

Numbers and breeding success of Golden Plover and Dunlin in an area frequented by Ravens

dried out and cracked peat pools, Dunlin and Golden Plovers may postpone or abandon breeding without laying eggs (Rae & Watson 1998). Failed breeding of both species would be impossible to quantify under such circumstances. However, 2010 was not such a year, with late snow and a wet spring providing good breeding conditions, with no recorded nest failures and many broods of chicks being reared. Sim *et al.* (2005) suggested an improved method of monitoring upland breeding waders was required prior to future surveys.

Amar *et al.* (2010) suggested that some areas could be acting as 'sinks' by drawing in waders from other areas where waders bred successfully. However, this presumes low breeding success in North-east Scotland, which our fieldwork does not support. Both the present study and that by Amar *et al.* (2010) do not support the view that Ravens have a detrimental effect on breeding Dunlin and Golden Plover populations in North-east Scotland. Consequently, any application for a license to kill Ravens to protect the nests of waders remains unjustified and should be rejected.

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Scottish Birds

Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2009

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This is the second annual report of the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC). The first report covered the period 2005 to 2008 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a, b), but this and future reports will cover single years.

The main ornithological events of 2009 documented in this report include the 4th Scottish record of Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* and the 7th record of Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*. An Alpine Swift *Apus melba* in the Outer Hebrides was Scotland's first since 2003, and a Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicephalus* on Fair Isle the first since 2004. More notable than any of these, perhaps, was Scotland's first breeding record of Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*, albeit in a mixed pair with a Common Gull *Larus canus*. Also, 2009 saw the first confirmed Black-tailed Godwit of the nominate subspecies *Limosa limosa limosa* in Scotland. More Great White Egrets *Ardea alba* were recorded in Scotland in 2009 than in any previous year, and there were at least 18 White-billed Divers *Gavia adamsii*, excluding presumed returning birds.

On the other hand, 2009 was unexceptional for large shearwaters, and while American Golden Plovers *Pluvialis dominica* continued to be reported in numbers, there was only a single record of White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*. Species recorded during 2005–08 but not in 2009 included Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*, Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*.

Not unusually, the Northern Isles (Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland) enjoyed a monopoly or near-monopoly of several of the passerine species covered by this report. Thus the only records of Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* and Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* in 2009 came from these islands. However, all three records of Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* were on the east coast of mainland Scotland, while there were as many records of Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* in the rest of Scotland as there were in the Northern Isles.

Format of the report

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*. Nomenclature and taxonomic sequence follow the *Scottish List* (Forrester 2011). Several English names have changed since the last report, as has the sequence of passerines.

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 adjustments in some cases, and also including records added in this report. In some cases, older records, 'At sea' records, or records pertaining to the breeding population are explicitly excluded from the totals, following the example of Forrester *et al.* (2007). In the case of Marsh Warbler

Acrocephalus palustris and Ortolan Bunting, numbers seen in the past were so great that totals have not been estimated. Similarly, no totals are available for Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*.

- Total number of birds in Scotland during the period since 2004, but excluding the current year. Where appropriate, acceptances by BBRC and by local committees are included. Returning birds or repeat sightings of the same individual, insofar as these can be judged, are not counted.
- Total number in the current year (2009).

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted Scottish records for 2009, with details. For species assessed locally in the Northern Isles, full details of accepted Northern Isles records are not given. Instead, they are summarised as a separate table or in the text.

For all taxa, information is also provided about pre-2009 records that were not included in the last report. These are presented in reverse chronological order. Records assessed by SBRC are listed in full, otherwise only summary information is provided. For White-billed Diver and Cattle Egret, which were assessed by BBRC to the end of 2008, this summary information covers the period since the end of 2004, thus fully updating information in Forrester *et al.* (2007). The same applies to Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*, which was omitted from the last report.

It should be noted that records of individual birds reappearing at the same location in subsequent years are sometimes accepted locally without formal submission to SBRC; full details of these returning birds are nonetheless provided. Revised details are also provided for some pre-2009 records published in the last report.

For each record listed in full, the following information is provided. For additional details, see ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a).

- Year (unless this is 2009).
- Recording area.
- Location(s). In the case of some recording areas, individual islands or component administrative areas are also named.
- Number of birds if more than one, with age and/or sex if known.
- 'Returning' if applicable.
- Date(s). Note that the use of a date range does not necessarily imply that a bird was present throughout; in some cases it may have been observed only on the first and last dates given.
- '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. However, if no submission was made by these observers, the submitter of the record is also credited. All other observers are covered by the use of 'et al.'
- Details and location of specimen if preserved in a museum, with specimen number if available.
- Additional sightings of the same bird, 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 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. As in the 2005–08 report, certain species totals are said to be adjusted from Forrester *et al.* (2007). These adjustments have been occasioned for the most part by small discrepancies between the published totals in the species texts of Forrester *et al.* (2007) and the database of records used to compile the graphs and tables in the same publication.

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

In terms of species coverage, the main difference between this report and the last one is that it includes records for two species previously assessed by BBRC: White-billed Diver and Cattle Egret. For both these species, SBRC assumed responsibility for the assessment of records in Scotland as from 1 January 2009. The same applies to Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*, but in this case no records were accepted by either BBRC or SBRC during the period 2004–09. Given the known presence of a small breeding population in Scotland, this represents an anomaly. To compensate for this anomaly in a pragmatic manner, it has been decided that in future SBRC will not ask to see submissions from recording areas in the immediate vicinity of the core breeding range, except at the local recorder's discretion. At the same time, it is believed that assessment of the status of Parrot Crossbill in the broader Scottish context demands a parallel assessment of the status of Scottish Crossbill. With this in mind, SBRC has defined a geographical area within which it would like to assess all claims of the latter species. Full details are given in the species accounts.

No species were removed from the SBRC list at the end of 2008, although local committees in the Northern Isles took over the assessment of records of Red-throated Pipit as from 1 January 2009. However, 2009 was the last year for which SBRC assessed records of American Golden Plover and Ring-billed Gull, which will in future be assessed locally. The same applies to Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* in the Outer Hebrides (see Appendix 2).

Rare subspecies of several species on the SBRC list are still assessed by BBRC. The most numerous examples are Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* and Arctic Redpoll. For both of these, the accounts in this report summarise accepted BBRC records in order to give as complete a picture as possible of the species' occurrence in Scotland.

The most significant omission from the report is Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*. The review of all Scottish records of this species is nearing completion and the results will be made available shortly on the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (SOC) website (www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc.htm). A full account will then appear in the next report.

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 taxa on the SBRC list. Appendix 3 consists of corrections to the last report.

At the request of local recorders, SBRC also assessed individual records of species not on the SBRC list during 2009. 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 SOC Council. Its role is to assess records of species that are rare in Scotland but not rare enough in Britain to be assessed by BBRC. Current members are Alan Brown (chairman), Tristan ap Rheinallt, John Bowler, Mark Chapman, Alan Lauder, Hywel Maggs and John Sweeney, with Bob McGowan as non-voting museum consultant. In addition, Chris McInerny served on the committee prior to taking over the position of non-voting secretary from Angus Hogg in November 2009. The *Scottish List* subcommittee consists of Dave Clugston, Ron Forrester, Angus Hogg, Bob McGowan, Chris McInerny and Roger Riddington. For more information about SBRC, see ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a) and www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc.htm.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we are grateful to all observers who submitted 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, co-recorders and report compilers for their assistance in compiling, checking and correcting records for this report: Paul Baxter, Mark Chapman, Paul Collin, Jon Cook, Jim Dickson, Angus Hogg, Hugh Insley, Chris Pendlebury, Mike Pennington, Brian Rabbitts, Deryk Shaw, Malcolm Ware, Jim Williams and Val Wilson. We are particularly grateful for the cooperation of the three Northern Isles recorders in helping to compile summaries for species assessed locally within their areas.

We thank Ian Andrews for making available the database of records of scarce and rare species used during the preparation of Forrester *et al.* (2007), and also for creating the graphics. David Jardine and Ron Summers provided valuable information and comments on crossbills, while Gwion ap Rheinallt helped with data checking.

We would like to express our special thanks to Angus Hogg, former SBRC secretary, who, although he did not participate directly in the production of this report, managed the assessment process for most of the featured records.

Systematic list of accepted records

Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* 15: 4: 1

Table 1. Accepted records of Ferruginous Duck in Scotland, 2009.

Fife Loch Gelly, adult male (returning), 26 July to 2 September, photo (J.S. Nadin *et al.*).

Ferruginous Duck continues to be a very rare visitor to Scotland. Initial sightings of the few accepted individuals are scattered through the year, leading to a poorly defined pattern of occurrence.

The Fife individual arrived during the late-summer moult period and may have been the same as that seen at Loch Gelly in July and August 2006. However, with a three-year gap separating the two sightings, it is probably best to treat them as involving different birds.

(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.)



Plate 95. Ferruginous Duck, adult male, Loch Gelly, Fife, 26 July to 2 September. © John Nadin

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* 196: 91: 18

Table 2. Accepted records of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2009, with a summary of earlier records since 2005.

Argyll Laggan Bay, Mull, 1 March (A. Carroll, C. Stevenson).

Highland Loch Ewe, Ross & Cromarty, two, 11 April (T.P. Drew, M.A. Wilkinson), increasing to five on 12 April (A. & C. Carroll).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 12 May (M. Lewis).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, adult, 6 April (R.J. Butcher *et al.*).

Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, adult, 15 April, photo (R.J. Butcher *et al.*).

Orkney Hunda Sound, adult, 5 October, photo (G. Cannon).

Outer Hebrides Port Nis (Port of Ness) to Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta), Lewis, at least seven, 12–26 April, photo (B.A.E. Marr *et al.*).

Shetland Kirkabister, Mainland, adult (returning), 1 January to 18 April, since 29 October 2008 (Hudson *et al.* 2009).

Shetland Bluemull Sound, adult (returning), 15 February to 25 April, photo (B.H. Thomason); presumed same as one of two Bluemull Sound birds below.

Shetland Mousa Sound, adult, 26 April (M. Heubeck, R.M. Mellor, H. Moncrieff).

Shetland Bluemull Sound, adult (returning), 16 November (B.H. Thomason).

Shetland Bluemull Sound, adult (returning), 11 December (B.H. Thomason).

2008 BBRC

28 birds: Caithness 1, Highland 5, Moray & Nairn 1, North-east Scotland 1, Orkney 7, Outer Hebrides 8, Shetland 5.

2007 BBRC

22 birds: Borders 1, Orkney 2, North-east Scotland 1, Outer Hebrides 6, Shetland 12.

2006 BBRC

16 birds: Highland 1, North-east Scotland 1, Orkney 3, Outer Hebrides 6, Shetland 4, Sea area Irish Sea 1.

2005 BBRC

25 birds: Argyll 1, Highland 2, Moray & Nairn 1, Orkney 1, Outer Hebrides 15, Shetland 5.

White-billed Diver is a rare but annual visitor to Scotland, seen in small numbers each year, with most records off the north-west coast and in Shetland. Some preferred localities are used each year in spring, and there is growing evidence that birds use these sites as regular stop-overs between their wintering and summering areas (Scott & Shaw 2008).

Records were assessed for the first time by SBRC in 2009, following a decision by BBRC to remove the species from the list of British rarities as from the end of 2008 (Rowlands 2009). This reflects an increase in the number of birds seen annually in Great Britain. In Scotland at least, this increase is probably a result of better observer coverage in key areas, leading to an improved understanding of the pattern of occurrence (Scott & Shaw 2008). The total number of individuals seen in Scotland was 196 to the end of 2004 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007), increasing by more than half to 305 by the end of 2009.

The 2009 records come from typical localities, with some involving long-staying or presumed returning individuals. A count of seven would have raised eyebrows in the past but is now perhaps to be expected, especially coming from the Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta) 'hot-spot' on Lewis (Outer Hebrides). Because some returnees may not have been identified as such, the true number of birds could be less than the totals suggest. On the other hand, it is thought that some records of apparent long-staying individuals in Shetland during spring may involve more than one bird (M.S. Chapman, pers. comm.).

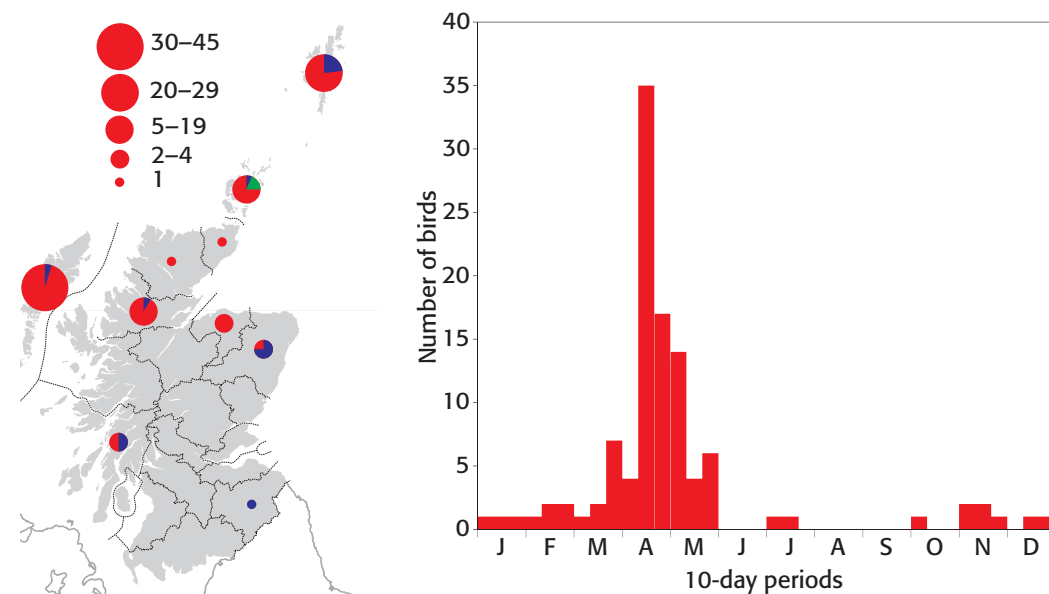


Figure 1. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2005–09. Red = March–June, blue = November–February, green = July–October.

Highland, the Outer Hebrides and the Northern Isles accounted for 98 of the 109 records during the period 2005–09. There was a very pronounced spring peak, with maximum numbers in April. This peak was if anything even more marked on the west side of the country, suggesting a difference in migration routes between spring and autumn as proposed by Hudson *et al.* (2009).

White-billed Diver is globally rare and was recently upgraded to ‘near threatened’ on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list (IUCN 2010) following a decline in numbers, particularly in Russia. Even small numbers of birds around Scotland may therefore be of some conservation significance.

(Breeds in parts of Arctic Russia, Alaska and Arctic Canada; winters on the Pacific coasts of Russia and Canada as well as along the coast of Norway.)

Cory’s Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* c. 228: 20: 2

Table 3. Accepted records of Cory’s Shearwater in Scotland, 2009.

- Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 14 September (P.J. Donnelly).
- Orkney Marwick Head, Birsay, Mainland, 29 October (K. Fairclough).

Cory’s Shearwater is recorded near-annually in Scottish waters, with most birds seen off North Ronaldsay (Orkney) and the Outer Hebrides. The 2009 total of only two birds is low given the increase in sightings since the mid-1990s, but their location further underlines Orkney’s status as a favoured area for observations of this species.

(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 are assumed to be Cory’s and no confirmed Scopoli’s yet recorded in Scottish waters.)

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* c. 522 (1950–2004): 9,208: 6 (excluding ‘at sea’ records)

Table 4. Accepted records of Great Shearwater in Scotland, 2009.

- Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 31 August (P.A. Brown).
- Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, two, 17 September (P.A. Brown, R.J. Butcher).
- Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 18 September (P.A. Brown).
- Orkney Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 30 September (P.A. Brown, R.J. Butcher).
- Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 9 September (T. ap Rheinallt).
- Sea area Fair Isle c. 20 km east of Fetlar, seven, 27 August, photo (E. Mouat per D. Coutts).

Great Shearwater was a rare bird in Scotland through most of its recorded history up to 2004, but its perceived status had to be revised following the large number of sightings during 2005–07. It is almost exclusively an autumn visitor, with most sightings from islands.

Although 2009 would have been regarded as a significant year by earlier standards, it does not compare with 2006 or 2007. It remains to be seen whether it now represents a normal showing for the species.

The distribution of 2009 records emphasises the importance of North Ronaldsay’s Dennis Head as a key Scottish site for this species. As with similar records in 2007 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a), the seven birds in Sea area Fair Isle are omitted from the totals above, although they do form part of the Shetland county totals.

The bird on Lewis was the only one accepted in the Outer Hebrides in 2009. Nonetheless, based on the large numbers seen in this recording area in other recent years, records of Great Shearwater in the Outer Hebrides from 1 January 2010 are to be assessed locally rather than by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

(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 the west coast of Ireland.)

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* 2: 8: 8

Table 5. Accepted records of Continental Cormorant in Scotland, 2009.

- Lothian Musselburgh, adult, 7 June, photo (K. Gillon, C. Scott *et al.*).
- Lothian Musselburgh, two adults, 1 August, photo (K. Gillon *et al.*).
- North-east Scotland Stonehaven, adult, 27 March, photo (M.A. Maher).
- Shetland Lochs of Hillwell & Spiggie, Mainland, at least four adults, 20 April to 11 June, photo (R. Riddington *et al.*).

Continental Cormorant is a rare visitor to Scotland, with most records along the east coast or in Shetland between December and June. However, reliable identification criteria for this subspecies, based mainly on the gular pouch angle and related features, have only been established relatively recently (Newson *et al.* 2004, 2005), and it is likely to have been under-recorded in the past. There are only two accepted Scottish sightings prior to 2004: one in Moray & Nairn in 1998–99 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a), and one in Borders in 2002 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

The 2009 records reported here bring the total number of birds accepted in Scotland to 18. Regular sightings through the spring at the Lochs of Hillwell & Spiggie (Shetland) resulted in an estimate of a minimum of four individuals, but more may have been involved (Riddington 2010).

With identification now on a much sounder footing, it is likely that a pattern of occurrence will start to emerge from the rather broad range of dates seen so far. The August 2009 birds are of particular interest in falling outwith the date range of previous records. Now that it is understood



Plate 96–97. Continental Cormorant (bottom) and Atlantic Cormorant (top), adults, Musselburgh, Lothian, 7 June. Purple lines indicate the gular pouch angles of each bird, which are different in the two subspecies and represent a crucial identification feature. © Keith Gillon

that reliable identification does not hinge on the presence of white head plumes, seen only in spring, perhaps we shall see more autumn records in future.

Rare subspecies with more than 20 Scottish records are not normally assessed by SBRC. In the case of Continental Cormorant this threshold seems likely to be exceeded soon. Should this happen by the time the 2010 SBRC report is published, then Continental Cormorant will be removed from the SBRC list as of 1 January 2013.

(*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. *P. c. carbo* breeds in north-west Europe including Iceland, Norway and the British Isles.)

Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* 46: 6: 0

Table 6. Revised record of Night-heron in Scotland, 2008.

2008

Fair Isle Various locations, two adults (including one male), 5–13 April, both died (M.J. Breaks, S.J. Davies *et al.*); partial skeletons, head and wing preserved, NMS.Z 2009.148.1–3; note revised dates and observers' names (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a, see also Breaks 2009).

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 3: 3: 1

Table 7. Accepted records of Cattle Egret in Scotland, 2009, with a summary of earlier records since 2005.

Argyll Ballimartin, Islay, 23 October to 6 November, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 187 (M. Anderson, E. MacArthur *et al.*).

2007 BBRC

3 birds: Caithness 1, Dumfries & Galloway 1, Outer Hebrides 1.

Cattle Egret is a very rare bird in Scotland, with just three records of single birds to the end of 2004 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). This total was doubled in 2007, when one on the Outer Hebrides in August was followed by others in Caithness in September and Dumfries & Galloway in December. Although it is possible that the same individual was responsible for all these occurrences, many birds were at large farther south in Britain during the same period.

The 2009 Islay (Argyll) individual constitutes the 7th for Scotland, and the first since SBRC took over the assessment of Scottish records from BBRC on 1 January 2009. The species has rapidly expanded its range within Europe, along with other egrets and herons, and it bred in England for the first time in 2008 (Hudson *et al.* 2009). The steep increase in the frequency of records in southern Britain and Ireland may result in more Scottish sightings in coming years.

(Occurs commonly in sub-tropical and temperate areas throughout the world, the European population being centred on the Mediterranean, extending north to central and western France, with increasing numbers of records farther north. Generally a short-distance migrant.)

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* 37: 13: 13

Table 8. Accepted records of Great White Egret in Scotland, 2009.

Angus & Dundee Monikie & Forfar Lochs, 14 December (A. Brennan, T. Castleton, B. McCurley).

Clyde Larkhall & Baron's Haugh, 7 February, photo (J. McKechnie per I. English, M. Molloy).

Clyde Gilmourton Ponds, Strathaven, 24 February to 8 March, photo (A. Boyd, M. Taylor, K. Thomson *et al.*).

Clyde Knapps Loch, Kilmacollm, 16–17 May, photo (E. & J.A. Cumming, E. Williams *et al.*).

Fife Kilconquhar Loch, 6–12 December, photo (M. Ramage *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 30 April to 3 May, photo (D. Goulder, D. Parnaby *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 28–30 June (D. Parnaby *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Durris Bridge, Banchory, 5 November (S. Willis).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 11–17 November, photo (R. MacLean, D. Funnell, D. Parnaby *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Inchgarth Reservoir, Cults, 21 December (I. Broadbent).

Orkney Graemeshall Loch, Mainland, 5–18 July, photo (K.E. Hague *et al.*).

Shetland Brow Marsh, Mainland, 29 April to 2 May, photo (M.S. Chapman *et al.*).

Shetland Tirsá Water & Sandwater, Mainland, 4–8 August, photo (G. Carle, M.S. Chapman *et al.*).

Great White Egret is a rare but increasingly frequent visitor to Scotland, with sightings in most areas and most months. It is likely that some duplication of records occurs, as these large white birds move around between sites, are highly visible, and are relatively easy to observe. Such duplication could well have occurred in North-east Scotland, for example, in 2009.

With this reservation, the 13 accepted individuals in 2009 represent a record number for Scotland and make up more than 20% of the total to date. While impressive, this figure is perhaps not surprising given the rapid range expansion of this and other egret species across Europe.

Sightings of Great White Egrets in Scotland are thought to result from a combination of overshooting in spring, dispersal in autumn, and over-wintering. The dates of the 2009 records cover the full spectrum of possibilities.

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

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* 19: 3: 1

Table 9. Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2009.

Shetland Sandwick, Channerwick, Bigton & Fladdabister, Mainland, adult, 27 April to 5 May, photo (J.G. Brown, G.A. Tyler *et al.*).

Black Kite is a 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 and a single case of hybridisation with Red Kite *Milvus milvus*.



Plate 98. Black Kite, adult, Sandwick, Channerwick, Bigton & Fladdabister, Mainland, Shetland, 27 April to 5 May. © Jim Nicolson

The Black Kite seen in Shetland over an eight-day period in spring 2009 was the third for the recording area. There have only been two other April birds in Scotland: one on 7 April 1995 in Lothian, and one on 18 April 2001 in North-east Scotland.

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

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* 45: 0: 1 (excluding young from known Scottish nests)

Table 10. Accepted records of Montagu's Harrier in Scotland, 2009.

North-east Scotland Forvie NNR, female, 16–17 May (P. Bloor, I.J. Kelman *et al.*).

Montagu's Harrier is an extremely rare migrant to Scotland, mostly occurring in spring in North-east Scotland, Angus & Dundee and Perth & Kinross. There have been a few successful breeding attempts, though none more recently than 1955 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The total of 45 birds to the end of 2004 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007) excludes fledged young from these breeding attempts.

Since 2000, Montagu's Harrier has occurred five times in Scotland and all but one of the birds have appeared in the latter half of May, a pattern reflecting the timing of peak spring passage. The 2009 record was the third from North-east Scotland in the decade and followed five blank years for the species in Scotland.

(Breeds from North Africa, Iberia, England, and Sweden across continental Europe and central Asia to Yenisei River; winters in African savannas and on the Indian subcontinent.)

Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* c. 325 (1968–2004): 17: 4

Table 11. Accepted records of Rough-legged Buzzard in Scotland, 2009.

Highland Gordonbush Estate, Sutherland, 27 April (D. Douglas).
 North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 19 May (D. Parnaby).
 North-east Scotland Blackdog, 7 November, photo (N.A. Littlewood).
 Orkney Lyde Road, Harray, Mainland, 3 May (R.E. Matson, E.J. & S.J. Williams *et al.*).

Rough-legged Buzzard is a scarce passage migrant in Scotland, occurring mostly on the eastern side of the country and in the Northern Isles, with numbers generally higher in autumn than in spring. In addition, a few birds overwinter. Some 342 individuals were seen between 1968 and 2008 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007 and ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

The four records for 2009 conform to the established geographical distribution. The three spring records spanned a three-week period, with just a single occurrence in autumn.

Although claims of Rough-legged Buzzard generally have one of the highest rejection rates among species assessed by SBRC (Forrester *et al.* 2007, ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a), no records were rejected during 2009.

(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. *B. l. sanctijohannis* from North America is a potential vagrant to Scotland.)

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* 81: 8: 0

Table 12. Revised record of Red-footed Falcon in Scotland, 2008.

2008

Shetland Bixter, Mainland, first-summer female, 2–3 June, photo (M. Henry *et al.*); note revised dates (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

Red-footed Falcon is mainly a rare late-spring migrant to Scotland with no more than one or two accepted individuals in most years. Most sightings come from Shetland and Orkney. There were none in 2009, but BBRC has recently accepted a record from Strathy, Sutherland on 6 June 2003 (Hudson *et al.* 2010), bringing the total in Scotland for that year to three. The all-time total of birds seen in Scotland therefore increases from 88 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a) to 89.

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

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedícnemus* 30: 0: 1

Table 13. Accepted records of Stone-curlew in Scotland, 2009.

Fair Isle Meoness & Kirk, 24 May, photo (D. Riley, D.N. Shaw *et al.*).

Stone-curlew is a very rare visitor to Scotland with just 30 accepted records to the end of 2004 (adjusted from Forrester *et al.* 2007, with a sighting in Dumfries & Galloway in July 2004 removed in the absence of supporting evidence). The Northern Isles account for 14 of these 30 records, with the remainder scattered across the country. There is a pronounced peak in occurrence in late May and early June (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

The 2009 Fair Isle individual was the first to be accepted in Scotland since 2004. The date and location of the sighting corresponded well to the established pattern.

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Plate 99. Stone-curlew, Meoness & Kirk, Fair Isle, 24 May. © Deryk Shaw

(Nominate *oedicnemus* breeds in open habitats in southern Europe east to the Caucasus, extending as far north as England and Poland; migrates south to winter in Spain and North Africa. Five other subspecies.)

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* 15: 2: 0

Table 14. Additional record of Kentish Plover in Scotland, 2008.

2008
Lothian Aberlady Bay, male, 1–2 June, photo (M. Griffin *et al.*).

Kentish Plover is a very rare migrant in Scotland, first recorded only in 1949. Most records come from the east coast of the mainland and nearly all have been in spring.

Following the overwintering bird in the Outer Hebrides in 2007–08, the 2008 individual in Lothian was more typical in terms of date and location. Of the 15 Scottish spring records to date, six have been in April, seven in May and two in June. More birds (6) have been seen in Lothian than in any other recording area.

(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: 16

Table 15. Accepted records of American Golden Plover in Scotland, 2009, with a revised record for 2008.

- Argyll Barrapol & Sandaig, Tiree, adult, 14 September to 14 October, photo (J.M. Bowler *et al.*).
- Argyll Sandaig, Tiree, adult, 1–14 October, photo (R. Ahmed *et al.*).
- Argyll Loch a' Phuill, Tiree, adult, 1–2 October, photo (J.M. Bowler *et al.*).
- Fife Guardbridge, juvenile, 11–18 October (A.R. Armstrong *et al.*).
- Orkney Grindigar, Deerness, Mainland, adult, 21–30 September, photo (T. Dean, K.E. Hague *et al.*).
- Orkney Bride's Ness & Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, adult, 24–25 September, photo (R.J. Butcher *et al.*).
- Orkney Various locations, Deerness, Mainland, adult, 24 September to 13 October, photo (J. Branscombe, K.E. Hague *et al.*).
- Orkney Grindigar & Watermoss, Deerness, Mainland, juvenile, 30 September to 23 October, photo (K.E. Hague *et al.*).
- Orkney Watermoss & Waterfield, Deerness, Mainland, juvenile, 20–29 October, photo (K.E. Hague *et al.*).
- Outer Hebrides Loch Bi (Loch Bee), South Uist, adult, 4–17 September, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).
- Outer Hebrides Eòropaidh (Eoropie), Lewis, adult, 20–22 September, photo (M.A. Maher, T.J. & S. Sykes *et al.*).
- Outer Hebrides Borgh (Borve), Berneray, North Uist, adult, 4 October (D.M. Bryant).
- Outer Hebrides Baleshare, North Uist, adult, 10–15 October, photo (B. Rabbitts *et al.*).
- Shetland Stennes, Eshaness, Mainland, adult, 20 September, photo (M.S. Chapman, R.W. Tait *et al.*).
- Shetland Skaw, Unst, adult, 27–28 September (G. Armit, L. Nixon *et al.*).
- Shetland Boddam, Mainland, juvenile, 9–17 October, photo (M.S. Chapman, D. Fairhurst *et al.*).

2008
Shetland Baltasound, Unst, juvenile, 29 September to 18 December, photo (D. Fairhurst *et al.*); note revised dates (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

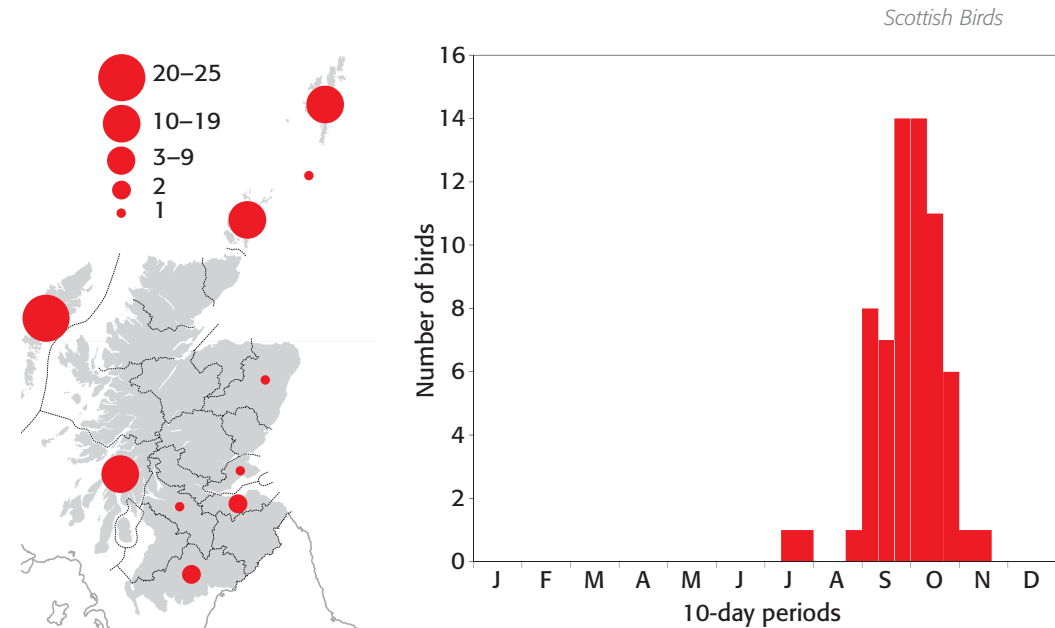


Figure 2. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of American Golden Plover in Scotland, 2005–09.

American Golden Plover is a rare but annual visitor to Scotland from the Nearctic, seen mostly on islands during August to October.

The high numbers recorded in Scotland over the previous five years were maintained in 2009. All occurrences were in September and October, and adults (12) tended to arrive earlier than juveniles (4). The single mainland record (Fife) was only the second for the recording area, and the other records were almost evenly split between the Northern Isles (8) and the Outer Hebrides and Tiree (Argyll) (7).

As from 1 January 2010, records of American Golden Plover in Scotland are to be assessed locally rather than by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

(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: 1

Table 16. Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2009, with a revised record for 2007.

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 1–9 October (D. Funnell *et al.*).

2007
North-east Scotland Ythan Estuary, adult, 29–31 July (A.J. Whitehouse *et al.*); note revised dates and observers' names (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

White-rumped Sandpiper is a rare but nowadays annual visitor to Scotland from North America, with nearly all records in autumn.

There was only a single occurrence in 2009, a bird observed in early October at Loch of Strathbeg (North-east Scotland). This compares with an annual average of more than ten birds during the previous four years.

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

Continental Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa limosa* 0: 0: 1

Table 17. Accepted records of Continental Black-tailed Godwit in Scotland, 2009.

Argyll Loch an Eilein & Heylipol, Tiree, first-summer, 6–7 May, photo (J.M. Bowler).

The vast majority of Black-tailed Godwits that breed in Scotland or occur on passage are considered to belong to the subspecies *islandica*. There has been little evidence in the past to support the conjecture that birds of the nominate subspecies might also occur (Forrester *et al.* 2007), although a pair that probably bred in Dumfries & Galloway in 2005 was thought most likely to belong to this subspecies (Holling *et al.* 2008).

In May 2009, routine scanning of a small flock of Black-tailed Godwits on Tiree (Argyll) yielded an unexpected bonus for the observer when the leg-flag of one bird indicated that it had been ringed as a chick a year earlier in the Netherlands (Bowler 2010). Ringing data and plumage and structural characters, in conjunction with the absence of breeding records of *islandica* in the Netherlands, led to acceptance of this claim as the first proven occurrence of nominate *limosa* in Scotland.

(*L. l. limosa* breeds from western and central Europe to Asia and Russia, east to the Yenisei River, and winters in the Mediterranean, sub-Saharan Africa and India. *L. l. islandica* breeds in Iceland, the Lofoten Islands, the Faroe Islands and Scotland, wintering in the British Isles, France and Iberia.)

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* 132: 29: 1

Table 18. Accepted records of Ring-billed Gull in Scotland, 2009.

Angus & Dundee Dundee, adult, 2 December 2008 to 25 February, photo *Scottish Birds* 29: 282 (R. McCurley *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a).

Argyll Oban, adult (returning), 16 August 2008 to 1 April, photo (W. Allan, S. Gibson *et al.*), note revised dates (cf. ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a); same, 12 October to 8 December (W. Allan *et al.*).

Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 1–10 March, photo (D. Abraham, D. Stewart *et al.*).

Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, adult (returning), 14 August 2008 to 10 February, photo (R. Shand *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a); same, 5 September to 25 October (D. Thorogood *et al.*).

Undisclosed site Adult, 13–17 June, attempted breeding with Common Gull, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 31 (P.J. Barden *et al.*).

Ring-billed Gull is a rare visitor to Scotland, with most observations on islands along the west side of the country. Birds are typically seen from January to April in flocks of migrating Common Gulls. A few individuals have returned to the same locations over a number of years.

The most striking occurrence in 2009 was an instance of attempted breeding, the first to be recorded for this species in the UK. It involved a bird paired with a Common Gull, but although an occupied nest was observed, it appears that the breeding attempt was unsuccessful (Barden 2010).

Considering the large number of sightings of this species during 2005–08, it is surprising that only four other individuals were observed in 2009. Two of these were birds that had arrived in 2008 and stayed to winter, and the other two were returning birds from previous years. Thus it appears that there were no new arrivals of passage migrants in Scotland during 2009.

As with American Golden Plover, 2009 was the last year that records of Ring-billed Gull were assessed by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

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

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* 0: 3: 1

Table 19. Accepted records of Caspian Gull in Scotland, 2009.

North-east Scotland Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, first-winter, 10 January (C. Gibbins *et al.*).

Caspian Gull is extremely rare in Scotland, observed on just three occasions up to the end of 2008. All three occurrences involved first-winter birds in late autumn or winter. Following this pattern, another first-winter bird was found in mid-winter during 2009, on this occasion in North-east Scotland. It was the first for the recording area.

(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.)

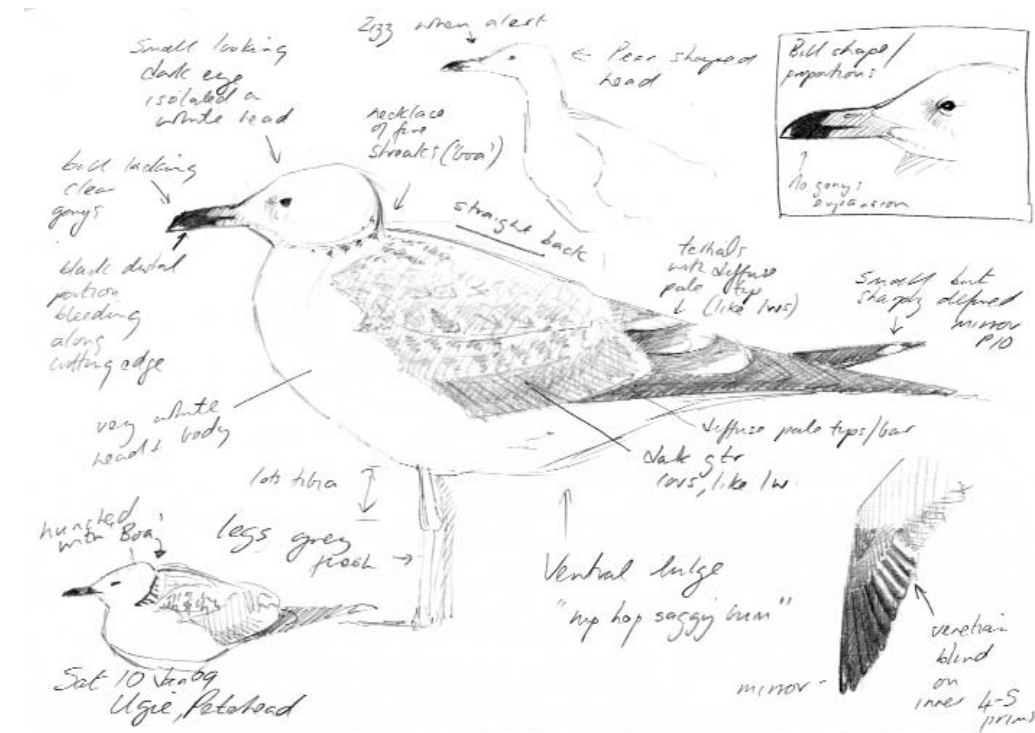


Plate 100. Caspian Gull, first-winter, Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, North-east Scotland, 10 January. © Chris Gibbins

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* 59: 8: 2

Table 20. Accepted records of White-winged Black Tern in Scotland, 2009.

Fife Guardbridge, adult, 18 May, photo (A.R. Armstrong *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, first-winter, 29 August to 2 September (D. Parnaby *et al.*).

White-winged Black Tern is a rare visitor to Scotland, mostly observed along the east side of the country between late spring and late autumn. Both records in 2009 fit well with this established pattern of occurrence.

(Breeds on marshy lakes in central and eastern Palearctic areas, migrating south to winter in Australasia, the Indian subcontinent and Africa.)

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* 34: 0: 1

Table 21. Accepted records of Alpine Swift in Scotland, 2009.

Outer Hebrides Barabhas (Barvas), Lewis, 30 May (M.S. Scott).

Alpine Swift is a very rare visitor to Scotland, with most records between mid-April and late July. Spring occurrences are thought to involve overshoots from breeding grounds on the Continent, while those in summer presumably relate to wandering non-breeders. Autumn records are fewer. The Northern Isles account for almost a third of records, with most of the remainder coming from other islands or the mainland coast (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

Until 2005, records of Alpine Swift in Scotland were considered by BBRC, but the species was removed from the BBRC list in January 2006 (Fraser *et al.* 2007a), with SBRC then taking over. There were no accepted records in the period 2005–08, and the bird on Lewis (Outer Hebrides) in 2009 was the first for Scotland since 2003.

(Ten subspecies. Breeds in southern Europe from Iberia to the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Africa, with northern populations moving south to winter.)

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* 86: 7: 1

Table 22. Accepted records of Woodchat Shrike in Scotland, 2009.

Shetland Skaw, Unst, juvenile, 18 September, photo (M. Kerby *et al.*).

Woodchat Shrike is a rare, almost annual, passage migrant to Scotland. Most birds are seen in the Northern Isles, where autumn juveniles predominate. Thus the sole 2009 record was typical of the general pattern.

(Nominate *senator* breeds from north-west Africa, Iberia, France and Belgium south to Turkey; *L. s. badius* on Mediterranean islands; and *L. s. niloticus* from Turkey to Iran. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa.)

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* 286: 28: 5

Table 23. Accepted records of Short-toed Lark in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 23a.

Angus & Dundee Seaton Cliffs, Arbroath, 2–17 January, photo (R. Bramhall *et al.*).



Plate 101. Short-toed Lark, Seaton Cliffs, Arbroath, Angus & Dundee, 2–17 January. © John Anderson

Short-toed Lark is found annually in Scotland in very small numbers, mostly in spring and autumn, with almost all observations in the Northern Isles. It is very rare elsewhere, particularly on the mainland.

In 2009, the only sighting away from the Northern Isles involved a bird in Angus & Dundee in January. This was the first winter record for

Scotland. In the Northern Isles, where records are judged locally, one was found on Fair Isle, two in Shetland, and one on North Ronaldsay (Orkney). All these birds were seen during the autumn migration period, between 2 October and 4 November.

Table 23a. Summary of accepted records of Short-toed Lark in the Northern Isles, 2009.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	-	1	-	14–16 October
Orkney	-	1	-	19 Oct–4 Nov
Shetland	-	2	-	2 Oct–1 Nov

(Eight or nine subspecies. Breeds widely in dry, sandy areas from southern and eastern Europe to the Middle East and western China, with populations migrating to winter in India, the Middle East and Africa.)

Woodlark *Lullula arborea* 68 (1950–2004): 6: 5

Table 24. Accepted records of Woodlark in Scotland, 2009.

Fair Isle Neder Taft & Quoy, up to three, 23 October to 2 November, photo (S.J. Davies, D.N. Shaw *et al.*).
Orkney Westness & Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, 31 October to 7 November, photo (R.J. Butcher *et al.*).
Shetland Brough, Whalsay, 23–24 October, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 190 (J. Atkinson *et al.*).

Although there has been a slight increase in sightings in recent years, Woodlark remains a rare bird in Scotland, found almost exclusively in the Northern Isles in late autumn and early winter. All three records in 2009 conformed to this pattern, but the Fair Isle one is unusual in that it involved three birds seen and photographed together. This is the largest group observed in Scotland since 1950, though small parties occurred on Fair Isle in the early part of the 20th century.

(Two subspecies breed from the Middle East across to Morocco, extending north as far as Finland, Norway and England north to Yorkshire, where the population is increasing. Most populations move south to wintering areas, with more northerly populations moving the farthest.)

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* 40: 12: 7

Table 25. Accepted records of Red-rumped Swallow in Scotland, 2009.

Borders Eyemouth, juvenile, 18–24 November, photo (J. Ellison *et al.*).
Fair Isle Hesti Geo, Shalstane & Hesswalls, 20 April to 3 May, photo (A. Seward *et al.*).
Fife Kilmany, 28–30 April, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 95 (A. Cage *et al.*).
Fife Kilconquhar Loch, 18 May (C.J. McInerney *et al.*).
Fife Kilminning, 28 October, photo (W. McBay, J.S. Nadin *et al.*).
Highland Balblair, Sutherland, 8 November, photo (M. Finn *et al.*).
Lothian Aberlady Village & Gosford Estate, 3–5 November, photo (I.J. Andrews, J. Harrison, P. Johnson *et al.*).

Red-rumped Swallow is seen annually in Scotland in very small numbers from April through to November along the east coast and on islands.

The three sightings in Fife in 2009 were the first for the recording area. Plumage features suggested that the two spring birds were likely to be different individuals. The bird in Highland was also the first for the recording area, while the sighting in Borders in November was the latest ever in Scotland.

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(Eleven or 12 subspecies. Breeds widely from southern and eastern Europe eastwards across the Palearctic region, and in sub-Saharan Africa. Northern populations are migratory, wintering in Africa and southern Asia. In recent years its range has expanded into more northern and western areas.)

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* 158: 16: 4

Table 26. Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in the text.

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 4 September (D. Funnell, D. Parnaby, H. Regan).

Greenish Warbler is a rare but annual migrant to Scotland, having become increasingly regular in autumn over the past few decades. It is generally seen in August and September, with more than 80% of sightings in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally.

The single record away from the Northern Isles in 2009 was at a typical east-coast location on a typical date. In addition, there were three birds on Fair Isle during a two-week period in early autumn, between 17 August and 3 September.

(*P. t. viridanus* breeds from the Baltic east through Russia to the Yenisei and south to Afghanistan, and winters in the Indian subcontinent and south-east Asia. There are a very few records of *P. t. plumbeitarsus* (eastern Siberia) in England.)

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* 46: 4: 3

Table 27. Accepted records of Radde's Warbler in Scotland, 2009.

Angus & Dundee Easthaven, 22 October (R. Bramhall *et al.*).

Fife Fife Ness Muir, 23 October, photo (D.E. Dickson *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 23 October (N. Picozzi, R.A. Schofield, B.H. Thomason *et al.*).

Radde's Warbler is a very rare autumn visitor to Scotland, with the majority of occurrences in the Northern Isles and the remainder along the east coast.

Unusually, all sightings during 2009 were on the mainland. The dates of these three birds, all of which were found within a two-day period, are late but by no means unprecedented. Short stays are typical of this species.

(Breeds from southern Siberia east to Sakhalin and North Korea; migrates to winter in southern China and south-east Asia.)

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* 60: 8: 1

Dusky Warbler is a rare but more or less annual visitor to Scotland, with the autumn migration period accounting for all records but one. Like Radde's Warbler, it occurs mainly in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. Nearly all other sightings have been on the east coast.

The only Scottish record in 2009 came from Shetland, where one was photographed at Sandwick, Whalsay, on 5 November. Several previous occurrences have been in early November, the latest date being the 15th.

(Breeds from western Siberia to China, wintering from the Himalayas to south China; two subspecies, with European vagrants belonging to nominate *fuscatus*.)

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Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* 194: 25: 5

Table 28. Accepted records of Subalpine Warbler in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 28a.

North-east Scotland Forvie NNR, female, 18 May, photo (C. Reid, D. Short *et al.*).

Subalpine Warbler occurs annually in Scotland as a rare migrant, mainly in spring. The overwhelming majority of birds are seen in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. BBRC assesses claims of subspecies other than nominate *S. c. cantillans*.

The female at Forvie NNR in May 2009 was the first to be seen on the Scottish mainland since 2005, and the fifth for North-east Scotland. All four birds in the Northern Isles were also in spring, and all were males. The Fair Isle individual and two of those from Shetland were accepted as belonging to the nominate subspecies, while the subspecific identity of the remainder was undetermined.

Table 28a. Accepted records of Subalpine Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2009.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	1	-	21 May	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	3	-	22 Apr–31 May	-

In addition to these birds, claims from Shetland of both *S. c. albistriata* and *S. c. moltonii* (Pennington 2010) have been submitted to BBRC.

(*S. c. cantillans* breeds from Iberia to Italy; *S. c. albistriata* from the Balkans to Turkey; *S. c. moltonii* in the Balearics, Corsica, Sardinia and northern Italy. Migrates to winter in the sub-Saharan Sahel.)

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* many: c. 145: 35

Table 29. Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 29a.

Angus & Dundee Springfield Park, Arbroath, male in song, 1 June, photo (R. Bramwell).

Marsh Warbler is a scarce annual migrant to Scotland with most occurrences involving singing males in late spring; very rarely, birds remain to breed. The Northern Isles account for the overwhelming majority of records.

Only a single individual was seen away from the Northern Isles in 2009, the location and date being typical. This compares with at least 34 in Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland, where records are assessed locally. As usual, autumn records in these islands were relatively few. They extended from late August into October, while spring birds were confined to the last few days of May and the month of June. Unlike 2005 and 2008, there were no reports of breeding.

Table 29a. Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2009.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	10+	1	31 May–30 Jun	1 September
Orkney	5	-	29 May–23 Jun	-
Shetland	13	5	24 May–28 Jun	28 Aug–11 Oct

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Also, there are additional records from Shetland in 2007 (one bird in June) and 2008 (one in August) (*Shetland Bird Report 2009*), while records of three other birds in 2008 (two in August, one in September) (*Shetland Bird Report 2008*) have now been accepted. This increases the total number of Scottish records in the period 2005–08 from c. 140 to c. 145.

(Breeds in Britain, France, Denmark and Fennoscandia east through Europe to Russia; winters in sub-Equatorial Africa.)

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* 139: 5: 2

Nightingale is a very rare, but almost annual, passage migrant to Scotland. Spring records predominate, and Fair Isle and Shetland account for the vast majority of sightings.

In 2009, as in many other years, none were seen away from the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. One at Toab, Mainland (Shetland) on 28–29 April was followed by another on Fair Isle on 21–23 May.

(Nominate *megarhynchos* breeds from Morocco and western Europe through North Africa and southern and central Europe to the Ukraine and Turkey; *L. m. golzii* from the Aral Sea to Mongolia. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa.)

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* 142: 9: 1

Table 30. Additional record of Red-throated Pipit in Scotland, 2008.

2008

Outer Hebrides Pabbay, Barra Isles, 24 May (A. Stevenson).

Red-throated Pipit is a rare spring and autumn migrant in Scotland, found almost exclusively on islands, with most sightings on Fair Isle and Shetland.

The only Scottish individual in 2009 was seen on 18 May on Fair Isle, where records of this species are now judged locally. The date coincides closely with that of the additional 2008 record reported here. Mid- to late May is the peak period for this species and is indicative of spring overshoots.

(Breeds widely in northern boreal Palearctic regions, migrating to winter in Africa and south-east Asia.)

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* 86: 13: 9

Table 31. Accepted records of Water Pipit in Scotland, 2009, with an additional record for 2008.

Ayrshire Bracken Bay, 8–9 November (A. Hogg *et al.*).

Ayrshire Seamill, 30 December to 21 March 2010, photo (A. Hogg, J. McManus *et al.*).

Ayrshire Girvan, 31 December to 8 January 2010, photo (A. Hogg *et al.*).

Clyde Crom Mhin Marsh, Endrick Mouth NNR, 1 December 2008 to 25 March, one of two present on former date, photo (I. Fulton, C.J. McInerney, J.J. Sweeney *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010b).

Dumfries & Galloway Rigg Bay, 22 January (P.N. Collin).

Fife Coble Shore, Eden Estuary, 29 March (M. Ware *et al.*).

Lothian Scoughall, 28 November, photo (K. Gillon, C. Scott).

Lothian Bams Ness, two, 6 December, with one remaining to 31 January 2010, photo (A. Brown, A. Hogg *et al.*).

Lothian Skateraw, 20 December, photo (N. Milligan).

2008

Lothian Musselburgh, 18 March, photo (B.D. Kerr, M. Thrower).

Scottish Birds



Plate 102. Water Pipit, Seamill, Ayrshire, 30 December 2009 to 21 March 2010. © Angus Hogg

Water Pipit is a rare winter visitor to Scotland, often found on beaches among seaweed. Its seasonal distribution features a late-autumn arrival and a secondary peak in spring. Most sightings to the end of 2008 were in Ayrshire and Lothian.

With nine new birds, 2009 becomes the second best year for this species in Scotland. The spatial and temporal pattern of sightings is very much in line with the established norm, with only two birds outwith Ayrshire and Lothian, and none during April to October. The Rigg Bay individual was the first to be accepted for Dumfries & Galloway.

(Nominate *spinoletta* breeds from highlands of Iberia to the Balkans and Turkey, dispersing widely in Europe in non-breeding season; two other Asian subspecies.)

Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni* 366: 21: 22

Arctic Redpoll is a rare though annual visitor to Scotland, most sightings prior to 2004 being referred to the subspecies *C. h. exilipes* (Coues's Redpoll), which tends to arrive in association with Mealy Redpolls (*C. f. flammea*). A major influx in winter 1995–96 was responsible for more than half of accepted Scottish records to date.

The subspecies *C. h. hornemanni* (Hornemann's Redpoll), which breeds in Greenland and parts of Arctic Canada, was in the past regarded as a very rare migrant, with no more than two Scottish records in any year prior to 2003. Of the 366 accepted Arctic Redpolls in Scotland to the end of 2004, 328 were referred to *exilipes* and the remainder regarded as probable or definite *hornemanni* (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

The perception of *hornemanni* as by far the rarer of the two subspecies in Great Britain was reflected in BBRC's decision to consider records of this subspecies alone as from 1 January 2006 (Fraser *et al.* 2007b). SBRC assumed responsibility for the assessment of Scottish claims of *exilipes* and of birds not assigned to any subspecies, other than in the Northern Isles where records were to be assessed locally.

During the current decade, the relative status of the two subspecies in Scotland appears to have undergone a marked reversal. In the period 2005–09 there were 38 accepted *hornemanni* (Fraser *et al.* 2007c, Hudson *et al.* 2010) but only three accepted *exilipes* (Fraser *et al.* 2007b, Hudson *et al.* 2009, *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report 2007*). In addition, two birds in Shetland were accepted as Arctic Redpolls of undetermined subspecies (*Shetland Bird Report 2007, 2008*).

The geographical distribution of sightings during 2005–09 corresponds to the pattern established for the species in previous years, with the Northern Isles accounting for 39 of the 43 records, and just one mainland bird, an *exilipes* in Lothian in 2005. Most of the accepted records of *hornemanni* were in autumn, mainly September and October, with a few in spring. None occurred during June to August, but the 2007 *exilipes* on Fair Isle was found in July, and one of the Shetland birds of undetermined subspecies in June.

Table 32. Accepted records of Arctic Redpoll in Scotland, 2005–09.

	<i>hornemanni</i>	<i>exilipes</i>	undetermined
2009	Orkney 3, Outer Hebrides 1, Shetland 18		
2008	Fair Isle 1, Outer Hebrides 2, Shetland 4		Shetland 1 (12–17 June)
2007	Shetland 5	Fair Isle 1 (19–22 July)	Shetland 1 (1–8 October)
2006	Fair Isle 1 (same as Shetland), Shetland 4		
2005		Fair Isle 1, Lothian 1	

Observers should be aware that very pale redpolls of the ‘North-western Redpoll’ complex *C. f. rostrata/islandica* may occur as autumn visitors in those areas where Hornemann’s Redpolls are also likely to be found. These are often labelled ‘*islandica*’ but their taxonomic status is not entirely clear. Both the British Ornithologists’ Union (BOU) and BBRC mention *C. f. rostrata* (from Greenland) and *C. f. islandica* (from Iceland) as subspecies that occur in Britain (BOU 2006, Kehoe 2006), but although the status of *rostrata* in Britain has a long-established pedigree, this is less so for *islandica*. The (Common) Redpoll account in the BOU’s 5th Checklist (BOU 1971) accepted subspecies *rostrata*, but also commented: ‘The Icelandic race *A[canthis]. f. islandica* (Hantzsch) has probably occurred in northern Britain and Ireland, but no examples have been certainly identified.’

Some years later the BOU Records Committee (BOURC) considered redpoll taxonomy and reaffirmed the status of the two species Common and Arctic Redpoll *inclusive of their respective subspecies* on the *British (and Irish) List*; shortly afterwards *islandica* appeared in the 6th Checklist (BOU 1991, 1992). As formal recognition of a subspecies on the *British List* is normally dependent on a voucher record of the taxon being acceptable to BOURC, it appears that *islandica* became established on the *British List* by default, and without the explicit determination of a voucher record. Partly as a result of the absence of such a voucher record, the lack of defined identification criteria for *islandica* is a major problem in recording its status; furthermore the validity of the subspecies has been questioned (Herremans 1990, Cramp & Perrins 1994).

Until the BOURC formally pronounces on the validity of *islandica* and determines a voucher record, the current usage of ‘North-western Redpoll’ is a pragmatic method of recording the occurrence of birds of the *rostrata/islandica* complex.

It should be noted that Scottish claims of *hornemanni* regarded as ‘not proven’ by BBRC could in principle still be acceptable as Arctic Redpolls. Observers who believe this might apply in their case are invited to consider resubmission, via the local recorder, to SBRC or to local record committees in the Northern Isles.

(Breeds on the Arctic tundra, with a circumpolar range divided between two subspecies: *C. h. hornemanni* on Ellesmere and Baffin Island (Canada) and in Greenland, and *C. h. exilipes* elsewhere. Winters to the south of the breeding range.)

Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica*

Recent work has shown Scottish Crossbill to be widely distributed in northern Scotland, with an estimated population of some 13,600 post-juvenile birds (Summers *et al.* 2004, Forrester *et al.* 2007, Summers & Buckland 2010). The species is not restricted to Caledonian pine forests as was once thought to be the case.

It is known that Scottish Crossbills occasionally stray some distance from the main range, for example to Fife and Stirlingshire (Dawson 2004, Summers *et al.* 2004). In order to gain a clearer idea of the species’ potential for such movements, and provide comparative data to support the assessment of the status of Parrot Crossbill (see below), SBRC would like to receive submissions for all claimed sightings within all recording areas except Angus & Dundee, Caithness, Highland (mainland), Moray & Nairn, North-east Scotland, and Perth & Kinross. Any such submissions will be assessed by the committee and, if accepted, published in future reports. At the local recorder’s discretion, SBRC would also be happy to assess records within the exempted areas above where they involve birds well away from established core sites.

Observers are reminded that while photographic evidence may go some way to identifying a crossbill, excitement calls are believed to constitute the only entirely reliable method for separating Scottish Crossbill from Parrot Crossbill (Summers *et al.* 2002, 2004). Submissions should therefore be accompanied by sound recordings and/or sonograms wherever possible. Should birds be feeding on cones, the tree species involved should be identified, as different crossbill species have different feeding preferences (Rae 2010). To assist observers with identification, audio recordings of excitement calls and sonograms of Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*, Scottish Crossbill and Parrot Crossbill are available on the SOC website (www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc.htm).

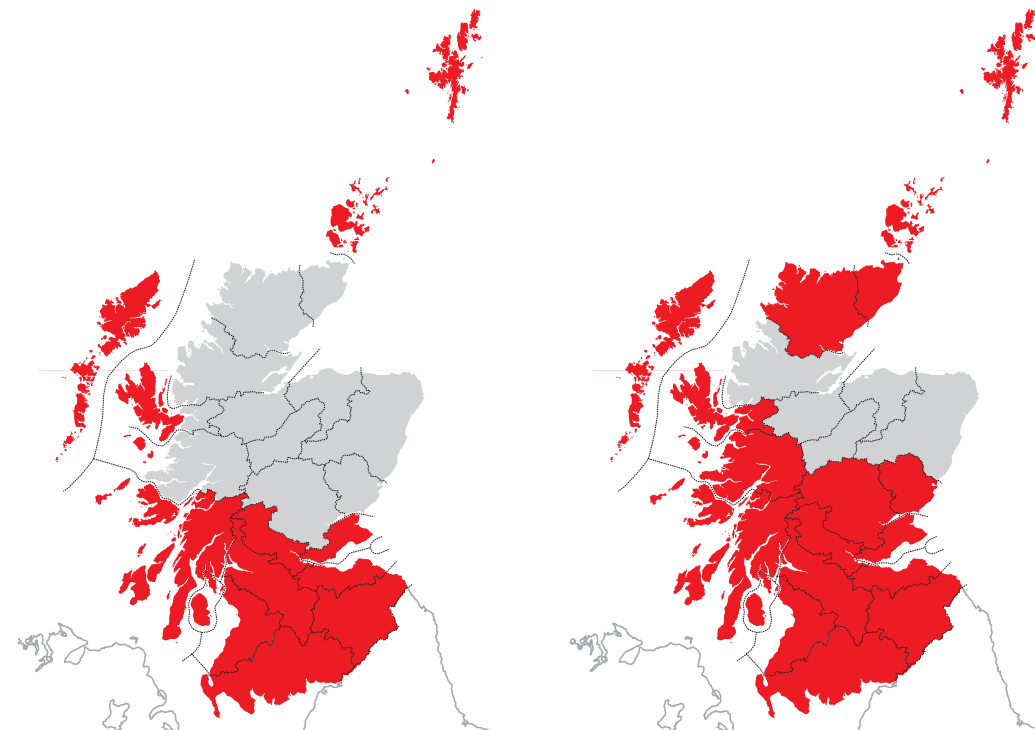


Figure 3. Geographical areas (marked in red) for which SBRC would like to receive submissions of all claimed sightings of Scottish Crossbill (left) and Parrot Crossbill (right).

(A resident endemic species that breeds in conifer forests in the Scottish Highlands.)

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus* 111: 0: 0 (migrants only)

Until the 1980s, Parrot Crossbill was regarded as a rare vagrant to Scotland, with influxes in 1962 and 1982 accounting for nearly all occurrences (Forrester *et al.* 2007). Following the first accepted Scottish breeding record in Abernethy Forest, Badenoch & Strathspey (Highland) in 1991, the existence of a small breeding population, restricted to old Scots Pine forests, became apparent. This population, currently estimated to total some 130 post-juvenile birds (Summers & Buckland 2010), is concentrated within a small area in Strathspey and in Deeside (North-east Scotland), although there are scattered breeding-season records across several adjacent recording areas (Forrester *et al.* 2007). It is not known how long the population has been in existence. Most of the 111 accepted records of presumed migrants, on the other hand, have been in the Northern Isles and Outer Hebrides (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

Prior to 2009, records of Parrot Crossbill in Great Britain were assessed by BBRC, although records relating to the Scottish breeding population did not feature in its annual reports (Rowlands 2009). Similarly, no records were submitted to SBRC in 2009, the first year in which it assumed responsibility for this species.

Since SBRC's concern is to monitor the status of the Parrot Crossbill as a vagrant rather than a localised breeder, it will aim in future to assess all submissions from all recording areas other than the following, centred on the core breeding range: North-east Scotland, Moray & Nairn, and parts of Highland (Badenoch & Strathspey, Inverness, and Ross & Cromarty districts). As with Scottish Crossbill, any such submissions will be formally circulated and published in future SBRC reports if accepted. Again, as with Scottish Crossbill, this does not preclude local recorders responsible for North-east Scotland, Moray & Nairn, and the Highland districts listed above from submitting records of birds that do not appear to belong to known breeding populations.

(Breeds in Scots Pine forests from Scandinavia across Finland and Russia to the Kola Peninsula and Pechora River, with a small, recently discovered population in Scotland. Makes only limited movements in most years, but occasionally involved in irruptions.)

Oortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* many: 18: 4

Table 33. Accepted records of Oortolan Bunting in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in the text.

Angus & Dundee Arbroath–Auchmithie coastal path, 17 October (V. Wilson *et al.*).
Argyll Craignure, Mull, female, 9–10 May, photo (A. Ingle, S. Price).

Oortolan Bunting is a rare and declining but still annual passage migrant in Scotland. In recent years the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally, have accounted for more than 90% of occurrences.

Unusually, sightings in 2009 were equally divided between the Northern Isles and the rest of Scotland. In total, there were two spring and two autumn birds. The female on Mull was the first for Argyll, while the autumn bird in Angus & Dundee was the first of the decade for the recording area. Interestingly, the last sighting in Angus & Dundee, on 22 September 1999, was also at Auchmithie.

In the Northern Isles, one was seen on North Ronaldsay (Orkney) on 26 May, and one at Virkie, Mainland (Shetland) on 19–20 October.

(Breeds patchily from Algeria and Iberia north to Norway and east through Europe to Asia; winters in sub-Saharan Africa.)



Plate 103. Oortolan Bunting, female, Craignure, Mull, Argyll, 9–10 May. © Sandra Price

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* 276: 24: 3

Rustic Bunting is a scarce, annual vagrant in Scotland with the majority of birds appearing in the Northern Isles. Numbers have declined in recent years.

In 2009, as in two of the four years 2005–08, there were no Scottish occurrences outwith the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. The dates of the spring individuals in Fair Isle and Shetland, and the single autumn bird in Fair Isle, were typical of the respective migration periods.

Table 34. Accepted records of Rustic Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2009.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	1	1	26 May	14–16 October
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	1	-	15–16 May	-

(Breeds from Fennoscandia to Siberia; winters mainly in Japan, Korea and China.)

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* 593: 61: 17

Table 35. Accepted records of Little Bunting in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 35a.

Fife Coaltown of Callange, Ceres, 1–9 January, photo (J. Dean *et al.*).

Little Bunting is a scarce though increasingly regular passage migrant in Scotland, with most occurrences in the Northern Isles. The great majority of birds are found in autumn, but there have also been a few sightings in winter and spring.

The sole record away from the Northern Isles in 2009 involved an individual seen over a period of several days in mid-winter. Of the ten previous Scottish winter records, all in the period 1977–2004, eight were on the mainland and some certainly involved overwintering birds (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

In the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally, the 16 individuals in 2009 were all within the peak autumn migration period in September and October. Since the end of 2004 only two birds have been seen in Scotland in spring.

Table 35a. Accepted records of Little Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2009.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	-	6	-	14 Sep–16 October
Orkney	-	3	-	26 Sep–30 October
Shetland	-	7	-	2–29 October

(Breeds from northern Fennoscandia to eastern Siberia; winters from north-east India and Nepal to south-east Asia.)

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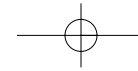
Appendix 1.

List of records regarded as not proven by SBRC.

- 2009:** White-billed Diver Little Loch Broom, Ross & Cromarty, Highland, 19 March. Little Loch Broom, Ross & Cromarty, Highland, 14 April. Cory's Shearwater Gott Bay, Tiree, Argyll, 28 July. Fife Ness, Fife, 5 September. Great Shearwater Tarbat Ness, Ross & Cromarty, Highland, 10 October. Great White Egret North Keanchulish, Ullapool, Ross & Cromarty, Highland, 5 July. Montagu's Harrier Hatton, Angus & Dundee, 18 May. Ring-billed Gull Port Ellen, Islay, Argyll, 18 March. Loch Beg, Mull, Argyll, 15 April. White-winged Black Tern Leith Docks, Lothian, 15 May. Tawny Pipit Breckan, Deerness, Mainland, Orkney, 13 September. Marsh Warbler Kilchiaran, Islay, Argyll, 27 May. Dusky Warbler Skateraw, Lothian, 15 October.
- 2008:** Cory's Shearwater Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 13 July. Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 10 August. Caspian Gull Barns Ness & Skateraw, Lothian, 20–24 January.
- 2007:** Great Shearwater Peterhead, North-east Scotland, 8 September. Newtonhill, North-east Scotland, two, 18 September. Water Pipit Barns Ness, Lothian, 26 November.
- 2005:** American Wigeon Loch of Strathbeg, North-east Scotland, 16 December to 12 February 2006.

Appendix 2.

Summary of assessment of records by the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) and other committees, 2009 (this report) and 2010–2012. All species and subspecies assessed by SBRC are included, but some of the former have additional rare subspecies assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and not shown here.



09 10 11 12	09 10 11 12
■ ■ ■ ■ Black Brant <i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ White-billed Diver <i>Gavia adamsii</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Great Shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Wilson's Petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans</i> (except <i>S. c. albistriata</i>)
■ ■ ■ ■ Continental Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Eastern Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans albistriata</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Great White Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis hornemanni</i> (except <i>C. h. hornemanni</i>)
■ ■ ■ ■ Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Hornemann's Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis hornemanni hornemanni</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ American Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis dominica</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Scottish Crossbill <i>Loxia scotica</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ White-rumped Sandpiper <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Parrot Crossbill <i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Continental Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Ring-billed Gull <i>Larus delawarensis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Rustic Bunting <i>Emberiza rustica</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ Caspian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i>	■ ■ ■ ■ Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ White-winged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>	
■ ■ ■ ■ Franz Josef Land Little Auk <i>Alle alle polaris</i>	
■ ■ ■ ■ Alpine Swift <i>Apus melba</i>	■ = BBRC
■ ■ ■ ■ Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos minor</i>	■ = SBRC
■ ■ ■ ■ Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>	■ = SBRC except Northern Isles (Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland)
■ ■ ■ ■ Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>	■ = SBRC except Outer Hebrides
■ ■ ■ ■ Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>	■ = SBRC outside core range (see text)
■ ■ ■ ■ Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis daurica</i>	□ = local assessment

Appendix 3.

Corrections to the 2005–08 report.

The following 2005 records accepted by BBRC were assigned to Shetland but should be under Fair Isle (number of birds shown): American Golden Plover 1, Red-rumped Swallow 1, Subalpine Warbler 1, Rustic Bunting 2.

The 'not proven' record of a Great Shearwater from the Ullapool–Stornoway ferry, Ross & Cromarty, Highland, on 28 August 2005 was in fact on 28 August 2006.

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Little Ringed Plovers in Fife

Oliver (2008) described the breeding status of Little Ringed Plovers *Charadrius dubius* in north Fife up to 2006. Several suitable sites still exist in the north-east of the region. This note summarises observations from 2007 to 2010.

In the BTO's national survey in 2007 only two pairs were located in the 20 sites monitored in Fife, neither of which was successful (Elkins 2008). Details of two additional pairs were not submitted to the survey organiser. Holling *et al.* (2010a, b) noted 22 confirmed or probable breeding pairs in Scotland in both 2007 and 2008; these included the results of the Fife survey. That source quoted seven pairs in Fife in 2008, later revised to nine, of which six pairs were thought to have been successful (M. Holling pers. comm.).

I currently monitor two sites in north-east Fife, one being on a working gravel pit and the other on a land reclamation site. Successful fledging has occurred in every year from 2005 to 2010 except 2007, when the one clutch found was predated. Single broods fledged in 2005, 2006 and 2008, with two broods in 2009 and 2010. The average number of chicks fledged per pair in the successful years was 2.7, with the best

season in 2010 seeing six fully grown chicks fledged by two pairs. The earliest hatching also took place in that year, with one pair fledging four young which were fully grown by 13 June and flying strongly on 24 June, suggesting a relatively early hatching date around 22 May. Fortunately, both sites are relatively undisturbed and one has sympathetic management.

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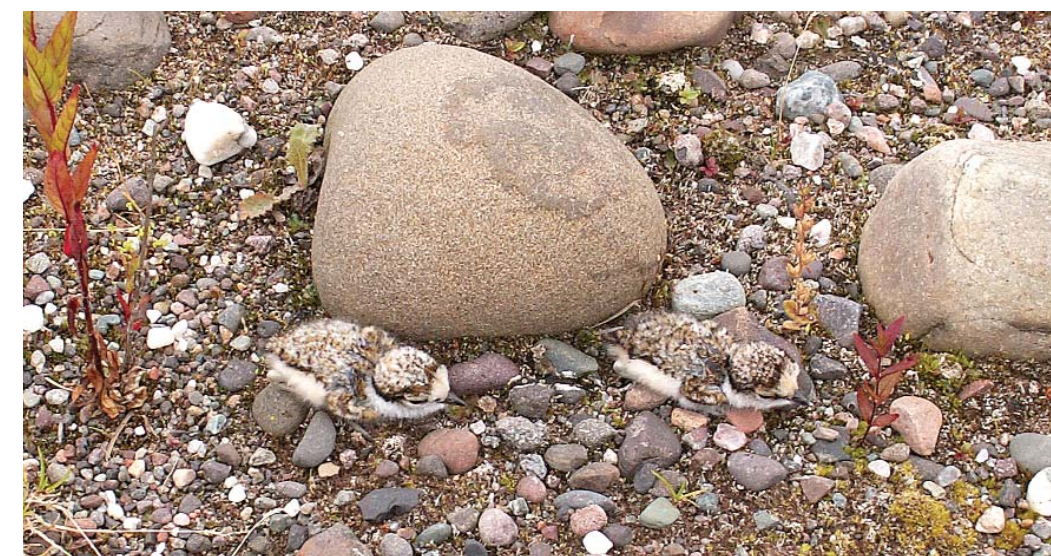


Plate 104. Newly hatched Little Ringed Plover chicks, Fife, July 2006. © Norman Elkins [taken with an appropriate licence]

