

27<sup>th</sup> March 2012

*Light south-westerly and fine and sunny. As good a day as any in the summer on Fair Isle!*

And fantastic weather to officially resume census on the island! Wildfowl included the 2 lingering **Tundra Bean Geese**, 2 Pink-footed Geese and 87 Greylags all lingering with a Wigeon, 2 Teal, the first Tufted Duck of the year and 4 female Common Scoter in Furse. A female Sparrowhawk was at Pund, while a Merlin and 2 Peregrines were also present. Wader totals included 109 Oystercatchers, 17 Ringed Plovers, 12 Golden Plovers, 21 Lapwings, 7 Purple Sandpipers, 14 Snipe, 16 Curlew, 16 Redshank and 65 Turnstones.

The first **Bonxie** of the year was seen over Swey (spring has officially arrived on Fair Isle!) while gulls were also on the move, with 13 Black-headed Gulls and 22 Common Gulls recorded, with some northerly movement evident. A first winter Glaucous Gull was a new arrival, while the first good numbers of **Puffins** made an appearance, with several hundred noted offshore.

Smaller migrant numbers were obviously low, given the time of year. However the weather had obviously ushered a few small migrants into action, with a scattering of the following; 1 Woodpigeon, the first Collared Dove of the year, a Carrion Crow, plus one Hybrid Carrion/Hooded, a nice scattering of 13 Goldcrests, 9 **Chiffchaffs**, 1 female **Blackcap** (the earliest ever recorded on Fair Isle), 2 Blackbirds, a Fieldfare, 2 Song Thrushes, an arrival of 55 Redwings, 2 Robins, a very smart male **Black Redstart** at Quoy, the first **Wheatear** of the year (unusually a female), a Dunnock, a male **White Wagtail** at Easter Lother Water (the first of the year), 117 Meadow Pipits, 1 Chaffinch, 3 Siskins, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 1 Redpoll sp, 9 Snow buntings and a fly-over Lapland Bunting.

On a non-avian note, a Minke Whale was recorded from the Good Shepherd.

**Black Redstart.** *Photo by Jason Moss*

28<sup>th</sup> March 2012

*South-westerly force 3. Overcast with occasional drizzle*

Wildfowl sightings were roughly consistent with yesterday, though Greylag Goose numbers reached 131 scattered across the south of the island. The Sparrowhawk and pair of Peregrines were seen again, while wader counts produced 133 Oystercatchers, 23 Ringed Plovers, 16 Golden Plovers and 25 Purple Sandpipers.

Goldcrest and Chiffchaff numbers fell, with just 5 and one bird remaining respectively, while Skylarks arrived, with 240 birds on the isle. One Blackbird remained, as did 4 Song Thrushes, 46 Redwings, 1 Robin, the male **Black Redstart**, 2 male Wheatears arrived, 2 Dunnocks, 2 Chaffinches, 3 Siskins, 1 Mealy Redpoll, 1 Redpoll sp. and 8 Snow Buntings.

29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

*Moderate westerly winds, with low cloud and misty rain*

Teal numbers increased to 6 on Da Water, while the Tufted Duck reappeared and 3 Common Scoter and the first Goldeneye of the month were sighted. A Red-throated Diver past South Light was the first since mid-January. A cormorant was seen, while a notable arrival of Snipe included a Jack Snipe and 79 Common Snipe. Common Gulls were back on territory on Bunes and a near-adult **Iceland Gull** made an appearance.

A Woodpigeon was noted, while other passerine sightings included one lingering Goldcrest and Chiffchaff, 2 Song Thrushes, 55 Redwing, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 3 Snow Buntings and a female Reed Bunting.

**Fulmar.** *Photo by Jason Moss*

30<sup>th</sup> March 2012

*Moderate W/NW and stinging rain showers all day*

A fairly nasty day all in all still managed to turn up a first for the year in the shape of a very smart male **Ring Ouzel** at the Mast

The 5 Teal and 4 Common Scoters remain, while a Grey Heron arrived and the male Merlin reappeared. Twenty-five Lapwings were an increase on recent days.

The Woodpigeon remains on the cliffs at Furse, while a **Long-eared Owl** was nearly caught (but ultimately bungled) in the Gulley, while other migrants included 2 Goldcrests, 1 lingering Chiffchaff, a new Fieldfare, the same male **Black Redstart** and the female Reed Bunting.

31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

*Moderate north-westerly winds with occasional showers. Cold*

A great bird to cap off the end of the month was a smart drake **GREEN-WINGED TEAL** associating with Teal on Da Water. Amazingly, considering the regularity of this species' occurrence on both Shetland and Orkney, this is only Fair Isle's second record, after another drake on Da Water on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Two adult **Greenland White-fronted Geese** also arrived in the morning, loosely joining the lingering Greylag flock.

A Shelduck made an appearance while 5 Teal and 4 Common Scoters remain. A 'dark' Fulmar was seen off South Light while the female Sparrowhawk remains. Forty-three Snipe across the island suggests that many migrant birds remain. Two Bonxies were present along with a 2<sup>nd</sup> winter **Iceland Gull**.

A total of 135 Skylarks suggests an arrival while the Chiffchaff remains and what was probably the same Blackcap from the other day was re-found in Furse. Three Blackbirds were present, along with 27 Redwings, 1 Robin, a monthly peak of 10 Pied Wagtails, 1 Chaffinch and 5 Snow Buntings.

**Green-winged Teal** on Da Water. *Photo by Jason Moss*

**White-fronted Geese**. *Photos by Jason Moss*