

Wild Scotland Cruise

Species List | May 27 – June 7, 2024

with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guide Chris Harbard. Our clients included Kaye, Carol, James, Alan, Carol, Michael, Annette, Ed, Judy, Amy, Pam, Paul, Suzanne, Peggy, Mary.

The Naturalist Journeys Wild Scotland Cruise was on board the *MV Greg Mortimer*, run by Aurora Expeditions. The group of 15 participants met with the group leader, Chris, on the evening on May 27 in Edinburgh and after a short tour of the city the following day, we were taken by coach to Troon where we boarded the ship on a fantastic voyage exploring the Inner and Outer Hebrides, as well as the Orkney and Shetland Islands, arriving in Aberdeen on June 7. The trip itinerary was chosen for its wildlife, scenery and history, with excursions from the ship at each stop, with many landings ashore by Zodiac. Clients were free to choose the excursion they wanted to join.

87 bird species were recorded of which two were heard only. Seven mammals were seen as well as a wide range of plants. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details most of the 87 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Wild Scotland Cruise | May 27- June 7, 2024 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the birds, mammals and some of the plants we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family or Species Common Name Scientific Name

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: Anatidae — (11)

Graylag Goose *Anser anser* — Wild birds seen on Iona, Lewis, Papa Westray and Orkney along edges of estuaries and lochs, and on seashores. Many of them with young.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* — Seen by two of the group while kayaking on Skye and Lewis.

Canada Goose (I) *Branta canadensis* — Seen by two of the group while kayaking on Skye.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* — Seen on Orkney mainland where there were large numbers, and a couple on Shetland mainland.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* — One bird seen at edge of fields at Standing Stones of Stenness, Orkney.

Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* — Several with young on Isle of Lewis, near Callanish. Also at Mouse RSPB reserve, Shetland and Brodgar RSPB reserve, Orkney.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* — Three seen by North Hill RSPB reserve, Papa Westray, Orkney.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* — Not numerous, on Lewis, Orkney and Shetland.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* — Six seen at Clickimin Loch, Lerwick, Shetland.

Common Eider *Somateria mollissima* — Birds seen leaving Troon. Females with young seen on Eigg, one male seen on St

Kilda, many females with young on Pap Westray, and birds also on Fair Isle and mainland Shetland.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* — A few were seen on Skye, Shetland and Orkney.

PHEASANTS, PARTRIDGES, AND ALLIES: Phasianidae — (1)

Ring-necked Pheasant (1) *Phasianus colchicus* — One seen from the bus on Orkney on June 6.

PIGEONS AND DOVES: Columbidae — (3)

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* — Seen on most days with most birds looking like wild birds. The only domestic types were seen in Edinburgh and on mainland Shetland.

Common Wood-Pigeon *Columba palumbus* — Seen in Edinburgh. Several seen from bus on Mainland Orkney on June 6.

Eurasian Collared-Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* — A pair seen on St Kilda. Not introduced to the UK.

CUCKOOS: Cuculidae — (1)

Common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* — Two seen well on Iona, calling constantly. Often chased by small birds. One also seen and heard on Lewis.

SWIFTS: Apodidae — (1)

Common Swift *Apus apus* — Birds seen flying over Edinburgh.

RAILS, COOTS, AND ALLIES: Rallidae — (1)

Corn Crane *Crex crex* — A single bird was calling occasionally from close to the Abbey on Iona, but despite searching could not be seen.

OYSTERCATCHERS: Haematopodidae — (1)

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* — Very common (and noisy). Seen every day on all of the islands (seen from bus on Orkney).

LAPWINGS AND PLOVERS: Charadriidae — (3)

European Golden-Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* — A couple were seen at Callanish, Lewis and a flock of 10 seen at Pabay Mor, Lewis.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* — Birds seen at Callanish, Lewis, Pap Westray, Orkney and on Fair Isle.

Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* — Birds heard or seen on Eigg, Lewis and Shetland mainland.

SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES: Scolopacidae — (7)

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata* — Usually seen on fields. Lewis, Orkney, Shetland and Fair Isle. Bubbling call heard occasionally.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* — Small number seen on shores of Lewis, Papa Westray, Shetland and Fair Isle. Most birds in bright breeding plumage.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* — Eight seen on shore along Sumburgh coastal trail, Shetland.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* — Fifteen seen at North Hill RSPB reserve, Papa Westray, and one on Mousa, Shetland. Many in fine breeding plumage with black bellies.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* — Birds heard bleating on St Kilda, and also seen and heard in display flight at North Hill reserve, Papa Westray, and also on Mouse, Shetland.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* — One on Skye and one on Eigg.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* — Fairly common in breeding habitat with many near Callanish Stones, Lewis.

SKUAS AND JAEGERES: Stercorariidae — (2)

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* — Many good sightings, despite population decline due to avian flu. Seen flying over Hirta,

St Kilda and seven seen by dead Gannet near Boreray, St Kilda. Several seen at Mousa, Shetland and on Fair Isle, and also feeding on casualties below the cliffs of Noss, Shetland.

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus* — Several on Papa Westray, one on Shetland, and a pair on Fair Isle.

AUKS, MURRES, AND PUFFINS: Alcidae – (2)

Common Murre *Uria aalge* — Huge numbers seen at several breeding colonies. Most were at St Kilda and Isle of Noss, Shetland. A small percentage were of the 'bridled' form with a white face pattern.

Razorbill *Alca torda* — Small numbers seen at or near seabird colonies.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle* — Seen at Troon as we left and then on almost every day.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica* — Everyone's favorite seabird! Seen up close and personal on Lunga (Inner Hebrides), and also on the sea at several locations as well as at colonies on Papa Westray, Fair Isle and Isle of Noss, Shetland.

GULLS AND TERNS: Laridae – (7)

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* — Small numbers away from colonies, but hundreds seen sailing round St Kilda. A few immature birds.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* — A small number seen at several locations on Orkney and Shetland.

Common Gull *Larus canus* — Almost living up to its name, it was not numerous but was seen at most locations.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* — The commonest gull, seen most days.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* — Small numbers seen at several locations, especially in Hebrides.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* — The world's largest gull! Seen on most islands and especially obvious at seabird colonies where it predares eggs and young.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* — Seen most days, feeding offshore.

LOONS: Gaviidae – (2)

Red-throated Loon *Gavia stellata* — Two seen flying over at Mousa RSPB reserve, Shetland.

Common Loon *Gavia immer* — One seen close to the ship at Pabay Mor, Lewis.

PETRELS AND SHEARWATERS: Procellariidae – (2)

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* — Seen most days, over land on some islands, and whenever at sea.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* — A couple of sightings when at sea.

BOOBIES AND GANNETS: Sulidae – (1)

Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus* — Seen most days. A huge colony at Boreray, St Kilda, and others at nests at the Isle of Noss, Shetland. Also seen at sea in most locations with some diving seen off Iona.

CORMORANTS: Phalacrocoracidae – (2)

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* — Uncommon, only a few seen in Hebrides and Orkney.

European Shag *Gulosus aristotelis* — Very common.

HERONS AND EGRETS: Ardeidae – (1)

Gray Heron *Ardea cinerea* — Birds seen on Eigg and at Callanish, Lewis

HAWKS, KITES, AND EAGLES: Accipitridae - (2)

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* — An immature bird flew over at Pabay Mor, Lewis

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* — One bird seen at Callanish, near visitor center.

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* — One flew by along shore at Callanish, Lewis

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo* — One bird seen over distant hillside on Eigg.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS: Falconidae - (1)

Eurasian Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* — One seen diving at Common Buzzard on Eigg.

CROWS AND JAYS: Corvidae – (5)

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica* — Several seen in Edinburgh Old Town.

Eurasian Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* — Many seen in Edinburgh Old Town and on Iona.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* — Several seen near rookery on Iona, including fledged young. Also lots were seen in fields on Orkney.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* — Common. Seen on most islands.

Common Raven *Corvus corax* — Singles seen on Iona and Pabay Mor, Lewis and a pair at Sumburgh, Shetland.

TITS AND CHICKADEES: Paridae – (2)

Coal Tit *Parus ater* — One seen on Isle of Eigg.

Eurasian Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus* — One seen on Isle of Eigg.

LARKS: Alaudidae – (1)

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* — Common and widespread. See on most islands, usually in high song flight.

REED WARBLERS: Acrocephalidae – (1)

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* — One heard singing on Iona.

SWALLOWS AND MARTINS: Hirundinidae – (3)

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* — Known in UK as Sand Martin. Several seen, on Iona and at many locations on Orkney.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* — Seen at many locations in Hebrides and Northern Isles.

Common House-Martin *Delichon urbicum* — One bird seen on Iona.

LEAF WARBLERS: Phylloscopidae – (1)

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* — Single birds seen and heard singing on Iona and Eigg.

WRENS: Troglodytidae - (1)

Eurasian Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* — Several interesting subspecies were seen and heard on this trip. Mainland Scotland (ie Edinburgh) and Orkney host British Wren (*T. t. indigenus*), and those on Iona and Skye are thought to be the same. St Kilda has a distinctive subspecies (*T. t. hirtensis*) which is larger than mainland birds. Lewis has the Hebridean subspecies (*T. t. hebridensis*), Fair Isle has its own (*T. t. fridariensis*), and Shetland has its version (*T. t. zetlandicus*). All of these were seen or heard singing their loud songs.

STARLINGS AND MYNAS: Sturnidae – (1)

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* — Seen almost everywhere. Breeds in stone walls, buildings and on cliffs and among boulders where there are no trees. The populations on Shetland and Fair Isle are a subspecies (*S. v. zetlandicus*).

THRUSHES: Turdidae – (3)

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* — Seen on Isle of Iona, in allotments near Nunnery and in fields by Abbey.

Eurasian Blackbird *Turdus merula* — Seen on many islands, with some birds in song.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus* — One seen flying past at Loch Coriusk, Skye.

OLD WORLD FLYCATCHERS AND CHATS: Muscicapidae – (2)

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula* — Seen and heard singing in Edinburgh, and on Iona and Eigg.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* — Seen on many islands, with some males singing, and several watched taking food to their nesting cavities.

ACCENTORS: Prunellidae – (1)

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* — Only seen in Iona.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS: Passeridae – (1)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* — Seen at a few locations, always near buildings.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: Motacillidae – (3)

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* — British subspecies (*M. a. yarelli*) known as Pied Wagtail. Small numbers seen on several islands.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* — Common and widespread. Many seen in song flight, parachuting down in song.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* — Quite common. Always along the shoreline and cliffs on many islands.

FINCHES AND EUPHONIAS: Fringillidae – (6)

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* — Seen near trees on Iona and Eigg.

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* — Several on Iona and one heard at Callanish, Lewis.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris* — Seen and heard in flight on mainland Shetland and Fair Isle. A couple seen perched on Mousa, Shetland.

Eurasian Linnet *Linaria cannabina* — A couple heard and seen near Abbey on Iona.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* — Only seen at Iona and Callanish, Lewis.

Eurasian Siskin *Spinus spinus* — Several seen, on Isle of Eigg.

OLD WORLD BUNTINGS: Emberizidae — (1)

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* — A male singing at Brodgar RSPB reserve, Orkney.,

MAMMALS:

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* — Seen on many islands. Rabbit holes are often used by breeding Northern Wheatears.

Red Deer *Cervus elaphus* — Several seen at Loch Coriusk, Skye.

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis* — Several approached ship while sailing away from Lewis.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* — Seen from ship near Eigg.

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina* — Several seen at Loch Coriusk, Skye and at Isle of Noss, Shetland.

Gray Seal *Halichoerus grypus* — The commonest seal, seen most days.

Common Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* — One seen in front of ship while sailing away from St Kilda.

PLANTS (selected species):

Sea Campion — *Silene maritima* Common in coastal areas.

Red Campion — *Silene dioica* Common along roadsides.

Marsh Marigold — *Caltha palustris* Common in most marshy areas.

Oblong-leaved Sundew — *Drosera intermedia* Found in boggy areas on Skye.

Tormentil — *Potentilla erecta* Common along roadsides.

Water Avens — *Geum rivale* Seen mainly on Eigg.

Bitter Vetchling — *Lathyrus montanus* Seen by road on Eigg.

Common Bird's-foot Trefoil — *Lotus corniculatus* Very common.

Herb Robert — *Geranium robertianum* Common along roadsides.

Heath Milkwort – *Polygala serpyllifolia* Loch Coruisk, Skye
Common Primrose – *Primula vulgaris* Seen on Lunga and other places.
Scottish Primrose – *Primula scotica* Rare, seen on Papa Westray.
Foxglove – *Digitalis purpurea* Found commonly.
Yellow-rattle – *Rhinanthus minor* Found in grassy roadside verges.
Common Lousewort - *Pedicularis sylvatica* Common in damp areas.
Butterwort - *Pinguicula vulgaris* Found beside boggy lochs.
Bog Asphodel – *Narthecium ossifragum* Found by loch on Skye.
Wild Garlic – *Allium ursinum* Common by roadside on Eigg.
Spring Squill – *Scilla verna* Common in coastal grasslands.
Bluebell – *Hyacinthoides non-scriptus* Common everywhere in shady areas.
Yellow Iris – *Iris pseudacorus* Common in marshy areas.
Northern Marsh Orchid - *Dactylorhiza purpurella* Common in marshy areas.
Heath Spotted Orchid – *Dactylorhiza maculata* Common in marshy areas.