
GUERNSEY

BIRD REPORT



2005

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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Editorial

This is the sixth recent year 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/mplawlor/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 seawatching 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 2006 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

2005 will be remembered by most birders for the visible migration observed in the autumn. This was the strongest seen for quite a few years and there were many days with birds passing overhead almost continuously. Despite this, there were not many big rarities seen, especially in the first half of the year. The highlights were the island's second Black Brant, third Desert Wheatear and fifth Barred Warbler, as well as the first Mute Swans and Cirl Bunting for quite a few years. There were other rarities, most of which were nice but predictable, with nothing special to get the pulse going. On the breeding front it was much as last year, but Buzzards now appear to have set up home in the central valleys and we have hopes for breeding in 2006.

The most interesting and useful ornithological development of 2005 was Phil Atkinson's analysis of 25 years of island Wader Count data. This is a survey that has taken place once a month since 1975, where all the waders present around the coast of Guernsey are counted simultaneously. The details of this analysis will be presented soon, but the overall picture is not at all good. Most species of wader seem to have suffered a decline in numbers wintering around the island's coastline, and in a few of these species, the decline has been spectacular. The reasons for these changes are bound to be complex and may be due to factors beyond our control – climate change, for example. However, one factor which we should be able to do something about, is the disturbance to these birds' feeding and roosting areas. Whereas 20 years ago 30% of counts recorded disturbance to bird flocks, at the moment the figure is 80%. Increased human activity around the coastline means that birds have to take flight far too often which interrupts their important feeding. Ideally the survey will be able to identify the most important places for waders around the island and steps can be taken to reduce this disturbance as much as possible.

More cheerful news was, with help from the RSPB, the creation of larger scrapes at the nature reserve at L'Eree. These shallow pools should encourage more migrant birds to stop, rest and feed during their migrations, long enough for local birders to see them. Hopefully the feral geese in the area will not be allowed to take over these scrapes as they are becoming a nuisance, competing for resources with the wild species in the area. Steps are being taken to remove this problem. Some members are trying to encourage new breeding species to nest on the island with the construction of nest 'baskets' for Hobbies and artificial nesting holes for Sand Martins. We will have to wait with patience and crossed-fingers to see if either of these projects is successful in the next few years.

Other new developments in the Section included the publication of a Bird Calendar at the end of the year which sold many, many copies. Also the Guernsey Rarities Committee extended its range to include rare birds sighted in Alderney and Sark also. Unless rare bird sightings have been through a rarities committee and been accepted by that committee, then they do not officially exist in the historical record. So if anyone finds anything rare in any of the islands of the Bailiwick in 2006, please fill out a rare bird report form, and send it to the Bird Recorder.

January

The year started very mild, which must have encouraged the wintering **Turtle Dove** and **Rose-coloured Starling** to stay on into 2005. In general, wintering seabirds numbers were low with no divers and few grebes reported in January. Around the middle of the month there was a period of wild windy weather which probably brought in a male **Goldeneye** to Perelle on the 16th and a very large group of 30 **Eider** past Chouet on 21st. A nice surprise was the sudden return of last year's **Sacred Ibis** from 26th in the Vingtaine de l'Epine area, which had apparently been in Alderney in the intervening period. Other good sightings in January were **Red-necked Grebe** at Rousse on 7th, 3 **Eider** at Perelle on 30th, the regular adult **Glaucous Gull**, and up to 4 **Reed Buntings** and 5 **Jack Snipe** wintering at St. Sampsons Marais.

February

The highlight of February was the discovery of a **Black Brant** – the North American and Siberian race of Brent Goose – on Herm on 5th. This was only the second for Guernsey and

luckily it became more accessible, being seen in the Belle Greve Bay and Bordeaux areas later in the month. Despite starting pretty mild, the second half of February brought the coldest temperatures for quite a few years with snow falling regularly, and laying on the high ground. Surprisingly, this did not bring in any unusual birds, although the **Stock Dove** flock in the Pont Vaillant area reached an impressive 90 birds.



Black Brant - Belle Greve Bay - Feb 2005 - MPLawlor

March

The temperatures continued to be very low at the start of March which saw an impressive arrival of **Lapwings**. From 4th, flocks were regularly seen overhead, with the largest groups gathering at Mont Herault (300+) and Barras Lane Fields (200+). Conditions suddenly changed halfway through the month, with very warm weather bringing in the first spring migrants from 14th. A few **Wheatears**, **Black Redstarts** and **Reed Buntings** were recorded from coastal headlands during the next few days. A second wave of migrants came through over the weekend of 19th and 20th, with **Little Ringed Plover**, **Willow Warbler**, **Swallow**, **Sand** and **House Martin** all recorded, although only small numbers passed through before the month end. **Glaucous Gull**, **Sacred Ibis** and **Black Brant** continued to be seen into the month and other notable sightings included a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Claire Mare on 19th, an **Arctic Skua** passing Fort le Crocq on 28th, plus plenty of **Redwings** making their way North. .

April

Migrating birds continued to be seen in the first few days of April, starting with 2 male and a female **Garganey** at La Claire Mare on 1st. A couple of days later, on 3rd, **Ring Ouzels**, **Common Redstart**, **Little Ringed Plover** and an excellent **Osprey** all appeared on the island. The **Black Brant** was last seen on 3rd. Despite promising weather conditions, most of the month was disappointing for rare birds and the highlight mid-month was a couple of **Marsh Harriers** in the Claire Mare area. A few winter birds were staying late including a male **Brambling** still lingering in a Town garden between 13th and 29th. The weekend of 23rd and 24th April was a time of good birding, with most species of summer migrants now passing through. The highlight was an unusual spring sighting of **Tawny Pipit** at Pleinmont. On 28th, there was a spectacular movement of **Swallows** early in the morning, with 1000's of birds passing down the West coast, mostly flying low over the sea. Three **Black-tailed Godwits** showed well for several days on the Old Aerodrome from 29th. The month ended with the finding of a female **Montagu's Harrier** in fields in St. Andrews on 30th but it was unfortunately elusive. There also seemed to be a pair of **Common Buzzards** inhabiting this area during the month and display was seen on a number of occasions.

May

The Annual Bird Race on 1st was generally quiet but threw up a few surprises, namely a **Dotterel** at Pleinmont and a **Honey Buzzard** over Saumarez Park – both new birds for the 'race'. Possibly the same **Honey Buzzard** was seen at a few sites during the next week. Raptors are increasingly a feature of spring migration as their population levels seem to be increasing further North. During May, there were records of **Honey Buzzard**, **Merlin**, **Hobby**, **Marsh** and **Hen Harriers** around the island. The 3 **Black-tailed Godwits** from April stayed for another week or so and an **Avocet** was a popular visitor to the Vale Pond on 15th. One feature of this spring was a better than usual showing of **Golden Orioles**, starting with a male singing along Mount Row on 5th. Another male was at Pleinmont on 20th, followed by a

female at Fermain on 22nd. Other interesting singing birds were a **Firecrest** in Petit Bot on 22nd and a **Black Redstart** at Pleinmont on 29th. These male birds were probably just being hopeful as there was no further evidence of nesting. Despite the weather remaining changeable during May, birders were again disappointed that there were no big rarities recorded during the month.

June

Since migration is mainly over, less time is spent in the field by birders during June. Nevertheless, a few rarities were discovered including brief sightings of **Quail** on 8th and **Bee-eater** on 10th. There were two further singing male **Golden Orioles** – at Rue de Closel, Vale on 13th and in the Fauxquets Valley on 19th. There were much more records of **Cuckoo** than in recent years which was an encouraging sign, as were the number of **Hobbies** seen, which bodes well for the nest-basket project. Breeding numbers and species were quite similar to last year.

July

The main feature of July was an influx of **Crossbills** into the island. This started on 9th when 3 were seen at Pleinmont, and flocks of up to 30 were widely seen until the last week of the month. The Claire Mare area attracted waders with **Black-tailed Godwit** and 2 **Wood Sandpiper** appearing amongst **Greenshanks** and **Green Sandpipers**. Two very unseasonal sightings were of a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** in the Fauxquets Valley from 16th onwards, and a male **Redstart** at Pleinmont on 4th.

August

August was a very warm and sunny month with just a few days of poorer weather in the middle. This was not good for displacing migrant birds from far a field and so most good birds only arrived from close by, or were passing through on migration. Raptors like the sun though, and during the second half of the month, **Honey Buzzard**, **Osprey** and **Marsh Harrier** were all seen. Seawatching started again in earnest, but despite many hours being put in, the rarest sightings were of a **Pomarine Skua** on 2nd and a female **Red-crested Pochard** on 6th. Other birds during the month included a juvenile **Purple Heron** at St. Saviours Reservoir on 8th, an **Aquatic Warbler** trapped at Claire Mare on 9th, a **Spotted Crake** also there on 24th, and a **Wryneck** on Lihou on 22nd.

September

After the quietness of the year so far, everyone was pleased that there was a succession of good birds seen during September. The month started with an **Ortolan Bunting** around the Scramble Track, Pleinmont on 1st and a new **Great Spotted Woodpecker** the next day. The 3rd was clearly an excellent day for raptor migration as two **Honey Buzzards** and an **Osprey** were noted moving through. During the next week, waders came to the fore with the highlight a welcome **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** accompanying 3 **Ruff** on the Old Aerodrome on 10th. Other birds seen during this time included a **Dotterel** on the Golf Course at L'Ancresse (6th/7th), a **Melodious Warbler** at Pleinmont (9th), a **Hoopoe** at Fort Doyle (from 10th), **Wrynecks** at Pulias (12th) and Bordeaux (14th). Mid-September proved to be good for diurnal migrants in general. **Great Spotted Woodpeckers** made their best showing for many years with 2 birds visiting a garden at La Petite Vallette from 17th. The second half of the month proved quieter apart from a **Rose-coloured Starling** at Fort Doyle from 20th and a one-day **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Old Aerodrome on 22nd. Seawatching was not particularly eventful in September, but the pelagic trip did record and photograph an adult **Sabine's Gull** on 24th. The month ended with a confused **Mute Swan** waddling up the road in Town on 30th which was fortunately rescued and taken to the Animal Shelter.

October

Seawatching was the main focus at the start of October and six hours watching from Jaonneuse Point on 2nd produced 262 **Sooty Shearwaters**, 5 **Balearic Shearwaters**, a **Pomarine Skua** and a juvenile **Sabine's Gull**. The **Mute Swan** wandered off from the Animal Shelter and, presumably the same one was seen with 2 other birds on 4th, when a

Red-breasted Flycatcher appeared at Trinity Cottages. The most notable feature of the month was a large-scale passage of 'winter' migrants through the island. The main species involved in this were the finches most notably **Siskin** - with 100's of birds both present and flying over Guernsey - and **Chaffinch** – with an especially large passage of 1000's of birds heading North-East up the West coast on 15th, leaving at Fort Doyle heading to France. Other finches involved were plenty of **Brambling**, a few **Lesser Redpolls** and a **Hawfinch**. During the weekend of 15th and 16th, there was an impressive amount of birds at or over Pleinmont including a small influx of **Coal Tits** (the first for quite a few years), a few **Rooks**, **Crossbill**, 2 **Yellow-browed Warblers** (since 7th), **Ring Ouzels** and **Reed Buntings**. It was just a shame no big rarities were discovered in amongst these masses. The second half of the month petered out a bit but quality birds were still seen – another 3 **Hawfinches** and a late **Lesser Whitethroat** on 19th, a second **Rose-coloured Starling** on 21st and **Yellow-browed Warbler** on 31st. A swift which was seen in the L'Eree and Catioroc areas on 29th and 30th was probably a Pallid Swift but unfortunately it did not hang around for long enough.

November

November is becoming more and more interesting for rare and migrant birds and this year was no exception. Although it started quite quietly, a movement occurred over Pleinmont on 5th mainly involving 1000+ **Woodpigeon**, together with over 50 **Stock Doves**. Also on this date a **Yellow-browed Warbler** appeared at Trinity Cottages and a late **Arctic Tern** fed off the beach at Cobo. Around this time, there was the surprise discovery of a dead **Barred Warbler** in a garden shed in the Vale. The weather became very windy during the next week and on 12th the winds suddenly turned to the North, which must have shaken up the birds somewhat as 3 rarities arrived the next day. The 13th produced a **Pallas's Warbler** – trapped at Rue du Closel – and the first **Cirl Bunting** for many years – on Herm. The rarest visitor though was the **Desert Wheatear** which was discovered on the beach at Chouet, only the island's third record. New birds were still regularly arriving into the second half of November with **Water Pipit**, **Grey Phalarope**, **Little Gull** and **Lesser Redpoll** all being recorded on 20th. The former stayed around to winter on the island on its favoured beach at Pulus. On 25th it was joined by a **Desert Wheatear** which is assumed to have been the one seen earlier in the month at Chouet. In addition to these sightings, a single **Mute Swan** continued to be seen along the West coast, there was a long-staying **Yellow-browed Warbler** at Rue du Closel from 14th to 23rd, a late **Marsh Harrier** was at Pleinmont on 13th and a few **Pomarine Skuas** were seen off Chouet.



Grey Phalarope - Cobo - Nov 2005 - BGWells

December

The final month of the year was quieter bird-wise with much of the visible migration having stopped. There were plenty of winter duck around with good counts of **Wigeon**, **Tufted Duck** and **Shoveler** on the island, but the numbers of wintering seabirds continues to fall with very few grebes or divers reported. The best December bird was the **Hawfinch** seen at Icart on 10th.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

A total of **198** species were recorded during the year, which is a reasonable total. The island bird list increased by one to **310** species with the addition of Yellow-legged Gull which has been finally officially split from Herring Gull. Species which are usually recorded but were not in 2005 included Goosander, Yellow-legged Gull, Little and Black Tern, Richard's Pipit, Bearded Tit, Serin and Yellowhammer.

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.

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

1 record (of 3 birds)

Vagrant – 1 previous recent record

An uninjured - but no doubt confused - adult bird was found wandering along Le Bordage in town on 30th September, until it was rescued and taken to the Animal Shelter. It left there the next day and eventually made Vale Pond its temporary home. On 4th October it was joined by another adult bird and a juvenile – so quite possibly reuniting with its lost family. Unfortunately one bird died, but at least one stayed on the island into 2006. This is the first record since 1994.



Mute Swan – Vale Pond – Oct 2005 - MPLawlor

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

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

During the first half of the year, peak counts were almost identical to those in 2004. The East coast and Herm flock totalled 65 on 11th Mar, and the West coast flock, like last year, consisted of 24 birds. Numbers dwindled during April before the last bird was seen at Rocquaine on 1st May (MB,CB). An additional single bird was seen at Vazon on 16th Jun (AJB).

Rather late, on 9th Oct, the first returning birds were seen flying past Jonneuse (WRT) and Houmet Paradis (MPL). Thereafter, birds started to slowly return to the East and West coast bays, where similar numbers would again spend the winter.

Black Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*)

1 record

Vagrant – 1 previous record

In February, the second Black Brant for Guernsey joined the regular Brent Goose flock which winters along the island's East coast. It was first located on Herm on 5th February and was seen on and off until 3rd April. It was noted at Bordeaux and Belle Greve Bay but probably spent most of its time in Herm as it was seen flying across the Little Russell to and from there.

(W.R.Turner, C.J.Mourant, et al)



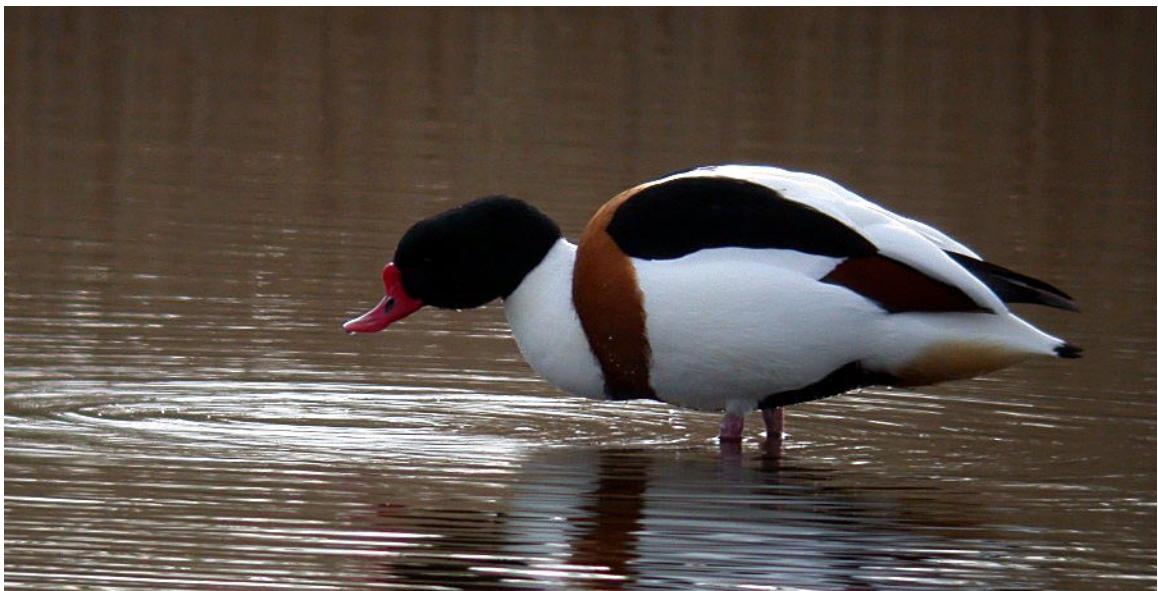
Black Brant – Belle Greve Bay – Feb 2004 - MPLawlor

Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

2 or 3 pairs

Uncommon year-round visitor and rare breeder.

Depending upon how mobile they were, there were as many as 3 pairs wintering on the island at the start of the year, which was a lot more than usual. All these birds probably stayed to breed in the Lihou/L'Eree/Fort le Crocq area although it was difficult to ascertain the exact number of pairs present. At least 2 pairs were successful and 10 juvenile birds could be counted at the Claire Mare in July. As usual, birds disappeared during August but one bird was seen on and off during September. The first returned back after moult on 25th Nov and there were 3 present by the year-end.



Shelduck – Claire Mare – Mar 2004 - MPLawlor

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

Up to 27 birds were counted from the Claire Mare at the very start of the year, but these birds seemed to leave very quickly as there were no reports here after January. There were reports from Marais Nord however with up to 22 birds seen, so perhaps they relocated. The last of the winter was here on 28th Mar. An unusual sighting was of a female bird at the Claire Mare on 25th May (GDA).

The first 2 birds were back at the Claire Mare on 16th Sep (RJM). There were 30 birds here by 25th Nov and 60 nearby on the Old Aerodrome a week later. This is a large number compared to recent years, but there was only a handful present in the North of the island.



female Wigeon – Claire Mare – May 2005 - RAFebrache

Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)**1 record (of 3 birds)****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Assuming the same individuals, this group of three birds have visited the Claire Mare in the late Autumn or early Winter for the last three years. This is the longest they have stayed.

2 males + 1 female, Claire Mare, 25th Nov to year end (RJM,LT)

Teal (*Anas crecca*)**Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Less were reported at the start of the year than were seen on the island at the end of 2004, with 40 at the Track Marais being the peak count reported. Birds were also seen at the Claire Mare, Marais Nord, Vale Pond and Rue des Bergers, as well as a single at Dell Nursery in mid-March (RA). A pair lingered at Rue des Bergers into the start of May this year.

As early as 8th Jul a single was seen at the Claire Mare (RJM), where the numbers built up to 46 by November. There were very few birds noted elsewhere and probably less than 50 birds appeared to be wintering.

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)**Common resident breeding species, winter visitor and passage migrant.**

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

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)**1 record****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

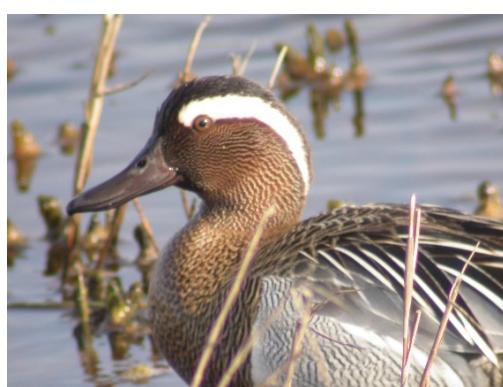
Another serious of sightings of the bird of 'unknown origin'. As this bird seems to appear at random times, it would be identify any other female Pintail that visited the island.

1 female, Marais Nord, 7th Jan (RJM,LT), then Vale Pond, 30th Apr to 13th May (MPL), then either at Vale Pond or Claire Mare on 6 dates until 2nd Nov.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)**1 record (of 3 birds)****Scarce passage migrant**

Almost an identical sighting as last year so perhaps the same returning group?

2 male + 1 female, Claire Mare, 1st Apr



male Garganey – Claire Mare – Apr 2004 - RJMurphy

Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant in small numbers.

There were two wintering flocks at the start of the year – up to 4 at the Claire Mare, and up to 8 at Marais Nord, which is about half the number as the previous winter. All these birds left by the end of March.

Three birds returned to the Claire Mare on 4th Sep (RJM,LT) and numbers peaked at 7 there in early November. The flock at Marais Nord held 20 birds on 19th Dec which is an excellent count. There were also brief sightings of (probably migrant) birds at Vale Pond (3) on 16th Sep and the Reservoir on 2nd Oct.

Red-crested Pochard (*Netta rufina*)

No accepted wild records – regular escapee.

An unusual sighting was of a female-type Red-crested Pochard which flew past Jaonneuse Point on 6th August (WRT,MAG).

This species has not been officially recorded in Guernsey before, but the species is common in waterfowl collections, and has a high escape likelihood. The Rarities Committee felt that the circumstances suggested it may well have been wild, but this could not be investigated due to the brevity of the sighting. It has been placed in category D, which is the category for species for which the escape probability is high enough to preclude a species from the island's official bird list.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

1 record

Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant

This single bird is being seen every winter at the moment, assuming it's the same one.

1 male, Reservoir until 21st Jan, then at Marais Nord on 22nd – presumed last years.
1 male, Grande Mare, 30th Dec (AJB)

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*)

Uncommon year-round visitor. Has bred recently.

Birds were seen in every month of the year in small numbers - the largest flock reported being 18 at Marais Nord on 14th Nov (PKV,MV). There was no evidence of breeding this year but it could have occurred in the NE quarries.

Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

2 records (of 34 birds)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

The first flock was a very large number for the island. The Perelle birds were widely watched, with 4 birds on the first day only, and just a single remaining female after 4th Feb.

30, West past Jaonneuse Point, 21st Jan (RJM,LT)
1 1st-winter male + 3 females, Perelle, 30th Jan to 11th Feb (AJB)

Common Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

6 records (of 20 birds)

Uncommon year-round visitor and passage migrant.

One immature in Grandes Rocques Bay between 18th and 21st Nov and two females at Pembroke from 25th Nov until year-end (RJM,LT).

All other sightings were of birds going past Chouet and Jaonneuse during seawatching sessions. There was a total of only 17 seen between 15th Aug and 9th Oct.

Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

1 record

Rare winter visitor.

Ever elusive, this bird was only a brief visitor to the bay and was not re-found.
1 male, Perelle, 16th Jan (AJB)

Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

3 records (of 6 birds)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

This group of three birds seems to be our current wintering total and are probably the ones which return each winter. The other sightings may involve the same birds, or hopefully new ones which could stay to boost our wintering population.

1 male + 2 females, Perelle to Vazon, 7th Jan to 18th Mar (RJM,LT).
1 pair, Vazon, 29th Nov (AJB)
1 male, Lihou, 11th Dec (AJB)

Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*)

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

Up to 20 birds were recorded from the fields on Herm during the year. It seems that a few birds were 'put down' in Guernsey since there were sightings from Pleinmont on 2nd Apr (WRT) and one with chicks at Jerbourg on 15th May (CJM).

Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

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.

Quail (*Coturnix coturnix*)

1 record

Very rare passage migrant – becoming much rarer

A single bird was flushed twice from a grassy field at Le Catoroc on 8th June. Despite searching, it could not be relocated. This is the first accepted record of Quail for ten years.

(J.Hooper)

Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*)

1 record

Scarce to rare winter visitor and passage migrant.

Finding this species in Guernsey is becoming very difficult, so this bird which was seen by many birders was very welcome.

1, south end of Rocquaine Bay, 16th Oct (JPD,MCS et al)

Black-throated Diver (*Gavia arctica*)**1 record*****Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.***

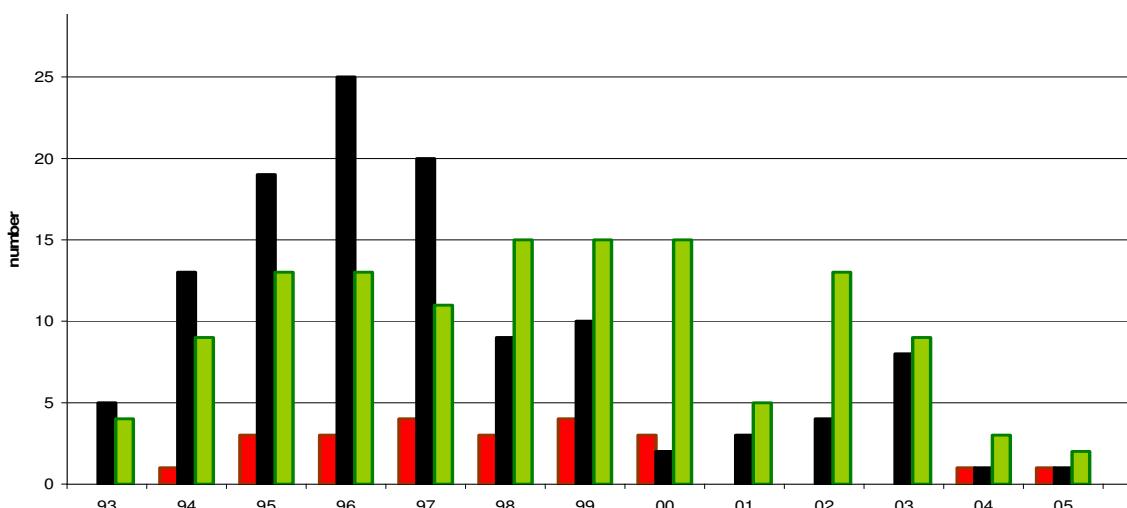
The second year running that only a single bird has been recorded.
1, Vazon, 13th to 18th Mar (MPL)

Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*)**2 records*****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.***

After last year's poor showing, two birds was even worse.

1, L'Eree, 23rd Jan (LT)
1, Grandes Havres, 18th to 27th Nov (RJM,LT)

There seems to have been a large decline in the number of wintering divers around the island. The reasons may be varied but the most obvious would be lack of food, disturbance and/or climate change. The chart below shows this decline – red bars are Red-throated Diver, black bars are Black-throated Diver and green bars are Great Northern Diver.

**Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*)****8+ birds (1 breeding pair)*****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant. Has bred.***

Approximately 8 birds were wintering on the island at the start of the year – 4 at the Reservoir, 1 in Paradis Quarry, 1 in Gallotin Quarry, 1 at the Grande Mare, plus an unusual sighting of a bird on a pond at Vingtaine de l'Epine on 30th Jan (AJB). As last year, a pair stayed behind and successfully bred at the Reservoir – now for the third year running. Again, about 8 birds were found to be wintering at the end of the year – 3 at the Reservoir, 2 at Gallotin Quarry, 2 at Paradis Quarry and 1 at the Claire Mare. There were also sightings at Pulias on 4th Dec (AJB), and very unusually, on the sea at Vazon on 9th Dec (GDA,LT)

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

After the low numbers of last year, it was pleasing to see between 15 and 20 birds choosing to spend the first winter period around the island's coast. These were mainly in ones or twos but 4 birds were seen in both Vazon and Perelle Bays. The last of these was seen at L'Eree on 19th Mar (LT).

The first sighting of the second winter period was a very unusual one, at the inland site of Marais Nord on 2nd Oct (RJM,LT) – probably a migrant bird stopping off to feed. The rest of the sightings came after 9th Dec, and about 6 birds had reappeared by the end of the year.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

3 records

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

Three sightings is about average for the species currently.

- 1, Rousse, 7th Jan (RJM,LT)
- 1, L'Eree, 27th Feb (TDCE)
- 1, Perelle, 18th Mar (GDA)

Slavonian Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*)

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

About 7 birds were found wintering around the island at the start of the year – in Belle Greve Bay and between Rocquaine and Perelle Bays. There was not an obvious spring passage this year and the last bird was noted at Perelle on 28th Mar (AJB,RJM,LT).

A migrant bird was seen at L'Eree on 31st Oct (RJM), then from 4th Dec, birds started to return to Rocquaine Bay, peaking at 5 birds on 11th.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

2 records

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

This is not the first time that the harbour at St Sampsons has attracted this species.

- 1, St. Sampsons Harbour, 4th Jan (DL)
- 1, L'Eree, 18th Mar (RJM,LT)

Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*)

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 (*Puffinus griseus*)

287 birds

Quite common to uncommon autumn passage migrant.

The first of the autumn was noted past Jaonneuse on 6th Aug (WRT), and small numbers of birds were regularly seen for the next couple of months. There was one day of very heavy passage, and during a six-and-a-half hour seawatch on 2nd Oct, at least 262 birds were noted passing the island. The final two birds were seen on 9th Nov.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*)

Quite common to uncommon passage migrant and summer visitor.

Not very many sightings of Manx Shearwater were reported in 2005 after the first was noted on 8th Apr (RJM,LT). The peak count was just 12 on 2nd Oct, which was also the last sighting of the year (WRT).

Balearic Shearwater (*Puffinus mauretanicus*)**49 birds*****Uncommon autumn passage migrant.***

Recorded on an impressive 13 days in 2005, all from Chouet or Jaonneuse during autumns seawatches. The total of 49 birds is the best-ever year-count for this species. The first was seen on 5th Aug (RJM,LT) and the last was on 21st Oct, seen from Lihou Island (LT). The highest day-count was 14 birds seen on 20th Aug (WRT). An additional 3 birds were noted from the pelagic trip of 24th Sep.

Storm Petrel (*Hydrobates pelagicus*)**2 records (of 9 birds)*****Uncommon summer visitor and passage migrant.***

The only sightings from land this year were seawatching records from Jaonneuse Point, with at least 8 on 20th and 1 on 26th Aug (WRT,AJB). 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 28th Aug and 24th Sep.

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 count recorded was 347 past Chouet on 11th Nov.

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.

Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*)**3 pairs*****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. Fort le Crocq held the largest non-roost flock of 15 on 28th Mar (RJM).

Birds continued to nest in the small breeding colony off Herm that was discovered in 2004. Three pairs built nests and at least 10 chicks were produced. All these youngsters were colour-ringed and one of these birds was noted at Port Grat later in the year.



Little Egret – St. Sampsons Harbour – Feb 2005 – BGWells

Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)

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. A flock of 13 was observed flying East over Pleinmont on 24th Jun (AJB).

Purple Heron (Ardea purpurea)

1 record

Very rare passage and summer visitor – 13 previous records

A juvenile bird was very skulking in reeds at St. Saviours Reservoir on 8th August. The first record since 1999.

(C.Kinnersly)

Sacred Ibis (Threskiornis aethiopicus)

Vagrant – no previous records

The first Sacred Ibis for Guernsey which was present for a week at the end of 2004, suddenly reappeared at Vingtaine de l'Epine on 26th January. It settled in that area until early March, when it started to wander round the island, being seen at Barras Lane Fields, Rousse, Chouet, Claire Mare and Marais Nord. The final sighting was flying over this latter site on 25th Mar (PKV,MV).

Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*)**8 records****Scarce passage migrant.**

Less than ten years ago, this species was a big rarity on the island and now it is a regular migrant in both seasons.

- 1, Saumarez Park, 1st May (JH,RJM,LT,RAF)
- 1, Le Chene, 2nd May (PKV)
- 1, Mount Row, SPP, 7th May (MAG)
- 1, Mount Row, SPP, 28th May (MAG)
- 1, Fauxquets Valley & King's Mills area, 7th to 27th Aug (WS,AJB)
- 1, over St. Martins village, 15th Aug (DJRA)
- 1, Le Catoroc, 3rd Sep (MPL)
- 1, Rue de la Boulleerie, 3rd Sep (WRT)

Marsh Harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*)**7 records****Scarce passage migrant.**

Despite the breeding successes in Jersey, Marsh Harrier records do not appear to be increasing at the moment.

- Up to 2, West coast between Pleinmont & Lihou Island, 15th to 22nd Apr (JH,MAG)
- 1, Rue des Houges, SA, 30th Apr (MAG,WRT)
- 1, Claire Mare, 15th May
- 1, Claire Mare, 22nd May (MB,CB)
- 1 cream-crown, over Cambridge Park, 31st Aug (MPL)
- 1 juvenile, Pleinmont, 13th Nov (AJB)



female Marsh Harrier – Claire Mare NR – Apr 2005 – BGWells

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)**2 records****Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.**

The same bird may have been involved in both sightings. If so, 2005 would be the worst year for Hen Harrier in recent times.

- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 8th May (RJM,LT,AJB,WS)
- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 15th to 17th May (RJM,LT,AJB, MAG)

Montagu's Harrier (*Circus pygarus*)**1 record****Vagrant - 8 previous records**

A 'ring-tail' Montagu's Harrier – probably a 1st-summer bird – spent a short while in the late afternoon, flying around, as well as resting in, the arable fields at Rue des Buttes, St. Andrews. Unfortunately, the bird was elusive and only a handful of locals managed to see it before dusk. This is only the 9th record of this species for Guernsey.

(M.A.Guppy, L.Guppy, W.R.Turner)

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

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



Sparrowhawk – Ty Coed ringing station – Nov 2005 – PK&MVeron

Common Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)**Scarce passage migrant and uncommon resident.**

The pair which decided to stay in the island last year were again present all year in the Fauxquets Valley area, wandering around the central part of the island. During the spring it became evident that there were more birds present and up to 5 birds could be seen soaring on fine days. The impression was that there were two pairs present – one based in the lower part of the Fauxquets and the other based higher up the valley in St Andrews. Despite display noted in the spring there was no evidence that any breeding took place this year. With these resident birds wandering, it was difficult to pick out any migrant birds. Sightings from the Little Russell on 1st May (RJM,LT), Saumarez Manor on 7th May (WRT), 2 very high over Les Effards on 18th Sep and another over there on 17th Nov (MPL) were all likely migrants.

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

Three records is a good year for Osprey, and there have been 17 birds recorded in the last 8 years.

- 1, South over Old Aerodrome, 3rd Apr (RJM,LT)
- 1, over La Petite Vallette, SSv, 3rd Sep (CK,CK)
- 1, very high South over Les Effards, 18th Sep (MPL)

Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)

Common resident breeding species.

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



Juvenile Kestrel in nest box – Rue des Bergers NR – Jun 2005 – MPLawlor

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

12 records

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Four good years in a row for the species, which is encouraging since the previous four years were very poor.

- 1 fem/imm, L'Eree, 3rd Jan (RJM,LT)
- 1 male, Grand Pre, 23rd Feb (JH)
- 1 fem/imm, Pleinmont, 13th Mar (LT)
- 1 male, Rue des Bergers, 18th to 20th Mar (RJM,LT)
- 1 fem/imm, Fort le Crocq, 27th Mar (AJB)
- 1 fem/imm, Rousse, 13th Apr (MPL)
- 1, Grandes Havres, 24th Apr (MAG)
- 1 fem/imm, Fauxquets Valley, 1st May (MPL,WRT,CJM,MAG)
- 1 fem/imm, Herm, 1st May (VEF,AJB,AG,RAL)
- 1 male, Les Tielles, 3rd Aug (GDA)
- 1, Pleinmont, 5th Nov (WRT)
- 1, Rue des Hougues, SA, 26th Nov (WRT)

Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

14 records

Uncommon to scarce passage migrant.

A fantastic series of records. It is notable that there were plenty of sightings in late May and June, which is encouraging for the Hobby nest-box project.

- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 1st May (MB,CB)
- 1, Track Marais, 1st May (MPL,MAG,WRT,CJM)

- 1, Lihou Headland, 15th May
- 1, Claire Mare, 20th May (RJM)
- 1, Reservoir, 22nd May (MAG)
- 1, Pleinmont, 2nd Jun
- 1, Bas Capelles, SS, 11th Jun (RAF)
- 1, Roque Poisson, L'Eree, 16th Jun
- 1, Pleinmont, 24th Jun (RJM,LT,AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 1st Sep (AJB)
- 1, Mont Héault & Pleinmont, 13th Sep (LT)
- 1, Blanche Pierre Lane, SM, 25th Sep (LT)
- 1, Petit Bot, 1st Oct (LT)
- 1, Pleinmont, 14th Oct (RJM,LT)

Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	1 pair
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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 (<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>)

Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor. Has bred.

Between 1 and 5 birds were recorded from most suitable marshy areas during both winter periods. The last of the spring was on 16th Apr at Rue des Bergers (AJB). There were a couple of sightings in July from the Claire Mare which may mean that a pair secretly nested there.

Spotted Crake (<i>Porzana porzana</i>)	1 record
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Rare migrant

***A single bird was seen at La Claire Mare Nature Reserve on 24th August.
(J.Hooper, et al)***

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

Very common resident breeding species and winter visitor.

Commonly seen around all lakes, ditches and marshy areas. 60 birds were counted at the Grande Mare on 23rd Dec (PKV,MV).

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 80 birds were present at the Grande Mare at the start and the end of the year (AJB,PKV,MV).

Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*)

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

Commonly seen on all coasts at all times of the year. There will be almost 1000 Oystercatchers on the island during the winter.

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

1 record

Very rare visitor – 17 previous records

A single bird was found in the morning at Vale Pond on 15th May and performed beautifully for many people during the day. The Vale Pond is the prime site for this species on the island.



Avocet – Vale Pond – May 2005 – MPLawlor

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

5 records

Scarce passage migrant, mostly in Spring

A good series of records, above average for the species.

- 1, L'Eree Aerodrome, 19th Mar (LT)
- 1, Claire Mare, 3rd to 4th Apr (JPD)
- 1, Claire Mare, 19th Apr (WS)
- 1, Claire Mare, 20th May (RJM)
- 1, Claire Mare, 4th Sep (JB)

Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*)

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

A commonly seen bird of the shoreline, with more than 100 usually noted on wader counts in winter, or perhaps more during migration. A few pairs bred on the shingle beaches at, for example, Portinifer.

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

The May bird was the first ever recorded on the bird race but was very brief.

- 1, Pleinmont, 1st May (JB et al)
- 1, L'Ancrese Golf Course, 6th & 7th Sep (AJB)

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

The early peak count at the Portinfer roost was 46 birds on 14th Feb (GDA) – just two less than in 2004. All winter sightings were from here, but there were a few spring migrants seen at L'Eree Old Aerodrome during April and May, with the final 3 birds observed on Herm on 27th May (AG).

There were very few autumn migrants recorded this year after the first two at Pleinmont on 13th Sep (AJB). The roost held 33 birds on 19th Nov (GDA) which was a very low peak count. It seems that the roost at Portinfer is slowly petering out due to lack of 'new blood' amongst the population which uses Guernsey during the cold months.

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

Regularly noted during all the winter months with numbers increasing slightly during migration periods – counts of 50 to 100 island-wide are regular on wader counts. Disappears during the breeding season with no records for June or July.

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

There were just small numbers of Lapwing wintering at the start of the year, with no single count exceeding 24 birds. However, on 4th Mar, there was the start of an obvious movement of Lapwing, pushed onto the island by very low temperatures elsewhere. On that day, flocks were seen at or over 7 sites, totally about 250 to 300 birds. Groups continued to arrive during the next couple of days and the peak counts recorded were 300 at Mont Herault on 5th (MAG), 200 at Barras Lane fields on 7th (MPL) and 200 at the Airport on 9th (CK). These birds moved on during the second half of March and the last was seen on 1st Apr (RJM).

During the summer months there was the odd sighting of Lapwing, which is typical for the species, but autumn passage began on 4th Oct with birds seen at Pleinmont and St. Sampsons (AJB,MPL). Pleinmont seemed to be the favoured spot for autumn migrants with up to 30 birds seen there during October. Few birds were observed in November and December with, again, no large flocks wintering.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)**2 records (of 3 birds)****Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.**

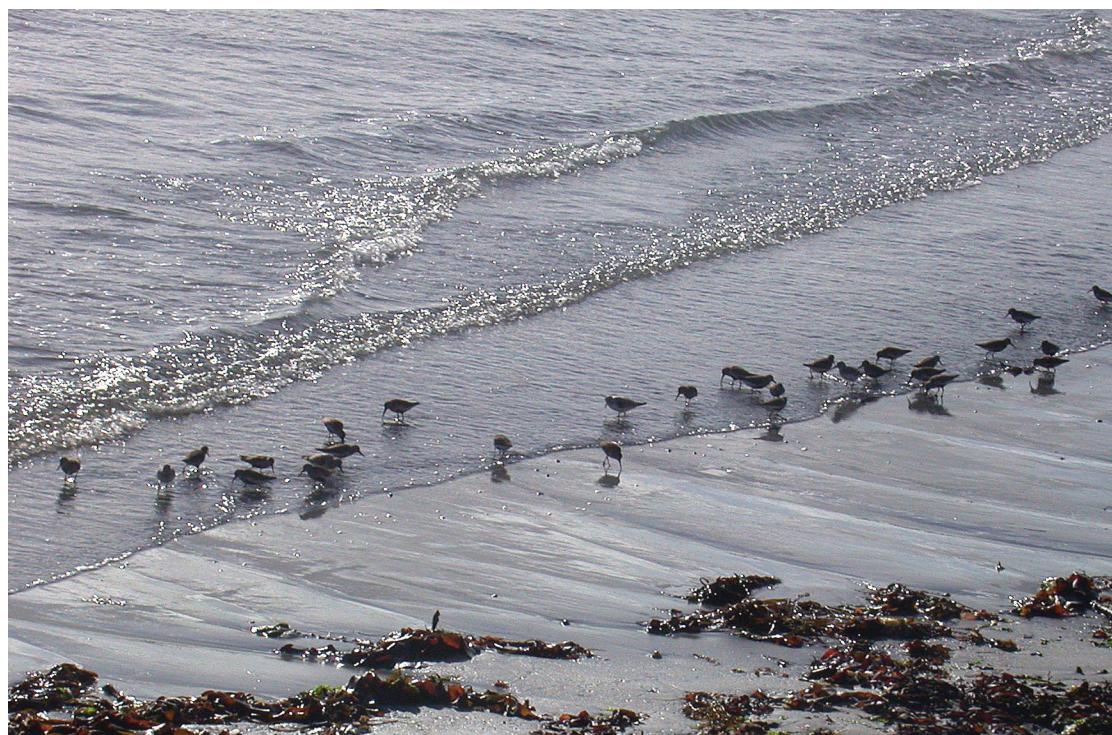
Three birds seen in the whole year is a new low for the species which is becoming increasingly difficult to find.

- 2, Vazon, 17th May (AJB)
- 1, Port Grat/Pecqueries/Portinfer, 4th to 9th Oct (MPL)

Sanderling (*Calidris alba*)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

The Grandes Havres flock contained just over 50 birds at the start of the year. During March there was a notable increase in birds at Vazon, with up to 36 seen, probably due to the cold weather. Spring migration occurred during May with the last birds on 20th at Vazon (RJM). There were quite a few non-breeding birds seen during the summer this year, with 4 at Vazon and 6 at Miellette in mid-Jun (AJB,GDA). Autumn migration started on 19th Jul but this was not heavy with no double-figure counts reported. By the end of the year, the flock of 50 birds were all back at Grandes Havres.



Sanderling & Dunlin feeding on the falling tide – Vazon – May 2005 - MPLawlor

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

3 records (of 5 birds)

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Five birds is the best total for 6 years.

- 1, Herm, 11th Sep (JB)
- 3, Vazon, 20th Sep (RJM)
- 1, Old Aerodrome & Claire Mare, 20th to 26th Sep

Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*)

1 record

Vagrant or Very rare passage migrant

One was present on L'Eree Old Aerodrome for most of the day on 22nd September.
There was a single bird in 2003, but before that the last was seen in 1992.

(A.J.Bisson, et al)

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)**3 records (of 4 birds)**

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Four birds is actually a very low total for the year, and even these four arrived very late on in the autumn – much later than usual.

- 1, L'Eree, 23rd Oct (RJM,LT)
- 1, Fort le Crocq, 18th Nov (RJM,LT)
- 2, Portinfer, 19th Nov (GDA)

Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)**20+ birds**

Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.

The very poor wintering population from 2004 was boosted by 6 birds which appeared at Vazon on 3rd Jan (AJB). These seemed to stick around for the rest of the winter. On 23rd Jan an additional bird was seen at Pezeries (LT). In March and April a few extra birds on spring migration were noted including 3 at Portinfer on 14th Mar (GDA) and a peak of 5 at Jaonneuse on 23rd Apr (PKV,MV). The Vazon birds – or new migrants – were last seen on 27th Apr (AJB). There was one autumn record – from Fort Hommet on 5th Sep (RJM). In December there were just 2 wintering birds recorded – one from the Vazon area and one from Les Ammareurs/Jaonneuse area (RJM,LT,AJB).

Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*)

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Flocks of over 200 birds could be seen mid-winter, with most of these at Vazon. Common during migration periods but single-figures only could be seen during the summer months.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*) **1 record**

Vagrant – 11 previous records

After the disappointment of last year's short-staying bird, the island was treated to a much more obliging individual feeding with Ruff on the saltmarsh pools of L'Eree Old Aerodrome between 10th and 17th September. With two now in two years, this species may be returning to its former, more regular, status of the late 70's and early 80's.

(V.E.Froome, et al)



Buff-breasted Sandpiper – L'Eree Old Aerodrome – Sep 2005 - MPLawlor

Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)**3 records (of 7 birds)****Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.**

The three birds on the Old Aerodrome were in the company of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, offering a useful comparison.

- 3, Vale Pond, 16th Jul (GDA)
- 1, Grande Mare, 8th Aug (AJB)
- Up to 3, Old Aerodrome, 10th to 21st Sep

Jack Snipe (*Lymnocryptes minimus*)**8+ birds****Uncommon to scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

The key wintering location was the Track Marais where 5 birds were flushed on 7th Jan (AJB). The only other singles seen were at Vingtaine de l'Epine on 27th Jan (LT) and Grande Mare on 21st Feb (AJB). No birds were seen after 25th Feb apart from an incoming migrant bird resting at Fort le Crocq on 16th Oct (AJB).

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

No counts of wintering Snipe were received this year but there were probably similar numbers as usual from the main sites of Claire Mare, Vale Pond and Track Marais. The last bird of the spring this year was seen at Track Marais on 29th Apr (AJB). A very early bird on 16th Jul was at Claire Mare (LT) and birds were commonly seen after that, either as autumn migrants or winterers.

Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)**Uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Woodcocks are under-recorded due to their secretive nature – mostly seen when flushed by shooters. The species was seen at 10 sites by birders during the months of January to March and November and December. Notable records were of an early one seen at L'Ancrelle G.C. on 9th Sep (RJM,LT) and one found roosting in a willow bush at Rue du Closel on 16th Jan (PKV,MV). The largest number seen was 5 at Home Farm on 3rd Dec (PKV,MV).

A total of 71 Woodcock were ringed during the year, which shows how common they actually are.

Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)**4 records (of 7 birds)****Scarce passage migrant, rare in winter.**

The three birds at the Old Aerodrome were especially popular as they were resplendent in their full breeding-plumage.

- 1, Claire Mare/Old Aerodrome, 19th & 20th Mar (JH)
- Up to 3, Old Aerodrome, 29th Apr to 14th May (RJM,LT)
- 1, Rue des Bergers/Claire Mare, 18th & 19th Jul (DJRA)
- 2, Old Aerodrome, 2nd Nov (RJM)



Black-tailed Godwit – L'Eree Old Aerodrome – May 2005 - MPLawlor

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*)

Quite common winter visitor and passage migrant.

There were few birds seen wintering on the island – just a few records of single birds – which seems to be becoming an increasing trend. Migration occurred during April and May, but no flocks were seen bigger than 4 birds. The last of these spring birds was spotted on 20th May (RJM).

There were no autumn reports received by the Societe until 14th Sep (RJM) but birds were seen regularly thereafter, mainly in the Vazon to L'Eree stretch of coast, where the maximum counts were only of 8 birds. A handful of birds could be seen into December.

Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Quite common passage migrant.

The 2 wintering birds at Portlet Bay were seen on a few days in Jan and Feb, but the first of the spring migrants were 4 noted on 10th Apr at Vazon (RJM,LT). Most of these passed through in the few days at the end of April and had departed by mid-May. There was a handful of June records this year from various locations, but the main autumn passage was from late Jul to early Oct. No doubt the same two wintering birds reappeared at Portlet and Pezeries Bays, Pleinmont in mid-October and stayed until the end of the year.

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*)

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

A peak count was 100 birds on Herm on 5th Feb (WRT) but the species is difficult to count accurately as feeding birds spread out and some feed inland. Very few spend the early summer period on the island.



Curlew – L'Eree Old Aerodrome – May 2005 - MPLawlor

Spotted Redshank (<i>Tringa erythropus</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant

The first record of this species for three years of this irregular species.

1, Vale Pond, 19th & 20th Aug (DT)

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

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

This species is usually absent in May and June but was much commoner at other times of the year. No especially large flocks are usually seen and monthly-counts of less than 50 birds are usual.

Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>)	11+ birds
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Uncommon passage migrant.

There was a single spring sighting – of 2 birds at Fort Le Crocq on 1st May (MB,CB). Mid-summer saw a couple of non-breeding individuals seen at Claire Mare. All other sightings were of single autumn passage birds between 10th Aug and 13th Sep – noted at Claire Mare, Vazon, Vale Pond, Pulias and Albecq.

Green Sandpiper (<i>Tringa ochropus</i>)	20+ birds
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Uncommon passage migrant. Rare in winter.

All records were from autumn, between the extreme dates of 1st Jul (RJM) and 13th Sep (LT). The peak site was Claire Mare with a maximum of 8 together on 4th Sep (JB) and at least 14 different birds in total. There were also 4 seen at Rue des Bergers and 2 at Vale Pond.

Wood Sandpiper (<i>Tringa glareola</i>)	4 records (of 5 birds)
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Scarce passage migrant.

Another good year for Wood Sandpiper makes about 18 in just three years (compare with just one bird in the previous three years).

1, Claire Mare, 13th May (DT)

1, Claire Mare, 11th to 13th Jul (DT)

Up to 2, Claire Mare, 28th Jul to 1st Aug (GDA,DT)

1, Vale Pond, 6th Sep (DT)

Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucus*)

Quite common passage migrant, scarce in winter.

The first birds of the year were seen at Miellette on 9th Apr (GDA), and the species was seen regularly in groups of up to 4 until 16th May. Autumn migrants arrived back early as usual, on 1st Jul (RJM,LT) and were seen more regularly than in spring until 7th Oct. These records were almost all singles or twos, apart from a larger flock of 13 birds at Pulias on 31st Aug (MPL).

Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*)

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

A common bird of the shoreline, it is very familiar to everyone as Turnstones often feed on coastal roads and pavements at high tides, even in the Town Centre. Maximum wader-counts of 200+ are usually made mid-winter but this species is certainly on the decline.

Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

3 records (+2 at sea)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Whether this species appears is very weather-dependant and conditions in November must have been ideal.

- 1, Jaonneuse/Chouet, 4th to 11th Nov (JPD,MCS)
- 1, Cobo, 5th Nov (LT)
- 1, north end of Belle Greve Bay, 20th Nov (CJM)

[Two birds were also seen on the pelagic trip which went North of Guernsey on 24th Sep]



Grey Phalarope – Jaonneuse Bay – Nov 2005 - BGWells

Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)**3 records (of 7 birds)**

Scarce Autumn passage migrant. Very rare in Winter.

A good total after a few lean years. The number of Poms that get recorded is quite dependant on how strong the Arctic Skua passage is.

1 light-phase, past Jaonneuse Point, 2nd Oct (WRT)

1, past Chouet, 11th Nov (RJM)

5, past Chouet, 13th Nov (MAG,RJM,LT)

Arctic Skua (*Stercorarius parasiticus*)**76 birds**

Uncommon autumn passage migrant.

An unusual and early spring sighting was of a bird passing Fort le Crocq on 28th Mar (MAG). First recorded in autumn on 6th Aug when 2 birds passed Jaonneuse (WRT,MAG). A total of 75 birds were seen during the year, until the last one on 4th Nov (RJM,LT). All sightings were from the Chouet/Jaonneuse headland apart from one off Pulias. The peak day was 16th Sep with 36 birds noted.

Great Skua (*Stercorarius skua*)**53 birds**

Uncommon autumn passage migrant. Very rare in winter.

First recorded on autumn passage on 22nd Jul (RJM,LT) and last seen on 25th Nov (LT). The total for the year was at least 53 birds, peaking at 35 on 2nd Oct (sev).

Mediterranean Gull (*Larus melanocephalus*)**10+ birds**

Scarce visitor, mainly from summer through to winter.

The adult bird which had been wintering in Belle Greve Bay could be seen there until 12th Mar (PKV,MV) and a 2nd-winter was also there on 20th Jan (BGW). There was not the usual post-breeding arrival of birds in mid-summer – just a couple of brief sightings : Grandes Havres, 28th Jun (AJB), Chouet 22nd Jul (RJM,LT). The arrival happened later on in the summer with a juvenile and an adult together in Belle Greve Bay on 24th Aug, then 3 adults there on 26th Aug (BGW). By 21st Oct there were 4 birds at Belle Greve Bay (RJM) – 2 ad, 1 2nd-w, 1 1st-w – but only a single adult appeared to stay on to winter.



Adult Mediterranean Gulls – Belle Greve Bay – Feb (below), July (above L) & Aug (above R) 2005 - BGWells

**Little Gull (*Larus minutus*)****2 records**

Scarce autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.

This species is very irregular in appearance but 2 records is still very low.

1 adult, Belle Greve Bay, 25th Oct (BGW)
1 adult, Chouet, 20th Nov (LT)

Sabine's Gull (*Larus sabini*)**2 records**

Rare autumn passage migrant – 8 previous records.

An adult bird was seen and photographed at sea to the NW of Guernsey during the pelagic trip of 24th September.

Another bird, this time a juvenile, flew West past Jaonneuse Point on 2nd October.
(M.A.Guppy, W.R.Turner)



Sabine's Gull – at sea – Sep 2005 - DSolway

Black-headed Gull (*Larus ridibundus*)

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

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

Common Gull (*Larus canus*)

8 records

Uncommon to scarce visitor, mainly in winter.

For the last three years, Common Gull has been less common than Mediterranean Gull.

- 1, Rocquaine, 23rd Jan (MAG)
- 1 1st-winter, Grandes Havres, 1st & 2nd Feb (MPL)
- 1 ad, Perelle, 13th Mar (MPL)
- 1 1st-winter, Vazon, 20th Nov to 9th Dec (AJB)
- 1 ad, Fort le Crocq, 2nd Dec (AJB)
- 1 ad, Belle Greve Bay, 29th Dec (MPL)
- 1 1st-winter, Fort Saumarez, 30th Dec (RJM,LT)
- 1 1st-winter, Vale Pond, 30th Dec (AJB)

Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*)

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 (*Larus argentatus*)

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

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

Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

1 returning individual

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

The regular wintering adult bird was seen either in Belle Greve Bay or the Town Harbour on many dates until 11th March. Disappointingly it did not reappear in the second winter period. It was first sighted in February 1997.



Glaucous Gull (right, with Herring Gull) – Belle Greve Bay – Feb 2005 - MPLawlor

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. No very large numbers were seen on one day and the final sighting was on 8th Apr (RJM,LT). From 19th Aug (WRT) birds were regularly seen passing the headlands again, the peak days being 16th Sep and 2nd Oct.

Sandwich Tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*)

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

There were probably less than ten birds wintering at the start of the year – a slight decrease on recent years – scattered around the east and west coasts.

Six birds appearing in Grandes Havres on 5th Mar may have been the first of the spring migrants (GDA) and small numbers could be seen daily during the spring and summer months. Autumn passage past Jaonneuse was regular, peaking at 36 on 21st Aug (WRT). By October this passage had stopped and only stragglers were seen. The wintering population again seemed lower than usual with perhaps as little as 7 birds choosing to brave the cold. Our small, regular wintering population is one of the northernmost in western Europe.

Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)

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

The first birds of the spring were seen in Grandes Havres and Jaonneuse on 24th Apr (RJM,LT). Small numbers were then seen irregularly passing through the island during the spring. There seemed to be plenty of birds present in the area during June and July, mainly along the north-east coast and around Herm, so it is likely that a few pairs bred on suitable islets. The first notable day of autumn passage was on 6th Aug when 44 birds passed Jaonneuse (WRT) and this proved to be the largest daily count of the season. There were very few seen in September this year and no late records were received.



Common Tern – Town Harbour – Aug 2005 - BGWells

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)**3 records****Scarce passage migrant.**

Small terns which hang around the island in early-November are usually Arctic Terns, and this individual performed excellently.

1 juv, west past Jaonneuse, 19th Aug (MPL)

1, Chouet/ Jaonneuse, 2nd Oct (RJM)

1 1st-winter, Cobo (then Vazon, then Grandes Havres), 5th to 12th Nov



Arctic Tern – Cobo – Nov 2005 - BGWells

Guillemot (*Uria aalge*)**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 (*Alca torda*)**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 17 were off Chouet on 11th Nov (RJM). A few pairs probably bred in the Herm and Jethou areas as they could be seen there through the Summer.

Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*)

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 returning birds were seen on 9th Mar (RJM). Up to 30 birds could be seen from the "Puffin Patrol" boat trips during June. As usual birds disappeared again during July, with the last seen on 11th. A further record was of an oiled bird picked up in Perelle in January.

Feral Pigeon (*Columba livia*)

Common resident breeding species.

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

Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*)

Uncommon resident breeding species and passage migrant.

The species was recorded in larger numbers than usual in 2005. The flock which had built up at Pont Vaillant at the end of 2004 peaked at 90 birds on 7th Feb (MPL) much higher than is typically recorded. During the breeding season the species was noted widely in single-figure flocks. Although Stock Dove does migrate through the island in small numbers every autumn, there were more than usual reported, associated with the large Woodpigeon passage. On 5th Nov for example, there were about 50 birds observed flying over Pleinmont during the morning (WRT).



flock of 90 Stock Dove (plus a few Woodpigeon) – Pont Vaillant – Feb 2005 - MPLawlor

Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbas*)

Very common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Widely recorded from all parts of the island in flocks of 100+. There was a large autumn movement of this species in the last week of October and the first week of November, peaking with 1000 over Pleinmont on 5th Nov (WRT).

Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

Common resident breeding species.

Present in all areas of the island, flocking in numbers at a few sites.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

Quite common passage migrant and summer visitor.

The unusual wintering bird at Pont Vaillant was last seen on 24th Jan (MPL). The first migrant Turtle Dove of the year was seen at Rue de Close, Vale on 30th Apr (PKV,MV) 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.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

10 birds

Uncommon passage migrant and rare breeding species.

A single bird was calling in the Vale Marais (Nord) area between 14th and 16th Apr (PKV,MV). There then was another 8 birds recorded between 1st and 16th May at a variety of sites, which is a big improvement on last year's measly total. Further birds were noted at the Pea Stacks (2) on 12th Jun (CJM,MAG) and Pleinmont on 27th Jun (AJB).

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba alba*)

Uncommon resident breeding species.

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

Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*)

1 or 2 pairs

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

There were less sightings of this species reported to the Societe this year and only one pair – at the Reservoir, with 2 chicks – was confirmed breeding. Birds were regularly seen at dusk in the Marais Nord/Houges Peres area of Vale and so they probably bred there again. Also a single bird was seen on the edge of St Peter Port in mid-July so perhaps another pair lurks somewhere nearby.

Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

9 records (of 10 birds)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

A typical selection from a wide variety of sites, but Lihou and Pleinmont remain the favoured locations. The ringed bird was eating a Turnstone.

- 1, Pleinmont, 20th Mar (LT)
- 1, Fort Hommet, 4th Apr (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 15th Apr (AJB,LT,RJM)
- 1, L'Ancresse, 29th Apr (LT)
- 1, Claire Mare, 14th May
- 1, Fort Doyle, 4th Oct (AJB)
- 1, Lihou Headland, 9th Oct (PC)
- 1, Lihou, 17th Oct (AJB)
- 1, Pleinmont, 23rd Oct (AJB,LT,RJM)

2, Lihou, 19th Nov to 11th Dec at least (AJB)
1 ringed, L'Eree, 7th Dec (JH) – probably one of above birds



Short-eared Owl – L'Eree – Dec 2005 - JHooper

Swift (*Apus apus*)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

Saumarez Park had the first Swift of the summer on 24th Apr (AG) and during the next month passage birds moved through in numbers. 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 of the regular sightings on 8th. There was a much later bird seen feeding low over Rousse on 12th Oct (MPL).

[On 29th October, a swift flew over L'Eree and showed some characters of **Pallid Swift** (*Apus pallidus*). What was thought to be the same bird was seen the next day over Le Catoroc. Unfortunately, despite this bird being a very good candidate for Pallid Swift - and probably was one – it was not showing well enough to be studied in close enough detail for a first for Guernsey, especially as this is one of the hardest species to identify in the field.]

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

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 when the last was seen on 4th Mar at Grande Mare (AJB). Returning birds were noted from 8th Jul at Claire Mare (RJM,LT).

Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*)**1 record****Very rare summer visitor and migrant – 11 previous records****A single bird was observed sitting on a telephone wire along La Rue de la Hougue de Noirmont, Vale on 10th June.**

(I.J.Hall)

Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)**1 record****Scarce passage migrant.**

Only one bird seen for the second year running.

1, Fort Doyle, 10th & 11th Sep (BF)**Wryneck** (*Jynx torquilla*)**6 records****Scarce passage migrant. Formerly common breeder.**

Six birds is about average recently – the species has increased since the late-90's.

- 1, Lihou, 22nd Aug (AJB)
- 1, Lihou, 7th & 8th Sep (IH)
- 1, Pulias, 12th Sep (MAG)
- 1, Bordeaux, 14th Sep (BF)
- 1, Fort Doyle, 18th Sep (BF)
- 1, Claire Mare, 25th Sep (LT)

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*) **10 records (up to 12 birds)****Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.**

Even allowing for some duplication due to birds moving within the island, this was a superb year for Great Spotted Woodpecker. One of the mid-summer record may have been last years bird relocating or perhaps there is a secret breeding pair. There was an obvious influx in mid-September of 5 birds, and probably more arrived in Nov and Dec.

- Up to 2, Fauxquets Valley, 16th to 31st Jul (LT)
- 1, Pleinmont, 2nd to 11th Sep (JH)
- 1, Rue des Bergers, 11th Sep (AJB)
- 1, Saumarez Park, 16th Sep (RJM,LT)
- 2, La Petite Vallette, 17th to 28th Sep (CK,CK)
- 1, Pleinmont area, 18th to 28th Oct (LT)
- 1, Marais Nord area, 4th Nov to 18th Dec (PKV,MV)
- 1, Saumarez Park, 4th Nov to 18th Dec (JPD,MCS)
- 1, St. Saviour's Church, 5th Dec (JH)
- 1, Kings Mills, 6th Dec (JH)

*Great Spotted Woodpecker – La Petite Vallette – Sep 2005 - CKinnersley*

Skylark (Alauda arvensis)

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

Only small flocks of Skylark were seen during the winter months this year, with no large numbers building up. The breeding population continues to hang on at L'Ancresse but the handful of pairs there is not encouraging. Autumn migration was most evident between mid-October and mid-November, with 40 to 50 recorded on a few days.

Sand Martin (Riparia riparia)

Quite common passage migrant. Uncommon summer visitor.

The first 3 birds were observed at Lihou Headland on 19th Mar (LT) and by the next day the species was widespread in small numbers. 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 just the odd bird noted in August and early September.

Swallow (Hirundo rustica)

Very common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

A Swallow heading south over Les Effards, St. Sampsons on 19th Mar was the first of the summer (MPL). Passage started properly from 28th Mar and continued through the spring. On the morning of 28th Apr, a spectacular continuous passage was observed from Pulias with many 1000's of birds flying West low over the sea (MPL). Breeding was widespread and during August birds began to return on autumn migration. The peak dates noted were 13th Sep and 9th Oct. Numbers fell during October and there was a single November record of a bird at Icart on 2nd (MPL).



adult Swallow feeding recently-fledged youngsters – Les Effards – Aug 2005 - MPLawlor

House Martin (Delichon urbicum)

Quite common breeding summer visitor and common passage migrant.

A bird at Rue des Bergers on 20th Mar was the first of the year (RJM), but passage didn't really get underway until the middle of April. The species bred on suitable locations in small numbers and was observed on return migration in the autumn until mid-October.

Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)**1 record**

Scarce autumn migrant, very rare in spring.

Although Tawny Pipits are regularly seen in autumn, a single bird found at Pleinmont on 23rd April was much more unusual.

(W.R.Turner, et al)

Tree Pipit (*Anthus trivialis*)**11 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, 24th Apr (WRT)
- 1, Jaonneuse, 15th Aug (WRT)
- 3, Pleinmont, 1st Sep (MPL)
- 1, Pleinmont, 4th Sep (WRT)
- 1, L'Ancresse GC, 9th Sep (RJM,LT)
- 1, Mont Herault, 13th Sep (LT)
- 1, Rousse, 13th Sep (MPL)
- 1, Pulias, 17th Sep (MPL)
- 1, Claire Mare, 23rd Oct (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 petrosus*)

Common breeding species, with additional wintering birds.

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

Scandinavian Rock Pipit (*Anthus petrosus littoralis*)

Uncommon spring migrant and probable wintering subspecies.

In the early spring a few of the Rock Pipits gain a very bright breeding plumage of bluey-grey colour above and quite a peachy-pink tone below. These bright birds will be of the Scandinavian race of Rock Pipit and can be very distinctive. It is difficult to assess how many of these winter on the island due to their similar winter plumage to local birds. These birds leave to head North to breed around March time.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)**1 record**

Rare passage migrant – 13 previous records

The beach at Pulias proved a very popular feeding ground for insect-eating birds in the late-autumn, and a Water Pipit joined the numerous Rock Pipits there from the 20th November. It stayed in the same area until the end of the year.

(M. P. Lawlor et al)



Water Pipit – Pulias – Nov 2005 - BGWells

Yellow Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flavissima*)

Quite common passage migrant. Former breeder.

A bird seen in the L'Eree area on 6th Apr was a very early arrival (AG). Most other spring birds were recorded in the short period of the last week of April and first two weeks of May. The final spring bird was noted on 16th May (WS), apart from one at Bordeaux on 2nd Jun. Autumn migration began on 28th Aug (RJM,LT) and there were more regular sighting than in spring. Mid-September seemed to be the main passage period and the peak count was 30 at Pleinmont on 13th (LT). There were no October records this year with a bird on 30th Sep being the last (RJM).

Blue-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flava*)

1 record

Scarce passage migrant.

A typical record on a typical date.
1, Herm, 10th May (LT)

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 19th at the Claire Mare (LT). After the first 2 returning birds at Pleinmont on 11th Sep (WRT), the species could be seen in groups of 1 to 3 until the end of the year.

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.

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 Polish-ringed individual stayed in a St. Sampsons garden until at least the end of February.

Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochrurus*)

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

Only singles were reported at the start of the year at a variety of sites. The final bird noted was at L'Eree on 15th Apr (JH). On 29th May a singing male bird was observed on rocks at Pleinmont (MAG). It was still present the next day but it moved on when it couldn't find a mate. The species seemed more common in the autumn after the first at Les Eturs on 7th Oct (RA,MA), with between one and three birds seen, mainly along rocky shorelines.

Common Redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*)

Uncommon passage migrant.

A poor spring with only two birds seen – both at Pleinmont on 3rd Apr (DJRA) and 8th May (AJB). A very unusual mid-summer record was of a bird also at Pleinmont on 4th Jul (AJB). Autumn was not a great deal better, with only another 8 birds seen all between the 2nd and 14th Sep (AJB).

Whinchat (*Saxicola rubetra*)

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

On 21st Apr the first of the year was noted at Pleinmont (LT) and a further 5 birds were seen passing through the island during the next two weeks. A bird at Portinfer on 9th Aug was the first returning Whinchat of the autumn (GDA) and the species was much more widespread

than in the spring, albeit only seen at six sites, mostly at Pleinmont. The last one was there on 23rd Sep (RJM,LT).

Stonechat (*Saxicola torquatus*)

Common breeding resident and passage migrant.

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

Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

Common passage migrant, irregular breeder.

First recorded at Vazon on 14th Mar (AJB), this was quite a late date for a Wheatear to arrive, so it was not a surprise to see many more the next day. Numbers built up slowly during the spring, peaking on 24th Apr when there were over a hundred around the island. The last lingering migrant was at Fort Hommet on 10th Jun (AJB).

After one at L'Eree on 4th Aug (RJM), small numbers were seen throughout the autumn but no large counts were made this year. There were two November records – on 1st at Fort Hommet (AJB) and on 9th at Les Ammareurs (IH).



'Greenland' Wheatear – Fauxquets Valley – Apr 2005 – MPLawlor



Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*)**1 record**

Vagrant – 2 previous records.

Guernsey's third Desert Wheatear was a male bird discovered on the evening of 13th November on the stony beach at Chouet. It proved to be very elusive, regularly flying around the headland out of sight, but it was also seen again the next day.

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

On the 25th November a similar bird suddenly appeared on the beach at Pulias and was much more obliging. It was quite confiding and showed well until at least 29th November and was enjoyed by many. (M.P.Lawlor, et al)

Some observers considered that two different birds were involved in these sightings, but photographs of the Chouet bird were not good enough to be certain of this. There were more Desert Wheatears than usual seen in NW Europe this autumn.



Desert Wheatear – Pulias – Nov 2005 – BGWells (top & right) & MPLawlor (left)

Ring Ouzel (*Turdus torquatus*)

up to 11 birds

Uncommon passage migrant.

Only seen on a single day in the spring – 3rd Apr – when singles were seen at Pleinmont and Rue de la Boulleerie, SA (WRT,DJRA).

Autumn was above average with single birds being seen on 9 days between 16th and 27th Oct, mostly at Pleinmont, but also at Rousse, Heritage Walk and Fort le Marchant (MPL,AJB,WRT,LT,RJM)

Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)***Very common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.***

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

Fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*)***Quite common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.***

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 one at Claire Mare on 13th Mar (MPL).

Pleinmont saw the first returning bird in autumn on 4th Oct (AJB). Quite surprisingly, with the large numbers of similar migrant species observed this year, very few Fieldfare were noted, with no counts of above 20 birds all autumn or winter.

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.



Song Thrush & Redwing – Dec 2005 – JHooper

Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)***Common passage migrant and winter visitor – numbers vary.***

There were a few larger Redwing flocks noted at the start of the year, for example 100 at Vingtaine de l'Epine on 5th Mar. These soon disappeared however and none were seen after 13th Mar (GDA).

Autumn birds were first noted passing over after dark on 14th Oct (MPL) and numbers soon built up with over 1000 birds estimated flying over Pleinmont on 23rd Oct (WRT). Flocks of up to 40 birds were observed to be wintering at the end of the year.

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*)

5+ 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. Numbers were slightly down on last year it seems

- 1, Vale Pond, 20th Mar to 14th Oct
- 1, Rue des Bergers/Grande Mare, 20th Mar to 23rd Dec
- up to 2, Marais Nord, 7th Jan to 4th Dec
- 1, Grand Pre, 21st Jan to 10th Oct

Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*)

2 records

Uncommon passage migrant.

None seen 'in the field' this year – two birds is a poor showing.

- 1 trapped, Ty Coed, Castel, 16th Apr (PKV,MV)
- 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 2nd Aug (JH)



Grasshopper Warbler – Ty Coed – Apr 2005 – PKVeron

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

1 record

Scarce autumn passage migrant.

There seems to be more poor years than good years at the moment which is not surprising for an endangered species.

- 1 trapped, Claire Mare, 9th Aug (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 10th Apr (RJM, 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. The final bird noted was at Rousse on 20th Sep (MPL).

Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*)

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first two birds were heard singing at Marais Nord on 16th Apr (RJM,LT). Good numbers passed through, with singing and breeding birds located at most reedbed sites, even quite small ones. Good migration was noted in August and early September, with the last of the main migrants at Rousse on 10th Oct (MPL). However a very late bird was trapped and ringed at Ty Coed on 20th Nov (PKV,MV).

Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)

1 record

Scarce autumn passage migrant

Typical location, typical time of year.
1, Pleinmont, 9th Sep (AJB)

Blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*)

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

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

Garden Warbler (*Sylvia borin*)

Uncommon breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

The first sighting of this species was not until rather late – at the Grande Mare on 29th Apr (AJB). Small numbers passed through during the next month or so and breeding pairs were evident in a few locations in the countryside but the species was typically elusive during the breeding season. A few migrants were noted passing through between August and October.

Barred Warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*)

1 record

Vagrant – 4 previous records.

A surprising report was of a first-winter Barred Warbler which died when it flew into a shed at La Rochelle, Vale in mid-November (exact date unknown but probably around 18th or 19th). This is only the 5th record for the island.

(K.Stevens)

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)**2 records**

Scarce passage migrant and occasional breeding summer visitor.

This species becomes scarcer and scarcer.

1, Pleinmont, 20th Aug (LT)

1, Vau de Monel, Pleinmont, 18th Oct (AJB)

Whitethroat (*Sylvia communis*)

Common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.

On 15th Apr, the first Whitethroat was noted in scrub at Fort Hommet (AJB) and the species was common during spring migration and throughout the summertime. In early autumn lots of migrants passed through the island and a final, very late bird, was noted at Pleinmont on 17th Oct (LT).

Dartford Warbler (*Sylvia undata*)**1+ pairs**

Uncommon breeding resident.

There were fewer than usual reports made to the Societe this year with up to 3 at Pleinmont being the only record from the South coast. This may indicate a decline in numbers, but more likely was that no-one had been looking or reporting them there in 2005. There were also single records from Fort le Marchant and Fort Doyle during the year.



Dartford Warbler – Pleinmont – Dec 2005 – JHooper

Pallas's Warbler (*Phylloscopus proregulus*)**1 record**

Rare autumn visitor – 12 previous records.

On 13th November, one was trapped at the ringing site at Ty Coed, Vale which is located near Marais Nord. This is the 13th island record.

(P.K.Veron, M.Veron, et al)



Pallas's Warbler – Ty Coed – Nov 2005 – PKVeron

Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*) 4 records (of 5 birds)

Scarce autumn migrant.

After two surprising blank years, five birds makes 2005 the best ever autumn for Yellow-browed Warblers.

up to 2 birds, Rue des Valniquets, Pleinmont, 7th to 16th Oct (RJM,LT)
1 ringed, Ty Coed, Vale, 31st Oct (PKV,MV)
1 ringed, Ty Coed, Vale, 4th to 23rd Nov (PKV,MV)
1, Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont, 5th Nov (JH)



Yellow-browed Warbler – Ty Coed – Oct 2005 – PKVeron

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) 2 records

Scarce passage migrant, mostly in spring.

The Park is one of the top sites to find singing Wood Warblers in Guernsey.

1, Saumarez Park, 23rd Apr (LT)
1, Saumarez Park, 1st May (RJM, LT)

Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*)

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 (MPL). Some of these birds started singing in March, with new arrivals becoming obvious from about 19th Mar. Thereafter a common species both on passage and in the breeding season, with a peak count of 50 migrants at Pleinmont on 15th Oct (WRT). Autumn passage continued well into November and small numbers could be found at various sites until the year end, including 5 at Marais Nord (LT).

Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Common passage migrant, uncommon breeding summer visitor.

An early migrant was recorded at Claire Mare on 11th Mar (RJM) and there plenty of other sightings during the rest of that month, before most of the birds passed through in April. 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 and this peaked during late August and early September. Numbers tailed off, with the final bird at Pleinmont on 18th Oct (LT).

Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*)

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon breeding resident.

Commonly reported, especially during autumn migration in October and November. Only small numbers 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.

There seemed to be less birds reported than usual at the start of the year with mainly singles seen apart from 2 at Saumarez Park. Any spring birds also were non-existent with no sightings after 13th Mar (LT) which was probably just a wintering bird anyway. In the autumn, there was a very early bird seen on Lihou Island on 8th Sep (IH) but proper migration occurred from about 25th Sep. There were lots of reports of up to 5 birds during the next two months, but only a handful of birds were reported as wintering by the end of the year.

Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa striata*)

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

There were numerous sightings of mainly single birds during mid-May after the first one at Pleinmont on 8th. Seven were together on Lihou Headland on 15th May (MAG). Sightings were not widespread this summer with the Fauxquets Valley the only site where birds were seen throughout and so there was probably a pair breeding there. Also a young juvenile was at Le Guet on 17th Jul. There were also not many autumn migration sightings apart from a brief burst in mid-September. The last one was at Valniquets on 25th Sep (RJM,LT).

Red-breasted Flycatcher (*Ficedula parva*)

2 records

Very rare autumn passage migrant – 18 previous records.

A bird was seen briefly in the high trees around Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 4th October. (J.Hooper)

A second was seen nearby, at Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont on 17th October.

(L.Thomson)

Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*)

Uncommon to Quite common passage migrant.

Only a single spring sighting was made, on 24th Apr at Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont (WRT). Autumn was better, but by no means great. Eighteen birds were seen at various locations between 29th Aug and 7th Oct when a late one was at the Reservoir (RJM,LT)

Long-tailed Tit (*Aegithalos caudatus*)

Uncommon to quite common resident breeding species.

Regularly recorded on the island, with a maximum flock of 25 birds reported.

Coal Tit (*Parus ater*)

up to 31 birds

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

Recent years have been very poor for Coal Tit and there has not been a clear influx since 1997. There was an obvious influx of birds into the island in autumn 2005 which began on 7th Oct when birds were heard calling at Pleinmont (JH). From 14th Oct birds started appearing on Guernsey itself and birds could be found at 12 widespread locations until the end of November, many of the birds were ringed. The Pleinmont area was the key site with up to 4 birds regularly seen during the period. Other sites (and peak counts) were: Candie Gardens (1), Damouettes Lane (2), Dell Nursery (3), Fort Saumarez (2), Grande Lande, SSv (1), Heritage Walk (2), Herm (4), Portinfer (2), Route Isabelle (2), Rue du Closel, V (1), Rue Maze (1), Saumarez Park (3), Sous L'Eglise (3). There are difficulties in knowing the exact number seen due to movement of birds but there was a maximum of 31 birds located. The only place to keep birds until the end of the year however was Saumarez Park where 2 birds wintered in the pines near the lake. 21 birds were ringed during the year.



Coal Tit – Dec 2005 – JHooper

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 (*Certhia brachydactyla*)

Common resident breeding species.

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

Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)

5 records

Rare summer visitor.

Five birds is the best ever year for this species but these were all very brief or elusive and none of them put on a show for local birders

- 1 heard singing, Mount Row, 5th May (MAG)
- 1 male, Pleinmont, 20th May (RJM)
- 1 female, Fermain Valley, 22nd May (CJM)
- 1 singing male, Rue de Closel, Vale, 13th Jun (PKV,MV)
- 1 singing male, Fauxquets Valley, 19th Jun (LT)

Magpie (*Pica pica*)

Very common resident breeding species.

Very commonly seen throughout. On 18th Mar, 29 birds were together in one flock on St. Peter Port School playing fields (MPL).

Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant. Recently rare breeder.

There did not seem to be a noticeable increase in numbers from last year but birds were seen much more widely. The sightings were mainly from the breeding sites along the cliffs between Tielles and Pleinmont but also from the extreme North of the island centred around the refuse tip at Chouet. Birds were even seen to be inspecting owl nest boxes here.

Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

1 record (of 3 birds)

Rare visitor.

Three birds appeared in the fields at Pleinmont on 2nd October and were present there on and off until at least 16th October.

(A.J.Bisson, M.A.Guppy, R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al)

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.

Again there were the regular two pairs on the cliffs – the pair on Herm probably raised 2 chicks, and the Guernsey pair probably 3. 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*)

2 records

Rare autumn passage migrant – 26 previous records.

The juvenile bird which wintered in gardens in St. Martins was last noted on 16th February.

A juvenile was seen regularly in the Fort Doyle to L'Ancresse Common area from 20th September to 3rd October. (A.J.Bisson, et al)

A further juvenile was a brief visitor to the beach at Belle Greve Bay on 21st October. (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson)



Rose-coloured Starling – St. Martins – Jan 2005 – SJCooper

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

Common resident breeding species.

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

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*)

Common resident breeding species, passage migrant and winter visitor.

Commonly recorded all year, with an increase in numbers during the migration and winter periods. The 15th Oct was a notable day of passage for many species. Chaffinch was one of the main species with birds constantly passing over Pleinmont and leaving East from Fort Doyle during the day – thousands of birds were probably involved (WRT,MPL).

Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*)

90+ birds

Scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.

There was only one sighting in the first part of the year and it was a long-staying spring migrant in a garden at Route Isabelle between 13th and 29th Apr (AG). After the first couple of autumn migrants on 1st and 7th Oct (LT), there was a notable passage of Brambling associated with the aforementioned Chaffinch passage. On 15th Oct, there was at least 30 birds counted going through Pleinmont (WRT,LT) and there were also double-figure counts on 17th and 22nd. Small numbers were then noted throughout November, but there was only one December record on 9th (AJB).

Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*)

Common resident breeding species and passage migrant.

Commonly recorded, with many flocks of over a hundred present in the autumn and winter. The largest flock reported was at least 200 birds at Pulias on 14th Oct (RJM).

Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)

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

Commonly recorded with flocks of up to 50 present throughout the year. Most common during autumn migration, and least common in mid-winter. There was evidence of migration on 5th Nov when 150 flew over Pleinmont during the morning (WRT).

Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*)

Scarce to uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor.

The Dell Nursery flock of up to 15 birds was the only group noted during January and February. After the first group of 25 which was seen at Pleinmont on 4th Oct (AJB) there was an untypically large influx of Siskin into the island. There was a sudden arrival on 14th Oct when about 350 birds were seen, with flocks of 100 at Grande Mare (AJB) and 200 at Trinity, Pleinmont (RJM,LT). Visible migration watchers noted 500 going through Pleinmont during the morning of 15th (WRT) and a feeding flock of 150 was in trees at Rue du Closel on 16th (PKV,MV). Flocks of up to 60 were noted at various locations until mid-November when birds started to disperse away from the island, with only a handful of Siskins being seen in December.

Linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*)

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

Commonly recorded, with flocks of up to 100 reported throughout the year but less common during mid-winter. At least 300 birds went through over Pleinmont during the day of heavy finch passage (WRT).

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

5 record (of 12 birds)

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Easily the best year since detailed records were kept in 1993. This was because of the heavy finch passage in the late autumn. One may speculate that perhaps Mealy Redpoll occurred this year in these large finch flocks but most redpoll records are of brief flyover birds so cannot be studied closely.

- 1, Pleinmont, 23rd Sep (RJM,LT)
- 3, Mont Herault, 14th Oct (LT)
- 6, East through Fort Doyle, 15th Oct (MPL)
- 1, Pleinmont, 1st Nov (RJM)
- 1, Rue des Buttes, SA, 20th Nov (WRT)

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

100+ birds

Irregular visitor at any time of year.

There was an influx of Crossbills this summer, starting with 3 birds at Pleinmont on 9th Jul (GDA). During the next week or so there were plenty of flocks seen, mainly flying over – 16 at Pleinmont and 20 at Vale Pond on 10th (RJM,LT), 10 at Saumarez Park on 11th (JPD), 22 over Port Soif on 12th (JH), 28 at Pleinmont on 15th (RJM,LT), 24 at Fauxquets and 20 at Le Guet on 17th (MAG), plus single-figure groups at a few other places. Most of these birds disappeared but a few seemed to stay around as there were records during the next two months, mainly in the Pleinmont area. The final bird of the year was over here on 15th Oct (WRT). Even allowing for repetition, probably 100 birds at least were seen in 2005.

Bullfinch (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*)

Uncommon resident breeding species.

Up to 10 reported at various sites throughout the island during the year.

Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes coccothraustes*)

3 records (of 5 birds)

Vagrant – 14 previous records.

The excellent finch migration in autumn 2005 included unusually large numbers of Hawfinch reaching Western Europe. A few of these reached the island, starting with a male bird trapped and ringed at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 14th October.

(J.Hooper)

A further 3 birds were found along the Saumarez Nature Trail on 19th October.

A final sighting was of a single bird along the cliff path at Icart on 10th December.
(L.Thomson)



Hawfinch – Pleinmont – Oct 2005 – RJMurphy

Lapland Bunting (<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>)	1 record
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Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.

Again a poor year for Lapland Bunting, a species which is becoming quite rare.
1, Lihou, 31st Oct (RJM)

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)**3 records****Scarce to uncommon autumn passage migrant and winter visitor.**

Again no long-staying wintering birds – maybe a result of global warming.

- 1, Vazon, 7th Feb (GE)
- 1, Lihou, 14th Oct (AJB)
- 1, Fort le Crocq, 28th Oct to 4th Nov (RJM,LT)



Snow Bunting – Fort le Crocq – Nov 2005 – BGWells

Cirl Bunting (*Emberiza cirlus*)**1 record****Vagrant – 25 previous records, but none since 1997.**

A male bird was present near the rubbish tip on Herm on 13th November. This is the first record since 1997 of this declining species.

(L.Thomson)

Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)**1 record****Scarce autumn passage migrant.**

A typical date and a typical location for this species.

- 1, Pleinmont Scramble Track, 1st Sep (AJB)

Reed Bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*)**29+ birds****Uncommon resident, passage migrant and winter visitor. Sometimes breeds.**

The only site to hold regular wintering birds was the Track Marais where there were up to 4 birds noted during February, but there was the odd single bird at Claire Mare and the Reservoir. During March and early April there was the odd sighting of migrant birds at sites such as Rousse, Lihou, Rue des Bergers, Grand Pre and Claire Mare but again none stayed to summer. An early bird was seen at Claire Mare on 31st Aug, but all other sightings were after the 15th Oct. Autumn migrants were seen on various dates but probably numbered less than 15 birds, and there were just 2 seen in December – at Track Marais and Rue des Bergers.

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.

Bar-headed Goose (Anser indicus)

One at the Reservoir on 20th Apr.

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.

Pin-tailed Whydah (Vidua macroura)

A female-type bird visited feeders in a local garden in late July and early August.



Pin-tailed Whydah – Jul 2005 – DOuthwaite

List of Observers mentioned in the systematic list

DJRA	David Andrews
GDA	Geoff Atkinson
RA	Rich Austin
MA	Margaret Austin
CB	Chrissie Baines
MB	Malcolm Baines
AJB	Tony Bisson
JB	Jean Brown
PC	Pat Costen
JPD	Judy Down
TDCE	Tim Earl
GE	Geoff Elliott
RAF	Rod Ferbrache
BF	Brian Forsey
VEF	Vic Froome
AG	Tony Grange
MAG	Mark Guppy
IH	Ian Hall
JH	Jamie Hooper
CK	Carol Kinnersly
CK	Catherine Kinnersly
DL	Dave Laurent
MPL	Mark Lawlor
RAL	Rob Lihou
CJM	Chris Mourant
RJM	Bob Murphy
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.

SEAWATCHING DATA

The table below shows the ten best days for seawatching in Autumn 2005, 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	06/08	14/08	15/08	20/08	26/08	11/09	16/09	01/10	02/10	13/11	season totals
Wind direction	NW3	NW4	ENE1	NNW4	WNW4	N3	NNE5	WNW5	NNW5	NNE4	
No. of hours watched	3.5	3	2	5	3.25	3.25	2.75	4	6.5	2.25	(54 hours)
Sooty Shearwater	3		1	2	1		21	45	262		341
Manx Shearwater			1	5	1	2	12		15		39
Balearic Shearwater	6	2	1	18	3	2	13	3	5		67
Pomarine Skua									1	5	8
Arctic Skua	2	1	2	7	1	16	36		2	3	75
Great Skua		1	2				9		35	1	53
Unidentified skua sp.									1	1	5
Sandwich Tern	28	14	16	26	25	34	10	14	65	1	315
Common/Arctic Tern	74	14	36	38	17	13	100	45	45		527

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.

Black Brant

Herm – 5th February 2005 – 2nd Guernsey record

By Wayne Turner

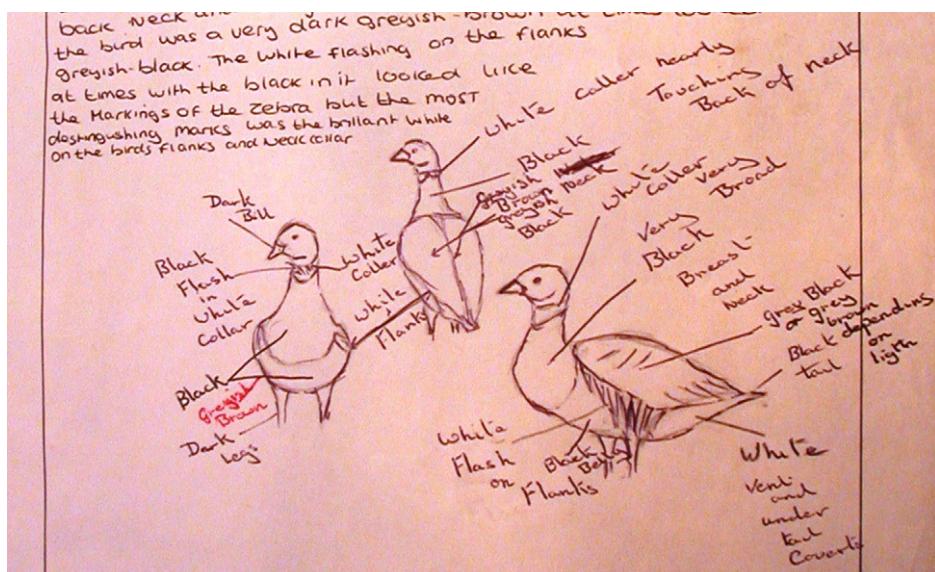
With the constraints of family commitments and inclement weather, the earliest I could partake in my annual post-Christmas/New Year trip to Herm was Saturday 5th February. Chris Mourant joined me and we had a pleasant morning's walk around the island. After a quick check of the Common we dropped down onto the beach at the North end where we received some respite from a buffeting moderate southerly wind. The tide was half-way up and there was a good number of waders to check through.

On a scan across the tideline with my binoculars I saw half a dozen Brent Geese several hundred yards away. I immediately noticed one that stood out different to the rest. It appeared darker all over (including the upper belly) except for clean brighter white flanks and a more distinct white collar.

Straight away I called it as a Black Brant to Chris and we proceeded to set up our tripods and confirm the salient features through our telescopes, before moving in closer in stages until only 100m away. The light was excellent for observation at this time and would have been for taking photos had we had our cameras with us! Luckily others were afforded the opportunity of photography on subsequent dates.

identification

- This bird was 'black' compared to Dark-bellied Brents on its back and upper belly.
- The flanks were a brilliant white rectangular panel, not whitish 'flashes'
- The belly was black not light (it was only the flanks that were light)
- The white neck collar was broad and met at the front.
- Approximately same size as accompanying Brents although it looked stockier (neck, breast and body).



Sketches of Black Brant – Herm – Feb 2005 - CJMourant

Desert Wheatear

Chouet – 13th November 2005 – 3rd Guernsey record

By Bob Murphy

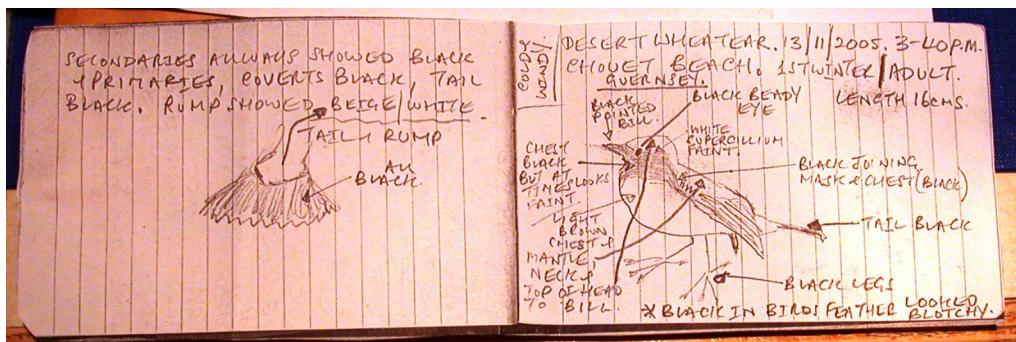
Whilst looking out to sea off Chouet Beach with Liz Thomson at 3:40 pm, a wheatear-type bird appeared. I leapt out of the car to see a Desert Wheatear on the rocks. The bird flew down to the Chouet Observation Hide onto the rocks there and good views were obtained.

Identification

The bird was identified as a male Desert Wheatear by the following features:

- Dark face mask and throat
- Blackish wing feathers
- Black tail showing no white
- Rump off-white/beige
- Black of wings reached up and joined neck and face mask
- Top of head, nape and mantle beigey-brown

Field sketches below:



Desert Wheatear – Pulias – Nov 2005 - BGWells

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	Gyrfalcon
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

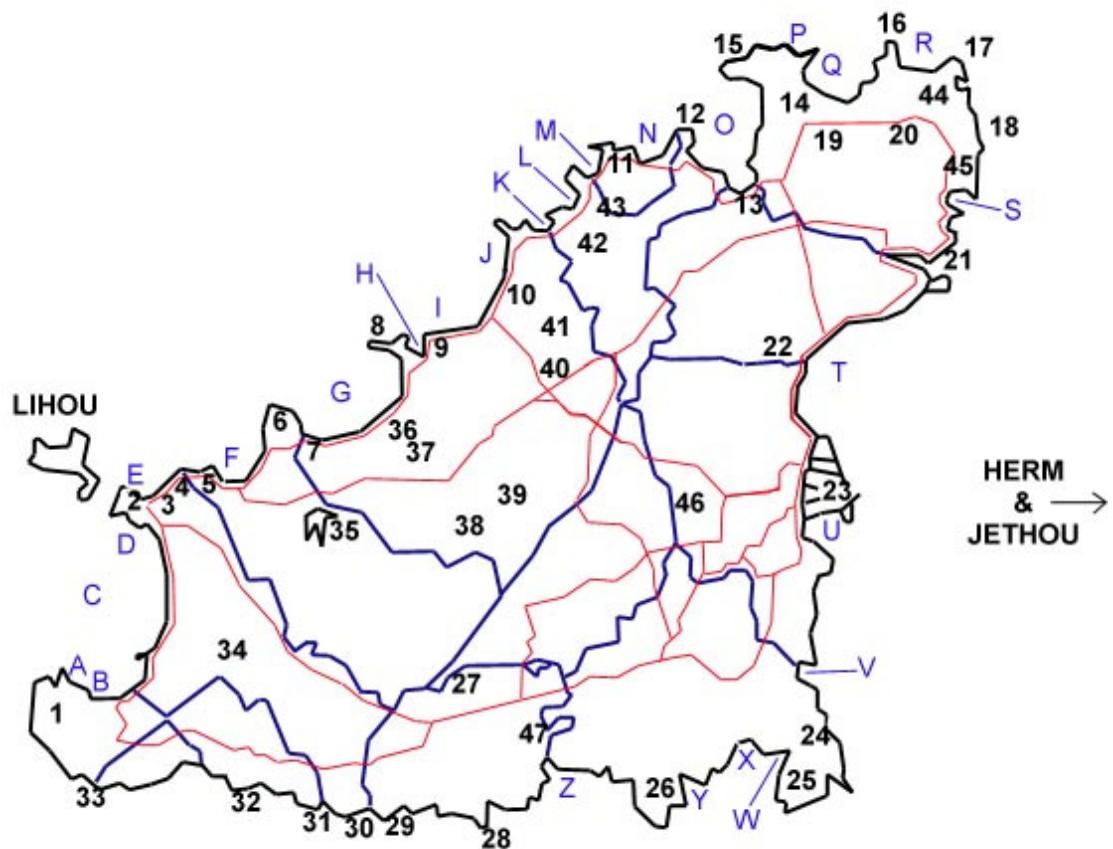
plus

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



Mediterranean Gull – Belle Greve Bay [letter T on map] – Feb 2005 – MPLawlor