



**CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE  
BIRDWATCH GALWAY**

**www.birdwatchgalway.org**  
**QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY**  
Telephone: 086 1680856 e-mail: neilsharkey@eircom.net  
Issue No. 67 November 09

This is a local forum newsletter –  
contributions and comments are  
most welcome.  
Distributed by e mail only

**BRANCH MATTERS**

Winter birds are flocking in and building up the numbers of our avifauna. This heralds the start of another busy season with I-WeBS counts all across the county from the lakes and turloughs in the south-west around Gort to the ones in north-east around Tuam and from the south-east around Loughrea to the north-west on the Connemara coast. The third round of winter Atlas counts have started again on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and soon there will be the winter garden bird survey as well. All records count, so please, submit as many sightings as you can onto our own website [www.birdwatchgalway.org](http://www.birdwatchgalway.org) and onto the Atlas website [www.birdatlas.net](http://www.birdatlas.net). If you submit your records onto both sites it will make life much easier for those who compile the summaries, i.e. Chris Peppiatt dealing with the Galway records and Brian Caffrey dealing with the Atlas records. They will both be very grateful to receive your input.

In recent weeks there has been a lively exchange of emails and mobile phone text messages discussing what our national bird might be. While Tom Cuffe was guiding a group of American ornithologists he was asked whether Ireland has a national bird and, in response to his plea for an answer to this question, lots of ideas have floated around cyberspace. Of course, it is always the foreign visitor who manages to ask the awkward questions so Tom better gets used to it now that he has launched his new career as guide to visiting birdwatchers. No better man to deal with such a challenge so if you are ever asked for a guide, contact Tom at 087-9190818. As you will see from our forthcoming programme Tom will kindly entertain us again at our annual Christmas get-together with his pictures of birds sighted during 2009. Please, come along and join us!

**Marianne ten Cate**

**A POTTED TALE OF BIRD REARING**

In July 2009 three families of European Swallows decided to nest in our three year old house in Kiltullagh, Athenry. After a week of much chatter and frenzied flying to and from the muddy pond at the back of our garden, we had three nests, and one failed attempt, under the eaves of our house. Eggs were laid and very soon we grew accustomed to the chattering and constant swooping to and fro as the parents tended to their young.

Very early on, after a particularly cold, wet and windy weekend (what's new this summer in Ireland?) the nest on the north-facing side of the house fell down and two small featherless fledglings perished on the driveway.

On the west-facing side of the house, just outside our bedroom window, much activity was still taking place. Starting at about 5:30 every morning the babies shrieked for food and the parents, using our window ledge as a stopover, tirelessly obliged. We could stand at the window and watch them, insects in mouth, rest for a minute before taking off again for the next round.

It was to our dismay that, on returning from Camogie training one evening, we found this nest on the ground in pieces and four very frightened little birds huddled against the front wall. How had they survived the 30 foot fall? The nest had smashed into pieces and although they were feathered, and therefore older than the previous lot who had died, they were as yet unable to fly.

We gathered together the remnants of the nest, found an old ceramic plant pot, about six inches in diameter, and moved the family in. This we wrapped in an old towel, leaving a small opening at one side. We placed the pot on our bedroom window ledge, the stopover spot, and hoped for the best. As this is west facing, and it's windy out here, we hoped that the towel would provide some small amount of shelter and warmth for the babies. After that we waited and hoped not knowing how it would turn out.

The following morning the parents were still making forlorn trips to the site of the nest, food in mouth as usual. The babies were starting to perk up and make noise and, much to our surprise and delight, feeding resumed by mid-day. It was fascinating to watch the whole feeding procedure and we certainly got, to pardon the pun, a bird's eye view of proceedings. No webcam required here!

The feeding went on day after day, four little beaks constantly clamouring for more, and mom and dad obliging. We moved the nest to the opposite, and more sheltered corner of the window, one blustery day as a precaution. Then one day, a week or more after the rescue, we noticed that the four little birds were out of the nest sitting on the windowsill. By afternoon, one had gone and shortly afterwards the other three managed to fly down to the front lawn. In fascination we watched as the parents flew to and fro urging the little ones on, feeding them every so often, and angrily chasing a magpie moving in for the spoils. By evening, two more had managed to get aloft leaving the weakest behind. We didn't interfere and the following morning we found the fourth and weakest one dead on the grass.

A week later another nest appeared in the same spot as the original and the cycle began again. No rescue required this time, as yet.

**Clare and James Lundon**

**BRANCH OUTING TO SHANNON AIRPORT  
LAGOONS AND RAHASANE TURLOUGH,  
29/08/2009**

The branch organised this outing to Shannon Airport Lagoons and Rahasane Turlough on the last Saturday of August. Like most people in the West, I've flown out of Shannon regularly but I've never watched birds in the area, so I was keen to go on the outing.

The day didn't start particularly well, with rain sweeping across Loughrea from the west as I left on the drive south. At one point I considered turning back, but a smidgen of blue sky over Gort convinced me to continue. I arrived in the car park of Shannon Golf Club just after 11am, to be greeted by 7 other branch members waiting to get going.

We headed out from the golf club towards the lagoons and immediately a Whimbrel and a Redshank were heard calling. The path from the golf club leads out toward the Shannon river with lagoons (presumably fresh water) and reed beds on the left and the river on the right. The path is protected by a high embankment, up which we clambered to scan the shoreline. A small flock of Black-tailed Godwit was feeding on the mud in the company of a couple of Curlew and a solitary Golden Plover. About 8 Turnstone also flew past, never to be seen again.

As we stopped to scan the lagoons, three Common Tern flew over. The water of the lagoons was dotted with duck, and careful scanning revealed plenty of Teal and Mallard, three Shoveler and a pair of

Gadwall. The Gadwall were preening, with the white panel on the wing very much in evidence. A pair of Little Grebe was also picked out. Little Egret were everywhere, hunting in the shallow water and flying in and out of the reeds. A flock of around 100 Black-tailed Godwit was also observed.

Suddenly everything went up from the lagoons; a juvenile Peregrine was chasing the godwits. Well, I say chasing, but to tell the truth, the bird didn't seem to know what it was doing. It never really looked like catching one of the godwits; presumably it was the first time the Peregrine had been let out to play on its own. We watched the fun and games for a couple of minutes, noting the brown upperparts, creamy streaked underparts and pale band at the tip of the tail of the Peregrine. After a lot of flapping around, the Peregrine got fed up and departed, leaving everything to settle down again.

There were also a number of butterflies using the scrub on both sides of the path. These included Peacocks, Red Admirals and, further on, Painted Ladies. They provided a very colourful addition to the bird life.

We continued to the end of the track and had lunch in the shelter of a building at the old jetty, overlooking a flock of about 500 Black-tailed Godwit feeding on the mud with a couple of Common Gull and Oystercatcher. The tide was going out and as a consequence more waders were feeding on the exposed mud. After lunch we picked our way through the waders, coming up with Ringed Plover, Redshank and Dunlin, some of which showed the black belly of summer.

We followed the road back towards the airport. The road runs along the opposite side of the lagoons, coming out in the grounds of the airport itself. We were lucky enough to hear two Water Rail squealing like pigs in the reeds, but needless to say we didn't see this elusive bird. A Sparrowhawk was then seen being mobbed by a Hooded Crow; the small size of the hawk compared to the crow suggested it was a male.

Then came the final excitement of the day – we were stopped by the airport police and questioned about our activities around the airport. Apparently birders should contact the Airport Police Duty Office to get permission to watch birds in the airport environs. We were eventually released (!) to continue back to the golf club for a well-earned cup of coffee.

We ended the visit with 51 species, which wasn't bad at all, and it only rained once and very briefly at that. Unfortunately, the visit to Rahasane Turlough only yielded three more species (Tufted Duck, Jackdaw and Magpie). The water level was too high to be attractive to waders and most of the usual waterbirds there.

Many thanks to Marianne for organising such a successful trip and to the Shannon Airport Police Duty Office for its hospitality. I was glad I hadn't turned back that morning.

Participants:

Marianne ten Cate	Jo Gordon
Aidan Coleman	P.J. Moore
Deirdre Comerford	Cathy Seale
Ann Fleming	and
	<b>Pete Capsey</b>



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### BIRDS IN POETRY

Three distinguished Irish poets celebrated landmark birthdays this year. John Montague was 80 and Seamus Heaney and Michael Longley were 70. Both Seamus and Michael gave memorable readings at the Clifden Arts Festival. The selected poem's title would seem far from the usual bird titles but in this delightful poem the poet ranges the spectrum of his love for nature and Carrigskeewaun.

Pat Finnegan

#### THE LEVERET

for my grandson, Benjamin

This is your first night in Carrigskeewaun.  
The Owennadornaun is so full of rain  
You arrived in Paddy Morrison's tractor,  
A bumpy approach in your father's arms  
To the cottage where, all of one year ago,  
You were conceived, a fire-seed in the hearth.  
Did you hear the wind in the fluffy chimney?  
Do you hear the wind tonight, and the rain  
And a shore bird calling from the mussel reefs?  
Tomorrow I'll introduce you to the sea,  
Little hoplite. Have you been missing it?  
I'll park your chariot by the otters' rock  
And carry you over seaweed to the sea.  
There's a tufted duck on David's lake  
With her sootfall of hatchlings, pompoms  
A day old and already learning to dive.  
We may meet the stoat near the erratic  
Boulder, a shrew in his mouth, or the merlin  
Meadow-pipit-hunting. But don't be afraid.  
The leveret breakfasts under the fuchsia  
Every morning, and we shall be watching.  
I have picked wild flowers for you, scabious  
And centaury in a jam-jar of water  
That will bend and magnify the daylight.  
This is your first night in Carrigskeewaun.

Michael Longley

Grateful thanks to the poet for permission to publish.

### FIRST SATURDAY WALKS

I joined BirdWatch Galway in February 1999 while at an Open Day / First-Saturday-of-the-month outing on Nimmo's Pier. I went there having seen a notice in a local paper and got hooked when Dermot Breen showed me an Iceland gull in his 'scope. Up to that moment I'd little interest in sea/shorebirds, my leanings were towards garden/farmland birds. In the intervening years I've missed few of the 'First Saturday Walks' and learnt a huge amount.

The outings are held each month from Sep/Oct to Apr/May, normally at Nimmo's Pier. There are usually more birds to be seen at low tide, but to fix the walk in people's minds the start time is always 10.30 a.m.

Tim Griffin started similar walks with the then North Munster branch in the 1970-s where they visited Tim's favourite patch – the settling ponds at the now defunct Thurles Sugar Factory. These ponds were a stopover for migrating birds, including seabirds and waders! The walks became very popular.

When Tim came to Galway he brought the idea with him – and it didn't take him long to focus on Nimmo's Pier as an ideal place to implement it. The walks are heading into their 16<sup>th</sup> year, with Tim leading

just about all of them and organising a deputy when he is unavailable – in latter years often yours truly.

At branch meetings the number of people taking part in each walk were noted, so I began to wonder about the numbers of species seen. On the October 2005 walk I started noting species I had seen, at the end of which I had recorded 27 species. When I asked Tim the number of species seen, he said "about 15 or so," so he was quite surprised when I told him the actual number.

Over the next couple of walks people noticed me writing and were very interested in my results, so much so that they were asking me had I written down such-and-such. I started recording species seen on the walks, irrespective of whether I had seen them or not. What began as a personal interest has become a part of branch meeting reports! After each walk I make two lists – branch sightings and my own sightings.

I record sightings only, for consistency, because that was the way I started. On some walks there can be a bit of banter, along the lines of:

"I heard a greenfinch"

"Did you see it?"

"No, but that doesn't matter!"

"Oh! But it does, I only record sightings."

In the four seasons, 2005/06 to 2008/09, there were 36 walks, 28 of which I have recorded. The number of species sighted, per walk recorded, has ranged from 15 to 40 with an average of 28. The total number of species! recorded over the four seasons was

71:-

Red-throated diver	Lesser black-backed gull
Great northern diver	Great black-backed gull
Great crested grebe	Little gull
Gannet	Glaucous gull
Cormorant	Glaucous-x-Herring gull
Shag	Iceland gull
Little egret	Kumlien's gull
Grey heron	Sandwich tern
Mute swan	Common tern
Brent goose	Arctic tern
Shelduck	Forster's tern
Mallard	Guillemot
Wigeon	Razorbill
Scaup	Feral pigeon
Surf scoter	Woodpigeon
Red-breasted merganser	Skylark
Oystercatcher	Swallow
Ringed plover	Rock pipit
Lapwing	Meadow pipit
Knot	Pied wagtail
Sanderling	Grey wagtail
Turnstone	Black redstart
Dunlin	Wheatear
Redshank	Wheatear, leucorhoa
Greenshank	Stonechat
Bar-tailed godwit	Maggie
Curlew	Jackdaw
Whimbrel	Rook
Snipe	Hooded crow
Grey phalarope	Starling
Black-headed gull	House sparrow
Common gull	Chaffinch
Mediterranean gull	Linnets
Herring gull	Goldfinch
American herring gull	Greenfinch
Ring-billed gull	

Brendan Dunne

### MONFRAGUE NATIONAL PARK

We arrive at the viewpoint an hour before first light. It is windy and bitterly cold. Maybe we would hear them calling and be able to locate them in the dark. If we were very lucky a roosting bird might be found in the morning light. The cliff face of the Portilla del Tietar comprises two large vertical columns of stone with some scrub between. Viewed from the road on the opposite side of the gorge it is an impressive sight. In the half-light I notice some movement at the edge of the scrub and quickly scan the area. False alarm - a red deer hind freezes as I line her up in my scope. We split up and walk in opposite directions along the road. Maybe scanning the cliff from different angles will increase our chances. A quick scan with the binoculars over the cliff reveals nothing new. As the sun rises the vultures are getting restless and so am I. I line up my scope where the red deer had been seen. From my position 100m along the road the cliff reveals new angles, caves, ledges and a bird I have dreamed of seeing since I was a child. Eagle Owl. Even from this distance she looks massive. I watch her for a few seconds and then abandon my post to locate Dermot. The sight of me sprinting towards him waving my arms gets the message across. I get back to the scope first. Disaster! She's gone! Twenty minutes of scanning reveals nothing until I hear the magic words "I have her, in flight along the cliff". She lands and below her on the cliff sits a well-grown chick. For the next hour we bask in our glory and enjoy views of the of the worlds' largest owl.

Raptors raptors everywhere and not a gull in sight! If I took sugar in my tea then Monfrague National Park would be it. Located less than three hours drive south west of Madrid this gem in the heart of Extremadura ranks as possibly the finest area in Europe for birds of prey. Spanish Imperial, Golden, Short-toed, Booted and Bonelli's eagles, Griffon, Black and Egyptian vultures, Red, Black and Black-winged kites, Peregrine, Kestrel, Lesser Kestrel, Hobby, Buzzard, Honey Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Montagu's and Marsh harriers breed in the park or close by. Twenty one species of diurnal raptor breed and an equally impressive supporting cast includes no less than twenty pairs of Eagle Owl, Black Stork, Alpine Swift, White-rumped Swift, Crag Martin, Blue-rock Thrush, Crested Tit and Rock Bunting.

The real beauty of Monfrague is its accessibility. All the specialities of the area can be viewed from the network of roads running through the park. Birders visit the area from all over Europe and a vast array of up to date information is available on the birds. During our short visit we met birders from the UK, France, Germany, Holland, Denmark and Spain. Most stop for a chat and to seek and swap information on what they have or haven't yet seen. Most birders come to see Spanish Imperial Eagle. Less than 150 pairs survive and Monfrague is a stronghold of the species. In recent years a pair has nested in the vicinity of the aforementioned Portilla del Tietar allowing visitors a chance to view this globally threatened species without fear of disturbance. We were lucky enough to view this species in flight, one of the five species of eagle and sixteen species of raptor we saw that day.

To the south of Monfrague lie vast swathes of steppe grassland inhabited by Great and Little



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Bustards. Early morning visits produce excellent views of both species. White Storks abound while overhead Griffon Vultures are ever-present. Every fence post and wire holds a Corn Bunting, lark or Hoopoe. Near the town of Caceres we find four pairs of Montagu's Harrier nesting in a crop field beside a minor road. They are nesting literally on top of one another, the field being less than 2 hectares in size. A scan of the telegraph poles reveals another of our targets - Roller. Scores of nestboxes have been erected to encourage them to breed and this kind offer has been well received by the birds. Late in the evening we visit a site for Black-winged Kite and are treated to stunning views of a pair displaying and hunting over the Dehesa forest which characterises much of the region. One perches on an overhead wire, its red eyes clearly visible. Easily the bird of the trip. I can't wait to return.

Aonghus O Donail

### A 'PELAGIC' EXPLAINED

As the newsletter now has a wide circulation it may well be that for some the meaning and purpose of a 'Pelagic' is less than clear. Put simply it is a sea-going birdwatching trip. Its purpose is to locate and see oceanic seabirds, particularly shearwaters and petrels but also other birds that are most likely to be located well offshore. It involves the hire of a boat suitable and licensed to take a party of 10 or 12 well out to sea, usually in late autumn, in the hope that worthwhile seabirds will show up. Going on a pelagic requires a certain intrepidity – sea sickness and coping with the pretty awful fishy smell can be a hazard. On the other hand on a good day the rewards for keen birdwatchers can be of a high order - as can be seen from the following account by Aonghus O Donail. It is an account of an August 2008 pelagic from Cleggan. This and the other article by Aonghus are a year late due to a computer glitch - my apologies for this.

NS

### CLEGGAN PELAGIC

Departing Cleggan at 8am we soon had our first Bonxies close to Inishbofin. Were they birds on passage or part of the increasing local breeding population? Impossible to tell but who knows? Our eagle-eyed skipper, John Brittain, who only a month previously had photographed a presumed Fea's Petrel off Slyne Head, picked up a small wader flying over the boat. Grey phalarope. Things were looking good. Only a week previously Wilson's Petrel and Great Shearwaters had been recorded in our target area and hopes were high. Storm Petrels trickled by in ones and two's and it was not long before the shout of 'Sooty Shearwater' went up. In the last ten years I have seen six Sooty Shearwaters in Galway, five in the previous fortnight. Two were now circling the boat at close range, almost close enough to touch. Approximately 14 miles off Cleggan we cut the engine and started to chum. Chum is a mix of fish parts which is pulverised and thrown overboard to attract seabirds to the boat. As Shearwaters and Petrels have an extremely acute sense of smell the chum should be as pungent as possible in order to attract birds from far and wide. A fish box of mackerel was pulverised and placed in a sealed drum four weeks prior to our departure. Twice a week I stirred this delightful mix and re-sealed the drum. Twenty litres of pure fish oil was then added to

the mix before being placed in sealed containers. When a suitable location is found at sea the chum is thrown overboard and an oily slick is made on the water surface. This slick serves to attract the birds that come to avail of the free food on offer. After a slow start the eye-popping mix began to work its magic. Storm Petrels began to appear in numbers. Each one was studied intently as it tiptoed on the water surface.. Would our luck be in? Would we find a Wilson's? Arctic Skuas flew into the mix of Fulmars, gulls and the ever-present Bonxies. Small numbers of Sooty Shearwaters were ever-present. A juvenile Sabine's Gull provided an excellent comparison with some young Kittiwakes. An adult Long-tailed Skua appeared from nowhere. Though missing its elongated central tail feathers it was still the bird of the trip. Readily distinguished from its cousins by its smaller size and almost tern-like flight it stayed with the boat for almost two hours allowing all on board to obtain stunning views of this most sought after of the Skuas. One hundred Storm petrels were now on view. A Leach's Petrel flew past at speed and sent pulses racing before it was identified. A two-metre swell made scrutiny of individual birds difficult at times but it soon became obvious that our target of Wilson's Petrel was not present. A single Pomarine Skua as we turned for home saw us tick the four Skua species in one morning. A brief stop saw the fishing rods emerge and enough Mackerel and Pollack were caught to ensure that no one went home empty handed. A great day out. Great fun and great company. The birds were only a bonus.

Aonghus O Donail

### FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

- Saturday 7 November, short outing at Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am. These monthly short outings are particularly suitable for beginners. Families with children are welcome, too.
- Sunday 8 November, Corrib count; those interested in taking part, please contact Marianne (091) 552519.
- Wednesday 18 November, branch meeting, Anno Santo Hotel, Threadneedle Road, Salthill, 8pm. All members are welcome to attend the monthly branch meetings.
- Saturday 21 November, Galway Bay count, those interested in taking part, please contact Chris Peppiatt at 091-862566 or 086-3125356.
- Friday 27 November, talk by John Murphy on *The birds of British Columbia*, Anno Santo, 8pm. Our talks normally run for just over an hour and generally appeal to all ages. Feel free to bring a friend – or two.
- Saturday 5 December, short outing at Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.
- Friday 11 December, pre-Christmas informal branch get-together with '*Birds of Galway seen in 2009, a video collection*' by Tom Cuffe. All branch members are welcome to attend this annual event in the Anno Santo Hotel at 8pm.
- Wednesday 16 December, branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm.
- Saturday 2 January, short outing at Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.
- Sunday 3 January, Galway Bay count, those interested in taking part, please contact Chris Peppiatt, details as above.
- Weekend 16-17 January, International Swan Survey. If you would like to take part, please contact Marianne to get an area allocated to you.
- Wednesday 20 January, branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm.
- Friday 29 January, talk by Alex Copland, Senior Conservation Officer with BirdWatch Ireland, *From Corn Bunting to Linnet – farmland birds in Galway and beyond*, Anno Santo, 8pm.
- Saturday 6 February, short outing at Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.
- Saturday 13 February, roving outing for the new Atlas of Birds of Britain and Ireland. Those interested in taking part in this day-long event, please contact Marianne.

## BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009

2nd July: 10 Little Egret, 77 Lapwing & Curlew, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).

2nd July: Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Tom Cuffe & Tim Griffin).

7th July: Yellowhammer singing, Ardrahan Grassland (Chris Peppiatt).

9th July: Female/Imm. Marsh Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).

9th July: 2nd Sum. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

10th July: Little Egret confirmed breeding, near to Galway City and in Connemara.

10th July: 2nd Sum. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).

11th July: Female/Imm. Marsh Harrier, again present, Angliham, Lough Corrib.

12th July: 3 Storm Petrel, Baile na hAbhainn (Tom Chadwick).

12th July: Storm Petrel & Little Tern, Lettermullan (Dermot Breen).

12th July: 1st Sum. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).

13th July: 135+ apparently occupied Fulmar nest sites, High Island (Paul Walsh).

13th July: 28+ apparently occupied Fulmar nest sites & 14+ adult Great Black-backed Gull, Friar Island (Paul Walsh).

13th July: 35+ apparently occupied Fulmar nest sites, 28+ adult Great Black-backed Gull (& unfledged chicks) & 4+ Black Guillemot, Cruagh Island (Paul Walsh).

13th July: 10+ apparently occupied Common Gull nests & unfledged chicks, Carrickculloo (Paul Walsh).

14th July: Great Northern Diver, Rusheenduff beach, Nr. Tully (Paul Walsh).

15th July: 1st Sum. Mediterranean Gull (Belgian-ringed) & 1st Sum. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).

21st July: Sooty Shearwater, Turnstone, 3 Great Skua, 50-100 Storm Petrel, 12 hour pelagic from Derryinver Quay, Nr. Letterfrack, to 46 miles offshore (Dan Brown, Dermot Breen, Anthony McGeehan *et al.*).

22nd July: Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 1st Sum. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

23rd July: 2nd Sum. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (per Irishbirding).

24th July: Common Buzzard, Cregg Castle, Nr. Corrandulla (Pat Roberts).

25th July: 150 Mallard, 20 Little Egret, Peregrine, 300 Lapwing, 2 Redshank, 180 Curlew, 6 Common Sandpiper, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John Carey).

26th July: Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Dermot Breen).

26th July: 3 colour-ringed Little Egret, 2 Dunlin, Oystercatcher, 2 Wigeon, 6 Teal & 6 Black-tailed Godwit, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen).

26th July: 2 Sooty Shearwater, 10 Storm Petrel, Arctic Skua & Great Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Tom Chadwick, Dermot Breen & Aonghus O'Donail).

31st July: 3 Arctic Skua, Spiddal Pier (Aonghus O'Donail).

4th August: Cory's Shearwater, Doonloughan, Ballyconneely (Aonghus O'Donail).

8th August: Little Egret, Tysaxon, Athenry (Kieran Shaughnessy).

8th August: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

9th August: 2 Sooty Shearwater, off Doonloughan, Ballyconneely (Aonghus O'Donail).

10th August: Black Guillemot, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).

13th August: 3 Sooty Shearwater, Puffin 7 50 Storm Petrel, pelagic off High Island (Dermot Breen).

13th August: 80 Whimbrel, 16 km west of Slyne Head (John Brittain).

15th August: Ad. Mediterranean Gull & leucistic Black-headed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).

15th August: 7 Whimbrel, 67 Dunlin, 57 Ringed Plover, 240 Redshank & 40 Sandwich Tern, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Dermot Breen).

15th August: 2nd Win. Ring-billed Gull, off Salthill Promenade, Galway City (Rory Brett).

15th August: Balearic Shearwater, 2 Sooty Shearwater & 10 Storm Petrel, Lettermullan (Tom Chadwick).

16th August: 34 Sooty Shearwater, 2 Great Skua & 10 Common Scoter, 11:15-14:45, Lettermullan (Dermot Breen).

16th August: Balearic Shearwater & 6 Arctic Skua, Silver Strand, Galway City (Aonghus O'Donail).

17th August: Balearic Shearwater & Arctic Skua, off Mullaghglass, Nr. Tullycross (Dermot Breen).

17th August: Great Shearwater, off Slyne Head (John Brittain).

18th August: Balearic Shearwater, off Inveran (Aonghus O'Donail).

21st August: 100 Wheatear, 100 Manx Shearwater & Great Skua, Inisheer (Tom Cuffe).

24th August: Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Tom Cuffe).

26th August: Leucistic Linnet, Grattan Road, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne). (1)

27th August: 100 Ringed Plover, Ballyloughaun, Galway City (Neil Ellis).

27th August: Ad. Sabine's Gull, 10 Great Skua & 10 Arctic Skua, off Ballyconneely (Aonghus O'Donail).

28th August: 6 Twite, 3 Great Skua & 3 Arctic Skua, Ballyconneely (Aonghus O'Donail).

28th August: 4 Great Shearwater, 3 Ad. Sabine's Gull, Sooty Shearwater, 6 Storm Petrel & 5 Great Skua, Silver Strand, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

31st August: Brent Goose, Mweenish island, Nr. Tawin (Joe Smith).
31st August: sub-Ad. male Marsh Harrier & ringtail Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
31st August: Juv. Sabine's Gull, Mountscribe, Kinvara (per Irishbirding).
1st September: 30-40 Great Shearwater, 4 Sooty Shearwater & 5 Arctic Skua, off Slyne Head (Aonghus O'Donail).
1st September: Female/Imm. Merlin, Slyne Head (Aonghus O'Donail).
1st September: 2 Sooty Shearwater, 2 Arctic Skua & 7 Great Skua, Silver Strand, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
2nd September: 3 Pectoral Sandpiper & 2 Black-tailed Godwit, Murlach, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
2nd September: Brent Goose, Ballyconneely Bay (Dermot Breen).
2nd September: Juv. Little Gull & 4 Eider, Mannin Beg, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
3rd September: 2 Arctic Skua & 2 Great Skua, Rossadillask, Cleggan (Aonghus O'Donail).
3rd September: 2 Grey Phalarope, Inishbofin ferry (Aonghus O'Donail).
3rd September: 2 Great Shearwater, 2 Grey Phalarope, 2 Great Skua & 2 Arctic Skua, Inishbofin (Aonghus O'Donail).
4th September: 6 Leach's Petrel, 4 Sooty Shearwater & 5 Great Skua, seawatch off Inishbofin (Dermot Breen).
7th September: 3 (Ad. & 2 Juv.) Sabine's Gull, Black Tern, Pomarine Skua & 12 Arctic Skua, Inverin (Tim Griffin).
8th September: Juv. Sabine's Gull, 90 Sanderling, 60 Ringed Plover & 12 Dunlin, Mannin Beg, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
8th September: Juv. Sabine's Gull, Balearic Shearwater, 5 Arctic Skua & 3 Great Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
8th September: 2 Arctic Skua, Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
8th September: 3 Juv. Sabine's Gull & 1st Win. Little Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
10th September: 5 Brent Goose, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
12th September: Kingfisher, Ardnasillagh, Lough Corrib (Jenny Whilde).
13th September: Common Buzzard, Claregalway (Jim Glennon). (2)
13th September: 7 Bar-tailed Godwit, Ballyloughaune, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
14th September: 2 Juv. Pectoral Sandpiper, Doonloughaun Marsh, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (3)
14th September: 2 Arctic Skua, Silver Strand, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
14th September: 'Male and female' (not aged) Marsh Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).
14th September: ringtail Hen Harrier, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
15th September: Juv. Curlew Sandpiper, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donail).
18th September: Juv. Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 9 Ruff & 6 Knot, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick). (4)
18th September: 2 Purple Sandpiper & 2 Sanderling, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
19th September: 2 Juv. Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 10 Ruff, 2 Curlew Sandpiper & Kingfisher, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen & Tom Chadwick). (4)
19th September: 2 Kingfisher, Oranmore (Dermot Breen & Tom Chadwick).
19th September: 2 Arctic Skua & Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen & Tom Chadwick).
19th September: Juv. Peregrine Falcon, Murvey, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
19th September: Snowy Owl, Island Eddy, Galway Bay (2nd hand report per Aonghus O'Donail).
20th September: Turtle Dove, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).
20th September: 12 Curlew, 2 Ruff, 3 Knot, Greenshank, Redshank, 73 Lapwing, 200 Golden Plover, 9 Snipe, 5 Dunlin, 29 Black-tailed Godwit, 50 Shoveler, 500 Wigeon, 300 Teal, 71 Coot, 13 Little Egret & 2 Juv. Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John Carey).
20th September: Peregrine Falcon, Doonloughaun Marsh, Ballyconneely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
20th September: Wheatear, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
21st September: Pectoral Sandpiper, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick).
21st September: Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Tom Chadwick).
23rd September: Black Guillemot, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
24th September: 6 Arctic Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
24th September: Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Tom Chadwick).
25th September: Juv. Pectoral Sandpiper, presumably a new individual, Doonloughaun Marsh, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
26th September: Curlew Sandpiper & Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Dermot Breen).
26th September: 5 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Cuffe).
27th September: Pomarine Skua & 2 Arctic Skua, ferry to Inishmore (Dermot Breen).
28th September: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Trawmore, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).
28th September: Juv. Long-billed Dowitcher & Great White Egret, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick, Aonghus O'Donail & Tom Cuffe). (5), (6).
29th September: Short-eared Owl, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (John Keogh).
29th September: Merlin, Ellagh, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
30th September: Juv. Curlew Sandpiper & 10+ Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen).

**NOTES:**

- (1) The leucistic Linnet was present in the area until 25<sup>th</sup> September at least.
- (2) This bird was again present on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September.
- (3) One Juv. Pectoral Sandpiper was still present here on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September.
- (4) The Juv. Buff-breasted Sandpiper of the 18<sup>th</sup> of September was joined by a second bird on the 19<sup>th</sup>; single birds were seen until the 23<sup>rd</sup> at least.
- (5) The Juv. Long-billed Dowitcher was present until the 30<sup>th</sup> of September at least..
- (6) The Great White Egret was still present at the end of September.

**OTHER BEASTS:**

21<sup>st</sup> July: Sunfish & 2 pods of Common Dolphin, Derryinver pelagic.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

Better than average seawatching Autumn: Cory's Shearwater, 37-47 Great Shearwater, 5 Balearic Shearwater, 13 Sabine's Gull, 6 Leach's Petrel, 55 Sooty Shearwater. Only 4 Grey Phalarope, 2 Pomarine Skua and no Long-tailed Skua this quarter, though.

Long-billed Dowitcher, 5-7 Pectoral Sandpiper, Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl, Turtle Dove, Great White Egret,.

First Winter migrants: Brent Goose (31<sup>st</sup> August).