

Rarity Report 2006



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Bailiwick of Guernsey Rarities Committee (BGRC)

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Guernsey

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

1st record since 1994 – last recorded 2005

Grande Mare, 2005 until 10th January.

A single bird lingering from the group of 3 which first appeared on 30th September 2005.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

2nd record – last recorded 1987

Miellette, and Marais Nord, 21st October into 2007 (M.P.Lawlor et al).

This bird appeared in a flock of feral White-fronted Geese and it stayed with them all the winter. As there are no wild flocks of grey geese on the island, it is natural that a lost bird would find the feral flocks of geese and join them. It may actually have arrived a week earlier, as a similar bird was seen briefly near the airport.



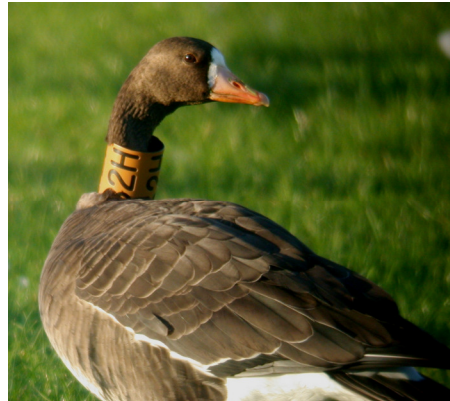
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Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Assumed 1st record

Miellette, 4th and 5th November (J.Hooper, M.L.Stanford et al).

Whilst watching the above Pink-footed Goose this bird was found in the same small flock of feral geese. If it wasn't for a large orange neck ring, this bird would have probably gone unnoticed amongst the similar feral White-fronted Geese. Because it had this easy-to-read identification ring, we now know that it was an adult female ringed in autumn 2005 in western Iceland, where it was pausing during migration. It was then seen wintering on the Wexford Slobs, Ireland that winter but had not been seen since. As far as we know, this is the first definite Greenland-raced White-fronted Goose recorded on the island.



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Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

15th to 17th records – last recorded 2005

Le Bigard, 3rd April (J. Hooper).

Pleinmont, 15th April (L.Thomson), presumed same Herm, 16th April (M. A. Guppy).

St. Saviour's Reservoir, juvenile, 14th to 30th July.

This year echoes 1995 when there were also two in spring and one in the summer. The first three sightings were all of birds in flight, no doubt overshooting whilst returning to their breeding grounds in France. We can probably expect more of this with the warming of the climate. The last bird stayed for quite a while and showed exceptionally well on occasion.



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Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

8th record – last recorded 1996

Over La Grande Rue, St. Saviour's, 8th November (M.A.Guppy).

The first record for quite a while - this species has become more unexpected than Black Kite. It is definitely a winter species for the island, with all 8 records between November and February.

Short-toed Eagle *Circaetus gallicus*

1st record

Airport area, then various locations, 9th & 10th June (M.A.Guppy et al).

Probably the highlight of the year for those who saw it – although many local birders were unlucky not to catch up with this magnificent bird of prey. It appeared near the Airport in the afternoon and was also seen well at lcart. It was very elusive and was seen only a couple more times in that area before it went to roost. The next day it seemed to have disappeared until it was suddenly seen flying up the coast at Port Soif and it carried on North until it was over the sea at Fort le Marchant. It then turned back south and drifted slowly down the eastern part of the island probably leaving from the South coast early afternoon on 10th. This species seems to be more common in Western Europe than previously. With birds now summering in Normandy, there is a good chance that there will be more records in the future.



© JH

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

5th record – last recorded 1995

Claire Mare NR, 14th April.

Unfortunately, this rarity stayed for just one evening and because it was discovered by visitors to the island, only one or two local birders happened to bump into it. With five records in twenty years, hopefully it won't be too long until the next one.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

1st record

L'Eree beach, 1st October (B.G.Wells).

The first record of American Golden Plover for Guernsey was long-expected as it is a regular trans-Atlantic visitor to Western Europe. However, this bird was not very helpful as it was seen for just a few minutes. Luckily the finder was able to take a photograph to confirm the identification.



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Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

3rd record since 1992 – last recorded 2005

L'Eree Old Aerodrome, 14th and 15th September (J.Hooper et al).

A bit of déjà vu here as there was a Pectoral Sandpiper in the same spot almost exactly a year ago. After a gap of 10 years, there have been three records in the last three years.



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Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*

1st record

Fort le Crocq, then Vazon beach, 11th June (A.J.Bisson et al).

There was a large influx of Laughing Gulls into the UK in late autumn 2005, which contained a few Franklin's Gulls. Local birders thought we had missed out on both species during the winter but the last lingering bird appeared on the west coast for little more than an hour one morning. After disappearing twice briefly, it was 'pinned down' on Vazon beach where it could be enjoyed and photographed. It was seen to gain height and head inland never to be seen again.



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Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*

12th record – last recorded 2001

**Jaonneuse Bay and Grandes Havres area, first-winter, 17th December to 2007
(R.J.Murphy et al).**

2006 was the best ever year for 'white-winged' gulls, with four individuals found. However this bird was the first of a record influx during the winter of 2006-2007, of which more can be read in next year's report. This bird was actually our earliest ever Iceland Gull by eight days.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucooides kumlieni*

2nd record – last recorded 1999

Port Grat, first-winter, 26th December (B.G.Wells, M.P.Lawlor).

This bird was found whilst looking for the above-mentioned Iceland Gull but was only on show for less than 15 minutes. Luckily it was photographed and so an identification could be made. Kumlien's Gull is currently classed as a race of Iceland Gull breeding in arctic Canada, but there is much unknown about this variable taxon and it may be a hybrid population. Luckily, it suddenly reappeared in January 2007.



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Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

9th and 10th records – last recorded 2005

Creux Mahie, 1st-winter, 20th February (A.J.Bisson).

L'Eree shingle bank, 1st-winter, 21st December (J.Hooper).

The long-returning bird of 1997 to 2005 seems to have definitely disappeared which means that Glaucous Gull is now much more sought-after. Two records in one year is notable – although there were two seen in 1967 and 2000.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

3rd record since 1996 – last recorded 2001

Vale Garage (exhausted/injured), 3rd November

As is often the case with the species, a Little Auk was brought into the Animal Shelter by a member of the public after being found 'wrecked' by Vale Garage. Unfortunately it did not survive.



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Dark-breasted Barn Owl *Tyto alba guttata*

7th record – last recorded 2000

La Ramee, 3rd March (M.P.Lawlor).

This central and eastern European race of Barn Owl is not only darker on the breast, but is darker all over the plumage, not showing the white-ness of our local birds. Most Guernsey records are of winter birds but it is notable that the last wintering one in 2000, was last seen on 4th Mar. This suggests that the species migrates back to its breeding grounds at the start of March which fits in with the arrival of this bird. Despite further searching, it was only seen on one evening.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

6th record – last recorded 2000

Rue du Closel, Vale, 26th October (P.K.Veron).

This bird flew overhead, calling, during a good passage of Skylarks.

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

14th record – last recorded 2005

Pulias Beach, 20th November 2005 until 12th February.

The rocky, seashore habitat is unusual for this species but it was sometimes seen to fly inland to a nearby grassy field. This is the longest-staying Water Pipit ever on the island and the first to fully overwinter.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

22nd record – last recorded 2000

Saumarez Nature Trail/Heritage Walk, 22nd April (L.Thomson).

Although a few Nightingales probably pass through the island every year on migration, they are so secretive that they are rarely seen. Even this bird – which was discovered because it was singing – disappeared after a brief sighting.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

14th record – last recorded 2005

Pleinmont, 1st December (L.Thomson).

This was the latest ever report of this species, which has previously been noted between 5th October and 23rd November.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

3rd and 4th records since 1998 - last recorded 2005

Pleinmont, 9th April (R.J.Murphy).

Rue des Hougues, SA, 18th April (M.A.Guppy).

Between 1998 and 2004 there were no Rooks reported in Guernsey and so the four records in the last three years is an improvement. These two records were perhaps the same bird.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

29th record – last recorded 2005

L'Eree area, juvenile, 9th to 19th October (J.Hooper et al).

Guernsey continues its run of sightings, with an amazing 21 birds in the last 10 years.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

1st record

Moulin Huet, 12th October (C.J.Mourant).

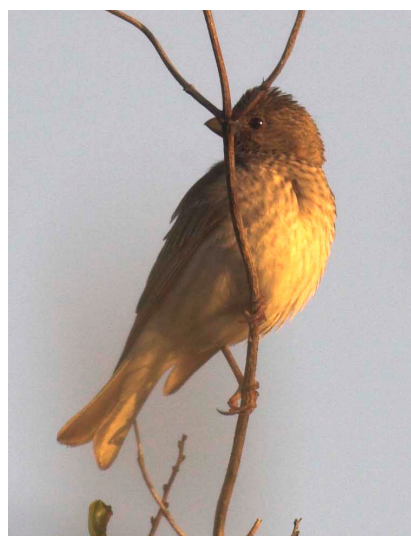
Red-eyed Vireo is the most regular of the North American landbirds to occur in Western Europe, and local birders have been searching for one for many years. This bird was seen well a few times by one fortunate observer but it chose the most unhelpful, densely-wooded valley to feed in. By the time the rest of the local birders had arrived it had vanished.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

2nd record – last recorded 1992

2, Pleinmont, 1st-year males, 2nd to 4th June (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson et al).

Common Rosefinch is surprisingly rare on Guernsey. It is a regular albeit uncommon visitor the south coast of Britain and one would expect it to have a similar status here. This year's record mirrors the previous one, when two birds were found together in June 1992. Although it was one singing bird that was usually seen, observers reported two birds singing on occasion.

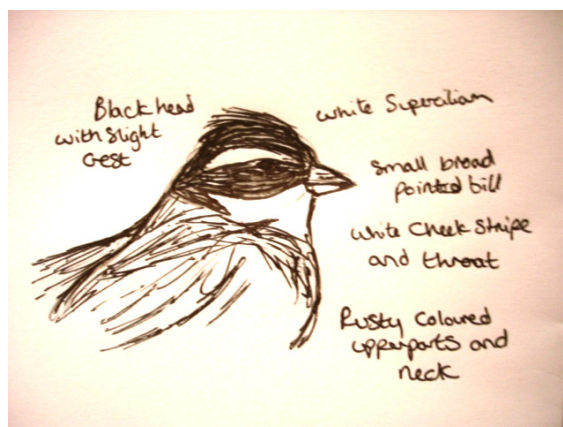


Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

1st record

Perelle Bay slipway, male, 11th June (J.Hooper, M.L.Stanford).

Although Rustic Bunting has long been predicted to occur in Guernsey, a male bird in early summer was most unexpected. As it was a male bird, the identification was straightforward which was useful as the sighting was brief. After feeding with sparrows on the slipway for just a few minutes, the bird flew inland and was never seen again. The third new species for the island in a magical three days in June.



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Alderney

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*

Over Longis, immature, 16th August (J.G.Sanders).

A new species for Alderney, this bird was watched to fly in and appeared to land but unfortunately could not be re-found.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Over Longis, 4th May (M.P.Atkinson, R.Laband, N.Maurice).

Black Kite appears to becoming a rare but regular sight in Alderney.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

Guns, male, 4th June (J.G.Sanders).

A June record for this northerly-breeding species is very unusual this far south. Clearly something unusual was happening at the time if one also considers the Rustic Bunting record in Guernsey.