

## October Sightings:

### 21st October 2011:

Wildfowl included 18 Wigeon, 3 Teal, 2 Long-tailed Ducks and 1 Goldeneye, while a Great Northern Diver remains in the Havens. Six Woodcock arrived overnight, while the Iceland Gull remains and the 1st winter Glaucous Gull was joined by another 1st winter.

An impressive fall of Fieldfares occurred, along with smaller numbers of other thrushes, with the Fieldfare total reaching 985 birds, mostly concentrated in the southwest of the island. However, nothing else seemed to have come in with them, except a Garden Warbler and 7 Blackcaps. Lingering passerines included 2 Chiffchaffs, 1 Goldcrest, a Mealy Redpoll, 1 Chaffinch, 6 Bramblings, 2 Lapland Buntings, 11 Snow Buntings and the Yellowhammer.

### 20th October 2011:

Four Merlins were an increase on recent days, while a Short-eared Owl was present. White-winged gulls included 2 Glaucous Gulls (an adult and a 1st winter) and a 1st winter Iceland Gull.

Small migrants included 2 Woodpigeons, 4 Dunnocks, 4 Robins, 3 Wheatears, dwindling numbers of thrushes, 2 Chiffchaffs, 7 Goldcrests, 2 Jackdaws, 1 Rook, 4 Chaffinches, 5 Bramblings, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 2 Common Rosefinches, 4 Lapland Buntings, 84 Snow Buntings and the lingering Yellowhammer.

### 19th October 2011:

There was another influx of Greylag Geese, with 585 birds recorded, while other wildfowl included 26 Wigeon, 11 Teal, a lingering Scaup (on the pond at the back of the Haa!), 8 Long-tailed Ducks, and 7 Red-breasted Mergansers. Two Great Northern Divers remain. Raptors today included one remaining Hen Harrier, 4 Sparrowhawks, 2 Kestrels, one Merlin and a Peregrine, while the Water Rail remains in the Gulleys. A Bar-tailed Godwit arrived onto Bunes, while 2 Glaucous Gulls; an adult and a 1st winter, also made an appearance. Large numbers of Kittiwakes were on the move, with over 700 counted in 90 minutes past south light, along with 2 Little Auks.

Small migrant numbers were low, with counts including 46 Meadow Pipits, 4 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 5 Wheatears, 13 Blackbirds, 12 Fieldfares, 1 Song Thrush, 49 Redwings, 3 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs, 2 Jackdaws still, 1 Carrion Crow, 5 Chaffinches, 7 Bramblings, 1 Mealy Redpoll still at the Obs, 2 Common Rosefinches lingering, 3 Lapland Buntings, 82 Snow Buntings and the lingering Yellowhammer.

### 18th October 2011:

Four Whooper Swans made an appearance, along with 6 Barnacle Geese and 84 Greylags, while 15 Wigeon, 19 Teal and 1 Scaup lingered. Long-tailed Duck numbers increased to 8. Two Great Northern Divers showed well in the Havens, while a veritable island raptor fest consisted of at least 4 Hen Harriers (a Fair Isle record), 1 Sparrowhawk, 2 Kestrels, 4 Merlins, 2 Peregrines and 7 Short-eared Owls!

Small migrants on the island included 3 Dunnocks, 3 Robins, 1 Black Redstart, 1 Whinchat, 4 Wheatears, 150 Redwings (virtually all of the Icelandic race, *coburni*), 7 Blackcaps, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler, 3 Chiffchaffs, 4 Goldcrests, 2 Jackdaws, 7 Chaffinches, 32 Bramblings, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 2 Rosefinches, 7 Lapland Buntings, at least 52 Snow Buntings and the lingering Reed Bunting and Yellowhammer.



Hen Harriers. Photo by Mark Breaks

### 17th October 2011:

The days highlight was the discovery of a very smart and confiding OLIVE BACKED PIPIT at Setter. Three Grey Phalaropes were also seen, along with a Gadwall; a scarce duck on the island!

A Pintail was seen, along with the lingering male Shoveler, an immature male Greater Scaup , 5 Long-tailed Ducks and 5 Red-breasted Mergansers. A Great Northern Diver flew past South Light. Three Hen Harriers remain, putting on a great show that's a pleasure to enjoy every time. At least 800 Kittiwakes were seen to pass the island through the day, along with 2 Little Auks. Three Short-eared Owls are still present in Da Water.

Small Migrants present included 2 Whinchats, 7 Wheatears, small numbers of lingering thrushes, 16 Blackcaps, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler, 2 Chiffchaffs, 6 Goldcrests, 2 Jackdaws, 7 Chaffinches, 20 Bramblings, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 2 Rosefinches, 2 Lapland Buntings, 53 Snow Buntings and the lingering Yellowhammer and Reed Bunting.



Olive-backed Pipit Photos by Mark Breaks

### 16th October 2011:

A drake Shoveler in South Harbour was the wildfowl highlight, while 5 Long-tailed Ducks were also present, and at least 2 Great Northern Divers were seen during seawatches. A Sooty Shearwater flew past the south end. Three Hen Harriers were seen on the island together, along with 2 Sparrowhawks, 3 each of Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine and Short-eared Owl and a Long-eared Owl making for a good raptor day. Three Water Rails were present, while waders present included the lingering Grey Phalarope, 4 Jack Snipe, 3 Woodcock and a Bar-tailed Godwit. A 1st winter Iceland Gull on Greenholm was the first of the autumn, while 124 Kittiwakes were logged passing various points of the island.

Passerine figures included 110 Meadow Pipits, 1 lingering flava Wagtail, 3 Dunnocks, 1 Robin, the lingering Bluethroat and Black Redstart, 4 Whinchats, 13 Wheatears, 25 Blackbirds, 163 Fieldfares, 3 Song Thrushes, 130 Redwings, a Barred Warbler at the Chalet, 2 Whitethroats, 40 Blackcaps, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, 8 Chiffchaffs, 10 Goldcrests, 2 Jackdaws, 5 Chaffinches, 51 Bramblings, 2 Lesser Redpolls, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 4 Crossbills, 1 Rosefinch, 6 Lapland Buntings, 56 Snow Buntings, 1 Yellowhammer and a Reed Bunting.



Barred Warbler. Photo by Dave Curtis



Grey Phalarope. Photo by Mark Breaks

### 15th October 2011:

Wildfowl included 44 Greylags, 20 Wigeon, 12 Teal, 4 Long-tailed Ducks, 2 Goldeneyes and 4 Red-breasted Mergansers. Two Hen Harriers remain and continue to put on a show, along with 2 Kestrels, 3 Merlins and 2 Peregrines. A Grey Phalarope was present in the Havens, along with a Little Auk. Two Woodpigeons and a Collared Dove were present, as were 4 Short-eared Owls; our highest count of the year so far. Passerine counts included a Flava Wagtail, 2 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, the lingering, but mobile Bluethroat, a Black Redstart at Busta Geo, 1 Whinchat, 48 Blackbirds, 87 Fieldfares, 5 Song Thrushes, 132 Redwings, 1 Whitethroat, an arrival of 50 Blackcaps, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, 10 Chiffchaffs, 25 Goldcrests, 1 Jackdaw; our second of the year, 5 Chaffinches, 28 Bramblings, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 11 Crossbills, 2 Rosefinches, 3 Lapland Buntings, 76 Snow Buntings, 1 Yellowhammer and 2 Reed Buntings



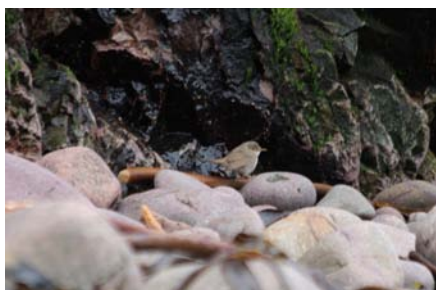
Little Auk  
Photo by Mark Breaks

#### **14th October 2011:**

Highlights of a good day included a BLYTH'S REED WARBLER found in the bottom of Easter Locher which, although the ID was made fairly firmly, was mist-netted on the beach and brought back to the Obs for bios and ringing. A Little Bunting was also present in the North, at Dronger. A possible Olive-backed Pipit flew over the Obs calling, but views were insufficient for certain ID and the bird wasn't seen again. Sadly, what was possibly a different LANCEOLATED WARBLER to yesterday's bird was found dead at Pund.

Nine Wigeon and 9 Teal on the island is roughly typical of the last few days, while 1 Long-tailed Duck and 3 Goldeneyes were present, along with a Slavonian Grebe in Furse. Hen Harrier numbers increased to 3, with birds favouring the Da Water area. Seven Woodcocks arrived while 2 Little Auks were present in the Havens.

Three Short-eared Owls arrived and a Swallow passed through. A Bluethroat was found near Barkland, while other totals included 3 Whinchats, 9 Wheatears, 63 Blackbirds, 251 Fieldfares, 7 Song Thrushes, 182 Redwings, 1 Reed Warbler at Schoolton, 11 Blackcaps, 5 Yellow-browed Warblers, 7 Chiffchaffs, 36 Goldcrests, 8 Chaffinches, 16 Bramblings, 1 Siskin, 2 Mealy and one Lesser Redpolls, 1 Rosefinch, 7 Lapland Buntings, 46 Snow Buntings and a Reed Bunting.



BLYTH'S REED WARBLER. Photo's by Jason Moss

#### **13th October 2011:**

Highlight was the early morning discovery of our first LANCEOLATED WARBLER at Field; long time coming! The bird showed fairly well on occasions in the long grass by Field Ditch.

Two Hen Harriers were present in the Da Water area, while a Sparrowhawk also arrived. A Water Rail was in Chalet pond and 2 Woodcock arrived.

Six Woodpigeons were present, along with a Collared Dove and the lingering Short-eared Owl. Five Whinchats were present, along with a Ring Ouzel, 59 Blackbirds, 51 Fieldfares, 8 Song Thrushes, 286 Redwings, a Lesser Whitethroat, 3 Blackcaps, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, 2 Chiffchaffs, 25 Goldcrests, 9 Chaffinches, 19 Bramblings, 6 Mealy Redpolls and 5 Reed Buntings.

#### **12th October 2011:**

Wildfowl numbers were lower than they have been recently, although 8 Long-tailed Ducks were seen again, along with a Great Northern Diver. Twelve 'Blue' Fulmars together off Bunes was a good record. One Hen Harrier remains in the Da Water area, along with a Short-eared Owl.

One Swallow was recorded, along with small numbers of common thrushes, small numbers of Blackcaps, a Rook, a few Chaffinches and Bramblings, 1 Lesser and 2 Mealy Redpolls, 6 Lapland Buntings, 43 Snow Buntings and 3 Reed Buntings.

### **11th October 2011:**

4 Whooper Swans remained, while other notable wildfowl included 2 Long-tailed Ducks, 3 Velvet Scoters (a scarce species on Fair Isle) and 3 Mergansers. Two Red-throated Divers and a Slavonian Grebe were also found, along with a Grey Phalarope in Furse.

A Short-eared Owl arrived, while small migrants included the lingering Flava Wagtail, 6 Dunnocks, 4 Whinchats, 19 Wheatears, a Ring Ouzel, 11 Blackbirds, 68 Fieldfares, 9 Song Thrushes, 439 Redwings, 2 Blackcaps, 16 Chaffinches, 3 Bramblings, 1 Siskin, 2 Mealy Redpolls, a Crossbill, 7 Lapland Buntings, 64 Snow Buntings and 2 Reed Buntings.

### **10th October 2011:**

Highlight was the discovery of a flighty Citrine Wagtail at the Walli Burn in the afternoon. Sadly, after initial discovery the bird was not seen again.

Twenty seven Whooper Swans passed through, along with 12 Pink-feet, 163 Greylags and 86 Barnacle Geese. Eight Long-tailed Ducks, a Goldeneye and 5 Mergansers were also recorded. One Red-throated Diver flew through and 3 Arctic Terns were seen, while 6 Little Auks passed the island.

A Ring Ouzel was present, while other thrush numbers dropped slightly after yesterdays arrival. One Greenfinch was a good sighting, while 7 Lapland Buntings and 58 Snow Buntings were present.

### **9th October 2011:**

The LESSER SCAUP remains on Bunes.

Thirty-five Pink-footed Geese were present, along with reduced numbers of Greylags, 7 Wigeon, 14 Teal, Tufted Duck, Long-tailed Duck and our first Pintail of the year. One Hen Harrier remains, along with 4 Kestrels and 3 Merlins, and the Water Rail was seen again. A total of 397 Common Gulls arrived onto the island, while our first Little Auk of the year flew south off Bunes.

A good arrival of thrushes onto the island didn't bring too much with it, but census returns included 1 Flava Wagtail, 5 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 2 Whinchats, 59 Blackbirds, 156 Fieldfares, 78 Song Thrushes, 2892 Redwings, 3 Blackcaps, 1 Goldcrest, a Spotted Flycatcher, 7 Chaffinches, 56 Bramblings, 8 Siskins, 1 Lesser Redpoll, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 1 Hawfinch at the Obs, 7 Lapland Buntings, 9 Snow Buntings and a Reed Bunting.

### **8th October 2011:**

Highlight was the presence of the lingering LESSER SCAUP in North Haven.

A total of 15 Pink-footed Geese, 161 Greylags and 11 Barnacle Geese were logged, along with the first 2 Long-tailed Ducks of the month and another Slavonian Grebe. The Hen Harrier was seen again, with other raptors including 2 Kestrels and 5 Merlins. The autumn's first Glaucous Gull was present in the north.

Migrant numbers included a Woodpigeon, 5 Dunnocks, 2 Robin, 4 Whinchats, 18 Wheatears, a late Barred Warbler in Easter Lother, 4 Blackcaps, 2 Yellow-browed Warbler, 5 Goldcrests, 16 Chaffinches, 3 Bramblings, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 11 Lapland Buntings and 36 Snow Buntings.

### **7th October 2011:**

Outstanding highlight of the day, and a first for Fair Isle, was the unexpected arrival of a LESSER SCAUP onto a tiny rock-pool on Bunes. The bird was trapped and ringed back at the obs, before being released in the same area where it continued to show very well to all present.

Six Whooper Swans, 26 Pinks, 172 Greylags and 10 Barnacle Geese were seen, along with 3 Tufted Ducks and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers.

The Short-toed Lark remains, while counts include ever reduced numbers of commoner migrants, the lingering Spotted Flycatcher, 10 Lapland Buntings and 58 Snow Buntings.

Image - LESSER SCAUP, a first for Fair Isle. Photo by Jamie Coleman

### **6th October 2011:**

Thirty-four Whooper Swans flew through, as did 111 Greylags and 13 Barnacle Geese while other wildfowl included 12 Wigeon and 12 Teal. A Ring-tail Hen Harrier arrived and toured the island all day, along with a Sparrowhawk, while 2 Water Rails were

seen.

The Short-toed Lark remains, as does one of the Short-eared Owls, while migrant counts included 155 Skylarks, a Swallow, 187 Meadow Pipits, a Grey Wagtail, 3 Robins, 3 Whinchats, dwindling numbers of thrushes, 8 Blackcaps, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 19 Chaffinches, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 1 lingering Hawfinch, 22 Lapland Buntings and 53 Snow Buntings.

#### **5th October 2011:**

Highlights, apart from an impressive movement of geese through the day, was the discovery of a Short-toed Lark in the sheep cru near the Plantation and the year's first 2 Grey Phalaropes seen passing South Light.

A count of ninety-nine Whooper Swans was the second highest ever recorded on Fair Isle, the highest count being of 142 birds in October 2007. Several skeins of Pink-footed Geese, totalling 363, moved south along with 406 Greylag Geese and 7 Barnacle Geese. Other wildfowl included 26 Wigeon, 9 Teal, 1 Tufted Duck and 8 Red-breasted Mergansers, along with a Great Northern Diver over South Light and Slavonian Grebe in South Haven all day; all in all a good day for ducks! Four Herons were seen, as was the lingering Water Rail. Eight Purple Sandpipers were recorded, along with 3 Jack Snipes. Eighty-one Black-headed Gulls was the highest count of the year so far and Common Gulls reached 98.

A Woodpigeon and Collared Dove remain, while 2 Short-eared Owls were present and one Swallow was recorded, while other counts included 152 Meadow Pipits, the lingering Flava Wagtail, 1 White Wagtail, 4 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 2 Whinchats, 34 Wheatears, 5 Blackbirds, 9 Song Thrushes, 194 Redwings, 1 Garden Warbler, 6 Blackcaps, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers, 4 Chiffchaffs, 1 Willow Warbler, 5 Goldcrests, 35 Chaffinches, 6 Bramblings, 7 Siskins, 2 Linnets, 1 Lesser Redpoll, 1 Hawfinch, 21 Lapland Buntings and 43 Snow Buntings.

#### **4th October 2011:**

Geese and wildfowl on the island included 80 Pink-footed Geese, 21 Greylags, 7 Barnacle Geese, 21 Wigeon, 5 Teal, a Tufted Duck and Red-breasted Merganser. Five Kestrels was an increase on recent days and 8 Jack Snipes was a good count.

Two Wood Pigeons and the Collared Dove were present, as was a Short-eared Owl, while further counts included 100 Skylarks, 2 Swallows, 1 House Martin, 160 Meadow Pipits, 1 flava Wagtail, 5 Whinchats, 32 Wheatears, reducing numbers of lingering thrushes, Blackcaps, 4 Chiffchaffs, 1 Goldcrest, 14 Chaffinches, 3 Bramblings, 7 Siskins, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 1 lingering Hawfinch, 5 Lapland Buntings, 23 Snow Buntings and the lingering Little Bunting.

#### **3rd October 2011:**

A few geese remain on the island, with 27 Pink-feet, 14 Greylags and 8 Barnacle Geese present, plus other wildfowl including 20 Wigeon, 6 Teal and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers. Five Grey Herons moved through and 2 Water Rails were noted, while raptors included 3 Kestrels, 1 Merlin and a Peregrine. Three Black-headed Gulls, 130 Common Gulls and 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were an improvement to numbers in recent weeks, while 7 Kittiwakes were noted over the sea.

A Woodpigeon arrived, while further passerine totals included 63 Skylarks, 2 Swallows, 2 House Martins, the lingering Citrine Wagtail, 2 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 3 Whinchats, 29 Wheatears, 10 Blackbirds, 5 Fieldfares, 26 Song Thrushes, 799 Redwings still lingering, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 2 Garden Warblers, 7 Blackcaps, 1 Yellow-browed Warbler, 4 Chiffchaffs, 1 Willow Warbler, 1 Goldcrest, 12 Chaffinches, 3 Bramblings, 7 Siskins, 1 Hawfinch, 4 Lapland Buntings, 13 Snow Buntings and the lingering 2 Little Buntings.

#### **2nd October 2011:**

The Melodious Warbler and Rose-coloured Starling both remain.

Sixty-five Pink-footed Geese were logged, along with 9 Greylag Geese and the first Barnacle Geese of the month. Five Wigeon and 3 Teal were present, while our second Shoveler of the year and a Tufted Duck were also recorded. A Water Rail was at Houll and 6 Jack Snipe were seen in the wetter areas of the island.

One Collared Dove toured the island, while a Short-eared Owl lingers and 6 Swallows and a House Martin moved through. A female-type Yellow Wagtail and our first Grey Wagtail of the autumn arrived, while further passerines included 2 Robins, a Redstart, 3 Whinchats, a Ring Ouzel, 4 Blackbirds, 1 Fieldfare, 35 Song Thrushes, 394 Redwings, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 1 Barred Warbler, 18 Blackcaps, 10 Yellow-browed Warblers, 7 Chiffchaffs, 3 Willow Warblers, 1 Pied Flycatcher, 26 Chaffinches, 12 Bramblings, 35 Siskins, 4 Lesser Redpolls, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 2 Hawfinches, 8 Lapland Buntings, 25 Snow Buntings and 2 Little Buntings.

#### **1st October 2011:**

Highlight was the discovery of an OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT at North Light in the morning, while equally worthy of the headline was

a tricky Acro found on South Haven beach. Views strongly suggested BLYTH'S REED WARBLER, and the ID was confirmed when a mist-net was deployed and the bird was studied in the hand. Further good birds include the long-staying Citrine Wagtail at Barkland, Rose-coloured Starling at North Light and Melodious Warbler at Shirva.

One hundred and thirty Pink-footed Geese flew south, along with 78 Greylag Geese. A ring-tail Hen Harrier arrived and toured the south of the island, while 5 Kestrels, 2 Merlins and a Peregrine remained. A Moorhen was found headless on Gilsetter. Notable waders included 3 Jack Snipe and a Woodcock.

Four Woodpigeons arrived and 3 Short-eared Owls were present, along with a late Common Swift. A total of 124 Skylarks were logged, along with a Tree Pipit, 177 Meadow Pipits, 5 Robins, a Bluethroat at Setter, 2 Redstarts, 2 Whinchats, 8 Blackbirds, 1 Fieldfare, 44 Song Thrushes, 1018 Redwings, 2 Barred Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 62 Blackcaps (our highest count of the year), 15 Yellow-browed Warblers, 5 Chiffchaffs, 6 Willow Warblers, 4 Goldcrests, 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 1 Red-breasted Flycatcher at Shirva briefly in the morning, 1 Pied Flycatcher, 37 Chaffinches, 29 Bramblings, 15 Siskins, 4 Linnets, 5 Mealy Redpolls, 2 Crossbills, 3 Hawfinches, 10 Lapland Buntings, 10 Snow Buntings and a Little Bunting at the Obs.

## September Sightings:

Highlights from the end of September

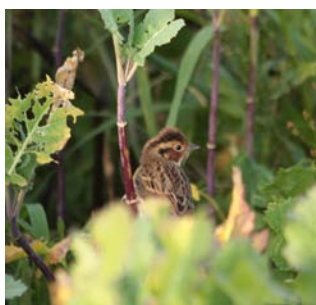
First of all, apologies for the lack of updates over the last month. We're now back up and running and sightings updates will be more frequent from now until the end of the season.

First off, the major highlights during this period included the discovery of a fine PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER on the evening of the 30th, in the ditches and long grass at Gilsetter. Though not the easiest bird to view, this Fair Isle classic gave reasonable views before dark, giving a lot of people something to smile about that evening. Another outstanding highlight was the discovery of our 3rd GREAT SNIPE this year, seen first at Kennaby and then Da Water on the 18th. The bird continued to be seen occasionally through to the 22nd. The PALLID HARRIER from the 11th lingered through until the 14th, while the isle also hosted its 4th ever BAIRD'S SANDPIPER in the Havens on the 24th. A BLYTH'S REED WARBLER was discovered in the Obs garden, spotted from the bedroom of a certain AW, on the 19th.

Other good birds during this period included the lingering Melodious Warbler and Citrine Wagtail, remaining into early October, a Rose-coloured Starling roaming the island from the 25th into October, a Sabine's Gull on the 20th-21st, a Wryneck on the 17th-18th, one, and probably two Short-toed Larks on the 18th-20th and 26th, Richards Pipit on the 30th, 2 Barred Warbler on the 19th, plus another 2 on the 25th, the first Yellow-browed Warblers on the 18th, peaking at 10 on the 30th, a Great Grey Shrike on the 17th-29th, small numbers of Rosefinches until the 25th, a Hawfinch on the 30th and Little Bunting from the 18th, peaking with 3 on the 30th.



Baird's Sandpiper  
Photo by Chris Goodie



Little Bunting  
Photo by Jason Moss



Melodious Warbler  
Photo by Dave Curtis

## 13th September 2011: South-westerly 1-2. Showers

The PALLID HARRIER remains and continues to patrol the island.

Three Whooper Swans travelled south in the afternoon, nearly taking the summering bird (fondly named 'Dennis') with them, though not quite! Thirteen Wigeon and 18 Teal were still present around the isle. Five Cormorants moved south, while a Grey Heron lingered, and raptors included 5 Kestrels, 1 Merlin and 2 Peregrines. Wader counts included 43 Ringed Plovers, 8 Golden Plovers, 10 Lapwings, 3 Knots, 8 Sanderlings, 35 Dunlin, 4 Ruff, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit, 17 Redshank and 1 Greenshank.

Two Woodpigeons were seen, while a Sand Martin in the south of the island was the first of the month. Small passerine migrants included 3 Tree Pipits, 5 Whinchats, 2 Sedge Warbler, 3 Barred Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Common Whitethroat, 10 Garden Warblers and 23 Blackcaps (a clear arrival of these species), 2 Chiffchaffs, 11 Willow Warblers, 1 Goldcrest, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 4 Common Rosefinches, 25 Lapland Buntings (a bit of a drop in number from yesterday's high count) and an increase to 12 Snow Buntings.



Photo by Dave Curtis



Photo by Arnaud Barras



Photo by Jason Moss

Images above – Common Rosefinches and Barred Warblers become so much part of the furniture at Fair Isle that you have to be careful not to forget that they are actually British scarcities. It is a rather good place to get familiar with them, both in the hand and in the field. Photos by Dave Curtis (Barred Warbler), Arnaud Barras (Rosefinches) and Jason Moss (birds in the hand)



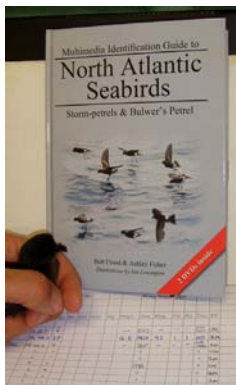
## 12th September 2011:

South-easterly 2-3, backing north-easterly 3-4. Overcast in the morning, with rain in the afternoon.

Highlight was the discovery of a fine MELODIOUS WARBLER at Schoolton during morning census. The bird showed well through the day, shifting between the garden and the crop strip below Shirva. This is our second record of the year. Of course, the lingering PALLID HARRIER, showing very well on its second day, is also considered a highlight.

A total of 14 Wigeon and 18 Teal were present, while 20 Cormorants was a notable count. Raptors included a female Sparrowhawk, 4 lingering Kestrels, 1 Merlin and 2 Peregrines. Waders included 2 Knot, 6 Sanderling, 1 juvenile Little Stint in North Haven, 4 Purple Sandpipers, 29 Dunlin, 4 Ruff, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit and the first Greenshank of the month. Two Common Terns seen off South Light were the first in a while.

A Woodpigeon remained, while also seen were 3 Tree Pipits, 290 Meadow Pipits, 3 Whinchats, 4 Sedge Warblers, 1 Barred Warbler, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Common Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, 8 Blackcaps, 5 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 3 Common Rosefinches, 50 Lapland Buntings and 3 Snow Buntings.



Pallid Harrier. Photo by Dave Curtis

European Storm-petrel (with Wilson's Storm-petrels and Swinhoe's Storm-petrel).

Will's new favourite book. Photo by Will Miles

## 11th September 2011:

South/south-easterly winds, force 2-3. Mostly overcast, but dry throughout. A fine day.

Highlight selection today isn't particularly difficult, with a juvenile PALLID HARRIER sailing past over Gilsetter at 0745 during the morning trap-round blowing most things out of the water. What a bird! And our second of the year! It spent the day showing excellently to all, quartering over Da Water and the Pund Croft, often landing and giving great views. It's difficult to know where the bird may have come from, but with two and possibly three birds being reported from Shetland Mainland on the day, this bird may have been a newly arrived continental vagrant. The underwing pattern seems to suggest that the bird is unlikely to be out bird from August, despite the birds uncanny favouritism for the same hunting and resting grounds! De-ja-vu!

Ten Wigeon and 3 Teal were seen, as was our first Red-breasted Merganser since July. To add to what was already an impressive raptor day, the island was also invaded by at least 8 Kestrels, while a Merlin and 2 Peregrines were also present. Wader numbers included 12 Golden Plovers, 13 Lapwings, 7 Sanderlings, 16 Dunlins, 5 Ruffs, 1 Bar-tailed Godwit, 11 Redshanks and 2 Common Sandpipers.

Two Woodpigeons were present, along with a Tree Pipit, 222 Meadow Pipits, 4 Whinchats, 59 Wheatears, a Blackbird, 2 Sedge Warblers, a Reed Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, a small arrival of 6 Blackcaps, 8 Willow Warblers, 1 Goldcrest, 3 Common Rosefinches, 26 Lapland Buntings dotted around and 5 Snow Buntings on the back of Ward Hill.



PALLID HARRIER. Photos by Jason Moss



## 10th September 2011:

East/south-easterly 3 to 4. Overcast in the morning, with rain and fog following in the afternoon.

A fairly quiet day by recent standards, with little in the way of new arrivals and a couple of lingering scarcities keeping things interesting. Highlight though, probably goes to the birth of our first Grey Seal pups, at the bottom of Steensi Geo.

The resident Whooper Swan remains, while 5 Wigeon and 14 Teal were on Da Water and a male Tufted Duck was on Easter Lother Water. Two Grey Herons arrived. Wader counts included 12 Oystercatchers, 8 Sanderlings, 18 Dunlin, 8 Ruff, 12 Curlew and 32 Redshanks. Common Gull numbers increased to 22.

A Woodpigeon dropped in, while other migrant counts included 237 Meadow Pipits, 2 Whinchats, 2 Sedge Warblers, 2 Barred Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Common Whitethroat, 2 Blackcaps, 6 Willow Warblers, 2 Goldcrests, 1 Pied Flycatcher in Wester Lother, 1 Common Rosefinch and continually building numbers of Lapland Buntings, with 18 counted around the island.

## 9th September 2011:

Very light East/south-easterly winds. Overcast but dry.

The first 5 Barnacle Geese of the autumn were seen to-ing and fro-ing over Bunes in the morning, while 5 Wigeon and 8 Teal were present on Da Water. The day's wader counts included 22 Golden Plover, 9 Sanderling, 18 Dunlin, a Ruff and 23 Redshank.

Migrant numbers included a hint of passage, with 71 Skylarks, including a few clearly headed south, 2 Swallows, 355 Meadow Pipits, including a moderate southerly passage in the morning, 77 Rock Pipits; an increase possibly suggestive of an influx, 4 Whinchats, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Barred Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 1 Blackcap, 5 Willow Warblers, 2 Goldcrests, 207 Twite, 4 Common Rosefinches, 15 Lapland Buntings and 2 Snow Buntings.



Dunlin by Arnaud Barras



Sunset by Arnaud Barras

## 8th August 2011:

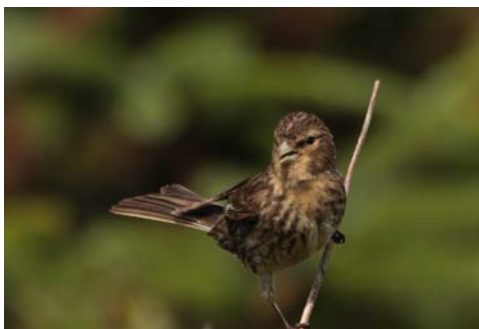
The CITRINE WAGTAIL remains in the same area for its third day, as did the Pectoral Sandpiper.

Two Storm Petrels were noted from the Good Shepherd in the morning, while 2 Merlins and 4 Peregrines were present, the latter putting on a good display over Malcolm's Head in the evening. Wader highlights and good totals included 86 Ringed Plover, 10 Golden Plovers, 7 Sanderling and 24 Dunlin.

Migrant passerine numbers were relatively low on the island, and a lot of the birds were just lingerers from the last few days. Highlights included 7 Whinchats, 2 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 lingering Barred Warbler at the shop, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, 1 Blackcap, 7 Willow Warblers, 1 Goldcrest, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 2 Common Rosefinches, 14 Lapland Buntings (the beginnings of another good autumn?) and a Snow Bunting.



Eider. Photo by Arnaud Barras



Twite : Photo by Jason Moss Twite. The Twite have had what can only be described as a bumper breeding season. Large numbers are present on the island, with census counts reaching 240 birds on the 5th!

## 7th September 2011:

The days highlights revolved around the lingering CITRINE WAGTAIL and Pectoral Sandpiper.

Three Greylags paid the islands a visit, along with the lingering Teal and Wigeon flock. Waders included 9 Oystercatchers, 15 Golden Plovers, 13 Lapwings, 6 Knot, 9 Sanderling, 1 Purple Sandpiper, 10 Dunlins, 4 Ruff, 2 Jack Snipe, 1 Black-tailed Godwit, 1 Whimbrel and 19 Redshanks. A Kittiwake and 2 Guillemots offshore were the first in a good while.

Two Swifts were seen, along with 2 Swallows, 2 tree Pipits, 1 Redstart, 6 Whinchats, 1 Sedge Warbler, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 3 Garden Warblers, 1 Blackcap, 7 Willow Warblers, 1 Goldcrest, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 5 Rosefinches and a small arrival of 3 Lapland Buntings and a Snow Bunting.



Pectoral Sandpiper. Photo by Arnaud Barras



Lapland Bunting. Photo by Arnaud Barras

## 6th September 2011:

East/south-easterly winds, force 2-3. Heavy rain am, clearing by the afternoon.

Highlights included a Corncrake flushed from Vailas Trees in the afternoon, an adult Pectoral Sandpiper found feeding along the edge of Easter Locher Water and a CITRINE WAGTAIL discovered on the beach at Furse. An elusive bird, it was difficult to keep tabs on. However life was made easy for everyone at the observatory when it was caught in a mist-net in the garden whilst trapping Pied Wagtails!

Ten Wigeon and 19 Teal were present, as were a Cormorant and Grey Heron. 61 Storm Petrels were trapped overnight. Waders included 102 Ringed Plovers, 4 Golden Plovers, 12 Lapwings, 3 Knot, 14 Sanderling, 15 Dunlin, 5 Ruff, the first Jack Snipe of the autumn, the lingering Black-tailed Godwit, 5 Curlew, 27 Redshank and 48 Turnstones. Our first Arctic Terns for a while (6) were seen offshore.

Small passerine movements included 3 Swifts, 3 Swallows, 3 House Martins, 7 Tree Pipits, 322 Meadow Pipits, 1 male Redstart, 8 Whinchats, 90 Wheatears, 1 Blackbird, 2 Sedge Warblers (finally!), 1 Barred Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 2 Garden Warblers, 3 Blackcaps, 11 Willow Warblers, 3 Goldcrests, 1 Spotted Flycatcher and 6 Common Rosefinches.



Pectoral Sandpiper on Easter Locher Water.  
Photo by Arnaud Barras



Citrine Wagtail – an incredibly small wagtail! Photo by Arnaud Barras

## 3rd-5th September 2011:

Main highlights for the period mostly revolved around the 3rd, with both the EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER and the GREAT SNIPE still being present and showing well in the morning. Another good bird was the brief appearance of a Pectoral Sandpiper over Meoness on the same afternoon.

Eight Greylags were present (3rd and 4th), while ducks included steadily increasing numbers of Wigeon (16 on the 4th) and Teal (32 on the 5th). Around 15 Storm Petrels were seen in Fair Isle waters off the Good Shepherd on the 3rd, while a Cormorant was present throughout. Kestrels increased to 4 on the 4th, while Peregrine and Merlin remain. Wader numbers continue to increase, with peaks of 14 Oystercatchers (5th), 89 Ringed Plover (5th), 12 Golden Plovers (3rd), 14 Lapwings (3rd), 6 Knot (4th), 5 Sanderling (5th), 1 Curlew Sandpiper at North Light (4th), 11 Dunlin (5th), 4 Ruff and 1 Black-tailed Godwit throughout, 2 Bar-tailed Godwits (5th), Whimbrel (5th), 5 Curlew (5th), 17 Redshank (5th) and a Common Sandpiper throughout.

A Collared Dove arrived on the 3rd, while small migrant numbers included 66 Skylarks on the 4th, with some southerly movement, 19 Swallows on the 3rd, 19 Tree Pipits (4th), 431 Meadow Pipits (5th), 2 probable juvenile Grey-headed Wagtails at Springfield (4th), the first Grey Wagtail of the autumn on the 5th, Robin throughout, Redstart on the 4th, 20 Whinchats (3rd), 177 Wheatears (5th), 2 Blackbirds (3rd), 2 Reed Warblers (3rd), up to 5 Barred Warblers (5th), 3 Lesser Whitethroats (3rd), 1 Common Whitethroat (4th), 6 Garden Warblers (5th), 2 Blackcaps (3rd and 5th), a peak of 15 Willow Warblers (3rd), 3 Goldcrests (3rd), Spotted Flycatcher (5th), 2 lingering female-type Red-backed

Shrikes throughout, a peak of (and Fair Isles second highest count) 15 Rosefinches, most of which spent their time in the Schoolton Rosa and Lapland Bunting on the 3rd and 4th.



Barred Warbler – one of 10 individuals that have been ringed on the island this year. Photo by Jason Moss  
Sanderling.  
Photo by Arnaud Barras



## 2nd September 2011:

South-easterly, force 4. Overcast with rain in the morning, but clearing by the afternoon, leaving only the occasional shower. Warm.

Major highlight involved an elusive Hippolais warbler found in the morning near Taft. Initial suspicions based on brief views were confirmed later in the evening when the bird was rediscovered near Schoolton; EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER! This was the 3rd Fair Isle Record. The bird showed well in the Schoolton garden later in the evening, sharing said garden with at least 8 Rosefinches, a Red-backed Shrike and a Barred Warbler. Where else in the country could boast such a sight! The GREAT SNIPE was also still present at Kennaby.

There were 8 Wigeon and 11 Teal present, while the lingering Kestrel was joined by another. Waders included 45 Ringed Plovers, 9 Golden Plovers, 14 Lapwings, 5 Knot, 9 Sanderling, 3 Purple Sandpipers, 4 Dunlins, 4 Ruff, 1 Black-tailed Godwit in-off, 1 Whimbrel, 25 Redshank and a Common Sandpiper. A Woodpigeon arrived, while other passerine numbers included 16 Tree Pipits, 364 Meadow Pipits, 1 Robin, 12 Whinchats, 100 Wheatears, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 1 Reed Warbler, 2 Barred Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, a Chiffchaff, 20 Willow Warblers, 2 Red-backed Shrikes and 8 Common Rosefinches.



EASTERN OLIVACEOUS WARBLER.  
Photo by David Parnaby



Also featuring in the Schoolton Garden; Red-backed Shrike and Rosefinch.  
Photo by David Parnaby

## 1st September 2011:

East/south-easterly winds, force 1. Fine but overcast.

The GREAT SNIPE lingers for its 5th day, being seen each time in exactly the same tatty strip; something to look forward to each day for whichever warden is doing south-east census!

Six Wigeon and 9 Teal were present, while a Grey Heron, 1 Kestrel, 1 Merlin and 1 Peregrine were sighted. Waders included 34 Ringed Plovers, 4 Knot, 3 Sanderling, 3 Purple Sandpipers, 5 Dunlins, 1 Ruff, 6 Curlew, 7 Redshank, 2 Green Sandpipers and a Common Sandpiper.

Forty-three Skylarks were counted, along with 16 Swallows, 17 Tree Pipits, 334 Meadow Pipits, 1 Flava Wagtail, 1 Robin, 16 Whinchats, 2 Barred Warblers, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 2 Garden Warblers, 1 Wood Warbler trapped in the Plantation, 2 Chiffchaffs, 16 Willow Warblers, 8 Common Rosefinches and 1 Lapland Bunting.



Three Common  
Rosefinches  
Photo by David Parnaby

and

A Whinchat.  
Photo by Jason Moss

## August Sightings:

31st August 2011:

West/north-westerly 1. Overcast but dry.

Highlight today was the rediscovery of the GREAT SNIPE at Kennaby. Apparently being a fan of potatoes, the bird was flushed once from the tattie rig and flashed a number of key features and, most importantly called several times before being lost from view.

Eleven Wigeon and 17 Teal were present on Da Water and Golden Water, while an Intermediate Fulmar was watched passing Bunes. Raptors included 2 Kestrels and 2 Merlins while waders involved 46 Ringed Plovers, 4 Golden Plovers, 12 Lapwings, 5 Knot, 5 Sanderling, the lingering Curlew Sandpiper at North Light, 19 Dunlin, 5 Ruff, 5 Curlew, 15 Redshank, 1 Green Sandpiper, 1 Common Sandpiper and 29 Turnstone.

Two Swallows were present, while small passerine migrants present on the island included 17 Tree Pipits, 8 Whinchats, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 1 Barred Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 12 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 1 Pied Flycatcher, 2 migrant Ravens and 4 Common Rosefinches.



These two images display most of the key characteristics to look for when ruling out Common Snipe, including the finely barred underwing, distinct (though not so much as in an adult Great) white greater and median covert bars, white outer tail feathers (most obvious on take-off and landing) and its general relatively pot-bellied and short-billed appearance.

Photos by Arnaud Barras

Great Snipe.

### 27th -30th August 2011:

Several days of gale-force winds and rain, but conditions improving by the end of the month.

Highlights of the period included the discovery of our second GREAT SNIPE of the year; a bird flushed from the crop at Kennaby, and again seen in flight over a neighbouring wet field. Further highlights included the lingering Short-toed Lark remaining faithful to the airstrip, lingering probably due to its advanced state of moult, a lingering Wryneck at the Obs, up to 2 lingering Barred Warblers, a lingering Red-backed Shrike at Field and the Obs and at least one Common Rosefinch at Schoolton.

The Whooper Swan remains, as does the lingering Greylag Goose, while a peak of 7 Wigeon and 14 Teal were present on the 30th. A Sooty Shearwater was picked up while seawatching from the south end on the 28th, while a Cormorant flew north on the same day and 2 Herons arrived on the 29th. Raptors included a lingering Sparrowhawk and Kestrel, 2 Merlins on the 30th and 2 Peregrines on the 29th.



Photos by Jason Moss

Notable wader counts and sightings included 54 Ringed Plover (29th), 31 Golden Plover (28th), 13 Lapwing (30th, 23 Knot (29th), 5 Sanderling (29th), Little Stint throughout, Curlew Sandpiper (30th), 41 Dunlin (28th), 6 Ruff (30th), Black-tailed Godwit throughout, 3 Bar-tailed Godwits north (29th), 2 Whimbrel (27th), 28 Redshank (27th, 2 Green Sandpipers (27th) and a Common Sandpiper (28th).

Passerine migrants included dwindling numbers of Tree Pipits throughout, dropping from 26 on the 27th to 19 on the 30th, 443 Meadow Pipits on the 30th, 2 Flava wagtails on the 30th, an immature/female Grey-headed Wagtail from the 27th, 3 Redstarts, 16 Whinchats, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Blackcaps, 23 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher and 2 Pied Flycatchers on the 30th and 3 Garden Warblers on the 27th.

### 26th August 2011:

Light and variable, but still with a fair bit of east in the wind. Dry and bright, fine weather.

As is often the case after a big fall of migrants, you have to wait a day or two before the rarities drop in, and today demonstrated that beautifully with the appearance of not one, but two hippolais warblers; a BOOTED WARBLER at Burkle and a MELODIOUS WARBLER at the

Auld Haa. Both birds were showy when they could be located in the first place, but could disappear without a trace quite easily amongst the long grasses they were moving in. Further highlights included the lingering Dotterel, 2 Wrynecks, 7 Barred Warblers, a Red-backed Shrike and 9 Rosefinches.

Twelve Teal were present on Da Water, as was yesterday's Little Stint, while the Curlew Sandpiper relocated to South Harbour. Three Grey Herons travelled south while a female Sparrowhawk arrived.

Most smaller migrants showed a decrease in number from previous days, though the flycatchers increased and there were some new arrivals. Totals included 17 Swifts, 62 Tree Pipits, 1 Flava Wagtail, 4 Redstarts, 17 Whinchats, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Common Whitethroats, 5 Garden Warblers, 2 Blackcaps, 1 Wood Warbler, 62 Willow Warblers, the first Goldcrest of the autumn, 9 Spotted Flycatchers and 11 Pied Flycatchers.



Booted Warbler. Photo by Arnaud Barras



Melodious Warbler. Photo by Jason Moss

### **25th August 2011:**

East/south-easterly 2. Overcast

A few new birds in today, with highlights including an immature Dotterel at the top of Ward Hill and this year's first Little Stint and Curlew Sandpiper in off the sea and on Easter Lother Water respectively. A drop to five Wrynecks suggests the majority of yesterday's birds probably left overnight, while 6 Barred Warblers, 1 immature Red-backed Shrike and 7 Rosefinches were also present.

Two Kestrels arrived, while waders included 30 Golden Plover, 5 Ruff, 14 Redshank, 2 Green Sandpipers and 4 Common Sandpipers.

Small migrant numbers tended to increase from yesterday's numbers, suggesting mostly new arrivals, though some may well have also made it up onto the island from the cliffs in the calmer weather. Totals included 22 Swifts, 104 Tree Pipits, 3 Flava Wagtails, a Robin, 15 Redstarts, 20 Whinchats, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Common Whitethroats, 15 Garden Warblers, 7 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs, 93 Willow Warblers, 4 Spotted Flycatchers and 10 Pied Flycatchers.



Dotterel. Photo by Arnaud Barras



Curlew Sandpiper. Photo by Arnaud Barras

### **24th August 2011:**

North-easterly with rain all morning, drying up by the afternoon

The island today saw one of the best falls of scarce migrants it has ever witnessed, in recent history at least. The weather conditions brought with it an unbelievable total of 19 Wrynecks; the 2nd highest Autumn Fair Isle count, the record being 20 birds, and no doubt a few more were lurking on the cliffs and elsewhere. It was an unbelievable experience for the wardens, kicking birds up in most areas of suitable habitat across the island! Add to this the ARCTIC WARBLER still lingering in the plantation, 8 Barred Warblers, 7 Rosefinches, 3 Wood Warblers, a Corncrake trapped at lunch and stacks of Tree Pipits, Willow Warblers and other common migrants, and today will forever go down as a good'un.

Waders included 6 Sanderling, 2 Knot, 11 Golden Plover, 7 Dunlin, an exceptional 25 Ruff, 2 Greenshanks and 3 Green Sandpipers.

Small migrants noted during today's fall included 71 Tree Pipits, 268 Meadow Pipits, 2 Flava Wagtails, the autumn's first Robin, 4 Redstarts, 9 Whinchats, 3 Grasshopper Warblers, a Reed Warbler, 14 Garden Warblers, the first 3 Blackcaps of the autumn, 3 Chiffchaffs, 80 Willow Warblers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers and 8 Pied Flycatchers.



A 1st cal. yr. Corncrake. Photo by Jason Moss



Wryneck in the hand. Photo by Jason Moss

**23rd August 2011:**

Light easterly winds all day. Dry but overcast.

Another great August day on Fair Isle with some top class arrivals. Top of the bunch was an ARCTIC WARBLER trapped late in the evening in the Vaadal. On release it flew across Gilsetter, but hopefully it will reappear again tomorrow. A probable CITRINE WAGTAIL was also logged, though only in flight as it flew south in front of Malcolms Head, calling before appearing to go down near South Light. Views were good, but probably not enough to rule out Eastern Yellow Wagtail. Further highlights included 6 Barred Warblers dotted across the island at the Obs, Bulls Park, Chalet, Midway, Schoolton and Field, and 4 Rosefinches, including 3 at Schoolton.

An excellent night of Storm Petrel ringing produced 114 birds, and continued until the sun began to rise. Waders included 24 Ringed Plovers, 5 Golden Plovers, 2 Sanderling, 7 Dunlin, an Whimbrel, 15 Redshank and 2 Greenshank. Nineteen Swift were probably lingering from previous days.

Commoner passerine counts included 228 Meadow Pipits, the autumns first Grasshopper Warbler, 1 Reed Warbler, a Garden Warbler, 2 Chiffchaffs, 2 Willow Warblers, 2 Carrion Crows and 175 Twite.



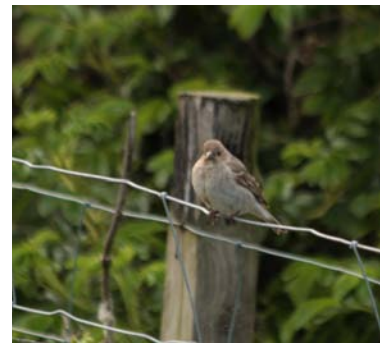
ARCTIC WARBLER.  
A good find and capture this evening.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Barred Warbler in the Chalet garden.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Short-toed Lark, though not today's one; this one being our spring bird.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Common Rosefinch, though again, this is a bird from the spring. Really must get out with the camera more!  
Photo by Jason Moss

**22nd August 2011:**

Westerly 1-2. Fine and dry

A Relatively quiet day really, but still with a few bits around and some new arrivals in the light winds. Highlights were a Short-toed Lark at the airstrip; possibly the bird lingering from the 12th, but it could equally be a new bird. Also present were 2 Barred Warblers and at least 4 Common Rosefinches, including the red male at Houll.

Five Greylag Geese roamed the isle, while a Wigeon and Teal were on Da Water. Raptors included at least 3 Merlins, the lingering Kestrel and a Peregrine. Wader numbers consisted of 2 Golden Plovers, 9 Lapwing, 6 Knot, 2 Sanderling, a lingering juvenile Black-tailed Godwit, 1 Whimbrel, 25 Redshank, Greenshank and a Common Sandpiper. An Arctic Tern was offshore in the south.

Twenty Swifts and 12 Swallows were present, while passerine migrants included a building number of Meadow Pipits, with 218 counted, 2 Black Redstarts; a male and first-year type, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, 1 Chiffchaff, 3 Willow Warblers and a Carrion Crow.

**21st August 2011:**

Light westerly winds and overcast

Highlight of the day was the arrival of six Rosefinches in the afternoon, including a smart male at Barkland and 5 female-types, all of which went to roost in the Schoolton garden, and none of which were found during census, or even seen by any of the wardens!

Eighteen Teal arrived overnight onto Da Water, joining the lingering Wigeon. Two Merlins also arrived (both narrowly avoiding the Planation trap). Swifts and Swallows were again on the move with 35 of the former and 17 of the latter seen to be headed south.

Passerine Migrants included 2 Reed Warblers, a Lesser Whitethroat at Barkland, a Common Whitethroat and 2 Garden Warblers, 4 Willow Warblers and a Pied Flycatcher.

### **18th – 20th August 2011:**

More of the same, with light winds and fine weather throughout

Highlights included one of the Barred Warblers lingering throughout in the garden at Leogh and 1, possibly 2 Common Rosefinch at the Obs and Bulls Park on 19th-20th. However, the main highlight must go to a fantastic day of cetacean watching on the 19th, including a minimum of 17 Porpoise, at least 6 Risso's Dolphins north past Bunes in the early afternoon, a large pod of 30 White-sided Dolphins north past Bunes in the evening and 2 Dolphin sp.

Four Greylag Geese flew south on the 20th, while a Wigeon and up to 11 Teal were present. Three Herons arrived on the 18th, while a Storm Petrel and Manx Shearwater were seen from the Good Shepherd on the 20th. Wader counts included 7 Golden Plover, 10 Lapwing, 2 Sanderling and a Ruff on the 20th and 14 Knot, 9 Purple Sandpipers, 8 Dunlin, 18 Redshank and the lingering Green Sandpiper and Greenshank on the 19th.

A good passage of Swifts was noted on the 20th, with 45 passing through, while Swallow numbers reached 41 on the 18th. Passerine migrants included a Reed Warbler on the 19th, Lesser Whitethroat and 3 Whitethroats on the 18th and 2 Garden Warblers on the 19th.

### **15th – 17th August 2011:**

Light variable or south-westerly winds, and mostly fine and warm. Fog on the 17th

Highlights included the final morning of the PALLID HARRIERS stay, before disappearing and not being seen again, presumably leaving the island in the fine weather. The first Barred Warbler of the year arrived on the 15th, with 2 on 16th and 3 on the 17th, and a Rosefinch also arrived on the 15th.

The summering Whooper Swan still remains, while a Wigeon and 12 Teal arrived on the 15th. Raptors on the 16th included the lingering immature Kestrel and a Sparrowhawk, Merlin and Peregrine also on the island. Wader numbers, though far from spectacular, still continue to increase with counts of 35 Oystercatcher (15th), 19 Ringed Plover (16th), 17 Golden Plover (16th), 8 Lapwings (15th) 2 Sanderling (16th and 17th), 3 Dunlin, 3 Ruff (both 17th), 1 Bar-tailed Godwit north (17th) and singles of both Green Sandpiper and Greenshank throughout.

Smaller migrants were hosted in still relatively small numbers, with counts of 24 Swifts and 17 Swallows on the 16th, Sand Martin on the 15th, steadily building numbers of Meadow Pipits (169 on the 16th, a lingering Whinchat, 2 Reed Warblers on the 15th, Whitethroat and 3 Garden Warblers on the 17th, up to 10 Willow Warblers on the 17th and 2 Pied Flycatchers on the 16th.

Further highlights of the non-avian kind included a pod of 5 Risso's Dolphins that put on a good show on the 16th as they travelled slowly past North Light in the evening.

### **13th – 14th August 2011:**

South-easterly 5 to 6, with rain am. Wind easing and rain turning to mist by the afternoon.

Another good day, with many of the previous day's rarities and scarcities lingering (PALLID HARRIER, Greenish Warbler and Red-backed Shrike) plus the discovery of a flighty, but vocal CITRINE WAGTAIL. Initially heard in the fog, it eventually settled down in the area around Da Water where good views were obtained of this classic Fair Isle special.

There was evidence of some wildfowl movement, with 10 Greylag Geese moving through and 14 Teal arriving onto Da Water on the 13th. Golden Plover numbers increased to 7 on the 13th, while 18 Knot, a Sanderling, 10 Dunlin, 7 Ruff, 23 Curlew, a Spotted Redshank calling in the fog, 2 Greenshank, Green Sandpiper and Common Sandpiper all on the 13th all made it clear that summer is truly coming to an end on the island. Common Tern on the 13th and Arctic Tern on the 14th were both the first in a while around the island.

There was a reasonable selection of commoner migrants scattered across the island on both days, with peaks and highlights being a Woodpigeon on the 13th, 11 Swifts (14th) 2 Whinchats on the (14th) an unseasonal Stonechat on the 13th, 2 Reed Warblers (13th), Whitethroat and 4 Garden Warblers, Chiffchaff, 20 Willow Warblers, Spotted Flycatcher and Pied Flycatcher and 2 Redpoll sp. all also on the 14th.



Citrine Wagtail. Photo by Jason Moss  
Ruff. Photo by Jason Moss

## 12th August 2011:

South-easterly 3-4 in the morning, gusting up to 5-6 in the afternoon. Fine and bright

What a day! The autumn has kicked off in fine style, with a day of birding that few of us at Fair Isle will ever forget. Census in the morning revealed a small arrival of commoner bits and pieces, plus the rediscovery of the Short-toed Lark from the 7th on the airstrip and the Red-backed Shrike remaining faithful to the Chalet. However things really kicked off in the afternoon, initially with a report of a ring-tailed harrier sp. near Malcolm's Head seen during wedding rehearsals, the bird was refound and identified as a stunning juvenile PALLID HARRIER! The bird showed well all afternoon, hunting over the croft-lands, hunting Snipe, Meadow Pipits, Wheatears and Rabbits, sometimes giving very close views. However the story doesn't end there as, while the search was on for the harrier, a GREENISH WARBLER was discovered at Schoolton! This bird also showed exceptionally well in the gardens Rosa plantation. Classic August? Definitely classic Fair Isle. Expect the unexpected!

Two Teal remained and a Grey Heron arrived. A group of 4 Ruff and a Black-tailed Godwit arrived off the sea and, being fearless juveniles, showed incredibly well on Meoness. Five Whimbrel, 8 Redshanks, 2 Greenshanks, 1 Green Sandpiper and 1 Common Sandpiper were also present. Common Gulls arrived in decent numbers, with 69 on Meoness along with 4 Black-headed Gulls.

One Swift passed through while other counts included the autumn's first Redstart, 1 Whinchat, 124 Wheatears (still lingering breeders mostly), the first Reed Warbler of the autumn and 21 Willow Warblers.



PALLID HARRIER!  
Photo by Jason Moss



Greenish Warbler.  
Photo by Elizabeth Morison



Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit.  
Ruff and Black-tailed Godwit. Some incredibly confident juveniles.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Reed Warbler.  
Photo by Jason Moss

## 11th August 2011:

North-easterly 3. Showers

A fairly quiet day really, considering the wind direction and promising conditions. However census did provide a fine immature Red-backed Shrike at Chalet.

Three Teal were discovered, along with a lingering male Tufted Duck, while 2 Red-throated Divers flew over in the morning. Twenty-three Storm Petrels were caught during a ringing session in the evening. The Swedish Kestrel lingers of its 4th day. Wader highlights included 3 Golden Plovers, 1 Dunlin, 14 Redshanks, 2 Greenshanks and 2 Green Sandpipers (with one trapped in the Gulley).

The Twite population has exploded in this late summer period, with a big boost provided by fledged birds after what appears to have been a successful season. The day's census revealed 164 birds on the island. Two Swifts were seen to pass through, while 9 Swallows were lingering breeding stock. Further passerine visitors included 2 Whinchats and 10 Willow Warblers.



Red-backed Shrike.  
Photo by



Green Sandpiper in the hand.  
Photo by Elizabeth Morison



### 7th – 10th August 2011:

Moderate north-westerlies, veering north-easterly in the last few days. Blustery with regular showers, sometimes heavy

The steady introduction to the autumn continues, with a trickle of migrating birds continuing to pass through Fair Isle day by day. Our first real scarcity of the autumn arrived on the 7th, with a Short-toed Lark found feeding along the edge of the Airstrip near lunchtime. However, with the onset of a heavy spell of rain, the bird promptly disappeared and could not be relocated, leaving it as a one-man-bird only. An additional highlight was a pod of 4 Risso's Dolphins seen traveling north past Sheep Rock on the 10th.

Wildfowl migrants on the island included 2 Greylags on the 8th, Teal on the 7th and 2 Tufted Ducks from the 8th, while 2 summer-plumaged Red-throated Divers flew overhead on the 10th and a Leaches Petrel was trapped during Stormy ringing on the 7th. An interesting ringing control on the 9th involved a first year Kestrel trapped in the Roadside Dyke trap, sporting a Swedish ring! This is the 54th Kestrel ringed on Fair Isle, and the 9th control since 1948.

The 10th produced a juvenile Moorhen on Chalet pond; a scarce migrant to the isle and the earliest ever autumn record. Waders have included a single Golden Plover throughout, 7 Lapwings on the 9th, 4 Sanderling on the 7th, 2 Dunlin on the 7th and 9th, a peak of 11 Ruff on the 7th, 7 Whimbrel on the 10th, 24 Redshank on the 9th, 3 Greenshank on the 9th, 3 Green Sandpipers on the 7th and the 10th and a peak of 38 Turnstones on the 7th.

Small migrant sightings have included a juvenile Cuckoo on the 8th, Swift on the 10th, a House Martin on the 10th, a juvenile White Wag-tail trapped on the 10th, a peak of 4 Whinchats on the 10th, 2 Garden Warblers on the 9th, a Wood Warbler on the 7th and 8th, Chiffchaff throughout and a peak of 10 Willow Warblers on the 10th.

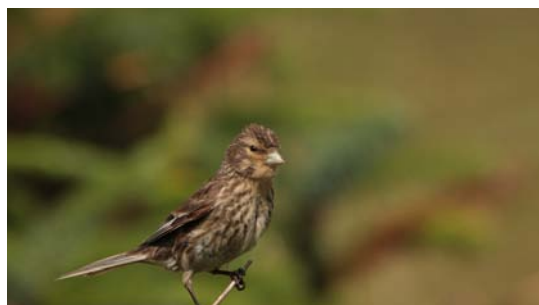


This juvenile Kestrel was trapped in the evening of the 9th, bearing a Swedish ring! Photos by Elizabeth Morison

### 5th – 6th August 2011:

Eight Teal arrived on the 5th, with 4 the following day, along with 2 Grey Herons also on the 6th. Wader numbers continue to build, with Oystercatchers well into 3 figures, 5 Dunlin, 2 Redshank, 2 Greenshank and 6 Green Sandpipers on the 5th and 25 Golden Plovers, 5 Lapwings, 3 Sanderlings and 2 Ruff on the 6th. A massive influx of Common Gulls occurred on the 5th, with at least 850 birds counted.

On the passerine side of things, birds are definitely on the move, with a nice scattering of species across the island, though obviously small numbers at this early stage of the autumn. Records include a male Black Redstart at the Obs, Whinchat, Sedge Warbler, up to 2 Reed Warblers, Common Whitethroat, Wood Warbler at the Chalet on the 6th, up to 3 Willow Warblers and a Pied Flycatcher on the 5th.



Twite numbers are really starting to build on the island, with a flock of over 60 birds regularly visiting the Observatory.  
Photo by Jason Moss



From this



... to this, in just a few weeks. Sadly our Bonxie population hasn't had the best season, but there are still a good few fledged young up in the hills.

Photos by Elizabeth Morison

**1st – 4th August 2011:**

Birds started trickling through with a Black Redstart at the Obs on 2nd and the same day bringing the first Willow Warbler and White-throat of the autumn, along with two Sedge Warblers. A lingering Chiffchaff and Siskin in the garden were joined by two Mealy Redpolls (1st) with three the following day. The post-breeding flock of Twite at the Obs had built up to 60 by the 4th.

Four House Martins arrived on the 1st along with a Swift (with two the following day) and a Peregrine over Bunes on 3rd was the first sighting in a while.

Waders were well represented, with 12 Whimbrel heading south on 4th, three each of Green Sandpiper, Ruff and Sanderling, single Greenshank and Golden Plover and peaks of 18 Purple Sandpiper and five Dunlin.

The Whooper Swan and Greylag Goose both made it onto the August list, but the oiled Grey Heron finally succumbed and was found dead on the 1st.

The fourth saw an arrival of Painted Lady butterflies with several noted coming in from the east, hopefully bringing a few migrant birds in their wake...

## July Sightings:

### 18th – 31st July 2011:

Neither the tern nor the bunting decided to hang around after the 17th and there were no more real surprises on the birding front as the spring migration finally seemed to grind to a halt, although by the end of the month there were signs of the approaching autumn.

Things were predictably quiet on the wildfowl front, with the lingering Whooper Swan throughout, a Greylag from 19th, a single Teal and a couple of Wigeon.

Good numbers of Storm Petrels were ringed and brought with them three more Leach's Petrels to the nets (with another seen over the nets on one night). Seawatching is not Fair Isle's strong point and the best that could be mustered from the isle was a Sooty Shearwater on 18th (with three more in Fair Isle waters on the same date) and a 'blue' Fulmar on 23rd.

Waders showed some sign of movement with Greenshank on several dates, Green Sandpiper (27th), Common Sandpiper (19th), Bar-tailed Godwit (26th), Knot (24th), Sanderling (2 on 19th), Whimbrel (8 on 29th) and an increase in some of the more regular species.

At the end of the month up to 120 Common Gulls were feeding on the recently cut fields but Arctic Terns were almost completely absent, the peak being just 32 on a seawatch on 23rd.

In the Obs garden a Collared Dove lingered until the 20th and the summering Chiffchaff was present throughout. Three Siskins were present until 19th then after a short gap, a new bird appeared on 26th. A Mealy Redpoll was also present from 16th to 20th with another from 24th – 27th and the first Greenfinch of the autumn appeared on 26th. Another early arrival was a Fieldfare on 21st, August records are not unusual, but birds in July are less expected. More typical of the time of year were a Sedge Warbler (29th onwards) and a Swift (26th). One of the juvenile Cuckoos lingered, but was clearly struggling and was found dead on 20th. A Sparrowhawk found itself in a trap on 23rd and up to three Grey Herons were seen.

Although seawatching was quiet, there were a few more cetacean sightings with six White-sided Dolphins seen from the Good Shepherd (19th), three White-beaked Dolphins from the South Light (26th) and three Porpoise (30th). Butterflies were noticeably absent though, with the only sightings of note being Small Tortoiseshell (22nd) and Painted Lady (27th).

### 15th-17th July 2011:

Outstanding highlight of the last few days goes comfortably to the unexpected appearance of a stunning adult WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN in the afternoon on the 16th. Found as the Warden returned from Stackhoull with the shop order, the bird was hawking insects over the fields around Setter. Soon everyone was in place, watching this amazing bird flying down to within 20 feet. Unbelievable! This combined with the lingering BLACK-HEADED BUNTING and you could be forgiven for assuming this was some far eastern European locality, not Fair Isle! Who ever said July was a quiet month for rarities?!

Further bird of note include a Teal on 17th, 2 Storm Petrels on 16th, building numbers of Oystercatchers and Lapwings, with 212 and 11 respectively on the 17th, along with 6 Sanderling, 3 Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Whimbrel, 3 Redshank (with 5 on 16th), Greenshank and 6 Turnstones. Two juvenile Cuckoos arrived on the 16th (though an adult Meadow Pipit with food circling over one bird on the 17th aroused suspicions of breeding on the island), along with 2 Swifts, 8 Swallows (including the first fledged brood of 3 at Setter) and 5 Siskins and a Mealy Redpoll on the 16th-17th.



White-winged Black Tern.  
An unexpected arrival; the 3rd Fair Isle record.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Hawking for insects over the hay-fields, the bird put on a fabulous show.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Punda in the background.  
Photo by Jason Moss

## 12th – 14th July 2011:

Highlights for the last few days include the lingering male BLACK HEADED BUNTING on the 12th and 13th, later making its way to the Observatory garden (though sadly not into the mist nets!) and a pod of 10+ Rissos Dolphins seen from the Good Shepherd on 12th.

Further sightings included a Red-throated Diver floating over the island on the 12th, 2 Grey Herons throughout and 2 Peregrines on the 14th. Waders are slowly creeping in, with Golden Plover on the 12th, Whimbrel on the 13th, 2 Curlew south on the 14th and 6 Redshank on the 14th, while passerines included a Spotted Flycatcher and 2 Chiffchaffs on the 12th and up to 7 Siskins on 14th.



Storm and Leaches Petrel.  
Photo by William Marsh

## 7th – 11th July 2011:

Storm Petrel ringing on the 10th produced the first reasonable catch of birds, along with the first Leaches Petrel of the year. Wader numbers include 6 Whimbrel on the 8th and 8 Purple Sandpipers, 5 Redshank, a Common Sandpiper and 17 Turnstone on 9th. Two Collared Doves remain, while small passerine numbers are really only consisting of the breeding species, plus 3 Chiffchaffs on the 9th and the lingering Siskin flock, with up to 12 on the 9th. A Minke Whale was seen from land on the 10th.



Since the birding is a bit on the quiet side, here are a couple of moths; the Suspected – a rare Fair Isle visitor. Photo by Jason Moss  
Northern Rustic.

Photo by Jason Moss

## 4th-6th July 2011:

A fairly quiet period, with little migrant movement (as you would expect at this time of year) However, as is often the case here, a surprise is never far around the corner, and this time it came in the shape of the reappearance of the male BLACK-HEADED BUNTING at Schoolton on the 5th. Initially found and photographed by a single observer on 3rd, and not relocated in the following days, its reappearance was a big and very welcome surprise. Where that's been hiding is anyone's guess!



Black-headed Bunting.  
Photo by David Jardine



Oystercatchers seem to be having a relatively average year, with the odd brood appearing to do well, avoiding the many perils associated with living on Fair Isle.

Photo by Jason Moss

Further movement/sightings of note include a Grey Heron in from the north on the 4th, Redshank and Greenshank on the 6th, a Woodpigeon and 2 Collared Doves on the 5th and 6th, a south-bound Swift and a Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler on 6th and a continued turnover of juvenile Siskins, with 12 on the 5th increasing to 15 on the 6th. A slight oversight on the 3rd was the appearance of a female type Lapland Bunting by Pund. An unusual mid-summer record, discovered whilst searching for another certain bunting sp.; not quite what the observer was hoping for, but pleasing none the less!

**1st – 2nd July:**

Standout highlights, and nothing if not a little unexpected, for the last few days were the arrivals of a male BLACK-HEADED BUNTING on the 3rd and a Wryneck and Rosefinch on 1st. Why these birds should be moving at this time of year is anyone's guess, but it's nice all the same! The Black-headed Bunting was discovered in the morning around the Plantation trap where it was seen and photographed by its solo observer, but, despite extensive searching, this renowned Houdini or a bird couldn't be relocated. The Wryneck did a similar disappearing act, only being seen on one occasion in the Gully before vanishing. The Rosefinch was far more confiding, allowing itself to be caught in the Plantation in the evening of its discovery.



Wheatears appear to be having a good breeding season, with plenty of fledged young around the island. Photos by Jason Moss

## June Sightings:

### 28th – 30th June 2011:

Undoubtedly the outstanding highlight, and a fantastic way to end the month, was the pod of eight Orca that were spotted during a two hour Guillemot feeding watch at Pietron. The group, consisting of one bull, a calf and six females appeared to be feeding just offshore on a shoal of fish, before drifting across the mouth of North Haven (giving unbelievable views to a lucky few) and down to south harbour, where they were watched hunting seals by the majority of the islands population. Always a joy to see!

A pretty quiet period bird-wise, but with a small number of birds moving through it was always worth a bit of a wander. Returning southbound species included 10 Greylag Geese and 2 Teal south on 29th, Wigeon on 30th, drake Tufted Duck on 29th, summer plumaged Great Northern Diver south on 28th, 2 Golden Plover, Greenshank, 3 Turnstone and 2 Whimbrel on 30th and 3 Redshank on 29th. Further species arriving on the isle included Wood Pigeon on 30th, a steady movement of Swifts throughout, with a peak of 23 south on 29th, 4 House Martin on 28th and a small arrival of juvenile Siskins, with numbers building to 9 on 30th.



Unbelievable views were offered by these phenomenal animals; a regular visitor to the island.

Photos by Jason Moss

### 25th – 27th June:

Six Wigeon on 25th and 2 Red-breasted Mergansers on 26th were new wildfowl in, while old wildfowl include the Whooper Swan that has been with us for what feels like an eternity. A Great Northern Diver was seen on 27th. A Grey Heron on 25th was a lingering bird, while two different Kestrels on 26th-27th were new. On the wader front, only small numbers are present on the island, but there are signs of autumn passage, with 2 Sanderling on 25th, 2 Whimbrel and a hint of southward Curlew movement on 26th, along with 6 Redshank and 3 Turnstone on the same day.

Small migrant-wise, the days have felt fairly quiet, but bits and pieces still continue to move though. Eight Collared Doves arrived on 25th while the Turtle Dove remains and a juvenile Cuckoo was found at South Late – a very early bird. A Swift moved through on 27th. Passerine migrants on the isle included a Garden Warbler and Blackcap on 25th, 2 Chiffchaffs throughout and the first migrant juvenile Siskin of the year.



Another moth, this Shears is an early emerging species that has past its peak on the isle.

Photo by Jason Moss

The first young Siskins, probably having fledged in Scandinavia, are starting to arrive onto the isle.

Photo by Jason Moss

### 20th – 24th June:

Highlights for the last few days included the lingering immature Hobby through until 21st, another Marsh Warbler trapped in the Obs Plantation on 21st, with another bird still lingering until 20th and a female Red-backed Shrike at Barkland on 23rd.

Notable sightings for the period included a small number of returning wildfowl and waders, with 14 Greylag Geese south on 23rd, a Teal and Red-breasted Merganser on 22nd and Golden Plover, 5 Whimbrel and 3 Redshank on 21st.

Passerine movements have slowed considerably on the isle, but bits and pieces are still arriving. Notable species included the lingering Turtle Dove at the Haa, Sand Martin and 2 House Martins on 21st, 10 Swallows on 24th, a very late (or early?!) Redwing on 24th, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler and Blackcap on 20th, 2 Chiffchaffs and a Willow Warbler on 21st, 2 Spotted Flycatchers on 22nd, 3 Siskins on 23rd and a singing Mealy Redpoll and male Crossbill on 22nd.



Fair Isle is currently looking mighty fine, with a wash of colourful flowers carpeting most of the island, including this Marsh Cinquefoil, currently in flower at Da Water. Photo by Jason Moss

Moth Trapping is still pretty slow at the minute, with only small numbers being caught. This Map-winged Swift is one of a few that have been either attracted to light, or seen during the day. Photo by Jason Moss

**16th – 19th- June 2011:**

Light to moderate winds, wavering between NE and SE.

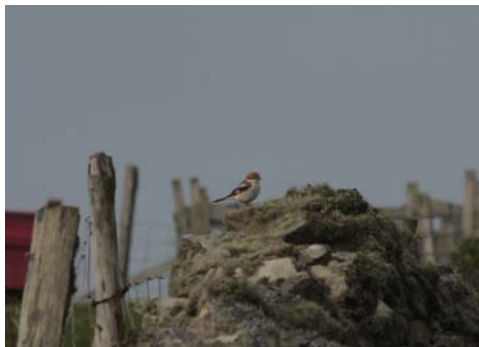
Highlights over the last 4 days have included the trapping of a 2nd year Bluethroat in the Vaadal on 18th, Marsh Warbler trapped in the Gulley on 19th and lingering Hobby until 18th and Woodchat Shrike on 16th.

A hint of wildfowl and wader return passage, with two Greylags through on 19th and three Tufted Ducks on 17th, along with the first Bar-tailed Godwit and of the year on 17th, along with 2 Redshank. A female Kestrel moved through on 17th, while both Red-throated and Great Northern Diver were seen on 18th, both in fine summer plumage, and 6 Storm Petrels were seen off the Good Sheppard on 16th.

A Cuckoo was present on 17th, while a Short-eared Owl lingered on 17th-18th. A reasonable passage of Swifts occurred on 17th, with 12 passing through. Passerine passage highlights for the four day period included a small trickle of Swallows and House Martins, plus Sand Martin on 18th, 2 Sedge Warblers on 19th, singing Reed Warbler on 17th, along with Lesser and Common Whitethroat, 2 Garden Warblers on 16th and 19th, Blackcap on 16th, 3 each of Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler on 17th, Spotted Flycatcher on 17th-19th and 4 Siskins and Mealy Redpoll on 17th, with 2 of the latter on 18th-19th

**15th June 2011:**

East/south-east all day. Overcast.



Into its second day on the island, the Woodchat Shrike continues to show well. Photo by Jason Moss The days highlight was provided by the lingering Woodchat Shrike, remaining in the Field/Barkland area and showing well. A Turtle Dove feeding on the ground at Meoness was also a good sighting, with the species being few and far between in recent years on Fair Isle.

Two Storm Petrels were sighted off the Good Shepard, while remaining birds include 2 Grey Herons, 6 Golden Plover and a Whimbrel, with 6 Dunlin and a Redshank new in.

Non-passerine highlights included 4 White Wagtails, 1 Reed Warbler singing in the Chalet garden, a Garden Warbler, 2 Chiffchaffs, 1 Spotted Flycatcher and a male Siskin.

**14th June 2011:**

Westerly winds, strong in the morning, but easing into the evening. Heavy showers all marning, again easing towards the end of the day. A fine evening in the end.

Highlight of the day was undoubtedly the discovery of a fine female Woodchat Shrike mid-afternoon at Chalet/Field. With the weather clearing, the bird showed well to an admiring crowd, initially distantly. However, taking matters into its own hands, the bird decided to put on a bit of a show, flying straight at the assembled group and perching on fence-posts close-by, giving epic views.



Female Woodchat Shrike at Field. A very smart bird on what was essentially a very quiet day for migration. Photo by Jason Moss

Five Greylag Geese appeared on the island, though what they are doing here is anyone's guess. A presumed feral Bar-headed Goose was also in tow. A Shoveler at Utra was the first of the year, while a fine summer plumaged Red-throated Diver was in South Harbour. Golden Plover numbers increased to 8; presumably failed breeders heading south already, while Dunlin, Whimbrel and 20 Turnstone were also seen. Thirteen Swallows and 2 House Martins were present, while the only migrant passerines (bar the Shrike, of course) were a Chiffchaff and a Spotted Flycatcher.

### 11th - 13th June 2011:

Three day with an easterly element to the wind direction, often strong, plus showers and heavy rain on 12th and 13th. Mainly overcast otherwise.



In case anyone is worried, and with the lack of mention in the updates maybe causing some concern, don't fear, the Canada Goose is still here!  
Photo by Jason Moss

Highlight of the three days involved Marsh Warblers in one way or the other, with a ringed individual seen in the Observatory garden on 11th presumed to be a bird lingering from 7th, plus an arrival of two new birds on 12th. These birds were found in Schoolton garden and at Charlie's Trees; the latter being a rather obliging bird, showing well along the fence-lines. A Short-eared Owl was also found in foul weather on 13th, by South Light.

A Red-breasted Merganser was in South Haven, while 2 Grey Herons arrived on 12th, 4 Golden Plover on 13th, along with a Dunlin and the first Redshank of June. The Whimbrel lingers in North Haven. Two Wood Pigeons and up to 7 Collared Doves are also present. A Swift was seen on the 11th and 12th, while hirundines included a Sand Martin on 13th, plus 20 Swallows and 4 House Martins on 12th.

Passerine peaks included a Dunnock trapped on 11th, a Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Common Whitethroats, a Garden Warbler, 2 Blackcaps, 4 Chiffchaffs, 2 Willow Warblers, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 5 Siskins, 1 Redpoll sp. and 6 Common Crossbills.

### 10th June 2011:

North-easterly winds, force 2. Fine and dry.



Blyth's Reed Warbler

Another day of easterlies, a small arrival of common migrants, and yet another rarity found! This time it's a Blyth's Reed Warbler trapped in the plantation in the afternoon. After ringing and a quick display to the guests and islanders, it was released into the garden where it was particularly elusive, only being seen briefly. The Greenish Warbler remains from the previous day, spending its time at Schoolton, and one of the Icterine Warblers was at Utra. Two Quail were located on the island in the morning, on the North Road and at the top of Ward Hill.

A small arrival of migrants included 2 Cuckoos (one of which was trapped in the Vaadal), 2 female-type Black Redstarts, an unseasonal Redwing, one each of Lesser Whitethroat, Common Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Blackcap and Willow Warbler, 5 Chiffchaffs, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Mealy Redpolls and 1 Crossbill.

### 9th June 2011:

Light south-easterly, veering south-westerly later. Fine and sunny



This Greenish Warbler is Fair Isles 42nd; an unbelievable total for one locality.  
Photo by Jason Moss



An apparently quiet day, with little in the way of common migrants (you wouldn't expect there to be on a fine June day on Fair Isle). However the discovery of Fair Isles 42nd Greenish Warbler, the 8th spring record, greatly improved matters. Discovered by Tommy at the Haa, the bird showed well to all who visited the garden, which it also shared with an Icterine Warbler! A second Icterine Warbler was also found at Sukka Mire.

The Short-eared Owl was seen again around Boini Mire, while passerine numbers included 5 Blackbirds (the brood and parents, plus a migrant at Tor O' Da Ward Hill), Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, 4 Chiffchaffs, a small arrival of 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 3 Siskins, 2 Crossbills and a Snow Bunting.



**8th June 2011:**

Easterly/south-easterly winds, force 2. Hazy, with showers in the morning

A quiet day, with the highlight being a male Bluethroat at Utra, found by 7 year old Robyn! Further totals included 14 Swallows, 2 House Martins, a Sedge Warbler, 2 Common Whitethroats, a Garden Warbler, 4 Chiffchaffs, 2 Siskins and a Mealy Redpoll.



A nice Puffin at sunset, since no migrant pictures were taken. Photo by Becki Rosser

**7th June 2011:**

North/north-easterly winds, light mostly. Fine and warm overall.

Six Dunlin, 3 Whimbrel and a Short-eared Owl roaming the south were the non-passerine highlights, while passerine arrivals were few and far between. Two Spotted Flycatchers and a couple of Garden Warblers were the only arrivals of any consequence, while the Marsh Warbler remained in the Obs Plantation from yesterday.



Arctic Skuas by Jason Moss



Marsh Warbler in the hand.  
Photo by Jason Moss

**6th June 2011:**

No discernable wind direction for most of the day, which is a rare thing on Fair Isle! Showers in the morning, but clearing for a nice day later.

With seabird season well and truly underway, the day's main task involved the full island count of the breeding Kittiwake population. Figures were low, with a decline of nearly 50 percent from 2008's figures. Disappointing, but not wholly unexpected. However, despite full census not being possible, good birds were still found. Highlights included another male Albistriata Subalpine Warbler. Astonishingly, after a stay of 37 days, 'Albi', the lingering Subalp was not seen on 5th, apparently moving on. However, with only a days absence, a Subalpine Warbler appears at Schoolton. Close inspection shows the bird to lack a ring, proving it to be a different bird! Differences in plumage are also clear from photos. What are the chances! A Marsh Warbler was also trapped in the plantation late on in the afternoon; our 3rd this spring.

A few other passerines arrived in the calm conditions, being 2 Sedge Warblers, 2 Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 1 Blackcap, 5 Chiffchaffs and a Willow Warbler.

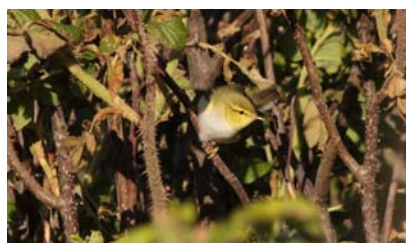
**5th June 2011:**

Light north to north-easterly winds all day, fine and bright. A stunning, warm day.

Despite full census being difficult to achieve these days, with seabird commitments building, a few nice birds were still discovered through the day. One that got away today was a large pipit sp. which flew past the obs in the morning, calling repeatedly. It was almost certainly a Tawny Pipit, but sadly couldn't be pinned down. A Wood Warbler in the Obs Garden was a smart surprise in the morning.



The best Phyllosc?  
A Wood Warbler in the hand.  
Photo by Becki Rosser



Wood Warbler in the Observatory  
Plantation.  
Photo by Jason Moss

Two Barnacle Geese at Easter Locher were slightly unseasonal, while small migrant arrivals included 10 Collared Doves, 1 Wood Warbler caught in the obs plantation, 2 Willow Warblers, 12 Siskins, 2 Mealy Redpolls and 8 Common Crossbills at Furse in the evening.

#### 4th June 2011:

Winds in the north-west, with sunny spells during an otherwise overcast day. Warm throughout

An unseasonal sighting was made of 5 Pink-footed Geese flying south over Bunes in the morning, while further wildfowl included 2 Red-breasted Mergansers in the Havens and the summering Whooper Swan still at Easter Locher Water.

Highlight of the day was the appearance of a 2nd cal. yr. Hobby at Midway. Initially seen in flight and perched there, it made its way north past the Obs and finally was seen around Easter Locher in the evening. A rare Fair Isle bird, with around 50 previous records.

Very little else of note was seen during the day, with the only notable sightings being 2 Swifts, 35 Swallows, 8 House Martins, a Yellow Wagtail, a variety of single lingering common Sylvia warblers (plus the Eastern Subalpine Warbler, of course), 1 Spotted Flycatcher and 2 lingering Common Crossbills.



Meadow Pipit fledglings are starting to pop up in various places across the island.  
Photo by Jason Moss

#### 3rd June 2011:

Light west/southwesterly winds and fine conditions. With temperatures reaching 18 degrees, it was the hottest day on Fair Isle since June 2009!

Two Teal lingered, while 2 Red-throated and a Great Northern Diver flew past Bunes in the evening, along with a Manx Shearwater. A Cormorant and 3 Grey Herons also arrived. Raptors included our 2nd Common Buzzard of the year drifting north offshore, a female Sparrowhawk and 2 Kestrels. A Sanderling, 2 Purple Sandpipers, 3 Dunlin, 7 Whimbrel and 1 Common Sandpiper were present, mostly in South Harbour.

Small migrant numbers remained low, but a few bits and pieces either arrived or passed through during the day, including 15 Swifts, 1 Sand Martin, 47 Swallows and 50 House Martins; a good passage at around midday. Further to this other arrivals and highlights included a Tree Pipit, 4 Sedge Warblers, Subalpine Warbler still, 2 Common Whitethroats, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 12 Siskins, 5 Mealy Redpolls, 6 Crossbills, 1 Rosefinch trapped late evening in the gully and the lingering Snow Bunting.



Since birds (or more, good photos of!) are in short supply, here's one of a fair and rather attractive carpet of Orchids on the island. Northern Marsh Orchid.

Photos by Jason Moss Great Skua - the flying tank of Fair Isle!

#### 2nd June 2011:

Strong WSW'ly with mist, rain and drizzle for much of the day. Dry sunny evening then fog to end the day as winds went light S'ly.



Photo by Becki Rosser Eider on eggs. Photo by Becki Rosser Most, if not all seabirds (Storm Petrels being a bit tricky to assess, though most likely on eggs now) are incubating, with Razorbills already with chicks. Here's a pair of Arctic Skua's in residence by the Obs.

With seabird season kicking into full swing on Fair Isle, and migration likely to grind to a steady halt by the end of this month, sightings on here may start to become a little less frequent. However, any highlights or bits and pieces that do arrive will surely appear fairly regularly! And, of course, write off June at your peril...

Non-passerine highlights today included a Manx Shearwater from the Good Shepard, Grey Heron, Kestrel, 2 Common Sandpipers and the Short-eared Owl lingering. New arrivals and further birds of interest included a Swift through (it's been a poor spring so far for this species), 2 White Wagtails, a new Blackbird, 2 Sedge Warblers, the lingering Subalpine Warbler, a continued trickle of Crossbills, with 2 on the island, 1 Rosefinch still and 2 Snow Buntings.

**1st June 2011:**

Strong south-westerly wind and constant, misty rain. Tough going!

Seven Teal were on Da Water, while 2 Purple Sandpipers and 5 Dunlin were in south harbour. Two Whimbrel and a Common Sandpiper were also present.

A Short-eared Owl around Dronger was new in, as was a Redwing, Common Whitethroat, 10 Siskins and another Snow Bunting. The Eastern Subalpine Warbler remains, as do the 4 Rosefinches.



Since today was pretty quiet, here's the Western Subalpine Warbler in the hand from yesterday.  
Photo by Ian Weatherley

## May Sightings:

31st May 2011: South/south-westerly 2. Fine and pleasant.

Standout surprise of the day was the capture of a 2nd cal. yr. male Western Subalpine Warbler on the early morning trap round. With most birds escaping the trap through the morning rounds (much to the chagrin of the AW involved), and an expectant crowd of guests looking likely to be disappointed, this gem saved the morning nicely. What's more, on release the bird took a liking to the Observatory plantation and proceeded to share it with the long-staying Eastern Subalpine Warbler! Not many places in the world can boast such a sight as these two birds in territorial dispute! Four Common Rosefinches also remain, with an immature male frequently singing from the Observatory plantation. The male Snow Bunting remains.

Four Storm Petrels were caught during an evening trapping session, with birds also singing in their burrows at the Kirn O' Scroo. A Sparrowhawk was a new arrival onto the isle, while a Peregrine was also seen. 2 Dunlin and 5 Whimbrel were knocking around, in addition to the normal breeding waders.



Western Subalpine being processed by Will

Migrant numbers included a decent count of 26 Woodpigeons, including 8 traveling north, 2 Sand Martins, 51 Swallows, 14 House Martins, 1 Tree Pipit, 6 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Common Whitethroats, 3 Garden Warblers, including one singing in the Gully, 1 Blackcap, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 5 Siskins, 1 Redpoll sp. and 2 Crossbills.

**30th May 2011:** Southerly 3, easing later. Fine and warm

Highlights include 3 lingering Icterine Warblers, Subalpine Warbler and 4 Common Rosefinches.



Crossbill in the Obs Garden, after ringing.

Photo by Jason Moss

A Quail was flushed from Hill Dyke in the morning, while wader counts included 1 Purple Sandpiper, 6 Whimbrel and 11 Turnstones.

Small migrant figures included 12 Woodpigeons, 6 Collared Doves, 1 Sand Martin, 40 Swallows, 24 House Martins, 3 Tree Pipits, 1 White Wagtail, 1 Dunnock, 1 Whinchat, 1 Grasshopper Warbler still, 6 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 2 Lesser and Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 2 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs, 4 Willow Warblers, 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 9 Siskins, 1 Linnet, 1 female Crossbill and the lingering male Snow Bunting.

**29th May 2011:** South/south-easterly winds, force 1-2. Overcast, with showers in the afternoon.

The main highlights included a female Bluethroat at Busta, which may have been the bird from the 26th, but equally could have been new in, a new Marsh Warbler at the Haa (2nd of the year) and 4 Common Rosefinches, with two lingering at the Observatory, one at Furse and another at Schoolton. Also 2 Icterine Warblers are still lingering at Setter and Barkland and the Eastern Subalpine Warbler celebrating its one month anniversary

Ten Purple Sandpipers at South Harbour was the highest count of the month while migrant numbers included an arrival of 10 Woodpigeons, 29 Swallows, 19 House Martins, 2 Tree Pipits, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 8 Sedge Warblers, 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 4 Blackcaps, 5 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Siskins, 2 Linnets, 1 Lapland Bunting and the summer plumaged Snow Bunting.

**28th May 2011:** South-easterly am, backing southwest. Blustery with showers.

Highlight today was the discovery of a flighty Thrush Nightingale at the Haa mid-morning. Sadly its appearance was brief, disappearing after lunch not to be seen again. Further highlights included a female Bluethroat at Setter, Marsh Warbler still, but in the Obs Garden this time, 2 Icterine Warblers still, 1 Subalpine Warbler, 3 Common Rosefinches, including the lingering pair and the male Snow Bunting on Bunes.

Non-passerine highlights included 6 Greylag Geese north, a Quail near Pund, 3 Manx Shearwaters off South Light, 4 Golden Plover and 2 Common Sandpipers.



Common Rosefinch: Photo by David Parnaby

A small number of new small migrants arrived onto the island in the mornings south-easterly winds, with totals including 5 Collared Doves, 4 Tree Pipits, 25 Swallows, 16 House Martins, 2 Robins, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 10 Sedge Warblers, 2 Reed Warblers, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 7 Willow Warblers, 8 Spotted Flycatchers and 1 Pied Flycatcher.

**27th May 2011:** West/south-westerly winds, force 1-2. Showers.

A good selection of lingering goodies included the Marsh Warbler, 3 Icterine Warblers, 1 Subalpine Warbler, 2 male Red-backed Shrikes and 2 Common Rosefinches.

Snow Bunting – a pristine summer male bird on Bunes A Pink-footed Goose arrived in the morning, while 2 Wigeon and a Red-breasted Merganser were also present. Two Cormorants north and a Grey Heron were also new, as were 3 Common Sandpipers.

Good numbers of passerines remain lingering on the island, including 3 Grasshopper Warblers, 10 Sedge Warblers, 3 Reed Warblers, 7 Lesser Whitethroats, 7 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 3 Blackcaps, 6 Willow Warblers, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Siskins, 1 Redpoll sp north, 1 Lapland Bunting and 1 Stunning male Snow Bunting still.

**26th May 2011:** Easterly winds, backing north/north-east during the day, force 2-3. Heavy rain all morning, easing to dry, bright conditions in the afternoon

A fantastic day (or afternoon, as census was held until after lunch, due to the state of the weather; a wise choice in the end!), with a good fall of birds onto the island, including several scarcities. The quality was provided by the arrivals of 2 female Bluethroats (Kennnaby and South Light), 2 male Red-backed Shrikes (Obs – Easter Lothar Water and Da Water), 1 Marsh Warbler at Lower Stoneybreck and 3 Icterine Warblers (lingering bird plus Chalet and Hesti Geo).

Further highlights included the discovery a breeding pair of Blackbirds at Houll, with 2 newly fledged chicks in Brian's shed! This is the first confirmed breeding record since a pair bred at Utra in 1973.

Icterine Warbler on a fuel barrel; classic Fair Isle? One of three on the island sounds about right!

A typically confiding Grasshopper Warbler?



Photos by Jason Moss

A Quail was flushed from near the Chalet garden, while 2 Red-throated Divers sailed over in the morning. Two Blue Fulmars were seen from the Good Shepherd in the afternoon, as were 2 Storm Petrels.

Thirteen Dunlin was the highest count of the year so far, while 4 Golden Plover, 1 Knot, 7 Whimbrel and 1 Common Sandpiper were also seen.

The change of wind direction to a more favourable orientation for bird arrivals had an instant effect, with good numbers of common migrants arriving in support of the scarcer arrivals. Numbers were made up by 35 House Martins through, 5 Tree Pipits, 4 White Wagtails, 1 Whinchat, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 18 Sedge Warblers, 2 Reed Warblers, 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Common Whitethroats, 8 Garden Warblers, 3 Blackcaps, 2 Chiffchaffs, 2 Willow Warblers, 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Siskins, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 1 male Crossbill and an adult male Snow Bunting on Bunes.

**25th May 2011:** Light and variable westerlies. Dry



Photo by Becki Rosser

A Turtle Dove found on the cliffs at Kirn O' Scroo was the first of the year and the highlight of a quiet day. Lingered still were the Icterine Warbler, Subalpine Warbler and Rustic Bunting.

Small migrant numbers were made of lingering birds, with 7 Wood Pigeons, 59 Swallows, 24 House Martins, 3 White Wagtails, 1 Robin, 1 Ring Ouzel, 5 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 2 Mealy Redpolls and 1 Lapland Bunting.

One of several Whimbrel lingering on the island at the minute.

**24th May 2011:** South-westerly winds, force 5-6. Overcast and showery

A small trickle of birds arrived on the island, but any standout highlights consisted mostly of lingering birds, with Icterine Warbler, Subalpine Warbler and Rustic Bunting all still showing off for guests to the island. The two 2nd calendar year Iceland Gulls and Canada Goose remain.

The wildfowl presence was boosted by a Shelduck, 5 Wigeon, 2 Teal and a Red-breasted Merganser, along with the lingering Barnacle Geese. The first Manx Shearwater of the year was watched from Bunes in the afternoon.

The lingering Canada Goose. Only just a highlight, but still only the island's 27th record, after a bit of an upturn in occurrence in the last 10 years.



Photo by Becki Rosser

Small migrant numbers included 1 Sand Martin, 44 Swallows, 13 House Martins, 4 Sedge Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 1 Blackcap, 2 Willow Warblers, 1 female Brambling, 9 Siskins and 1 Reed Bunting.

**23rd May 2011:** Strong south-easterly winds and occasional showers all day

A good day, with some great scarce passerines found, though only one certain new arrival, in the shape of a female/1st winter Common Rosefinch found at Schoolton in the morning. Further to this, a male Grey-headed Wagtail was quite possibly the same bird as was present on 20th and an Icterine Warbler trapped and ringed from the Gully was again quite possibly the bird from the day before, moving inland overnight. After release, the bird was occasionally heard singing in the Obs garden. The Albistriata Subalpine Warbler and Rustic Bunting were still performing superbly outside of the observatory windows.

The wildfowl contingent today included the Whooper Swan still lingering, having been present since the 1st March, 3 Greylag Geese, 2 Barnacle Geese new in onto Meoness, 1 Wigeon, 2 Tufted Ducks and 1 female Red-breasted Merganser. Waders included 6 Sanderling, 1 Knot, 1 Golden Plover, 6 Purple Sandpipers, 11 Dunlin, 5 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank and 16 Turnstones. One of the 1st winter Iceland Gulls remains.

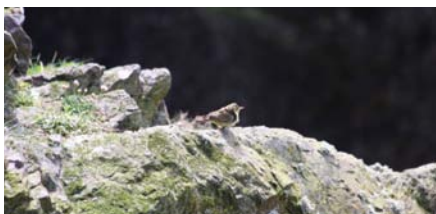
A few good passerines arrived today, in decent conditions. Totals included 7 Wood Pigeons, 4 Collared Doves, 31 Swallows, 8 House Martins, 2 Tree Pipits, 2 Blackbirds, 5 Sedge Warblers, 2 Reed Warblers still, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Common Whitethroat, 3 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs, 2 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher caught in the morning, 1 female Pied Flycatcher at Easter Lothar, 7 Siskins, 1 Lapland Bunting at North Light still and a Reed Bunting.

**22nd May 2011:** Southerly 2-3. Fine most of the day, but westerly 10 in the evening.

A pretty good day, with scarce goodies popping up left, right and centre, mostly in the afternoon. A Hawfinch found in the morning at the Haa was followed by the discovery of a bright Icterine Warbler in North Naarversgill mid-afternoon; a smart bird in a dramatic setting! A late evening discovery by one of our resident RSPB researchers was a Bluethroat in Easter Lothar. Just a fly-by whilst harnessed to a descent-rope though, age or sex could not be determined! The Rustic Bunting and Eastern Subalpine Warbler both remain.

A good hirundine movement through the day produced 70 Swallows and 40 House Martins south, with the only other passerine arrival being 1 Garden Warbler!

Icterine Warbler in a rather exposed setting.  
Photo by Jason Moss



A Red-throated Diver and 4 Tufted Ducks (3 males, 1 female) were seen to fly over the isle, while 2 Kestrels and 2 Peregrines were also migrants. Singles of Golden Plover, Knot, Redshank and Common Sandpiper were seen, along with 16 Whimbrel; the highest count of the year so far. A record count for the year of Common Gulls was made, with 61 seen, while 2 Iceland Gulls were present; almost certainly the same birds as recently.

**21st May 2011:** South-easterly, veering south-westerly by afternoon. Dry in the morning



A breath of south-easterly winds in the morning gave good reason for optimism as a smart female/1st winter Rustic Bunting was found in the SE, at Quoy. Preferring to feed along the edges of the recently ploughed crop-strips, it gave good views until just after lunch, when it disappeared. The Eastern Subalpine Warbler remains and a nice flurry of slightly scarcer migrants arrived through the day.

Waders included 4 Sanderling, 8 Purple Sandpipers and 5 Dunlin in South Harbour in the evening, along with 5 Whimbrel. The Iceland Gull remains, supported by reasonable numbers of Black-headed, Common and Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

This 1st winter/female Rustic Bunting was the highlight of a pretty productive day on Fair Isle.

Photo by David Parnaby

Common summer passerines still refuse to grace the island in any great numbers despite good conditions, but new arrivals included 18 Swallows, 6 Blackbirds, 2 more Lesser and Common Whitethroats, a smattering of common phylloscops, 1 female Brambling, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 2 female-type Common Crossbills lingering around the traps, but refusing to be caught and 1 Lapland Bunting.

**20th May 2011:** South-southwesterly 2-3. Rain, sometimes heavy, throughout the day. Pretty dreary stuff!

Wader and wildfowl numbers remain low, but a Greylag Goose, Male Tufted Duck, Red-throated Diver, Golden Plover on Ward Hill, 7 Purple Sandpipers and 7 Dunlin were all showing a hint of at least some bird movement, while gull numbers remain high, with 63 Common Gulls being the year's highest count so far. One 1st winter Iceland Gull remains.

Little to report on the passerine movement front, but a few highlights included an incredibly showy Quail performing all day in-front of the observatory lounge windows, giving views that few present could ever remember bettering before. A Short-eared Owl was watched as it circled north over the Wirvy Burn while 9 Wood Pigeons, 5 Collared Doves, 2 Tree Pipits, Mealy Redpoll and 2 Linnets also arrived onto the Isle. The lingering Grey-headed Wagtail and Eastern Subalpine Warbler were both still performing nicely.



Albistriata Subalpine Warbler and Quail sharing a moment.

Photo by Johan Nilsson



Incoming! With Bonxies on eggs, they are becoming increasingly lairy...

Photo by Jason Moss

**19th May 2011:** The south-westerly airflow continues, with some heavy showers through the day

A distinctly quiet day all in all, with very little small migrant movements and highlights being restricted to lingering birds. The Eastern Subalpine Warbler and Grey-headed Wagtail both remain, brightening up a rather dreary day.

A Quail was flushed and chased by a Bonxie across the airstrip in the morning; this being the highlight of north census. The Sanderling lingers in south Harbour, along with 6 Purple Sandpipers, 3 Dunlin and 9 Whimbrel.

Large numbers of gulls remain in South Harbour, being drawn in by the south westerly winds. A new Iceland Gull; another 1st winter, was found along with the original bird, 5 Black-headed Gulls, 30 Common Gulls and 27 Lesser Black-backed Gulls.

Little to report otherwise, with the only new birds in being 10 Swallows, 1 Tree Pipit, 1 Robin, 2 Blackbirds and 1 Sedge Warbler.

**18th May 2011:** South/south-westerly winds, but a brief breath of south-easterly in the morning seemed to deliver a few birds.

A small arrival in the afternoon produced a cracking male Grey-headed Wagtail at Barkland, before it relocated to Da Water and showed pretty well. A juvenile Common Crossbill was seen on a couple of occasions around the Helgoland's, before self-trapping in the plantation and being ringed at the observatory in-front of an appreciative crowd. The Subalpine Warbler remains.

Grey-headed Wagtail on Da Water; a bit of a spud.



Photos above by Jason Moss

Considering that this bird, a Common Crossbill, probably only left the nest a couple of months ago, this bird has probably never laid eyes on a human before; hence its ridiculously confiding nature.

Wildfowl included the appearance of a Greylag Goose; notable as the lingering flock dwindled to nothing on 16th. Whooper Swan, Canada Goose and female Tufted Duck remain. A New Grey Heron arrived during the day, as did a female Sparrowhawk.

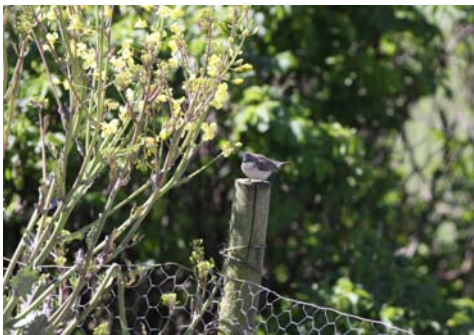
On the wader front, 6 Golden Plover, 1 Sanderling, 1 Purple Sandpiper, 7 Dunlin, 6 Whimbrel,, 1 Redshank and 28 Turnstones were recorded. Passage gull numbers remain reasonable, with 12 Black-headed Gulls, 44 Common Gulls, 6 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and the lingering Iceland Gull all present.

A small afternoon arrival livened up a pretty quiet day. In addition to the above-mentioned highlights, the following migrants were seen; 4 Woodpigeons, 1 Ring Ouzel, 1 Sedge Warbler, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Chiffchaff, 1 Chaffinch, 7 Siskins, 1 Redpoll sp south and 3 Reed Buntings.

**17th May 2011:** South to south-westerly winds, force 2 to 3. Patchy showers and cool

A desperately quiet morning, with very little seen on census, was improved by a flurry of nice birds in the afternoon, and by the evening the days log didn't seem that bad! One of the highlights of the day was the islands 39th Marsh Harrier which flew south in the afternoon. An immature female, it was spotted by the visiting Shetland Wildlife group, who also saw what was probably the same bird at Sumburgh in the morning! Other highlights included a Quail at Springfield, Wood Sandpiper at Golden Water, Iceland Gull still in South Harbour and the lingering Eastern Subalpine Warbler. In further exciting news, the Canada Goose is still here...

Wildfowl on the island included a couple of new birds in, including a Wigeon, 3 Teal, 2 Tufted Ducks and the lingering Whooper Swan. Our second Red-throated Diver of the year also flew south, while the Grey Heron remains and raptors included the lingering female Kestrel and a Peregrine.



Lesser Whitethroat.

Photo by David Parnaby

Waders on the isle included 5 Golden Plover, 3 Dunlin, 6 Whimbrel and 2 Redshank. Gull numbers are increasing on the island in the south-westerly winds, with 2 Black-headed Gulls, 45 Common Gulls and 12 Lesser Black-backed Gulls in south harbour.

Passerine numbers were verging on desperate, with the island seeming very quiet. However there were still a few birds lingering and one or two new arrivals. Birds seen through the day included 2 Woodpigeons, 18 Swallows, 3 House Martins, 3 Tree Pipits, 1 Whinchat, 3 Blackbirds, 2 Reed Warblers, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 4 Common Whitethroats, 6 Blackcaps, 1 Chiffchaff, 1 Willow Warbler, 3 Siskins and 2 Reed Buntings.



**16th May 2011:** Fog, mist and low cloud for much of the day. Some patchy rain and drizzle, F2-4 W'ly winds.

Another quiet day, with very little arriving onto the island. Highlights were purely from the lingering Subalpine Warbler.

Three Kestrels were seen, while waders included 4 Dunlin and the lingering Knot, 3 Golden Plovers and 13 Whimbrel. The 1st winter Iceland Gull is also still present in the south of the island.



The Gannets have been on eggs since 14th April, and many more are now incubating.  
Photo by Jason Moss

A late posting, but here's a pic of the Wood Warbler from the 12th, perched on a gate.  
Photo by David Parnaby

Not much around on the passerine front with mostly ever-decreasing numbers. Highlights included 1 Tree Pipit, 3 Robins new in, 1 Ring Ouzel, 2 Sedge Warblers, 3 Reed Warblers, 1 Eastern Subalpine Warbler, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler and 2 Mealy Redpolls

**15th May 2011:** South-westerly 1-2. Dry

Little to report on the whole, with the majority of birds on the island just lingering stock. The Canada Goose remains, along with the long-staying male Eastern Subalpine Warbler.



With migrants being thin on the ground, here's a nice Puffin. Photo by Deryk Shaw

The Eastern Subalpine Warbler takes a liking to Grace's toy lawn-mower  
Photo by Jason Moss

One Common Sandpiper and 5 Whimbrel were seen, including brief song from a Whimbrel at Setter. The Iceland Gull remains at Meoness.

Not Much of interest on the migrant front, with most numbers remaining the same or decreasing. The most notable birds included 11 Swallows, 5 Tree Pipits, 2 White Wagtails, 1 Ring Ouzel, 1 Sedge Warbler, 1 Eastern Subalpine Warbler still, 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 4 Common Whitethroats, 4 Blackcaps, 23 Carrion Crows (dwindling numbers after the record arrival of 65 on 11th), 1 Siskin and 2 Reed Buntings.

**14th May 2011:** SW 1. Showers, sometimes heavy

Wildfowl on the island included 2 Greylag Geese, 2 Teal and 2 Tufted Ducks while the first Red-throated Diver of the year flew north over Easter Lother. Two Cormorants were on the island along while one Grey Heron remains. Another first for the year was a Corncrake in the garden at Lower Leogh. A summer plumaged Knot was the first for the month while a Woodcock was also seen.

A 1st winter Iceland Gull was a late bird for the year, found in the evening south of the Haa.

Passerines continued to clear out, with the only newly arrived birds being a female-type Pied Flycatcher at the mast and 3 Linnets. The Eastern Subalpine Warbler reaches its 17th day with us.

**13th May 2011:** SW 2-3. Showers

A shift to westerly and south-westerly winds meant an end to any major migrant arrivals of migrants, with a big clearout for most migrants. However, surprises are nothing new here, as an unexpected Short-toed Lark was found by the airfield after a distinctly quiet north census.



Short-toed Lark at the end of the Vaadal was a pleasant end to a quiet census.  
Photo by Hideo Tsuneyama

Tufted Duck and Common Scoter remain and 2 Cormorants were seen. Three Golden Plover were present after a short absence, along with 4 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank, 1 Greenshank and 2 Common Sandpiper.

Passerine numbers were drastically reduced on the island, with very few warblers around. However, a Short-toed Lark found by the airstrip certainly brightened up a quiet day. Further migrants on the island included 29 Swallows, 1 House Martin, 4 Dunnocks, 1 lingering Black Redstart, 3 Ring Ouzels, 1 Redwing, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Sedge Warblers, 3 Reed Warblers, 1 Subalpine Warbler still, 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Common Whitethroats, 1 Garden Warbler, 7 Blackcaps, 1 Mealy Redpoll and 3 Reed Buntings.

**12th May 2011:** S/SE 1-2. Shower early on, but fine for rest of day

A steady increase in common migrant numbers and a fair arrival of scarce spring birds was the flavour of the day, with highlights being a Wood Sandpiper south, Wood Warbler, Northern Bullfinch and Hawfinch. The Subalpine continues to delight visitors to the Observatory.

One Cormorant was seen flying south over the middle of the island in the afternoon, while waders on the island included 4 Dunlin, 7 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank and 1 Wood Sandpiper south. Arctic Terns arrived onto the island in numbers, with 70 seen across the main breeding areas. Guillemots are now on eggs.



Migrant arrivals included 12 Woodpigeons, 4 Collared Doves, dwindling numbers of Swallows, 1 Yellow Wagtail, 1 Black Redstart, 2 Redstarts, 4 Whinchats, 5 Blackbirds, 1 Song Thrush, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 4 Sedge Warblers, 3 Reed Warblers, 1 Subalpine Warbler still, 12 Lesser Whitethroats, 12 Common Whitethroats, 12 Blackcaps, 1 Wood Warbler at the Haa, 5 Chiffchaffs, 8 Willow Warblers, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Chaffinches, 2 Redpoll sp, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 1 male Northern Bullfinch found at Burkle, 1 Hawfinch at Schoolton and 3 Reed Buntings.

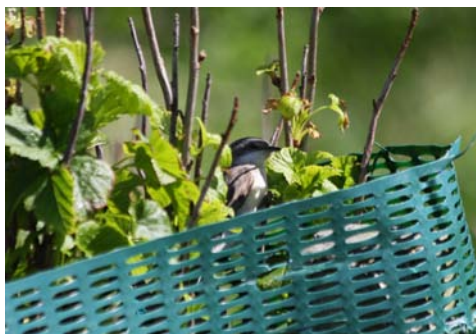
Male Northern Bullfinch was one of several rays of sunshine on the island today  
Photo by Jason Moss

**11th May 2011:** S/SE 1 to 2. Showers am, but fine for rest of day

A steady procession of common migrants continue to arrive on the island in calm, settled (and rather pleasant) conditions, making census a joy to complete.

Wildfowl again mostly consisted of lingering stock, but a drake Goosander south over the island during the early morning trap round was a good record, with typically only a couple of records annually. A decent raptor showing gave 3 Sparrowhawks, 3 Kestrels, 1 Merlin and a Peregrine on the island.

Five Curlews traveling south bulked up the breeding stock numbers for the day, while 8 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 9 Black-headed Gulls were also noted traveling south. Not moving, but arriving in good numbers today were the Arctic Terns, with 40 birds seen calling and displaying over the island; a joy to see again!



Sylvia Warblers have been putting in a good showing during this settled period.  
Lesser Whitethroat  
Photo by Jason Moss



A good number of hirundines have been passing through over the last few days, including this Swallow  
Photo by Jason Moss

A continuation of the past few days migrant arrivals onto the island provided a good selection and reasonable numbers, with every croft holding a summer migrant or two. Totals included 1 Sand Martin, 75 Swallows, 9 House Martins, 12 Tree Pipits, 2 Yellow Wagtails, 5 Robins, 1 Black Redstart, 3 Redstarts, 3 Whinchats, 1 Ring Ouzel, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 7 Sedge Warblers, 2 Reed Warblers, 1 albistriata Subalpine Warbler still in the Obs garden, 7 Lesser Whitethroats, 9 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 9 Blackcaps, 9 Chiffchaffs, 20 Willow Warblers, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 20 Hooded Crows and 65 Carrion Crows (an exceptional arrival for the island), 6 Tree Sparrows, 3 Chaffinches, 1 Brambling, 2 Siskins, 2 Linnet, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 1 Lapland Bunting and 3 Reed Buntings.

**10th May 2011:** S/SE 4-5. Sunny and bright all day.

Wildfowl highlights included a new Common Scoter; a female in Furse, a male Wigeon at Utra and a lingering Tufted Duck.

A steady gull passage through the day produced 31 Common Gulls and 20 Black-headed Gulls; the highest count so far this year. Two Common Terns were displaying in Furse in the morning.



Tree Pipit Photo by Adam Cross

On an insecty note, 7 Red Admirals across the island indicated a small influx.

Good passerine totals revealed a reasonable arrival of migrants overnight onto the island. Totals included 10 Wood Pigeons, 6 Collared Doves (both 2011 highs so far), 78 Swallows, 13 House Martins, 7 Tree Pipits, 73 Meadow Pipits, 1 Littoralis Rock Pipit at Double Dyke, 4 Yellow Wagtails, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Common Redstarts, 3 Whinchats, 4 Ring Ouzels, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, 4 Sedge Warblers, 1 Reed Warbler, 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 8 Common Whitethroats, the Eastern Subalpine Warbler still, 2 Garden Warblers, 5 Chiffchaffs, 8 Willow Warblers, including a rather crisp acredula type, 2 Spotted Flycatchers, 21 Carrion Crows, 5 Tree Sparrows, 1 Chaffinch, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 1 female Crossbill in Gunnawark and 6 Reed Buntings.

**9th May 2011:** SE 3. Fog am, fine pm



Short-eared Owl Photo by Adam Cross



Common Sandpiper Photo by Adam Cross

Our first two Shelduck since mid-April flew south over Gilsetter and the Canada Goose remains, while further wildfowl included 2 Tufted Ducks and the lingering Whooper Swan and Greylag Goose flock. An interesting record involved a Storm Petrel seen at around 11pm flying around the North Haven. The Grey Heron lingers, while raptors on the island included 2 Kestrels and 1 male Merlin.

Notable waders on the isle included 6 Purple Sandpipers, 2 Dunlin, 2 Black-tailed Godwits, 5 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank, 1 Greenshank and 3 Common Sandpipers. Tern Numbers remain low, with one Common Tern and 2 Arctic Terns present.

Present on the island were 3 Woodpigeons, 1 Collared Dove, 1 Cuckoo still, 1 Short-eared Owl by Setter, 1 Sand Martin, 77 Swallows, 11 House Martins, 15 Tree Pipits, 3 flavissima Yellow Wagtails, 3 White Wagtails, 3 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 2 Redstarts, 5 Whinchats, 5 Ring Ouzels, 5 Blackbirds, 4 Fieldfare, 1 Song Thrush, 4 Grasshopper Warblers, 6 Sedge Warblers, 1 Subalpine Warbler still, 8 Lesser Whitethroats, 2 Common Whitethroats, 2 Garden Warblers, 11 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaffs, 13 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 1 Tree Sparrow, 1 Brambling, 2 Linnets, 1 Lapland Bunting and 4 Reed Buntings.

**8th May 2011:** Gale force SE with occasional heavy rain.



Common Scoter in North Haven

Photo by Adam Cross

A good days birding, with several first records for the year. However with the weather being so promising, the hoped-for day's scarcity was sadly not forthcoming. Firsts for the year were Cuckoo, Whinchat, Reed Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher, while further highlights included the lingering Canada Goose, a Quail, Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper and the remaining Subalpine Warbler.

A Quail was flushed from near the school during morning census, while a Grey Heron was notable as the first in a while. Two Sparrowhawks were seen on passage through the island.

Waders were represented by 25 Golden Plover, 2 Purple Sandpipers, 1 Dunlin, 12 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank, 1 Greenshank, 1 Wood Sandpiper on Da Water (probably yesterday's bird), 1 Common Sandpiper and 13 Turnstones. 6 Arctic Terns were the highest total this year.

Conditions in the morning; with heavy rain and the strong south-easterlies meant that there was a reasonable arrival of migrants onto the island, with several firsts for the year and some good totals. Totals included 6 Wood Pigeons, 1 Collared Dove, 1 Cuckoo, 1 Sand Martin, 13 Swallows, 4 House Martins, 11 Tree Pipits, 3 Littoralis Rock Pipits, 1 female Blue-headed Wagtail, 2 White Wagtails, 1 Dunnock, 2 Robins, 1 Black Redstart, 3 Common Redstarts, 3 Whinchats, 4 Ring Ouzels, 4 Blackbirds, 3 Fieldfare, 2 Song Thrush, 1 Reed Warbler, 1 Subalpine Warbler still, 7 Lesser Whitethroats, 10 Common Whitethroats, 9 Blackcaps, 11 Chiffchaffs, 16 Willow Warblers, 1 Spotted Flycatcher, 4 Tree Sparrows still, 2 Bramblings, 2 Goldfinch, 4 Linnets, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 1 Lapland Bunting and 8 Reed Buntings

**7th May 2011:** S/SE 2. Hazy conditions, fairly mild

A slightly better day than yesterday, with a few new birds in, including another Wood Sandpiper in off the sea and a Canada Goose at Easter Lother Water; a rare spring visitor to the island. The Eastern Subalpine Warbler is still here.

Wildfowl was represented mainly by the lingering birds, but a Canada Goose had arrived at Easter Lother Water in the morning; a rare Fair Isle bird, with fewer than 25 records. Wader highlights included a calling Wood Sandpiper in off the sea at South Naarversgill, 2 Green Sandpipers and 2 Common Sandpipers. Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers increased to 14, while 2 Common and 2 Arctic Terns were recorded, but are yet to be seen in any number over the island.



Fair Isle Wren – an endemic subspecies Photo by Jason Moss

Five Woodpigeon and 2 Collared Doves was a slight increase on recent numbers, whilst hirundines trickled through with 1 Sand Martin, 15 Swallows and 5 House Martins seen. Further notable passerine totals included 6 Tree Pipits, 1 White Wagtail, 3 Dunnocks, 2 Robins, 1 female Black Redstart, 3 Common Redstarts, 7 Ring Ouzels, 1 Redwing, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Sedge Warblers, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Common Whitethroats, 6 Blackcaps, 4 Willow Warblers, 12 Carrion Crows, 2 migrant Ravens, 4 Tree Sparrows, 1 Siskin, 1 Linnet and 6 Reed Buntings.

**6th May 2011:** Easterly 3 with heavy rain am. Dry pm, with low cloud

A promising day on the surface of it, but nothing dramatic to report. A few of the commoner migrants increased in number as the day went on, but most remained stable or decreased. New arrivals included a Greenshank and Mistle Thrush, while the Eastern Subalpine Warbler continues to show well to guests in the Obs Garden.



Twite Photo by Jason Moss

The islands lingering wildfowl consisted of the Whooper Swan, 11 Greylag Geese, 2 Teal, 3 Tufted Ducks and the drake Common Scoter in North Haven, While Raptors consisted of a passage female Sparrowhawk and Kestrel. Six Dunlin were present, passing on route to northern breeding grounds, as were 6 Whimbrel, 1 Black-tailed Godwit still, 3 Purple Sandpipers, 22 Golden Plover, 1 Greenshank, 2 Green Sandpipers and 29 Turnstones. Six Lesser Black-backed Gulls was a slight increase on the island.

Woodpigeon numbers increased slightly (by one), while the Collared Dove remains. The promising weather conditions through the day saw very little in the way of newly arrived birds on the isle, with totals mostly consisting of lingering birds. Species that saw an increase on the day were Tree Pipit (8), Dunnock (3), Robin (7), Mistle Thrush (1), Chiffchaff (7) and Brambling (4). Ring Ouzel (2), the Eastern Subalpine Warbler and Tree Sparrows (4) were all still present.

**5th May 2011:** Moderate to fresh SE to E'ly winds. Good visibility and sunny periods. Clouding over later with rain during the evening marking the end of a long, dry settled period.

The COLLARED FLYCATCHER continues its protracted stay on the island, as does the Eastern Subalpine Warbler, while further census highlights included 2 Quail.

Two Quail were present on the island, with one on Bunes and one calling around Schoolton. Raptors on the island included the lingering Kestrel, while wader highlights included our 4th Sanderling of the year in South Harbour, along with 1 Dunlin, 1 Purple sandpiper and 5 Whimbrel.



Collared Flycatcher still present  
Photo David Parnaby

Eleven Swallows and 6 House Martins were logged, while small numbers of passerines had arrived on the days light easterly winds; notably Black Redstarts, Common Redstarts, Ring Ouzels and Siskins. Totals included 6 Tree Pipits, 1 flavissima Wagtail, 3 Black Redstarts, 3 Common Redstarts, 158 Wheatears, 8 Ring Ouzels, 2 Song Thrushes, 3 Grasshopper Warblers, 2 Sedge Warblers, the Eastern Subalpine Warbler still, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Common Whitethroats, 4 Blackcaps, 5 Willow Warblers, COLLARED FLYCATCHER, 6 Tree Sparrows still, 2 Brambling, 7 Siskins, and 11 Reed Buntings

**4th May 2011:** A bright but rather cloudy day with good visibility. Light NE'ly winds in the morning veering E to SE'ly by the afternoon.

A comparatively quiet day today, with little in the way of new arrivals, and most birds clearing out. The COLLARED FLYCATCHER remains for its 5th day, with the 'Eastern' Subalpine Warbler also still present.



Subalpine Warbler in the obs garden still  
Photo by David Parnaby



Two of the four Tree Sparrows frequenting Tommy's feeders

Three Tufted Ducks remain, along with the drake Common Scoter, while raptors were represented by the lingering and resident Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Peregrines.

The Green Sandpiper and Black-tailed Godwit remain and 3 Woodpigeons and 5 Collared Doves were present. Hirundines were represented by 3 Sand Martins and 22 Swallows.

Virtually all passerines on the island showed a reduction in number, but the variety was still good. Totals were; 5 Tree Pipits, 1 'flava' Wagtail over, 4 White and 5 Pied Wagtails, 4 Dunnocks, 4 Robins, 1 male Black Redstart, 1 Common Redstart, 3 Ring Ouzels, 5 Blackbirds, 1 Song Thrush, 3 Grasshopper Warblers (an increase of 2 from yesterday), 1 Sedge Warbler, 1 Male Albistriata Subalpine Warbler still, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Common Whitethroat, 10 Blackcaps, 5 Chiffchaffs, 5 Willow Warblers, COLLARED FLYCATCHER, 4 Tree Sparrows still, 1 Brambling, 2 Linnets, 1 Redpoll sp., 2 Lapland Buntings and 3 Reed Buntings.

**3rd May 2011:** Light W/NW winds. Fine and bright

Another day, another fantastic bird, and, along with an impressive array of eye-candy still present to be enjoyed, Fair Isle is definitely the place to be right now! Pride of place must go to the RED-RUMPED SWALLOW that was discovered in the evening, feeding around Utra amongst a flock of Swallows. For about half an hour the bird performed, doing flypasts down to 3 feet and giving phenomenal views. A new Wryneck was also trapped in Single Dyke in the afternoon. Also present lingering on the island was the COLLARED FLYCATCHER, appearing in the same area as previously, but instead feeding at the bottom of the cliffs, so obviously elusive and easily missed. Subalpine Warblers returned to two birds, with the male re-found in the observatory garden after a day's apparent absence and a further highlight was 4 Tree Sparrows at the Haa.



Red-rumped Swallow in flight  
Photo by Jason Moss



The bird gave fantastic views as it lingered around Utra in the evening  
Photo by David Parnaby

Again, wildfowl numbers consisted mostly of the lingering birds, but the Greylag Goose flock, having begun to dwindle in size increased by nine, to 22 birds. The three Tufted Ducks on the island were also joined by a fourth. Raptors were represented by a passage male Sparrowhawk and female Kestrel, while 2 Peregrines were present and performing courtship displays. Seventeen Golden Plover, 1 Black-tailed Godwit, 8 Whimbrel, 2 Redshank and 1 Green Sandpiper were also present.

A good day for hirundines involved a full set, with 3 Sand Martins, 28 Swallows, 1 RED-RUMPED SWALLOW and 2 House Martins seen, along with 1 Swift. A new Wryneck featured around the traps, while other migrants lingered in good numbers still. Present on the isle were 10 Tree Pipits, 69 Meadow Pipits, probable female Blue-headed and Grey-headed Wagtails, 5 White Wagtails, 4 Dunnocks, 9 Robins, 1 male Black Redstart, 9 Common Redstarts, 4 Ring Ouzels, 4 Blackbirds, 3 Song Thrushes, 1 Sedge Warbler, 2 Subalpine Warblers, 1 Lesser White-throat, 4 Common Whitethroats, 9 Blackcaps, 10 Chiffchaffs, 12 Willow Warblers, 1 male Pied Flycatcher, 1 male COLLARED FLYCATCHER still, after a day's absence, 1 Rook, 4 Tree Sparrows at Old Haa, 3 Brambling, 1 Siskin, 1 Linnet, 3 Mealy Redpolls, 1 Snow Bunting and 10 Reed Buntings.

**2nd May 2011:** Variable winds, but mostly in the east, force 2-3. Another fine day!

This spring just keeps getting better and better, as good birds continue to arrive on Fair Isle. Massive highlight of the day was the discovery of an incredibly showy GREAT SNIPE on Utra Scrape, where it was seen well on the ground and in flight by multiple observers. Typically a September bird, this was only the 3rd spring Fair Isle Record. Three Wrynecks were also present, with birds by Single Dyke, in Chalet Garden and at South Harbour. New for the year was a showy Quail by Utra and a Tree Sparrow moving between Utra, the Haa and Burkle, while the Female Subalpine Warbler lingers for its 9th day!



Great Snipe on the deck.  
The bird was relatively easy to observe at times, due to the vegetation being relatively short.  
Photo by Jason Moss



Great Snipe in flight  
Photo by Jason Moss

Three Teal, 3 Tufted Ducks and 1 lingering Common Scoter were present, along with the 1st Quail of the year in a roadside ditch at Utra. The Male Merlin was still in the north, while wader numbers consisted of 7 Ringed Plovers, 14 Golden Plovers, 1 Purple Sandpiper, 1 Black-tailed Godwit still, 9 Whimbrel, 1 Redshank, 2 Green Sandpipers, 1 Common Sandpiper, 1 GREAT SNIPE and 10 Turnstones. Two Common Terns were in South Harbour in the evening.

Numbers of migrants on the island were fairly impressive, with arrivals apparently occurring throughout the day. Day totals are as follows; 3 Woodpigeons, 3 Collared Doves, 1 Short-eared Owl, 1 Swift, 3 Wrynecks, 41 Skylarks, 8 Swallows, 1 House Martin, 20 Tree Pipits, 158 Meadow Pipits, 2 Flava Wagtails, 2 White Wagtails, 3 Dunnocks, 5 Robins, 3 Black Redstarts, 6 Common Redstarts, 118 Wheatear, 14 Ring Ouzels (with 8 just around Pund), 6 Blackbirds, 5 Fieldfare, 3 Song Thrush, 1 Redwing, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 1 Sedge Warbler, 2 Subalpine Warblers still, 1 Common Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, 4 Blackcaps, 5 Chiffchaffs, 10 Willow Warblers, 2 Pied Flycatchers, Tree Sparrow, 4 Brambling, 1 Siskin, 1 Linnet, 6 Lapland Buntings, 1 Snow Bunting and 17 Reed Buntings.

**1st May 2011:** Easterlies continue, along with the stunning bright weather.

The days star arrival was a Wryneck found on the roadside dykes, narrowly avoiding being captured in the heligoland traps, while an Osprey south in the evening was our 2nd of the year. The COLLARED FLYCATCHER remains on the same stretch of cliffs, showing and performing well all day, while the two Subalpine Warblers still remain. A Waxwing also arrived in the obs plantation in the afternoon, and first for the year (along with the Wryneck) was a Goldfinch and Swift.

The wildfowl contingent on the island involved lingering Whooper Swan, the 2 Tufted Ducks and the male Common Scoter, while raptors on the island consisted of the southbound Osprey, female Kestrel and a smart male Merlin in the north.

A Green Sandpiper was on Utra Scrape, while 2 Wood Pigeons and 2 Collared Doves were present on the island. A Short-eared Owl was also seen in the south, while the 1st Swift of the year was hawking over the airstrip.



Lapland Bunting Photo by Jason Moss



Waxwing in Obs Garden Photo by Jason Moss

A widely predicted first Wryneck was found around the traps on the first round of the day. Passerine movement was evident, with a reasonable number of migrants arriving throughout the day. Totals included 2 Tree Pipits, 1 Flava Wagtail, 5 White Wagtails, 1 Waxwing, 1 Dunnock, 9 Robins, 2 Black Redstarts, 6 Common Redstarts, 107 Wheatears, 6 Ring Ouzel, 7 Blackbirds, 5 Fieldfare, 2 Song Thrush, 1 Mistle Thrush, 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 3 Sedge Warblers, 2 Subalpine Warblers still, 1 Lesser Whitethroat, 1 Garden Warbler, 14 Blackcaps, 5 Chiffchaffs, 10 Willow Warblers, 1 Pied Flycatcher still, COLLARED FLYCATCHER still, 1 Goldfinch, 1 Linnet, 8 Lapland Buntings, 1 Snow Bunting and 2 Reed Buntings.