

# Lothian Bird Bulletin



The Newsletter of  
Lothian SOC

2003 : No 4

# Contents

Editorial	3
News	3
From The President	4
Lothian SOC Outings	4
City Buzzards	6
Mystery Songs	6
We Want Your Record Collection!	7
Birdwatching Top Ten	10
SOC Conference	10
Lothian Bird Sightings	11
Mystery Bird	12

**Published by Lothian SOC, 18th  
November 2003.**

**Edited by**

Stephen Hunter  
Flat 6, 2 Glenogle Road  
Edinburgh, EH3 5HW

**Tel**

0131-556 4996

**Email**

[stephenjameshunter@btopenworld.com](mailto:stephenjameshunter@btopenworld.com)

**Contributors**

Ian Andrews, Rosemary Davidson, Mark  
Holling, Eleanor Hurley, David Kelly,  
Keith MacGregor, Jacky Robinson, Ian  
Thomson

**Photography**

Ringed Plover © Ian Andrews  
Mystery Bird © Ian Thomson



**Contact The SOC at**

Harbour Point, Newhailes Road  
Musselburgh, EH21 6SJ

**Tel** 0131-653 0653

**Email** [mail@the-soc.org.uk](mailto:mail@the-soc.org.uk)

**Websites**

[www.the-soc.org.uk](http://www.the-soc.org.uk)

[www.geocities.com/lothianbirding](http://www.geocities.com/lothianbirding)

# Editorial

Merry Christmas from the Lothian Bird Bulletin! Or Happy New Year if the post is a bit slow. The last issue of 2003 features an introduction from the new SOC president Mark Holling, an article (also by Mark) on Edinburgh's Buzzards, a report on the SOC Conference by Keith MacGregor, and a piece on submitting records for the 2003 Lothian Bird Report. Thanks also to Jacky Robinson for her report on the Northumberland outing.

As always I hope you'll consider contributing to future issues of the LBB. See *Birdwatching Top Ten* on page 10 for a suggestion.

Cheers,



## News

### **Richard Stands Down as Lothian SOC Chairman**

Just after the last issue 'went to press', Richard Birch announced that he was standing down as chairman of the Lothian Branch. Richard will be a familiar face to anyone who has attended the monthly branch meetings at Meadowbank or travelled on the club outings. He served on the LSOC committee for around 7 years, during which time he not only led most of the outings, but drove the minibus too. Richard has now decided to take a back seat due to pressure from other commitments. Vice Chair Jacky Robinson has agreed to take over as LSOC Chairperson, and Gillian Herbert has joined the committee to help arrange the club outings.

We'd like to wish Richard all the best in his 'retirement' - hopefully he'll still manage to come along to at least some of the branch meetings and outings. Also good luck to Jacky and Gillian with their new roles.

### **Argaty Red Kite Viewing**

In February Lothian SOC visited Lerrocks Farm, Argaty, near Doune, where a feeding station has been set up for the recently reintroduced Red Kite population. We had a very enjoyable afternoon, watching upwards of 25 Kites from a makeshift hide. Things have gone upmarket since then, with a website and a new viewing hide. Visits can now be arranged using the online form at <http://www.argatyredkites.co.uk>, or by phone on 01786 841 373. *Note that advance booking is essential.*

### **BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition**

Over 100 photos are on show at the Scottish Seabird Centre in North Berwick until 25th January. Entry is included in the centre admission price.

### **Last Remaining 2000 Lothian Bird Reports**

Just a few copies left now. Contact Ian Thomson (01875 870 588) or John Pringle (0131 334 7105).

# From The President

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself to the Lothian SOC, as your new President – although most of you who attend meetings will know me already I'm sure! As well as being a regular at branch meetings (where I'm often standing up to ask for volunteers for surveys), I have chaired the Lothian Discussion Group meetings since 1991 and co-wrote our local breeding bird atlas (copies still available). From late 1989 to late 2002 I was actually living in the Borders, but still working in Edinburgh, so I made more meetings in Edinburgh than in Melrose. In November 2002 though I moved to North Berwick, back to the coast for the first time since I left my ancestral home on the Yorkshire coast in 1976.

I follow Ian Andrews, also of the Lothian branch, into the SOC Presidency. Ian has done a magnificent job moving the club forward as we left Regent Terrace and now are set to build our new HQ at Aberlady. He has also introduced many other initiatives and laid the foundations for many more, which I hope to build on. Our standard-setting website is the most visible, but there are many others behind the scenes.

The next two years will be exciting and challenging times for the SOC, and for me! My term will be overshadowed by the opening of Waterston House, but I fully intend to continue the improvement of the Club, aiming for a club which will be the first choice for everyone interested in birds and birdwatching in Scotland. I hope you will support me in this by selling the SOC to all your friends – go on, tell them why you are a member and what it is that most interests you. Let's show the other branches how we can increase our membership locally – with the opening of Waterston House within the next year or so we have a perfect opportunity.

I hope that I will have the opportunity to chat to many of you over the next two years. Please feel free to tell me what you think about the SOC (good or bad!), and I hope that many of you will be looking forward to becoming volunteers at our new centre at Aberlady once we are open.

*Mark Holling, November 2003*

## Lothian SOC Outings

### **Northumberland - 28th September**

The minibus trip to Northumberland proved an interesting day out and ended with amusement at the behaviour of our fellow species. Birdline produced no reports of any rarities along the Northumberland coast, so the minibus with 13 occupants headed for Holy Island. At least we might expect to see Brent geese!

Reaching the causeway over an hour after the safe crossing time we were surprised to find it still quite wet (though the tide was well out), but with very few waders. The first bird of interest was a very confiding song thrush in the churchyard, allowing us to approach within feet. Walking out onto the open ground on the east side of the island we had our first glimpse of distant geese, a large group of seals on the sandbank, and a variety of ducks and waders in the estuary including a few grey plover one with remnant summer plumage. The sun brought out red admiral, small tortoiseshell and white butterflies in profusion, but did Syd get a decent digital photo of them? Unidentified noises in the sycamores led us to look more closely for the source - a pair of bramblings (maybe more)

arguing with a resident robin. I've never seen them so early in the autumn. We also saw the first redwings of the season, and yet there were still a few swallows overhead.

There were no other major surprises on the island except the lack of ringed plovers in the harbour area - have you ever not seen ringed plover there? Leaving the island in good time for a safe crossing back to the mainland we moved on a few miles south to Denham-le-Moor and a two-storey hide (new to me) overlooking Denham Flats and Holy Island beyond with the tide racing in. The 'geese' were brought nearer to us by the tide, and then swept past us. As well as large numbers of brent geese there were barnacle geese, 2 mute swans and a single whooper swan, large numbers of wigeon and probably 20 pintail, all still in eclipse. A small group of pinkfeet flew over - definitely in the minority here. In all we totalled about 50 species for the day - a dry, still, early autumn day.

And what was our amusement? Well, it was watching visitors leave the island through our telescopes – people who had obviously either not read or taken seriously the notices about safe crossing times! There were some with 4 wheel drives who just put their foot down and created a wash; others who drove slowly and deliberately through the water, and finally one who drove in hesitantly, got cold feet (perhaps literally) and then reversed blindly back onto the island. It must be a regular entertainment for the local residents; it certainly caused us a few laughs. *Jacky Robinson, November 2003*

### **East Coast Migrants - 19th October**

First stop in our quest for migrants was Barns Ness. Here we saw a large flock of (probably) migrant Skylarks, and a non-migrant Stoat chasing a non-migrant Rabbit. Off to Barns Ness next, where we were treated to views of a Peregrine flying around the sea cliffs. Some of our group were fortunate to see a Water Rail on Mire Loch, plus a rather late Common Sandpiper. Others were entertained by a Raven repeatedly dropping a twig and catching it again in mid-air. Finally, Torness produced a Red-throated Diver and a variety of other seabirds. Rarities? There were Yellow-browed Warblers at Barns Ness and St Abbs Head...unfortunately the prospect of a guaranteed mention in the Lothian Bird Bulletin wasn't enough to tempt them into view.

### **Slamannan - 9th November**

This outing started at Linlithgow Loch, where the resident Red-crested Pochard obliged us with very close views. Next, on to the Slamannan area, where we were determined to find the elusive Taiga Bean Goose flock - after having 'dipped' on the previous trip in January. To help us, Richard enlisted local Bean Goose expert Angus Maciver. This proved to be a successful tactic, and we located the 200+ geese without any difficulty. Also in the area was a large flock of Pink-footed Geese, and some of the group glimpsed a Kingfisher on the River Avon. We finished off the day with visits to Kinneil (177 Black-tailed Godwits, several Shovelers, and massive flocks of Golden Plovers and Knot) and Grangemouth Harbour. Our species total for the day was 55. (For anyone wishing to track down the Bean Geese, we recommend that you visit the Bean Geese Website at [www.bean-geese.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk](http://www.bean-geese.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk), or contact Angus Maciver on 01324 714 479.)

### **Coming Up...**

- 11th Jan: Fife Coast and Vane Farm.
- 8th Feb: Ayrshire Coast.
- 28th Mar: Glen Artney, Perthshire.
- 23-25th Apr: Speyside Capercaillie Weekend.

(Contact the Lothian Bird Bulletin for details.)

# City Buzzards

For a long time now I have been very interested in the distribution of Buzzards locally, and have done a lot of work on the expansion of Buzzards in the Borders (see my talk on this subject at the January meeting). There has been a similar rise in numbers throughout Lothian too, and this spectacular bird of prey is now been seen regularly within the Edinburgh City boundary, not only in those more rural areas west of the City bypass.

At a branch meeting in autumn 2002, I asked members to show me on an Edinburgh map where they had seen Buzzards during 2002. This proved to be a most useful exercise, and 37 "dots" were added to the map indicating sightings. A few of these were in areas where Buzzards have been established for a good few years now, and were not too surprising – these included the northern edge of the Pentlands and by the A90 near Dalmeny.

However, there was a significant cluster in the "southeast wedge", including Dalkeith Country Park where Buzzards have been present for more than six years. There were other records close to here though, including near the bypass towards Straiton and by the River Esk where it is crossed by the A1. These records outside the bypass totalled 13, but there were another 13 records inside the bypass in eastern Edinburgh from Burdiehouse round to Musselburgh, including ones as far into the city as Newington and Duddingston. There has been one nesting record within this area – so far the only one known within the bypass.

This open area in the southeast perhaps explains the number of records here, as in the western half of the city there were just five records within the bypass, all in the most likely locations: Craiglockart Hill, Corstorphine Hill and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

To document this spread into urban areas I would ask everyone to report any Buzzards within the City bypass to our local bird recorder (David Kelly). It is possible that within five years there could be four or five nesting pairs in this area, so look out!

*Mark Holling, November 2003*

# Mystery Songs

Autumn - when the trees become a beautiful patchwork of colour, migrant geese and thrushes pass by overhead, and the air is filled with the sweet sound of Magpies singing. Hang on...that last bit can't be right. Seriously though, Magpies really can sing when they put their minds to it - not the usual squawks and rattles, but a proper song. I heard this recently in Edinburgh - it was a quiet, wistful song, perhaps a little bit Blackbird-like, delivered from a fence post. Consulting my field guides, most mention a Magpie 'subsung'. The Collins Bird Guide describes this rather ungraciously as a "harsh twittering". Elsewhere it's described as "a quiet song with chirping and twittering sounds", "a low-voiced babbling song consisting of whining and twittering sounds", and "a quiet bubbling repetitive song". Was it the subsong I heard...or was 'my' Magpie a talented mimic (or am I just going mad)?

While on the subject, another unusual song I've heard on a couple of occasions belongs to the Tawny Owl. The ubiquitous Tawny hoot is a fairly short note, with a dip in pitch at the end. The 'alternative' song is a spooky, tremulous note, much longer than the familiar one, and with no drop in pitch at the end. This time the Collins guide redeems itself with the only description I could find - it refers to the "xylophone trill", "a low-pitched, shivering

tremolo o'o'o'o'o'o'o'o'o'o'o...". (To be honest I don't remember it being particularly low pitched...so once again I'm left in some doubt over what I heard.)

Is there a birdsong expert out there who can tell the LBB more about these calls, or supply any other examples of unusual birdsong? Please get in touch!

## We Want Your Record Collection!

**No, not that kind of record collection.** By the time you read this, I hope you'll be preparing to send in the bird records you've meticulously collected during 2003. The publication of the **Lothian Bird Report** is an important function of the Lothian SOC, and we can't do it without records from local birdwatchers. The more records we receive, the more comprehensive the LBR will be. **We welcome records from everyone** - you don't need to have a PhD in birdwatching. If you're unsure what to send in, I've included some guidance below.

### What to report

There are no hard-and-fast rules on what bird sightings to report, but a flick through a back issue of the Lothian Bird Report should give you a rough idea of what we're looking for. Remember that the SOC isn't just interested in rare birds - the LBR contains a section for every species seen during the year. (We do still like to hear about rare birds though!)

Here are some examples of information you might consider sending in:

- Early and late records of a migratory species.
- Peak counts at a regularly watched site for each calendar month.
- A summary for a common species - for example the numbers present at a particular site throughout the year. In general, individual records of a very common species (other than breeding records) are not so useful - unless they are put in context (eg first for the site, largest number seen there).
- Records of a less common or less widespread species. For many species we don't list individual sightings in the LBR, but records are still important for monitoring the status of the species in Lothian.
- Records of a rare or unusual species or sub-species - even if common elsewhere in the country. Sometimes extra information such as time of day, direction of flight etc might be helpful. Don't forget to send a **Rare Bird Record Form** to the local recorder David Kelly if you see a species which is considered by one of the records committees (Local, SBRC, or BBRC). See the SOC website for more information. Records of these species will not be published in the Lothian Bird Report unless accepted by the relevant committee.
- Records of a species away from its usual sites - for example inland records of a bird usually seen at sea.
- Breeding records (or probable breeding records), including territory counts, brood sizes, first broods, records of displaying birds etc. Note that 'sensitive' information will not be published in the Lothian Bird Report.
- Seawatch records. Please give the time period that your count relates to, so we know whether or not to add other observers' counts to yours.

Remember only to include records for the Lothian recording area. (For the purposes of the Lothian Bird Report, this is now the combined West Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian, and East Lothian Council areas.) Recorders for the other Scottish regions are listed in the SOC website, or can be obtained by contacting the Lothian Bird Bulletin.

It's worth noting that all records are held in a database for future reference, so your efforts won't be wasted even if they don't all appear in the report.

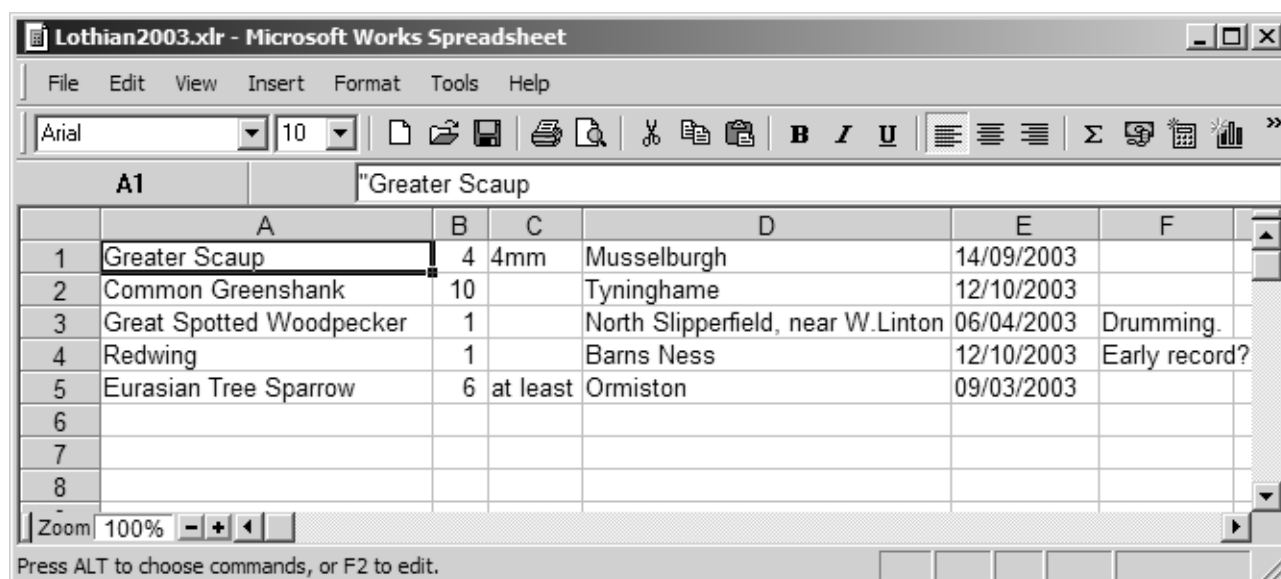
## What information to include

Records should include

- the **name** of the species seen. If possible use the name as given in the most recent Lothian Bird Report.
- the **number** of birds seen. *Please leave this as a number only, without any text.*
- a **comment** with additional information such as sex, age, and plumage (eg "2mm + 1f", "1st-w").
- **where** the species was seen. Please give a grid reference for a less well known site, or refer to a more familiar site nearby (eg "White Hill NT215672", or "White Hill, Bonaly").
- the **date** when the species was seen. Please take care with the date format - use DD/MM/YYYY rather than MM/DD/YYYY. If the record applies to a range of dates - eg from 6/11/2003 to 14/11/2003 - enter the first date here, and include the last date in the comments - eg "Present until 14/11/2003".
- any **comments** that you think would be helpful and put your record in context - don't assume that the Recorder/Editor knows everything about every site! Include any information that you think would be of interest to a reader of the 2003 Lothian Bird Report - we'd like it to be as readable as possible. (See also **What to report.**)  
*Please keep these comments separate from the comments on sex, age, plumage etc above.*

## What format to use

If you have a computer, please try to send in your records as a Microsoft Works Spreadsheet or Excel Spreadsheet.



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Greater Scaup	4	4mm	Musselburgh	14/09/2003	
2	Common Greenshank	10		Tynninghame	12/10/2003	
3	Great Spotted Woodpecker	1		North Slipperfield, near W.Linton	06/04/2003	Drumming.
4	Redwing	1		Barns Ness	12/10/2003	Early record?
5	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	6 at least		Ormiston	09/03/2003	
6						
7						
8						

The example overleaf shows the 'Borders Database' Excel format, which can be downloaded from the SOC website at [www.the-soc.fsnet.co.uk/database-instructions.htm](http://www.the-soc.fsnet.co.uk/database-instructions.htm). This allows the species name to be entered as a two-letter BTO code - the full name and Euring number are automatically filled in for you. (Full instructions on how to use this program are also available online.)



Microsoft Excel - Lothian2003.xls

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Data Window Help

A2 = SP

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
	BTO code	Euring	Species	No.	No. Details	Date	Location	Rec. Area	GridRef	Obs Initials	Obs Name	Comment
2	SP	0204	Greater Scaup	4	4mm	14/09/2003	Musselburgh	Lothian		SJH	Stephen Hunter	
3	GK	0548	Common Greensh	10		12/10/2003	Tynninghame	Lothian		SJH	Stephen Hunter	
4	GS	0876	Great Spotted Wood	1		06/04/2003	North Slipperfield, nr W.Li	Lothian	NT128518	SJH	Stephen Hunter	Drumming.
5	RE	1201	Redwing	1		12/10/2003	Barns Ness	Lothian		SJH	Stephen Hunter	Early record?
6	TS	1598	Eurasian Tree Spa	6	at least	09/03/2003	Ormiston	Lothian		SJH	Stephen Hunter	

Lothian 2003 - Stephen Hunter / Short Species / Borders Lis

Ready

If you don't have Excel or Works Spreadsheet, a table in a Word document will suffice.

Lothian2003.doc - Microsoft Word

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window Help

Type a question for help

100% Courier New 10 B I

Greater Scaup	4	4mm	Musselburgh	14/09/2003	
Common Greenshank	10		Tynninghame	12/10/2003	
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1		North Slipperfield, nr W.Linton	06/04/2003	Drumming
Redwing	1		Barns Ness	12/10/2003	Early record?
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	6	at least	Ormiston	09/03/2003	

Page 1 Sec 1 1/1 At 3.5cm Ln 2 Col 1 REC TRK EXT OVR English (U.K)

As a last resort, a basic text file could be used - with commas to separate the names, counts, locations etc.

Lothian2003.csv - WordPad

File Edit View Insert Format Help

```

Greater Scaup,4,4mm,Musselburgh,14/09/2003,
Common Greenshank,10,,Tynninghame,12/10/2003,
Great Spotted Woodpecker,1,, "North Slipperfield nr W.Linton",06/04/2003,Drumming
Redwing,1,,Barns Ness,12/10/2003,Early record?
Eurasian Tree Sparrow,6,at least,Ormiston,09/03/2003,

```

For Help, press F1

Other computer formats may be acceptable - contact David Kelly for details. If you don't have a computer, paper records can also be submitted. *(Please don't send in a paper printout of your computer records - email them or send them on a floppy disk!)*

## Where to send your records

Records should be sent - if possible before 31st January - by email to davidjkelly@tiscali.co.uk (note David's new email address) or by post to:

David Kelly  
20 Market View  
Tranent  
East Lothian  
EH33 1GA  
(tel 01875 614072)

**And finally...if you didn't keep records for 2003, why not start 'collecting' in 2004?**

*Thanks very much to Ian Andrews and David Kelly for their help with this article - Ed.*

# Birdwatching Top Ten

This is the point where I try to persuade you to send in an article for the Lothian Bird Bulletin. I'm hoping to start a regular feature where Lothian SOC members write about their ten most memorable bird sightings. For example you could tell me about the Blue Tit that inspired you to start birdwatching, or the day you found Britain's first Black-bellied Sandgrouse on Portobello beach. I'm not looking for technical descriptions - just where and when you saw each bird, and what made the occasion so memorable for you. Put the sightings in chronological order, so that they make up a brief history of your birdwatching exploits. Aim for between one and two pages of A4.

I look forward to hearing from you!

## SOC Conference 31st Oct - 2nd Nov 2003

This year's conference took place once again at the popular Balavil Sport Hotel at Newtonmore. An excellent attendance of over 130 members ensured a highly social event encompassing the theme of "Picturing Birds". The speakers, all expert in their own field, covered the subject of bird portrayal in its various forms from drawing and sketching to the latest techniques in video and digi-scoping.

To watch John Busby bringing birds such as Cranes to life with a few deft strokes of charcoal, and hear Ian Wallace describing depiction from his field sketch book of many years was a revelation. Birds in historical art form by Professor Michael Thomas brought many thought-provoking and unusual angles to light, and the excellent photographic skills of Tim Loseby and Mark Hamblin provided proof of how bird photography - even of common or garden birds - has reached such high levels.

Paul Hackett in his talk on digi-scoping (ably assisted by volunteers from the audience) did not disguise the cost and variety of equipment if starting from scratch, but proved that results (with much practice!) could be worth the effort. Finally, birds were spectacularly brought to life by Paul Doherty with his video and DVD films, a highlight amongst many being the extraordinary shots of mass internal ground movement within a vast flock of Knots, with birds rapidly flowing to and fro.

Other events included an update of the Waterston House project by Bill Gardner, Ian Andrew's information on the projected new Birds of Scotland, a raffle of many prizes, and the draw selecting the lucky winners of the latest 200 Club promotion, followed by a smoothly run AGM with Mark Holling as the new president. An excellent dinner with witty comments by Ian Wallace rounded off the day.

The weather being largely kind, many members spread through Strathspey on the Saturday morning, finding amongst others many Fieldfares and Redwings, Whoopers and Hen Harrier, Waxwing and Peregrine, but no sign of the reported White-tailed Eagle - instead of all things a Little Auk on Loch Insh!

All in all a happy Conference, for which the organisers are to be congratulated.

*Keith MacGregor, November 2003*

# Lothian Bird Sightings

## SEPTEMBER

At *Aberlady*, 2 adult **Mediterranean Gulls** on the 1st; 9 **Black-tailed Godwits** and a **Roseate Tern** on the 4th; a **Curlew Sandpiper**, a **Greenshank**, and a **Water Rail** from the 7th-12th; a **Pectoral Sandpiper** and 5 **Arctic Skuas** on the 7th; 490 **Barnacle Geese** on the 20th; 3530 **Pink-footed Geese**, 169 **Barnacle Geese** and 8 **Canada Geese** on the 21st; a small-race (*parvipes*) **Canada Goose** on the 24th and 25th; 12600 **Pink-footed Geese** on the 23rd; 14130 **Pink-footed Geese**, 14 **Barnacle Geese**, and a **Barn Owl** on the 25th.

At *Barns Ness*, 2 **Little Gulls**, 2 **Great Skuas**, an **Arctic Skua**, a **Balearic Shearwater** and a **Black Tern** on the 11th; 5 **Black Terns** on the 14th; 5 **Little Gulls**, 4 **Pintails** and a **Short-eared Owl** on the 17th; a **Little Gull**, a **Great Skua**, 2 **Arctic Skuas** and 83 **Barnacle Geese** on the 24th.

At *Cramond*, a **Spotted Redshank**, 2 **Greenshanks**, and a **Whimbrel** on the 3rd; a **Greenshank**, a **Kingfisher**, 4 **Pintails**, 175 **Wigeon** and an **Arctic Skua** on the 11th; a **Spotted Redshank**, a **Greenshank**, 3 **Scaup**, 2 **Pintails** on the 19th; a **Mediterranean Gull** on the 22nd.

At *Musselburgh*, 2 **Curlew Sandpipers**, a **Short-eared Owl**, a **Red-necked Grebe**, 5 **Slavonian Grebes** and 2 **Arctic Skuas** on the 7th; 3 **Little Stints**, 2 **Ruff**, 6 **Scaup**, 18 **Red-throated Divers**, 8 **Slavonian Grebes**, 31 **Snipe**, a **Black-tailed Godwit** and 2 **Arctic Skuas** on the 18th; 4 **Greenshanks**, 5 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 13 **Slavonian Grebes**, 29 **Snipe** and a **Kingfisher** on the 20th; 4 **Whooper Swans**, 11 **Slavonian Grebes**, and 40 **Barnacle Geese** on the 21st; a **Purple Sandpiper** on the 23rd; 4 **Brent Geese** on the 26th.

At *Threipmuir*, a juvenile **Baird's Sandpiper** from the 6th to the 18th; 3 **Sanderlings** on the 15th; 4 **Pintails** on the 14th; a **Green Sandpiper** on the 19th; up to 2 **Greenshanks** throughout the month. On the *River Almond Pools*, 2 **Pintails** and a **Kingfisher** on the 1st. At *Hound Point*, a juvenile **Hobby** on the 3rd; 2 **Arctic Skuas**, 2 **Great Skuas** and a **Goshawk** on the 20th; 7 **Pomarine Skuas**, 11 **Great Skuas**, 12 **Arctic Skuas** and a **Little Gull** on the 26th. At *Tynninghame*, 16 **Greenshanks**, a **Black Tern** and a **Kingfisher** on the 9th. At *Blackness*, 116 **Black-tailed Godwit** on the 18th. At *Portobello*, an **Osprey** on the 17th. At *Torness*, a **Lapland Bunting** and a **Snow Bunting** on the 25th. At *Belhaven*, 2 **Mediterranean Gulls** on the 25th. At *Gladhouse*, a male **Mandarin Duck**, 6 **Pintails**, 2 **Shovelers** and 7 **Whooper Swans** on the 25th; a **Wood Duck** the previous week.

## OCTOBER

At *Aberlady*, 15040 **Pink-footed Geese**, 75 **Barnacle Geese**, 3 **Red-necked Grebes**, a **Black-throated Diver** and 3 **Jack Snipe** on the 1st; 14930 **Pink-footed Geese** and 69 **Barnacle Geese** on the 10th; 103 **Barnacle Geese**, 10 **Whooper Swans**, a **Peregrine** and a **Pintail** on the 9th; 64 **Little Gulls** and 24 **Whooper Swans** on the 11th; 16 **Red-throated Divers** and 7 **Red-necked Grebes** on the 12th; a **Greenshank** from the 21st-25th; 20 **Waxwings** on the 25th; a **Great Grey Shrike** on the 27th; a **Green Sandpiper**, a **Jack Snipe**, and 3 **Twite** on the 29th; a **Firecrest**, 9 **Waxwings** (8 in the village) and 12 **Little Gulls** on the 30th.

At *Barns Ness*, 71 **Little Gulls** on the 2nd; 9 **Sooty Shearwaters** on the 6th; a **Yellow-browed Warbler** on the 14th; a **Short-eared Owl**, a **Long-eared Owl** and a **Jack Snipe**

on the 15th; a **Yellow-browed Warbler** and 2 **Bramblings** on the 17th; 11 **Great Skuas** and 28 **Little Gulls** on the 19th.

At *Cramond*, a **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Greenshank** on the 2nd; a **Spotted Redshank**, 2 **Black-tailed Godwits**, 2 **Greenshanks** and 2 **Pintails** on the 8th. At *Gladhouse*, a **Snow Goose**, 70 **Barnacle Geese** and 13 **Whooper Swans** on the 15th; 6 **Pintails**, 7 **Gadwalls**, 2 **Shovelers**, a **Scaup** and 12 **Whooper Swans** on the 17th; a juvenile **Pectoral Sandpiper** from the 16th-19th.

At *Musselburgh*, an adult **Glaucous Gull** on the 5th; a **Great Northern Diver**, 60 **Barnacle Geese** and 494 **Little Gulls** on the 10th; 19 **Slavonian Grebes**, 2 **Scaup**, 50 **Little Gulls** and 4 **Sandwich Terns** on the 12th; a **Great Northern Diver** and 7 **Slavonian Grebes** on the 18th; 3 **Brent Geese** on the 19th; a 2nd-winter **Mediterranean Gull** and 10 **Little Gulls** on the 25th.

At *Belhaven Bay*, 2 **Mediterranean Gulls** and 5 **Lapland Buntings** on the 2nd. At *Torness*, 550 **Little Gulls** on the 4th. At *Blackness*, 50 **Black-tailed Godwits**, a **Greenshank** and a **Whimbrel** on the 8th. At *Hound Point*, 46 **Red-throated Divers** on the 10th. At *Thorntonloch*, a **Pallas's Warbler** on the 14th. Near *Traprain Law*, a **Hoopoe** on the 13th. In *Vogrie Park*, a **Nuthatch** from at least the 24th-26th. At *Port Seton*, a **Mediterranean Gull** on the 30th. At *Tynninghame*, 12 **Waxwings**, 11 **Greenshanks**, a **Whimbrel** and 50 **Twite** on the 26th.

*Thanks to Eleanor Hurley for these records. (Eleanor is running a number of birdwatching trips in 2004: Cyprus 21-28 or 18-25 Apr; The Hirsell 7 May; Guernsey in May; Peebles area 7 Jun; Angus 19-22 Jun; Dumfries & Galloway 8-11 Oct. Contact her on 0131 449 5552 for details.)*

## Mystery Bird

Identify the species pictured below. Just to make things a bit more interesting, I've printed it as a negative. The answer will be published in the next issue.



(The last mystery bird was a **Reed Bunting**.)