

Lothian Bird Bulletin



The Newsletter of Lothian SOC
2006: No 2

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Published by Lothian SOC, 15th June 2006.

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Editorial

On 20th May I was once again lucky enough to be included in the SOC team competing in the Lothian Bird Race - an attempt to see or hear the largest number of bird species in 24 hours. Find out how we got on by reading Stephen Welch's article on page 4. Being a bit of a cloth-eared amateur, I suspect I'm allowed to take part in order to give our rivals the East Lothian Countryside Ranger Service a sporting chance. Although essentially a 'bit of fun', for me the race is an excellent opportunity to see the experts in action. The ability to recognise a species by its call or song is particularly important in a bird race, and hopefully I've made some progress - albeit slow - since my debut in 2003.

Also in this issue is part one of Willian Edmond's excellent account of a birdwatching trip to Jamaica. (The final part will be published in the next issue.) We also have a report of the branch trip to The Hirsell by Gillian Herbert, a review of the year by branch chairperson Jacky Robinson, and a summary of the LSOC accounts by John Pringle. Many thanks to all the contributors for making my job relatively easy this issue.

Stephen

News

Lothian Bird Report

The 2004 LBR is now on sale. Priced £7.50, it's available from Charles Frank (Rose Street, Edinburgh), and from Waterston House. Alternatively, you can obtain a copy by post by sending a cheque for £8.80 (inc p&p), payable to "SOC Lothian Branch", to John Hamilton, 30 Swanston Gardens, Edinburgh, EH10 7DL.

2006 AGM

At Lothian SOC's AGM on 11th April, Gillian Moulton was voted onto the branch committee, and John Pringle and Stephen Hunter were re-elected after completing 3 year's service. Ian Thomson has decided to step down from the committee after many years of involvement with the branch. We hope you enjoy your 'retirement' Ian! John Hamilton will now represent the branch on the SOC's Council. As at 14th March, membership of Lothian branch had increased to 448. Taking family memberships into account, this means that at least 554 people were LSOC members.

RSPB and RBBP

On 1st August, Pete Gordon will be taking up a new post as a Conservation Planner with the RSPB in Inverness. This follows around 13 years as the RSPB's Conservation Officer for Lothian, Borders, & Falkirk. Meanwhile former SOC president Mark Holling was recently appointed secretary of the UK Rare Birds Breeding Panel. All the best to Pete and Mark in their new roles.

2006 Lothian Bird Race

The SOC team for the 2006 Lothian Bird Race consisted of Graham Clark, Stephen Hunter, Stephen Welch and Ian Andrews (aka Crestie, Sprawk, Sedgie and Crane, after the BTO code of initials), the latter being a last-minute replacement for Mark Holling (Hen), the team leader, who had to pull out.

As the clock passed midnight Sedge Warblers were in full song and common waterfowl and Tawny Owl were quickly added in still and mild conditions; we also got Great Crested Grebe during the night via a procedure requiring balancing on a fence with a torch in one hand and bins in the other, peering into the darkness – a sight which may have mystified passing drivers!

Gropper proved more straightforward, in a very good year for the species, but Barn Owl remained surprisingly elusive until about 3am. Woodcock was a huge disappointment as we drew a blank at four locations in a large wood which has held several roding birds in the past, though conditions were seemingly ideal.

By 3:30am we arrived at our dawn chorus woodland, only to be greeted by the Rangers' team – a bit disconcerting as we reckoned they must already have cleaned up on all the nocturnal species! As dawn broke common passerines were added rapidly together with a bonus Green Woodpecker; however, the key target species, Redstart, failed to show and we fell well behind on our timings after a long wait; immediately after deciding to give up sharp ears picked one up further up the valley than we had expected.

We headed for the coast just as the wind began to freshen from the north-east and arrived under ideal seawatching conditions. 25 species were added in the next half hour, including most key seabirds, Peregrine, Wheatears and a bonus Greenshank; unfortunately, only one member of the team saw Manx Shearwaters.

Yellow Wagtail proved easier than expected, appearing on the roadside before we had even started searching for it! At this point we were also pleased to connect with straggling geese (2 dark-bellied Brents and 4 Pinkfeet), together with Gadwall and Arctic Tern. Just after 9am and we were 90 species up, making good progress.

A couple of disappointing dips followed with Lesser Whitethroat and Pochard failing to show at recent stake-outs; however, this was probably no coincidence with the weather now worsening and rain setting in for most of the rest of the day.

Upland species (including Ring Ouzel, Stonechat, Whinchat, Cuckoo and Raven) on the other hand were very obliging, with the exception of Red Grouse which cost us precious time and we eventually gave up on. Bullfinch was glimpsed on the dash back to the coast, but only by the two in the front of the car, at over 70mph* – so could not be counted!

*(*I think Stephen meant to say "almost 70mph" - Ed.)*

Arctic Skua and a nice flock of Sanderling were pleasing additions and most of the remaining obvious holes in the list steadily got plugged, though Bar-tailed Godwit eluded us until the end. The sea also yielded the third Peregrine of the day, a young male struggling with Feral Pigeon prey which it eventually dropped, and the only Sparrowhawk.

We also heard of a Black Guillemot sighting and one member of the team was kicking himself having glimpsed a bird which resembled this species diving just as we had hastily departed the previous site. Too late to go back now!

Now on 120 species, we had three and a half hours of daylight left in which to try to add what we felt would be the few extra species critical to achieving a good total. Problem was, most of those outstanding were unreliable, including the classic bird-race bogey birds of Kingfisher, Jay and Bullfinch. Time was wasted on these, and again on Lesser Whitethroat, but we had more success with Nuthatch, watching two birds bringing food to a nest, and the whole team finally saw Long-tailed Tits.

With a last roll of the dice we decided to go back into the uplands to mop up grouse and see whatever else could be found. This decision paid off spectacularly when we picked up a magnificent male Goshawk coming off the hills with prey and plunging down into a wood. Just a few minutes later we had a Short-eared Owl perched up near the road, taking us to 125 species.

A final effort to see Woodcock in another traditional location proved fruitless in now heavier rain, so we reluctantly agreed to an early conclusion and met the opposition in a car park at 10:30pm. At that stage we thought we had seen 124 species and we were amazed to hear that the Rangers team had made 123 – a pretty close-run race! Between us we had seen 134 species, a good effort considering the dismal weather conditions. Neither team had seen Jay, Kingfisher or Woodcock but together with Black Guillemot and a few more birds which must have been recorded somewhere there were perhaps 140 species seen again in Lothian on bird-race day...

Stephen Welch, May 2006



The SOC team (from left to right): Stephen Hunter (inset), Graham Clark, Stephen Welch, and Ian Andrews. (If you'd like to read an alternative account of the day by our opposition the ELCRS, see the Birding East Lothian website at <http://birdingeastlothian.blogspot.com>, and click on the archive for May. Ed.)

Jamaica - St. Elizabeth and Westmoreland

4th-5th Jan 2006

Having decided to take a winter holiday with my wife Lynn and daughter Lauren to the beautiful island of Jamaica for two weeks, there had to be time set aside for a spot of birdwatching.

So having got in touch with Vaughan Turland a couple of months before going over, he kindly devised an itinerary which would allow me to try and see as many endemics, residents and winter visitors on the island as a two day trip would allow.

Vaughan is a keen naturalist and ornithologist. He is English and married to a Jamaican. He lives in Jamaica and has an excellent knowledge of Jamaican Natural history gathered over the last 30 years. Located on the South Coast of Jamaica, he has specialist knowledge of Birding locations in the parishes of St Elizabeth and Westmoreland. These range from isolated mountain areas to morass and coastal wetland. He is currently working on a project to trace the steps of Victorian Naturalist Philip Henry Gosse who visited Bluefields from 1845-46 and who is famous for his works; *A Naturalists Sojourn in Jamaica* and *Birds of Jamaica*. He has planned and led walking expeditions in a number of locations including the Arctic of Northern Norway, Canada, Malaysia, as well as the mountains of Scotland and throughout Europe. Vaughan offers sound advice to fellow birders visiting Jamaica. He will also arrange birding tours through Reliable Adventures Jamaica, a Bluefields based community tour company which is licenced by the Jamaica Tourist Board.

The two day bird tour on the spectacularly beautiful south coast of Jamaica found 74 species including 16 endemics. We visited a good range of habitats from mountain to coastal plain, morass and sea shore. On the first day, after leaving the hotel on the North Coast we travelled along the scenic route from Reading near Montego Bay, over the winding and sometimes narrow mountain road that climbs over the island and down to Ferris Cross on the South Coast. The journey, just over an hour's duration passes through extensive orange groves and thick mountain forest. The road with its many hairpin bends has literally been cut through the rocky mountain sides. Beautiful wild orchids and many species bromeliad (wild pine) can be seen clinging to the trees along the roadside. Many species of bird can often be observed taking a bath in the water that has collected on the bromeliads in the early mornings. Banana leaves are another favourite bathing point for Orangequits and other relatively small species.

Jamaica offers some of the best birding in the Caribbean. It has more endemics than any other island in the region. There are more than 270 species (including a large number of winter visitors, transients and vagrants that can be seen depending on the season). Of these there are approximately 125 species that breed here including endemic species, subspecies, residents and visitors. There are 18 endemic sub species and 3 Caribbean endemics (West Indian Whistling Duck, Caribbean Coot, Antillean Palm Swift)

The first birding stop of the tour was at Fonthill Pond in St Elizabeth. It was early afternoon and there were a good number of species readily evident: Least Grebe, Northern Jacana (including some in juvenile plumage), Blue-winged Teal, Snowy Egret,

Cattle Egret and Common Moorhen. The gracefully elegant Black-necked Stilts were seen feeding on a shallow area in the middle of the pond.

The next venue in the afternoon session was The Black River Safari. This is a 1½ hour boat tour on Jamaica's legendary Black River with miles of morass and swamp-lands, reed and mangrove. The Luana, Nassua and Santa Cruz Mountains provide a wonderful backdrop to the tranquil scene. From the moment we arrived at the dockside, we were surrounded by birds – Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron. After leaving the dock, we visited a communal nesting colony of Snowy Egret and Cattle Egrets. There were several young in the nests providing an excellent eye-level photo-opportunity. Down in the Red Mangrove roots a Black-Crowned Night Heron was seen standing absolutely still, just waiting for the heat of the day to pass. As we moved further up stream, we were fortunate to find a few of the local crocodiles (*Crocodilus Acutus*) ready to oblige the cameras. An Osprey was seen perched in a tree top, but it was a little too distant to get a detailed view. A little later we saw a beautifully marked Green-backed Heron (locally known as the Crocodile Dentist) and some Little Blue Herons.

In winter, through migration, the number of species in Jamaica nearly doubles. These migrants can arrive in August and remain here until early May. For people from North America, it is often a good opportunity to see species that do not occur in their area of the USA. Whilst for people from Europe, the winter season is an ideal time to visit and to catch the mainly North American influx. Many of the species that come at this time add to Jamaica's resident populations (example, herons and Glossy Ibis). In spring, they have a few species that migrate to breed here (Black-whiskered Vireo, Caribbean Martin, Antillean Nighthawk).

From The Black River we moved on eastwards to Crane Road Beach to see what birds were on the shoreline. Again, we were not disappointed. On the piles of a ruined pier there were a good number of Sandwich Terns and the larger Royal Tern. At the waterline there were a few Willets, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstones and Spotted Sandpipers. Overhead, a flotilla of Magnificent Frigatebirds (a mix of males, females and immature birds) cruised menacingly on the stiff afternoon breeze.

After twenty minutes or so of fruitless waiting and hoping to find a Belted Kingfisher we moved on eastwards for around three miles towards the fishing village of Parattee. The road in this area has water on both sides. To the south it is the sea and to the north a large expanse of morass, mudflats and mangrove forest. The water here is extremely saline, but nevertheless strongly favoured by winter migrants and residents alike. Almost immediately, we were treated to the sight of three Ospreys close by wheeling and diving with great agility for fish. We watched one carrying a fish in its strong, sharp talons and listened to the calls that they made to each other. The subject of the Belted Kingfisher was once again mentioned – and, quite by chance one flew overhead. Not a good view, but enough to make a positive identification.

In the shallow, mirror calm waters of the saline wetland there were plenty of birds to see. Brown Pelicans were gliding in search of prey, more Magnificent Frigates soared and flocks of Blue-winged Teal bobbed and floated. In addition to the herons we had previously seen, there were a good number of Tri-Coloured Herons. These distinctively marked birds would dance and run a few paces and lift their wings to provide shade over the water that they were searching. At the end of last year there had been a Greater Flamingo sighted here (the fourth recorded in Jamaica) – but not today. We saw a couple of Lesser Yellow-legs, but really spent the time enjoying the fantastic scenery and

watching a number of multi-coloured Glossy Ibis. Apparently, there is an increasing number of this species now residing here rather than being a predominantly migratory bird.

From this site we drove back to Black River town and then a few miles northwards through Middle Quarters (famous for its hot and spicy peppered shrimps) to Holland Bamboo Avenue – three miles of tall bamboo which grows on both sides of the road and forms a gothic style arch. It was halfway along the refreshingly green avenue that we stopped to explore a small roadside pond. Another gem! On leaving the vehicle and walking a couple of paces to the pond-side we saw Purple Gallinule in all their purple, green and blue glory. There were also some juveniles which made us think for a couple of seconds before positively identifying them. In a Guango tree there was a family group of Yellow-crowned Night Herons. The brown speckled youngsters very different from their very smart parents. They stood absolutely motionless among the tree branches while a small freshwater turtle enjoyed the evening breeze below .

Our last birding stop of the day was an old wooden property house near the village of Lacovia. Here the owners put out feeders for hummingbirds. As dusk approached, the Red-billed Streamertails put on a fine display of aerobatics and aggression. The larger males with their whirring tail feathers spent more time chasing each other and the females from the feeders than actually feeding. Their iridescent green feathers sparkled in the rays of the evening sun. Just as the males became complacent, the much larger Mango Hummingbird would zoom in and drive them away.

From the 90 feet veranda the property enjoys magnificent views of the Nassau Mountains and Cockpit Country beyond – also the Figuerero Mountains on which sits the cool town of Mandeville in the parish of Manchester. Below in the garden, a Vervain Hummingbird (smaller than some of the moths out there) was feeding on the tiny blue flowers of the Coleus: these are very similar to the flowers of the Vervain plant from which the bird gets its name. In the garden itself we saw Northern Mockingbirds, Jamaican Woodpecker and the first of the migrant warblers – the jewel like Northern Parula, Black-throated Blue Warbler, American Redstart and Prairie Warbler. Other endemics seen in the fading light were a male Orangequit (Blue Blaize) and Sad Flycatcher (Little Tom Fool). We were destined to get better sightings of these during the next day.

In Jamaica, the sunset twilight period is very short – 10 minutes to 15 minutes only. It was therefore time for a break before moving back to the town of Black River (the first place to get electricity in the island and famous for its old wooden fret-worked buildings and indigo dye industry in the 19th century) for an evening meal on the sea-view veranda of the casual and very laid back Waterloo Guest House. Our comfortable evening accommodation had been arranged at Fonthill Villas and Guest House. The house sits on a small hillock and commands panoramic views across the extensive property and its rolling wooded hills down to the Caribbean Sea.

William Edmond, April 2006

2005/6 Branch Chairperson's Report

It's quite a challenge to try to summarise branch activities during the last year when so much has happened to the SOC itself, spilling over to the branch. This year has seen the move of the HQ and its extensive library to Waterston House, Aberlady with the official

opening in October by Magnus Magnusson. Is there any Lothian member who hasn't yet visited, or who has failed to be impressed by the building and its setting?

However, having the club HQ within our patch inevitably places additional demands on local members, and very many of you have risen to the challenge - in helping with the move over the summer, and since then in so many ways (gardening, pond maintenance, stuffing envelopes for the quarterly mailings, cleaning, showing visitors round, helping in the library, leading local bird walks for beginners, to name just a few). A very big thank you to you all! Why do we do it? Because the SOC is our Club, and we want to achieve its aims.

All those visitors to Waterston House are translating into increased club membership, with a large proportion coming from Lothian. We are seeing new faces at indoor and outdoor meetings. There is a lot of interest in the building from local people, and a great demand to learn more about birds and bird watching – hence the enormous success of the first bird watching course, now being followed by a second. The enthusiasm of these new members is infectious; we must harness it appropriately to encourage further members.

Your committee has met several times in the year to plan the talks and outings for the year. My thanks to them for the time they unstintingly give. Ian Thompson is now retiring after several years on branch and regional committees, and SOC Council. We hope he will still contribute to Member's Nights and an occasional quiz. If there are things you think the branch ought to be doing, please tell us, or better still - volunteer yourself to be on the committee to help do them.

We have held the usual series of indoor meetings (Sep – Apr), with 4 meetings being arranged by HQ and 4 by the branch. The former covered diverse subjects such as whooper swans, the birds and flora of South Africa, a Lapland Summer, and the Tay Reed Beds beautifully illustrated by slides of the artist's own field paintings. We are extremely fortunate in having so many Lothian members who are both excellent photographers and willing to share either their local interest or trips to more exotic parts of the world. Many thanks to them too.

We've arranged Sunday outings most months to coastal birding spots and inland habitats, such as the visit to Slammanan Plateau, where we all had magnificent views of the rare and rather shy bean goose. 14 members enjoyed a long weekend in November in Dumfries and Galloway, with geese, red kite and willow tit. Our December morning walk at Aberlady followed by Christmas lunch this year at the Craighielaw Golf Course was an excellent move, and a resounding success. Our thanks to those members who plan and lead these outings.

But so much happens outside the meetings. In fact most branch members rarely, if ever, come to meetings, or the discussion group. They may contribute regularly to the SOC by recording bird sightings and sending these to the county recorder. These records form the basis of the SOC's Lothian Bird Report (2004 edition now available), and our thanks go to Ian Andrews, who has been LBR editor for the last 3 years, and the other members of his editorial team.

Plans to build new roads and develop sites, which are of major significance to birds and other wildlife, seem to proliferate; the various levels of protection or scientific recognition ascribed to such sites appear to have few teeth. The proposed development of the Musselburgh racecourse is one such example. Some of our members have staunchly

opposed such developments at every stage by repeatedly writing their objections to the planning authority, and lobbying their councillors or MSPs. The final decision is now in the hands of the Scottish Executive.

Whatever your own particular interest in birds, personal skills or abilities, you can contribute to the success of the SOC. If you're not doing so already, spare a thought as to what you might do. (By the way, we still urgently need a new secretary for the committee - and volunteers to make tea and coffee at the indoor meetings. And people to show visitors round Waterston House at the weekends. How about you?

Enjoy your birding!

Jacky Robinson, April 2006

Summary of Branch Accounts

for Year Ended 31 March 2006

INCOME	Sale of Bird Reports	£498.20	
	Donations at Meetings	346.60	
	Bank Interest	17.75	
	Miscellaneous	<u>37.50</u>	
	Total Income		£900.05
EXPENSES	Bird Reports – Sundry expenses	£12.38	
	Meetings - Speakers	25.00	
	Meetings – Quiz Prize	20.00	
	Meetings – Coffee, etc.	23.93	
	Donation to HQ re Hall Rents	468.00	
	Branch Newsletters (4)	234.75	
	Miscellaneous	<u>2.40</u>	
	Total Expenses		786.46
	Excess Income		£113.59
	Account balance as at 01/04/2005		1483.86
	Account balance as at 31/03/2006		£1597.45

Prepared by John P Pringle and audited by Miss N F Henderson

Lothian SOC Outings

Hermitage of Braid, 12th March

This was supposed to be a trip to West Stirlingshire, but due to lack of preparation had to be replaced by a short visit to the Hermitage of Braid to look for Green Woodpeckers. With hindsight this was probably just as well, as central Scotland was covered in thick snow that day, making even local travel difficult. In the event only two hardy people turned up at the Hermitage - and unfortunately at completely different times! The birds were more sensible, and stayed indoors.

Angus Glens, 23rd April

This outing was led by Tom Gillies, and started with a visit to the RSPB Loch of Kinnordy reserve near Kirriemuir. Sadly the Black-necked Grebes are no longer present here, but there was still plenty to see. We then made our way along the scenic Glen Clova. Here

we were treated to superb views of Golden Eagle, with Peregrine and Merlin also spotted. Several Ring Ouzels were heard, but they somehow managed to stay out of sight. Later in the day we returned to Loch of Kinnordy, where one of the local Ospreys put on an excellent display to finish off the day.

The Hirsell, 14th May

On a lovely sunny spring day on the 14th of May we made our way to the Hirsell for a very enjoyable outing led by Keith McGregor. The early birds among us were lucky enough to see good views of three otters swimming in the lake. A first for me.

Among the highlights of the day were nuthatch, garden warbler, black caps, chiffchaff, bull finch and goldcrest. Rosemary and Betty helped identify the trees and flowers and the cameras were out from some interesting fungi.

We saw an unusual site of a mallard nesting in a tree and we felt spring had arrived with the swallows, sand martins and swifts. On our return to the lake we saw little grebe, grey heron, mute swan, tufted ducks and buzzards but our otters were nowhere to be seen. We then had our final stop at the cafe for a most welcome tea and cakes. Thanks Keith for a great day.

Gillian Herbert, June 2006

Aberlady Dawn Chorus, 28th May

A good selection of bird songs were heard on this early morning trip to Aberlady LNR, including the elusive Lesser Whitethroat, and a few Manx Shearwaters were seen during a spot of sea-watching from Gullane Point. More importantly, we had some delicious bacon butties and several gallons of coffee for breakfast at Craigielaw Golf Club.

Coming Up...

- 9th Jul: Hen Harriers at Clyde Muirshiel Country Park
- 6th Aug: Aberlady: Birds, Botany, & Beasties
- 10th Sep: Seabirds from the Ardrossan to Arran ferry

Contact Gillian Herbert on 0131 337 0767 for details.

Lothian Bird Sightings

APRIL

At *Aberlady*, an **Osprey** over Kilspindie on 2nd; a **Greenshank** on 7th; a pair of **Crossbills** west of village on 9th; a **Little Auk** on 23rd; a **Little Tern** on 23rd; a **Grasshopper Warbler** on 24th; a male **Ruff** on 24th; a **Lesser Whitethroat** on 28th. At *Barns Ness*, a female **Black Redstart** on 1st; 2 **Snow Buntings** on 8th; 2 **Grasshopper Warblers** on 23rd; up to 25 **White Wagtails** from 23rd-29th; 4 **Yellow Wagtails** on 28th, 7 on 29th; 2 **Grasshopper Warblers** on 28th. In the *Lammermuirs*, 2 male & 1 female **Ring Ouzels** at Faseny Cottage on 2nd; a **White Wagtail** in East Lammermuir Deans on 19th; 5 male **Ring Ouzels** in East Lammermuir Deans on 19th; 1000+ **Golden Plovers** east of Mayshiel on 21st. At *Musselburgh*, a **Jack Snipe** on 11th; a **White Wagtail** on 21st/27th; a **Green Sandpiper** on 22nd; a **Little Ringed Plover** from 24th-27th; 4 **Grasshopper Warblers** on 27th, 2 on 29th. In the *Pentlands*, 2 male **Ring Ouzels** on Castlelaw Hill on 1st; up to 2 **Greenshanks** at Bavelaw from 15th-26th; a **Cuckoo** at Loganlea Cottage on

21st; 2 male **Ring Ouzels** near Loganlea on 21st. At *Skateraw*, 2 male and 1 female **Black Redstarts** on 1st, 2 females on 2nd, 1 on 4th; 5-10 **Scandinavian Rock Pipits** on 2nd, 8+ on 4th; a **White Wagtail** on 28th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **White Wagtail** on 14th; a **Brambling** on 14th; an adult male **Ring-necked Duck** on Seafield Pond on 26th/27th. At *Whitesands*, a **Blue-headed Wagtail** on 23rd; a **Scandinavian Rock Pipit** on 23rd; 3+ **White Wagtails** on 23rd, 85 on 28th; 3 **Yellow Wagtails** on 28th. In *Edinburgh*, 32 **Waxwings** in South Queensferry on 11th; 3+ **Crossbills** over Edinburgh Zoo on 16th; 10 **Waxwings** at Abbotsford Park/Colinton Rd on 21st; a **Grasshopper Warbler** in Holyrood Park on 27th. Elsewhere in *East Lothian*, 300 **Bramblings** at Tynninghame on 1st; 14+ **Crossbills** in Saltoun Wood on 16th; a **Brambling** in Saltoun Wood on 16th; a **Hoopoe** in Pencaitland on 24th. In *West Lothian*, a **Water Rail** at Bathgate Bog on 18th/26th; a **Grasshopper Warbler** at Bathgate Bog on 24th/26th; a **Grasshopper Warbler** at River Almond Pools on 29th; up to 40 **Waxwings** near Bonnyrigg from 2nd-7th.

MARCH

At *Aberlady*, 2 **Ravens** on 9th; a **Ring Ouzel** at Gullane Point on 27th; 8 dark-bellied **Brent Geese** from 28th-31st; a **Black-necked Grebe** on 31st; a **Coues's Arctic Redpoll** until 18th at least. On *Linlithgow Loch*, a female **Smew** on 1st/4th; a 1st year **Mediterranean Gull** on 1st; a male **Mandarin Duck** on 4th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Water Pipit** from 5th-8th; a **Snow Bunting** on 8th, 2 on 18th/21st; a **White Wagtail** on 26th/31st. In the *Pentlands*, an **Osprey** at Bavelaw on 28th; an **Osprey** over Scald Law on 29th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **Water Pipit** on 5th; 95 **Bramblings** on 29th; 8 **Crossbills** on 29th; 15 **Twites** on 29th. In *Edinburgh*, 13 **Waxwings** at Canonmills on 1st. Elsewhere in *East Lothian*, up to 50 **Waxwings** at Tranent A1/A198 junction all month; a **Water Rail** at Longniddry Bents all month; a **Jack Snipe** at Longniddry Bents on 9th; a **Snow Bunting** at Drem Pools on 12th; a **Raven** near Longniddry on 14th; up to 2 **Snow Buntings** at Barns Ness from 26th-28th; a female **Black Redstart** near Garvald on 27th; a **Black Redstart** at North Berwick on 28th; a **White-fronted Goose** with Greylags near A8000 on 30th. In *Midlothian*, a **Nuthatch** in Arniston Wood on 2nd; 25 **Waxwings** at Penicuik on 9th; 30 on 13th; 60 **Waxwings** in Dalkeith on 25th. Elsewhere in *West Lothian*, 11 **Waxwings** in Livingston on 27th.

Thanks to Eleanor Hurley and everyone who contributed to these records.

Mystery Bird



Identify the species pictured on the left. The answer will be published in the next issue.

The last mystery birds were Wood Pigeons.

