

# Lothian Bird Bulletin



**Newsletter of the Lothian SOC Branch  
2007: No. 3**

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American Golden Plover© 2007 Dave Allan

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## **1 A goodbye from Stephen**

The eagle-eyed among you may have noticed a new name on the page opposite: after four years and seventeen issues, I've handed over the keys to LBB Towers to new editor Julie-Ann Goodlet-Rowley. Julie seemed surprisingly keen to take over the role, and I didn't even need to resort to torture or blackmail to persuade her. Many thanks if you've written articles or supplied photos during my stint as editor, also to Eleanor Hurley and Lothian Bird News for the bird sightings, and to Wendy and predecessor Kate at HQ for doing the printing and tolerating my inevitable last minute changes! I hope you'll all look after Julie and send her lots of articles.

Over to you Julie...

Stephen

## **2 And a hello from Julie**

Welcome to the latest edition of the Lothian Bird Bulletin. This is my first editorial for the LBB but I hope there will be many more to come. I am a recent newcomer to the SOC, tempted by the allure of the Birds of Scotland publication, which should be hitting the shelves as we speak.

This issue features an article on Grey Squirrels and their impact on the native Reds, an announcement by the RSPB about their new 'Homes for Wildlife' project and a few other interesting articles.

I have been very impressed with the SOC and the information and help given to me and my husband as new members. I would like to encourage people to write for this publication. It does not need to be a detailed essay on the birds of Aberlady, just your thoughts and feelings on the world of birds. I would like to encourage any of our younger readers to write for me and even to include a regular 'kids eye-view' section.

If you have any articles you would like to see included in the next issue, e.g. letters, reviews, comments, etc please feel free to contact me, my e-mail is given on the inside cover.

I hope you enjoy the new look and a big 'thank-you' to Stephen for his excellent time as Editor.

Julie

### 3 Homes for wildlife

#### The RSPB looks to gardeners to ease pressure on suffering bird populations

The collective efforts of homeowners could be the key to reversing declines of song thrushes, house sparrows and starlings, according to the RSPB. The charity is launching Homes for Wildlife, a new initiative which aims to inspire people to make a real difference for the wildlife that shares the open spaces closest to them.

By 2020, the UK government will have built three million new homes, many purpose built for families and including sizeable gardens. The RSPB predicts that private gardens will become a vital habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Dr Darren Moorcroft, the RSPB's head of conservation management advice, said: 'As more land is developed to provide homes for people, this could remove homes for wildlife. Gordon Brown's development plan answers a clear need for more housing, but it also makes it increasingly important that we all do what we can to make the land around our homes and gardens as wildlife friendly as possible.'

Homes for Wildlife, which aims to tackle existing declines in garden birds was launched by the RSPB on Feed the Birds Day - Saturday 27 October. The RSPB estimates that UK gardens cover 5,000 square-kilometres of land - an area equivalent to Northumberland - and for some wildlife they are the most important habitat on offer<sup>1</sup>.

The charity hopes that more than 200,000 people will support the Homes for Wildlife project, by following free wildlife-gardening advice to help them transform their homes and gardens into wildlife havens.

Everybody registering to take part in the project will receive an extensive information pack, either electronically or hard copy, full of simple advice and recommendations for all types and sizes of garden.

Richard Bashford, the RSPB's Homes for Wildlife manager, said: 'If everybody does something for wildlife it will make a difference - from putting pot plants on balconies to building a pond, you will encourage insects and provide food for birds. We can all create homes for wildlife in our own homes, no matter how much space we have.'

The RSPB's Homes for Wildlife builds on three key elements:

- Leave patches of long grass. This will provide a home for insects eaten by house sparrows and other birds.
- Provide a mixture of well structured, deciduous trees, native shrubs and climbers. Honey-suckle, rose or ivy will not only look great in your garden but take up little space and will provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife.
- Provide a mixture of nectar and seed rich flowering plants such as alyssum, sunflower and knapweed, which will attract insects and also provide seed for birds to feed on.

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<sup>1</sup>House Martins, Swallows and Swifts breed almost exclusively in buildings, therefore homes and gardens are an incredibly important habitat for these birds

The RSPB hopes that in gardens taking part in the Homes for Wildlife project there will be a significant increase in numbers of species like house sparrows and starlings over the next five years<sup>2</sup>.

Dr Moorcroft added: 'Every garden is part of a much bigger community on which a wide variety of wildlife depends. Just as we socialise and use facilities in our local areas, so does the wildlife that shares our homes and gardens.'

'A hedgehog that nests in your garden may feed in your neighbour's garden three doors down, or a wood mouse may be using up to 30 gardens. By taking simple wildlife-friendly steps in our gardens, collectively we will make a real difference for many of our birds and other wildlife.'

For further information on how to register to take part in Homes for Wildlife, please visit the RSPB website [www.rspb.org.uk/hfw](http://www.rspb.org.uk/hfw) or telephone 0870 240 1001.

Additional notes:

- 2007 saw the house sparrow and starling added as priority species to the updated UK Biodiversity Action Plan list meaning that they are species of conservation concern. The Song Thrush is also included on the list.
- Populations of House Sparrow, Starling and Song Thrush have declined by more than half over the last 25 years.

## 4 Grey Squirrels - alien invaders

### Introduction

Here in Edinburgh, the Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus Carolinensis*) is now well established and a familiar sight. I live at the north edge of the City and it was about ten years ago that we first noticed a Grey Squirrel in our garden. Over the years visits have become more regular and last winter they arrived in numbers with visits every day and often two at a time. Throwing bricks and stones did not deter them as they simply climbed up the harling on the walls of my house and looked down from on high. A neighbour claims one fatality from a direct hit with a brick! They caused havoc with my bird feeders gnawing through the wire mesh to feed on peanuts and extracting seeds from other feeders. I was also aware that some Grey Squirrels had the habit of stripping bark from trees in Spring time, which is apparently to get at the sap. Where the damage is severe this can kill the tree. This prompted me to seek out information on the current status of the Grey Squirrel in Britain and control measures available. Do they predate the nests of song birds and if so what is the impact on local populations? What about the interaction of Greys with our native Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)?

### Status of Grey Squirrels in Scotland

The Grey Squirrel is not a native species and was initially introduced to England from North America. Greys have become an abundant resident in much woodland in England, Wales and parts of southern Scotland. Currently they have reached Pitlochry. Greys were introduced to Aberdeen city centre parks 30 years ago and now are spreading out along the valleys of the Dee and the Don. Under current legislation, relocation of Grey Squirrels to new areas is illegal. Currently the UK population of Greys is estimated at around 2.5 million and includes an estimated 200,000 in Scotland, where they are increasing in numbers and spreading to colonise new areas. By contrast the Scottish population of our native Reds is estimated at only 120,000, but importantly is 75 per cent of the total UK population.

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<sup>2</sup>As part of the project, householders will provide details of the birds and other wildlife using their home and garden. This will allow us to assess how species are responding to the habitat being created and compare this against national trends.

## **Grey Squirrels and the law**

Greys breed in the early part of the year and generally have a family of three youngsters but in favourable conditions can rear a second litter. Being an alien species there are no natural predators to check the growth and spread of the population into new areas of the British Isles and this poses a potential threat to the survival of our Reds. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, classes the Grey as a pest species which should be controlled where possible and both shooting and trapping is legal. It is illegal to release a Grey Squirrel which has been trapped. Where Greys are well established, trapping to protect your bird feeders will only give short term relief as other Greys will move in from the surrounding area. Bear in mind that trapping could upset your neighbours, some of whom may be encouraging these cute and furry creatures with regular supplies of peanuts. It only takes a visit to the Royal Botanical Gardens here in Edinburgh to see children and adults delight in the antics of the Greys and their reactions to hand-outs of peanuts.

## **Habitat of Red Squirrels**

Our native Reds live in all types of woodlands and forests but do well in coniferous woodlands as they are more specialised feeders and can utilise the smaller conifer seeds. Forests with Scots pine and Norway spruce are particularly favoured. If trees have several bad seed years in a row the supply of food for Reds can run out.

## **Grey Squirrels put survival of Red Squirrels at risk**

Generally when Greys move into an area, the Reds disappear and the reasons are complex. Greys are heavier and less choosy in what they eat, so when food is scarce they can generally cope better. Another factor is the Squirrel Pox Virus which is a disease that is fatal to Reds and the origins of which are unknown. The first case was in East Anglia in the 1980s. It is thought that the virus is a significant factor in the Red Squirrel decline in England. Greys are not affected but are known to be carriers of the disease and are thought to pass it on to Reds. Typically a Red will die within 15 days of contracting the virus. The virus causes skin ulcers, lesions and scabs with swelling and discharge around the eyes, feet and genitalia. It is not yet known exactly how the virus spreads. Possibilities are passing from fleas moving from animal to animal in dreys, in the air, saliva on food or on feeders. Alternatively it could be squirrels picking up the virus when scent marking, or through cuts and scratches from feeders, or when pushing into dreys.

## **Protection of Red Squirrels in core areas**

Despite intensive efforts across the country it has proven impossible to eradicate Greys once they have become established in an area. Research is being carried out to try to develop a vaccine against the virus. In the meantime efforts are now likely to be concentrated on forming buffer zones around the remaining healthy populations of Reds in their core areas. It will be critical to control any Grey Squirrels that move into the buffer zone so that they do not become established and then spread into the Reds core area. The Squirrel Pox Virus is present amongst Greys in Cumbria and for sometime now there has been concern about infected Greys moving north up the M74 corridor into southern Scotland, thus putting at risk the populations of Reds in the Lockerbie and Langholm areas. Despite control measures to try to prevent this, the worst fears were realised with the news in May 2007 that the first reported case of an infected Red squirrel had been discovered near Lockerbie.

## **Predation of Birds Nests by squirrels**

It is known that squirrels, in general, are major nest predators of birds, both in North America and Europe. So with an estimated population of some 2.5 million Grey Squirrels here in Britain are they

a threat to our woodland birds? The British Trust for Ornithology has reviewed the published and other evidence of the extent to which Greys eat eggs and young of woodland song birds. Their report concludes that a large body of anecdotal/circumstantial evidence exists that Greys frequently predate nests of woodland birds in Britain. This is based on a survey of contributions to the BTOs Nest Records Scheme and on correspondence with other professional biologists and amateur naturalists. There appears to be considerable spatial variation in rates of predation and the perception of the importance of the Grey Squirrel as a predator. It seems that there could, at least, be locally severe impacts on songbird breeding success. The BTO suggests that the principal factors likely to cause this variation in predation rates by Greys are the differences in squirrel densities and the availability of alternative foods. It is also possible that individual squirrels may specialise on pre-dating the nests of birds. The report concludes that there is no firm evidence that any of the national declines in woodland birds are caused by Grey Squirrel predation. It also indicates that there is a dearth of research on the importance of Grey Squirrels as nest predators. It is noted that instances of Red Squirrels pre-dating birds nests have also been recorded. However the impact is likely to be less because Reds are smaller and typically occur at far lower densities than the Greys.

I am grateful for information provided by Marie Cole, Scottish Natural Heritage and Graeme Prest, Forestry Commission.

**Reference:** Hewson, C. M. & Fuller, R. J. - BTO Research Report No 328 Impacts of Grey Squirrels on Woodland Birds: An Important Predator of Eggs and Young?

Willie Prest

## 5 My life with birds



*Ian Andrews is a familiar face to most Lothian SOC members. Since joining the club in 1979 he has been Lothian Recorder, LBRC chairman, Lothian Bird Report editor, author of The Birds of The Lothians, SOC website creator, and SOC president. Most recently, Ian was a lead editor of the new SOC book The Birds of Scotland.*

### How did your birdwatching start?

My interest in birds goes back to 1969 when I remember noting a few birds in the garden and on family trips out. Things got serious after being introduced to a friend of my grandfather's, Mr G B Rimes. He was a retired school teacher who was mentor for many of my generation. I have such a lot to thank him for - he passed on not just field skills and instruction on songs and calls, but also the importance of getting to know sites and how to work them. I think his name may have been George, but he was always Mr Rimes to me. The first entry in my first real bird diary (the page is



numbered '2' - not sure what happened to page '1') is 25 July 1970. I went to Murston in north Kent with Mr Rimes and saw 54 species including a Little Ringed Plover and Green Sandpiper. Looking back I remember walking past a site where Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike has nested 'a few years before' - but I'd just missed those.

### **What was your first pair of binoculars?**

I don't remember much about my first binoculars, except that I think they came from Boots (yes, the Chemist). Mr Rimes had a draw-tube telescope which he let us boys look through! What a treat that was.

### **...and your first bird book?**

I know loads of people say the same - but it really was the Observer's Book of Birds. It was a pretty hopeless book really, and thankfully the Heinzel, Fitter & Parlow guide came out in 1972.

### **When did you join the SOC?**

It was the automatic thing to do when I moved to Aberdeen back in 1979. There was a very active university bird club, but I had no hesitation in joining the SOC as well - it was so cheap as a student!

### **Describe your 'local patch'**

I'm sure many readers are familiar with Musselburgh river mouth and the lagoons. I moved to Musselburgh soon after I started work in Edinburgh. Initially I was close enough to walk to the lagoons.

### **Where is your dream birdwatching location?**

I think any location can be a 'dream location'. Getting to know a site inside out is the key, so that you get to know exactly what is common, where and when, and as a result what is uncommon or rare - after all that is the spice of birding.

### **Birdwatcher or a birder?**

It depends who I'm talking to, as a lot of non-birders don't know what a 'birder' is. I am happy to use both, but if pushed I would say I prefer to be called a birder.

### **Your most embarrassing birdwatching moment?**

I'm sure it was when I made a hasty identification somewhere - never a good thing to do in public. Mind you, having said that first impressions are often actually correct.

### **What makes your blood boil?**

I birdwatch for relaxation as much as anything, so my answer would be 'anything that make it stressful'. More often than not this involves people, from something like letting a dog run through the waders/gulls at Musselburgh and flushing everything so I have nothing to look at in my only free hour, to the frustrations of trying to improve or even simply maintain wildlife habitats and birdwatching facilities in East Lothian - I recall back in the 1980s when Torness Power Station was being built, a proposal to build an SOC seawatching hide was turned down as it 'would interfere with the visual impact of the concrete sea wall'. Typical.



**The most unusual bird or rare bird you've found?**

In a Scottish context, the 1997 Western Sandpiper and 1999 Royal Tern are the rarest - but, the discovery of both, which should have been euphoric times, was tainted slightly by uncertainty over identification. The 1985 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was my most enjoyable discovery, as the identification was 100% certain and instant!

**...and your most memorable sighting?**

Having lived in Jordan for three years, I think one of my most memorable sightings has to be bird-watching in a plantation at dawn where literally hundreds (maybe thousands) of Honey Buzzards and Levant Sparrowhawks had roosted the night before. The endless streams of close raptor encounters on that morning was certainly memorable.

**Your most wanted species?**

In Scotland, either of the big shearwaters (Cory's or Great) would do fine, as would a Little Bunting.

## **6 New grazing project at Aberlady Bay**

This winter sees an exciting new project get underway to improve the grassland habitats at Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve (LNR) for birds and plants.

**Background**

The area that is now Aberlady Bay LNR used to be extensively grazed and was at one time used as common land where animals could be left to graze on the grassland. When the Local Nature Reserve was established in 1952, the ethos of nature conservation was very much to leave mother nature to her own devices and consequently animals were removed from the area to allow 'natural processes' to take over. It is a philosophy that is understandable. However, nowadays we are more understanding of how ecosystems can benefit from such 'interference' and also, with land for nature becoming more and more at a premium, are keen to try to maximise the wildlife benefit of areas of land so that they can be more biological diverse and abundant.

With the value of grazing as a tool for conservation management understood, we hope that we can reap the benefits of this at Aberlady.

**Aberlady Grassland**

Since the cessation of grazing at Aberlady, the grassland sward has become rank; dominated by fewer species such as False Oat Grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*). By introducing grazing animals we hope to break up the sward, grazing back the more dominant species and allowing other plant species to grow. We hope that there will also be benefits for breeding birds such as skylark with more open, grazed areas giving them improved breeding habitat.

This winter, 100 sheep will be introduced to a 20-hectare area of mixed wet and dry grassland on the reserve and will be present until mid-March, being taken off before the breeding bird season. Two kilometres of electric fencing will be erected to keep the sheep in. A flock of 40 sheep were used during the past three winters to graze a smaller, four-hectare plot on the saltmarsh. This seems to have been very successful: the area providing the core breeding wader population and seemingly

having an improved floristic diversity.

A lot of vegetation monitoring within the grazing area was carried out in 2007 to assess the impact that the introduction of sheep will have. We plan to continue to graze the area annually, tweaking things as we go (such as the number of animals, grazing period and area) and it will be fascinating to see how the habitat changes over the next 5, 10, 50 years!

### **Sheep Minding - can you help?**

When the sheep are present on the reserve they will need checking daily. This will involve counting to make sure that all the sheep are present and that none is in poor health. This doesn't require you to be a vet, just to note if any are limping or obviously unwell. All will be explained before you get out shepherding! It should only take 1-2 hours to check on the sheep, leaving plenty of time for a nice walk around the reserve!

I require help with sheep minding (or 'lookering' as it's known) mostly at weekends from 8/9th December till 29/30th March 2008. If you think you might be able to help out, please contact John at [jharrison@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:jharrison@eastlothian.gov.uk), phone 01620 827 279 or write to c/o Block C, Brewery Park, Haddington. EH41 3HA.

John Harrison Reserve Warden Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve

## **7 Lothian SOC outings**

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.

## **8 Meetings**

Reminder for all SOC Members in Lothian of the following Indoor Meetings:

### **2008**

8 January	Norman Elkins	Climate Change and Wildlife
12 February	David Catt	Birds of New Zealand: Legacy of a Sheltered Evolution
11 March	Graham Wren	Bird Nesting Habitats; Past, Present, Future (Venue: Waterston House, Aberlady)
8 April	AGM and Members Night	

Time: 7:30 pm

Unless otherwise stated, the venue is: Lounge 3, Meadowbank Sports Stadium, Edinburgh  
All Welcome (Donation of £2 requested to help defray costs)

Further details from Colin Beckett on 0131 663 4143

## RSPB Indoor meetings

### 2008

January 15th	Alan Heavisides	Introduction to the Lothian and Borders Raptor Study Group
February 20th	Kenny Kortland	Saving Scottish Capercaillies: the four key factors
March 18th	Laurie Campbell	Life and Land
April 16th	Duncan Orr-Ewing	The Indian Vulture crisis

Time: 7:30 pm

Location: Lindsay Stewart Lecture Theatre, Napier University, Craiglockhart Campus, Colinton Road, Edinburgh. Time: 07.30 pm

Price: £2 includes refreshments

For further details from Stephen on 0131 466 7163 or e-mail: [stephen@jadevine.org.uk](mailto:stephen@jadevine.org.uk)

## 9 Did you spot?

### September

*Highlights:* A **Little Egret** was at *Musselburgh* (4th). A possible **Gull-billed Tern** flew past *Hound Point* (17th).

*Aberlady:* A **Wood Sandpiper** was present (3rd-4th) and (9th - 14th). 101 **Pink-footed Goose** were noted (13th) with 12000 counted (22nd) and 8000 **Pink-footed Geese** and 30 **Barnacle Geese** (29th). A **Red-necked Grebe** was present (22nd).

*Barns Ness:* A **Sooty Shearwater**, ten **Great Skua** and seven **Arctic Skua** flew past (14th).

*Dunbar:* Six adult **Roseate Tern** and two **Little Gull** were present (15th).

*Hound Point:* A seawatch (1st) saw 24 **Arctic Skua**, one **Great Skua** and five **Red-throated Diver** with 82 **Arctic Skua** and two **Black-throated Diver** (3rd). Six **Long-tailed Skua**, ten **Pomarine Skua**, six **Great Skua** and 81 **Arctic Skua** flew past (3rd) and three **Long-tailed Skua**, ten **Pomarine Skua**, ten **Great Skua** and 61 **Arctic Skua** were seen (8th). The (14th) saw eight **Great Skua**, 42 **Arctic Skua**, seven **Pomarine Skua**, 22 **Pintail**, nine **Scaup** and 14 **Red-throated Diver**. Four **Brent Geese**, a **Sabine's Gull**, 20 **Arctic Skua**, 24 **Great Skua** and eight **Pomarine Skua** flew past (17th) and a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** and juvenile **Long-tailed Skua** were noted (21st). The (27th) saw 18 **Arctic Skua**, 20 **Great Skua**, five **Pomarine Skua**, 22 **Barnacle Geese**, four **Brent Geese**, 11 **Red-throated Diver**. A **Mediterranean Gull** and a **Sabine's Gull**.

*Musselburgh:* Five **Ruff** and a **Spotted Redshank** were present (5th). An **Osprey** flew over (9th) with a **Curlew Sandpiper** (10th - 17th). Two **Little Stint**, 1 **Curlew Sandpiper**, four **Ruff**, 28 **Snipe**, 64 **Little Gull** and a **Peregrine** were noted (14th) with **Merlin** seen (16th). A count of 20 **Little Gull**, three **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Merlin** was made (20th). A **Spotted Redshank**, three **Curlew Sandpiper** and a **Ruff** were noted (26th). The (27th) saw single **Great Northern Diver** and **Black-throated Diver** with 11 **Barnacle Geese** over.

*Scoughall:* A **Black Tern**, three **Sooty Shearwater** and five **Little Gull** were noted (8th).

*Seton Sands:* Up to three adult **Mediterranean Gull** were in the roost all month.

*Torness:* A seawatch (14th) produced an adult and juvenile **Sabine's Gull**, two **Mediterranean Gull**, two **Pomarine Skua**, 12 **Arctic Skua**, ten **Great Skua**, four **Manx Shearwater** and 16 **Red-throated Diver**. The (17th) saw two **Sooty Shearwater**, eight **Manx Shearwater**, 26 **Red-throated Diver**, two **Pomarine Skua**, 15 **Great Skua** and four **Arctic Skua**.

*Tynninghame:* Two **Curlew Sandpiper** were present (1st) and four **Roseate Tern**, a **Black Tern** and two **Little Gull** (2nd). A **Green Sandpiper** was noted (5th) with **Little Stint** and **Curlew Sandpiper** present (15th).

*Other sites:* A **Swift** flew over *Bruntsfield* (1st). A **Sabine's Gull** flew past *Blackness* (25th). A **Black-throated diver** was off *Seafield* (26th). A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was at *Skateraw* (30th).

## October

*Highlights:* An adult summer plumage **American Golden Plover** was at *Aberlady* (4th) with a juvenile **American Golden Plover** present at *Aberlady* (22nd & 31st).

*Aberlady:* A count of 20 **Red-necked Grebe** and 26 **Red-throated Diver** was made (2nd). A **Pink-footed Geese** (15th). A juvenile **Dotterel** was noted (21st) when 17 **Barnacle Geese**, six **Gadwall**, two **Pintail** and a **Peregrine** were also noted. The (23rd) saw five **Pintail**, a **Water Rail**, 13 **House Martin**, 16 **Tree Sparrow**, 25 **Barnacle Geese** and a **Merlin**. Two **Rosss Geese** have been present (24th 27th). Two **Snow Bunting** were seen (28th).

*Barns Ness:* A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was present (7th). A **Great Northern Diver** was noted (20th) when a **Wood-cock** flew in off the sea.

*Bavelaw:* A late **Swallow** was seen (5th) with 16 **Brambling** and eight **Whooper Swan** seen (14th) and 22 **Whooper Swan** present (21st). A **Kingfisher** has been seen regularly with 20 **Fielfare** (25th) and 3000 **Pink-footed Geese** (29th).

*Dunbar:* Three **Lapland Bunting** were at *Whitesands* (20th) with a **Water Pipit** at *Broxmouth* the same date. Two **Arctic Tern** flew past (28th).

*Gosford Bay:* A count of 34 **Slavonian Grebe** and two **Red-necked Grebe** was made (2nd).

*Hound Point:* Two **Great Skua**, six **Arctic Skua** and ten **Scaup** were noted (4th) and one **Pomarine Skua**, a **Black-throated Diver** and a **Sabiness Gull** (10th).

*Musselburgh:* A count of 30 **Scaup** was made (7th) and four **Brent Geese** have been present (11th end month with nine noted (31st) An adult **Mediterranean Gull**, four adult **Little Gull** and single **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Gadwall** were noted (13th). A **Shore Lark**, **Great Northern Diver**, 10 **Red-throated diver** were noted (18th). A white **Snow Goose** flew west (27th). The 30th saw single **Short-eared Owl** and **Kingfisher** and 2114 **Golden Plover** with nine **Brent Geese**, two **Stonechat** (31st).

*Seafield:* A count of 63 **Little Gull** was made at *Seafield* (12th). A **Sabines Gull** was noted (15th).

*Seton Sands:* A second winter **Mediterranean Gull** was in the roost (6th & 8th) with two adult and a first winter also present (8th).

*Skateraw:* A **Yellow-browed Warbler** was present (1st). An adult, first winter and second winter **Mediterranean Gulls** were present (19th).

*Torness:* A **Lapland Bunting** was noted (1st) and a **Firecrest** (9th). Two **Rosss Geese** were noted with **Pink-footed Geese** (27th).

*Tynninghame:* A first winter **Caspian Gull** and three **Mediterranean Gull** were present (14th). A **Lapland Bunting** and 100 **Twite** were noted (21st). A count of 123 **Barnacle Geese**, ten **Greenshank**, 120 **Twite**, a juvenile **Curlew Sandpiper**, single **Ruff** and **Whimbrel** and two **Snow Bunting** was made (26th).

*Other sites:* A juvenile **Curlew Sandpiper** has been at *Cramond* 8th & 21st. 16 adult **Whooper Swan** were at *East Fenton* (10th). Ten **Crossbill** were at *East Rigg* (12th). A **Jack Snipe** was seen at *Bathgate Bog* (14th & 15th). Two **Rosss Geese**, three **Greenland White-fronted Geese**, a **Brent Goose** and 30 **Barnacle Geese** were at *Luffness Mains* (26th).