

Scottish Birds Records Committee report on rare birds in Scotland, 2019

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on behalf of the Scottish Birds Records Committee

This is the 12th annual report of the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC) describing rare birds recorded in Scotland during 2019. Details of previous annual reports that cover the period 2005 to 2018 can be found in McGowan & McInerney (2018) and McInerney & McGowan (2020), some of which are cited in this report.

A summary of the rare bird species considered by SBRC, the SBRC List, and other committees is given in Appendix 2 and is shown at www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists

Changes to the SBRC List include, from 1 January 2019, White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii* being removed from the SBRC List with records from after this date assessed by local Scottish committees. Additionally from this date all records of Western Subalpine Warbler *Curruca iberiae*, Eastern Subalpine Warbler *C. cantillans* and Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni* are considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC), with Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* and Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* added to the SBRC List being no longer assessed by BBRC.

Furthermore, from 1 January 2020, Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*, Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* and Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* were removed from the SBRC List. Records for Lesser Scaup and Kentish Plover are considered by BBRC and the four other species assessed by local Scottish committees. For a summary of these changes see Appendix 2 and www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-list-past-lists

The range and number of most rare birds seen in Scotland during 2019 was similar to other years. However, for two species records were considered by SBRC for the first time, having been previously assessed by BBRC: a record of Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* was accepted with the last from 2005; and the first Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* records were noted since 2012. Elsewhere a significant influx of 49 White-rumped Sandpipers *Calidris fuscicollis* was reported, the highest ever annual total, including 36 on the Outer Hebrides where a group of 11 was observed. Although the species is seen most years, particularly in the Outer Hebrides, the previous highest Scottish annual total was 27 in 2005 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010).

In contrast, a number of SBRC species were not seen in Scotland during 2019 including Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*, Great Shearwater *Ardenna gravis*, Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*, Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*, Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* and Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*.

Format of the report

The species accounts in the report follow a standard format following the annual BBRC reports published in *British Birds*. Nomenclature and taxonomic sequence follow the latest version of the *Scottish List*, which follows the 9th Edition of the British List and subsequent changes adopted by

the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU 2018a, BOU 2018b, BOU 2020a, BOU 2020b, BOU 2021, Forrester *et al.* 2019; www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/the-scottish-list).

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

- Total number of birds in Scotland to the end of 2004, based on Forrester *et al.* (2007) with adjustments in some cases, and also including records added in this report. In some cases older records, 'At Sea' records, or records pertaining to the breeding population are explicitly excluded from the totals, following the example of Forrester *et al.* (2007). In the case of Marsh Warbler and 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 and so are not added to totals.
- Total number in the current year (2019).

Occasionally, adjustments to totals have been made to take account of late retrospective acceptances by local committees, or when corrections are detected from Excel spreadsheet totals.

Immediately below the header line is a table of accepted Scottish records for 2019, with details. For those species assessed locally in the Northern Isles (Shetland, Fair Isle and Orkney), 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-2019 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 submission to SBRC; full details of these returning birds are nonetheless provided in this report. Revised and/or corrected details are also provided for some pre-2018 records, published previously.

For each record listed in full the following information is provided:

- Year
- Recording area 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 gender 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 at the location or observed throughout; in some cases, it may have been observed only on the first and last dates and may even have moved elsewhere.
- 'Found dead' or 'died' if applicable.
- 'Trapped' if applicable.
- Use of DNA analysis to aid identification.
- Existence of a photograph, video or audio 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 SBRC.

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 to Scotland, is given in parentheses.

Species coverage

Species coverage is changed from the last report, with some species removed from the SBRC list being assessed either by BBRC or local committees, while other species have been added. White-billed Diver, Subalpine Warbler and Arctic Redpoll have been removed, and Lesser Yellowlegs and Arctic Warbler added. The changes occurred from 1 January 2019; however, some older pre-2019 records of these species, where appropriate, are included in this report.

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 each year for the period 2016–20. **Appendix 3** lists corrections to previous SBRC Reports.

SBRC

SBRC was set up in 1984 as a subcommittee of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club (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), Rob Fray (replacing David Parnaby in 2020), Jim Dickson, Mark Lewis, Dave Pullan, David Steel and Mark Warren. Chris McNerny is non-voting Secretary and Bob McGowan is non-voting Museum Consultant. For more information about SBRC see www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/about-sbrc.

Records accepted by SBRC are announced on the SOC website as soon as they are processed at www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/recent-decisions, and thereafter formally published in annual reports, such as this, in the June issue of *Scottish Birds*.

When published the accepted record details are also added to Excel spreadsheets which list all records for SBRC species. These Excel spreadsheets display the data chronologically by recording areas, and graphically both by year from 1950 to 2019 and seasonally by 10-day periods. Examples of the graphs have been used in SBRC Reports published in *Scottish Birds*, with some in this report. The Excel spreadsheets have been placed on the SOC website at www.the-soc.org.uk/bird-recording/sbrc-species-analysis, where they can be downloaded; they are updated once a year following publication of the SBRC Report. The SBRC and SOC encourage interested parties to use these Excel files which are a convenient way to analyse and interrogate SBRC data, but we ask that SBRC Reports published in *Scottish Birds*, such as this, are cited as a way to acknowledge the source of the data.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost we are grateful to all observers who submitted records of Scottish rarities to Local Recorders and SBRC during the period. Without their efforts to find and record these birds the report would not exist. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to those who gave permission for their excellent photographs to be reproduced here.

We thank the following Local Recorders for their assistance in compiling, checking and correcting records for this report: Yvonne Benting, Ian Broadbent, Paul Collin, Jon Cook, Jim Dickson, Iain

English, Rob Fray, Sinclair Manson, Russell Neave, David Parkinson, David Parnaby, John Poyner, Fraser Simpson, Graham Sparshott, Stephen Welch, and Val Wilson. We are particularly grateful for the co-operation of the Northern Isles recorders Rob Fray, Russell Neave and David Parnaby in helping to compile summaries for species assessed locally within their areas included in this report. We very much appreciate the help of Stephen Hunter in managing the SBRC pages on the SOC website, uploading accepted SBRC records and the SBRC Excel spreadsheets. We thank Ian Andrews for help with updating the SBRC Excel spreadsheets and preparing the figures for this report, and Keith Naylor and Mark Wilkinson for comments on the manuscript.

Systematic list of accepted records

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* 19 (of 23 birds): 53: 2

Table 1. Accepted records of Lesser Scaup in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Borders** Millar's Moss Reservoir & Mire Loch, St Abb's Head, adult, male, 18 May to 10 July, photo (A. Denton, C.R. Hatsell, W. Scott *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 40: 70–71).
Dumfries & Galloway Loch Ryan, adult, male, 9–30 January, photo; same, returning, Loch Ryan, 28 October to 31 December (B.D. Henderson).

Lesser Scaup is a rare though increasing visitor to Scotland, since the first in 1990, with observations throughout the country. Most records have been of singles, although multiples, including a group of three, have been seen. A number of individuals have remained for extended periods, sometimes moving between sites, and have returned in following years.



Plate 87. Lesser Scaup, male, Millar's Moss Reservoir & Mire Loch, Borders, 18 May to 10 July 2019.
© Mark Wilkinson

Due to the species becoming rarer in Britain records of Lesser Scaup from 1 January 2020 will be assessed by BBRC, and so this is the last year that it will be listed in SBRC Reports.

The male seen in Borders was the first for the recording area and was unusual both in the length of its stay and that it attempted to mate with a Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, the first observation of such behaviour in Scotland (Wilkinson 2020).

An adult male Lesser Scaup was seen on Loch Ryan in December 2016 (McGowan & McInerny 2018), so it is possible that the 2019 observation is the same returning bird. However, the gap of three years makes this uncertain so the record listed here is counted as a new bird.

(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.)

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* 34: 9: 2

Table 2. Accepted records of Alpine Swift in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Orkney** Burwick, South Ronaldsay, 8 June (D. Hoy *et al.*).
Shetland Skaw, Unst, 27 September, photo (D. Cooper).

Alpine Swift is a very rare visitor to Scotland, seen usually between mid-April and late July. Spring occurrences involve overshoots from mountain breeding grounds on the European

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

The two 2019 observations, in coastal areas on islands, are typical for many sightings in Scotland; 53% of records have been seen under such circumstances.

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

Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*
29: 9: 2

Table 3. Accepted records of Stone-curlew in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Outer Hebrides** Nis (Ness), Isle of Lewis, 25 June, photo (G. Gay *et al.*).
Shetland Virkie & Loch of Clevigarth, Mainland, second-calendar-year or older, 17 May, photo (R. Riddington *et al.*).

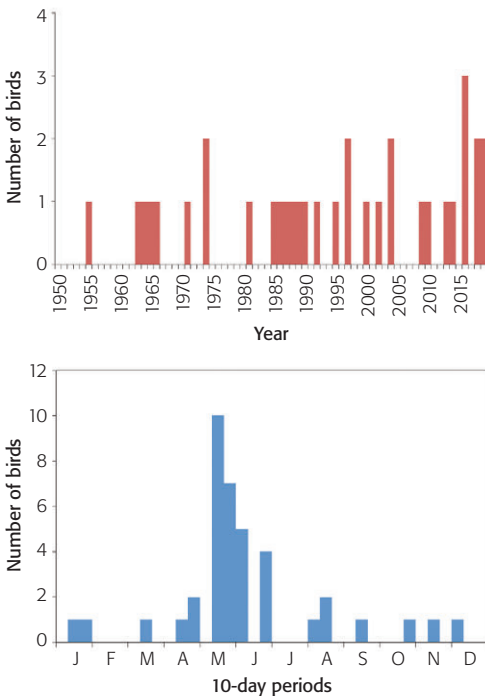


Figure 1. Annual and seasonal occurrence of Stone-curlew in Scotland by 10-day periods, 1950–2019.

Stone-curlew is a very rare visitor to Scotland; there were just 38 observations to the end of 2018 with almost 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, although birds have been observed at all times of the year (Figure 1).

The two 2019 observations fit this pattern being seen in May and June, with the Isle of Lewis bird the second for the Outer Hebrides and the Shetland bird the seventh for the recording area.

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

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*
8 (of 9 birds): 1: 3

Table 4. Accepted records of Black-winged Stilt in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Argyll** Heylipol, Tiree, second-calendar-year, male, 16–18 April, photo (G. Todd *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 39: 262–265; 40: 169–172).
Borders Greenlaw Farm pond, Foulden, first-calendar-year, 29 August, photo (R. Drew, C. Hartley *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 40: 169–172).
Fair Isle North Haven, first-calendar-year, 9 October, photo (S. Thomson *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 40: 169–172).

Black-winged Stilt is very rare in Scotland with just nine records of 10 birds, although these were found in many parts of the country including islands. The first was pre-1684, the next two in 1850 and 1920, with two records during the 1950s, two in the 1980s and one each in 1990 and 2012 (Forrester *et al.* 2007, Newell 2012).

These are the first Black-winged Stilt records to be considered by SBRC as the committee has only assessed records of the species since 1 January 2017, these being previously judged by BBRC (Appendix 2).

The Tiree bird was the first to be seen in Scotland since 2012 (Bowler & Todd 2019), though this was followed by the two



Plate 88. Black-winged Stilt, male, second-calendar-year, Heylipol Church, Tiree, Argyll, 16–18 April 2019. © Jim Dickson

observations in Borders and on Fair Isle later in the year (Hartley *et al.* 2019).

It is possible that the two later Scottish observations, and others elsewhere in England during 2019, all relate to the same first-calendar-year bird, an age class very rarely seen in Britain. First-calendar-year Black-winged Stilts were seen at North Yorkshire on 28

August, Foulden (Borders) on 29 August, Northumberland on 31 August, Nottinghamshire on 1–7 September, Berkshire from 11 September to 8 October, and Fair Isle on 9 October. As all of the sightings were of the same age class the coincidence of consecutive and non-overlapping dates suggests that one wide-ranging individual may be responsible for all of these records.

(Breeds patchily across southern Europe to northern France and the Netherlands, Africa, and southern Asia. Northern Eurasian populations migrate south in winter, though other populations are mostly resident.)



Plate 89. Black-winged Stilt, first-calendar-year, Greenlaw Farm, Foulden, Borders, 29 August 2019. Possibly the same bird was seen elsewhere in England and on Fair Isle. © Dennis Morrison

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*
69: 94: 49

Table 5. Accepted records of White-rumped Sandpiper in Scotland, 2019.

- 2019: **Argyll** Sanaigmore, Islay, two, first-calendar-year, 12–13 October, photo (R. Belter *et al.* per Local Recorder).
Ayrshire Fail Flash, Tarbolton, two, 16–24 October, photo (D. Cree, D. Given, D. Grant *et al.*).
Dumfries & Galloway Piltanton Burn, Luce Bay, 4 August (J. Grover *et al.*).
Lothian Aberlady Bay, adult, 2 August, photo (D. Allan, B. & M. Griffin).

North-East Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, two, adult, 17–18 July, photo (S. Broyd & P. Gordon *et al.*).

North-East Scotland Loch of Strathbeg, second-calendar-year or older, 6–10 September, photo (T. Kirkpatrick, S. O'Hara *et al. per* Local Recorder).

North-East Scotland Waulkmill, Ythan, one (two 17–19 October), first-calendar-year, 14–21 October, photo (P. Crockett, M. Webber *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Caolis, Bhatarsaigh (Caolis, Vatersay), adult, 22–23 July, photo (M. Oksien, B.A. Taylor).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, adult, 5–6 September, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Barabhas (Barvas) beach, Isle of Lewis, adult, 16–17 September, photo (J. Jones, D. Pointon *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Cill Amhlaidh (Kilaulay) machair & South Ford, South Uist, adult, 17–18 September, photo (A. Hogg, A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Sgarasta Bheag, Harris, first-calendar-year, 20 September (R.D. Wemyss).

Outer Hebrides Loch a' Ghlinne, Hiort (Glen Bay, Hirta), St Kilda, adult, 21 September, photo (W.T.S. Miles).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird na Machrach (Ardivachar Point), South Uist, 11, first-calendar-year, 12 October to 10 November, photo (A. Stevenson *et al.*).

Outer Hebrides Loch Phaibeil (Loch Paible), North Uist, two, first-calendar-year, 13 October, photo (S.E. Duffield).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird na Machrach (Ardivachar Point), South Uist, seven, first-calendar-year, 15 October, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Cille Pheadair (Kilpheder), South Uist, two, first-calendar-year, 19 October, photo (S.E. Duffield).

Outer Hebrides Loch Ordais, Isle of Lewis, first-calendar-year, 20 October, photo (T. ap Rheinallt).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Robhanais (Butt of Lewis), Isle of Lewis, first-calendar-year, 22 October, photo (B.A.E. Marr *per* Local Recorder).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, first-calendar-year, 28 October, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Baghasdail & Cille Pheadair (Boisdale & Kilpheder), South Uist, first-calendar-year, 31 October, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird na Machrach (Ardivachar Point), South Uist, two, first-calendar-year, 3 November, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Outer Hebrides Rubha Àird a' Mhuile (Rubha Ardvule), South Uist, first-calendar-year, 8 November, photo (J.B. Kemp).

Shetland Eshaness, Mainland, adult, 16 September, photo (R.M. Fray *et al.*).

Shetland Shoadals, Foula, first-calendar-year, 10–19 October, photo (D. & G. Atherton).

Upper Forth Skinflats, first-calendar-year, 29–30 September, photo (A. Blair, S. Wotherspoon *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.

The total of 49 birds in 2019 was the highest annual total seen in Scotland. This included 36 in the Outer Hebrides where a group of 11 was observed, the largest ever. It is striking how regularly this Nearctic species is a trans-Atlantic vagrant, with birds now seen most years in north-west Scotland. Many are



Plate 90. White-rumped Sandpiper, first-calendar-year, Rubha Àird na Machrach (Ardivachar Point), South Uist, Outer Hebrides, 3 November 2019. © John Kemp



Plate 91. White-rumped Sandpipers, two, first-calendar-year, Sanaigmore, Islay, Argyll, 12–13 October 2019. © Ian Brooke

young birds displaced east during first migration to their South American wintering grounds. White-rumped Sandpipers have a strong easterly component in the first leg of their autumn migration, as shown by the observation that though they breed as far west as northern Alaska almost all migrate south through central and eastern USA with very small numbers seen along the west coast.

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

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*
34: 40: 3

Table 6. Accepted records of Lesser Yellowlegs in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Ayrshire** Capringstone Flash, Irvine, 1–3 October, photo (D. Given, D. Grant *et al.*).
Fair Isle Da Water, second-calendar-year or older, 18–19 May, photo (R. Cope *et al.*); same
Shetland Scatness, Mainland, 23–29 May, 19–21 June, photo (R. Riddington *et al.*).
Outer Hebrides Aird a' Mhachair (Ardivachar), South Uist, first-calendar-year, 24 October to 2 November, photo (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).

Lesser Yellowlegs is a very rare visitor to Scotland. The majority of birds are found in late summer and autumn, with smaller numbers in spring, and there are observations in about half of the recording areas.

This is the first year that SBRC has assessed the species. An increase in numbers observed in Britain means that records after 1 January 2019 are no longer considered by BBRC (Appendix 2).



Plate 92. Lesser Yellowlegs, second-calendar-year or older, Da Water, Fair Isle, 18–19 May 2019. © Deryk Shaw



Plate 93. Lesser Yellowlegs, first-calendar-year, Aird a' Mhachair (Ardivachar), South Uist, Outer Hebrides 24 October to 2 November 2019. © Steve Duffield

Plumage detail confirmed that the same individual first seen on Fair Isle was subsequently present at the south end of Mainland Shetland.

(Breeds in North America at higher latitudes. Migrates to winter in southern USA, south through the Caribbean, Central and South America to Tierra del Fuego.)

Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*
12: 28: 1

Table 7. Accepted records of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Clyde** Balgray Reservoir, fourth-calendar-year, returning, 1 January to 6 February, same as 2018, photo (McInerny & McGowan 2020).
Highland Skye & Lochalsh, Lower Milovaig, Skye, adult, 23 February to 12 March, photo (A. Stables *et al.*); same, Lower Milovaig, Skye, adult, June to 31 December (R. McMillan).

Yellow-legged Gull is very rare in Scotland, although 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. However, the species is probably under-recorded being challenging to identify, particularly immatures.

It seems likely that most if not all records of Yellow-legged Gull in Scotland refer to the nominate subspecies *L. m. michahellis*, which has a Mediterranean and south-west European distribution including England (McInerny

2009). However, observers should be aware that one record in Scotland of Yellow-legged Gull of the subspecies *L. m. atlantis* has been accepted by the British Ornithologists' Union Records Committee (BOURC) and BBRC as the first for Britain (Stoddart & McNerny 2017, BOU 2020a). All potential records of this subspecific taxon, which breeds on the Atlantic Islands of the Azores, Madeira and Canaries, should be sent to BBRC (Appendix 2).

The Skye bird was just the third for Highland and the first for Skye & Lochalsh; the previous two were in June 2002 and June 2008, in Ross & Cromarty and Sutherland, respectively. Its appearance in February fits with other Scottish observations, as arriving with migrating Lesser-blacked Gulls moving from north-west Africa to their breeding grounds in Scotland.

(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. *L. m. atlantis* breeds on the Azores, Madeira and Canaries, wandering south to north-west Africa.)

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*
59: 24: 1

Table 8. Accepted record of White-winged Black Tern in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **North-East Scotland** Ythan Estuary, adult, 28 July, photo (P. Crockett *et al.*).

White-winged Black Tern is a rare visitor to Scotland, mostly observed along the east side of the country and on islands between late spring and late autumn.

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

White-billed Diver *Gavia adamsii*
194: 337: 0

Table 9. Accepted record of White-billed Diver in Scotland, 2018.

2018: **Highland** Uig Bay, Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, 20 January, photo (M. Lumb).

White-billed Diver is a scarce though regular visitor to Scotland, with up to 40 being reported each year. Most occur in spring at a number of favoured localities in the Outer Hebrides, Moray & Nairn and North-East Scotland, where birds stop-over to moult into breeding plumage before moving to summer nesting areas in the high Arctic (McNerny & Shaw 2020). In Shetland and Orkney a few wintering individuals return to the same sites in successive years, and a very small number of immature, non-breeding birds have been observed during the summer.

There may be some overlap among Scottish records given the species' longevity and mobility. It seems likely that a few of the spring birds return to use the same sites each year. As it is impossible to distinguish these and they are registered as new records SBRC total numbers are probably inflated.

Records of the species since 1 January 2019 are not considered by SBRC but instead by local committees and so will not be listed in SBRC Reports (Appendix 2); here we note one outstanding record from 2018.

(Breeds in 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.)

Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*
4: 1: 1

Table 10. Accepted record of Wilson's Petrel in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Outer Hebrides** off Loch Baghasdail (Lochboisdale), South Uist, 25 August (A. Stevenson).

Wilson's Petrel is a very rare visitor to Scotland with just five accepted records prior to 2019. The first was a bird caught in poultry nets 50 m from the sea on Jura (Argyll) on 1 October 1891 (Evans 1892). The other four, all since 1988, include two off the Outer Hebrides and the others 'At Sea' off Fair Isle, with three in August and one in June (Forrester *et al.* 2007). The last of these was seen off Labost, Isle of Lewis (Outer Hebrides) on 3 August 2005 (ap Rheinallt *et al.* 2010).

Since SBRC took over the assessment of the species in 2006 no claims have been submitted until this 2019 record.

The Outer Hebrides bird was seen from the deck of CalMac MV *Lord of the Isles* ferry about 10 km out from Loch Baghasdail (Lochboisdale) amongst Storm Petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* and Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus*, which were sitting on the water and flushed as the boat passed them.

(Oceanic. Three subspecies, nominate *O. o. oceanicus*, *O. o. exasperates* and *O. o. chilensis*, all widespread across the southern oceans where it is the world's most numerous seabird. Breeds on the Antarctic continent and offshore islands of South America. Trans-equatorial migrants occur in all oceans. The two subspecies *O. o. oceanicus* and *O. o. exasperates* are thought to migrate into the North Atlantic; although either could occur in Western Palearctic waters, Irish and Icelandic specimens have been identified as *O. o. exasperates*.)

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*
3: 19: 1

Table 11. Accepted record of Cattle Egret in Scotland, 2019.

2019: Upper Forth Bolfofnought Farm, Stirling, 10–16 October, photo (W. Callion *et al.* per Local Recorder).

Cattle Egret remains very rare in Scotland although in recent years more are being found. This follows the large increase in numbers present in England, where over 200 appeared in 2007, with the species first breeding in 2008; a second influx occurred in 2016 resulting in further breeding and flocks of 51 and 87 observed in Devon and Somerset during 2018 (McInerney & McGowan 2019).

The only Scottish record during 2019 in Upper Forth was reported to be present at Bolfofnought Farm for 2–3 weeks before it was confirmed on 10 October. It frequented a herd of cows, sometimes present with them in their barn.

(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. Largely a short-distance migrant.)

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*
22: 5: 2

Table 12. Accepted records of Purple Heron in Scotland, 2019.

2019: Dumfries & Galloway Lochrutton Loch, first-calendar-year, 7 September, photo (K. & A. Freemantle).

Outer Hebrides Buaile nam Bodach (Balnabodach), Barra, 16–26 May, 9–10 June, photo (the late K. Lyon *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 39: 268–270).

Purple Heron is a very rare visitor to Scotland with a peak of sightings in May and June likely being spring overshoots from continental Europe, and the majority of the remainder occurring in September and October being dispersing juveniles.

The Barra bird remained for over three weeks, the longest staying individual ever seen in Scotland (Lyon 2019). So it was unfortunate that it was at such an inconvenient location for most birders as many have not seen the species in Scotland and would have appreciated adding it to their Scottish List.

(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 three other subspecies breeding in the Cape Verde Islands, Madagascar and the eastern part of the range.)

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*
19: 34: 2

Table 13. Accepted records of Black Kite in Scotland, 2019.

2019: Fair Isle Ward Hill, 19 April, photo (R. Cope *et al.*); same **Shetland** Norwick, Unst, 20 April, photo (D. Cooper); same **Shetland**

Cunningsburgh & Sumburgh, Mainland, 22 April (R.M. Fray, P.A. Harris); same Fair Isle Schoolhouse & various locations, 28 April to 1 May, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).
Orkney North Dales, Stenness, Mainland, 20 April, photo (J.B. Ribbands, E.J. Williams).

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*. Occurrences have increased in recent years; there were 33 during 2007–18 following just nine in the period 1997–2006.

This species has been seen a number of times in the Northern Isles, with individuals wandering between the islands. The advent of digital photography has allowed birds to be recorded and re-identified at different sites.

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

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*
 86: 30: 2

Table 14. Accepted records of Woodchat Shrike in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Orkney** Hatston Industrial Estate, Kirkwall, Mainland, second-calendar-year or older, female, 17–18 May, photo (D. Shearer *et al.*).
Orkney Holland House, Papa Westray, first-calendar-year, 10 September, photo (D. Roche *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, with dispersing juveniles recorded in autumn.

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

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*
 68 (1950–2004): 29: 1

Table 15. Accepted record of Woodlark in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Fair Isle** Hoiligoini, 29 October (R. Cope *et al.*).

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 during 1993 (Forrester *et al.* 2007). Since 1950 the majority of observations have been on the Northern Isles, with 70% on Fair Isle and Shetland.

(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.)

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla*
 286: 99: 5

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.

In 2019 none were seen on Mainland Scotland or the Western Isles, with just five recorded in the Northern Isles.

Table 16. Accepted records of Short-toed Lark in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	-	-	-
Orkney	1	-	29–30 May	-
Shetland	1	3	27–28 Apr	23 Sep–11 Oct

(Eight 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 Africa, the Middle East and India.)

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

40: 52: 2

Table 17. Accepted records of Red-rumped Swallow in Scotland, 2019.

- 2019:** **Fair Isle** Malcolm's Head & South Harbour, 21 May, photo (C. Dodd *et al.*).
Shetland Sumburgh, Mainland, 20 May, photo (G.F. Bell *et al.*).

Red-rumped Swallow is observed in Scotland annually in very small numbers from April through to November, mainly along the east coast and on islands. An increase in frequency over the last 15 years is thought to reflect a northward expansion of the European continental breeding range. Over 70% of sightings in Scotland have occurred since 2000.

Two individuals of an eastern subspecies, either *C. d. daurica* or *C. d. japonica*, have been observed in Scotland: one on Orkney and then Skye, Skye & Lochalsh, Highland, in June 2011 (McGowan *et al.* 2013), and the other 'At Sea' c.50 km east of Lybster, Caithness in May 2018 (McInerney & McGowan 2020).

(Eight 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.)

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

46: 28: 2

Table 18. Accepted records of Radde's Warbler in Scotland, 2019.

- 2019:** **Fair Isle** Klinger's Geo, 17–18 October, photo, DNA analysis (R. Hughes *et al.*).
Isle of May 21–23 October, trapped, photo (M. Marquiss, D. Steel *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 39: 353–355).

Radde's Warbler is a rare late autumn visitor to Scotland, with the majority of occurrences in the Northern Isles, principally Shetland, and the remaining few along the east coast.

The Fair Isle bird was well observed, though it was not heard to call, and showed some features suggesting that it might have been the very similar Yellow-streaked Warbler *Phylloscopus armandii*, an Eastern Palearctic species not previously recorded in the Western Palearctic. Consequently some faecal matter was obtained and DNA analysis performed, which confirmed the bird's identity as a Radde's Warbler.

(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: 61: 3

Dusky Warbler is a rare annual visitor to Scotland, with the autumn migration period accounting for all but two sightings. It occurs mainly in the Northern Isles where records are assessed locally. Nearly all other sightings have been along the east coast of mainland Scotland.

The three occurrences in 2019 were all in the Northern Isles on typical dates: one at Haroldswick, Unst, Shetland on 2–4 October; one at Millfield, Burray, Orkney on 4 October; and the last at Shirva & Meadow Burn, Fair Isle on 14 October.

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

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

157: 116: 7

Table 19. Accepted record of Greenish Warbler in Scotland, 2019, and additional record from 2018. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 20.

- 2019:** **North-East Scotland** Torry Battery, Girdle Ness, 10 September, photo (M. Lewis).
2018: **North-East Scotland** Rattray Head, second-calendar-year or older, 31 May to 1 June, photo (T. Kirkpatrick *et al.*).

Greenish Warbler is a rare but annual migrant to Scotland, increasingly regular over the past few decades (Figure 2). It is mostly seen in late

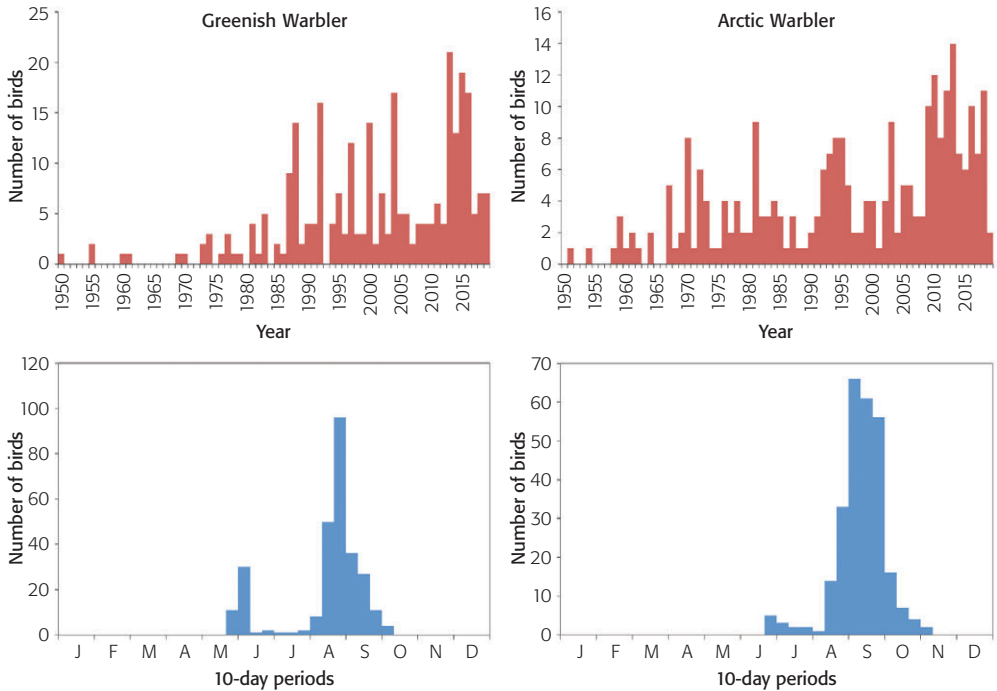


Figure 2. Annual and seasonal occurrence of Greenish Warbler and Arctic Warbler in Scotland by 10-day periods, 1950–2019.

August and early September, with smaller numbers in late May and early June; about 70% of sightings have been in the Northern Isles where records are assessed locally.

Table 20. Accepted records of Greenish Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	1	-	27 Aug
Orkney	-	1	-	26 Aug
Shetland	-	4	-	1 Aug–3 Oct

(Four subspecies. *P. t. viridanus* breeds from the Baltic east through Russia to central Siberia and north-west China, wintering in the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka. Other subspecies breed in central and eastern Palearctic areas, wintering in southern India and northern Indochina.)

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*
164: 112: 2

Table 21. Accepted records of Arctic Warbler in Scotland, 2019.

2019: **Isle of May** first-calendar-year, 22–23 September, trapped, photo (I. Livingstone, T. Southall *et al.*).
Shetland Braidfit, Foula, second-calendar-year or older, 12 July, photo (G. Atherton); same
Fair Isle, Observatory, 13–16 July, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).

Arctic Warbler is a rare but annual and increasingly regular autumn migrant to Scotland occurring mostly in the Northern Isles and along the east coast (Figure 2). It is most frequent in September, with fewer seen in late August and October; very small numbers are seen in late June and July; about 90% of observations have been in the Northern Isles.

This is the first year that SBRC has assessed the species. An increase in numbers observed in Britain means that records after 1 January 2019 are not considered by BBRC (Appendix 2).

Photographs of plumage detail confirmed that the same Shetland individual was first present on Foula and the following few days on Fair Isle. Such ‘island-hopping’ of rare warblers has been observed before in Scotland.



Plate 94. Arctic Warbler, second-calendar-year or older, Observatory, Fair Isle, 13–16 July 2019. This same bird was seen on 12 July 2019 at Braidfit, Foula, Shetland. © David Parnaby

(Breeds from northern Fennoscandia to the Bering Straits and west Alaska, and south to the Ural Mountains, Mongolia and Korea. Winters from Myanmar to Indonesia and the Philippines.)

Blyth’s Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
46: 135: 15

Table 22. Accepted records of Blyth’s Reed Warbler in Scotland, 2019. Records for Fair Isle and Shetland are summarised in Table 23.

- 2019:** **Clyde** High Wards Farm, Gartocharn, male, singing, 4 June, audio recording (R. Coleman, A.A. Murray, V. Wilson *et al.*).
Isle of May first-calendar-year, 18 October, trapped, photo (W. Hayward *et al.*).
Lothian Barns Ness, 8–9 October, photo, audio recording (I.J. Andrews *et al.*).
North-East Scotland Kirkton, Collieston, second-calendar-year or older, 6 June, photo (P. Crockett *et al.*).
Outer Hebrides Baile Raghnaill (Balranald), North Uist, male, singing, 21 June, photo, audio recording (S.E. Duffield *et al.*).
Outer Hebrides Bruairnis (Bruernish), Barra, first-calendar-year, 24–27 September, photo (S. Meek, I.N. Ricketts, B.A. Taylor *et al.*).

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, 70% of occurrences have been in the last decade. The increasing frequency of the species in Scotland follows a westward spread from European Russia through

southern Finland, Estonia and Latvia, with breeding also noted in Sweden and Poland.

A significant increase in numbers seen in Britain means that the species no longer meets criteria for consideration by BBRC and instead has been reviewed by SBRC since 1 January 2015. This trend has continued in Scotland and so since 1 January 2017 the species has been assessed by local committees on Shetland and Fair Isle, and from 1 January 2020 will no longer be considered by SBRC (Appendix 2). So, this is the last year that the species will be listed in an SBRC Report.

The overwhelming majority of sightings (87%) have been in the Northern Isles. While most occurrences are in September and October there have been an increasing number of spring singing males over the last several years, both on islands and mainland.

Table 23. Accepted records of Blyth’s Reed Warbler in Fair Isle and Shetland, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	1	5 Jun	18–21 Aug
Shetland	2	5	23 May–6 Jul	17 Aug–26 Oct

Three of the spring records in Clyde, Outer Hebrides and Shetland were singing males, with audio recordings of the songs included with the submitted descriptions; the description of the autumn Lothian record also had an audio recording. Such recordings aided the assessment process of this sometimes difficult to identify species, and SBRC encourages observers to make audio recordings of songs and calls when possible to submit with their descriptions. An article describing how to make audio-recordings and sonograms of bird calls is currently being prepared by Mark Lewis on behalf of SBRC; this will be published in a future issue of *Scottish Birds*.

(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. In recent years its range has expanded into more northern and western European areas.)

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*

many: c. 447: 20

Table 24. Accepted record of Marsh Warbler in Scotland, 2019. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 25.

2019: Isle of May 5 June, trapped, photo (S. Ritchie, D. Steel *et al.*).

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.

Table 25. Accepted records of Marsh Warbler in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	2	-	29 Jul–1 Sep
Orkney	1	3	7 Jun	9 Jul–20 Sep
Shetland	11	2	20 May–20 Jun	8 Jul–9 Sep

Due to an increase in numbers being observed in Scotland records of the species after 1 January 2020 will no longer be considered by SBRC, so this is the last SBRC Report where it is listed (Appendix 2).



Plate 95. Melodious Warbler, second-calendar-year or older, Lower Stonybreck, Fair Isle, 4–8 June 2019. © Max Hellicar

The fluctuating spring annual abundance of this species is related to the prevalence of easterly winds in late May and early June, which are presumed to cause birds to overshoot their breeding grounds in Fennoscandia during northerly spring migration from Africa (Forrester *et al.* 2007).

A notable occurrence was an adult trapped on 7 June at Lighthouse Punds, North Ronaldsay, Orkney, which bore a Swedish ring, this being the first Swedish recovery in the UK. Two males were present at Baltasound, Unst, Shetland from 9 June to 7 July.

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

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglotta*

53: 19: 4

Table 26. Accepted records of Melodious Warbler in Scotland, 2019, and an additional record for 2014.

2019: Fair Isle Lower Stonybreck & Plantation, second-calendar-year or older, 4–8 June, trapped, photo (N. Riddiford *et al.*).

Isle of May second-calendar-year or older, 30–31 July, trapped, photo (S. Langlois *et al.*).

Orkney Twingness, North Ronaldsay, first-calendar-year, 25–26 August, trapped, photo (S.J. Davies *et al.*).

Shetland Out Skerries, 25–29 September, photo (N.W. Addey, D. Bywater, M. McNaghten, S. Wignill *et al.*).

2014: Outer Hebrides Gleann (Glen), Barra, 22–29 September, photo (M. Marshall *et al.*).

Melodious Warbler is a very rare spring and autumn migrant to Scotland recorded in most years but not all. About three quarters of occurrences have been in the Northern Isles.

The sighting on Barra was the sixth for Outer Hebrides; four earlier occurrences were on South Uist with another on Barra on 1 October 2003.

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

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*
139: 33: 3

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

All three sightings during 2019 were in Shetland with birds at Burrarfirth, Unst on 15 May, Quendale, Mainland on 11 June and Geosetter, Mainland on 25–27 September.

The last Scottish mainland occurrence of Nightingale was at Garthdee, North-East Scotland on 7 May 2007.

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

Shetland Burrarfirth, Unst, 12 April, photo (R.J. Brookes *et al.*).

Shetland Da Sneck o da Smaalie, Foula, first-calendar-year/female, 24–27 September, photo (M.J. McKee, C. Turner *et al.*).

Shetland Norwick, Unst, 1–3 October, photo, died (P.H. Aley, P. Kemp *per* Local Recorder).

Shetland Sound, Lerwick, Mainland, 21 October, photo (J.G. Brown *et al.*).



Plate 96. Red-flanked Bluetails, first-calendar-year/females, both Fair Isle; North Gunnawark, 15 October 2019; inset, South Raeva, 14 October 2019. The arrows highlight plumage differences which indicate two individuals. © Steve Arlow and Rob Hughes

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*
15: 59: 15

Table 27. Accepted records of Red-flanked Bluetail in Scotland, 2019.

- 2019:** **Fair Isle** Wester Lother, first-calendar-year/female, 23 September, photo (T. Gale *et al.*).
Fair Isle Wester Lother, first-calendar-year/female, 6 October, photo (R. Cope *et al.*).
Fair Isle Observatory, first-calendar-year, 14 October, trapped, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).
Fair Isle South Raeva, first-calendar-year/female, 14 October, photo (D. Parnaby *et al.*).
Fair Isle North Gunnawark, first-calendar-year/female, 15 October, photo (R. Cope *et al.*).
Isle of May first-calendar-year, 4–6 October, trapped, photo (A. Lauder *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 39: 353–355; 40: 152–153).
North-East Scotland Rattray Head, 6 October (M.A. Sullivan, M.J. Sullivan).
Orkney Holland House, North Ronaldsay, 24 May, trapped, photo (P.E. Hales, C.D. Scott *et al.*) (*Scottish Birds* 39: 274–277).
Orkney Holland House, North Ronaldsay, 24 September (G. Gay *et al.*).
Orkney Neuks, Sanday, first-calendar-year/female, 5 October, photo (I. Hartley *et al.*).
Orkney Queenamidda, Rendall, Mainland, first-calendar-year/female, 14 October, trapped, photo (J.B. Ribbands *et al.*).

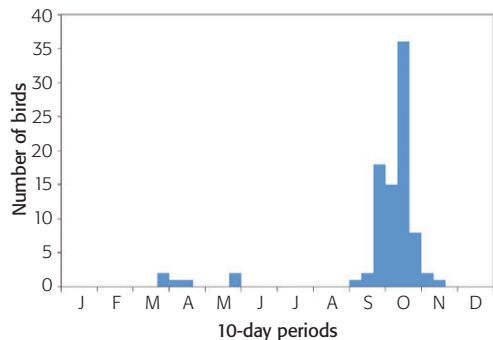
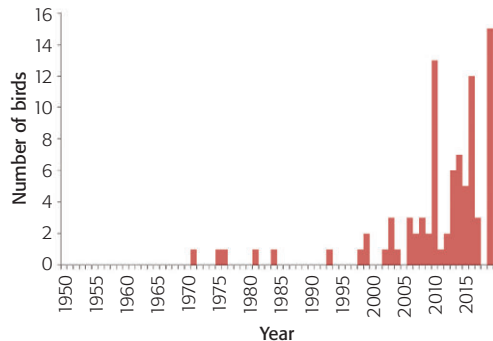


Figure 3. Annual and seasonal occurrence of Red-flanked Bluetail in Scotland by 10-day periods, 1950–2019.

Red-flanked Bluetail is a rare but annual migrant to Scotland, increasingly regular in the last two decades (Figure 3). The vast majority (93%) of sightings in Scotland have been from September to mid-November with a peak in mid-October, and 82% have been in the Northern Isles.

Assessment of Red-flanked Bluetail was undertaken by BBRC until 1 January 2017. A recent increase in numbers seen in Britain means that the species no longer meets criteria for consideration by BBRC and it is now assessed by SBRC (Appendix 2).

Following the surprising blank year for the species in 2018, the 2019 total of 15 was the highest ever Scottish count (Figure 3). Thirteen of these were in autumn from late September to late October (Steel 2019, Steel 2020), with just two in spring in April and May (Scott & Hales 2019).

The sightings on the Isle of May and in North-East Scotland were the second for these areas.

(Breeds in Finland through Eurasia to Kamchatka and south to Mongolia, China and Japan. Migrates to winter in China and south-east Asia. In recent years its range has expanded into more northern and western European areas.)

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*
105: 94: 9

Table 28. Accepted records of Citrine Wagtail in Scotland, 2019.

- 2019: **Fair Isle** Walli Burn & Easter Lother Water, male, 14 May, photo (A. Barker, A. Heavisides, I.R. Poxton *et al.*).
Fair Isle Da Water, male, 27–28 June, photo (S. Pamaby *et al.*).
Fair Isle Various locations, first-calendar-year, 25–27 August, photo (R. Cope *et al.*).
Orkney North Wick, Papa Westray, first-calendar-year, 6–17 September, photo (D. Roche *et al.*).
Shetland Dale of Walls, Mainland, first-calendar-year, 27 August, photo (R. Riddington, R.M. Tallack).
Shetland Balta Isle, Unst, first-calendar-year, 29 August, photo (B.H. Thomason *per* Local Recorder).
Shetland Hillswick, Mainland, first-calendar-year, 2 September, photo (R.M. Fray *et al.*).

Shetland Baltasound, Unst, first-calendar-year, 3–4 September, photo (B.H. Thomason *et al. per* Local Recorder).

Shetland Shoadals, Foula, first-calendar-year, 15–28 September, photo (D. & G. Atherton *et al.*).

Citrine Wagtail is a rare but annual spring and autumn migrant to Scotland, increasingly regular since the 1990s, though found mostly on islands. Occurrence is generally in autumn with few seen in spring. The overwhelming majority (86%) have been in the Northern Isles with a further 7% in Outer Hebrides. Despite the recent increase in numbers Citrine Wagtail remains an extreme rarity in other parts of the country not being seen in many recording areas.

(Nominate *M. c. citreola* breeds in Russia from Kola Peninsula to River Khatanga, south to Himalayas; another subspecies in Iran and Afghanistan. Migrates to winter in China, south-east Asia, the Indian subcontinent and the Arabian Gulf.)

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
151: 207: 19

Table 29. Accepted records of Olive-backed Pipit in Scotland, 2019. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 30.

- 2019: **Angus & Dundee** Mains of Usan, 6 October, photo (K. Edwards, G. Smith).
Highland Tarbat Ness, Ross & Cromarty, 5 November, photo (P. Stronach, B. Swann) (*Scottish Birds* 40: 154–156).
Isle of May 5 November (M. Newell *et al.*).



Plate 97. Citrine Wagtail, male, Walli Burn & Easter Lother Water, Fair Isle, 14 May 2019. © Richard Cope

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. The species has been considered by SBRC since 2013 and assessed locally in the Northern Isles since 2015, but records of the species after 1 January 2020 will not be considered by SBRC so this is the last SBRC Report where it will be listed (Appendix 2).

Table 30. Accepted records of Olive-backed Pipit in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	-	2	-	16–18 Oct
Orkney	-	1	-	28 Aug–6 Oct
Shetland	-	13	-	24 Sep–19 Oct

The two mainland sightings, at Mains of Usan (Angus & Dundee) and Tarbat Ness (Highland), were the first for these recording areas (Stronach 2019).

Of the total number of occurrences in Scotland, 50% have been on Shetland.

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

Serin *Serinus serinus*

7: 3: 2

Table 31. Accepted records of Serin in Scotland, 2019, and additional record from 2018.

- 2019:** **Outer Hebrides** Nasg (Nask), Barra, adult, male, 29–30 April, photo, audio recording (B.A. Taylor *et al.*).
Shetland Brough, Whalsay, female, 26–27 April, photo (J.L. Irvine *et al.*).
2018: **Fair Isle** North Light area, female, 16 May, photo (R. Cope *et al.*).

Serin is an extremely rare vagrant to Scotland, with just nine previous records: three on Fair Isle, two on Shetland (Unst and Fetlar), and one each in Lothian (Edinburgh), Borders (St Abbs), the Isle of May and the Outer Hebrides (McGowan & McNerny 2016). Five were males and four females, with birds being found in April (2), May (5), August (1) and November (1); the last was in 2014.



Plate 98. Serin, male, Nasg (Nask), Barra, Outer Hebrides, 29–30 April 2019. © Bruce Taylor

Thus the two in 2019 and one in 2018 perhaps suggest an upward turn for the species incidence in Scotland. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues in the future.

(Breeds from the Canary Islands, North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula to Germany, Denmark and the Middle East. Northern populations migrate south, remaining within the breeding range.)

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

many: 62: 6

Table 32. Accepted records of Ortolan Bunting in Scotland, 2019. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 33.

- 2019:** **Caithness** Biel of Duncansby, first-calendar-year, 28 September (R. Hughes & N. O'Hanlon).
Dumfries & Galloway Mull of Galloway, adult, female, 26 May, photo (M. Lazar *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. The general trend of decreasing numbers over the last two decades appears to be continuing. This reflects the steep decline of the west European population since 1980 thought to be due to habitat destruction and unsustainable hunting (McNerny & McGowan 2019).



Plate 99. Ortolan Bunting, female, Mull of Galloway, Dumfries & Galloway, 26 May 2019. © Milo Lazar

Table 33. Accepted records of Ortolan Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	-	15 May	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-
Shetland	-	3	-	22 Sep–12 Oct

(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: 460: 37

Table 34. Accepted records of Little Bunting in Scotland, 2019. Northern Isles records are summarised separately in Table 35.

2019: **Fife** Kilminning, 23 September, photo (B. Farquharson *per* Local Recorder).
Clyde Gryfe Reservoir No. 1, near Garvock, 19 November, photo (B. Beer, A. Russell *per* Local Recorder).
Isle of May 28 September, photo (A. Lauder, K. Morton, J. Osborne *et al.*).
North-East Scotland Inverbervie, 14 October, trapped, photo (P.A.A. Baxter).
Outer Hebrides Eòlaigearraidh (Eoligarry), Barra, 6–7 May, photo (B.A. Taylor *et al.*).

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

The species remains rare on the mainland with most seen along the east coast: the 2019 records were the seventh for Fife, and the 10th for North-East Scotland. It is extremely rare on west mainland Scotland as shown by the Gryfe Reservoir sighting being for the first for the Clyde recording area.

Table 35. Accepted records of Little Bunting in the Northern Isles, 2019.

	Number of birds		Date range	
	Spr.	Aut.	Spr.	Aut.
Fair Isle	1	5	23 Apr	8 Sep–2 Oct
Orkney	-	2	-	10 Sep–5 Oct
Shetland	1	23	23 May	22 Sep–17 Nov

Most records were of single birds but two were seen at Swinister Burn, Mainland, Shetland, on 23–27 September.



Plate 100. Little Bunting, Eòlaigearraidh (Eoligarry), Barra, Outer Hebrides, 6–7 May 2019. © Bruce Taylor

An additional record from 2018 at Senness, North Ronaldsay (Orkney) on 11 October, is added to the header totals. SBRC, so this is the last SBRC Report where it will be listed (Appendix 2).

Due to an increase in numbers being observed in Scotland records of the species after 1 January 2020 will no longer be considered by

(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.

- 2019: Lesser Scaup Loch Bea, Sanday, Orkney, 9–21 April; White-rumped Sandpiper Skateraw, Lothian, 4 August; Caspian Gull Ravensheugh Sands, Scoughall, Lothian, 27 March; Yellow-legged Gull Ham, Foula, Shetland, 24 May to 22 June; Yellow-legged Gull Garnock Floods, Ayrshire, 23–25 May; Cory's Shearwater Barns Ness, Lothian, 18 September; Cetti's Warbler Crantit Trail, St Ola, Kirkwall, Mainland, Orkney, 9 May; Marsh Warbler Inverugie, North-East Scotland, 13 May.
- 2018: Yellow-legged Gull Loch of Skene, North-East Scotland, 22 August; Greenish Warbler Girdle Ness, Torry Battery, North-East Scotland, 2 June.

Appendix 2

Summary of assessment of records by the Scottish Birds Records Committee (SBRC), the SBRC List, and other committees, 2016–20. 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

16	17	18	19	20	
■	■	■	■	■	Black Brant <i>Branta bernicla nigricans</i>
■					Egyptian Goose <i>Alopochen aegyptiaca</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Lesser Scaup <i>Aythya affinis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Alpine Swift <i>Tachymarptis melba</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Black-winged Stilt <i>Himantopus himantopus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Kentish Plover <i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Continental Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa limosa</i>
■	■	■	■	■	White-rumped Sandpiper <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Caspian Gull <i>Larus cachinnans</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Yellow-legged Gull <i>Larus michahellis</i> (except <i>L. m. atlantis</i> - BBRC)
■	■	■	■	■	White-winged Black Tern <i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Franz Josef Land Little Auk <i>Alle alle polaris</i>
■	■	■			White-billed Diver <i>Gavia adamsii</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Wilson's Petrel <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Cory's Shearwater <i>Calonectris borealis</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Great Shearwater <i>Ardenna gravis</i>
■					Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>
■	■	■	■	■	Night-heron <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>

■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Cattle Egret <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Purple Heron <i>Ardea purpurea</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Montagu's Harrier <i>Circus pygargus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Black Kite <i>Milvus migrans</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)
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Short-toed Lark <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</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>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Radde's Warbler <i>Phylloscopus schwarzi</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Dusky Warbler <i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Greenish Warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Arctic Warbler <i>Phylloscopus borealis</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Blyth's Reed Warbler <i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Marsh Warbler <i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Melodious Warbler <i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Western/Eastern Subalpine Warbler <i>Curruca iberiae/cantillans</i> *
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Dartford Warbler <i>Curruca undata</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>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Olive-backed Pipit <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Arctic Redpoll <i>Acanthis hornemanni</i> *
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Parrot Crossbill <i>Loxia pytyopsittacus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Scottish Crossbill <i>Loxia scotica</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Serim <i>Serinus serinus</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Ortolan Bunting <i>Emberiza hortulana</i>
■ ■ ■ ■ ■	Cirl Bunting <i>Emberiza cirlus</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

* From 1 January 2019, all records to be considered 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

Appendix 3

Correction to previous reports:

2018: Parrot Crossbill. It was stated that an influx in 1982 was of 20 birds. In fact, the total was 29, with the 20 from Shetland and Fair Isle only.

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