



# EAST LANCASHIRE ORNITHOLOGIST CLUB

## Field Trip Report

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Participants: 12

Sunrise: 16<sup>th</sup> - 5:05am

Hightide: 16<sup>th</sup> - 13:00

Weather: 16<sup>th</sup> 08:00 – Broken Cloud. Temperature 6.5 °C. Wind 2 mph SSE

14:00 – Overcast Cloud. Temperature 12 °C. Wind 7 mph SW

17<sup>th</sup> 05:00 – Light Rain. Temperature 5 °C. Wind 7 mph SSW

10:00 – Broken Cloud. Temperature 10.5 °C. Wind 17 mph SSW

Species Count: 83

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May**

#### **RSPB Loch Lomond**

This was the ELOC members weekend away trip which this year was in the area around Dumbarton. The group met at RSPB Loch Lomond with some members having travelled up the previous day, while others chose an early start from East Lancashire.

Meeting in the car park at 09:00 we were greeted by a noisy Garden Warbler, before setting off on a walk through the reserve to Loch Lomond.

Walking through the woods we heard and saw Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Goldcrest, Siskin, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Song and Mistle Thrush, along with other expected woodland birds.

Coming out of the woods into a more open meadow area we had excellent views of a displaying Tree Pipit, before walking into a wooded area where a pair of Bullfinch were seen.

The walk continued through an area of Bog where many Sedge Warbler were seen and heard. Stonechat and Reed Bunting were present. Sand Martin, House Martin, Swallow and Swift were hunting over the Bog as a Sparrowhawk flew through.

Walking into another wooded area we heard a singing Redstart, before finally reaching the loch shore.

At the loch we saw Goosander and Red-breasted Merganser along with Gulls and a Grey Heron by the loch shore.

The farthest point of the reserve is a viewpoint over the Southeast corner of Loch Lomond. We waited only 20 minutes before we were treated to the sight of two Osprey successfully fishing on the loch.

We then retraced our steps back to the carpark for lunch, but not before some of the group managed to see the singing Redstart.

## **Cashel Forest**

In the afternoon we travelled up the east side of Loch Lomond to Cashel Woodlands at Balmaha. Here we hoped to see Wood Warbler but, although distant Wood Warbler singing was heard, some only had the briefest of views high in the tree canopy.

The walk through the woods was very pleasant and Blackcap were abundant, along with the expected woodland species.

It was now time to return to our accommodation at the Abbotsford Hotel, where we had a joint evening meal.

## **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Garelochhead Range**

A 05:00 start saw most of the group travelling to an area on the moors above Garelochhead. In the early morning light, we saw a Cuckoo perched on a post which subsequently flew off. Walking up a track to view an area used as a rifle range, we saw four Black Grouse lecking. Walking back to the cars the Cuckoo was heard calling, and it was located high up on a power pylon.

A disturbance over the rifle range was noticed, with Gulls and Corvids mobbing a large raptor. This was identified as a ring-tailed Hen Harrier. We had excellent views as it flew past us.

We now travelled to Ardmore Point.

### **Ardmore Point**

The point is a promontory on Gare Loch with a pleasant walk through gorse and woodland, with a muddy bay to view.

It felt cold, with the wind blowing across the loch.

Not much was seen in the gorse and woodland, but it was noted that this was the first time we had seen Whitethroat.

On the loch side we saw both a Curlew and a Whimbrel with Eider, Shelduck, Shag and Mallard present.

A couple of Common Tern were seen flying up the loch, as was a Gannet.

Returning to the start point of the walk, we were caught in a sharp shower, and while sheltering we located a Greenfinch and a Little Egret.

We returned to the Hotel for breakfast, before setting off south to RSPB Lochwinnoch.

### **RSPB Lochwinnoch**

We first viewed the scrape in front of the Visitors Centre, where there was a pair of Little Ringed Plover on a nest. Redshank, Lapwing, Curlew, Tufted Duck and a sleeping Shoveler were seen. In the increasingly blustery conditions, we walked around the reserve.

The most noteworthy sighting was of Swift. A local birder told us that this was the first time they had been seen this year, and each year they arrive later and in fewer numbers.

We then returned to the Visitors Centre for lunch, before starting our journeys home.

This had been an ambitious trip to an area that was unfamiliar to many of us. This required a lot of planning and preparation by Nigel and Glenn for which we are very grateful. Collectively we agreed that the area had much to offer and it was a very enjoyable weekend away.

### Species List

Mute Swan	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Chiffchaff
Canada Goose	Gannet	Garden Warbler
Greylag Goose	Shag	Blackcap
Shelduck	Cormorant	Whitethroat
Eider	Little Egret	Goldcrest
Red-breasted Merganser	Grey Heron	Nuthatch
Goosander	Swift	Treecreeper
Tufted Duck	Osprey	Wren
Shoveler	Sparrowhawk	Starling
Mallard	Hen Harrier	Mistle Thrush
Black Grouse	Buzzard	Song Thrush
Pheasant	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Blackbird
Cuckoo	Jay	Robin
Collared Dove	Magpie	Redstart
Woodpigeon	Jackdaw	Stonechat
Moorhen	Rook	Dunnock
Oystercatcher	Carrion Crow	House Sparrow
Little Ringed Plover	Blue Tit	Pied Wagtail
Lapwing	Great Tit	Tree Pipit
Whimbrel	Skylark	Meadow Pipit
Curlew	Sedge Warbler	Chaffinch
Common Sandpiper	Sand Martin	Bullfinch
Redshank	Swallow	Greenfinch
Common Tern	House Martin	Linnet
Black-headed Gull	Long-tailed Tit	Goldfinch
Common Gull	Cetti's Warbler	Siskin
Herring Gull	Wood Warbler	Reed Bunting
Great Black-backed Gull	Willow Warbler	