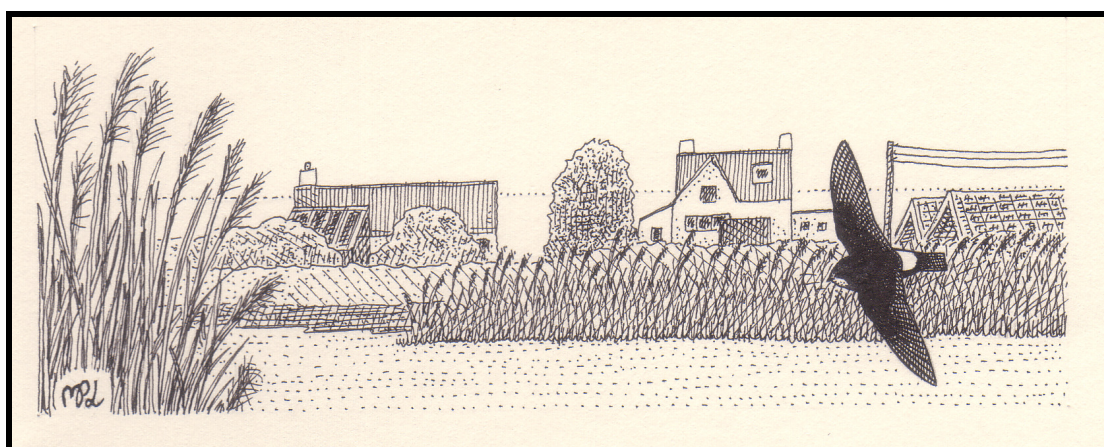


GUERNSEY BIRD REPORT

2000



Little Swift, Claire Mare N.R., 22nd April 2000

GUERNSEY BIRD REPORT

2000



EDITOR - MARK LAWLOR

Based upon information supplied by the members of the Ornithological Section of La Societe Guernesiaise.

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CONTENTS

1. Editorial
2. Systematic List
3. List of observers
4. Wader Count Data
5. Seawatching Log
6. Rarity descriptions
 - Fan-tailed Warbler
 - Little Swift
 - Black-headed Bunting
 - Griffon Vulture
7. Species requiring descriptions
8. Gazetteer

Editorial

This is the first year that a full systematic bird report has been produced for Guernsey. There has always been an excellent summary of the ornithological year published in the yearly Transactions of La Societe Guernesiaise, including a report of the accepted rarities and a detailed ringing report. This will continue to be the case, and this bird report is intended to complement the Transactions, and make it easier for birders throughout the world to find the information they require. The bird report will be published on the internet, on the Societe Guernesiaise website, and paper copies will also be kept.

Many thanks go to the birders who have taken the time to send in their records. Having a detailed database, as well as a monthly 'Bird News' newsletter, from which to glean the information, made the task of compiling this report much easier, so thanks to the team involved – Barry Wells, Julian Medland, Rich Austin. Also thanks to Wayne Turner for writing a superb report in the 2000 Societe Transactions.

The structure of the report tries to follow the general accepted format. The systematic list is arranged in Voous order and follows the BOU, although Yellow-legged Gull is treated separately. The English names used for species are the commonly used names on the island. The scientific names are also given to avoid confusion.

I have made every effort to acknowledge the finders of the birds listed but have been unable to do so for many of the records as they are listed in the bird news and database as "SEV" indicating they have been reported by several observers. I apologise if you are not credited for certain records but the situation for next year should improve as I will be able to check back with the original record slips.

Please contact me if you want to offer suggestions for improvements to the report.

Records for 2002 and beyond should be submitted to myself, the new recorder, at the address below.

Pentland, 15 Clos des Pecqueries,
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To make the report more accurate and detailed, more records are required of the commoner species. Information such as large flock sizes, visible migration, unusual places, plumage or behaviour would be very welcomed. Also, more records of escaped birds would be welcomed. At the end of the report, there is a list of rare species requiring a full description for acceptance.

Mark Lawlor

SYSTEMATIC LIST

2000 was an excellent year for birders on the island, as they were able to see many unusual species. A total of **202** species were recorded, of which **three** were new to the island – Fan-tailed Warbler, Little Swift and Griffon Vulture. These birds are all extreme rarities in a British context and were supported by a wide range of other rare species during the year. The breeding highlight was the first successful pair of Tufted Duck for the island.

The abundance categories for each species in the systematic list give some indication of how likely you are to see each species if you visit the correct habitat at the correct time of year. Apart from the first category, they give no indication of the number of individuals to be seen, as some species never occur in large flocks even though they might be ‘common’.

Very common	many should be seen each visit
Common	should be seen each visit
Quite common	should be seen most visits
Uncommon	will sometimes be seen, often depending on weather conditions
Scarce	maximum of a handful of records per year on the island
Rare	not usually seen every year on the island
Very rare	usually only seen once every few years
Vagrant	very few records for the island

Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)	3 records
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Unusually, in 2000, there were more records of this species than the next, but there were no long stayers. 1, Rocquaine Bay, 15th Jan (P+VW) – 1, Town Harbour, 4th Mar (MAG) – 1, Belle Greve Bay, 3rd Dec.

Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>)	2 records
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Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just two records during the year is exceptionally low – the species has been difficult to find recently. 1, Ladies Bay, 5th Jan (CFB) – 1, Belle Greve Bay, 18th to 20th Jan.

Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	15+ birds
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

At least 5 single birds were noted in various bays in the first part of year, with the last sighting at Pembroke on 12th Mar (JMA). There were another 10 sightings towards the end of year, with the first returning bird migrating past Jaonneuse on 4th Oct (WRT).

Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>)	19+ birds
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.

Up to 7 wintering birds were noted at 5 inland sites in the first winter period (Vale Pond, The Reservoir, Gallotin and Paradis Quarries, Juas Reservoir), plus coastal sightings from Pembroke and Victoria Marina. During the summer, birds were seen at the Reservoir and Gallotin Quarry, but there was no evidence of breeding. From August, at least 10 birds could be found wintering at all the above-mentioned sites, plus records from Pezeries, Pulias and Claire Mare.

Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Wintering birds were recorded in most of the island's bays until 26th Mar, with a maximum of 8 together in Belle Greve Bay on 23rd Jan. The first returning bird was in the Town Harbour on 1st Nov (LT), with flocks of up to 4 recorded thereafter.

Red-necked Grebe (<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>)

3 records of 4 birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

After a blank year last year, 4 birds was more of a typical total.

1, Rousse, 1st Jan (PKV) – 2, between Rocquaine and Perelle, 2nd to 19th Jan – 1, off Shell Beach, Herm, 26th Feb (MAG et al).

Slavonian Grebe (<i>Podiceps auritus</i>)
--

15+ birds

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Belle Greve Bay held up to 4 birds and Rocquaine Bay up to 8 (on 16th) during January with the last being seen at Pezeries on 13th Feb (AJB). A single bird roamed between Perelle and Lihou from 1st Dec until the year-end, and 2 were in Belle Greve Bay on 3rd Dec (MPL).

Black-necked Grebe (<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>)

2 records

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

After no records in 1999, these brief sightings were welcome – possibly the same bird.

1, Grandes Havres, 16th Jan (CJM) – 1, Grandes Havres, 26th Feb (RAL).

Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>)

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor. Breeds in small numbers.

All early records were from the south cliffs or from Herm, where up to 20 were seen. From June, birds were observed passing the headlands, but no counts of more than 10 birds were recorded.

Sooty Shearwater (<i>Puffinus griseus</i>)

519 birds

Quite common to uncommon autumn passage migrant.

All records were of birds passing Jaonneuse Point, during seawatches. The extreme dates were 3 on 20th Aug (sev) and 1 on 4th Nov (WRT). There was very strong passage at the start of October with peak counts of 352 on 6th Oct (sev) and 127 on 8th Oct (WRT). The passage of 6th Oct was a record for Guernsey, 30 more than the 322 recorded on 2nd Oct 1977.

Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>)

Quite common to uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

There was an early record of a bird passing the Shingle Bank on 26th Mar (AJB), but the rest of the year's sightings were between 18th May and 8th Oct (WRT). Most were noted from Jaonneuse Point - with a peak of 32 on 24th Jun (WRT) - but there were also records from Herm, Fort Doyle and Fort le Crocq.

Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*)**5 records of 6 birds*****Uncommon autumn passage migrant.***

All sightings were of birds migrating past Jaonneuse Point – 1 on 12th Aug (WRT), 2 on 20th Aug (sev), 1 on 27th Aug (WRT), 1 on 17th Sep (sev) and 1 on 8th Oct (WRT).

Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)**21 birds*****Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.***

21 were seen, on 6 dates between 7th and 24th June from Jaonneuse and Fort le Crocq with 8 off the former on 23rd (RJM). Storm Petrels will pass the north and west coasts every evening but conditions are not always suitable for seeing them.

Gannet (*Morus bassanus*)***Common passage migrant and summer visitor, less common in winter.***

The species was commonly seen off all coasts throughout the year, but greater numbers were noted during the autumn, with up to 100 birds per hour noted from Jaonneuse Point on a few days. Spectacular high-diving flocks can sometimes be watched out to sea when a productive feeding area is found.

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)***Common year-round visitor. Breeds in small numbers.***

The species was seen in small numbers all around the coast but, unlike the next species, was noted widely on inland lakes and ponds, and also flying overland to and from these areas. No large concentrations were reported.

Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)***Common breeding resident.***

The species was seen more regularly than the last and often in large flocks of over 100, especially around the northern limits of the islands. As usual, there were no inland records.

Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*)**1 record of 2 birds*****Vagrant – 9 previous records***

A male bird was seen at St. Saviour's Reservoir on 30th May. Birders looking for it the next day discovered a female of the same species, and the pair were seen on and off until 17th Aug (J.Hooper, S.G.Brooks). Although the birds were generally quite elusive, patience would usually result in good views, with the female often feeding very close in. The birds were rarely seen together and, unfortunately, there was no evidence of breeding.



female Little Bittern – Barry Wells



male and female Little Bitterns - Mark Lawlor

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

Quite common year-round visitor, less common in spring.

There was no evidence of an increase in egret numbers on the island this year. The usual gap in records between 10th May and 24th Jun was noted and a peak count of 30+ was made at Rue des Crabbes on 15th Dec (per BK). No accurate counts of roosts were made, so the total number on the island was unknown.

Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*)

Quite common year-round visitor, less common in spring and summer.

The species was seen mainly as single birds feeding in rockpools and ponds. Groups of resting birds did flock together, especially at high tide on offshore rocks and behind the Claire Mare reedbed. Only a very few birds spent the summer here and the occasional migrating bird was noted in the autumn.

White Stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)

1 record of 3 birds

Vagrant – 7 previous records

Three birds arrived at the Fauxquets Valley in the afternoon of the 27th Apr, having first been recorded over Alderney earlier in the day (M.A.Guppy). After resting for a while, the birds fed in grassy fields at the bottom of the Talbot Valley and birders managed excellent views. There seemed to be 2 adults with a first-year bird and they gave a spectacular aerial display. After a while, they moved on to the Old Aerodrome where they roosted overnight, disappearing during the morning of the 28th.



White Storks – Talbot Valley – Mark Lawlor



White Storks – Talbot Valley - Mark Lawlor

Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)

1 record of 2 birds

Very rare passage migrant.

The owners of the house overlooking the Vale Pond discovered 2 Spoonbills resting there on 28th June and, although they were flighty, many birders caught up with them before they left later in the day. (R.L. & E.A.Collenette).

Dark-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were about 115 birds wintering in the first part of the year mostly in the east - c.50 in Herm, c.50 between Miellette and Belle Greve Bay. The west coast flock of c.15 spent most of their time around Perelle and Vazon. The last bird of the spring was seen at Grande Mare on 28th May (GDA). Returning birds were seen from 17th Sep, when a migrant passed Jaonneuse (MPL). Very similar numbers were seen in the second winter period as the first.

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

1 breeding pair

Uncommon year-round visitor and rare breeder.

A pair were observed at various West coast sites early in the year before settling down to produce 8 young on Lihou (CMK). Unfortunately, only one of these survived. This juvenile bird, or one of the adults, accounted for sightings at six sites before the end of the year, travelling as far as Herm.

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 20 were at Marais Nord early in the year (PKV), with another flock of up to 8 frequenting Claire Mare. Wigeons that were sometimes seen on the sea were probably birds disturbed from these flocks. Claire Mare hosted the final female on 7th Mar (WRT). Very few were noted in the latter half of the year, namely 4 at Marais Nord on 12th Nov (LT) and 5 at Claire Mare in the final week of December.

Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)	3 records of 6 birds
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

All three sightings this year were of brief visitors.

3 females, Claire Mare, 7th Feb (RRC) – a pair, Vale Pond, 17th Sep (GDA) – 1 male, Claire Mare, 25th Dec (RJM).

Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Only recorded at three sites at the start of the year with maxima of 12 at Rue des Bergers, 23 at Vale Pond, and 25 at Claire Mare. The final birds of the spring were 4 at the latter site on 10th Apr (WRT). The first returning birds were 7 at Rue des Bergers on 26th Aug (AJB), with a total of at least 30 birds staying to winter by the year end.

Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
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Common resident breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant.

As usual the species was encountered practically everywhere on the island, but pure pairs are becoming less common, as many birds show signs of hybridisation with domestic ducks.

Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)	1 record
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

December records are rare, so this long-stayer was quite unusual.

1 first-winter male, Claire Mare, 2nd Dec until end of year.

Garganey (<i>Anas querquedula</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant.

A typical record for the species, most Garganeys do not stay on the island very long.

1 male, Claire Mare, 3rd May.

Shoveler (<i>Anas chipeata</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.

Up to 19 wintering birds were seen in the first half of the year – 10 at Claire Mare, 7 at Marais Nord, 2 at Grand Pre – with the last of these noted on 10th Mar. The first of the autumn was a bird at Rue des Bergers on 8th Aug (AJB), joined by a second ten days later. All other sightings in autumn and winter were at Claire Mare, peaking at 2 males and 4 females in December.

Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>)	2 records of 4 birds
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Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A better showing this year, but with only one bird in the last two winters, the species is becoming scarcer. 3, including 2 males, Marais Nord, 8th to 16th Jan (PKV) – 1 male, Claire Mare, 27th Dec.

Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. First breeding record.

Up to 30 birds were seen in the first winter period, at 6 different sites, with a peak of 10 at Grande Mare on 15th Feb (MAG). Later in the year, up to 20 birds returned, with a max of 13 at Marais Nord on 12th Nov (LT). One of the more notable records of the year was the addition of Tufted Duck to the list of breeding species of Guernsey. 3 males and a female remained behind at Gallotin Quarry for the summer and a pair produced 5 young.

Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>)
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2 records of 11 birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

After a blank year in 1999, 10 birds together is the largest flock reported for a number of years. 10, Lihou, 14th Oct, with one next day (DL) – 1 male, Fort le Crocq, 17th Dec (AJB).

Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>)

10 records of 51 birds

Uncommon year-round visitor and passage migrant.

Apart from on seawatches, the species is very unpredictable, and the spread of records shows this. 1 male, Chouet, 9th Apr (RJM) – 1 female, Rocque Poisson, 5th May (RJM) – 1 female, Vazon, 13th May (MPL) – 2, Fort Doyle, 2nd Jul (JMA) – 9, Lihou, 15th Oct (DL) – 12, Pulias, 26th Dec (DL). Also 25 were seen on seawatches from Jaonneuse, on 4 dates between 17th Jun and 21st Oct (WRT, CMK, LT).

Velvet Scoter (<i>Melanitta fusca</i>)

1 record of 5 birds

Rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

After only one record in 10 years, these birds were, disappointingly, only briefly seen. 5 flew North-east and high, 25th Dec, Pembroke (RJM)

Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)
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8+ birds

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

A minimum of 1 male and 3 female birds roamed between Lihou and Vazon in the first winter period, with an extra bird at Miellette on 18th Jan (CFB). The last sighting was at Fort le Crocq on 13th April (GDA). A female returned to the same west coast areas from 1st Dec, with additional males at L'Eree on 26th Dec (MAG) and Grandes Havres from 23rd Dec.

Goosander (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)
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2 birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

These two birds may have arrived as a pair but they seemed to keep away from each other, albeit close. 1 male, Claire Mare, 21st to 22nd Dec – 1 female, off Shingle Bank, 21st to 23rd Dec.

Honey Buzzard (<i>Pernis apivorus</i>)

2 records

Scarce passage migrant.

There were actually 3 more sightings during the year, but written descriptions were not received. Due to the increase in records, Honey Buzzard is now removed from the list of species requiring description. 1, Fauxquets Valley, 2nd Sep (RRC) – 1, Pleinmont, 25th Sep (DIS)

Griffon Vulture (<i>Gyps fulvus</i>)	1 record
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Vagrant – no previous records.

A report of a vulture seen on Sark in August was thought to be a touch fanciful, until it was spotted soaring over Grande Mare on 24th Aug (W.R. Turner, D.J.R.Andrews, L.A.Terry). It was soon tracked down to the cliffs at La Prevote where it roosted overnight. It appeared to be a first-summer bird and was noted at various sites on the island before it departed over Herm on 27th Aug. This record ties in with an increase in the number of records from northern Europe, of this Mediterranean species, although the species has not reached the British Isles yet.



Griffon Vulture - Barry Wells



Griffon Vulture - Jessica Bisson

Marsh Harrier (<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>)	6 records
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Scarce passage migrant.

A good series of records, with a couple of birds using the Claire Mare reedbed to roost overnight. All records were females or young birds – 1, Claire Mare, 5th and 6th Apr – 1, Claire Mare, 13th Apr (JMA) – 1, Claire Mare, 27th and 28th Apr – 1, Pleinmont, 4th Jun (MAG) – 1, Corbiere, 8th Jun (LT) – 1, Pleinmont, 6th Aug (AJB).

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)**4 records*****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.***

No wintering birds were found this year but 4 migrants was quite a good total.

All records were females or young birds – 1, Herm, 8th Apr (sev) – 1, Lihou, 6th May (GDA) – 1, Herm, 12th May (BK) – 1, Pleinmont, 12th to 19th Aug.

Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*)***Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.***

Widely seen in all areas of the island, with pairs displaying at a number of woodland sites indicating breeding.

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)**3 records*****Scarce passage migrant.***

Just three brief birds is the worst showing for many years.

1, Pleinmont, 18th June (AJB) – 1, Reservoir, 7th Aug (LT) – 1, Lihou, 30th Sep (GDA).

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)**2 records of 3 birds*****Scarce passage migrant.***

The species continues its good series of records, no doubt due to the increase in the British population.

2, Reservoir, 4th Apr (JH, CMK) – 1 in off sea, Petit Bot, 14th May (WRT, MAG, CJM, MPL).

One of the birds seen at the reservoir was satellite-tagged and it proved to be “S10”, an 11 year-old male bird from Speyside, Scotland. Tracking its journey, it had wintered in sub-saharan West Africa, passed up the coast of North Africa, through Spain and France, paused in Guernsey, before crossing to Devon and continuing back to Scotland. This was an amazing speed of 250 km per day.

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)***Common resident breeding species.***

Breeding was proved at a number of sites and the species continues to make use of the nestboxes provided.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)**4 records*****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.***

The second poor year in a row for this species, although records do not always reach double figures.

1 male, Herm, 24th Apr (AG) – 1 fem, Mont Herault, 14th Oct (MAG) – 1 fem, Claire Mare, 27th Oct – 1 male, Track Marais, 2nd Nov (RJM).

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)**9 records*****Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.***

The bird on 5th April was almost the earliest ever seen on the island, arriving with many hirundines.

1, Fort Saumarez, 5th Apr (BGW) – 1, Petite Vallette, 9th May (CMK) – 1, Petit Bot, 15th May (CMK) – 1, Portinifer, 31st May (MPL) – 1, Jaonneuse Point, 10th Jun (LT) – 1, Les Someilleuses, 17th Jun (BGW) – 1, Pleinmont, 27th Jun (LT) – 1, Pleinmont, 12th Aug (MAG) – 1, Lihou, 15th Oct (DL).

Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)
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Uncommon year-round visitor. Rare breeding species.

Peregrines were seen in all parts of the island throughout the year, with up to 3 birds flocking together. The breeding pair on the island were apparently successful, and this family probably accounted for a good proportion of the sightings. A young bird seen at Miellette on 4th Mar was probably a falconers bird as it had a chunky black ring on its leg (MPL).

Red-legged Partridge (<i>Alectoris rufa</i>)

Uncommon introduced species to Herm – not self-supporting.

The maximum count reported from the introduced birds on Herm was 4 in May.

Pheasant (<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>)
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Quite common introduced resident species.

This introduced species was regularly seen in numbers, especially on Herm and in the SE corner of Guernsey. The birds make use of feed put down for them.

Water Rail (<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>)

Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.

Water Rails were present at all suitable sites in both winter periods, with maximum counts of 4 at both Claire Mare and Marais Nord. The last of the spring was seen in Herm on 8th May, although there was the possibility of a breeding pair at Claire Mare with a bird seen in July and a juvenile there on 11th Aug (AJB).

Moorhen (<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>)

Very common resident breeding species and winter visitor.

Commonly seen around all lakes, ditches and marshy areas, with a maximum count of 40 at Saumarez Park on 16th Nov (LT).

Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>)

Uncommon resident breeding species, common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Seen in small numbers around freshwater ponds – no interesting counts were reported.

Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)

Quite common resident breeding species. Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

Wader count data showed a peak of 1041 birds on the island in November, with only about a fifth of this number in the late Spring.

Avocet (<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>)

1 record

Very rare year-round visitor.

Most of records for the island are actually from Vale Pond, and most stay for a few days. 1, Vale Pond, 23rd to 25th May.

Stone Curlew (<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>)	1 record
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Very rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

One was disturbed from the lake at Claire Mare in the afternoon of 15th Apr (M.P.Lawlor). It flew low over the hide, then over the road, before resting on the Shingle Bank. It was disturbed and flew onto the Old Aerodrome, where it disappeared. A thorough search eventually located it, hiding amongst the tussocks where it remained until dusk. It had gone the following day. This is only the second since 1985.

Little Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant, mainly in spring.

Most recent records are from this corner of the island, as there is not much suitable habitat elsewhere. 1, Old Aerodrome, 8th and 9th Apr.

Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)
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Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Breeds in small numbers.

A commonly seen bird of the shoreline, with a peak of 130 birds on the island in November.

Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)

Uncommon to quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Approximately 40 birds were present at the start of the year, mainly at the Portinfer roost, with only 4 records from elsewhere. The final one was at L'Eree on 23rd Apr (MAG). On 28th Aug an early returning bird was seen at Catoroc (CMK), and numbers were slightly larger than before, with up to 55 seen near the roost in December.

Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)
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Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Good numbers were present in the first part of the year, for example 250 at Portinfer in February (L.T). Birds moved through the island during the spring, with 4 on Lihou on 7th May (JMA) being the last of the migrants reported. On 31st Jul one was at Fort le Crocq (GDA), the first returning individual. After autumn migration, numbers fell, with 40 being the largest count late on in the year.

Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Lapwings wintered at the Airport (maximum of 50) and at Vale Pond (maximum of 65) with the final report being from the latter site on 14th Feb (CFB). There were 5 records of autumn migrants before the end of September, starting with one at the Reservoir on 23rd Jul (AJB). The wintering birds arrived in October in small numbers, followed by another arrival in December in much larger numbers. Peak counts were of 56 at the Old Aerodrome, 60 near St. Saviour's Church, 160+ at Grove Farm, and 200 at the Airport (WRT).

Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)	6 records of 13 birds
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

This species had a much better spring than usual, as most records are from autumn. 3 spring records – 2, Shingle Bank and 2 Vazon (RJM), 5th May – 4, Herm, 12th May (BK).

3 autumn records – 1, Belle Greve Bay, 30th Jul (LT,RJM) – 1, Grandes Havres, 2nd Sep (RJM) – 3, Grandes Havres, 9th Sep (MPL).

Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were plenty of double-figure counts of this species but 63 at L'Eree on 7th May was by far the largest spring flock (MAG). The final spring migrants were 3 on Herm on 14th June (GDA). After one at Baie des Pecqueries on 28th Jul (MPL) birds moved back through and to the island, but no very large flocks were noted. 38 birds were counted on wader-count day in December.

Little Stint (<i>Calidris minuta</i>)
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3 records of 4 birds

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

A poor autumn, but the first two records were the first spring birds since 1996.
1, L'Eree, 5th May (PAC) – 1, Fort le Crocq, 9th May (RJM) – 2, Vazon, 3rd Sep (AJB).

Curlew Sandpiper (<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>)
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3 records

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Three records are quite a poor showing. The first bird was, unusually, not on a beach.
1, Claire Mare, 27th Aug (CJM) – 1, Vazon, 13th to 22nd Sep – 1, Rocquaine, 30th Sep (BGW)



juvenile Curlew Sandpiper - Rocquaine - Barry Wells

Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>)
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15+ birds

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

About 10 birds wintered in the island, with a maximum count of 4 at Grandes Rocques on 9th Mar (LT). The last record was 2 birds at Vazon on 7th May (AJB). The first returning bird of the winter was also at Vazon on 5th Nov, and birds were seen here, and only here, until the end of the year. Up to 5 birds were noted on the last day of the year (AJB).

Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)
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Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

This species was seen at all times of the year, but the migration periods saw the largest gatherings. On 7th May, wader-count day, 678 birds were counted across the island. The wintering population seems to be approximately 150 birds.

Ruff (<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

A single record is a very poor showing for this species.
1, Shingle Bank, 28th Aug.

Jack Snipe (<i>Lymnocyptes minimus</i>)	2 records
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Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The species is under-recorded as it is secretive. The number of sightings also depends on water levels.
1, Vale Pond, 24th and 25th Feb (LT) – 1, Grande Mare, 10th Mar (LT)

Common Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>)
--

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 30 were at the Vale Pond in the first three months of the year, with 9+ at Claire Mare and 16+ at Rue des Bergers during this period. The first returning birds of the autumn were seen at Vale Pond on 16th Jul (CJM), and the species was recorded at 7 sites thereafter, with a peak of 29 on 26th Nov at Vale Pond.

Woodcock (<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Woodcocks are under-recorded due to their secretive nature. The species was seen at 8 sites during the winter – Marais Nord, Jerbourg, Silbe, Corbiere, Quevillette Lane, Track Marais, Fauxquets Valley, Le Huriaux. The extreme dates were 23rd Feb (RJM) and 9th Oct (CJM). Up to 15 were seen in the Fauxquets Valley.

Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)	4 records of 61 birds
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Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

The species is only usually seen in singles or very small flocks whilst on migration, and a large flock of 52 is astounding. This was at a time of heavy wader passage including huge flocks of other species.
52, L'Eree and 6, Fort le Crocq, 5th May (GDA) – 2, Portelet, 9th May (RJM) – 1, Herm, 12th May (BK)

Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)
--

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Only single figures were reported early in the year until the spring migration got under way. This peaked on 6th May with an amazing flock of 551 which spent a short time on the beach at Richmond, Vazon (DJRA), which must have been a fabulous sight. The last of the spring was at Fort le Crocq on 18th June (JMA). The first of the autumn were 2 at Rocquaine on 25th Aug (RJM), with mostly single-figure counts thereafter until the year end.

Whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>)
--

Quite common passage migrant.

An early first record was in Herm on 26th Feb (WRT, MAG, CJM, MPL) and flocks of up to 16 were seen regularly until the last day of May. Return passage began on 13th Jul when one was seen on Herm (WRT), and up to 7 were seen widely until the last was noted at Icart on 8th Nov (AJB).

Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Smaller numbers in summer.

Wader-count data showed a peak of 125 in October, but the species is difficult to monitor as many feed inland. Very few spent the early summer period on the island.

Spotted Redshank (<i>Tringa erythropus</i>)
--

3 records

Scarce passage migrant, very rare winter visitor.

Three recorded in a year is the best total since the mid-eighties, and it included one of the earliest ever. 1, Vale Pond, 12th Mar (P+VW) – 1, Rue des Bergers, 22nd Aug (MAG) – 1 juv, Grandes Havres/Vale Pond, 2nd to 9th Sep (sev).

Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Smaller numbers in summer.

This species was very scarce in May and June but was much commoner at other times of the year. No large flocks were noted and 26 birds in February was the largest wader-count figure, although the wintering population will be larger than that number suggests.

Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)

40+ birds

Uncommon passage migrant.

About 14 birds were seen on spring passage this year, all in the short period between 3rd and 9th May, with the first 2 at Claire Mare on 3rd (PAC). The first of the autumn flew in off the sea over Jaonneuse Point on 8th July (MPL), and there were at least 25 birds noted altogether, mainly at, or near, the Vale Pond. The final sighting was at Grandes Havres on 29th Oct (GDA).

Green Sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>)

25+ birds

Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.

One bird frequented Claire Mare on 25th and 26th June, but otherwise all the records were from autumn. The first of these was on 9th Jul at Vale Pond (CJM) and there were birds present on the island until 27th Sep, when there were singles at Vale Pond and Claire Mare (WRT). Most of the records were at these two sites, Rue des Bergers or the Reservoir, but 4 were seen high over St. Pierre du Bois on 5th Aug (RRC).

Common Sandpiper (<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>)

Quite common passage migrant, scarce in winter.

A wintering bird was present at the Reservoir from 5th to 29th January, and what was presumably the same bird returned there on 22nd Dec. The first spring migrant was at Vazon on 15th Apr, and there were flocks of up to 5 at various sites until 7th May. An early return saw 2 at the Reservoir on 26th Jun (PWA), and passage was heaviest in July, with 11 birds between Miellette and Beaucette on one day. The final one of the autumn was at Claire Mare on 24th Sep (WRT).

Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)
--

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Small numbers in summer.

265 birds counted in September were probably mainly migrant birds, whilst a similar count of 256 in December's wader-count gave an indication of the wintering population. Even taking into account the

difficulties of counting this rocky-shore species, the number of wintering birds visiting the island has dropped considerably in recent years.

Grey Phalarope (<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>)
--

2 records of 3 birds

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

After none in 1999, there was a good showing. The November bird showed well, mostly in a rockpool, until it became slightly oiled on the last day.

1, L'Eree, 10th to 12th Nov (MC) – 2, Jaonneuse Bay, 17th to 29th Dec.

Pomarine Skua (<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>)
--

7 birds

Scarce autumn passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

With more intensive seawatching during the last five years, the species has been shown to be a regular migrant in autumn off the north coast during good passage periods.

All records from Jaonneuse Point – 2 adults, 12th Aug (WRT) – 2 juvs, 3rd Sep (WRT) – 1 adult, 17th Sep (LT,RJM) – 1 adult + 1 juv, 8th Oct (WRT).

Arctic Skua (<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>)
--

90 birds

Uncommon autumn passage migrant.

A total of 90 Arctic Skuas flew past Jaonneuse Point on autumn migration. These were noted on 14 dates between 12th Aug and 21st Oct (WRT). The peak day was 20th Aug when 33 flew past the headland, and this was a record day-count for Guernsey.

Long-tailed Skua (<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>)

2 records

Vagrant – 3 previous records.

The fourth island record of this rarest skua was on the 4th October when a juvenile bird passed West, very close inshore at Jaonneuse Point (W.R.Turner).

A few days later on 8th October an adult passed the same point but was, unfortunately, not as close as the previous bird (W.R.Turner, J.M.Medland, A.J.Bisson).

Great Skua (<i>Catharacta skua</i>)
--

45 birds

Uncommon autumn passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

45 Great Skuas passed Jaonneuse Point this year, all between 11th Jul (LT) and 21st Oct (WRT). 11 birds on 10th Oct (AJB) being the maximum day count.

Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>)

6 records

Scarce visitor, mainly from summer through to winter.

Only one long-stayer was seen this year, in a typical spread of records.

1 adult, L'Eree, 14th Jan (LT,RJM) – 1, Les Ammareurs, 22nd Jan (P+VW) – 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 12th Aug (BGW) – 1 juv, Havelet, 21st and 22nd Aug (BGW) – 1 2nd-winter, Belle Greve Bay, and sometimes Grandes Havres or Town Harbour, 27th Sep to year-end – 1 adult, Pembroke, 23rd Dec (MPL).



2nd-winter Mediterranean Gull (left) with Black-headed Gull – Belle Greve Bay – Barry Wells



juvenile Mediterranean Gull – Havelet - Barry Wells

Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>)	4 records of 6 birds
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Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

All birds this year were seen whilst seawatching, with none lingering.

Jaonneuse Pt : 1 on 5th Oct (WRT), 3 on 8th Oct (WRT), 1 on 17th Nov and 1 on 26th Dec (RJM).

Sabine's Gull (<i>Larus sabini</i>)	2 records
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Vagrant – one previous record.

The second record for the island was a juvenile found on the beach at Grandes Havres opposite the Vale Pond on 2nd September. It was slightly oiled but gave excellent views to all those who saw it (M.A.Guppy).

Whilst seawatching from Jaonneuse Point on 21st October, another juvenile was noted passing West (W.R.Turner, M.A.Guppy). More intensive seawatching should produce more records in suitable weather conditions.

Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)
--

Very common year-round visitor, but uncommon in late spring and early summer.

The species was commonly noted in large flocks in the winter and migration seasons, but as usual, was difficult to find in May and June.

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)**20+ birds**

Uncommon to scarce visitor, mainly in winter.

The only birds noted in the first winter period were 5 seen in January, with the final one at Belle Greve Bay on 23rd. The first returning individuals were 2 seen on 12th Oct at Vazon (LT). Two more were noted at the start of November, and then there was a small influx in the last week of December when there was at least 11 birds present on the island.

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon in mid-winter.

The species was observed flocking in the largest numbers during poor weather in passage periods, mainly on beaches. During mid-winter single-figure counts were most common.

Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*)

Very common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The commonest gull on the island and abundant throughout the year. Flocks of 1000+ were often noted at Chouet Rubbish Tip and stormy weather out to sea brought many birds to shelter on the West coast. Breeding birds were mainly nesting on the South cliffs, Lihou and off Herm.

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)**5 birds**

Scarce visitor, mainly summer and autumn.

Birds are now being identified more regularly around the island, and this is the highest annual total so far. 1 adult, Chouet, 6th and 7th Jul (LT) – 2 adults, Chouet, 16th to 20th Jul (CJM) – 1 3rd-summer, Cobo, 14th Aug (MPL) – 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 10th to 14th Oct (RJM)



adult Yellow-legged Gull (left) with Herring Gull – Bulver Avenue, Belle Greve Bay - Barry Wells

Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides*)**2 records**

Vagrant – 9 previous records.

A third-winter was found in the gull roost on the Old Aerodrome on 9th January (M.A.Guppy).

An injured adult bird intelligently found its own way to the Animal Shelter on 13th February (C.M.Kinnersly). Along with many other gulls, it fed on the bird food provided for the ducks and could be seen there until at least 16th April.

Glaucous Gull (<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>)	2 records
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Vagrant – 6 previous records, including one regular wintering individual.

The regular wintering bird returned to Belle Greve Bay on 29th November and had acquired full adult plumage. It stayed until the end of the year (W.R.Turner).

A first-winter bird was discovered resting with other large gulls on the beach at Vazon on 10th December during heavy hailstorms. It stayed until at least 16th December (M.P.Lawlor).

Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)

Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

The species does not flock in as large numbers as other large gulls but is still common throughout the year, with groups of a few hundred together not uncommon.

Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)
--

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were mostly single-figure counts made of this species in all months except March and April, which surprisingly, were blank. Later in the year, a few days of passage were noted with the highest count being a low 58 past Jaonneuse on 22nd Aug (LT). No big-days were recorded this year.

Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>)

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor. Uncommon winter visitor. Former breeder.

The recent increase in wintering birds continued, as there were flocks of up to 7 present during January and February. These birds ranged between Belle Greve and Fort le Crocq, but most sightings were in the North and East. Summer birds returned during March but no real passage was noted until the autumn, when the peak was 33 past Chouet on 17th Sep (LT). These summer migrants had left by the start of October but the wintering birds soon returned, and were present in similar numbers and at similar sites until the end of the year.

Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)
--

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor. Small numbers breed.

The first birds of the spring were 2 seen at Cobo on 30th Apr (LT). Spring passage peaked with a flock of 20 in Grades Havres on 14th May, and then the usual small numbers were widely noted throughout the summer. Autumn passage was observed whilst seawatching with a peak of 64 'commic' terns on 20th Aug (WRT). No Common Terns were positively identified after 17th Sep.

Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant.

Many late autumn terns prove to be Arctics, and this bird showed very well during its stay. No doubt some of the 'commic' terns seen off the north coast in autumn would have been Arctic Terns, but they rarely come close inshore.

1, first-winter, Belle Greve Bay, 2nd to 5th Nov (CJM)

Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*)**2 records of 5 birds*****Scarce passage migrant.***

The February bird was an unprecedented winter record of a summer migrant.

1, winter-plumage, La Miellette, 25th Feb (MPL) – 4 1st-winters, Richmond, Vazon, 27th Aug (AJB).

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)**4 records of 12 birds*****Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.***

Most Black Terns seen are migrating past the north coast, or after having been grounded by poor weather.

3 adults, L'Eree, 23rd Aug (WRT) – Seawatching from Jaonneuse : 1 on 26th Aug, 6 on 3rd Sep, 2 on 6th Oct (WRT).

Guillemot (*Uria aalge*)***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor, a few breed.***

Between 1 and 4 noted irregularly throughout the year at most coastal locations except the South coast.

Auk passage observed whilst seawatching included many of this species. There were no details received of numbers of breeding birds.

Razorbill (*Alca torda*)***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor, a few breed.***

Between 1 and 7 noted irregularly throughout the year at most coastal locations except the South coast. Auk

passage observed whilst seawatching included many of this species. There were no details received of numbers of breeding birds.

Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)***Uncommon summer visitor and breeder. Rarer on passage and in winter.***

Most records received were from the breeding areas around Jethou and Herm with 36 on 31st May being

the peak count (JMA), indicating a possible improvement in numbers. Records from Guernsey were 2 past Jaonneuse on 24th Jun (WRT) and 2 off Jerbourg on 3rd Jul (LT).

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)***Common resident breeding species.***

Large flocks were noted at a few sites, especially around the harbour and town, or in certain favoured fields. Tired racing pigeons were often seen exhausted and resting on the island's headlands.

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)***Uncommon resident breeding species and passage migrant.***

The species was not recorded in any numbers, with groups of up to 4 being usual. The largest flock reported was just 7 at Grantez Mill on 14th July (LT). No evidence of migration was reported.

Woodpigeon (<i>Columba palumbus</i>)

Very common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Widely recorded from all parts of the island, with visible migration noted especially during the autumn. The largest count reported was 200 at Pleinmont on 4th Aug (LT).

Collared Dove (<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>)

Common resident breeding species.

Present in all areas of the island. The largest flock reported was 35 at Pleinmont on 22nd Apr (WRT)

Turtle Dove (<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>)

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor.

An early bird was seen at Corbiere on 27th Apr (GDA), but the main arrival took place from 9th May. During the summer, small numbers were reported from the quieter areas of the island. Migrant birds returned from August, with autumn migration peaking with 14 at Pleinmont on 14th Sep (AJB). The last bird was seen there the next day (LT).

Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>)
--

Uncommon to quite common passage migrant and breeding species.

The species arrived on 16th April when there were sightings at Fort Doyle and Fort le Marchant (MPL). There were at least 20 more records during the spring with the last at Jaonneuse on 8th Jul (WRT). Additionally, a fledgling was watched being fed by a Dunnock at Fort le Marchant on 17th Jul (LT).

Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba alba</i>)

Uncommon resident breeding species.

Many pairs of owls are using the nestboxes erected around the island, but they are still frustratingly difficult to see. At least 20 pairs were found to be breeding (VEF).

Dark Barn Owl (<i>Tyto alba guttata</i>)

Vagrant – 5 previous records.

The individual of this continental race of Barn Owl which was found at Rue des Bergers at the end of 1999, could be seen there with patience up until 4th March.

Long-eared Owl (<i>Asio otus</i>)
--

Uncommon resident breeding species. Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding pairs were successful at Jerbourg (3 young), Petit Bot (2 young), Pleinmont (2 young) and probably at the Reservoir (1 young seen). Also birds behaving like newly-arrived migrants were noted at Mont Herault and Valniquets on 15th Oct (MAG, WRT, MPL).

Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)

5 records of probably 3 birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There have not been any wintering birds on the island for many years.

1, St. Saviour's Church, 22nd Apr (BK) and Pleinmont, 23rd Apr (BGW) – 1, Mont Herault, 22nd Oct (MAG) and Pleinmont, 26th Oct (MPL) – 1, Chouet, 29th Dec (GDA).

Swift (<i>Apus apus</i>)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first bird of the spring was seen over Clos des Pecqueries on 25th Apr (MPL) with birds becoming common from 27th. As usual many flocks were seen during the summer with birds breeding in many a roof. Numbers dropped off in August, and only 7 birds were seen in September, the last on 23rd (MAG). A very late individual was seen at Pleinmont on 20th Oct.

Little Swift (<i>Apus affinis</i>)

1 record

Vagrant – no previous records.

A new species for the island was recorded on 22nd April when a Little Swift was found feeding over the lake at Claire Mare with hirundines. Unfortunately it only stayed for 20 minutes before heading off NW out to sea, which meant that only a handful of birders managed to see it (D.J.R.Andrews, W.R.Turner, C.M.Kinnersly). This species is a resident of North Africa and the Middle East and it is very rare in Northern Europe.

Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)
--

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.

Wintering birds were reported from 6 inland sites and 6 coastal sites up until 16th April, when the last was noted at the Reservoir. Vale Pond hosted the first returning bird on 16th Jul (RJM), and then 1 or 2 birds were seen at 20 sites until the year end.

Hoopoe (<i>Upupa epops</i>)

2 records

Scarce passage migrant.

Hoopoe sightings continue to be brief and frustrating.
1, Pleinmont, 23rd Mar (LM) – 1, Herm, 31st Aug (CJM).

Wryneck (<i>Jynx torquilla</i>)
--

6 records

Scarce passage migrant. Formerly common breeder.

A very good year for Wrynecks - the most since 7 in 1992.
1, Pleinmont, 24th to 27th Aug (MPL) – 1, Fort le Marchant, 26th Aug (WRT) – 1, Pleinmont, 9th Sep (AJB) – 1, Paradis, 17th Sep (MAG) - 1, Pleinmont, 24th Sep (WRT) – 1, Fort le Marchant, 4th Oct (MPL).

Great Spotted Woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>)
--

2 records (possibly same bird)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The very small number wintering on the island show little sign of staying into the spring.
1, La Hougette, 8th Oct (JH) – 1 female, Reservoir, 13th Oct to 17th Nov.

Short-toed Lark (<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i>)

1 record

Vagrant – 3 previous records.

The fourth record for Guernsey was found feeding amongst vrac at Richmond, Vazon on 5th May and it stayed until 7th (V.E.Froome, A.Grange, A.Seebeck).

Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*)**1 record**

Vagrant – 5 previous records.

A migrant was briefly seen and heard over Vara Road, St. Martin's on 16th April (M.A.Guppy).

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor. Uncommon breeding species now.

The decline in nesting birds continues, with the few pairs on L'Ancrese Common being the only certain breeders. There were, however, singing birds noted at Port Soif and at the Airport, so breeding may have occurred at these sites also. No large passage was noted in the autumn, with 40 birds at Pleinmont on 20th Oct being the peak count (LT).

Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

Quite common passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor.

One bird arrived at Grande Mare on 10th Mar, but the main arrival took place from the 15th. As usual, a few birds wandered around the island during the summer months and autumn passage was light, with the final 2 over Jerbourg on 22nd Sep (LT).

Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Four over Grandes Havres on 23rd Mar were the first of the spring (CJM), with birds passing through steadily thereafter. Return passage peaked in late September when 400 passed through Jerbourg on 22nd. The species lingered late this year, with many records in November, plus 4 in December – L'Eree and Portinfer on 1st, Saints Bay on 3rd and finally 1 over Rue de la Masse on 10th (per BF).

House Martin (*Delichon urbica*)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

A very early individual fed at the top of Petit Bot Valley on 17th Feb (WS), the earliest ever seen in Guernsey. The first of the spring proper was over Cobo on 1st Apr (MPL), with 50 on Herm on 29th May being the largest reported count of the year (CMK). The autumn passage was also not very strong and the final sighting was at Vaux de Monel on 3rd Nov (RJM).

Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)**1 record**

Scarce autumn migrant, very rare in spring.

An unusual spring record of this typically autumn migrant, it may have actually wintered in the area. 1, Mont Herault, 5th Mar to 1st Apr (AJB, CJM).

Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)**3 records of 3 or 4 birds**

Scarce autumn migrant, very rare in spring.

The brief bird in April was one of the very few ever recorded in the spring in Guernsey. 1, Les Tielles, 23rd Apr (MPL) – 1 or 2, Pleinmont, 25th to 28th Aug – 1 1st-winter, Mont Herault/Pleinmont, 29th Sep to 1st Oct (DIS).

Tree Pipit (<i>Anthus trivialis</i>)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Only reported on 2 days in Spring – 5 at Pleinmont on 27th and 1 at Barras Lane on 29th Apr (MPL).
Autumn passage began on 9th Sep, peaking at 8 over Pleinmont the next day (WRT). The final one was also at Pleinmont on 22nd Sep (LT).

Meadow Pipit (<i>Anthus pratensis</i>)

Very common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

No unusually large groups or passage was reported this year, but large flocks did build up at various headlands and fields during the migration season.

Rock Pipit (<i>Anthus pratensis</i>)

Common breeding species, with additional wintering birds.

Birds were seen in all coastal areas, but no very large flocks were reported.

Water Pipit (<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>)

1 record

Rare passage migrant.

A bird could be watched feeding on the beach at Vazon on 13th and 14th May (P.W.Atkinson).

Yellow Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava flavissima</i>)

Quite common passage migrant. Former breeder.

Birds passed through the island from 8th April to 18th May on their way to the breeding grounds further north. Up to 30 could be seen round the Old Aerodrome in late April. The autumn passage started with one over Jaonneuse over 20th Aug (MPL, WRT). Soon after, large numbers were found flocking at Petit Bot, reaching a maximum of 60 on 3rd Sep (CMK). Passage slowed down thereafter, finishing on 6th Oct, although a late first-winter bird was at Mont Herault on 22nd Oct (WRT, MPL).

Blue-headed Wagtail (<i>Motacilla flava flava</i>)

1 record

Scarce passage migrant.

1, Old Aerodrome, 23rd Apr (MAG)

Grey Wagtail (<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>)
--

Quite common winter visitor and migrant.

1 to 2 were seen wintering at various sites on the island and the last was recorded on 10th Mar. Pleinmont had the first returning bird on 20th Aug (AJB) and migration continued through October at many sites. 1 to 3 were seen near the end of the year.

Pied Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.

Commonly seen during the winter and passage periods. A roosting flock of 220 was at the P.E.Hospital on 8th Feb (MAG).

White Wagtail (<i>Motacilla alba alba</i>)

Quite common passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.

The first obvious 'alba' race wagtails to appear were on 5th Mar at Pleinmont and the Shingle Bank (MPL, WRT). Numbers built up to a maximum of 50 at Richmond on 30th Apr (AG). Autumn migration was obvious and merged with the returning Pied Wagtails.

'Alba' wagtails were very scarce in the breeding season but an adult was observed feeding two young birds at Delancy Park on 16th June. Young juveniles were also seen at St. Peter Port School, Cambridge Park and Ladies Bay in early July suggesting further pairs (LT, MPL).

Waxwing (<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>)

1 record

Very rare winter visitor, especially recently with only 5 records in last 30 years.

A bird fed on apples in a garden on Rue des Landes, Forest for a very short period on 28th December with only a few people managing to catch up with it (G.D. & P.W. Atkinson, G.A. & E.B. Callaway). This sighting resulted from a south-westerly movement of this species from northern Europe.

Wren (<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>)
--

Very common resident species.

Commonly noted at all sites.

Dunnock (<i>Prunella modularis</i>)
--

Very common resident species.

Commonly noted at all sites.

Robin (<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>)
--

Very common resident species, also passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly noted at all sites, numbers augmented by continental-raced birds arriving during October and November.

Nightingale (<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>)

1 record

Rare passage migrant.

1, singing briefly from thick cover, Pleinmont, 30th Apr (VEF, AJB, AG, RAL)

Black Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus ochrurus</i>)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor, rare in summer. Bred once.

Groups of up to 4 birds could be seen around the island during the first winter period and early spring, right up until 8th Apr. However, a late male bird was on Lihou on 6th and 7th May (IH). There were two unusual summer records – a female at Fort Doyle on 25th Jul (LT), and a male at Pulias headland on 28th Jul (MPL) – probably wanderers from France. Autumn migration began in earnest on 15th Oct, and groups of up to 4 birds wintered around the island.

Common Redstart (<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Spring migration was over very quick, with birds passing through the island between 9th and 23rd Apr only. A single at Pleinmont on 20th Aug (AJB) was the first of the return passage, with a maximum of only 15 birds recorded in total, mainly at Pleinmont. The last one was there on 28th Sep (WRT).

Whinchat (<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>)

Passage migrant – uncommon in spring, quite common in autumn.

About 20 birds were recorded on spring passage in a space of about two weeks. The first was on 2nd May on Herm (GDA), and the last was on 14th May. 10 at Pleinmont on 5th May was a very good spring count (JMM). Autumn passage was typically stronger, with birds noted from 7th Aug right through to the last on 21st Oct – 1 at Chouet (MPL). The maximum count was 18 on 26th Aug at Pleinmont.

Stonechat (<i>Saxicola torquata</i>)

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

Many pairs bred in suitable habitat, mostly around coastline. During the non-breeding season birds were more dispersed in other habitats.



male Stonechat – Fort le Marchant – Mark Lawlor

Wheatear (<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>)
--

Common passage migrant, irregular breeder.

A very early individual was observed at the Shingle Bank on 14th Feb (WS), three weeks before the next on 7th Mar. No large falls of this species were recorded this spring with 30 at Pleinmont being the largest number at any one site. Single-figures continued into May with the last of the spring on 4th Jun at L'Ancrese (RJM, LT). The first autumn migrant was noted at Bordeaux on 27th Jul (MPL), and again no counts of more than 30 were made. There were 4 records for November with the last at L'Ancrese on 17th.

Ring Ouzel (<i>Turdus torquatus</i>)

30+ birds

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were probably over 20 birds observed on spring migration, starting with one on 22nd Mar at Fort le Marchant (AJB). Most were seen at Pleinmont - including 5 on 9th Apr (MAG) – but also at Chouet, Portinfer and the Track Marais. There were 4 October records – singles at Pleinmont on 1st and 15th, 1 at Icart on 16th and the final 7 on Herm on 22nd (BGW).

Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)

Very common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly noted at all sites, with additional influxes recorded during the autumn and winter months.

Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>)
--

Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.

Small flocks could be seen around the island at the start of the year with the largest reported being 35 in Talbot Valley on 18th Feb (LT). The last bird of the winter lingered on the Old Aerodrome from 15th to 21st April. The returning Fieldfares first appeared at Paradis on 8th Nov (GDA) and the species was few and far between, apart from a migrating group of 150 at Portelet on 18th Nov (MAG).

Song Thrush (<i>Turdus philomelos</i>)

Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly noted at all sites, with additional influxes recorded during the autumn and winter months.

Redwing (<i>Turdus iliacus</i>)
--

Common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.

Small numbers were noted at the start of the year, with a maximum flock size of 30. The last reported bird was on 9th Apr at Track Marais (LT). The first of the autumn was seen on 13th Oct at the Reservoir (LT), and up to 40 were present in flocks until the end of the year.

Mistle Thrush (<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>)

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.

Observed infrequently, with some evidence of migration, e.g. 12 at College Fields on 12th Sep (MAG).

Fan-tailed Warbler (<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>)

1 record

Vagrant – no previous records.

A new species for the island was recorded on New Year's Day when a Fan-tailed Warbler was found in the reeds at Claire Mare. It was feeding with Chiffchaffs but its skulking nature meant that only a handful of birders managed to see it properly. This record ties in with other sightings in northern Europe during spring 2000 as the species extends its range northwards from the Mediterranean (M.P.Lawlor).

What was presumably the same bird was trapped in a mist net in the same reedbed on 24th Apr, and was thought to be a female bird (C.M.Kinnersly).



Fan-tailed Warbler – Claire Mare – April – Barry Wells (left) and Jessica Bisson (right)

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cettia*)

4 records

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Has probably bred.

The Grand Pre site continues to be reliable for the species and it possibly breeds there.

1 singing male, Grand Pre, 10th Jan to 14th Apr – 1 female trapped, Claire Mare, 5th Feb (JH) - 1 trapped, Grand Pre, 15th Aug (NBP) - 1, Herm, 31st Aug (CJM)

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

6 records

Uncommon passage migrant.

There were more actually seen rather than just heard this year.

1, Fort Doyle, 16th Apr (MPL) – 1, Claire Mare, 16th Apr (WRT) – 1, Pleinmont, 22nd Apr (WRT) – 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 27th Jul (JH,CMK) – 1, Vale Pond, 5th Aug (MAG) – 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 7th Aug (JH,CMK).

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

4 records

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

Three birds were trapped this year, interestingly all in the hour between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. Sight records are very uncommon indeed.

3 trapped at Claire Mare NR on 7th Aug, 12th Aug and 15th Aug (JH) – 1 seen, Reservoir, 7th Aug (LT).

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

Quite common passage migrant. Occasionally breeds.

Spring passage started with a bird seen on 2nd Apr and birds continued to be noted until 29th May. The first of the autumn was on 27th Jul at Grand Pre (GDA), and birds trickled through until the final record at Pleinmont on 3rd Oct (WRT).

Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i>)
--

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first bird was recorded on 4th Apr, with good numbers moving through the reedbeds during the spring. Singing and breeding birds were located at most reedbed sites, even quite small ones. Good migration was noted in August and September, but there was only one October record, at Vale Pond on 21st (MPL).

Melodious Warbler (<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>)
--

3 records

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

The species has been recorded less and less frequently in recent years, these birds being the first since 1997. 1, Pleinmont, 6th & 7th Aug (AJB) – 1, Pleinmont, 24th to 27th Aug (WRT, DJRA) – 1, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 9th Sep (JH).

Dartford Warbler (<i>Sylvia undata</i>)
--

c.7 pairs?

Uncommon breeding resident.

Breeding birds on the south cliffs were seen throughout the year. A maximum of 7 was counted at Pleinmont on 23rd Apr, indicating perhaps 3 or 4 pairs. Also cliff-top birds were present at Corbiere, Prevote and Le Gouffre during the season. Also, the species made a return to the north of the island with a pair producing 3 young at Fort le Marchant.



female Dartford Warbler – Fort le Marchant – Mark Lawlor

Lesser Whitethroat (<i>Sylvia curruca</i>)

5 records

Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.

A poor year with no breeding pairs recorded - no autumn migrants were seen either. 1, Fort le Marchant, 16th Apr (MPL) – 1, Pleinmont, 16th Apr (MAG) – 1 trapped, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 29th Apr (JH, CMK) - 1, Mont Herault, 30th Apr (LT) – 1, Rue Sauvage, 5th May (RJM).

Whitethroat (<i>Sylvia communis</i>)

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Birds were present on the island from 9th Apr to 30th Sep. The species was very common around the island with hundreds of singing birds and breeding pairs.

Blackcap (<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>)

Quite common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor.

Widespread groups of up to 3 birds could be seen wintering in the first 3 months of the year, with the spring birds arriving from about 7th Apr. The autumn passage peaked in October and similar numbers wintered again.

Garden Warbler (<i>Sylvia borin</i>)

Uncommon breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first bird of the year was seen on 6th May on Lihou Island. Birds were thinly spread during the summer and autumn migration was weak, with the last reported individual on 10th Sep at Pleinmont (MPL).

Yellow-browed Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>)	3 records
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Scarce autumn passage migrant.

2000 equals 1984 as the best year for this species, although many no doubt escape detection.
1, Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont, 28th Sep (WRT) – 1, Mount Row, SPP, 6th Oct (MAG) – 1, Reservoir, 12th Oct (JH)

Wood Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>)	4 records
--	------------------

Scarce passage migrant, mostly in spring.

A typical selection of records, although autumn records are quite rare.
1, Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont, 30th Apr (AJB, VEF, AG, RAL) – 1, Saumarez Park, 5th May – 1 trapped, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 6th May (JH, CMK) – 1, Saumarez Park, 10th Sep (LT).

Chiffchaff (<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>)

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, uncommon winter visitor.

Up to 4 were seen at a number of sites during January, but few were noted during February. Migrants appeared from about 7th March this year and Chiffchaffs were common on both spring and autumn migration, as well as in the breeding season. There were groups of up to 3 wintering birds seen during December.

Willow Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>)

Common passage migrant, uncommon breeding summer visitor.

The first migrant was seen at Jerbourg on 23rd Mar (LT) but larger numbers were noted from 2nd Apr. At least 100 were counted at Pleinmont on 9th Apr (WRT). As usual, the species was not very common during the summer until migrants appeared during August. The last of the year was at Pleinmont on 30th Sep (GDA).

Goldcrest (<i>Regulus regulus</i>)

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon breeding resident.

Commonly reported, especially during autumn migration in October and November. On 21st Oct, one was observed to fly in off the sea at Jaonneuse Point, landing on rocks exhausted (WRT).

Firecrest (<i>Regulus ignicapillus</i>)
--

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has probably bred.

Only a few wintering birds were recorded in the first three months, and just 4 migrants were noted in April and May. The last of these was on Lihou on 6th and 7th May. The first of the autumn migration was at Pleinmont on 10th Sep (MPL), and there were site-counts of up to 8 during October. Numbers reduced into mid-winter but flocks of up to 3 could still be found at the end of the year. 53 Firecrests were ringed on the island during the year.

Spotted Flycatcher (<i>Muscicapa striata</i>)
--

Uncommon to quite common passage migrant, scarce breeding summer visitor.

A very early individual was at Pezeries, Pleinmont on 7th Apr (LT), but the main passage period was from 4th May. There were few sightings during the summer months and no reported breeding birds. Autumn passage began on 25th Aug and there was a peak of 8 on Herm on 31st Aug (CJM). Less were seen in September, with the final one at Les Paas on 2nd Oct (WS).

Red-breasted Flycatcher (<i>Ficedula parva</i>)	1 record
--	-----------------

Rare autumn passage migrant. One spring record.

One was found along Rue de Valniquets, Pleinmont on 22nd Oct and gave good views as it fed amongst the dense lower branches of the trees (A.J.Bisson).

Pied Flycatcher (<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>)
--

Uncommon to Quite common passage migrant.

There were only 5 birds seen on Spring migration this year with the first, a male, at Vaux de Monel on 9th Apr. Autumn birds arrived from 22nd Aug and there were many sightings during the next week. A total of 10 birds were watched feeding at Café du Moulin on 25th Aug (MAG). The final bird was seen on Lihou on 1st Oct (GDA).

Bearded Tit (<i>Panurus biarmicus</i>)	3 records of 12 birds
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Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

All records were from Claire Mare. None have been seen elsewhere for over 3 years
6 including 2 males, from 20th to 22nd Oct – 4 on 20th Nov – 2 on 3rd Dec (RJM).

Long-tailed Tit (<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>)

Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.

Commonly recorded throughout the island, the largest count reported was 27 at Fermain on 9th Nov (LT).

Blue Tit (<i>Parus caeruleus</i>)
--

Very common resident breeding species.

Very commonly seen throughout, but no large flocks were reported.

Great Tit (<i>Parus major</i>)

Very common resident breeding species.

Very commonly seen throughout, but no large flocks were reported.

Short-toed Treecreeper (<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>)
--

Common resident breeding species.

Commonly seen in suitable habitat. Seven were counted in Saumarez Park on 12th Apr (RJM).

Golden Oriole (<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>)

1 record of 2 birds

Scarce to rare spring migrant

This species is notable by the fact that many of the records are of two birds together.
2, behind Imperial Hotel, Pleinmont, 16th May (CMK)

Magpie (<i>Pica pica</i>)

Very common resident breeding species.

Very commonly seen throughout, but no large flocks were reported.

Jackdaw (<i>Corvus monedula</i>)

4+ birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently rare breeder.

Up to four were seen throughout the year on, or near the South Cliffs, mainly between Pleinmont and Les Tielles. This indicates probably one pair breeding. There were a few reports of birds wandering inland, including sightings in the crow flocks in the Fauxquets Valley.

Carrion Crow (<i>Corvus corone</i>)
--

Very common resident breeding species.

Very commonly seen throughout. Often, large flocks of over 100 built up, especially in the central valleys.

Raven (<i>Corvus corax</i>)

c.10 birds

Uncommon resident breeding species.

A pair bred on Herm producing 4 young, but there was no report of how successful the usual pair at Les Tielles. Birds wandered widely all over the island, and flock sizes of 6 were not uncommon, although the juvenile birds seemed to leave the island in the autumn.

Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)

Very common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Flocks of up to 1000 were not uncommon in winter, with equally large migrant flocks passing through the island in the autumn.

Rose-coloured Starling (<i>Sturnus roseus</i>)	2 records
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Rare autumn passage migrant – 14 previous records.

A juvenile bird was found in fields and gardens at L'Eree on 17th Sep, but stayed for only a short time (J.Hooper). It was probably seen at L'Ancrese the previous day.

Another juvenile stayed in the L'Islet and Sandy Hook Bay area of Grandes Havres between 27th and 29th Sep (A.J.Bisson).

House Sparrow (<i>Passer domesticus</i>)

Common resident breeding species.

Commonly seen throughout, but no large flocks were reported.

Chaffinch (<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>)

Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly recorded all year, with an increase in numbers during the migration and winter periods. 200 were counted at Rue de la Corderie on 27th Oct (LT).

Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>)	7 records of 9 birds
--	-----------------------------

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

No spring migrants were noted this year, except perhaps the male in March.

1 female, Green Lanes, 31st Jan to 21st Mar, joined by a male in March (LT) – 1 female, trapped at Les Damouettes Lane, 21st Mar (TJB) - 2, Pleimont, 15th Oct (MAG) – 1, Reservoir, 20th Oct (LT) – 2, Rue de la Cordiere, 27th Oct – 1, Mount Row, 27th Nov (MAG) – 1 male, Les Landes, 3rd Dec (JMA).

Serin (<i>Serinus serinus</i>)	9 records of 11 birds
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Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor. Has bred on occasion.

The total of 11 birds is probably the best ever year, and it included a couple of longer-stayers, and also pairs and singing birds. It is perhaps surprising that no evidence of breeding was discovered.

1, over Pleimont, 2nd Apr (WRT) – 1, over L'Eree, 6th Apr (WRT) – 1, Herm, 8th Apr (sev)– pair, Les Caches, 21st Apr to 4th Jun (BGW) – 1, Saumarez Park, 21st to 27th Apr (LT,RJM) – pair, Pleimont, 30th Apr (MPL) – 1, Pleimont, 9th May (DL) – 1, Claire Mare, 20th May (MAG) – 1, over L'Eree, 6th Jul (WRT).

Greenfinch (<i>Carduelis chloris</i>)
--

Common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Commonly recorded, with flocks of up to 40 present throughout the year.

Goldfinch (<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>)

Common resident breeding species and passage migrant. Less in winter.

Commonly recorded with flocks of up to 50 present throughout the year. Most common during autumn migration, and least common in mid-winter.

Siskin (<i>Carduelis spinus</i>)

Scarce to uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Present at the traditional site of Dell Nursery at the start of the year, with up to 10 seen until 12th Mar. Also up to 6 were at Saumarez Park from February until 20th Mar. Other early records were from the Reservoir, Mare de Carteret and La Petite Vallette, totalling 11 birds. There was some autumn passage, with flocks of up to 20 at Pleinmont, Silbe and Dell Nursery, between 10th Oct and 4th Nov. The first of these were 2 at Vaux de Monel (LT, RJM). There was a final flurry of sightings in the final week of the year with 30 at Dell Nursery, 10 at Mare de Carteret, and 20 at Saumarez Park.

Linnet (<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>)
--

Common resident breeding species and passage migrant. Less in winter.

Commonly recorded, with flocks of up to 200 reported throughout the year but less common during the mid-winter.

Lesser Redpoll (<i>Carduelis cabaret</i>)
--

2 records of 5 birds

Scarce to rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

A very difficult species to catch up with on the island. Both records assumed to be this species of redpoll. 1, over Pleinmont, 24th Aug (WRT) – 4, over Pleinmont, 22nd Oct (WRT,MAG,CJM).

Crossbill (<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>)

1 record of 4 birds

Scarce irregular migrant.

These birds showed well in pine trees, but were not part of a large influx. 1 male and 3 females, Saumarez Park, 2nd and 3rd Mar.

Bullfinch (<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>)

Uncommon resident breeding species.

Widely reported in small numbers. Up to 10 birds seen at various sites throughout the year.

Lapland Bunting (<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>)
--

4 records of 5 birds

Scarce autumn passage migrant, rare winter visitor.

Quite a good year for the species, the December bird was exceptionally tame.

1, Fort le Crocq, 26th Sep (MAJR) – 1, Pleinmont, 1st to 3rd Oct (WRT) – 2, Mont Herault, 15th Oct (MPL, WRT, CJM) – 1 first-winter, Pulias Headland, 7th to 13th Dec (VEF, RAF, MPL).

1st-winter Lapland Bunting – Pulias – Barry Wells



Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)**6 records of 9 birds**

Scarce to uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

Less common recently, but plenty of sightings this autumn.

1, Pleinmont, 20th Oct (DL) – 1, Rousse, 22nd to 26th Oct (LT, MPL) – 3, Rousse, then Pulias Headland, 12th to 25th Nov – 1, Vazon, 19th Nov – 2, Grandes Rocques, 30th Nov (LT) – 1, Shingle Bank, 29th Dec (BGW).



Snow Bunting – Shingle Bank – Barry Wells

Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)**4 records**

Scarce passage migrant. Formerly resident breeding species.

These four birds are the first seen on the island since 1997.

1, Chouet, 2nd Apr (MAG) – 1, Herm, 8th Apr (WRT, MAG, CJM, MPL) – 1, Pleinmont, 14th May (CJM et al) – 1, Mont Herault, 6th Oct (MAG).

Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)**2 records of 6 birds**

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

Five together is exceptional, although this also occurred in Sep 1978 and Sep 1993.

1, Pleinmont, 20th Aug (RJM, LT) – 5, Pleinmont, 25th and 26th Aug, with one to 28th (WRT, DIS)

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)**9 records of 13 birds**

Uncommon resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Sometimes breeds.

A typically irregular selection of records – no evidence of breeding this year.

Records from Claire Mare were as follows – 2, 1st Jan – 1 male, 11th Mar (MPL) – 1 female, 2nd to 7th Apr (RJM) – a pair, 28th Apr (LT) – a pair, 3rd and 4th Nov – 1 male, 24th Dec.

There were other records – 1 female, Grande Pre, 13th Nov (GDA) – 2 females, Rue des Bergers, 23rd and 24th Dec – 1 female, Reservoir, 24th Dec (MAG).

Black-headed Bunting (*Emberiza melanocephala*)**1 record**

Vagrant – one previous record.

A first-summer male bird frequented a garden at La Rocquette, Castel from 21st to 23rd June (R.R.Cave). The record was part of a small influx into the UK but unfortunately the bird was not available to be seen by most birders.



Black-headed Bunting – La Rocquette, Castel - Vic Froome

ESCAPES AND EXOTICA

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

Two birds were at large at the start of the year, mainly at the Reservoir, and at least one bird continued to be seen at various sites until the end of the year.

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

20+ feral birds commuted between Marais Nord and Barras Lane fields during the year.

Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)

40+ feral birds, including many farmyard and hybrids, spent most of their time at the Old Aerodrome.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

Small flocks commuted between Marais Nord, Vale Pond and Barras Lane fields during the year.

Mandarin (*Aix galericulata*)

One male at the Reservoir on 4th Nov (MPL).

Chiloe Wigeon (*Anas sibilatrix*)

One male at the Reservoir on a few dates during July and August (SGB, MPL)

Speckled Teal (*Anas flavirostris*)

One bird on Pulias Pond on 19th Aug (MPL).

Ring-necked/Alexandrine Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri/eupatria*)

A parakeet, reported as either of the above species, was seen at various sites around the north of the island during the year (MAJR, MPL, RJM).

List of Observers mentioned in the systematic list

DJRA	David Andrews
GDA	Geoff Atkinson
JMA	Joan Anderson
PWA	Phil Atkinson
AJB	Tony Bisson
CFB	Chris Brown
SGB	Steve Brooks
TJB	Trevor Bourgaize
MC	Mike Cave
RRC	Ralph Cave
PAC	Pauline Chapman
VEF	Vic Froome
AG	Tony Grange
MAG	Mark Guppy
IH	Ian Hall
JH	Jamie Hooper
BK	Barbara Kendall
CMK	Catherine Kinnersly
DL	Dave Laurent
MPL	Mark Lawlor
RAL	Rob Lihou
CJM	Chris Mourant
JMM	Julian Medland
LM	Liz MacIntyre
RJM	Bob Murphy
NBP	N. B. Peet
MAJR	Mike Rogers
AS	Anne Seebeck
DIS	Dave Smith
WS	Win Symons
LAT	Laurie Terry
LT	Liz Thomson
WRT	Wayne Turner
PKV	Paul Veron
BGW	Barry Wells
P+VW	Pat and Vera Webb

sev Several people were present at the time the bird appeared

Plus thanks to all other observers who contributed records used in this report.

WADER COUNT DATA

Table showing the total number of selected waders at Guernsey coastal sites during 2000
(taken from the monthly Wetland Bird Survey)

Compiled by the present wader count co-ordinator, Wayne Turner

Date of count	Oystercatcher	Ringed Plover	Golden Plover	Grey Plover	Sanderling	Purple Sandpiper	Dunlin	Bar-tailed Godwit	Whimbrel	Curlew	Redshank	Turnstone	Uncounted Sectors
09-Jan	492	54	40	108	26	-	140	2	2	73	13	109	1
06-Feb	540	74	41	104	-	-	117	1	-	75	26	143	1
05-Mar	421	17	-	109	10	-	68	-	-	57	25	79	2
02-Apr	341	16	-	16	6	-	3	2	-	6	2	111	1
07-May	164	119	-	9	94	3	678	12	26	3	7	132	0
04-Jun	274	10	-	-	3	-	6	-	-	2	-	-	0
30-Jul	372	13	-	6	4	-	5	-	3	61	15	35	0
13-Aug	515	121	-	22	3	-	39	-	2	53	16	86	0
17-Sep	774	125	1	47	17	-	27	1	-	69	10	265	0
29-Oct	516	51	30	92	5	-	13	-	-	125	10	68	0
12-Nov	1041	130	-	124	21	1	155	-	-	82	19	158	1
17-Dec	651	125	4	141	38	1	118	-	-	82	9	256	0

Contributors:- Tony Grange / Wayne Turner (Local Organisers).

Pat & Vera Webb, Queenie Guillemette / Steve Brooks, Bob Murphy, Liz Burrard,
John Aslett, Julian Medland, Griff Caldwell / Mary Simmons, Tony Bisson, Pete
Vaudin, Wayne Turner (Sector Counters).

Vic Froome, Tony Grange, Mark Guppy, Chris Maurant, Anne Seebeck, Liz
Thomson (Relief Counters).

SEAWATCHING LOG

The table below shows seabird passage off Jaonneuse Point, Vale during Autumn 2000.

Compiled by Wayne Turner.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Wind Direction</i>	<i>No. of hrs watched</i>	Sooty Shearwater	Manx Shearwater	Balearic Shearwater	Pomarine Skua	Arctic Skua	Long-tailed Skua	Great Skua	<i>Unidentified skua sp.</i>	Sandwich Tern	Common /Arctic Tern	Black Tern
12/8	NW1	2.5			1	2	10				2	21	
19/8	WSW3	3.5		3			2				14	25	
20/8	NNW2	4	3	1	2		33			9	13	64	
26/8	WNW4	2									14	5	1
27/8	W4	2	1	1	1		1		1		2		
28/8	W3	1.5									6	10	
2/9	WNW4	2.5	2	1					1		12		
3/9	NE3	2.5	1	3		2	9		6	2	22	14	6
16/9	WNW4	2.5					1				10	2	
17/9	W3	3	1	2	1	1	12		1		13	2	
2/10	WNW6	3.5	3	1			3		2		5	1	
4/10	W4	3.5	11	1			1	1	3		12		
5/10	WNW4	3	32	1						1	3		
6/10	NW4	5.5	352	6			1		9	2	15		2
7/10	W3	2	3								6		
8/10	WNW4	7.5	127	1	1	2	7	1	9		2		
13/10	WNW4	0.5									1		
14/10	WSW2	1.75	1								2		
21/10	NNW3	2.75	1				1		1				
4/11	WNW4	2	1										
Totals		58	539	21	6	7	81	2	33	14	154	144	9

RARITY DESCRIPTIONS

FAN-TAILED WARBLER - Claire Mare NR – 1st January 2000

I was doing my usual New Year birding, carefully noting down my year list, and I went into the hide at Claire Mare. The sun was shining and the small birds were showing well in the reedbed. I spent most of the time watching 4 wintering Chiffchaffs feeding in the reeds.

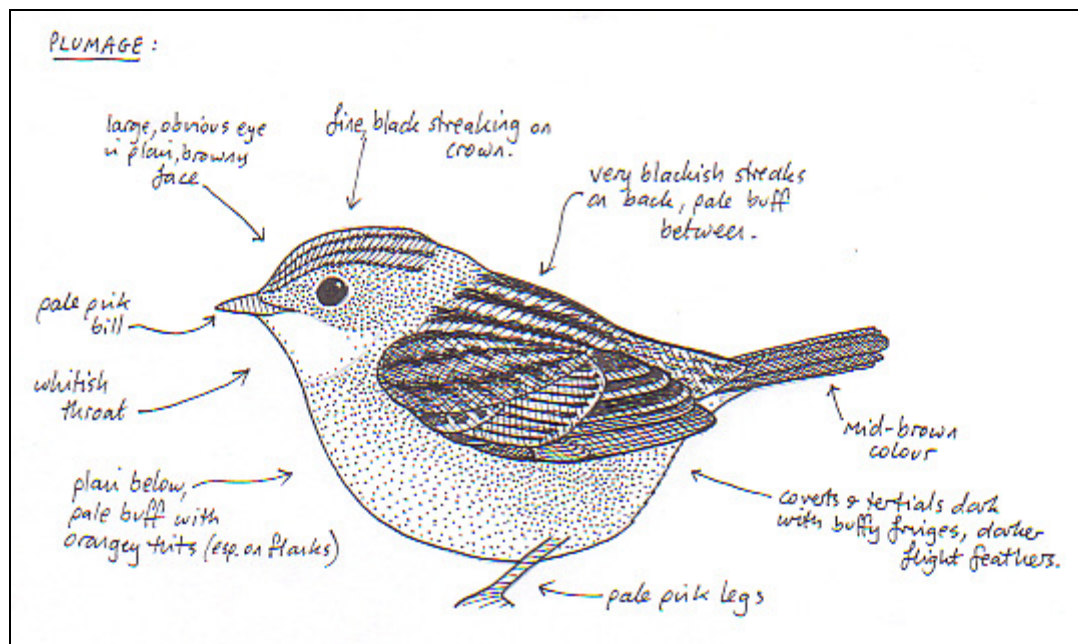
At about 11 o'clock, all the Chiffchaffs were feeding in together in the thin strip of reeds along the east side of the pool. I then had a split-second view of a small, sandy bird feeding with the Chiffchaffs. It popped back deep into the base of the reeds, and as it was clearly smaller than the Chiffchaffs, I thought perhaps it was a funny 'crest.

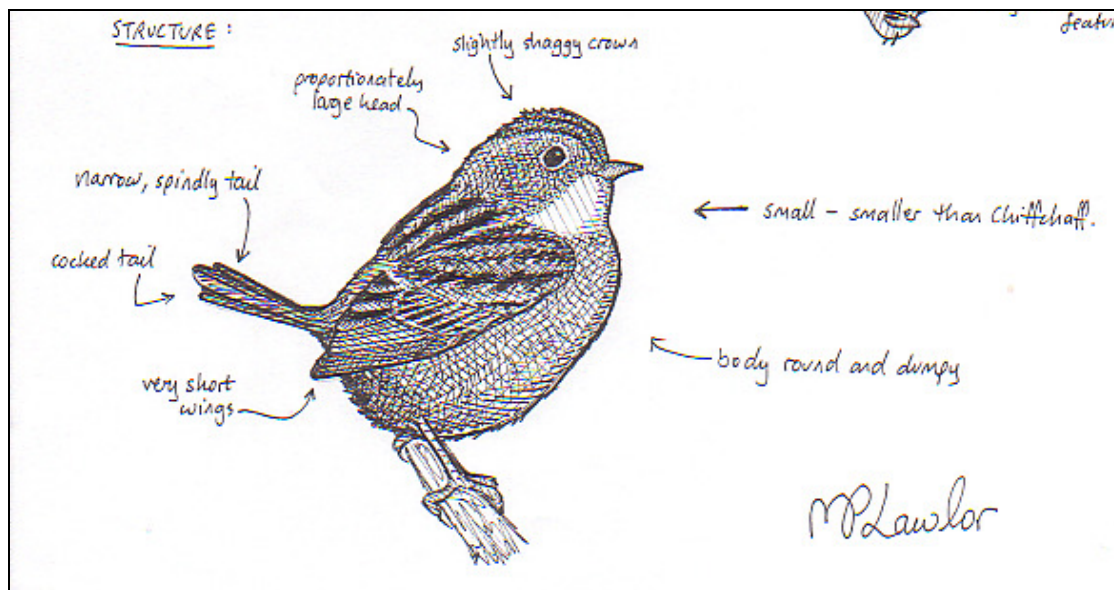
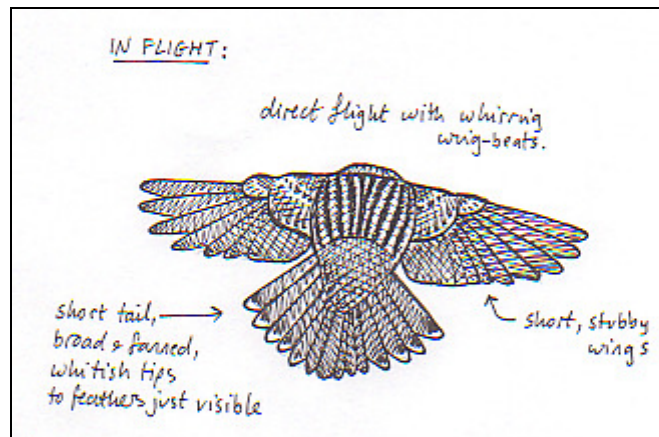
I waited a couple of minutes and the bird popped out again briefly. This time, I noted that it was certainly not a 'crest as it has a blackish-streaked back. I strongly suspected Fan-tailed Warbler but I had only distant bins-only views. I ran back to the car to collect my 'scope. At the car park, Chris Maurant had just arrived, and I told him that I had a probable Fan-tailed Warbler. He had his mobile phone with him and so he began to phone around the news.

After a short time, there were five birders in the hide waiting for the bird to show. Wayne Turner suddenly spotted a small bird zip across the water and land in the spot of the original sighting. Luckily, it climbed to the top of a reed stem and stood there for about a minute. 'Scope views quickly confirmed the identification, with all five of us getting good views.

It began to feed low down, deep in the bases of the reeds for a few minutes, before suddenly flying to the back of the pool by the far hide. A few other birders saw it distantly as it kept flying up above the reeds, but it soon disappeared. After midday, it was not seen again.

Description





Mark Lawlor

LITTLE SWIFT – Claire Mare NR – 22nd April 2000

On the way back from birding at Pleinmont with David Andrews, we decided to visit the hide at Claire Mare NR in order to check the sightings logbook for anything interesting. We had been aware all morning that a heavy hirundine passage was under way, with good numbers of Swallows and Sand Martins heading north. It wasn't a surprise to us, therefore, that there were dozens of these birds hawking insects over the scrape, reedbed and surrounding fields at the reserve on arrival.

David checked the book and I remarked on the sheer numbers of Swallows and Sand Martins present. David added that there was also a House Martin amongst them. I hadn't yet seen this particular bird and mused the possibility of it being a Red-rumped Swallow and locked onto it through my bins as it flew away from us. Nope, the rump was definitely white, but as the bird banked left something didn't ring true. This 'House Martin' was black underneath.

At this stage, the information reaching my brain was not computing. Melanistic House Martin went through my mind, but then, as it flew low over the reeds and banked, I could see its sickle-shaped wings, and it dawned on me that this was a small swift. By now I had three key identification features: a small swift, with a white rump and a square tail. Not being familiar with any of the rarer species of swift that have occurred in the British Isles, other than Alpine and Pallid, I could only think of Needle-tailed. Thus, it was this species I initially plumped for.

David volunteered to run down the boardwalk to the second hide to fetch Catherine Kinnersly who we knew was ringing there. Meanwhile, I ran back up the access lane in an attempt to flag down Barry Wells that we had just seen getting into his car ten minutes before. There was no sign of Barry, so on David's return and Catherine's arrival, we relocated the bird, still hawking insects close by. From Catherine's mobile, we now contacted Jamie Hooper and Barry. Catherine also had a field guide in her rucksack, and reading this we discovered that the bird was clearly a Little Swift, rather than a Needle-tailed. Jamie and Barry arrived, and also Pauline Chapman and Steve Brooks, who were passing, and for the next few minutes the swift afforded all of us excellent views. Barry's admirable camcorder skills allowed him to obtain a few seconds of footage.

After a few minutes, it started flying a larger circuit of the reedbed, and then another, and finally flew off strongly to the north-west and out to sea, gaining height as it did so.

Description

Size: A small swift, only slightly larger than Swallow/House Martin. More compact-looking than Common Swift, and only three-quarters its size.

Head: The dark eye-mask, bordered above by a paler forehead and below by a paler throat (see underparts), gave the bird a facial appearance typical of a swift.

Wings: Long, narrow, swept back and sickle-shaped.

Tail: Short and square.

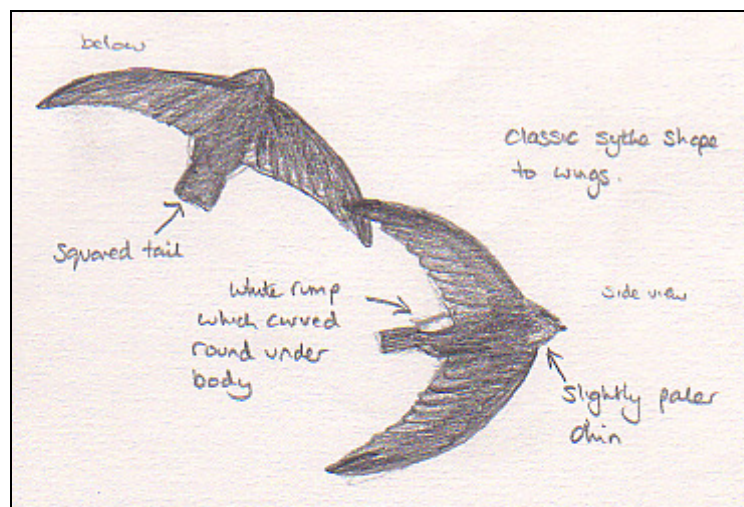
Upperparts: All dark charcoal grey, except for very broad, square white rump, which combined with the square tail was vaguely reminiscent of a Storm Petrel. The rump appeared particularly full, raised and bulbous compared with House Martin.

Underparts: All dark charcoal grey, with even darker-looking axillaries and underwing coverts. The exception being the throat which was diffusely pale buff (certainly not white or clean-cut). The wrap-around effect of the white rump meant that this feature too was still noticeable at the sides from below.

Flight action: Smooth gliding arcs over terrain, interspersed with fast, stiff, shallow wingbeats and banking. Rarely exceeding a height above 10 metres. As it turned out, there were a couple of House Martins also at the site at the same time, but the swift was never difficult to pick out from any of the hirundine species present, due to its size, shape and flight action.

Behaviour: The swift only ever loosely associated with the other hawking birds in the vicinity, obviously just taking advantage of the same food source, and it departed alone. Total viewing time, twenty minutes.

Wayne Turner



sketches by Catherine Kinnersly

BLACK-HEADED BUNTING – La Rocquette, Vazon – 21st to 23rd June 2000

During the early evening of Wednesday 21st June, I received a telephone call from Ralph Cave, a work colleague and birdwatcher, asking me if I was able to identify an unusual bird he and his wife had been watching in his garden on and off all afternoon. It was in the company of House Sparrows and Chaffinches. He described it as a slightly larger, stocky-looking bird, with creamy-yellow underparts, warm-brown upperparts and a black head with paler feathers intermingled, the black extending under the eye but not under the chin. I told him that it sounded like he had Guernsey's second ever Black-headed Bunting in his garden! Probably a first-summer male. The first was on the remarkably similar dates of 19th to 22nd June 1993.

Unfortunately, due a family commitment, I was unable to visit that evening despite an invitation to see the bird. He did assure me that he had good camcorder footage of it. Fortunately, the bird was still present the next day and I paid a visit after work. Following a nervous 10 minute wait, it reappeared and performed admirably in front of Ralph and I for the remaining quarter of an hour I was able to stay. Vic Froome had watched it an hour earlier with Ralph. Regrettably a twitch was not an option due to the garden's private, enclosed nature.

Description

Head: Solid-looking, long, bluey-grey 'seed-eater' bill. Black eye. Black 'hood', solid black on forehead and forecrown, but flecked brown on rear part of crown and above and below eye.

Upperparts: Nape, mantle and scapulars warm rufous 'yellowhammer-brown' and slightly streaked on mantle and scapulars. Buff edges to coverts and remiges which were a darker brown, with more whitish tips to secondaries and inner median coverts. Yellow of underparts stretched up in a narrow band towards the nape, giving the bird a semi-collared appearance.

Underparts: Plain bright yellow. Slightly washed-out at sides of throat and on flanks and undertail coverts. A distinct line of more whitish-yellow between black of hood and throat, and at sides of bill. Rufous brown at sides of upper breast. Pale yellow rump streaked brown.

Tail: Long, dark-brown tail feathers with buffy edges, arranged in a 'layered' fashion.

Legs: pale pink.

Behaviour: I only saw the bird feeding on bird seed laid out on the lawn. It was seen by Ralph on the bird table also. It hopped around, warily looking up with its head half-tilted and using its bill to extract seeds from their husks.

The weather over the weekend 17th/18th June had been extremely warm (temperatures in the 80's) and fresh south-easterly winds predominated throughout. With high pressure stretching all the way down to SE Europe it seems likely that the bunting arrived as a result of these 'overshooting' conditions.

Wayne Turner

GRIFFON VULTURE – La Grande Mare/Pleinmont/Prevote – 24th to 27th August 2000

After a successful morning's birding with David Andrews at Pleinmont (Wryneck, Melodious Warbler, Pied Flycatchers etc.) we made our way towards the Fauxquets Valley to see if any birds of prey had arrived on the stiff easterly winds of the preceding days. We were aware that a Griffon Vulture had been claimed over Little Sark on the 22nd and surmised that if it was true, and if it island hopped to Guernsey, it would be attracted to the Fauxquets Valley, like most large raptors tend to be. We joked about seeing the vulture, and the evening before I had even revised the ID features of Griffon Vulture on video.

On our way to the valley at about 12:30 pm, we popped into the hide at the Rue des Bergers NR as it was en route. Inside was Lawrie Terry who we sat alongside. At 12:40, the gulls in the area became airborne en masse and a propelled aircraft flew over. I mentioned that the gulls in the air meant that either the plane had upset them or a large raptor was nearby, half-jokingly adding "perhaps it's the Griffon Vulture!". With

the naked eye I saw a large bird of prey circling on shallow 'V-shaped' wings over La Grande Mare Golf Course. On raising my binoculars to my eyes, I straight away saw the unmistakable shape of a vulture and said "It is, it's the Griffon Vulture!".

I got the other two onto the bird, and ran back to my car to extract my telescope from the boot. I set it up and we all watched the bird for about 20 minutes slowly soaring at a height of only a few hundred feet over the golf course, gradually drifting south. I rang a few birders who were most likely to be able to get there quickly as I was unsure how long the bird was going to stay.

Jamie Hooper managed to catch the bird as it flew over the road at the Richmond end of Vazon. It then drifted towards L'Eree, taking the same route as the White Storks had done in spring. Tony Bisson and Chris Mourant arrived at Rue des Bergers, missing the bird by a few minutes, and we all made haste to the Shingle Bank to search for the bird. There was no news initially, then Jamie phoned through a report that he could see the bird over Pleinmont. It had headed out over the Hanois Lighthouse but had lost heart and returned to Guernsey, alighting on the cliff edge near the ruined Pleinmont Watch House in full view! We all had stunning views.

It remained perched there for about 15 minutes before taking off and flying east along the coast at cliff top height. We managed to track the bird, using cars and mobiles, as far as La Prevote where Barry Wells was able to take camcorder footage. It alighted again on the cliffs and was seen there on and off until dusk, despite flying out to sea on occasion. It roosted on the cliffs overnight and was seen a few times for the next few days.

Description

Size: A quite simply HUGE raptor. When soaring it was often accompanied by a flock of attendant gulls, all of which it dwarfed, including Greater Black-backed. The gulls shadowed the bird by circling nearby, but always kept a respectful distance.

Flight action: Soared on wings held in a shallow V-shape, with very long primaries which curved upwards towards the tips. It very rarely had to beat its wings to maintain height or change direction, but when it did, it was slow, deep and very often only a single flap. When gliding the shape of the wings, created by the bend in the wing being pressed forward, gave a jizz reminiscent of a gliding Rough-legged Buzzard.

Wings: The wings were very wide indeed, and at a distance, appeared almost oblong in shape. This, combined with a small head protrusion and short, fanned tail, when soaring gave an unmistakable and unforgettable vulture silhouette. The primaries were long, narrow and 'gappy' looking. At certain angles the inner primaries looked marginally longer and better defined than the outer primaries and outer secondaries, perhaps suggestive of having been moulted(?). The secondaries bulged on the outstretched wing, but showed a symmetrical 'saw-toothed' pattern along the trailing edge. At rest, the folded wings gave the impression that the bird had what I can only describe as a giant native american shawl over it.

Head: Whitish, bald-looking head. Dark iris. Large, full bill, dark flint-grey in colour with a paler grey culmen, fading to horn at the tip.

Neck: Retracted in flight, but at rest long. 'Shaven-looking' and whitish, with a crook in it. Buff-brown ruff.

Upperparts: Very worn, almost ragged, sandy-brown greater coverts, some feathers with tips that were visibly pointed. The contrast between the dark brown remiges and retrices and the light brown upperwing coverts was striking even at very long distances, particularly in bright sunlight.

Underparts: Body buff brown. In flight, paler underwing coverts contrasted only slightly with dark brown remiges and retrices, the lightest area being a greater covert bar along the middle of the underwings.

Legs: Both legs and feet were a steel grey.

The vulture bore no rings, had no missing remiges or retrices, and showed no obvious plumage aberrations.

Wayne Turner

LIST OF SPECIES REQUIRING A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION

If you see any of the following species, please fill in a rarity form, write a full description and send it to the recorder. If you need a form, contact the recorder.

Cory's Shearwater
Great Shearwater
Leach's Petrel
American Bittern
Little Bittern
Night Heron
Green Heron
Squacco Heron
Cattle Egret
Great White Egret
Black Stork
White Stork
Spoonbill
Mute Swan
Bewick's Swan
Whooper Swan
Bean Goose
Pink-footed Goose
White-fronted Goose (wild)
Greylag Goose (wild)
Canada Goose
Barnacle Goose (wild)
American Wigeon
Scaup
Long-tailed Duck
Velvet Scoter
Smew
Black Kite
Red Kite
White-tailed Eagle
Griffon Vulture
Montagu's Harrier
Goshawk
Rough-legged Buzzard
Red-footed Falcon
Gyrfalcon
Quail
Spotted Crake
Corncrake
Crane
Little Bustard
Black-winged Stilt
Stone Curlew
Kentish Plover
Temminck's Stint
Pectoral Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper
Wilson's Phalarope
Red-necked Phalarope

Long-tailed Skua
Sabine's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Iceland Gull
Glaucous Gull
Roseate Tern
White-winged Black Tern
Little Auk
Pallas's Sandgrouse
Great Spotted Cuckoo
Snowy Owl
Tawny Owl
Nightjar
Alpine Swift
Little Swift
Bee-eater
Roller
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Short-toed Lark
Woodlark
Shorelark
Red-rumped Swallow
Water Pipit
Citrine Wagtail
Waxwing
Dipper
Alpine Accentor
Nightingale
Bluethroat
Black-eared Wheatear
Desert Wheatear
Fan-tailed Warbler
Savi's Warbler
Aquatic Warbler (untrapped)
Paddyfield Warbler
Marsh Warbler
Great Reed Warbler
Icterine Warbler
Subalpine Warbler
Sardinian Warbler
Barred Warbler
Greenish Warbler
Pallas's Warbler
Dusky Warbler
Western Bonelli's Warbler
Red-breasted Flycatcher
Treetreeper
Penduline Tit
Red-backed Shrike
Woodchat Shrike
Jay
Chough

Rose-coloured Starling
Tree Sparrow
Common Rosefinch
Hawfinch
Cirl Bunting
Little Bunting
Yellow-breasted Bunting
Black-headed Bunting
Corn Bunting
Rose-breasted Grosbeak

plus

any species that has not occurred in Guernsey before

plus

any record that is well out of season (eg summer visitor sighted in mid-winter). Check with the recorder if unsure.

GAZETTEER

All the main birdwatching sites on the island – see the map for approx. locations.

BAYS		Other sites	
A	Pezeries	1	Pleinmont
B	Portelet	2	Lihou
C	Rocquaine	3	Lihou Headland/Fort Saumarez
D	L'Eree	4	L'Eree Aerodrome
E	'Shingle Bank'	5	Claire Mare NR
F	Perelle	6	Fort le Crocq
G	Vazon	7	Richmond
H	Albecq	8	Fort Hommet
I	Cobo	9	Le Guet
J	Grandes Rocques	10	Mare de Carteret
K	Port Soif	11	Pulias Pond
L	Portinfer	12	Rousse
M	Pecqueries	13	Vale Pond
N	Port Grat	14	L'Ancrese Common & Golf Course
O	Grandes Havres	15	Chouet
P	Pembroke/L'Ancrese	16	Fort le Marchant
Q	Jaonneuse	17	Fort Doyle
R	Fontenelle	18	Le Miellette
S	Bordeaux	19	Marais Nord
T	Belle Greve	20	Grand Pre
U	Havelet	21	St. Sampsons Harbour
V	Fermain	22	Track Marais
W	Petit Port	23	Town Harbour
X	Moulin Huet	24	Bouvee
Y	Saints	25	Jerbouurg Pt.
Z	Petit Bot	26	Icart Point
		27	Airport
		28	Le Gouffre
		29	Le Bigard
		30	Corbiere
		31	Prevote
		32	Les Tielles
		33	Mont Herault
		34	Silbe NR
		35	The Reservoir (St. Saviours)
		36	Grande Mare (inc. Golf Course)
		37	Rue des Bergers NR
		38	Fauxquets Valley
		39	Talbot Valley
		40	Saumarez Park
		41	Heritage Walk
		42	Vingtaine de l'Epine
		43	Barras Lane Fields
		44	Longue Hougue Reservoir
		45	Juas Reservoir
		46	Paradis Quarry
		47	Gallotin Quarry
		48	Les Ammareurs
		49	Dell Nursery
		50	Petit Bot Valley

LOCATIONS OF MAIN BIRDING SITES

(see key on previous page for code letters/numbers)

