

## 2005 - DECEMBER SIGHTINGS

**December 10th:** Still a fair few thrushes around (40 **Blackbird**, 50 **Fieldfare**, 60 **Redwing**, 15 **Song Thrush**) plus six **Skylark** and a couple of **Meadow Pipits**. Highlight was a first-winter **Glaucous Gull** but a **Jack Snipe** was flushed (with c50 **Common Snipe**), a handful of **Woodcock** and 30 **Lapwing** plus five **Teal** and a **Goldeneye**.

**December 8th:** The nice weather and SE'ly wind has brought in a few migrants with over 200 each of **Fieldfare** and **Redwing** counted and one, possibly two, **Black Redstarts**. Other sightings included two **Wigeon**, a **Teal**, five **Curlew**, **Woodcock**, **Black-headed Gull**, two **Meadow Pipit**, **Chaffinch**, 20 **Snow Bunting** and a **Lapland Bunting**.

**December 7th:** A **Goshawk** was reported at Quoy before heading east and climbing high into the sky, pursued by a Raven. This is the only our 6th record and first record since 1996. A **Goldfinch** and **Greenfinch** in the Plantation are presumably lingering birds from November. Three **Barnacle Geese** were with the **Greylags**.

**December 5th:** A **Long-eared Owl** was at Shirva.

**December 4th:** A count of the geese revealed 68 **Greylags** and that the **Greenland Whitefront** was still present. The two **Whooper Swans**, **Long-tailed Duck** and two **Greenfinch** were also seen.

**December 2nd:** A family party of five **Whooper Swans** briefly joined the lingering adult and juvenile.

**December 1st:** A few **Little Auks** were passing South Light and a **Scaup** was in South Harbour.

## 2005 - NOVEMBER SIGHTINGS

**November 30th:** A **Brambling** at Upper Leogh rounded off the month.

**November 29th:** Two each of **Skylark**, **Meadow Pipit** and **Greenfinch** were noted whilst two **Moorhens** at Quoy have apparently been present for at least two weeks. An increase in **Common Snipe** was noted and a single **Jack Snipe** was flushed and single **Grey Heron** and **Curlew** linger.

**November 28th:** Two **Long-tailed Ducks** were in South Haven.

**November 27th:** First-winter and second-winter **Glaucous Gulls** were at South Light whilst four **Lapwings** were new and two female **Chaffinches** were at the Obs.

**November 25th:** The stormy weather has brought in at least three **Glaucous Gulls** (adult and two first-winters) and a first-winter **Iceland Gull**. A **Long-eared Owl** was trapped in the Gully and the **Goldfinch** was again in the Plantation.

**November 22nd:** A **Goldfinch** and 2 **Mealy Redpolls** were in the Plantation.

**November 21st:** A **Kestrel** was seen and a **Red-breasted Merganser** in south harbour.

**November 18th:** A ringtail **Hen Harrier** quartered the north of the isle plus a **Kestrel** and **Merlin**. Twelve **Pinkfeet** flew over and 7 **Woodcock** were flushed. the south held 2 **Mealy Redpoll**, a **Black Redstart** and a pair of **Chaffinch**.

**November 17th:** The **Rook** was again at Setter, a **Dunnock** at Shirva, 6 **Greenfinch** and a **Chaffinch** and 120 **Snow Bunting**. The **Greylag** flock is still high at 130 and an adult and juvenile **Whooper Swan** arrived.

**November 16th:** A single **Waxwing** was at the Observatory.

**November 15th:** A **Rook** is at Setter and a male **Long-tailed Duck** in the Havens and a **Kestrel** was seen.

**November 14th:** A family party of four **Whooper Swans** landed briefly at Field.

**November 13th:** The **Little Bunting** was seen again in the Bull's Park crop with a male **Siskin** and c200 **Snow Buntings** (in several flocks) were counted.

**November 12th:** Highlight was undoubtedly the juvenile **SABINE'S GULL** seen close inshore at South Light. Three **Little Auks** were seen later at sea. The **Common Buzzard** was seen again and 125 **Snow Buntings** counted. Two **Sanderlings** were unusual at this time whilst a male **Wheatear** was late and the Plantation produced a **Long-eared Owl** and two **Greenfinch**.

**November 11th:** A first-winter **Glaucous Gull** was in the gull roost on Vaasetter and a **Common Redpoll** was noted flying over.



Waxwings



Paul Baxter and pets at Barkland



Siberian Rubythroat



Siberian Rubythroat

**November 1st-10th:** Highlight of early November was the arrival of **Waxwings**, with birds seen daily and peak counts of 11 (3rd) and 40 (4th). A total of 15 were trapped and colour-ringed, so hopefully these may be re-sighted later in the winter, further south in Britain. A **Richard's Pipit** was at Barkland on 4th and presumably the same bird on Buness the following day. Barkland also produced a fly-over **Olive-backed Pipit** on 4th. A few **Whooper Swans** (4) were seen, a couple of **Merlins**, **Kestrel** and the **Common Buzzard**. The geese linger with c100 **Greylag**, 9 **Pinkfeet**, 21 **Barnacles** and a single **Greenland Whitefront** plus around 85 **Wigeon** associating with them. Lingering waders of note include 13 **Golden Plover**, 5 **Purple Sandpiper** and a **Curlew**. **Woodcock** peaked at 30 on 1st. Two **Short-eared Owl** plus three **Wood Pigeon** and two **Collared Dove** were seen. Peak passerine counts were a **Dunnock**, 8 **Blackcap**(2nd), 3 **Chiffchaff** (1st), a **Goldcrest** (10th), 14 **Greenfinch** (1st), 24 **Brambling**, a **Siskin**, **Lapland Bunting**, 2 **Yellowhammer** and c150 **Snow Bunting**. Best however were the **Little Bunting** in Bull's Park (6th onwards) and **Black-bellied Dipper** in Vaadal (5th).

## 2005 - OCTOBER SIGHTINGS

**October 26th-31st:** The last few days of the month saw everyone at the Observatory busy closing down the place for the winter before all the seasonal staff leave on 1st/2nd November. Birds however still trickled through.....

The **Siberian Rubythroat** wandered into a building at Quoy on the morning of 27th, where it was trapped, ringed and released back into the cabbages there. It was seen there later that afternoon but had departed the next morning. A **Black-bellied Dipper** was found at Wirvie (singing its heart out!) on 26th and remained on the isle until the end of the month, moving to the Gully and Hjukni(!) and a **Pallas's Warbler** was at Schoolton on 28th. A **Tree Pipit** on 26th was late whilst the **Bluethroat** remained at the Obs (until 27th) and four **Waxwings** were noted. The **Common Buzzard** was seen periodically and a male **Hen Harrier** (27th-28th) with three **Sparrowhawks**, three **Merlins**, **Kestrel** and **Peregrine** plus five **Short-eared Owls**. Counts included peaks of five **Jack Snipe**, six **Water Rail**, 35 **Woodcock**, six **Wheatear**, 63 **Goldcrest**, 20 **Blackcap**, six **Chiffchaff**, 39 **Mealy Redpoll**, two **Lesser Redpoll**, 91 **Brambling**, 11 **Chaffinch**, a **Linnet**, two **Siskin**, eight **Greenfinch**, two **Yellowhammer**, five **Lapland Bunting** and 200 **Snow Bunting**. The final day of the month brought in 50 **Woodcock**, a new **Bluethroat** and two **Yellow-browed Warblers** whilst **Snow Buntings** reached 300.



**Siberian Rubythroat**

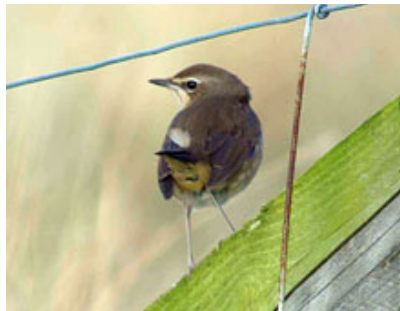
*Photos  
by  
Rebecca Nason*



**Black-bellied Dipper**



**Siberian Rubythroat**  
*Photo by Steve Minton*



**Siberian Rubythroat**  
*Photo by Steve Minton*



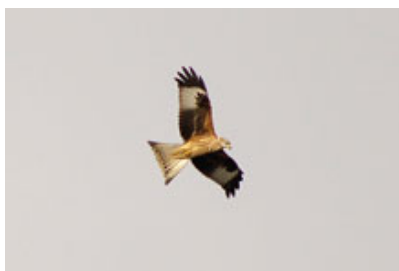
**Black-bellied Dipper**  
*Photo by Steve Minton*

**October 25th:** The **Siberian Rubythroat** was missing for most of the day but finally put in an appearance at Burkle at 4pm, where it remained until dusk. A **Pallas's Warbler** at the School was new whilst the **Bluethroat** remains in the Havens and 2 **Waxwings** were also seen. An increase in thrushes (350 **Blackbird**, 2,500 **Redwing**, 150 **Fieldfare**, 3 **Mistle Thrush**), **Blackcaps** (80) and **Mealy Redpolls** (81) was noted.



**Pallas's Warbler**

*Photos by Rebecca Nason*

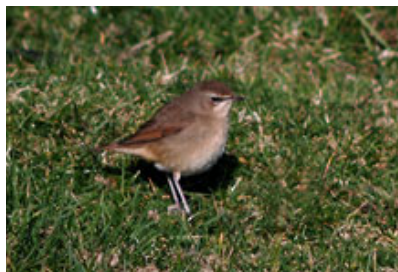


**Red Kite**



**Siberian Rubythroat**





Siberian Rubythroat

**October 24th:** The **SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT** has been seen for a few minutes at Quoy before disappearing once again around 1130hrs. The adult male **Black-throated Thrush** appeared at Haa at 1500 hrs.

**October 23rd:** The 'Magic date' has arrived again. Following on from the Rufous-tailed Robin on this date in 2004 we had a different *Luscinia* this year - a first-winter female **SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT**! Initially found just below Midway at 1200 hrs, it then went missing before being refound at Haa after lunch but disappeared again at Burkle around 1530hrs. Previous to this a superb **adult male Black-throated Thrush** had been found at Klingers Geo (but no sign of yesterday's female) and an **Olive-backed Pipit** nearby on the Rippack. Also of note were a male **Velvet Scoter** past South Light and a very late **Osprey** drifting around the isle, as was the **Red Kite** and a **Common Buzzard**. Four **Waxwings**, 2 **Richard's Pipit** (including one picked up dead in Bull's Park) and single **Pallas's Warbler**, **Yellow-browed Warbler** and the **Bluethroat** were other goodies.



Male Black-throated Thrush



Photos by Deryk Shaw

**October 22nd:** The female **Black-throated Thrush** was again on Hoini and **Red Kite**, **Pallas's Warbler**, 2 **Little Auk**, **Short-toed Lark**, **Bluethroat**, 2 **Richard's Pipit** and **Northern Bullfinch** were also seen.



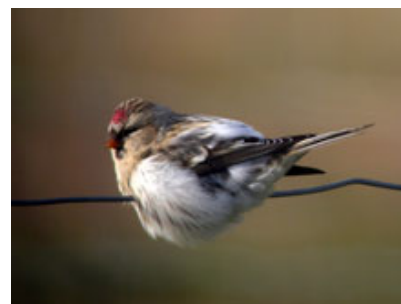
Female Black-throated Thrush



Photos by Deryk Shaw

**October 21st:** The **Red Kite** and **Grey Phalarope** were seen again plus **Common Buzzard**, **Short-toed Lark**, **Richard's Pipit**, 2 **Waxwing**, **Bluethroat**, 4 **Yellow-browed Warblers**, 2 **Northern Bullfinch** and **Little Bunting**. Best however was a female **Black-throated Thrush** found in the late afternoon on Hoini.

**October 20th:** Bird of the day was an *exilipes* **Arctic Redpoll**, trapped at Barkland. The **Red Kite** and **Pallas's warbler** remain and a **Barred Warbler** and **Grey Phalarope** were new highlights. The **Barnacle Goose** flock peaked at 985 whilst the 2 **Brent Geese** remain. A **Hen Harrier** and **Common Buzzard** added to the raptor count. Other counts were; 33 **Purple Sandpiper**, 17 **Jack Snipe**, 100 **Common Snipe**, 23 **Short-eared Owl**, 18 **Wheatear**, 19 **Ring Ouzel**, 450 **Blackbird**, 90 **Fieldfare**, 180 **Song Thrush**, 5,000 **Redwing**, 95 **Blackcap**, 7 **Yellow-browed Warbler**, 21 **Chiffchaff** (incl. 2 *abietinus*), 340 **Goldcrest**, 185 **Brambling**, 30 **Greenfinch**, 38 **Mealy Redpoll**, 2 **Lesser Redpoll**, 3 **Northern Bullfinch**, 10 **Lapland Bunting**, 2 **Little Bunting** and singles of **Short-toed Lark**, **Bluethroat**, **Dunnock**, **Reed Warbler**, **Rook** and **Yellowhammer**.



Arctic Redpoll photos by Deryk Shaw

**October 19th:** Much the same stuff still around with the **Red Kite** and **Pallas's Warbler** leading the way but also 2 **Little Bunting**, the **Short-toed Lark**, **Richard's Pipit**, 5 **Yellow-browed Warbler**, a male **Northern Bullfinch** and 3 **Little Auks**. A total of 13 raptors were seen of six species, with **Hen Harrier**, **Kestrel** (3), **Sparrowhawk** (2), **Merlin** (4) and **Peregrine** (2) also noted. The **Barnacle Goose** flock had dropped slightly, to 870 but the 2 **Brent Geese** remain and other wildfowl included 129 **Wigeon** and 27 **Long-tailed Duck**. Three **Long-eared** and 16 **Short-eared Owls** were counted whilst passerines were dominated by thrushes again with 6 **Ring Ouzel**, 370 **Blackbird**, 75 **Fieldfare**, 150 **Song Thrush**, 4,500 **Redwing** and a **Mistle Thrush** logged. Other warblers included a **Reed Warbler**, 75 **Blackcap**, 8 **Chiffchaff** (4 *collybita* and 4 *abietinus*) and 250 **Goldcrest**. Other counts included 180 **Brambling**, 30 **Greenfinch**, 2 **Lesser Redpoll**, 4 **Mealy Redpoll**, 3 **Greenland** and one **Icelandic Redpoll**, a **Crossbill** sp. and 11 **Lapland Bunting**.

**October 18th:** Star attraction today (or would have been if it had lingered) was a **Red Kite**, seen by one person at North Light and amazingly (considering there are 30 birders on the isle) only by one other when it drifted over the Obs and headed west at around 12 noon. Also new in were a ringtail **Hen Harrier** and a **Rook**. The **Barnacle Goose** flock continues to grow and now numbers 910 (including quite a few darvic-ringed birds)! Other counts included 113 **Wigeon**, 5 **Goldeneye** and singles of **Red-throated** and **Great Northern Divers**, 20 **Jack Snipe**, 135 **Common Snipe**, 100 **Woodcock**, 6 **Wood Pigeon**, 2 **Long-eared Owl** and 17 **Short-eared Owl**. On the passerine front were single **Richards Pipit**, **Dunnock**, **Black Redstart**, **Common Redstart**, **Stonechat**, **Pallas's Warbler**, **Yellowhammer** and **Little Bunting**, plus counts of 270 **Blackbird**, 100 **Fieldfare**, 150 **Song Thrush**, 4 **Mistle Thrush**, 3 **Garden Warbler**, 60 **Blackcap**, 6 **Yellow-browed Warbler**, 7 **Chiffchaff**, 250 **Goldcrest**, 180 **Brambling**, 33 **Greenfinch**, one **Lesser Redpoll**, 23 'mealy' **Common Redpoll** and one each of 'Greenland' and 'Iceland' **Redpolls**, 9 **Common Crossbill**, 14 **Lapland Bunting** and 10 **Reed Bunting**.

**October 17th:** Star bird today was a **Lanceolated Warbler** near Kenaby, delighting all viewers as it scurried quickly through the rough grass. Two **Pallas's Warblers** on Dronger had people groaning about the extra exertion needed to see them! Nine **Yellow-browed Warblers** were scattered mainly along the cliffs in the north of the isle and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** was seen briefly in Gunnawark, whilst the **Little Bunting** was again seen in Easter Lothar. A high count of 17 **Short-eared Owls** were mainly concentrated in da Water whilst 2 **Long-eared Owls** were also seen - one trapped at Barkland and another at Shirva. Thrush counts were; 15 **Ring Ouzel**, 500 **Blackbird**, 32 **Fieldfare**, 420 **Song Thrush**, 5,000 **Redwing** and a **Mistle Thrush**. Other warblers included 120 **Blackcap** and 5 **Chiffchaff** (one eastern). **Goldcrests** reached 360 and **Bramblings** 160 with also 15 **Greenfinch**, 15 'Mealy' **Common Redpoll**, 2 **Hawfinch**, 10 **Reed Bunting** and 2 **Yellowhammer**. A very thin female **Scaup** was picked up at South Light whilst other ducks seen were 2 **Long-tailed Duck** and a **Goldeneye**. Also of note were 22 **Jack Snipe**, an estimated 100 **Woodcock**, a **Whimbrel**, 6 **Wood Pigeon**, 3 **Richards Pipit**, a **Dunnock**, 61 **Robin**, **Black Redstart**, 2 **Common Redstart** and 14 **Wheatear**. Finally, the **Barnacle Goose** record was broken again with 783 counted.

**October 16th:** Yesterday's **Barnacle Goose** record was short-lived with in excess of 700 birds counted today. Thrushes continue to pass through with 5 **Ring Ouzel**, 330 **Blackbird**, 60 **Fieldfare**, 6,000 **Redwing**, 220 **Song Thrush** and a single **Mistle Thrush** reported. Warblers consisted of 35 **Blackcap**, 4 **Yellow-browed**, 2 **Willow** and 9 **Chiffchaff** (including 3 greyish 'eastern' types). The cliffs also continue to ring with the high-pitched calls of **Goldcrest** with 260 noted today. A large flock of **Brambling** has settled in the bird-crop at Kenaby and now numbers 140 birds. Other finches noted were; 20 **Greenfinch**, 3 **Siskin**, 3 **Linnet**, 63 **Twite**, 14 **Redpolls** (one Lesser, 7 Mealy, one Greenland, one Iceland and 4 unidentified) and a **Hawfinch**. Other counts and sightings of note were 10 **Grey Heron**, 6 **Water Rail**, 13 **Jack Snipe**, 25 **Woodcock**, 120 **Common Gull**, 4 **Wood Pigeon**, 9 **Short-eared Owl**, 2 **Long-eared owl**, 2 **Richard's Pipit**, 50 **Robin**, **Black Redstart**, 2 **Yellowhammer** and a **Little Bunting** (at Easter Lothar).

**October 15th:** A proper SE'ly wind brought instant results. There were birds everywhere!! Counts were dominated by thrushes with 9 **Ring Ouzel**, 500 **Blackbird**, 41 **Fieldfare**, 500 **Song Thrush**, 12,000 **Redwing** and a single **Mistle Thrush**. There was also a record count of **Barnacle Geese** with two large flocks present adding up to 608 birds - several sporting coloured darvic rings. Several other species were in much greater numbers than of late; **Water Rail** (7), **Purple Sandpiper** (25), **Jack Snipe** (25), **Common Snipe** (170), **Common Gull** (34), **Short-eared Owl** (6), **Robin** (35), **Blackcap** (45), **Yellow-browed Warbler** (12), **Goldcrest** (300) and **Brambling** (230). Other sightings of note were; 10 **Woodcock**, 2 **Wood Pigeon**, a **Short-toed Lark**, a **Richard's Pipit**, 2 **Black Redstart**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, 2 'eastern' **Chiffchaff**, 7 **Willow Warbler**, a **Spotted Flycatcher**, a **Red-backed Shrike**, 8 **Chaffinch**, 4



**Linnet**, 17 **Redpoll** (mainly 'mealy'), 2 **Hawfinch**, 2 **Yellowhammer** and 7 **Reed Bunting**. Strangest bird however was trapped in the Plantation and appears to be some sort of hybrid Turtle Dove. It was wearing a closed black plastic ring with the inscription NL - H6 04 1022 Any takers?



**Hybrid Turtle Dove**  
*by Rory Tallack*



**October 14th:** A light S'ly turned SSE'ly later on. The **Lanceolated Warbler** showed regularly, but fleetingly, in the Obs Plantation. Other highlights were a **Barred Warbler** at Utra, 2 **Yellow-browed Warblers** and the **Hawfinch** still in the Plantation and a **Common Crossbill**. Fewer thrushes today with 550 **Redwing** but 3 **Ring Ouzel** too. Other counts included 4 **Water Rail**, 19 **Common Gull**, **Short-eared Owl**, the **House Martin** still, 9 **Robin**, 3 **Whinchat**, **Stonechat**, 18 **Blackcap**, 38 **Brambling**, 4 **Siskin**, 2 **Linnet** and a **Yellowhammer**.

**October 13th:** Fair Isle finally came good (in a light Westerly wind!) with a **Lanceolated Warbler** in Bull's Park and then later an **Olive-backed Pipit** at Sma Trinket Geo. Prior to all this however, a **Hawfinch** was trapped in the Plantation in the morning. The **Great Grey Shrike** lingers as do the two **Brent Geese**, two **Yellow-browed Warblers**, **House Martin** and the **Yellowhammer**. Thrushes comprised 2,000 **Redwing**, 5 **Ring Ouzel**, 30 **Blackbird**, 25 **Song Thrush** and 15 **Fieldfare**. Other counts included 23 **Whooper Swan**, **Pintail**, 6 **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Slavonian Grebe**, 3 **Woodcock**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Reed Warbler**, 40 **Blackcap**, 2 **Willow Warbler** and 25 **Brambling**.



**Hawfinch** by Deryk Shaw



**Lanceolated Warbler** by Deryk Shaw



**Lanceolated Warbler** by Deryk Shaw

**October 12th:** Some more wildfowl movement with 23 **Whooper Swan**, 850 **Greylags**, 53 **Pinkfeet**, 70 **Barnacle Goose**, 107 **Wigeon**, **Shoveler** and 21 **Red-breasted Merganser**. A **Slavonian Grebe** frequented South Harbour, where a **Yellowhammer** was found, whilst a **Common Sandpiper** was in the Havens. Two **Short-eared Owls** were seen and the **Great Grey Shrike** remained - impaling a **Blackcap** in the Plantation! Four **Goldfinch** were seen and counts of 300 **Golden Plover**, 3 **Woodcock**, 1500 **Redwing**, **Ring Ouzel**, 3 **Fieldfare**, 45 **Blackbird**, 20 **Song Thrush**, 11 **Blackcap** and 45 **Brambling**.

**October 11th:** A good day for wildfowl with 30 **Whooper Swan**, 53 **Pink-footed Goose**, 300+ **Greylag Goose**, 83 **Barnacle Goose**, the 2 **Brent Goose** (pale bellied), 107 **Wigeon**, 52 **Teal**, 6 **Pintail**, **Tufted Duck**, **Long-tailed Duck** and 7 **Red-breasted Merganser**. The **Great Grey Shrike** was still present whilst new in were a **Common Buzzard**, 3 **Goldfinch** and 3 **Linnet**. Counts included 6 **Grey Heron**, 192 **Golden Plover**, 22 **Jack Snipe**, 140 **Common Snipe**, 169 **Turnstone**, 200 **Meadow Pipit**, 7 **Robin**, 30 **Wheatear**, 2 **Ring Ouzel**, 900 **Redwing**, 13 **Blackcap**, 3 **Yellow-browed Warbler**, 2 **Willow Warbler**, 8 **Goldcrest**, 25 **Brambling**, 10 **Siskin**, 100 **Twite**, 13 **Lapland Bunting** and 66 **Snow Bunting** plus singles of **Red-throated Diver**, **Wood Pigeon**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Stonechat**, **Chiffchaff** and 'mealy' **Redpoll**.

**October 10th:** The **Great Grey Shrike** was trapped in the Plantation. A **Stonechat** was new and 2 **Arctic Terns** also. The sea also produced 2 **Long-tailed Duck**, 2 **Red-throated Diver** and 8 **Red-breasted Merganser**. The two **Brent Geese** remain, with 152 other geese counted. Thrushes were down with 700 **Redwing**, 46 **Blackbird**, 54 **Song Thrush** and 3 **Ring Ouzel**. Eight **Blackcap** and single **Willow** and **Yellow-browed** were the only Warblers seen. Waders were dominated by 120 **Golden Plover** with 12 **Jack Snipe**, 66 **Common Snipe** and 3 **Woodcock** of note.



Great Grey Shrike by Rory Tallack

**October 9th:** The sea was active today with singles of **Red-throated**, **Great Northern** and **Black-throated Diver** seen plus a **Sooty Shearwater**, **Goldeneye**, **Long-tailed Duck**, **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and **Puffin** also reported. A **Wood Pigeon** was new as was a **Great Grey Shrike** and a **Linnet**. Meanwhile 3 **Yellow-browed Warblers** and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** remain. Other sightings and counts included the 2 **Brent Geese**, 18 **Jack Snipe**, **Short-eared Owl**, 110 **Skylark**, 225 **Meadow Pipit**, 5 **Robin**, **Black Redstart**, 5 **Whinchat**, 20 **Wheatear**, **Ring Ouzel**, 55 **Blackbird**, 1200 **Redwing**, 44 **Song Thrush** and 13 **Blackcap**.

**October 8th:** Although the wind was light, birding was made very difficult by the constant heavy rain!! However it did pass in the afternoon to leave some blue sky and sunshine. Highlights were a **Corncrake** in Gilsetter, a **Slavonian Grebe** in South Harbour, a count of 5 **Yellow-browed Warblers**, a **Spotted Flycatcher** plus the 2 **Brent Geese** and the **Iceland Gull** again outside the Observatory. An influx of **Jack Snipe** was noted with at least 40 counted plus 120 **Common Snipe** and a **Woodcock**. A **Storm Petrel** was picked up at South Light (where 7 dead **Redwings** were also collected) and released after dark. Sightings were however dominated by an arrival of thrushes, with 2 **Ring Ouzel**, 100 **Blackbird**, 80 **Song Thrush** and 3,000 **Redwing** counted. Warbler sightings comprised the 5 **Yellow-broweds**, 12 **Blackcap** and a **Garden Warbler**. A flock of 50 **Brambling** and 8 **Siskin** plus 2 **Chaffinch**, 2 **Lesser Redpoll** and 100 **Twite** made up the finch count. Also noted were the **House Martin**, a **Tree Pipit**, 3 **Robin**, the **Bluethroat**, 3 **Whinchat** and 23 **Wheatear**.

**October 7th:** The 2 pale-bellied **Brent Geese** remain, as does the **Iceland Gull**, 2 **Yellow-browed Warblers** and a **Rosefinch**. Single **Red-throated Diver**, **Short-eared Owl** and **House Martin** were seen plus the first **Woodcock** of the autumn. Thrushes dominated once again with a single **Ring Ouzel** and **Fieldfare**, 7 **Blackbird**, 29 **Song Thrush** and 600 **Redwing**. Other counts included 23 **Brambling**, 6 **Siskin**, 11 **Lapland Bunting** and 40 **Snow Bunting**.

**October 6th:** Fair Isle highlights today were 2 **Red-breasted Flycatcher** and 2 pale-bellied **Brent Geese**. The **Richard's Pipit**, **Bluethroat**, 4 **Yellow-browed Warblers** and **Rosefinch** were other noteables. A count of 17 **Jack Snipe** was good and other counts included 20 **Wheatear**, 11 **Blackbird**, **Fieldfare**, 31 **Song Thrush**, 800 **Redwing**, 9 **Blackcap**, 5 **Goldcrest**, 50 **Brambling**, 6 **Siskin**, 110 **Twite**, 7 **Lapland Bunting** and 42 **Snow Bunting**.

**October 5th:** Amazingly, the second dry day in a row, with a brisk SW'ly wind. Highlights were a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** in Hjukni and 7 **Yellow-browed Warblers** but sightings were dominated by a large arrival of **Redwings**. At least 2,000 were counted and whereas up to now all have been dark Icelandic (*coburnii*) birds, the birds today were of the Scandinavian (*iliacus*) race. Along with the **Redwings** were 60 **Song Thrushes**, 4 **Fieldfares**, 6 **Blackbirds** and 2 **Ring Ouzels**. The **Richard's Pipit** remains and just one **Rosefinch** was seen. Other counts included 10 **Jack Snipe**, 70 **Common Snipe**, 100 **Skylark**, 5 **Swallow**, the **House Martin**, 255 **Meadow Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, 36 **Wheatear**, 11 **Blackcap**, 2 **Willow Warbler**, 8 **Goldcrest**, 6 **Chaffinch**, 25 **Brambling**, 9 **Siskin**, 110 **Twite**, 16 **Lapland Bunting** and 79 **Snow Bunting**.

**October 4th:** A very pleasant day with NO RAIN and a light SW'ly wind. The flock of geese (3 species plus the Red-breasted!) reached 220 and a couple of **Tufted Ducks** were seen. A **Long-eared Owl** was flushed from the Gully on early traps. Highlights were 7 **Yellow-browed Warblers**, 2 **Little Buntings**, 2 **Rosefinch**, a **Richard's Pipit** and a **Barred Warbler**. An influx of finches was noted with 21 **Brambling** and 13 **Siskins** with 6 **Chaffinch**, 5 **Linnet** and 80 **Twite**. Thrushes were dominated by **Redwing** (130) with other species barely making double figures.



**October 3rd:** A cloudy morning with a light SW'ly brightened up in the afternoon. Much the same birds around as before - the **Greenland Whitefront** with the 240 strong mixed goose flock. A **Tufted Duck** and 31 **Wigeon** made up the other wildfowl sightings. A **Red-throated Diver** flew by whilst the **Richard's Pipit**, **Bluethroat**, 3 **Rosefinch**, 2 **Greenland Redpolls**, **Ortolan** and **Little Bunting** all remain. The only new things in were a **Tree Pipit**, c45 **Redwing** (the first thrush 'fall' of the autumn) and more **Snow Buntings** (98).



**Richard's Pipit** by Steve Minton

**October 2nd:** Another wet day with a NW'ly wind. New birds in included another **Bluethroat**, at Barkland and another **Little Bunting** - at Kenaby, with the first bird still at Bull's Park. A **House Martin** at North Light and two **Yellow-browed Warblers** were also new. Lingering highlights included the **Ortolan** and a few **Redpolls** (including 2 Greenlands). Other sightings of note were a Red-breasted Merganser, 5 Cormorant, the Greenshank still, 9 Lapland Bunting and 23 Snow Bunting.

**October 1st:** A cooler NW'ly wind today but still a few things came in. A **Bluethroat** was trapped at the Observatory, 4 **Yellow-browed Warblers** were spotted and 2 **Water Rails** eluded many for a while. The 130 strong goose flock included 35 **Barnacles** and the **White-fronted** but also the escaped **Red-breasted Goose** (which has been here since mid-July) for a while before it retreated back to the safety of the Chalet pond!! A **Tree Pipit** was spotted amongst the 205 **Meadow Pipit** - a count only beaten by **Skylark** (215). Three **Sparrowhawks** and two each of **Peregrine**, **Kestrel** and **Merlin** kept most passerines alert. **Bonxies** have been rapidly dwindling the past week or so and are down to just eight on the hill. **Wheatears** had increased to 30 and also 6 **Whinchat**. A handful of **thrushes** (4 species) were seen whilst a similar number of warblers included single **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Whitethroat**, **Garden Warbler** and **Willow Warbler** plus 5 **Blackcap**. Finches comprised **Chaffinch**, 2 **Brambling**, 2 **Siskin**, 2 **Common Rosefinch** and 85 **Twite**. Finally, a nice variety of buntings were present - 8 **Lapland**, 21 **Snow** and singles of **Ortolan** and **Little Bunting**.

## 2005 - SEPTEMBER SIGHTINGS

**September 30th:** The final day of the month was very wet in the morning but brightened up in the afternoon with a light SW'ly wind. New arrivals were; a **Brent Goose**, a **Spotted Crane** in Schoolton ditch, a **Collared Dove**, a nice male **Bluethroat** in the Gully, two **Yellow-browed Warblers** (one trapped) and a **Little Bunting** in the Bull's Park crop. Also around were; 43 **Pink-feet**, 85 **Greylag** and the **Greenland White-fronted Goose**, 4 **Grey Heron**, a whole host of raptors (4 **Sparrowhawk**, 2 **Kestrel**, **Peregrine** and 3 **Merlin**), 5 **Jack Snipe**, 105 **Common Snipe**, 54 **Common Gull**, the **Richard's Pipit**, 67 **Wheatear**, the other **Bluethroat** at Pund, 15 **thrushes** (four species), **Whitethroat**, 4 **Blackcap** and a **Willow Warbler**, 2 **Rosefinch**, 12 **Lapland Bunting**, 17 **Snow Bunting**, the **Ortolan** and 3 **Reed Bunting**.

**September 29th:** Less strong (and dry!) WSW'ly winds eased late afternoon to almost nothing but still not alot of new excitement to be had on the bird front. A **Greenland Whitefronted Goose** joined the 100 strong goose flock. Three **Whooper Swans** flew through. Two **Arctic Terns** were noted. The **Richard's Pipit** remained at the Cemetery, the **Bluethroat** at Pund, two **Rosefinch** at Quoy and the **Ortolan** at the Haa. The **Twite** flock amounted to 120 birds today and included 2 **Linnets**. Other finches were two each of **Chaffinch**, **Brambling**, **Siskin** and three 'types' of **Redpoll** (**Lesser**, **Mealy** and **Greenland**). **Lapland Buntings** reached 13 and **Snow Buntings** 39 whilst other sightings included 2 **Jack Snipe**, 3 **Robins**, **Redstart**, 5 **Whinchat**, 5 **Song Thrush**, 4 **Redwing** and a **Fieldfare**.

**September 28th:** Four **Whooper Swan** started the day off but there was little else new in. One **Richards Pipit**, **Bluethroat**, 3 **Rosefinch**, **Ortolan** and **Little Bunting** were the (lingering) highlights but a **Yellow-browed Warbler** may have been new. Two **Blackcaps** were the only other warblers seen. Three **Short-eared Owls** were a sign of arrivals. A **Robin**, **Black Redstart**, 5 **Whinchat**, 21 **Wheatear** made up the chat family. Other sightings included a handful of **thrushes** (four species), 180 **Twite**, 2 **Chaffinch**, **Brambling**, **Siskin**, 5 **Redpolls** (2 **Lesser**, 2 **Greenland**, **Mealy**), 10 **Lapland Bunting**, 35 **Snow Bunting** and 2 **Reed Bunting**.

**September 27th:** Fair Isle highlights today were 3 **Pintail** and a **Curlew Sandpiper** although national scarcities comprised 2 **Richards Pipit**, **Bluethroat**, **Yellow-browed Warbler**, **Ortolan** and **Little Bunting**. Counts included 120 **Greylag Geese**, 52 **Pink-footed Geese**, 9 **Barnacle Geese**, 2 **Tufted Duck**, 3 **Jack Snipe**, 2 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Short-eared Owl**, 265 **Meadow Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, 2 **Redstart**, 4 **Whinchat**, a few **thrushes**, 5 **Blackcap**, 3 **Chaffinch**, 4 **Brambling**, 150 **Twite** and 5 **Lapland Bunting**.

**September 26th:** A quieter day for birds but not for weather - a near gale-force SSE'ly with rain! A few things were found though. A **Long-eared owl** in the Plantation on morning traps started thing off, followed shortly after by a **Little Bunting** in the Havens. Another **Little Bunting** was found at Lerness and the **Richards Pipit** in Homisdale. Just 4 **Yellow-browed Warblers** and 16 **Blackcaps** were found today plus a handful of **thrushes** and **finches**. A total of 7 **raptors** (not including the LEO) of 4 species terrorised most other birds. An adult **Arctic Tern** was in the Havens whilst the **Bluethroat**, **Ortolan** and 3 each of **Barred Warbler** and **Rosefinch** were also noted. Other sightings included 68 **Wigeon**, 3 **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Wood Pigeon**, 325 **Meadow Pipit**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Dunnock**, 2 **Robin**, 3 **Redstart**, 4 **Whinchat**, **Reed Warbler**, a scattering of common **Phylloscs**, **Pied Flycatcher**, the variety of **Redpolls** and 2 **Reed Buntings**.

**September 25th:** A strong south-easterly wind brought in a few nice birds including 15 **Yellow-browed Warblers**, a variety of **Pipits** (**Richard's**, **Olive-backed** and **Tree**) and a **Bluethroat** plus a scattering of common migrants, including 32 **Barnacle Geese**, 4 **Common Sandpiper**, **Wood Pigeon**, 2 **Robin**, 11 **Common Redstart**, 8 **Whinchat**, **thrushes** (**Blackbird**, 4 **Fieldfare**, 7 **Song Thrush**, 6 **Redwing**), **warblers** (3 **Garden**, 34 **Blackcap**, 6 **Chiffchaff**, 7 **Willow**) with **Pied Flycatcher**, 8 **Chaffinch**, 2 **Brambling** and a **Reed Bunting**. Counts included 35 **Pinkfeet**, 106 **Greylag**, 40 **Wigeon**, 26 **Teal**, **raptors** (3 **Sparrowhawk**, 3 **Kestrel**, 2 **Peregrine** and **Merlin**), 116 **Common** and 2 **Jack Snipe**, 170 **Turnstone**, 150 **Skylark**, 290 **Meadow Pipit**, the suite of **Redpoll** varieties, 6 **Lapland Bunting** and 18 **Snow Bunting**. Three each of **Barred Warbler** and **Rosefinch** must have included at least some lingerers, whilst the **Ortolan** definitely was.



Barred Warbler

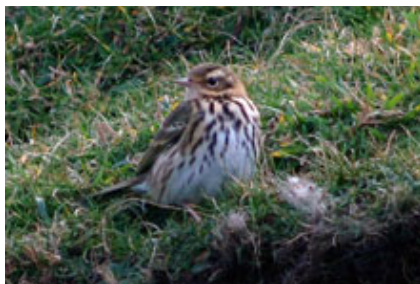


Barred Warbler and Blackcap



Greenland Redpoll

*Photographs by Rebecca Nason*



Olive-backed Pipit



Olive-backed Pipit

**September 24th:** Highlight was the first **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the autumn. Three **Barred Warblers**, two **Rosefinch** and the **Ortolan** made up the other scarcies. A few new birds in included 12 **Song Thrush**, 2 **Blackbird**, 7 **Blackcap** and 4 **Willow Warbler**. Other counts included 70 **Pink-footed Geese**, 40 **Greylags**, 23 **Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck**, **Sooty Shearwater**, a suite of raptors (**Sparrowhawk**, 3 **Kestrel**, **Merlin**, 2 **Peregrine**), 2 **Jack Snipe**, 75 **Common Snipe**, 140 **Skylark**, 200 **Meadow Pipit**, 40 **Wheatear**, 8 **Lapland Bunting** and 21 **Snow Bunting**. The collection of **Redpolls** remain.

**Sept 17th-23rd:** A week dominated by westerly winds and hence no major falls of migrants. However a few nice birds made it here. Highlights of **Corncrake** (20th), **Wood Warbler** (23rd) and **Common Rosefinches** (at least three during the week) whilst the **Barred Warbler** and approachable **Ortolan** remained throughout. A lone **Pink-footed Goose** on 18th was the forerunner of daily passage, peaking at 300 on 22nd and 80 **Greylag** on 21st. Raptors comprised two each of **Peregrine**, **Kestrel** and **Merlin**. An increase in ducks was noted with peak counts of 31 **Wigeon**, 14 **Teal**, 5 **Red-breasted Merganser** and a **Tufted Duck**. The sea produced a handful of **auks** and single **Sooty Shearwaters** (22nd & 23rd). Thrashing the wet areas on land turned up a few **Jack Snipe** (from 19th), with four on 20th the best count so far. Passerines have been scarce with a couple of **Black Redstarts**, a **Common Redstart** (23rd) and a scattering of warblers - daily counts of less than five each of **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap** and **Willow Warbler** plus a couple of the summering **Chiffchaffs** still. These were swamped in the flocks of **Meadow Pipits** continuing to pass through with counts of 2-300 daily, joined by **Skylarks** (c150 daily) and **Twite** (120 daily). A brief sniff of south-easterly winds on 23rd produced a mini-fall of **Song Thrushes** (16) and a few **Goldcrests** (5) plus another **Barred Warbler**, a **Lesser Whitethroat** and **Spotted Flycatcher**. **Lapland Buntings** and **Snow Buntings** have been slowly increasing, peaking at 9 and 31 respectively. Most interest however has been provided by a selection of **Redpolls**; 1-2 **Lesser**, 3 **Mealy**, one **Greenland** plus one 'northwestern'.

**September 16th:** A cooler day with showers and a NNW'ly wind. New arrivals included a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** at Stackhoull. Also seen were a **Red-breasted Merganser**, five **Grey Heron**, **Peregrine**, **Sparrowhawk**, two **Greenshank**, a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a **Lapland Bunting** and 17 **Snow Buntings**. A scattering of warblers included three **Barred** and four each of **Willow** and **Blackcap**. Finally, the **Common Rosefinch** and **Ortolan** remain.



Ortolan Bunting  
Photos by Deryk Shaw



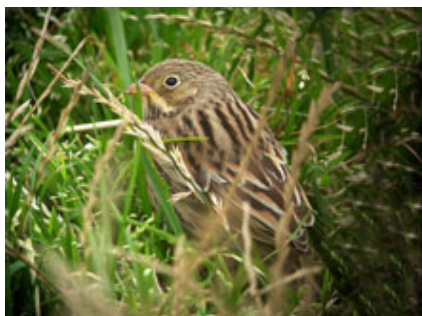
**September 15th:** One **Dotterel** remains, as does the **Ortolan** and **Common Rosefinch**. A **Turtle Dove** was new however and **Red-throated Diver**, **Sooty Shearwater**, two **Cormorant**, two **Ruff**, two **Sparrowhawk**, **Merlin** and **Peregrine** were other non-passerine highlights. Smaller birds included 113 **Skylark**, 340 **Meadow Pipit**, two **Dunnock**, **Black Redstart**, **Song Thrush**, **Sedge Warbler**, two **Barred Warbler**, five **Blackcap**, 11 **Willow Warbler**, 140 **Twite** and 13 **Snow Bunting**.

**September 14th:** The two **Dotterel** remain on Buness and two **Barred Warbler**, **Ortolan** and a **Rosefinch** were in the south. **Willow Warblers** rose to 18 whilst the first movement of **Greylag Geese** (46) was noted. A few ducks (33 **Wigeon** and 13 **Teal**) plus two **Red-throated Diver**, six **Sooty Shearwater** and two **Arctic Tern** were the sea-based highlights. A **Lapland Bunting** and three **Snow Buntings** ended the days log.

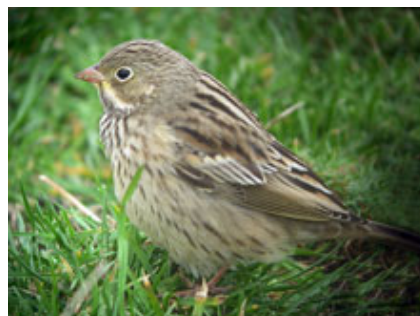
**September 13th:** A male **Goosander** was a nice find and two **Manx Shearwater** flew past. An **Arctic Skua** and two **Arctic Terns** were also seen at sea. The two **Dotterel** remain on Buness but the **American Golden Plover** appears to have gone (to Foula?). Warblers were almost exclusively of the **Willow** variety with 16 counted. Two **Common Rosefinch**, a **Lapland Bunting** and three **Snow Buntings** were all noted.



**September 12th:** Highlight was a confiding **Ortolan Bunting** near South Harbour but the two **Dotterel** and **American Golden Plover** on Buness were almost as confiding. Two **Barred Warblers** and three **Rosefinch** were other scarce migrants noted. Counts included a male **Sparrowhawk**, **Ruff**, 83 **Common Snipe**, two each of **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Greenshank**, 120 **Skylark**, 405 **Meadow Pipit**, 24 **Willow Warbler** and 200 **Twite**. A scattering of other passerines included singles of **Dunnock**, **Robin**, **Black Redstart**, **Whinchat**, **Sedge Warbler** and **Chaffinch**. Two each of **Fieldfare** and **Song Thrush** plus six **Garden Warbler**, three **Blackcap**, two **Goldcrest** and six **Snow Buntings** were also seen. The sea produced two **Sooty Shearwaters** plus five **Minke Whales** and 11 **Harbour Porpoise**.



Ortolan Bunting



Photos by Deryk Shaw

**September 11th:** The **American Golden Plover** remains whilst the **Dotterel** was joined by a second!! Two **Barred Warbler** and three **Rosefinch** were good but were overshadowed by three **Goosander**! Census produced counts of; 40 **Common Gull**, 330 **Meadow Pipit**, two **Fieldfare**, three **Song Thrush**, six **Garden Warbler**, 20 **Willow Warbler**, five **Goldcrest**, two **Pied Flycatcher** and singles of **Arctic Tern**, **Swallow**, **Tree Pipit**, **Dunnock**, **Whinchat**, **Sedge Warbler**, **Reed Warbler**, **Blackcap**, **Chaffinch**, **Tree Sparrow** and **Snow Bunting**.



Western Bonelli's Warbler

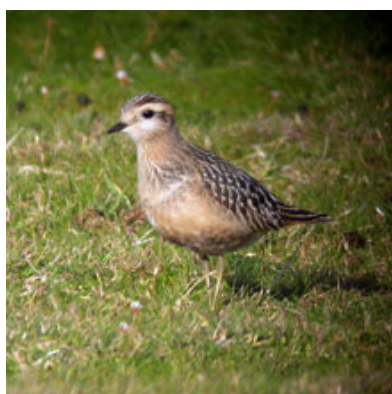
Photos by Deryk Shaw



**September 10th:** A light south-easterly wind produced a good days birding. The best by far was the **Western Bonelli's Warbler** found at Quoy and later trapped near North Shirva. Measurements and plumage better fitted the western species but unfortunately it did not call. Also today were the **American Golden Plover** and **Dotterel** on Buness whilst new birds in included a **Corncrake**, a **Wryneck**, a **Grasshopper Warbler**, four **Barred Warblers**, six **Lesser Whitethroat**, up to 60 **Willow Warbler** and three **Common Rosefinch**. A return trip on the Good Shepherd produced two **Minke Whales**, a **White-sided Dolphin** plus two **Sooty Shearwater** and c12 **Storm Petrel**.

**September 9th:** The **American Golden Plover** and **Dotterel** remained together on Buness and the **Icterine Warbler** was still at Barkland. A scattering of common warblers was noted plus three **Barred Warblers** and a **Common Rosefinch** and **Lapland Bunting**. Three **Snow Buntings** are now on Buness.

Photos by Deryk Shaw



Dotterel



American Golden Plover

**September 8th:** A good day with highlights of an **American Golden Plover** and a **Dotterel** - both juveniles - together on Bunes! Bird of the day however went to the **Cory's Shearwater** just off North Light - but unfortunately seen by just two people - everyone else had to be content with a **Sooty Shearwater** and a **Storm Petrel** plus two each of **Guillemot**, **Razorbill** and **Puffin**! A **Moorhen** in the Gully was new as were the first **Snow Buntings** (2) of the autumn. Remaining scarcities included **Barred Warbler**, **Icterine Warbler** and **Red-backed Shrike**. A handful of commoner warblers were also seen plus singles of **Goldcrest** and **Pied Flycatcher**. seven **Common Terns** were noted off Bunes and a juvenile **Arctic Skua**.



**Dotterel+American Golden Plover**  
*Photo by Deryk Shaw*



**American Golden Plover**  
*3 photos by Paul Baxter*



**Icterine Warbler**



**Dotterel**

**September 7th:** Highlights today were just the lingering **Barred Warblers** (2), **Icterine Warbler** and **Red-backed Shrikes** (2) although the first **Siskin** and **Lapland Bunting** of the autumn were good whilst a **Song Thrush** and **House Martin** were also new. Counts included 49 **Golden Plover**, 45 **Dunlin**, 56 **Redshank**, 163 **Turnstone**, 565 **Meadow Pipit** and 83 **Wheatear**.

**September 6th:** Much the same as yesterday with the **Thrush Nightingale** and **Booted Warbler** both still present, today in close proximity at Skerryholm. Other highlights included remaining three **Barred Warblers**, an **Icterine Warbler** and the two **Red-backed Shrikes**. Wildfowl highlights were the four **Pinkfeet**, 12 **Wigeon**, 17 **Teal** and a **Tufted Duck** plus of course the tame **Red-breasted Goose**. Other counts included four **Kestrels**, three **Sparrowhawks**, 14 **Sanderling**, three **Reed Warbler**, two **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Common Whitethroat**, two **Goldcrest**, two **Pied Flycatcher** and the long-staying two **Tree Sparrows**. A number of sightings reported from the Good Shepherd IV crossing included a **Robin** (first of the autumn) and a **Grey Phalarope** as well as a selection of cetaceans (**Minke Whale**, **White-sided Dolphins**, **White-beaked Dolphins**, **Common Dolphins** and **Harbour Porpoise**).



**Thrush Nightingale**

*Photos by Paul Baxter*



**September 5th:** Absolute blanket fog all day but the **Booted Warbler** was re-found early this morning at Setter, but disappeared shortly after and could not be relocated. The ringed **Icterine Warbler** remained at the Chalet and the two **Red-backed Shrikes** and three **Barred Warblers** remain. It was looking like no new stuff had arrived (understandably given the weather) when a **Thrush Nightingale** was discovered mid-afternoon at Skerryholm. It showed extremely well to all 15 or so people present and narrowly escaped the Skerryholm cat!! Other sightings in the fog included seven **Grey Heron**, three **Sparrowhawk**, two **Tree Pipit**, a **Black Redstart**, a **Common Redstart**, three **Whinchat**, **Fieldfare**, two **Reed Warbler**, three **Garden Warbler**, nine **Willow Warbler**, two **Goldcrest** and a **Pied Flycatcher**.

**Thrush Nightingale**





Photo by Rory Tallack

**September 4th:** A better day with a few new birds in with morning census producing three **Icterine Warblers**, three **Barred Warblers**, two **Red-backed Shrikes**, a **Wryneck** and the first **Blackcaps**(2) of the autumn. Other counts and highlights included; seven **Grey Heron**, three **Sparrowhawk**, five **Kestrel**, a **Merlin**, 63 **Ringed Plover**, 27 **Golden Plover**, 69 **Dunlin**, two **Ruff**, 77 **Common Snipe**, **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Greenshank**, 157 **Turnstone**, an **Arctic Skua** (adult), a **Common Tern**, 585 **Meadow Pipit**, 92 'alba' **Wagtails**, four **Whinchat**, 115 **Wheatear**, **Fieldfare**, **Reed Warbler**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Whitethroat**, two **Garden Warbler**, ten **Willow Warbler**, two **Goldcrest**, eight **Pied Flycatcher** and the two **Tree Sparrows**. A **Puffin** was seen entering a burrow with fish - a very late nester!! Best of all waited until the evening when a **Booted Warbler** was discovered at Field Ditch. Unfortunately it only showed to one person and very briefly to two others before disappearing as the light faded. With fog forecast overnight and tomorrow, hopefully it shall still be present!!!



Icterine Warbler

Photos by  
Paul Baxter

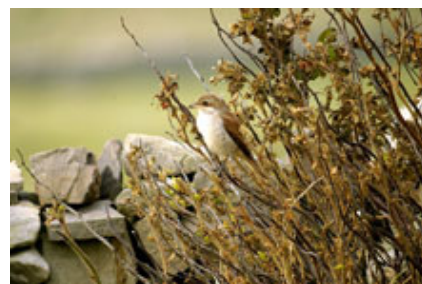


Photo by Paul Baxter



Red-backed Shrike

Photo by Steve Minton



Red-backed Shrike

**September 3rd:** Highlights today could have been better given the conditions but we had to settle for five **Barred Warblers**, an **Icterine warbler**, **Red-backed Shrike** and a **Common Rosefinch**. Counts of three **Sparrowhawk**, three **Kestrel**, 54 **Dunlin**, **Ruff**, 550 **Meadow Pipit**, 67 'alba' **Wagtails**, three **Whinchat**, 86 **Wheatear**, a scattering of **common warblers**, five **Pied Flycatcher** and a **Common Crossbill** were also made.

**September 2nd:** Highlights today were the three **Honey Buzzards** (two together at 1200hrs and another at 1300hrs) followed later by three **Kestrels** and a **Sparrowhawk**. As well as raptors an increase in warblers was noted with six **Barred Warblers** and an **Icterine** leading the way but also 12 **Willow Warblers**, five **Garden warblers** plus two each of **Reed Warbler** and **Lesser Whitethroat**. Also new in were six **Whinchat** and a **Pied Flycatcher**. Other counts included 20 **Knot**, six **Sanderling**, just one **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Ruff** plus 138 **Wheatear** and 50 'alba' **Wagtails**. Lone **Cormorant**, **Arctic Skua** (an adult), **Razorbill**,



Pied Flycatcher Photo Paul Baxter



**Tree Pipit** and **Fieldfare** were also seen. The four **Pink-footed Geese** are still present and two **Black Redstarts**.

**September 1st:** A new month started where the last ended with a scattering of warblers (three **Barred**, nine **Willow**, five **Garden**, and single **Reed Warbler** and **Lesser Whitethroat**). An increase in ducks was noted with 23 **Wigeon** and 37 **Teal**. Other counts included seven **Grey Herons**, **Sparrowhawk**, two **Kestrels**, 23 **Knot**, nine **Sanderling**, 12 **Golden plover**, 84 **Common Snipe**, 84 **Redshank**, 750 **Meadow Pipit**, four **Whinchat** and 12 **Raven**. Singles of **Ruff**, **Arctic Skua** (a lingering juvenile), **Greenshank**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Fieldfare** and **Song Thrush** were also spotted.

## 2005 - AUGUST SIGHTINGS

**August 31st:** A few new things included a **Common Rosefinch** and the first **Goldcrest** of the autumn. One (of the two present) **Barred Warbler** was new. Other counts included 14 **Teal**, a **Sooty Shearwater**, **Sparrowhawk**, **Kestrel**, 14 **Knot**, 84 **Common Snipe**, 155 **Turnstone**, **Greenshank**, two **Green Sandpipers**, **Tree Pipit**, 725 **Meadow Pipit**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, five **Garden Warbler**, 11 **Willow Warbler**, six **Pied Flycatcher**, the two **Tree Sparrow** and 88 **Twite**.

**August 27th:** Two **Barred Warblers** and the **Red-backed Shrike** were seen. Two **Sooty** and a **Manx Shearwater** were reported from the *Good Shepherd IV* crossing. A 'blue' **Fulmar**, the first **Arctic Tern** for several days and a **Redpoll sp.** were other highlights. Counts included **Sparrowhawk** and **Kestrel**, 30 **Ringed Plover**, 50 **Oystercatcher**, 20 **Golden Plover**, 9 **Knot**, 10 **Sanderling**, 76 **Dunlin**, 9 **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Bar-tailed Godwit**, 120 **Turnstone**, a **Short-eared Owl**, 575 **Meadow Pipit**, a **Whinchat**, 192 **Wheatear**, the **Marsh Warbler** again and 87 **Twite**.

**August 26th:** Five **Barred Warblers** and the **Red-backed Shrike** remain. Single **Sedge**, **Garden**, the **Marsh Warbler** and three summering **Chiffchaffs** were the only other warblers seen. The Chalet pond collection (including the **Red-breasted Goose**) was joined briefly by two **Wigeon** and seven **Teal**. Waders consisted of 54 **Ringed Plover**, 20 **Golden Plover**, 15 **Knot**, five **Sanderling**, 66 **Dunlin**, **Ruff**, five **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Bar-tailed Godwit**. Other passerines of note included 560 **Meadow Pipit**, 60 'alba' **Wagtails** (mostly Whites), a **Whinchat**, 158 **Wheatear** and 81 **Twite**.

**August 25th:** Five **Barred Warblers** and the **Red-backed Shrike** remain. Three **Manx Shearwater** were seen of South Light and the same seawatch produced a **Puffin**. Waders were in evidence again with 10 **Knot**, 10 **Sanderling**, 56 **Dunlin**, 10 **Black-tailed Godwit**, 100 **Redshank**, **Greenshank** and 110 **Turnstone**. Other good counts included 22 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, 450 **Meadow Pipit**, 80 'alba' **Wagtail** (nearly all Whites), two **Black Redstart** and 132 **Wheatear** (including many 'Greenland'). Singles of **Sparrowhawk**, **Kestrel**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Whinchat**, **Sedge**, **Garden** & **Willow Warbler** and **Common Crossbill** added variety.

In a poor year for butterflies, a **Red Admiral** was seen in the Obs garden.

**August 24th:** Three **Barred Warblers** and the **Red-backed Shrike** remain. Highlight however was the record flock of **17 Black-tailed Godwit** which alighted on the new scrape (the previous highest number was a party of 13 in August 1990). Other wader numbers had increased and included 11 **Knot**, 18 **Sanderling**, 80 **Dunlin**, 150 **Redshank** and 140 **Turnstone**. An hours seawatching off South Light produced 12 **Sooty Shearwaters**, three **Manx Shearwaters** and two **Puffins**. Around the crofts and the hill were a **Swift**, 400 **Meadow Pipit**, 110 'alba' **Wagtail** (mainly White), a **Black Redstart**, 150 **Wheatear** (including 'Greenland'), the two **Tree Sparrow** and a male **Common Crossbill**.

**August 23rd:** A few more ducks noted with five **Wigeon** and seven **Teal** joining the **Shoveler**. Two **Sooty Shearwaters** were reported from the *Good Shepherd IV* and a **Short-eared Owl** floated around the isle. Waders of note included ten **Knot**, 30 **Curlew** and three **Whimbrel**. Passerines of note were; five **Barred Warbler**, three **Garden Warbler**, **Red-backed Shrike** and **Pied Flycatcher**.

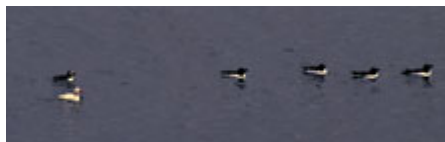
**August 22nd:** Highlights were five **Barred Warblers** plus the **Common Rosefinch** and **Red-backed Shrike**. The two **Wigeon** and **Shoveler** remain on the Chalet Pond and elsewhere. Single **Ruff**, **Black-tailed Godwit** and **Greenshank** added variety to counts of **Ringed Plover** (27), **Knot** (10), **Sanderling** (4), **Purple Sandpiper** (9), **Dunlin** (29), **Redshank** (50), **Turnstone** (71), **Common Gull** (34), **Meadow Pipit** (103), "alba" **Wagtail** (36), **Wheatear** (120), **Garden Warbler** (2) and **Willow Warbler** (5).

**August 21st:** Five **Barred Warblers** and the **Red-backed Shrike** and one **Common Rosefinch** were the rarest sightings but more interesting was the tricky **Marsh Warbler** trapped in the Vaadal and the first **Tree Pipit** of the autumn. An influx of **Common Gulls** produced a count of 261. Other counts and sightings of note were: **Wigeon** (2), **Teal** (15), **Shoveler**, **Ringed Plover** (28), **Knot** (8), **Dunlin** (25), **Ruff** (2), **Meadow Pipit** (160), **Black Redstart** (2), **Wheatear** (150), **Whinchat**, **Willow Warbler** (6) and **Twite** (114).

**August 20th:** At last, some decent SE'ly winds.....and some birds!! Highlights were the seven **Barred Warblers**, two **Common Rosefinches** and the juvenile **Red-backed Shrike**. Other influxes included 34 **Golden Plover**, 24 **Dunlin**, 88 **Common Snipe**, a **Wood Pigeon**, six **Swift**, 150 **Meadow Pipit**, 34 'alba' **Wagtails** and two **Whinchat**. **Black-tailed Godwit**, **Greenshank** and two **Common Sandpiper** were the wader highlights. The **Shoveler** was seen again and two **Kestrel**, six **Swift**, **Black Redstart**, 170 **Wheatear**, two **Fieldfare**, three **Garden Warbler**, six

**Willow Warbler** and the two **Tree Sparrow**. **Arctic Skuas** are dwindling fast with just 11 counted (including four juveniles) whilst two **Guillemot** and a **Puffin** were also stragglers.

A couple of extraordinarily coloured birds!



**Puffin** *Photo Corina Torregrosa*



**Starling** *Photo Rory Tallack*



**Common Rosefinch**

*Photos Deryk Shaw*



**Barred Warbler**

**August 19<sup>th</sup>**: Six **Greylag** flew over first thing and two **Teal** and one **Shoveler** were noted. Both **Black-tailed** and **Bar-tailed Godwits** were seen as was the first **Whinchat** of the autumn. Other sightings of note included 71 **Redshank**, a **Razorbill**, 72 **Meadow Pipit**, two **Black Redstart**, 105 **Wheatear**, the long-staying female **Blackbird**, two **Fieldfare**, **Pied Flycatcher**, two **Tree Sparrow** and two **Common Crossbill**. Warblers included the four summering **Chiffchaff** plus **Sedge**, three **Garden**, four **Willow** and two **Barred Warblers**. The crew of the *Good Shepherd IV* reported two **Sooty Shearwaters** and 30+ **Storm Petrels**.

**August 18<sup>th</sup>**: Ducks were in evidence with two **Wigeon**, four **Teal** and two **Shoveler** spotted. Waders of note included 13 **Knot**, eight **Sanderling**, a **Ruff**, a **Black-tailed Godwit**, 57 **Redshank** and **Green Sandpiper**. New in were two **Fieldfare** and three **Willow Warblers** but best of all were the two **Common Rosefinch**.

**August 17<sup>th</sup>**: An increase in warblers included five **Sedge** and three **Garden Warblers**. Two **Swift**, **Sparrowhawk**, 80 **Meadow Pipit** and a **Pied Flycatcher** were also counted.

**August 16<sup>th</sup>**: A **Ruff**, **Greenshank** and **Common Sandpiper** were the wader highlights. A **Swift** and 100 **Wheatears** were counted and two **Tree Sparrows** are possibly summering birds.

**August 15<sup>th</sup>**: Six **Teal** were new as was a **Greenshank** and three **Sedge Warblers**. **Arctic Terns** have cleared out en-masse with just ten counted. Twenty **Storm Petrels** were trapped at night.

**August 14<sup>th</sup>**: Raptors were in evidence with **Peregrine**, **Kestrel**, **Sparrowhawk** and **Short-eared Owl** all on show. A **Pied Flycatcher** was the first of the autumn and **Sedge Warbler** and six **Willow Warbler** showed autumn passage migrants were trickling through. Two **Black Redstart** and 150 **Wheatear** were also seen. Best of all however was a flock of 20 **Bar-tailed Godwit** – the largest number for 25 years!!

**August 13<sup>th</sup>**: Highlight was the first **Barred Warbler** of the autumn but also a **Peregrine**, **Fieldfare**, **Sedge Warbler**, two **Garden Warbler** and a **Willow Warbler** were all new. Six **Ruff** is a good count whilst **Wheatears** topped 140 and **Twite** 127. A good nights "petrelling" produced 127 **Stormies** and two **Leach's**.

**August 12<sup>th</sup>**: A **Manx Shearwater** from North Light was the best bird today. Two **Grey Herons**, **Kestrel**, three **Knot**, five **Dunlin**, six **Guillemot**, eight **Swallow**, two **Black Redstart**, 86 **Wheatear**, 103 **Twite** and a **Common Crossbill** were other counts.



**August 11<sup>th</sup>**: Five **Sanderling** remain and were joined by three **Knot**. The **Short-eared Owl** was seen again and a **Sooty Shearwater** from Buness.

**August 10<sup>th</sup>**: Waders dominated with six **Sanderling**, two **Whimbrel** and 21 **Curlew**. Also counted were 41 **Common Gulls** and six **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** on the newly cut haylage fields. Two **Razorbills** and a **Swift** were the other highlights.

**August 9<sup>th</sup>**: The three **Grey Heron** and **Common Sandpiper** remain plus a **Short-eared Owl**. **Wheatears** topped 100, **Meadow Pipits** 75 and a **Black Redstart** was new.

**August 8<sup>th</sup>**: Three **Grey Heron**, two **Ringed Plover**, two **Ruff**, two **Common Sandpiper**, demonstrated the increase in wader passage, whilst **Marsh Warbler**, **Willow Warbler** and two **Common Crossbill** hinted that (finally) autumn is just around the corner!

**August 7<sup>th</sup>**: Eleven **Purple Sandpipers** and **Ruff** (year tick) were the day's highlights.

**August 6<sup>th</sup>**: Two **Grey Heron** remained, whilst **Oystercatcher** numbered 153.

**August 5<sup>th</sup>**: Two **Grey Heron**, female **Kestrel**, 40 **Redshank** and eight **Swallows** were the best on offer.

**August 4<sup>th</sup>**: Two **Grey Heron**, 200 **Oystercatcher**, 58 **Turnstone** and six **Common Crossbill**.

**August 3<sup>rd</sup>**: Some higher counts today included 23 **Purple Sandpipers**, 65 **Black-headed Gulls**, 115 **Wheatear** and six **Common Crossbills**.

**August 2<sup>nd</sup>**: A **Greylag Goose**, **Grey Heron**, 6 **Dunlin** and **Black Redstart** were the highlights.

**August 1<sup>st</sup>**: Very few **Guillemot** and **Razorbills** are left ashore. A **Red-throated Diver** flew over. A **Storm Petrel** ringing session at night resulted in 61 birds being ringed.

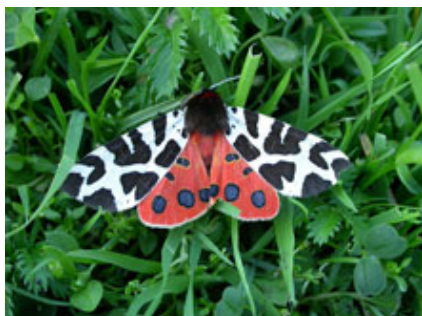
## 2005 - JULY SIGHTINGS

**July 17<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>:** One or two **Grey Herons** were reported regularly. Waders were represented by 1-2 **Knot** and **Sanderling** throughout with **Greenshank** (22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>) and **Oystercatchers** reached 164 (31<sup>st</sup>). Two **Sandwich Terns** amongst the 400 **Arctic Terns** on 25<sup>th</sup> were a year tick. A **Wood Pigeon** and **Collared Dove** were noted (29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>) and a **Cuckoo** (21<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>). A female **Blackbird** was noted on 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> and **Black Redstarts** (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>) whilst 2-8 **Common Crossbills** were counted almost daily, but for 30 on 19<sup>th</sup>. The two **Tree Sparrows** were seen daily, as was the escaped **Red-breasted Goose**. Regular "Petrelling" produced a maximum catch of 76 **Storm Petrels** (27<sup>th</sup>) plus **Leach's Petrels** on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>.

Three **Killer Whales** were seen on 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>.

**July 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>:** A scour of the hill for skua chicks on 15<sup>th</sup> produced just 5 **Arctics** and 7 **Bonxies** - evidence of another poor breeding season! Failed **Arctic Terns** gathering at South Light numbered 130 whilst some wader passage on 17<sup>th</sup> produced counts of 171 **Oystercatcher**, 18 **Lapwing**, 39 **Curlew**, 6 **Whimbrel**, 2 **Golden Plover**, 18 **Redshank** and 2 **Knot**. Another tape-luring session on the night of 18<sup>th</sup> pulled in 35 **Storm** and single **Leach's Petrels** when a female **Blackbird** frequented the Observatory garden. the 19<sup>th</sup> was the best day of the week with a **Green Sandpiper** on the brand new scrape at Ultra - hopefully the first of many waders on there this autumn - a **Linnet** and a **Redpoll sp** overhead and a flock of 30 **Common Crossbills** on the cliffs (including one with very striking wing-bars). Petrel tape-luring that night produced 31 **Stormies** and another **Leach's** but also a **Black Redstart**!! Two **Sanderling** were the highlight of 20<sup>th</sup>.

What has been a very poor year for moths has had some highlights with the increasing number of **Magpie moths** in evidence in recent years reaching an all time high this week with field counts of ten (15<sup>th</sup>) and 14 (17<sup>th</sup>) swelling the 14 caught in the mercury vapour lamp trap!! Pride of place however goes to the beautiful **Garden Tiger** moth caught on 19<sup>th</sup> - the first record for Fair Isle.

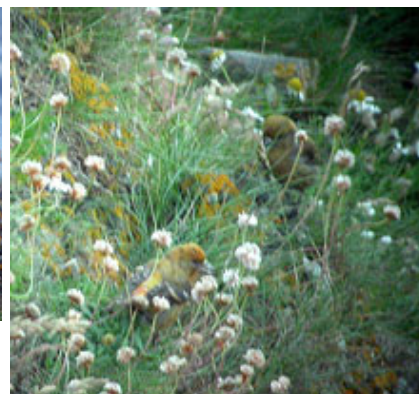


Garden Tiger moth



Wing-barred Common Crossbill

*Photos Deryk Shaw*



**July 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>:** The **Black-tailed Godwit** was still present on 8<sup>th</sup>, when a **Bar-tailed Godwit** was also seen but bird of the day was the **Reed Warbler** trapped in the Gully and a **Common Whitethroat** in the Plantation. A **Cuckoo** was present 'til 13<sup>th</sup>. Seven **Storm Petrels** were trapped on 9<sup>th</sup>, 13 on 11<sup>th</sup> (also including the first **Leach's Petrel**) and 24 on 12<sup>th</sup> (plus two **Leach's** - one trapped). Waders this week included peak counts of 33 **Redshank**, 24 **Lapwing**, 125 **Oystercatcher**, 2 **Knot** and 12 **Curlew**. A **Manx Shearwater** was reward for a couple of hours seawatch on 13<sup>th</sup> and a flock of 12 **Common Crossbills** was spotted on 14<sup>th</sup>. A potential addition to the Fair Isle list was a fine **Red-breasted Goose**, but it chose to associate with the feral ducks on the Chalet Pond and came to bread - obviously an escape! Bird of the week however was the *pure white* **Puffin** seen by two of our visitors at Furse!

**July 1<sup>st</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>:** Two **Sandwich Terns** on 1<sup>st</sup> were a nice year tick (with four on 3<sup>rd</sup>), when 31 **Curlews** flew through heading south once more. Other waders included 10 **Whimbrel** (2<sup>nd</sup>), 23 **Lapwing** (3<sup>rd</sup>) and a few **Golden Plovers**. **Grey Herons** began to appear with three (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>). A **Red-breasted Merganser** in North Haven (5<sup>th</sup>) was not as good as a **Leach's Petrel** seen from The Good Shepherd but a **Song Thrush** trapped the same day was unexpected and a **Cuckoo** also arrived. A **Common Crossbill** on 6<sup>th</sup> was the forerunner of a few more later whilst other sightings that day included **Common Sandpiper**, **Siskin** and **Linnet**. the 7<sup>th</sup> saw a **Red-throated Diver** fly over, a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Pund and two **Tree Sparrows** at Setter and the first **Storm Petrel** trapping session of the year outside the Observatory resulted in three birds being caught. At least four **Chiffchaffs** appear to be summering on the isle.

## 2005 - JUNE SIGHTINGS

**June 26th:** A **Red-throated Diver** flew over and 4 **Common Swift** cruised around the cliffs. A **Grey Wagtail** was an unusual summer record and two each of **Sedge** and **Garden Warblers** and a juvenile **Common Crossbill** were also seen.

**June 25th:** Not much today with highlights(?) of **Turtle Dove**, **Short-eared Owl**, 2 **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap** and juvenile **Common Crossbill** (trapped).



**Juvenile Common Crossbill**

*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**June 24th:** A male **Goosander** was most unexpected. A **Quail** was heard and pigeons comprised 2 **Wood Pigeon**, 5 **Collared Dove** and a **Turtle Dove**. Two **Short-eared Owls** were seen again and a scattering of warblers included **Whitethroat**, **Garden Warbler**, **Willow Warbler** and 2 **Chiffchaff**. A **Common Redstart** and male **Common Crossbill** were new.

**June 23rd:** The **Arctic Warbler** was found again in the Vaadal/Plantation area. A male **Red-backed Shrike** was nice and a **Teal** and 4 **Common Crossbills** were also new. Eleven **Collared Doves** and 2 **Turtle Doves** were noted and a female **Blackbird** and a **Spotted Flycatcher** were trapped.



**Spotted Flycatcher**

*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**June 22nd:** A sudden burst of activity started with an **ARCTIC WARBLER** caught on the pre-breakfast trap round. An influx of other warblers included 2 **Sedge**, 2 **Common Whitethroat**, 2 **Garden**, 5 **Chiffchaff** and a **Willow Warbler**. An arrival of Pigeons was noted with 2 **Wood Pigeon**, 13 **Collared Dove** and 3 **Turtle Dove**. A few hirundines included 3 **Sand Martin** whilst a **Kestrel**, female **Blackbird** and 2 **Common Crossbill** were also new. Finally, an **Osprey** caused commotion as it toured around the isle in the afternoon.

A **Red Admiral** butterfly was also seen.



**Arctic Warbler**

*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**June 21st:** Quieter still although the **Cuckoo** was seen again and a **Sanderling** was in the Havens.

**June 20th:** Another quiet day but a **Turtle Dove** was nice and a male **Chaffinch** was a real surprise.

**June 19th:** Highlight was the final arrival of our first **Cuckoo**. The **Canada Geese**, **Tufted Duck**, a **Short-eared Owl** and **Wood Warbler** were all noted again whilst a female **Ring Ouzel** was new. A **Red Admiral** butterfly was also a year tick.

**June 18th:** A quieter day with the **Canada Geese**, **Tufted Duck** and **Wood Warbler** still present. A **Rook** may have been new.

**June 17th:** Much the same stuff as yesterday with the **Blyths Reed Warbler** (in the Obs Plantation), the **Icterine** and a scattering of **common warblers** plus hirundines (including a **Sand Martin**). New in were 6 **Canada Geese**, 11 **Collared Dove**, a female **Blackbird** and male **Ring Ouzel**.





**Blyth's Reed Warbler**

*Photos  
Deryk Shaw*

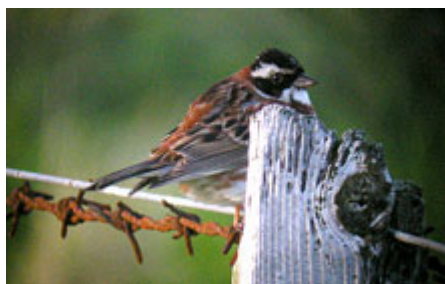


**June 16th:** A very warm pleasant day with a few birds.....Highlight was undoubtedly the **BLYTH'S REED WARBLER** found at the Chalet with support from a **Quail**, two **Red-backed Shrikes**, **Icterine Warbler** and a male **Grey-headed Wagtail**. The male **Tufted Duck** was seen again and 6 **Swift** were joined by 15 **Swallow** and 13 **House Martin**. A fair scattering of other warblers included **Reed**, **Sedge**, 6 **Common Whitethroat**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, 3 **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap**, **Wood Warbler**, 5 **Chiffchaff** and 2 **Willow Warbler**. Two **Common Redstart**, a **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Common Redpoll** were also noted.

A **Small Tortoiseshell** butterfly was also a first for the year.

**June 15th:** The **Red-backed Shrike**, **Marsh Warbler** and **Wood Warbler** were all seen again and a **Common Crossbill** was new for the year.

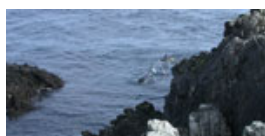
**June 14th:** An easterly wind and a few birds.....a **Red-necked Phalarope** was found on the pools at Mire o' Vatnagard, a **Quail** at Boini Mire, a female **Red-backed Shrike** at Shirva, a **Wood Warbler** at Hjukni and a **Marsh Warbler** at Lower Stoneybrek and a scattering of **common warblers** and two **Spotted Flycatchers**.



**June 13th:** A hint of North-easterly and an evening stroll around the isle produced a fine male **Rustic Bunting** at Shirva.

*Photo Rael Butcher*

**June 12th:** Killer whales off Fair Isle.



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Rael Butcher*



*Photo Rebecca Rosser*



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Rael Butcher*



*Photo Deryk Shaw*



*Photo Rael Butcher*



*Photo Rael Butcher*



*Photo Rebecca Rosser*

**June 7th:** No sign of the recent rarities but a **Cormorant**, two **Sparrowhawk**, three **Swift** and three **Rook** were new. Two **Short-eared owls** linger on and a few common warblers were noted.

**June 6th:** A quieter day but the **Red-rumped Swallow** was seen again as well as **Icterine Warbler**, **Reed Warbler** and the two **Tree Sparrow**. Two **Redwing** were new.

**June 5th:** The **Subalpine** and **Icterine** were noted again amidst a thin scattering of common warblers (including two **Reed Warbler**). A **Red-throated Diver** was seen and heard whilst a **Quail** was just heard. New in were a **Grey Heron**, two **Common Sandpiper**, a 2ndS **Iceland Gull** and a male **Black Redstart**. A **Spotted Flycatcher** and the two **Tree Sparrows** remain but pride of place went to the highly mobile and elusive **Red-rumped Swallow**.

**June 4th:** The **Subalpine** and **Icterine Warblers** remain along with a scattering of commoner warblers including **Marsh**, 4 **Common Whitethroat**, 3 **Lesser Whitethroat**, 7 **Chiffchaff** and 4 **Willow Warbler**. **Turtle Dove** appeared outside the Obs and a **Black-tailed Godwit** was reported. A **flava wagtail** flew over as did a vocal **Red-throated Diver**. Four **Spotted Flycatcher**, 2 **Tree Sparrow**, the singing male **Siskin** and female **Snow Bunting** and **Yellowhammer** were also noted.

**June 3rd:** Blanket fog most of the day, which eventually mostly cleared mid-afternoon. The **Subalpine Warbler** and **Red-backed Shrike** were seen again but new in were another **Icterine Warbler** and two **Marsh Warblers**. A scattering of common warblers and flycatchers were also noted plus the long-lingering **Rook** and two **Tree Sparrows**.



**Subalpine Warbler**  
*Photo Rebecca Nason*

**June 2nd:** A pleasant day with a mainly ESE'ly breeze. Most sightings were of lingering birds from previous days but a **Turtle Dove** and **Black-tailed Godwit** were both new for the year. The female **Subalpine Warbler** was at Shirva (later relocating back to the Chalet), whilst female **Bluethroat**, **Red-backed Shrike** and the male **Grey-headed Wagtail** and **Common Rosefinch** were also logged. Other sightings included a few **common warblers**, the three **Wigeon**, **Pied** and **Spotted Flycatchers**, two **Tree Sparrows** and **Yellowhammer**.

**June 1st:** A lovely morning with a light NE'ly soon freshened a little as it clouded over and became ESE'ly. Star bird was a female **Subalpine Warbler** at the Chalet, supported by an **Icterine Warbler** across the road at Barkland and a singing first-summer male **Common Rosefinch** at Setter. The **Red-backed Shrike** was trapped in North Grind in the afternoon and one **Quail** was heard. Other birds of note included; 5 **Song Thrush**, **Reed Warbler**, **Goldcrest**, **Spotted Flycatcher**, 3 **Tree Sparrow** and **Yellowhammer**.

**Red-backed Shrike**  
*Photo Deryk Shaw*



## 2005 - MAY SIGHTINGS

**May 31st:** May ended with possibly the best days birding of the month - although it didn't really start until lunchtime!! A good start was the re-appearance of the **Tawny Pipit** on Bunness - following an eight day absence! Two **Quail** were heard singing in the south of the isle. A well overdue **Red-backed Shrike** (female) was in Hjukni Geo and a **Long-eared Owl** was flushed from Hill Dyke whilst three **Short-eared Owls** remain. A female **Hen Harrier**, two **Sparrowhawk**, **Kestrel** and **Merlin** completed the raptor round-up. Both **Black** and **Common Redstart** were seen and three **Bluethroats** were found. A cracking male **Grey-headed Wagtail** was seen at various parts of the isle and a few hirundines (20 **Swallow**, 14 **House Martin**) were counted as were a thin scattering of common warblers. Most unexpected though was the **Great-spotted Woodpecker** at the Plantation in the evening!

**May 30th:** Another quiet day but a **Black Redstart** was new and three **Quail** were noted.

**May 29th:** A better day for birds, although still miserable weather and a cold N'ly wind. A male **Dotterel** was found near the School, a **Quail** at Leogh and a new male **Hen Harrier** drifted through. Other counts and sightings included; **Knot**, 49 **Dunlin**, 9 **Whimbrel**, **Common Sandpiper**, 36 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, **Short-eared Owl**, 12 **Swallow**, 2 **House Martin**, the **Rook**, 2 **Tree Sparrows** and male **Yellowhammer**.

**May 28th:** A much quieter day with the a stiff N'ly wind and rain. New birds were a **Waxwing**, male **Siskin** and male **Yellowhammer**. A **Sparrowhawk**, **Short-eared Owl**, 3 **Tree Pipit**, the long-staying **Rook** and 2 **Tree Sparrows** were also seen.

**May 27th:** A bright morning with a light N'ly wind soon clouded over as the wind strengthened to F5-6. Not much evidence of movement today but a cracking red male **Common Rosefinch** was found at Shirva and was later heard singing at Schoolton. A brown individual was also at Barkland. One of the ringed **Icterine Warblers** was seen in the Parks and two **Quail** were heard. A male **Hen Harrier** floated through whilst other raptors included **Peregrine** and **Sparrowhawk**. Other counts and sightings of note were; **Grey Heron**, six **Sanderling**, **Knot**, 49 **Dunlin**, 35 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, two **Tree Pipit**, **Black Redstart** (still) and a similar scattering of common warblers to yesterday.

**May 26th:** A quieter day with highlights of remaining **Common Buzzard**, **Quail**, **Bluethroat** and **Common Rosefinch**. **Kestrel** and **Merlin** were both spotted and 5 **Sanderling** is the highest count so far this year. Other good counts included 30 **Dunlin**, 33 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, 400 **Arctic Tern**, 4 **Short-eared Owl** and 4 **Tree Pipit**. Lingering **Ring Ouzel**, **Black Redstart**, **Rook**, 2 **Tree Sparrow** and **Brambling** were all seen again and a thin smattering of common warblers were also remnants of the past few days.

**May 25th:** Highlights were provided by four **Icterine Warblers** (two trapped) plus two **Bluethroats** and a **Quail**. Some counts included 26 **Dunlin**, 24 **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, 6 **Swift**, 40 **Swallow** and 32 **House Martin** whilst a good scattering of warblers ( 9 **Sedge**, 2 **Reed**, 11 **Lesser Whitethroat**, 3 **Common Whitethroat**, **Garden Warbler**, **Blackcap**, 11 **Chiffchaff** and 3 **Willow Warbler**) was noted. Other sightings were; **Kestrel**, **Peregrine**, **Common Sandpiper**, 3 **Tree Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, **Whinchat**, **Fieldfare**, **Brambling**, 2 **Linnet**, **Lesser Redpoll**, 2 **Snow Bunting** and 5 **Reed Bunting**.



Icterine Warbler  
Photo Deryk Shaw

**May 24th:** A male **Golden Oriole** was, typically, hard to catch up with and two **Common Rosefinch** were a welcome year tick as was a reported **Short-toed Lark**. The **Common Buzzard** was seen again and three **Quail** (including one which had collided with a fence and died) and 2 female **Bluethroats** were the other highlights. A **Red-throated Diver** flew over calling and some good hirundine counts (7 **Sand Martin**, 45 **Swallow** and 30 **House Martin**) were received. Warblers were in evidence with 8 **Sedge**, 2 **Reed**, 4 **Lesser Whitethroat**, 2 **Common Whitethroat**, 5 **Blackcap**, 10 **Chiffchaff** and 8 **Willow Warbler** logged. Other sightings included 4 **Barnacle Geese**, **Sparrowhawk**, 2 **Common Sandpiper**, 11 **Black-headed Gull**, 33 **Common Gull**, 3 **Short-eared owl**, 2 **Swift**, 5 **Tree Pipit**, **Black Redstart**, 3 **Whinchat**, **Ring Ouzel**, **Mistle Thrush**, 2 **Tree Sparrow** and 4 **Snow Bunting**. The first **Ravens** fledged from Milens-houllan and Skinners Glig - ten days later than normal!



**May 23rd:** A **Quail** was added to the year list whilst the **Common Buzzard** was seen again and 2 **Barnacle Geese** flew over. A **Long-eared Owl** joined the 3 **Short-eared Owls** present. Some increased wader counts included 20 **Purple Sandpiper**, 45 **Dunlin**, 49 **Turnstone** and 15 **Whimbrel** (including one spring-trapped on the beach). A flyover *flava* wagtail was seen whilst a **Mistle Thrush** is unusual at this time of year but 2 **Ring Ouzel** and 2 **Fieldfare** are less so. A scattering of warblers included 6 **Sedge Warbler**, 5 **Lesser Whitethroat**, 4 **Common Whitethroat**, 2 **Garden Warbler**, 3 **Blackcap**, 20 **Chiffchaff** and 11 **Willow Warbler**. Six **Spotted Flycatcher**, **Black Redstart**, **Common Redstart**, 4 **Whinchat**, the 2 **Tree Sparrow**, 2 **Linnet** and fine male **Snow Bunting** were also noted. Best of all however was not found until the evening when a **Tawny Pipit** was located on Bunes - the 17th Fair Isle record but first since 1993.



Tawny Pipit



Whimbrel

Photos Deryk Shaw

**May 22nd:** A hazy warm day with a light SE'ly. There was a complete raptor-fest today with 2 **Hen Harriers** (one bearing a wing tag), **Osprey**, **Common Buzzard**, **Peregrine**, **Merlin** and **Kestrel** all logged. **Reed Warbler** was added to the year list and a new male **Bluethroat** was trapped. Other highlights were 2 **Swift**, 2 **Whinchat**, 2 **Ring Ouzel**, **Grasshopper Warbler** and 8 **Sedge Warbler** and a number of Hirundines (50+ **Swallow**, 3 **Sand Martin** and 20 **House Martin**). Also of note was a dead **Risso's Dolphin** on the beach at Furse.



Bluethroat



Risso's Dolphin



Photos Deryk Shaw

**May 21st:** A wet morning with a light SSW wind developed into a beautiful afternoon. The **Bluethroat** remains near the Observatory, where a **Waxwing** put in an appearance and a **Garden Warbler** was added to the year list. A flock of 35 **Barnacle Geese** flew over and later another six passed through. Highlights however were the almost simultaneous appearance of an **Osprey** and a **Common Buzzard**.

**May 20th:** Blanket fog seriously hindered census but a **Golden Oriole** was seen a few times around the isle. The **Bluethroat**, **Whinchat**, **Spotted Flycatcher** and **Reed Bunting** were the next best on offer.

**May 19th:** At last the wind is in the SE, but still very cold!! It brought instant results with a **RUSTIC BUNTING** at Wirvie and the first **Bluethroat** of the year at the Obs. Two **Spotted Flycatchers** were also a year tick and other new arrivals included a **Goldeneye**, an **Iceland Gull**, 2 **Redstart**, 4 **Whinchat**, 2 **Grasshopper Warbler**, 3 **Whitethroat**, 3 **Chaffinch** and a **Yellow Wagtail**. The last of the wintering **Greylag Geese** departed whilst lingering birds included **Kestrel**, **Merlin**, **Tufted Duck** (a pair), **Short-eared Owl**, **Ring Ouzel**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, 2 **Tree Sparrow** and 5 **Snow Bunting**. Counts of 20 **Dunlin**, 200 **Arctic Tern** and 260 **Wheatear** were of note.

Bluethroat



Photos Deryk Shaw



**May 18th:** Another day with a cool light NW'ly but an almost blue sky and brilliant sunshine raised the temperature somewhat. The most noticeable birds were the 350 **Arctic Terns** screaming overhead whilst a similar number of **Wheatears** were also logged. Also of note were a pair of **Tufted Duck**, female **Long-tailed Duck**, **Sparrowhawk**, **Knot**, **Sanderling**, 2 **Common Sandpiper**, 2 **Grey-headed Wagtail** (both males), **Lesser Whitethroat**, 2 **Tree Sparrow**, **Linnet**, 3 **Mealy Redpoll** and 6 **Snow Bunting**. The wind started to swing east in the evening, so perhaps tomorrow will be better?



Knot

Photos Deryk Shaw



**May 17th:** The wind remains a cool NW'ly, but lighter today. Highlight was the first **Quail** of the year whilst 380 **Wheatears** were counted and a female **Ring Ouzel** was trapped in the Plantation and four **Snow Buntings** lingered.

**May 16th:** With the wind still in the NW, another quiet day and highlights of two **Great Northern Divers** - one in Finniequoy and another at South Light. A **Long-tailed Duck** was in South Harbour and on land were; **Kestrel**, 260 **Wheatear**, **Tree Pipit**, **Willow Warbler** and four **Snow Bunting**.

**May 15th:** A quiet day with absolutely nothing of note.

**May 14th:** A generally quiet day with a light westerly wind with prolonged drizzle in the afternoon. Several lingering birds including **Rook**, **Whinchat**, **Goldfinch** and **Shorelark** were noted. New birds included a **Wryneck** whilst **Dotterel** and **Sanderling** took the year list to the 150 mark.

**May 13th:** A beautiful day with blue sky and a light NNW'ly wind, which just took the edge off the (otherwise seemingly) baking temperature!

Highlight of the day was undoubtedly the **Great Reed Warbler** which was trapped shortly after breakfast in North Grind. Later that morning a **Rough-legged Buzzard** passed through and was seen coming in at Sumburgh 50 minutes later. Five Sparrowhawks and 2 Peregrines added to the raptor passage. A Grey-headed Wagtail was another year tick which was relegated to an also-ran! A new Shorelark was found near the Chapel and a male Whinchat, 4 Tree Sparrows, 2 Sedge Warblers, Ring Ouzel and the male Yellowhammer rounded off a nice day.



**Great Reed Warbler**

- 12th Fair Isle record & first since 1996



*Photos Deryk Shaw*

**May 12th:** A glorious warm sunny day with blue sky and light westerly winds. Highlights were the two **Ospreys** that passed through, one just prior to lunch and another at 4 pm. A **Waxwing** trapped in the Obs trap and the first **Sedge Warbler** of the year were *not* the only other sightings of note. Good numbers of gulls and terns were around again - 20 **Black-headed Gull**, 75 **Common Gull**, 15 **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and 50+ **Arctic Tern**. Apart from the Ospreys, raptor delights were 2 **Kestrel**, **Peregrine** and **Sparrowhawk**. Two **Shelduck** flew along the west cliffs and the male **Tufted Duck** was again on Field Pond. Three **Cormorant** flew over and 20 **Whimbrel** and a **Common Sandpiper** were the wader highlights. Hirundines were in evidence with at least 40 **Swallow**, 5 **House Martin** and 2 **Sand Martin**. On the warbler front; 3 **Blackcap**, 2 **Whitethroat** and the **Lesser Whitethroat** were outnumbered by the dozen or so **Chiffchaff** and 8 **Willow Warbler**. Four **Tree Sparrow** was another good find whilst the finch family produced 3 **Common Redpoll**, 2 **Linnet** and a **Goldfinch**. Finally, a cracking male **Yellowhammer** frequented the Observatory environs all day!

**May 11th:** A surprisingly quiet day with the first main arrival of **Arctic Terns** (numbering 60+) the main highlight and 40 **Black-headed Gulls** and 57 **Common Gulls** the only other counts of note.

**May 10th:** The **Red-necked Phalarope** remained in North Haven for another day - allowing all those who missed it yesterday to enjoy fantastic views of a delightful little bird. Elsewhere, the **Shorelark** was relocated on Meoness, female **Black Redstarts** lingered in the Havens and at the Mast - where a male **Ring Ouzel** also remains. Other sightings included a couple of **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Cormorant**, 28 **Whimbrel**, **Common Sandpiper**, 4 **Arctic Tern**, 3 **Chiffchaff**, 2 **Willow Warbler**, 2 **Linnet**, **Common Redpoll** and 3 **Snow Bunting**.



**Red-necked Phalarope, North Haven**

Although breeding as near as Fetlar they are scarce elsewhere in Shetland. This is only the 20th Fair Isle record.



*Photos Deryk Shaw*

**May 9th:** Bird of the day was a female **Red-necked Phalarope** found in North Haven. A hopeful seawatch for **Pomarine Skuas** proved fruitless but did produce a **Manx Shearwater**. On land, **Peregrine**, 21 **Whimbrel**, 2 **Common Sandpiper**, 2 **Short-eared Owl**, **Black Redstart**, female **Northern Bullfinch** and 3 **Snow Bunting** were the highlights.

**May 8th:** A strong cold WNW wind with nasty showers made census pretty unpleasant. The **Richard's Pipit** remains near the Observatory but a pleasant surprise came just prior to lunch when a smart male **Rustic Bunting** was discovered near the Plantation. It had obviously recently arrived as it was very flighty and just goes to show that birds can arrive on Fair Isle in even the worst weather!!!





**Richard's Pipit**

- although regular in the Autumn, this is only the third Spring record following birds in May 1998 & May 2002 .



*Photos Deryk Shaw*

**May 7th:** A cool fresh NNW wind with showers was not conducive to any movement. The **Richard's Pipit** has relocated to the Observatory and a **Ring Ouzel** was at the mast.

**May 6th:** An even quieter day, but **Garganey**, **Shorelark** and **Richards Pipit** are still present and 5 **Arctic Terns** were spotted. Lingering **Short-eared Owl** and **Grasshopper Warbler** were the next best.

**May 5th:** A quieter day with the wind firmly in the west, but the male **Garganey**, **Shorelark** and **Corn Bunting** all remain.

**May 4th:** A generally quiet day but a male **Garganey** in Hegri Burn was a delightful surprise and a **Shorelark** on Meoness was also another nice addition to the year list. Other sightings of note were; 220 **Wheatear**, 3 **Grasshopper Warbler**, 10 **Chiffchaff**, 2 **Willow Warbler**, 2 **Tree Sparrow** and 10 **Brambling**.



**Shorelark** *Photo Deryk Shaw*

**May 3rd:** A glorious warm morning with blue sky and sunshine and light SW'ly wind gradually cooled as the wind veered NE'ly. Highlights were the reappearance of the **Corn Bunting** plus three year ticks; a **Common Tern** in the Havens, a summer plumaged **Great Northern Diver** off Meoness and 4 **Tree Sparrows** on Hill Dyke.

**May 2nd:** A (mainly) glorious day with light SW'ly winds. A large number of **Wheatears** arrived and a final day total of 380 is almost three times that of the previous day. Added to these were; 32 **Golden Plover**, 4 **Common Sandpiper**, 50 **Swallow**, 15 **House Martin**, 5 **Sand Martin**, 4 **Tree Pipit**, 18 **Dunnock**, 4 **Ring Ouzel**, 9 **Chiffchaff**, just 1 **Willow Warbler** and a flock of corvids (5 **Rook** & 14 **Carrion Crow**). The best however were the four year ticks spotted; **Arctic Tern**, **Common Swift**, **Whinchat** and a **Richards Pipit** - only the third Spring record. The **Citrine Wagtail** was seen again, briefly and the **Waxwing** continues to eat apples outside the Observatory!



**Waxwing**

*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**May 1st:** A cloudy but mild day with a light ESE'ly. The **Citrine Wagtail** was re-found near the Raevas and the **Waxwing** is still present at the Obs - with possibly another seen flying around the south end. Migrants were fairly thin on the ground with highlights of; **House Martin**, 135 **Wheatear**, 16 **Chiffchaff**, 2 **Blackcap** and **Lesser Whitethroat**.

## 2005 - APRIL SIGHTINGS

**April 29th:** A slight switch in the wind to a more southerly direction brought instant results.....A cracking male **CITRINE WAGTAIL** was found prior to lunch in the ditches opposite Barkland and later that afternoon a male **Marsh Harrier** drifted down the isle. Other sightings of note included both **Black and Common Redstarts**, three **Grasshopper Warbler**, two **Pied Flycatcher** and a female **Northern Bullfinch**. Numbers were generally down on yesterday with 30 **Swallow**, 160 **Wheatear**, 15 **Blackbird**, 10 **Ring Ouzel**, 46 **Fieldfare**, 30 **Song Thrush**, 16 **Chiffchaff**, two **Willow Warbler** and 12 **Reed Bunting**.



**Citrine Wagtail** at Barkland  
*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**April 28th:** A good days birding was eventually brought to a conclusion mid-afternoon by a SE'ly gale and driving rain, but not before five year ticks had been logged and some good counts of common migrants been made. Highlight of the day was probably the **Waxwing** which was caught in the Obs trap in the afternoon. A **House Martin** was spotted in the Gully on morning traps and a **Common Sandpiper** was in the Havens. A male **Shoveler** flew in and landed in Finniequoy, two **Pied Flycatchers** (both males) were found in Hjukni Geo and a **Wood Warbler** nearby became the fifth species of the day to be added to the year list. Added to these highlights were counts of; 18 **Wood Pigeon**, 4 **Short-eared Owl**, 200 **Wheatear**, 2 **Black Redstart**, 4 **Common Redstart**, 3 **Stonechat**, 15 **Robin**, 29 **Dunnock**, 15 **Ring Ouzel**, 58 **Fieldfare**, 55 **Song Thrush**, 6 **Grasshopper Warbler**, 3 **Blackcap**, 3 **Whitethroat**, 30 **Chiffchaff**, 48 **Brambling**, a female **Bullfinch** and 11 **Reed Bunting**. The **Corn Bunting** was seen at Shirva. All in all, a very good day - just lacking that BB rare!!!



**Waxwing**

*Photos Deryk Shaw*



**Grasshopper warbler**

**April 27th:** A **Common Whitethroat** at Setter was new for the year. The **Corn Bunting** has relocated to Quoy. A count of four **Grasshopper Warblers** was the other highlight.

**April 26th:** The **Corn Bunting** was seen again in the afternoon at Busta. Two **Common Redpolls** were new for the year and **Common Scoter**, six **Ring Ouzels**, **Tree Pipit**, three **Grasshopper Warblers** and eight **Chiffchaffs** were other sightings of note whilst **Wheatears** reached 160.

**April 25th:** A bright day with a light SE'ly wind which strengthened during the afternoon. There seemed to be less birds around today but this was made up for by the arrival of **four** year ticks. Pride of place went to the **CORN BUNTING** at Busta - the first since 2001 and only the fourth in the last 25 years. A **Tufted Duck** was found on Field pond whilst two **Whimbrel** flew over and a **Lesser Whitethroat** was flushed from the Vaadal. Late news came of a **Great Grey Shrike** at Quoy yesterday!

**April 24th:** Another pleasant day with a light (but cool) ESE'ly. An influx of **Robins** gave a day count of 55 whilst **Wheatears** topped 100 and there was a good count of **Reed Buntings** (15). Other highlights were the first **Greenshank** of the year, 5 **Short-eared Owls**, 4 **Swallows**, 4 **Tree Pipits**, 14 **Ring Ouzels**, 85

**Song Thrushes**, 3 **Common Redstarts** and 2 **Stonechats** and a **Blackcap**. Another female **Sparrowhawk** (one of three present) was trapped in the Gully whilst the **Brambling** flocks in the garden and Plantation totalled 50 and a freshly dead **Hawfinch** was picked up by an islander.



**Bramblings** in the Obs garden

*Photos Deryk Shaw*



Female **Sparrowhawk**

**April 23rd:** A **Wryneck** just pipped the two year ticks (**Common Scoter** and **Lesser Redpoll**) to bird of the day and other highlights included some good counts; 80 **Wheatear**, 40 **Robin**, 20 **Dunnock**, 24 **Ring Ouzel**, 200 **Fieldfare** and 60 **Brambling**. Further variety was provided by 4 **Short-eared Owl**, 3 **Woodcock**, **Greenfinch**, **Goldfinch** and 3 **Siskin**.

**April 22nd:** Another fairly quiet day but a **Woodcock** was the first for several weeks. A flock of 137 **Common Gulls** presided at Pund and other counts included 93 **Wheatear**, 8 **Ring Ouzel**, 230 **Fieldfare**, 105 **Song Thrush**, 12 **Chiffchaff** 21 migrant **Raven** and 40 **Brambling**. A **Short-eared Owl**, **Black Redstart**, female **Northern Bullfinch** and two **Snow Bunting** were other birds of note.

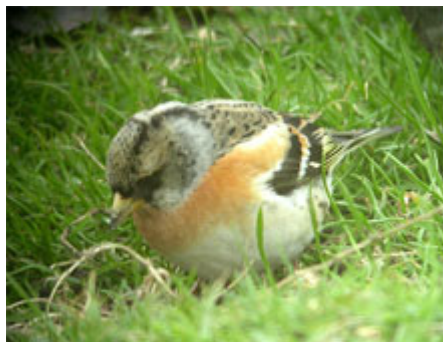
**April 21st:** A quieter day which started with a female **Sparrowhawk** self-trapped in Roadside trap!!!! Totals of 230 **Fieldfare** and 6 **Ring Ouzels** is an indication that there has been a clear-out. A new **Grasshopper Warbler** was the only sighting of note, although the male **Lapland Bunting** again visited the garden for short spells.



*Photos Deryk Shaw*

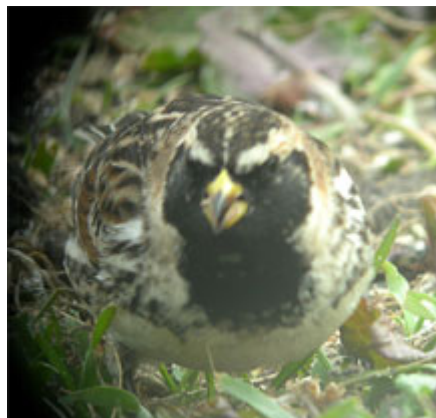
**April 20th:** A bright mild day with a light NE'ly. Highlights were undoubtedly the three **Wrynecks** dotted around the isle but year ticks of **Grasshopper Warbler** and **Common Redstart** were also pleasing. There seemed to be a lot of birds around including; 88 **Wheatear**, 32 **Robin**, 25 **Dunnock**, 19 **Ring Ouzel**, 400 **Fieldfare**, 170 **Song Thrush**, 7 **Blackcap** and 34 **Brambling**. The nice male **Lapland Bunting** again made a brief visit to the seed in the Obs garden whilst 3 **Tree Pipit**, 2 **Willow Warbler**, 6 **Chiffchaff**, 3 **Jackdaw** and 5 **Reed Bunting** were also logged.





**Brambling**

*Photos Deryk Shaw*



**Lapland Bunting**

**April 19th:** A gloomy wet start gradually improved throughout the day and with a fresh but lessening SE'ly, conditions were right for arrivals....No less than **eight** species were added to the year list today. North census produced **Tree Pipit**, **Swallow**, **Blackcap** (2) and **Willow Warbler** whilst the South of the isle held **Collared Dove**, **Waxwing** (3) and another **Blackcap**. A **Wryneck** was found near the Plantation late afternoon and was later trapped there and a **Green Sandpiper** flew over the Observatory that evening. Added to all of these were good numbers of thrushes (120 **Fieldfare**, 70 **Song Thrush**, 9 **Ring Ouzel**), 184 **Common Gull** and 18 **Brambling**. The **Great-crested Grebe** remains in North Haven.

**April 18th:** A cold day with a strong ESE'ly wind. Highlights were totals of 180 **Skylark**, 12 **Ring Ouzel**, 8 **Chiffchaff** and a **Goldfinch**.

**April 17th:** A strong ESE wind and low cloud kept the temperature around 5-6 degrees. Very little was noted in the morning but a few birds arrived in the afternoon. The **Greylag** flock was joined by a **Barnacle Goose**, as well as the two **Greenland Whitefronts** and two **Pinkfeet**. A **Red-throated Diver** was spotted in the Havens, where the **Great-crested Grebe** lingers. A count of 17 **Purple Sandpipers** is the most for a while. Other arrivals were; three **Ring Ouzel**, two **Fieldfare**, 84 **Redwing**, four **Chiffchaff**, nine **Brambling**, two **Linnet**, seven **Snow Bunting**, two **Reed Bunting** and a cracking summer-plumaged male **Lapland Bunting** - in the Obs garden.

**April 16th:** A few new birds in with **Pintail** (a pair in Hesti Geo) and **Jack Snipe** (flushed in Gilsetter) added to the year list. Four **Wigeon**, three **Pink-footed Goose**, a **Water Rail**, **Stonechat**, **Mistle Thrush**, four **Siskin** and four **Brambling** were also new.

**April 15th:** The male **Peregrine** and 1st-winter **Iceland Gull** linger, as does the **Great-crested Grebe**. A (dark morph) **Arctic Skua** was only the second of the year (first on 11th). Counts of 370 **Skylark** and 62 **Wheatear** boosted a dull census.

**April 14th:** An arrival of **Wheatears** with 87 counted was the highlight. Male **Peregrine** and **Iceland Gull** were seen again. Census counts included two **Wood Pigeon**, 12 **Pied Wagtail**, 14 **Robin**, 10 **Dunnock**, 3 **Chiffchaff**, 12 **Goldcrest**, 10 **Rook**, 7 migrant **Raven**, and 4 **Linnet**. Singles of **Grey Wagtail**, **Siskin** and **Yellowhammer** were also seen.

**April 13th:** On the water, **Great-crested Grebe**, **Red-throated Diver**, **Goldeneye** and a pair of **Red-breasted Merganser** were noted. On land **Bonxies** had increased to 36 whilst some corvid passage was in evidence with 9 **Rook**, 10 **Carriion Crow** and 3 **Hooded Crow**. Other sightings of note were; 11 **Black-headed Gull**, **Iceland Gull**, **Peregrine**, **Grey Wagtail**, 3 **Ring Ouzel** and a **Chiffchaff**.

**April 12th:** A fairly quiet day but male **Peregrine**, **Shelduck** and **Moorhen** were spotted along with two each of **Chaffinch** and **Yellowhammer**.

**April 11th:** A winter-plumaged **Bar-tailed Godwit** on Buness and a dark morph **Arctic Skua** were both added to the year list today. The **Great-crested Grebe** remains in North Haven and yesterday's **Iceland Gull** was seen again as was a **Shelduck** on Easter Lothar and the two **Yellowhammers** at Quoy. **Wheatears** approached double figures whilst **Bonxies** have risen to 14.

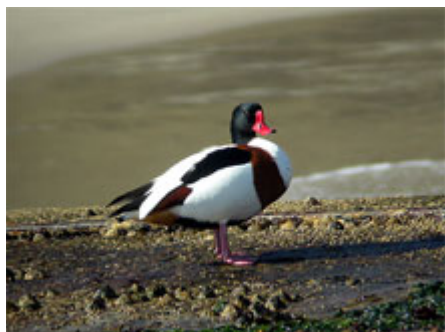
**April 10th:** A fairly quiet day but a 1st winter **Iceland Gull** and two **Yellowhammers** were new. The **Great-crested Grebe** is still in North Haven and the two **Whitefronted Geese** are still with the **Greylags**.

**April 9th:** A showery morning with a brisk SW'ly gave way to a brighter afternoon. The **Great-crested Grebe** remains in North Haven. Other highlights included two **White-fronted Goose**, two **Shelduck**, a **Peregrine** (the 100th species of the year), a **Black Redstart**, three **Chiffchaff**, four **Rook**, **Siskin**, **Brambling**, 45 **Twite** and three **Reed Bunting**. Most exciting discovery however was of a freshly dead **Long-finned Pilot Whale** washed up in Hesti Geo.

**April 8th:** A strong biting northerly wind with frequent hail and snow showers finally eased enough by late afternoon to allow the plane to get in - with the first staff members for the new season!!!! Hurrah! Other highlights were the **Great-crested Grebe** and 32 **Ringed Plover** together at Walli Burn.

**April 7th:** A tramp around in the morning ahead of the (expected) nasty weather in the afternoon produced just a few **Wheatears** and a **Ring Ouzel**. Best birds were in the Obs garden, where a **Reed Bunting** and a **Siskin** - both females - and a male **Brambling** were observed. The **Great-crested Grebe** remains in North Haven - but for how much longer before the northerly gale moves it on?

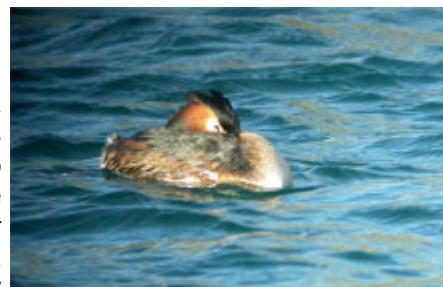
**April 6th:** The **Great-crested Grebe** remains in North Haven whilst the **Bonxie** count has risen to six. Three **Rook** and a **Carrion Crow** loitered around the crofts and 25 **Twite** enjoyed the seed in the Obs garden.



**Shelduck** in North Haven  
*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**April 5th:** Highlights were the **Great-crested Grebe** still in North Haven, with a **Shelduck** and two more **Shelduck** on Easter Lothar. A **Carrion Crow** was the first of the year and the **Jackdaw** was again in the Obs garden, along with the **Goldfinch**. A handful of **Wheatears**, a **Stonechat** and **Ring Ouzel** were the best of the rest.

**April 4th:** The **Great-crested Grebe** is still in North Haven, with a **Shelduck**. A **Goldfinch** and **Jackdaw** both frequented the Obs garden for a time whilst a **Long-eared Owl** was at Shirva and two **Greenfinch** (a year tick) were at Schoolton. Two **Stock Dove** were the other year tick today. A **Kestrel** was new and at least four **Bonxies** have arrived. A **Grey Wagtail**, two **Mistle Thrush** and a new **Chiffchaff** were also seen. A Peacock butterfly was rudely awakened during tidy-up operations at Upper Stoneybrek!



**Great-crested Grebe** in North Haven  
- only the 12th record and first since 1994.

*Photo Deryk Shaw*

**April 3rd:** No sign of the Snowy Owl but it could be sheltering somewhere from the cool stiff SE'ly wind. Compensation was provided by a **Great-crested Grebe** in the Havens - only the 12th Fair Isle record and first since 1994. It was accompanied for part of the day by a **Shelduck**. There were also *four* other birds new for the year - a **Goldfinch** around the Havens, a **Brambling** at Upper Stoneybrek, **Linnet** at Upper Leogh and **Chiffchaff** in the Schoolton Ditch. **Robins** were still plentiful with at least 50 counted whilst **Fieldfares** (51), **Song Thrushes** (30) and **Wheatears**(10) all increased.

**April 2nd:** A beautiful warm sunny day with a light southerly wind. It therefore came as no surprise that there were three year ticks today; a **Long-eared Owl** was in the Plantation and Schoolton garden and the first **Bonxie** was seen patrolling Suka Mire. Pride of place however went to the splendid **SNOWY OWL** which cut across the airstrip in front of the plane before disappearing towards Homisdale. Frantic searching during the rest of the morning proved fruitless, however after lunch it was found sitting in a broken wall on Vaasetter.

**Black Redstart**, **Hawfinch**, six **Snow Bunting**, a handful each of **Wheatear** and **Woodcock** were the runners up.



**Snowy Owl**  
*All photos Deryk Shaw*



**April 1st:** The April Fool was the weather with lots of low cloud and poor visibility. One **Hawfinch** was seen again in the garden.



## 2005 JANUARY - MARCH SIGHTINGS

**March 30th:** Another **Ring Ouzel** was seen at Neder Taft, a ringed **Hawfinch** in the Obs garden whilst **Grey Wagtail** and **Jackdaw** were added to the year list.



**March 29th:** First **Ring Ouzel** of the year at Upper Stoneybrek. Another **Hawfinch** was trapped in the Plantation. A **Stonechat** and four **Wheatears** were also seen.

*All photos Deryk Shaw*



**March 28th:** A female **Hawfinch** trapped in the Vaadal before breakfast was a nice start to the day. There were lots of **Robins** around the traps and a wander around the south of the isle produced a count of 74 birds - a count only beaten by **Skylarks** (450), **Meadow Pipits** (85) and **Starlings** (1,000). Also of note were three **Rook** (another year tick), 3 **Wheatears**, 8 **Dunnocks**, 7 **Mistle Thrush** and a **Yellowhammer**.

**March 26th:** A better day, with some arrivals. The first **Lesser-black-backed Gulls** (3) have finally put in an appearance on Bunes and a female **Northern Bullfinch** appeared in the Obs Plantation. Three **Wheatears** and a **Black Redstart** were also of note.

**March 25th:** FOG!!

**March 24th:** A trek around the north of the isle produced 27 **Goldcrests** on the cliffs, a male **Wheatear** at the Mast, with the female still in the Havens, 100 **Meadow Pipits** and a **Mistle Thrush**. Best of all though were the first returning **Puffins** in the Bay of Furse.

**March 23rd:** Highlight was the **Great Tit** in the Obs garden first thing but this was just one of *four* year ticks today; **Red-throated Diver**, **Dunlin** and **Reed Bunting** were all added before lunchtime. Other sightings of note included two **Wheatear**, two **Stonechat**, two **Mistle Thrush**, two **Dunnock**, an **Iceland Gull** and a *littoralis* **Rock Pipit**. Counts included 320 **Skylark**, 65 **Meadow Pipit**, seven **Pied Wagtail**, 150 **Blackbird**, 15 **Song Thrush**, 15 **Fieldfare**, 25 **Robin**, 16 **Chaffinch** and 65 **Snow Bunting**.

**March 22<sup>nd</sup>:** An even stronger and colder SE'ly curtailed any meaningful census but **Meadow Pipits** appeared to be common whilst our first **Dunnock** of the year in the Plantation was demoted to an also ran by our first true summer migrant – a female **Wheatear** in the Havens. The two **Moorhens** remain at the Chalet.

**March 21<sup>st</sup>:** A strong, cold SE'ly wind brought back a wintry feel but a **Short-eared Owl** arrived on the year list, **Meadow Pipits** appeared to have arrived in force and 120 **Oystercatcher**, 42 **Ringed Plover**, 40 **Lapwing**, four **Stonechats** three **Goldeneye**, two **Black-headed Gull** and a 1stW **Glaucous Gull** were also noted.



**Skylarks** begin to move through in large numbers from mid-March *photo Deryk Shaw*

**March 20<sup>th</sup>**: A light SE'yly produced an influx with wader counts of; **Oystercatcher** (120), **Lapwing** (74), **Ringed Plover** (26), **Curlew** (32), and **Woodcock** (5+). On the passerine front, **Skylarks** (400) and **Blackbirds** (130) once again dominated but increases of **Meadow Pipit** (13), **Redwing** (35), **Fieldfare** (10), **Song Thrush** (24) and **Chaffinch** (18) added to a nice walk whilst a 2ndW **Glaucous Gull**, two **Pied Wagtails**, four **Siskins** and 14 **Snow Buntings** were outshone by three year ticks – a **Shelduck** at Hegri Burn, **Goldcrests** in Raeva and Plantation and a male **Yellowhammer** at Schoolton. Lots of **Kittiwakes**, **Guillemots** and **Razorbills** were noted still ashore in the afternoon.

**March 19<sup>th</sup>**: A female **Siskin** arrived on the seed in the Obs garden.

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**: Two **Mistle Thrushes** at Furse were new for the year as was a **Wood Pigeon**. Another **Meadow Pipit** put in an appearance and six **Golden Plover**.

**March 17<sup>th</sup>**: A pleasant mild sunny morning with a light SW'yly wind had clouded over by lunchtime as the wind switched to a cool NE'yly. Nevertheless, the brief period of southerly winds had brought birds in with increased numbers of **Oystercatchers** (146), **Lapwings** (45), **Ringed Plovers** (35). Passerine counts were also up and were dominated by **Skylark** (100), **Blackbird** (80) and **Starling** (500). Other counts included a **Grey Heron**, **Pied Wagtail** (2), **Fieldfare** (8), **Redwing** (25), **Stonechat** (3) and **Snow Bunting** (17). Year ticks came in the form of a **Meadow Pipit** and (most surprisingly) a **Grey Plover** – usually a very scarce autumn migrant.

**March 16<sup>th</sup>**: The first **Stonechat** (a fine male) was at Midway and the first **Skylark** song was noted. Both **Glaucous** and **Iceland Gulls** were seen and a **Black-headed Gull**.

**March 1<sup>st</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>**: A quiet start to the month saw **Skylarks** slowly building up (seven on 1<sup>st</sup>, 18 on 8<sup>th</sup>, 25 by 14<sup>th</sup>) and first **Lapwings** displaying on 2<sup>nd</sup>. Migrant **Oystercatchers**, **Ringed Plovers** and **Lapwings** continue to pass through in small numbers whilst the geese gradually depart. Thrushes (notably **Blackbirds**) began to pass through (50 on 8<sup>th</sup>) and year ticks began to arrive with a **Pied Wagtail** on 6<sup>th</sup>, **Red-breasted Merganser** the following day and a **Woodcock** on 14<sup>th</sup> – a day when the first **Fieldfare** since January was seen. **Iceland Gulls** and a **Merlin** were seen occasionally. The first **Common Frog** of the year was spotted on 8<sup>th</sup> with several on the road on the night of 10<sup>th</sup>.

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February: Highlights: Occasional **Iceland Gull** and a **European White-fronted Goose** (15<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>).

Numbers of thrushes remained encouraging with max counts of; 40 **Blackbird**, 35 **Redwing** and 15 **Song Thrush**. The over wintering **Moorhens** (2) and **Chaffinches** (2) remained throughout. A male and a female **Merlin** were regularly seen whilst a **Kestrel** (8<sup>th</sup>) was unusual. A pair of **Wigeon** and occasional **Goldeneye** was noted. The wintering **Greylag Goose** flock began to depart and a couple of **Pink-footed Geese** dropped in (24<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>) and a **Barnacle Goose** (13<sup>th</sup>). The **Twite** flock on seed in the Obs garden peaked at 20 and was joined by occasional **Snow Buntings** and **Skylark**. First **Gannets** were back on the Outer Stacks o' Scroo from 15<sup>th</sup> and **Guillemots** were first noted ashore on 22<sup>nd</sup> when **Curlews** were noted back on territory. Passage was most prevalent in **Oystercatchers** and **Lapwing** with small parties continually passing through (peaks of 51 and 40 respectively).

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**January summary**

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### **Iceland Gull**

*photo Deryk Shaw*

The white morph Gyr Falcon from December remained until 11<sup>th</sup> whilst a Puffin (1<sup>st</sup>) was un-seasonal. The overwintering Greylag Goose flock reached 160 and was joined by 15 Barnacle Geese. The stormy weather produced some unusual winter sightings with three Bar-tailed Godwits and a Knot (15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>) and occasional Oystercatcher. Two overwintering Moorhens at the Chalet battled with the local ducks for scraps and were occasionally joined by a Water Rail. Other waders included Lapwings (peak count 44), Golden Plover, Redshank (60), Turnstone (155), Curlew (12), Common Snipe (45) and Purple Sandpiper (7). Kestrel and at least two Merlins were seen sporadically and at least two each of Iceland and Glaucous Gull were present. Overwintering thrushes consisted of peak counts of 45 Blackbird, 70 Redwing and, unusually, 18 Song Thrush. Other passerines of note included a single Skylark, a Chaffinch, a handful of Robins and peak counts of 20 Twite and 17 Snow Bunting.

*Deryk Shaw*