

1st June 2012

Moderate north-westerly. Cool.

A quiet start of a new month saw a Great Northern Diver fly south off South Light and a count of 9 Dunlin, along with 2 Short-eared Owls at Field, 5 Swallows (probably what are going to be breeding stock for the season), 4 Chiffchaffs, a Willow Warbler, 3 Blackcaps, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, a Whitethroat, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Robins, 1 Chaffinch and a lingering Reed Bunting.

2nd June 2012

Light north-westerly. Fine.

An **Osprey** heading north over the island in the early afternoon was easily the highlight today, giving stunning views as it passed low over the Obs. A Redshank arrived after a short absence from the islands small wader selection while other migrants were represented by a new Collared Dove, a lingering Short-eared Owl, 2 Carrion Crows (plus a hybrid), 10 Swallows, 2 Garden Warblers, the Reed Warbler at Schoolton, a male Ring Ouzel, a Dunnock, 1 White Wagtail and a female Siskin at the Obs.

3rd June 2012

Light north/north-westerly. Fine.

A Wigeon arrived in the south, as did 6 Golden Plovers, 2 Whimbrel and a **Wood Sandpiper** onto the Observatory scrape.

Four Chiffchaffs, 3 Blackcaps, 2 Whitethroats and a new Reed Warbler were all signs of light movement, while a female Ring Ouzel was in the Kirn O' Skroo and Blackbirds increased to 3. A Song Thrush may have been a lingering bird while 3 Siskins were definitely an increase.

4th June 2012

Moderate northerly. Cold with showers.

Two unexpected June highlights were vying for attention today with a 1st summer **RING-BILLED GULL** first in line. Discovered in South Harbour, it fed amid an assortment of immature gulls sheltering from the northerly winds. A fairly distinctive bird, on account of it being massive, as well as being distinctly more faded in the scapulars, coverts and primaries compared to surrounding Common and Herring Gulls. The bird showed well, often floating close to the beach and flying past regularly, before settling onto Meones. This represents only the 3rd Fair Isle record, following one in April 2001.

Soon after however, an interesting Redpoll trapped in the Plantation before lunch caused some discussion. Initially being assumed to be a large *Islandica* Mealy Redpoll on account of its greyish plumage and relatively heavy streaking, in-hand measurements revealed that it was too large for that sub-species, but appeared to be more in line with **Hornemanni ARCTIC REDPOLL**. The bird is likely to be submitted as such, with the extent of the dark streaking on the bird being explained, at least for the time being, as being due to the worn nature of the birds spring plumage.

Another **Osprey** flew over the island at the unusual time of 2250, while a summer plumaged Knot was in South Harbour, along with 3 Purple Sandpipers.

Small migrants were represented by 2 Willow Warblers, 5 Blackcaps and a Whinchat.

5th June 2012

Light north-westerly. Fine.

The **RING-BILLED GULL** was seen again in South Harbour, but there was no further sign of yesterday's Redpoll.

A Kestrel arrived, as did a Common Sandpiper, while a Carrion Crow flew south.

Swallows were noted moving, with 21 noted, while small migrants arrived in small numbers in the calmer conditions, with counts including 6 Chiffchaffs, 7 Willow Warblers, 6 Blackcaps, a **Marsh Warbler** singing at Springfield, the Reed Warbler at Schoolton, 4 Ring Ousels (oddly, all in the Kirn O' Skroo!), 2 Whinchats, 72 Wheatears (an increase on recent days), 2 Siskins and a Reed Bunting.

6th June 2012

Moderate east/south-easterly. Overcast.

A **Common Crane** was spotted flying high over the island in the evening, dipping into and out of view in low murky cloud, making for quite an atmospheric experience for all those lucky enough to experience it. The bird eventually settled for the night around Hoini. A Red-throated Diver flew north over the island along with 2 Cormorants and a Grey Heron. A Short-eared Owl also arrived.

A small number of common migrants arrived along with some more notable scarce species, including a new Garden Warbler, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 **Icterine Warblers** at Schoolton, Stackhoul and the Chalet, a Spotted Flycatcher, a female-type **Common Rosefinch** at the Haa and a stunning male **Lapland Bunting** at the airstrip.

7th June 2012

Moderate east/north-easterly. Overcast with showers.

The **Crane** remained, spending most of its time around Da Water, while an **Osprey** was bizarrely flushed from the cliffs at Hjukni! A female Merlin was also present. A late Woodcock was trapped in the Gulley.

Three Woodpigeons and a Carrion Crow arrived and the Short-eared Owl remains while House Martins also moved through. Small migrants also saw a slight increase, with counts including 4 Chiffchaffs, 5 Blackcaps, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 1 remaining **Icterine Warbler**, a Sedge Warblers, a **Marsh Warbler** at Lower Stonybreck, 3 lingering Ring Ouzels, a Siskin and the lingering male Lapland Bunting.

8th June 2012

Moderate easterly. Fine.

A good arrival of scarce birds on the island was highlighted by a very brief **Golden Oriole** on the cliffs at Troila Geo. The finders were initially searching for a **Red-backed Shrike** found there 20 minutes before. However, with no sign of the Shrike they were instead treated to the Oriole and a new **Icterine Warbler**!

Two Kestrels and a Merlin were present on the island, along with singles of Whimbrel, Dunlin and Common Sandpiper. The **Common Crane** remains in the Da Water area.

Hirundines included 14 lingering Swallows and 17 House Martins, while small migrant arrivals included 7 Willow Warblers, 4 Blackcaps, 6 Garden Warblers, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 5 Whitethroats, 1 lingering **Icterine Warblers**, a Reed Warbler in the Gulley, 3 lingering Ring Ouzels, 6 Spotted Flycatchers, a male **Black Redstart** at Wester Lothar, 2 Redstarts, 1 Whinchat, a Pied Flycatcher, a *flava*-type Wagtail, a female **Grey-headed Wagtail** on Meoness, a White Wagtail, 2 Tree Pipits,

9th June 2012

Moderate north-easterly. Overcast but dry

A Common Scoter was in Furse and 2 Red-throated Divers passed through. The **Common Crane** lingers from the 6th. A Kestrel and a Peregrine were sighted while notable waders included 4 Golden Plovers and 1 Whimbrel.

The first Cuckoo of the year arrived at the Obs in the morning while both Long-eared and 2 Short-eared Owls were seen. The **Golden Oriole** was refound in the Kirn O' Skroo in the morning where it showed well to an admiring croud, before remarkably flying south and directly into an open mist-net in the Obs Garden! A tricky bird to age or sex, it was probably an adult female. Small migrant counts included 34 Swallows, 13 House Martins, 10 Willow Warblers, 3 Blackcaps, 8 Garden Warblers, 3 Lesser Whitethroats, 8 Whitethroats, a lingering **Icterine Warbler**, 3 Sedge Warblers, 2 **Marsh Warblers** at Lower Stonybreck and Steensi Geo, a Reed Warbler at the Obs, 4 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Robins, Whinchat, Pied Flycatcher, the lingering female **Grey-headed Wagtail** on Bunes, Tree Pipit, Siskin, Mealy Redpoll and Reed Bunting.

10th June 2012

Light to moderate north/north-easterly. Overcast but dry

Two new Greylag Geese arrived while the Common Scoter lingered and another Red-throated Diver flew through north. An **Osprey** flying north over the Obs in the evening was our 4th this month while 2 Peregrines were present. A Redshank was new in and the first of the month.

One Short-eared Owl remains and the **Golden Oriole** was briefly sighted again in the Obs Garden. A total of 29 Swallows and 7 House Martins were logged while small passerine migrants included smaller or static numbers of most things, but with 6 Blackcaps, 9 Garden Warblers, 2 Blackbirds, 7 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Siskins and a **Common Crossbill** over the Obs all representing increased numbers. An **Icterine Warbler** and **Marsh Warbler** remain.

11th June 2012

Light North-easterly. Showers

It's funny how these things work. Today was the first day of the season when seabird work took real priority over census with a full island boat count Kittiwake count. Making it round the back of Malcolms Head it was time for lunch! We moored up on the beach at Steensi Geo and, on finishing sandwiches the south end of the beach was briefly checked for migrants, where one bird was found; a **RIVER WARBLER!** The bird showed fantastically well feeding amongst the boulders and seaweed and working its way up a narrow vegetated gulley, feeding on grubs found in the soil.

Thirteen Greylags flew north and 2 Whimbrels arrived. A male **Red-backed Shrike** arrived at the Chaple in the morning but coverage was limited for other species with counts being minimum estimates. Species noted included a Chiffchaff, 3 Willow Warblers, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Common Whitethroats, 2 **Icterine Warbler** at the Haa and Chalet, Sedge Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Redstart, Whinchat, Tree Pipit, 3 Siskins and the lingering Mealy Redpoll.

12th-15th June 2012

The **RIVER WARBLER** remained on the beach at Steensi Geo until 13th, often coming to the top of the cliff to feed on insects in the sun.

Four Storm Petrels were trapped in the Kirn O' Skroo overnight on 15th while a Sparrowhawk arrived 14th along with an Osprey north at midday. A Kestrel arrived on 13th. Waders present during this period include Whimbrel on 13th and 15th and Turnstone on 14th.

A Collared Dove arrived on 13th, followed by a Woodpigeon on 15th while a Swift passed through on 12th. The male **Red-backed Shrike** remained until 13th. Peak small migrant numbers included peaks of 2 Chiffchaffs (13th onwards), 2 Willow Warblers (12th-13th), 2 Blackcaps (13th), 9 Garden Warblers (13th), 2 Lesser Whitethroats (15th), Whitethroat (13th-15th), single **Icterine Warbler** throughout, Sedge Warbler (14th-15th), **Marsh Warbler** trapped in the Plantation (15th), 2 Ring Ouzels in the Kirn O' Skroo (12th), 3 Spotted Flycatchers (12th), 2 Redstarts (12th), 3 Whinchats (13th), male Brambling trapped (14th), 6 Siskins (14th), and Mealy Redpoll (14th).

16th-20th June 2012

A **Common Crane** flying back and forth across the island on 18th was the main highlight of the period; our 3rd of the season.

A Pink-footed Goose arrived on 16th while 26 Greylags flew south on 18th and single Wigeon and Teal arrived (19th and 16th respectively). Two Cormorants and 3 Grey Herons passed through (20th). A male Kestrel arrived (19th) and 2 Peregrines were presumably the breeding birds on 18th. A Golden Plover arrived on 16th along with a Dunlin; the only notable waders for the period.

Three Collared Doves arrived on 19th and a Short-eared Owl turned up on 18th. Small migrant maxima for the period included 6 Chiffchaffs (19th), Willow Warbler (18th), 2 Blackcaps (16th), 4 Garden Warblers (19th), 2 Lesser Whitethroats (19th), Whitethroat (18th), an **Icterine Warbler** at the Haa (16th), **Marsh Warbler** and Reed Warbler throughout at Schoolton, a Ring Ouzel at Gunnawark (16th), 4 Spotted Flycatchers (19th), **Black Redstart** at Wirvy (19th), Redstart (16th), Whinchat (19th), Dunnock (18th), White Wagtail (16th), the lingering male Brambling until 18th, 3 Siskins (18th), 2 Linnets at Schoolton, nest building 16th-18th, 6 Common Crossbills (19th), a **Hawfinch** found dead in the Gulley on 18th followed by a live female on 19th-20th (!) and a Yellowhammer at Kennaby (16th).

21st-25th June 2012

The highlight of this 5 day period was the unexpected rediscovery of the **RIVER WARBLER** in the Observatory Plantation on 24th! Having been last seen in Steensi Geo on 13th the bird had obviously survived well, despite displaying several small injuries and missing many feathers when it first arrived. The bird was trapped, confirming its identification as the same bird, before being released and seen again on 25th.

The Pink-footed Goose was still present (22nd-23rd) while 3 Common Scoters arrived (23rd). A Kestrel on 22nd represented the only BOP sighting of the period. Notable waders included small numbers of Golden Plovers, Dunlin, Whimbrel, Redshank, and Turnstone and up to 2 Common Sandpipers.

A Woodpigeon arrived (21st) while Collared Doves peaked at 3 birds. A **Turtle Dove** on Meones on 23rd was a good record while 3 Swifts were seen on 21st. One Sand Martin and 9 House Martins were logged on 21st while other small migrants during this period included peaks of 3 Chiffchaffs, 1 Willow Warbler, 2 Blackcaps, 3 Garden Warblers, 2 Whitethroats (all 23rd), 2 Sedge Warblers (22nd), 2 **Marsh Warblers** (22nd), 2 Reed Warblers (23rd), 2 Blackbirds (summering individuals), 2 Spotted Flycatchers (23rd), single Whinchat throughout, 2 Dunnocks (21st), a bright female **Grey-headed Wagtail** on Buness (21st), 2 Siskins (21st), 2 Linnets throughout, a Redpoll sp. (21st-22nd) and the lingering **Hawfinch** (until 23rd, when sadly killed by a cat).

26th-30th June 2012

Major highlight of the period was the capture of a **PADDYFIELD WARBLER** during early morning traps on 30th. Caught in the Plantation trap, it was ringed and released at the Observatory where it showed well in the same bushes as the lingering **RIVER WARBLER!** Best garden in the UK? Some might say so!

A Male Wigeon arrived (26th) and 3 Common Scoter were present (29th-30th). Four Storm Petrels were seen from the Good Shepherd (30th) and 2 Cormorants passed through (29th) while 2 Herons lingered. Singles of Kestrel and Peregrine were seen.

Three Collared Doves were present (26th) and 3 Swifts arrived (27th) while an unseasonal Carrion Crow was present on 29th. Small migrant peaks included 4 Chiffchaffs (29th), Blackcap (28th), 2 Whitethroats (27th), 2 **Marsh Warblers** (30th), Reed Warbler (27th and 30th), 2 Spotted Flycatchers (26th), 2 Whinchats (28th), 2 Dunnocks still, Siskin (26th), 2 Linnets throughout and 2 **Crossbills** (26th).