



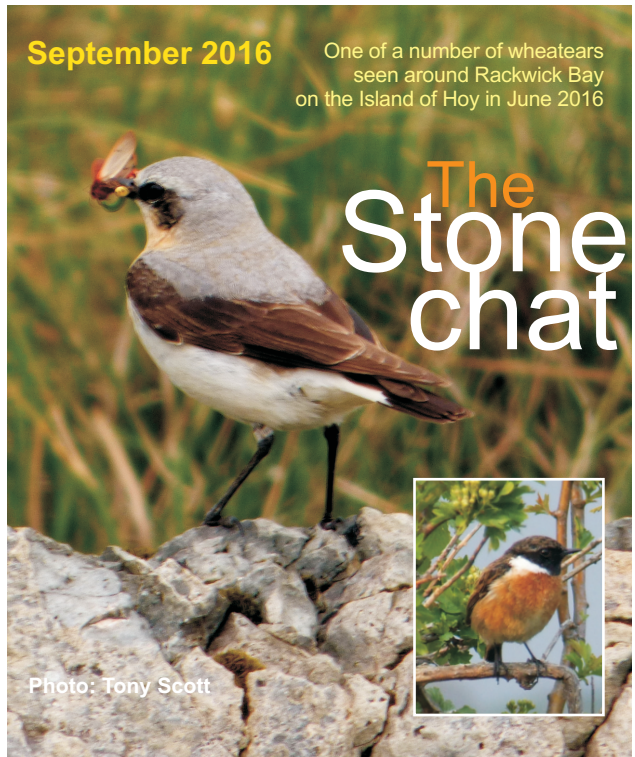
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## Scotland's Bird Club Ayrshire Branch

We are always on the look-out for more articles, cartoons and photographs to include in the future editions of **Stonechat**. Please think about contributing and send any work for publication to me: Tony Scott / Editor, at 4 Hilltop Place, AYR KA7 3PB - or e-mail me at: [da.scott@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:da.scott@tiscali.co.uk)

**Sightings to:** Ayrshire Bird Recorder Fraser Simpson. E-mail: [recorder@ayrshire-birding.org.uk](mailto:recorder@ayrshire-birding.org.uk)

**For all local birding info:** please go to [www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk](http://www.ayrshire-birding.org.uk) Thanks go to Kevin Waite for his excellent work in keeping this superb website on the go.



**Hello and welcome to our summer/autumn edition of 'Stonechat'.** We have an article from Angus Hogg in this edition - 'A Simple Rook Survey'. Our Chairman David Rackham, has written an introduction. There are articles covering the decline of kittiwakes on St. Kilda, and another 'Guardian' article on the 'unusual' mass drowning of starlings. Anne Dick has passed on an article by Bruce Kerr on 'Troon Birds' - with some excellent photographs. In addition we have all our notices of both evening meetings and field trips, and details of a joint eight day holiday with RSPB Central Ayrshire - to the north of Ireland in May 2017, when we will be travelling by coach from Ayr - and ferry from Cairnryan. We are also arranging a day trip by coach (in November) to RSPB Loch Leven and the Fife coast. We hope you can join us for our meetings and maybe our day trip and coach holiday next spring. Best wishes to you all.

**Tony Scott newsletter editor**

# Notes from the Chair

David Rackham

David and Helen Rackham on a club trip to the Farne Islands



It is my pleasant task to welcome you back after the summer recess, though in truth, as I write this in late July, we are not there yet! Maybe this is how "journalistic creep" occurs - that phenomenon whereby the October issue of a monthly magazine appears in early August! I hope you are all enjoying a good summer. With the exception of family-orientated trips to Angus and further south, mine has been very much home-based. The glorious spell of weather in late May/early June did tempt us on to two long-promised outings: a Waverley cruise from Oban, and the Hogwart's Express, sorry, "Jacobite", from Fort William to Mallaig. Needless to say, neither disappointed. Since then, of course, we have experienced more typical west coast summer weather - say no more.

In the garden, the orchestra of birdsong has given way to just the early-bird song thrush solo, the odd frantic trill of a wren, and the sporadic but unmistakable, repetitive "pthwitt" of a nuthatch - this last call never heard in the garden till three years ago. This year a pair of nuthatches occupied one of the two new "woodcrete" nestboxes we had erected to replace the wooden ones that suffered woodpecker attacks last year. The nuthatches successfully reared a brood, though we missed their fledging. This must have taken place quickly and quietly, maybe early in the morning. A glance upwards whilst enjoying a cuppa in the garden will usually reveal some house martins and, still, some swifts. Sometimes, especially on a sunny day, a high silhouette might turn out to be a patrolling sparrow hawk or buzzard. Such sightings are always cheering. We had more cheering sightings on a recent trip south. From a garden on the edge of a market town in deepest agri-business Norfolk, we saw not only sparrow hawk, buzzard and kestrel, but also a red kite. The kite was repeatedly cruising over a recently mown field of hay, and looking, no doubt, for wildlife which had not escaped the spinning blade of the mower. This gives me optimism, hopefully not misplaced; though I have to wonder when, not content with removing the hedges, some "land managers" down there are getting away with ploughing to within 30 cm (1 foot!) of country roads and tracks. Such practices put paid to any residual wildlife corridor benefit left after the removal of hedges decades ago, as well as allowing nutrient-rich run-off and sediment ready access to watercourses.

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SOC-wise, some of you will have heard that Ian Thompson has, regrettably, had to step down as president, due to a "perfect storm" of, principally, family issues. James Main, current vice-president, has stepped in to fill the role as acting president, with Paul Taylor agreeing to become acting vice-president. These arrangements, which were approved by the SOC Council in June, will stand till the AGM at the Annual Conference on 23 - 25 September. Also, the Club is still looking for an Honorary Treasurer to take over from Alan Fox.

At branch level, it will not be long before we start the evening meetings. The first meeting is on Tuesday 13 September when we welcome Liz Parsons to give a talk entitled 'Birdwatchers in industry'. Liz will talk about her ecological survey work at windfarms and other developments, such as the Bishopton Royal Ordnance Factory - and the effects of such developments on birds. This, together with a chance to catch up with folk after the summer, makes this a session not to miss. The rest of the programme for the season appears elsewhere in this newsletter. As usual, our meetings start at 7:00 for 7:30 and are held in the Pioneer Hall and Cafe in Monkton village. See you there!



PS Waverley at full speed



Nuthatch



Red kite



Great spotted woodpecker

# Just a simple rook survey



## Angus Hogg

Some years ago – well, a considerable numbers of years ago – I decided to take part in a county-wide survey of rooks which had been organised by the late Malcolm Castle. This wasn't the first such survey which he'd organised, and it wasn't going to be his last, but it seemed so delightfully simple that I chose one or two rookeries which I would then go out and try to count.

It certainly sounded simple and, typical of its organiser, the instructions were really straightforward. But, then, that's the way surveys always look until you start on them! One major obstacle with my first large rookery at Kirkmichael was that many of the birds nested in the crowns of Scots Pine trees, rendering a totally accurate count almost impossible. However, a challenge like this was something to be tackled head-on, and, four hours later, I'd ploughed through just over 400 nests. One or two rookeries later, and I was starting to enjoy it, but it wasn't until Malcolm had pulled all the results together that I saw the real purpose in doing such a series of counts.

That was 1975, and rooks were doing well within Ayrshire. The survey was repeated in 1986, and it looked like the future was bright for the species. Moreover, the survey had provided all sorts of information for observers to get their teeth into e.g. rookery sizes, favoured nest-trees and overall distribution within Ayrshire. A further survey was arranged for 1996. Sadly, Malcolm didn't live to see the final results written up, but Roger Hissett placed the results in the Ayrshire Bird report of 1997. These showed that the rook was still faring reasonably well, despite substantial changes in the rural landscape.

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In 2005 Kevin Waite took another slant on assessing the health of the rook population in Ayrshire. His one-man survey drew on previous survey results, and looked at particular aspects such as urban growth, nest-tree species and site faithfulness. One urban area which seemed to have remained fairly stable was Maybole, perhaps due to the slow rate of urban expansion, and a mixed farming regime in the nearby countryside which appears to have shown relatively little change in the past 20 years.

Within the town itself, most of the nests have been built in beech trees, but one or two outlying locations, which hold between 1-5 nests, can reveal the use of other tree species, the strangest perhaps being in a car park near the Town Hall where the nests in birch trees could easily be mistaken for the witches' broom infestation. The table below outlines the count results between 2001 and 2016, most counts usually having been carried out in mid-April, at a time when most nests would clearly show signs of occupation.

| Year  | 2001 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2011 | 2012 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Nests | 70+  | 111  | 136  | 166  | 149  | 180  | 176  | 181  | 155  | 148  |

#### **Rook nests within Maybole 2001 - 2006**

The 2001 count was probably an under-count since, at the time, I was not aware of the locations of all the nests. However, since then, there has been an increase, followed by a period of stability, and a very slight decline. It's difficult to be certain that this decline is something to be concerned about – many rookeries in nearby rural areas have flourished, fragmented, declined and, in some cases, disappeared during the past 15-20 years. The reasons for these fluctuations aren't entirely clear (there's a job here for some keen young field-worker!), but they will almost certainly reflect the relative abundance of food locally, to some extent. Other factors may include the increasing trend for ravens to nest at the periphery of some rookeries and, by nesting earlier than rooks, they can exploit the availability of a nearby food supply.

There appears to be little problem with human interference in Maybole at present, so food availability perhaps linked to a changing climate pattern may emerge as important issues. Either way, Maybole's rooks continue to fare reasonably well within their urban environment. This kind of survey is easily carried out, and will not just provide a picture of what's happening to a species over a period of time, but will also throw up a range of questions associated with these results e.g what's driving the population changes? This, then, can become the basis for a related survey which can use the nesting figures as a starting point. Is anyone up for it??

**Angus Hogg, 11 Kirkmichael Road, Crosshill, Maybole, Ayrshire KA19 7RJ**



# Mass drowning of starlings 'unusual' say zoologists



**Emma Howard**

Photograph: Jill Packenham/BTO

Starlings have been drowning in large groups in a phenomenon yet to be fully explained by scientists.

In 12 separate incidents in England and Wales between 1993 and 2013, starlings were found drowned in groups of up to 80, according to research led by the Zoological Society of London.

Experts said the mass deaths were very unusual, with drowning a rare cause of death among wild birds normally only affecting individuals.

Postmortems revealed no evidence disease was a factor in the incidents, which occurred in summer and spring and mostly concerned juvenile birds. Records show drowning has been a probable cause of death in starlings more often than any other species.

Becki Lawson, a veterinarian at ZSL and lead author of the study - published in the journal *Scientific Reports* yesterday (25.11.15) - said the cause was likely to be behavioural. The flocking species bathe and drink together and may become unable to exit confined spaces or their plumage may become waterlogged. Juveniles failing to recognize water hazards could also be a factor.

Lawson said: "It does seem to be something related to the species being vulnerable or predisposed to these drowning events. It is really unusual." Starlings are a threatened species in the United Kingdom, with numbers put at 3.4 million in the breeding season, down from 45 million since the 1980's.

***From 'The Guardian' 26.11.2015.***

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# St. Kilda's kittiwakes reveal impact of warming



**Michael MacLeod  
Severin Carrell**

**Empty nests as fish driven beyond  
seabirds' reach. Naturalists say ecological  
change already happening**

The survival of seabirds including puffins and kittiwakes on St. Kilda - the island archipelago that is home to one of the world's most important seabird populations - is being threatened by climate change, striking new evidence shows. Naturalists have discovered that the kittiwake, a small gull with black wing tips, is on the brink of disappearing from St. Kilda. Just one kittiwake chick was born there this year (2015) after a 99% decrease in occupied nests since 2005, and St. Kilda's puffin population is in decline. Warming seas to the west of the Hebrides are believed to have driven the marine life the birds rely on deeper or further north into colder seas, starving the birds. The findings from the annual bird survey by the National Trust for Scotland (NTS), the charity that owns St. Kilda, have alarmed conservationists. "This data from St. Kilda is extremely worrying," said Dr. Paul Walton, head of habitats and species for RSPB Scotland. "We are losing whole colonies now and it's a very serious issue. Frankly, it breaks my heart." With crucial UN climate talks approaching their halfway point in Paris, the data underscored the case for urgent action on climate change, he said. "There's a very strong climate change link here that needs to go straight to Paris: what they decide there is going to determine the future of our seabirds," he said. "We are clear on what the science is saying, that really big ecology effects of climate change are unfolding in the marine environment around Scotland right now. It's not coming, it's here now." St. Kilda - regarded as one of the world's most significant bird sanctuaries - was inhabited until 1930 by an isolated community that subsisted on seabirds, which featured heavily in its songs and poetry. The cluster of Scottish islands in the eastern Atlantic is the UK's only site with two Unesco world heritage site listings - for its culture and natural history - and one of only 24 sites with a dual listing worldwide. When bird populations are at their highest, about a million birds perch on the island's high, precipitous cliffs, sea stacks and rocky crags, including the world's largest gannet colony and nearly a third of the Atlantic puffins that live around the UK and Ireland. In 1987, the NTS counted 7,829 kittiwakes. Now there are 3,886. When routine monitoring began 21 years ago, there were 513 occupied kittiwake nests and 56 chicks. This year, researchers found just four nests and a single chick. The number of fulmar nests has declined by 37% since 2002, with productivity rates averaging 0.28 chicks per nest compared with 0.42 in 2005. Puffins are also struggling, at 0.59 chicks per burrow. Susan Bain, who manages the island for the NTS, said "We're seeing significant declines in the number of species, which suggests that there's something changing in the seas. We know the sea temperature is getting warmer, so the fish are moving or are at greater depths. *From 'The Guardian' 05 December 2015*

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# Troon Birds

Article and photos by  
**Bruce Kerr**



Black guillemot, Troon Harbour



Glaucous gull, first summer



Iceland gull, second summer

Troon, a nose or cape (from Gaelic or Welsh), look at a map and you can see why. The port sticks out into the Clyde and its easy access and shelter created by the Ballast Bank (built 1840 onward by the Duke of Portland ) attracts the fishing fleet, which then attracts gulls to the harbour and Barassie Beach area.

Gulls of all types frequent the harbour – from herring, great and lesser black-backed gull; with black-headed, common gull and kittiwake from time to time. It also attracts the rarer Iceland and glaucous gull - mostly in winter, but seen at all seasons. Barassie has hosted ring-billed gull, little gull, yellow-legged gull (which has also featured at the harbour) and once a Franklin's gull from USA found by yours truly. The harbour once had a passing laughing gull too.

It is hardly surprising that the harbour jutting into the Clyde as it does is good for sea-watching, particularly in the autumn with a lighter spring passage. Manx shearwater on a windy day between July and September may be seen passing at up to 3000 birds an hour. Balearic shearwater are seen almost annually and sooty, Cory's and great have all been recorded at least once. It is during these autumnal gales that one might be lucky enough to see a Sabine's gull flying past. Great, Arctic, and Pomarine skuas are recorded regularly on spring but more numerous during autumn passage . Long-tailed have been recorded too, but not in the huge spring numbers (almost 500 birds on a good day) from Stevenston Point .

The harbour also has nesting black guillemot, but razorbill and common guillemot are frequent too, with puffin being a much rarer passage bird. The odd little auk is seen during or after winter storms. The harbour has regular winter red-throated diver, with black-throated and great northern infrequent visitors. Long-tailed ducks and common scoter are irregular visitors too. Rock pipit are here all year round.

Waders are seen, notably purple sandpiper (up to 50 birds) and whimbrel resting on the rocks singly or in pairs in the spring. Wheatear turn up along the Ballast Bank in spring and autumn along with white wagtails, both of which are regular along most grassy coastal stretches between the Pow Burn to the south and Barassie Stinking Rocks to the north. Barassie beach occasionally hosts a good number of dunlin and ringed plover in the autumn with golden plover and lapwing turning up at the Stinking Rocks. Bar-tailed and black-tailed godwit are seen here, the former from autumn through to spring and the latter almost only autumn visitors.



Mediterranean gull, Loans



Little egret, Stinking Rocks



Ringed plover, Stinking Rocks



Grey heron, Loans

Knot pass through here and the harbour in autumn, sometimes lingering on the rocks from the harbour to the south beach (Troon) in winter. If you are lucky a passing merlin or peregrine might scare them.

Troon Fullarton and South Woods used to have one or two pairs of green woodpecker, but it is now ten years since any have been recorded. Great spotted are common still with three pairs in Fullarton Woods. Barn owl are seen around the edges of the wood over farmland at night or very early morning, and occasionally tawny owls are seen flying at night or roosting in a tree. One or two pairs of nuthatches seem to have established themselves in Fullarton Woods in the last two years. At the north edge of the wood, when the field floods at the centre in winter greylag and pink-footed goose can be seen in large numbers with the occasional Barnacle, white front or Bean goose and once a snow goose. Brent geese are seen just after arrival or just before departure in very small numbers at Barassie Beach in spring or autumn.

Fullarton Woods has good numbers of common birds and can have large flocks of fieldfare and redwing in winter and hosts the commoner warblers in summer (blackcap, whitethroat, chiffchaff and willow warbler). It is also good in winter for siskin and lesser redpoll with a handful of breeding birds too. Common buzzard are seen around this area and over the fields to the north and Dundonald Hill. A raven might also be seen in these areas.

Town gardens, during a waxwing winter, can host these birds but they are unpredictable as to where they will turn up. Usually a lot of winter berries acts as a pull for them, but I've seen them where there are no berries.

Further afield, walking to Dundonald I have come across a black redstart (which are also seen on the rockier more concrete covered bits of the coast, or Ballast Bank in winter on occasion) that was so young it may have been fledged locally, as well as lesser whitethroats. I also came across a yellow-browed warbler that stayed for three days between Troon and Loans, but unfortunately someone has cut down all the trees in the lane it was in. In the field next to the lane partridge appear very rarely and quail even more rarely in summer. Jack snipe sometimes visit the small pool at the back of Muirhead.

In my garden from 28 January to 24 March 2012, a rosy starling fed with its commoner counterparts, and I have also had mealy (north western) redpoll at my nyjer (or niger) feeder, so anything is possible .

Troon reservoir, at Collennan, has up to three pairs of breeding little grebe, and in winter can host goldeneye and goosander. Teal are found from time to time almost at the top of Dundonald Hill on the small pool in winter.



Black redstart, Collenan



Wood warbler at Beech Wood



Blackbird, Fullarton Woods



Common starling in back garden



# The protected flight of the Cory's shearwater

**Georgia Gaibani, IBA  
and Natura 2000 Network  
Co-ordinator**

From [ali](#), newsletter of LIPU  
Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli



Photo by Michaeli Mondì

Four new marine areas that are fundamental to the conservation of Cory's shearwater, a species also known as 'Mediterranean albatross', have been identified by LIPU following years of research in Sicily, Sardinia, Puglia and Tuscany. Technically known as IBA's, these four areas are the outcome of LIPU's long-standing commitment to the Marine IBA Programme. This programme, begun by BirdLife International, of which LIPU is the Italian partner - aims to identify, via the application of quantitative and qualitative scientific criteria, those sites that are crucial for the long-term survival of Marine bird populations.

Currently, marine IBA's are far fewer than terrestrial IBA's. This is due to the lower number of marine bird species compared to terrestrial bird species, but also to the difficulty of collecting data on the processes that regulate the distribution of pelagic birds. The marine habitat, and the pelagic portion of that habitat in particular, is especially difficult to study and such study requires a more complex methodology, and more advanced tools and knowledge compared to its terrestrial equivalent.

The first marine IBA's were created as an extension of coastal IBA's characterised by important nesting and roosting sites of the most abundant and well-studied species. However, this method does not, by itself allow the identification of pelagic zones used by marine species, and neither does it guarantee that the size of the area that requires protection around the nesting colony is taken into account in an appropriate manner. For this reason BirdLife International has developed a special programme for the identification of marine IBA's based on telemetry studies. This programme and the use of new technologies are helping to fill the gaps in our knowledge regarding the ecology and behaviour of marine birds, and is identifying - around the world - the most important sites for the long-term survival of the species.

## A European requirement

The location of breeding colonies of marine birds in Europe is relatively well-known and some already benefit from some sort of protection. However, the spatial ecology of these birds is less well-known and we know very little about the most important feeding zones in the sea. Identifying marine IBA's and completing the Natura 2000 Network so that it includes marine habitats are important tools for safeguarding pelagic birds.

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## **LIPU and Cory's shearwater**

This project originated in 2002 when LIPU, in an effort funded by the Ministry of the Environment, identified terrestrial IBA's at the national level. As part of that study, LIPU also identified certain marine IBA's, which included sections of marine areas around the country's major seabird colonies. However, the 2002 project did not provide an exhaustive list of all marine IBA's due to a lack of studies on the behaviour of marine and pelagic birds. To solve this problem, in 2008 LIPU - commissioned by the Ministry of the Environment and then Tutelage of Land and Sea Areas - launched a national scale pilot study to identify those IBA's that would benefit marine birds; a study that employed BirdLife International methodologies. Following this initial pilot programme, from 2009 to 2014 LIPU, in collaboration with ISPRA and thanks to the support of LIPU-UK, continued to identify marine IBA's, focussing its telemetry studies on Cory's shearwaters.

From 2008 to 2013, a total of 188 individual Cory's shearwaters from four Italian colonies (the Arcipelago delle Tremiti, the Arcipelago di La Maddalena, the Arcipelago Toscana and the Isola di Linosa) were followed using GPS loggers for a total of 219 feeding trips. Data collected were used to identify new marine IBA's essential for the conservation of Mediterranean Cory's shearwaters from the four Italian colonies and which also benefit other species of marine birds.

### **Cory's shearwater**

This is a migratory species that nests exclusively in the Mediterranean Sea and winters on the western side of the southern Atlantic Ocean. The global population is an estimated 140-220,00 breeding pairs, 179-193,000 of which breed on the Isle of Zembra, in Tunisia. The colony on the Isle of Linosa with its 10,000 pairs, is the second biggest in the world and the most important on the European level. Towards the end of winter, adults start to arrive in the areas surrounding the breeding colonies and start to prospect the site, a process that continues more or less regularly until April when the breeding season actually begins. Incubation of the eggs takes approximately 50 days with both parents alternating sitting and feeding at sea. During the foraging trips, shearwaters cover several hundred kilometres, even reaching areas 400 kilometres away from the colony. After the eggs have hatched around the middle of July, the parents brood the chick until it is able to control its own body temperature. The offspring is fed by both parents until it fledges around the middle of October. Each parent returns to the nest to feed the chick almost exclusively on moonless nights, probably to reduce the risk of predation. While waiting for the right conditions to return to the nest, adults float on the sea (a behaviour known as 'rafting') until dark, at moon-or sunset.

### **Types of Marine IBA**

The four types of IBA (Important Bird Areas) recognised by BirdLife International are - 1: Sea extension of breeding colonies of marine birds; 2: Non-reproductive coastal aggregations; 3: Migration bottlenecks; 4: Pelagic areas.

To read this article in full - please see the summer 2016 edition of '[ali](#)' - or go to [www.lipu-uk.org](http://www.lipu-uk.org) and to join LIPU-UK - contact David Lingard at: Fernwood, Doddington Road, WHISBY, Lincs. LN6 9BX. Or email: [mail@lipu-uk.org](mailto:mail@lipu-uk.org).

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## Birds and landscapes of the North of Ireland

Monday 15 May  
to Monday  
22 May 2017



Leader: Jim Thomson  
Organisers: Tony  
& Gerda Scott

**Join us for seven nights as we tour the most interesting birding sites and places of natural beauty throughout the North of Ireland.** We will travel by small luxury coach from Ayr and cross from Cairnryan to Belfast with Stena Lines Ferries. For the first two nights, we plan to stay close to Belfast to allow us to visit places such as the magnificent WWT Castle Espie Wildlife Reserve on the shores of Strangford Lough. We also plan to visit Oxford Island Nature Reserve and Shanes' Castle Park on Lough Neagh. Moving on for five nights to the area around Derry/Londonderry, we will radiate from here to visit such places as RSPB's reserve on Rathlin Island and also Fair Head for more nesting seabirds. Nearby is the Giant's Causeway - also worth a visit. Inch Levels Wildfowl Reserve in County Donegal is well worth a trip - being one of Ireland's premier wildlife sites. Other places will be RSPB reserves at Lough Foyle, Portmore Loch and Lower Lough Erne. Pettigo Plateau is also good for raptors. We will be staying at comfortable three or four star hotels on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. **We would appreciate early booking if possible, as hotels can be booked up quite early for this time of year. We expect the cost to be in the region of £895.00 for the eight days/seven nights trip - inclusive of all travel and hotel accommodation.**

The cost of the trip will be around £820.00 - 895.00 depending on the number of participants.

It will include all coach and ferry costs and dbb accommodation in en-suite rooms in a three or four star hotel.

If you would like to join this tour, please request an itinerary from Tony & Gerda Scott, 4 Hilltop Place, Ayr KA7 3PB or f please telephone us on 01292 281 085 or e-mail Tony Scott on: [da.scott@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:da.scott@tiscali.co.uk)



Scotland's Bird Club  
**The SOC**



## Evening meetings at Monkton Community Church Hall and Pioneer Café **Tuesday 19.00 for 19.30hrs.**

**13 September 2016** **Liz PARSONS** Birdwatchers in Industry

**11 October 2016** **Jim CASSELS** Mapping Arran's Birds

**08 November 2016** **Jeremy BROCK** Spanish Steppes: birds of the Laguna de Gallacanta

**13 December 2016** **Kenny KORTLAND** Plantations: lifeless monocultures or biodiversity hotspots

**10 January 2017** **Gordon RIDDLE** Working with the kestrel

**14 February 2017** **Innes SIM** Ring ouzel conservation

**14 March 2017** **John SAVORY** The Carrifran Wildwood story + colonisation with woodland birds

**11 April 2017 - AGM followed by** **Iain MALZER** Bearded tits of the Tay reedbeds

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## **RSPB LOCH LEVEN AND LARGO BAY (FIFE)**

**Saturday 19 November 2016  
by COACH**

**Leader: Jim Thomson**

**Tickets £25.00**

A joint SOC Ayrshire and RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group day trip. **Leaving Dodds coach depot, East Road, AYR at 07.30.** We will be driving via Glasgow with the first comfort stop at DOBBIE'S GARDEN CENTRE - LIVINGSTON (09.00 - 09.40). On over the Forth Road Bridge to the M90 and RSPB LOCH LEVEN for 10.30. Here until 14.30 (Café on site). Time to visit all the hides and possibly the hill and woodland walk where we have fantastic views across the whole reserve. On via Leslie and Glenrothes to LARGO BAY - where we can view seabirds from LOWER LARGO and LEVEN. We return via Kirkcaldy and the Forth Bridge to SOUTH QUEENSFERRY where we will book dinner at the BREWER'S FAYRE for around 17.30. Leave again at 19.30 and return to AYR via the M8 / M77. Back about 21.00 hrs. **Tickets will be available from September onwards or register by e-mailing Tony Scott on : [da.scott@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:da.scott@tiscali.co.uk) or telephone 01292 281 085.**

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## **Field Trips and tours** jointly with RSPB Central Ayrshire Local Group

### **Field Trips 2016**

#### **Saturday 24 September** [WWT CAERLAVEROCK RESERVE](#)

Meet in the reserve car park at 11.00 hrs. Whole day birding trip until 16.00 hrs. There is a café on site - or bring along a picnic lunch.

#### **Saturday 15 October** [BALLANTRAE, LOCH RYAN AND WIG BAY](#)

Meet at Ballantrae seafront car park (toilets) for 10.30 hrs. On to Loch Ryan, Stranraer and Wig Bay. Café at Soleburn Garden Centre or bring a picnic lunch. Finish c.16.00 hrs.

#### **Saturday 19 November** [by COACH](#)

##### [RSPB LOCH LEVEN RESERVE AND LARGO BAY \(FIFE\)](#)

Meet 07.30 at Dodd's bus depot, East Road, Ayr. Whole day trip, returning for c. 21.00 hrs. Full details elsewhere in this newsletter. Coach tickets £25.00 - available at club meetings.

#### **Saturday 17 December** [IRVINE HARBOUR AND BEACH PARK](#)

Meet at 10.30 hrs. at Irvine Harbour Point car park (toilets). Whole day birding trip until c.15.30 hrs. Food available at Harbour Arts Centre or the Ship Inn, or bring a packed lunch.

### **Field trips 2017**

#### **Saturday 21 January** [MAIDENS & NTS CULZEAN](#)

Meet 10.30 hrs at Maidens Harbour car park (toilets). On to Culzean later. Café at Culzean or bring a picnic lunch. Finish around 15.30 hrs.

#### **Saturday 18 February** [GREENAN SHORE AND DOONFOOT.](#)

Meet at 10.00 hrs Greenan Castle car park. Trip lasts until 12.00 hrs.

#### **Saturday 18 March** [RSPB KEN-DEE MARSHES RESERVE](#)

Meet at New Galloway High Street (toilets) for 10.30 hrs. On to Ken-Dee Reserve for around 11.15 hrs. Please bring a picnic lunch. Finish around 16.00 hrs.

#### **Saturday 22 April** [DUMFRIES HOUSE ESTATE AND GARDENS](#)

Meet 10.00 hrs at Dumfries House car park (toilets). Walk and birdwatch the riverbank, woodlands and gardens. Café on site or bring a picnic lunch. All day trip until 16.00 hrs.

#### **Monday 15 May to Monday 22 May**

##### **An eight-day coach holiday**

##### [BIRDS AND LANDSCAPES OF THE NORTH OF IRELAND](#)

Coach travel from Ayr. Staying at three or four-star hotels on a DBB basis. Visiting WWT's Castle Espie Reserve and Strangford Lough (C.Down), RSPB reserves at Rathlin Island, Belfast Lough, Portmore Lough and Lough Foyle. Also visits to Fair Head (Antrim), The Bann Estuary, Inch Levels Wildfowl Reserve - Ireland's premier wildlife site (C.Donegal), Rathmullen Wood, Sheskinmore NR, Pettigo Plateau NR, plus the Giant's Causeway and Benbane Head. Price will include accommodation, dinner, bed and breakfast, coach travel and ferry crossings. Estimated cost - around £895.00 inclusive.