

Dundalk trip Saturday 7th December 2013

Ten members met at 8.30am at Junction 18/exit Dundalk. The weather was good.

Our first stop of the day was Giles Quay to look for divers. Arriving at the car park we had a small group of Brent Geese along the shore line. We then moved behind the harbour wall for shelter and had Ringed Plover, Common Scoter, Red -Breasted Merganser; Bar- tailed Godwit, Black and Common Guillemot, Golden Plover, Shag, Cormorant Oystercatcher, Turnstone and distant views of Red Throated Divers.

Next stop was St. Georges Quay for a much needed coffee break and even some sunshine.

Some of the species recorded here included (on an approaching high tide) was Dunlin, Snipe, Grey Plover, Red Shank , Greenshank, Black-Tailed Godwit one of which had coloured rings(red above green on left leg, 2 pale green rings with tabs on right leg). A Peregrine Falcon was spotted perched on a fence post; this was a new bird for new member Shane. The buzz of finding a 'lifer' is very infectious.

A further move was made to Blackrock where we added Pintail, Goldeneye and Great Crested Grebe to the species list.

We then headed to Lurgangreen which was a new sight for me, with the hope of finding Grey geese, Nigel went to check out if the new hide was open but unfortunately found it locked. It was then decided to have lunch followed by a walk in the other direction along the grassy shoreline path. New member Martin had a Yellow Hammer on route which was a high light of the day for him.

We headed up the bank for better views of waders roosting on the remaining islands as high tide began to ebb. We scoped a large flock of Knot shuffling to and fro and a large flock of Golden Plover wheeling around with Lapwing in the mix. There was a crop field behind which I decided was worth a look , after a short time 12 Yellowhammer(mix of male/female) and some Reed Bunting got up from the crop field and landed in bushes that edged the field giving us some nice views.

A hovering Kestrel and Stonechat was another two species for the list.

Next stop was Iveco vehicle testing centre where at last we found 36 White -fronted Geese (a highlight of the trip for Gerard) along with Greylag Geese. Moving on to our last stop of the day, we followed the scenic route towards Castlebellingham where a short stop added Great Northern Diver to the list. There was also close views of Common Scoter and Razorbill.

In total we had 67 species and thanks to Nigel for leading the trip, it was a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Shirley Dunlop

