



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to RSPB Baron's Haugh Reserve

6th May 2023 (1030-1430)

Leader: **Lang Stewart**

Weather: Mixed. Mainly overcast and fairly cool with some light rain at times. We also had some sun.

Eight of us met at the car park at RSPB Baron's Haugh Reserve at 1030 and after a brief introduction from our leader, Lang Stewart, we set off. For three of the participants, it was their first SOC outing. A **Jay** at the edge of the car park was a great bird straightaway. A **Blackcap** was singing there too. We took our time getting to the first hide and were soon adding the commoner birds to the list. An obliging **Song Thrush** was belting its song out. A singing **Whitethroat** was quite elusive for a while, but eventually everyone got good views of it.



Whitethroat © David Palmar

The first hide we visited was the Marsh Hide where we saw a superb breeding-plumaged **Black-tailed Godwit** straightaway. There were about half a dozen each of **Mallard**, **Teal** and **Gadwall** and we spent some time learning how to identify the females! The Gadwall is one of the highlights of the Reserve and one some of the participants hadn't seen one before. A **Water Rail** was heard briefly by some as was a **Grasshopper Warbler**. We also had great views of Reed Bunting from this hide. Unfortunately, the hoped for Kingfisher which this hide is well known for didn't materialize.

En route to the Causeway Hide, we had **Long-tailed Tit** and **Great Spotted Woodpecker**. The birds seen from the Causeway Hide were fairly similar to those seen at the Marsh Hide and we didn't linger too long here. We did spend some time looking at gulls though – **Black-headed**, **Lesser Black-backed** and **Herring** were all present.

Baron's Haugh Reserve has suffered greatly from severe erosion at the hands of the River Clyde. Significant sections of the riverside path have fallen into the river and there are serious breaches. The Phoenix Hide which we would normally have visited next was one of the casualties and was removed by the RSPB recently. The only sighting of note we had from the hide site was a **Mute Swan** on a nest.

Next we visited the Centenary Hide where we had our packed lunches. Apart from the wetland birds, we also had a **Roe Deer** and noted many **Orange-tip** butterflies on the wing. Many **Swallows** and **Sand Martins** were about. Lang heard a **Garden Warbler** singing from thick scrub behind the hide and eventually we all caught glimpses. A second one was also singing from the dense riverside bushes nearby. A **Sedge Warbler** was our seventh warbler species (others being Chiffchaff, Willow, Blackcap, Garden, Whitethroat and Grasshopper).

Leaving the Centenary Hide to rejoin the main riverside path was challenging as quite a bit of it had fallen in to the river. People had pioneered a way round via the high bund. We spent some time looking at the River Clyde and were rewarded with excellent views of **Goosander** and **Common Sandpiper**. **Sand Martins** were nesting in the sandy banks, and we enjoyed those too.



Male Orange Tip butterfly on Garlic Mustard
© David Palmar



Riverbank erosion at Baron's Haugh
© David Palmar

To avoid having a long uphill walk back to the car park, Lang took us into Dalzell Estate where he was also hoping to show us Nuthatch but unfortunately, none showed up. The Estate was the first site in Clyde where they were proved breeding and now has double figures of pairs. Since the first breeding of course, they have become fairly common in many places in Clyde.

43 species were seen by us (see list below). All my own records from the outing were submitted to BirdTrack. Our thanks to all that attended. The 'atmosphere' was brilliant. Special thanks to Lang Stewart for leading us so ably and sharing his extensive knowledge of the site and its wildlife.



Group photo © Zul Bhatia

Zul Bhatia, June 2023

No of bird species recorded: 43

Mute Swan
Greylag Goose
Canada Goose
Gadwall
Teal
Mallard
Goosander
Grey Heron
Water Rail
Moorhen
Coot
Black-tailed Godwit
Common Sandpiper
Black-headed Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull

Herring Gull
Woodpigeon
Great Spotted Woodpecker
Magpie
Jay
Jackdaw
Carrion Crow
Blue Tit
Great Tit
Sand Martin
Swallow
Long-tailed Tit
Chiffchaff
Willow Warbler
Blackcap

Garden Warbler
Whitethroat
Grasshopper Warbler
Sedge Warbler
Wren
Starling
Blackbird
Song Thrush
Robin
Dunnock
Chaffinch
Bullfinch
Reed Bunting

Other species recorded:

Roe Deer
Orange-tip