Out this month — November

Birds to look for in and around Dumfries · 61 species

☐		**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*	The Solway's signature bird — the entire Svalbard population winters here and almost nowhere else.
☐		**Black-headed Gull** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	The small gull whose hood is actually dark chocolate-brown, and only there for half the year.
☐		**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*	The rich, unhurried song from a rooftop at dusk — the sound of a Dumfries spring evening.
☐		**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*	A rich, tumbling song from deep in the scrub, and a cap that is black on males and warm brown on females.
☐		**Blue Tit** *Cyanistes caeruleus*	Blue cap, yellow breast, no fear of anything — the acrobat of every feeder in town.
☐		**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	A soft, mournful piping from inside a hedge, then a flash of white rump as it slips away.
☐		**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*	Introduced from North America three centuries ago, and now thoroughly at home on the town pond.
☐		**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*	All black, all business, and usually on its own — the crow that is not a rook.
☐		**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*	An accelerating rattle that ends in a flourish — and a different accent depending where you are.
☐		**Coal Tit** *Periparus ater*	The smallest of our tits — grabs a seed and vanishes, hiding it somewhere for later.
☐		**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*	Unknown in Britain before the 1950s — it walked here from the Balkans in a single human lifetime.
☐		**Common Buzzard** *Buteo buteo*	The plaintive mewing overhead — now the commonest bird of prey in Britain, and back from near-extinction here.
☐		**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*	Holds its head perfectly still while the rest of it works hard to hang in the wind.
☐		**Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*	Explodes out of the verge with a clattering shriek at exactly the moment you least expect it.
☐		**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*	A deep, resonant 'cronk' from overhead, and a bird far bigger than any crow has a right to be.
☐		**Common Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*	The heavy clatter of wings from a hedge, and a five-note coo that always seems to stop one note early.

☐		**Coot** *Fulica atra*	Sooty black with a white bill and forehead shield — and spectacularly bad-tempered with its neighbours.
☐		**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*	The bubbling song over spring moorland, and the long downcurved bill — Britain's biggest wader, and in serious trouble.
☐		**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*	Flocks that turn as one over the mudflats, flashing dark then silver-white in the same second.
☐		**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*	The quiet grey-brown bird shuffling under the feeder — overlooked, and with a startlingly complicated love life.
☐		**Feral Pigeon** *Columba livia domestica*	A cliff-nesting seabird that decided our buildings were cliffs — and never looked back.
☐		**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*	Big, grey-headed northern thrushes that arrive in chattering flocks to strip the hedgerows bare.
☐		**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*	Britain's smallest bird, weighing about the same as a ten-pence piece.
☐		**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*	A red face, gold wing bars and a tinkling call — a charm of goldfinches is worth the name.
☐		**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos major*	That short, hard burst of drumming in March is not feeding — it is a bird announcing itself.
☐		**Great Tit** *Parus major*	The black stripe down a yellow chest, and a two-note 'tea-cher' that carries right across the garden.
☐		**Green Woodpecker** *Picus viridis*	The laugh — a loud, ringing 'yaffle' — carries across a field long before you find the bird.
☐		**Greenfinch** *Chloris chloris*	Stocky, olive-green and heavy-billed — and much scarcer at the feeder than it used to be.
☐		**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*	Stands in the shallows without moving for twenty minutes, then strikes faster than you can follow.
☐		**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*	The ancestor of the farmyard goose — and the one that actually sounds like a goose.
☐		**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*	The noisy, squabbling bird of hedges and eaves that we only noticed once it started disappearing.
☐		**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*	The small grey-hooded crow with pale eyes that nests in your chimney and knows exactly what you are doing.
☐		**Jay** *Garrulus glandarius*	Our most colourful crow, and the reason a good many oak trees are where they are.
☐		**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*	Slate-grey back and yellow legs — the herring gull's darker cousin, and once a bird that always left for winter.

☐		**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*	A flying teaspoon — and never alone: where there is one, there are a dozen close behind.
☐		**Magpie** *Pica pica*	Black and white at a glance — but catch the light and the tail is bottle-green and violet.
☐		**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*	The small brown bird that flushes from the grass in front of you, calling thinly as it goes.
☐		**Mute Swan** *Cygnus olor*	Orange bill with a black knob at the base — the swan that is here all year, and not silent at all.
☐		**Nuthatch** *Sitta europaea*	The only British bird that routinely walks head-first down a tree trunk.
☐		**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*	Black, white and loud, with a carrot-orange bill built for opening shellfish.
☐		**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus*	The fastest animal on earth — and increasingly likely to be nesting on a building rather than a crag.
☐		**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*	Runs across the supermarket car park in short bursts, tail pumping the whole time.
☐		**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*	Skeins yelping across a September sky — for many people the first real sign that autumn has arrived.
☐		**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*	Deeply forked tail, constantly twisting — a bird brought back to Galloway deliberately, and now breeding here.
☐		**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*	Listen on an October night — the thin 'seep' overhead is redwings arriving in the dark.
☐		**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*	Black hood, white collar and a song so unhurried it sounds like the bird has forgotten how it ends.
☐		**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*	The gardener's shadow — bold, orange-breasted and singing on the darkest days of the year.
☐		**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*	Never alone: rooks live, feed and nest in company, in the clattering treetop colonies called rookeries.
☐		**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*	An owl that hunts in daylight, quartering low over the marsh on long, stiff wings.
☐		**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*	Song pouring down out of an empty sky from a bird too high to see.
☐		**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*	Sings every phrase two or three times over, as if making sure you heard it.
☐		**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*	Comes through the garden low and fast, round the corner of the house, and is gone before you register it.

☐		**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*	Black at a distance, iridescent purple and green close up — and capable of imitating a car alarm.
☐		**Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola*	Perches on the very top of a gorse bush and scolds you with a sound like two pebbles knocked together.
☐		**Teal** *Anas crecca*	Our smallest duck, and the one that springs vertically off the water when flushed.
☐		**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*	Like a house sparrow drawn more carefully — chestnut cap, and a black comma on a white cheek.
☐		**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*	Black and white, golden-eyed, with a drooping ponytail — and forever disappearing underwater mid-sentence.
☐		**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*	Straight neck, yellow wedge on the bill, and a bugling call from birds that flew here from Iceland.
☐		**Wigeon** *Mareca penelope*	The drake's clear rising whistle across a winter marsh is one of the great Solway sounds.
☐		**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*	Britain's commonest bird, and one of its smallest — a brown scrap with a startlingly loud voice.
☐		**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*	'A little bit of bread and no cheese' — sung from a hedge top through the heat of a July afternoon.

Photograph credits

Photo by Andreas Trepte, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Hans Hillewaert, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Charles J. Sharp, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Francis Franklin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Rror, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Alexis Lours, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by caroline legg, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by stevem4560, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Frank Schulenburg, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Bengt Nyman from Vaxholm, Sweden, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Charles Homler d/b/a FocusOnWildlife, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Francis C. Franklin, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Giles Laurent, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Martin Kunz, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Diliff, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Rhododendrites, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by hedera.baltica from Wrocław, Poland, CC BY-SA 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Luc Viatour, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Ігор Червоненко, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Sanchezn, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Isiwal, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Mykola Swarnyk, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Jac. Janssen from BAARLO LB, NL, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by MPF, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Hansueli Krapf, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Sumeet Moghe, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by User:Diliff, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Dion Art, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons
Photo by Laitche, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons