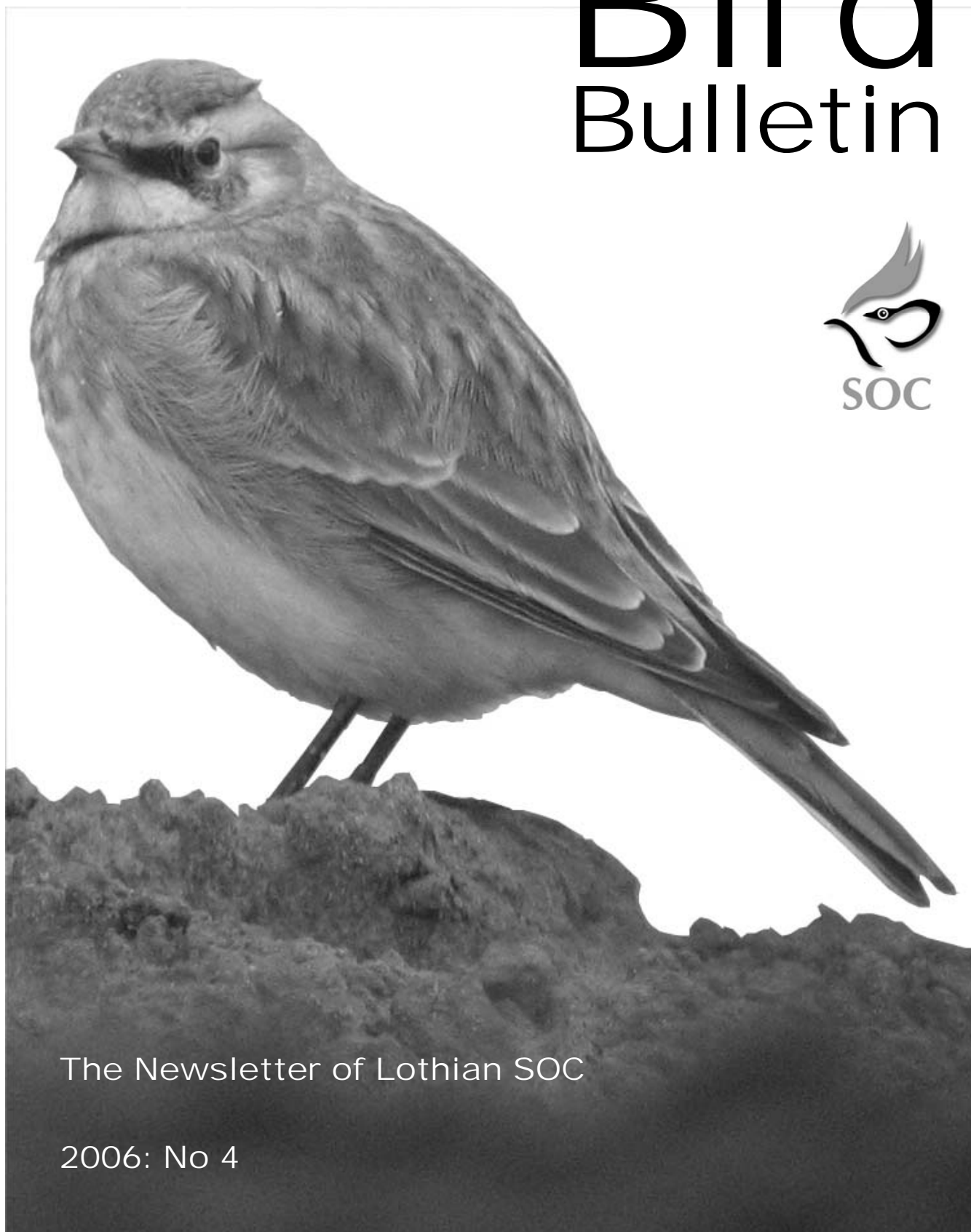


Lothian Bird Bulletin



The Newsletter of Lothian SOC

2006: No 4

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Editorial

*Dear Santa,
Please can you send lots of Waxwings for Christmas. I promise to be a good boy, and not drink too much, again, at the office Christmas party.
Thank you,
Stephen, aged 43 $\frac{3}{4}$*

Well...it's worth a try... I've started to take these fantastic birds for granted over the last few winters, but as I write this on 6th December it looks like we might be in for a Waxwing-free Christmas. At least the local Thrushes and Blackbirds will have something to celebrate.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue of LBB. Committee member Colin Beckett reports on a trip to Iceland (which gives me an excuse to recycle my map from a previous article), Mike Hannam has been to Tiree with fspn-bgf (don't ask), Richard Leslie has been birdwatching on Skye, and David Atkins writes about what must have been the most successful 'twitch' by Lothian Branch for many years. In fact I've had so much material that I could only fit in the Bird Sightings for one month. Please keep the articles coming in!

Finally, good luck to Ian Thomson, who has moved to a new job with the RSPB in Edinburgh after 14 years as warden at Aberlady LNR. Ian's regular reports from Aberlady will be sadly missed, but we hope he'll still find time to come along to branch events.

Stephen

News

Branch Meetings

Here's a reminder of the remaining meetings for this season:

- *Eiders in Clyde* - Chris Waltho. 9th Jan, Meadowbank Stadium, 7.30pm.
- *Skye Birds* - Bob McMillan. 13th Feb, Meadowbank Stadium, 7.30pm.
- *Changes to Scotland's Birdlife: a New Avifauna* - BS3 Team. 13th Mar, Waterston House, Aberlady, 7.30pm.
- *Changes to Scotland's Birdlife: a New Avifauna* - BS3 Team. 21st Mar, Craiglockhart Campus, Napier University, 7.30pm.
- *AGM and Members' Night*. 10th Apr, Meadowbank Stadium, 7.30pm.

You have two chances to hear from the team producing the forthcoming *Birds of Scotland* book. For the first, we move from our usual venue to Waterston House. The second evening is being held with the RSPB Edinburgh group. SOC members are welcome.

Scottish Birdwatchers' Conference

The 2007 spring conference, organised jointly by the SOC and BTO Scotland, will be held just down the road at the Eastgate Theatre in Peebles on 18th March. We're hoping for a good turnout of Lothian SOC members.



Lothian Bird Report

We still have a few copies of the latest (2004) Lothian Bird Report. Charles Frank (Rose Street, Edinburgh) and Waterston House both have it on sale for £7.50. If you prefer we can post one to you: send a cheque for £8.80 inc p&p (payable to "SOC Lothian Branch"), to John Hamilton, 30 Swanston Gardens, Edinburgh, EH10 7DL.

A Surprise Visit To Iceland (Part One)

I was surprised to hear that my grandchildren (aged 11 and 12) had asked to go to Iceland for their summer holiday. Sadly, I think it was the hype that was being put out for The Blue Lagoon that had interested them, rather than the wildlife!

My daughter invited me to join them at the end of July: 3 nights in Myvatn in the north, followed by 2 nights in Reykjavik on the way back.

I did have some reservations: a single room booking in a country that is renowned for being expensive, the end of July was not the timing of choice for birding and wildlife, and I also had serious concerns about wildlife of a different sort: midges and mosquitoes! The very name Myvatn means Midge Lake in Icelandic, so that gave a hint. But I had been wanting to go there and it would be nice to share their experiences, so I asked her to try to book me in.

Iceland is part of Europe, but not a member of the EEC. Until the Second World War it was administered by Denmark, and historically had been under the Norwegian Crown. The entire population is less than 300,000, of whom about 180,000 live in or near Reykjavik.



Following our flight from Glasgow, we caught the coach from the international to the domestic airport in the centre of Reykjavik. On route by coach we got the first taste of the rugged lava-strewn landscape we were to encounter. From this airport we caught a one-hour internal flight to Akureyri.

The town was on a deep fjord, and as we set off by car there were Ravens on the hills and Whimbrels flew up from the seashore

towards the hills. Nearing Myvatn at Godafoss, we came to the first of the Icelandic rivers that flow down from the high hills and glaciers with huge volumes of water. This river had an impressive series of waterfalls, and must have had links to the thermals as steam as well as spray was rising.

Driving into Myvatn, the whole landscape was dotted with lakes and lagoons, with lush vegetation in stark contrast to the black lava flows and the towering cones of old volcanoes. Ominously, clouds of midges hovered over sheltered areas of the lake shore.

We had booked into a small private lakeside hotel. From my window I could see 2 Slavonian Grebe nests, many Black-headed Gull chicks, and Arctic Terns were also breeding on a small offshore island. Later we would see Gadwall, Barrow's Goldeneye and a hunting Merlin from that same window. Snipe, Golden Plover, and young Redwing were feeding on the meadow between the hotel and the water, together with a mass of young ducklings (mostly Widgeon).

Next day we headed for the Geothermal Generating plant behind the village, where hot springs feed an outdoor bathing pool. I am not an enthusiastic bather, but I did find this the most relaxing experience, and the faint wiff of sulphur did wonders for the respiration. The temperature was that of a pleasantly warm bath, but alongside were huts for steamrooms and a plunge bath of cold water for those who found it too hot!

There was a small geothermal generating plant nearby that utilised the emerging heat to generate electricity. It seems that there are few places where the heat is far from the surface, and most towns and even villages utilise it. In Reykjavik the streets have under-surface heating and some houses have central heating run off a main. Energy-intensive industries such as aluminium smelting are carried on utilising the cheap power.

Later that day, we travelled north to the coast at Húsavík, as we had booked to go whale watching. Most of the route was a dirt track of c. 50km, passing through landscape similar to the mountains of the moon. Sparse vegetation was fighting to gain a foothold. Lupins had been planted as part of a scheme to get nitrogen into the soil and hasten fertilisation.

Húsavík was a small attractive fishing town, but it has become a tourist centre for whale watching. There were three boats leaving that evening; two were standard converted fishing boats, and our boat was traditionally constructed of timber with schooner rig and heavy red canvas sails. The boat had been built about 50 years ago for commercial shark fishing, but had been converted when the demand for shark oil waned.

I had hoped to see Brünnich's Guillemot and Iceland and Glaucous Gulls, but I later found that Guillemots and Razorbills leave the area early in July, and that the gulls are better seen earlier in the year (and I suspect on the west coast). King Eiders are also only occasional in the area. However we set off and visited Lundey Island, which has a population of 250,000 Puffins. There were Puffins everywhere. There were also many Arctic Terns with some Arctic Skuas, and two Bonxies flew in. Under license a small number of Puffins are killed to eat, but with some fifty million in Iceland there are some to spare!

Colin Beckett, November 2006

Tiree Odyssey (6th - 13th May 2006)

Almost four years residing in Edinburgh and not a single visit to the Hebrides. Even for a fairly sedentary birdwatcher this was beginning to seem like negligence bordering on the criminal. So it was decided that my annual May 'week off' would involve a wee jaunt to these alluring isles. After some discussion with my travelling companion (full sum plum

non-birding g/friend) we settled on Tiree as our chosen destination. For fspn-bgf it was the promise of pearl-white beaches, cobalt seas and the title 'sunniest place in Britain', for me the possibility of glimpsing the fabled corncrake (though the pearl-white etc also sounded pretty tempting).

After a night in Oban incorporating some rowdy carousing at the 'Oban Inn' we headed slightly unsteadily for the early ferry. The sight of 14 splendid summer black guillemots in the harbour was a promising portent for the holiday as was the bright, near cloudless sky. The ferry journey through the Sound of Mull was stunning. 19 manx shearwaters, larger numbers of razorbill and guillemot with the odd fulmar, gannet and kittiwake thrown in. A brief stop on Tiree's sister Isle of Coll emphasised the contrast between Coll's rather rugged form and the flatter, more gentle lines of Tiree.

We had lugged our bikes, at times a little grumpily, via two trains and the ferry but on Tiree the trouble seemed well worth it. The island is excellent for cycling though the wind was a little capricious on occasion (I seem to recall slightly different adjectives being employed at the time).

As for the birdwatching it's difficult to know where to start. Waders were ubiquitous, the beaches alive with incredibly tame flocks of ringed plover, sanderling, turnstone, dunlin and oystercatcher, a single summer plumage purple sandpiper was a bonus. The fields were filled with nesting lapwing, redshank and snipe all engaged in their extraordinary displays. The lapwings tumbling and whooping, the snipe circling and steeping, the air reverberating to the 'drumming' of their outer tail-feathers in the most flagrant display of showing off since I attached tea-cards to the spokes of my grifter in an attempt to make it sound like a motorbike (it didn't). Migrant whimbrel were present in decent numbers though only a single curlew was located.

Ditches thronged with churring sedge warblers while linnets, meadow pipits and glorious skylarks filled the meadows and gorse with song. A pair of twite in the garden was a delightful surprise. Song thrush is common on Tiree and a solitary redwing was spotted (though not quite as spotted as the thrushes). A couple of whitethroat and a smattering of willow warblers added to the migrant tally as did regular flocks of swallows, sand and house martins.

The terrain of the island is actually more varied than it had appeared from the ferry. The isolated areas of higher ground are home to nesting ravens mobbed relentlessly whenever they passed over the hordes of waders, as indeed were the marauding hoodies. We watched the intimate display of a pair of peregrines over the cliffs of Caenna Mora, itself home to a bustling seabird metropolis teeming with auks and kittiwakes.

A merlin swept over the rough moorland sending shockwaves through the smaller waders whilst several buzzards circled lazily. Brown hares frolicked in the cultivated fields or squatted motionless their leonine amber eyes transfixed by our presence. (There is no rabbit population on Tiree perhaps contributing to the abundance of hares.) Flocks of greylag geese, forgoing their traditional migratory instincts have set up home on the island to the chagrin of local farmers as the odd carcass hanging forlornly from the barbed wire testified.

Little and arctic terns screeched along the foreshore whilst beyond the glistening, azure sea held gorgeous summer plumage great northern divers, eider and red-breasted mergansers. Grey seals lolled on the exposed rocks their limpid eyes cranking up the

cuteness factor. On one occasion we observed the sleek undulations of an otter as it slipped through a kelp forest before emerging onto a semi-submerged rock. We watched its pelt change from oily black to soft russet-brown as it basked apparently oblivious to its enchanted audience.

On another day we saw a basking shark cruising languidly along the Hynish reef, its dorsal fin cutting through the surf in true 'Jaws' style.

So onto the corncrakes. Their bizarre rasping call (exactly like the sound of a whittled stick being repeatedly drawn over the ridged back of a wooden Vietnamese frog...I thought) seemed to echo from the corner of every field though the local starlings appear to have developed a pitch-perfect corncrake impression first noted when fspn-bgf commented that we seemed to have a 'corncraig' (I ask you!) on the roof.

(A friend of mine once swore he had a starling in his garden which did an uncanny rendition of Michael Caine in 'Escape to Victory. "Do you want...to play...for our team?...You'll get good food...a good bed...and beat the Germans...to boot". Personally I'm a little sceptical on that one.)

Despite the sporadic bursts of 'grinding' the birds themselves remained resolutely elusive for the first couple of days and I began to harbour doubts that I would ever set eyes on a corncraig. However on the third day we took a ride down to the local shop a mere three miles away and as we barrelled past the crofts fspn-bgf shouted to me to stop. Apparently a 'small brown chicken' had scurried into the ditch as she cycled past. 'Chicken' I thought, 'not chuffing likely!' and after a few moments of tense waiting a corncrake emerged tentatively from the iris beds. I've always had a soft spot for the cryptically marked skulkers ('little brown jobs' to the less enamoured) and this one didn't disappoint. The rufescent lores and ear covets surrounded by smoky blue-grey and the soft coral pink of the bill seemed to shine as it emerged mere metres from where we stood. The limply flapping rust-red wings and dangling feet when it finally fluttered up over the wall made the reality of its recent journey to this isolated scrap of land seem all the more implausible. Following this first sighting it seemed that corncrakes were falling over themselves to court the limelight. Two birds close to the cottage were particularly obliging. Cornelius and Rex (as christened by fspn-bgf) regularly entertained us with their exhibitions of vocal mastery, bouncing their 'crex crex' call off the stone walls and sending it reverberating around the fields and the insides of our heads. Indeed skulking seemed to be the last thing on their minds as they stalked brazenly through the grass. Apparently a couple of weeks later and that resonant call would in all probability have been our only memory as the vegetation grew and with territories established the 'crakes retiring nature reasserted itself.

Aside from the superb bird-watching the sheer beauty of the island itself was enough to have us both 'aahhing' and 'aawwing' on a regular basis. I even managed a brief 'swim' off Bhalepetrish beach (if I'm correct in my belief that total immersion for anything over 10 nano-seconds does actually qualify as swimming).

On a somewhat incongruous note it would take another article to relate the rather spooky occurrences we encountered on occasion. The profusion of apparently ownerless black dogs on the night of the full moon, the mysterious (and inedible) curried carrot-cake in the Scarinish Arms and the huge wicker corncrake atop Ben Hough (ok I made up that last one).

With such a wealth of natural (and supernatural if you possess a particularly fertile imagination) wonders the week just flew by and all too soon we were heading back through the Sound gazing back towards the pearl-white beaches and straining our ears for a waft of Cornelius and Rex' rattling chorus. Me? I can't wait for my next Hebridean adventure.

Mike Hannam, October 2006

Birding With A Baby A Family Holiday on Skye, 23 May - 3 Jun 2006 (Part One)

This year my wife, Jude, and I decided that we would spend our summer holiday in Scotland rather than take a flight abroad. Part of the reason was the arrival of our son, Ben, in October of last year. We thought that renting a self-catering cottage in Skye would be easier than lugging armfuls of baby gear through airports. We booked a cottage for the last week in May and hoped for fine weather.

I was hoping to take in some bird watching, and to try and add to my list of Munros by climbing one or two of the Cuillin hills. All this and spend quality time with the family and catch up with a few friends who we had invited along.

I was collected from the office at lunch-time, by my wife, on the Friday, and we drove on to Skye in thickening cloud and strengthening wind. A stop on the shores of Loch Ainort to feed Ben only produced a couple of Red-breasted Mergansers and some distant Greylag Geese, and an inquisitive Grey Seal. We met up with my climbing friends at the Sligachan Inn and after a meal of venison burgers we headed on down to the campsite in Glen Brittle.

I should explain that myself and four of my climbing friends were camping, whilst Jude and Ben enjoyed the luxury of a bed & Breakfast establishment (they were due to pick up the keys for our cottage the next day).

As is so often the case on Skye the weather grew from bad to worse and during the night I found myself tugging at my tent to stop it from flying away and to release the puddle of water that was working its way towards my head. The weather showed no sign of improving and it was a dejected bunch of would-be mountaineers who sat eating their breakfast from the confines of one of the tents whilst watching the rain fall outside.

There was, however, plenty of bird life to see. Next to our site a pair of Skylarks had built a nest and the parents busied themselves throughout the morning ferrying in food for the hungry chicks, and driving off the attentions of the local Common Gulls. Also sharing the campsite were a small flock of Twite, a number of Wheatear and plenty of Swallows.

At last a break in the clouds allowed us to limber up and we set off up the Cuillin to try and climb two hills, Sgurr Dubh Mor and Sgurr nan Eag. Unfortunately the weather closed in again and after negotiating the slippery boilerplate slabs to gain access to the remote Coir a Ghruinnnda we were hit by a vicious sleet storm which stung the bare flesh on our faces. Up here in the coire there were no birds and precious few plants. It was a very wet and alien landscape.

We moved higher up onto the ridge and allowed the hailstones to bounce off our heads whilst battling the buffeting wind. Visibility was very poor and we decided not to attempt the trickier of the two summits and instead to concentrate on Sgurr nan Eag. With the aid of a portable GPS reader we were able to judge our altitude and eventually managed to make it to the summit, over a couple of false tops.

It was a great relief to be able to descend back below the cloud base and to change into dry clothes back at the campsite. We then all piled into the cars and drove across to the cottage at Ardmore, towards the end of the Waternish Peninsula. After a hot curry and a warm bath I was ready for my bed.

From where we were staying we could look out over rough farmland towards Dunvegan Head, which promised a variety of birds, including calling Cuckoo's. More importantly, from our perspective, the tar road outside the cottage took us in a neat loop fine for pushing Ben in his buggy. The loop (which we named the Trumpan Loop) took us past the ruined Trumpan Chapel, scene of a massacre carried out by the MacDonalds of Uist on the McLeods in 1578.

On our walk we soon picked up dozens of Wheatears, Whinchats, Sedge Warblers, Meadow Pipits and Skylarks, whilst Greylag Geese grazed the fields. An over-summering Whooper Swan had taken up residence on a small loch. Near the chapel it was possible to look down on to Ardmore Point. On the sea cliffs nested Fulmars, with Gannets gliding by, and in the bay a flotilla of Red-breasted Mergansers were always present. It was also good to see genuine Rock Doves about as well as the odd Raven. A small field which had been allowed to grow over with rushes looked promising for Corncrakes (more of that later). A Dipper at a small roadside stream was an unexpected sighting.

After a big day on the hill the previous day we all needed a bit of sustenance and what better place to go with a thirst and a hunger than the Stein Inn on Loch Bay. We were able to eat our crab sandwiches and watch the Black Guillemots and Razorbills swim in amongst the moored yachts. It is a very pretty part of the world.

We tried to be a bit more energetic the following day by taking Ben out in his baby rucksack in an attempt to walk to the end of Waternish Point. A cold northerly wind was a minor distraction but in the end at just over halfway to the point a series of miserable showers had us scurrying back towards the shelter of the cottage. This did leave me the rest of the afternoon to engage in a bit of birdwatching with my hillwalking friend Mike.

Richard Leslie, September 2006

Lothian SOC Outings

Arran Ferry, 10th September

I'd made the boat trip from Ardrossan to Arran several times before, so knew that this was an excellent stretch of water to see hundreds - or even thousands - of Manx Shearwaters. Unfortunately I had forgotten the old SOC proverb "don't count your Manxies before they've hatched", and in the event we only saw a single Shearwater close up, plus another two or three in the distance. Still, it was at least a change from the usual land-based SOC outings, and the ferry trip was quite a pleasant way to spend a sunny afternoon. Other sightings included Black Guillemots and good numbers of Porpoises.

Holy Island (Lindisfarne), 15th October

The timing and destination of this outing were aimed at giving a chance of seeing autumn migrants. Pre-trip research confirmed that there had been a goodly fall of migrants along the North Sea coast during the previous week. So hopes were high – and we were not to be disappointed.

Thick mist in Edinburgh gave way to clear and bright conditions at Barns Ness, our first calling point. Here we found male and female blackcaps along with the usual waders and seabirds, including many gannets moving past offshore. At Skateraw, it was much the same, although one or two folk were lucky to get a brief glimpse of a yellow-browed warbler near the waterfall. A very large skein of pink-footed geese flying north was a lovely sight and sound.

Then it was on into Northumberland in time for the start of safe crossing to Holy Island. Before reaching the causeway, however, we paused near Beal to watch one of the day's star birds – a roller which had been in the area for about a week. Everyone got good views as it perched in tree tops and flew, shimmering blue, between look-out points and the ground. From the middle of the causeway we had close views of waders such as bar-tailed godwit, dunlin and redshank. We dipped on a recently seen great grey shrike in the dunes of The Snook, but we did see several redwings and LBJs such as linnet, meadow pipit and skylark. We also enjoyed our picnic lunch here, sitting in the warmth of the early autumn sun.

Lindisfarne village, alive with birders (mainly Geordies, by the sound of it!), provided us with a second yellow-browed warbler – seen by everyone this time – and a very obliging juvenile barred warbler, plus a couple of late swallows. Two chiffchaffs were found in the vicarage garden, and from the field next door we saw a red-necked grebe close inshore, lots of Brent geese, shags and seals on Fenham Flats, and a huge distant flock of golden plover. Elevated viewing from The Heugh, in a freshening breeze, produced several red-throated divers, one or two with red patches still showing, plus guillemot, razorbill, more shags, eider and red-breasted merganser. There were numerous ringed plover on the mud in the harbour, and a short walk past the castle and along Crooked Lonnen gave us some superb redwings and lots of lapwings and starlings in the fields.

Back in the village, we all eventually managed to see the hard-to-spot juvenile red-breasted flycatcher in the same garden as the yellow-browed warbler we had seen earlier. And we couldn't resist stopping to watch the roller again before setting off for home!

68 different species were seen during the day – a good total – including some cracking migrants: I suspect it has been some time since there has been such a good set of rarities on one of these outings. Talking of rarities, it was noted that every single member of the Lothians Branch committee came on the trip – another record, maybe? Or perhaps they simply had inside information!

David Atkins, November 2006

Coming Up...

- 14th Jan: Fife, including Ruddon's Point and Kilconquhar Loch
- 18th Feb: Baron's Haugh RSPB
- 11th March: Birnie and Gaddon Lochs, Fife
- 15th April: John Muir Country Park and the East Lothian Coast
- 13th May: Dawn Chorus at Hadfast Valley SWT
- 3rd Jun: Perthshire walk

Details are available at branch meetings, or from Gillian Herbert on 0131 337 0767.

Lothian Bird Sightings

OCTOBER

At *Aberlady*, up to 13 **Pintails**; 4 **Little Gulls** on 3rd and 12 on 23rd; 4 **Great Skuas** on 3rd; up to 18300 **Pink-footed Geese**; up to 181 **Barnacle Geese**; a **Merlin** on 6th; a **Mediterranean Gull** on 4th; a **Snow Goose** on 11th; 2 **Surf Scoters** on 22nd and 1 from 23rd-29th; 2200 **Golden Plovers** on 22nd. At *Cramond*, 6 **Great Skuas** on 4th; 2 **Arctic Skuas** on 4th; a **Manx Shearwater** on 4th; a **Greenshank** on 4th; a **Mediterranean Gull** on 4th.

At *Musselburgh*, a **Jack Snipe** on 1st; 2 **Black Guillemots** on 1st, and 1 for most of the month; a **Great Northern Diver** from 3rd-8th (and at Port Seton on 8th); up to 20 **Little Gulls**; up to 3 **Mediterranean Gulls**; up to 6 **Ruff**; a **Lapland Bunting** on 8th; a **Green Sandpiper** on 9th; 1000+ **Golden Plovers** 15th; a **Black-throated Diver** on 13th; 3 **Scaup** on 16th; a **Red-necked Grebe** on 18th and 29th; a **Shore Lark** on 20th, and a different bird from 24th-29th; an **Arctic Skua** on 20th; a **Twite** on 25th; a **Long-tailed Skua** on 28th.

At *Portobello/Joppa*, 30+ **Little Gulls** on 31st; 3 **Arctic Skuas** on 31st; 2 **Manx Shearwaters** on 31st. At *Skateraw*, 2 **Yellow-browed Warblers** on 12th and 1 on 13th; a **Brambling** on 12th; a juv **Dotterel** (between Skateraw and Barns Ness) on 18th. At *Torness*, a **Yellow-browed Warbler** on 11th; 2 **Bramblings** on 11th; 2 **Lapland Buntings** on 12th; 40 **Little Auks** on 28th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **White-rumped Sandpiper** from 5th-8th; a **Curlew Sandpiper** on 8th; a **Little Stint** on 8th; a **Lapland Bunting** on 16th and 21st; 3 **Snow Buntings** on 22nd; 2 **Pintails** on 22nd; a **Twite** flock on 22nd; a **Mediterranean Gull** on 25th. In the *Pentlands*, a **Pintail** at *Bavelaw* on 26th; a ringtail **Hen Harrier** at *Bavelaw* on 26th; a **Brambling** near *Bavelaw* on 26th; 44 **Whooper Swans** on 26th.

Around *Edinburgh*, a **Great Skua**, a **Pomarine Skua**, and an **Arctic Skua**, all east of the *Forth Bridges* on 1st; a **Mediterranean Gull** at *South Queensferry* on 5th; a **Black-throated Diver** off *Silverknowes* on 25th. Around *East Lothian*, a **Crossbill** in *Saltoun Wood* on 2nd; at least 9 different **Mediterranean Gulls** at the *Seton* roost; 115 **Little Gulls** off *Port Seton* on 8th; 2 **Red-necked Grebes** off *Port Seton* on 8th; 144 **Barnacle Geese** in the *Fenton Barns/W Fenton* area on 7th/8th; a **Lapland Bunting** at *Longniddry* on 19th; a **Reed Warbler** at *Thorntonloch* from 21st-25th; 7 **Bewick's Swans** south past *Thorntonloch* on 21st; an **Arctic Skua** off *Hound Point* on 22nd; 13 **Little Auks** at *Thorntonloch* on 28th; a **Storm Petrel** past *Dunbar* on 31st; a **Little Auk** at *Barns Ness* on 22nd/25th and 3 on 29th; a **Twite** at *Barns Ness* on 29th. Around *Midlothian*, up to 3

Nuthatches in *Vogrie CP*; a **Nuthatch** in *Roslin Glen* on 15th. Around *West Lothian*, a **Pomarine Skua** at *Blackness* on 5th.

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

Mystery Bird

Identify the species silhouetted below. The answer will be published in the next issue.



The last mystery speck was a Short-eared Owl.



The SOC is a registered Scottish charity (no. SCO 009859).