



Plates 82–83. Red-rumped Swallow, possible subspecies *japonica/daurica*, Talisker, Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, 17–29 June 2011. © Ian Fulton

## Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2011

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on behalf of the Scottish Birds Records Committee

This is the fourth annual report of the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC), covering 2011. Previous reports have covered the periods 2005–08, 2009 and 2010 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012).

Several changes to record assessment have been agreed this year. Great White Egret *Ardea alba*, Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* and Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* are now considered sufficiently numerous that assessment is delegated to a local level for records from 1 January 2013. Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* will be assessed locally from the same date (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012). Similarly, due to an increase in occurrences in Britain, the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) will no longer assess records of Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* (<http://www.bbrc.org.uk/514>); accordingly, from 1 January 2013 records of Glossy Ibis will be reviewed by SBRC. For a summary of these changes, see Appendix 2.

In this report we give details of a late acceptance of an Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca* in Orkney from 2008, which becomes Scotland's first.

In 2011, two species had their highest ever annual totals. There were three Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea*, which had not been recorded for nine years, and five Black Kites *Milvus migrans*, which have been more or less annual in recent years.

As assessment of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* and Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* is now undertaken locally, these species only appear due to late acceptance of records for the Outer Hebrides in 2007 and 2008 respectively. A Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*, seen first on Orkney and then on Skye in 2011, is possibly an Eastern Palearctic subspecies. This potential occurrence of a subspecies new to Britain is under consideration by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC).

In 2011, there were no accepted Scottish records of Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* for a second successive year. There have been no records of Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* since 2008, making this the longest blank period since 1981–84; and there were no occurrences of Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* in 2011, making this only the third blank year since 1990.

In 2011, as in previous years, the Northern Isles accounted for most Scottish records of songbirds on the SBRC list. Only 20 of 94 individuals newly recorded in 2011 were seen outwith the Northern Isles, and only nine of these were on the mainland. Two species (Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* and Water Pipit) accounted for seven of the nine mainland sightings.

### Format of the report

The species accounts in the report follow a standard format, which is modelled on the annual BBRC reports published in *British Birds*. Nomenclature and taxonomic sequence follow the *Scottish List* (Forrester 2013).

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 *Emberiza hortulana*, numbers seen in the past were so great that totals have not been estimated.
- Total number of birds in Scotland during the period 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 (2011).

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted Scottish records for 2011, 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-2011 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-2011 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 2011).
- Recording area ([www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-records-network/](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-records-network/)).
- 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. 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. Appendix 2 summarises the involvement of different committees in the assessment of the taxa on the SBRC list. Appendix 3 lists minor corrections to previous SBRC reports.

### 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), John Bowler, Mark Chapman, Hywel Maggs, John Nadin, Martin Scott and John Sweeney, with Chris McNerny as non-voting secretary and Bob McGowan as non-voting museum consultant. Martin Scott replaced Tristan ap Rheinallt 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 McNerny and Roger Riddington. For more information about SBRC, see ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a) and [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/records-committee/](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/records-committee/).

### 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, Paul Collin, Jon Cook, Martin Cook, Jim Dickson, Iain English, Keith Gillon, Angus Hogg, Hugh Insley, Hywel Maggs, Ray Murray, David Parnaby, Scott Paterson, Chris Pendlebury, Mike Pennington, Brian Rabbitts, David Parnaby, Malcolm Ware, Stephen Welch, Jim Williams, and Val Wilson. 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 appreciate Keith Naylor's scrutiny of past and current SBRC reports and thank him for his valuable comments. 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.

## Systematic list of accepted records

### Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

0: 3: 0

**Table 1.** Additional records of Egyptian Goose in Scotland, 2010 and 2008.

**2010: North-east Scotland** Meikle Loch & Ythan estuary, 27 March (J. & T. Nichols *et al.*).

**2008: Orkney** Little Green Holm, 30 June (A.J. Leitch, E.R. Meek *et al.*); same, Loons, Mainland, 7 November (W. Herkel *et al.*).

Egyptian Goose was only recently added to Category C of the *Scottish List*, following the occurrence of an adult at several sites on Mainland Shetland in February and March 2010 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012).

The observation of a bird in North-east Scotland came just two days after the last sighting in Shetland, and may relate to the same individual. However, as late winter and early spring is the time when migrants of presumed continental origin are seen in southern England (Riddington 2011), there could well have been more than one bird at large in Scotland in March 2010.

The Orkney individual was seen two years prior to these records and thus becomes the first for Scotland. Like the Shetland individual, it was apparently a long-stayer, although only reported on two dates six months apart.

All three of these sightings are considered more likely to relate to birds from feral populations rather than escapes from captivity.

(Breeds throughout Africa south of 20°N latitude, extending farther north into southern Egypt, the only part of its natural range to fall 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: 131: 17

**Table 2.** Accepted records of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2011, with additional records for 2010.

**2011: Argyll** Aird, Tiree, adult, 18 October (J. Bowler).

**Highland** Sròn na Cleite, Melvaig, Ross & Cromarty, adult or third-calendar-year, 9 April (K.A. & K.D. Shaw *et al.*).

**Highland** Loch Ewe, Ross & Cromarty, adult or third-calendar-year, 9 April (K.A. & K.D. Shaw *et al.*).

**Highland** Gruinard Island, Ross & Cromarty, adult or third-calendar-year, 10 April (K.A. & K.D. Shaw *et al.*).

**Moray & Nairn** Burghead, up to three, including one adult, 20 April to 8 May (A. Guthrie, M.J.H. Cook *et al.*).

**North-east Scotland** Portsoy, up to five, including three adults, 21–30 April, photo (C. Gibbins, H.E. Maggs, P.A. Osborn *et al.*).

**Orkney** Tor Ness, North Ronaldsay, second-calendar-year, 28 March (M.D. Warren).

**Orkney** Broch of Gurness, Evie, Mainland, adult, 7 June, photo (G. Hogg *et al.*).

**Orkney** Kirk Sound & Holm Sound, Mainland, juvenile, 12 December (K.E. Hague).



**Plate 84.** White-billed Diver, adult, Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 14–16 November 2011. © Steve Duffield

**Outer Hebrides** Port Nis (Port of Ness) & Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta), Lewis, 2–5 May, photo (B.A.E. Marr *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Peighinn nan Aoireann (Peninerine), South Uist, adult, 14–16 November, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

**Shetland** Bluemull Sound, adult (returning), 26 January 2011 (B.H. Thomason); same, 7 November (B.H. Thomason).

**Shetland** South Nesting Bay, Kirkabister, Mainland, adult (returning), 7 February to 4 May (J. Dunn *et al.*).

**2010: Moray & Nairn** Burghead, two adults and one immature, 14 April to 3 May (R. Proctor, A. Saunder *et al.*).

**Shetland** Bluemull Sound, 3 October (M. Garner, B.H. Thomason *et al.*).

White-billed Diver is a scarce visitor to Scotland, with ten or more birds being reported each year since 2003. Most are seen in Shetland, Orkney, the Outer Hebrides and Highland, with some preferred localities being used each year in spring as presumed stop-overs between wintering and summering areas. In Shetland, a small number of wintering individuals are believed to return to the same sites in successive years.

The number and spatial distribution of records in 2011 conforms to the pattern seen in previous years, with a preponderance of birds in Highland and the islands in spring. However, the observation of small groups at Portsoy (North-east Scotland) and Burghead (Moray & Nairn) is a new phenomenon, although the additional 2010 record reported here suggests that at least one of these two locations could be a regular spring stop-over. All 22 accepted records from Moray & Nairn and North-east Scotland prior to 2010 involved single birds, with the exception of two at Peterhead (North-east Scotland) in October 1998.

The late acceptance of a record from Orkney in 2005, involving a single bird at Inganess Bay, Mainland (Hudson *et al.* 2011), brings the total for that year to 27 birds.

(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 borealis***

c. 228: 23: 1

**Table 3.** Accepted records of Cory's Shearwater in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 2005.

**2011: Lothian** Dunbar, 17 September (K. Gillon *et al.*).

**2005: Angus & Dundee** Scurdle Ness, 21 August (S. Busuttill).

Cory's Shearwater is recorded near-annually in Scottish waters, with most birds seen off North Ronaldsay (Orkney) and the Outer Hebrides. Although ap Rheinnallt *et al.* (2010a) reported a marked increase in sightings from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, numbers since appear to have decreased, with no more than two birds seen annually between 2007 and 2011.

The Angus & Dundee and Lothian individuals reported here were the sixth and eighth respectively for the recording areas and occurred during the peak autumn period for this species in Scotland.

(Breeds on the Azores, Canary Islands and other nearby Atlantic islands, with the closely related Scopoli's Shearwater *C. diomedea* breeding in the Mediterranean. Both species can occur in North Atlantic waters in autumn and are on the *British List*, 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): 9,214: 3

(excluding 'at sea' records)

**Table 4.** Accepted records of Great Shearwater in Scotland, 2011.

**2011: Orkney** Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 27 August (P.J. Donnelly).

**Orkney** Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, 9 September (M.D. Warren).

**Outer Hebrides** Rubha Aird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvue), South Uist, 2 September (J.B. Kemp).

Great Shearwater was a rare bird in Scotland throughout most of its recorded history up to 2004, but its perceived status appeared to be in need of revision following the large number of sightings during 2005–07. Since then, however, no more than six birds have been recorded in any one year, if 'at sea' records are discounted.

This underlines the exceptional nature of the influxes witnessed in the mid-2000s.

This species is almost exclusively an autumn visitor to Scotland, with most sightings from islands in the north and west. The three birds reported in 2011 are typical in terms of date and location.

(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: 20: 6**

**Table 5.** Accepted records of Continental Cormorant in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 2010.

- 2011: **Lothian** Seafield Pond, adult, 22 April to 8 May, photo (M.A. Wilkinson).  
**Lothian** Musselburgh, two (including one adult), 22 July, photo (I.J. Andrews).  
**North-east Scotland** Ythan estuary, adult, 17 August, photo (P.R. Massey).  
**Shetland** Loch of Hillwell, Mainland, adult, 29 May, photo (R. Riddington).  
**Shetland** Scatness, Mainland, first-summer, 1–3 June, photo (R. Riddington).  
2010: **Lothian** Musselburgh, adult, 21 July to 8 August, photo (G. Morgan).

Continental Cormorant is a rare visitor to Scotland, with most records along the east coast or in Shetland between the months of December and June. As recently as the beginning of 2007, there were only three accepted Scottish records, but there have been several sightings each year since then and claims of Continental Cormorant from 1 January 2013 will no longer be assessed by SBRC (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012; see also Appendix 2).

With the addition of the six birds reported here from 2011 and the late acceptance of one in Lothian in 2010, the total number of individuals in Scotland becomes 28. Of these, half (14) were seen either on Mainland Shetland or at Musselburgh (Lothian). This unusual distribution pattern is likely to be a consequence of the activities of the small number of observers who have taken an interest in this taxon.

Nevertheless, as Continental Cormorant is a visitor from the Continent it is not surprising that sightings on the east side of Scotland predominate. To date, the only bird observed in the western half of the country was an individual at Prince's Dock, Glasgow (Clyde), in December 2005 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a).

(*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: 7: 0**

**Table 6.** Additional record of Night-heron in Scotland, 2010.

- 2010: **Outer Hebrides** Creag Ghoraidh (Creagorry), Benbecula, adult, 22–23 June, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Night Heron is a less-than-annual visitor to Scotland, with a spring peak corresponding to presumed continental overshoots and a scattering of sightings through the rest of the year. There is a wide geographical spread but the most likely areas of occurrence in Scotland are the south, the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebrides. In the past this picture was clouded by the existence of a free-flying colony of Night Herons at Edinburgh Zoo (Lothian), but the number of free-flying birds in Scotland has decreased over the past decade or so.

There were no Scottish records of this species in 2011. The 2010 Benbecula individual reported here is the first since 2008, when there was a spring bird in North Uist (also Outer Hebrides).

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



**Plate 85.** Cattle Egret, Loch Stiapabhat (Stiapavat), Lewis, Outer Hebrides, 29 September 2011. © Tony Marr



**Plate 86.** Great White Egret, Balnamoon Farm, Brechin, Angus & Dundee, 12–16 December 2011. © Jon Cook

### Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 3: 4: 2

**Table 7.** Accepted records of Cattle Egret in Scotland, 2011.

**2011:** Argyll Croig, Mull, 27 October (R. Atkinson, B.A. & S. Fuller); same, Whitehouse & Hough, Tiree, 17–25 November, photo (J. Bowler *et al.*).  
Outer Hebrides Loch Stiapabhat (Stiapavat), Lewis, 29 September, photo (B.A.E. Marr *et al.*).

Although Cattle Egret now has a tentative foothold in southern England as a breeding species (Holling *et al.* 2012), it remains very rare in Scotland, with just seven records to the end of 2010. Both birds in 2011 were seen on islands in the west of the country, and indeed it is possible that all the sightings relate to a single wandering individual.

Of the nine accepted individuals to the end of 2011, five were on islands and four on the mainland. Argyll and the Outer Hebrides account for four of the island birds, with the fifth in Shetland, while the mainland sightings come from Dumfries & Galloway (two birds), Angus & Dundee, and Caithness.

(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: 33: 9

**Table 8.** Accepted records of Great White Egret in Scotland, 2011, with additional records for 2010 and 2009.

**2011:** Angus & Dundee Loch of Kinnordy, 5–8 June, photo (A. Guthrie *et al.*).  
Angus & Dundee Montrose Basin, 21–27 November, photo (T. Craig, C. Twister *et al.*).  
Angus & Dundee Balnamoon Farm, Brechin, 12–16 December, photo (J. Bardner, J. Cook *et al.*).  
Argyll Inveraray, 21 May (P. Daw).  
Highland Tain Bay, Ross & Cromarty, 21 May, photo (D. & H. McAllister, B. Urquhart *et al.*).  
Moray & Nairn Between Tugnet & Bogmoor, 27 November 2010 to 22 February (see below).  
Perth & Kinross Carsebreck Loch, 26 October (M. Bell).  
Shetland Various locations, Whalsay, two, 24 October to 5 November, with one remaining to 31 December, photo (J. Dunn, J.L. Irvine, B. Marshall, N. Poleson *et al.*); Out Skerries, same as one of Whalsay birds, 6–19 November, photo (E. Tait *et al.*).  
Upper Forth Kinneil Lagoon, 26 October, photo (C. Smith).  
**2010:** Moray & Nairn Between Tugnet & Bogmoor, 9 January to 1 May, photo (M.J.H. Cook, D. Spencer *et al.*); probably same, 27 November to 22 February 2011, photo (I.P. Green *et al.*).  
**2009:** Argyll Sound of Islay, 16 October (S. Pinder).

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 individuals move from site to site.

The nine birds seen in 2011 do not match the total for 2009 (15, with the addition of the late acceptance reported here) but exceed the number seen in any other year to date. They include the first for the Perth & Kinross recording area. Further increase can be expected in future for a species whose recent expansion in western and central Europe has been described as ‘amazing’, with breeding confirmed for the first time in England in 2012 (Pitches 2012).

Note that the record of a Great White Egret at Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, in December 2009 was inadvertently repeated in the following year’s report (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011, 2012). The required downward adjustment in the species totals is offset by the additional 2009 bird reported here, and the addition of a further new bird from 2010 increases the total number of Scottish records to the end of 2010 by one to 70.

As from 1 January 2013, records of this species in Scotland will be assessed locally rather than by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

(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.)

### Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* 22: 0: 3

**Table 9.** Accepted records of Purple Heron in Scotland, 2011.

<b>2011:</b> <b>Fife</b> Mountcastle Quarry, 10 April, photo (N. Elkins <i>et al.</i> ).
<b>Moray &amp; Nairn</b> Loch Spynie, second-calendar-year, 19–25 April (A. Bowie, D.A. Gibson <i>et al.</i> ).
<b>Shetland</b> Mires of Funzie, Fetlar, second-calendar-year, female found dead, 20 April; specimen at National Museums Scotland (NMS.Z.2013.87) (M.I. Smith).

Purple Heron is a very rare visitor to Scotland, with a peak of sightings in spring (May and June), and the majority of the remainder occurring in September and October. The 22 birds recorded between the first sighting in 1872 and the end of 2010 were split almost equally between the mainland (12 birds) and islands (ten). Most of the mainland records come from the east side of the country, especially Lothian and North-east Scotland, while on the islands there have been sightings in the Outer Hebrides, Orkney, Fair Isle and Shetland.

The three 2011 individuals reported here, all seen in April, are the first in Scotland since 2002 and the most ever seen in a single year. It is tempting to link this with the increase in numbers farther south that culminated in the first confirmed breeding of this species in England in 2010 (Holling *et al.* 2012). As for some other rare herons and egrets, we may witness a sustained increase in sightings in the future.

**Plate 87.** Purple Heron, second-calendar-year, Mires of Funzie, Fetlar, Shetland, 20 April 2011. © Malcie Smith





(Breeds from western Europe across to south-east Asia, and also in sub-Saharan Africa, where Western Palearctic populations winter. These populations belong to the nominate subspecies *purpurea*, with two other subspecies breeding in Madagascar and the eastern part of the range respectively.)

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans* 19: 8: 5**

**Table 10.** Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 2010.

- 2011: North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, 8–9 May (T.W. Marshall *et al.*).  
**North-east Scotland** Miltonhaven, St Cyrus, 10 June (P.A.A. Baxter, P.D. Bloor).  
**Orkney** Observatory, North Ronaldsay, second-calendar-year, 2 May, photo (M.D. Warren *et al.*).  
**Orkney** Fara, Scapa Flow & Tankerness, Mainland, 28–29 May (A. Upton, K.E. Hague *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Various locations, Yell, Unst and Whalsay, 5–9 May, photo (R.M. Tallack, R.J. Brookes, J.L. Irvine *et al.*).  
**2010: Highland** Port Rìgh (Portree), Isle of Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, 30 May, photo (D. Brown per R. McMillan).

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*.

Including the late acceptance reported here, more birds (four) were seen in Scotland in 2010 than in any previous year. However, this total was exceeded in 2011, when five individuals were observed, equivalent to the total for the seven-year period from 2003 to 2009. It remains to be seen whether the recent steep increase will be maintained.

In line with the majority of previous records, all the sightings reported here were during May or early June. All were in recording areas with multiple previous sightings.

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



**Plate 88.** Montagu's Harrier, first-summer female, Sumburgh Farm, Mainland, Shetland, 9–17 May 2011. © Roger Riddington

**Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus* 45: 2: 1**  
(excluding young from known Scottish nests)

**Table 11.** Accepted records of Montagu's Harrier in Scotland, 2011.

- 2011: Shetland** Sumburgh Farm, Mainland, first-summer female, 9–17 May, photo (R. Riddington *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 47 birds to the end of 2010 excludes fledged young from these breeding attempts.

Perhaps surprisingly, there had only been two sightings in Shetland prior to 2011, both involving males on Mainland in May: one at Spiggie in 1954 and another at Sumburgh in 1982. As described by Riddington (2012), the identification of the 2011 individual was arrived at in retrospect from photographic evidence, several months after the sighting. This highlights the fact that harrier identification is difficult, and also perhaps that expectations regarding Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* might be leading today's observers to overlook Montagu's when considering the possibilities for a ring-tailed bird that does not look right for Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*.

(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): 30: 10

**Table 12.** Accepted records of Rough-legged Buzzard in Scotland, 2011.

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- 2011: **Fair Isle** Swey, second-winter, 12–13 November, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, adult, 27 April (D. Funnell).  
**North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, juvenile, 28–29 October, photo (N. Littlewood *et al.*).  
**Orkney** Harray & Rendall, Mainland, juvenile, 13–20 October, photo (B. & J. Wright *et al.*).  
**Orkney** Stembister, Toab & Langskaill, Tankerness, Mainland, second-winter, 17–24 November, photo (K.E. Hague).  
**Shetland** Valla Field, Collaster, Burrafirth & Colvadale, Unst, juvenile, 29 December 2010 to at least 23 March, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2012).  
**Shetland** Valla Field, Collaster, Burrafirth & Colvadale, Unst, juvenile, 1 January to at least 23 March, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al.*); this or the bird present since 29 December 2010 remained to 8 April.  
**Shetland** Toft & Dales Lees, Mainland, juvenile, 5 January to 9 May, photo (M.S. Chapman, J. Laurensen, B.H. Thomason *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Laxobigging, Mainland, juvenile, 5 November to 2012, photo (M.S. Chapman *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Isbister, Houll & Vatshoull, Whalsay, juvenile, 18–21 November, photo (J.L. Irvine, B. Marshall *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Hill of Caldback, Unst, 1 December (B.H. Thomason).

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.

With ten birds, 2011 is the first year since 1994 for which the Scottish total reached double figures, although this was a regular occurrence in the 1970s and 1980s. As usual, the majority of sightings were in late autumn, with the Northern Isles accounting for all but two of the birds seen. Two individuals wintered on Unst (Shetland) at the beginning of the year, with another apparently doing the same on Mainland Shetland at the end of the year.

It is possible that some of the autumn records involve repeat sightings of migrants on their way south, and thus the actual number of individuals involved could be fewer than ten.

As from 1 January 2013, records of this species in Scotland will be assessed locally rather than by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

(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: 12: 0

**Table 13.** Additional record of Red-footed Falcon in Scotland, 2007.

- 
- 2007: **Highland** Bundalloch, Dornie, Skye & Lochalsh, adult female, 20–27 October, video (S. Reekie).

Red-footed Falcon is mainly a rare late-spring migrant to Scotland, with most sightings coming from Shetland, Orkney and North-east Scotland. Although it is not quite annual, since the late 1960s there has been at least one sighting every other year, with the exception of the three-year period 1986–88, when no birds were seen.

Following three birds in 2010, there were none in 2011. However, the late acceptance for 2007, reported here, increases the total for that year to two birds. This was the first record for Skye & Lochalsh and also one of the few late-autumn sightings of this species in Scotland.

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

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus***

29: 2: 0

An adjustment is made here to the total number of accepted records to the end of 2004. Details of an occurrence on Stronsay (Orkney) in 1998 were not submitted to SBRC, and the total is reduced from 30 to 29 (see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2011).

**American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica***

72: 69: -

**Table 14.** Additional record of American Golden Plover in Scotland, 2007.

- 
- 2007: **Outer Hebrides** Ormaclait (Ormaclate), South Uist, juvenile, 15–20 October (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

American Golden Plover is a scarce, but annual, visitor to Scotland from the Nearctic, seen mostly on islands, particularly the Outer Hebrides, during September and October.

As from 1 January 2010, records of this species in Scotland have been assessed locally rather than by SBRC (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012).

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

### **Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

15: 2: 1

**Table 15.** Accepted record of Kentish Plover in Scotland, 2011.

2011: **Lothian** Tynninghame, female, 18–19 April (J. Ellison *et al.*).

Kentish Plover is a very rare migrant to Scotland. Most records come from the east coast of the mainland on sandy beaches, and nearly all have been in spring, with just one winter record.

Lothian remains the recording area with most observations (seven), with the beaches of Aberlady and Tynninghame being the favoured sites for this species.

(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.)

### **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

69: 46: 16

**Table 16.** Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2011.

2011: **Argyll** Gott Bay, Tiree, adult, 4 August, photo (J. Bowler).

**Argyll** The Reef, Tiree, adult, 15 September, photo (J. Bowler).

**Lothian** Musselburgh, adult, 30 September to 4 October, photo (D. Allan *et al.*).

**Moray & Nairn** Hopeman, adult, 23 September, photo (M.J.H. Cook *et al.*).

**North-east Scotland** Ythan estuary, adult, 29 July, photo (C. Gibbins *et al.*).

**North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, 19 August (D. Funnell).

**Outer Hebrides** Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvue), South Uist, adult, 15 September, photo (S.E. Duffield, J.B. Kemp).

**Outer Hebrides** Cille Pheadair (Kilpheder), South Uist, adult, 21–22 September, photo (J.B. Kemp *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Geirinis (Gerinish), South Uist, 7–8 October, photo (A. Hogg *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides**, Còig Peighinnean (Fivepenny), Ness, Lewis, juvenile, 10 October, photo (B.A.E. Marr, M. Shrubbs).

**Outer Hebrides** Bornais (Bornish), South Uist, juvenile, 10–11 October, photo (S.E. Duffield, J.B. Kemp *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Còig Peighinnean (Fivepenny), Ness, Lewis, juvenile, 15–18 October, photo (B.A.E. Marr, M.S. Scott *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Baile Gharbhaidh (Balgava), South Uist, juvenile, 20–22 October (S.E. Duffield).

**Outer Hebrides** Orasaigh (Orasay), South Uist, juvenile, 6–9 November, photo (S.E. Duffield, J.B. Kemp *et al.*).

**Perth & Kinross** Loch Leven, adult, 13 October, photo (N.F. Mitchell, J.J. Squire).

**Shetland** Fetlar, 31 May (M. Devine, M.I. Smith).

White-rumped Sandpiper is a scarce but annual visitor to Scotland from North America, with most observations in autumn in the Hebrides.

Following an influx of 27 birds in 2005, reported occurrences declined with just two birds in 2009 and a single in 2010. But numbers then increased again with 16 seen in 2011. These annual fluctuations reflect the incidence of westerly weather patterns across the North Atlantic during peak migration times, both for adults principally in August/September, and juveniles in October/November. The rarity of spring records reflects the species' migration routes: in autumn, the birds follow a western Atlantic route to South America, but in spring they move north through inland North America (Cramp & Simmons 1983).

Two mainland records possibly refer to the same individual: photographs of the adult birds observed in Lothian and Perth & Kinross show close plumage similarities.

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



Plate 89. White-winged Black Tern, Ancum Loch, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 9–10 July 2011. © Richard Else

**White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus* 59: 11: 2**

Table 17. Accepted records of White-winged Black Tern in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 2010.

- 2011: Fair Isle Setter, adult, 16 July, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).
- Orkney Ancum Loch, North Ronaldsay, 9–10 July, photo (P.A. Brown, R.J. Else *et al.*).
- 2010: Perth & Kinross Vane Farm, juvenile, 22 August, photo (G. Sparshott *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. The records from 2011 and 2010 fit into 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.)

**Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* 132: 31: -**

Table 18. Additional record of Ring-billed Gull in Scotland, 2008.

- 2008: Outer Hebrides Loch Sanndaraigh, North Uist, adult, 22 April to 4 May, photo (B. Rabbitts *et al.*).

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

The 2008 bird reported here was the only one seen in the Outer Hebrides that year.

As with American Golden Plover, 2009 was the last year that records of Ring-billed Gull were assessed by SBRC (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012).

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

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis* 12: 7: 3**

Table 19. Accepted records of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland, 2011.

- 2011: Ayrshire Doonfoot, adult, 1 March (A. Hogg).
- Dumfries & Galloway Loch Ryan, second-summer, 26 July to 5 August, photo (P. Berry, P.N. Collin *et al.*).
- Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a’ Mhuile (Rubha Ardvue), South Uist, second-summer, 9 May, photo (A. Stevenson).

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

The Loch Ryan individual was the first accepted record for Dumfries & Galloway, and the South Uist individual the first for the Outer Hebrides. All records in 2011 were in the west of Scotland.

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

### Alpine Swift *Apus melba* 34: 2: 1

**Table 20.** Accepted records of Alpine Swift in Scotland, 2011.

**2011: Shetland** Laxo, Mail & Cunningsburgh, Mainland, 29 September to 2 October, photo (D. Gray, C. Green, N.W. Hagley, S. Meredith, M. Potts *et al.* per Local Recorder).

Alpine Swift is a very rare visitor to Scotland, seen usually 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, and thus the 2011 Shetland individual, which remained for several days, was exceptional.

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



**Plate 91.** Alpine Swift, Laxo, Mail & Cunningsburgh, Mainland, Shetland, 29 September to 2 October 2011. © Jim Wood

Woodchat Shrike is a rare, almost annual, passage migrant to Scotland. Most occurrences involve juveniles seen in the Northern Isles in autumn. However, in 2011 three individuals were observed in spring, between 6 May and 29 June.

(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.)



**Plate 90.** Woodchat Shrike, adult male, Port Nis (Port of Ness), Lewis, Outer Hebrides, 6–7 May 2011. © Tony Marr

### Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* 86: 8: 3

**Table 21.** Accepted records of Woodchat Shrike in Scotland, 2011.

**2011: Fair Isle** Various locations, female, 14–16 June, photo (W.T.S. Miles, S. Money *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Port Nis (Port of Ness), Lewis, male, 6–7 May, photo (B.A.E. Marr *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Cladach Bhàlaigh (Claddach Vallay) & Solas (Sollas), North Uist, male, 10–29 June, photo (N. Thomas, J. Wilkinson, B. Rabbitts *et al.*).

### Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* 286: 44: 8

**Table 22.** Accepted records of Short-toed Lark in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 23.

**2011: Argyll** Oronsay, 1–5 October, photo (M.A. Peacock *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 fourth successive year, there was a sighting of this species away from the Northern Isles. The Oronsay bird was the third for Argyll, following autumn birds on Tiree in 2008 and 2010.

Another seven 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 three months.

**Table 23.** Summary of accepted records of Short-toed Lark in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	2	13 May	7 Aug–7 Oct
Orkney	-	2	-	21 Sep–3 Nov
Shetland	1	1	20 Jun–7 Jul	18 Sep

Annual totals in Scotland reached double figures on five occasions during the 1990s but have only done so twice since (2006 and 2010), although the total during 2011 is one of the four largest in the last decade. The spring arrival in Shetland represents a notable late date.

(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): 14: 4

**Table 24.** Accepted records of Woodlark in Scotland, 2011.

- 2011: **Orkney** Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, 9 October (M.D. Warren).  
**Shetland** Hamister, Whalsay, 10–26 April, photo (J.L. Irvine *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Upper Sound, Lerwick, Mainland, 27 October, photo (D. Coutts, E. Manson per Local Recorder).  
**Shetland** Skaw, Unst, 14 November to 16 January 2012, photo (R.J. Brookes *et al.*).

Woodlark is a rare bird in Scotland, mostly found in late autumn and early winter in the Northern Isles. There has been one instance of attempted breeding, in Angus & Dundee in 1993 (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

All four of the 2011 records were from the Northern Isles, with three of them being in autumn. One individual remained to winter, a phenomenon which has been observed in Scotland previously (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

Of the 18 birds seen in Scotland during the period 2005–11, 16 have been in the Northern Isles and only two elsewhere (in Lothian and Highland).

(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: 23: 5

**Table 25.** Accepted records of Red-rumped Swallow in Scotland, 2011.

- 2011: **Argyll** Ballygown, Mull, 5 July (C.J. Smith).  
**Fair Isle** Kirki Geo, 3 May, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**Orkney** Lady, Sanday, 9 June, photo (S.R. & T. Thorne *et al.*); same **Highland** Talisker, Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, 17–29 June, photo (I. Fulton, S. & R. Hamilton).  
**Outer Hebrides** Butt of Lewis & Loch Stiapabhat (Stiapavat), Lewis, 9–11 May, photo (B.A.E. Marr *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Loch of Hillwell, Mainland, adult, 19–21 July, photo (R.M. Fray *et al.*).

Red-rumped Swallow is observed in Scotland annually in small though increasing numbers from April through to November, mainly along the east coast and on islands. This recent increase is thought to reflect a northward expansion of the Continental breeding range.

Almost all occurrences are thought to relate to the Western Palearctic subspecies *rufula*, the closest breeding populations of which are in France. However, an individual found on Sanday (Orkney) and then remarkably refound at Talisker, Skye, in June 2011 showed the characteristics of an Eastern Palearctic subspecies, either *japonica* or *daurica* (Thorne 2011). This bird's subspecific identity is currently being considered by BBRC and BOURC.

(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: 24: 6

**Table 26.** Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 27.

2011: **North-east Scotland** Collieston, 24–25 August, photo (P. Stronach *et al.*).

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

With the single bird at Collieston, North-east Scotland maintains an impressive track record for this early-autumn migrant, accounting for all but one of the nine Scottish records away from the Northern Isles during 2005–2011.

In Scotland, Greenish Warbler has a consistently narrow spread of arrival dates in both spring and autumn, and the dates reported for 2011 are typical.

**Table 27.** Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	-	9–10 Jun	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	-	4	-	14 Aug–18 Sep



**Plate 92.** Greenish Warbler, Collieston, North-east Scotland, 24–25 August 2011. © Peter Stronach

(*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 Two-barred Greenish Warbler *P. t. plumbeitarsus* from eastern Siberia in England.)



**Plate 93.** Dusky Warbler, Cliffturn Gully, Arbroath, Angus & Dundee, 27–30 October 2011. © Jon Cook

**Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus***  
60: 12: 11

**Table 28.** Accepted records of Dusky Warbler in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 29.

2011: **Angus & Dundee** Cliffturn Gully, Arbroath, 27–28 October, then two 29–30 October, photo (S.R. Green, R. Bramhall, D. Douglas *et al.*).

**Isle of May** First-winter, 14 November, photo (M. Newell *et al.*).

**North-east Scotland** Balmedie, 4–12 November, photo (C. Gibbins *et al.*).

**North-east Scotland** Girdle Ness, 15 November (A.J. Whitehouse).

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 four records in eastern Scotland in 2011 were the first outside the Northern Isles since 2005. The occurrence in Angus & Dundee was the first for the recording area, and the first time in Scotland that two birds have been seen in the same place at the same time. The Isle of May registered its second Dusky Warbler, following the first in 1985. The two birds in North-east Scotland doubled the total for the recording area.

In addition, six individuals were observed in the Northern Isles between mid-October and mid-November. The total of eleven birds in one year is a record for Scotland, the previous highest number being eight in 1993.

**Table 29.** Accepted records of Dusky Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	-	-	-
Orkney	-	2	-	27 Oct–3 Nov
Shetland	-	4	-	14 Oct–15 Nov

(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: 38: 10

**Table 30.** Accepted records of Subalpine Warbler (excluding the subspecies *albistriata*) in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 31.

2011: Outer Hebrides Greinetobht (Grenitote), North Uist, 22–29 April, photo (J. Boyle, S.E Duffield *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 of nominate *cantillans*, and birds not assigned to any particular subspecies, are assessed locally. Scottish claims of any other subspecies are assessed by BBRC.

**Table 31.** Accepted records of Subalpine Warbler (excluding *albistriata*), in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	2	-	24 Apr–31 May	-
Orkney	2	-	25 Apr–5 May	-
Shetland	2	-	24 Apr–5 May	-

There were ten accepted records of this species in Scotland in 2011, comprising seven *cantillans* or individuals not assigned to subspecies (above), and three *albistriata*: in Shetland in April and in May/June, and on Fair Isle for a prolonged period from late April to

early June (Hudson *et al.* 2012). Thus the bird at Greinetobht (Grenitote) was the only Subalpine Warbler seen away from the Northern Isles during the year, and the first in the Outer Hebrides since 2008.

Turning to previous years, the totals have been adjusted as a result of several recent acceptances, all relating to the Northern Isles. Four pre-2011 acceptances of *albistriata* were published by Hudson *et al.* (2012); in Shetland in May 2010, Orkney in May 2009, and Shetland in May 2006 (two birds). In addition, a claimed *albistriata* from Scousburgh, Mainland (Shetland), 19 May 2009, is now accepted as a Subalpine Warbler of undetermined subspecies (*Shetland Bird Report 2011*). Finally, a bird of the subspecies *cantillans* at Wester Quarff, Mainland (Shetland) on 20 May 2008, published in the *Shetland Bird Report 2008* as a pending record, has been accepted (M.S. Chapman, *in litt.*); this was within the date range for other Shetland records that year (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010b).

(*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: 4: 2

**Table 32.** Accepted records of Melodious Warbler in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 1998.

2011: Fair Isle Auld Haa, 26 August, photo (W.T.S. Miles, D. Parnaby *et al.*).

Fair Isle Schoolton to Shirva, first-winter, 12 September to 3 October, photo (W.T.S. Miles *et al.*).

1998: Orkney Netherstove, Deerness, Mainland, first-winter, 26 September (K.E. Hague).

Melodious Warbler is a very rare spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, recorded in most years but not all: for example, 2001, 2004, 2005 and 2009 were blank years. About three-quarters of occurrences have been in the Northern Isles, with almost identical totals for the three recording areas. This species has not been recorded in Scotland outwith Fair Isle and Shetland since 2003.





**Plate 94.** *Melodious Warbler*, Schoolton to Shirva, Fair Isle, first-winter, 12 September to 3 October 2011. © Larry Dalziel

The late August to early October dates for the birds reported here are typical for autumn Melodious Warblers. Most in Scotland have stayed for no more than a few days, though birds in the last ten years have been recorded over longer periods. This may be a reflection of observer effort. The Fair Isle individual in 2011 lingered for 22 days, still some way short of the 44-day record set by a bird in Shetland in autumn 2007.

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

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***  
many: c. 193: 16

**Table 33.** Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 34.

2011: Isle of May 7 June, trapped, photo (J. Conner, L. Swift).

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 and these are assessed locally.

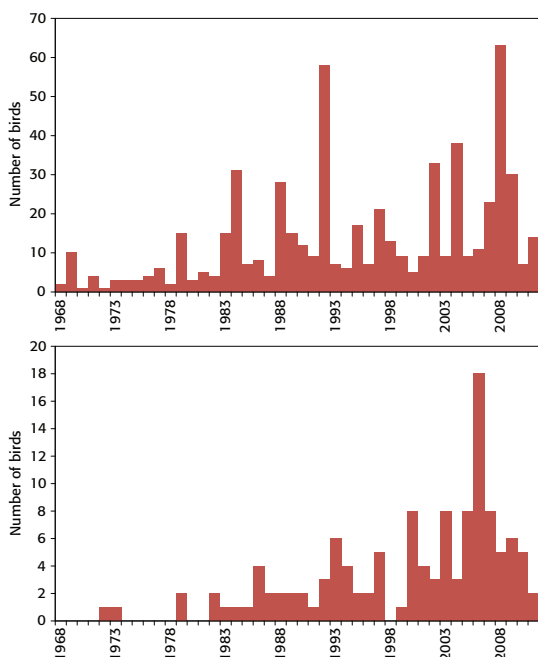
For the second successive year there were no records on the Scottish mainland. The bird trapped on the Isle of May occurred at a typical period for this species on the island.

**Table 34.** Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	7	-	26 May–21 Jun	-
Orkney	2	1	18 Jun–1 Jul	31 Aug
Shetland	4	1	31 May–5 Jul	6–8 Sep

Fewer Marsh Warblers were recorded in the Northern Isles in 2010 (12 birds) and 2011 (15) than in the previous few years. The fluctuating annual abundance of this species is related, for spring birds at least, 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). Most occurrences in 2011 involved birds that stayed for no more than a few days. The exception was a singing male that was present from 11 June to 5 July on Unst (Shetland), where breeding was confirmed in 2005 and 2008 (ap Rheinnallt *et al.* 2010b).

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



**Figure 1a–b.** Annual occurrence of Marsh Warbler in Scotland in spring (top) and autumn (below), 1968–2011.



Plate 95. Nightingale, Vaul, Tiree, Argyll, 3–8 September 2011. © Mark Fanshawe

**Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***  
139: 9: 2

**Table 35.** Accepted records of Nightingale in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in the text.

2011: **Argyll** Vaul, Tiree, 3–8 September, photo (K. Gillon *et al.*).

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.

The bird at Vaul was the second for Tiree, following one in May 2004. It was the fourth for Argyll and the first there in autumn, the other records being in April 1973 and May 1989.

In the Northern Isles, claims are assessed locally. In 2011, a late spring arrival was trapped on North Ronaldsay (Orkney) during a brief stay on 17–19 June. Mid- to late June arrivals are rare in Scotland, though the last Orkney record (2002) was also on 17 June.

(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.)

**Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris* 44: 4: 2**

**Table 36.** Accepted records of Tawny Pipit in Scotland, 2011.

2011: **Orkney** Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, 18 August, photo (M.D. Warren *et al.*).

**Shetland** Nestie Voe, Noss, 9–11 May, photo (C. Dodd, G.A. Tyler *et al.*).

Tawny Pipit is a very rare bird in Scotland with just four individuals seen during the period 2005–10, all being presumed spring overshoots on islands.

The North Ronaldsay bird in 2011 was only the third for Orkney, following records on Stronsay in 1988 and North Ronaldsay in 2010. The August date is the earliest autumn occurrence in Scotland to date, the sole other bird in this month being one in Moray & Nairn on 22 August 1988. The Shetland individual was on a typical spring date.

Note that a record in North-east Scotland in 1981, included in Forrester *et al.* (2007), was not accepted by BBRC, and thus the total to the end of 2004 has been reduced by one to 44.

(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.)

**Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus***  
135: 13: 0

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

A review and rejection of records on Fair Isle in 1957 (one) and 1936 (six) (Shaw 2004) was not taken into account by Forrester *et al.* (2007). The total number of birds in Scotland has now been revised accordingly, with the number of records prior to 2005 falling from 142 to 135.

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

**Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* 86: 27: 3**

**Table 37.** Accepted records of Water Pipit in Scotland, 2011, with an additional record for 2010 and a revised record for 2009.

- 2011:** **Ayrshire** Seamill, 29 November 2010 to 28 March, photo (D. Given, A. Hogg *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2012).  
**Clyde** Ardmore Point, Helensburgh, 10 December 2010 to 4 April (see below), another 2 March to 4 April, photo (A.D.W. Tongue *et al.*).  
**Dumfries & Galloway** Wigtown, 6–10 February, photo (G. & A. Chambers *et al.*).  
**Lothian** Barns Ness, 28 October 2010 to 5 April, photo (J. Ellison *et al.*), see also ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2012), but note revised dates; same, 25 October to 2012 (E. Forbes *et al.*).  
**Lothian** Broxmouth, Dunbar, 5 November, photo (K. Gillon, M. Griffin *et al.*).  
**2010:** **Clyde** Ardmore Point, Helensburgh, 10 December to 4 April 2011, photo (A. Nicol *et al.*).  
**2009:** **Perth & Kinross** Vane Farm, 21 November to 6 December, photo (K.D. Shaw, G. Sparshott *et al.*); note revised dates (*cf.* ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012).

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, overwintering by a few individuals, and a secondary peak in spring. The majority of sightings to the end of 2011 were in Ayrshire and Lothian.

Three apparently overwintering birds were present at the beginning of 2011, having been first noted in late 2010. Details of two of these were published by ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2012) and are repeated here for 2011, but the third, a bird first seen in December 2010 in Clyde, was accepted more recently. This individual was joined by a second during March to April 2011. Together, they constitute the sixth and seventh birds for Clyde, and the second occasion that two individuals have been present together in this recording area.

There were two other new records in 2011: a spring bird in Dumfries & Galloway was the second for the recording area (following one in January 2009), and another was observed in Lothian in late autumn.

As from 1 January 2013, records of this species in Scotland will be assessed locally rather than by SBRC (see Appendix 2).

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

**Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni* 366: 60: 1**

**Table 38.** Accepted record of Coues's Redpoll in Scotland, 2011.

- 2011:** **Borders** Bell Wood, Cranshaws, 4–30 January, photo (D. Graham *et al.*).

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 60 birds during 2005–10 were in the Northern Isles, and the majority of them occurred in autumn. Claims of Coues's Redpoll in the Northern Isles are assessed locally.

The Borders bird was the only occurrence of this species accepted in Scotland for 2011. It was just the third record of Arctic Redpoll in Borders. The two previous sightings in this recording area were also in the month of January (1985 and 1996), and all three have been close to Whiteadder Reservoir.

There were no accepted records in 2011 of Hornemann's Redpoll in Scotland (or indeed elsewhere in Great Britain), the first blank year for this taxon in Scotland since 2005 (Hudson *et al.* 2012). Rather than indicating a decline, this apparent decrease may simply reflect the irregular nature of dispersal from the breeding grounds.

One record of Hornemann's Redpoll from Fair Isle in October 2006 was recently accepted by BBRC (Hudson *et al.* 2012). The species total has been adjusted accordingly.

(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: 31: 2**

**Table 39.** Additional record of Ortolan Bunting in Scotland, 2010. Northern Isles records for 2011 are summarised separately in the text.

**2010: Isle of May** First-winter, 22 September, photo (A.W. Lauder, K.M. Morton, M. Osborne *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.

There were only two individuals in Scotland in 2011. One was on North Ronaldsay (Orkney) from 16–21 September and another was on Whalsay (Shetland) on 4 October, both typical dates for autumn migrants. This total is the lowest since the single birds seen in 2004 and 2005. The general trend of declining numbers appears to be continuing.

An additional record for 2010 brings the Scottish total for that year to eight birds. This was the second of two Ortolan Buntings on the Isle of May in September 2010, the first being noted 12 days earlier (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012).

(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: 33: 4**

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 three previous years, the only occurrences in 2011 were in the Northern Isles, where claims of this species are assessed locally. Three birds were seen in spring and one in autumn, all on typical dates.

**Table 40.** Accepted records of Rustic Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	-	21–25 May	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	2	1	15–22 May	4 Oct

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

**Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* 593: 93: 19**

**Table 41.** Accepted records of Little Bunting in Scotland, 2011. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 42.

**2011: Outer Hebrides** Bàgh Shiarabhaigh (North Bay), Barra, 2–10 October, photo (S.L. Rivers *et al.*).

Little Bunting is a scarce though increasingly regular passage migrant to Scotland, mostly in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. 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 2011 correspond well to the established pattern, with all but two of the 19 birds being seen in autumn, and all but one being in the Northern Isles. Only two Little Buntings since 2000 have been on the mainland.

**Table 42.** Accepted records of Little Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2011.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	4	21–25 May	18 Sep–14 Oct
Orkney	-	1	-	18 Sept
Shetland	1	11	7 May	25 Sep–16 Nov

(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.

2011: White-billed Diver Row Head, Sandwick, Mainland, Orkney, 20 April. St Combs, North-east Scotland, 13 November. Cory's Shearwater Dunbar, Lothian, 17 September. Rough-legged Buzzard Loch Assynt, Sutherland, Highland, 25 October. Nightingale Loch Aineort (Eynort), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 9 May. Water Pipit Broughty Ferry, Angus & Dundee, 13 September.

2010: White-billed Diver Burghead, Moray & Nairn, 21 March. Yellow-legged Gull Lossie Estuary, Moray & Nairn, 13-20 March. Alpine Swift RAF Kinloss, Moray & Nairn, 20 May. Continental Cormorant Duddingston Loch, Lothian, 30 January.

## Appendix 2

Summary of assessment of records by the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) and other committees, 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.

2011	2012	2013	
■	■	■	Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</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>
■	■	■	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</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 oedipnemus</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>
■	■	■	Serin <i>Serinus serinus</i>
■	■	■	Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis hornemanni</i> (except <i>C. h. hornemanni</i> )
■	■	■	Hornemann'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/identification-of-scottish-and-parrot-crossbills/](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/identification-of-scottish-and-parrot-crossbills/)); □ = local assessment

### Appendix 3

Corrections to previous SBRC reports:

2006: Nightingale Fair Isle, 16 June 2006 (not 2005).

2009: Caspian Gull Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, North-east Scotland, second-winter, 10 January.

2010: Subalpine Warbler Punds, Foula, Shetland, female, unraced, 26-27 May.

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*Revised ms accepted April 2013*

The advertisement features a dark blue background with several white birds in flight at the top. The main text reads "Wildlife wonders" in large white font, followed by "Zoom in on amazing wildlife in the Discovery Centre and on our boat trips." Below this is the website "www.seabird.org" and the phone number "01620 890202". On the right, the "Scottish Seabird Centre" logo is displayed, featuring a stylized bird. A large photograph of a puffin is on the right side. At the bottom, there is a QR code, a "Green Tourism" logo, a "Scottish Tourism" logo, and a "Year of Natural Scotland 2013" logo. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also present. A purple banner at the bottom contains the text "OPEN ALL YEAR DISCOVERY CENTRE · BOAT TRIPS · CAFÉ · GIFT SHOP".