



Scottish Ornithologists' Club
Scotland's Bird Club
Established 1936

Clyde branch outing to North Ayrshire coast

18th January 2025 (1100-1430)

Leader: Zul Bhatia

Participants: 23

Weather: Dry throughout but there was a cold wind at times

No of bird species recorded: 47 (see list below)

It was a very well attended outing. As usual, there was a good mix of people on the outing with some relative beginners as well as some very experienced birdwatchers. For one person, it was their first SOC outing. It was great that three people came by public transport. We met at the small car park at Fairlie Bay which was unusually busy and some of us had to park in the lay-by adjacent to the main road and walk over to join the group.



The outing group © Zul Bhatia

At Fairlie, **Wigeon** were numerous and we also had a few **Eiders**, a couple of **Red-breasted Mergansers** and a male **Goldeneye**. A group of c15 **Greylags** flew past. We all had great views of many **Oystercatchers** and **Redshanks** with a sprinkling of **Curlews**. Those who had parked in the lay-by, also saw **Greenshank**. We all saw the **Little Egret** well. Angus gave a master class on identification of gulls, especially immature ones. **Black-headed, Herring** and

Common Gulls were numerous and a distant **Great Black-backed Gull** was seen too. Passerines were represented by **Starlings**, **Goldfinches**, **Greenfinches** and a **Song Thrush**. The last people to depart from Fairlie had a **Peregrine**, so most of us missed this.



Greenshank © Zul Bhatia

Our next stop was at Southannan Sands where there were so many birds. Neil had arrived just before us and he had our only **Pink-footed Goose** of the day. **Shelducks** were very numerous and there were many **Teal** and **Wigeon** too. Angus picked out a drake **Gadwall** which took a while for everyone to get onto. As expected, waders were many with the highlights being **Bar-tailed Godwits**, **Greenshanks**, **Dunlins** and a **Turnstone**. Another **Little Egret** was seen as well as five **Grey Herons**. A **Kestrel** perched nicely, albeit distant and we got good views through the telescopes.

Our next stop was at Hawking Craig at the end of the power station road where we had lunch in our cars. We had hoped we might see Peregrine, Raven and the odd seabird from here but it was very quiet and we only saw **Herring Gull**, a **Shag** and a small group of **Greylags** flying past.

We had arranged to park our cars in the small car park at the former Hunterston Power Station visitor centre and from there we checked out the nearby shore. The visitor centre used to be a great place to use the loo, buy a drink and snacks but unfortunately, it has never re-opened to the public after the Lockdown.

At Hunterston Bay, we had more views of many of the same species we had seen earlier but got better views of some. Several **Rock Pipits** were very obliging and a **Meadow Pipit** was seen briefly too. Also nice was a fine **Grey Wagtail** amongst the more numerous **Pied Wagtails**. The best birds were a **Black Guillemot** and a **Little Grebe**.

Our thanks to all who attended the outing. All sightings recorded by ZB were submitted to BirdTrack. Some of the other participants also added their records to BirdTrack. Normally after an outing, we receive some wildlife photos from the outing to use in the report but this time, there were none. I have added a couple of my own taken previously at the sites we visited.

Zul Bhatia, February 2025



Wigeon © Zul Bhatia

No of bird species recorded: 47

Pink-footed Goose	Curlew	Magpie
Greylag Goose	Bar-tailed Godwit	Jackdaw
Shelduck	Turnstone	Carrion Crow
Wigeon	Dunlin	Blue Tit
Gadwall	Greenshank	Starling
Teal	Redshank	Song Thrush
Mallard	Black Guillemot	Mistle Thrush
Eider	Black-headed Gull	Dunnock
Goldeneye	Common Gull	House Sparrow
Red-breasted Merganser	Herring Gull	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Cormorant	Great Black-backed Gull	Meadow Pipit
Shag	Feral Pigeon	Rock Pipit
Little Egret	Woodpigeon	Chaffinch
Grey Heron	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Greenfinch
Little Grebe	Kestrel	Goldfinch
Oystercatcher	Peregrine	