

## “8 species” focus in Clyde - an evolving story

On 15 February 2023, the SOC Clyde Discussion Group agreed it would initially focus on 8 bird species: Cuckoo, Goosander, Kingfisher, Nuthatch, Raven, Rook, Tree Sparrow and Yellowhammer.

Over the past couple of years Judith has been entering complete lists of birds observed on our birding expeditions on Birdtrack. We thought it would be fun to look back and see which of our outings in Clyde since mid-February had included observations of the “8 species”. Up to 26 April we had a total of 24 lists from places within the Clyde area, and 19 of these included one or more of the 8.

Many of Judith’s records only show “bird present”, but she is now trying to include numbers, where feasible, as well as breeding status.



Throughout the period, we saw no Tree Sparrows, and only one Kingfisher (perched over a tributary to the Allander Water). Our first Cuckoo was heard around the southwestern edge of Lennox Forrest on 22 April.

The Nuthatches along the Blane Valley, in Mugdock Country Park and near the Allander Walkway became helpfully noisy from early March. We were delighted to find 2 pairs of Nuthatches carrying nesting material into nest boxes on one of our favourite walks in Blane Valley, and are doing our best to monitor these.

The Goosanders have been interesting throughout, feeding in small groups, displaying, then forming pairs.



They were regularly seen on the pools in the Blane Valley, on the Allander from Lennox Park, Milngavie southwards, and on the Kelvin between Torrance and the Millichen. Within the past couple of weeks they have disappeared, so we hope this means that the females are sitting on eggs while the males head off to the boys club to moult.

We have enjoyed watching our local nest-building Rooks along the Blane Valley (10 nests) and noticing for the first time that some already have a pouch under the bill ready to collect food to feed chicks.



Ravens are always exciting to find, and we are pretty sure some are nesting not far outside Milngavie, having seen a young one locally in a previous year. We tend to find them at Burncrooks Reservoir and at Ardinging SWT, and have heard and seen them from west of Lennox Forrest next door.



We have seen and heard Yellowhammers in small numbers (ones and twos) along the hedgerows of the Allander Water, and along a walk involving Torrance, Balmore and the canal. So far we have not observed nesting behaviour.

Of the 8 species, only the Cuckoo is a properly seasonal migrant and, of course, at this time of year noticing the arrivals of migrants, hearing birdsong, observing nesting and seeing young birds always makes birding a particular joy. It will be an interesting challenge to observe the 7 resident species as they become quieter and change behaviour over the changing seasons.



All the photographs were taken by John. Judith did the drawings, (from photographic references, not in the field)

Judith and John Chapman