



**Scottish Ornithologists' Club**  
*Scotland's Bird Club*  
Established 1936

## Clyde branch outing to Great Cumbrae

18 June 2022 (1015-1645)

**Leader:** Eddie Williams

**Participants:** 18

**Weather:** Some drizzle whilst on the outward ferry but dry throughout whilst on the island. Plenty of sun but steady westerly winds, gusting quite strongly at times made it feel cool occasionally.

**No of species recorded:** 54 (see list below)

15 of us met at Largs ferry terminal and got the 1015 ferry to the Island – a short 10-minute ride. We were met at the Cumbrae Slip by Janet & David Palmar (who were already on the Island) and our Leader Eddie Williams. We walked round the north and west sides of Great Cumbrae towards Millport along a relatively quiet road by the sea, then by a footpath over the hill. The total walking distance was approximately five miles.



Common Lizard (David Palmar)

Shortly after we set off, Eddie found the first of several **Common Lizards** which we all enjoyed. The island seems to be particularly good for them and Eddie recorded 29 individuals earlier this month (on 6<sup>th</sup> June). Notable birds during the first stretch to White Bay included **Greylag** (pair on the shore) **Ringed Plover**, **Common Sandpiper**, **Black Guillemot**, **Sand Martin**, **Whitethroat**, **Mistle Thrush** and **Bullfinch**.

We carried on along the road checking both sides of the road for birds. At Greycraigs, Eddie counted 66 **Common Gulls**, someone picked out a **Red-breasted Merganser** (our only one) at White Bay where there was a very obliging pair of **Greenfinches** feeding close to us on the shore. A **Sedge Warbler** with food was seen well at Skate Bay with a solitary **Curlew** at Skate Point. An **Oystercatcher** chick was seen at one point and we quickly moved off another spot as there was an **Oystercatcher** nest with 3 eggs very close to the road and an anxious adult nearby.



Greenfinch male (David Palmar)

Up to four **Ravens** were great to see. **Eiders** were plentiful and we saw several groups of ducklings. There weren't many seabirds around except **Gannet** but Bill (a seasoned seawatcher) picked out a couple of distant **Fulmar** and some **Guillemot** through his telescope. It was good to see both **Meadow Pipit** and **Rock Pipit** close together to be able to clearly see the differences.



Female Eider Duck with brood (David Palmar)

We had our packed lunches (topped up with items bought from the Café) at Fintray Bay where toilets were also available. **Chaffinch** and **Robin** joined us at lunch (the only ones I saw during the whole outing!). Other birds recorded in the Fintray area included **Blackcap**.

We left the road at Fintray Bay and headed uphill on the Targets Walk (a short walking route to Millport). A number of **Small Heath** butterflies were seen but the birding highlight was a fine male **Sparrowhawk** which gave us a long view as it crossed a large open area on the Upper Targets Walk. The views from up there were fabulous.



Some of the participants at the top of the Targets walk (Zul Bhatia)

We reached the Golf Course, had brilliant views of a very obliging **Song Thrush** and took a detour to the Lower Reservoir where we had a pair of **Little Grebe** and our only **Great Black-backed Gull** of the trip. In a ditch beside the Golf Road, we had a nice male **Siskin** drinking. We arrived in Millport at about 1630 and everyone got a bus back to the Cumbrae Slip. A **Black-headed Gull** in Ballochmartin Bay (seen from the bus) was the last species of the outing.

It had been a great outing with good company, some good birds and it stayed dry! We are particularly grateful to **Eddie Williams** who led the outing and shared his extensive knowledge with us. It was great to see some familiar faces from previous outings as well welcome five new ones for whom it was their first SOC outing since we started them back again after the Lockdown. Three species (Gannet, Ringed Plover and Sedge Warbler) were added to our cumulative list of species recorded on our SOC outings bringing the total to 119 species.

**Zul Bhatia**

**54 species of birds were recorded on SOC Outing to Great Cumbrae on 18 June 2022.**

Greylag Goose	Common Gull	Whitethroat
Mallard	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Sedge Warbler
Eider	Herring Gull	Wren
Red-breasted Merganser	Great Black-backed Gull	Starling
Fulmar	Feral Pigeon	Blackbird
Gannet	Woodpigeon	Song Thrush
Shag	Jackdaw	Mistle Thrush
Grey Heron	Rook	Robin
Little Grebe	Carrion Crow	Dunnock
Sparrowhawk	Raven	House Sparrow
Buzzard	Blue Tit	Pied Wagtail ( <i>yarrellii</i> )
Oystercatcher	Great Tit	Meadow Pipit
Ringed Plover	Sand Martin	Rock Pipit
Curlew	Swallow	Chaffinch
Common Sandpiper	House Martin	Bullfinch
Black Guillemot	Chiffchaff	Greenfinch
Guillemot	Willow Warbler	Goldfinch
Black-headed Gull	Blackcap	Siskin