



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to Inchcailloch, Loch Lomond

27th April 2022 (0930-1530)

Leader: Ian Fulton

Participants: 24

Weather: Dry, overcast, mild

No. of species: 42 (see list below)

A group of 24 participants gathered at the National Park visitor centre in the Balmaha car park. Along with some of our regular attendees, we were pleased to welcome Lindsay and Liz Ferguson, SOC Central Branch members, and two guests from Aberdeenshire. After the introductions we made our way the short distance to the Balmaha boatyard.



On the boat to Inchcailloch, Loch Lomond (David Palmar)

There had been a last minute worry regarding the outing as there some been some sort of procedural issue getting the boat's licence to operate renewed. Fortunately, the inspection had been completed on the Monday enabling the boat to commence its ferry service for the season the next day. From the boatyard jetty it was clear how dry it had been as the low water level in the loch had exposed huge areas of mud. An Oystercatcher and a couple White Wagtails were active on the nearest mud and a brood of four Mallard chicks was present at the water's edge.

We boarded the boat for the short but idyllic journey to Inchcailloch. At this time of the year, Inchcailloch is a hot spot for woodland spring migrants as they just arrive from their arduous journeys. It is also usually prime time for the display of bluebells which carpet the woods though, unfortunately, the cool very dry spring had delayed the best of the floral display.

Once on the island we made our way up the path which leads through the woods on the east side to the highest point of the island. It was soon evident that the birds we were hoping to find might be more heard than seen. Within moments of leaving the landing jetty we could hear Redstart, Tree Pipit and Nuthatch calling from quite close by but remaining out of view. A little further on a regular repeated rattling call revealed the presence of a Wood Warbler. This bird proved to be very cooperative and gave everyone excellent views and a great chance to become familiar with its call.



Wood Warbler (Ian Fulton)

We continued to the summit viewpoint along the way hearing at least three Redstarts singing. At this time of the year, the male Redstart likes to perch on the highest point of the tallest tree and sing to claim a territory and attract a mate. Finding the singing bird can be difficult. A few in the group had fleeting views of Redstarts high in the trees above us. An Osprey drifted past over the trees as it headed for the shallow water in Net Bay to hunt. A Willow Warbler put on a good show from a bush by the viewpoint.

After a rest to admire the view north up Loch Lomond we began to descend from the top. After only a few yards a sudden flurry of wings close to the path turned out to be a Woodcock. Unfortunately, only the front few people were lucky enough to see it. On the descent down to Port Bawn several more Redstarts, Wood Warblers, Willow Warblers and Nuthatches were heard in song. Closer to the bay, the consensus was that a bird singing in the trees nearby was a Garden Warbler which can be difficult to tell apart from the more common Blackcap which was also present.

After a lunch break, we followed the low level path round the west side of the island to the old graveyard. The birding experience was much as before with lots of birds being heard but little being seen. The old graveyard is a beautiful place to enjoy the tranquillity of the island. A Nuthatch finally revealed itself close to the path as we made our way back to the jetty. All too soon we were back on the boat and heading back to the mainland.



Admiring the views from top of Inchcailloch (Joe Timmins)

42 species of birds were recorded on SOC Outing to Inchcailloch, Loch Lomond on 27 April 2022:

Mute Swan	Collared Dove	Nuthatch
Greylag Goose	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Treecreeper
Canada Goose	Jackdaw	Wren
Mallard	Carrion Crow	Blackbird
Goosander	Raven	Song Thrush
Cormorant	Blue Tit	Robin
Buzzard	Great Tit	Redstart
Osprey	Coal Tit	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Oystercatcher	Long-tailed Tit	Tree Pipit
Woodcock	Wood Warbler	Chaffinch
Black-headed Gull	Chiffchaff	Bullfinch
Common Gull	Willow Warbler	Lesser Redpoll
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Blackcap	Goldfinch
Herring Gull	Garden Warbler	Siskin

Butterflies seen: Red Admiral and Orange Tip