



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to RSPB Loch Leven

14 March 2026 (0900 - 1400)

Weather: Overcast with brief sunny intervals. Temp: 3°C; wind 7mph SSW

Leader: John Dryden

Participants: 6

Six of us, including our leader, met at 07:45 at Hogganfield Loch and then continued to Loch Leven in two cars, to reduce our carbon footprint and increase the chance to chat. One more participant joined us at Loch Leven.



Group photo © Ania Owsianka

We started with a walk through the woodland area, because the morning is the best time of day for woodland birds. We could hear a dominant **Song Thrush** and soon had good views of **Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Blackbird, Robin, Dunnock, Blue Tit, Coal Tit, Siskin, and Long-tailed Tit** on the feeders and in the surrounding trees. A pair of **Jays** flew by and disappeared. A pair of **Buzzards** interacted above us.



Tree Sparrow © Ania Owsianka



Great Tit and finches on Feeder © Ania Owsianka

From the terrace beside the visitors' centre, we scanned the Loch and then walked through the tunnel to the hides for a closer look. We were delighted to have good views of several pairs of courting **Great Crested Grebes** "dancing" together. Further away on the water were numerous **Goldeneye** and **Tufted Duck**. Those with keen eyes and good scopes were scanning the far shore of the loch, where there were numerous gulls and geese, including several **Barnacle Geese** and a large white gull – which may have been a second winter Iceland Gull, but it was too far away to be sure. Beside the hide was a bird feeder which had attracted a **Tree Sparrow** and a male **Bullfinch**, as well as **Great Tit** and **Goldfinch**. They made a colourful combination.

We moved on to the next hide, which was beside a colony of squabbling **Black-headed Gulls**. From here we had good views of a group of five **Little Egrets**, and soon saw a **Great Egret** and a couple of **Grey Herons**. Several **Teal** dabbled about in front of us, a single **Lapwing** showed well, and there were **Wigeon**, **Mallard**, **Shelduck**, **Gadwall** and **Pintail** a little further away. A flock of 50 **Curlew** rose up and then settled down again. Suddenly, the sky was filled with several hundred **Pink-footed Geese** flying in.



Pink-footed Geese © Kate Powell

The came down and settled to feed on a distant area of grass. After some minutes another flock flew in to join them, and then another. It was quite a spectacle. Then one of us noticed a goose that looked different – it had white on its face at the base of the bill. Could it be a White-fronted

Goose? It was very hard to get a good view, because it was too far away and kept hiding behind the other birds, but it did not appear to have any black barring on its belly. After much discussion and consultation, John concluded that it was a Pink-footed Goose with a white blaze.

By one o'clock we were cold and hungry enough for some soup in the visitor's centre. When lunch was over it was threatening to rain, and we called it a day.

We had not seen any of the **Whooper Swans** for which Loch Leven is famous, but, ironically, there were plenty right beside the car park at Hogganfield Loch on our return!

Many thanks to John for stepping in to lead this walk, instead of Donald Wilson.

Ania Owsianka

Number of bird species recorded: 52

Mute Swan	Great Crested Grebe	Coal Tit
Whooper Swan	Oystercatcher	Long-tailed Tit
Barnacle Goose	Lapwing	Skylark
Pink-footed Goose	Curlew	Chiffchaff
Greylag Goose	Black-headed Gull	Treecreeper
Shelduck	Common Gull	Wren
Gadwall	Herring Gull	Blackbird
Wigeon	Great Black-backed Gull	Robin
Teal	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Dunnock
Mallard	Buzzard	Tree Sparrow
Pintail	Woodpigeon	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Tufted Duck	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Chaffinch
Goldeneye	Jay	Bullfinch
Goosander	Magpie	Greenfinch
Cormorant	Jackdaw	Goldfinch
Grey Heron	Carrion Crow	Siskin
Little Egret	Blue Tit	
Great White Egret	Great Tit	



Little Egret © Kate Powell