



Plate 141. SOC group birdwatching at Ardmore Point, Firth of Clyde, Clyde, 24 March 2018. © *David Palmar*

Clyde Branch at Ardmore - a joint outing with SWT Glasgow on 24 March 2018

D. PALMAR

After a morning coffee for some at Ardardan Garden Centre, which enabled a car-sharing arrangement to Ardmore, the sun was shining and a mild breeze came from the south-west as an amazingly large group of 32 people, about 20 from the SOC and 12 from SWT Glasgow gathered at the beach layby for the first of the recently reinstated SOC Clyde excursions, this one a joint venture with SWT Glasgow Members' Group. The Ardmore excursion was led by Sandy McNeil for SOC and Ann Brackenridge for SWT.

Memories of 15 inches of snow and a 'red warning' which had cancelled the Baron's Haugh excursion were soon forgotten as we made our way anti-clockwise around the



Plate 142. Buzzard circling above Ardmore Point, Firth of Clyde, Clyde, 24 March 2018. © *David Palmar*

peninsula. Starting at the North Bay, 33 Shelducks were seen feeding on the mud, and four Curlews flew over with two others in the bay. Jackdaws and Carrion Crows were in the field and a Wren called while a pair of Buzzards wheeled and mewed overhead.

An irresponsible (or perhaps ignorant) dog owner walked his dog on the sand round the bay, despite a notice asking people to refrain from this practice in what is a Special Protection Area.

While walking round the bay, we heard Blue Tit, Great Tit and Magpie calling and a Greenfinch singing. In the bay were Herring Gulls, Common Gulls and a small group of Teal. At the north-western point of the peninsula, we stopped and most people managed to catch a glimpse through a telescope of some of the very distant 73 Great Crested Grebes and 25 Red-throated Divers which were counted by Sandy. Both the grebes and the divers spend the winter feeding on the sea before going back to their inland breeding lochs. A Gannet flew over as we rounded the peninsula, while a male Red-breasted Merganser and two Black Guillemots swam just offshore. Later, there were sightings of Eiders, Goldeneyes, Cormorants and six Shags on the sugar boat. A Slavonian Grebe was seen by Sandy but disappeared before anyone

else could find it. On the way back, there was a heavy rain shower but a close view of three Wigeon in the South Bay. At the end nearly back at the cars, there were 11 Canada Geese in the field. A Woodpigeon, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Blackbird, Long-tailed Tit and Robin rounded off the day's sightings.

A total of 31 bird species were entered on BirdTrack as a complete list. Thanks go to Sandy McNeil for SOC and Ann Brackenridge for SWT for leading the excursion.

Look out for details of future Clyde branch outings in the Winter Outings Programme leaflet included alongside the September mailing of *Scottish Birds*. The branch hope to reschedule the cancelled outing to Baron's Haugh for autumn 2018.

*David Palmar,
Clyde Branch Outings' Convenor*



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