

# Lothian Bird Bulletin



# Contents

Editorial	3
News	3
Looking for a Button in a Hayfield	4
My Life With Birds	8
Lothian SOC Outings	10
Lothian Bird Sightings	11
Mystery Bird	12

**Published by Lothian SOC, 13th  
September 2007.**

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

**Tel**  
0131-556 4996

**Email**  
stephenjameshunter@btopenworld.com

**Contributors**  
Richard Leslie  
Neil Grubb  
John P Pringle

**Photography**  
Rock Dove (sort of) © Stephen Hunter



**Contact The SOC at**  
The Scottish Birdwatching Resource  
Centre, Waterston House, Aberlady, East  
Lothian, EH32 0PY  
**Tel** 01875 871 330  
**Email** mail@the-soc.org.uk

**Websites**  
[www.the-soc.org.uk](http://www.the-soc.org.uk)  
[www.lsoc.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.lsoc.btinternet.co.uk)

# Editorial

Phew. Since you're reading this, it must have reached Waterston House in time for the September mailing. Unlike the last one... This issue features another entertaining article by Richard Leslie; an account of his trip to South Africa and Lesotho in February. Thanks Richard! We also introduce a new regular series *My Life With Birds*, where Lothian SOC members are forced to tell us about their birdwatching experiences. This time we have a double-bill featuring LSOC treasurer John P Pringle and - to mark the inclusion of his excellent DVD with the new Lothian Bird Report - Neil Grubb. (The last regular series I introduced in the Bulletin lasted precisely one issue, but I have high hopes for this one.)

Please keep the articles (and any other contributions) coming in!

Stephen

## News

### Branch Meetings

The 2007/8 programme is now underway, with meetings at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month. The venue is Meadowbank Stadium on all dates except for 13th Nov and 11th Mar, when we'll be visiting Waterston House in Aberlady. As always we have some entertaining speakers lined up – why not come along?



### Lothian Bird Report

The 2005 report is finally available – apologies for keeping everyone waiting! This year it comes with a free DVD titled *Northern Frontier*. This was filmed and produced by Neil Grubb, and documents the long-awaited arrival of the Nuthatch as a breeding species in Lothian. The report is available for £8.50 from Charles Frank/Viking Optical Centre (Rose Street, Edinburgh), from Waterston House, and at LSOC branch meetings. Alternatively, you can obtain a copy by post by sending a cheque for £9.80 (inc p&p), payable to "SOC Lothian Branch", to John Hamilton, 30 Swanston Gardens, Edinburgh, EH10 7DL.

As co-editor, I'd like to thank everyone who helped with the report!

# Looking for a Button in a Hayfield

## South Africa and Lesotho, February 2007

Or, to be more precise wading through shoulder high grass looking for a Black-rumped Buttonquail. I was out at 5.30 am on a cool February Thursday morning in the Creighton District of Kwazulu Natal, with Malcolm Gemmill, a bird guide with Button Birding, looking for this notorious skulker.

I was nervous about treading on snakes but Malcolm assured me that he never saw snakes on this particular walk. I was not so sure, two days previously he had given me the same assurances when we were visiting a high altitude wetland and on that occasion we had bumped into a Rinkhals Spitting Cobra. Only that time we were in a car and now we were on foot tramping through thick grass.

I also thought of the possibility of being struck by lightning. A violent electric storm had struck and killed twelve cows on a farm not very far from here earlier in the week. However, thunder storms usually roll in later in the day, not first thing in the morning.

Somehow this did not seem as friendly as bird watching on a crisp February morning in Scotland!

Our morning walk yielded much excitement. Each time something brown with wings whirred out from under our feet I would feel the excitement mount only to be told, or to realise myself, that what we had seen was either a Common Quail, Rufous-naped Lark, Zitting Cisticola, African Quailfinch, Red-collared Widow or some other avian denizen of the thick grass. A Croaking Cisticola, on an overhead telephone wire, seemed to mock my unsteady progress.

A much larger brown shape bounded out of the undergrowth. This was a small antelope, known as an Oribi, which is endangered over much of its range and is more prevalent in farmland than it is in protected areas.

It was only once we got back into the vehicle, and were driving down a grassy strip, that a Buttonquail shot out and over the bonnet, its black rump showing briefly before it dived back into cover. A result, and a feeling of elation, after an uncomfortable hours tramp in the veld. This is a difficult bird to find and I was pleased to have the services of someone with me who knew where to find them.

As part of a two week holiday in South Africa, my wife, Jude, very graciously allowed me to indulge in two days, and three nights, of bird watching, with Button Birding. We stayed at Malcolm's guest farm, Smithfield, run by his wife, Gail, in this district of Kwazulu Natal. The area is noted for its dairy farming, and for access to some of the more difficult to find birds in Southern Africa.

After settling into a converted farm outbuilding, upon our late afternoon arrival, and giving young Ben (aged 16 months) a bath in a large green bucket, I was taken away by Malcolm to the local cricket club where we enjoyed sundowners under a large tree. As the sun set the sky became filled with the swirl of hundreds of Amur Falcons getting ready to roost for the night. My first lifers of the trip.

Silently they accumulated in the darkening sky, until one of them, braver than the rest suddenly swooped down and settled in the tree. Almost in unison the rest of the group, numbering an estimated 1,300 birds, flew in and disappeared into the foliage. It was, to quote a much over-used term, an awesome sight.

After an uncomfortable and very warm night in our room, thankfully absent of any biting insects, I was roused by Malcolm at 5:00 and lead to his vehicle. We drove up to a patch of mistbelt forest, Hlabeni, to wait for the dawn chorus. Malcolm rigged up headphones and with a tracking dish we were able to pick out bird song from the dense cover. Although there were birds about our wait did not include the rare Cape Parrot.

We did, however, see four more lifers in the form of Long-crested Eagle, Drakensberg Prinia, Wailing Cisticola and African Yellow Warbler. Other birds included Sombre Greenbul, Bar-throated Apalis, African Olive Pigeon and Black Saw-wing Swallow.

Our descent into farmland produced a Forest Buzzard, Speckled Mousebirds and both Common Waxbills and their more colourful cousins, Sweet Waxbills. We stopped at a bare tree to take in two Southern Black Tits with a Red-throated Wryneck perched on top. As we rounded a bend on a dirt track a small red and black bird lifted off the ground and dived into thick shrubbery. It was a glimpse, but a good glimpse, of the confiding Red-chested Flufftail, not an easy bird to see and a real bonus for the day.

Breakfast was delayed for another wee while as we took a detour past a farm reservoir where the dairy cattle shared their green meadow with a flock of Grey Crowned Cranes and Southern Bald Ibis, resplendent in their glossy plumage and bright red, bald heads. Waterbirds included South African Shelduck, Red-billed Teal and the ubiquitous Egyptian Geese.

We joined our respective families for a late breakfast set outside on a table under a tree in the garden. A quick look at my wish list allowed Malcolm to set the agenda for the rest of the day – looking for hard to find rarities and new birds for my life list. Jude, and little Ben spent the day partly in the swimming pool, exploring the surrounding countryside with one of Gail's friends and visiting a craft centre at the nearby mission hospital.

Malcolm and I set off for the remote upland wetland, known as Ntsikeni, where we hoped to see the rare Wattled Crane. There are estimated to be only 250 of these cranes in South Africa, and across Africa they are listed as critically endangered.

Our drive took us through communal farming land, commercial pine plantations and then up on to rolling high plateau grasslands at 1,800 metres. Birds were sparse but did include Mountain Wheatear, Buff-streaked Chat, Cape or Orange-throated Longclaw, and various LBJ's, or little brown jobs.

Working our way through these groups we were pleased to sort out the Plain-backed Pipits from the Grassveld Pipits, and the Pale-crowned Cisticolas from the Zitting, Wailing and Levaillant's Cisticolas. We also examined a mixed flock of swifts, separating the slightly larger Eurasian (or Common) Swifts from the African Black Swifts.

There was no sign of the cranes when we arrived at the wetland, although a chick in a Secretarybird's nest was an added bonus. We had to make do with Speckled Pigeons and Banded Martins as we ate our pack lunch at the newly renovated Ntsikeni lodge. On our return we scanned the wetland with our scopes trying to conjure up the cranes from distant White Storks. An African Marsh Harrier caught our attention as did a small party of Black-headed Herons. Another good find was a stately Denham's (or Stanley's) Bustard, which flushed another Common Quail.

Finally Malcolm let out a shout and I was directed to a Wattled Crane with a chick almost two kilometres away. However, as these birds stand over six feet tall they were easily distinguishable with grey and white plumage and red-wattled faces. A definite tick, and a good one too.

The birding excitement was not over for the day, however, as we still had to have one last try for the Cape Parrot. We collected Jude and Ben from the farm and took them up to another patch of mistbelt forest, at Xumeni, where Malcolm arranged deckchairs and brought out the coolbox. We staked out a dead tree where parrots often returned to roost from foraging in the nearby district.

Seeing the parrots was not guaranteed, however, as they sometimes chose to roost elsewhere in the forest, or the presence of a raptor may cause them to be far less conspicuous. Eventually, after we had depleted the contents of the coolbox Malcolm found a Cape Parrot sitting some way off which I managed to get my scope on to identifying the thickset head and red wing flashes. Three of them then flew over our site calling noisily to each other, but did not alight in the favoured tree.

Other birds seen in the forest included Yellow-breasted Apalis and Lemon (Cinnamon) Dove.

Gail's dinners are famous amongst travelling bird watchers, and the steaks that she produced that evening were no exception. The evenings events were enlivened by one of the other guests, an Afrikaans cattle feed salesman, recounting how he was absolutely convinced that he had seen a dinosaur on the road while travelling up to Creighton from the coast. The area certainly has many hidden wonders, but prehistoric creatures were not on my list!

We were treated to yet another early start the following morning. This time Jude and Ben accompanied Malcolm and I for a trip up the Sani Pass, across the Drakensberg Mountains, and into the little African kingdom of Lesotho. The pass is one of the most famous drives in South Africa, but can only be undertaken in a four wheel drive vehicle. You will not be allowed to proceed beyond the border post without one.

By going up in the world we would encounter different birds at different altitudes. At the bottom of the pass we stopped to scan a small lake but the waterbirds were too distant to be of any real interest (although Red-knobbed Coots and Little Grebes were close enough to easily identify). Jude was impressed by a group of Crowned Cranes flying overhead.

Further along the pass, we drove through stands of trees which produced Cardinal Woodpecker and another lifer for me, the Bush Blackcap. Is it a Bulbul or a Babbler – I am not sure? We stopped for breakfast at a layby with a vista of the Drakensberg range spread out in front of us. Ben ate his yoghurt and banana while his Dad surveyed the surrounding Protea bushes for Gurney's Sugarbirds and the iridescent Malachite Sunbirds.

The road winded its way up the mountain, past the South African border post, and past impressive drops, with wrecked vehicles far below. We passed a party of baboons foraging on either side of the road, and a group of Rock Hyraxes sunning themselves on a rock. There was less cover available for birds but we did find the diminutive Fairy Flycatcher flitting about. Prominent on exposed rocks were a good number of Ground Woodpeckers, as far as I am aware the only species of woodpecker that does not nest in trees.

The very top of the pass consists of a series of switchbacks which become iced over in winter. The road is nothing more than a rutted track with large boulders and loose scree. Not for the faint hearted. Here, where the cliffs of the Drakensberg curled around us were two new birds for my life list. The first, the Orange-breasted or Drakensberg Rockjumper was inquisitive, almost hopping up to the vehicle's window. The second was the fairly non-descript Drakensberg Siskin.

With a huge sigh of relief we crested the summit of the pass, at 9,400 feet, and checked through the Lesotho border post. What lay ahead of us was a vast landscape with hills rising to over 11,000 feet above sea level and low stunted vegetation grazed by goats under the watchful eye of Basutho herdsman.

Of more immediate interest, however, was the small hotel and pub, styled as the “highest pub in Africa”, where Malcolm suggested that I buy him a beer. After negotiating the pass in his 4x4 it was the very least that I could do. Jude and I joined him and Ben scampered about free of the confines of the vehicle.

From the viewing deck of the pub we could see a number of Sentinel Rock Thrushes, the very cute Sloggett Ice Rats and draped over rocks in the sun, Drakensberg Crag Lizards.

We had time to visit a local trading post for a few souvenirs. It was Jude who spotted the dark shape looming over the horizon as we emerged from the shack, that sold hats, candles and condoms! I dismissed the shape as one of the many Jackal Buzzards seen around, but Malcolm jolted me out of my complacency by shouting “Lammergeier”. I instantly looked up and saw it silhouetted against the sky, with its long tail clearly visible.

This was one of my targeted “must see” birds, but I did not expect to see it whilst simply walking out of a shop. Although we failed to see it again we did see a group of eight Cape Griffon Vultures rise on a thermal out on the plain.

We continued our journey across the plateau, known as Sani Flats, and saw a variety of birds, including White-necked Raven, more Southern Bald Ibis, Yellow Canary and Thick-billed Lark. We also managed to coax a Mountain Pipit into view.

Our journey took us on up out of the plateau and over a mountain, called Black Mountain, where we encountered more of the herdsman on their little ponies and also saw, at close range, the spectacular Black Harrier quartering the ground. In the scrub on the far side of the mountain we picked up two more lifers in the form of African Rock Pipit and Southern Grey Tit.

Lunch was held in a roadside clearing with a view across the valley to a Lammergeier’s nesting site. Although there were no Lammergeier’s currently present we were told that they often flew past. Alas, we had no such visits and had to admire the aerial antics of Rock Martins instead. We were paid a visit by a local herdsman who allowed me to take his photo in return for some fresh fruit.

The return journey was fairly uneventful. We had to descend the pass before the South African border closed at four o’ clock so we did not have time to stop and look for more birds. If anything, going down the steepest sections of the pass were even more hair-raising than going up.

Once we hit farmland again, at the bottom of the pass, we took a different route back to Smithfield Farm. We dipped on seeing South African Cliff Swallows, but did see Brown-throated Martins and a stunning view of a Half-collared Kingfisher on a stream.

The following morning found me in the field looking for the Buttonquail. Having located the target bird we set about checking on what other birds could be found on the surrounding fields. I was impressed by the number of Widows on offer and clocked up Long-tailed, Red-collared, Red-shouldered and White-winged in quick succession. We also spotted the hard-to-find Broad-tailed Warbler.

Our final destination of the morning was a field on the edge of a forestry plantation, near the town of Ixopo. Here we picked out two gorgeous Blue Swallows in amongst the

Greater-striped and Black Saw-wing Swallows. These rare swallows are intra African migrants and are in serious decline as much of their habitat has been planted over with commercial pine plantations. They are also very selective in their sites for nest building, preferring natural sink holes or abandoned Aardvark burrows.

We returned to the farm for yet another late breakfast, stopping only once en route to look at a Brimstone (Bully) Canary on an overhead wire.

In the space of two full days I had seen 133 birds of which 29 were lifers. The highlights were seeing the Cape Parrot, Lammergeier, Grey Crowned and Wattled Cuckers, and the elusive Black-rumped Buttonquail.

I can heartily recommend the services of Malcolm Gemmell and Button Birding, and so if you are travelling to that part of the world why not sign up to see a selection of really great birds.

*Richard Leslie, June 2007*

## My Life With Birds

**Neil Grubb** is 42 years old, and was born in Edinburgh. He works as a consultant cardiologist at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and specialises in heart rhythm disorders. He's married to Fiona who also enjoys birds and (according to Neil) is more observant than him. His other interests include photography and astronomy. Neil produced the DVD that is available free with the latest Lothian Bird Report, and is currently making his second bird movie using footage shot in the North Esk Valley through spring and summer 2007.

**How did your birdwatching start?** I've always enjoyed wildlife but my interest in birds is quite recent. In 2003 Fiona and I moved from Edinburgh to Roslin Glen and the birds immediately sparked my enthusiasm - seeing woodpeckers on the garden feeders and buzzards and kestrels over the fields near my house. Several people were encouraging early on - Colin Davison answered endless ID queries (almost always dunnocks!), and big Al and Dave Allan helped me with waders at Musselburgh (and I still need help!). My brother, Mark, and I have encouraged each other along the way although he has a rather more disciplined approach to his birding than me!

**What was your first pair of binoculars?** A pair of compact Nikon 8 x 20s. I also used a pair of 11 x 70 astronomy binoculars but got laughed at every time I took these monsters out at Musselburgh!

**...and your first bird book?** Collins Wild Guide - a pocket photoguide which is not much use in the field!

**When did you join the SOC?** 2005 after having my arm twisted by Dave Allan.

**Describe your local/regular patch.** Roslin Glen is a rare habitat in Midlothian. It consists of the North Esk Valley watershed. The river itself has improved dramatically in the past 30 years, and grey heron, grey wagtail, dipper and kingfisher are common sights. The river valley has fairly large tracts of mature deciduous woodland including some oak wood. In the past two years jays have become a fairly common sight, and nuthatches started to breed in 2005-6. The area around Rosslyn Castle (Gardner's Brae) is particularly good for warblers in the spring. Birds of prey do quite well and fortunately most of the surrounding



farmland is arable and not too heavily kept. I have seen more than 50 species in my garden, which backs on to the river valley.

**What's your dream birdwatching location?** I have a great local patch, but for sheer impressiveness Kilauea Point on Kauai, Hawaii, would be hard to beat. I got quite badly sunburned because I didn't want to leave! Great Frigatebirds, Red-tailed and White-Tailed Tropicbirds, Red Footed Boobies, Wedge-Tailed Shearwaters and Laysan Albatrosses all rose up the updraughts at very close quarters. Pods of dolphins could be seen from the clifftops. And the weather was great!

**Birdwatcher or birder?** I don't mind which label is applied but if pushed, a birder, because listening has helped me as much as watching!

**Your most embarrassing birdwatching moment?** Spending half an hour wondering why I couldn't get my camera to focus on kingfishers I was trying to photograph, only to find a ten pack of compact Kleenex stuck in the lens hood!

**What makes your blood boil?** Persecution of birds of prey. Also, some peoples' behaviour when an unusual bird turns up - I have seen a 'birder' beating through the bushes at Torness to flush a wryneck, and similar behaviour at Musselburgh with a Richard's Pipit. Some photographers can ruin your day by having to get just that extra few feet closer for a better picture. So I most enjoy birding alone on my local patch!

**The most unusual or rare bird you've found?** I found a very odd, dark tit on my garden feeder the first year I started birding. I photographed it and have been given various opinions as to its identity. The most common suggestion has been a blue tit x great tit hybrid. I'll post it on the SOC website!

**...and your most memorable sighting?** A short-eared owl landing on one of the hides at Musselburgh while its occupant was scanning the scrapes to see where it had gone! And the most memorable sound, though I never saw the bird, was the song of the North American Wood Thrush, which I heard during a walk through the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. It has a wonderful haunting, melodic song.

**Your most wanted species?** I would love to see a firecrest

**Do you have a 'bogey bird'?** Tawny owls, definitely! I go to sleep to the sound of them hooting almost every night but can never see them when I go out to look. I was once 'buzzed' by an owl when I was watching Saturn through my telescope - I heard this 'whump' and felt a strong blast of air on my head. I don't know if the owl disapproved of me being on its territory!



**John Pringle** was born in 1931 in Stenhouse. He joined an insurance office at 17, then the Royal Navy at 18 for two years. He married Nancy (a non birder) at 25, moving down to Liverpool. They have 2 children and 6 grandchildren. The latter part of John's career was spent back in Edinburgh, until his retirement in 1991. John is LSOC Treasurer, and a familiar face at branch outings.

**How did your birdwatching start?** I started birdwatching 2/3 years after starting bird-nesting, whilst still at Stenhouse primary school. Following my father's lifelong birding I soon learnt that most trees could be climbed (but beware of close-growing conifers) and that hedges should be viewed towards the light.

**What was your first pair of binoculars?** Make unknown, a very 'used' 6X30s.

**...and your first bird book?** British Birds - F B Kirkman - 4th edition, 1924 (slightly older than myself)

**When did you join the SOC?** Not too long ago as a fair proportion of my working life was spent in Lancashire. RSPB some 60 years.

**Describe your local/regular patch.** Medwin Valley, west Pentlands. An attractive, narrow valley which holds a fairly steady variety of nesting and wintering birds. The N/S axis also acts as a migration route.

**What's your dream birdwatching location?** A small hillock at a Y junction at the top of Medwin Valley where I can sit quietly, munching my sarnies, whilst waiting on that once in a lifetime bird passing through.

**Birdwatcher or birder?** A hybrid - including hillwalking and watching all beasties large and small.

**Your most embarrassing birdwatching moment?** Being asked to fill in this questionnaire.

**What makes your blood boil?** The title 'Guardians of the Countryside' self-assumed by those who are only protecting their own narrow interests at the expense of the natural heritage of all.

**The most unusual or rare bird you've found?** See 'most wanted' below.

**...and your most memorable sighting?** A juvenile Golden Eagle flying lazily 50 yards away past my seat in the Medwin Valley.

**Your most wanted species?** None! Proving I'm no twitcher?

**Do you have a 'bogey bird'?** Long-tailed Skua. Why do I never find an adult in summer plumage?

### **Past Sins?**

I was an egg collector, but only one of a species in very youthful years. Glad to say I 'converted' my father shortly afterwards although this didn't stop him 'just looking'.

*Many thanks to Neil and John for sharing their thoughts and experiences.*

## **Lothian SOC Outings**

- 14th October: East Coast Migration
- 18th November: Scone Palace
- 9th December: Aberlady Bay and Christmas Lunch
- 13th January: Linlithgow and Kinneil
- 24th February: Vogrie Country Park
- 9th March: Loch Ore
- 13th April: Perthshire

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

# Lothian Bird Sightings

## AUGUST

At *Aberlady*, a **Little Egret** on 13th/15th; a **Great Northern Diver** on 28th; a juv **Curlew Sandpiper** on 29th. Off *Barns Ness*, an adult **Sabine's Gull** on 18th and 7 **Sooty Shearwaters** on 19th. At *Cramond*, a **Spotted Redshank** on 27th. Off *Dunbar*, a **Balearic Shearwater** on 1st; a **Sooty Shearwater** on 17th, with 19 on 19th, 11 on 21st, 4 on 28th; a possible **Bridled** or **Sooty Tern** on 18th; a **Long-tailed Skua** and 20 **Pomarine Skuas** on 28th. Near *East Fortune*, a **Quail** on 12th. In *Edinburgh*, an **Osprey** over Princes St on 28th. Near *Gifford*, a **Quail** on 9th. Off *Hound Point*, an adult **Pomarine Skua** on 10th, with 10 on 27th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Green Sandpiper** until 14th; a **Wood Sandpiper** on 16th; an **Osprey** on 20th; a **Curlew Sandpiper** and 2 **Black-throated Divers** on 30th. Off *Torness*, a **Balearic Shearwater**, a **Sooty Shearwater**, 3 **Pomarine Skuas** and a fem/imm **Black Redstart** on 29th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **Little Egret** on 4th/17th; a **Wood Sandpiper**, adult **Sabine's Gull** and **Black Tern** on 18th; an **Osprey** on 26th; a **Curlew Sandpiper** on 31st. Near *North Berwick*, **Quails** until 13th at least.

## JULY

At *Musselburgh*, an adult **Pectoral Sandpiper** from 12th-17th; an adult **Great Northern Diver** on 13th; up to 276 (mostly adult) **Little Gulls**; a **Green Sandpiper** on 30th/31st. Off *Dunbar*, a **Cory's Shearwater** on 9th. Near *East Fenton*, a **Quail** on 23rd. Near *Tranent*, a **Quail** on 9th.

## JUNE

At *Aberlady*, a **Little Stint** on 9th. At *Barns Ness*, a **Yellow Wagtail** on 2nd and 29th; a **Red-backed Shrike** on 17th/18th; a **Storm Petrel** on 27th. Near *Crichton Castle*, a **Quail** on 1st. Off *Dunbar*, a **Storm Petrel** on 26th, and 10 on 27th. At *East Barns*, a possible **Marsh Warbler** from 18th-27th. Near *Garvald*, a **Wood Warbler** on 7th. In *Gosford Bay*, a **Black-throated Diver** on 9th; a **Great Northern Diver** on 19th. Near *Linlithgow*, a **Quail** on 9th. At *Musselburgh*, an **Osprey** and a **Black-throated Diver** on 9th. In the *Pentlands*, a **Wood Sandpiper** at Bavelaw on 10th. At *Torness/Skateraw*, a male and a fem **Red-backed Shrike** on 10th/17th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, a **Curlew Sandpiper** from 1st-3rd and 14th.

## MAY

At *Aberlady*, a **Black-throated Diver** on 5th; a **Spoonbill** on 22nd (and later at *Musselburgh*) and 24th. At *Barns Ness*, 2 **Yellow Wagtails** on 12th (and up to 7 *Barns Ness-Torness*); a **Balearic Shearwater** on 28th. At *Gladhouse*, a drake **Mandarin** on 15th. At *Gullane*, 8 **Black-throated Divers** on 4th. Off *Joppa*, a drake **Surf Scoter** on 16th. On *Linlithgow Loch*, a drake **Garganey** on 7th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Black-throated Diver** on 5th and 20th; a drake **Garganey** on 6th; a **Black Guillemot** on 11th; a **Little Plover** on 22nd. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, 1-2 **Temminck's Stints** from 27th-31st.

## APRIL

At *Cramond*, a pair of **Garganey** on 29th. At *Dunbar*, an **Osprey** on 11th. Near *East Fortune*, a **White Stork** reported on 12th. Near *Gifford*, an **Osprey** on 14th. Over *Gosford Bay*, a **Red Kite** on 12th. In *Holyrood Park*, the **Lesser Scaup** still on St Margaret's Loch until 16th; an **Osprey** overhead on 17th. At *Longniddry*, a **Black Guillemot** on 29th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Black Guillemot** on several dates; a male **Hen Harrier** on 10th; 2 **Little Plovers** from 12th-15th and 1 on 19th; 2 **Avocets** on 19th. In the *Pentlands*, an **Osprey** at Bavelaw/Threipmuir on 15th; a **Great Grey Shrike** reported at Boghall Glen, Allermuir, on 22nd. At *River Almond Pools*, a **Wood Warbler** on 29th. At *Scoughall*, a drake **Green-winged Teal** on 20th; a **northern (borealis) Eider** on 20th. At *Skateraw*, a **Black Redstart** on 2nd. At *Torness*, a **Black Redstart** on 1st; more than 50 **White Wagtails** (Torness-White Sands) on 21st/22nd; a male **Blue-headed Wagtail** from 27th-29th. At *Tynninghame/Belhaven*, an **Osprey** on 11th; a **Little Egret** on 17th.

## MARCH

In *Edinburgh*, a **Waxwing** on Easter Road on 10th; a 1st-year **Lesser Scaup** on St Margaret's Loch, Holyrood Park, from 30th. On *Linlithgow Loch*, a female **Smew** on 18th. At *Musselburgh*, a **Snow Bunting** on 18th. In the *Pentlands*, a **Hen Harrier** at Bavelaw on 14th. At *Seton Sands/Port Seton*, a possible **Yellow-legged Gull** on 18th; an **Iceland Gull** on 27th. At *Torness*, a fem/imm **Black Redstart** on 31st. Near *Tranent*, 3 **Waxwings** on 28th/29th.

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

## Mystery Bird



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



The last mystery bird was a  
Long-eared Owl.