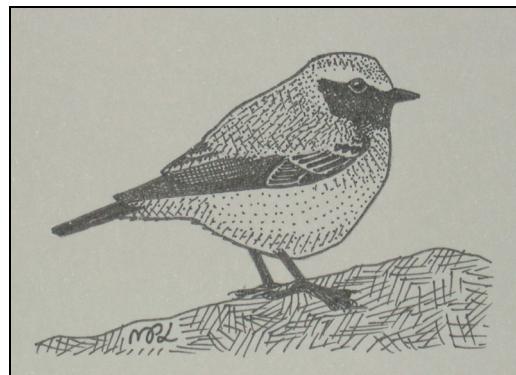


# GUERNSEY BIRD REPORT

2002



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***EDITOR - MARK LAWLOR***

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

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## **Editorial**

This is the third year that I have written a full systematic bird report for Guernsey, but 2002 is the first year that I have been recorder for. There has always been an excellent summary of the ornithological year published in the yearly Transactions of La Societe Guernesiaise, including an official 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 Guernsey Bird News website [[www.geocities.com/mplawlor/Guernseybirdnews](http://www.geocities.com/mplawlor/Guernseybirdnews)], 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 – Mike Bairds and Steve Brooks. Also thanks to Wayne Turner for supplying wader count and seawatching data, and Margaret Austin for providing ringing data.

The structure of the report tries to follow the general accepted format. However, the systematic list has changed order since last year due to recommendations of the BOU, and we are following the list that they publish (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 some of the records as they are listed in the bird news and database as "SEV" indicating they have been reported by several observers

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

Records for 2003 and beyond should be submitted to myself, the recorder, at the address below.

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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**

## **Summary of the year**

During 2002, there were many improvements made for the island's birdwatchers. The main one was construction of the excellent seawatching hide at Chouet, which will be very useful for when the weather is poor. Instead of clinging to the rocks at Jaoenneuse during a howling northwesterly, birdwatchers can now observe seabird migration in relative comfort. Bird recording continues to become computerised with the Wader Count data being the latest to be stored electronically. This mountain of figures gained from years of counting shorebirds was sent to England to be inputted and the job has been quickly completed. Such information will eventually be stored at the new records centre for La Societe Guernsiaise along with all the existing data.

2002 was a frustrating year for birdwatchers, as many of the rarer sightings did not stick around for very long. Luckily the last quarter of the year made up for this, as the birds stayed for longer. There were no 'firsts' for Guernsey recorded in 2002 but there were two 'seconds' – Roseate Tern and Desert Wheatear. The total number of species recorded on the island did increase to 307 however. This was because of Hooded Crow being given full species status this year.

### **JANUARY**

The start of January was cold, with an icy wind blowing from the east. When the temperature on the continent falls, birds may be forced further west where it is slightly warmer. A few of these birds will often arrive on Guernsey. Species involved in this movement during January included two **Common Buzzards**, a few **Little Gulls**, a **Jack Snipe** and good numbers of **Redwing**. The highlight though was a **Bittern** which spent the afternoon of the 3<sup>rd</sup> at Rue des Bergers, showing well at times. Although quite hardy birds, Bitterns will leave their reedbed wintering grounds when they become frozen, as they are not able to feed well.

During this time, there were other good birds to be seen which were leftovers from the end of 2001. The rarest of these was the **American Green-winged Teal** at Claire Mare, which reappeared on New Year's Day after not being seen for three weeks. A **Black-necked Grebe** continued to be seen in Grandes Havres, the young **Hen Harrier** was still hunting the fields of Herm and "Droopy" the **Glaucous Gull** loafed around the Town Harbour most days.

The biggest surprise of January was a **Wryneck** found in a birder's garden on the 12<sup>th</sup>. This small woodpecker is not a rarity on the island (a handful are seen every autumn) but in mid-January it should actually be sunning itself in Africa – not shivering in St. Sampsons! Because their diet consists of insects, wintering Wrynecks have only ever been seen on 2 or 3 occasions in Northern Europe. Local birders enjoyed this one-off sighting and it was last seen on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Another unusual wintering bird was a **Willow Warbler** seen in St. Peter Port on 27<sup>th</sup>, which is another example of summer birds being recorded in winter.

The rest of the month consisted of numerous fronts rolling in from the Atlantic, with heavy rain and strong winds. These conditions can blow birds in, but sensible birders keep indoors, so little new was found.

### **FEBRUARY**

During February there was little change in the weather, resulting in few new birds being found. There were a few more sunny days though – for example the 17<sup>th</sup>, when a **Marsh Harrier** drifted into Herm. A large skua, probably a Great, was observed chasing gulls in the Little Russell on 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Bearded Tits** became popular at the Claire Mare NR, with two pairs showing well in the reedbed. A **Serin** visited feeders in a garden at Rocquaine and **Siskin** numbers built up in Saumarez Park.

The first sign of summer was a lone **Wheatear**, which was seen by the roadside at Icart Point on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **MARCH**

March started with cold winds arriving from the continent which were not conducive for early migration. This brought in a few grebes with a **Red-necked** and 4 **Slavonian Grebes** together in Belle Greve Bay on 3<sup>rd</sup>. One of the highlights during this time was watching male **Siskins** singing out in the open in Saumarez Park. A male **Cetti's Warbler** set up territory at Rue des Bergers mid-month and could regularly be heard singing during the whole spring. The pair of **Ravens** on Herm were again successful, with 3 chicks present in the nest before the end of the month.

After a week or so, there began a period of southerly winds, coinciding with heavy rain showers and these grounded many **Wheatear** on their way north. At least 50 birds were on the Old Aerodrome on 15<sup>th</sup> – a very high count for such an early date. Other birds caught up with the weather system included a **Marsh Harrier** passing through the Vale, a **Hoopoe**, and a **Serin** visiting a garden along the south coast. Also 5 early **House Martins** were sighted amongst the returning **Sand Martins** trickling through.

The last half of the month was sunnier and milder with less wind, but the clear nights meant that migrants simply by-passed Guernsey on their way north. Although numbers of migrants were very low, a few good birds were recorded. Two more **Hoopes** were reported, another **Marsh Harrier** went over La Grande Mare and the first **Whimbrel** and **Willow Warbler** were seen on 26th. An unusual occurrence was a small influx of **Ruff**, a scarce bird in recent years. After one at Grande Mare on 24<sup>th</sup>, another appeared at Claire Mare the same day. At this latter site, two birds were present by 29<sup>th</sup>, with a third joining them by 30<sup>th</sup>. Only a handful of **Swallows** had been noted before the turn of the month.

## APRIL

Poor weather further south in Europe during the first week of the month meant that only a trickle of summer migrants were noted at this time. On 8<sup>th</sup> however, conditions improved and migrants including **Marsh Harrier**, **Redstart** and **Ring Ouzel** suddenly appeared at Pleinmont and elsewhere. During the next few weeks, passage increased and most expected species were recorded, along with a few more uncommon species. A **Little Ringed Plover** was on L'Eree Aerodrome from 8<sup>th</sup> increasing to 2 birds at Claire Mare on 19<sup>th</sup>. The **Green-winged Teal** was seen here until 16<sup>th</sup>. A **Hooded Crow** was an excellent find at Chouet on 9<sup>th</sup>, especially as they are now considered a full species, separate from the commoner Carrion Crow with which they were previously lumped. It stayed on the island until 15<sup>th</sup>. A full breeding-plumaged **Slavonian Grebe** fed in Rocquaine Bay on 14<sup>th</sup> – an unusual sight in Guernsey. Migration stepped up a gear on 21<sup>st</sup> with tail-winds from southern Europe encouraging birds to move through. Three different **Marsh Harriers** through on this day illustrates the good conditions, which also brought a **Dotterel** to Herm Common. On the same day, a first-year **Rose-coloured Starling** at Grandes Rocques was very unexpected. They are nearly always seen in summer and autumn in western Europe, and an April bird is very unusual. It stayed for a few days but was difficult to catch up with. The highlight of the 21<sup>st</sup> though was an **Alpine Swift**. It was first sighted feeding over a lane just west of Saumarez Park by a group of birders mid-morning. It was then seen later in the afternoon over Grande Mare. As is typical of the species it was very elusive and would not play ball for most of the island's birders. The few days after this peak were also good migrant days but numbers returned to normal levels by the end of the month. Two more **Marsh Harriers** were recorded before the 30<sup>th</sup>, along with 2 **Common Buzzards**. Waders included both **Ruff** and **Spotted Redshank** at Claire Mare on 25<sup>th</sup>, where a female **Pintail** was regularly seen. Two **Arctic Terns** were noted in the **Common Tern** passage – at Belle Greve Bay on 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## MAY

As is usual in May, the improvement in weather means many birds pass straight through without stopping. The first week saw little of interest except 2 **Blue-headed Wagtails**, which meant that the annual Bird Race was quite quiet.

A few interesting raptors passed through mid-month, with a **Marsh Harrier** on 13<sup>th</sup>, an **Osprey** on 16<sup>th</sup>, and **Honey Buzzards** on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. During this time wader variety increased, with **Knot**, **Lapwing**, **Green Sandpiper** and **Greenshank** recorded, although the overall passage this year was not at all strong. Interesting passerines included a male **Yellowhammer** at Pleinmont on 17<sup>th</sup> and about 6 **Wood Warblers** in total.

A **Woodchat Shrike** was seen very briefly on the morning of 19<sup>th</sup> on Jerbourg Point but disappeared as quick as it arrived. Birders searching for it did see a female **Golden Oriole** however.

The rarest bird of the month was a male **Black-headed Bunting** which fed on a bird table in a garden along Ruette Braye, SPP from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, behaviour exhibited by both previous records of the species. Looking at breeding birds, **Razorbill** chicks and **Puffin** burrows could be seen on Jethou by the month's end. More unexpected though were **Sand Martins** flying in and out of holes in the sandbanks on the North side of Herm. Good numbers of **Shelduck** were recorded in the north-west corner of the island during the month, with a peak of 8 birds noted. Hopefully a larger colony may build up on Lihou where the single pair again nested. Good conditions at the end of the month meant **Storm Petrels** could be seen at incredibly close range at Chouet as they passed the headland in the evenings.

## JUNE

Migration petered out during the start of the month with the last few waders and **Wheatears** leaving the island. Less common birds noted included 6 to 8 **Crossbills** on 30<sup>th</sup>, 3 **Hobbies** and another female **Marsh Harrier** on 18<sup>th</sup>. The spring passage of the latter species totalled 11 individuals, a record for the season. The rarest migrants were a flock of 5 **Bee-eaters** which flew around Fort le Marchant on 24<sup>th</sup>. Species which seem to be hanging on as breeding species on the island included **Ringed Plover**, **Skylark**, **Meadow Pipit** and **Common Tern**, but the numbers of each are small. Other species however are doing well with four young **Shelducks** produced on Lihou, and both **Ravens** and **Jackdaws** were successful on the cliffs. **Long-eared Owls** were present at most of the usual sites but the weather was not kind to them

and it is not thought that they were very successful, with only one set of chicks seen. Up to 40 post-breeding **Puffins** could be seen off Jethou indicating a successful year.

An influx of **Rose-coloured Starlings** into Western Europe brought a few birds to the island. Rosy-pink and black adults were seen at Fort le Crocq on 9<sup>th</sup>, La Planque Lane, Forest on 15<sup>th</sup> and at L'Eree Shingle Bank on 16<sup>th</sup>, but they did not stick around to be enjoyed by many birders.

## JULY

July is the month that autumn migration begins, and a few waders were recorded returning south, including **Greenshanks** and **Green Sandpipers**. Gulls also were seen passing through with 2 each of **Mediterranean** and **Yellow-legged Gulls** noted. Interesting passerines were few, apart from a male **Red-backed Shrike** briefly at Pleinmont on 14<sup>th</sup> – probably a non-breeding wanderer from nearby France. The highlight of the summer months was a superb adult **Roseate Tern** which was seen along the west coast on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> – only the second record for Guernsey. It was found early morning resting on the beach at Vazon and was then noted at a variety of sites between Cobo and L'Eree during the next 24 hours. Although difficult to catch up with due to its mobility, many people managed to get a good view of this rarity.

## AUGUST

During August, vast numbers of birds head south over and past Guernsey but it is the weather conditions which dictate how many of these actually stay or get seen. A pelagic trip which took birdwatchers out to sea managed to watch up to 40 **Storm Petrels** from very close quarters. Wind directions for watching seabirds passing Chouet were not ideal during most of the month which was disappointing as the new seawatching hide was up and running. There were a few skuas and shearwaters seen however, the rarest being a **Cory's Shearwater** on 10<sup>th</sup>.

Waders also moved through with the highlights being up to 3 **Curlew Sandpipers** at Vazon during the last week, a few **Black-tailed Godwits** and a **Wood Sandpiper** at Claire Mare NR on 19<sup>th</sup>. Landbirds were also now passing through, especially from mid-month. More interesting sightings were a **Wryneck** at Claire Mare on 24<sup>th</sup> and 2 **Melodious Warblers** – in St. Peter Port on 14<sup>th</sup>, and on Lihou then Lihou Headland on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Only one **Aquatic Warbler** was trapped during the month. On 25<sup>th</sup> an **Osprey** was noted fishing at Rocquaine Bay. Up to 12 **Crossbills** were elusive around the pines at Pleinmont during the second half of the month.

## SEPTEMBER

The highlight of the start of the month was a **Temminck's Stint** which spent the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> at Claire Mare NR. Seawatching was still not producing many birds of interest but 16 **Black Terns** passing on 10<sup>th</sup> was a very good count. Birds of prey were noticeable however with up to 2 **Honey Buzzards** staying in the Fauxquets Valley for a few days, plus 2 **Common Buzzard** near there on 8<sup>th</sup>. Two **Wrynecks** arrived during the first week of September but few other interesting land migrants arrived.

From about 11<sup>th</sup>, an easterly airflow took up residence over the island and was present until at least the end of the month. These conditions usually produce some interesting migrant birds from Europe but the clear conditions meant that many birds passed straight through. Species which did occur were a long-staying **Hoopoe** at Pleinmont from 12<sup>th</sup> to 16th, 4 different **Ortolan Buntings**, 2 more **Wrynecks**, a **Richard's Pipit**, 4 migrant **Short-eared Owls** and a **Dotterel** at the Pleinmont Scramble Track. The most uncommon visitor was a short-staying **Short-toed Lark** which was found in the car park at Pulus Headland on 15<sup>th</sup>.

Winter birds also started to return with wildfowl such as **Wigeon**, **Teal** and **Shoveler** appearing at wetland sites, joined by **Water Rails**, **Snipe** and **Kingfishers**. Waders continued to pass through with up to 4 **Curlew Sandpipers** at Vazon early in the month, but only one **Little Stint** was recorded – at L'Eree Aerodrome on 22<sup>nd</sup>. There was a single **Ruff** noted and good flocks of 18 and 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** were seen. **Crossbills** were still seen sporadically at Pleinmont all month.

## OCTOBER

October started off quiet as the clear weather continued. The highlight was a young **Spoonbill** which arrived at Vale Pond on 8<sup>th</sup>. It was seen there and at other sites along the west coast until 17<sup>th</sup>. The regularly wintering **Glaucous Gull** returned to the east coast from 18<sup>th</sup>.

When the weather finally broke, a week or so into the month, more interesting birds were grounded on the island. On 17<sup>th</sup> for example, there were 100's of **Song Thrushes**, good numbers of **Blackbirds** and **Redwings**, and at least 15 **Ring Ouzels** at Pleinmont. Finches and winter buntings also arrived about this time, with **Siskin**, **Brambling**, **Lapland** and **Snow Bunting** even seen feeding in the same flock at St. Sampsons reclamation site on 20<sup>th</sup>. There was also above average sightings of **Short-eared Owls** and **Merlins**, as well as a **Marsh Harrier** on 19<sup>th</sup>. On the final day of October, a **Yellow-browed Warbler** was discovered in Petit Bot woods.

The most notable feature of October was an influx of **Whooper Swans** into the island, with a record number being seen. The first arrived at Grandes Havres on 19<sup>th</sup> but was clearly ill and blind in one eye. It roosted overnight at Vale Pond, then drifted down the west coast as far as Vazon, where unfortunately, it died. On 23<sup>rd</sup> however, there were 2 sightings of a flock of 4 Whooper Swans, and then a total of 8 birds together on L'Eree Aerodrome the next day – 3 adults and 5 juveniles. During the last week of the month these split up and wandered round the island before settling to feed in a field along Rue des Bergers.

## NOVEMBER

As well as **Swallows**, **House Martins** and **Wheatears** which are now regularly seen into November, a **Common Redstart** was unusual on 1<sup>st</sup>. Also very late, a small tern in Belle Greve Bay on 16<sup>th</sup> was identified as an **Arctic Tern**. A **Little Gull** rested at Richmond on 15<sup>th</sup> and an immature male **Hen Harrier** passed through Herm Common towards France on 16<sup>th</sup>. This weekend was notable for 2 warbler sightings: first a **Yellow-browed** on Herm on 16<sup>th</sup>, but better was a **Pallas's Warbler** discovered near Foulon Cemetery the next day which many birdwatchers managed to watch at close range. The rarest bird of the year was discovered on 24<sup>th</sup> – a male **Desert Wheatear**. This was only the second ever recorded on the island and amazingly the first – in 1991 – was found on exactly the same date, by exactly the same birdwatcher! It performed brilliantly for the assembled birders at Jaoenneuse beach, flicking from rock to rock, catching insects and flashing its tail. The bird probably originated from the central Asian deserts and a few make their way to Western Europe every autumn, although none were seen in Britain in 2002. Unusually for a Guernsey rarity, the bird stayed in the area until 4<sup>th</sup> December. After a series of poor years, it was good to hear of a series of **Snow Bunting** records with sightings from L'Ancresse, Port Grat, Fort le Marchant and Herm. Other winter visitors seen in good numbers were **Black-throated** and **Great Northern Divers** which were around in much better numbers than in recent years. As well as about 20 trapped and ringed, there were also 3 other **Jack Snipe** sightings including an unusual record of one arriving in off the sea at Chouet. A surprising sighting was an escaped **Village Weaver** which visited a bird table in Torteval.

## DECEMBER

The month started off relatively quiet with 2 **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** briefly at Cobo on 4<sup>th</sup> being the most interesting. From about the 9<sup>th</sup> a winter movement of birds started when cold easterly winds came in from the continent, and consisted mainly of 100's of **Lapwings** passing South. Associated with this movement were 4 **Cranes** which passed east over Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont in the afternoon, before resting on Herm later in the day. Five days later another 2 **Cranes** appeared over Lihou, and toured the west of the island for the day, but were extremely elusive.

By the end of the year, winter birds were settled in, such as **Short-eared Owl** on Lihou, **Bearded Tits** at Claire Mare and **Hen Harrier** on Herm. Another **Hen Harrier** was seen at Claire Mare on 24<sup>th</sup> and a **Knot** seemed to be wintering along the west coast. The **Whooper Swan** flock diminished to just 4 birds by the end of the year, but remained loyal to their favourite field at Rue des Bergers.

A final bizarre record was a **Common Swift** which appeared at Le Guet on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Usually these birds are rarely seen after September and are never seen mid-winter. Where it came from is a mystery and shows that when birdwatching, no matter how much you think you know, you will constantly be surprised.



Common Swift – Le Guet – December 2002 – M P Lawlor

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

A total of **193** species were recorded during the year, 4 more than last year. The island bird list grew to **307** species with the addition of **Hooded Crow**. Usual species which were not recorded included Red-throated Diver, Gadwall, Garganey, Pochard, Goosander, Grey Phalarope, Pomarine Skua, Little Tern, Tawny Pipit and Redpoll.

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'.

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

Species accounts in **bold type** indicate those records which have been accepted by the island's Rarities Committee, and which (in most cases) required a full written report to be submitted.

### **Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)**

**2 records of 9+ birds**

#### *Vagrant – 5 previous records*

An adult bird arrived in Grandes Havres on 19<sup>th</sup> October but did not look very well and had a poorly eye. Indeed, after roosting at Vale Pond overnight, it made its way slowly down the west coast before dying at Vazon. In other years, this individual may have been a suspected escapee from a collection, but considering the other records a few days later, it was given the benefit of the doubt.

(J. T. Aslett)



Whooper Swan – Grandes Havres – October 2002 – M P Lawlor

A few days later, on 24<sup>th</sup> October, a group of 4 Whooper Swans appeared briefly at Vale Pond. The next day they were relocated at L'Eree Aerodrome and the flock had increased to 8 birds – 3 adults and 5 juveniles. These birds ranged widely over the island before 7 settled in a field along Rue des Bergers at the start of November. Four birds left a few weeks later, and then one came back, leaving 4 birds to spend the winter on the island. These records coincided with a substantial movement of the species in southern Britain.

(M. C. Simmons, C. Kinnersly, M. P. Lawlor)



adult (left) and juvenile Whooper Swans – Rue des Bergers – November 2002 – M P Lawlor

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

***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

At the start of the year, the East coast flock numbered less than in recent winters. A maximum of only 27 was recorded in Belle Greve Bay – half the amount of last year. The other flocks were up to strength however, with a maximum of 52 on Herm (GDA) and 25 on the West coast. The final one of the winter was noted on Herm on 31<sup>st</sup> May (LT, RJM).

An unusual summer record was of a bird on Herm on 16<sup>th</sup> Jul (GDA), but the first autumn migrant passed Chouet on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep (WRT). Numbers built up slowly to the final wintering totals of up to 36 on Herm, 32 in Belle Greve Bay and 23 on the West coast.

A leucistic bird was present with other Brent Geese at Bordeaux on 26/3, which had all black areas of the plumage a pale creamy-brown colour (MPL).

### **Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)**

**1 pair**

***Uncommon year-round visitor and rare breeder.***

The regular pair returned to the L'Eree and Lihou area on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan (AJB). At the start of May these were joined by more birds and a maximum of 2 males and 6 females were present in the area by the end of the month. Also there were a few reports of a male bird on Herm in the spring. Despite the larger numbers, only one pair was definitely breeding on Lihou – 4 chicks seen – but hopefully the colony may increase in future. Birds seemed to disappear at the end of the summer as is typical. Unusually though, a pair were present in the same general area during the last 2 months of the year.

### **Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)**

***Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The flock of 5 from the end of last year were still at Claire Mare on New Year's Day but there were very few further records. 3 flew over Rue des Bergers on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan (AJB), and a pair were present at Grand Pre on 10<sup>th</sup> Feb (PKV).

Two birds returned to Claire Mare on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep (LT, JMA), rising to 5 by the end of October. A pair were at Rue des Bergers on 27<sup>th</sup> Sep (MCS). More birds arrived during December with peaks of 17 in the Claire Mare/Shingle Bank area on 27<sup>th</sup> (AJB) and 6 at Marais Nord on 13<sup>th</sup> (RJM, LT).

### **Teal (*Anas crecca*)**

***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The wintering flock at Claire Mare peaked at 40 birds on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb (AJB), with other flocks seen at the Reservoir (14), Rue des Bergers (10+), Rocquaine (14) and Grand Pre (4) during January and February. Numbers dropped considerably during March and the final birds lingered until mid-April..

A female bird at Rue des Bergers on 31<sup>st</sup> Jul was the first of the Autumn (AJB), where numbers built up to 20. The Claire Mare flock reached 36 on 30<sup>th</sup> Nov (RRC). Single records were also received from Saumarez Park and Vale Pond during the Autumn, but a record of 20+ birds at Track Marais on 10<sup>th</sup> Dec is probably a regular wintering flock..

### **Green-winged Teal (*Anas carolinensis*)**

*Vagrant – no previous records.*

The first for the Channel Islands – a first-winter male – which was present for a week in early December 2001, suddenly reappeared at Claire Mare on New Year's Day. It stayed up until 16<sup>th</sup> April slowly developing its adult plumage. It also paid a few visits to Rue des Bergers during this time.



Green-winged Teal – Claire Mare – W R Turner

### **Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)**

*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 (*Anas acuta*)**

**1 record**

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Spring is a good time to see Pintail on the island and this bird stayed an exceptionally long time.  
1 female, Claire Mare, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr to 19<sup>th</sup> May (LT, RJM), then Vale Pond, 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May.

### **Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)**

*Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.*

Overall, numbers were down on last year's totals. The Claire Mare wintering flock numbered 10 birds at the start of the year, then reducing until March. Another flock was discovered at Marais Nord during March, peaking at 6 birds, with the last pair seen here on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (PKV). Two birds reappeared at Claire Mare on 30<sup>th</sup> Sep (sev), with numbers reaching 7 birds by the year end. Also birds wintered again at Marais Nord with 10 noted there in December. Also during December wandering birds were noted at Saumarez Park and Track Marais.

## Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

**Uncommon year-round visitor. One breeding record.**

Birds were wintering at Saumarez Park (max of 3) and the Reservoir (max of 4) at the start of the year. Spring migration saw pairs appearing at Grande Mare and Marais Nord, and numbers increased to 6 birds at Saumarez Park. None were reported during May, but a lone male spent the first week of June at Saumarez Park. During the rest of the summer, a minimum of 4 birds wandered around the north-eastern quarries and Saumarez Park. Numbers dropped during the autumn with only one sighting in October, before more wintering birds arrived during November with 6 at Marais Nord and a year-peak of 9 birds at Paradis Quarry on 17<sup>th</sup> (DL).

## Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

**2 records**

**Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The first record below is notable due to its unusually early date – the second is more typical.

pair, South past Pleinmont, 15<sup>th</sup> Sep (RJM, LT)  
1 female, Belle Greve Bay, 13<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, LT).

## Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

**15 records of 86 birds**

**Uncommon year-round visitor and passage migrant.**

Widely recorded this year, with birds seen every month except November and December.

The female from 2001, was seen at Vazon, Port Grat or Grandes Rocques until 24<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
A flock of 6 or 7 birds, off various Northern/Western headlands on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (AJB, LT, RJM)  
1 female, Jaonneuse, 26<sup>th</sup> Apr (LT)  
15, East past Vazon, 5<sup>th</sup> May (CJM)

A total of 63 birds were seen on 12 dates whilst seawatching from Jaonneuse or Chouet between 2<sup>nd</sup> Jun and 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

## Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

**6 records of 10 birds**

**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The species does not seem to be recovering from its low totals in recent years.

1 pair, Grandes Havres and Port Grat, 4<sup>th</sup> Jan (RJM, LT)  
2 pairs, Perelle, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> Jan (RJM, LT), one pair staying along the West coast until 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar  
3, Belle Greve Bay, 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Nov (MAG)  
2 females, between Lihou and Vazon, 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov to year end (LT)  
1 male, Richmond, Vazon, 10<sup>th</sup> Dec (WRT)  
1 female, Herm, 14<sup>th</sup> Dec (LT).

## Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

**Uncommon introduced species to Herm – not thought to be self-supporting.**

The introduced birds on Herm seem to be dwindling in number at the moment with just a handful reported. Apparently, about 100 birds were released in the Petit Bot area in the autumn but few, if any, of this flock were noted by birders.

## Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

**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.

**Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*)****4 records**

*Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

A slight increase in records is evident after a small slump in sightings.

- 1, between Herm and Jethou, 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (GDA, TDCE)
- 1, Pembroke, 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM)
- 1, Havelet and Town Harbour, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Nov (LT, RJM)
- 1, Grandes Havres, 27<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, LT).

**Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*)****13+ birds**

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

This is the minimum number recorded during the year as many of the sightings at certain sites were separated by quite a few days. Poor numbers were seen early in the year.

- 1, Grandes Havres, from Dec 2001 irregularly until 10<sup>th</sup> Feb
- 2, Herm, 30<sup>th</sup> Mar (PKV)
- 1, Vazon, 31<sup>st</sup> Oct (AJB)
- 1, Grandes Havres, 8<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM)
- 1, Pembroke, 8<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM)
- 2, Herm, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL, WRT, DJRA)
- 1, Belle Greve Bay, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov to 27<sup>th</sup> Dec (LT)
- 1, Grandes Rocques, 9<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL)
- 1, Grandes Havres, 25<sup>th</sup> Dec (LT, RJM)
- 1, Pleinmont, 26<sup>th</sup> Dec (LT, RJM)
- 1, Mont Crevault Marina, 30<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, LT).

**Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)****15+ birds**

*Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.*

The main site for Little Grebe continues to be the Reservoir with up to 6 birds present during January, gradually falling in number until the last 2 birds on 4<sup>th</sup> Apr (RAL). Birds returned here on 5<sup>th</sup> Aug, peaking at 4 birds in September, with 2 birds remaining to winter at the site. The species was recorded at fewer other sites than is usual – 1 at Grande Mare on 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (AJB), singles at Claire Mare on 24<sup>th</sup> Jul (AJB) and 13<sup>th</sup> Oct (RJM, LT), plus a few sightings at Gallotin and Paradis Quarries in September and November (IH, DL). A bird was rescued by the GSPCA, ringed and released during the year.

**Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)**

*Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Wintering groups of up to 6 birds were recorded in most of the island's bays until the 8<sup>th</sup> Mar, with a later bird at Grandes Rocques on 19<sup>th</sup> Mar (MPL). The first returning bird was at Grandes Havres on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL), with ones and twos recorded widely thereafter.

**Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)****2 records**

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Only 2 birds were recorded this year, but this seems to be an average total at the moment.

- 1, Belle Greve Bay, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar (JMM)
- 1, off Rousse, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM).

**Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)****22+ birds*****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***

At the start of the year there were as many as 7 birds wintering on the West coast between Rocquaine and Vazon, plus up to 5 in Belle Greve Bay. One off Herm on 5<sup>th</sup> Jan was the only other sighting and the final wintering bird left the island on 8<sup>th</sup> Mar. Spring migration was evident with 2 at L'Eree on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr (AJB) and 1 in Rocquaine Bay on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (WRT), the latter in full breeding dress. The first bird returned on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov at L'Eree (RJM, LT) and all further sightings were on the West coast between L'Eree and Grandes Rocques, peaking at 4 birds at the former site on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec.

**Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)*****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.***

No new birds were seen on the island during 2002.

1, Grandes Havres, lingering from Dec 2001 until 15<sup>th</sup> Feb.

**Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)*****Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor. Breeds in small numbers.***

Most early records were from the south cliffs or from Herm, where up to 20 nest sites were found in the Spring (GDA). No counts of breeding pairs were made from Guernsey. From August, birds were observed passing the headlands, but no single counts of more than 14 birds were recorded.

**Cory's Shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*)****1 record*****Vagrant – 6 previous records.***

One was watched passing west off Jaonneuse Point on 10<sup>th</sup> August.

(R. J. Murphy, E. A. Thomson)

**Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*)****18 birds*****Quite common to uncommon autumn passage migrant.***

Only a small number of sightings due to poor seawatching weather during most of the Autumn. The first was seen on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug with another 2 in August, 11 in September and 4 in October. Also 1 was seen on the pelagic boat trip on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug.

**Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)*****Quite common to uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.***

Small numbers were observed during the summer, mostly from the north and west coast headlands, starting with 20 past Jaonneuse on 26<sup>th</sup> Apr (RJM, LT). Autumn migration peaked on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug with 40 birds passing Jaonneuse in just one hour (PKV). A total of less than 100 migrating birds were seen during seawatches during the autumn and the last bird passed on 6<sup>th</sup> Oct (WRT). An unusual winter sighting was one off Fort le Crocq on 26<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, LT).

**Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*)****7 birds*****Uncommon autumn passage migrant.***

In a poor seawatching season, only 5 birds were seen passing Chouet/Jaonneuse

1 on 21<sup>st</sup> Jul (WRT, MAG, LT, RJM)

1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep (LT)

2 on 8<sup>th</sup> Sep (WRT)  
1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct (MPL).

Also 2 were seen from the pelagic boat trip on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug.

### Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)

83+ birds (plus 60 at sea)

***Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.***

At the end of May, conditions for watching Storm Petrels were fantastic, with calm seas and light onshore winds. Up to 50 birds could be seen from Chouet at dusk between 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May (sev). A few birds were noted in June and the last was noted on 5<sup>th</sup> Jul (RJM, LT). More unusually, 2 birds were seen behind Jethou at the start of June (DJRA). There were up to 60 Storm Petrels observed on the pelagic boat trip on 18<sup>th</sup> Aug.

### 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 Jaoenneuse 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. A few birds showing characteristics of the continental race 'sinensis' were noted early in the year.

### 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. [N.B. a chick ringed on Lihou in 1999 was found dead in Denmark eight months later.]

### Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)

1 record

***Rare to very rare winter visitor or passage migrant.***

A single bird dropped into the reeds at Rue des Bergers NR around lunchtime on 3<sup>rd</sup> January and could be watched there until dusk.

(L. A. Terry)



Bittern – Rue des Bergers – January 2002 – M P Lawlor

## Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)

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

Although seen very often by birdwatchers, no accurate counts of roosts were made, so the total number on the island was unknown. As usual, only a handful remained on the island during May and June. Numbers built up during the summer and autumn but few large flocks were reported. 22 at Claire Mare on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov (AG) was the largest group recorded.

## 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 small number of birds spent the early summer here and the occasional migrating bird was noted in the autumn.

## Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)

**1 record**

*Very rare visitor – 17 previous records*

A juvenile bird spent two weeks on the island after it was first discovered at Vale Pond on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. It was also seen feeding in various nearby bays until the last sighting on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

(V. E. Froome)

## Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*)

**3 records of 4 birds**

*Scarce passage migrant.*

The species continues to consolidate its new status as a regular migrant rather than the rarity it used to be.

1, over Mount Row, SPP, 16<sup>th</sup> May (MAG), presumed same, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> May (DT)  
Up to 2 birds, Fauxquets Valley, 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Sep (BF, RRC)  
1, Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep (GDA)

## Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)

**13 records**

*Scarce passage migrant.*

13 birds in a year is easily the record for this species, eclipsing the 8 birds in 1993 and 2001.

1, Herm, 16<sup>th</sup> Feb (LT)  
1 male, Marais Nord, 16<sup>th</sup> Mar (PKV)  
1, Grande Mare, 22<sup>nd</sup> Mar (AJB)  
1, Pleinmont, 8<sup>th</sup> Apr (DS)  
1, Chouet, 9<sup>th</sup> Apr (JH)  
1, Perelle, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (DJRA)  
1, Claire Mare, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (PKV, CJM, BGW)  
1, Herm, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (CG)  
1, Grande Mare & Grand Pre, 25<sup>th</sup> Apr (AJB, GDA)  
1, Vale Pond, 29<sup>th</sup> Apr (MPL, RAF)  
1, Barras Lane Fields, 13<sup>th</sup> May (MPL)  
1, Barras Lane Fields, 18<sup>th</sup> Jun (MPL)  
1, Claire Mare, 19<sup>th</sup> Oct (RAF).

**Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)****3 records*****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.***

Again Herm shows itself to be the favoured location for this species.

- juvenile/first-winter, Herm, from 2001 to 24<sup>th</sup> Mar
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-winter male, Herm Common (flying East to France), 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL, WRT, DJRA)
- female, Claire Mare, 24<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, MAG, BGW).
- female, Herm, 29<sup>th</sup> Dec (DJRA)

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

Regularly seen in all areas of the island, with pairs displaying at a number of woodland sites, indicating breeding. [N.B. A bird found dead at Port Soif on 8<sup>th</sup> Mar 2001 had been ringed in Cornwall two years previously.]

**Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)****6 records of 7 birds*****Scarce passage migrant.***

Records seem to be showing a slight improvement, with the first spring migrants for at least 2 years.

- 1, in off sea over St. Peter Port, 6<sup>th</sup> Jan (MAG), probably same, Fauxquet Valley, 12<sup>th</sup> Jan (RRC)
- 1, La Petite Vallette, 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar and Silbe, 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (JH, CMK)
- 1, Talbot Valley, 13<sup>th</sup> Apr (RRC)
- 1, Moulin Huet, 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr (MAG)
- 1, Fort le Marchant, 27<sup>th</sup> Apr (DY)
- 2, Fauxquets & Talbot Valley/Grande Mare, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Sep (MAG, AJB).

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

Ten records in the last 5 years contrasts with the single record from the previous 5 years.

- 1, flying off East from Vale Pond, 16<sup>th</sup> May (MAG)
- 1, briefly fishing in Rocquaine Bay, 25<sup>th</sup> Aug (JH).

**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*)****10 records*****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.***

An excellent series of records during the autumn resulted in the species returning to its usual numbers rather than the poor last few years. There may be some records which refer to the same bird however.

- 1 male, Track Marais, 10<sup>th</sup> Mar (LT)
- 1, in off sea at Chouet, 25<sup>th</sup> Mar (JH)
- 1, Claire Mare, 5<sup>th</sup> Sep (MCS)
- 1 male, Les Tielles, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep (GDA)
- 1 fem/imm, Grandes Havres, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep (MAG)
- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep (MPL)
- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB)
- 1 fem/imm, Lihou, 11<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB)

1 fem/imm, Old Aerodrome, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB)  
1 fem/imm, Lihou, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov (AJB).

### Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

14 records

*Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.*

With raptors doing very well this year, it is no surprise to find that 14 is the largest total for many years.

- 1, La Miellette, 5<sup>th</sup> May (RAL, AG, VE, AJB)
- 1, Herm, 10<sup>th</sup> May (GDA)
- 1, Pleinmont, 16<sup>th</sup> May (GDA)
- 1, Clos des Pecqueries, 15<sup>th</sup> Jun (MPL)
- 1, Pleinmont, 21<sup>st</sup> Jun (RJM, LT)
- 1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 30<sup>th</sup> Jun (DJRA)
- 1, Les Rouvets, 12<sup>th</sup> Jul (RJM, LT)
- 1, Pleinmont Road, 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug (DT)
- 1, Les Beaucamps, 7<sup>th</sup> Sep (TDCE)
- 1, Herm, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep (LT, RJM)
- 1, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB, MCS)
- 1, Petit Bot, 19<sup>th</sup> Sep (BGW)
- 1, Portlet, Pleinmont, 19<sup>th</sup> Oct (RJM, LT).

### Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)

*Uncommon year-round visitor. Rare breeding species.*

Peregrines were noted in all parts of the island throughout the year, with 1 or 2 birds seen. The breeding pair on the island were present again in the usual location, but whether they were successful is not known. Most sightings were probably of these birds although other migrants must have been seen.

### Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)

*Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.*

Up to 5 Water Rails were present at all suitable sites in both winter periods. The last of the spring was seen along the Heritage Walk on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (RAL) and the first of the autumn were 2 birds seen at Claire Mare on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug (LT).

### Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*)

*Very common resident breeding species and winter visitor.*

Commonly seen around all lakes, ditches and marshy areas

### Coot (*Fulica atra*)

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

Seen in small numbers around freshwater ponds and lakes.

### Common Crane (*Grus grus*)

2 records of 6 birds

*Vagrant – 5 previous records*

Four birds flew east over Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont in the late afternoon of 9<sup>th</sup> December. They later made a landfall on Herm probably resting on the island before moving on.

(J. P. Hooper)

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, two adult Cranes were seen soaring over Lihou Island before drifting across the western parishes of Guernsey. They did land a few times in hidden fields but were very elusive.

(R. R. Cave)



Cranes – North of Claire Mare – December 2002 – M P Lawlor

### **Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)**

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

The maximum of 1107 counted in December during the wader-count was a month later than the usual peak.

#### **Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)**

**2 records of 3 birds**

The first bird was in an unusual location and obviously it had just arrived. It soon found more suitable habitat in the species' favoured spot.

1, Pleinmont, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Mar (RAL), moving to Old Aerodrome later on 15<sup>th</sup> 2 (male & female), Claire Mare & Old Aerodrome, 8<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (DT)

### **Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)**

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Breeds in small numbers.*

A commonly seen bird of the shoreline, with wader-count peaks of 237 birds on the island in August and 240 in October. A few pairs bred on the shingle beaches at, for example, Lihou and near Fort Doyle.

#### **Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*)**

**2 records**

The first record for Herm Common since 1989 despite perfect habitat for a migrant Dotterel to rest.

1, Herm Common, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (JTA, CG)  
1, Scramble Track Car Park, Pleinmont, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB).

### **Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)**

*Uncommon to quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

There were up to 90 birds present at the Portinfer roost during January but, as usual, birds left during February. These birds are assumed to disperse to feed inland but are actually rarely seen away from the roost site. The first returning bird was at Pleinmont on 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug (AJB) and small groups were regularly seen on migration during September and October. Again small numbers started to roost at Portinfer during November peaking at 33 on 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)**

*Common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

The maximum count from the wader-count data was 138 on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov. Regularly noted during the winter months with c.100 birds present and numbers increased slightly during migration. Disappearing during the summer months, the first returning bird was an individual at Portinfer on 11<sup>th</sup> Jul (GDA).

## Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

### *Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

There were only small numbers seen during the early winter period, with up to 24 reported from the Airport. Other sightings were probably these birds wandering around the centre of the island until mid-February. A spring migrant went over Pleinmont on 20<sup>th</sup> May (LT) and there were a few sightings in July of perhaps the same juvenile bird – at Pleinmont on 14<sup>th</sup>, Lihou on 19<sup>th</sup> and Claire Mare between 21<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> (AJB). From 16<sup>th</sup> Sep, there were four sightings of migrant birds and the small numbers returning to Vale Pond, until larger numbers suddenly appeared at the start of December. Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Dec, regular flocks could be seen touring the island - probably in excess of 1000 birds were involved altogether. Most passed through though and left only about 8 wintering at Vale Pond.

## Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

**8 records**

### *Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.*

An average showing for the species, with a typical spread of records.

- 1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (sev)
- 1, Vazon, 15<sup>th</sup> May (GDA)
- 1, Vazon, 25<sup>th</sup> Aug (sev)
- 1, Rocquaine, 5<sup>th</sup> Sep (TDCE)
- 1, Vazon, 16<sup>th</sup> Sep (RJM)
- 1, Rocquaine, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep (LT)
- 1, Shingle Bank, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL), seen at Perelle, Cobo and then Vazon until the end of the year.
- Second individual, Vazon, 12<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL).

## Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

### *Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

The peak month for Sanderling was November - according to the wader count data - when 107 birds were noted. Birds were missing from the island for less than a month in the summer. Vazon held the last spring birds on 15<sup>th</sup> Jun (AJB, GDA) and also the first autumn bird on 12<sup>th</sup> Jul (AJB).

## Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

**1 record**

### *Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.*

A poor year. The last big year was 1996 when at least 30 were recorded.

- 1, Old Aerodrome, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep (DJRA)

## Temminck's Stint (*Calidris temminckii*)

**1 record**

### *Vagrant – 6 previous records*

A single bird was present during the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> September in front of the hide at Claire Mare NR. His is the first record since 1996 but it departed overnight.

(J. P. Hooper)

## Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

**4 records of 8+ birds**

### *Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.*

More than 4 birds were probably involved in the first series of sightings.

- Up to 4, Vazon, 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug to 9<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB, LT)
- 2, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Sep (RJM, LT)
- 2, L'Eree, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct (MCS)

**Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)****17+ birds*****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***

There were 2 birds in the Fort le Crocq/Vazon area in the first week of the year, but no further sightings until mid-February. There were 3 more records in March but then no more until the Spring migration in May – Fort Hommet, 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1 on 12<sup>th</sup> (AJB) and 4 on Lihou on 26<sup>th</sup> (MCS, AG).

A single bird was noted at Chouet on 8<sup>th</sup> Sep (WRT). Possibly the same single bird was observed in the Les Ammareurs/Rousse area on 4 occasions from 4<sup>th</sup> Oct (MCS) until the year end. An extra bird was at Vazon on 8<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM, LT). Not good winter periods for the species which is now difficult to find.

**Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)*****Common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

164 birds recorded on the February wader-count was the peak count of the year. It was not uncommon to see flocks of over 200 birds in winter or during migration, especially at Vazon. Single-figures could be seen during the summer.

**Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)****up to 7 records*****Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.***

The best showing for 5 years with four birds arriving in the same week in March.

- 1, Grande Mare, 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (MAG)
- 1, Claire Mare, 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> Mar (AJB)
- second bird, Claire Mare, 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> Mar (RJM, LT)
- third bird joined the other two, Claire Mare, 30<sup>th</sup> Mar (DT)
- 1, Claire Mare, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> Apr (BGW)
- 1, Old Aerodrome, 10<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB).
- 1, L'Eree, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct (TDCE)

**Jack Snipe (*Lymnocryptes minimus*)****7 records*****Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The species is under-recorded as it probably winters in small numbers in wet areas throughout the island. The number of sightings also depends on water levels and luck. The bird seen coming in off the sea in November was a very surprising sight.

- 1, Claire Mare, 6<sup>th</sup> Jan (AG, AJB, JP)
- 1, Track Marais, 28<sup>th</sup> Oct & 11<sup>th</sup> Nov (AJB)
- 1, Old Aerodrome, 8<sup>th</sup> Nov (RJM, LT)
- 1, flying in over the sea, Chouet, 9<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL, WRT).

Also 3 birds were ringed during the year.

**Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)*****Common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The largest concentration of Snipe early in the year came from Claire Mare where up to 40 birds were seen. Numbers slowly diminished until the last of the spring was noted at Claire Mare on 25<sup>th</sup> Apr (WS). Claire Mare also had the first autumn record on 22<sup>nd</sup> Jul (AJB), after which migrants could be seen regularly either at unusual locations or flying overhead. Good numbers built up again during the last three months with c.40 again at Claire Mare, but over 50 reported at Vale Pond.

## **Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)**

***Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***

Woodcocks are under-recorded due to their secretive nature – mostly seen when flushed by shooters. The species was seen at 8 sites by birders during the months of January, February, March, October and November. The largest number seen was 8 at Silbe NR on 12<sup>th</sup> Jan (RJM). A total of 28 birds were ringed during the year.

## **Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)**

**16 records of up to 54 birds**

***Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.***

An excellent autumn for this species, with the species seen on many more days than in previous years.

- 1, Belle Greve Bay, 24<sup>th</sup> Feb (GDA)
- 2, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 19<sup>th</sup> Apr (LT, RJM)
- 2, Vazon, 28<sup>th</sup> Apr (GDA)
- 1, Vazon, 18<sup>th</sup> May (BGW)

Between 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug and 26<sup>th</sup> Oct there were sightings on 12 dates at numerous sites involving a maximum of 48 birds, with larger flocks of 18 at Grandes Havres on 9<sup>th</sup> Sep (CJM, LT) and 11 at Rocquaine on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep (VEF).

## **Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)**

***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

A handful of birds were present in the early winter. Spring migration started in mid-April and peaked in mid-May. The largest flock was 25 at Vazon on 10<sup>th</sup> May (LT, RJM) although, according to the records, birds disappeared soon after this date.

On 11<sup>th</sup> Aug the first bird returned to Vazon (RJM), peaking at 29 birds there during September, with groups of up to 20 seen at many other sites as they migrated through the island. Again single figures were present during the second winter period.

## **Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)**

***Quite common passage migrant.***

The first report of the year were 2 birds at Pezeries on 15<sup>th</sup> Mar (RJM), with migrant birds easily found on the coastline thereafter up until the 9<sup>th</sup> Jun (GDA). A maximum spring flock size of 30 was recorded. Birds returned early as usual from 12<sup>th</sup> Jul (RJM) with smaller numbers noted than in spring, and no birds reported after September.

## **Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)**

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

Wader-count data showed a peak of 139 in November, but the species is difficult to monitor as many feed inland. Very few spent the early summer period on the island.

## **Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*)**

**1 record**

***Scarce passage migrant, very rare winter visitor.***

A fine breeding-plumaged individual was the only record of the year.

- 1, Claire Mare, 25<sup>th</sup> April (sev)

## Redshank (*Tringa totanus*)

**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 41 birds in November was the largest wader-count figure, although the wintering population will be larger than that number suggests.

## Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*)

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

Spring passage consisted of three birds – singles on Herm on 23<sup>rd</sup> Apr (CG), at Claire Mare on 25<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> Apr and another from 9<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May, and one on Herm on 31<sup>st</sup> May. Autumn passage started on 5<sup>th</sup> Jul with one at Claire Mare (LT, RJM), with excellent numbers reported during August, the largest flock being 11 at Fort le Crocq on 19<sup>th</sup> Aug (AJB). Numbers tailed off during September and October, with the final one of the year seen at Vale Pond on 26<sup>th</sup> Oct (JMA).

## Green Sandpiper (*Tringa ochropus*)

**16+ birds**

**Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.**

There were 4 spring records between the first at Barras Lane Fields on 7<sup>th</sup> Apr (MPL) and 17<sup>th</sup> May. The autumn passage was quite good with birds regularly seen at the usual wetland locations. The first of these was on 18<sup>th</sup> Jul at Claire Mare and the final bird of the year went over Fort le Crocq on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep (AJB).

## Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*)

**1 record**

The first record for three years.

1, Claire Mare, 19<sup>th</sup> Aug (KC).

## Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*)

**Quite common passage migrant, scarce in winter.**

The wintering bird at the Reservoir was present until 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar at least, paying a visit to Rue des Bergers on 4<sup>th</sup> Jan. Spring migrants arrived on 15<sup>th</sup> Apr (RAL, AJB) and up to 3 birds could be seen widely until 17<sup>th</sup> May. Birds returned in July, starting with one at Rue des Bergers on 6<sup>th</sup>, peaking at 9 at La Miellette on 27<sup>th</sup> (LT). Numbers reduced slowly until the last bird was seen at Pezeries on 7<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB). Again a bird arrived to winter on the island which may have been a new individual as it chose Perelle Bay. It was seen there first on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec (RJM, LT).

## Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

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

Wader-count data shows that 313 birds on the island in December was the largest count, and a small number also spent the summer season here. 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.

## Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)

**19 birds**

**Uncommon autumn passage migrant.**

The first of the autumn was seen on 10<sup>th</sup> Aug (PKV) and the species was seen on a further 8 dates until the last on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct (WRT). The total number of 19 birds is the lowest total since 1994 and reflects the poor seawatching season in 2002. All records were from Chouet or Jaonneuse Point.

**Great Skua (*Stercorarius skua*)****15 birds**

*Uncommon autumn passage migrant. Very rare in winter.*

On 4<sup>th</sup> Aug, the first bird of the autumn passed Jaonneuse/Chouet (WRT) and a poor total of 13 birds were recorded from there on just 8 dates until the last on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL, WRT). Like with the previous species, this was the lowest total since 1994. Two were also seen on the pelagic trip of 18<sup>th</sup> Aug. [A bird seen chasing gulls in Belle Greve Bay on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb was probably this species (WRT)]

**Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)****8 records**

*Scarce visitor, mainly from summer through to winter.*

There was probably a little repetition of birds in these sightings, all made at just 3 sites.

- 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, from 2001 until 6<sup>th</sup> Mar (sev)
- 1 adult, Vazon, 8<sup>th</sup> Feb (RJM, LT)
- 1 first-summer, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 14<sup>th</sup> Jul (WRT, AJB)
- 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 28<sup>th</sup> Jul (GDA)
- 1 juvenile, Vazon area, 7<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Aug (PKV)
- 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov (MCS)
- 1 first-winter, Vazon, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (MCS)
- 1 first-winter, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec (RJM, LT)
- 1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 29<sup>th</sup> Dec (GDA)



first-winter Mediterranean Gull – L'Eree Shingle Bank – Dec 2002 – M P Lawlor

**Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)****3 records of 4 birds**

*Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.*

All records this year were of winter birds rather than passage migrants.

- 1 adult, Little Russell, 5<sup>th</sup> Jan (MPL)
- 2 adults, Fort le Crocq, 6<sup>th</sup> Jan (RJM)
- 1, Richmond, Vazon, 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (CK)

**Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)**

*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, it was very difficult to find any in May and June, whilst they were away breeding.

**Common Gull (*Larus canus*)****10 records of up to 13 birds**

*Uncommon to scarce visitor, mainly in winter.*

A wide spread of records, showing that this species turns up at any time of the year.

- 1, King's Mills, 4<sup>th</sup> Jan (RJM, LT)
- 2, Herm, 8<sup>th</sup> Mar (RJM, LT)
- 1 ad, La Mare de Carteret, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Mar (MPL)

2 past Chouet, 29<sup>th</sup> May (PKV)  
1 ad, The Track Playing Fields, 29<sup>th</sup> Jul (AJB)  
1, Perelle, Sep (DJRA)  
1 first-w, Chouet, 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct (MPL)  
1, Vazon, 12<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL)  
1, Vazon, 26<sup>th</sup> Nov (MCS)  
2 ads, Grandes Rocques, 5<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL).

### 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. A wholly black bird around Chouet during mid-August caused some confusion but was covered head to foot with a chemical.



oiled Herring Gull – Chouet – Aug 2002 – M P Lawlor

### Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*)

**4 records**

*Scarce visitor, mainly summer and autumn.*

The bird in April is the first for that month, most being seen late summer, autumn and winter.

1, Chouet, 26<sup>th</sup> Apr (RJM)  
1 ad, Chouet, 4<sup>th</sup> Jul (LT)  
1 ad, Bordeaux, 26<sup>th</sup> Jul (MPL)  
1, Pembroke, 9<sup>th</sup> Sep (LT)

### Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

**1 returning individual**

*Vagrant – 9 previous records, including one regular wintering individual.*

The regular wintering adult bird was seen around the Town Harbour and nearby areas until only 25<sup>th</sup> January – an early departure date. It was located again on 18<sup>th</sup> October and could be found regularly until the end of the year.



Glaucous Gull – Town Harbour – B G Wells

### Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

*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 (*Rissa tridactyla*)

*Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Small numbers were widely seen in the first half of the year and during early autumn. Late autumn usually has the odd day with heavy passage but numbers were well down this year with no counts of more than 40 received.

### Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

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

Probably 8 or so birds wintered on the island at the start of the year, with up to 6 in Belle Greve Bay and ones and twos along the west coast. As usual, small flocks could be encountered during the spring and summer periods. Slightly larger counts were made during autumn migration, peaking at only 34 on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug, but like many seabirds numbers were not high. Sightings at the end of the year were again from the West and East coasts where up to 7 birds could be seen. The wintering population does not seem to be increasing at the moment

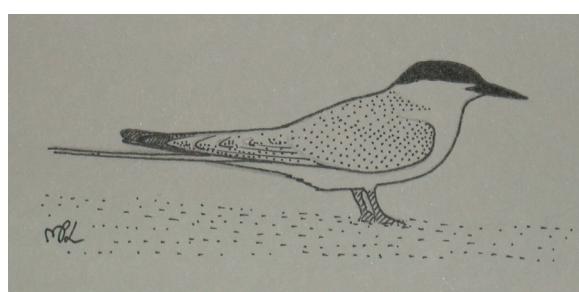
### Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*)

**1 record**

*Vagrant – 1 previous record*

An adult Roseate Tern was found early in the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> July resting with gulls on the beach at Vazon. Although elusive, it remained for the rest of the day either here or at Cobo, and was last seen on the 13<sup>th</sup> roosting on La Capelle off L'Eree Shingle Bank. This is only the second record for Guernsey - the first was in 1983.

(R. J. Murphy, E. A. Thomson)



## Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

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

The first birds reported were 2 off Herm on 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (CG), but regular sightings only started in May when single-figure groups were seen passing through. Small numbers again bred at Saddle Rocks, Herm, plus encouraging signs from the Pea Stacks where up to 10 birds could be seen, and 3 or 4 birds appeared to be sitting. Autumn migration was seen from Jonneuse Point with the peak count of 55 birds on 25<sup>th</sup> Aug (WRT). Migration tailed off once September started, with the last 2 birds recorded from Herm on 17<sup>th</sup> Sep (GDA).

## Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

**2 records of 3 birds**

**Scarce passage migrant.**

A 'commic' tern seen in November usually turns out to be Arctic.

- 2, Belle Greve Bay, 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr (WRT)
- 1, Belle Greve Bay, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (MAG)

## Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

**2 records of 16+ birds**

**Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.**

Possibly the largest single flock ever seen from the island.

- Flock of 15+, plus a further single bird, past Chouet, 10<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB)

## 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 many coastal locations except the South coast. Auk passage observed whilst seawatching in autumn included many of this species. There were no details received of numbers of breeding birds but Guillemots were present during the summer round Jethou and Herm, albeit in very small numbers.

## Razorbill (*Alca torda*)

**Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor, a few breed.**

Between 1 and 6 noted irregularly throughout the year and more often seen from land than Guillemot. Auk passage observed whilst seawatching in autumn included many of this species. There were no details received of numbers of breeding birds but Razorbills were more common than Guillemots during the summer round Jethou and Herm.

## Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)

**Uncommon summer visitor and breeder. Rarer on passage and in winter.**

All records received were from the breeding areas around Jethou and Herm, where the first returning birds were seen on 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (GDA). Approximately 40 birds on 24<sup>th</sup> Jun was the peak count, similar numbers as seen last year. As usual birds disappeared again during July.

## 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 generally not recorded in any numbers, with groups of up to 6 being usual. However, a huge flock of 40+ were noted at Vingtaine de L'Epine on 10<sup>th</sup> Nov (AJB). No clear evidence of migration was reported.

## Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbas*)

**Very common resident breeding species and passage migrant.**

Widely recorded from all parts of the island, with visible migration noted especially during the autumn.

## Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

**Common resident breeding species.**

Present in all areas of the island, flocking in numbers at a few sites. A leucistic bird was present at Chouet on 7<sup>th</sup> Sep (WRT).

## Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

**Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor.**

The first returning migrant was noted at Chouet on 16<sup>th</sup> Apr (DJRA) - quite an early date, as the next wasn't reported until 4<sup>th</sup> May. During the summer, small numbers were reported from the quieter areas of the island, with migrant birds returning from August. Autumn migration had very few birds reported, with the final one flying East at Grandes Rocques on 19<sup>th</sup> Sep (MPL).

## Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

**Uncommon to quite common passage migrant and breeding species.**

The first genuine Cuckoo of the summer was calling on 19<sup>th</sup> Apr at Marais Nord (PKV), but only 10 more birds were reported to the Societe by the start of June, indicating a poor year for the species. The total lack of records after 8<sup>th</sup> Jun implies Cuckoos *may* not have bred locally this year.

## Barn Owl (*Tyto alba alba*)

**Uncommon resident breeding species.**

Many pairs of owls are using the nestboxes erected around the island, but they are still frustratingly difficult to see. About 20 pairs were probably breeding in them (VEF).

## Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

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

Long-eared Owls did seem to be present at most of the traditional sites, but the weather was not kind to them and only one pair (Reservoir) definitely produced chicks. Good locations where Long-eared Owls may be seen are Jerbourg Point, Petit Bot, Pleinmont and the Reservoir.

## Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

up to 14 birds

### *Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

An excellent year for the species, although 13 must remain as a maximum figure as some repetition is likely

A wintering bird on Lihou Island was last seen on 10<sup>th</sup> Jan (AJB)

1, Vale Pond, 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (DLd)

1, Lihou, 4<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB)

2, Choffin Farm, N of Reservoir, 29<sup>th</sup> Sep (VEF)

8 sightings of birds either in Lihou/L'Eree area or Pleinmont area between 14<sup>th</sup> Sep and 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov (AJB, MPL, MAG, WRT). Exactly how many birds involved was impossible to ascertain.

1, Chouet, 28<sup>th</sup> Sep (MPL)

1, roosting in gorse bush, Lihou, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Dec (AJB).

## Swift (*Apus apus*)

### *Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first Swift of the year was seen over Grande Mare on 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (AJB). They arrived in force on 26<sup>th</sup> Apr then numbers built up slowly during the next few weeks with good numbers passing through on a few days. Many flocks were present during the summer with birds breeding in many roof-spaces in the older buildings. Numbers dropped off in August and there were 8 birds seen during September. The last of the summer were 2 over Claire Mare on 20<sup>th</sup> Sep (LT).

**A very unusual record of a bird appearing on 23<sup>rd</sup> December at Le Guet and spending most of the day feeding there. This is the first winter record for the island, although there has been one in Jersey.**

(E. A. Thomson)

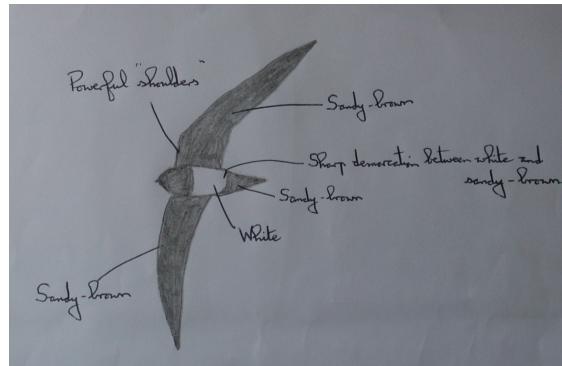
## Alpine Swift (*Apus melba*)

1 record

### *Vagrant – 6 previous records*

A bird was seen well as it flew over a group of ten birdwatchers walking along La Ruette du Frocq, Castel in the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> April. Later in the day it was seen more than once, flying over a birder's garden at La Grande Mare. The 7<sup>th</sup> record for Guernsey, this bird occurred during a good period for migrant birds with a warm airflow emanating from southern Europe.

(J. P. Down et al)



Alpine Swift – Grande Mare – A J Bisson

## Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

### *Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.*

Early in the year there were about 4 birds wintering at various sites around the island, with the last bird lingering at Claire Mare until 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (LT, RJM). After the breeding season, birds returned to the island, starting with a single in the Fauxquets Valley on 20<sup>th</sup> Jul (RRC). Single birds were seen at many locations

during the main passage period between late August and October., with smaller numbers present in the final two months.

<b>Bee-eater</b> ( <i>Merops apiaster</i> )	<b>1 record of 5 birds</b>
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*Vagrant – 10 previous records.*

Five birds appeared over The Croft, Fort le Marchant on 24<sup>th</sup> June and stayed for a short while calling and swooping for insects before heading off out to sea.

(M. A. Guppy)

<b>Hoopoe</b> ( <i>Upupa epops</i> )	<b>3 records</b>
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The number of sightings per year varies between 0 and 3 – so 2002 was a good year.

1, in Torteval area, 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Mar

1, feeding on a lawn at Les Fauconnaires, 27<sup>th</sup> Mar

1, Pleinmont, 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Sep (CJM), was very pale and so possibly from the East.

<b>Wryneck</b> ( <i>Jynx torquilla</i> )	<b>6 records</b>
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*Scarce passage migrant. Formerly common breeder.*

Probably the most surprising sighting of the year was the Channel Islands' first ever winter record of Wryneck in a birder's garden at Bas Capelles, St. Sampsons between 12<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January. There are only a handful of records ever for this season in the whole of northern Europe.

(R. A. Ferbrache)

The autumn produced a good run of sightings.

1 trapped, Claire Mare, 24<sup>th</sup> Aug (JH)

1, Lihou, 4<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB)

1, Chouet, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Sep (MAG)

1, Herm Common, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep (AJB, JB)

1, Mont Herault, 29<sup>th</sup> Sep (BGW)

<b>Great Spotted Woodpecker</b> ( <i>Dendrocopos major</i> )	<b>2 records</b>
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*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Saumarez Park seems to be the favoured site at the moment, but even there the species is seldom encountered.

The female remained in Saumarez Park until 28<sup>th</sup> Jan

1, La Petite Vallette, 1<sup>st</sup> Mar (CK)

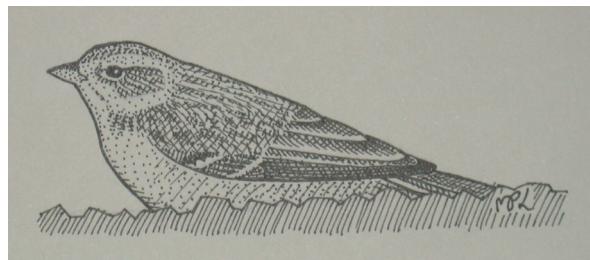
1, Saumarez Park, 1<sup>st</sup> Dec (RJM)

<b>Short-toed Lark</b> ( <i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> )	<b>1 record</b>
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*Vagrant – 4 previous records*

A bird was watched at very close range as it rested on the shingle of the car park at Pulias Headland on 15<sup>th</sup> September. This was the island's 5<sup>th</sup> record, but unfortunately stayed for less than ten minutes.

(M. P. Lawlor)



Short-toed Lark – Pulias – Sep 2002 – M P Lawlor

### Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*)

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

Birds were present during the breeding season at L'Ancresse Common and Port Soif and presumably bred there in small numbers. Small flocks were widespread during the winter periods, but larger numbers were seen in late autumn peaking at 75+ at Pleinmont on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (AJB).

### Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*)

**Quite common passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor.**

The two birds which appeared over L'Ancresse on 9<sup>th</sup> Mar were the first hirundines of the year (CJM). During the next month or so, regular passage continued, then smaller numbers through in May. As usual, a handful of birds wandered around the island during the summer months and an encouraging sign was of a few birds appearing to enter nest holes in the bank above the beach at the North side of Herm. Autumn passage was light, with the final 3 birds reported from Pleinmont on 19<sup>th</sup> Sep (LT).

### Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

**Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

Two birds feeding at Claire Mare on 21<sup>st</sup> Mar were the first Swallows of the summer (CJM) but heavy migration did not start until 9<sup>th</sup> Apr. Strong passage continued for the next two months and birds were common all summer. Return passage was evident throughout the autumn, peaking on 5<sup>th</sup> Oct, when at least 300 birds came in off the sea at Japonneuse in just 2 hours (WRT). There were still quite a few around in the final week of October, but only 3 further sightings, the last bird battling south over Herm Common on 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL). [N.B. a bird ringed in Guernsey on 25<sup>th</sup> Sep 2001 whilst on its southward migration, was heading for its winter quarters at Bloemfontein, South Africa, where it was caught on 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2002.]

### House Martin (*Delichon urbicum*)

**Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first sighting of House Martin was over La Houlette School on 23<sup>rd</sup> Mar (TDCE), then more arrived on the island from 25<sup>th</sup> Mar. There seemed to be few birds passing through during April but some nests were found during the summer. Return passage peaked in September then slowed down in early October, with the final 3 birds feeding at La Houlette on 9<sup>th</sup> Nov (RRC).

### Richard's Pipit (*Anthus novaeseelandiae*)

**1 record**

**Scarce autumn migrant, very rare in spring.**

One record in a year is the most common total.

1, Pleinmont, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Sep (WRT, MAG).

**Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)****12 records*****Uncommon passage migrant.***

There were only 5 sightings reported to the Societe in the spring – one over Pleinmont on 20<sup>th</sup> Apr (WRT) being the first. Autumn was better, with 7 sightings between 28<sup>th</sup> Aug and 28<sup>th</sup> Sep (WRT). An under-recorded species on the island.

**Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*)*****Common resident species and passage migrant. Declining breeding bird.***

No especially large groups or heavy passage was reported this year, but flocks did build up at various headlands and fields during the migration season. Still only small numbers now breed.

**Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus*)*****Common breeding species, with additional wintering birds.***

Birds were seen in all coastal areas, often flocking into double-figures, feeding on vraic.

**Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)*****Quite common passage migrant. Former breeder.***

The species first appeared on 11<sup>th</sup> Apr on the beach by the Claire Mare (MPL) with groups of up to 6 birds present during April and a peak of 8 in early May at Fort Hommet (AJB). The first reported autumn migrant was at Chouet on 24<sup>th</sup> Aug (MPL), with small groups of up to 6 seen in September, with the final 2 reported over the Heritage Walk on only 5<sup>th</sup> Oct (MPL), with unusually no later October sightings.

**Blue-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flava*)****2 records*****Scarce passage migrant.***

Two birds in two days is very good.

- 1, Fort Hommet, 2<sup>nd</sup> May (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 3<sup>rd</sup> May (LT, RJM)

**Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*)*****Quite common winter visitor and migrant.***

Single birds were seen wintering at various sites on the island, departing during March, when the last was on the beach by Vale Pond on 17<sup>th</sup> (RAL). Autumn migrants appeared from 21<sup>st</sup> Sep when one was at Pleinmont (LT), passage peaking with 5 birds at Petit Bot on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct (LT). Thereafter, 1 or 2 birds were recorded at various sites until the end of the year.

**Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)*****Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.***

Commonly seen during the winter and passage periods. No actual roost counts were made but 36 were in a pre-roost flock at the Town Harbour on 28<sup>th</sup> Oct (WRT). This race of Pied Wagtail generally disappears during April and returns to the island during October to winter in large numbers.

## White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

**Quite common passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.**

The first of the spring migrant wagtails was a male bird on La Mare de Carteret playing fields on 14<sup>th</sup> Mar (MPL). Passage peaked during May when 21 birds was the highest single count. Numbers again passed through in August and September before they vacated the island for their winter quarters.

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[*alba*] wagtail – As has been typical in recent years, there was the odd sighting of mainly juvenile birds in the summer which were variously reported as Pied or White Wagtails. These birds were mainly in the Claire Mare area and were no doubt locally bred.

## Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

**Very common resident species.**

Commonly noted at all sites.

## Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*)

**Very common resident species.**

Commonly noted at all sites.

## Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)

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

Commonly noted at all sites, numbers augmented by continental birds arriving from the last week of September to winter in the island.

## Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

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

1 or 2 birds were noted wintering at various sites during the first three months of the year. Passage was noted as usual in mid-March, especially between 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, but no large groups were recorded. A further male was present at Pleinmont on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (AJB). There was also a mid-summer wandering bird at Pleinmont on 19<sup>th</sup> Jul (LT). The first autumn bird was also there on the early date of 4<sup>th</sup> Sep (JMA) but the main passage occurred from 21<sup>st</sup> Oct. 1 to 4 birds were noted regularly on migration at many sites, with many of these staying to winter around the island.

## Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

The first Redstart for 2002 was a male present on Lihou Island on 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr (AJB). Between that date and the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, a very poor 4 birds were recorded in the whole season. Autumn was slightly better however, with 15 birds seen after the first at Catioroc on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep (AJB). Four birds together at Havilland Hall on 21<sup>st</sup> Sep (MAG) was the only multiple sighting, and the final female was seen at Pleinmont on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov (RJM).

## Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

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

Four spring migrants were reported, starting with a male at Fort le Marchant on 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (MPL). The others were in May on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Returning migrants in autumn appeared from 18<sup>th</sup> Aug (DL) and

were, as usual, more numerous than in spring, peaking at 7 bird. A few were noted at Pleinmont into October until the last was seen on 10<sup>th</sup> (AJB).

### Stonechat (*Saxicola torquatus*)

**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.

### Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

**Common passage migrant, irregular breeder.**

A very early bird was seen along the approach road to Icart Point on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb (IS), with the next bird, at the Grammar School playing fields just 5 days later (DJRA). Passage picked up from about 12<sup>th</sup> Mar, with a larger arrival on 15<sup>th</sup> when 50 were at the Old Aerodrome and over 30 were at Pleinmont. Passage then slowed with mainly single-figure counts during April and May. The last of the spring migrants occurred on 14<sup>th</sup> June, when single birds were seen at L'Ancresse, Lihou and Pulias (CJM, AJB, GDA).

A single present on 30<sup>th</sup> Jul on the dunes at Port Soif was the autumn's first sighting (MPL) with regular passage of up to 20 birds noted thereafter - peaking in mid-September. There was only one November record – at Pleinmont on 3<sup>rd</sup> (MCS).

### Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*)

**1 record**

**Vagrant – 1 previous record**

The highlight of the year for most birdwatchers was the discovery of a male Desert Wheatear on the beach at Jaonneuse Bay on 24<sup>th</sup> November. This was the second record for the island, exactly 11 years after the first and it performed brilliantly until at least 4<sup>th</sup> December.

(W. Symons)



Desert Wheatear – Jaonneuse Bay – Nov 2002 – M P Lawlor

### Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)

**16+ birds**

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

There was only 2 birds in the whole of the spring – males on Herm on 5<sup>th</sup> Apr (GDA) and Pleinmont on 8<sup>th</sup> Apr (DS).

Autumn was much better as, after singles at Pleinmont on 10<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB) and in a Bulwer Avenue garden on 13<sup>th</sup> Oct (DJRA), there was a small influx of birds there from 17<sup>th</sup>, when up to 15 birds were present with large numbers of other thrushes (JMM, AJB, WRT). The last of these birds stayed until 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)**

**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 (*Turdus pilaris*)**

**Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.**

There were very few birds present on the island at the start of the year, with only very small groups reported. February saw a couple of larger flocks of c.40 birds – at Fauxquets Valley and Pleinmont (RJM, LT, WRT). Birds disappeared during the next month with the final sightings on Herm on 6<sup>th</sup> and Fort le Merchant on 14<sup>th</sup> Apr (LT, RJM).

The first of the autumn was grounded at Chouet on 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct (MPL), but this species was not involved in the large thrush influx of that month. There was a small influx in November though with, for example, at least 100 birds feeding in stubble fields at Pont Vaillant – much improved numbers than recently – although few were reported in December.

## **Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)**

**Common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Commonly noted at all sites, with additional influxes recorded during the autumn and winter months. This was especially noticeable in mid-October when at least 200 were recorded at Pleinmont on 17<sup>th</sup>, along with many other thrushes.

## **Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)**

**Common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.**

Quite good numbers were present at the start of the year with flocks of up to 100 birds recorded. After 10<sup>th</sup> Mar, none were reported from the island.

After the first were heard going over Pont Vaillant on 11<sup>th</sup> Oct (WRT), there was a large movement on 17<sup>th</sup> when hundreds of birds passed through and the species was very visible all day. Most did not stay long however as there were not especially large numbers staying to winter.

## **Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)**

**Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.**

Observed infrequently, mainly in parkland, with groups of up to 4 birds recorded.

## **Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cettia*)**

**2 records**

**Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor. Has probably bred.**

Interestingly, birds seem to have moved on from the traditional sites in the north of the island.

1 singing male, Rue des Bergers, from 15<sup>th</sup> Mar (RJM, LT, RAF), last heard on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

1 regularly heard, Claire Mare, 29<sup>th</sup> Oct (AJB) to year end.

## **Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)**

**4 records**

**Uncommon passage migrant.**

Only 2 birds were heard reeling during the spring, a very low total.

1 singing, Pleinmont, 20<sup>th</sup> Apr (WRT)

1 singing, Marais Nord, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (PKV)

1 trapped, Claire Mare, 11<sup>th</sup> Aug (JH)  
1 trapped, Claire Mare, 18<sup>th</sup> Aug (JH)

### Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

1 record

Only one record this year, but still better than the blank of 2001.  
1 juvenile trapped, Claire Mare, 21<sup>st</sup> Aug (JH)

### Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

*Quite common passage migrant but not easily seen. Occasionally breeds.*

First reported to La Societe on 16<sup>th</sup> Apr from Rue des Bergers (AJB). The main passage of birds was recorded through the island's wetter areas in April and May. There were a few records in June and July, before birds started passing through again during autumn migration in small numbers.

### Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

*Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first reported Reed Warbler was at Marais Nord on 20<sup>th</sup> Apr (PKV). Good numbers passed through, with singing and breeding birds located at most reedbed sites, even quite small ones. Good migration was noted in August and early September, but none were reported after 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep (RJM, LT)

### Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)

3 records

*Scarce autumn passage migrant*

Three in one year is excellent – the species has only been seen in 4 out of the last ten years.  
1, in a garden on Mount Row, St. Peter Port, 14<sup>th</sup> Aug (MAG)  
1, Lihou, 15<sup>th</sup> Aug (AJB), moving to Lihou Headland on 16<sup>th</sup>.  
1 trapped, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 26<sup>th</sup> Sep (JH)

### Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

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

There were plenty of sightings of male and female birds wintering at the start of the year, but singing males were more in evidence during March. Spring passage peaked in late April and autumn migrants were commonest in mid to late October. Again small numbers stayed to winter around the island.

### Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

*Uncommon breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first Garden Warbler of the year was present on 21<sup>st</sup> Apr (JMM). The majority of the spring migrants were recorded in May and breeding occurred at a few sites. Autumn migration was poor and few birds were seen.

### Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

6 records of 7 birds

*Uncommon passage migrant and scarce breeding summer visitor.*

A few pairs probably breed in scrubby areas but are very difficult to find and to prove.

- 2, Pleinmont, 12<sup>th</sup> May (MAG)
- 1, Corbiere, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jun (LT)
- 1, Fond du Val, Forest, 20<sup>th</sup> Jul (LT)
- 1, Reservoir, 9<sup>th</sup> Aug (LT, RJM)

1, Catioroc, 28<sup>th</sup> Aug (AJB)  
1, Pleinmont, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep (LT)

### Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

**Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.**

The first few arrivals were at Pleinmont on 19<sup>th</sup> Apr (AJB, LT, RJM), with larger numbers appearing two days later. The species seems very common around the island at the moment with lots of singing birds and breeding pairs. Autumn passage continued up until 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct, with the last record year on 17<sup>th</sup> Oct at Pleinmont (LT, RJM).

### Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)

**up to 8 pairs**

**Uncommon breeding resident.**

Breeding birds on the south-western cliffs were seen throughout the year. A maximum of 3 singing males were counted at Pleinmont in Spring. Also cliff-top birds were present at Corbiere and Les Tielles during the breeding season indicating probable pairs there. Again there were single male birds at Fort le Marchant, Fort Doyle and on Herm during the breeding season, but no specific signs of breeding were noted.

### Pallas's Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)

**1 record**

**Recently, a rare autumn passage migrant – 10 previous records, all since 1991.**

A bird was found on 17<sup>th</sup> November feeding in an area of large trees above the horse paddock along Route Isabelle, St. Peter Port. It put on an excellent show at times gleaning insects from the leaves.

(E. A. Thomson)

### Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

**2 records**

**Scarce autumn passage migrant.**

A typical pair of records – two birds per year seems to be the current average.

- 1, Petit Bot, 31<sup>st</sup> Oct (LT)
- 1, in woods above the village, Herm, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov (WRT, MPL, DJRA).

### Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

**8 records of 9 birds**

**Scarce passage migrant, mostly in spring.**

An excellent May for the species, with many singing male birds recorded.

- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 2<sup>nd</sup> May (RAL)
- 1, Saumarez Park, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> May (LT, RJM)
- 1, Reservoir, 5<sup>th</sup> May (LT, RJM)
- 1, Fond du Val, Forest, 11<sup>th</sup> May (LT)
- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 12<sup>th</sup> May (MAG)
- 1, Les Fauconnaires, 14<sup>th</sup> May (JMA)
- 1, Herm, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug (RJM, LT)
- 2, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 19<sup>th</sup> Aug (JH, RJM, LT)

## Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

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

1 or 2 birds were noted at many sites during January and February. Spring migrants arrived from mid-March, with the main arrival taking place from 28<sup>th</sup>. Chiffchaffs were very common during the autumn migration, with many birds choosing to stay for the winter.

## Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

**Common passage migrant, uncommon breeding summer visitor.**

The first winter record of Willow Warbler for Guernsey was of a bird seen briefly in a George Street garden in St. Peter Port on 27<sup>th</sup> January.

(A. R. Grange)

The first migrant Willow Warbler was present on Lihou Island on 26<sup>th</sup> Mar (AJB). More birds arrived in April but numbers seemed low compared to most years. As usual, the species was not very common during the summer until large numbers of migrants appeared during August. Gradually, less and less were seen during September, with only a couple of October records, the last at Pezeries, Pleinmont on 16<sup>th</sup> Oct (LT).

## Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

**Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon breeding resident.**

Commonly reported, especially during autumn migration in October and November. Only small numbers can be seen during the summer in suitable habitat.

## Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapillus*)

**Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has probably bred.**

Widespread during January and February in small groups of 1 to 4 birds. There were more records in March, than is usual with the last on Herm on 24<sup>th</sup> (GDA). There was another bird present in the Fauxquets Valley however on 2<sup>nd</sup> May (RAL). There was a very early first autumn record on 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug at Vaux de Monel (LT, RJM) before the stronger autumn migration started from mid-September. During October and November migrants were not difficult to find in all suitable habitats. In December there were only single-figures reported. 36 Firecrests were ringed on the island during the year.

## Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

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

Fauxquets Valley held the first bird of the year on 2<sup>nd</sup> May (RAL). Birds were not noted passing through in great numbers during May, although there were sightings during the summer at various sites indicating probable breeding of 3 or 4 pairs. One pair definitely bred on Herm as adults were observed feeding young there in August (LT, RJM). Autumn migration started in earnest from 16<sup>th</sup> Aug, and was quite good with counts of up to 8 birds seen during September. The final sightings were at Pleinmont and Rue des Bergers on 25<sup>th</sup> Sep (MCS, WS).

## Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

**Uncommon to Quite common passage migrant.**

Unusually, no birds were reported in spring at all. Autumn migration was good though with suitable weather conditions in August bringing birds in from 14<sup>th</sup> (AJB) and groups of up to 6 birds were present in the next few weeks. A further 14 were reported in September, and the last of the year was at Beau Sejour on 25<sup>th</sup> Sep (LT).

**Bearded Tit (*Panurus biarmicus*)****7+ birds**

*Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Claire Mare continues its monopoly at the moment.

Up to 5, Claire Mare, 7<sup>th</sup> Feb to 25<sup>th</sup> Mar (AJB)  
2, Claire Mare, 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov until year-end (RJM)

**Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)**

*Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.*

Commonly recorded on the island, but no very large flocks were reported

**Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)****3 records**

*Scarce, irregular winter visitor and passage migrant – has bred.*

Numbers are well down from the double-figure totals in 1996 and 1997.

1, Saumarez Park, 1<sup>st</sup> Jan (LT, RJM)  
1, Foulon, 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb (LT)  
1, Saumarez Park, 9<sup>th</sup> Mar (LT)

**Blue Tit (*Parus caeruleus*)**

*Very common resident breeding species.*

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

**Great Tit (*Parus major*)**

*Very common resident breeding species.*

Very commonly seen throughout, but no large flocks were reported. [N.B. a Jersey-ringed bird was found dead at Rue du Closel, Vale on 4<sup>th</sup> Aug, the first ever Jersey/Guernsey recovery.]

**Short-toed Treecreeper (*Certhia brachydactyla*)**

*Common resident breeding species.*

Commonly seen in suitable habitat throughout the island, even in the town centre.

**Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)****1 record**

*Scarce to rare spring migrant*

The typical single spring sighting, found whilst searching for the Woodchat Shrike.

1 female, in flight, Jerbourg Point, 20<sup>th</sup> May (RJM, LT)

**Red-backed Shrike (*Lanius collurio*)****1 record**

*Very rare passage migrant recently*

A male bird was seen briefly in the clifftop scrub at Pleinmont, late afternoon on 14<sup>th</sup> July. This is the first record since 1997.

(M. Leach)

**Woodchat Shrike** (*Lanius senator*)**1 record**

*Vagrant - 6 previous records*

A bird was seen briefly along the clifftop road at Jerbourg in the early morning of 19<sup>th</sup> May. Despite prolonged searching, it was never found again and was assumed to have headed inland. The last record of this species was in 1996.

(M. A. Guppy)

**Magpie** (*Pica pica*)

*Very common resident breeding species.*

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

**Jackdaw** (*Corvus monedula*)**12+ birds**

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently rare breeder.*

Most reports were either from the South cliffs between Pleinmont and Tielles, or flying to the corvid roost in the Fauxquets Valley. The largest count was 12 birds at Les Tielles (GDA) which indicates possibly two pairs are breeding. The most unusual sighting was 3 birds at Port Grat on 20<sup>th</sup> Nov (JH), possibly newly-arrived birds but they may still have been the resident birds wandering north.

**Carriion Crow** (*Corvus corone*)

*Very common resident breeding species.*

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

**Hooded Crow** (*Corvus cornix*)**1 record**

*Very rare visitor.*

A bird was seen in the vicinity of Mont Cuet Tip, Chouet on 9<sup>th</sup> April. It could be regularly seen there until 15<sup>th</sup> April, but was also seen as far away as L'Eree Aerodrome. At some point during the year, the ornithological authorities decided to split this form as a separate species from the closely related Carrion Crow.

(J. P. Hooper)

**Raven** (*Corvus corax*)**2 breeding pairs**

*Uncommon resident breeding species.*

The Guernsey pair were successful this year as 6 birds were seen on the south coast in the spring. The usual pair on Herm were also successful as 3 chicks were seen in the nest in late March. After the breeding season, birds wandered widely all over the island, and flock sizes of 6 were not uncommon, although the juvenile birds appeared to leave the island in the autumn as they usually do.

**Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

*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 (*Sturnus roseus*)****4 records**

*Rare autumn passage migrant – 18 previous records.*

Four records brings the Guernsey total to 22, including an incredible 14 birds in the last 6 years. The first of 2002 was the most unusual – a first-summer bird, irregularly from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April with a flock of starlings at the car park at Grandes Rocques. This species is usually seen in summer and autumn.

(J. P. Hooper)

The other three records were of adult birds which occurred in late spring during a huge influx of this species into north-west Europe:

One at Fort le Crocq on 9<sup>th</sup> June.

(M. A. Guppy)

One in a garden at La Planque Lane, Forest on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

(N. S. & S. A. Tulie)

One on L'Eree Shingle Bank on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

(J. M. Anderson)



Rose-coloured Starling – Forest – June 2002 – NS & SA Tulie

**House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)**

*Common resident breeding species.*

Commonly seen throughout, but no especially large flocks were reported.

**Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)**

*Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Commonly recorded all year, with an increase in numbers during the migration and winter periods. The largest flocks reported were in the fields around Pont Vaillant where 400 were estimated on 19<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL).

**Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)****46+ birds**

*Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

At least 17 birds were recorded in the first three months of the year, indicating that there were more than usual spending the winter here. The last flock fed up on put-out food at Mon Plaisir until 24<sup>th</sup> Mar (LT). Autumn migration started from 16<sup>th</sup> Oct (RJM) and at least 26 birds were reported from various sites up until 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. After that there were only 3 more birds sighted indicating fewer wintering into 2003.

**Serin** (*Serinus serinus*)**2 records**

**Scarce passage migrant and summer visitor. Has bred on occasion.**

No summer records of this species, and much less than the 18 recorded during the previous two years.

- 1 male, visiting a garden at Rocque Poisson, about 9<sup>th</sup> Feb to 30<sup>th</sup> Mar (JH, CMK)
- 1 female, visiting a garden at Rue des Fosses, Forest, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> Mar (NO, TO)

**Greenfinch** (*Carduelis chloris*)

**Common resident breeding species and passage migrant.**

Commonly recorded, with flocks of up to a few hundred present in the autumn and winter. The largest flock reported was at least 250 birds at Portinfer in late October (MPL, WS).

**Goldfinch** (*Carduelis carduelis*)

**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** (*Carduelis spinus*)

**Scarce to uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.**

At the start of the year small flocks of Siskins were recorded widely but the largest numbers were at Saumarez Park where up to 30 birds could be seen, including some lovely singing males during March. The last of the wintering birds were 4 at Les Caches, St. Martins on 17<sup>th</sup> Apr (BGW), although a further sighting on 3<sup>rd</sup> May came from Saumarez Park (RJM).

The first of the autumn birds were a flock of 8 at Silbe on 8<sup>th</sup> Oct (GDA) with plenty of further sightings during the next two months. At some sites sizeable flocks built up – with a maximum of 50 birds at St Pierre Park Hotel on 5<sup>th</sup> Nov (MPL). Few however were reported in December.

**Linnet** (*Carduelis cannabina*)

**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.

**Crossbill** (*Loxia curvirostra*)**4+ records of 24+ birds**

**Scarce irregular migrant.**

When there are small influxes, like this year, it is impossible to be certain on the number of birds involved, especially when they all chose the pines at Pleinmont to feed upon.

- 6 to 8, Pleinmont, 30<sup>th</sup> Jun (JH)
- Up to 12, Pleinmont, 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Aug (RJM, LT)
- 1 male, Pleinmont, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep (RJM, LT)
- Up to 5 Pleinmont, 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> Sep (RJM)

**Bullfinch** (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

**Uncommon resident breeding species.**

Up to 5 reported at various sites throughout the island during the year.

**Lapland Bunting (*Calcarius lapponicus*)****2 records**

Two birds is about average in a non-influx year, these arriving on the same day.

- 1, Fort le Crocq, 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct (AJB)
- 1, St. Sampsons Reclamation Area, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct (DJRA)

**Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)****8 records of up to 11 birds**

*Scarce to uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A big improvement on the dismal 2 sightings last year, but well short of the large flocks of 1995 and 1996.

- 1, St. Sampsons Reclamation Area, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct (DJRA)
- 1 male, Fort le Crocq, 26<sup>th</sup> Oct (DT, JMA, MCS)
- 1, L'Ancrese G.C., 11<sup>th</sup> Nov (DJRA)
- 1, Port Grat, 20<sup>th</sup> Nov (JH)
- 1 male, Fort le Marchant, 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (LT, RJM)
- 4, Fort le Marchant, 30<sup>th</sup> Nov to 4<sup>th</sup> Dec (MB, PKV)
- 1, Herm, 30<sup>th</sup> Nov (MAG)
- 1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 8<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL)

**Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*)****1 record**

A brief sighting of a migrant bird is typical for the species at the moment.

- 1 male, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> May (LT, RJM)

**Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)****3 records of 4 birds**

*Scarce autumn passage migrant.*

The species can be almost expected in suitable weather conditions during September.

- 2, Pulias, 12<sup>th</sup> Sep (MPL)
- 1, over Pleinmont, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep (MAG)
- 1, Pleinmont, 29<sup>th</sup> Sep (JMM)

**Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)****6 records of 11 birds**

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

An increase in sightings from last year.

- 1, Claire Mare, 13<sup>th</sup> Jan (WRT)
- pair, Claire Mare, 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar (MAG, LT, RJM)
- 1 or 2, Rue des Bergers, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Mar (AJB)
- up to 4, Track Marais, 28<sup>th</sup> Oct until year-end (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 15<sup>th</sup> Nov (AJB)
- 1, Fort le Crocq, 18<sup>th</sup> Nov (AJB).

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

*Vagrant – 2 previous records*

A male bird frequented a bird table on Ruette Braye, St. Peter Port on and off between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May. This pattern of behaviour was exhibited by the island's previous two records of this species. Unfortunately most of the island's birdwatchers were unable to catch up it.

(Mr. & Mrs. Symons)

## **ESCAPES AND EXOTICA**

### **Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)**

At least one bird was at large during the year, mainly seen in the Grande Mare area.

### **White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)**

20+ feral birds commuted between Marais Nord and Barras Lane fields during the year, with breeding noted at the former site. It is always difficult to pick out wild flocks due to local movements of these birds which can disperse more widely at times.

### **Greylag Goose (*Anser anser*)**

Lots of feral birds, including many farmyard and hybrids, spent most of their time at the Old Aerodrome. The numbers are set to increase quickly now that they have started to breed in the area.

### **Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)**

Small flocks commuted between Marais Nord, Vale Pond and Barras Lane fields during the year. Also there are a few strange-looking birds which are probably hybrids between Barnacle and White-fronted Goose. A flock of 6 birds with 2 White-fronted Geese were present briefly in Belle Greve Bay and their behaviour suggested they *may* have been wild (DJRA).

### **Canary (*Serinus canaria*)**

One was rescued from gardens at Clos des Pecqueries on 17<sup>th</sup> Dec (MPL)

### **Village Weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*)**

One visiting a bird table in Torteval during November (MC)



Village Weaver – Torteval – Nov 2002 – M Cave

***List of Observers mentioned in the systematic list***

DJRA	David Andrews
GDA	Geoff Atkinson
JMA	Joan Anderson
JB	Jessica Bisson
AJB	Tony Bisson
MB	Martin Brouard
KC	Kevin Childs
MC	Mike Cave
RRC	Ralph Cave
TDCE	Tim Earl
BF	Brian Forsey
RAF	Rod Ferbrache
VEF	Vic Froome
AG	Tony Grange
CG	Chris Gooddie
MAG	Mark Guppy
IH	Ian Hall
JH	Jamie Hooper
CK	Carol Kinnersly
CMK	Catherine Kinnersly
DLd	Dee Landmead
DL	Dave Laurent
MPL	Mark Lawlor
RAL	Rob Lihou
CJM	Chris Mourant
JMM	Julian Medland
RJM	Bob Murphy
NO	Nancy Ogier
TO	T. Ogier
JP	Jenny Page
DS	D. Smith
MCS	Mary Simmons
IS	Ian Sutherland
WS	Win Symons
DT	David Trestain
LT	Liz Thomson
WRT	Wayne Turner
PKV	Paul Veron
BGW	Barry Wells
DY	D. Yeadon

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 2002 (taken from the monthly Wetland Bird Survey). This is a co-ordinated count of most of the coastal sites on the island which regularly hold waders.

Compiled by the wader count co-ordinator, Wayne Turner

## **REPORTS OF RARITIES**

*These reports are edited versions of the descriptions submitted to the Guernsey Rarities Committee by the finders of the birds involved and were all accepted. If more than one description was submitted, I have picked out one of them to include in this report.*

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### **DESERT WHEATEAR**

***Jaonneuse Bay – 24<sup>th</sup> November to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2002 – 2<sup>nd</sup> island record***

*By Mark Lawlor*

Late morning on 24<sup>th</sup> Nov, Win Symons was birding around the slipway onto Jaonneuse beach and she discovered a superb male Desert Wheatear. Quite astonishingly, Win had found Guernsey's only other example of this rare species exactly 11 years ago to the day! As she was certain of the identification she 'grapevined' the news straight away. By lunchtime lots of birders were watching the bird as it performed brilliantly flitting round the rocks and sand. It could be found with ease around the slipway during its stay and it was trapped and ringed. It seemed to disappear during a cold snap in early December. In 2002, there were very few sightings of this species in Britain & Ireland (just birds in January in the Isle of Man and in October in Ireland).

#### **Size and structure:**

Seemingly smaller than a Northern Wheatear and much less slender. A more roundish bird with bulging breast and nape.

#### **Plumage,**

Head: Crown and nape orange-buff with distinct greyish cast. Supercilium brighter buff, turning whitish above and behind the eye. Ear-coverts and throat black with pale whitish-buff tips to many feathers, especially on throat and malar region.

Underparts: Whitish-buff, becoming quite orangey across the mid-breast. The blackish colour of the ear-coverts extending behind onto the side of the 'neck', continuing as a blackish line to the bend of the wing.

Upperparts: Bright orangey-buff, paler whitish on lowest scapulars. Rump and uppertail coverts whitish with the latter at least having a faint buffy tinge.

Wings: Very dark brown in colour rather than black. Primaries plain, but secondaries and tertials with contrasting and distinct whitish-buff fringe, thickest on tips of tertials. All coverts also pale fringed, thickest at tips forming clear wing bars.

Tail: Feather tips very 'shaggy'. Blackish-brown with white bases. Black of all the tail feathers extending further than the tips of the longest uppertail coverts. All tail feathers having about the same amount of black (about 2/3 of feather), but this extended even further up the outer web of the outermost feather.

Bare parts: all black

#### **Behaviour:**

Not surprisingly, considering the species natural habitat, the bird stuck to the rocks and sand along the edge of the beach, despite there being short turf nearby. It fed with short bursts of energy, resting on top of a rock between times. It flycatched and chased small insects with flicking wingbeats, in rather a graceful manner. It seemed to roost in the gaps between the rocks along the edge of the beach.

The tail pattern alone is sufficient to identify the species and this is clear in the photos. No other species has such large amounts of black in the tail. The species which comes closest is Isabelline, and that never has a blackish throat.



## **ROSEATE TERN – Vazon Bay – 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> July 2002 – 2<sup>nd</sup> island record**

***By Bob Murphy***

While we were viewing the tideline, I became aware of a tern at distance with Black-headed Gulls, resting on the sand. Closer views of 40 to 50 feet enabled us to see it was a *sterna* tern. Continued viewing enabled us to work out that it was a Roseate Tern.

### **DESCRIPTION**

*Head*: Black cap, going down slightly to nape, slight break above eye and reaching bill.

*Underparts*: All white, with flush of pale pink.

*Upperparts*: Very pale above.

*Wings*: Very pale, with outer primaries showing a dark wedge. Inner primaries paler, with white inner edge. Looked short-winged.

*Tail*: Very long. Appeared slightly longer than wing projections.

*Bare parts*: Bill all black. Legs orangey-red with black nails. Two alloy rings – one on each leg.

*Behaviour*: In flight, showed shallower wingbeats than Common Tern, and appeared more direct. Was seen to fly into water whilst fishing rather than “Dive-bombing”.

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## **BLACK-HEADED BUNTING**

***Ruette Braye, St. Peter Port – 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2002 – 3<sup>rd</sup> island record***

***By Paul Veron***

Mike Symons had seen the bird two days earlier feeding on his seed feeders outside his kitchen window. He did not recognise the bird, so went to the Guille-Alles library. He found the bird on the cover of a field guide. He called Tim Earl, who in turn called me.

We visited early morning of 24<sup>th</sup> May. After a wait of c 30 minutes the bird flew in and fed on the seed feeders outside the window for 15 minutes before flying off again. Both observers having seen Black-headed Buntings before, immediately confirmed Mike’s identification.

### **FULL DESCRIPTION**

*Size and structure*:

Large bulky bunting size and shape.

*Plumage*,

*Head*: Black head with some greyish flecking. Yellow semi-collar up side of neck. Sharp demarcation across lores – black hood and yellow throat

*Underparts*: Whole underparts yellow, paler towards vent

*Upperparts*: Back of neck, mantle and rump = rusty. Rusty spurs emerging onto upper breast.

*Wings*: Dark brown, tawny edging to greater coverts & secondaries. Primary coverts tipped buff.

*Tail*: Brown

*Bare parts*: Legs = pinky horn. Bill = thick bunting-like bill. Eyes = dark.

*Behaviour*:

The bird fed on seed feeders in the garden of the house. When it had first arrived two days earlier it had apparently fed voraciously for long periods. When we saw the bird it fed more typically. When we saw it the bird was coming to feed for 15-20 minutes at a time and then disappearing for an hour or two. The bird was only seen for a couple of days, before disappearing. Its feeding became even more sporadic at the end of its stay (when it was presumably back to normal body weight).

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## **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	Long-tailed Skua	Rose-coloured Starling
Great Shearwater	Sabine's Gull	Tree Sparrow
Leach's Petrel	Ring-billed Gull	Common Rosefinch
Red-billed Tropicbird	Iceland Gull	Hawfinch
American Bittern	Glaucous Gull	Cirl Bunting
Little Bittern	Roseate Tern	Little Bunting
Night Heron	White-winged Black Tern	Yellow-breasted Bunting
Green Heron	Little Auk	Black-headed Bunting
Squacco Heron	Pallas's Sandgrouse	Corn Bunting
Cattle Egret	Great Spotted Cuckoo	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Great White Egret	Snowy Owl	
Black Stork	Tawny Owl	
White Stork	Nightjar	<b>plus</b>
Mute Swan	Alpine Swift	any species that has not
Bewick's Swan	Little Swift	occurred in Guernsey before
Whooper Swan	Bee-eater	
Bean Goose	Roller	
Pink-footed Goose	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	
White-fronted Goose (wild)	Short-toed Lark	
Greylag Goose (wild)	Woodlark	
Canada Goose	Shorelark	
Barnacle Goose (wild)	Red-rumped Swallow	
American Wigeon	Water Pipit	
Green-winged Teal	Citrine Wagtail	
Scaup	Waxwing	
Long-tailed Duck	Dipper	
Velvet Scoter	Alpine Accentor	
Smew	Nightingale	
Black Kite	Bluethroat	
Red Kite	Black-eared Wheatear	
White-tailed Eagle	Desert Wheatear	
Griffon Vulture	Fan-tailed Warbler	
Montagu's Harrier	Savi's Warbler	
Goshawk	Aquatic Warbler (untrapped)	
Rough-legged Buzzard	Paddyfield Warbler	
Red-footed Falcon	Marsh Warbler	
Gyrfalcon	Great Reed Warbler	
Quail	Icterine Warbler	
Spotted Crake	Subalpine Warbler	
Corncrake	Sardinian Warbler	
Crane	Barred Warbler	
Little Bustard	Greenish Warbler	
Black-winged Stilt	Pallas's Warbler	
Stone Curlew	Dusky Warbler	
Kentish Plover	Western Bonelli's Warbler	
Temminck's Stint	Red-breasted Flycatcher	
Pectoral Sandpiper	Treecreeper	
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Penduline Tit	
Upland Sandpiper	Red-backed Shrike	
Solitary Sandpiper	Woodchat Shrike	
Spotted Sandpiper	Jay	
Wilson's Phalarope	Chough	
Red-necked Phalarope	Hooded Crow	