



Plate 92. Olive-backed Pipit, Seacliff, Lothian, 24 April 2016. © Ian Andrews

# Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2016

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on behalf of the Scottish Birds Records Committee

This is the ninth annual report of the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC), covering 2016. Previous reports have covered the periods 2005–08, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a, 2010b, 2011, 2012, McGowan *et al.* 2013, 2014, McGowan & McInerny 2015, 2016, 2017).

The report's species and subspecies remain the same as 2015. White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* is assessed locally in Shetland and the Outer Hebrides; and Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* is assessed locally in Shetland, Fair Isle and Orkney.

However, from 1 January 2017, Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca* and Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* are removed from the SBRC list. Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* remains on the SBRC list, but with local assessment in Shetland and Fair Isle; and Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* and Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* are added to the SBRC List. A summary of these changes is given in Appendix 2 and shown at [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists)

In 2016, the most striking feature was the exceptional influx of Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* with a record total of 106 birds observed between 8 September and 22 November, with 70 of these on Shetland alone. The previous highest Scottish annual total was 66 in 2014, with 44 on Shetland, though six were recorded in spring that year (McGowan & McInerny 2015).

## 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 2017).

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 (2016).

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted Scottish records for 2016, 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-2016 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 can be accepted by local recorders without formal submission to SBRC; full details of these returning birds are nonetheless provided. Revised details are also provided for some pre-2016 records published previously.

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

- Year
- Recording area [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-recorders-network](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/local-recorders-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, video or sound recording, 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: if the submitter was the local recorder this is shown as '*per* Local Recorder'. All other observers are covered by the use of '*et al.*'
- Details and location of specimen if preserved in a museum, with specimen accession number if available.

- Additional sightings of the same bird at a different location, 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 Mark Wilkinson (Chairman), Jim Dickson (replacing John Bowler in 2017), John Nadin, David Parnaby, Dave Pullan, Martin Scott and Mark Warren; Chris McInerny is non-voting Secretary and Bob McGowan is non-voting Museum Consultant. For more information about SBRC, see ap Rheinallt *et al.* (2010a) and [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/about-sbrc](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/about-sbrc)

Records accepted by SBRC are published on the SOC website at [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/recent-decisions](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/recent-decisions) as soon as they are processed, and thereafter in annual reports, such as this, published in *Scottish Birds*. The accepted record details are also added to Excel files which list records for SBRC species, and display the data chronologically, by recording area and graphically. Examples of the graphs have been used in SBRC annual reports published in *Scottish Birds*, such as those showing Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* records both by year and month in this report. The Excel files are archived at the Waterston Library, SOC Headquarters, Aberlady [www.the-soc.org.uk/about-us/library](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/about-us/library). They may be consulted on request, and we encourage interested parties to use this resource.

### 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: Yvonne Benting, Paul Collin, Jon Cook, Martin Cook, Jim Dickson, Iain English, Rob Fray, Nick Littlewood, Martin Moncrieff, David Parkinson, David Parnaby, Scott Petterson, Ian Ricketts, Fraser Simpson, Graham Sparshott, Peter Stronach, 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 thank Ian Andrews for making available the database of records of scarce and rare species used during the preparation of Forrester *et al.* (2007).

## Systematic list of accepted records

### Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*

0: 13: 4

**Table 1.** Accepted records of Egyptian Goose in Scotland, 2016.

**2016:** **Fife** The Wilderness, Ladybank, adult, 24 July, photo (K. Blasco).  
**Lothian** River Esk, Musselburgh, adult, 5 August, photo (L.M. Pulawski).  
**Orkney** North End, Sanday, adult, two, 1 February until 11 March, one to 16 March, photo (R. Neave, E. Peace *et al.*).

Egyptian Goose was added to Category C of the *Scottish List* in 2010 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2012). The species is a very rare, but annual visitor, with observations throughout the country.

The Fife record was the first for the recording area.

Records of the species since 1 January 2017 are not considered by SBRC (Appendix 2).

(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. Substantial naturalised populations are present in England, the Netherlands and Denmark, with smaller numbers breeding in Belgium, France and Germany.)

### Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*

19 (of 23 birds): 45: 3

**Table 2.** Accepted records of Lesser Scaup in Scotland, 2016.

**2016:** **Clyde** Barr Loch, Lochwinnoch, adult, male, 30 April to 1 May, photo, nasal saddle tag 'VH' (J.J. Sweeney *et al.*).  
**Dumfries & Galloway** Loch Ryan, adult, male, 12–30 December, photo (G. & A. Chambers, B.D. Henderson).  
**Orkney** Loch of Boardhouse, Birsay, adult, male, 26 November to 2017, photo (A. Forsyth *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Lochs of Houlland and Benston, Mainland, second-calendar-year, male, 1–16 January, photo, same as 2015 (McGowan & McInerny 2017).

Lesser Scaup is a rare though increasing visitor to Scotland, with observations throughout the country. Most records have been of singles,

although multiples, including a group of three, have been observed. A number of individuals have remained for extended periods, sometimes moving between sites, and have returned in following years.

The Dumfries & Galloway record was unusual in that the bird was found on salt water at Loch Ryan in a flock of Greater Scaup *Aythya marila*, which winter in large numbers at the site. Lesser Scaup is typically found on fresh water.

The Clyde bird had a nasal saddle tag with the annotation 'VH', fitted in Portugal at São Jacinto Dunes Nature Reserve, near Aveiro on 20 December 2013, when it was aged as a first-calendar-year, and where it remained until 3 February 2014 <http://btoringing.blogspot.co.uk/2014/11/portuguese-ringed-lesser-scaup-in-wales.html>. This bird was also recognised at Llyn Syfaddan (Llangorse Lake) in Powys, Wales on 17 October 2014, and at Vane Farm, Loch Leven (Perth & Kinross), although the latter observation has not been submitted to SBRC. This is apparently the first European recovery of a marked bird for the species. The bird was later shot in Northern Ireland - see 'Report on Scarce Birds' in *British Birds*.

Lesser Scaup was previously assessed by BBRC, and only judged by SBRC since 1 January 2015 (Appendix 2).

(Breeds in North America from Alaska to Ontario and south to California, Colorado and Minnesota. Most migrate to winter from USA south to Central America, the Caribbean and Hawaiian Islands, but smaller numbers regularly move eastwards to winter in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.)

### White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*

197: 258: 24

**Table 3.** Accepted records of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2016.

**2016:** **Argyll** North coast of Mull, opposite Ardnamurchan, adult, 5 March, photo (E. & J. Miles).  
**Dumfries & Galloway** Dunskirloch, Corsewall Point, 28–30 April, photo (B.D. Henderson).  
**Highland** Uig Bay, Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, adult, 28 February to 15 March, photo (M. Lumb).

**Highland** Loch Broom, Ullapool, Ross & Cromarty, second-calendar-year, 11 April (P. Howard).  
**Moray & Nairn** Burghead, adult, 18 March to 12 May (R. Proctor); same Lossiemouth, 7 April (R. Proctor); same Lossiemouth, 1–6 May, photo (R. Proctor, M. Warren).  
**Moray & Nairn** Burghead Bay, 10–16 July, photo (R.S. Cocks *et al.* per Local Recorder).  
**North-east Scotland** Findlater Castle, Sandend, two, 16 March, photo (P. Stronach *et al.*).  
**North-east Scotland** Blackdog, third-calendar-year, 14 August, photo (N. Littlewood *et al.*).  
**North-east Scotland** Peterhead, adult, 13 September (M. Innes).  
**Orkney** Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, adult, 28 May (G. Woodbridge).  
**Orkney** Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, adult, 6 November (G. Prescott, S. Perfect).  
**Outer Hebrides** Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta), Lewis, 14–24 March (B.A.E. Marr).  
**Outer Hebrides** Port Nis (Port of Ness), Lewis, two, 15 March (B.A.E. Marr).  
**Outer Hebrides** Eòlaigearraidh (Eoligarra), Barra, 29 March to 1 May, photo (I. Ricketts, B. Taylor).  
**Outer Hebrides** Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta), Lewis, two, 2–4 April (B.A.E. Marr).  
**Outer Hebrides** Sgiogarstaigh (Skigersta), Lewis, two, 19–29 April (B.A.E. Marr).  
**Outer Hebrides** Eòlaigearraidh (Eoligarra), Barra, adult, 18 May (B. Taylor).  
**Outer Hebrides** Brèibhig (Brevig), Barra, adult, 5 June (B. Taylor).  
**Shetland** Bluemull Sound, two, adults, returning, 17 January, photo (P.A. Harris, M. Heubeck, B.H. Thomason); same, first adult, 21 November, photo (B.H. Thomason); same, second adult, 13 December, photo (B.H. Thomason).  
**Shetland** Hoy Sound, Weisdale Voe, adult, 20 January (P.A. Harris, M. Heubeck).  
**Shetland** Basta Voe, Yell, third-calendar-year, 22 April to 8 June, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al.*).

White-billed Diver is a scarce though regular visitor to Scotland, with up to 30 being reported each year. Most occur at a number of favoured localities in the Outer Hebrides, north-west Highland, Moray & Nairn and North-east Scotland used in spring as stop-over sites between wintering and summering areas. In Shetland and Orkney, a small number of wintering individuals return to the same sites in successive years, and summering birds have become almost annual. There may be some overlap among Scottish records given the species' mobility. It also seems likely that a proportion of the spring birds return to use the same stop-over sites each year. As it is impossible to distinguish these and they are registered as new birds, SBRC totals are probably inflated.

The record of a new wintering population of up to 13 White-billed Divers off Papa Westray (Orkney) in November–December 2016 published in *Scottish Birds* (McKay 2017) has yet to be accepted by SBRC (Appendix 1).

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

**Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis***  
**c. 228: 28: 1**

**Table 4.** Accepted record of Cory's Shearwater in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Lothian** Scoughall, 29 August (C.N. Davison).

Cory's Shearwater is a rare visitor to Scottish waters, recorded near-annually, with most seen off North Ronaldsay and the Outer Hebrides during the late summer and early autumn. A very few enter the North Sea where they are observed moving along the east coast. Although a marked increase in sightings from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s occurred (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a), numbers since have decreased, with about two or less seen annually, although none were observed in 2015.

(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 occur in North Atlantic waters in autumn and are on the British List, but most are assumed to be Cory's, with Scopoli's not yet recorded in Scottish waters.)

**Continental Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*** **3: 34: 0**

**Table 5.** Accepted record of Continental Cormorant in Scotland, 1873.

**1873: Orkney** adult, male, 30 March, skin at National Museums Scotland (accession number NMS.Z 1888.84.162) (T.W. Dougall, R.Y. McGowan).

Continental Cormorant is a rare visitor to Scotland, with a pattern of most records along the east coast and Shetland in the first half of the year. There were only three accepted



Scottish records by 2007, but since then multiple sightings annually, with a high of five on Shetland.

Claims of Continental Cormorant after 1 January 2013 are not assessed by SBRC (McGowan *et al.* 2013). However, SBRC still considers records before this date. While working with the bird collection at National Museums Scotland Tom Dougall noted that a Cormorant specimen collected on Orkney from an unspecified location during the 19th Century had a gular patch angle within the range of the continental subspecies *sinensis*. Following acceptance of the identification by SBRC this made it the first Scottish, and second British, record (McGowan *et al.* 2018).

As noted, SBRC ceased assessment of this taxon from 2013 and accordingly the middle total in the header above covers the period 2005–2012 only.

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

### Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

46: 12: 2

**Table 6.** Accepted records of Night-heron in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Orkney** Black Loch, Cleat, Sanday, first-calendar-year, 22 November to 13 December, photo (A. Hough, S. Walker *et al.*).

**Shetland** Clach-na-Strom, Whiteness, Mainland, first-calendar-year, 4 December, photo (J. Davies).

Night-heron is a less-than-annual visitor to Scotland, with a spring peak in observations. There is a wide geographical spread, but most are seen in the Northern Isles and the Outer Hebrides.

Considering the rarity of Nigh-heron in Scotland (none were seen during 2015), it was possible that the two 2016 records were of the same bird, which had moved to Shetland temporarily during its three week stay on Orkney. However, photographs of the bills of the two birds established that they were different individuals.

(Holarctic with four subspecies. Nominate *nycticorax* breeding in mainland Europe and into Asia, with another subspecies in North America. Populations move south in winter.)



**Plate 93.** Night-heron, first-calendar-year, Black Loch, Cleat, Sanday, Orkney, 22 November to 13 December 2016. © Adam Hough



**Plate 94.** Cattle Egret, Carbans, Clyde, 24 April 2016.  
© Davie Abraham

**Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis***

3: 9: 1

**Table 7.** Accepted record of Cattle Egret in Scotland, 2016.

**2016:** Clyde Carbans, 24 April, photo (D. Abraham, R. Smith).

Cattle Egret remains very rare in Scotland, although more are being found. This reflects the increase in numbers seen in England, where the species first bred in 2008.

The only record for 2016 was the first for the recording area. It was found and photographed by an observer working their 'local patch', but remained for just 25 minutes, and was seen by one other observer. Likely it was in fields with livestock nearby but, frustratingly, could not be refound.

(Occurs widely 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.)

**Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus***

c. 65: 50: 6

**Table 8.** Accepted records of Glossy Ibis in Scotland, 2016, with additional records from 2015 and 2013.

**2016:** Fife Letham Pools, 25 November, photo (W. Dickson).

**Highland** Kyleakin, Isle of Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, 10 January, photo (A. & E. Horner).

**North-east Scotland** Slains Pool & Loch of Strathbeg, two, second-calendar-year, one 16–19 May, then two together 20–26 May, photo (P.S. Crockett *et al.* per Local Recorder).

**North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, 18–19 December, photo (*per* Local Recorder).

**Orkney** Hooking Loch, North Ronaldsay, 30 October to 15 November, photo (L. Simulik *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Caisteal Ormaclieit (Ormiclate Castle), South Uist, adult, 1–2 January, photo, same as 2015 (McGowan & McInerny 2017).

**Shetland** Tupton, Unst, second-calendar-year, 1–2 January, photo, found dead on 2 January, same as 2015 (McGowan & McInerny 2017).

**2015:** **Outer Hebrides** Allathasdal (Allasdale), Barra, first-calendar-year, 30 August to 1 September, photo (B.A. Taylor *et al.*).

**2013:** **Dumfries & Galloway** Caerlaverock, four, first-calendar-year, 30 September to 3 October, photo, (M. Youdale *per* Local Recorder *et al.*); same Mersehead, 3 October; same Baldoon, 8–9 October.

Glossy Ibis is a rare, though increasingly frequent, visitor to Scotland. In the early 20th Century a few flocks were observed, including a group of 19–20 in Orkney in September 1907, but the species subsequently became much rarer (Forrester *et al.* 2007). In the early 21st Century larger numbers and flocks were seen again in the UK, with more being observed in Scotland, including groups in Orkney and the Outer Hebrides.

Records of the species since 1 January 2017 are not considered by SBRC (Appendix 2).

(Nominate *falcinellus* breeds from Spain and France, through the Balkans to central Asia, in sub-Saharan Africa, the Indian subcontinent, south-east Asia, the east coast of the USA and the Caribbean. Most European birds migrate to Africa with others short distance migrants or resident. Another subspecies in the Far East and Australia).



**Plate 95.** Glossy Ibis, Letham Pools, Fife, 25 November 2016. © William Dickson



**Plate 96.** Black Kite, Flodaigh (Flodda), Benbecula, Outer Hebrides, 12 May 2016. © Mark Mitchell

**Black Kite *Milvus migrans***

19: 25: 4

**Table 9.** Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Argyll** near Machrihanish, Kintyre, 11 May, video (A. MacCormick *per* Local Recorder).

**Dumfries & Galloway** Bennan, near Moniaive, 21 April (C. McKay).

**Outer Hebrides** Liurbost (Leurbost), Lewis, 25–27 April, photo (A. Carroll, A. McNab *et al.*).

**Outer Hebrides** Flodaigh (Flodda), Benbecula, 12 May, photo (M. Mitchell, A. Robinson *et al.*).

Black Kite is a very rare visitor to Scotland from continental Europe. Most have been seen in spring, from April to June, with far fewer sightings in summer and autumn. There have also been instances of summering, and a single case of hybridisation with Red Kite *Milvus milvus* (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010a). Occurrences have increased in frequency in recent years; there were 27 during 2007–2016, but only nine during 1997–2006.

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

**Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus***

29: 4: 3

**Table 10.** Accepted records of Stone-curlew in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Highland** Balnakeil, Sutherland, adult, 28–30 May, photo (A. Gergaud, B. Iliou *et al.*).

**Moray & Nairn** Kintessack, Forres, adult, 25 June (R. Potter).

**Orkney** Sangar, North Ronaldsay, 30 May, photo (C. Azahara *per* Local Recorder).

Stone-curlew is a very rare visitor to Scotland; there were just 33 accepted records to the end of 2014 with half of these in the Northern Isles, and the remainder scattered across the country, though mostly along the east coast. There is a peak in occurrence in late May and early June. The species was last recorded in Scotland in 2014.

It is interesting, but unexplained, why the few recent mainland records have been mostly in the northern half of the country. A Stone-curlew in southern Scotland would be appreciated by many observers.

(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.)



**Plate 97.** Stone-curlew, Sangar, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 30 May 2016. © Carmen Azahara





**Plate 98.** White-rumped Sandpiper, adult, Eochar (Iochdar), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 1 June 2016. © Ian Thompson

**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*  
69: 83: 3

**Table 11.** Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2016, with additional records from 2015 and 2011.

- 2016:** **Angus & Dundee** Rossie Spit, Montrose Basin, adult, 2–5 August, photo (H. Bickerstaff *et al.*).  
**North-east Scotland** Greyhope Bay, Girdle Ness, adult, 10–19 August, photo (M. Lewis *et al.*).  
**Outer Hebrides** Eochar (Iochdar), South Uist, adult, 1 June, photo (I.R. Thompson).  
**2015:** **North-east Scotland** Loch of Strathbeg, first-calendar-year, 18 October to 1 November, photo (P.A.A. Baxter *et al.*).  
**2011:** **Outer Hebrides** Sgarasta (Scarista), Harris, two, first-calendar-year, 8 November, photo (M. Scott *et al.*).

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

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

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*  
12: 21: 3

**Table 12.** Accepted records of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland, 2016.

- 2016:** **Ayrshire** Barassie, adult, 24 November (B.D. Kerr).  
**Clyde** Strathclyde Country Park, second-calendar-year/third-calendar-year, 1 January to 9 March, photo, same as **2015** (McGowan & McInerny 2017); same Carbans, 26 March, photo (D. Abraham).  
**Clyde** Balgray Reservoir, adult, returning, 2–14 February (J.J. Sweeney); same Waulkmill Glen Reservoir, 7 November (J.J. Sweeney); same Balgray Reservoir, 9–28 November (J.J. Sweeney).  
**Clyde** Balgray Reservoir, adult, 9–14 February (J.J. Sweeney).  
**Clyde** Mount Vernon, Glasgow, first-calendar-year, 24 September to 29 October, photo (K. Hoey).



**Plate 99.** Yellow-legged Gull, first-calendar-year, Mount Vernon, Glasgow, Clyde, 24 September to 29 October 2016. © Keith Hoey

Yellow-legged Gull is very rare in Scotland, found throughout the country, usually in groups of other large white-headed gulls, often Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus*. Birds have been found at all times of the year, sometimes remaining for extended periods, with a number of individuals returning to the same locations in consecutive years.

Many Scottish records have been in south-west Scotland with the 2016 records fitting this pattern. Most have been adults, so it is encouraging that immatures are now also being identified.

(Nominate *michahellis* breeds mainly from south-west Europe east to the Black Sea, with immatures 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.)

### **Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*** **O: 7: 2**

**Table 13.** Accepted records of Caspian Gull in Scotland, 2016.

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**2016: Lothian** Skateraw, second-calendar-year, 23–25 February, photo (D. Foster, C. Scott *et al.*).  
**Lothian** Skateraw, second-calendar-year, 8–9 April, photo (K. Hoey *et al.*).

Caspian Gull is extremely rare in Scotland. Prior to 2016 occurrences have been in late autumn or winter, so the late February and April sightings are noteworthy.

It is now known that a regular movement of the species takes place each year through England, with most observations in the south and east. The majority are immatures present in summer and autumn. It remains very rare elsewhere in the UK. However, under-recording of this difficult-to-identify species is likely.

Most Scottish records have been in coastal East Lothian, amongst flocks of wintering gulls. The two immatures in 2016 fit this pattern.

(Breeds at inland lakes in eastern Europe and the Middle East, wintering mostly in the

eastern Mediterranean, but with smaller numbers reaching western maritime Europe.)

### **White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*** 59: 17: 3

**Table 14.** Accepted records of White-winged Black Tern in Scotland, 2016.

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**2016: Moray & Nairn** Spey Bay, adult, 21 June (R. & S. Hamilton).  
**North-east Scotland** Meikle Loch, Collieston, third-calendar-year, 29–30 July, photo (P. Bloor *et al. per* Local Recorder).  
**North-east Scotland** Meikle Loch, Collieston, third-calendar-year/adult, 5 August, photo (P.S. Crockett *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 species was not recorded in Scotland in 2015.

The two different birds at Meikle Loch, just six days apart, were established by plumage differences.

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

### **Alpine Swift *Apus melba*** **34: 7: 1**

**Table 15.** Accepted record of Alpine Swift in Scotland, 2016.

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**2016: Shetland** Fethaland, Mainland, 26 June, photo (C. Porter *et al.*).

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 European continent, while those in summer relate to wandering non-breeders. There are very few autumn records.

The Shetland bird, the only one seen in Scotland during 2016, with none observed in 2015, was found while the observer was taking a picnic with his family.

(Nominate *alba* breeds in north Africa and southern Europe from Iberia to the Middle East, moving to southern Africa in winter. Other subspecies in the Indian subcontinent and Africa.)

**Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator***

86: 19: 2

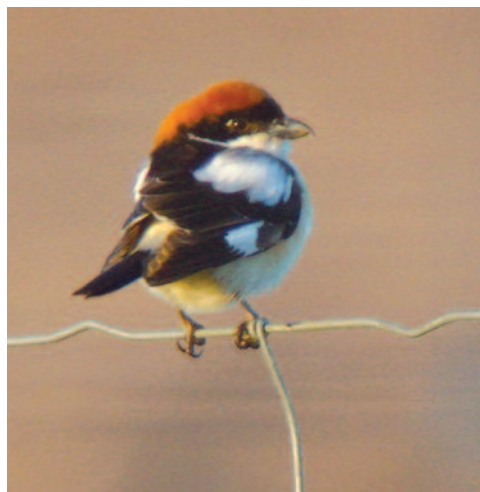
**Table 16.** Accepted records of Woodchat Shrike in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Borders** Northfield, St Abbs, adult, male, 19–24 June, photo (L. Hunter, A. Sinclair *per* Local Recorder).

**Fair Isle** Nether Taft & various locations, male, 11–24 May, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).

Woodchat Shrike is a rare, almost annual, passage migrant to Scotland, with most in the Northern Isles. Adults and sub-adults are seen in spring as overshoots from their European continental breeding areas, along with dispersing juveniles recorded in autumn. The St Abbs sighting was the fourth for Borders, with the last in 1995.

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



**Plate 100.** Woodchat Shrike, male, Nether Taft, Fair Isle, 11–24 May 2016. © Lee Gregory

**Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla***

286: 83: 4

Short-toed Lark is found annually in Scotland in very small numbers, mostly in spring and autumn, with the majority of observations in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally. It is very rare elsewhere, particularly on the mainland.

There were four occurrences in Scotland in 2016. Two were on Fair Isle, one during 2–8 May and the other from 14 September to 7 October; two were on Shetland, one on Out Skerries during 24–27 September and the other at Quendale, Mainland on 23 October.

(Eight or nine subspecies, with the subspecies seen in Scotland and the UK undetermined. 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): 24: 2

**Table 17.** Accepted record of Woodlark in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Shetland** Northdale, Unst, 12 November, photo (M.A. Maher, M.G. Pennington); same and new bird Haroldswick, Unst, 17 November (D. Cooper, B. Kay); same Northdale, 19 November (M.G. Pennington).

Woodlark is rare in Scotland, found mostly 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).

Since 1950 the vast majority of occurrences have been on the Northern Isles, with 70% on Fair Isle and Shetland.

There has been just one mainland occurrence since 2000, in Lothian in 2008.

(Two subspecies. *L. a. arborea* breeds in north and central European areas from western Russia through Finland and Norway to England, where present north to Yorkshire. The

other subspecies breeds from Iran and the Middle East through southern Europe to north-west Africa. Most populations move south to wintering areas, with more northerly populations moving the farthest.)

**Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica***  
40: 45: 1

**Table 18.** Accepted record of Red-rumped Swallow in Scotland, 2016, and additional record for 2011.

- 2016:** Fair Isle Ultra & Hesti Geo, second-calendar-year or older, 5–6 May, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**2011:** Outer Hebrides Steòrnabhagh (Stornoway), Isle of Lewis, two, adult and second-calendar-year, 14 May, photo (M. Scott *et al.*).

Red-rumped Swallow is observed in Scotland annually in small numbers from April through to November, mainly along the east coast and on islands. A small increase in frequency over the last 13 years or so is thought to reflect a northward expansion of the European continental breeding range. One individual of an eastern subspecies, either *daurica* or *japonica*, has been observed on Orkney and then Skye (Highland) in June 2011 (McGowan *et al.* 2013).

The single occurrence in 2016 represented the lowest annual total since 2002, and contrasts with a mean annual total of 3.6 birds over the last ten years. The early May date is typical of peak arrival. Fair Isle has 11.6% of the total Scottish records since 1950.

(Eleven or 12 subspecies. Breeds widely from southern Europe eastwards across the Palearctic region, and in sub-Saharan Africa. *C. d. rufula* breeds in Europe and the Middle East, with nominate *daurica* and *japonica* in Asia. Northern populations are migratory, wintering in Africa and southern Asia. In recent years its range has expanded into more northern and western European areas.)

**Cetti's Warbler *Cettia cetti***

1: 1: 1

**Table 19.** Accepted record of Cetti's Warbler in Scotland, 2016.

- 2016:** Location withheld 8 October, trapped, photo (per Local Recorder).

Cetti's Warbler is an extremely rare vagrant to Scotland, with just two previous records, one dead and the other alive, from Lothian in October 1993 and the Outer Hebrides in October 2014 (McGowan & McInerny 2015).

The bird in 2016 was trapped, with its location withheld here to protect the site, which is very sensitive to disturbance. It could have derived from either the European continent, or from the English and Welsh population that has expanded rapidly to reach c. 1,800 singing males/territories in recent years following a peak of c. 2,000 ten years ago (Holling *et al.* 2016).

(Nominate *cetti* breeds in southern Britain, and eastwards from Morocco through to Bulgaria; mainly sedentary. Two other subspecies in central and eastern Asia Minor and from Kazakhstan to western China.)

**Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides***  
157: 84: 17

**Table 20.** Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in Scotland, 2016 and an additional record for 2015. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 21.

- 2016:** Fife Kilminning, 23 August (W. Cresswell *et al.*).  
Isle of May first-calendar-year, 25 August, trapped, photo (M. Martin *et al.*).  
North-east Scotland Forvie, first-calendar-year, 19–20 August, photo (H. Addelee *et al.*).  
**2015:** North-east Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, first-calendar-year, 25 August, photo (P.A.A. Baxter).

Greenish Warbler is a rare but annual migrant to Scotland, 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. There was only one spring occurrence in 2016, at Skaw, Whalsay, Shetland on 5 June.



**Table 21.** Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2016.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	5	-	19 Aug–5 Sep
Orkney	-	4	-	20 Aug–8 Oct
Shetland	1	4	5 Jun	19 Aug–30 Sep

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

**Radde’s Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi***  
**46: 21: 5**

**Table 22.** Accepted records of Radde’s Warbler in Scotland, 2016.

- 2016:** **Fair Isle** Chapel Plantation, 2 October, photo (K. Kelly *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** 6 October, trapped, photo (C. Southall *et al.*).  
**Lothian** Skateraw, 16 October, photo (E. Forbes).  
**Shetland** Norwick, Unst, 27 September, photo (C. Auld, E. Marsh, D. Wilson *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Burns, Foula, 2 October, photo (P.V. Harvey, M.A. Maher, R. Riddington, R.M. Tallack, B.H. Thomason).



**Plate 101.** Radde’s Warbler, Skateraw, Lothian, 16 October 2016. © Ewen Forbes

Radde’s Warbler is a rare late autumn visitor to Scotland, with the majority of occurrences in the Northern Isles, principally Shetland, and the remainder along the east coast. The five seen in 2016 was the highest total since six in 2010. The sighting in Lothian was only the second for the recording area, the first being in 1990.

(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: 37: 13**

**Table 23.** Accepted records of Dusky Warbler in Scotland, 2016. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 24.

- 2016:** **Borders** St Abb’s Head, 16 October, photo, (D.K. Graham *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** 12 October (D. Steel).  
**Lothian** Barns Ness, 16–21 October, photo (I.J. Andrews *et al.*).

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.

**Table 24.** Accepted records of Dusky Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2016.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	1	-	12 Oct
Orkney	-	1	-	22 Oct
Shetland	-	8	-	28 Sep–3 Nov

The 13 sightings in 2016 were a record annual total and only the second year in which the total reached double figures; there were 11 in 2011. Sightings on the Isle of May, in Borders and in Lothian were third, fourth and fifth occurrences for the respective recording areas. In contrast, a bird at Burravoe, Yell, was the 60th for Shetland.

(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***  
193: 78: 4

Subalpine Warbler occurs annually in Scotland as a rare migrant, mainly in spring. The overwhelming majority are seen in the Northern Isles.

All records to subspecies level are currently assessed by BBRC (Appendix 2). Subalpine Warbler *sensu lato* is assessed by SBRC apart from the Northern Isles where it is reviewed locally.

**Table 25.** Accepted records of Subalpine Warbler in Scotland, 2016 (*per* Holt *et al.* 2017, and local committees).

- 2016: Shetland** Hamister, Whalsay, female, 8 May, photo (B. Marshall).  
**Shetland** South Biggins, Foula, second-calendar-year or older, male, 10 May, photo (D. & G. Atherton), *iberiae/inornata*.  
**Shetland** Soberlie, Foula, female, 11–12 May, photo (D. & G. Atherton).  
**Shetland** Ristie, Foula, male, 22–26 May, photo (R. Riddington *et al.*), *iberiae/inornata*.

Two of the four Shetland occurrences were accepted at species level, and two were accepted as ‘Western Subalpine Warbler’ *S. c. iberiae/inornata*.

One record for 2016 was assessed by SBRC, a second-calendar-year male at Kinnabus, The Oa, Islay (Argyll) on 16 May. This was determined as either ‘Western Subalpine Warbler’ or Moltoni’s Subalpine Warbler *S. subalpina*, and as not identified to species is excluded from the species total (Appendix 1).

Similarly, it should be noted that three individuals on Fair Isle in May 2016 were also only determined as ‘Western Subalpine Warbler’ or Moltoni’s Subalpine Warbler (Holt *et al.* 2017).

(Nominate *cantillans* breeds in south Italy and Sicily, *albistriata* from south-east Europe through Greece, Aegean Islands to Turkey, *iberiae* in Iberian Peninsula, south France and North-west Italy, *inornata* from Morocco to Libya. Migrates to winter in the sub-Saharan Sahel, though *inornata* probably north-west Africa.)

**Blyth’s Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*** 46: 98: 11

**Table 26.** Accepted records of Blyth’s Reed Warbler in Scotland, 2016.

- 2016: Fair Isle** Mid Geo & Skadan, first-calendar-year, 28 August, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**Fair Isle** Haven & Observatory, first-calendar-year, 2 October, trapped, photo (C.J. Dodd, D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**Fair Isle** Observatory, first-calendar-year, 6 October, trapped, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** first-calendar-year, 5 October, trapped, photo (T. Southall, I. Livingstone).  
**Orkney** Lettan, Sanday, first-calendar-year, 8 October, photo (D. Douglas, M. Lewis *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Northdale & Norwick, Unst, first-calendar-year, 22 September to 4 October, photo (N.C. Crouch *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Houlland, Baltasound, Unst, 25 September to 5 October, photo (C. Barton, P. Bloor, P. Crockett, I. Gordon *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Quendale, Mainland, 2 October, photo (D. Houghton *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Bruray, Out Skerries, first-calendar-year, 6 October, photo (P. Forrest, M.J. McKee, C.J. Turner).  
**Shetland** Skaw, Whalsay, first-calendar-year, 9–16 October, photo (J. Dunn *et al.*).  
**Shetland** Uyeasound, Unst, first-calendar-year, 20–29 September, photo (P.R. French, G. Gough *et al.*).

Assessment of Blyth’s Reed Warbler was undertaken by BBRC until 1 January 2015. A recent significant increase in numbers seen in Britain means that the species no longer meets criteria for consideration by BBRC and is instead reviewed by SBRC. However, from 1 January 2017 the species will be assessed by local committees on Shetland and Fair Isle (Appendix 2).



**Plate 102.** Blyth’s Reed Warbler, first-calendar-year, Mid Geo & Skadan, Fair Isle, 28 August 2016. © Lee Gregory



**Plate 103.** Blyth's Reed Warbler, first-calendar-year, Bruray, Out Skerries, Shetland, 6 October 2016. © Mike McKee

Blyth's Reed Warbler is a rare but annual spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, increasingly seen since 2000. Although the first Scottish record dates from 1910, 68% of occurrences have been in the last decade. The overwhelming majority of sightings (88%) have been in the Northern Isles. The sighting on the Isle of May was the fourth for the recording area. While most occurrences are in September and October, there have been an increasing number of spring singing males over the last several years.

A sighting at Logie Buchan, North-east Scotland on 30 August 2014 has been accepted by BBRC (Holt *et al.* 2017); the total in the header has been adjusted accordingly.

The increasing frequency of the species in Scotland follows a westward spread from European Russia through southern Finland, Estonia and Latvia, with breeding also recorded in Sweden and Poland (BirdLife International 2017).

(Breeds from Sweden, Finland and Baltic countries, through Russia to Lake Baikal and Mongolia, and south to Iran and north Pakistan; migrates to winter in the Indian subcontinent and Myanmar.)

**Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris***  
many: c. 342: 19

**Table 27.** Accepted record of Marsh Warbler in Scotland, 2016. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 28.

**2016: Argyll** The Glebe, Scarinish, Tiree, male, singing, 4 June, sound recording (J. Bowler, K. Gillon).

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.

The sighting in Argyll was the fourth for the recording area; all have been on Tiree.

**Table 28.** Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2016.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	4	1	31 May–6 Jun	29 Aug
Orkney	2	2	30 May–6 Jun	25 Aug–17 Sep
Shetland	5	4	28 May–30 Jun	23 Aug–22 Sep

The 19 Marsh Warblers recorded in Scotland in 2016 was lower than the annual mean of 32.5 between 2006 and 2015. The fluctuating annual abundance of this species is related, for spring birds at least, to variation in the prevalence of easterly winds in late May and early June, which are presumed to cause them to overshoot their breeding grounds in Fennoscandia during northerly spring migration (Forrester *et al.* 2007). As is usual, most birds in 2016 only stayed for a few days. One individual, trapped and ringed on 4 June on North Ronaldsay, Orkney was re-trapped on Fair Isle on 10 June; the second observation is thus not double-counted in the species totals. Breeding has been recorded at Norwick, Unst, Shetland in 2005, 2008 and 2014 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010, McGowan & McInerney 2016). As well as the singing male in Argyll, three others were heard in Shetland.

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

**Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos***  
139: 21: 3

Nightingale is a rare, but almost annual, passage migrant to Scotland; spring records predominate. In the Northern Isles, claims are assessed locally, and Fair Isle and Shetland account for the vast majority of sightings.

There were three occurrences in 2016, all in the Northern Isles. The first was seen on Fair Isle on 11 May. On Shetland one was seen at Punds, Foula on 20–22 May, and another at Still, Fetlar on 4 June.

There has been a total of 11 sightings in the last three years, one more than the inclusive total for Scotland during 2007 to 2013.

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

**Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola***  
105: 86: 3

**Table 29.** Accepted records of Citrine Wagtail in Scotland, 2016.

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<b>2016:</b> Fair Isle Meadow Burn & Da Water, first-calendar-year, 13 September, photo (C.R. Hatsell <i>et al.</i> ).
Isle of May second-calendar-year, female, 10–11 May, photo (M. Newell, B. Outram, D. Steel <i>et al.</i> ).
Outer Hebrides Poll na Crann ('Stinky Bay'), Benbecula, first-calendar-year, 26 September, photo (S.E. Duffield <i>et al.</i> ).

Assessment of Citrine Wagtail was undertaken by BBRC until 1 January 2015. A recent significant increase in numbers in Britain means that the species no longer meets criteria for consideration by BBRC and is assessed by SBRC (Appendix 2).

Citrine Wagtail is a rare but annual spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, increasingly regular since the 1990s, and found mostly on islands. The first two records were in 1954, but 71% of sightings have taken place in the last two decades. The overwhelming majority (85.6%) have been in the Northern Isles, with a further 6.7% in Outer Hebrides. Occurrence is generally in autumn, with few records in spring. Despite the recent increase in numbers, Citrine Wagtail remains an extreme rarity in other parts of the country. On the Scottish mainland it has been recorded six times in Lothian and twice in North-east Scotland. But elsewhere it has been sighted only once in Inverness and Sutherland (both Highland) and Dumfries & Galloway and is unrecorded in another ten recording areas.



**Plate 104.** Citrine Wagtail, first-calendar-year, Poll na Crann ('Stinky Bay'), Benbecula, Outer Hebrides, 26 September 2016. © Steve Duffield



The Isle of May occurrence is the third for the island, and the sighting on Benbecula the 13th for Outer Hebrides.

(Nominate *citreola* breeds in Russia from Kola Peninsula to River Khatanga, south to Himalayas; another subspecies south of Tien Shan Mountains. Migrates to winter in China, South-east Asia, north of the Indian subcontinent and shores of Arabian Gulf.)

**Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni***

151: 169: 16

**Table 30.** Accepted records of Olive-backed Pipit in Scotland, 2016. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 31.

**2016: Borders** St Abb's Head, 13 October, photo (S. Gillies *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** 13–15 October (D. Steel *et al.*).  
**Lothian** Seacliff, 24 April, photo (C.N. Davison, K. Gillon *et al.*).  
**Lothian** White Sands, 8 October (A. Brown).  
**Outer Hebrides** Àird Mhòr (Ardmhor), Barra, 6 October (I. English).

Olive-backed Pipit is a rare but regular autumn migrant in Scotland. There was a marked increase in occurrences in Britain and Europe since the 1980s. Hence, the species was dropped from BBRC review in 2013, when it was considered by SBRC, but since 2015 was assessed locally in the Northern Isles (Appendix 2).

The vast majority of sightings in Scotland are in the Northern Isles, with only 21 birds (6%) seen in other areas.

**Table 31.** Accepted records of Olive-backed Pipit in the Northern Isles, 2016.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	4	-	23 Sep–20 Oct
Orkney	-	1	-	16 Oct
Shetland	-	6	-	24 Sep–18 Oct

The two sightings in Lothian and one in Borders were the first for the mainland since 2006, and increased the total number of mainland records to just ten birds. Totals for the Isle of May, Outer Hebrides and the Borders have increased to seven, five and two, respectively. The Lothian spring record matches the

earliest previous date (Fair Isle in 1995) and is only the eighth in spring for Scotland.

(*A. h. yunnanensis* breeds from Urals east to Kamchatka, Manchuria and Japan; one other subspecies. Winters in south-east Asia.)

**Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni***

366: 110: 15

Arctic Redpoll is a scarce though annual visitor to Scotland. Most sightings since 2005 have involved the race *C. h. hornemanni* (Hornemann's Redpoll), though many earlier occurrences referred to *C. h. exilipes* (Coues's Redpoll). All records to subspecies level are currently assessed by BBRC, while Arctic Redpoll *sensu lato* is assessed by SBRC apart from the Northern Isles where it is reviewed locally (Appendix 2).

No records were assessed by SBRC for 2016. A summary of records accepted by BBRC, all from Shetland, is provided here (*per* Local Recorder and Holt *et al.* 2017).

**Table 32.** Accepted records of Arctic Redpoll in Scotland, 2016.

**2016: Shetland** South Ness, Foula, 30 September, photo (D. & G. Atherton), *hornemanni*.  
**Shetland** Norwich & Baltasound, Unst, 30 September to 20 November, photo (A.E. Chick, N.C. Crouch, P.R. Eele, P.R. French *et al.*), *hornemanni*.  
**Shetland** East Burrarfirth, Mainland, 6 October, photo (N. Harris, M. Ponsford, M. Willmott), *hornemanni*.  
**Shetland** Uyeasound, Unst, 7 October, photo (A. Griffiths *et al.*), *hornemanni*.  
**Shetland** Aith, Mainland, 7 October, photo (J. Holt *et al.*), *hornemanni*.  
**Shetland** Out Skerries, 11–12 October, photo (P. Forrest, M.J. McKee, C.J. Turner), *exilipes*.  
**Shetland** Baltasound, Unst, 18 October, photo (M.G. Pennington, B.H. Thomason), *exilipes*.  
**Shetland** Sound, Lerwick, Mainland, 21–29 October, photo (J.G. Brown, P.A. Harris *et al.*), *exilipes*.  
**Shetland** Sound, Lerwick, Mainland, 24–31 October, photo (P.V. Harvey *et al.*), *exilipes*.  
**Shetland** Baltasound, Unst, three, 24–25 October, photo (D. Cooper, B. Kay, M.G. Pennington), *exilipes*.  
**Shetland** Baltasound, Unst, three, 13–20 November, photo (D. Cooper, M.A. Maher, M.G. Pennington), *exilipes*.

After a single record in 2014 and a blank year in 2015, 15 birds were seen in 2016. Five *hornemanni* were sighted between 30 September and 7 October, and ten *exilipes* between 11 October and 20 November.

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

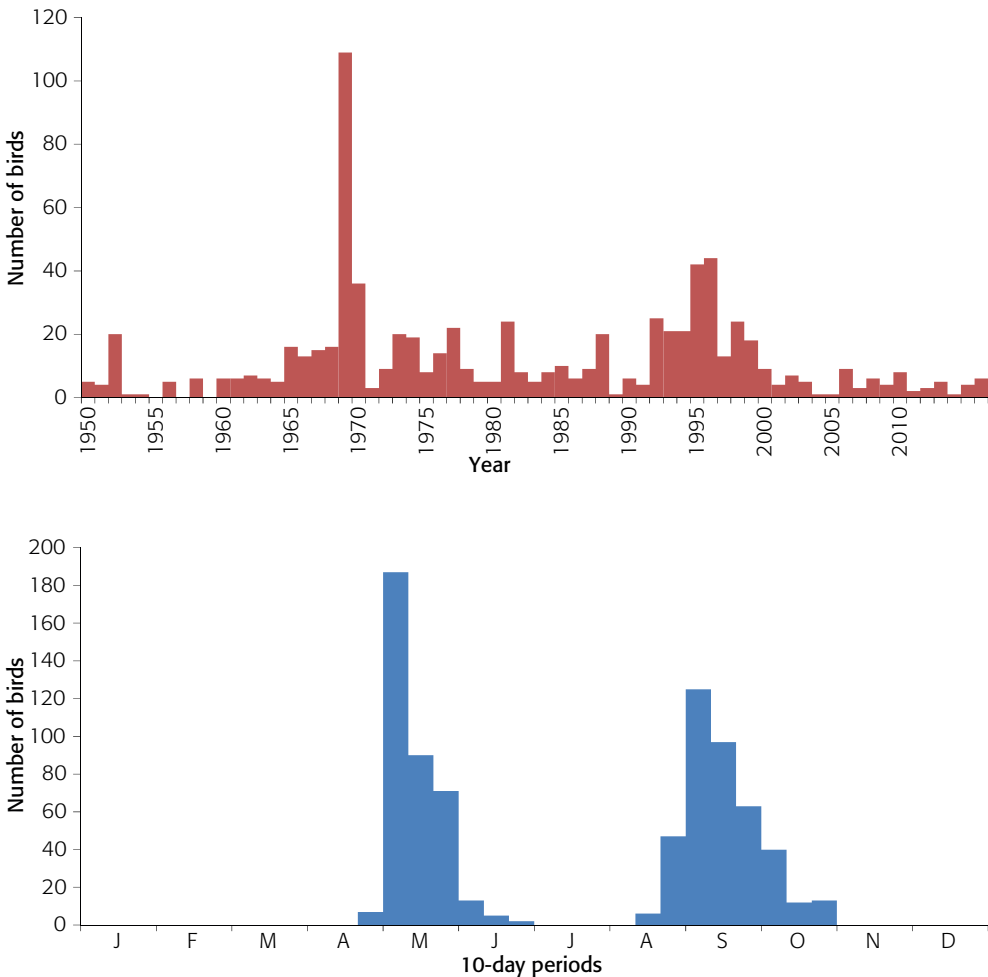
**Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana***  
**many: 46: 6**

**Table 33.** Accepted records of Ortolan Bunting in Scotland, 2016.

**2016:** At sea 35 nm north-east of Peterhead, Buzzard Field, on *Osprey Explorer*, first-calendar-year, 19 August, photo (A. Williams).

**Borders** St Abb's Head, first-calendar-year, 8 October (D.K. Graham).

Ortolan Bunting is a rare and declining, but still annual, passage migrant to Scotland (Figure 1). In recent years the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally, have accounted for more than 90% of occurrences.



**Figure 1.** Annual and seasonal occurrence of Ortolan Bunting in Scotland by 10-day periods, 1950–2016.

The *Osprey Explorer* observation was the first 'at sea' record, with the bird in Borders the sixth for the recording area.

There were five sightings in the Northern Isles. On Fair Isle, one bird was seen on 11 May at Barkland, a second on 21 May at North Naaversgill and another during 8–18 September at Gilsetter and Field. On Orkney, one was seen at Howar, North Ronaldsay on 6–8 October, and on Shetland there was one occurrence at Spiggie and Brake, Mainland on 7–13 October. Excluding the 'at sea' record, which is not counted towards the total, these six sightings represent the highest annual total since eight in 2010. However, general trend of declining numbers over the last 17 years appears to be continuing.

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

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*

593: 270: 106

**Table 34.** Accepted records of Little Bunting in Scotland, 2016. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 35.

- 2016: **Dumfries & Galloway** Leswalt, Stranraer, first-calendar-year, 21 October, trapped, photo (G. & J. Sheppard).  
**Isle of May** 3 October, trapped, photo (C. & T. Southall *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** 7–19 October, trapped, photo (T. Southall *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** two, 8–11 October, photo (D. Steel *et al.*).  
**Isle of May** 19 October, trapped, photo (B. Etheridge *et al.*).  
**Outer Hebrides** Creachan, Brèibhig (Brevig), Barra, first-calendar-year, 10 October, trapped, photo (M. Oksien *et al.*).  
**Outer Hebrides** Taobh a Tuath Loch Aineort (North Loch Eynort), South Uist, 17 October, photo (S.E Duffield *et al.*).  
**Outer Hebrides** Sgallairidh (Skallary), Barra, 4 November, photo (B.A. Taylor).

Little Bunting is a scarce but increasingly regular passage migrant to Scotland, mostly in the Northern Isles, where records are assessed locally (Figure 2). The great majority are found in autumn, but there have also been a few in winter

and spring. Seven of the eight occurrences outwith the Northern Isles were on islands; the single mainland sighting, at Leswalt, Stranraer, Dumfries & Galloway, was a first for the recording area. The increase in frequency in recent years has been dramatic; the mean annual total for the last ten years was 33.5, compared to 17.9 for the preceding ten-year period.



**Plate 105.** Little Bunting, Isle of May, 19 October 2016. © Chris Southall



**Plate 106.** Little Bunting, Taobh a Tuath Loch Aineort (North Loch Eynort), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 17 October 2016. © Steve Duffield

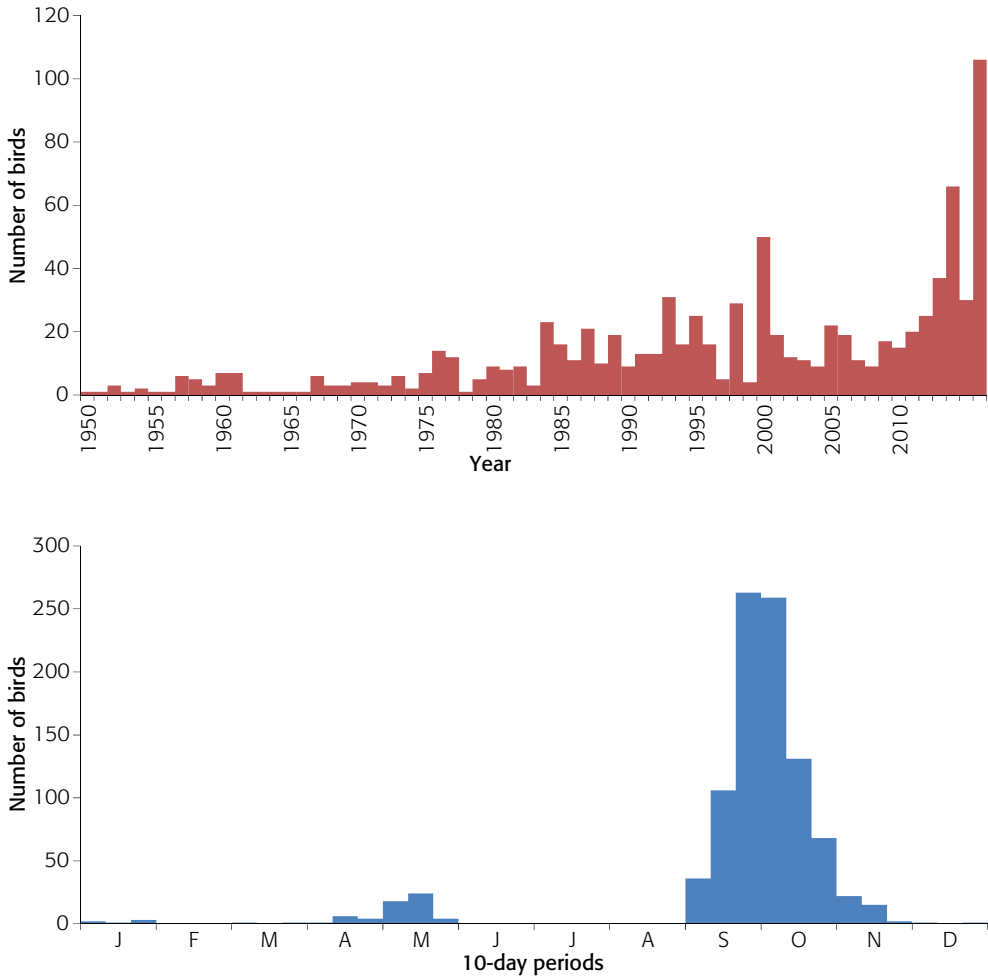


Figure 2. Annual and seasonal occurrence of Little Bunting in Scotland by 10-day periods, 1950–2016.



Plate 107. Little Bunting, Sgallairidh (Skallary), Barra, Outer Hebrides, 4 November 2016. © Bruce Taylor

In the Northern Isles there were a remarkable 97 sightings. The total of 70 in Shetland alone was higher than the previous record annual total for Scotland, 66 in 2014.

Table 35. Accepted records of Little Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2016.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	15	-	13–24 Oct
Orkney	-	12	-	2–17 Oct
Shetland	-	70	-	8 Sep–22 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.

- 2016: White-billed Diver Kingsbarns, Fife, 28 March; White-billed Diver immature, Poolewe, Wester Ross, Highland 13 April; White-billed Diver (13) Mull Head, Papa Westray, Orkney, 10 November (6), 12 November (3), 17 November (1), 27 November (5+), 5 December (13), 27 December (5); Cory's Shearwater Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 25 August; Great Shearwater (2) Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 30 and 31 August; Great Shearwater Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 7 September; Great Shearwater (4) Lossiemouth, Moray & Nairn, 8 September; Great Shearwater Dennis Head, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 27 September; Yellow-legged Gull adult, Maidens, Ayrshire, 29 August; Yellow-legged Gull adult, River Forth, South Alloa, Falkirk, Upper Forth, 2 November; Radde's Warbler Kirbest, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 23 October;

Subalpine Warbler second-calendar-year, male, Kinnabus, The Oa, Islay, Argyll, 16 May; Blyth's Reed Warbler Gulberwick, Mainland, Shetland, 6 October; Blyth's Reed Warbler Isle of May, 10 October; **Ortolan Bunting** first-calendar-year/female, Kirbost, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, 28 September.

2015: **Ortolan Bunting** between Askival & Hallival, Rum, Lochaber, Highland, 7 September.

## Appendix 2.

Summary of assessment of records by the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) and other committees, 2014–18. 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 on the *Scottish List* have additional rare subspecies assessed by BBRC that are not shown here. Species and subspecies considered by BBRC are listed on [www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/species-taxa](http://www.bbrc.org.uk/main-information/species-taxa)

14	15	16	17	18	
■	■	■			Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Black Brant <i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Lesser Scaup <i>Aythya affinis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	White-billed Diver <i>Gavia adamsii</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris borealis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Great Shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Wilson's Petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</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>
■	■	■	■	■	Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedipnemos</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</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> (except <i>L. m. atlantis</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	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>
■	■	■	■	■	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dryobates minor</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Red-footed Falcon <i>Falco vespertinus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Woodchat Shrike <i>Lanius senator</i> (except <i>L. s. badius</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Red-rumped Swallow <i>Cecropis daurica</i> (except <i>C. d. daurica</i> or <i>japonica</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	Cetti's Warbler <i>Cettia cetti</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i> (except <i>P. t. plumbeitarsus</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>

■	■	■	■	■	Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Subalpine Warbler <i>Sylvia cantillans</i> *
■	■	■	■	■	Dartford Warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Aquatic Warbler <i>Acrocephalus paludicola</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> (except <i>L. m. golzii</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	Red-flanked Bluetail <i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Citrine Wagtail <i>Motacilla citreola</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Tawny Pipit <i>Anthus campestris</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Red-throated Pipit <i>Anthus cervinus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Serim <i>Serinus serinus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Arctic Redpoll <i>Carduelis 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>

■ = SBRC ■ = BBRC ■ = SBRC except Northern Isles (Fair Isle, Orkney and Shetland) ■ = SBRC except Shetland and Outer Hebrides ■ = SBRC except Fair Isle and Shetland ■ = SBRC except Outer Hebrides  
 ■ = SBRC outside core range [www.the-soc.org.uk/content/bird-recording/sbrc/identification-of-scottish-and-parrot-crossbills](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/content/bird-recording/sbrc/identification-of-scottish-and-parrot-crossbills)

\* Only birds not identified to any particular subspecies are considered by SBRC or local committees. Birds identified to subspecies are assessed by BBRC.

The species and subspecies considered by SBRC listed here are also shown on [www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists](http://www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists)

### Appendix 3.

Corrections to previous SBRC reports:

Report year 2015

Citrine Wagtail: the caption for the photograph (Plate 86) should read '25–27 August'.

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