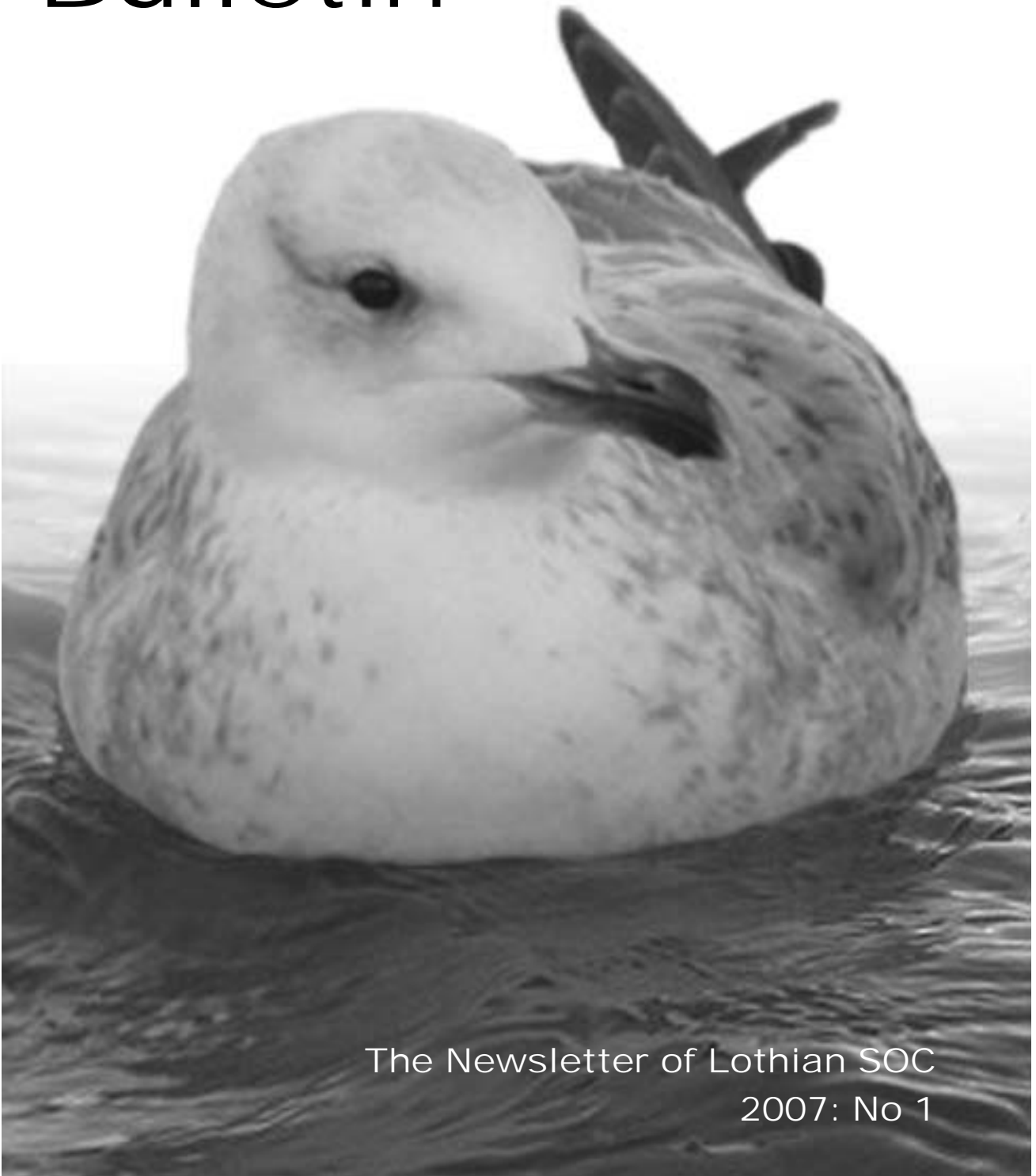


Lothian Bird Bulletin



The Newsletter of Lothian SOC
2007: No 1

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Editorial

Things have been busy in Lothian SOC's Edinburgh office recently. Apart from the Bulletin and organising branch outings, our team of writers is putting the finishing touches to the 2005 Lothian Bird Report. This should hopefully be in the shops around the middle of the year.

On 18th March I spent an enjoyable day in Peebles at the SOC/BTO Birdwatchers' Conference. Arctic weather early in the morning failed to put anyone off, and there was a close to capacity audience in the 200-seat Eastgate Theatre. Subjects included the monitoring of Short-eared Owls and the changing avifauna of the Borders; and a talk on Goshawks even provided an unexpected insight into some 'unconventional' methods employed by the local police force. Thanks to everyone involved for a successful event.

In this issue of the Lothian Bird Bulletin, David Atkins reports on the November branch outing to Islay, John Hamilton drums up support for the club AGM in April, we conclude two articles started last time - Colin Beckett on his trip to Iceland in July, and Richard Leslie slightly nearer to home on Skye. Thanks to all for the contributions.

Dumb and Dunbar: Finally, thanks to the staff at Virgin Trains for retrieving the gloves and hat left in the waiting room at Dunbar by a dozy LBB editor!

Stephen

News

Lothian Branch AGM, Meadowbank Stadium, 10 April 2007, 7.30pm

The SOC's Constitution requires that nominations for any vacancy on a branch committee must be received by the branch secretary not later than one week before the AGM of the branch. In view of this tight deadline, it is not possible to incorporate a detailed Agenda for the AGM in Lothian Bird Bulletin, so please accept this reminder as Notice of the AGM. A detailed Agenda will be available at the AGM.

Under the Constitution, branch committee members hold office for three years and are then eligible for re-election. The branch committee members retiring this year are John Hamilton, Branch Secretary, and Gillian Herbert, Outdoor Meetings Organiser. Both these committee members intend to offer themselves for re-election.

But do not let that put you off. The Branch needs new blood on the Committee from time to time. So if you have appropriate skills, you may wish to consider joining the Branch Committee. If so, please speak to any present Committee Member who will be pleased to assist.

Each year the Branch elects a representative to SOC Council. Last year, your representative was John Hamilton, who intends to offer himself for re-election.

Finally, I would like to encourage all Lothian members to come along to “your AGM” and help influence Branch and Club matters by expressing your opinion and voting. (There will also be talks and a quiz! Ed.)

John Hamilton, Branch Secretary

Library

Keith Macgregor would like to remind members that the library at Waterston House boasts a comprehensive collection of periodicals - both current and back-issues. A full list can be found on the SOC website.

A (very) wild weekend on Islay

Group trip, 18-20 November 2006

It was only the weather that was wild – honest!

Building on the success of the Lothians Branch autumn weekend in Dumfries and Galloway in 2005, a follow-up weekend was arranged for autumn 2006 - this time to the beautiful and bird-rich island of Islay. As before, the trip was organised and led by Jacky Robinson and David Atkins, although this time we took a minibus with us.

Our minibus turned out to be one size larger than had been booked – see later – so there was plenty of space on board for the party of 10, together with all our luggage and optical equipment. An enforced change to our planned ferry times meant that we would have a day and a bit of birding on Islay itself plus half a day back on the mainland on the final day.

The weather forecast for the weekend was dire – gale-to-storm force winds and plenty of rain! If we managed to make it across to Islay, would we ever get off again? The four-hour drive on the Saturday to Kennacraig was uneventful; in fact, it was beautifully bright and sunny by the time we got to the west coast, Loch Fyne looking, dare I say, fine. At the ferry terminal, two men with a very big tape measure came over to the minibus and pronounced us too long for our booking. Would we be allowed on the ferry? There were sighs of relief all round, however, when they eventually said they could fit us in.

The two-hour crossing to Port Askaig took us out along West Loch Tarbert, past Gigha Island and between Jura and Islay itself, and was remarkably smooth. Wildlife watching was very good from the ferry, with the highlight being large numbers of wintering great northern divers, mostly ones and twos but also some groups of up to half a dozen birds. We also saw plenty of auks, including several tysties, plus a couple of harbour porpoises. We were back on terra firma by mid-afternoon, and made several stops along the road to Bowmore to view the large flocks of barnacle and white-fronted geese feeding in the fields. A small party of whooper swans was also seen.

An hour's stop in the island's capital of Bowmore – not enough time for a tour of the distillery! – provided a little shopping and/or birding time, as the wind started to pick up and the temperature dropped. The main shop in town turned out to be a real Aladdin's Cave, which kept the shopaholics among us happy. Meanwhile, in fading light, a long-tailed duck, a red-throated diver and some turnstones were seen from the harbour wall. Half an hour's

drive south brought us to our hotel, the White Hart in Port Ellen – a comfortable, old-fashioned sort of place overlooking the main beach. So far, so good!

Sunday morning, while cold and with a fresh wind, was bright and sunny. We could see snow on the mountains of eastern Islay and, later on, on the Paps of Jura. We stopped frequently on the back road to Bridgend and picked up species such as buzzard (trying hard to make it something rarer), raven, hooded crow, redwing and stonechat, as well as further large flocks of barnacle and white-fronted geese. A party of rock doves flew out unexpectedly from under a small bridge by which we had stopped. At the head of Loch Indaal, we started to see shore birds such as shelduck, curlew and redshank, while a hunting sparrowhawk swept by us where we were parked. But viewing over the sea loch itself proved difficult in the head-on wind. Then it was on round to Bruichladdich – distillery closed! – where we saw a tree-full of collared doves in a front garden and purple sandpipers and other waders among the rocks near the pier.

We then headed west to Machir Bay to look for choughs, one of Islay's speciality birds. En route, we saw several more flocks of geese – barnacles and white-fronts again, but also a few pink-feet. One or two flocks of rock doves were seen in amongst the geese, and we got a short but distant sighting of a ring-tail hen harrier. Once arrived at the dunes of Machir Bay, we split up into small chough-hunting groups. Most of the party eventually managed to find their own birds, but it was hard work and, by now, it was almost blowing a gale. A lucky few saw three twite feeding on the ground near the minibus. After our individual efforts to find choughs, we all then had a really close view of six birds quietly feeding in a field only yards from the minibus as we left the car park.

We then moved on to the RSPB reserve at Loch Gruinart. It was now very windy indeed and it had started to rain. From the comfort of the viewing window at the visitor centre, we looked down on a wonderful sight of thousands of geese and other wildfowl spread out below us. In still deteriorating weather, we struggled down to the hide overlooking Gruinart Bay. We were rewarded with close views of shoveler, little grebe, snipe, black-tailed godwit and golden plover, all seemingly impervious to the atrocious weather. It was not safe to get out of the bus by the time we reached Ardnave Loch in search of more choughs and water birds, so we decided to head straight back to the safety and warmth of our hotel. We enjoyed a hearty meal while the whole hotel seemed to howl and rattle in the wind. The forecast for the Sunday was seriously bad, and we were sure we wouldn't get off the island in the morning.

It was a truly wild night, with our hotel bearing the full brunt of the southerly gale – no one dared venture out for a late-evening stroll along the beach! After several early morning phone calls, and against all the odds, we were told to head straight for Port Askaig from where our ferry would be sailing at the scheduled time. Apart from a 'lively' half-hour as we sailed clear of Jura, it wasn't too bad a return crossing, although holding binoculars steady on the boat deck in the wind and rain was certainly not easy. However, we did see auks and divers again, and also a few kittiwakes and fulmars. By the time we reached our lunch spot at Tarbert it was raining heavily, but at least we'd made it safely back to the mainland.

We spent the afternoon exploring the length of the Crinan Canal, a new area for everyone. A short (wet) walk in Knapdale Forest added goosander and some woodland species to our list. Then on to Crinan, having had a fleeting glimpse of an otter swimming in the canal itself. Crinan is a charming and beautifully-positioned place at the start – or is it the end? – of the canal. We were surprised to find the Vital Spark (of 1960s Para Handy TV fame) quietly rusting away in the canal basin. Photographs were duly taken of the boat and then of ourselves in front of our minibus – not rusting away as far as we could tell.



David closed off the bird list at this stage, with Flora Ross Russell winning the prize, having correctly guessed the total of 69 species – just one more than we had seen in a single day on the group trip to Holy Island in October!

Then we set off for home, although even at this late stage of the weekend, fate still seemed to be stalking us – with snow threatening and in the dark, we were forced to find an impromptu diversion when we came across a town sealed off by the police on the main Oban road. We eventually made it back to Edinburgh in one piece, albeit tired and late.

In spite of an eventful and sometimes challenging weekend, mostly caused by the increasingly inclement weather, everyone enjoyed themselves and seemed happy with the birding (and travelling) experience, in a pioneer-spirited sort of way. Certainly, it was a trip which I suspect will linger in the memory for some time to come.

Postscript: Just a week after our visit to Crinan, I found a report in The Herald which said that the Vital Spark was due to be moved in the spring to Inveraray, where it will be restored and displayed as a tourist attraction in the local maritime museum. A happy rescue indeed!

David Atkins, March 2007

A Surprise Visit To Iceland (Part Two)

We thought we were going to miss out on the whales, but then had a call from one of the other boats that there were whales at the opposite side of the bay. We motored over to right under the steep high cliffs and were rewarded with distant views of spouting whales and occasional heads and tails! We were told there were two Humpbacks and Minke whales. By slowly moving forward we were finally so close to one of the Humpbacks that we all felt the boat move as it swam close under the bow and surfaced alongside, giving an unforgettable view of the head, with long white flippers, the length of the body and finally the fluke as it dived down to the bottom. The skipper reckoned the whale to be about thirty tons. An unforgettable end to the day.

Iceland lies on the fault line between the North American tectonic plate and the Eurasian plate, and is volcanic in origin. The island is only seventeen million years old, which in geological terms is very recent.

The following day we visited another geothermal generating plant of recent construction and stunning architecture. Nearby were steaming and hissing fumerols and boiling mud pools. Beyond the plant was the cone of a volcano, now filled with water, and beyond that we walked over a recent lava field (1980s/90s) with a central area that was still molten. The most recent lava was completely black and covered an area about the size of Edinburgh. It was interesting to see the sequence of colonisation of plants on the older lava, with splendid flowers including Gentians, Mountain Avens, a species of Bladderwort, and Butterwort.

The lava forms domed structures, presumably because of the steam from fumerols. When set solid they tend to partly break away forming fern-filled damp hollows. I gathered that Mergansers, Barrow's Goldeneye and other ducks use these structures for nesting in the absence of usable trees.

In the afternoon we drove on to a massive river with a range of waterfalls, and it had also cut an impressive canyon on its way to the sea. The main waterfall was at Dettifoss and the whole area now forms a National Park.

I had hoped to see Ptarmigan, Snowy Owl and Gyr Falcon in this area, but it is vast and barren, and without special knowledge (or luck) it is difficult to find birds. I was surprised to find Fulmar nesting on the cliffs at Dettifoss as it must be at least 50km from the nearest sea.

Our last day we had to leave Myvatn at midday to fly back to Reykjavik in the evening. On the way back we looked more carefully where the lake flows out into the Laxa river. This river is one of the finest Salmon rivers in the world, and fishing cost the astronomical sum of \$1000 per day. Even then the time you can fish is restricted and, coming from abroad, you have to disinfect all your fishing gear to prevent infection by parasites.

The river runs at a huge volume and surprisingly, in the strongest flowing parts are the Harlequin ducks diving constantly. They must have remarkable powers of underwater swimming to prevent them being swept over the waterfalls they frequented. Unfortunately none of the ducks was in the colourful spring plumage from which they get their name. Young Harlequins were swimming at the edge of the stream avoiding the main current. Both Harlequins and Barrow's Goldeneye are residents, surviving the winter by virtue of the warm springs that keep the ice at bay.

On a small lagoon near to the outflow of the river we also found a family of about eight Red-necked Phalaropes dancing over the water, again sadly not in breeding plumage. Also on the lagoon was a parent Slavonian Grebe with two attractive striped chicks in tow.

We returned to Reykjavik that evening and with partly clear skies, we could appreciate the vast remote areas inland, with great ice caps, glaciers, and melt water streams.

A day in Reykjavic was well worthwhile, with excellend cultural and historic exhibitions, the interesting architecture and way of life. Whilst it is an expensive place to stay and visit, in fact prices were not more that one might expect to pay in Edinburgh.

The midges I had so feared proved to be a myth. Not one of us was bitten in the time we were there, and although there were clouds of the beasts around the lake they could be avoided. Although bigger than the Scottish variety, at least they did not bite! Many people

were camping, and although the locals were honest enough to tell us the weather was not always fine, a tent might be an option for those on a budget.

My itinerary was dictated by the grandchildren whose holiday I had joined, and in consequence I did not see some of the birds I had hoped to. Given more time I would have done more research as to where to find specific target birds, and if I went again I would choose to be there mid-June, although this year there had been heavy snow at that time.

Colin Beckett, November 2006

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

We decided to explore the area around Ardmore Bay and found four Canada Geese next to a shallow lochan. We also found that the small picnic site next to Trumpan Chapel was a useful place to put up our scopes and engage in a spot of seawatching. The cold wind made our eyes water but we stuck at it long enough to pick out an Arctic Skua harrying the passing terns.

The greatest surprise of the day occurred when we were back inside the cottage when Jude suddenly pointed out a large raptor, which had landed in a field a little distance away. It was definitely an eagle and it was being mobbed by two Hooded Crows. A quick fumble to get up the scope soon revealed that it was a White-tailed Eagle, a first for Mike.

My hillwalking friends departed the next morning and we were left to get on with our family holiday. We decided to take Ben for a swim, not in the chilly waters of the Minch but rather the warmer waters of the public pool in Portree. Though only aged seven and a half months Ben had already attained his Tadpole Certificate in swimming proficiency and he was keen to show off his floating skills to his Dad.

However, on the winding road along the Waternish Peninsula both Ben and Jude fell asleep and I conjured up a plan to take in some bird watching on the route to Portree. I thought that we might just catch some new birds if we took the hill road over the Trotternish Peninsula, which passed close to the Quiraing. By the time that my wife had woken up and realised that we were not proceeding to Portree we had already reached Uig and it was too late to turn back.

We parked up near the Quiraing and watched a small number of Ravens flap up on over the ridge. Their attention was soon drawn to a much larger shape cruising along the crest of the hills, that of a Golden Eagle. I scoped a number of smaller birds whilst Ben had his lunch and not before too long we were back on our way to Portree and our long awaited swim.

The mid point of our week's holiday, the Wednesday, saw us take the boat from Elgol to Loch Coruisk in almost balmy weather. The sea was flat calm and although some clouds did sneak up on us in the afternoon it was still a great day out. Loch Coruisk is a dark forboding place but in the fine conditions I could clearly see the summit ridge where I had so dismally toiled a few days earlier.

On the short sea crossing we saw a lone Puffin, the first of the year, as well as a number of Black Guillemot, Cormorant and Common Terns. The rocks near the Loch Coruisk jetty held good numbers of Common Seal, and a pair of Shelduck.

On the return car journey we stopped briefly near Torrin, in a patch of native woodland and saw birds which we did not readily see on the more exposed side of the island where we were staying, such as Tree Pipit.

The weather returned to cool wind and rain the next day and we confined ourselves to walks near the cottage. On our Trumpan loop walk we saw a female Merlin dive behind a patch of cover, near the chapel, and down in the bay three Whimbrel were late migrants. What I really wanted to see, however, was a Corncrake, as the habitat and time of year were ideal for them.

I telephone Alan Sillence, the local RSPB volunteer who monitors Corncrake numbers on Skye, and who lived near to where we were staying. He was able to confirm my hunch that the area of set-aside at the corner of the road, on the way to the chapel, held a calling Corncrake, but to hear it you had to go in the dead of night. With the sun setting at the back of ten 'o clock, and with a young baby waking us up early in the morning, venturing out in the pitch darkness was not easy.

However, the arrival of two new friends and a bottle or two of red wine fortified my resolve and at the back of midnight, in a fine drizzle, I marched down the road. Almost at once I was struck by the amount of noise and activity that was going on around me. Apart from the restless sheep and Lapwing, nesting in their field, there was an almost constant drumming of snipe on either side of the road. At one stage I almost thought that a snipe was going to fly straight into such was the intensity of the noise.

I also had to watch my feet as a number of toads were criss-crossing the road. I even came across a Palmate Newt on the road, which I picked up and moved to the verge. As I grew closer to the corner I started to hear the crek-crek-crekking of a Corncrake from deep within the rushes and stubble in the field. Try as I might I could not see the bird, but as I did not wish to disturb it unnecessarily I listened for a while and then made my way back to the dryness and comfort of the cottage.

It was not long before we had to pack up and return to Edinburgh. After a week of cold winds and quite a bit of rain I still felt that we had seen a very good cross section of the birds available to see on our patch of Skye.

Richard Leslie, September 2006

Lothian SOC Outings

Hogganfield Loch and Dalzell Park, 18th February

Hogganfield, near Stepps on the outskirts of Glasgow, is a large shallow loch boasting an impressive variety of wildlife - highlights on this occasion included a dozen or more surprisingly tame (but definitely wild) Whooper Swans, 6 Ruddy Ducks, and a family of Foxes on the small wooded island.

This was originally intended to be a visit to the RSPB's excellent Baron's Haugh reserve in Motherwell, but work to improve the reserve was in progress and we decided that this wasn't the best time to visit. (We'll be back soon I'm sure.) Instead our afternoon was spent at Dalzell Park, which is literally just next door. We were met there by RSPB volunteer Stephen, who had very kindly offered to take us on a tour of the area. Birds seen included a pair of Nuthatches (one of two breeding pairs in the park) and several Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Coming Up...

- 15th April: Tweed Valley Forests (note new destination)
- 13th May: Dawn Chorus at Hadfast Valley SWT
- 3rd Jun: Perthshire walk
- 1st Jul: Farne Islands (to be confirmed)
- 26 Aug: Gosford Bay and Musselburgh

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

Lothian Bird Sightings

FEBRUARY

At *Aberlady*, a **Greenshank** on several dates; 15 **Twites** on 16th; 20 on 18th; up to 12 **Snow Buntings**; 3 **Scaup** on 20th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Jack Snipe** on 4th; up to 3 **Mediterranean Gulls**; a **Water Pipit** present all month; a **Great Northern Diver** on 18th.

In the *Pentlands*, 8 **Bramblings** near *East Rigg* on 6th; a **Taiga Bean Goose** at *Threipmuir Res* on 6th, 7th, and 17th; a **Greenland White-fronted Goose** at *Threipmuir* on 6th; a **Greenshank** at *Bavelaw* on 8th; a **Hen Harrier** at *Bavelaw* on 8th; 5 **Bramblings** near *Red Moss* on 7th and 1 on 9th; a **Night Heron** at *Bavelaw* on 14th; 60 **Twites** at *Bavelaw* on 26th.

Around *Edinburgh*, a 1st winter **Caspian Gull** at *Dunbar Harbour* until 13th; up to 13 **Waxwings** in *Leith* until 9th and 1 on 28th; an **Iceland Gull** at *South Queensferry* on 3rd; a **Scaup** on *St Margaret's Loch* on 4th; 4-5 **Waxwings** at *Asda, The Jewel* on 8th; 13 **Waxwings** at *Portobello Road* on 9th.

Around *East Lothian*, a **Mediterranean Gull** at *Seton Sands* roost on 4th/11th; a **Mediterranean Gull** at *Longniddry* on 4th; 120 **Twites** at *Tynninghame* on 4th; 4 **Brent Geese** at *Tynninghame* on 4th; a **Greenshank** north of *Dunbar* on 7th; a **Black-necked Grebe** off *Ferry Ness* on 8th, 17th, 18th; a **Little Gull** at *Seton Burn* on 11th; a **Great Northern Diver** in *Gosford Bay* on 11th and 21st; 4 **Scaup** off *Portobello* on 13th; a **Jack Snipe** at *Drem* on 18th; a **Northern Eider** of race *borealis* at *Scoughall* on 18th; a **Nuthatch** in *Gosford Estate* on 21st; a 1st winter **Iceland Gull** at *Broxmouth, Dunbar* on 25th; a **Little Gull** at *Skateraw* on 26th.

Around *Midlothian*, 2 **Nuthatches** in *Roslin Glen* on 3rd and 17th; 2 **Waxwings** near *Bonnyrigg* on 5th. Around *West Lothian*, a redhead **Smew** on *Linlithgow Loch* on 1st; an **Iceland Gull** at *Blackness* on 25th.

JANUARY

At *Aberlady*, 20 **Twites** on 7th; up to 5 **Pintails**; a **Jack Snipe** on 21st; a **Black-necked Grebe** on 28th; a **Greenshank** on 30th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Little Gull** on 1st; up to 21 **Mealy Redpolls** in a garden near Newhailes; a **Black-necked Grebe** on 7th; a **Mediterranean Gull** on a number of dates; a **Water Pipit** all month. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **Caspian Gull** at *Belhaven/Dunbar Harbour* all month; a **Great Northern Diver** on 2nd; a **Jack Snipe** on 2nd; a **Glaucous Gull** on 4th; 4 **Brent Geese** from 5th-14th; a **Water Pipit** on 6th; a **Great Grey Shrike** on 6th; up to 140 **Twites**.

In the *Lammermuirs*, 100 **Bramblings** at *Whiteadder Res* on 7th; 2 **Snow Buntings** in *Faseneay* area on 7th/15th; 17 **Crossbills** in *Monynut Forest* on 27th. In the *Pentlands*, a **Taiga Bean Goose** with Pink-footed Geese near *Bavelaw* from 1st-14th at least; 3 **Peregrines** at *Bavelaw* on 2nd; 250 **Twites** at *Buteland* on 2nd; a **Snow Bunting** on *West Kip* on 7th.

Around *Edinburgh*, 54 **Little Gulls** at *Seafield* on 2nd; a **Black Guillemot** at *Seafield* on 2nd and 20th; 11 **Waxwings** at *Portobello/Joppa* on 3rd-4th; up to 13 **Waxwings** in *Leith* from 5th-28th; 11 **Waxwings** in *Currie* on 6th and 7 on 16th; a **Mediterranean Gull** at *Cramond* on 26th; a **Woodcock** in *The Meadows* on 27th; up to 13 **Waxwings** in *Leith* from 28th-31st; an **Iceland Gull** off *South Queensferry* on 31st.

Around *East Lothian*, 5 **Mealy redpolls** in *Longniddry* on 1st; up to 2 **Mediterranean Gulls** at *Seton* roost; 2 **Nuthatches** in *Gosford Estate* on 2nd; 3 **Nuthatches** at *East Linton* on 2nd; a **Glaucous Gull** at *Torncroft* on 3rd; a male **Marsh Harrier** near *Hailes Castle* on 5th; a **Black-necked Grebe** off *Port Seton* on 7th; 180+ **Velvet Scoters** west past *Seton* in 15 mins on 7th; a **Brambling** near *Garvald* on 8th; a **Jack Snipe** at *Drem Pools* on 21st; a **Great Northern Diver** off *Dunbar* on 23rd.

Around *Midlothian*, up to 2 **Nuthatches** in *Roslin Glen*. Around *West Lothian*, 24+ **Bramblings** in *Almondell* on 7th; 15 **Waxwings** in *Craigshill, Livingston* on 25th; a redhead **Smew** on *Linlithgow Loch* for most of month.

DECEMBER

At *Musselburgh*, a **Mediterranean Gull** on 1st and 2 on 3rd; a **Little Gull** on 2nd and 6th; up to 22 **Mealy Redpolls** in garden near Newhailes; a **Water Pipit** all month; a **Black-throated Diver** on 6th; a **Ring-billed Gull** on 31st.

In the *Pentlands*, a 1st winter **Ferruginous Duck** on *Threipmuir Res* from 22nd to month end; 250 **Twites** near *Buteland House* on 30th.

Around *Edinburgh*, a **Greenshank** at *Cramond* on 1st; a **Manx Shearwater** off *Silverknowes* on 2nd; a **Great Northern Diver** off *Portobello* on 11th; a **Black-throated Diver** off *Portobello* on 22nd.

Around *East Lothian*, **Crossbills** heard in *Saltoun Wood* on 1st; a **White-fronted Goose** at *Tynninghame* on 6th; 2 male **Surf Scoters** off *Ferry Ness* on 9th; a **Crossbill** in *Longniddry* on 11th; 110 **Twites** at *Tynninghame* on 17th; a **Nuthatch** in *East Linton* area on 17th; a **Black-necked Grebe** off *Ferry Ness* on 18th; up to 4 different **Mediterranean Gulls** at *Seton* roost; a **Little Gull** at *Seton Sands* on 24th; 16+ **Mealy Redpolls** in

Longniddry on 28th; a **Common Redstart** in *Longniddry* on 28th; a 1st winter **Caspian Gull** in *Belhaven Bay* from 28th; 3 **Brent Geese** at *Seton* on 28th.

Around *Midlothian*, 3 **Nuthatches** in *Roslin Glen* on 30th.

NOVEMBER

At *Aberlady*, a **Waxwing** in a garden on 2nd; up to 15 **Pintails**; a **Merlin** (juv) on 3rd and another on 26th; up to 5 **Red-necked Grebes**; 10 **Little Auks** past *Gullane Point* in 15 mins on 3rd; 3 (pale-bellied) **Brent Geese** on 4th, 2 on 18th; a male **Surf Scoter** off *Gullane Point* on 12th and in *Gosford Bay* on 26th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Water Pipit** all month; a **Black-throated Diver** on several dates; a **House Martin** on 7th; a **Mediterranean Gull** on 15th and 28th; a **Yellow-legged Gull** on 20th; a **Little Auk** on 20th; 2 **Black Guillemots** on 22nd; a **Little Gull** on 23rd and 26th.

Around *Edinburgh*, 196 **Little Auks** east past *Silverknowes* in 90 mins on 5th, 115 on 6th; a **Pomarine Skua** past *Seafield* on 9th; a **Mediterranean Gull** at *Seafield* on 27th.

Around *East Lothian*, 670 **Little Auks** north in 35 mins on 2nd at *Scoughall*; 2 **Snow Buntings** at *Scoughall* on 2nd; 200 **Little Auks** north off *Dunbar* in 90 mins on 3rd, 502 on 4th; 2 **Nuthatches** at *Gosford* on 3rd; a **Woodcock** at *Gosford* on 3rd; up to 5 **Mediterranean Gulls** at *Port Seton*; a **Merlin** near *East Linton* on 3rd; 62 **Little Auks** past *Barns Ness* in 1 hour on 3rd, 18 north in 1 hour on 4th, 59 on 5th; a **Greenshank** at *Tynninghame* on 4th; a **Great Northern Diver** off *Ferry Ness* on 18th; 2 **Snow Buntings** opp *Eyebroughty, Dirleton*, on 26th.

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

Mystery Bird



Can you identify the species of Owl pictured? The answer will be published in the next issue.

The silhouetted bird in the last issue was a Red-backed Shrike.



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