



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to Lochwinnoch

12th December 2021 (0930-1230)

Leader: Zul Bhatia

Fifteen of us met at Castle Semple, Lochwinnoch on a dreich Sunday. The forecast was for rain, but it stayed more or less dry. There was a very good mix of people with a range of ages and included some beginners as well as some very experienced birdwatchers. A total of 51 species was seen – a very good number for an inland site in December. 65 records from the outing were submitted to BirdTrack.

We spent quite a bit of time at the Castle Semple car park as there were so many birds there including many wildfowl and gulls habituated to being fed. Further away from the car park edge, there were plenty of diving duck, **Coot** and we had one **Little Grebe** too. Highlight was at least 57 **Goosanders** together.

We then set off along the Semple Trail to get to the RSPB Reserve. Although we didn't linger too long, some good birds were seen en route including five **Bullfinches** together, a **Song Thrush** in full song, seven **Siskins** and a **Goldcrest**. At the River Calder crossing where we had hoped to see at least **Dipper** or **Grey Wagtail**, the water levels were too high to see any suitable habitat.

At the RSPB Reserve, we had a short introduction to the site from Robert Conn, the Visitor Experience Manager before we went up to the Tower to overlook the Aird Meadow and Loch. This was a very productive area with bird feeders close to the Centre, scrapes and meadow next to them and the Loch beyond them. The scrapes were actually very quiet but we did see four **Teal** and a very well-camouflaged **Snipe** staying totally still. Highlight for everyone was the two **Smews** (a drake and a redhead) of course and good views were obtained by all through the many telescopes. Other notable species seen from the Tower were a **Sparrowhawk** briefly, a **Redwing**, and about a dozen **Lapwings**. One of our members didn't come up to the Tower but instead went to the end of the Aird Meadow trail and was rewarded with **Kestrel** and **Reed Bunting**.

Our next stop was at the feeders & screen along the Aird Meadow trail where everyone saw the **Nuthatch** and some saw the **Treecreeper** behind the feeders too. Stopping at the viewpoint beyond the Aird Meadow hide, we had great views of the drake **Smew**. We had a brief look at the Barr Loch next with our highlights being about a dozen **Whooper Swans** and at least 12 **Great Crested Grebes**. 24 **Canada Geese** flying over were the only ones that day. We walked back along the Semple Trail to Castle Semple.

Our thanks to all that attended as well as the RSPB for waiving the entry charges for non-members.

Zul Bhatia

Species List (Count: 51)

Mute Swan
Whooper Swan
Greylag Goose
Canada Goose
Wigeon
Teal
Mallard
Tufted Duck
Goldeneye
Smew
Goosander
Pheasant
Cormorant
Grey Heron
Little Grebe
Great Crested Grebe
Sparrowhawk

Moorhen
Coot
Lapwing
Snipe
Black-headed Gull
Common Gull
Herring Gull
Feral Pigeon
Woodpigeon
Collared Dove
Kestrel
Magpie
Jackdaw
Rook
Carrion Crow
Goldcrest
Blue Tit

Great Tit
Coal Tit
Long-tailed Tit
Nuthatch
Treetreeper
Wren
Blackbird
Song Thrush
Redwing
Robin
House Sparrow
Pied Wagtail (*yarrellii*)
Chaffinch
Bullfinch
Goldfinch
Siskin
Reed Bunting