



Birds of Elmwood Golf Course

S.T. Buckland



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A selection of photos illustrating some of the bird species that occur at Elmwood Golf Course. All photos were taken on the course.

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Canada goose

Not a common sight over the course, this bird was flying around near the clubhouse on 17 March 2022.



Pink-footed goose

Pinkfeet can often be seen and heard flying over the golf course in autumn, winter and spring.





Mallard

Mallards occasionally fly over the course or visit the pools at the bottom of the course. The above drake flew up from the pools with a female. The female hit the powerline, and nearly crashed to the ground. It managed to get itself sorted just in time, and flew off with the drake.





Grey partridge

Grey partridges occasionally come onto the course from the surrounding farmland, but are easily disturbed. This pair was crouched down in a field just across the railway from the course.



Pheasant

Common on the surrounding farmland. Some birds roost each night in the trees around the course, and sometimes come onto the course before heading out to farmland (below). The above bird was in a ploughed field about 10m from the course.





Swift

One of the last summer migrants to arrive. They can often be seen hunting insects over the course.





Feral pigeon

Sometimes called the London pigeon, this is the semi-domesticated pigeon whose ancestor is the rock dove. Birds from Elmwood Farm often overfly the course.





Stock dove

The stock dove is smaller and much less numerous than the woodpigeon.





Woodpigeon

Common on the course and in the surrounding farmland.





Collared dove

Collared doves occasionally fly fast over the course. These two were nearly out of sight over the driving range by the time I got my camera pointed in their direction!



Moorhen

The ponds at the bottom of the course provide good habitat for moorhens.





Oystercatcher

Birds return to farmland in February, to establish their territories for the breeding season. These two were at the bottom end of the course near the pools in mid-February.





Curlew

This bird flew low over the course in late May 2022.





Black-headed gull

A common species. It is mis-named, as it never has a black head, but adults have a chocolate brown head in summer. These birds are in winter plumage.





Common gull

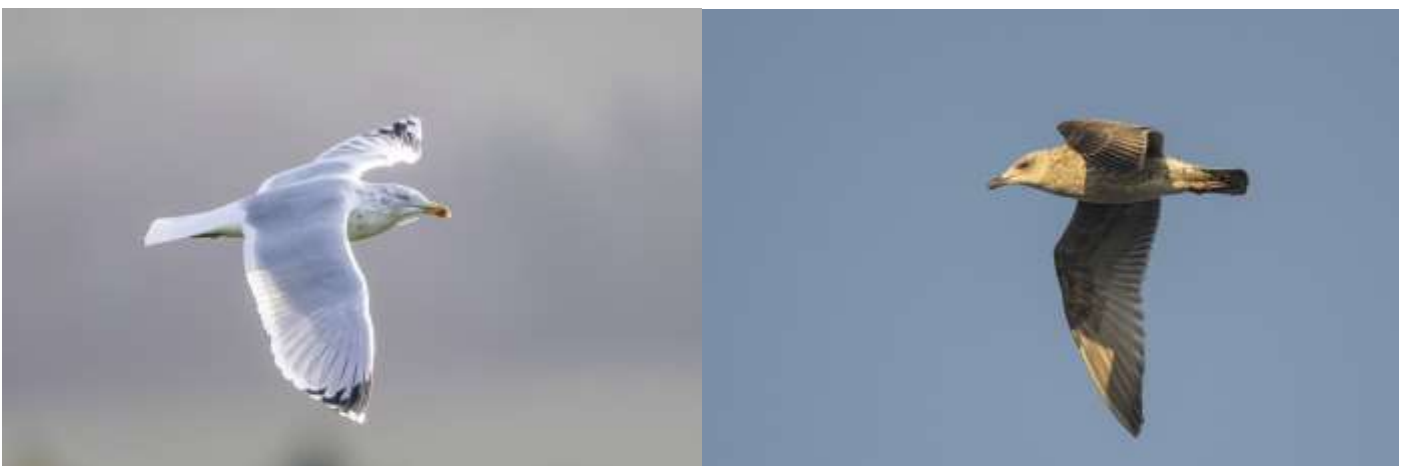
As its name suggests, a common species.





Herring gull

Common around and flying over the course.





Lesser black-backed gull

A summer visitor. Most return to the area in March and April. These were on a fairway alongside the railway in early April 2022.





Cormorant

This species is becoming more common inland, and birds follow the River Eden. This one flew over the clubhouse on 22 December 2021, heading towards the Eden.



Grey heron

Common along the Eden.



Sparrowhawk

A frequent visitor, hunting along the hedges, walls and tree belts.



Common buzzard

Common buzzards had disappeared from the area, but in the last thirty years, they have returned, and increased in numbers. The bird on the right was being mobbed by a crow.





Great spotted woodpecker

Although there are relatively few mature trees around the course, great spotted woodpeckers can be seen there. These birds (female above and below, male right) were alongside the road from Cuparmuir.





Kestrel

The kestrel is less common than it used to be, but can sometimes be seen hunting over the course.





Magpie

Until recently, a scarce species in the Cupar area, but it is now becoming relatively common.





Jackdaw

Common, often joining rooks on the course.





Rook

Common, often feeding on the fairways.





Carrion crow

Although not occurring in the numbers that rooks do, carrion crows are common on the course.





Coal tit

Very common in the belts of conifer trees on the course.





Blue tit

Very common in the trees and vegetation alongside the fairways.





Great tit

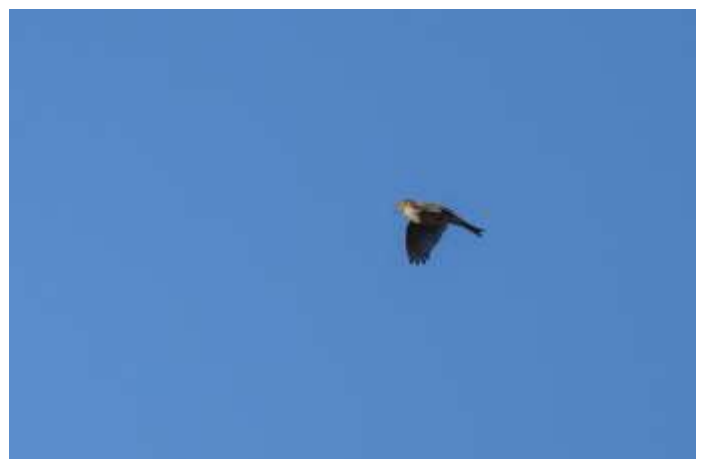
Like the blue tit, common in the tree belts and where vegetation is uncut. Male above and below left, female below right.





Skylark

Breeds on farmland surrounding the course, and can often be heard singing high over the course.





Sand martin

Sand martins nest in holes in banks and cliffs, and there is a small colony on the course.





Swallow

A common summer visitor that can often be seen flying over the course.





House martin

A summer visitor that can sometimes be seen flying over the course, often with swallows and sand martins.





Long-tailed tit

Small groups sometimes work their way along hedges around the course.





Willow warbler

A summer migrant, arriving in April. They are quite common on the course.





Chiffchaff

A summer migrant that is steadily becoming more common. Many arrive back in March, earlier than for other summer migrants. This image was taken on 22 March 2022, at the edge of the course just north of the railway.



Sedge warbler

A summer migrant. The pools at the bottom of the course provide good habitat, but they can also be seen on dryer parts of the course.





Blackcap

A summer migrant that has become more common in Scotland in recent decades.





Whitethroat

A summer migrant that usually arrives in late April.





Goldcrest

This tiny bird can sometimes be seen in the conifers around the course.





Wren

Common where there is cover to skulk in.





Treecreeper

Treecreepers often join tit flocks in winter. These birds were in the belt of trees by the road, with blue and great tits.





Starling

Common, and attracted to the clubhouse by the bird feeders.





Song thrush

Once very common, but now relatively scarce when compared with blackbird.





Mistle thrush

A golf course provides the kind of habitat that mistle thrushes like, with open country and trees. They can be seen throughout the year.





Redwing

Like the fieldfare, most likely to be seen in the autumn, but a few stay through the winter, feeding on berries and earth worms.





Blackbird

Common throughout the year. Female above, male below.





Fieldfare

Most likely to be encountered on the course in autumn, when birds arriving from Scandinavia feed on berries. A few stay through the winter if the berry supply lasts. They will also feed on worms on the fairways.





Robin

Common in the tree belts, hedges and patches of scrub.





Stonechat

The stonechat is not common around Cupar. This female was near the pools at the bottom of the course on 21 February 2022.





Tree sparrow

A species that has declined nationally, but which still remains fairly common around the golf course. They benefit from bird feeders and nest boxes.





House sparrow

The bird feeders at the clubhouse attract house sparrows. They also wander onto the course from the gardens and farms surrounding the course.





Dunnock

Common where there is cover. The above bird has a ring.





Pied wagtail

Can often be seen on the course in spring or summer.





Chaffinch

Common, especially in the tree belts around the course. Male above and below left, female below right.





Bullfinch

Occurs throughout the year. Like the goldfinch, it benefits from the uncut vegetation on the course, although it favours larger seeds, and it will also take berries, leaf buds and blossom. Male above, female below.





Greenfinch

A resident species that is common around the course.





Linnet

A few pairs breed on the course, and can sometimes be seen perched on gorse bushes. In winter, the linnet forms flocks on farmland. The flock below was near the entrance to the course in early March.





Goldfinch

A species that is increasing, in part because of bird feeders. They benefit from the areas of uncut vegetation around the course, which provides them with seeds.





Siskin

Not common on the course.



Yellowhammer

Common especially around the margins of the course. Male above and below left, female below right.





Reed bunting

Birds breed around the ponds at the bottom of the course. Although seldom seen far from reeds in spring and summer, they often wander into other habitats in autumn and winter, when a few feed on seeds in the uncut areas of the course. Male above and below left, female below right.

