



Plate 85. Egyptian Goose, adult, Ocrabooy, Lerwick, Virkie & Exnaboe, Mainland, Shetland, 24 February to 25 March 2010. © Roger Riddington

Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2010

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on behalf of the Scottish Birds Records Committee

This is the third annual report of the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC). Previous reports have covered the period 2005–08 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a, b) and 2009 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011).

Details of one addition to the *Scottish List* and one deletion are provided in this report. The former relates to an Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* in Shetland in February and March 2010; it was thought most likely to originate from a feral population and the species is thus admitted to Category C. The latter concerns Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor*, which is removed from the list following SBRC's recent review of the only accepted record from 1970. Incidentally, we are aware of previous sightings of apparently 'wild' Egyptian Geese in Scotland, and would encourage the observers concerned to submit details of their sightings for formal assessment.

We also report on a recently accepted 19th-century record of White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*, which becomes Scotland's first. Other information that relates primarily to previous years includes the results of SBRC's review of Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*, hitherto available only online.

Turning to 2010, there were as in 2009 single records of Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* and Alpine Swift *Apus melba*, none of which featured in the 2005–08 report. In contrast, there were no accepted Scottish records in 2010 of either Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* or Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*. The last time this happened was in 1972. Other species reported in relatively small numbers by comparison with other recent years were White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* and Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*. No claims of Scottish Crossbill *Loxia scotica* or Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus* outside the core areas defined in last year's report were received for assessment.

Once again, the Northern Isles had a monopoly of several passerines. Indeed, discounting Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*, only ten individual birds of passerine species on the SBRC list were seen outwith the Northern Isles in 2010. Of these, six were on other islands, with a single observer based on the Isle of May accounting for four of them. The four on the mainland were all in North-east Scotland. One wonders how many others go undetected elsewhere on the mainland.

Returning to Water Pipit, the bird on Unst in November 2010 was Shetland's first, while the late acceptance of a bird seen at Vane Farm in 2009 results in the appearance of the Perth & Kinross recording area in the SBRC report for the first time.

Two species were removed from the SBRC list at the end of 2009: American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* and Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. Only the former features in this report, due to some late acceptances for the Outer Hebrides in 2008 and 2009.

Following the publication of this report, the number of accepted Scottish records of Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* now exceeds 20. As such, this form no longer qualifies for inclusion on the SBRC list as a rare subspecies. It will therefore be removed as from 1 January 2013.

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).

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 and Orlolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*, numbers seen in the past were so great that totals have not been estimated. Similarly, no totals are available for Scottish Crossbill.
- 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 (2010). In the case of species dropped by SBRC at the end of 2009, no total is given for 2010 when reporting late acceptances.

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted Scottish records for 2010, with details. For those 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-2010 records that were not included in previous reports. These are presented in reverse chronological order. Records assessed by SBRC are listed in full, otherwise only summary information is provided.

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-2010 records published previously.

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

- Year (unless this is 2010).
- 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 confirmed to be present throughout; in some cases it may have been observed only on the first and last dates given.
- 'Found dead' or 'died' if applicable.
- 'Trapped' 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. At the end of each account, a brief summary of global breeding and wintering distribution, with mention of relevant subspecies, is given in parentheses.

Species coverage

Species coverage is unchanged from the last report except that, as stated above, American Golden Plover and Ring-billed Gull were removed from the SBRC list as from 1 January 2010, while the local recorder in the Outer Hebrides took over the assessment of records of Great Shearwater as from the same date. Rare subspecies of several species on the SBRC list are still assessed by BBRC, the most important being Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* and Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*. For these, the accounts in the SBRC report summarise accepted BBRC records in order to give as complete a picture as possible of the species' occurrence in Scotland.

A list of records assessed by SBRC and considered to be 'not proven' can be found in Appendix 1. This includes records of Yellow-legged Gull previously accepted but judged not proven after review. Appendix 2 summarises the involvement of different committees in the assessment of the taxa on the SBRC list.

At the request of local recorders, SBRC also assessed individual records of species not on the SBRC list during 2010. 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 Lauder (chairman), Tristan ap Rheinallt, John Bowler, Mark Chapman, Hywel Maggs, John Nadin and John Sweeney, with Chris McInerny as non-voting secretary and Bob McGowan as non-voting museum consultant. John Nadin replaces Alan Brown, who was SBRC chairman during the period when the records reported here were assessed.

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 current and former recorders and report compilers for their assistance in compiling, checking and correcting records for this report: Paul Baxter, Mark Chapman, Jon Cook, Jim Dickson, Iain English, Hugh Insley, Scott Paterson, Chris Pendlebury, Brian Rabbitts, Deryk Shaw, Fraser Simpson, Malcolm Ware, Stephen Welch and Jim Williams. We are particularly grateful for the co-operation of the 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. Roger Riddington and Alan Lauder provided helpful comments on Cormorant records, while Gwion ap Rheinallt helped with data checking.

Systematic list of accepted records

Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiacus* 0: 0: 1

Table 1. Accepted records of Egyptian Goose in Scotland, 2010.

Shetland Ocracquoy, Lerwick, Virkie & Exnaboe, Mainland, adult, 24 February to 25 March, photo (G.W. Petrie, R. Riddington *et al.*).

The first record for Scotland.

This species will not have been uppermost in people's minds when contemplating the next addition to the *Scottish List* but, even so, the first acceptable record of this exotic-looking goose will come as no surprise. With significant naturalised populations in Western Europe, notably in England, Denmark and the Netherlands, a Scottish record has been a possibility for some time. Indeed, several Egyptian Geese have previously been seen in Scotland, though none has been formally submitted as being of 'wild' (albeit feral) origin until now. SBRC took the view that given the location and time of year (late winter and early spring being a time when the species can be on the move in England; see Riddington 2011), the Shetland bird was much more likely to have come from a feral population than to be an escape from captivity.

(Breeds throughout Africa south of 20°N latitude, extending farther north into southern Egypt, the only part of its natural range within the Western Palearctic. There are substantial naturalised populations in England (concentrated in Norfolk), the Netherlands and Denmark, with smaller numbers breeding in Belgium, France and Germany.)

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* 197: 110: 16

Table 2. Accepted records of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record for 1890.

Highland Melvaig, Ross & Cromarty, adult/second-winter, 16 March (K.D. Shaw).
North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, adult, 25 May (D. Parnaby).
Orkney Gurness, Evie, Mainland, 2-5 July (J. Picksley).
Outer Hebrides Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta) to Cuidhsiadar, Lewis, up to 8, 6-25 April (B.A.E. Marr, M.S. Scott *et al.*).
Outer Hebrides Labost, Lewis, 19 November (T. ap Rheinallt).
Shetland Mousa Sound, adult (returning), 24 April (M. Heubeck, R.M. Mellor).
Shetland Bluemull Sound, adult, 1 May (B.H. Thomason).
Shetland Off Lunna Holm, Mainland, adult, 1 May (B.H. Thomason).
Shetland Kirkabister, Mainland, adult, 2 May (M.S. Chapman *et al.*).
Shetland Lamba Ness, Unst, adult, 31 May (B.H. Thomason *et al.*).
Shetland Kirkabister, Mainland, adult (returning), 24 October to 15 November (R.A. Haywood *et al.*).

1890

Highland Sutherland, juvenile male, January 1890, specimen at National Museums Scotland, NMS.Z 1890.33 (per R.Y. McGowan).

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).

In the main, the 16 birds in 2010 are typical of the regional spread of recent years. Nearly all, however, were adults or near-adults detected on spring passage by observers specifically looking for this species in recently discovered 'hot-spots'. The spring passage through the Northern Isles, Outer Hebrides and certain bays along the north-west mainland is now well established, although the wintering sites of these birds remain unknown.

The absence of wintering birds in 2010 was notable. However, the bird seen at Kirkabister in October and November was considered to be a returning individual from previous winters (and different to the presumed migrant seen briefly at the same location earlier in the year).

The 1890 record concerns a juvenile that was collected on the Sutherland coast and then languished for 120 years, labelled as a Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*, in the Royal Scottish Museum (now National Museums Scotland). The recent re-identification of the specimen was discussed by McGowan (2011). Following assessment and acceptance by SBRC, this bird now becomes the first Scottish record, predating the previously accepted first record by nearly two years. Together with BBRC's recent acceptance of an individual in Orkney in June 2005 (Hudson *et al.* 2011), it brings the total number of birds seen in Scotland to date to 323.

(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.)

Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* 2: 16: 3

Table 3. Accepted records of Continental Cormorant in Scotland, 2010.

North-east Scotland Girdleness, adult and third-calendar-year, 2 May, photo (T. ap Rheinallt, A.J. Whitehouse).
Shetland Loch of Hillwell, Mainland, adult, 24 April, photo (R. Riddington).

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 angle of the feathering framing the gular pouch and subtle structural features, have only been established relatively recently, and it is likely to have been under-recorded in the past.

The 2010 occurrences fit in with the pattern of existing records. However, with so few observers taking an active interest in these birds, the significance of this pattern is questionable.

Rare subspecies with more than 20 Scottish records are not normally assessed by SBRC. The 2010 records reported here bring the number of Continental Cormorants accepted in Scotland to 21 and, as a result, this form 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. The former also occurs in Asia and the latter in North America, with other subspecies in Africa, Australasia and the Far East.)

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* 37: 27: 5

Table 4. Accepted records of Great White Egret in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record and a revised record for 2009.

Angus & Dundee Balgavies & Rescobie Lochs, 7-13 April, photo (J. Cook, I. Hay *et al.*).
Argyll Barraholm, Loch Sween, 12-30 October, photo *Scottish Birds* 31: 94 (J. & J. Close *et al.*).
North-east Scotland Inverugie, 18-25 January (W. Bruce, M. Innes).
North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 21 April to 2 May (D. Funnell, D. Parnaby *et al.*).
North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 30 May to 4 June, photo (I. Moig, D. Parnaby *et al.*).

2009

Clyde Merryton & Baron's Haugh, 7 February, photo (J. McKechnie per I. English, M. Molloy); note revised location (*cf. ap Rheinallt et al.* 2011).
Fife Kilconquhar Loch, 6-12 December, photo (M. Ramage *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. The absence of any temporal overlap among the four east-coast records in 2010 suggests that duplication may well be involved.

The five acceptances in 2010 represent a return to normal levels following a record annual total of 14 birds in 2009 (including the late acceptance from Fife reported here). As in 2009, the records were well distributed throughout the



Plate 86. Great White Egret, Barraholm, Loch Sween, Argyll, 12-30 October 2010. © Jon Close

year and concentrated along the east coast. Given the significant range expansion of Great White Egret into Western Europe, the species is widely expected to become a British breeder in the near future and North-east Scotland might prove attractive to potential colonists.

(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: 4: 3

Table 5. Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2010.

Argyll Dalmally, adult, 31 May, photo (A.J. Booth).
North-east Scotland Near Peterculter, Aberdeen, second-calendar-year, 23 May, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 375, 376 (I. Francis).
Shetland Loch of Voe, Mainland, adult, 19 May (M.S. Chapman).

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

The three adults in 2010 were widely scattered across Scotland but all occurred during a 12-day period in the latter half of May. This accords well with the established pattern for Britain as a whole, where records peak in early May but are, on average, one or two weeks later in northern Britain including Scotland (Fraser *et al.* 2007). The North-east Scotland individual in 2010 was identified retrospectively by the observer, who had been photographing Red Kites at the time (Francis 2010).

(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: 1: 1 (excluding young from known Scottish nests)

Table 6. Accepted records of Montagu's Harrier in Scotland, 2010.

North-east Scotland Cotehill Loch, Forvie NNR, wing-tagged female, 22 June, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 285 (D. Short *et al.*).

Montagu's Harrier is a very rare migrant to Scotland, mostly occurring in spring in North-east Scotland, Angus & Dundee or Perth & Kinross. A few breeding attempts have been successful, though none more recently than 1955, and the total of 45 birds to the end of 2004 excludes fledged young from these breeding attempts (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011).

Montagu's Harrier has occurred six times in Scotland since 2000, four of the sightings being in North-east Scotland, with the two most recent, in 2009 and 2010, being on the same National Nature Reserve. Occurrences peak in May, and midsummer records, such as this, are rare.

Subsequent enquiries regarding the wing-tagged Cotehill Loch bird revealed that it had been ringed as a chick on 18 July 2008 at Villeneuve, Puy-de-Dôme, France (Duncan 2010).

(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): 21: 9

Table 7. Accepted records of Rough-legged Buzzard in Scotland, 2010.

Angus & Dundee West Ferry, Dundee, juvenile, 31 October, photo (C. Farquharson).
Highland Essich, Inverness district, 18 April (H. Insley).
Orkney Holm/Toab area, Mainland, juvenile, 7-31 January (J. Branscombe, K.E. Hague, D. Shearer, R.J. Simpson).
Orkney Twingness, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 16 October (R.J. Butcher *et al.*).
Orkney Holland House, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 16-17 October (R.J. Butcher, T. Collett *et al.*).
Orkney Holland House, Airport & Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, juvenile, 18 October, photo (R.J. Butcher, T. Collett).
Shetland Toab & Scatness, Mainland, juvenile, 16 October, photo (P.V. Harvey, R. Riddington *et al.*).
Shetland West Yell, juvenile, 22 November (P.M. Ellis, J. Nicolson, J.D. Okill, G.W. Petrie, I. Sandison *et al.*).
Shetland Valla Field, Unst, juvenile, 29 December to 2011, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al.*).

Rough-legged Buzzard is a scarce passage migrant to Scotland, occurring mostly on the eastern side of the country and in the Northern Isles, with numbers tending to peak in late autumn. In addition, a few birds overwinter. Some 346 individuals were seen between 1968 and 2009 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011).

The nine records for 2010 conform to established geographical and temporal patterns. Following a juvenile in January, one unaged bird occurred in April, and seven juveniles were recorded from October to December, with a peak of five in the latter half of October. This supports the view that autumn records in Scotland mainly involve young birds dispersing from Fennoscandia. Although nine were also seen in 2005, fewer individuals were aged then and the sightings were spread more evenly throughout the year (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

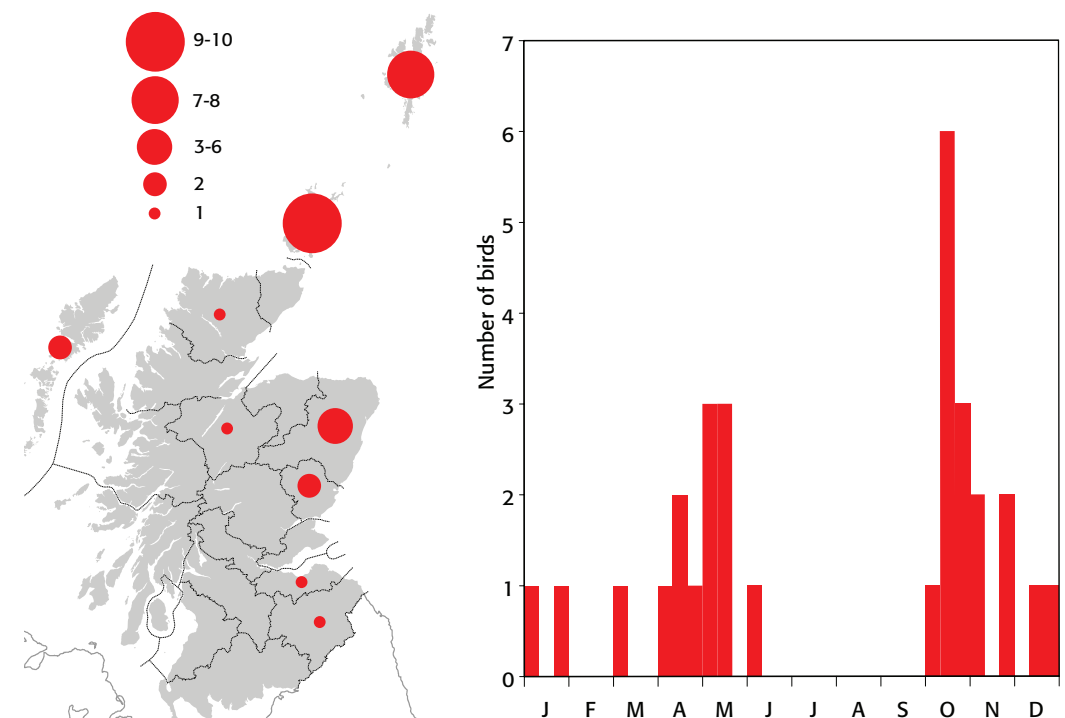


Figure 1. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of Rough-legged Buzzard in Scotland, 2005-10. Note that the 2005 Fair Isle bird is not included as it was first seen in Shetland.

For the second year in a row, SBRC accepted all submitted claims of Rough-legged Buzzard. This contrasts with the situation in the past, where claims of this species had one of the highest rejection rates among species assessed by the committee (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a). Combined with a general improvement in the quality of submissions, more birds are now being photographed.

(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: 3

Table 8. Accepted records of Red-footed Falcon in Scotland, 2010.

Argyll Gleann Mòr, Port Charlotte, Islay, first-summer male, 2 May (R. Davidson).
Fife Fife Ness, juvenile, 2 November, photo (G. & K. Leckie).
Lothian Howgate, female, 22 May, photo (M.A. Grubb).

Red-footed Falcon is mainly a rare late-spring migrant to Scotland with one or two individuals seen in most years. Most sightings come from Shetland, Orkney and North-east Scotland, so the distribution of the occurrences in 2010 was exceptional.

The sightings in Argyll and Lothian were during the peak period for Scottish records. The former was the third record for Argyll and the first for Islay, while the latter was the sixth for the Lothian recording area. The juvenile at Fife Ness was the third for Fife; the late date is matched by only two other Scottish records, Newport (Fife) on 21 November 1941 and Moss of Cree (Dumfries & Galloway) on 1 November 1944 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

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



Plate 87. Red-footed Falcon, juvenile, Fife Ness, Fife, 2 November 2010. © Kris Leckie

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus* 30: 1: 1

Table 9. Accepted records of Stone-curlew in Scotland, 2010.

Orkney The Lurn, North Ronaldsay, 19 November, photo (P.A. Brown *et al.*).

Stone-curlew is a very rare visitor to Scotland; there were just 31 accepted records to the end of 2009 and half of these were in the Northern Isles, with the remainder scattered across the country. There is a pronounced peak in occurrence in late May and early June (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

Plate 88. Stone-curlew, The Lurn, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 19 November 2010. © Paul Brown

Prior to 2010, there were only three records during the months of September to December, with the Orkney bird in 2010 being the first to be seen in November in Scotland.

(Nominate *oediconemus* 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.)



American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* 72: 68: -

Table 10. Additional records of American Golden Plover in Scotland, 2008 and 2009.

2009

Outer Hebrides Bòrnais (Bornish), South Uist, adult, 29 August to 13 September, photo (A. Stevenson *et al.*).
Outer Hebrides Mullach Mòr, St Kilda, adult, 23 September, photo (W.T.S. Miles *et al.*).

2008

Outer Hebrides Gleann Mòr, St Kilda, juvenile, 1 October, photo (R.M. Tallack *et al.*).

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

As from 1 January 2010, records of this species in Scotland have been assessed locally rather than by SBRC. The total for Scotland in 2005-08 was formerly 49 birds, with a further 16 in 2009 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011); the additional Outer Hebrides individuals reported here bring the revised totals to 50 and 18, respectively. There have been four previous occurrences on St Kilda, three in September and one in October.

(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: 45: 1

Table 11. Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record for 2009.

Shetland Scatness, Mainland, 20 June, photo (D. Eichhorn, M.A. Neumann *et al.*).

2009

Angus & Dundee Montrose Basin, adult, 1-2 August, trapped, photo (C. McGuigan, E. Watson *et al.*).

White-rumped Sandpiper is a rare but annual visitor to Scotland from North America, with nearly all records in autumn. Following the influx of 27 birds in 2005, reported occurrences have declined, with only 16 in 2006-8 and, including records published in this report, just two birds in 2009 and a single in 2010.

The midsummer occurrence in Shetland was only the second June sighting in Scotland, and the second earliest date ever; in 1980, one was observed at Musselburgh (Lothian) on 31 May and 1 June. The near absence of spring records reflects the species' migration routes: in autumn, the majority of birds follow an Atlantic route, but in spring they move north through inland North America (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

The adult at Montrose Basin in 2009 was the third record for Angus & Dundee; both previous sightings were in 1996.

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

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* 12: 7: 0

Table 12. Accepted records of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland, 1998 to 2009.

2009	Ayrshire Stevenston, adult, 11 August to 11 September, photo (K. Hoey).
2008	Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 6 January to 23 February, photo <i>Scottish Birds</i> 29: 221 (C.J. McInerny, J.J. Sweeney <i>et al.</i>). Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, second adult (returning), 17-21 February, photo (C.J. McInerny, J.J. Sweeney <i>et al.</i>). Highland Bettyhill, Sutherland, adult, 22 June, photo (M.S. Scott <i>et al.</i>).
2007	Lothian Seafield, adult, 2 January (A. Jensen).
2006	Ayrshire Troon Harbour, adult (returning), 17-28 February, photo (A. Hogg, B.D. Kerr <i>et al.</i>). Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 3 February, photo (J.J. Sweeney). Moray & Nairn Lossie Estuary, two adults, 29-30 June, photo (A. Jensen). North-east Scotland Peterhead, second-summer/third-winter, 27 August to November, photo (C. Gibbins <i>et al.</i>).
2005	Ayrshire Troon Harbour, adult, 25 February to 5 March, photo (A. Hogg, B.D. Kerr <i>et al.</i>).
2004	Moray & Nairn Lossie Estuary, fourth-summer or adult, 30 March to 4 April, photo (R. Proctor).
2003	Clyde Hogganfield Loch, adult (returning), 2 February (C.J. McInerny). Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 22 February (C.J. McInerny <i>et al.</i>); same, 9 December to 25 February 2004 (C.J. McInerny <i>et al.</i>). Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 9 December to 25 February 2004 (C.J. McInerny <i>et al.</i>).
2002	Argyll Loch Gruinart, Islay, adult, 1-7 September (T. ap Rheinallt <i>et al.</i>). Clyde Hogganfield Loch, adult, 3 February, photo (C.J. McInerny). Fife Tayport, second-winter or third-summer, 21 July, photo (D.E. Dickson, W. McBay, J.S. Nadin <i>et al.</i>). Highland Ullapool, Ross & Cromarty, second-summer, 18 June, photo (D. Dorling). North-east Scotland Peterhead, adult, 31 December to 16 March 2003, photo (P.A.A. Baxter, C. Gibbins <i>et al.</i>).
2001	Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult, 6 January to 4 February, photo (C.J. McInerny, S.C. Votier <i>et al.</i>); same, 9 November to 6 January 2002, photo (C.J. McInerny, S.C. Votier <i>et al.</i>).

Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult (returning), 9 November to 6 January 2002, photo (C.J. McInerny, S.C. Votier *et al.*).

Shetland Loch of Cliff, Burrafirth, Unst, adult, 10 January, photo (P.V. Harvey *et al.*).

2000

Clyde Strathclyde Country Park, adult, 9 December to 4 February 2001, photo (C.J. McInerny, S.C. Votier *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, third- or fourth-summer, 9-10 July (J.J. Sweeney *et al.*).

1999

North-east Scotland Ythan Estuary, adult, 28 June (C. Gibbins).

1998

North-east Scotland Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, adult, 15 August (P.A.A. Baxter).

Yellow-legged Gull is a very rare species in Scotland, found at scattered locations throughout the country, usually in groups of other large white-headed larids, often Lesser Black-backed Gulls *L. fuscus graellsii*. Birds, predominately adults, have been found at all times of the year, sometimes remaining for extended periods.

All Yellow-legged Gull records on the *Scottish List* recently underwent a review to ensure that they fulfilled identification criteria published by SBRC (McInerny 2009). The review, the results of which were first announced on the SOC website in May 2011 (www.the-soc.org.uk/y1gull-review.htm), led to the acceptance of 25 submissions, which equated to 18 birds when presumed

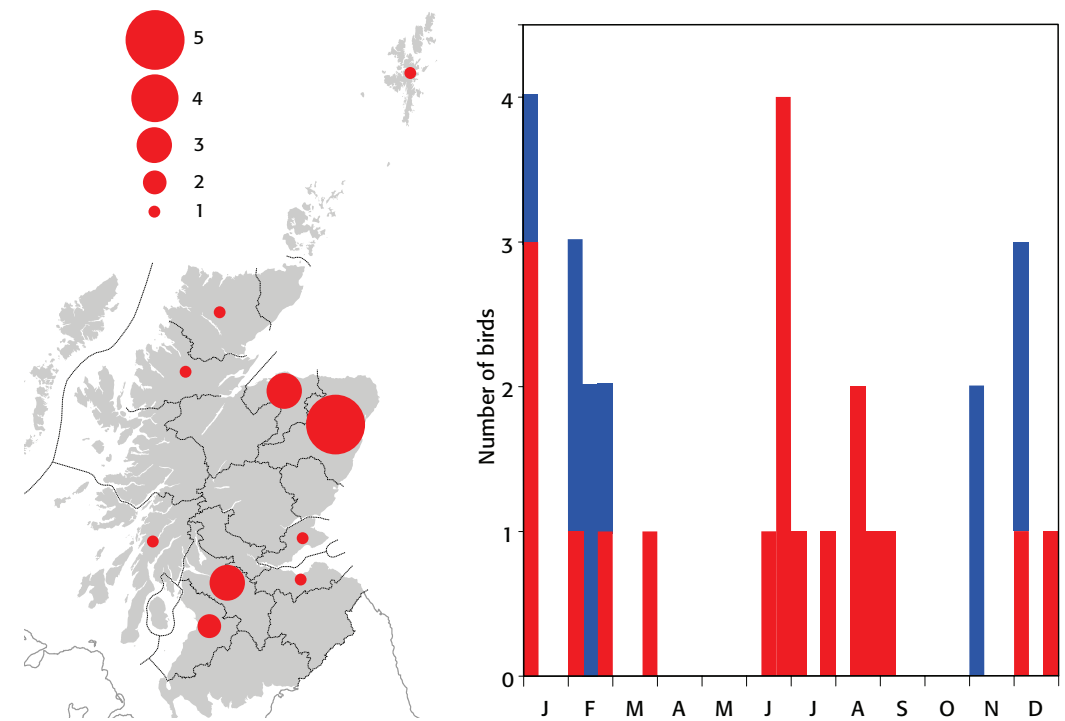


Figure 2. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland, 1998-2010. Note that the map does not include presumed returning birds which, however, are shown on the graph in blue.

returning individuals were taken into account. Another 17 birds were removed from the *Scottish List*, including the first six published records. Following the review, the first accepted Yellow-legged Gull for Scotland is now the adult seen at the Ugie Estuary on 15 August 1998.

Since the initiation of this review, one new record of Yellow-legged Gull has been accepted by SBRC, involving an adult in Ayrshire in August and September 2009. So far there have been no accepted records in 2010. This means that the current Scottish total stands at 19 birds.

(Nominate *michahellis* breeds mainly from south-west Europe, east to Black Sea, dispersing widely in winter as far north as Britain and Baltic; *atlantis* breeds on Azores, Madeira and Canaries, wandering south to NW Africa.)

Alpine Swift *Apus melba* 34: 1: 1

Table 13. Accepted records of Alpine Swift in Scotland, 2010.

Orkney Oback & Isbister, South Ronaldsay, 24 July to 7 August, photo *Scottish Birds* 30: 383 (L. Campbell, R. Rozier, S. Sankey, G. Voller *et al.*).

Alpine Swift is a very rare visitor to Scotland, seen mostly between mid-April and late July. Spring occurrences probably involve overshoots from breeding grounds on the Continent, while those in summer relate to wandering non-breeders. There are very few autumn records. 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).

The sole 2010 record likely relates to a non-breeder, accounting for its prolonged stay.

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

Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* 0: 0: 0

As part of its remit to examine older records, SBRC recently reviewed the only accepted record of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker on the *Scottish List*. This record related to as many as three birds seen near Aberfoyle (Upper Forth) in consecutive winters during the period 1968-70 (Mitchell 1970). The review resulted in the rejection of this record, and thus Lesser Spotted Woodpecker is now removed from the *Scottish List*. Given its steep decline farther south in Britain (Brown & Grice 2005), it seems unlikely to be reinstated in the foreseeable future.

(Ten or 11 subspecies. Breeds across the Palearctic region from England and Wales to Japan. Northern populations are short-distance migrants, with those farther south being sedentary.)

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* 286: 33: 11

Table 14. Accepted records of Short-toed Lark in Scotland, 2010. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 15.

Argyll Sandaig, Tiree, 2-7 October 2010, photo *Scottish Birds* 31: 95 (J.M. Dickson *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Girdleness, 30 September to 3 October, photo (P.A.A. Baxter, P. Massey, M. Ponsford, J. Willmott *et al.*).

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.

For the third year in a row, there were sightings of this species away from the Northern Isles. The Tiree bird was the second for Argyll, coming two years after the first, also on Tiree, while the individual in North-east Scotland was the third for the recording area, following spring birds in 1995 and 1999.

Another nine birds were seen in the Northern Isles, where claims of this species are assessed locally. Only two of these occurred in spring, the remainder being noted over a prolonged period in autumn, lasting nearly two months.

Table 15. Summary of accepted records of Short-toed Lark in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	1	1	16-17 May	10 September
Orkney	-	2	-	29 Sep-3 Nov
Shetland	1	4	2 June	28 Sep-31 Oct

Not since 1999 has the annual total of Short-toed Larks in Scotland exceeded 11 birds. Against a background of a gradual rise in the number of Scottish records, attributed by Forrester *et al.* (2007) to increased observer effort, annual totals reached double figures on five occasions during the 1990s but have only done so twice since then (2006 and 2010).

(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): 12: 2

Table 16. Accepted records of Woodlark in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record for 2009.

Highland Eigg, Lochaber, 4 December, photo (J. Chester).

Orkney Tankerness, Mainland, 9-10 November, photo (J. Branscombe *et al.*).

2009

Shetland Skaw, Whalsay, 10 October (J.L. Irvine *et al.*).

Despite there being a modest increase in sightings in recent years, Woodlark remains a rare bird in Scotland, found in late autumn and early winter almost entirely in the Northern Isles (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011). There has been one instance of attempted breeding, in Angus & Dundee in 1993 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).



Plate 89. Woodlark, Tankerness, Mainland, Orkney, 9-10 November 2010. © Morris Rendall

The Eigg record was only the fourth for the west coast of Scotland in the period since 1950, and the third for the Highland recording area. The two previous Highland sightings were both close by, on Rum (Lochaber), in 1978 and 1993 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

(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: 20: 3

Table 17. Accepted records of Red-rumped Swallow in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record from 2009.

North-east Scotland Forvie NNR, 11 May, photo (M. Souter).

Orkney St Margaret's Hope, South Ronaldsay, 20 May to 3 June, photo (P. Higson, S. Sankey *et al.*).

Shetland Norwick & Haroldswick, Unst, 18-19 May, photo (H. Bradley, R.M. Tallack *et al.*).

2009

Shetland Out Skerries, 1 May (D. Fairhurst).

Red-rumped Swallow is seen in Scotland each year in very small numbers from April through to November along the east coast and on islands. Most occurrences are believed to relate to the subspecies *rufula*, the closest breeding populations of which are in southern France (Forrester *et al.* 2007). However, other subspecies, most notably the west-central Asian *daurica*, are potential vagrants.



Plate 90. Red-rumped Swallow, Norwick & Haroldswick, Unst, Shetland, 18–19 May 2010. © Rob Brookes

The four records from 2009 and 2010 detailed in this report, being all in May, likely refer to overshooting spring migrants from the Continent.

(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. Only subspecies *rufula* is currently on the *British List*.)

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* 158: 20: 4

Table 18. Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in Scotland, 2010. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in the text.

Isle of May First-winter, 10 September, trapped, photo (A. Ash *et al.*).

North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, 8 September (D. Parnaby *et al.*).

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.

In 2010, as in 2008 and 2009, there was a single record from what has arguably become the mainland 'hot-spot' for this species, Loch of Strathbeg. Two days later, another bird occurred on the Isle of May; this was the first Scottish Greenish Warbler since 2004 to have been observed outwith the Northern Isles and North-east Scotland.

The only other occurrences in 2010 were in Shetland, and involved single birds on 10-11 August and 4 September. This set of dates is typical and underlines the status of the species as an early-autumn migrant to Scotland.

(*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 four records of *P. t. plumbeitarsus* (eastern Siberia) in England.)

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* 46: 7: 4

Table 19. Accepted records of Radde's Warbler in Scotland, 2010.

North-east Scotland Kineff Old Church, Inverberrie, 9 October (P.A.A. Baxter, P. Bloor).

Shetland Sumburgh Head, Mainland, 2-4 October, photo (M. Ponsford, J. Willmott *et al.*).

Shetland Skaw, Whalsay, 8 October, photo (J.A. Atkinson, B. Marshall *et al.*).

Shetland Sandwick, Mainland, 11-12 October (P.M. Ellis *et al.*).



Plate 91. Radde's Warbler, Skaw, Whalsay, Shetland, 8 October 2010. © Jason Atkinson

Radde's Warbler is a very rare late autumn visitor to Scotland, with the majority of occurrences in the Northern Isles, and the remainder along the east coast. All four sightings in 2010 fit into the classic period for this species in Scotland, early to mid-October.

(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: 9: 3

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.

There were only three occurrences in 2010, all involving single birds on Shetland within the space of a few days in early October: one on the 8th which remained until the next day, one on the 9th, and one on the 11th which remained until the 12th.

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

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* 194: 30: 2

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 of nominate *cantillans*, and birds not assigned to any particular subspecies, are assessed locally. Scottish claims of any other subspecies are assessed by BBRC.

There were only two accepted records of this species in Scotland in 2010. They both came from the Northern Isles, where a male of the race *cantillans* was present on Foula (Shetland) on 26-27 May, and one was on Fair Isle on 26 September.

Several Scottish claims of *S. c. albistriata* and *S. c. moltonii*, including a bird of the former subspecies on Shetland in May 2010, are currently with BBRC. Thus the totals given above may not be complete.

(*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.)

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta* 52: 3: 1

Table 20. Accepted records of Melodious Warbler in Scotland, 2010.

Shetland Norwick, Unst, first-winter, 19–27 September (R. Brookes, M.A. Maher, M.G. Pennington, R.M. Tallack *et al.*).

Melodious Warbler is a very rare spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, recorded in most years but not all: there were none in 2001, 2004, 2005 or 2009, for example. About three-quarters of occurrences have been in the Northern Isles.

The single individual in Shetland in the second half of September 2010 was typical in terms of location and date. Not since 2003 has a Melodious Warbler been recorded in Scotland outwith Fair Isle and Shetland.

(Breeds in north Africa, Iberia, France, Belgium, and south-west Germany to the north-west Balkans; migrates to winter in sub-Saharan West Africa.)



Plate 92. Melodious Warbler, first-winter, Norwick, Unst, Shetland, 19–27 September 2010. © Rob Brookes

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* many: c. 181: 12

Table 21. Additional record of Marsh Warbler in Scotland, 2009. Northern Isles records for 2010 are summarised separately in Table 22.

2009
Outer Hebrides Bàgh a' Bhaile (Village Bay), St Kilda, 2 June, photo (I. McNee, W.T.S. Miles).

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.

Although the only Marsh Warblers in Scotland in 2010 were in the Northern Isles, the recent acceptance of a bird in St Kilda on a typical late-spring date in 2009 increases the total for that year by one to 36.

Table 22. Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	2	5	29 May–3 Jun	22 Aug–20 Sep
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	5	-	3–27 June	-

Far fewer Marsh Warblers were recorded in the Northern Isles in 2010 (12 birds) than in 2009 (34 birds). In fact, not since 1996 have there been fewer occurrences in Scotland in any one year. This is a species whose numerical abundance fluctuates widely from one year to the next. In spring at least, this is related to variation in the prevalence of easterly winds, which are presumed to cause birds to overshoot their breeding grounds in Fennoscandia (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

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

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* 139: 7: 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.

As so often, the only occurrences of this species in Scotland in 2010 were in the Northern Isles, where claims are assessed locally. In spring, an early individual was in Shetland on 25 April, while in autumn, one was on Fair Isle on 26 September.

The Fair Isle bird was noticeably long-tailed and had a marked supercilium, thus suggesting the race *africana*, which is not on the *British List* but is a potential vagrant as it breeds on the borders of Europe in the Caucasus area as well as farther east. Details and photographs were sent to BBRC for reference (D.N. Shaw, pers. comm.).

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

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* 142: 10: 3

Red-throated Pipit is a rare spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, found almost exclusively on islands, with most sightings in Fair Isle and Shetland. Thus the three occurrences in 2010 were typical, there being one bird in spring (Fair Isle, 24 May) and two in autumn (Fair Isle, 27 September, and Shetland, 2 October).

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

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* 45: 3: 1

Table 23. Accepted records of Tawny Pipit in Scotland, 2010.

Orkney Sangar & Airport, North Ronaldsay, 23-26 June, photo (P.A. Brown, P.J. Donnelly *et al.*).



Tawny Pipit is a very rare bird in Scotland with just three individuals seen during the period 2005-09, all being presumed spring overshoots on islands.

The North Ronaldsay bird in 2010 was only the second for Orkney, following one on Stronsay on 28 May 1988. The late June date is unusual, but there are several previous records in June, the latest being on the 20th (St Kilda, Outer Hebrides, in 1986). In addition, there have been two in July: on the Isle of May on 1 July 1976, and at Aberlady Bay (Lothian) on 19-22 July 1980 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

(Nominate *campestris* breeds in dry, sandy areas from southern and eastern Europe to western Siberia; two other Asian subspecies. Winters in Africa, the Middle East and India.)

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* 86: 23: 3

Table 24. Accepted records of Water Pipit in Scotland, 2010, with an additional record for 2009 and a revised record for 2008.

Ayrshire Seamill, 30 December 2009 to 21 March, photo (A. Hogg, J. McManus *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2011).

Ayrshire Girvan, 31 December 2009 to 8 January, photo (A. Hogg *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2011).

Ayrshire Seamill, 29 November to 28 March 2011, photo (D. Given, A. Hogg *et al.*).

Ayrshire Maidens, 2-21 December, photo (A. Hogg *et al.*).

Lothian Barns Ness, two, 6 December 2009 to 3 April, photo (A. Brown, A. Hogg *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2011), but note revised dates; one of same, 28 October to year end (*per* Local Recorder).

Shetland Norwick, Unst, 21-23 November, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al.*).

2009

Perth & Kinross Vane Farm, 26 November to 6 December (K.D. Shaw, G. Sparshott *et al.*).

2008

Lothian Musselburgh, 18 March to 11 April, photo (B. Kerr, M. Thrower *et al.*); note revised dates and observer's initials (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011).

Water Pipit is a rare winter visitor to Scotland, often found among seaweed on beaches with Rock Pipits *Anthus petrosus*. Its seasonal distribution features a late-autumn arrival and a secondary peak in spring. Most sightings to the end of 2009 were in Ayrshire and Lothian.

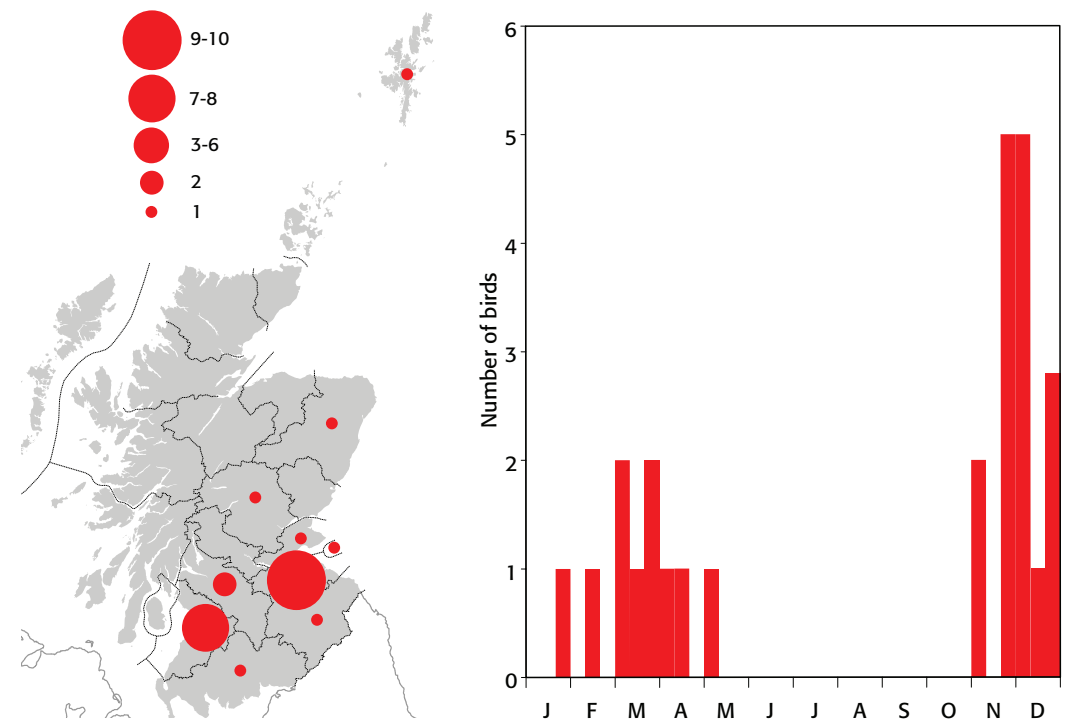


Figure 3. Distribution by recording area and seasonal occurrence of Water Pipit in Scotland, 2005-10.

Four apparently overwintering birds were present at the beginning of 2010, having been first noted in December 2009: two in Ayrshire and two together in Lothian. In addition, the late acceptance of an individual at Vane Farm in late 2009 (the second for Perth & Kinross) brings that year's total to 10 birds, just two short of the all-time high in 1996.

No new birds were observed in early 2010, but three were found towards the end of the year. Two of these were at traditional sites in Ayrshire, and might have been returnees. The third new bird, on Unst in late November, was Shetland's first; see Thomason (2011) for a detailed account of this occurrence. The only previously accepted records from islands were on Orkney, Skye (Skye & Lochalsh, Highland) and the Isle of May.

A bird present late in 2010 at Barns Ness was considered locally to be one of those that wintered during 2009/10, and thus has not been counted separately in the totals.

(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: 43: 16

Arctic Redpoll is a scarce though annual visitor to Scotland. Most sightings since 2005 have involved the race *C. h. hornemanni* (Hornemann's Redpoll), claims of which are assessed by BBRC, while most earlier occurrences were referred to *C. h. exilipes* (Coues's Redpoll). All but four of the 43 birds during 2005-09 were in the Northern Isles, and the majority of them occurred in autumn.

In 2010, as in several other recent years, the only Arctic Redpolls seen in Scotland were in the Northern Isles during autumn. A total of five were accepted as Coues's Redpolls, claims of which are assessed locally within those islands.

Table 25. Accepted records of Coues's Redpoll in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	-	1	-	12-13 October
Orkney	-	1	-	21 November
Shetland	-	3	-	13 Oct-20 Nov

In addition, BBRC accepted records of 11 Hornemann's Redpolls in Scotland during the period 19 September to 4 November 2010: two in Fair Isle, two in Orkney, and seven in Shetland. All but three of these birds were first seen in September, highlighting the difference in arrival dates between the two subspecies.

(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.)

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* many: 23: 7

Table 26. Accepted records of Ortolan Bunting in Scotland, 2010. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 27.

Isle of May First-winter, 8 September (A. Ash *et al.*).

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

All seven Scottish records of this species in 2010 were within the space of just over one month in autumn, corresponding to the main migration period during that season. As so often, nearly all occurrences were in the Northern Isles, the exception being a first-winter bird found in September on the Isle of May. The last Ortolan Bunting on the Isle of May was in 2001.

Table 27. Accepted records of Ortolan Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	-	1	-	19-20 September
Orkney	-	1	-	30 September
Shetland	-	4	-	10 Sep-11 Oct

There is also an additional record from Fair Isle in autumn 2008, within the range of dates (3-19 September) specified by ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010b). This increases the number of individuals seen during 2005-09 from 22 to 23.

Ortolan Buntings have now become less than annual in Scotland in spring, but there has been at least one autumn bird in every year since 1973. While numbers have declined since the mid-1990s, when as many as 40 birds were recorded in a single season, the existence of significant year-to-year variation, coupled with occasional influxes, can obscure longer-term trends.

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

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* 276: 27: 6

Table 28. Accepted records of Rustic Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	2	-	20 May-15 Jun	-
Orkney	1	1	31 May-1 Jun	8 October
Shetland	1	1	28 May	27-30 September

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.

As in the two previous years, the only occurrences in 2010 were in the Northern Isles, where claims of this species are assessed locally. Four birds were seen in spring and two in autumn. An individual on Fair Isle on 15 June was late for a spring migrant, but there have been later ones, most notably a bird on North Ronaldsay on 26 June 1995 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

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

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* 593: 78: 15

Table 29. Accepted records of Little Bunting in Scotland, 2010. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 30.

Isle of May 8-9 September, photo (A. Ash).
Isle of May 9 October (A. Ash).



Plate 94. Little Bunting, Isle of May, 8-9 September 2010. © Alex Ash

Little Bunting is a scarce though increasingly regular passage migrant to 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.

Occurrences in Scotland in 2010 corresponded well to the established pattern, with all but one of the 15 birds being seen in autumn, and all but two being in the Northern Isles. The two Isle of May birds, seen almost exactly a month apart, were the first to be seen on the island since 2000. Only one of 93 occurrences in Scotland during 2005-10 has been on the mainland.

Table 30. Accepted records of Little Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2010.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn
Fair Isle	1	2	9 May	29 Sep-17 Oct
Orkney	-	3	-	27 Sep-1 Oct
Shetland	-	7	-	20 Sep-8 Oct

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Appendix 1.

List of records regarded as not proven by SBRC.

2010: Great Shearwater Fife Ness, Fife, 15 August. Black Kite Loch of Strathbeg, 19 May. Alpine Swift Kirkcaldy, Fife, two, 24 March. Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Clarencefield, Dumfries & Galloway, 14 October. Water Pipit Ardmore Point, Clyde, two, 16 March. Caerlaverock, Dumfries & Galloway, 29-30 March.

2009: Yellow-legged Gull Lochmaben, Dumfries & Galloway, 5 April. Subalpine Warbler St Kilda, Outer Hebrides, 20 June.

2008: Yellow-legged Gull Linkfield, Elgin, Moray & Nairn, 23 March. Lossie Estuary, Moray & Nairn, 16 May.

2007: Yellow-legged Gull Newmains, Reston, Borders, 3 January. Barassie, Ayrshire, 14 Sep.

2006: Yellow-legged Gull Greengairs, Clyde, 8 January.

2005: Yellow-legged Gull Leven, Fife, 18 February.

2002: Yellow-legged Gull Tayport, Fife, 16-27 July.

2001: Yellow-legged Gull Tayport, Fife, 24 May. Tayport, Fife, 22 July.

2000: Yellow-legged Gull Tayport, Fife, 11 August.

1999: Yellow-legged Gull Barassie, Ayrshire, 17 August. North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 2 September.

1998: Yellow-legged Gull Soa Point, Tiree, Argyll, 23 February. Blairbowie & Martanham Loch, Ayrshire, 20 April to 8 May.

1997: Yellow-legged Gull Doonfoot, Ayrshire, 16 April. Doonfoot, Ayrshire, two, 28 July.

1991: Yellow-legged Gull Doonfoot, Ayrshire, 6 January to 6 May 1995.

1989: Yellow-legged Gull Kirkwall, Orkney, 20 April.

1970: Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Near Aberfoyle, Upper Forth, 5-6 January (also reported in 1968 and earlier years).

Appendix 2.

Summary of assessment of records by the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) and other committees, 2010 (this report) and 2011-2013. All species and subspecies assessed by SBRC are included, with two exceptions. First, any species or subspecies not on the *Scottish List* is automatically assessed by SBRC if it is not assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). Second, some species assessed by SBRC have additional rare subspecies assessed by BBRC but not shown here.

2010	2011	2012	2013	
■	■	■	■	Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiacus</i>
■	■	■	■	Black Brant <i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>
■	■	■	■	Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>
■	■	■	■	White-billed Diver <i>Gavia adamsii</i>
■	■	■	■	Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris diomedea</i>
■	■	■	■	Great Shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i>
■	■	■	■	Wilson's Petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
■	■	■	□	Continental Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis</i>
■	■	■	■	Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
■	■	■	■	Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
■	■	■	■	Great White Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>

■	■	■	■	Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>
■	■	■	■	Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</i>
■	■	■	■	Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>
■	■	■	■	Rough-legged Buzzard <i>Buteo lagopus</i>
■	■	■	■	Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i>
■	■	■	■	Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedichnemus</i>
■	■	■	■	Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
■	■	■	■	White-rumped Sandpiper <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>
■	■	■	■	Continental Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>
■	■	■	■	Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i>
■	■	■	■	Caspian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</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>
■	■	■	■	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i>
■	■	■	■	Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
■	■	■	■	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>
■	■	■	■	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis daurica</i>
■	■	■	■	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>
■	■	■	■	Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
■	■	■	■	Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>
■	■	■	■	Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
■	■	■	■	Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>
■	■	■	■	Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans</i> (except <i>S. c. albistriata</i>)
■	■	■	■	Eastern Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans albistriata</i>
■	■	■	■	Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>
■	■	■	■	Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
■	■	■	■	Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
■	■	■	■	Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
■	■	■	■	Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>
■	■	■	■	Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>
■	■	■	■	Water Pipit <i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
■	■	■	■	Serim <i>Serinus serinus</i>
■	■	■	■	Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis hornemanni</i> (except <i>C. h. hornemanni</i>)
■	■	■	■	Homemann's Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis hornemanni hornemanni</i>
■	■	■	■	Scottish Crossbill <i>Loxia scotica</i>
■	■	■	■	Parrot Crossbill <i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>
■	■	■	■	Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</i>
■	■	■	■	Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
■	■	■	■	Rustic Bunting <i>Emberiza rustica</i>
■	■	■	■	Little Bunting <i>Emberiza pusilla</i>

■ = BBRC ■ = SBRC ■ = SBRC except Northern Isles (Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland)
 ■ = SBRC except Outer Hebrides ■ = SBRC outside core range (see www.the-soc.org.uk/sbrc-crossbill-id.htm) □ = local assessment

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Blackbirds feeding on sandhoppers

The summer of 2010 saw several prolonged, dry spells of weather. On 20 or more occasions between May and July, I noticed Blackbirds *Turdus merula* foraging below the tideline at Balmerino beach on the Tay estuary in north Fife. The shore consists of pebbles and rocks, with some sandy patches, and the intertidal zone has been colonised by seaweeds.

Blackbirds were only seen feeding on the shore after several dry days and when the ground inland was very dry. Three birds were often visible feeding at one time though on one occasion I saw five. Both male and female birds were noted in similar numbers and I would estimate that three or four pairs of birds were foraging down on the shore. The Blackbirds turned over patches of loose seaweed and collected invertebrates. Almost all the birds were seen to be carrying food back inland - presumably to their chicks. On turning over the same patches of seaweed, I disturbed large concentrations of sandhoppers (*Talitridae* spp.). Using a telescope, I confirmed that this was what the birds were collecting. I ring birds in the scrub and gardens bordering the shore and twice caught birds which still had

sandhoppers in their bills. I found two Blackbird nests and saw the adults bringing sandhoppers to feed to their chicks.

Sandhoppers are common on the shore at Balmerino. After storms, they may be found high above the tideline and even among trees and scrub several metres inland. Blackbirds ceased foraging on the shore as soon as it rained and the ground inland became damp again. They ceased feeding on sandhoppers when the breeding season ended even when there were prolonged, dry periods, suggesting that sandhoppers are only taken when other prey is scarce.

Although Blackbirds are recorded as taking marine snails (Vauk & Wittig 1971), Cramp (1988) does not include *Talitridae* among the species' extensive list of prey items. I have seen Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* feeding below the shoreline on Inner and Outer Hebridean islands and the Scottish west coast, but I could not remember seeing Blackbirds doing this. I asked several birdwatchers and ringers who are familiar with these habitats and none of them could recall seeing Blackbirds foraging below the tideline.

I saw individual Blackbirds feeding on the shore at Balmerino in 2011 on just three occasions. The weather was generally wetter than the previous year and the ground inland was not as dry as in 2010.

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Plate 95. Blackbirds feeding on sandhoppers. © Derek Robertson