



ORIOLE BIRDING



TOUR REPORT OUTER HEBRIDES 9TH – 15TH MAY 2019

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THURSDAY 9TH MAY – *Sunny spells and moderate North-easterly winds, 8C*

A travelling day today, punctuated with one or two quality birding stops en route to Mallaig for the 1720 ferry crossing to Lochboisdale in South Uist. Some of us had travelled as far as Carlisle the previous evening, and from there we made our way to Glasgow airport to collect our American guests before continuing on past Loch Lomond to our first stop for lunch. Here we saw plenty of **Siskins** on the bird feeders by the café, and soon the first Hooded Crows and **Raven** were appearing too. Our next stop took us to a favoured loch where mixed woodland normally provides a good chance to see a nice variety of upland species. A **Tree Pipit** was in song flight from a dead tree, and gave us some lovely scope views, while an **Osprey** circled into view and headed down towards the loch. Just in the scattered Scot's Pine trees by the roadside, we could hear **Common Crossbills** calling and we soon located them – a flock of around ten birds which gave some superb views. Willow Warbler and **Lesser Redpoll** were among the small birds seen, with one of the latter species hopping around on the ground just a few feet away at our next pull off. Here we had a pair of **Ospreys** circling together, and scanning the head of the loch produced a nice selection of common waterbirds such as Eurasian Wigeon, Common Teal and **Common Sandpiper**. In the distance, we could hear a **Cuckoo** calling, and so we began scanning the few scattered small trees by the loch shore to see if we could spot it. What happened next was quite unprecedented, as we spotted a medium sized brown bird way off in the distance on the very top of a small pine. Initially thinking maybe it was a thrush, we then realised it was actually a wader! Greenshank didn't fit, as it was too small and well, it was sitting in the top of a tree! It opened its wings and showed a white tail base, but with all dark wings and no white running up the back. The penny dropped – it was a **Wood Sandpiper**! Taken aback, we realised the bird was actually displaying and soon it flew down onto the muddy loch shore and began to feed. Now we could see it quite well, albeit still at some distance. A remarkable discovery – this is a rare breeding bird in Britain with only a handful of pairs breeding each year in Scotland. We never did find the Cuckoo but that's birding! From here we continued north, and almost struck gold again but unfortunately a stunning pair of **Black-throated Divers** right beside the road were on a series of blind bends with nowhere to stop, and fast moving traffic racing along. A shame! We did, however, do very well with our next target of **Wood Warbler**, with two singing males at a roadside stop not far before Mallaig, and fabulous close views of one of them.

We arrived at the ferry terminal with plenty of time to spare, and one of the group spotted a pair of **Great Northern Divers** just off the harbour. We departed on time, and despite the cold winds it remained dry and relatively calm for the crossing, allowing us to seawatch for most of the journey. As we headed out past the islands of Skye, Eigg, Muck, Rhum and Canna seabird activity was good and we saw many hundreds of **Manx Shearwaters** often close to the ship in groups of up to fifty birds at a time. Auks were also common, with plenty of **Common Guillemot**, a few **Razorbill** and later on, several **Puffins** seen. Only a single **Great Skua** was noted, a scattering of Kittiwake and Gannet, and finally four Fulmars as we reached the South Uist side. We arrived weary after a long day, and after a swift check in and a quick drink in the bar, we retired ready for our first full day exploring the islands tomorrow!

FRIDAY 10TH MAY – *Frequent heavy showers and light NE winds, 10C*

Today was certainly a typical Hebridean mixed bag of weather, but we enjoyed some excellent birding! **Twite** from the breakfast table started us off well, and we set off to explore the island of South Uist with some excitement as the weather forecast had suggested blue sky and sunshine for the whole day. We headed down across the machair at Bornish, noting a fine roadside **Whooper Swan** along the way, towards Rubha Ardvule. Here we stopped to scan a newly ploughed area which was full of Dunlin and Ringed Plover. Several **Whimbrel** were also seen here, and there were Skylarks and Wheatears around too. Reaching the headland, the sea was flat calm and a full summer **Great Northern Diver** was floating close inshore. At least half a dozen were seen, along with several smart Common Eider and a summer plumage **Long-tailed Duck**. The beach was heaving with

waders, frantically feeding on the rotting bank of seaweed at the top of the beach. Dunlin, Sanderling, Turnstone, Ringed Plover and **Whimbrel** were all here, and the buzzing song of Dunlin was a constant backdrop as we scanned through hoping to pick something else out. **Arctic Terns** were passing overhead on occasion, and on the small lochan behind the beach were Wigeon and Tufted Duck. We walked along the track a short way, picking our way through breeding plumaged Dunlin scurrying among the stones, and scanned the loch further. It appeared fairly quiet though, so we returned to the van and got ready to set off. Another birder wandered over and tapped on our window, and asked if we'd seen the **Arctic Skua** – we hadn't! A gorgeous pale phase adult was sitting on the rocks, right in front of us! We bailed out of the van again and set our scopes up on this stunning bird, which stood around for a few minutes before powering off across the bay.



Arctic Skua showing off at Ardvule this morning

Next we drove up to the north end of the island and drove along the track at Balivanich by the Hebridean Jewellery. There were lots of waders close in here, but the heavens opened and we had to stay cocooned in the van! Nevertheless, we saw a flock of fifty **Grey Plovers** which flew in, and picked out three Bar-tailed Godwits. A **Little Tern** also flew along the sand dunes, but was distant. We waited for the showers to pass, but we seemed to be situated below a conveyor belt of shower clouds coming in from the north-east, so we gave up and continued towards Ardivachair Point. A north facing beach on the road down was full of waders, and with a break in the showers we stopped to scan with the scopes. More of the same species were seen in close up, but with better views of Bar-tailed Godwits. Another **Long-tailed Duck** was offshore, giving closer views than the earlier on, and at least half a dozen **Great Northern Divers** were seen. Around our parking spot, several **Twite** could be seen including a very obliging bird which perched up for us and preened, showing its pink rump. A **Peregrine** flashed through flushing all the waders off the beach, and then a young **White-tailed Eagle** was picked up, soaring distantly over the bay looking towards Benbecula. Not a bad coffee stop!

We continued down to Ardivachair Point, and then took the rough track round the range to check for Dotterel. It rained all the way round, and again we were confined to scanning from the van. The

highlight was several gorgeous **Golden Plover** in full breeding plumage, but we couldn't find any Dotterel. We lunched here, and then headed round to the south end of Loch Bee where another break in the weather allowed us to have a good check through the waders and wildfowl present. A **Snipe** was drumming behind us, and we had excellent views of **Red-breasted Mergansers**, but otherwise there was nothing out of the ordinary to be seen. It was almost 3pm by now, we opted for a change of scenery and headed back south and then down to North Loch Aeynort, in the more rugged eastern side of the island. This finally took us away from the showers, and it was warm and sunny by the parking area! Almost right away, a pair of adult **White-tailed Eagles** circled into view above the far hillside. We also saw a **Black Guillemot**, and the songs of Willow Warbler and Cuckoo were ringing around the woodland behind. We took a walk through the wood, seeing several Willow Warblers and a male Blackcap, with Redpolls seen buzzing around on the far side of the wood. We stopped by the picnic bench, and spent a while scanning down the valley – a stunning location, even if we'd not seen any birds! Over a twenty minute spell, we had excellent views of presumably the same pair of **White-tailed Eagles** again, with one circling against a dark sky and its white tail shining out like a beacon. Next a **Golden Eagle** appeared, and headed down the valley, followed by one of the White-tails which then landed on a distant hillside. Another **Golden Eagle** appeared, and then what may have been a third different bird circled up on the far side of the loch and landed right on top of one of the distant peaks. A great place for seeing eagles! There were two Cuckoos calling here, but only two of us saw one, which flew along the hillside and landed on the fence. A pair of **Ravens** were also seen, cronking away up on the hill above the wood.



Twite after a hail storm, South Uist 10th May

To round off the day, we headed back out to the main road and south towards our base. A **Short-eared Owl** duly appeared, floating over the moorland alongside us. We navigated round some minor roads south of Dalabrog, and heard three different **Corncrakes**, including one really close by but unfortunately, all remained hidden. It had been a really good start to the trip though, with some key targets already in the bag.

SATURDAY 11TH MAY – *Fine and sunny day in moderate NNW winds, IIC*

A great days birding today saw us head up to North Uist, where for the most part we were bathed in sunshine albeit in a fresh wind. We headed directly for Balranald RSPB reserve, and drove in slowly along the entrance track listening for **Corncrake**, which would be one of our main targets today. Reaching the centre, a **Corn Bunting** was in song on the wires, and we could hear Corncrakes creaking distantly in both directions. We made use of the facilities and then took a look in the small field behind the centre, and there were two **Corncrakes** creeping slowly through the short vegetation there right out in the open! They ducked under a fence into a smaller enclosed field, and the male proceeded to mount the female right in front of us! We watched the birds for half an hour, and they were virtually constantly on show in perfect light. It was interesting to note the greyer neck on the slightly larger male, and the two stayed together as they circumnavigated the field slowly. Amazing views of this iconic Hebridean special!



Amazing views of Corncrakes were had at Balranald today

Heading down to Aird an Runair, we planned to give seawatching a go despite the wind having too much north in it. With south-east winds coming in for the remainder of the trip though, this would be our only glimmer of hope to pick up any migrating skuas. We reached the car park, and heard that the four **Dotterel** were still present on the machair behind, so after a quick brew we wandered across there. The **Dotterel** were scurrying around in the sunshine, and they eventually came right towards us to within just 20m or so. Absolutely stunning birds, and one we have managed to catch up with on virtually every tour we have run here. Heading down to the beach, we checked the waders feeding on the rotting seaweed – all the usuals, plus a Rock Pipit and sleeping **Purple Sandpiper** on the rocks. Seawatching from the headland, we were surrounded by **Arctic Terns** which were just a delight, and there were a few groups of Kittiwakes hurrying north offshore. The highlight of the watch was a group of **Bottle-nosed Dolphins** which came in from way out south of the Monach Isles, and passed right in front. Their large size, slate grey colour, small sickle shaped fin and athletic leaping from the

water aiding the identification. Heading back up past the beach, we could now see nine **Purple Sandpipers** feeding along the strand, giving excellent views. Two very clean looking **White Wagtails** were also amongst the seaweed with the waders – all against the backdrop of azure blue sea and white sand, it was quite something. Back at the car park we had lunch overlooking the beach, where two **Little Terns** obliged with excellent views, and a **Great Skua** flew right up past us and off over the machair. Finally, we saw another **Corn Bunting** on the way out – much better views as it sang from the top of a muck pile.



One of four very obliging Dotterel at Aird an Runair

For the afternoon we headed around the northern side of the island, with the mountains of Harris visible in the distance, before taking the committee road up over the moorland. Reaching the top, we parked to scan for raptors, and had high hopes with the ideal conditions. Almost right away, a male **Hen Harrier** appeared, and began skydancing over the hillside right in front of us – we watched this amazing bird looping-the-loop right above our heads, for fifteen minutes solid. None of us had ever seen such a wonderful display like this before. A second male was seen quartering the peat bog lower down, and then a **White-tailed Eagle** circled into view, distantly over the hills to the west. We continued scanning, and then a **Golden Eagle** appeared, close to us and east of our position – it circled right over us before gaining height and crossing the valley – superb! We dropped down the hill, to check the largest loch for any waders. Two **Arctic Skuas** dropped in to bathe, which was a nice bonus, and then we heard a shriek overhead – we looked up to see an adult **White-tailed Eagle** and **Golden Eagle** circling round together right above us! We were certainly getting our fill on raptors here today!

Reaching the main road, we headed next to the isle of Baleshare to check on two **Curlew Sandpipers** which had been reported on the machair. This is a lovely spot, surrounded by vast expanses of white sand and the sea looked like a scene from the Caribbean, if it wasn't for the temperature! We found the large Dunlin flock on the machair, and got out to scope them. A **Curlew Sandpiper** was quickly picked out, being in grey and white plumage with longer legs, wings and bill. A **Black-tailed Godwit** was also present, and scanning around the adjacent small lochan also added a **Golden Plover**. Eventually, the second **Curlew Sandpiper** appeared too, and we had them both in the scope together and now much closer. After a brew in the sunshine, we began to make our way south – it was now almost 5pm. The way back was punctuated with a quick stop to check for returning phalaropes on the breeding lochans, but we couldn't see any. Once back on South Uist, we had one more impromptu stop near the Lochcarnan turn for a large raptor circling low over the road – a subadult **Golden Eagle**! A quick bail out gave us several minutes of excellent views of the eagle, which after initially circling away from us, turned and glided in straight towards us. The light was excellent, and we had no problem seeing its golden nape, and pale flashes in the wings and tail. A stunning bird to end a very productive day in the field in these magical islands.

SUNDAY 12TH MAY – *A fine and dry day with moderate south-easterly winds, IIC*

Today was our Barra day, and we enjoyed another good day's weather which made the experience all the more enjoyable! We set off towards the bottom end of South Uist checking Smercleit loch and then heading down into South Glendale. This can be a good, sheltered spot for seeing small birds, and we added a **Common Whitethroat**, several **Willow Warblers**, and our first **Sedge Warbler** nearby. There was also plenty of activity from the Hebridean races of **Wren** and **Song Thrush**, and our first **Greenfinch** of the trip. Crossing to Eriskay via the causeway, a **Common Tern** flew alongside us as we made our way towards the ferry terminal. The crossing was calm, but chilly, and there was a fair bit to see on the water – mainly **Great Northern Divers**, **Common Guillemot**, **Eider** and **Black Guillemot**, with excellent numbers of the latter seen. Once ashore at Ardmhor on Barra, we checked the first couple of small coves heading in the direction of Northbay. **Willow Warbler** was common, and we also picked up three **Goldcrest** and a **White-tailed Eagle** flying high overhead. We finally managed a proper view of a **Cuckoo** too, with a calling male perched up on a telegraph pole. A **Great Tit** was in one of the small belts of trees – according to local birder Bruce Taylor, the best bird present on the island currently (well everything has its perspective I suppose!). More **Willow Warblers** and a **Blackcap** were in the larger plantation by the road junction at Northbay, but clearly it was quiet migrant wise.

Heading round to Breivig, we stopped for coffee by the roadside and then took a walk round the far side of the sycamores. A **Corncrake** was creaking away, only a few feet from us at times, but we never saw it! **Reed Bunting** and **Common Whitethroat** were more obliging, and better still a superb **Whinchat** perched up on a rock long enough for everyone to get a scope view before it disappeared. Overhead, an adult **Golden Eagle** circled into view before drifting off over the valley, and as we headed back to the van an immature **White-tailed Eagle** appeared and circled low over the hilltop. Dropping down into Castlebay, we parked by the Co-op for lunch and enjoyed great views of a raspberry red male **Common Redpoll**. The local breeding birds in the islands all seem to be larger and paler than Lessers, with large bills and white wing bars. Another **Golden Eagle** appeared, drifting along the ridge behind the town while we ate our lunch, escorted by a pair of **Ravens**. After lunch we doubled back to Gleann to check the gardens there, but apart from a couple more **Common Redpolls**, we didn't add anything of note. Two **Corncrake** were heard here, with another by the Nasg turning, so clearly there are a few about here this year. Heading over towards Vatersay, we scanned the sea for divers but only saw a few small groups of **Eider**. Two **Great Northern Divers** in the bay at Caolas though included a fine full breeding adult, preening on the crystal clear blue water and looking very smart indeed!

The west side of the island was significantly more exposed in the wind, and it was cold scanning the sea at a favoured bay for **Long-tailed Ducks**. At least forty were present, most looking very dapper in breeding plumage, and quite close in. More **Great Northern Divers** were also seen here, plus a close

in fishing **Little Tern** and a single **Red-throated Diver** further out. Better was to come on the latter species though, as we checked a spot where a pair often hangs out and found them to be in residence. We watched the **Red-throated Divers** throughout our afternoon tea break, looking absolutely stunning and even indulging in a bit of display at one point, stretching up out of the water in tandem with their bills pointing skyward. We could see the fine striping on their necks, which is not normally possible to see on 'typical' views – a really superb bird and probably the days highlight. Heading up to Eoligarry on the north side of the island, we scanned the sea there for divers too but didn't see any – two **Great Skuas** came in from the west though and flew right over our heads! On a distant cairn atop a low hill, an adult **White-tailed Eagle** was perched, and being mobbed by Hooded Crows – we really were doing extremely well for eagles on this trip. It was now time to meet the last ferry of the day back to Eriskay, which provided lots more sightings of **Great Northern Diver** and **Black Guillemot**, as well as **Arctic Terns** and large numbers of Common Seals hauled out on the rocks. We could see the **White-tailed Eagle** again too, still perched in the same spot and a bit closer now. From Eriskay it was directly back to base, after a long and successful day.



Red-throated Diver in breeding plumage – always a delight

MONDAY 13TH MAY – *Fine and sunny with a fresh south-east wind, 16C*

Our warmest ever spring day on the islands, though for the most part the strong winds meant that it hardly felt especially warm! We started at the very top of the archipelago and worked our way south, driving up to Berneray to start this morning. The drive up was pretty quiet – we stopped to scan a couple of lochs for divers without success, and a male Hen Harrier was seen briefly from the van. Crossing to Berneray, we made our way out onto the machair at Borge, normally a good area for waders. Parking at the far end, we could see a few Ringed Plover and Dunlin dotted around, but

numbers were quite low. A large raptor was spotted coming distantly towards us over the sand dunes – an immature **White-tailed Eagle**. The bird came towards us for a while, then turned inland and headed off over the machair mobbed by gulls and Hooded Crows. Returning back to Borve the way we had come, we had some nice stops for really close views of Skylark, and a pair of **Arctic Terns** which settled beside us before breezing across the bonnet of our van. Seven **Pink-footed Geese** were a nice bonus too, resting among Greylag – our first of the trip. Driving up to Brusda, we picked a nice vantage point out of the wind to scan the loch and have coffee. More Arctic Terns, Dunlin, and another Pink-footed Goose were seen, as well as plenty of Wheatears dotted around. As we were packing up to leave, a **Great Skua** flew in and landed in the shallows, and then the immature **White-tailed Eagle** from earlier flew in from the dunes and across the loch! The Bonxie flew up, and gave another excellent view as it circled as if heading to mob the eagle but then thinking better of it.

Crossing back to North Uist, we took the road along the north coast to Grenitote picnic site and had lunch in the sunshine (and wind!) overlooking the strand. Seven **Grey Plovers** were stunning in full breeding plumage, and the rising tide gradually pushed them closer to our vantage point. Large numbers of Dunlin, Ringed Plover and Sanderling were on the sand, and four Bar-tailed Godwits flew in. Continuing west, we stopped to scan the bay at the north end of committee road, and this time picked up the **Greenshank** we had missed previously – nice! As we drove along the road along towards Hosta, two **Arctic Skuas**, flew alongside the van – we followed them for about a mile, keeping pace with them at just under 30mph! One was a light phase bird with white belly patch, the other a chocolatey intermediate phase – fantastic views! Eventually we reached the turning to Balranald via Loch Hosta, and we arrived at the visitor centre to find a small crowd with long lenses gathered. This could mean only one thing, the **Corncrake** must be showing! Sure enough we saw it within minutes, skulking in a thick bed of nettles, but then it came right out onto a patch of hay and shook itself in the sunshine – more brilliant views! A second was crekking close by, but remained hidden, and a **Corn Bunting** was bathing in a pool in the boggy ground.

Loch Sanadary was our next stop, an excellent spot which always has the potential to turn up something of note. We could only manage a Moorhen and **Black-tailed Godwit**, plus a few ducks and **Whooper Swans**, but another birder alerted us to the presence of a pair of **Ruff** on the fields a bit further down the track. We drove along there, just as everything was flushed, leaving a **Whimbrel** and two stunning **Golden Plovers** behind! We had brilliant views of these using the van as a hide, and then realised the Turnstone flock containing the **Ruff** had dropped back in. We got out to scope them – a female Ruff only for us, but still excellent views of her and the other waders too. To end the day we crossed to Benbecula, to check some lochans where a **Garganey** had been reported. A good selection was noted such as Wigeon, Gadwall and Shoveler, and two of us saw the head of the **Garganey** briefly! It was in thick bog bean and sedge around the edge of a small lochan, but it just wouldn't come out into view. Never mind, one for tomorrow! As usual there was an impromptu stop on the way back, this time for a **Short-eared Owl** which we watched hunting by the roadside for several minutes. A great day!

TUESDAY 14TH MAY – *Fine and sunny day in fresh South-east winds, 17C*

Our final days birding on the islands was blessed with the warmest day we have ever had here on a spring tour – the mercury reached 19C in the later afternoon! We started our day in the hills on the east side of South Uist, to check for raptors and divers in this wild and remote part of the island. Parking up over looking a loch, a male **Hen Harrier** cruised past us – a good start! We had fantastic views of a pair here, with the male passing food to the female and then proceeding to continue hunting either side of our parking spot. Looking out over the loch, we picked up two distant birds on the water – **Black-throated Divers**. The views weren't too bad as we could see the bulbous, dove grey head, dark throat and white flank patch on them. They always preferred to face away from us though, into the wind! A Cuckoo flew along the ridge calling, and there were several Willow Warblers around in the trees too. Reaching the north end of the island, we took the West Gerinish turning and parked at the south end of Loch Bee. A young **White-tailed Eagle** circled over behind us, as we scoped the large numbers of Dunlin feeding along the shore of the loch. The light was excellent,

and it was great to watch a **Snipe** drumming right over our heads too, and enjoy three Icelandic **Black-tailed Godwits** in breeding plumage. Heading back to the main road (the range was active today so we couldn't cross there), we took the road down to Ardivcahair Point. The light was great here for scoping the large concentrations of small waders on the seaweed banks – Dunlin and Sanderling mainly, with a few Turnstone and Ringed Plover. Arctic Terns were a frequent sight too, and few saw a few Gannets passing close inshore.



Male Hen Harrier – showing well!

Heading north, we wanted to spend much of the rest of the day checking for **Red-necked Phalaropes** which we hoped would have been newly arrived overnight! We learned on arrival at the site that indeed one had been seen early in the morning, but after checking carefully on several lochs, there appeared to be no further sign. Knowing how these birds behave when they first arrive, buzzing around all over the place and being very elusive, we were not too perturbed – we would just have to check again later. Four smart **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen, as well as the usual Teal, Gadwall, Shoveler and Wigeon. Little Grebe and our first Coot of the trip were seen nearby, too. We moved on to have lunch overlooking the Atlantic at so called Stinky Bay, and the tide was starting to rise and push numbers of Sanderling and Dunlin up onto the seaweed. We had a good look through the birds here, but couldn't find anything unusual – our visit was cut somewhat short though, as we received a call to say the phalarope was back and showing right now! We headed straight there, but unfortunately it had flown back out of view and we now had a lot of nooks and crannies to scan to refind it. Half an hour passed with no sign, and nine of us all scanning everywhere very carefully. Eventually the inevitable happened, as the bird was spotted (well done Baz!) skulking along the edge of a muddy cliff around one of the distant islands. The light was good, and as the bird swam out into open water its red neck sides were clearly visible – a well marked female bird. We watched the **Red-necked Phalarope** for and fifteen minutes, until it eventually flew towards us and back out of view behind an island.

With our final big target in the bag, we could relax and wind our way back south and enjoy some final wader watching over the high tide. Earlier in the trip, we had been rained off at the Hebridean Jewellery on South Uist, so we returned there to check for birds pushed up by the rising water. Sure

enough there was plenty to see here, with seventy magnificent **Grey Plovers** in full breeding plumage looking a real sight against the white sand and azure blue water. Fourteen **Knots** included several which were fully red, and another new bird for the trip. We had seen more **White-tailed Eagles** on this trip than ever before, and we now had one lumbering towards us mobbed by Lapwings. It flew low across the field behind us – perhaps our closest view of one so far! From here it was straight back to base, in order to give ourselves time to organise our gear as we needed to load the van this evening ready for the very early ferry tomorrow morning.



White-tailed Eagle – a record year for sightings on tour this year

WEDNESDAY 15TH MAY – *Fine and sunny in light winds, 23C*

An unbelievable day of weather on the west coast of Scotland as we steamed out of Lochboisdale at 7am on the early ferry back to Mallaig. We had breakfast on board, and then had a couple of hours of seawatching from the ferry. All the usual species were noted, though some huge rafts of **Manx Shearwaters** numbered many hundreds of birds. Because the sea was so calm, it was a great day for spotting cetaceans too, and while some of the group saw dolphins (probably Bottle-nosed) everyone got to see close views of **Harbour Porpoise** and best of all – **Minke Whale**. We had astonishing views of a Minke breaching completely out of the water, rising up vertically like a spy-hopping dolphin! It was illuminated perfectly in the morning sunshine, and was so close we could see its beady eye! A great end to the trip! As we reached mainland, we made a quick stop just south of Mallaig near Loch Morar. Here we hoped to connect with **Dipper**, and actually found a pair feeding young in the nest. It was quiet something to see one of the adults plunge diving into the rapids of a waterfall, goodness knows how they do it! Continuing south, we made a stop at the same site we had visited on the way up, and met with Jason and our second group heading north to Mallaig. It was

incredibly warm as we had our sandwiches in the sunshine here! A **Wood Sandpiper** was still present at the site, and must surely indicate at least possible breeding. A pair of **Greenshanks** were also present, as well as a **Cuckoo**, **Tree Pipit** and **Osprey** again. Not bad for a half hour stop! Our route south took us down along Loch Lomond back to Glasgow, where we dropped off our American guests, before the rest of us continued on to Carlisle for our overnight stop.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

1. Little Grebe
2. Great Northern Diver
3. Red-throated Diver
4. Black-throated Diver
5. Great Cormorant
6. European Shag
7. Northern Gannet
8. Northern Fulmar
9. Manx Shearwater
10. Grey Heron
11. Mute Swan
12. Whooper Swan
13. Greylag Goose
14. Canada Goose
15. Pink-footed Goose
16. Barnacle Goose
17. Common Shelduck
18. Mallard
19. Common Teal
20. Gadwall
21. Northern Shoveler
22. Eurasian Wigeon
23. Garganey
24. Tufted Duck
25. Common Eider
26. Red-breasted Merganser
27. Goosander
28. Common Goldeneye
29. Long-tailed Duck
30. Common Kestrel
31. Peregrine
32. Common Buzzard
33. Eurasian Sparrowhawk
34. Golden Eagle
35. White-tailed Eagle
36. Hen Harrier
37. Osprey
38. Corncrake
39. Common Moorhen
40. Common Coot
41. European Oystercatcher
42. European Golden Plover
43. Common Ringed Plover
44. Grey Plover
45. Dotterel
46. Northern Lapwing
47. Red Knot

48. Purple Sandpiper
49. Dunlin
50. Sanderling
51. Curlew Sandpiper
52. Wood Sandpiper
53. Common Redshank
54. Common Greenshank
55. Eurasian Curlew
56. Whimbrel
57. Black-tailed Godwit
58. Bar-tailed Godwit
59. Ruff
60. Ruddy Turnstone
61. Common Snipe
62. Common Sandpiper
63. Red-necked Phalarope
64. Arctic Skua
65. Great Skua
66. Black-headed Gull
67. Common Gull
68. Herring Gull
69. Lesser Black-backed Gull
70. Great Black-backed Gull
71. Black-legged Kittiwake
72. Common Guillemot
73. Razorbill
74. Black Guillemot
75. Atlantic Puffin
76. Common Tern
77. Arctic Tern
78. Little Tern
79. Collared Dove
80. Rock Dove
81. Woodpigeon
82. Common Cuckoo
83. Short-eared Owl
84. Barn Swallow
85. House Martin
86. Sand Martin
87. Skylark
88. Meadow Pipit
89. Tree Pipit
90. Rock Pipit
91. Pied Wagtail
92. Hebridean Wren
93. Dipper
94. Northern Wheatear
95. European Robin
96. Common Stonechat
97. Whinchat
98. Dunnock
99. Common Blackbird
100. Song Thrush
101. Common Chiffchaff
102. Willow Warbler

- 103. Wood Warbler
- 104. Sedge Warbler
- 105. Blackcap
- 106. Goldcrest
- 107. Great Tit
- 108. Blue Tit
- 109. Coal Tit
- 110. Hooded Crow
- 111. Carrion Crow
- 112. Western Jackdaw
- 113. Rook
- 114. Magpie
- 115. Common Raven
- 116. Common Starling
- 117. House Sparrow
- 118. Chaffinch
- 119. Greenfinch
- 120. Goldfinch
- 121. Common Linnet
- 122. Eurasian Siskin
- 123. Common Redpoll
- 124. Lesser Redpoll
- 125. Common Crossbill
- 126. Twite
- 127. Reed Bunting
- 128. Corn Bunting

*Checklist includes species seen on the journey from and to Glasgow