

Fife SOC

Newsletter No. 187

Compiled by Elizabeth Irwin

September 2017



Puffin at Fowlsheugh; Elizabeth Irwin

Our next Newsletter will be Issue No.188 for November 2017. Articles, letters, reports and photographs in *jpeg* or *tiff* format for publication should be sent, by Monday, 6 November 2017 at the latest, to Elizabeth Irwin at Drumcarrow Cottage, Pettycruik, Strathkinness KY16 9XP or email: elizabethirwin@hotmail.com

FROM THE CHAIR

I am delighted to be putting together my first Fife SOC newsletter since taking over from Paul Taylor as Chair at the AGM in April. If you don't know me, I have included a photo so you will recognise me. I want to get to know as many members as possible, so please introduce yourself.



I want to start by thanking Paul for providing such an excellent format for the newsletter and to thank the club members who have submitted their trip reports and some beautiful accompanying photographs. Particular thanks as well to Dave Heeley, who compiles and submits the records of monthly sightings.

September is an exciting month for bird watchers. Yes, you look up in the evening and suddenly realise it is getting dark, and thoughts turn to getting chimneys swept and boilers serviced. However, we are also saying farewell to summer visitors and listening for the first geese flying in, and the autumn migration period always brings surprises and delights.

We are about to start our winter programme of SOC talks, and the dates are included below. If you haven't come along before – or perhaps not for a while, we'd be very pleased to see you. We meet downstairs in the Town Hall in St Andrews (opposite The Bank of Scotland on Queens Gardens). The monthly outings are also sociable events and all are welcome, whether you are an experienced bird watcher or relatively new. More pairs of eyes and ears are always welcome! Some of you may also be interested in attending the SOC annual conference held at The Atholl Palace Hotel in Pitlochry. If you haven't been before, the conference combines an excellent range of talks and lectures with a friendly programme of outings and a ceilidh. This year the focus is on '*Movements and Migration*' and you will find all the details (and a wealth of other information) on the SOC website.

If you would like to get involved in any aspect of Fife SOC, or you have ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact me or any member of the committee. They are: Elizabeth Adams, Rob Armstrong, Norman Elkins, Caroline Gordon (Secretary), John Irwin (Treasurer), Andrew Riches and Paul Taylor (Representative on Council).

Elizabeth Irwin

NB: Thanks to R.B. Grant, electricians, for undertaking our PAT testing free of charge this year.

Forthcoming Meetings at The Town Hall:-

Wed 13 th September	Sophie Edwards, Rob Patchett, and Chima Nwaogu, from The University of St Andrews will present their current research findings.
Wed 11 th October	Peadar O'Connell - RSPB's seabird conservation work: tackling national and international challenges.
Wed 8 th November	Ben Darvill – the raptor monitoring season through the lens.
Wed 6 th December	Members' night.

Forthcoming Events:-

Friday 20 th – Sunday 22 nd Oct.	SOC annual conference (see SOC website for details).
Saturday 16 th December	Fife SOC annual Christmas dinner at The Fairways Restaurant, Elmwood Golf Club, Cupar; (details to follow).

Forthcoming outings:-

Members wishing to go on outings must let the leader know that they intend to attend by the Thursday before the outing at the very latest.

Sat 16 th Sept.	Fife Ness area	Elizabeth Irwin	07711526579
Sun 15 th Oct	Hound Point, Kinneil and Skinflats	Paul Taylor	01334 828925
Sat 11 th Nov	Lochs of Kinnordy and Lintrathen	Rob Armstrong	07979065078

Members are reminded that neither the Club nor its branches or individual leaders of outings can accept any responsibility for any injury suffered by individuals taking part in these outings, or any loss or damage to their property.

Proposed Culling of Gulls in Fife

Many of you might have been bemused by some of the intense discussion in local press and social media about the presence of gulls in Fife coastal towns and villages this summer. Gulls seem to be regularly cast in the role of villain especially in the July/August months when some journalists are searching for 'popular' stories. (Noted in the *BTO News*, Issue 323, Summer 2017.)

It is sad, however, that this summer the sensationalist terminology referring to gulls moved closer to home, when Dundee Council killed a number of gulls and removed nests, and some members of Burntisland Community Council called for a similar cull. Even the Fife posters aimed at discouraging people from feeding gulls, refer to them as the "winged menace" rather than focussing on the behaviour of humans. Where gulls are causing some disturbance in the summer months, it is changes in human behaviour that have led to this – inappropriate feeding of gulls, and the presence of rubbish. Professor Will Cresswell's research (St Andrews University) found that where plastic sacks were left with rubbish, 20% were targeted by gulls, and Norman Elkins has noted that often up to 3000 Herring Gulls have been present year-round at the Melville Lodges refuse site.

All gulls are of course protected under the '*Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*', which makes it illegal in Scotland to intentionally or recklessly injure or kill any gull or damage or destroy an active nest or its contents. This protection is particularly needed as our commonest gull in towns, the Herring Gull, is red listed, and the Lesser Black-Backed Gull is also in decline nationally and is amber listed (see *The Breeding and Wintering Birds of Fife 2007-13*, Elkins, Reid and Brown). It is of course a little disturbing to experience a Herring Gull determined to relieve you of your sandwich, but as Professor Cresswell, concluded "education that gulls are part of the seaside character of (the town in question) and indeed part of its valuable biodiversity, may be the best solution".

It is encouraging that in St Andrews, new bins are being trialled that are vermin and bird proof and have extra-large capacities. Further suggestions and sensible comments about gulls can be found on the RSPB website, and in *The Review of Urban Gulls and Their Management in Scotland* (Scottish Government May 2006), and *Seagulls in Coastal Towns and Cities* (House of Commons 3/2/2017).

Elizabeth Irwin

Birdguides 'Photo of the Week', 28th June – 4th July.

Congratulations to John Anderson, who has once again had one of his stunning photographs recognised. He has added a note about how it was taken.



'Arctic Skua' by John Anderson; taken at SWT Handa on 28th June 2017:
500 mm lens, 1/1600th sec, f5.6, ISO 1000.

"With local birding very quiet in midsummer I decided to go north to view the seabird colonies on the dramatic cliffs of Handa which has the bonus of Arctic and Great Skuas nesting on the moorland.

The island has a boardwalk which a few pairs of Arctic skuas take up territory close to. As dozens of people use the walk every day the birds become used to passers-by and can be photographed without additional disturbance. While walking towards the Great Stack an Arctic Skua decided to dive bomb a group of people walking in front of me after which it landed in the heather holding its wings open for just enough time to take a photograph. A small chick appeared from the grass further away giving the reason for the attack. Hopefully the skuas will pass the Fife coast shortly giving exciting views as they harry the terns and gulls over the sea as they make their way south."

John Anderson

Trip Reports:-

Outing to The Hirsell, Coldstream: 23 April 2017

In early May 1984 SOC member John O'Reilly and I, both then in the Edinburgh RSPB group, went with fellow RSPB members on an outing to The Hirsell. Someone from the group must have let it be known that we were coming because Lord Home, former Prime Minister, came out in his



The Hirsell: Paul Taylor

wellies and surrounded by black Labradors to meet us and chat with us about birds. My notes from the time show that we saw or heard Marsh Tit, Redstart and, on the Tweed, Yellow Wagtail.

Thirty-three years later John and I, accompanied by half a dozen Fife SOC members, visited The Hirsell together again. This time we were not greeted by someone from the Big House nor did we come across Marsh Tit or Redstart in the grounds, although I believe they are still to be found in small numbers in that part of the Borders. A species

that we did see and hear this time was a bird that was not there in 1984 and that was Nuthatch. We had very good views of Nuthatches as we walked around Dundock Wood and heard them calling throughout. In addition, we saw or heard several migrant species – Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Blackcap and Sedge Warbler. A Sparrowhawk flew over in front of us and a Great Spotted Woodpecker called. From the hide overlooking the loch we saw 19 Mute Swan, Coots, Moorhen, a pair of Little Grebe, Grey Heron, a couple of Greylag Geese, pairs of Gadwall and Tufted Duck.

We stopped for a leisurely lunch at the Hirsell café before taking the riverside walk beside the Leet Water when we added Pied Wagtail and Buzzard to our list making a total of 38 species of birds seen or heard.

It had been a most enjoyable visit which was very relaxing – some would say it was laid back to the point of being horizontal – as we interspersed our bird watching with visits to the café.

Paul Taylor

Glen Clova and Glen Doll 25th May 2017

Twelve of us met up with the aim of exploring some of the woodland and burn side walks and trails in one of the Angus Glens, and it was a pleasure to welcome some new faces.

The drive up Glen Clova is particularly scenic with a number of different habitats. The lower pastures held good numbers of breeding waders with Lapwings and raucous groups of Oystercatchers noticeable. The occasional Curlew was noted but the numbers are markedly down from previous years. The Glen also holds colonies of gulls with Black-headed and Common Gulls seen on the nest and good numbers of Herring Gulls and a few Lesser Black-backed Gulls in evidence. Barn Swallow and House Martins were present in numbers around any buildings and a small colony of Sand Martins had been established on the river bank. A Great-spotted Woodpecker provided entertainment at least for the occupants of the leading cars, flying alongside for a short spell before settling on a fence post. Pied Wagtails were numerous (even more so on the opposite side of the Glen as was discovered on the return journey), and a Wheatear, Meadow Pipits and Mistle Thrushes showed well higher up the Glen. From the ranger station at Glen Doll we walked up the trail to Corrie Fee through woodland alongside the River Fee. Blackcaps were heard signing, but of course not seen. Bird song was everywhere with Chaffinch predominating,

Great Tits causing some debate, and a well-heard unusual call proving (thanks to John's smartphone app) to be Common Crossbill. Goldcrest, Siskin and Chiffchaff were also picked out.

After quite a long and rather demanding uphill trudge we arrived at Corrie Fee, a truly spectacular part of the Cairngorms. The only bird was a House Martin hawking lower down the corrie and there was a fleeting view of a grey goose. The species could not be settled but it is known that there is a population of resident Greylag Geese in the Glen.



Corrie Fee: Dave Heeley

Returning for lunch to the car park, three male Bullfinches were feeding on a grassy patch and we noted a Willow Warbler perched in full view. Some had a fleeting view of Spotted Flycatcher. A post lunch amble along the River South Esk again gave us the opportunity to further enjoy the impressive upland scenery. Those at the head of the group had good views of a Dipper in flight at the footbridge. Scanning the escarpment further up the valley we

were delighted to see two Golden Eagles soaring over the crags. They appeared to be an adult (judging by its size) and a juvenile (on the basis of the obvious white patches on the underwings). Whether the adult was one of the pair that is nesting on Juanjorge crags further up the valley is open to speculation.

The return journey down Glen Clova added a rather careless Red-legged Partridge to the day list, which with the more common species numbered over 40 on a day when the Scottish weather was, for once, perfect for a day out.

Dave Heeley

Fowlsheugh and Newburgh on Ythan 11th June 2017

Fowlsheugh is always spectacular in summer: [Dave Heeley's](#) pictures tell their own story –





Above: Herring Gull colony at Fowlheugh. Prev page: Razorbill, Juvenile Guillemots; Bridled Guillemot

After a very enjoyable photographic safari at Fowlsheugh we agreed that, as we were “nearly there” it might be worthwhile (prompted by reports on *Birdguides*) going a bit further north to the Ythan estuary. The short walk to the estuary from the car park was enlivened by fine Yellowhammers, Whitethroats singing, and flocks of hirundines especially Sand Martins from the dune colony. Across the river great scope views were had of a large tern colony with good numbers of Common Terns, Arctic Terns and some Sandwich Terns.

The first highlight was the sought after Little Terns, with two showing well on our side of the river. Looking again at the tern roost we soon located another six or so. The Forvie Sands side of the river held several roosts of Common Eider, but it took a laboured walk into a strengthening head-wind to the estuary mouth to scan the Eider roost there to locate what was our target bird – a truly splendid drake King Eider. We enjoyed great views in the ‘scopes, and congrats to Stewart (“strong and stable”) Neilson for managing a very creditable record shot at extreme distance. An enjoyable addendum to Fowlsheugh, and we were relieved to locate the King Eider after much loose talk about “green tin sheds” – don’t ask.

Dave Heeley



King Eider: Stewart Neilson

A'Mharconaich, Drumochter 8th July 2017

After several postponements due to inclement weather, Rob Armstrong led four other Fife SOC members and one from the Clyde branch up A'Mharconaich on the 8th July to try and find Ptarmigan, Dotterel and Golden Plover.

While we were putting on boots and planning the route in the car park we saw Black-Headed Gull, Common Gull, Pied Wagtail, Barn Swallow, House Martin and Feral Pigeon. We walked up the ridge in clear skies with only a few high clouds and no threat of rain. There was, however, quite a stiff cool breeze that strengthened the higher we got. As we climbed we saw very few birds – mainly Meadow Pipits - but there were three Common Frogs, one Mountain Hare, one White-Tailed Bumble Bee and one small black beetle!

As we approached about 800 metres two Dotterel landed on the ridge in front of us and gave fine views.



Dotterel

At this point two of us decided to contour round the hill below the summit whilst four of us carried on to the top. Those who climbed on found that because of the wind it was not possible to stay long on the summit plateau but they saw four Golden Plovers and two distant Ptarmigan. Those contouring round found several Mountain Hares, more Meadow Pipits and got very close views of two Ptarmigan. Once we had all met up on the way down we came across a Red Grouse, more Meadow Pipits and we had good views of two Ravens flying overhead.



Golden Plover



Ptarmigan: Elizabeth Irwin

Finally, over lunch in the carpark Roger saw what he thought was most likely to be a Cuckoo. Thanks again to Rob for organising this trip and finding all the target species.

John Irwin

East Lothian Coast: 12th August 2017

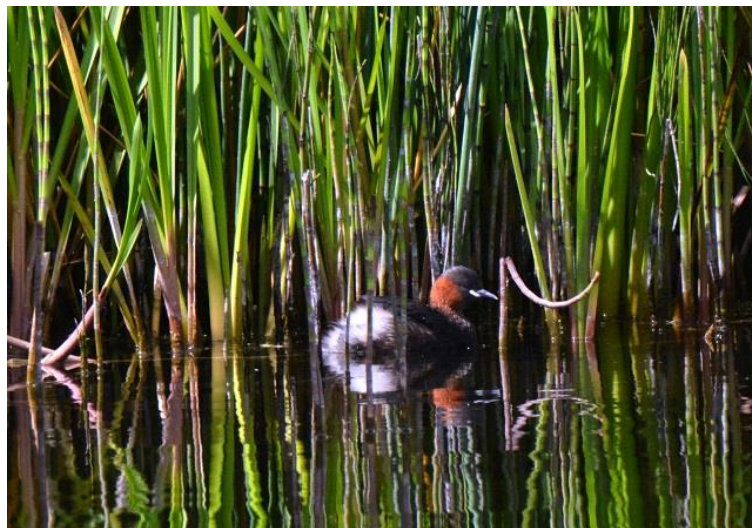
We called first at Waterston House to have a coffee and a chat with Dave Allan, who let us know what was about, and left with a slightly modified plan for the day based on Dave's knowledge.

We headed first to the Gosford Estate, bought a permit (£1.00 for the group) from the Bothy Shop and headed off into the woods. Among the various woodland birds, we eventually heard then saw a Nuthatch, a bird that we had hoped to find there. A male Sparrowhawk obliged us by flying in and perching on a dead tree giving excellent views. Throughout our walk we heard the soft cooing of Stock Doves, birds that are often overlooked. In the fields near Gosford House and beside the loch there were at least a hundred Greylag Geese, difficult to count among the trees. Heading back to Waterston House for lunch we saw two juvenile Great Spotted Woodpeckers on the feeders there.

After lunch, we drove to the car park at the footbridge over the Pepper Burn. From the bridge, we found a Whimbrel and a Greenshank upstream. Good light enabled us to see clearly the striped crown of the Whimbrel. We walked as far as the Marl Loch where we saw Sand Martins and an adult Little Grebe; we had seen a stripy faced juvenile on the Gosford loch earlier.



Whimbrel: Stewart Neilson



Little Grebe: Stewart Neilson

We had already decided that we would curtail our visit to the Aberlady reserve so that we could visit sites further down the coast so from there we headed to Longniddry Bents. Looking out over Gosford Bay we saw a long line of Common Scoters, Eiders and ten Gannets loafing on the sea. The bird that we hoped

to see was Red-Necked Grebe and we were not disappointed as we found a total of seven of these special birds, resplendent in their summer plumage. Gosford Bay is the best place in the UK to see Red-Necked Grebes and August is the best month in which to see them.

From Longniddry Bents, we drove to the Musselburgh Scrapes at Levenhall. There were huge numbers of birds on the scrapes including big flocks of Sandwich Terns, Oystercatchers, Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits; most of the godwits were still in their brick-red summer plumage. Other waders we saw were Redshanks, adult and juvenile Dunlins, two Ruff, two Whimbrel and a Common Sandpiper. Dave Allan dropped by and quickly found for us a Green Sandpiper hiding in the reeds but which eventually came out, and a Little Gull among the flock of Black-headed Gulls. It had been an excellent outing with some "quality" birds seen. Many thanks to Dave Allan for his advice on where to go and what to expect to see.

Paul Taylor

FIFE BIRD SIGHTINGS:-

April 2017

Central Fife

Letham Pools logged White-fronted Geese (Greenland race), Barnacle Geese, Ospreys, Little Egrets, Water Rails, Wheatears, Little Ringed Plovers, Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff, White Wagtails and Snipe. The Wilderness held Little Ringed Plovers, Common Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwits, Whooper Swans and White Wagtails. Elsewhere, two Manx Shearwaters were past Dysart on 8th, an Osprey visited Lindores Loch (14th), Marsh Harriers were noted on Mugdrum Island on 7th with a female seen carrying nesting materials on 9th. A Green Sandpiper was at Mountcastle, a Common Sandpiper was at West Wemyss (21st), a Greenshank was at Luthrie (13th) and a Whimbrel at Dysart (23rd). A Grasshopper Warbler was reeling at Markinch on 27th. Six Hawfinches were glimpsed briefly at Kilmany on 10th.

East Fife

Fife Ness logged Manx Shearwaters, Red-throated Divers, Whimbrels, a Great Skua (29th) and Purple Sandpipers. Eighteen Whooper Swans were past Crail on 8th, Surf Scoters continued off Ruddons Point, a Little Egret was at Kilconquhar Loch and an Osprey at Leuchars (1st). Purple Sandpipers were noted at Earlsferry with 25 there on 26th. Whimbrels were noted at Balcomie and Earlsferry. Iceland Gulls visited Pittenweem and Anstruther and there were nine Crossbills seen at Morton Lochs on 20th.

West Fife

Ospreys were over Steelend, Burntisland and Loch Gelly. A Marsh Harrier was at Loch Gelly on 9th with a Green Sandpiper and a Common Sandpiper there also. Black-tailed Godwits were over Steelend, seven Whimbrels stopped off at Loch Gelly on 21st with one at Dalgety Bay on 27th. Loch Gelly held a Ruff on 23rd, an Iceland Gull showed at Braefoot Point, with Ring Ouzels noted at Steelend and Kinghorn. A Garden Warbler was at Dunfermline, a Lesser Whitethroat at Ferryhills, and five Twite made a short stop at Dalgety Bay on 11th.

May 2017

Central Fife

Letham Pools held Little Egrets, White Wagtails, Sedge Warblers, Black-tailed Godwits, Wood Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Water Rails, Ruff, Common Sandpipers, Redshanks and Dunlin. The Wilderness logged Common Sandpipers, Wood Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwits and Little Ringed Plovers. Scaup were noted off East Wemyss as were 250 Common Scoters, Velvet Scoters and a Great Northern Diver. Two Common Cranes were over Springfield on 24th. Common Sandpipers were at Angle Park, Wheatears and Whinchats were noted in Glen Vale, a lingering Fieldfare surprised at Rossie Bog, Sedge Warblers were seen at Mountcastle, and Whitethroats on Norman's Law. Grasshopper Warblers were reeling at Coaltown of Balgonie.

East Fife

Kilminning logged Garden Warblers, Lesser Whitethroats, Whitethroats, Barnacle Geese, Spotted Flycatchers, Whinchats, Sedge Warblers and a Whimbrel over. Red-throated Divers continued in Largo bay with 12 on 4th; Red-necked Grebes were off Lower Largo. Ospreys visited the Eden Estuary, Marsh Harriers were seen at Crail (5th) and Balcomie (13th), Ringed Plovers were seen in numbers at Lower Largo, Whimbrels were noted at Fife Ness, Elie Ness and Largo Bay. Great Skuas and Pomarine Skuas (12 on 7th) were past Fife Ness. Little Terns made a welcome return to Tentsmuir Point NNR (14th). A Short-eared Owl was flushed at Ruddons Point. Yellow Wagtails (sp) were at Crail from 18th – 21st (echoing 2016), Redstarts were at Fife Ness, Wheatears at Lower Largo and Lesser Whitethroats were logged at Fife Ness and Kilrenny.

West Fife

Cullaloe logged Garden Warblers, Sedge Warblers, Blackcaps, Whitethroats and Wheatears. Loch Gelly held Garden Warblers, Sedge Warblers, Greenshanks, Common Sandpipers, Goosanders, Gadwall, Whimbrels, White Wagtails, Wheatears, Willow Warblers, Grasshopper Warblers, Ospreys over and a Peregrine. Whimbrels visited Braefoot Point, Ferry Hills, Torry Bay and Culross. Lesser Whitethroats were at Dunfermline and a Brambling was reluctant to leave Ferryhills (1st).

June 2017

A drake Scaup continued at Kilconquhar Loch until 2nd, an imm. Surf Scoter was noted off Kinshaldy (23rd), a notable 67 Goosanders were logged off West Wemyss on 25th. A Quail was calling at Morton Lochs (11th). A Red-throated Diver was past Fife Ness and a Great Northern Diver was in Dalgety Bay (12th). Manx Shearwaters were noted going past Anstruther (five on 1st, 120 on 13th), Dalgety Bay (seven on 15th), Cellardyke (20 on 21st), Pathhead (four on 25th) and Fife Ness (100 on 28th). Fife Ness also logged five European Storm Petrels on 29th. Little Egrets were in Balgove Bay and off the Eden Estuary Centre. A Spoonbill was over Ferry Hills and then appeared at Torryburn on 18th. An Osprey was over Kilmany, two Greenshanks were at Tentsmuir Point NNR, Guardbridge held a Whimbrel and a lone Arctic Skua was past Fife Ness (28th). Little Gulls were noted at Guardbridge (11th) and past Fife Ness (29th). Tentsmuir Point NNR continued to hold six Little Terns. Pairs of Cuckoos were seen at East Wemyss (15th), Kilminning (14th) and Wormiston (25th). Two Grey Wagtails were in Cupar, Whinchats returned to Glen Vale with three noted on 5th and a pair of Ravens were displaying over Kilrenny (3rd).

July 2017

Central Fife

The Wilderness held Little Ringed Plovers, Dunlins, Wood Sandpipers, Green Sandpipers, Common Sandpipers (nine on 19th), Greenshanks, Black-tailed Godwits (14 on 2nd), and Ruff (15th – 29th). 16 Goosanders were logged off Seafield on 2nd, Quail were heard singing at their regular summer location at Kilmany (18th, 21st), Marsh Harriers were seen over Letham Pools, with a Hobby there also. Common Sandpipers were at the coastal sites of Seafield and East Wemyss. Greenshanks and Black-tailed Godwits were noted at Letham Pools (14 on 2nd). A Whimbrel was at Buckhaven, Mediterranean Gulls were at East Wemyss, Buckhaven and Dysart. Whinchats bred in Glen Vale with five there on 1st and one was noted at Buckhaven (21st). Two Ravens were in Glen Vale.

East Fife

A notable 110 Goosanders were off Levenmouth on 13th, Manx Shearwaters were past Anstruther (seven on 11th) and Fife Ness (six on 23rd). Little Egrets continued at the Eden Estuary Centre, Ospreys were at Balmullo and the Eden Estuary. Balcomie Beach logged Little Ringed Plovers, Dunlins (225 on 9th) and a Whimbrel. Whimbrels were also at Fife Ness with Great Skuas and Little Gulls seen there. Mediterranean Gulls were at Crail and Roome Bay. Kingfishers continued at Morton Lochs and a Yellow Wagtail (sp) was seen at Crail on 1st.

West Fife

24 Manx Shearwaters were noted past Kinghorn on 19th with a Roseate Tern spotted going past there on the same date and Arctic Skuas past on 19th and 23rd. Valleyfield Lagoons held Little Egrets, Common Sandpipers, Black-tailed Godwits (16 on 23rd) and Greenshanks (eight on 23rd). Common Sandpipers were in Inverkeithing harbour, Little Gulls and Mediterranean Gulls showed at Dalgety Bay, there was an early record of a Black Guillemot at Pettycur on 27th and notable early migration records from Ferryhills included a Cuckoo on 8th and 54 Tree Pipits over on 30th.

August 2017

Highlights: Marsh Harriers were noted at Kilmany, Newburgh, Anstruther, Guardbridge, and Cellardyke; a Honey Buzzard was over Strathmiglo (14th); a Hobby was at St. Andrews; Cory's Shearwaters were logged past Fife Ness (4th, 23rd); an Avocet was at the Eden estuary 22nd – 29th and a Ross's Goose was seen with a flock of Greylags at Pleasant Farm on 15th.

Central Fife

The Wilderness held Pintails, Water Rails, Little Ringed Plovers, Ringed Plovers, Golden Plovers, Dunlin, Curlew Sandpipers, Wood Sandpipers, Common Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Black-tailed Godwits (22 on 15th), Common Snipe and Ruff. Quail were heard singing at Kilmany to 5th, a Red-necked Grebe was off Pathhead, 26 Manx Shearwaters were logged past Seafield (6th), a White-Tailed Eagle was at Kilmany, a Little Ringed Plover at Ballo Res., a Green Sandpiper at Newburgh and a Common Sandpiper at Seafield. Three Arctic Skuas were noted off Seafield (13th) with two Little Gulls stopping briefly at Newburgh (30th). Mediterranean Gulls were at East Weymss (two with Darvics), Ravenscraig, Buckhaven and Dysart. Whinchats were seen at Glen Vale and Outhead,

East Fife

The Eden NNR held Little Egrets (six on 26th), White Tailed Eagles, Ospreys, Peregrines, Knot, Dunlin, Common Sandpipers, Greenshanks, Black-tailed Godwits, Ruff, three Arctic Skuas and 41 Arctic Terns (30th). Red-throated Divers were past Fife Ness as were Manx Shearwaters. Ospreys were at Tentsmuir NNR, and Little Ringed Plovers and Ringed Plovers were at Balcomie. A notable 250 Golden Plover in summer plumage were at St Monans (30th) with Grey Plovers, Knot and Bar-tailed Godwits (c200 on 13th) at Tentsmuir. Whimbrel continued at Fife Ness and a Little Gull was logged at Anstruther.

West Fife

Ferryhills logged a Black-throated Diver over, Merlin, Great Skuas, Arctic Skuas, Little Gulls and Lesser Whitethroats. There was a notable count of c300 Tree Pipits migrating past there on 20th. An early Long-tailed Duck was at Kinghorn, Loch Gelly held Water Rails, Wood Sandpipers and Green Sandpipers. Common Sandpipers continued at Inverkeithing; Arctic Skuas were off Kinghorn and a Mediterranean Gull visited Dalgety Bay.

*Records of bird sightings for September and October for inclusion in the November Newsletter should be sent by **Friday 3rd November 2017 at the latest** to David Heeley at dw.heeley@btinternet.com or 50 High Street, Newburgh, Fife KY14 6AQ.*

The following three photographs show a Male Sparrowhawk eating a Collared Dove: Dave Heeley





And finally: contact with SOC Fife members and data protection

In common with other organisations including charities, SOC takes the security of members' details very seriously. You will no doubt also be aware that the laws on data protection are being strengthened. The SOC is reviewing its processes and will contact all members about this in due course. The Fife Branch ensures that you will only be contacted by Caroline Gordon (secretary) and I with emails that are directly relevant to you as a member of Fife SOC, eg notices of Fife SOC events and our newsletters.

This does mean that we cannot circulate any information about other events or wildlife issues. If you have something that you think members would like to hear about, you can let SOC know as they sometimes publish information on the website.

Elizabeth Irwin

The SOC is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation Reg. No SC009859