

Plate 89. American Golden Plover, juvenile, Torlum, Benbecula, Outer Hebrides, 25-26 September 2008 © Steve Duffield.

Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2005–08. Part 1

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This is the first in a planned series of annual reports from the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC). It covers the period 2005 to 2008, thus providing continuity with *The Birds of Scotland* (Forrester *et al.* 2007), which incorporated data to the end of 2004. Future reports will cover single years, starting with 2009. We plan to publish the next one in 2011.

The main purpose of this report is to summarise the occurrence of rare species assessed by SBRC during 2005–08. It is hoped that its publication will stimulate more comprehensive recording and encourage the submission of all relevant records of these species, even retrospective ones. We are aware that a number of claimed sightings from 2005–08 have never been formally submitted. We also encourage finders of rarities that have died to deposit the remains, even if incomplete, in a museum that maintains a permanent reference collection.

The main ornithological events documented in this report include the 1st to 3rd Scottish records of Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*, a species that may well feature more prominently in future reports. The same can be said for the Continental subspecies of Great Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*, which amassed seven accepted records during 2005–08 in conjunction with the delayed acceptance of the first record from 1998. Also notable is the 16th Scottish record of Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, which is also the first for western Scotland and the first involving a wintering bird. Other featured species that are particularly rare in Scotland include Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, with 19 records by the end of 2008, and Black Kite *Milvus migrans*, with 22. Interestingly, the 21st Scottish record of Black Kite, reported here, involved a

bird that paired with a Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and reared hybrid young that could potentially pose identification problems for Scottish observers.

One prominent feature of the period was a surge in numbers of several American wader species, including the three covered by this report: American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Whiterumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* and Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*. The total number of individuals of the first two species recorded during 2005–08 represented a remarkable 65% of the previous all-time total. For Buff-breasted Sandpiper, the equivalent proportion for the two years 2005 and 2006 alone (after which records were no longer assessed by SBRC) was 37%. Observers on the islands enjoyed the lion's share of sightings of these wader species, with the Outer Hebrides being strongly represented, and the island of Tiree (Argyll) also producing a good run of sightings. Most other records came from the Northern Isles (Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland).

Sightings of rare passerines were concentrated in the Northern Isles, which dominated the picture for several species. For example, c. 128 Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* occurred in the Northern Isles during 2005–08, compared to just 12 elsewhere in Scotland. The equivalent figures for Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* are 59 and 2, and for Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* 23 and 1. Of mainland recording areas, only North-east Scotland had a significant number of records of these rare passerines. Most notably, it accounted for all five records of Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* outwith the Northern Isles during the period, as well as the only records of Common Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* and Rustic Bunting. It also produced a single record of Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*, a species whose geographical distribution in Scotland differs substantially from all others, being concentrated in Lothian and Ayrshire.

For the observers involved, the period will be best remembered for a species that breeds many thousands of miles away in the South Atlantic. The staggering numbers of Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis* that flew past the Butt of Lewis, Lewis (Outer Hebrides) on 8 and 10 September 2007 included several flocks of more than 500 birds, making the previous land-based Scottish record count of 190, obtained at the same site a year earlier, seem like small beer indeed. Elsewhere, Dennis Head on North Ronaldsay (Orkney) produced an excellent series of counts in both 2006 and 2007, though overall numbers in 2007 were much smaller than those seen in the Outer Hebrides.

Format of the report

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The species accounts in the report follow a standard format, which is modelled on the annual British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) reports published in *British Birds*. We are aware of recent changes to the taxonomic sequence of the *British List* (BOU 2010, Sangster *et al.* 2010), but as these have not yet been formally adopted by SBRC, this report follows Forrester *et al.* (2007), as updated by SBRC (2009), with regard to sequence as well as nomenclature. However, *Pastor roseus* is used in preference to *Sturnus roseus* for Rosy Starling, following Knox *et al.* (2008).

On the header line, after the species or subspecies name, are three numbers:

- Total number of birds in Scotland to the end of 2004, based on Forrester *et al.* (2007), with corrections in some cases, and also including records added in this report. In some cases older records or 'At sea' records are explicitly excluded from the totals, following the example of Forrester *et al.* (2007). In the case of Marsh Warbler and Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*, numbers seen in the past were so great that totals have not been estimated.
- Total number of birds in Scotland during the period 2005–08, including acceptances by BBRC and by local committees in the Northern Isles where appropriate. Returning birds or repeat sightings of the same individual, insofar as these can be judged, are not counted. In the case of three species no longer assessed by SBRC from 1 January 2007, totals are for 2005–06 only.

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■ Total number to the end of 2008, or 2006 in the case of three species.

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted records with details. The list of records in this table covers the whole of Scotland and the period 2005-08, with the following exceptions:

- For 15 species that were assessed by BBRC to the end of 2005, full details are given only for records during 2006-08. BBRC acceptances for 2005, where they occur, are briefly summarised at the beginning of the table. However, there is no table for Wilson's Storm-petrel Oceanites oceanicus or Dusky Warbler Phylloscopus fuscatus, which had no records accepted by SBRC during the period.
- For the three species dropped from the SBRC list at the end of 2006, the period covered is 2005–06.
- For 12 species that were assessed by local committees in the Northern Isles but by SBRC elsewhere in Scotland, full details of accepted Northern Isles records are not given. Instead, information about these records is presented in summary form, usually in a separate table. We are very grateful for the cooperation of the relevant local recorders in compiling these summaries. For additional details of individual records, the reader is invited to consult the Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland Bird Reports.
- For all taxa, details are given of records from 2004 and earlier years accepted by SBRC but omitted from Forrester et al. (2007).

For each record listed in full, the following details are given:

- Year.
- Recording area, arranged alphabetically within each year.
- Location(s). In the case of Argyll, the Outer Hebrides and the Northern Isles, individual island names are given, while for the extensive Highland recording area, the component administrative areas are also named. Note that for locations in the Outer Hebrides, place names follow current Ordnance Survey maps; anglicised names as used in Forrester et al. (2007) and other ornithological literature are given in parentheses to facilitate comparison where necessary. Use of the word 'to' to link locations, e.g. 'Meoness to Vaasetter', implies that the bird was also seen at sites between these locations. Use of 'Off' before a place name indicates that a bird was observed at sea from a boat and not from land.
- Number of birds if more than one, with age and/or sex if known. Where no details of age are given, records in spring and summer concern birds in adult plumage.
- 'Returning' if applicable. Note that many claims of presumed returning birds were not assessed directly by SBRC but instead accepted by the local recorder.
- Date(s).
- 'Found dead' or 'died' if applicable.
- Existence of a photograph, if this formed part of the assessment process.
- Names of observers, in alphabetical order. Every effort has been made to name only those people who played a part in finding and/or identifying the bird. The sole exception to this rule is where no submission was made by these observers, in which case the submitter of the record is also credited; in a few instances, the finders' names were unknown. All other observers are covered by the use of 'et al.'.
- Details of specimen if preserved, with specimen number if available. National Museums Scotland (NMS), Edinburgh (Lothian), is the only museum named in this particular report.
- Additional sightings of the same bird in the same recording area in the same year where appropriate, or a cross-reference to additional sightings in a different recording area or year. Where a bird is said to be the same, this is rarely known with certainty but is usually a presumption based on the judgment of the observer, local recorder and/or others.

The table of records is followed by the main text of the species account, which aims to summarise the pattern of occurrence of the species (or, in one case, subspecies) in question. Maps and

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histograms are presented where appropriate, and there may be separate tables for the Northern Isles as explained above. Note that the date ranges given in these tables are based on both first and last dates for the individual birds concerned, thus a range may be given even when only one bird occurred in the season in question. Also, the definition of spring and autumn is somewhat flexible in accordance with the temporal pattern of records, and is not exactly the same for every species. Where information about birds in the Northern Isles is presented in the text without references, the source is normally the relevant local bird report.

Note that references to Forrester *et al.* (2007) are to the main text. Supplementary data for 2005 and 2006, presented in Appendix 3 of that work, are not taken into account except where explicitly stated.

At the end of each species account, a brief summary of global breeding and wintering distribution, with mention of relevant subspecies, is given in parentheses.

Species coverage

The period covered by this report saw SBRC taking over the assessment of several long-standing British rarities from BBRC, which carried out a major overhaul of its species list with effect from 1 January 2006 (Fraser *et al.* 2007a). The report includes records for 15 of these species, some of which remain very rare in Scotland. They are Ferruginous Duck, Wilson's Storm-petrel, Great Egret *Ardea alba*, Black Kite, Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, American Golden Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, White-winged Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*, Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*, Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*, Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans*, Greenish Warbler, Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*, Dusky Warbler and Rustic Bunting.

It should be noted that rare subspecies of several species now on the SBRC list are still assessed by BBRC. The most important example is Subalpine Warbler, for which BBRC assessed claims of the eastern subspecies, *S. c. albistriata*, during the period of this review, while claims of Western Subalpine Warbler *S. c. cantillans* or birds not assigned to any particular subspecies were assessed by SBRC (or, in the Northern Isles, local committees) after the end of 2005.

Another example is Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*, which like Subalpine Warbler was dropped from the BBRC list as from 1 January 2006 (Fraser *et al.* 2007a). In this case, BBRC still assesses records of the subspecies *C. h. hornemanni*, Hornemann's Redpoll, which has traditionally been perceived as rarer in Britain than *C. h. exilipes*, Coues's Redpoll. Arctic Redpoll does not feature in this report, however. No records were accepted by SBRC during 2006–08, and for various reasons only a fragmentary picture of its occurrence in Scotland during 2005–08 is currently available. It is hoped to rectify the omission in the next report.

Another significant omission, in this case involving a species that has been on the SBRC list for some time, is Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*. Although SBRC accepted several records during the period, all of these together with earlier acceptances are currently under review. Again, it is hoped that the results of the review can be published in the next report.

Other omissions involve species for which there were simply no accepted records during the period. These are Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*, Alpine Swift *Apus melba*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti*, Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata*, European Serin *Serinus serinus*, and Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*.

In addition to the changes occasioned by the dropping of several species from the BBRC list, SBRC also revised its own list during the period, delegating the assessment of American Wigeon

Anas americana, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Rosy Starling to local committees as from 1 January 2007. No reference is made in this report to occurrences of those species after the end of 2006.

Further changes have been made to the SBRC list since the end of 2008: Yellow-billed Diver Gavia adamsii, Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis and Parrot Crossbill Loxia pytyopsittacus were added on 1 January 2009, while American Golden Plover and Ring-billed Gull Larus delawarensis were delegated to local recorders on 1 January 2010, as was Great Shearwater in the Outer Hebrides only.

A list of records assessed by SBRC and considered to be 'not proven' can be found in Appendix 1, while Appendix 2 summarises the involvement of different committees in the assessment of the 37 species included in this report.

At the request of local recorders, SBRC also assessed individual records of several species not on the SBRC list. These records are not listed below but may have been published in local reports if accepted.

SBRC

SBRC was set up in 1984 as a subcommittee of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC) Council, with the objective of ensuring that records of birds that were rare in a Scottish context were fully assessed prior to publication in the Scottish Bird Report. With the advent of local records committees throughout most of Scotland, a three-tier system of record assessment was introduced in the 1990s. Within this system, SBRC's role is to assess records of species that are rare in Scotland but not rare enough in Britain to be assessed by BBRC. Local committees assess records of slightly less rare Scottish species as well as local rarities. In the case of some species, records from certain recording areas are assessed locally while records from the remainder of Scotland are assessed by SBRC. SBRC is also responsible for maintaining the official Scottish List.

There are seven voting members of SBRC, each serving for a seven-year period and with the longestserving member retiring each year. Current members are Alan Brown (chairman), Tristan ap Rheinallt, Mark Chapman, Alan Lauder, Chris McInerny, Hywel Maggs and John Sweeney, with Bob McGowan as non-voting museum consultant. In addition, Dougie Dickson, Angus Murray, Roger Riddington and Richard Schofield served on the committee during the period 2005-08, but have since retired. The position of non-voting secretary is currently occupied by Angus Hogg, who took over from Ron Forrester in April 2005. The Scottish List subcommittee consists of Dave Clugston, Ron Forrester, Angus Hogg, Bob McGowan, Chris McInerny and Roger Riddington. More information about SBRC, including details of voting procedures, can be found at www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc.htm.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we are grateful to all those observers who went to the trouble of writing up and submitting records of Scottish rarities during the period. Without their efforts, this report could not exist. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to those who gave permission for their excellent photographs to be reproduced here.

Next, we thank the following local recorders or co-recorders for their assistance in compiling, checking and correcting records: Paul Baxter, Mark Chapman, Jon Cook, Martin Cook, Kevin Davis, Paul Daw, Jim Dickson, Iain English, David Kelly, Hywel Maggs, Ray Murray, Chris Pendlebury, Brian Rabbitts, Rab Shand, Deryk Shaw, Fraser Simpson, Jim Williams, Val Wilson and Bernie Zonfrillo.

Ian Andrews produced the maps and graphs, and also provided much valuable assistance throughout the compilation of the report. Angus Hogg, SBRC secretary, played a major supporting role not only by providing information about records but also by commenting on different aspects of the report. Others who helped in various ways were John Bowler, Simon Cohen, Steve Duffield and Harry Scott.

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Systematic list of accepted records

American Wigeon Anas americana 165: 10 (2005-06): 175

Table 1. Accepted records of American Wigeon in Scotland, 2005–06. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 2.

2005

Angus & Dundee Loch of Kinnordy, male, 13 June to 9 September (S.R. Green, A.J. Leitch *et al.*). Highland Caol, Fort William, Lochaber, male, 2–17 January, photo (M.J. McKee *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Loch Mòr Bharabhais (Loch Barvas), Lewis, male, 15 January, photo; same, Siadar (Shader), 25–26 March (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore) & Loch Bì (Loch Bee), South Uist, male, 21 May to 21 June (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

2006

Outer Hebrides Siadar (Shader), Lewis, male (returning), 25 January to 1 April, photo (M.S. Scott *et al.*). Outer Hebrides Loch Bì (Loch Bee), South Uist, two males (one returning), 14–15 November (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

American Wigeon occurs annually in Scotland in very small numbers, with most birds arriving in autumn; many remain to winter and in some cases return in subsequent winters. Arrival is often apparent in the islands of the north and west. Like many other vagrant ducks, American Wigeons can quickly assimilate into flocks of carrier species, in this case almost always Eurasian Wigeon *Anas penelope*.

Records were assessed by SBRC up to the end of 2006, with the exception of the Northern Isles, where they were assessed locally. The species was then delegated to local committees throughout Scotland from 1 January 2007.

Table 2. Summary of accepted records of American Wigeon in the Northern Isles, 2005–06.

	Numbe	er of birds	Date range							
2005	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn						
Fair Isle	-	-	-	-						
Orkney	-	3	-	25 Sep-10 Oct						
Shetland	1	-	1 June	-						
2006										
Fair Isle	-	-	-	-						
Orkney	1	-	24-28 April	-						
Shetland	1	-	6–14 May	-						

Eight birds in 2005 was the seventh highest annual total on record, with two birds in 2006 more typical. The Orkney and Shetland records from 2006 were thought to relate to the same individual, which was paired with a female Eurasian Wigeon. The peak annual total, 11 records of 20 birds, was in 2000 and included a single flock of ten birds in Shetland. Additional observations in the period 2005–08, not listed above, involved long-stayers from 2004: a male in the Beauly Firth, Inverness district/Ross & Cromarty (Highland) from 12 December 2004 to 22 March 2005; and a male at Loch of Hillwell and Scatness, Mainland (Shetland) from 2 November 2004 to 18 January 2005 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The latter was thought to be a returning bird that had arrived originally with the 2000 influx.

Females remain rare, or at least rarely identified, with no confirmed records in this period, although a male American Wigeon on Loch of Tingwall, Mainland (Shetland) on 1 June 2005 was seen to mate with a female that may also have been an American Wigeon. American Wigeon pairs have occasionally bred in Iceland and young have also been reared by mixed pairs (Johan Oli Hilmarrsun pers. comm.). This may account for the appearance of hybrids in the population, with resulting identification difficulties. No fewer than three hybrids were observed in Orkney in early 2005.

(Breeds across North America south to northern USA, winters in northern South America.)

Ferruginous Duck Aythya nyroca 15: 4: 19

Table 3. Accepted records of Ferruginous Duck in Scotland, 2005–08.

2005 BBRC

2 birds: Perth & Kinross 1, Upper Forth 1.

2006

Fife Loch Gelly, adult male, 16 July to 16 August, photo (J.S. Nadin *et al.*). Lothian Threipmuir Reservoir, first-winter female, 22–29 December, photo (M. & B.D. Griffin *et al.*).

Ferruginous Duck is a very rare duck in Scotland with just 19 birds to the end of 2008. Records were assessed by BBRC until the end of 2005, with two Scottish individuals in that year: one at Gart Gravel Pits, Cambusmore (Upper Forth) (Fraser *et al.* 2007a), and the other at Loch Leven (Perth & Kinross) (Hudson *et al.* 2008, SBRC 2009). With two additional mainland records in 2006, the period 2005–08 augmented the previous all-time total of 15 birds by more than a quarter. The appearance of a flightless individual during the mid-summer moult period at Loch Gelly (Fife) coincided with the occurrence of a growing flock of other moulting diving ducks.

The overall pattern of occurrence in Scotland is poorly defined as birds have been found in most months and in a wide range of areas. The Fife record indicates a bird arriving to moult and now perhaps in long-term association with commoner diving ducks after the breeding season.

(Breeds from south-east Europe to central Asia, as far as western Mongolia. Winters from the Mediterranean, Iberia and Morocco through the Middle East to India and also sub-Saharan Africa.)

Cory's Shearwater Calonectris diomedea c. 228: 20: c. 248

Table 4. Accepted records of Cory's Shearwater in Scotland, 2005–08, with late acceptances from previous years not included in Forrester et al. (2007).

2003

Highland Portvasgo, Sutherland, 22 August (M.S. Scott).

2004

Lothian Aberlady Bay, 22 April, found dead, photo (I.M. Thomson).

2005

Argyll Aird, Tiree, 24 August (J. Bowler).

Fife Fife Ness, 10 September (R. Shand et al.).

Fife Fife Ness, 11 September (A.W. Lauder, T. Moodie).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 10 September (A.J. Bull, M. Newell).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, two, 4 August (T. ap Rheinallt, D. Houghton, N. Wilkinson).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 5 August (T. ap Rheinallt).

2006

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 14 July (R.J. Simpson et al.). Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, two, 28 August (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson et al.). Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, two, 31 August (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson et al.). Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 1 September (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson et al.). Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, two, 3 September (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson et al.). Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, two, 29 August (M.S. Scott).

2007

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 28 August (P.A. Brown, R.J. Simpson). **Outer Hebrides** Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 8 September (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott).

2008

Lothian Barns Ness, 1 September (A. Brown).

Cory's Shearwater is a near-annual visitor to Scotland in very small numbers, with records in most years falling between late summer and early autumn. Up to the end of 2004 there were 129 records of around 228 birds (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007, with the addition of late acceptances from 2003 and 2004, detailed in Table 4). The bird found dead at Aberlady Bay (Lothian) in 2004 is one of only three Scottish records in the month of April.

There has been a marked increase in sightings since the mid-1990s, in part due to observer effort, but warmer seas and a changing marine ecosystem in the north Atlantic may also be contributing factors. The species continues to be sought after by birdwatchers in Scotland, and is invariably found by dedicated seawatchers. During the period 2005–08 numbers seen in most years were close to the norm, but 2008, with just a single bird, was well below average. All observations fell within the normal mid-summer to mid-autumn period. The increase in the number of records in Orkney and the Outer Hebrides compared to earlier years was notable and reflects increased seawatching effort in these archipelagos.

Cory's Shearwater remains a difficult bird to identify with a relatively low acceptance rate of 56% for descriptions submitted to SBRC during the period. Scottish observers are still generally unfamiliar with the species, at least at home, and seawatching sightings are often brief and at long range. Thus there can be difficulties in picking up key identification features, or in confirming the lack of certain features to support separation from Great Shearwater and even commoner species such as juvenile Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* and Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Many records can end up, at best, as unproven large shearwaters.

(Polytypic with two subspecies: *C. d. borealis* (Cory's Shearwater) breeding on the Azores, Canary Islands and other nearby Atlantic islands, and nominate *diomedea* (Scopoli's Shearwater) breeding in the Mediterranean. Both subspecies can occur in North Atlantic waters in autumn but most assumed to be Cory's and no confirmed Scopoli's yet recorded in Scottish waters.)

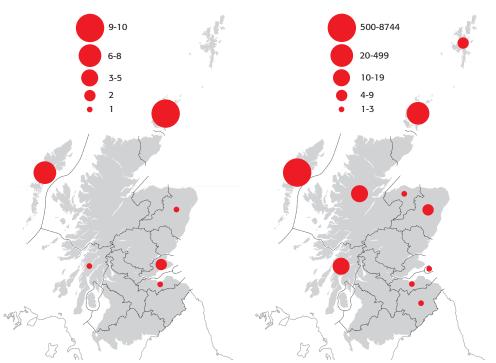


Figure 1. Distribution by recording area of Cory's Shearwater (left) and Great Shearwater (right) in Scotland, 2005–08.



Plate 90. Great Shearwater, off Stonehaven, North-east Scotland, 12 September 2007 © Caroline Weir.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis c.* 522 (1950–2004): 9,208: c. 9,730 (excluding 'at sea' records)

Table 5. Accepted records of Great Shearwater in Scotland, 2005-08. Data from Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay (Orkney) in 2007 are presented in summary form; for more detail, see Table 6.

Argyll Barra—Tiree ferry, 20 October (J. Bowler).

Highland Rubha Reidh, Gairloch, Ross & Cromarty, 24 August (E. Maguire, R. Shand).

Highland Tarbat Ness, Ross & Cromarty, 5 September (D. Tanner)

Lothian Cramond Island, 31 August (T. Cranston, J. Steele)

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 10 September (H.A. Addlesee et al.).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 4 August (T. ap Rheinallt).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, two, 5 August (T. ap Rheinallt).

Outer Hebrides Off Rubha Aird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, 14 August, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, four, 24 August, photo (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, 29 August (T. Charman, A. Stevenson). Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, 20 September (A. Stevenson).

Shetland Sumburgh Head, Mainland, 24 August (S.J. Minton, D.P. Hall).

Highland Ullapool-Stornoway ferry, Ross & Cromarty, 4 September (M. Coleman, J. Poyner et al.).

North-east Scotland Off Banff, 17 September, photo (N.A. Littlewood et al.).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, four, 30 August (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson).
Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 46, 31 August (P.A.Brown, M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, six, 1 September (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 2 September (R.J. Simpson).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, two, 5 September (M.J. Gee, R.J. Simpson).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, four, 28 August (T. ap Rheinallt).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 190, 29 August, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 29 August (T. ap Rheinallt).

Argyll Oban–Barra ferry, four, 7 September, photo (T.P. Drew, M.A. Wilkinson). Argyll Aird, Tiree, five, 10 September (J. Bowler).

Argyll Aird, Tiree, two, 14 September (J. Bowler).

Borders St Abbs Head, three, 10 September (D.K. Graham).

30:2 (2010) Scottish Birds 30: 99-123 Highland Ullapool–Stornoway ferry, Ross & Cromarty, 12, 8 September (G. Owens).

Isle of May 11 September (B. Bates).

Moray & Nairn Lossiemouth, 3 September (R. Proctor).

Moray & Nairn Lossiemouth, two, 14 September (M. Cook).

North-east Scotland Collieston, 12 September (P.S. Crockett)

North-east Scotland Off Stonehaven, three, 12 September, photo (C. Weir).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, two, 14 September (A. Webb).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, a total of 346 birds on 20 dates, 23 August to 29 September (P.A. Brown, R.J. Simpson) (see Table 6).

Orkney Whitaloo Point, Birsay, five, 26 August (S.J. Williams et al.).

Orkney Whitaloo Point, Birsay, two, 28 August (S.J. Williams et al.).

Orkney Whitaloo Point, Birsay, 13 September (S.J. Williams et al.).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Aird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, two, 24 August (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 41, 25 August (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott)

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 19, 26 August (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, two, 30 August (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 7,114, 8 September, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Brù (Brue), Lewis, three, 9 September (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 165, 9 September (G. Owens, M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Ghriminis (Griminish Point), North Uist, 74, 9 September (B. Rabbitts).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 16, 9 September (T. ap Rheinallt).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, 9 September (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 1,076, 10 September (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Oban-Barra ferry, seven, 11 September (T.P. Drew, M.A. Wilkinson).

Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 12 September (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 12, 14 September (S.E. Duffield). Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 5, 21 September (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, 25 September (J. Bowler).

Sea area Fair Isle c. 27 km west of Fair Isle, 10, 26 August, photo (J.L. Irvine, J.H. Simpson et al.).

Sea area Fair Isle c. 55 km south-west of Foula (but closer to Orkney), four, 29 August, photo (J.L. Irvine, J.H. Simpson et al.).

Shetland Lamba Ness, Unst, five, 10 September (D. Cooper, M.G. Pennington, B.H. Thomason et al.).

Shetland Rerwick Beach, Mainland, 30 September, found dead (R. Riddington); skeleton preserved, NMS.Z 2010.32.

Shetland Eshaness, Mainland, 25 August (M.S. Chapman).

Historically, Great Shearwater has been an infrequent visitor to Scotland, with few or no records in most years up to 2004, although large numbers were seen at St Kilda (Outer Hebrides) in 1910 and 1911, and off the Rockall Bank in 1948 (Forrester et al. 2007). The total number of birds seen during 1950-2004, excluding 'at sea' records, was c. 522 (adjusted from Forrester et al. 2007).

Since 2004, there has been a marked increase in sightings, with more birds than usual in 2005 and then a record year in 2006. However, this was completely eclipsed by 2007, with the number of birds seen not only breaking records for Scotland and indeed Britain, but also astounding the observers involved. 2008 reverted to being a more typical year by historical standards.

The two main locations involved in the 2007 series of records were the Butt of Lewis (Outer Hebrides) and Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay (Orkney). At the former site, birds were seen on seven dates, with two remarkable counts of 7,114 on 8 September and 1,065 on 10 September. Fewer birds were seen at the latter site but observations were spread across many more days, with a total of 346 birds seen (Table 6).

Table 6. Daily counts of Great Shearwaters observed from Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay (Orkney) in 2007.

August				September																
Date	23	25	26	27	28	29	30	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	22	29
Birds	1	- 1	4	10	20	2	1	29	40	73	95	39	1	17	5	1	3	1	1	2

The 1950-2008 total of c. 9,730 birds incorporates only land-based and inshore records, thus the birds recorded in Sea area Fair Isle in 2007 are omitted. However, the ten birds seen on 26 August that year form part of the Shetland county totals, as does one of the 29 August birds, which followed the observers' boat to within 30 km of Foula (Shetland Bird Report).

The recent increase in observations in Scotland possibly reflects a geographic shift, with a decrease in records from formerly favoured areas of the North Atlantic. It appears that the boom years in Scotland correspond with poorer years in Biscay and south-west Ireland, where birds are normally present. It is thought that flocks follow concentrations of prey species and may then pass headlands in large numbers during periods of strong onshore winds.

The species continues to be sought after by Scottish birdwatchers since, even in recent years, passage has been largely confined to certain headlands and island groups in the north-west and north, away from the bulk of the Scottish birdwatching public. The timing of the species' occurrence in Scotland is later than in other parts of Britain and Ireland, with most sightings from mid-August to mid-September.

In contrast to Cory's Shearwater, the acceptance rate of records by SBRC during the period 2005–08 was high. Records that involve larger numbers of birds demand a different approach to assessment, but even if records of 10 or more birds are excluded from consideration, the remainder still amassed an acceptance rate of more than 98%. Compared to Cory's Shearwater, the presence of better-defined identification features, like the dark cap and belly patch, may help observers and assessors alike.

(Breeds on South Atlantic islands and carries out a loop migration in the North Atlantic outside the breeding season. In the north-east Atlantic occurs most regularly off western coast of Ireland.)

Wilson's Storm-petrel Oceanites oceanicus 4: 1: 5

One at Labost, Lewis (Outer Hebrides) on 3 August 2005 (Fraser *et al.* 2007c) was the fifth for Scotland (SBRC 2009). Since SBRC took over the assessment of this species in 2006, no claims have been submitted.

Continental Great Cormorant Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis 1: 8: 9

Table 7. Accepted records of Continental Great Cormorant in Scotland, 2005–08, with a late acceptance from 1998 not included in Forrester et al. (2007).

1998

Moray & Nairn Loch Spynie, immature, 26 December to 20 January 1999, photo (R. Proctor et al.).

2005

Clyde Prince's Dock, Glasgow, first-winter, 26 December, photo (J.J. Molloy).

2007

Borders Eyemouth Harbour, adult, 25 March, photo (R.D. Murray).

Lothian Gladhouse Reservoir, adult, 21 January (M.A. Wilkinson).

Lothian Port Seton, adult, 13 March, photo (K. Gibb, M. Thrower).

Shetland Loch of Hillwell, Mainland, adult, 30 April to 4 June, photo (P.V. Harvey, R. Riddington, R.M. Tallack et al.). Shetland Lochs of Spiggie & Brow, Mainland, first-summer, 18–19 June (P.V. Harvey et al.).

2008

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 7 February, photo (M.A. Maher, R.A. Schofield). Shetland Uyeasound, Unst, adult, 10 May, photo (W. Dickson, R.M. Tallack).

There is only one accepted Scottish record of this difficult-to-identify subspecies prior to 2005, though a number of other claims were submitted to SBRC.

Criteria for field identification only became available in 1991 and were not widely known until the late 1990s. Since 2000 or so, there has been an improved awareness of these criteria among birdwatchers, and a resultant increase in the number of claims submitted. Some of these were discussed by Forrester *et al.* (2007), but remained unproven for a variety of reasons, including: lack of clear observation or mis-recording of the 'gular pouch angle' (Newson *et al.* 2004, 2005); lack of supporting characters such as size and structure of the bird in the case of a marginal gular pouch angle; misinterpretation of the identification criteria; and use of older, redundant identification criteria. Only recently was the first Scottish record from 1998 accepted. This bird at Loch Spynie (Moray & Nairn) was the subject of debate at the time (Proctor & Donald 2000a, 2000b), but the collection of video and other material was reviewed and finally accepted in a detailed review of claims in 2008. Proving identification remains difficult and claims should ideally be supported by good-quality images.

Continental Great Cormorants have expanded their population and range dramatically throughout Europe in recent decades following protection in the 1970s (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). They occur as breeders in southern England, and can mix and occasionally hybridise with *P. c. carbo* in tree colonies. Given the frequency of occurrence of the subspecies in England and its continued range expansion in Europe, its presence in Scotland is likely to become increasingly regular. As there is some potential for conflicts with fisheries, particularly inland, documenting its distribution will be of value in future years. To that effect birdwatchers are encouraged to pay extra attention to Great Cormorants and to submit descriptions accompanied by photographs of any likely *P. c. sinensis* candidates.

The Scottish records reveal a broad latitudinal range, although all but one come from the eastern side of the country. Given that they are likely to involve birds arriving from the south and east, particular attention might be directed to those areas when looking for Continental Great Cormorants in future. While accepted sightings remain too few to show a clear pattern of temporal occurrence, all to date have been in the period from mid-winter through to late spring. During this period, Continental Great Cormorants are perhaps at their most obvious, with adults having striking white head plumes, on average more extensive and untidy than on *P. c. carbo*.

(P. c. sinensis breeds throughout central and southern Europe and has expanded recently into parts of northern Europe. Outside the breeding season it occurs both inland and on coasts through much of Europe including England.)

Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax 46: 6: 52

Table 8. Accepted records of Black-crowned Night Heron in Scotland, 2005-08.

2006

Upper Forth Bridge of Allan, adult, 21 May (G. Owens).

2007

Lothian Bavelaw, adult, 14–15 February (E. Hurley et al.). Shetland Bressay, juvenile, 15 September, photo (A. Ash et al.).

2008

Fair Isle Various locations, two adults (including one male), 5–24 April, both died (M. Breaks *et al.*); partial skeletons, head and wing preserved, NMS.Z 2009.148.1–3.

Outer Hebrides Cladach Bhàlaigh (Claddach Vallay), North Uist, first-summer, 8 May, photo (J. Boyle, S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Since the apparent eradication, by 2004, of a free-flying colony of the North American subspecies *N. n. hoactli* at Edinburgh Zoo (Lothian), the status of this species in Scotland has become a little clearer (Forrester *et al.* 2007). However, a number of the Edinburgh Zoo birds were translocated to other collections, for example Auchingarrich Wildlife Centre near Comrie (Perth & Kinross), where they exist as a free-flying group. In addition, two ringed free-flying birds remained in the Edinburgh Zoo grounds during 2006–09 (Breaks 2009). Although adults appearing in southern Scotland may still be zoo escapes, the ability to racially identify adults using facial features (Forrester *et al.* 2007) helps to clarify origins as captive birds are of the North American subspecies. Any birds encountered should be scrutinised either to rule out *N. n. hoactli* in southern areas or, potentially, to confirm it in western areas, where vagrancy is possible. It was suggested that the juvenile seen on Shetland in September 2007 might have a transatlantic origin.

The total number of birds seen in Scotland to the end of 2004 was 46 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007). When escapes are removed from the equation, the occurrence of genuine wild vagrants fits the pattern seen elsewhere in Britain, with a spring peak of Continental overshoots and fewer at other times. Some can remain for long periods but may go undetected due to their secretive nature. There is a wide geographical spread of records but the most likely areas of occurrence in Scotland are southern counties, the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebrides.

The Fair Isle birds in 2008 were unusual not only in constituting a multiple record but also because both individuals perished. The corpses were donated to NMS (Breaks 2009).

(Holarctic with four subspecies, nominate *nycticorax* breeding in mainland Europe and into Asia, and *N. n. hoactli* in North America. Both populations move south in winter.)

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Great Egret Ardea alba 37: 13: 50

Table 9. Accepted records of Great Egret in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005 BBRC

3 birds: Clyde 1, Shetland 2.

2006

North-east Scotland Near Turriff, 18–19 June, photo (J. Littlejohn, S. Mackison *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Driomor (Drimore), South Uist, 13 February to 2 March (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

2007

Ayrshire Eriff, Loch Doon, 4-6 July, photo (J. Graham, A. Hogg et al.).

Clyde Wards Pond, Endrick Mouth NNR, 3–14 July, photo (I. Fulton, S. Longster *et al.*).

Orkney Loch of Banks, Mainland, 28 March to 3 April, photo (P. Hollinrake et al.).

Orkney Bridesness, North Ronaldsay, 14 May, photo (P.A. Brown *et al.*); same, Loch Carrick, Eday, 17 May, & Sanday, 20 May, photo (G. Byers, M. Cockram *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Various locations, North Uist, Benbecula, & South Uist, 12 October to 23 March 2008, photo (C. Johnson, M. MacRury, M.S. Scott *et al.*).

Shetland Brig of Bakkasetter, Mainland, 8–26 May, photo (P.V. Harvey et al.).

2008

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 21–22 April (H.E. Maggs *et al.*). Shetland Haroldswick & Norwick, Unst, 11–16 April, photo (W. Dickson *et al.*).

Great Egret, along with Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* and Cattle Egret, has gone through rapid population and range expansion in Europe, and now regularly breeds on the near Continent (Hagemeijer & Blair 1997). Records in Scotland have been assessed by SBRC since 2006. Previously they were assessed by BBRC, with three accepted records in 2005, within the period of this report (Fraser *et al.* 2007a). It is clear that, with more than a quarter of all Scottish records to date falling within the period 2005–08, the trend is one of a distinct increase.



Plate 91. Great Egret (with Mute Swan Cygnus olor and Common Crane Grus grus), Brig of Bakkasetter, Mainland, Shetland, 8–26 May 2007 © Roger Riddington.

The distribution of first recorded dates in Scotland is obscured by the fact that birds regularly remain for long periods and roam widely, thus their true arrival dates may be unknown. Generally, however, the main arrival appears to be in spring (April and May), followed by a smaller peak in late autumn (Forrester et al. 2007). This would fit the expected pattern, with spring migrant overshoots and north-westward autumn dispersal to wintering areas by a small proportion of birds from the Continental European population. Unusually, an individual wintered in the Outer Hebrides in 2007-08, moving between islands.

Despite the apparent ease of identification, the rejection rate of records by SBRC is more than 10%. Frustratingly, some observers do not exclude leucistic or albinistic Grey Heron Ardea cinerea from their often cursory descriptions. Given that Little Egrets are also occurring in Scotland with increasing frequency, an accurate estimation of size and bare-part colouration is also important. These are the only significant identification pitfalls.

The North American subspecies A. a. egretta is difficult to separate without biometrics but some records, particularly in autumn, could involve this subspecies. However, none has yet been confirmed.

(Occurs on all continents outside polar regions. In Europe, nominate alba breeds from central Europe eastwards, wintering in Africa and Persian Gulf to China and Korea; A. a. egretta breeds in Nearctic, with northern populations wintering in south; two other subspecies.)

Black Kite Milvus migrans 19: 3: 22

Table 10. Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005 BBRC

1 bird: Ayrshire 1.

Highland Undisclosed site, Inverness district, male, summered from 24 May, photo (C. Crawford, J. & N. Glenn).

Fair Isle Various locations, adult, 7–10 May, photo (S.J. Davies, D.N. Shaw et al.).



Plate 92. Black Kite, adult, Fair Isle, 7–10 May 2008 © Mark Breaks.

Black Kite is a very rare visitor to Scotland from Continental Europe. Most individuals have been seen in spring, from April to June, with just a handful of sightings later in the season, though there have also been instances of summering. One at Pinwherry (Ayrshire) on 7 June 2005 (Fraser et al. 2007a), the last year when records of this species were assessed by BBRC, was the 20th Scottish record.

The Black Kite seen in May 2008 on Fair Isle was the first for the recording area. It was presumably a spring overshoot, like many others in Scotland. The 2006 record, on the other hand, was highly unusual in that it involved a bird subsequently found to be paired with a wing-tagged female Red Kite belonging to the Black Isle, Ross & Cromarty (Highland) population. This hybrid pairing, which represented the first confirmed breeding by a Black Kite in the UK, produced two fledged young (Holling et al. 2009).

(Nominate migrans breeds throughout most of Europe except the far north, wintering in sub-Saharan Africa; other subspecies elsewhere in the Old World.)



Plate 93. Rough-legged Buzzard, juvenile, Skaw, Unst, Shetland, 7 May 2006 © Mike Pennington.



Plate 94. Rough-legged Buzzard, juvenile (right) with Common Buzzard Buteo buteo, Cille Pheadair (Kilpheder), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 2 October 2008 © Andrew Stevenson.

Rough-legged Buzzard Buteo lagopus c. 308 (1968-2004): 17: c. 325

Table 11. Accepted records of Rough-legged Buzzard in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005

Borders Dowlaw, 16 October (D.K. Graham).

Fair Isle Observatory, 13 May (R.J. Butcher et al.); also seen Shetland, 13 May.

Lothian Faseny Bridge, 28–29 November (C.N. Davison, S. Ward).

North-east Scotland Bridgend, Newburgh, juvenile, 16 April (D. Parnaby).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, adult, 1–18 June (T.W. Marshall et al.).

Outer Hebrides Various sites, North Uist, 6–29 March (B. Rabbitts et al.).

Shetland Sumburgh Head, Mainland, 13 May (H.R. Harrop, R.M. Mellor et al.); also seen Fair Isle.

Shetland North Roe, Mainland, 27 October (R.M. Mellor).

Shetland Fetlar, 30 October to early April 2006, found dead, photo (M.I. Smith, C. Thomason et al.).

2006

Lothian Kingside Hill, Spartleton & Whiteadder, 16–19 February (C.N. Davison); same as Lothian 2005. Orkney Hindera Fiold, Harray, adult female, 28 January to 11 April (J.B. Ribbands *et al.*). Shetland Skaw, Unst, juvenile, 7 May, photo (M.G. & M.J. Pennington).

2007

Orkney Rue, North Ronaldsay, adult, 16 May (R.J. Simpson).

Orkney Queenamidda, Rendall, Mainland, juvenile, 16 December to 23 April 2008, photo (J.B. Ribbands *et al.*). Shetland Foula, juvenile, 16–18 October, photo (T.P. Drew, M. Garner, M.A. Wilkinson *et al.*).

2008

Angus & Dundee Balduff Hill, Glenisla, juvenile, 2 April (C.R. McKay).

Orkney Tor Ness, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 4–5 May, photo (R.J. Simpson et al.).

Orkney Pegal Burn, Hoy, juvenile, 5 November (S.J. Williams).

Outer Hebrides Cille Pheadair (Kilpheder), South Uist, juvenile, 2 October, photo (A. Hogg, A. Stevenson, R.G. Vernon et al.).

Rough-legged Buzzard is a rare passage migrant in Scotland, occurring mostly on the eastern side of the country and the Northern Isles in autumn; in addition, a few birds overwinter (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The geographical distribution of sightings in the period 2005–08 reflects this general pattern, with Orkney continuing to be well represented. Arrival dates were divided equally between spring, with eight birds between early March and early June, and an extended autumn period, with eight birds between early October and mid-December. Outside these periods, a wintering individual was on Orkney from January to April 2006.

The North American subspecies, *B. l. sanctijohannis* or Rough-legged Hawk, which occurs in both pale and dark morphs, is a potential vagrant (Forrester *et al.* 2007). As yet this subspecies does not appear in Category A of the *British List*, although it is on the *Irish List* by virtue of a single occurrence. A Nearctic origin is suspected for birds that appear in the west of Scotland relatively early in the autumn, but pale morphs of the two subspecies may not be readily distinguishable.

A dark-morph Rough-legged Hawk seen at various locations on Mainland Shetland from May 2006 to March 2007 had been released at sea off Noss following several years' captivity in the Faroe Islands, which it reached as a passenger on a fishing boat after coming aboard near the Grand Banks of Newfoundland in September 2003. It was found dead in the Faroes in April 2008, more than a year after it was last seen on Shetland (Jensen 2006, *Shetland Bird Report* 2006, 2007).

Claims of Rough-legged Buzzard have one of the highest rejection rates among species assessed by SBRC (Forrester *et al.* 2007). This continued to be the case during the period covered by this report, with ten out of 29 submissions resulting in 'not proven' verdicts. Although some of these claims seemed to involve mistaken identity, the main obstacle to acceptance was the lack of detail in many descriptions.

(Holarctic, with four subspecies; nominate *lagopus* breeds from Scandinavia east to Siberia and migrates south to winter in an area extending from France to central Asia.)

Red-footed Falcon Falco vespertinus 80: 8: 88

Table 12. Accepted records of Red-footed Falcon in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005 BBRC

2 birds: Argyll 1, Lothian 1.

2006

Orkney Burgar Hill, Mainland, adult or first-summer male, 25 July (A. Upton).

Shetland Brow Marsh & Fladdabister, Mainland, first-summer female, 10–13 June, photo (P.V. Harvey, R. Riddington *et al.*).

Shetland Collafirth, Mainland, first-summer male, 12 June (M.S. Chapman).

2007

Highland Tarbat Ness, Ross & Cromarty, adult male, 15 October (D. Tanner).

2008

Lothian Almondell Viaduct, second-summer female, 25 May to 6 June, photo (I.J. Andrews, M. Hannam *et al.*). **Shetland** Bixter, Mainland, first-summer female, 3–5 June, photo (M. Henry *et al.*).





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Plates 95–96. Red-footed Falcon, second-summer female, Almondell Viaduct, Lothian, 25 May to 6 June 2008 © Jack Brodie (left) & Frank Golding (right).

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This species is mainly a rare late-spring migrant to Scotland, with no more than one or two records in most years, although there are occasional influxes, such as in 1992. The total number of Scottish individuals to the end of 2004 was 80 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007), and there were two additional sightings of singles in 2005 (Fraser *et al.* 2007a, Hudson *et al.* 2009).

Red-footed Falcon was dropped from the list of species assessed by BBRC from 1 January 2006. The six records since then reflect the pattern of earlier occurrences (Forrester *et al.* 2007), with the majority coming from Shetland and Orkney, and the three-month period May to July accounting for all but one of the records. Autumn birds are rare, thus the individual at Tarbat Ness, Ross & Cromarty (Highland) on 15 October 2007 was noteworthy.

(Breeds from Hungary and the Czech Republic east to China, wintering in southern Africa.)

Kentish Plover Charadrius alexandrinus 15: 1: 16

Table 13. Accepted records of Kentish Plover in Scotland, 2005-08.

2007

Outer Hebrides Baile Gharbhaidh (Balgarva) area, South Uist, 11 November to 20 April 2008, photo (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Kentish Plover is a very rare visitor to Scotland, first recorded only in 1949. All but one of the 15 records quoted by Forrester *et al.* (2007) were in April and May, the exception being a bird at Carnoustie (Angus & Dundee) on 8 September 1974. None of these remained longer than five days, thus the 2007 individual in the Outer Hebrides was highly unusual in more than one respect. In addition to the late arrival date and the exceptionally long duration of its stay, it was the first Kentish Plover to be seen in the west of Scotland, all previous records coming from the eastern mainland (13), Fair Isle (1) or Shetland (1).

Interestingly, a second long-staying Kentish Plover was present in the British Isles around the same time. This bird, discovered at Youghal, Co. Cork at the beginning of December 2007, was the first to be seen in Ireland for more than a decade. The fact that it was ringed enabled it to be traced to an illegal collection of birds that had apparently been confiscated by police on the German mainland before being taken to Helgoland for release into the wild (*Birding World* 20: 489). Thus, although the South Uist bird was unringed, some doubt was expressed about its origins. There was also speculation at the time that it might belong to one of the North American subspecies, *C. a. nivosus*, but the vagrancy potential of this form seems limited (Stevenson 2010).

(A cosmopolitan species with several subspecies, including nominate *alexandrinus*, which breeds patchily in Europe, North Africa and Asia; European birds are migratory and normally spend the winter in sub-Saharan Africa.)

American Golden Plover Pluvialis dominica 72: 49: 121

Table 14. Accepted records of American Golden Plover in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005 BBRC

11 birds: Argyll 2, Lothian 1, Orkney 1, Outer Hebrides 3, Shetland 4.

2006

Argyll Greenhill & Crossapol, Tiree, adult, 29 August to 3 September, photo (J. Bowler, K. Gillon et al.).

Dumfries & Galloway The Wig, Loch Ryan, juvenile, 16–29 October, photo (B. Orr et al.).

Orkney Overbister, Sanday, first-summer, 27-30 September, photo (J. Wright).

Outer Hebrides Cros (Cross) & Eòropaidh (Europie), Lewis, adult, 9–22 September, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, A.J. Whitehouse *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Bornais (Bornish), South Uist, juvenile, 26–28 September, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Eòropaidh (Europie), Lewis, juvenile, 15 October to 27 November, photo (S.É. Duffield et al.).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore), South Uist, juvenile, 31 October, photo (S.E. Duffield et al.).

Shetland Funzie, Fetlar, adult, 1–2 October, photo (I. & R. Broadbent, P.S. Crockett, I. Gordon et al.).

Shetland Challister & Vatshoull, Whalsay, juvenile, 2 October, photo (I. & R. Broadbent, P.S. Crockett, I. Gordon et al.).

Argyll Sandaig, Tiree, adult, 5–6 October, photo (J. Bowler, J. Wilson et al.).

Clyde Balgray Reservoir, adult, 16 September, photo (A.G. Jamieson, J.J. Sweeney).

Dumfries & Galloway Seafield Bay, Annan, juvenile, 24 October, photo (C. & A. Bushell).

Lothian Aberlady Bay, juvenile, 22 October to 2 November, photo (M. Griffin et al.).

North-east Scotland Ythan Estuary, juvenile, 20 October to 18 November (C. Gibbins *et al.*). Orkney Greentoft, Deerness, Mainland, adult, 8–11 September, photo (K.E. Hague *et al.*). Orkney Hilltoft, Holm, Mainland, adult, 25 September to 4 October, photo (K.E. Hague *et al.*).

Orkney Tofts, Sanday, juvenile, 8 October (D.M. Bryant).

Outer Hebrides Ceann Ear, Heiskeir (Monach Islands), first-summer, 14-17 July, photo (S.E. Duffield, J.B. Kemp, B. Rabbitts).

Outer Hebrides Àird a' Mhachair (Ardivachar), South Uist, adult, 8 September, photo (J.B. Kemp et al.).

Outer Hebrides Griminis (Griminish), Benbecula, juvenile, 11 October (S.E. Duffield).

Outer Hebrides Geirinis (West Gerinish), South Uist, juvenile, 17–26 October, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Geirinis (West Gerinish), South Uist, juvenile (second bird), 26 October, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Shetland Fleck, Mainland, juvenile, 4–5 October (R.M. Mellor et al.).

Shetland West Burra, juvenile, 10 October (R.A. Haywood).

Shetland Haroldswick, Unst, juvenile, 16 October, photo (R. Tallack, B.H. Thomason et al.).

Shetland Stenness, Mainland, juvenile, 31 October (M.S. Chapman, R.W. Tait).

Argyll Add Estuary, adult, 21 July, photo (J.M. Dickson).

Argyll Greenhill, Tiree, adult, 5–6 September, photo (K. Gillon).

Argyll Balevullin, Tiree, juvenile, 6–10 October, photo (W. Allan, J.M. Dickson).

Argyll Loch a' Phuill, Tiree, juvenile, 7 October, photo (W. Allan, J.M. Dickson).

Outer Hebrides Torlum, Benbecula, juvenile, 25–26 September, photo (S.E. Duffield et al.).

Outer Hebrides Baghasdal (North Boisdale), South Uist, juvenile, 29 September, photo (A. Hogg et al.).

Outer Hebrides Eòlaigearrialdh (Eoligarry), Barra, juvenile, 6–14 October (K. Gillon et al.).

Outer Hebrides Siadar (Shader) to Loch Ordais, Lewis, juvenile, 12-17 October, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, D.C. & J.A. Jardine, M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Loch Bì (Loch Bee), South Uist, juvenile, 17-20 October, photo (J.B. Kemp et al.).



Plate 97. American Golden Plover, adult, Cros (Cross) & Eòropaidh (Europie), Lewis, Outer Hebrides, 9-22 September 2006 © Tristan ap Rheinallt.

Shetland Dalsetter, Mainland, two juveniles, 24-27 September, photo (H.R. Harrop, R.M. Mellor et al.). Shetland Baltasound, Unst, juvenile, 29 September to 2 October, photo (D. Fairhurst et al.).

American Golden Plover is a scarce but annual visitor to Scotland from the Nearctic, seen mostly on islands during August, September and October. It was dropped from the list of species considered by BBRC in January 2006 (Fraser et al. 2007a), when the number of accepted Scottish birds stood at 83. Of these, 72 were seen in 2004 or earlier (adjusted from Forrester et al. 2007), and 11 in 2005 (Fraser et al. 2007a, 2007c).

Following a marked increase in records since the late 1980s, the period under review saw more American Golden Plovers than ever making landfall in Scotland. Indeed, the 49 individuals during the four years 2005-08 represent more than two-thirds of the previous all-time total. Although 2006, with nine birds, was not markedly different from some other recent years, 2007 and 2008 were both exceptional. Improved observer awareness has been invoked as an explanation of the long-term increase in Scottish records (Forrester et al. 2007), but is unlikely to account for the flurry of recent sightings. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the changing patterns of Atlantic weather systems, which are believed to have played a part in a general northward shift of vagrant Nearctic waders within Britain (Fraser et al. 2007a).

There also appears to have been a recent change in the geographical distribution of this species within Scotland. While the Northern Isles accounted for most records prior to 2005, they were overtaken during 2005-08 by the Outer Hebrides and nearby Tiree (Argyll). Between them, Orkney and Shetland mustered 18 birds during this period, while the Outer Hebrides and Tiree had 22. Mainland sightings are still relatively infrequent: Dumfries & Galloway, Clyde and mainland Argyll all recorded their first American Golden Plovers in the period covered by this report.

In accordance with the usual pattern of occurrence, American Golden Plovers during 2006-8 were seen mostly in autumn, with just two summer records. As usual, autumn adults tended to precede the more numerous juveniles. Indeed, in 2007 there was an almost perfect split in arrival dates between adult birds (to 5 October) and juveniles (from 4 October). Some birds labelled as juveniles in the table, especially those seen later in the autumn, would probably have moulted partially or wholly into first-winter plumage.

(Breeds at high latitudes in North America and northeast Siberia, migrating over the western Atlantic to winter in the south of South America.)

White-rumped Sandpiper Calidris fuscicollis 69: 43: 112

Table 15. Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2005-08.

2005 BBRC

27 birds: Argyll 1, Lothian 1, Orkney 10, Outer Hebrides 13, Shetland 2.

Fair Isle Various locations, juvenile, 7–10 October, photo (N. Green, P.A. Harris et al.).

Lothian Tyninghame, adult, 6–9 October (A. Brown, B. Doe, M. Griffin).

Orkney Trolla Vatn, North Ronaldsay, adult, 31 July to 1 August (P.A. Brown, R.J. Simpson).

Orkney Loch Gretchen, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 14–22 October, photo (P.A. Brown *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Loch Phaibeil (Loch Paible), North Uist, juvenile, 15–18 November (B. Rabbitts *et al.*).

Shetland Pool of Virkie, Mainland, adult, 22–24 July, photo (P.V. Harvey et al.).

Shetland Pool of Virkie, Mainland, adult, 24 July (second bird), photo (H.R. Harrop et al.).

Fair Isle South Harbour, adult, 2 October, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, M.S. Scott et al.); also seen Shetland, 27 September to 1 October.

North-east Scotland Ythan Estuary, adult, 31 July (R. King, A.J. Whitehouse et al.).

Orkney Mill Sand, Tankerness, Mainland, adult, 14–20 August (K.E. Hague).

Shetland Pool of Virkie, Mainland, adult, 16 August, photo (R.M. Fray, P.V. Harvey et al.).

Shetland Norwick & Westing, Unst, adult, 27 September to 1 October, photo (M.G. Pennington, G. Woodburn et al.); also seen Fair Isle.

Shetland Quendale, Pool of Virkie & Fleck, Mainland, juvenile, 17-22 October, photo (R.M. Fray, J.J. Gilroy et al.).

Outer Hebrides Bagh a' Bhaile (Village Bay), St Kilda, adult, 12 October, photo (W.T.S. Miles et al.). Outer Hebrides Baile Gharbhaidh (Balgarva), South Uist, adult, 22-25 October, photo (S.E. Duffield et al.). Outer Hebrides Baile Gharbhaidh (Balgarva), South Uist, juvenile, 29 October to 2 November, photo (S.E. Duffield et al.).

Shetland Pool of Virkie, Mainland, adult, 25 October (R.M. Fray).



Plate 98. White-rumped Sandpiper, adult, Pool of Virkie, Mainland, Shetland, 16 August 2007 © Hugh Harrop.

Like American Golden Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper is a scarce but nowadays annual visitor to Scotland from North America. The Outer Hebrides, the Isles. North-east Northern Scotland and Lothian account for most of the 68 occurrences catalogued by Forrester et al. (2007). A late acceptance of a bird in the Outer Hebrides in September 2004 (Fraser et al. 2007c) brings the total recorded to the end of 2004 to 69 birds.

2005, the last year when records of this species were assessed by BBRC, saw an unprecedented autumn influx, with a total of 27 birds seen in Scotland, including up to seven on North Ronaldsay (Orkney) and up to four together at Loch Ordais, Lewis (Outer Hebrides) in mid-October (Fraser et al. 2007a, 2007c). The 16 accepted individuals during

2006-8 represent a return to more normal numbers, though the annual totals of 4-7 birds are still towards the higher end of the range by pre-2005 standards. Geographically, the tabulated records correspond very well to the pattern of earlier years, and the range of dates is likewise typical, although the traditional division between early-autumn adults and late-autumn juveniles appears to be eroding away to some extent as more and more adults are seen in October.

The adult on Fair Isle on 2 October 2007 was identified from photographs as being the same as the bird on Unst (Shetland), almost 150 km to the north, from 27 September to 1 October.

(Breeds in North America at high latitudes, migrating to winter in Brazil, Argentina and Chile.)

Buff-breasted Sandpiper Tryngites subruficollis 134: 49 (2005–06): 183

Table 16. Accepted records of Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Scotland, 2005-06, with late acceptances from 2004 not included in Forrester et al. (2007).

Argyll The Reef, Tiree, male, 17-19 June (J. Bowler). Shetland Funzie, Fetlar, juvenile, 1–3 October (P.V. Harvey, B.H. Thomason et al.).

Argyll Various locations, Tiree, up to three juveniles, 3–8 September, photo (J. Bowler, K. Gillon et al.). Highland Traigh Golf Course, Arisaig, Lochaber, juvenile, 8 September, photo (S. Macdonald). Lothian Tyninghame, juvenile, 25 August, photo (D. Allan, P. Burns et al.). Lothian Tyninghame, juvenile, 15 September, photo (D. Allan, P. Burns et al.). Orkney Tor Ness, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 23–26 August, photo (P.A. Brown et al.). Orkney Kirkhouse, South Ronaldsay, juvenile, 5 September (P. Higson et al.).

Orkney Linklet Bay, North Ronaldsay, two juveniles, 9 September (P.A. Brown et al.) Orkney Linklet Bay, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 22–23 September (A.E. Duncan et al.). Outer Hebrides Mullach Sgar, St Kilda, two, 23 August to 4 September (N. Mitchell et al.). Outer Hebrides Bornais (Bornish), South Uist, up to five juveniles, 31 August to 20 September (T. Charman, A. Outer Hebrides Steinis (Steinish), Lewis, juvenile, 1-7 September (T. ap Rheinallt, A. Robinson et al.). Outer Hebrides Borgh (Borve), Berneray, North Uist, three, 3–5 September, photo (B. Rabbitts).

Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, juvenile, 3 September, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, À. Robinson et al.). Outer Hebrides Loch Bì (Loch Bee), South Uist, juvenile, 4–15 September (A. Stevenson et al.). Outer Hebrides Butt of Lewis, Lewis, juvenile, 15 September, photo (T. ap Rheinallt).

Shetland Foula, 8 September (A.R. Mainwood).

Shetland Scatness, Mainland, 14–15 September, photo (J. Wilson et al.).

Shetland Fleck, Mainland, 27 September (P.M. Ellis).

Argyll Loch a' Phuill, Tiree, 29 August (K. Gillon et al.).

Argyll Seal Cottage, Oronsay, juvenile, 10 September (D.C. Jardine et al.).

Fair Isle Meoness to Vaasetter, juvenile, 19–21 September, photo (M. Telfer et al.).

Lothian Tyninghame & Aberlady, 4–6 May, photo (C.N. Davison, K. Gillon et al.).

Moray & Nairn Lossie Estuary, 27 June (A. Jensen).

Orkney Linklet Bay, North Ronaldsay, 23–26 September, photo (D. Kramer, E.R. Meek, J. Palmer).

Outer Hebrides Ormacleit (Ormiclate) & Loch Bhornais (Loch Bornish), South Uist, adult, 17–26 August, photo (S.E. Duffield et al.)

Outer Hebrides Rubha Aird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, juvenile, 31 August (M.S. Scott).

Outer Hebrides Loch Bi (Loch Bee), South Uist, up to five, 6-27 September, photo (J.B. Kemp et al.).

Outer Hebrides Mullach Sgar, St Kilda, two juveniles, 6 September (S. Money et al.).

Outer Hebrides Groigearraidh (Grogarry), South Uist, juvenile, 11 September, photo (S.E. Duffield).

Outer Hebrides Eachcamais (Eachkamish), Baleshare, North Uist, three, 15 September, photo (B. Rabbitts).

Outer Hebrides Stornoway, Lewis, juvenile, 24-28 September (T. ap Rheinallt et al.).

Shetland Funzie, Fetlar, 21 September (K. Luxford, B.H. Thomason).

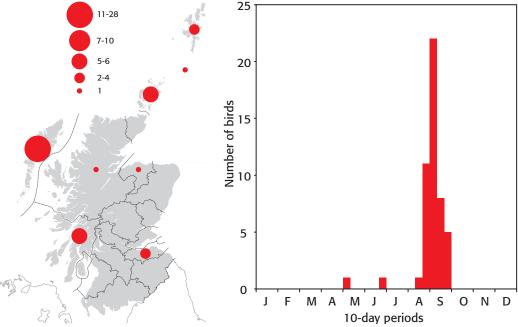


Figure 2. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Scotland, 2005-06.

30:2 (2010)



Plate 99. Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Tyninghame & Aberlady, Lothian, 4-6 May 2006 © Tristan Reid.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a scarce but annual visitor to Scotland, usually in autumn (Forrester *et al.* 2007). In terms of numbers recorded, it comes second only to Pectoral Sandpiper among Nearctic wader species. To the end of 2004, a total of 132 birds had been seen (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007, with the 1996 'At sea' record excluded as it is outside the *Scottish List* recording area). With the addition of two late acceptances from 2004 (Table 16), this total becomes 134.

Although numbers seen in Scotland vary widely from year to year, there has been an overall increase since the mid-1990s. The reasons for this are unclear, and there is some uncertainty about whether the breeding population is expanding or declining (Forrester *et al.* 2007). With a total of 28 birds, 2005 was a record year, although the possibility of repeat sightings of the same individuals, especially in the Outer Hebrides, cannot be ruled out. Fewer were seen in 2006, but the total of 21 still exceeded the next best year (2004, with 11) by a wide margin.

The Outer Hebrides have traditionally produced more sightings of this species than any other recording area in Scotland, and this continued to be the case during 2005–06, when they accounted for more than half the Scottish total (28 out of 49). In accordance with the usual pattern, sightings were largely confined to a short period between mid-August and late September. Only two birds were seen outside this period. One, in Lothian on 4–6 May 2006, was the earliest ever in spring by three days; it may have been a northbound migrant that had wintered on this side of the Atlantic. The other was at the Lossie Estuary (Moray & Nairn) on 27 June the same year, and was possibly a summering non-breeder. The same might apply to the June 2004 bird on Tiree (Argyll), which was seen to display (Bowler 2009).

Reflecting the steep increase in records, Buff-breasted Sandpiper was dropped from the list of species assessed by SBRC as from 1 January 2007.

(Breeds in the high Arctic of North America and eastern Siberia, wintering in South America.)

Ring-billed Gull Larus delawarensis 132: 29: 161

Table 17. Accepted records of Ring-billed Gull in Scotland, 2005–08, with a late acceptance from 2004 not included in Forrester et al. (2007).

2004

Outer Hebrides Siabost (Shawbost) to Barabhas (Barvas), Lewis, first-summer, 6 June to 11 July, photo (M.S. Scott *et al.*).

2005

Argyll Machir Bay, Islay, adult (returning), 29 March, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, A.J. Whitehouse); same, 8 November (M. Holt, T. Lowe).

Argyll Bowmore, Islay, first-winter/summer, 4-5 April, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, T.P. Drew et al.).

Argyll Oban, first-summer, 4 April to 10 May, photo (J.M. Dickson, B. Rabbitts *et al.*); same, 12 September to 5 March **2006**, photo (S. Gibson *et al.*).

Argyll Loch a' Phuill, Tiree, first-winter, 5 April (J. Bowler).

Highland Dingwall, Ross & Cromarty, adult (returning), 25 August to 18 October, photo (S. Cohen et al.).

Moray & Nairn Coltfield, first-summer, 27–28 April (D.M. Pullan, R. Proctor).

Orkney Point of Ness, Stromness, Mainland, adult (returning), 3 January to 7 February, photo; same, 18 November to 12 March 2006, photo (P. Higson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore) & Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), South Uist, first-winter/summer, 30 January to 29 July; same Àird a' Mhachair (Ardivachar), South Uist, 3–18 September, & Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), 9 November (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore), Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine) & Smeircleit (Smerclate), South Uist, second-winter, 30 January to 7 April (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Teanna Mhachair (Teanamachar), Baleshare, North Uist, second-winter, 6 February (A. Stevenson). Outer Hebrides Cnoc Gunna, Berneray, North Uist, first-winter, 6–7 March (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore) & Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), South Uist, adult, 27 March to 7 April (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Mòr (Howmore) & Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), South Uist, second-winter/summer, 5 April (A. Stevenson).

Outer Hebrides Bagh a Tuath (North Bay), South Uist, first-winter, 9 April (S.E. Duffield).

Outer Hebrides Tobha Beag, South Uist, second-winter, 10 November, photo (M. Benson, B. McMillan).

Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, adult, 16 September to 1 November, photo (J. Calladine, D. Thorogood, M.A. Wilkinson et al.).

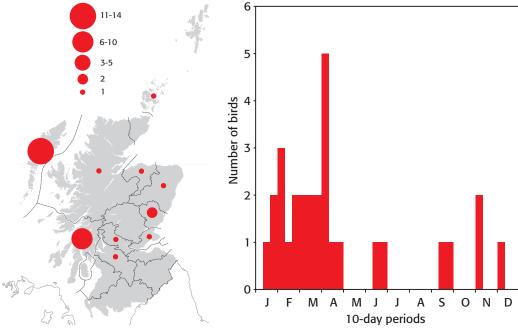


Figure 3. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of Ring-billed Gull in Scotland, 2005-08.

Angus & Dundee Lunan Water Mouth, adult, 3–6 November, photo (H. Bell et al.).

Argyll Oban, adult, 14 January to 2 May, photo (N. Milligan *et al.*). Argyll Sorobaidh Bay, Tiree, adult, 2–6 February, photo (J. Bowler *et al.*)

Argyll Bowmore, Islay, second-winter (returning), 22 February, photo (T.P. Drew, A. Hogg).

Argyll Oban, second-winter, 28 February to 5 March, photo (S. Gibson et al.).

Argyll Oban, third-winter/adult (returning), 16 November to April 2007, photo (J.M. Dickson, S. Gibson et al.); same as one of the two second-winters present in early March 2006.

Fife Thornton Pool, first-winter, 27 February (D.E. Dickson).

Highland Dingwall, Ross & Cromarty, adult (returning), 25 March to 11 April, photo; same, 4 October to 5 February 2007, photo (S. Cohen et al.).

Orkney Point of Ness, Stromness, Mainland, adult (returning), 27 November to 28 January 2007 (E.R. Meek et al.). Outer Hebrides Tolastadh bho Thuath (North Tolsta), Lewis, second-winter, 19 February, photo (T. ap Rheinallt). Outer Hebrides Siabost (Shawbost) to Arnol, Lewis, first-summer, 12–24 June, photo (C. Dunn, M.S. Scott et al.).

Outer Hebrides Mealabost Bhuirgh (Melbost Borve), Lewis, first-summer, 24 June, photo (M.S. Scott). Outer Hebrides Loch Ordais to Barabhas (Barvas), Lewis, second-winter, 22 September to 10 October, photo (T. ap Rheinallt et al.).

Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, adult (returning), 26 September to 23 December, photo (T.P. Drew et al.).

Argyll Oban, adult (returning), 23 August to 9 April 2008, photo (J.M. Dickson, S. Gibson et al.).

Highland Dingwall, Ross & Cromarty, adult (returning), 31 October to 16 November (S. Cohen et al.).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, first-summer, 16 March to 2 April, photo (G. Anderson, A.J. Whitehouse et al.). Orkney Point of Ness, Stromness, Mainland, adult (returning), 29 October to 30 December, photo (S.J. Williams et al.).

Outer Hebrides Loch Mòr Bharabhais (Loch Barvas), Lewis, first-winter/summer, 29-30 March, photo (S. Cole, T. McKinney et al.).

Outer Hebrides Balranald, North Uist, adult, 19 April, photo (B. Rabbitts).

Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, adult (returning), 28 October to 17 February 2008, photo (D. Thorogood et al.).

Angus & Dundee Dundee, adult, 2 December to 25 February 2009, photo (R. McCurley et al.).

Argyll Oban, adult (returning), 16 August to 18 December, photo (W. Allan, S. Gibson *et al.*). Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult, 9 February to 31 March, photo (K. Hoey *et al.*).

Highland Little Loch Broom, Ross & Cromarty, adult, 18 March (J. Bell).

Highland Dingwall, Ross & Cromarty, adult (returning), 17 November to December, photo (S. Cohen et al.).

Orkney Lighthouse, North Ronaldsay, adult, 9 March (R.J. Simpson).

Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, adult (returning), 14 August to 10 February 2009, photo (R. Shand et al.).

Ring-billed Gull is a scarce visitor to Scotland, with most observations along the west side of the country on islands. The majority of birds are seen from January to April in flocks of migrating Common Gulls Larus canus.

First observed in Scotland in 1976, the species has occurred with increasing regularity over the years. To the end of 2004, a total of 131 birds had been seen (Forrester et al. 2007); with the addition of a late acceptance from 2004 (Table 17), this total becomes 132. During the 1980s an average of 3.6 per annum were noted, increasing to 5.4 in the 1990s (Forrester et al. 2007). This trend continued with up to 13

new arrivals during 2005, but this was followed by a decline, with nine during 2006, and just three during 2007 and four during 2008. These totals do not include returning birds.

The geographical pattern of incidence follows that seen before 2005 with most birds being noted in coastal areas, particularly on west coast islands in Argyll and the Outer Hebrides, consistent with this species being of Nearctic origin. Many were seen during February to April, apparently moving north with Common Gulls. Such spring occurrences are thought to involve birds that, after arriving in Europe in previous seasons, subsequently move up and down the eastern Atlantic seaboard. Some autumn birds, however, particularly sub-adults, are probably newly arrived individuals displaced across the Atlantic after westerly gales.



Plate 100. Ring-billed Gull, Strathclyde Country Park, Clyde, February to 31 March 2008 © Jim Woods.

In a few cases birds have returned to the same sites for consecutive winter periods, or during migration. One well-known individual wintered at Point of Ness, Stromness, Mainland (Orkney), and was last observed in December 2007, its 21st winter; it was initially seen as a first-winter in January 1988, making it over 22 years old when last seen (Gray 1993, Dillon 2002). Other birds have returned to the same sites at Dingwall, Ross & Cromarty (Highland), at Machir Bay, Islay and on the Oban waterfront (both Argyll), and at Kinneil Lagoon (Upper Forth).

More unusual records include adults seen inland in Clyde at Strathclyde Country Park in February and March 2008 (returning in March 2009), and on the waterfront in Dundee (Angus & Dundee) from December 2008 to February 2009. Also, a first-winter at Thornton Pool in February 2006 was the first to be recorded in Fife (Dickson 2007). Most observations involve single birds, but two second-winters were present together at Oban during February and March 2006.

(Breeds widely in North America, wintering along the south-eastern seaboard, south to Central America and the Caribbean.)

Caspian Gull Larus cachinnans 0: 3: 3

Table 18. Accepted records of Caspian Gull in Scotland, 2005-08.

2006

Lothian Belhaven Bay & Dunbar Harbour, first-winter, 28 December to 13 February 2007, photo (C.N. Davison et al.).

2007

Lothian Tyninghame, first-winter, 14 October, photo (K. Gillon et al.).

2008

Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, first-winter, 9–14 February, photo (K. Hoey, C.J. McInerny).

First observed in Scotland in 2006 in Lothian (Davison 2009), Caspian Gull has been identified on just two more occasions, with all three sightings from the southern mainland in late autumn and winter.

Recent changes in the taxonomy of the large white-headed gulls have resulted in this taxon being elevated to full specific status (Sangster *et al.* 2007). This change, along with a heightened interest in gull identification amongst ornithologists, has resulted in a tiny number of individuals, all first-winters, being found in Scotland. This fits with observations elsewhere in England and Continental Europe. A proportion of the population, consisting mostly of immatures, leaves the breeding sites in eastern Europe to migrate north and west to the Atlantic and Baltic areas in late summer and early autumn, with smaller numbers remaining to winter in these areas (Olsen & Larsson 2003). Now that identification features for this species are becoming better known (Gibbins *et al.* 2010, McInerny 2010), it is likely that more will be seen in Scotland in the future.

(Breeds at inland lakes in eastern Europe and the Middle East, wintering mostly in the eastern Mediterranean, but with smaller numbers reaching western maritime Europe.)

Part 2 of this report, covering terns to passerines, will appear in the September issue.

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Revised ms accepted April 2010