

GUERNSEY

BIRD REPORT



2004

LA SOCIETE GUERNESIAISE – ORNITHOLOGICAL SECTION

GUERNSEY BIRD REPORT

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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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front cover – Ring-billed & Black-headed Gulls – Mark Lawlor

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Editorial

This is the fifth recent year that that a full systematic bird report for Guernsey has been compiled. There has always been a summary of the ornithological year published in the annual 'Transactions' of La Societe Guernesiaise, including an official report of the accepted rarities and a detailed ringing report. This continues 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 available on CD (for a minimal charge) and so will include lots of photos, drawings and graphs. Also a text-only version will eventually be available on-line at the Guernsey Bird News website: [www.geocities.com/mplawlorque/Guernseybirdnews], and a few 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 many thanks to Mike Bairds. Also thanks to Wayne Turner for supplying wader count data and Margaret Austin for providing ringing data (for more details of numbers ringed, recoveries etc see the Transactions).

The structure of the report tries to follow the general accepted format and follows the species order as recommended by the BOU. 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 there will be no doubt some errors which I apologise for. I have been unable to acknowledge 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 2005 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, and forms are available online at the above website or from myself through the post.

Mark Lawlor

Summary of the year

I am sure that the members of the Section would join me in thanking Nancy Ogier for doing an excellent job as Section Secretary during 2004. I would ask all members to continue to assist her as much as possible, especially with offers to give slide shows and talks at meetings.

Also many thanks to Mike Bairds who works very hard with the monthly 'Bird News' and with the Societe 'bird sightings' database. This database is an invaluable tool for conservationists of Guernsey but improvements can be made. One area of concern is the lack of records of common species. If one types in a common bird such as Dunnock for example, it would appear to be a rare species since there are just a handful of crosses on the map. Although realistically, birdwatchers cannot possibly record everything they see, I am sure that with a bit more effort, more records of commoner birds can appear in the database. The kinds of record which could be included are:

- An unusually large flock of a commoner species
- A location where a nest has been found or other proof of breeding
- A sighting in an unusual location
- A sighting of unusual behaviour
- A bird with unusual plumage (e.g. albino)
- A list of all species seen at a particular location (e.g. garden)
- A list of all sites that a particular species has been seen at.
- A change in status at a familiar site (e.g. only 10 males were singing on my morning walk this year, when there were 20 last year)

All this takes valuable time, but when a location is under threat, it carries much more weight to prove that over 100 species of bird have been recorded there, than perhaps 10 or 20. In addition to this, many birdwatchers are reporting sightings to me on the website which are not being submitted formally on record slips for the database – for example in 2003, only 5 of 9 Marsh Harriers were in the database. So please can everyone (including myself) try to send in more records for the database.

The various surveys continued during the year. It was felt that the Breeding/Wintering Bird Survey needed fresh impetus and a coordinator is needed to collect forms and chase up records. Thanks go to Wayne Turner for organising the Wader Count for the last few years and he now passes this task on to Mary Simmons.

There was one less event in 2004 with the annual Barbeque coming to an end. The most enjoyable and profitable event was the yearly 24 hour Bird Race which was held on 2nd May. After many years of trying, the day-record was finally broken when 'The Sultans of String' totted up 96 species for the day. Two other teams also beat the previous record and we look forward to a team breaking the magical 100 in the not too distant future.

Bird-wise it was a good year for some breeding birds and rarities. The highlight of the former being the finding of Little Egret nests – a new species breeding in the Bailiwick. There was a total of almost 30 rare birds reported – the most for quite a few years – with two of these new species for the island, Blyth's Reed Warbler and Sacred Ibis. This brings the Guernsey Bird List up to 309 species. Other exciting sightings were the island's 2nd Cattle Egret and Canada Goose, 3rd and 4th Black Kite and Fan-tailed Warbler, 4th Ring-billed Gull and Barred Warbler and first Corn Bunting for many years.

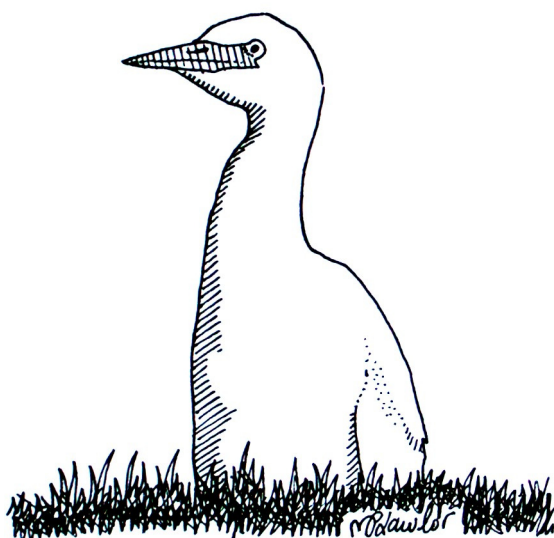
January

At the start of the year there was plenty for birdwatchers to see, despite temperatures staying mild for most of the month. The 4 **White-fronted Geese** and the **Bean Goose** were still at L'Eree, and there were numerous gulls to watch out for. As well as the wintering **Glaucous Gull** and a handful of **Mediterranean Gulls** around Belle Greve Bay, two **Little Gulls** were seen at Chouet on 1st, and two **Great Skuas** went past there the next day. Other wintering birds were a **Buzzard** at the Track Marais, a **Red-necked Grebe** in Belle Greve Bay, a few pairs of **Shelduck** and up to 50 **Wigeon** at Marais Nord. On the 2nd, a **Water Pipit** appeared at Claire Mare and a small flock of 5 **Redpoll** joined the **Siskins** at Dell Nursery from 10th –

now a very uncommon species on the island. The first major rarity of the year appeared mid-month when an American **Ring-billed Gull** arrived in Belle Greve Bay on 15th, after a couple of days of westerly gales. An **Avocet** seen briefly at Track Marais on 29th was the only interesting sighting at the end of the month.

February

February started unseasonably warm and dry, and temperatures reached a record 17°C during the first week. This weather came from Southern Europe and brought some exceptionally early **House Martins**, with one at Le Gouffre on 8th and 3 at Baubigny on 15th. However, the highlight of this early influx was the **Cattle Egret** which appeared at the Track Marais on 6th. This was the second island record and could be found feeding in any of the various grassy fields to the North of St. Peter Port until the end of the month. The second part of the month was cooler, with a brief flurry of snow, but the only new arrival was a **Canada Goose** at Saumarez Park on 18th. Another second record for the island, this bird was not as popular as the Cattle Egret, and disappeared the next day.



March

March was quite cool compared to recent years and so plenty of winter birds stayed on well into the month. **Red-necked, Slavonian and Great Crested Grebes, Red-breasted Merganser, Shoveler and Jack Snipe** were all regularly seen during the first half of the month. The **Cattle Egret** was last seen on 14th. Apart from a further 2 **House Martins** on 5th, migrants did not arrive especially early, with **Wheatears** appearing from 12th and **Sand Martins** from 17th. The breeding season was also getting underway with at least 4 male **Cetti's Warblers** in song and **Little Grebes** paired up at the Reservoir. Also there were 3 **Buzzards** all month at Fauxquets Valley suggesting the possibility that nesting may occur. In the last few days of March the first **Swallow** arrived as well as a few very early **Garganey** – 3 birds at Claire Mare on 26th, then a male in a garden at La Ramee on 29th.

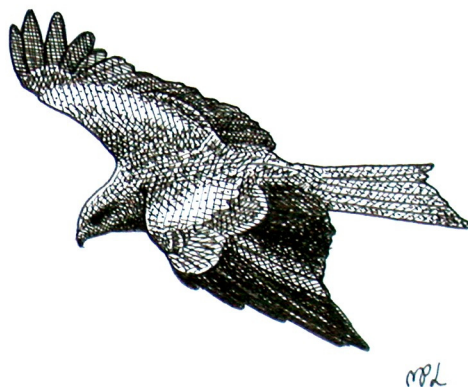
April

Spring migration can sometimes be dull if the weather is too nice, as migrant birds can race over the Channel without stopping. April was quite good this year as the conditions were very changeable, with occasional rain showers dropping down good numbers of migrants. Migration stepped up a gear from about 7th when hundreds of **Swallows** passed through the island. This was indeed an excellent day as a **Hoopoe** was also seen, as well as Guernsey's first ever Spring **Sabine's Gull** off Chouet. Good conditions on 11th brought the next wave of migrants, including 2 different **Serins** – at Pleinmont and in a St. Martins garden. Other good birds noted during this time were a male **Garganey** at Rue des Bergers on 5th, an **Osprey**

flying up the Little Russell on 10th and a **Stone Curlew** heading East over Les Ammareurs on 18th. Two **Brambling** lingered in a Castel garden until the late date of 18th and the **Ravens** on Herm had fledged 4 young mid-month. The rarest and most surprising bird of the month was the **Corn Bunting** which landed in the car park at Jaonneuse Bay on 19th – the first for many years. The rest of April continued to be very good with uncommon migrants such as **Grasshopper Warbler**, **Marsh Harrier** and **Ring Ouzel** being regularly recorded. A final surge of migrants occurred on 29th and 30th when there were hundreds of birds at various sites around the island but no rarities.

May

May started with a bang when a **Black Kite** was found circling in the Fauxquets Valley in the afternoon of 1st. Luckily it decided to hang around and the local birdwatchers were treated to a spectacular performance. Also that day, an **Eider** appeared in the Town Harbour and, probably due to sickness or injury, summered there. The 2nd was the day of the bird race and most birds found were probably left over from late April. The rarest sighting was a **Rook** – the first in Guernsey for quite a few years. Storm conditions on 4th heralded the start of the Summer, and the rest of May was hot and clear and not so good for birdwatching. After Guernsey's first ever Spring **Pomarine Skua** on 7th, no rare sightings were made.



June

A late Spring rarity was a female **Red-backed Shrike** at Pleinmont on 9th but there were very few other uncommon birds seen. More interest was on breeding species however, with the small **Cormorant** and **Shelduck** colonies on Lihou and the surrounding area again increasing slightly. **Little Grebes** again bred at the Reservoir and there were a few pairs of **Common Terns** around, including one nesting successfully in Belle Greve Bay. Otherwise, most species were breeding in similar numbers as last year.

July

The start of July was exceptionally wet, with the 7th actually the wettest ever day on Guernsey. The unseasonal female **Red-breasted Merganser** at Fort le Crocq from 2nd must have felt quite at home. Three **Honey Buzzards** soaring high over Herm on 6th were probably day-trippers from nearby France. Small numbers of waders were starting to move South during the month, including **Wood Sandpiper** and **Little Ringed Plover** at Claire Mare. Post-breeding **Mediterranean Gulls** are appearing in mid-Summer in increasing numbers and there were at least 8 birds on the island on 23rd, with up to 5 together in Belle Greve Bay. It was pleasing to prove **Cetti's Warbler** breeding this year as 2 young juvenile birds were ringed at Grand Pre mid-month. The weather improved as the month went on, and in the warm temperatures a male **Fan-tailed Warbler** had arrived and was singing away at Claire Mare from 30th.

August

The male **Fan-tailed Warbler** at Claire Mare soon attracted the attentions of a female bird on 4th, and both birds were trapped for ringing. They could be seen interacting regularly and it is hoped that if the winter is mild they may stick around and possibly breed next year. The Claire Mare was certainly the hot-spot with 2 different **Melodious Warblers** seen at this time, and a juvenile **Woodchat Shrike** briefly on 6th. The warm temperatures of early August, together with these Mediterranean species, made a walk round the Claire Mare feel more like Spain than Guernsey. Commoner migrants, such as **Pied Flycatcher**, were also moving through in good numbers, and there was a selection of quality waders seen. **Wood Sandpipers** were the highlight with numbers peaking at 8 birds at Claire Mare on the evening of 12th, when there was also a **Black-tailed Godwit** with them, and a large flock of 24 **Greenshank** overhead. The second part of the month was much wetter and windier, with more attention paid to seawatching – highlights being a **Pomarine Skua** on 28th and 2 **Little Terns**. Other interesting records for August were a **Spotted Crake** found near Bordeaux on 9th, a **Grey Phalarope** on the pool at Claire Mare on 18th and a couple of **Marsh Harriers** through. Altogether, a very busy month!

September

September started off very warm with favourable easterlies bringing in plenty of interesting birds and commoner migrants. This started on the 1st when an unseasonal **Bittern** appeared at the Claire Mare. The good birds continued with **Melodious Warbler** (Chouet) and **Red-backed Shrike** (L'Ancrese) on 3rd, **Wryneck** and **Honey Buzzard** (Pleinmont) on 4th, and the year's only **Aquatic Warbler** on 5th. Also on 4th the best pelagic trip of the year went West of Alderney and found a **Red-necked Phalarope** feeding out at sea, which is very unusual for this species as they are nearly always found on lakes and coastal pools. During the second week, the weather became very changeable with regular rain, wind and fog, which continued to the month end. This was useful to the birdwatcher as it grounded many migrants, starting with **Rose-coloured Starling** and **Wryneck** on 10th, a **Dotterel** on Herm on 12th, a **Spotted Crake** and 2 **Lapland Buntings** on 17th, and finally a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** also on Herm on 19th. After a few days break, the last weekend of the month produced a fresh run of good sightings – the second **Black Kite** of the year probably being the highlight, at Pleinmont on 25th. Seawatching was finally paying dividends with 3 **Sabine's Gulls** and a **Leach's Petrel** on 26th, and good totals of 13 **Little Gulls** and 15 **Arctic Terns** around this time. The final news for the month was a second **Rose-coloured Starling** from 26th at Rousse, and 'Droopy' – our friendly neighbourhood **Glaucous Gull** – reappearing from 23rd.

October

The month was extremely wet and windy throughout, with very few breaks for birdwatchers to get out into the field to find the rare birds which would have certainly arrived in the unsettled conditions. The first week was very quiet until about 9th when the first big movement of **Redwing**, **Fieldfares** and a few **Siskins** was evident. This brought in a few birds of prey with **Marsh Harrier**, **Honey Buzzard**, **Hobby** and **Short-eared Owl** recorded during the weekend, along with a **Dotterel** at Pleinmont on 10th. On 14th, the rarest bird of the year was recorded when a **Blyth's Reed Warbler** was pulled out of a mist-net at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont – the first for the Channel Islands. Plenty of birdwatchers rushed to observe the bird '*in the hand*', but as soon as it was released it hopped into the bushes, never to be seen again. Pleinmont followed up with two more rare warblers during the month – a **Barred Warbler** on 18th and a **Pallas's Warbler** on 29th. Small numbers of typical late-autumn species were recorded in the second half of the month such as 3 **Snow Buntings**, a **Hen Harrier**, **Bramblings**, a **Red-throated Diver** and at least 7 **Little Gulls**.

November

On 3rd, the year's third **Rose-coloured Starling** was discovered in a garden in St. Martins and it decided to stay around for the rest of the month. A very late **Turtle Dove** appeared in the same garden on 8th. November was quiet weather-wise and so very few unusual species

turned up. Winter species gradually appeared in numbers during the month as the temperatures cooled, but the **Eider** decided to leave us after spending the whole Summer in the Town Harbour. Interesting sightings included a very late **Whinchat** at Track Marais on 8th, two male **Goosanders** at the Reservoir on 29th, two **Great Spotted Woodpecker** sightings, two wintering **Whimbrels** again at Portlet and some better numbers of **Reed Buntings** than recent winters. A **Robin** visiting a garden in St. Sampsons was found to be wearing a ring from Poland, which indicated the easterly origin of most of our common wintering birds.

December

December was very mild which encouraged the **Rose-coloured Starling** to stay all month and into 2005. Also benefiting from the warm temperatures was a **Turtle Dove** which, from 7th, chose to spend Christmas in the stubble fields of Pont Vaillant, instead of sub-Saharan Africa. For both these species, this was the first time that they have been recorded overwintering on the island. The month was pretty uneventful, with few surprising sightings, and numbers of wintering seabirds in the bays seemed low. There was a wandering male **Pochard** and a **Kittiwake** was a surprise find on the pool at Claire Mare on 20th. Even a ferocious storm late in the month did not produce anything but a passage of auks. The year ended on a high however when a **Sacred Ibis** drifted into view at the Claire Mare on 27th. Although it was elusive, it settled in a field along Rue des Bergers, and could be seen there, on and off, before disappearing overnight on 31st. This was the second new species found in 2004, a year which will be remembered for the selection of fantastic rarities which turned up, most of which were readily accessible and enjoyed by us all.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

A total of **200** species exactly were recorded during the year, which is quite a high total – 13 more than last year. The island bird list grew to **309** species with the addition of Blyth's Reed Warbler and Sacred Ibis. Species which are usually recorded but were not in 2004 included Spotted Redshank, Richard's Pipit, Yellow-browed Warbler, Bearded Tit, Coal Tit, Golden Oriole, Crossbill and Oortolan Bunting.

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

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

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.

Taiga Bean Goose (<i>Anser fabalis fabalis</i>)
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Vagrant – 3 previous records

The bird which arrived at L'Eree Aerodrome with the four White-fronted Geese (below) on 22nd December 2003 remained there until 3rd Jan.

White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons</i>)

Very rare winter visitor, but also a feral breeding resident

Four birds remained on L'Eree Aerodrome from 22nd December 2003 until 3rd Jan.

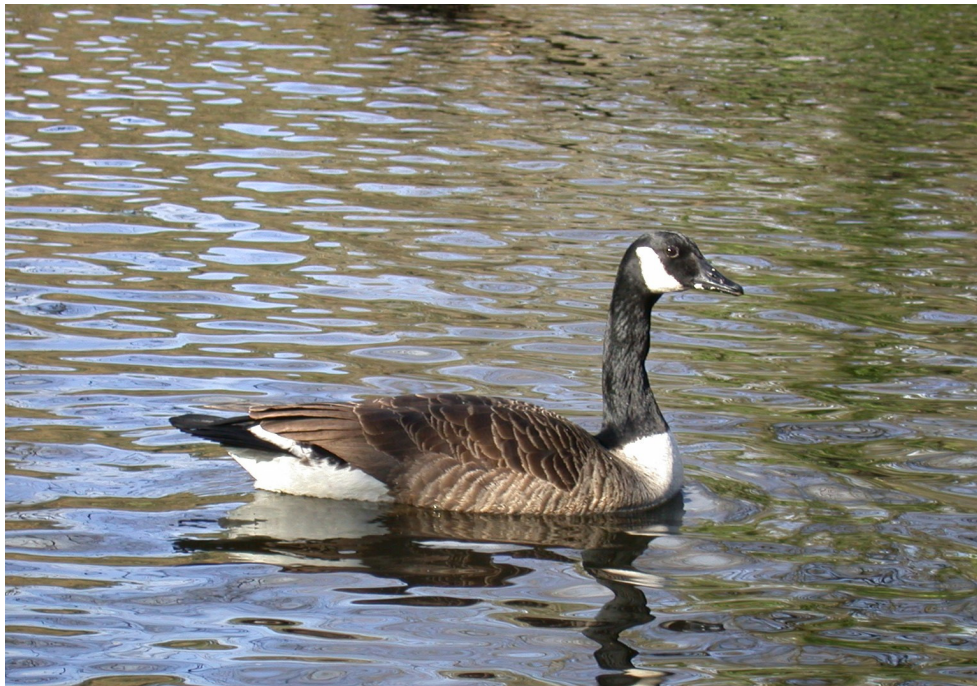
Canada Goose (<i>Branta canadensis</i>)
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1 record

Vagrant – 1 previous record

An individual of this species frequented the pond at Saumarez Park on 18th and 19th February. There were no physical indications that it was a recent escape from captivity, and although quite tame, it is assumed it was a visitor from the UK. This is only the island's second sighting.

(J.P.Down et al)



Canada Goose – Saumarez Park – Feb 2004 – MPLawlor

Dark-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

At the start of the year there were about 30 birds moving up and down the East coast of Guernsey, with similar counts made from Herm. This is no doubt one extended flock, so probably little more than 30 birds were involved. There was a noticeable increase in numbers to about 50 to 70 birds in these areas at the end of March and early April which probably meant that another group of Brent Geese stopped off on in the Channel Islands their way

back North. The relatively recently-formed western coast flock which seems to keep itself separate to the others increased by 6 birds since last year to peak at 24, ranging between Vazon and L'Eree. The final sighting was a flock of 9 birds on Herm on 11th May (GDA).

In the Autumn, a single bird migrated past Jaonneuse on 26th Sep (MPL) and was followed by a small number of similar migrants seen from the seawatching headlands. Wintering numbers built up slowly as usual, and flock sizes had not reached their peaks by the year end – 39 at Bordeaux and 15 at Perelle were the peak counts.

Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)
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3+ pairs

Uncommon year-round visitor and rare breeder.

This species is now present almost all the year round and the only month with no records was October. However just a single pair had wintered from 2003, being seen in the L'Eree area during the first three months. Others started arriving from 13th Mar but there did not seem to be as many birds as last year and only perhaps 2 pairs bred in the L'Eree/Lihou/Fort le Crocq area. Two adults with 7 juveniles seen at the North of the island indicated that there was a third pair somewhere else. During August all birds departed the island for their moulting grounds and there was just a couple of sightings in September. A pair returned on 12th Nov which was a very early date.

Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were very good numbers of Wigeon present at the start of the year compared to recent winters. Up to 50 birds could be found at the Claire Mare/Old Aerodrome, and there was also a minimum of 50 counted at Marais Nord. More unusually, one was at Saumarez Park on 1st Jan. These flocks disappeared at the end of February.

On 5th Sep, 2 birds appeared at the Claire Mare (RJM) and numbers built up slowly in that area with maxima of 7 in Oct, 19 in Nov and 32 in Dec, and these birds were often using the sea rather than the ponds. There was also smaller wintering flocks at Rue des Bergers (3) and Marais Nord (6).

Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)

1 record (of 3 birds)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just like last year, the only record was a group of 3 for a few days in the latter part of the year.
Up to 3, Claire Mare, 27th to 31st Oct (DT)

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

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The wintering locations for this species were the Claire Mare (35), Track Marais (18), Rue des Bergers (18) and Marais Nord (12) – even though there will be mixing, there was up to 80 birds here at the start of the year. Numbers fell during March until the last report was of 7 birds at Claire Mare on 18th Apr (MPL).

On 4th Aug, 8 birds were seen at the Claire Mare (AJB), where the flock built up to about 60 birds by mid-October. There were also up to 30 wintering at Rue des Bergers and up to 36 at Marais Nord, indicating larger numbers than early in the year.

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

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

Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)

1 record

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The regular returning bird appeared again in the spring – this time in the Claire Mare area – and, assuming it's the same bird, again followed the same pattern turning up again later in the year. The origins of this bird may not be totally wild, but it does seem to have a regular pattern of movements.

1 female, Claire Mare and L'Eree Shingle Bank, 9th to 30th Apr (RJM), then presumed the same at Vale Pond on 5th Oct, 8th and 9th Nov, and 24th Dec.



Pintail – L'Eree Shingle Bank – Apr 2004 - MPLawlor

Garganey (<i>Anas querquedula</i>)

3 records (of 5 birds)

Scarce passage migrant

A small influx early in the spring, including a bird visiting a large garden pond at La Ramee.

2 male + 1 female, Claire Mare, 26th Mar (TDCE)

1 male, La Ramee, 29th to 31st Mar (per AG)

1 male, Rue des Bergers, 5th Apr (RAF,AJB)

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

At the start of the year a flock of up to 10 birds could be seen at the Claire Mare but these disappeared by the end of February. Also there were sightings of up to 6 birds at the Track Marais and 7 at Marais Nord. So there were at least 20 birds wintering. The last sighting was of a late bird at Track Marais on 7th May (RJM,LT).

On 16th Aug a single bird was seen at the Claire Mare (RJM,AJB,GDA) and birds were seen at this site for the rest of the year, peaking at 7 only. The only other site to hold birds at the end of the year was Marais Nord with up to 12 birds.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)**1 record*****Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant***

Possibly the same returning bird.

1 male, Claire Mare, 1st Jan (RJM,LT) – presumed last years bird.

1 male, Saumarez Park, 17th Dec (RJM,LT), then Claire Mare on 18th, Marais Nord on 24th and Reservoir on 31st.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)***Uncommon year-round visitor. One breeding pair.***

Birds were seen in every month of the year and they visited most of the freshwater locations at some point. The largest flock reported was 14 at Marais Nord on 12th Nov (RJM,LT). There was no evidence of breeding this year but at least one pair was present in the NE quarries during the spring and there is the possibility that they did so at a secret location.

Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)**1 record*****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The only record of the year was highly unusual since Eiders in Guernsey are typically seen in the winter time. Also, the length of stay – 6 months – may indicate that the bird was sick.

1 first-summer male, Town Harbour, 6th May to 3rd Nov (AJM)



Eider – Town Harbour – May 2004 – MPLawlor

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)**9 records (of 51 birds)*****Uncommon year-round visitor and passage migrant.***

One seen in Vazon Bay on 12th Feb (GDA).

All other sightings were of birds going past Chouet and Jaonneuse during seawatching sessions. There was a total of 50 seen between 21st Aug and 19th Nov, with a flock 22 on 28th Aug being the largest number (WRT).

Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)	2 records (of 4 birds)
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just four birds in 2004 is probably the lowest number recorded for many years. The long-staying summer bird is most unusual.

Up to 3, Perelle to Vazon, 1st Feb to 27th Mar (RJM)
1 female, Fort le Crocq to Lihou Island, 2nd Jul to 1st Sep (RJM)

Goosander (<i>Mergus merganser</i>)	1 record (of 2 birds)
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

An inland record is very unusual but they quickly relocated to the coast.

2 males, Reservoir then Vazon, 29th Nov to 1st Dec (JPD)

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

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

Seen in small numbers on Herm, with a maximum of 15 on 3rd Jan (LT). Also one bird seen at Les Tielles on 6th Nov (GDA).

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

This introduced species was regularly seen in good numbers on Herm and in smaller numbers in Guernsey, especially along the south coast. The birds make use of feed put down for them.

Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)	1 record
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Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant

This is the first record for three years. We seem to be losing this species as a wintering bird and it may soon become quite a rarity.

1 East, past Jaonneuse Point, 31st Oct (RJM,LT)

Black-throated Diver (<i>Gavia arctica</i>)	1 record
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Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Just one bird being recorded is probably the worst ever year for the species.

1, Belle Greve Bay, 9th Jan (RJM,LT)

Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>)	3 records
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

As with the previous species, 2004 was a terrible year, with birds only seen on 3 days.

1, Pulias, 1st Jan (RJM,LT)
1, Pembroke, 11th Jan (LT)
1, Grandes Rocques, 31st Oct (JPD)

Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)**6+ birds (1 breeding pair)*****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.***

There were only about 4 birds wintering at the start of the year – 3 of these at the Reservoir and the other in the Gallotin and Paradis Quarries area – so a decrease from 2003. Because of these smaller numbers, it was not surprising that there were less pairs breeding this year. Only the Reservoir held a successful pair which probably had two broods since a small juvenile was being fed in late September. In the second winter period, there were up to 3 birds remaining at the Reservoir, plus a further bird at the Claire Mare. Another bird was present at Paradis Quarry, and a bird visited the Grande Mare in early December.



Little Grebe family – Reservoir – 2004 – CKinnersley

Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)***Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.***

Numbers of wintering Great Crested Grebes appear to be falling, and at the start of the year there could have been as few as 8 birds around the island. All these birds had left by 12th Mar, but there was a sighting of 2 at Perelle on 2nd Apr (GDA).

The first returning individual was in Vazon Bay on 23rd Nov (AJB) and about 7 birds stayed to winter on the island, in Belle Greve, Vazon, Perelle and Grandes Havres Bays.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)**2 records*****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.***

The first bird stayed for a very long time but usually was very far out in the bay.

1, Belle Greve Bay, 5th Jan to 2nd Mar (MPL)

1, Perelle, 25th Jan to 7th Feb (GDA)

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

In the first two months of the year there were up to 6 birds found wintering either in Belle Greve Bay or the area between L'Eree and Vazon. From the start of March however there was an obvious arrival, probably of birds returning North to breed. This peaked at a count of 12 birds in Rocquaine Bay on 5th Mar (AJB,LT,RJM). The last of these migrant birds was seen at Vazon on 2nd Apr (RJM,LT).

Two birds were back at L'Eree on 5th Dec (LT), but these were the only returning birds seen before the end of the year.

Black-necked Grebe (<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>)	1 record
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Black-necked Grebe sightings do seem to be declining overall.
1, Claire Mare, 15th Oct (GDA,CK)

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

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

Most records were from the breeding areas on south cliffs of Guernsey and the Herm/Jethou area. No counts of breeding pairs were made. From August, occasional birds were observed passing the northern headlands, but no days of proper passage was observed.

Sooty Shearwater (<i>Puffinus griseus</i>)	29 birds
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Quite common to uncommon autumn passage migrant.

A total of just 29 birds was recorded during seawatches from Chouet or Jaonneuse in the autumn. These were between 13th Aug (RJM,LT) and 26th Sep, with the peak count being 6 on two days. This was a poor year for the species.

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

Quite common to uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

This species could be observed from the island between 2nd May (LT) and 5th Oct (AJB). These sightings were mainly of single-figure counts apart from a larger passage noted from the northern headlands on 24th Sep, consisting of at least 64 birds (AJB,LT,RJM).

Balearic Shearwater (<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>)	9 birds
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Uncommon autumn passage migrant.

All birds were seen passing Jaonneuse Point or Chouet during seawatches. An average year for the species.

2 on 12th Sep (WRT)
2 on 15th Sep (PKV,MV)
3 on 24th Sep (RJM,LT)
1 on 16th Oct (WRT)
1 on 17th Aug (WRT)

Storm Petrel (<i>Hydrobates pelagicus</i>)	1 record
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Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.

There were no late-spring sightings this year as conditions were not ideal for observation, and so the only record from the vicinity of the island was one bird which flew north up the Great Russell on 9th Aug (RJM).

This is not a true representation of the species status in local waters as Storm Petrels were seen in good numbers at sea to the NW of Guernsey from the pelagic trips of 15th Aug and 4th Sep.

Leach's Petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)**1 record**

Vagrant – 4 previous records

A single bird flew East past Chouet headland, late afternoon on 26th September.

(M.A.Guppy)

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 and winter. Spectacular high-diving flocks can sometimes be watched out to sea when a productive feeding area is found. The peak counts recorded were 433 west past Chouet in 2 hours on 2nd Jan (PKV,MV) and 364 west past Jaonneuse in 30 minutes on 31st Oct (RJM,LT).

Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*)

Common year-round visitor. Breeds in small numbers.

The species was seen in small numbers all around the coast but, unlike Shag, 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 were noted showing extensive white around the head which may have been of the continental race '*sinensis*' but this was not proven.

Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*)

Common breeding resident.

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

Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*)**1 record**

Rare winter visitor or passage migrant.

A bird was discovered in the reedbed at Claire Mare on the unusual date of 1st September. Most Guernsey Bitterns are Winter visitors.

(J.M.Anderson, M.C.Simmons et al)

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)**1 record**

Vagrant – 1 previous record

The highlight of a very busy first two months, was this visitor from Southern Europe, which toured the fields between the Track Marais and La Ramee for over a month. It was first seen flying off from the former site on 6th February and could be very difficult to pin down as it liked to feed in hidden fields. The last sighting was on 14th March. This is only the second record for Guernsey, the first being way back in December 1964 when a flock of 4 birds was seen.

(A.J.Bisson et al)



Cattle Egret – Coutanchez – Feb 2004 – MPLawlor

Little Egret (<i>Egretta garzetta</i>)	2 pairs
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Quite common year-round visitor, less common in spring/early summer.

Commonly seen all round the coast, less so inland although small numbers are regularly observed feeding in fields. As usual, only a handful remained on the island during May and June. Numbers built up during the summer and autumn and 24 behind the reedbed at the Claire Mare on 28th Dec (PKV,MV) was the largest non-roost flock.

One of the highlights of the year was the discovery of two Little Egret nests in a small Elder bush on a small island off Herm – the first breeding record for the Guernsey. There isn't much room for a colony to develop at this site but perhaps the birds can find another suitably undisturbed site so that a colony can build up.

Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>)
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Quite common year-round visitor, less common in spring and summer.

The species is usually seen as single birds feeding in rockpools and ponds. Groups of resting birds do flock together, especially at high tide on offshore rocks and behind the Claire Mare reedbed and other such places. The highest flocks seen were 16 at the Claire Mare on 28th Dec (RJM) and 15 at Juas Quarry Reservoir on 16th Aug (IH).

Sacred Ibis (<i>Threskiornis aethiopicus</i>)	1 record
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Vagrant – no previous records

On 27th Dec a Sacred Ibis flew in and landed in the wet field behind Claire Mare NR. It was very elusive for a couple of days with only brief sightings. However, luckily for everyone, it eventually found a field along Rue des Bergers to its liking, where it could be watched feeding on worms. This bird was initially seen in Alderney the previous week and it disappeared from Guernsey on 31st December.

(G.D. Atkinson et al)

This is the first Sacred ibis seen in Guernsey. Although a native of sub-saharan Africa, a population of over a thousand birds breeds in the wild on the Southern edge of Brittany, France.



Sacred Ibis – Rue des Bergers – Dec 2004 – VEFroome

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

2 records (of 4 birds)

Scarce passage migrant.

Three birds suddenly appearing together over the Common on Herm in the middle of summer was totally unprecedented and may have been a family party on a day trip from France.

3, Herm, 6th Jul (MPL)

1, Pleinmont, 3rd Sep (MAG)

Black Kite (<i>Milvus migrans</i>)

2 records

Vagrant – 2 previous records

A Black Kite gave a spectacular display over Fauxquets Valley during the afternoon of 1st May. This was only the 3rd island record and was exactly five years to the day since the previous one.

(M.A.Guppy et al)

Much more surprising was a bird which appeared low over the ringing station at Pleinmont on 25th September. It immediately disappeared, but was seen briefly in the Talbot Valley later in the day. Autumn Black Kites are much more unusual than spring birds.

(J.Hooper, C.J.Mourant et al)



Black Kite – Fauxquets Valley – May 2004 – BGWells

Marsh Harrier (<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>)
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8 records

Scarce passage migrant.

Although becoming more expected, this migrant rarely reaches double-figures per year.

- 1, Pleinmont, 17th Apr (WRT,MAG)
- 1, over P.E.Hospital, 23rd Apr (MAG)
- 1, Claire Mare, 2nd May (AJB,RAL,VEF,AG)
- 1 cream-crown, over Little Russell, 2nd May (MPL,IDB,AJM)
- 1 cream-crown, over Rocquaine Bay, 14th Aug (MPL)
- 1 cream-crown, Pleinmont, 21st Aug (JH)
- 1, Pleinmont, 4th Sep (LT)
- 1, Pleinmont, 9th Oct (MAG)

Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)
--

2 records

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Records continue to diminish, perhaps due to the decline of the UK population.

- 1 fem/imm, Claire Mare, 11th Aug (GDA)
- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 28th Oct (AJB)

Sparrowhawk (<i>Accipiter nisus</i>)

Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.

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



Sparrowhawk – St. Martins – Feb 2004 – BGWells

Common Buzzard (<i>Buteo buteo</i>)
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Scarce passage migrant, and uncommon resident.

Buzzards were seen all year on the island and can now be considered a resident species. The bird which wintered at the Track Marais was seen there until 16th Feb and there was also at least one bird in the Fauxquets Valley during Jan and Feb, with a further bird on Herm on 13th and 14th Feb (RJM,WRT). During March, up to 3 birds could be seen in the Fauxquets Valley (often wandering around the central part of the island), with additional migrants over Baubigny on 11th (JH) and at Pleinmont on 31st (DJRA). After spring migration was over, two of these birds decided to stay and were seen in the Fauxquets Valley and elsewhere in the central part of the island for the rest of the year. It is hoped that these birds are in fact a pair and will perhaps breed next year as there is much suitable habitat in the area. These birds were joined by additional presumed migrant birds on 10th Sep (RJM,LT) and 14th Oct (BK).



Common Buzzard – Fauxquets Valley – May 2004 – BGWells

Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)
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1 record

Scarce passage migrant.

One bird seems a poor return since the population in the UK is doing so well. The species probably passes through quickly and many are missed.

1, over Little Russell, 10th Apr (CJM)

Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)

Common resident breeding species.

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

Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)
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15 records

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Fifteen sightings in a single year is one of the best ever totals for this species.

- 1, Pecqueries, 1st Jan (RJM)
- 1, Herm, 3rd Jan (LT)
- 1, L'Ancrese G.C., 30th Jan (RJM,LT)
- 1, Fort le Crocq, 27th Mar (MAG)
- 1 fem/imm, Herm, 20th Apr (GDA)
- 1, Grandes Havres, 27th Apr (MPL)
- 1, L'Eree, 30th Apr (RJM,LT)
- 1, Vazon, 2nd May (RJM, LT)
- 1, Rue du Tertre, 17th Oct (WS)
- 1, Claire Mare, 18th Oct (RJM)
- 1, Rue des Hougues, SA, 23rd Oct (WRT)
- 1, Les Tielles, 30th Oct (GDA)
- 1, Lihou, 1st to 12th Nov (AJB)
- 1, Fauxquets, 14th Nov (MAG)
- 1 fem/imm, L'Eree, 17th Nov (JPD,MCS)

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)**10 records*****Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.***

A good year for Hobby, with records right through the summer.

- 1, Pleinmont, 28th Apr (TDCE)
- 1, Claire Mare, 2nd May (Sev.)
- 1, Pleinmont, 2nd May (Sev.)
- 1, Reservoir, 5th Jun (GDA)
- 1, Silbe, 17th Jul (GDA)
- 1, Pleinmont, 23rd Jul (JH)
- 1 juvenile, Rue de la Boullerie, SA, 7th Aug (WRT)
- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 25th Aug to 7th Sep (RJM)
- 1, Silbe, 6th Sep (GDA)
- 1, Petit Bot, 10th Oct (RAF)

Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)**1 pair*****Uncommon year-round visitor. Rare breeding species.***

Peregrines were noted in all parts of the island throughout the year, but nearly all sightings were of single birds. The breeding pair on the island was present again but the success of this pair was unknown. Most sightings were probably of these birds although other migrant individuals must have been seen on their way through.

Water Rail (*Rallus aquaticus*)***Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.***

One to three birds were noted from most suitable marshy areas during both winter periods. The last sighting of the spring was on 30th Apr at the Claire Mare (AJB), with the next sighting also there on 9th Aug (GDA).

Spotted Crake (*Porzana porzana*)**2 records*****Rare migrant***

An exhausted or stunned bird was picked up by a member of the public near Bordeaux on 9th August. It was kept overnight before being ringed and released at the Claire Mare the next day.

There was a further record of Spotted Crake in 2004 when one appeared at Claire Mare NR on 17th September. The first birds seen since 1996.

(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson et al).



Spotted Crake – Claire Mare – Sep 2004 – RJMurphy

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

Very common resident breeding species and winter visitor.

Commonly seen around all lakes, ditches and marshy areas

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

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

Seen in small numbers around freshwater ponds and lakes. Up to 100 at the Grande Mare at the start of the year (AJB).

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

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

Commonly seen on all coasts at all times of the year. Wader count data showed that the winter population is approximately three times the summer population, with the peak count being 804 on 8th Feb. A partial albino bird was in Belle Greve Bay in January.

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

1 record

Very rare visitor – 16 previous records

One was present at the Track Marais very briefly on 29th January.

(C.J.Mourant)

Stone Curlew (<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>)
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1 record

Very rare migrant

A single bird flew East over Les Ammareurs with a Whimbrel on 18th April. This is only the second record in the last ten years of a species which used to be a more regular visitor to the island.

(M.A.Guppy)

Little Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius dubius</i>)
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3 records

Scarce passage migrant, mostly in spring

Unusually, all records were during the summer, but not unusually, all were at Claire Mare.

1, Claire Mare, 5th Jun (JH,DT)

1, Claire Mare, 27th Jul to 6th Aug (DT)

second bird, Claire Mare, 29th Jul to 6th Aug (JH)

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

A commonly seen bird of the shoreline. The winter wader-count maximum was similar to last year with 92 birds on 12th Dec. The 15th August count of 199 was the highest monthly count due to additional migrant birds. A few pairs bred on the shingle beaches around the island but Ringed Plover nests are still very scarce.

Dotterel (*Charadrius morinellus*)**2 records****Scarce passage migrant**

The first bird was quite a long-stayer for Dotterel which is a species which doesn't seem to hang around for long periods – perhaps it was lack of disturbance. The other record was decidedly late in the year for the species.

- 1, Herm Common, 12th to 19th Sep (TDCE et al)
- 1, Pleinmont, 10th Oct (CJM)

Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*)**Uncommon to quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Early on in the year, most records were from the area around Portinfer where the species roosts. The peak count here was 48 on 13th Mar (PKV,MV). There were no spring passage birds after one at L'Eree Old Aerodrome on 22nd Mar (AJB).

On 10th Sep, the first returning individual was noted flying over Pleinmont (AJB), where most of the handful of migrant birds were seen. Wintering birds arrived back at the Portinfer roost from mid-October, where the peak was 38 on 17th Nov (GDA).

Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*)**Common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Regularly noted during all the winter months with numbers increasing slightly during migration periods. The peak island-wide wader-count was 93 on 7th March. Disappears during the breeding season with no records for June or July.

Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)**Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

No large flocks were noted at the start of the year and birds were only regularly seen at Vale Pond where up to 10 birds were present. The last of these was noted on 5th Mar (RJM,LT).

There was the odd record from elsewhere but these were very few.

The first autumn bird was an injured individual at Rue des Bergers from 2nd to 8th Aug (AJB), but there were no more until 10th Oct. Thereafter, small flocks were seen widely during the late autumn migration and early winter. No large flocks were found to be overwintering though with single-figure counts at Vale Pond, Claire Mare and Track Marais.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)**4 records (of 5 birds)****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The number of Knot seen passing through the island seems to be declining so it was pleasing to be able to see 3 birds together. No winter birds this year.

- 1, Vazon, 12th Aug (RJM,LT)
- 1, Old Aerodrome/Shingle Bank/Claire Mare, 21st Aug to 10th Sep (LT)
- 2 more birds, Claire Mare, 7th to 9th Sep (MB,GDA)
- 1, Vazon, 1st Oct (RJM,LT)



Knot – Claire Mare – Sep 2004 - BGWells

Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)
--

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The Grandes Havres Bay was the favoured wintering site for the species and upwards of 50 birds could be seen there at the start of the year. Small single-figure flocks could be seen on other suitable beaches. No large groups of migrants were seen during May and the last of the spring birds was at Vazon on 19th May (GDA).

A breeding-plumaged bird at Portinfer on 20th Jun was the next seen (GDA) and autumn migration started in mid-July. Wintering numbers were more or less the same in the second part of the year as the first, again centred on a 50-strong flock in Grandes Havres.

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

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

The first bird showed very well on the pond in front of the hide.

- 1, Claire Mare, 28th Aug to 7th Sep
- 2, Belle Greve Bay, 25th Sep (MB)

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

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

The Claire Mare birds stayed for a long time and gave exceptional views close in front of the hide.

- 1, Claire Mare, 30th Apr (RJM,LT,WS)
- 1, Rocquaine Bay/L'Eree, 2nd May
- 1, Claire Mare, 26th Aug to 18th Sep
- a second bird, Claire Mare, 30th Aug
- 1, Vazon, 18th Sep (MPL)
- 1, Vazon, 2nd Oct (GDA)



Curlew Sandpiper – Claire Mare – Sep 2004 – MPLawlor

Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>)	20+ birds
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

At the start of the year, the wintering population appeared to be a dismal 2 birds which spent the first three months around Vazon Bay. There was another record of 4 birds at Portinfer on 12th Feb (GDA) – so possibly 6 birds actually overwintered. Spring migration occurred during April and early May, peaking at 9 birds on Vazon beach on 18th Apr (RAF), but totalling probably less than fifteen altogether. The last was at Jaonneuse on 5th May (AJB). On 18th Oct, the first returning bird was seen at Les Ammareurs (RJM), where 2 birds stayed for the winter. With only a single bird being seen in the Vazon area at the end of the year, there may come a time soon when Purple Sandpiper becomes solely an uncommon passage migrant rather than a regular winter visitor.

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

326 birds recorded on the 12th Dec wader-count was the peak month of the year. Also similarly large flocks of migrants were noted on some autumn days. Even in summer the odd non-breeding bird could be seen on the island.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i>)	1 record
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Vagrant – 10 previous records

A bird was photographed on Herm Common on 19th September, where it accompanied Golden Plovers and a Dotterel. This is the first record for ten years of this North American wader. Unfortunately this individual did not stay very long for other birders to catch up with it – the first record since 1994.

(J.T.Aslett et al)



Buff-breasted Sandpiper – Herm – Sep 2004 - MCarre

Ruff (<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>)	2 records
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Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

Only two birds in a year is very poor – both in the north of the island.

1, Vale Pond, 30th Aug to 1st Sep (MPL)

1, Pembroke, 24th Sep to 1st Oct (RJM,LT)

Jack Snipe (<i>Lymnocyrtus minimus</i>)	10+ birds
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Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

At the start of the year, wintering birds were recorded at 5 locations – Rue des Bergers, Claire Mare, Track Marais, the wet fields south of 'The Bowl', and on Herm (1 on 3rd Jan (LT)). Two birds showing very well at the Vale Pond between 13th and 21st Mar may have been migrants (MPL). In the latter part of the year singles were seen at Rue des Bergers on 1st Nov and Track Marais on 31st Dec (AJB)

Common Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>)
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Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Although small numbers of Snipe may be seen in any suitable habitat during the winter months, the key wintering locations with larger flocks are Claire Mare, Track Marais and Vale Pond – for example 85 at the latter on 5th Mar (RJM,LT). Birds departed during April with a single bird lingering at the Vale Pond until 13th May (MPL).

On 11th Aug the first returning bird was located at the Claire Mare (RJM) and numbers built up slowly thereafter in the usual locations. A few small parties of migrant Snipe were observed passing over Pleinmont headland on 19th Oct (AJB).

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

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 6 sites by birders during the months of January and November only (RJM,GDA,LT,AJB). A total of 38 Woodcock were ringed during the year, which shows how common they actually are.



Unusually short-billed Woodcock - JHooper

Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)

7 records (of 10 birds)

Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.

Although there were plenty of records this year, not many stayed for very long. This species is not restricted to passage periods and is often seen during mid-summer.

- 1, Fort le Crocq, 18th Apr (RJM,LT)
- 1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 30th Apr (RJM,LT)
- 2, Rocquaine Bay, 2nd May (WRT,CJM,MAG,DJRA)
- 2, Vale Pond, 20th Jun (MB,GDA)
- 1, Vale Pond, 27th Jul (AJB)
- 2, Vazon, 11th Aug (RJM,LT)
- 1, Claire Mare then Vale Pond, 12th to 19th Aug

Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

According to the reports received, it seems that no Bar-tailed Godwits started the year on the island, with the first report being on Herm on 17th Mar (GDA). During April and May, single-figure migrant flocks could be regularly seen on the beaches but there were no days of heavy passage. The last of these was noted on Lihou on 16th May (IH).

No autumn birds were reported until 22nd Aug (RJM,LT), and again just single-figure groups were seen regularly until 7th Oct. Only 3 birds were located during the December wader-count.

Whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>)
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Quite common passage migrant.

One or two birds wintered in Portlet Bay, Pleinmont and were noted occasionally during Jan, Feb and Mar. The first day that migrant birds were noted passing through the island was 18th Apr (RJM,WRT,GDA,MPL) and there was good passage during the next 4 or 5 weeks. This peaked on 2nd May when there were at least 200 birds noted from around the island on bird-race day, with a single flock of 40 birds at L'Ancrese G.C. The final bird of this passage was seen on 19th May.

A very early returning bird was seen on 20th Jun at Fort le Crocq (GDA) and migration was noted until 2nd Oct. The autumn migration is light compared to the spring, with mainly small single-figure groups seen. The tiny wintering population of 2 birds returned to Portlet Bay in late October and were seen on a few days late into the year.

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

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

Wader-count data showed a peak of 151 in January, but the species is difficult to monitor as some feed inland. Very few spend the early summer period on the island.

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

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

This species is very scarce in May and June but was much commoner at other times of the year. No especially large flocks were noted and 35 birds in the December wader-count was the largest count of the year.

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

6 records (of c.30 birds)

Uncommon passage migrant.

Apart from the brief sighting of a very large flock, 2004 was a very poor autumn for Greenshank.

- 1 heard, Grande Mare, 30th Apr (AJB)
- 1, Claire Mare, 22nd to 26th May (MAG)
- 2, Vale Pond, 24th May (CJM)
- Flock of c.24, over Claire Mare, 12th Aug (JH)
- 1, Claire Mare, 26th to 28th Aug (AJB,GDA)
- 1, over Grande Mare, 9th Sep (AJB)

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

4 records (of 5 birds)

Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.

There was a single spring record – at Vale Pond on 25th Apr (MPL). On 31st Jul two birds arrived at the Claire Mare and 1 appeared at Vale Pond (LT,AJB), the former staying until 12th Aug. The only other sighting was at the Track Marais on 2nd Aug (AJB).

Wood Sandpiper (<i>Tringa glareola</i>)
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9+ birds

Scarce passage migrant.

On 25th Jul a bird was seen at Claire Mare (DT). This bird lingered around into August when it was joined by 3 more on 10th, and then an amazing 8 birds were present together on the pool at the Claire Mare on the evening of 12th Aug (MAG). This is a very large number to be seen together on the island. The flock slowly diminished in size during the month but the species could be seen every day here during August until the last on 1st Sep. An additional bird was on the Old Aerodrome on 18th Sep (LT).

This was clearly the best year ever for Wood Sandpiper in Guernsey, although the database notes that 7 birds were reported from Vale Pond in August 1970.

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

Quite common passage migrant, scarce in winter.

There were two records from late-winter with one at Fort le Crocq on 6th Feb and one in the Town Harbour on 12th Feb (LT). The odd wintering bird gets seen on the island.

The first of the spring migrants appeared at the Claire Mare on 13th Apr (KC) and could be seen in small number until 23rd May. From 2nd Jul birds returned south, and were about twice as common as in spring, with flocks of up to 8 birds noted. The last bird was seen in Belle Greve Bay on 17th Oct (MB).

Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)
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Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Small numbers in summer.

The 257 count in December was the highest of the regular monthly counts, which again indicates a drop in numbers of this common wintering wader.

Grey Phalarope (<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

An interesting record – not only quite early in the autumn, but it was not on the sea. Clearly the bird soon realised this and didn't stay for long.

1, Claire Mare, 18th Aug (MAG)

Pomarine Skua (<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>)	2 records
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Scarce Autumn passage migrant. Very rare in Winter.

The bird in May was the first ever sighting in spring. It coincided with a well above-average passage of this species past Britain.

1, Jaonneuse, 7th May (RJM,LT)

1, past Jaonneuse Point, 28th Aug (WRT)

Arctic Skua (<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>)	38 birds
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Uncommon autumn passage migrant.

The first migrant birds were 10 that were seen passing Jaonneuse on a seawatch on 21st Aug (sev) which was actually the highest recorded in a single session. Arctic Skua was only recorded on a further 6 days, totalling 38 for the year, until the last sightings on 26th Sep. Most records were from the Jaonneuse/Chouet headland, except single birds noted off Fort le Crocq and Petit Bot.

Great Skua (<i>Stercorarius skua</i>)	58 birds
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Uncommon autumn passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

At the very start of the year, two birds were observed heading west past Jaonneuse on 2nd Jan (AJB,PKV,MV), probably the two seen at the end of 2003. The next individual was not seen until the 21st Aug (WRT). The tally for the autumn was 56 birds which is about average, and the last was seen on 26th Sep (MPL,WRT). The peak day was 24th Sep when 24 passed Jaonneuse (AJB,MPL).

Mediterranean Gull (<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>)	15+ birds
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Scarce visitor, mainly from summer through to winter.

There were two birds wintering in Belle Greve Bay at the start of the year – an adult and 2nd-winter, the former bearing a colour ring – and these could be seen on and off until 6th Mar. Another 2nd-winter bird was seen at Vale Pond and Grandes Havres from 17th to 23rd Mar (MAG).

The species reappeared suddenly post-breeding from 6th Jul (MB,CB) and there were at least 5 birds in Belle Greve Bay (1 juv, 2 2nd-yr, 2 ad) by 19th (BGW) and 3 in the Cobo/Vazon area around the same time. These birds had dispersed by the second week of August. There were three sightings of birds during the autumn (MPL,LT), before an adult bird returned to winter in Belle Greve Bay from 5th Nov (MPL).

Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>)	6 records (of 21 birds)
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Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

Twenty-one birds is by far the largest yearly-total for a while. Most of these were in 2 short bursts of autumn passage.

- 2, Chouet, 1st Jan (DJRA)
- 8 (7 ad + 1 1st-w), past Jaonneuse, 25th Sep (WRT)
- 5, past Jaonneuse, 26th Sep (WRT,MPL)
- 3, south over Lihou Causeway, 28th Oct (JH)
- 2, Belle Greve Bay, 29th Oct (MB)
- 2, past Jaonneuse, 31st Oct (RJM,LT)

Sabine's Gull (<i>Larus sabini</i>)	2 records (of 4 birds)
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Rare autumn passage migrant – 6 previous records.

Sabine's Gulls have never been seen in Spring in Guernsey, so a first-year bird flying East close past Chouet on 7th April is especially notable.

(J.Hooper)

A second record this year was a group of three juvenile birds, again past Chouet, on 26th September – a much more typical time of year.

(M.A.Guppy)

Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>)
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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 during the breeding season in May and June. They clearly breed quite close by, as very young juvenile birds started to appear in mid-summer.

Ring-billed Gull (<i>Larus delawarensis</i>)	1 record
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Vagrant – 3 previous records.

The Island's 4th record of this North American gull was an adult discovered on the beach at Belle Greve Bay on 15th January. It was also seen the next morning but soon departed. The first since 1996.

(B.G.Wells et al)





Ring-billed Gull – Belle Greve Bay – Jan 2004 - MPLawlor

Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)	4 records (of 5 birds)
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Uncommon to scarce visitor, mainly in winter.

Not a very large total. This species appears to be getting less common.

- 2 (ad + 1st-w), Herm then Belle Greve Bay, 3rd to 29th Jan (1-w to 11th) (LT)
- 1 ad, Rocquaine, 23rd Jul (RJM,LT)
- 1 ad, Vazon, 3rd Nov (AJB)
- 1 1st-w, St. Peter Port School, 15th Nov (MPL)

Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)

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

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

Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)

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

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

Yellow-legged Gull (<i>Larus michahellis</i>)	5 records
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Scarce visitor, mainly summer and autumn.

Five records equals the highest year-total. Unusually, most of these were seen early on in the year, whereas traditionally summer and early-autumn is the peak time.

1, Belle Greve Bay, 10th to 22nd Feb (TDCE)
 1 ad, fields west of Reservoir, 20th Feb (RJM)
 Second bird, Belle Greve Bay, 22nd Feb (RJM)
 1 ad, Mont Cuet Refuse Tip, Chouet, 26th Mar (MPL)
 1 ad, Mont Cuet Refuse Tip, Chouet, 26th Jul to 6th Aug (AJB)

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

1 returning individual

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

Our old friend 'Droopy' was seen in the Town Harbour or Belle Greve Bay until 27th February. On 23rd September it returned for its eighth winter out of nine, and could be seen irregularly until the end of the year.

Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*)

Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

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

Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Seen in small numbers during the first three months of the year, mainly passing the Northern headlands. Occasionally this passage was heavier – e.g. 84 in 2 hours on 2nd Jan (PKV,MV). A very unusual record was of a single bird with Black-headed Gulls on the Vale Pond on 24th Feb (TDCE). The final sighting before the species returned to the breeding grounds was on 7th Mar (RJM). There was a mid-summer record on 2nd Jul (RJM) but further records were from 9th Aug until the end of the year, with no heavy passage noted during this time. One was at Claire Mare NR on 20th Dec (DT)

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

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

At the start of the year there were up to 13 birds wintering on the island which is a typical total. Most of these were seen in Belle Greve Bay, with 7 together on New Years Day (WS), with 4 seen around the northern bays and 2 in the west.

These birds were seen up until the end of February before the spring migrants arrived back mid-March. Small numbers could then be seen throughout the spring and summer fishing in the island's bays. A roosting flock built up at Houmet Paradis Island and 45 birds were counted there on 9th Aug (MPL). There was also notable passage past the northern headlands in autumn with peak dates being 42 on 21st Aug and 38 on 19th Sep (WRT).

This gradually petered out, leaving single-figure groups to winter. These seemed to prefer the west coast during December with 6 to 8 birds being seen between Rocquaine and Cobo Bays, whilst only 2 to 4 were present in the east.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

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

A single bird observed in the Town Harbour on 22nd Apr was the first of the year (WRT). Small and varying numbers passed through during the next month. As usual a small number of pairs attempted to breed, mainly on small islets off Herm, but an audacious pair chose the 'island' by Belle Greve beach. On 2nd Jul a bird flew east over Les Effards – an unusual inland

sighting (MPL). Birds were noted passing the northern headlands during the autumn, mostly in passage of less than 25. There were two days of heavier passage however with 250 noted on 21st and 113 on 28th Aug (WRT). The number of sightings fell during October, with the final 3 being noted in Herm on 3rd Nov (GDA).

Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	6 records (of 19 birds)
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Scarce passage migrant.

Nineteen birds is easily the highest total recorded on the island in a single year. These were mainly seen in a 5-day period when clearly conditions were just right for birds to pass close enough for identification. Also observers are increasingly confident in identifying fly-by birds to this species. Interestingly, although this was also a very good year for Common Tern passage also, the Arctic Tern records were not associated with it but occurred a month afterwards.

- 1, west past Jaonneuse, 19th Sep (WRT)
- 3, west past Chouet, 23rd Sep (MPL)
- 2, west past Chouet, 24th Sep (RJM,LT)
- 5, west past Jaonneuse, 25th Sep (WRT)
- 3, west past Jaonneuse, 26th Sep (WRT,MPL)
- 5, west past Chouet, 27th Sep (JMB)
- [also one from pelagic trip on 15th Aug]

Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)	2 records
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Scarce passage migrant.

Two typical records of this difficult to catch up with species.

- 1, Chouet, 13th Aug (RJM,LT)
- 1, Jaonneuse, 21st Aug (WRT)

Black Tern (<i>Chlidonias niger</i>)	(2 'at sea' records)
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Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.

A very unpredictable species – none seen from land in the last 2 years.

- 4, from pelagic trip, 15th Aug
- 1, from pelagic trip, 4th Sep

Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor, a few breed.

The odd tired or sheltering bird could be seen around the coast during the Winter periods, with the occasional wrecked, dead bird found on the beaches. In the Spring and Summer, sightings were more or less restricted to the Jethou and Herm areas where there was probably a handful of breeding pairs. Some passage was visible whilst Autumn seawatching but this was never more than single-figures this year.

Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)
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Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor, a few breed.

The general comments for the previous species are also applicable to Razorbill, except that this species was much easier to find than Guillemot. For example 12 were off Chouet on 11th Jan (LT). A few pairs probably bred in the Herm and Jethou areas as they could be seen there through the Summer.

Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)

Uncommon summer visitor and breeder. Rare on passage and in winter.

All records received were from the breeding areas around Jethou and Herm, where the first 3 returning birds were seen on 17th Mar (GDA). Approximately 30 birds were seen from the "Puffin Patrol" boat trip on 10th Jun. As usual birds disappeared again during July, with the last seen on 6th.

Feral Pigeon (<i>Columba livia</i>)
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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 (<i>Columba oenas</i>)
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Uncommon resident breeding species and passage migrant.

The species was generally not recorded in any numbers, with groups of up to 8 noted at a variety of sites throughout the year. The only exception to this was a large flock of 40 birds which built up in the fields along Pont Vaillant at the very end of the year (MPL).

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

Very common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Widely recorded from all parts of the island, in flocks of up to 150, with some visible migration noted especially during the autumn.

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

Common resident breeding species.

Present in all areas of the island, flocking in numbers at a few sites. A leucistic bird was present at Les Effards, St. Sampsons on 27th Mar (MPL).

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

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor.

The first Turtle Dove of the year was located at Pleinmont on 2nd May (MPL) and small numbers moved through during the spring. The species was observed throughout the summer before more regular sightings occurred during late August and September. The last of the regular sightings was at Bas Capelles on 17th Oct (RAF) but there was a very late lingering migrant in a garden at Rue Maze on 8th Nov (SJC).

The first ever winter sighting of a Turtle Dove in Guernsey was of a 1st-winter bird in a Collared Dove flock in fields along Pont Vaillant on 7th December (MPL). This bird stayed in that area until the end of the year.



First-year Turtle Dove – Bas Capelles – Oct 2004 - RAFerbrache

Cuckoo (<i>Cuculus canorus</i>)	3 records
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Uncommon passage migrant and rare breeding species.

A record low for this species with only 3 individuals being reported to the Societe. It appears that Cuckoo is on a major decline in Guernsey – not just as a breeding bird but as a migrant also.

- 1, taken to the Animal Shelter, 16th Apr
- 1, St. John, 30th Apr (RA,MA)
- 1, Saumarez Park, 20th May (MB)

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

Uncommon resident breeding species.

Many pairs of owls are using the nestboxes erected around the island, but they are still difficult to see. Between 20 and 40 pairs were probably breeding around the island (VEF).

Long-eared Owl (<i>Asio otus</i>)	3+ pairs
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Uncommon resident breeding species. Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

Breeding was definite at two sites this year – young were heard calling at Jerbourg and in the Marais Nord area – but there was also a pair at the Reservoir that probably bred. Sightings seem to have dried up at the traditional sites of Pleinmont and Petit Bot.

Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)	5 records
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A low total since there are usually double-figures of sightings per year nowadays.

- 1, Herm, 28th Mar (TDCE,MCS,GDA et al)
- 1, Pleinmont, 11th Oct (JH)
- 1, Lihou (then Pleinmont), 30th Oct (IH)
- 1, West of Petit Bot, 11th Nov (JH)
- 1, Pleinmont, 4th Dec (JH)

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

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Swifts arrived back on the island on 24th Apr with a bird over Pleinmont (JH), becoming quite common by 26th. May saw the majority of the passage birds moving through and the species was common during the summer, breeding in small colonies in a few old buildings. Number petered out during August, with a handful of September records until the last on 17th. There was one further sighting of a very late bird over the Foulon on 24th Oct (LT) plus a swift sp. at Pleinmont on 28th (AJB).

Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>)
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Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.

The species was present in small numbers, both along the rocky coast and on inland ponds in all seasons apart from the spring. The last bird seen was on 7th Mar at Vale Pond (LT) and the next was at Herm harbour on 6th Jul (MPL). For a 'wintering' species, the Kingfisher always arrives back exceptionally early.



Kingfisher – 2004 - JHooper

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

1 record

Scarce passage migrant.

Only one seen but the species only averages less than 2 per year.
1, near Bon Port Hotel, 7th Apr (per TDCE)

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

1 record

Scarce passage migrant. Formerly common breeder.

One bird only after the record year of 14 in 2003 – there's been no blank years since 1980.
1, Pleinmont, 10th Sep (AJB,LT)

Great Spotted Woodpecker (<i>Dendrocopos major</i>) 3 records (of 1 bird?)
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

It is very likely that there is one woodpecker that has taken up residence in the centre of the island as all these sites are close to each other.

1, Fauxquets Valley, 29th Aug (LT)

1, Les Petites Vallees, Castel, 23rd Oct and 19th Nov (AJB)

1, Rue des Hougues, Castel, 28th Nov (AG)

Skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>)

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

The species was regularly seen in the winter months at a variety of locations, but the most of the sightings were from L'Ancrese Common where flocks of up to 26 were seen. There were 3 or 4 pairs of Skylark on the common this year, which now appears to be the only breeding location for Skylark in Guernsey. Birds were more regularly noted on Autumn migration in October with 100 at Pleinmont on 19th being a peak count.

Sand Martin (<i>Riparia riparia</i>)

Quite common passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor.

Sand Martins arrived suddenly this year on 17th Mar when a group of 40 birds appeared in foggy conditions at the Claire Mare (DJRA). Birds were then regularly seen passing through in small numbers during the next month or so. The summer months saw a few Sand Martins on the island but there were no breeding attempts. As usual, autumn passage was not as obvious as spring, with the last bird noted on 26th Sep (LT).

Swallow (<i>Hirundo rustica</i>)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The 29th Mar saw the first Swallow of the summer flying around Rue des Bergers NR (DJRA,MAG), but migration started proper on 4th Apr. Strong passage continued for the next two months and birds were common all summer. Birds moved back through the island in the autumn with especially heavy passage days noted on 31st Aug and 25th Sep (PKV,WRT). Numbers gradually fell during October and there were unusually no November records this year.

House Martin (<i>Delichon urbicum</i>)

Quite common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

The first records of the year were highly unusual as they were so very early. Firstly a bird was present at Le Gouffre on 8th Feb (RAF) and then three birds fed over the flooded quarry at Baubigny on 15th Feb (AJB). The weather conditions also brought many House Martins and southern insects to southern England during this time. Two more birds on 5th Mar at Track Marais were also very early (DJRA). Migration started properly on 24th Mar and martins were noted commonly during the spring. The species bred on suitable locations in small numbers and was observed on return migration in the autumn until mid-October.

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)**7 birds*****Uncommon passage migrant.***

The species does seem to be quite scarce at the moment so all reports are listed. This species is rather hit and miss however as most records are of flyover birds.

- 1, Pleinmont, 11th Apr (MAG)
- 1, Chouet, 22nd Apr (MPL)
- 1, Pleinmont, 2nd May (sev)
- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 2nd May (sev)
- 1, Les Effards, 8th Aug (MPL)
- 1, Pleinmont, 22nd Aug (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 10th Sep (RJM,LT)

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

No especially large groups or counts of heavy passage was reported this year, but flocks of a couple of hundred did build up at various headlands and fields during the migration season. Nowadays only small numbers breed in the more 'wild' areas of the island.

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 vrac.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)**1 record*****Rare passage migrant – 12 previous records***

A winter-plumaged bird was discovered feeding along the edge of the water in a flooded field between Claire Mare NR and L'Eree Aerodrome on 2nd January. It reappeared in a similar field to the East of the reserve on 17th and 18th January. This is the 13th record for Guernsey.

(M. P. Lawlor et al)

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

The first individual of the year was seen at Jaonneuse on 10th Apr (GDA), with sightings becoming regular by the 18th. Small numbers were seen for the next month, with a peak count of 10 on Old Aerodrome on 2nd (MPL). The last of the spring was seen on 14th May (RJM). The species arrived back on 22nd Aug (AJB,WRT) and was only seen irregularly during the autumn with no large counts made. 14 birds were at Pleinmont on 3rd Sep (RJM,LT) and the last of the year was noted in the same place as the first on 17th Oct (WRT).

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

Ones and twos were seen wintering at various sites on the island, departing during March, when the last was seen on 27th (LT). Autumn migrants appeared from 10th Sep when one was at L'Eree (LT). During the second winter period there were a couple of larger groups reported - 4 at Perelle on 11th Oct (BK) and 5 at Le Gouffre on 14th Nov (RJM).

Pied Wagtail (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.

Common in the Winter with birds flocking at various sites to roost. During the spring and autumn, the island sees a passage of this subspecies, mainly in Mar-Apr and then Sep-Oct. Generally a few are recorded during the summer but further study is required into the subspecific identity of the 'alba' wagtails which breed here – possibly both subspecies breed in small numbers.

White Wagtail (*Motacilla alba alba*)

Quite common passage migrant. Sometimes breeds.

White Wagtails do not occur in Guernsey during the winter months but arrive as a passage migrant during late March and are common until mid-May. They then return to pass through the island from late-Aug to Sep in general.

An adult was with 3 recently fledged juveniles at Fort le Crocq on 19th Jul (MPL). More study is required into the breeding 'alba' wagtails in Guernsey.



White Wagtail – Vazon – Apr 2004 - MPLawlor

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.

The most notable record was an individual that wintered in a garden on Les Effards, St. Sampsons that bore a ring. When it was caught on 14th Nov it was found that the ring was Polish, having been ringed on 23rd Sep of the same year at Stacja, near the northern coast of Poland, so it may have actually come from even further East.



The Polish Robin with its 'Gdansk' ring – Les Effards – Dec 2004 - MPLawlor

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochrurus*)

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

Ones and twos wintered at a variety of sites at the start of the year – but 4 were together at Longue Hougue on 4th Jan (RJM). The final sighting of the winter was on 11th Apr at Fort Le Marchant (DL) but the late March and April birds were probably migrants passing through. There were a couple of mid-summer records, perhaps of the same individual – at Les Tielles on 23rd and Pleinmont on 25th Jul (RJM,LT,AJB). A single bird at Jerbourg on 10th Oct (AJB) was the first returning individual of the autumn, and ones and two were seen regularly until the year end.



Black Redstart – Winter 2004 – JHooper

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

Uncommon passage migrant.

After a bird at Fort Saumarez on 11th Apr (WRT), there were a further 12 birds seen in spring, most of which were seen in the two days of 30th Apr and 1st May. Another 12 birds were noted during autumn migration after a few arrived on 22nd Aug (MB,RJM,AJB). A female hit a window at St. Peter Port School on 11th Oct but survived (MPL). A very late final bird was seen at L'Ancrese on 30th Oct (MB).

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

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

On 29th Apr, two Whinchat at L'Ancrese Common were the first of the year (MPL). A further 9 birds were seen on spring migration – all at Pleinmont or in the Claire Mare area. On 11th Aug, the first autumn migrant was recorded at Claire Mare (RJM) and, as usual, the species was much more common than in the spring. Ten birds at Pleinmont on 11th Sep was the peak count (LT). The final record of the year was exceptionally late when one was seen at Track Marais on 8th Nov (AJB).

Stonechat (<i>Saxicola torquatus</i>)
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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 (<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>)
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Common passage migrant, irregular breeder.

The 12th Mar saw the first Wheatear of the spring on the island when one was at Pulias (RJM,LT). By the end of that week more were moving through with double-figure counts made, this continuing through April until numbers tailed off in May. No large falls were observed this spring. The first arrival of the autumn was seen on 23rd Jul (RJM,LT) and Wheatears could be easily found for the next 3 months. There was a peak count of 50 at Pleinmont on 22nd Aug (LT). Sightings petered out during the last week of October and there were 3 November sightings with the last on 18th at Chouet (MPL).

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

4 records (of 8 birds)

Uncommon passage migrant.

This is the lowest total in the last five years but this species can be very unpredictable.

- 1, Port Soif, 11th Apr (CJM)
- 1, Pleinmont, 24th Apr (MAG)
- 1, Lihou Headland, 24th Apr (MAG)
- 1, Bordeaux, 27th Apr (JH)
- 5, Jerbourg, 10th Oct (AJB)

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

Very common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.

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

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)

Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.

Only very small numbers were seen in the first two months of the year with no double-figure flocks reported. There were no records after 2nd Mar (GDA).

Fieldfares arrived back on 9th Oct (MAG) and in force the next day when at least 100 birds were seen at Pleinmont (AJB). Thereafter, birds were regularly seen passing through on migration, peaking on 10th Oct when several hundred were recorded. Right up to the end of the year flocks of up to 30 birds could be found at a variety of sites.

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. Particular days of passage were noted on 10th and 19th Oct (AJB).



Song Thrush – Pleinmont – Apr 2004 – MPLawlor

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)

Common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.

No very large flocks were found to be wintering on the island at the start of the year – the maximum reported to the Societe was 35. Birds disappeared during March but of note was a singing male at St. Peter Port School on 29th Mar (MPL). A very late bird was seen at the Track Marais on the Bird Race on 2nd May (WRT,MAG,CJM,DJRA).

After dark on 7th Oct the first migrant Redwings of the autumn were heard passing over Candie Gardens (WRT). On 10th and 19th Oct, many hundreds were seen passing over Pleinmont (AJB). Flocks of up to 50 stayed on the island for the winter.

Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)

Uncommon breeding resident and passage migrant.

This species does not seem to be increasing at all and it can very hard to find. There are a few pairs breeding however, with most of the sightings being from parkland and large gardens in the St. Peter Port area.

Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cettia*)**8+ birds*****Scarce resident. Has probably bred.***

Most of the records in the spring were of singing males, with just the odd sighting after June, There is no doubt that breeding will have occurred at a few sites. 5 birds were ringed during the year.

- 1, Vale Pond, 5th Mar to 31st May
- 1, Rue des Bergers, 5th Mar to 7th Nov
- up to 2, Marais Nord, 9th Mar to 12th Nov
- 1, Grande Mare, 7th Apr to 18th Jun
- Up to 2, Grand Pre, 10th Apr to 18th Sep
- 1, Claire Mare, 2nd to 23rd May and 18th Oct

Fan-tailed Warbler (*Cisticola juncidis*)**1 record (of 2 birds)*****Vagrant – 2 previous records***

After last year's bird, it was not a huge surprise to hear another singing male at Claire Mare NR this year - the island's 3rd record. However, this time he was accompanied by a female bird – both of which were trapped for ringing - so hopefully this is a sign that breeding may occur very soon. These birds were present between 30th July and 31st August (and possibly to the end of October).

(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson et al)



Fan-tailed Warblers (female above, male below) – Claire Mare – Aug 2004 – JHooper



Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

7 records (of 8 birds)

Uncommon passage migrant.

An excellent spring passage this year. Also 4 individuals were ringed.

- 1, Pleinmont, 11th Apr (MAG)
- 1, Lihou Headland, 11th Apr (MAG)
- 1 singing, Herm Common, 12th Apr (LT)
- 1, Pleinmont, 25th Apr (DJRA)
- 1, Grand Pre, 29th Apr (DJRA)
- 1 ringed, Grand Pre, 30th Jul (RA,MA)
- 2, Claire Mare, 31st Jul (LT)

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

1 record

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

Quite a late bird saving a blank year.

- 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 5th Sep (JH)

Sedge Warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*)

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

The first bird reported was at the Claire Mare on 16th Apr (LT). The main passage of birds was recorded through the island's wetter areas in April and May, but this species is never seen in large numbers. There were a few records in June and July, before birds started passing through again during autumn migration in small numbers, mainly during mid to late August.

Blyth's Reed Warbler (<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i>) 1 record

Vagrant – no previous records.

A bird was trapped and ringed at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 14th October – the first record of this Eastern European species for the Channel Islands. The species is very difficult to differentiate from Reed Warbler in the field but luckily not so difficult in the hand. Upon release, it disappeared into the dense undergrowth and was not seen again.

(J.Hooper et al)



Blyth's Reed Warbler – Pleinmont – Oct 2004 – MLawlor

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

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Good numbers passed through in the spring from the first week of May, with singing and breeding birds located at most reedbed sites, even quite small ones. Good migration was noted in August and early September, with the final bird trapped at Dell Nursery on 24th Oct (RA,MA).

Melodious Warbler (<i>Hippolais polyglotta</i>) 4 records

Scarce autumn passage migrant

Four birds in one year is the highest total since 4 were also recorded in 1982. Three birds at the same site is noteworthy.

- 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 4th Aug (JH)
- 1, Claire Mare, 6th Aug (RJM,LT) – different to above
- 1, Claire Mare, 28th Aug (GDA)
- 1, Chouet, 3rd Sep (MPL)

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

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 in more 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 (<i>Sylvia borin</i>)

Uncommon breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

On 12th Apr the first Garden Warbler was seen on Herm (LT) and small numbers passed through during the next month or so. Breeding pairs were evident in a few locations in the countryside but the species was typically elusive during the breeding season. Migrants were noted passing through in the autumn with the final bird ringed at Dell Nursery on 24th Oct (RA,MA).

Barred Warbler (<i>Sylvia nisoria</i>)

1 record

Vagrant – 3 previous records.

Guernsey's fourth Barred Warbler was found in a hedge at Pleinmont on 18th October. Although typically elusive, a few birdwatchers managed to see it.

(A.J.Bisson et al)



Barred Warbler – Pleinmont – Oct 2004 – R.J.Murphy

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

5 records

Scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

One in July may indicate a breeding record as the species has bred at Pleinmont in the past.
1, Pleinmont, 16th Apr (LT)

1, Bordeaux, 29th & 30th Apr (DJRA)
1, Herm, 2nd May (RJM,LT)
1, Pleinmont, 4th Jul (MB)
1, Pleinmont, 18th Oct (AJB)

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

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

There was a sudden arrival of numbers of Whitethroat on 16th Apr (LT) and the species was a common sight in suitable habitat throughout the summer. A common early autumn migrant through the island also, with the last reported sighting on 12th Sep (MB).

Dartford Warbler (<i>Sylvia undata</i>)
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approx. 6 pairs

Uncommon breeding resident.

Most records were from the stronghold of Pleinmont, but there were also sightings from Mont Herault, Prevote and Le Gouffre, indicating probably 5 pairs minimum along the South coast. In the North there was also a pair regular at Fort le Marchant, but none were seen at Fort Doyle this year. A single bird was seen at L'Ancrese Golf Course in September (WRT).

Pallas's Warbler (<i>Phylloscopus proregulus</i>)
--

1 record

Rare autumn visitor – 11 previous records.

A single bird fed in the trees at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont for a short period on 29th October – the island's 12th record.

(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson)

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

1 record

Scarce passage migrant, mostly in spring.

Only a single bird in a year is very poor for this species.

1, Trinity Cottages area, Pleinmont, 30th Apr to 1st May (MAG)

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

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, quite common winter visitor.

Widely observed in the early winter period mainly at wet sites which have more insects. The peak count was 5 birds at Track Marais (AJB). Some of these birds started singing in March, with new arrivals becoming obvious from about 15th Mar. Thereafter a common species both on passage and in the breeding season. Autumn passage continued well into November and small numbers could be found at various sites until the year end.

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

Common passage migrant, uncommon breeding summer visitor.

The first migrant reported was on quite a late date of 5th Apr at Pleinmont (MPL) and birds were regularly seen after that, but no days of especially strong passage were noted. A handful of birds could be found in the breeding season – mainly in the wooded valleys around the island. Autumn passage began again in late July with birds arriving on Lihou Island, and this peaked during late August and early September. Numbers tailed off, with the final bird on Herm on 6th Oct (RJM).

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 were seen during the summer in suitable habitat where there were no doubt a few breeding pairs.

Firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*)

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor. Has probably bred.

During the winter, there were ones and twos reported at a variety of sites. As is typical, spring migration was very light with only two records at the start of April and the last on 4th (LT). The autumn birds arrived back on 1st Oct at Saints (RJM,LT), peaking at 7 birds at Portlet on 30th Oct (WRT). Numbers gradually fell during November and mostly singles were reported in December.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

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

On 30th April the first Spotted Flycatcher was seen at the Grand Pre (RJM,LT). Only a handful were recorded during May indicating a poor passage this spring. There were a number of sightings in June and July suggesting a few pairs probably bred although there was little proof reported. However, a very young juvenile was at La Vassellerie, SA on 6th Aug (MPL). About 20 birds were recorded on autumn passage until the final one at Jerbourg on 29th Sep (AJB)

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

Uncommon to Quite common passage migrant.

There were three spring sightings this year. 25th Apr at Fauxquets Valley (LT), 2 on 30th Apr at Grand Pre (RJM,LT) and 1st May on Lihou (AJB). Autumn passage began on 3rd Aug and there was a small influx on 11th Aug, including 7 birds along the Heritage Walk (GDA). Singles were then seen every now and again until the last bird on 12th Sep at Marais Nord (LT).

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.

Regularly recorded on the island, with a maximum flock of 30 birds reported. A notable ringing recovery from the Dell Nursery on 24th Oct was a bird initially ringed at Trinity Cottages in 1997 (RA,MA) - quite an age for such a small bird.

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

Short-toed Treecreeper (<i>Certhia brachydactyla</i>)
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Common resident breeding species.

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

Red-backed Shrike (<i>Lanius collurio</i>)	2 records
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Rare passage migrant

A female bird spent a few hours in the scrub around Pleinmont watch-house car park on 9th June. (A.J.Bisson et al)

On 3rd September, a female or juvenile bird was seen in the afternoon on L'Ancrese Common. (J.P.Down et al)

Woodchat Shrike (<i>Lanius senator</i>)	1 record
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Very rare – 7 previous records

A juvenile bird was discovered in the field next to the Claire Mare NR mid-morning on 6th August. It was very secretive and showed itself to only four birdwatchers before it disappeared half an hour later, never to be seen again. This is the 8th island record. (A.J.Bisson et al)

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

Very common resident breeding species.

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

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

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently rare breeder.

Jackdaws have now established themselves along the South cliffs between Les Tielles and Pleinmont and probably a few pairs breed there although it is difficult to prove. Birds were present there most of the year and nest building was observed. A new phenomenon was the regular sightings from Mont Cuët refuse tip at Chouet where presumably the south coast birds fly to feed. Also there were a few sightings during the year from fields by the Reservoir. A maximum count of 15 birds together shows how numbers are increasing.



Jackdaw – Apr 2004 – BGWells

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)**1 record**

Rare visitor.

With a 6 year gap since the last record, a Bird Race team was surprised to see a Rook flying East along the cliffs at Mont Herault on 2nd May.

(A.J.Bisson, V.E.Froome, A.Grange, R.Lihou)

Carrion 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.

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

Uncommon resident breeding species.

The pair in Herm produced 4 chicks, whilst the pair in the Mont Herault area were also successful, with probably 3 youngsters raised. These birds wandered widely and could be seen almost anywhere on the island flying between feeding areas.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

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

Flocks of up to 1000 were not uncommon in autumn when huge numbers of Starlings pass through the island. Also large numbers spent the winter here.

Rose-coloured Starling (*Sturnus roseus*)**3 records**

Rare autumn passage migrant – 23 previous records.

A juvenile bird was seen with Starlings at La Catioc on 10th September. It was seen irregularly in the L'Eree/Fort Saumarez/Fort le Crocq area until 4th October.

(J.Hooper et al)

A second juvenile bird was present with a large Starling flock at Rousse between 26th September and 11th October.

(M.A.Guppy et al)



Rose-coloured Starling – Rousse – Sep 2004 – MPLawlor

The final juvenile bird was discovered in a Rue Maze, St. Martins garden on 3rd November. It was most unusual, as it decided to spend the Winter there – the first example of this species to do so in Guernsey – and could be seen regularly until the New Year.

(S.J.Cooper et al)



Rose-coloured Starling – St. Martins – Nov 2004 – SJCooper

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

Common resident breeding species.

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

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

Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly recorded all year, with an increase in numbers during the migration and winter periods. Larger flocks of up to 100 birds were occasionally reported.

Brambling (<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>)	25+ birds
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Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were only three sightings early on in the year, at Pleinmont on 14th Feb and 2nd Apr (LT), and 2 at Rue Genorette on 18th Apr (JPD). The first autumn migrant appeared also at Pleinmont on 18th Oct (AJB) and there were about 14 birds observed around the island from that date until 21st Nov. Only two sightings of mid-winter birds – 6 at Pleinmont on 15th Dec (DJRA) and 1 at Les Eturs on 19th Dec (AJB).

Serin (<i>Serinus serinus</i>)	2 records
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Scarce summer visitor and passage migrant.

Two arriving on the same morning.
 1 singing male, Les Caches, SM, 11th Apr (BGW)
 1, Pleinmont, 11th Apr (MAG)

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

Common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Commonly recorded, with many flocks of over a hundred present in the autumn and winter.

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

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

Commonly recorded with flocks of up to 70 present throughout the year. Most common during autumn migration, and least common in mid-winter.

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

Scarce to uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

Most reports in the first half of the year were from the favoured spot of Dell Nursery, but the flock there this year seemed to contain less than 20 birds. The last of the spring was there on 14th Mar (LT). A single bird at Fort George on 12th Sep (MB) was the first returning bird and birds were seen at various spots during October and November. The largest count was 24 at Dell Nursery on 31st Oct.

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

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

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

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

1 record (of 5 birds)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Traditionally, the Dell Nursery is the most reliable site for this species, and this is the first time for a while that birds have spent any time there.

5, Dell Nursery, 10th Jan, (2 until 29th Feb) (PKV,MV)

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

Uncommon resident breeding species.

Up to 4 reported at various sites throughout the island during the year.

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

1 record (of 2 birds)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is currently averaging one record per year and so seems to be declining slightly.

2, Pulias Headland, 17th to 19th Sep (MPL)

Snow Bunting (<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>)
--

2 records (of 5 birds)

Scarce to uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

Like the last species, Snow Buntings appear also to be declining gradually and wintering birds are now very unusual, most records being autumn migrants like these two.

2, Chouet, 21st to 26th Oct (WS)

3, Pulias, 12th Nov (AJB)

Yellowhammer (<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>)	2 records
--	------------------

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A surprising pair of records at the same time of year but in completely different parts of the island so unlikely to be the same one.

1, Rue des Marais, Vale, 22nd Jan (MB)

1, Les Vauxbelets, 25th Jan (WS)

Reed Bunting (<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>)	20+ birds
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Uncommon resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Sometimes breeds.

At the start of the year there appeared to be two wintering birds – one at the Track Marais and another nearby, just south of The Bowl (AJB,RJM,LT). The odd spring migrant was seen at Rue des Bergers or Claire Mare in April but none seemed to stay for the breeding season. From 19th Oct there was a good series of records from Pleinmont with up to 4 birds seen (AG), and 2 stayed until the end of the year. Migrants were also seen at Claire Mare, Rue des Bergers, Vale Pond and Track Marais during the late autumn, with up to 6 birds staying to winter at the latter site.

Corn Bunting (<i>Emberiza calandra</i>)	1 record
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Vagrant – 5 previous records since 19th C.

One of the surprises of the year was the discovery of a Corn Bunting in the car park at Jaonneuse Bay on 19th April. There are only a handful of Guernsey records for this declining species, the last being in 1976. It eventually showed well to most birdwatchers and was seen again the next morning before it departed.

(J.Hooper et al)



Corn Bunting – Jaonneuse – Apr 2004 – BGWells

ESCAPES AND EXOTICA

Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*)

At least one bird was at large during the year, sometimes 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.

Black-headed Munia (*Lonchura atricapilla*)

One seen on at least 18th Aug in L'Eree area (JH). This is not an uncommon cage bird.



Black-headed Munia – L'Eree – Aug 2004 – JHooper

List of Observers mentioned in the systematic list

DJRA	David Andrews
GDA	Geoff Atkinson
JTA	John Aslett
RA	Rich Austin
MA	Margaret Austin
MB	Malcolm Baines
JMB	Mike Bairds
AJB	Tony Bisson
IDB	Ian Broadbent
SJC	Sue Cooper
JPD	Judy Down
TDCE	Tim Earl
RAF	Rod Ferbrache
VEF	Vic Froome
AG	Tony Grange
MAG	Mark Guppy
IH	Ian Hall
JH	Jamie Hooper
BK	Barbara Kendall
CK	Carol Kinnersly
DL	Dave Laurent
MPL	Mark Lawlor
RAL	Rob Lihou
CJM	Chris Maurant
RJM	Bob Murphy
AJM	Andy Musgrove
MCS	Mary Simmons
WS	Win Symons
DT	David Trestain
LT	Liz Thomson
WRT	Wayne Turner
MV	Merlin Veron
PKV	Paul Veron
BGW	Barry Wells

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 2004 (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 2004 wader count co-ordinator, Wayne Turner

Date of count	11th Jan	8th Feb	7th Mar	18th Apr	16th May	20th Jun	18th Jul	15th Aug	26th Sep	31st Oct	28th Nov	12th Dec
Oystercatcher	666	804	460	488	356	241	297	426	297	722	522	533
Ringed Plover	37	-	12	36	83	2	4	199	82	88	50	92
Golden Plover	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	-	38
Grey Plover	24	16	93	2	3	-	-	3	12	34	53	88
Sanderling	53	8	-	3	13	-	2	5	-	42	53	45
Purple Sandpiper	1	1	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	1
Dunlin	136	82	83	17	65	4	10	84	15	35	100	326
Bar-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	3	7	-	-	3
Whimbrel	-	-	-	17	9	-	1	3	3	-	1	-
Curlew	151	67	48	11	18	20	44	54	44	52	47	55
Redshank	10	25	10	5	5	1	6	6	19	32	15	35
Turnstone	211	170	170	175	50	5	28	169	109	260	172	257
Uncounted Sectors (out of 10)	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	1	1

Contributors:- Wayne Turner (Local Organiser).

Chris Mourant, Wayne Turner, Bob Murphy, Mark Guppy, John Aslett, Julian Medland, Mary Simmons, Tony Bisson, Pete Vaudin, David Trestain (Sector Counters).

Tim Earl, Tony Grange, Barry Wells (Relief Counters).

SEAWATCHING DATA

The table below shows the ten best days for seawatching in Autumn 2004, and the full total for the whole of the Autumn season. All counts were made from the Northern headlands of Chouet and Jaonneuse (table compiled by Wayne Turner).

Date of seawatch	21/08	28/08	30/08	12/09	15/09	19/09	22/09	24/09	25/09	26/09	season totals
Wind direction & strength	NW4	NW4	WNW5	W4	WNW3	W4	W5	NNW5	WNW3	NW3	
No. of hours watched	3.5	3.5	2.75	2.75	2.25	3	1.75	2.5	2.5	4	(34 hours)
Sooty Shearwater	1	2	3	2	6	6	2	3			29
Manx Shearwater	2	1				2	1	71	9	2	88
Balearic Shearwater	1	2		2	2			3		1	13
Leach's Petrel										1	1
Pomarine Skua		1									1
Arctic Skua	10	8			6	1		4		9	38
Great Skua	1	2	2	1	6	2	2	24		4	47
Unidentified skua sp.	2					1		1			4
Sandwich Tern	42	24	14	29	32	38	6	5	12	18	227
Common/Arctic Tern	250	113	17		6	8		19	18	4	438
Little Tern	1										2

REPORTS OF RARITIES

These reports are edited versions of the rarity report forms submitted to the Guernsey Rarities Committee by the finders of the birds involved and were all accepted.

Blyth's Reed Warbler

Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont – 14th October 2004 – 1st Guernsey record

By Jamie Hooper

As it was mid-October, I thought it might be worth opening at least the one 60ft net nearest to the house. I had caught a good number of common species when, on one round, I saw an *Acrocephalus* warbler towards the end of the net and I assumed it was a late Reed. As I approached it, it seemed slightly different, plainer looking with the beak colouration different (although it was difficult to say how at first). On extraction, the bird was obviously different to any Reed I'd ever ringed. The bird was tiny, the face was plain and the wing was very short. It was different to what I remembered of Phil Atkinson's 1994 Paddyfield, which made me suspect I was holding the Channel Island's first Blyth's Reed Warbler.



Blyth's Reed Warbler – Pleinmont – Oct 2004 - MPLawlor

Description

Size and structure:

Typical *Acrocephalus*, with notably short wing. Smaller than Reed. 'Softer feel' to plumage.

Plumage:

Similar to Reed with only subtle differences. Ground colour arguably without the reddish-brown of Reed. A colder grey-brown.

Head: The supercilium was obvious in front of the eye and abruptly ended just after the eye.

Underparts: Whitish-light brown and seemed cleaner than Reed. Throat appeared whiter compared to creamy upper chest. More brown on flanks.

Upperparts: Colder brown than typical Reed. No obvious rufous rump – colour remained the same down the back to the tail.

Wings: Some contrast between ground colour and more rufous wings. Plain with no bars, pale tips etc.

Tail: Appeared shorter than Reed, lacking any rufous tones. Colouration as back and rump.

Bare parts: Legs similar to Reed, but without contrast between upper and lower claw. Therefore appeared paler. The bill was shorter than most Reed. The lower mandible was pale pinkish almost to the tip, where some indistinct darkening was present.

Behaviour:

On release, the bird flew into the middle of a Sycamore and quickly skulked off without being seen. In the hand, the bird had a 'quieter' personality to most Reeds!

Identification

All the measurement taken in the hand fall within acceptable limits for Blyth's Reed. At least 3 important measurements fall outside the limits for Paddyfield and Reed Warbler. Subtle plumage details such as length of supercilium and contrasting rufous wing also eliminate other species.

Measurements : *more significant measurements in bold*

	Pleinmont bird	typical Blyth's RW	typical Reed W
Wing (mm)	60	58-65	62-73
2nd primary =	between 5 – 6	5 – 7 (rarely 8)	3 – 5 (rarely 6)
Notch on 2nd primary (mm)	11	10.5 – 14	11 – 15
Bill (to feathering) mm	11.7	11.5 – 15	12.1 – 16.5
Bill (to skull) mm	15.3	15.3 – 17.6	15.0 – 18.5
Secondary to wing tip (mm)	15.4	11.5 – 16	15 – 19
Wing point primary no.	3 rd (and very nearly 4 th)	3 rd (some- times 4 th)	3 rd
Tail roundness (mm)	6.5 - 7	3.5 – 8	?
Tail length (mm)	47	?	?
Wing : Tail ratio	0.78	0.74 – 0.86	?
Emarginations	on 3rd and 4th primary	3rd & usually 4th	3rd & very rarely slightly tip of 4th.

Primaries spacings (mm)

1-2	29.5
2-3	4.5
3-4	<0.5
4-5	1.5
5-6	3
6-7	2.5
7-8	2
8-9	<1.5
9-10	1.5

*Blyth's Reed
Warbler wing*



Sacred Ibis

Claire Mare NR – 27th December 2004 – 1st Guernsey record

By Geoff Atkinson

I first saw the bird from the Claire Mare hide flying into the reedbed. Initially it was a dark silhouette, but the general size and the decurved bill immediately identified it as an ibis. As it approached, the general black and white colouring became clear, indicating a Sacred Ibis.

The bird appeared to drop into the reeds beyond the water so I left the hide and went round to the back road hoping that it might be showing at the edge of the reeds. In fact it was standing in the open in the field not more than 50 yards away from me, and I had an excellent view.



Sacred Ibis - Rue des Bergers – Dec 2007 – MPLawlor

Additional notes by Recorder

The bird was elusive at first but eventually found a favourite field opposite the hide at Rue des Bergers. It was regularly seen here until it departed on New Year's Eve.

This bird had initially been seen in Alderney prior to its arrival here and in early 2005 it surprisingly returned there. Then on 26th January 2005 it reappeared on Guernsey and stayed for another 2 months.

There were no signs of a captive origin such as rings or abnormal feather wear, so it is assumed to be a wanderer from the French population. This species is not native to Europe, its natural range being sub-saharan Africa, but in the late 1970's birds started breeding in a 'wild' state at Branfere Bird Park, Moribhan, France. Although they do not breed at that site anymore, numbers built up to a self-sustaining population which now mainly breeds in the heronries of Lac Grand Lieu near Nantes. There is probably a population of well over 1000 birds in western France at the moment and they disperse away from their breeding colonies during the winter months. During this time they can be seen anywhere along the French Atlantic coast North to Brittany, and so it is not a great deal further for one to fly on to the Channel Islands. The location of the main colony in France is shown on the map below.



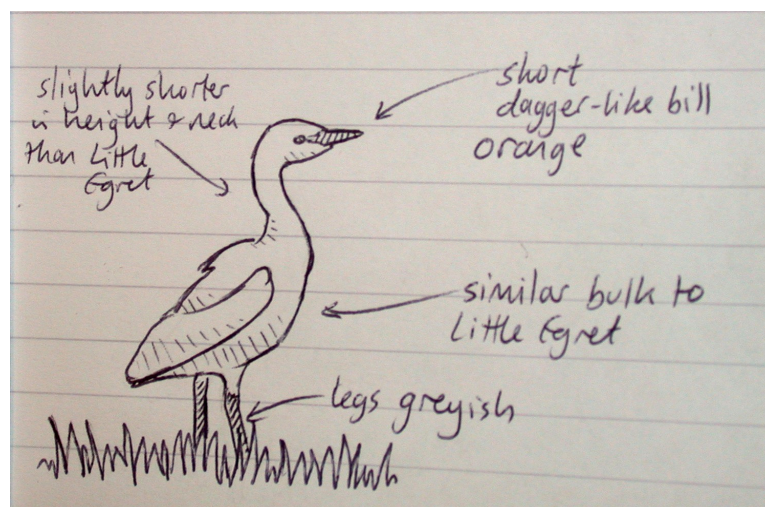
Cattle Egret

St. Sampsons (Track) Marais – 6th February 2004 – 2nd Guernsey record

By Tony Bisson

As I walked around the end of the wall bordering the 'centre pond' field (at 1100 hrs), a small white heron flushed. I only saw the bird in flight, and my initial impression was Little Egret, but then realised that the bill was all yellow and the legs and feet blackish. The bird flew away from me towards the NE and then turned back, flew towards me, over and disappeared towards the fields between Bukit Estate and The Bowl.

A search of the fields failed to produce the bird and I returned to Le Marais at 1220 hrs and spotted the heron in flight. It again headed off to the SW. A mobile phone call from Mark Lawlor informed me the bird was at La Ramee (when he had received my grape-vine call, he realised he had maybe seen the Cattle Egret the day before very briefly in a field along La Route de Ramee). I briefly observed it there at 1250 in the company of a Little Egret, Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. I had a further 4 sightings on 9th and 23rd February and 3rd and 8th March.



Field sketch of Cattle Egret – La Ramee – Feb 2004 - MPLawlor

LIST OF SPECIES REQUIRING A RARITY REPORT FORM

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.

Mute Swan	Bewick's Swan	Whooper Swan
Bean Goose	Pink-footed Goose	Canada Goose
American Wigeon	Green-winged Teal	Scaup
Long-tailed Duck	Velvet Scoter	Bufflehead
Smew	Quail	Cory's Shearwater
Great Shearwater	Wilson's Petrel	Leach's Petrel
Red-billed Tropicbird	American Bittern	Little Bittern
Night Heron	Green Heron	Squacco Heron
Cattle Egret	Great White Egret	Purple Heron
Black Stork	White Stork	Sacred Ibis
Black Kite	Red Kite	White-tailed Eagle
Griffon Vulture	Montagu's Harrier	Goshawk
Rough-legged Buzzard	Red-footed Falcon	Gyr Falcon
Spotted Crake	Corncrake	Crane
Little Bustard	Black-winged Stilt	Stone Curlew
Kentish Plover	Temminck's Stint	Pectoral Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Upland Sandpiper	Solitary Sandpiper
Spotted Sandpiper	Wilson's Phalarope	Red-necked Phalarope
Long-tailed Skua	Sabine's Gull	Ring-billed Gull
Iceland Gull	Glaucous Gull	Roseate Tern
White-winged Black Tern	Little Auk	Pallas's Sandgrouse
Great Spotted Cuckoo	Snowy Owl	Tawny Owl
Nightjar	Alpine Swift	Little Swift
Bee-eater	Roller	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Short-toed Lark	Woodlark	Shorelark
Red-rumped Swallow	Water Pipit	Citrine Wagtail
Waxwing	Dipper	Alpine Accentor
Nightingale	Bluethroat	Black-eared Wheatear
Desert Wheatear	Fan-tailed Warbler	Savi's Warbler
Paddyfield Warbler	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Marsh Warbler
Great Reed Warbler	Icterine Warbler	Barred Warbler
Subalpine Warbler	Sardinian Warbler	Greenish Warbler
Pallas's Warbler	Dusky Warbler	Western Bonelli's Warbler
Red-breasted Flycatcher	Treecreeper	Penduline Tit
Red-backed Shrike	Great Grey Shrike	Woodchat Shrike
Jay	Chough	Rook
Hooded Crow	Rose-coloured Starling	Tree Sparrow
Common Rosefinch	Hawfinch	Cirl Bunting
Little Bunting	Yellow-breasted Bunting	Black-headed Bunting
Corn Bunting	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	

plus

Aquatic Warbler – non-trapped individuals

White-fronted Goose and Greylag Goose – individuals thought to be wild

plus

any species that has not occurred in Guernsey before

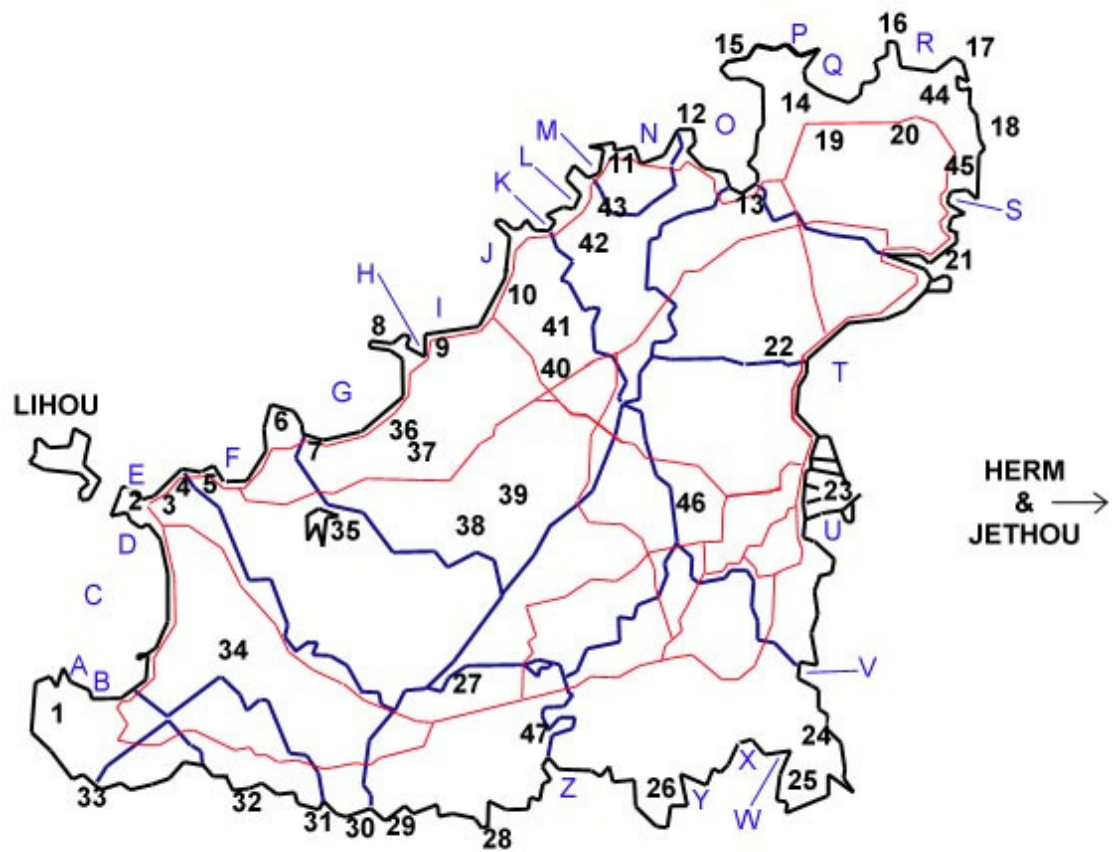
plus

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

GAZETTEER

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

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



Canada Goose - Saumarez Park [number 40 on map] - Feb 2004 - MPLawlor