



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

## **Clyde branch outing to RSPB Baron's Haugh**

17 August 2024 (1000-1500)

Leader: Lang Stewart

Participants: 24

Weather: Mainly overcast, with some drizzle.

There was a great turnout of 24 people. For four participants, it was their first SOC outing. A record 18 Green Sandpipers had been seen at Baron's Haugh the previous day, so we were keen to get down to the wetland. Given the numbers, we split into two groups. One went with Zul to the Marsh Hide, while the other went with Lang to the Causeway Hide. Near the Marsh Hide we were treated to good views of a **Bullfinch** family.



*Outing Group Photo (© Lang Stewart)*

The wetland was teeming with birds. A large flock of **Lapwing** rose briefly, and then settled back down among the reeds. A couple of **Common Snipe** showed nicely for a few moments beside a roosting **Curlew** and then disappeared. For a moment we thought we could see a Water Rail, but it turned out to be a juvenile **Moorhen**. Later, we heard – but could not see – a **Water Rail** near the hide. Running around on the mud were three **Ringed Plovers**, and on the water were **Mute Swan**, **Gadwall**, **Teal**, **Mallard**, **Shoveler**, **Tufted Duck**, **Little Grebe** and **Coot**. Several **Grey Herons** and a **Cormorant** stood guard at intervals along the bank, while a flock of **Sand Martins** zoomed about overhead, and a **Kestrel** put in a brief appearance. We were delighted to see a flock of **Black-tailed Godwits** feeding energetically in the shallows at the far side of the pool. However, the birds that most commanded our attention were the **Green Sandpipers**.

They were tucked away in the furthest corner of the pool, but were unmistakable with their bright white bellies and contrasting dark back and wings. We counted 10 in all, so some had presumably already continued on their passage south.



*Green Sandpipers* (© Ania Owsianka)

After a while the two groups swapped hides, although the view from both is very similar. Some members of each group went as far as the large break in the artificial bund between the river Clyde and the wetland, where the Phoenix Hide used to be. The Clyde had gradually been eroding the embankment, so the RSPB decided to work with the river and to completely remove a section of the bund. This allows the river to flood the wetland when it is in spate, and restores the Haugh to its original function of a natural floodplain. The walking route along the river has been compromised, but hopefully wildlife will benefit.



*Black-tailed Godwits* (© Ania Owsianka)

We regrouped in the carpark for a picnic lunch, and then Lang took us for a walk through the woods at Dalzell Estate.

This area has some wonderful mature mixed woodland, which is criss-crossed with paths and tracks. In the spring it is alive with bird song, whereas at this time of year it was very quiet.

Nonetheless, those who were looking out for birds rather than chatting managed to add **Great Spotted Woodpecker, Jay, Goldcrest, Nuthatch, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit, Long-tailed Tit and Chiffchaff** to the list. We also had a close encounter with a **Roe Deer**. As the afternoon went on, a number of people said their goodbyes and left. Those who stayed walked right down to the river near Carbars, where a **Kingfisher** was spotted. We turned west along the riverbank, which has been very badly eroded in places. On reaching another break in the bund we returned uphill to the carpark. It had been a very enjoyable day, thanks to Lang's enthusiastic guiding.

**We recorded 57 species of birds, of which Green Sandpiper was new to the outings list (which now stands at 171 spp).**

Mute Swan	Greenshank	Great Tit
Gadwall	Snipe	Coal Tit
Teal	Black-headed Gull	Sand Martin
Mallard	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Long-tailed Tit
Shoveler	Herring Gull	Chiffchaff
Tufted Duck	Stock Dove	Nuthatch
Cormorant	Woodpigeon	Treecreeper
Grey Heron	Swift	Wren
Little Grebe	Kingfisher	Starling
Sparrowhawk	Great Spotted	Blackbird
Water Rail	Woodpecker	Robin
Moorhen	Kestrel	Dunnock
Coot	Magpie	House Sparrow
Lapwing	Jay	Grey Wagtail
Ringed Plover	Jackdaw	Pied Wagtail (yarrellii)
Curlew	Rook	Chaffinch
Black-tailed Godwit	Carrion Crow	Bullfinch
Dunlin	Raven	Reed Bunting
Common Sandpiper	Goldcrest	
Green Sandpiper	Blue Tit	

**Other species recorded:** Roe Deer