

Lothian Bird Bulletin
Newsletter of the Lothian SOC Branch
2010: Autumn



1. Note from the Editor

Welcome back to the new-look LBB. As some of you may know I have been away on maternity leave since last year. I am now the proud mother-hen to Lachlan Rowley. I am pleased to say he is already turning into an avid bird watcher.

I was pleased to hear that my reporting of Little Egrets at West Loch Tarbert in 2008 has now been recorded in the Argyll Rare Birds list.

Please continue to send articles in and I hope you enjoy the new look and new (electronic) format of the branch newsletter.

My contact details are jagrowley@gmail.com.



2. Swift Survey

In association with various voluntary Swift groups we are currently running a national volunteer Swift survey with online reporting by anyone and everyone who cares to take part. This can be found at <http://www.rspb.org.uk/thingstodo/surveys/swifts/index.asp>

The survey is very simple to complete but will add hugely to our knowledge of this bird, which - like many long-distance migrants - is declining.

Keith Morton
Species Policy Officer
RSPB Scotland
Dunedin House, 25 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh, EH4 3TP
Tel: +44 131 311 6516
Fax: +44 131 311 6569

3. Edinburgh Wildlife

Letter from Anthony Robson, Edinburgh Wildlife:

Hi there, I thought you might be interested in a new website which has recently been set up, looking at photo-documenting all of the wildlife living within Edinburgh. It's imaginatively titled www.EdinburghWildlife.com and has had a pretty good start (especially when it comes to birds). There are still plenty of species missing, however, and even for those that I already have I'd like to expand the entries into as many areas of the city as possible. Basically, if there's any way you think you could help; or even if you'd like to pass the link on to any interested people; let's just say if there's anything at all you think you could do to help promote the site, and what is something of a personal project to provide a resource for anyone interested in wildlife in the city, I'd be really grateful.

Anthony Robson

anth@edinburghwildlife.com

4. Opening Times

Waterston House is open to visitors 7 days a week and entry is free.

Summer (BST): 10.00am – 4.00pm weekdays
 12noon – 6.00pm weekends

Winter (GMT): 10.00am – 4.00pm daily (from Sat 30th Oct 2010).

Christmas Closing: From 20th December 2010 to 2nd January 2011.

5. Art Exhibitions

Exhibitions by wildlife artists of national and international acclaim are held throughout the year in our Donald Watson Gallery. If you are interested in attending the preview of a particular show, please contact Waterston House.

11 Sept – 3 Nov: Mixed exhibition by **Tommy Daniels, Chris Lodge, Jenny Matthews, Darren Rees and Barry Van Dusen**
6 Nov – Jan 2011: Paintings by **Michael Warren**

6. SOC Lothian Branch indoor meetings

Tue 12 Oct '10: Ron Forrester – 'Birding in Africa'
Tue 08 Mar '11: Derek McGinn – 'Sea to Summit; birds etc from the shores of the Moray Firth to the Cairngorm Plateau'

The above illustrated talks, held at Waterston House, form part of a wider winter programme of monthly indoor meetings for Lothian branch members of the Club. Meetings start at 7.30pm and refreshments are served. With the exception of the above dates, talks are held at Meadowbank Stadium, Edinburgh. Non members are very welcome.

7. Goose Watch

Our popular annual goose watch, held in October is a chance for members of the public to learn from a local expert about the migration of Pink-footed Geese from Iceland and Greenland to their wintering grounds here in Scotland. After the short illustrated presentation, there is the opportunity to watch the breathtaking spectacle of thousands of geese (usually 15,000+) flying in to their night roost on the nearby nature reserve. Places are limited so advance booking is essential. £4.00 (£6.00 non-members). Light refreshments are served.

Thu 14 Oct '10 (4pm for 4.30pm)
Tue 19 Oct '10 (4pm for 4.30pm)

8. Back Issues of *British Birds* available

A run of vols 67-102 (missing vols 74-78) of *British Birds* journal (including 15 bound volumes) is looking for a good home. Anyone interested, who is able to collect from Edinburgh (The Grange area) should contact Dr John Webb on tel. 0131 667 2637.

9. Pentland Birds in the 1920s

Last year I bought a book *The Pentland Hills* by William Anderson published in 1926 at 1s 6d (7 1/2p). Anderson appears to have been a frequent walker in the Pentlands and writes about the hills, their weather and the flora and fauna. At a time when we are surveying our contemporary bird populations, a few observations from over 80 years ago may be of interest. What follows are extracts from his book (using his spelling and punctuation) and show how many changes have taken place.

That handsome bird, the Common Buzzard, I was long in meeting on the Pentlands. I suspected its presence, and in the end came upon it quite unawares. A strange bird rose from the side of Threipmuir Loch, and, flying low and heavily, settled on one of the fences to the west of the road.

From May to at least the end of June the call of the cuckoo is constant among the hills... Dreghorn is one of its favourite and early haunts. It was once my privilege to see a young

Cuckoo being fed by its foster-parent, in this case a wagtail, amongst the screes on Caerketton. Without controversy it was a sweated industry.

The Hooded Crows are always in pairs. The *huidies* are not favourites with the keeper, and get short shrift whenever met.

In February 1918 a flock, numbering between a dozen and a score, of Fork-tailed Petrels flew overhead as I was crossing the Nine Mile Burn path. The blue Rock Pigeon is a regular summer visitor. Among common species which frequents the hills, and occasionally nest on them, is the Sparrow, sometimes in immense flocks if there are fields of grain near at hand.

The three varieties of wagtail (Pied, Grey, and Yellow), with their beautifully undulating greyhound-like movement and their sweet notes, may all be seen, in their season, in the Loganlee Glen.

The Long-tailed tit has been seen at the shooting-ranges at Malleny. Separated by the breadth of the road from the hill-slopes, the song of the Corn Bunting, redolent of the clod, may often be heard during the summer. A beautiful and interesting bird I should like to see oftener is the Siskin. I have had that privilege but once, in the Howden Glen.

That mystery bird, the Corncrake, often heard but seldom visible, I have caught sight of in the neighbourhood of the hills. It walked quite leisurely in front of me as I was approaching the waterman's cottage at Torduff Reservoir.... I flushed it, when it made excellent flight away past Bonaly.

Maureen Sues

10. Lothian SOC Field Trip to Perthshire 29th June 2009

Tom Gillies led the trip to Perthshire and we all met at the Loch of the Lowes SWT Nature Reserve. There were Siskins, Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Red Squirrels on the feeders at the centre and we had an excellent view of the female Osprey on the nest with two youngsters and, unexpectedly, Common Terns fishing in the loch. Along the road beside the golf course we had singing Willow Warblers and Yellowhammers plus good views of Bullfinches and Treecreepers.

We then drove to the entrance to the extensive Atholl Estate. We had a walk of about 9 miles – all of it over reasonable tracks. The weather was dry and clear. After seeing various types of deer, a Peacock in a tree and a good view of a Green Woodpecker we stopped for lunch at Mill Dam. There a family of swans were very inquisitive – and hungry – and came out of the water to help us eat our lunch.

Up the track Tom said '*There's a Tree Pipit about*' – one minute later we all had good views with their characteristic parachuting into the tops of trees. We walked as far as the Dowally Loch before turning back. All of a sudden there was a bit of commotion - something had run across the path and a Sparrowhawk had swooped on it. We stopped

and waited and, sure enough it flew off with something in its talons – difficult to tell what it was – it could have been a Vole or a Weasel.

Through the woods on the way back we found four Smooth Newts in a patch of water on the track. Later we heard a Jay calling and then a couple of them appeared. They really are very secretive and they didn't hang around for long. Tom then announced '*Crossbill*' and sure enough a small group of them flew over.

Back to the cars – some folks were going for the legendary ice cream in Dunkeld but we headed for home.

A really good trip with 50+ species of birds, and the Smooth Newts! Many thanks to Tom for a lovely walk, and for conjuring up so much wildlife.

James Main
July 2009

11. SOC Lothians Branch outing to Montrose Basin, 15 November 2009

This long day out to Montrose attracted 14 branch members, and we were blessed with lovely, benign autumn weather: calm, dry and mainly sunny - perfect for birdwatching.

Montrose Basin is a huge area to cover, so we concentrated just on the southern side. The first hour was spent viewing from the panoramic windows of the well-equipped Wildlife Centre and the nearby Bank of Scotland hide – both affording excellent viewing. From here we saw Pink-footed Geese, several duck species including Eider, Wigeon, Teal, Shelduck and Red-breasted Merganser. A hunting Sparrowhawk flew low directly in front of us, and most people had outstanding views of a Fox and a stoat quite close to each of the hides.

As the tide came in, flocks of waders were being forced off the fast-disappearing mud banks. So we moved round to a good vantage point on the so-called Rossie Island, in the south-eastern corner of the Basin. From here we had grandstand views of flocks of waders flying into their high-tide roost on a small shingle beach nearby. These included Knot, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Turnstone, Oystercatcher and Dunlin. Here we also found five Greenshanks and a single Brent Goose. The ranger, Chris, joined us here to do part of his WEBS count.

Then it was on to our lunch stop at the Old Montrose Pier, in the far south-western corner of the Basin. By now the tide was high (very high) and we enjoyed a leisurely stroll along the bank, overlooking the rough meadowland of The Lurgies one way and a large expanse of utterly tranquil water the other way. Birds seen from here included Little Grebe, Goldeneye, a mixed herd of around 50 Whooper and Mute Swans, and some rather distant winter thrushes.

Before we ran out of daylight, we spent a very enjoyable and productive final hour atop the sand dunes of beautiful Lunan Bay, four miles down the coast from Montrose. There

seemed to be endless rafts of scoter – both Velvet and Common – not far off the beach. We also saw plenty of Long-tailed Duck and very good numbers of Red-throated Diver. A small group of delightful Sanderlings worked its way along the beach directly below where we were standing.

Lunan Bay was a perfect end to a successful foray into coastal Angus. We saw exactly 60 bird species in total during the day, plus several mammals. The fine weather and good birding did seem to justify the four hours or more of driving which most folk had to do.

David Atkins

12. Hungarian Bird Watching Trip

My annual European bird watching trip with a friend, Mike, from the south of England took me to Hungary this year. As we had limited time we employed the services of a dedicated guide, Bence Kokay, through Hungarian Birdwatching. Bence proved very knowledgeable in terms of the birds, but also saved us from having to navigate our way round the intricacies of a difficult language. Our trip, in early June 2010, lasted three days from Friday lunchtime to Sunday evening.

The weather over the days that preceded our trip were extremely wet, which resulted in large scale flooding and affected our ability to travel on some of our routes. However, our arrival coincided with a change in the weather and although it was wet on our first half day the rest of our stay was characterised by warm sunshine.

Bence collected us from the airport outside Budapest. Our first stop was not to see a bird, but a new mammal for both of us in the form of a ground squirrel, known as a Souslik. We carried on along the motorway travelling east in the direction of the Ukraine in pouring rain and bad driving conditions. We pulled in to have a picnic lunch near a petrol station. Bence had a surprise for us in the form of an obliging Imperial Eagle sitting on a pylon not far from us. Other lunch time birds included Crested Lark and Marsh Harrier.

Our route then took us up into the Bukk hills. We stopped at a small village and took a walk to find Wryneck, Common and Black Redstart and Spotted Flycatcher, but dipped on Collared Flycatcher. I was convinced that I could hear a Grasshopper Warbler but was told that in fact it was a grasshopper or cricket making the racket – our lack of noisy Scottish insects had let me down!

Our final destination of the day was the picturesque town of Tokaj, home of a well known wine growing region. However, floods on the nearby river added an hour and a half to our journey and we arrived too late to engage in any active birding. An obliging flypast by a Black-crowned Night Heron seemed fitting for the dark conditions.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny. This was our day of exploring the Zemplen Hills for interesting Woodpeckers and woodland birds. First up was a visit to a quarry on the outskirts of Tokaj to look for Eagle Owls. Unfortunately the recent rains had flooded their nest and the birds had moved on. However, we were pleased to see a large group of

European Bee Eaters in the area, making use of the quarry for nesting purposes.

Less pleasant were the squadrons of large yellow mosquitoes that clearly enjoyed fresh British flesh, but left our Hungarian host well alone. A quick change of clothing from shorts to long trousers helped protect bare knees from attack.

More birds were seen in the form of Red-backed Shrike, Barred Warbler and Golden Oriole. Turtle Doves purred from overhead wires. The villages surrounding Tokaj were noted for their nesting White Storks.

Our first roadside stop turned into a good vantage point for birds making use of thermals rising off the hills. Birds seen in the air included Common Buzzard, Lesser-spotted Eagle, Black Stork and Common Crane.

A walk in a streamside meadow near the village of Erdobenyé was rewarding. We heard (but did not see) calling Corncrake, but did catch up with Stonechat, Short-toed Eagle, Wryneck in a nest hole and a great view of the very difficult Locustella warbler, River Warbler, as it briefly sat up on a sedge to deliver its call.

Our third warbler of the day came further down the track when we stopped to locate an overflying raptor but settled for Marsh Warblers instead. On entering the forested areas of the hills it soon became apparent that the walking trails had suffered water damage and we were probably too late in the year for Woodpeckers. Bence pointed out the nesting hole of a White-backed Woodpecker but unfortunately the owner was away.

We returned to the sunshine of flooded meadows where we listened to the mournful drone of Yellow-bellied Toads and took in an array of wild flowers. No sooner had a coach load of children departed from the meadow than a Corncrake started up its crekking.

Brought up on a regime in Scotland of not disturbing Corncrakes we did not want to try and flush the bird by walking through the meadow. However, Bence was determined to draw it closer and set his MP3 player down in the grass playing a copy of its call. We stood with bated breath as the crekking grew louder as the bird, completely unseen to us, weaved its way through the knee length grass and briefly popped out giving us a great view.

Now I am not sure what the ethics are of using such means but we left as quickly as we could and kept our disturbance of the bird to a minimum. Far less than the group of children who had been playing a wide game in the meadow shortly before hand.

By this stage it was time to head back towards Tokaj, only Bence took us on a devious route with regular stops where we had great views of Syrian Woodpecker, Hawfinch and Sparrowhawk. Goulash for tea!

Sunday was even better both in terms of the birds and the weather. In fact the temperature was a little too warm, eventually reaching over 30c. After an early start and a three hour drive we found ourselves on the approach to the Kiskunsag National Park, an

area of steppe, known in Hungary at the Pusta. This is home to Great Bustards, which we saw before lunch.

The recent heavy rains had left temporary pools ideal for waders. One stop revealed Avocet, Lapwing, Black-winged Stilt, Stone Curlew and Collared Pratincole with over flying White-tailed Eagle, Whiskered Tern and Mediterranean Gull.

Deep reed fringed water channels were alive with birds and with a little patience we saw Great Reed Warbler, Moustached Warbler, Bearded and Penduline Tit and Little Bittern. Wildfowl was not as plentiful but we did have good close views of Ferruginous Duck. A view of a Golden Oriole chasing a Roller added a spectacle of colour. We also spotted European Pond Terrapins.

Our lunchtime spot in the shade of a tree was not without reward. Icterine Warbler, Yellow Wagtail, Nightingale and Tree Sparrow were all close at hand (even though the Nightingale refused to show itself). A real treat presented itself in the afternoon when we visited a stables next to a patch of woodland. The trees were being used as a rookery, and whilst Rooks are common to British birders the Red-footed Falcons making use of nesting opportunities in the trees were a sight to behold. We had great views of over-flying birds. Pity that we dipped on a Hoopoe seen by Bence but which disappeared before Mike and I had a chance to catch up on it.

Our final bird of the day came on the approach into Budapest. We stopped in a lay-by and saw Great-spotted Woodpecker, Blue Tit and Blackcap, but the prize bird was sitting on a pylon next to the construction of a length of new motorway – a Saker Falcon. It was sitting next to a nestbox and through a scope you could two smaller faces peering out. Bence dropped us off at our hotel in central Budapest where we had an evening to explore this delightful city.

All in all I saw 105 birds on the trip, with 16 lifers. Hungary is good, relatively cheap destination for a bird watching destination, but a guide would be great help especially if you only had limited time available.

Richard Leslie

13. MY LIFE WITH BIRDS - MIKE BETTS...



Mike was born in 1938 and brought up in Dorset before joining the Army when the recruiting cry was 'Join the Army and see the World.' He managed to serve in many parts of it, and usually had his binoculars handy, but the love of travel and of finding new birds in different parts of the world has never left him and he still has a long list of countries that he wants to visit! On leaving the Army he took up a quasi-judicial post in Edinburgh, from which he retired in 2003. He is married with two daughters and three grandchildren. He served on the Management Committee of SOC and was one of the team of editors of The Birds of Scotland. He is a past-Leader of the Edinburgh Local Group RSPB and is a member of RSPB's Committee for Scotland.

How did your birdwatching start?

We lived in Dorset when I was a child, and my Mother used to like to recognise the birds seen from her kitchen window. My Father ran a local shoot, and I used to go out as a beater. Later I had an air-rifle, which taught me to walk very slowly and observe, though the only thing I actually shot (by mistake!) was a schoolboy chum whom I hit in the thigh!

What was your first pair of binoculars?

I can't remember - probably my Father's wartime ones.

...and your first bird book?

That's easy - *The Observer's Book of British Birds*. I think it was pretty much everyone's bible in those days.

When did you join the SOC?

It must have been soon after coming to Edinburgh in 1993.

Describe your 'local patch'.

I don't have one as such, though I've been doing the CBC in SWT Roslin Glen since 1999.

What's your dream birdwatching location?

The world! The beauty of birdwatching is that it is a hobby I can carry out anywhere. I'm rarely without my binoculars.

Birdwatcher or birder?

Probably the former, though I'm not totally sure of the difference. I do know I'm not a 'twitcher'. I think that much of my enjoyment these days is in trying to enthuse others into the love of nature and the pleasures of birdwatching.

Your most embarrassing birdwatching moment?

So many... made even worse when one is the leader!

What makes your blood boil?

The slaughter of birds of prey, and the failure of prosecuting/sentencing authorities to put the perpetrators into prison.

The most unusual or rare bird you've found?

Probably a White-bellied Heron in Bhutan last year: there are only thought to be c 20 remaining in the country, and a world population of between 50 and 250, and it was a total surprise.

...and your most memorable sighting?

Another 'so many' - from Gannets powering into the sea around the Bass Rock to flocks of fish-eating birds living closely and peacefully alongside the local fishermen in Ethiopia. I could go on.

Your most wanted species?

All those thousands of species around the world that I've not seen!

Do you have a 'bogey bird'?

It used to be Grasshopper Warbler because I have difficulty hearing the call, but I was successfully put onto one at Aberlady a couple of years ago, and then managed to ID a non-singing one whilst I was Atlasing on the west coast last week. But I missed the Spoon-billed Sandpipers whilst serving in Hong Kong, for which I should have been cashiered!

14. UKBS Records

OCTOBER 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

A Lesser Yellowlegs was first noted at Aberlady (July 22nd) and is still present end October. This is the 4th Lothian record. A white morph Snow Goose was present at Aberlady (1st – 17th). A Dusky Warbler was noted at Skateraw (15th). A male Mandarin Duck has been in the Water of Leith at Leith (19th - 25th).

ABERLADY

The count of Pink-footed Geese (1st) was 29437 with 563 Barnacle Geese.

BAVELAW MARSH/THREIPUIR RESERVOIR

Up to 3 Water Rail have been showing daily from (14th) to end month. A Greenland Whitefront Goose was with Pink-footed Geese (28th – 29th). A count of 6500 Pink-footed Geese and 50 Fieldfare was made (31st).

CRAMOND

Seventeen Brent Geese, five Scaup and a single Greenshank were present (1st). Nine Brent Geese and six Scaup were noted (5th) with five Whooper Swan, four Scaup and four Greenshank (8th). A count of 80 Great Crested Grebe, two Red-necked Grebe and eight Red-throated Diver was made (15th).

DUNBAR

A Bean Goose was noted (2nd). A Yellow-browed Warbler was noted (10th). Single Great Skua and Arctic Skua flew past (15th). A Yellow-browed Warbler was in Vaults Wood (23rd).

FERNY NESS

A Black-necked Grebe was present (2nd – 7th). A count of 60 Long-tailed Duck, four Red-throated Diver, four Slavonian Grebe and a Red-necked Grebe were noted (14th). A count of 25 Slavonian Grebe and three Red-necked Grebe was made (24th) with 39 Slavonian Grebe (29th).

MUSSELBURGH

The (1st) saw a count of seven Brent Geese, ten Red-throated Diver, two Slavonian Grebe, one Red-necked Grebe, six Black-tailed Godwit and two Ruff. A single Snow Bunting was noted (6th). Single Little Gull and Short-eared Owl were noted (8th). A seawatch (10th)

produced two adult Pomarine Skua, six Arctic Skua, six Manx Shearwater, three Little Gull, two Great Northern Diver, 12 Pintail, pair Gadwall, two Sandwich Tern and a Red-necked Grebe. Six Red-throated Diver, one Red-necked Grebe, two Shoveler and four Snipe displaying were noted (29th).

SETON SANDS

A Polish ringed and a Belgian ringed adult Mediterranean Gulls were noted (9th) with three unringed adults in the roost (25th).

SKATERAW

A Yellow-browed Warbler was noted (10th). A count of 100 Goldfinch was made (19th). A Firecrest was present (21st – 23rd).

THORNTONLOCH

A Black Redstart was noted (21st) and a Yellow-browed Warbler (22nd – 24th).

TORNESS

A Barred Warbler was noted (13th – 14th) with a Yellow-browed Warbler, Chiffchaff and Brambling (14th) and Ring Ousel (22nd). A male Redstart and two Snow Bunting were present (24th).

OTHER SITES

Six Swallow and two singing Chiffchaff were noted in Gosford Estate (4th). A seawatch from Seacliff North Berwick (4th) produced six Pomarine Skua, 12 Red-throated Diver and a Great Northern Diver. Single Pomarine Skua and Long-tailed Skua flew past South Queensferry (8th). Gladhouse Reservoir held 13 Whooper Swan (10th) rising to 21 on (13th). A Cackling Canada Goose was at East Fenton (11th). A Yellow-browed Warbler was at Hound Point (17th). Four Waxwing were seen at Livingston (19th). A count of 26400 Pink-footed Geese and 7600 Common Gull was made at West Water Reservoir (20th). A Black-throated Diver was off Longniddry Bents (26th). Four juvenile White-fronted Geese were at Fenton Barns (26th).

NOVEMBER 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

A Lesser Yellowlegs was first noted at Aberlady (July 22nd) and is still present end November. A Red-rumped Swallow was seen at Aberlady (3rd – 4th). A Water Pipit was at Musselburgh (7th – 11th) with one at Skateraw (17th) moving to Barns Ness (21st) - 30th) and one at Scoughall (29th). A juvenile Baird's Sandpiper was at Belhaven Bay (7th - 11th) then re-located at Whitesands Bay (30th). A 1st winter Wilson's Phalarope was on the Musselburgh scrapes (14th – 26th). A juvenile Iceland Gull was at Musselburgh (29th).

ABERLADY

An adult Greenland White-fronted Goose and a Brent Goose were present (7th). A count of 9600 Pink-footed Geese, single Kingfisher and Short-eared Owl was made (13th). A Greenshank was present (15th). Two adult and two juvenile Greenland White-fronted

Geese were present (29th).

BAVELAW MARSH/THREIPUIR RESERVOIR

A Brambling was at the feeding station (1st). A count of 14 Crossbill was made at East Rigg (29th).

FERNY NESS

Seen Snow Bunting flew SW (1st) and two Sandwich Tern were also noted. A Black-necked Grebe was present (4th – 7th) and 15 Slavonian Grebe, six Red-throated Diver and a Whooper Swan were counted (5th).

MUSSELBURGH

Six Twite and two Whooper Swan were noted (6th). A Marsh Harrier flew west (7th). Two Snow Bunting were noted (15th) with one present to (22nd).

SKATERAW

A Black-throated Diver, three Red-throated Diver and a Snow Bunting were noted (11th).

TYNINGHAME

A male Wheatear and 35 Twite were noted (4th). Three Snow Bunting, 150 Twite and a Merlin were noted (10th).

OTHER SITES

Three Mediterranean Gull were in Belhaven Bay (2nd). A Black-throated Diver, three Arctic Skua, two Slavonian Grebe and four Purple Sandpiper were at Seafield (3rd). A count of 124 Whooper Swan was made at Fenton Barns (7th). A Lapland Bunting and Two Snow Bunting were at Dunbar (7th). A small Canada Goose was at East Fenton (15th). Twelve Purple Sandpiper were at North Berwick (15th). Four Greenland White-fronted Geese were at Tranent (21st – 22nd). A count of 20 Snow Bunting was made on East Kip Pentland Hills (18th). Seventeen Crossbill were at Colzium, Harperrig (27th).

DECEMBER 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

A Lesser Yellowlegs was first noted at Aberlady (July 22nd) and is still present to 20th at least. This is the 4th Lothian record. A juvenile Baird's Sandpiper has been present at Whitesands Bay, Dunbar all month showing very well at close range. A Bittern flew north from the Marl Loch at Aberlady (20th). A Night Heron was on the Water of Leith (31st).

ABERLADY

A Short-eared Owl was hunting (4th). Five Woodcock and a Water Rail were noted (24th). A male Hen Harrier was seen hunting on the saltmarsh (28th & 29th). 20 Twite were noted (28th) and three Short-eared Owl were hunting (29th). Pink-footed Geese numbers increased to 10,000 on (30th) when 800 Fieldfare, 50 Redwing and three Woodcock were also seen.

BARNS NESS

A Water Pipit was showing near the lighthouse (1st - 28th at least) with two present on several dates.

FERNY NESS

A count of 20 Slavonian Grebe was made (10th).

LINLITHGOW LOCH

A female Smew has been present (6th – to end month) on the small area of unfrozen water. Twelve Waxwing flew over (22nd).

MUSSELBURGH

An adult Mediterranean Gull and an adult Little Gull were noted (2nd) with two Mediterranean Gull present (20th). A Water Pipit was noted (4th – 13th). Two Snow Bunting and two Twite were present (10th) with three Twite noted (21st). Peregrine and Woodcock were noted (22nd) and ten Waxwing seen (23rd). Two Woodcock and 24 Reed Bunting were present (23rd) and a Woodcock was in a Musselburgh garden (26th).

PORT SETON/SETON SANDS

A Red-necked Grebe was noted (6th) with two seen on (8th). A second winter Glaucous Gull was present (13th – 14th). A count of 25 Twite and 35 Tree Sparrow was made (20th).

TYNINGHAME

Two Green Sandpiper, one Greenshank, and single Merlin, Peregrine and Kingfisher were present (8th).

OTHER SITES

A Great Northern Diver was off Longniddry Bents (4th). A count of 100 Whooper Swan was made (5th) between Fenton Barns and Drem. Five Crossbill, single Green Woodpecker, Pintail and Shoveler were at Gladhouse reservoir (10th). Twelve Crossbill were near East Rigg Balerno (10th) with 28 seen (11th) and 50 were seen a few days later. Six Brambling and 28 Waxwing were near Kirkliston (18th). A Water Pipit was at

Skateraw (20th). A Mediterranean Gull was at Seafield (20th). A Woodcock was flushed by a train at Murrayfield (23rd). A Jack Snipe was seen in flight on the Water of Leith at Stockbridge. A count of 1300 Skylark west in two hours was made at Old Craighall (23rd) and 1000 flew south past Torness the same date. A Woodcock, Jack Snipe and Water Rail were seen at Duddingston Loch (24th) with three Water Rail seen (22nd). 300 Fieldfare and 100 Redwing were in Joppa Terrace (24th) and two Brambling were in a garden in Winton Drive (26th). c2400 Skylark were at Belhaven Bay (26th) with 350 Linnet, 205 Reed Bunting, 40 Yellowhammer and six Brambling near Morton House (26th). A count of 98 Twite was made at Tynninghame (26th) with four Greenshank seen (29th). Fieldfare numbered 80 at MacMerry (27th). Four Woodcock were south of Gullane (28th). A count of 32 Purple Sandpiper was made at Dunbar (31st).

JANUARY 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

The first winter Baird's Sandpiper was present at Whitesands Bay, Barns Ness (1st – 11th). A Firecrest has been present in Gosford Estate (17th – to end month). A very confident Lapland Bunting was at Musselburgh (23rd - 29th at least).

ABERLADY

Four Short-eared Owl were seen hunting (1st) when six Woodcock were present and ten Twite were at Kilspindie. Five Pintail, two Peregrine and nine Twite were noted (4th). A single Brent Goose, Short-eared Owl, Great Northern Diver, Red-necked Grebe and two Jack Snipe were noted (10th).

BARNS NESS

A Water Pipit was showing near the lighthouse all month with two present on several dates. A count of 20 Snipe and a single Woodcock was made (5th). A pair of Pintail were noted (8th). Six Woodcock were seen (9th). A count of 2,000 Wood Pigeon was made (9th).

DUDDINGSTON LOCH

A Water Rail was noted (1st and 5th) with two Woodcock seen (1st). An adult Mediterranean Gull was present (24th).

DUNBAR

A count of 14 Purple Sandpiper was made at Dunbar (3rd) rising to 26 on (14th) when seven Brent Geese were also present. Some 24 Fulmar were noted (24th) and 30 Brent Geese flew south the same date.

FERNY NESS

An adult Mediterranean Gull and two Red-necked Grebe were present (12th). A Black-necked Grebe was present (19th & 20th) with 24 Slavonian Grebe counted (19th) when two Red-necked Grebe were also present.

LINLITHGOW LOCH

A female Smew has been present all month. A Water Rail was noted (10th).

MUSSELBURGH

Some 38 Stock Dove were present (4th). A single Snow Bunting was noted (6th). A count of 14 Bean Geese was made (9th). An adult Mediterranean Gull was noted (17th & 27th). Five Twite have been noted on several dates. Ten Brent Geese were on the scrapes (27th).

TYNINGHAME

A count of 42 Whooper Swan was made (8th) when a male Red Grouse was noted.

OTHER SITES

An adult Mediterranean Gull was noted at Cramond 1st, 3rd & 9th). Woodcock and Snipe were seen at Figgate Pond (6th - 8th) with a Kingfisher present (8th). Five Snipe and a Water Rail were on a small stream in The Hermitage of Braid (6th – 9th). A count of 30 Redwing was made at Murrayfield (6th). An adult Mediterranean Gull has been noted at Seton Sands all month. A Glaucous Gull and seven Brent Geese were seen at Broxmouth (9th). A garden at the edge of Dunbar had 50 Skylark. (9th). Belhaven Bay had a single Greenshank and three Woodcock (12th). Eight Brambling were in a North Berwick garden (12th) with seven in an Edinburgh garden from mid month and three have been using the feeders at the Bavelaw Marsh hide. A Black-throated Diver was noted in the western harbour at Leith Docks (14th & 15th) with a Black-throated Diver off Prestongrange (15th). A Barn Owl was seen at Longniddry (23rd). A dark bellied Brent Goose was at Yellowcraig (30th).

FERUARY 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

A Firecrest has been present in Gosford Estate all month.

ABERLADY

A Great Northern Diver was off Gullane Point (13th). A single Snow Bunting and Short eared Owl were noted (28th).

BARNS NESS

Two Water Pipit have been showing near the lighthouse all month.

CRAMOND

An adult Mediterranean Gull and two Greenshank were present (4th).

FERNY NESS

A Black-necked Grebe has been noted all month with 48 Slavonian Grebe present (17th) and a count of 20 Slavonian Grebe (23rd).

LINLITHGOW LOCH

A female Smew has been present all month on the small patch of unfrozen loch.

MUSSELBURGH

An adult Mediterranean Gull was noted (13th & 21st). Three Scaup, single Black-throated

Diver and adult Little Gull were noted (21st). A count of 24 Slavonian Grebe and seven Twite was made (23rd).

PORT SETON

A count of 30 Tree Sparrow was made (17th). A single Red-necked Grebe was offshore (16th).

TYNINGHAME

The Green Sandpiper present in January was still there (2nd).

WAXWING

A single was noted near North Berwick Law (7th) with three at Northfield (8th – 10th), two at Haddington (13th – 15th), seven at Prestonpans (23rd) and two groups of four and 14 at Livingston (27th).

OTHER SITES

A count of 270 Whooper Swan was made between Drem and Dirlton (1st) with 217 seen at Fenton Barns (14th). A flock of 25 Crossbill were at Harperrig Reservoir (5th) with 20 in the West Cairns Plantation (10th) and 25 at East Rigg near Balerno (23rd). An adult Mediterranean Gull was at Seafield (6th). A count of 14 Snipe and two Jack Snipe was made on (4th) at Belhaven Bay. Brent Geese peaked at 27 at Torness (15th – 25th). A count of 31 Golden Plover was made at Dunbar (23rd) with 30 in a field beside the A71 near the Heriot Watt University (26th). A flock of 475 Fieldfare and 30 Redwing were between Yellowcraig and Archerfield (25th). Ten Redpoll and 12 Brambling were in a Roslin garden (27th) with Brambling present in a garden at Greenbank Row all month the number peaking at 15. Up to two Brambling have been seen from the Bavelaw Marsh hide with a male Pintail and Jay noted (21st). A count of 600 Pink-footed Geese was made from the hide (14th).

MARCH 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

A Corn Bunting was seen briefly at Barns Ness (6th) the first record of this species in Lothian for 7 years. A Firecrest has been present in Gosford Estate till (18th) though elusive. Two Shore Lark have been present near Skateraw (17th - 28th) at least but were also elusive at times. Two Black Redstart were at Dunbar (26th - 27th) with one at Torness (27th).

ABERLADY

Three Snow Bunting and three Short-eared Owl were noted (3rd). Whimbrel, Greenshank, Blackcap and Chiffchaff were present (29th).

BARNS NESS

Two Water Pipit have been showing near the lighthouse all month. A White Wagtail, four Snow Bunting and Rock Pipit were noted (17th). A count of 30 Rock Pipit was made (21st) with some spring plumaged Scandinavian race.

BELHAVEN BAY

A count of 32 Snow Bunting and 50 Twite was made (7th). Four Sand Martin were noted (28th).

LINLITHGOW LOCH

A female Smew has been present on the loch all month. Four Sand Martin were noted (21st) and two Swallow (27th).

MUSSELBURGH

A Red-necked Grebe was present (2nd). A flock of nine Twite were present (9th). A Little Gull was seen (12th & 18th). Single Kingfisher, Kittiwake and 22 Slavonian Grebe were present (16th). Eight Slavonian Grebe, four Black-necked Grebe and two Red-necked Grebe were present (20th). A Swallow, Peregrine and male Gadwall were noted (23rd). An Osprey flew past (26th).

PORT SETON AREA

Two adult Mediterranean Gull were in the roost (6th). Two Red-necked Grebe were noted (7th) with three seen (20th).

SKATERAW

A Black-necked Grebe was seen in the harbour (3rd – 24th). Brent Geese numbers peaked at 33 including one dark bellied (7th). A Water Pipit was present (17th) with 27 Twite noted (20th). Four Wheatear were present (24th).

TYNINGHAME

The wintering Green Sandpiper present from January was noted to (3rd). A count of 49 Snow Bunting was made (8th). Four wintering Greenshank were noted (14th). A dark-bellied Brent Goose was present (27th).

WHITESANDS

Six Red-throated Diver were noted (9th). A male Wheatear and 22 Rock Pipit were noted (24th).

WAXWING

Two were seen at Haddington (2nd), 12 at Echline Avenue South Queensferry (6th – 8th), a single at Gosford Road (6th), 21 at Slateford Road (9th), seven in a Bruntsfield Garden (16th).

OTHER SITES

Four Brambling were in Joppa Terrace (2nd). A Black-throated Diver was at Ferny Ness (7th). A flock of 500 Fieldfare were at Rosewell (14th). A male Mandarin, male Shoveler and ten Goosander were on the River Tyne at Haddington to (28th) at least.

APRIL 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

The two Shore Lark remained near Skateraw till (7th). A female Bluethroat showed well on the rocks at the start of the Torness walkway at Skateraw (4th – 5th). A Hoopoe was

at Dunglass (4th – 5th). A White Stork was seen circling over Buckstone Road (8th). A Crane flew over Haddington (9th). A first winter Iceland Gull was at Blackness (10th) and a first summer Glaucous Gull was on Threipmuir reservoir (24th). A Wryneck was found in Bilston Woods (28th).

ABERLADY

A single Snow Bunting was present (7th). A Yellow Wagtail was noted (21st) and three were seen (27th) when 40 White Wagtails were also present. A female Marsh Harrier flew over (29th) with four Tree Pipits noted and ten Grasshopper Warblers singing. The (30th) saw four Whimbrels, 12 Sandwich Terns, 12 Sanderlings, two Red-throated Divers, three Swifts and seven Grasshopper Warblers singing.

BARNS NESS

A Water Pipit was still present (2nd) and an Osprey flew west (4th). A count of 20 singing Willow Warblers was made (22nd) with Sedge Warbler and Blackcap also noted. A Tree Pipit and Nuthatch were seen (24th).

BELHAVEN BAY

A male Black Redstart was noted (2nd). A male Yellow Wagtail was present (18th). A count of 15 Twites was made (23rd).

FERNY NESS

Seven Slavonian Grebes were noted (7th). A male Surf Scoter was present (12th – 20th). Two Red-necked Grebes, 179 Long-tailed Ducks, 130 Common Scoters and 350 Velvet Scoters were noted (24th). Three Common Terns and a single Sandwich Tern were offshore (27th).

MUSSELBURGH

Four White Wagtails were noted (7th) with Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler singing. A Common Sandpiper, 18 Sand Martins and three Swallows were noted (8th). A first winter Mediterranean Gull was seen (15th). A count of 64 Black-tailed Godwits was made (23rd). A Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, two Tree Pipits, six Sandwich Terns and a Swift were noted (24th). A Little Ringed Plover was present (25th & 28th). A count of 16 Black-tailed Godwits and two Swifts was made (28th).

SKATERAW

A single Snow Bunting and two White Wagtails were in the ploughed field with the Shore Lark (2nd). A Tree Pipit was noted (5th). A Black Redstart, two Whimbrels and three White Wagtails were present (18th) with four Whimbrels, 40 Pieds and White Wagtails and 22 Swallows (21st).

TORNESS

A Black Redstart showed (2nd) and an Osprey flew over (4th). A Yellow Wagtail was noted (22nd & 24th). A count of 20 Wheatears was made (24th).

TYNINGHAME

A Tundra Bean Goose was present (3rd - 5th) then seen at Whitekirk (18th – 24th). An Osprey flew over (19th) when two Common Sandpipers and two Whimbrels were noted.

WHITESANDS

Ten Swallow and two male White Wagtail were noted (4th).

OTHER SITES

The female Smew remained on Linlithgow Loch to (4th). A Ring Ousel was on Berwick Law (1st) and two pairs were at Feseny (12th). A female Black Redstart was in the Kirk yard at Prestongrange (7th). Nine Purple Sandpiper and 78 Turnstone were at Dunbar (14th). An Osprey flew over Brunsfield (17th). A count of 100 Sand Martin and 30 Swallow was made at Duddingston Loch (18th). Three Swift flew over Harperrig reservoir (21st) with two Swift over Vogrie (23rd). A female Pied Flycatcher was seen at Harlaw car park (24th).

MAY 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

Two Dotterel were on the top of Scald Law, Pentlands (1st) with one seen (5th – 7th). An Iceland Gull was at Seafeld (3rd). A drake Surf Scoter was off Port Seton (10th - 15th) with another drake at Musselburgh (15th – 17th and two seen (17th & 18th) and 1 drake present (20th). A Broad-billed Sandpiper was at Tynninghame (13th – 14th) and a Spotted Sandpiper at North Berwick (13th – 14th). A female Red-footed Falcon was found at Cockmuir on (22nd). A male Red-backed Shrike was at Aberlady (27th).

ABERLADY

A Curlew Sandpiper was present (16th) with two Whimbrel noted (17th).

FERNY NESS

Four Twite were present (1st). Two Red-necked Grebe were noted (29th).

MUSSELBURGH

A Little Tern was noted (13th). A drake Garganey and a drake Gadwall were present (16th). A Little Ringed Plover was noted (17th – 18th). A Green Woodpecker as seen (18th).

TYNINGHAME

A Curlew Sandpiper was noted (14th). With a Marsh Harrier and two Little Tern (15th). A count of 35 Crossbill was made at the Hedderwick Burn (17th). A Little Stint was present (25th).

OTHER SITES

A count of 25 Wheatear was made at East Craig Farm near Whitekirk (2nd). Three Whimbrel were at Yellowcraig (3rd). A Tree Pipit was noted at Harperrig (8th). A Black-throated Diver was off North Berwick (8th). A Spotted Flycatcher was at Bavelaw (13th). A Quail was heard at Drem (16th). A walk from Gullane to North Berwick (21st) produced Cuckoo, single Whimbrel, Common Sandpiper and three Wheatear.

JUNE 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

A Red Kite was seen at Byres Hill East Lothian (3rd). A Reed Warbler was singing at Seafeld Pond (from late May to 7th June). A Hobby was noted at Skateraw (7th). Marsh Harrier were over Musselburgh (2nd) and Fenton Barns (28th). A Black Stork flew over the A1 near Haddington am on (22nd) then was seen over Redcoll pm. This is the 3rd Lothian record.

BARNS NESS

A sea watch (10th) produced single Great Skua and Red-throated Diver and 11 Manx Shearwater.

MUSSELBURGH

A Little Ringed Plover was noted (3rd) and a Little Stint (5th). A count of 20 Manx Shearwater was made (6th). A Little Gull was on the scrapes (23rd) when a single Snipe, adult Mediterranean Gull and a single Whooper Swan were also seen.

TYNINGHAME

A Little Stint was present (2nd) with another present (8th - 10th). A Little Tern and Little Gull were noted (5th).

OTHER SITES

An Osprey flew north over the Lammermuir Hills (2nd). A Red-necked Grebe was at Ferny Ness (3rd – 4th). A Wood Sandpiper and two Arctic Tern were at Belhaven (8th). Two Water Rail were at Bogburn at Bathgate (20th). A Quail was singing at Harlaw Reservoir (23rd).

JULY 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

A Hobby was on a fence post at Whiteadder (3rd). A Little Egret was at Tynninghame (21st) and one flew past Gullane Point (25th).

ABERLADY

An Arctic Skua flew past Gullane Point (18th).

CRAMOND

Nine Black-tailed Godwit, seven Common Sandpiper and 65 Manx Shearwater were noted (12th) with four Little Gull , single Arctic Tern and Whimbrel seen (21st). Eight Whimbrel were present (23rd).

FERNY BNESS

Six Red-necked Grebe were present (9th) peaking at 13 on (31st).

MUSSELBURGH

A male Ruff in summer plumage was present (5th) with two summer plumage Black-tailed

Godwit (8th) and two first summer Mediterranean Gull (7th). Two adult Roseate Tern were present (8th) and eight adult Little Gull (12th). Two Greenshank, four Black-tailed Godwit and eight Common Sandpiper were noted (18th). A Green Sandpiper was noted (21st - 22nd) with two Ruff, single Greenshank and Peregrine (27th). Little Gull numbers peaked at 25 on (22nd). A juvenile Little Ringed Plover was present (28th – 29th). A count of 20 Swift was made (29th).

CRAMOND ISLAND TO INCHKEITH - RSPB BIRD CRUISE

A count of 100 Manx Shearwater was made (7th).

TYNINGHAME

Single Green Sandpiper, Greenshank, Whimbrel and Little Gull were present (19th). A count of 14 Greenshank, 12 Common Sandpiper and seven Whimbrel was made (21st). An adult and juvenile Roseate Tern were noted (24th).

OTHER SITES

A Quail was calling at the Peffer Burn area (1st) one was heard at Bolton (17th – 18th) and one near Haddington (23rd). Eight Manx Shearwater flew past Portobello (5th). Nine Black-tailed Godwit were at Cramond (12th). Small parties of Crossbill were seen at Glencorse (13th), Scoughall (17th) and Loanhead (17th). A Mandarin Duck was on East Fortune ponds (18th). A female Yellow Wagtail was at Auldham (30th). A count of 80 Swift was made (30th) over Longniddry with 50 over Linlithgow (31st).

Contact The SOC at

Waterston House
Aberlady
East Lothian
EH32 0PY
Tel 01875 871 330
Email: mail@the-soc.org.uk

Website

www.the-soc.org.uk