



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to Hogganfield & Frankfield Lochs

14th November 2021 (0930-1300)

Leader: Donald Wilson

Weather: 10 to 12 degrees light wind, overcast, one light shower

16 Participants joined the outing. 45 species of birds were recorded with highlights being **Whooper Swan, Gadwall, Jack Snipe, Mediterranean Gull, Jay, Redwing and Fieldfare.**

This was my first guided walk ever, however being a birder for many years and knowing many accomplished birders from all over the UK, some of whom I know are professional guides, I had a reasonable understanding of what to expect, but there was still a nervousness about what lay ahead. My main mission was to ensure everyone enjoyed the morning's birding and hoped they would learn something during the excursion.

Hogganfield Park Local Nature Reserve is a popular site with the general public for recreation as it has great facilities for families, has a very wide tarmac pathway around a large loch and is easily accessible. It also is the headquarters for the 7 Lochs Wetland Park and has Green Flag status. From an ornithological perspective it boasts an impressive bird list for an urban site (some 3 miles from Glasgow City Centre) and worked properly and regularly, up to c90 species of bird can be seen in a year.

Once the introductions were made, Jim Coyle announced that there was a Mediterranean Gull perched only about 30 yards from us on the railings adjacent to the car park, a great start! I have never found a Mediterranean Gull in the Clyde recording area and this was only my 4th Clyde sighting as it is a scarce but increasing bird. The bird in question was in 2nd winter plumage.

Hogganfield is a superb place to observe wildfowl with most species being able to be viewed at very close range such as Goldeneye, Whooper Swan and Goosander at this time of the year, hence the interest in this site with many local photographers.

Next on the agenda was to look more closely at some of the other gull species on offer and helping the group to distinguish between the varying species and their plumages, something of which I am still learning! Apart from the loch itself the Hogganfield Park area has varying mixed habitat including areas of mature trees, grassland, hedges, small ponds and a marsh.

We walked slowly around in an anti clockwise direction, birding and stopping whenever there was something to see, observe and/or explain. There were lots of stops! At one of our stops I looked behind the group and noticed a Jay flying into the mature trees. It was then noted by the group there were two Jays and all managed to view them. Again this is an under-recorded bird in the Clyde area and one that is on the increase and I for one never tire of seeing!

The next port of call was to try for Jack Snipe. This species is widespread but localised and most likely again vastly under recorded in the Clyde due the nature of where it can be located and its excellent camouflage. The Hogganfield Marsh usually turns up a few Jack Snipe every winter and I knew it had been recorded here over the past few weeks so was hoping to be in luck today, as I believed quite a few of our party had most likely never seen this species.

I gave a quick description of what to look for when trying to ID Jack Snipe especially in flight which is overall size, shorter bill length in comparison to Common Snipe, a differing flight jizz with it usually going back down to ground after a short flight compared to the high Zig Zag flight of Common Snipe and generally no call, again compared to Common Snipe which in the main will give its single syllable alarm call when rising up from the ground.

After a quick search one flew up with a Common Snipe and the whole group had a brief but good flight view with one of the group even managing to get a photograph of both species together in the one frame showing the obvious bill length difference and smaller body size.

From the marsh area we then walked some of the path network that was surrounded by mature hedges and it was great to see good numbers of Redwing and a few Fieldfare, which some of the group had not seen yet this winter and again giving some tips of flight identification to separate out Fieldfare from Redwing.

We then crossed the local road over towards Cardowan Moss Local Nature Reserve which leads to the back of Frankfield Loch.

We got to the South East corner of Frankfield where one of the SUDS ponds is located and which offers a lovely elevated wide view of the Loch. There was not too much on show, but it was nice to record eleven Gadwall and Gary Brown located a standing Snipe with his scope affording the group good views. We then walked the good path through the small woodland at Frankfield to end up at the main layby.

We had left our lunches at Hogganfield and so with it being 1pm, it was time to head back. Everyone was more than happy with the morning's sightings and we ended the excursion once back at Hogganfield.

For me I really enjoyed the morning and we had some great birding and I believed my wish list for those who attended was fulfilled? Thanks to all those who attended. Here's to the next Clyde SOC outing! Cannae wait!

Donald Wilson

Species List: (Count 45)

Mute Swan	Black-headed Gull	Coal Tit
Whooper Swan	Mediterranean Gull	Treecreeper
Canada Goose	Common Gull	Wren
Gadwall	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Starling
Mallard	Herring Gull	Blackbird
Tufted Duck	Feral Pigeon	Fieldfare
Goldeneye	Woodpigeon	Redwing
Goosander	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dunnock
Cormorant	Magpie	Grey Wagtail
Grey Heron	Jay	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Little Grebe	Rook	Chaffinch
Moorhen	Carrion Crow	Bullfinch
Coot	Goldcrest	Goldfinch
Jack Snipe	Blue Tit	Siskin
Snipe	Great Tit	Reed Bunting