

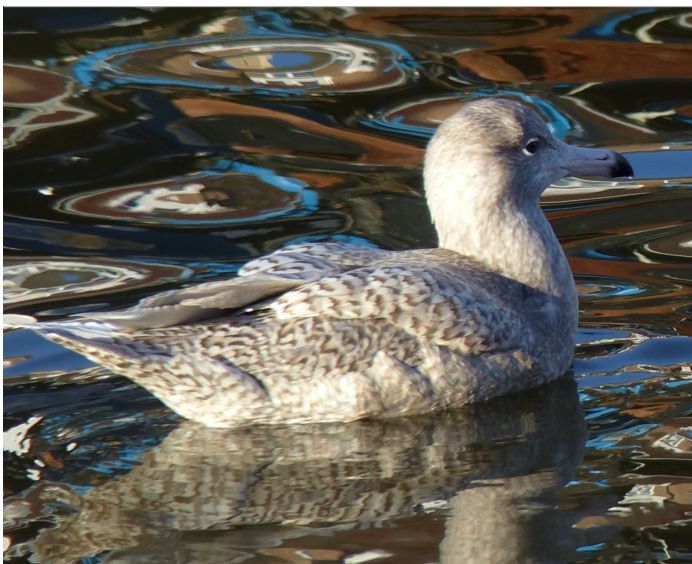
Out and About at the Coast with Mike Bloomfield



Shore Lark – A very close encounter at Spurn last October provided wonderful opportunities for a few lucky photographers and observers. This single and confiding bird was feeding in a seawater-logged grassy area, adjacent to the beach, after a high and stormy overnight sea had washed up detritus.



Eastern Black Redstart – There have been a few east coastal autumn reports of this species, a Middle East breeder, including this over-wintering one at Skinningrove. It seemed at ease with the many hundreds of birders keen to see this rare visitor. Somewhat less tolerant were the resident robins and dunnocks also hunting flies amongst the shoreline sea defences.



Glaucous and Iceland Gulls - A January visit to North Shields fish quay gave stunning close-up views of both birds paddling together on the calm shimmering water allowing birders to make a direct comparison between these juvenile first winter white-winged gulls. Both have the light brown flecked plumage. The Iceland gull is approx. 20% smaller (and just smaller than herring gull size) with a more proportionate and delicate bill relative to head size. The bright sun and reflected light on the water made photography difficult but luck was on my side when the rarer Iceland gull paddled into the red fishing boat reflection, providing a better image contrast more suited to my camera.