



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

## **Clyde branch joint outing with Lochwinnoch Force For Nature to RSPB Lochwinnoch**

**13<sup>th</sup> January 2024 (1030-1330)**

**Weather:** Cold and sunny with light WSW wind

**Leader:** Zul Bhatia

A very popular outing with 33 people joining it (the second highest attendance of any SOC outing). As it was a joint outing with Lochwinnoch Force For Nature, it was great to see five people from Lochwinnoch village there. For 14 people, it was their first SOC outing.



© Billy McKellar

We met at the RSPB Lochwinnoch Visitor Centre and first went on the Barr Loch trail. We didn't go far along the trail as there were a good number and variety of waterfowl visible from near the start of the trail. We just moved along a bit to get away from the A760 road. We were able to get great views of **Coot**, **Goosander**, **Goldeneye**, **Tufted Duck** and **Wigeon**. There were a few **Teal** around too, but as they were mainly sleeping at the far side of the loch, they were not very obvious. A **Great Crested Grebe** came quite close to where we were all assembled and everyone was delighted as before then, only a distant one was visible. There were many **Canada Geese** on the water and a flock of both **Greylag** and **Pinkfeet** passed overhead. A half-hidden bird in vegetation caused some initial excitement but turned out to be a **Moorhen**. A flock of at least 40 **Lapwing** were present standing on ice at the far edge of the loch briefly. Angus picked out a distant **Kingfisher** which unfortunately not all of us saw. A **Buzzard** flew over. A lone **Fieldfare** foraging in a nearby field was well watched though the telescopes.

We headed back to the Visitor Centre with some people seeing another **Kingfisher** (or the same) over the Dubbs Water. On the Scrape adjacent to the centre, a group of **Teal** were showing very nicely and doing some display too. The feeders by the picnic tables had a variety of mainly common birds but there was a **Nuthatch** too.



Nuthatch © Billy McKellar



Great Tit © Billy McKellar

We then headed along the Aird Meadow trail stopping at various points. At the feeders by the screen, there was a good variety of common woodland birds and nearby, we all eventually had good views of a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** which kept hiding at the back of a tall tree. At the Fen Pool, there was very little but a **Sparrowhawk** did flash past, only seen by one person! A **Grey Heron** flew over, one of several we saw.

We stopped to check out the Aird Meadow Loch from a viewpoint near the hide and had good views of some of the same waterfowl species we had seen earlier. There were a number of **Cormorants** perched up on the islands. As time was pressing on, we didn't linger here long as the plan was to walk the whole length of the trail including the new boardwalk.

The boardwalk is a great addition to the facilities at the reserve as from it, you can look into both Castle Semple and Aird Meadow lochs. The highlights from the boardwalk were an immature **Great Black-backed Gull** and a female type **Long-tailed Duck** (albeit distant as it had been flushed by canoes earlier in the day). The **Long-tailed Duck** is not a common bird on inland waters, but this one has been seen on and off in the Lochwinnoch area since last November. Sometimes very elusive, we were delighted when Angus picked it out for us. As it was distant, it was a bit of a struggle to see it, but eventually everyone that wanted was able to see it through the telescopes.



Grey Heron © Billy McKellar



Whooper Swans © Billy McKellar

The weather was great (albeit cold) and it was a very enjoyable outing. There was a very good mix of people with a range of ages and included some beginners as well as some very experienced birdwatchers. There was good 'banter'. A total of 46 species was seen (4 more than our last visit here in December 2022). Many of the records have been submitted to BirdTrack by several observers, often using the App which makes submitting records very easy.

We have now had 198 different people attend our outings since we restarted them in October 2021 after Lockdown. It was particularly good to see that someone without transport had managed to get a lift from one of the other participants via our Outings Organiser, Ania Owsianka – this is something we are keen to encourage. No new species were added to our outings list which still stands at 166 species of birds.

Thank you to Stuart Milligan and Helen Anderson for sharing their BirdTrack lists from the outing. Thanks to Billy McKellar for his lovely photos too.

**Zul Bhatia**, January 2024

**No of bird species recorded: 46**

|                     |                          |                 |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Mute Swan           | Buzzard                  | Great Tit       |
| Whooper Swan        | Moorhen                  | Coal Tit        |
| Pink-footed Goose   | Coot                     | Long-tailed Tit |
| Greylag Goose       | Lapwing                  | Nuthatch        |
| Canada Goose        | Black-headed Gull        | Treecreeper     |
| Wigeon              | Common Gull              | Wren            |
| Teal                | Herring Gull             | Blackbird       |
| Mallard             | Great Black-backed Gull  | Fieldfare       |
| Tufted Duck         | Collared Dove            | Robin           |
| Long-tailed Duck    | Kingfisher               | Dunnock         |
| Goldeneye           | Great Spotted Woodpecker | House Sparrow   |
| Goosander           | Magpie                   | Meadow Pipit    |
| Cormorant           | Jay                      | Chaffinch       |
| Grey Heron          | Rook                     | Goldfinch       |
| Great Crested Grebe | Carrion Crow             |                 |
| Sparrowhawk         | Blue Tit                 |                 |