

Guernsey Rare Bird Report 2007



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Bailiwick of Guernsey Rarities Committee

Rare Bird Report 2007

Guernsey

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

3rd record – last recorded 2006

Marais Nord, 2006 to at least 13th March.

Claire Mare & L'Eree, 13th October to 2008 (C.Radford, et al).

Last year's bird stayed with the feral geese all winter, and departed at about the right time. A second bird arriving in the Autumn was a surprise as the species is exceptionally rare in Guernsey – perhaps it was the same returning individual. This bird stayed with the feral geese on the Old Aerodrome until the end of the year.



Claire Mare © CRadford

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

3rd record – last recorded 2004

Claire Mare NR and L'Eree, 19th April to 21st May (R.J.Murphy, et al).

Only the third island record of this very common British species. This one stayed for a while, unlike the previous two. Its rarity in Guernsey is not hugely surprising as it is not widely distributed in France at all, especially in the West.



© R.J.Murphy

Scaup *Aythya marila*

13th record – last recorded 1996

First-winter male, Grande Mare Golf Course, 31st December into 2008

(A.J.Bisson, et al).

With 12 years since the last record of Scaup this was an excellent ending to the year. This bird chose a small green-side pond on the Golf Course and showed exceptionally well.



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Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

3rd, 4th and 5th records – last recorded 2004

Rue des Bergers, 30th October to 5th November (unknown, et al).

Verte Rue, St. Saviour (& surrounding area), 13th December to 2008 (C.Kinnersly, et al.)

**Route des Hougets, St. Saviour (& surrounding area – joining the previous bird),
24th December to 2008 (C.J.Mourant, et al)**

There was an unprecedented, large influx of this species into South-western Britain and Ireland in the late autumn and winter of 2007 and we managed to join in with the excitement. The October bird was one of the earliest of this influx and maybe moved on to the UK. It is amazing that new arrivals can find birds already present in anonymous fields in the middle of the island – but that's what happened in December. All these birds showed exceptionally well and this may be a more regular sight, as climate change may push this Mediterranean species north.



© MPLawlor – December



© MPLawlor – October



© MPLawlor – December

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

18th record – last recorded 2006

Claire Mare, 24th August (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, J.Hooper, et al).

Presumed same, Val des Terres, St. Peter Port, 30th August (P.Hillion).

It was impossible to know whether these two sightings were actually the same bird but the close dates suggest so. The latter sighting was very unusual in that the heron had paused to rest in a grassy field by the roadside, nowhere near any water whatsoever – a big surprise for the finder.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

2nd record – last recorded 2005

Le Petit Axse, Vale, 14th August.

A photograph appeared in the Guernsey Press of a Sacred Ibis in a field along this lane in the Vale. Despite subsequent searches it was not seen again. As with the last wintering bird, this was no doubt from the large population in western France, and as there were no suspicious rings or such like, it was accepted as the island's second record. We fully expect this species to be more regular in the future.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

19th record – last recorded 2002

L'Eree shingle bank, 28th September
(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al).

The first sighting for five years, this bird did not stay for very long.

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Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

13th record – last recorded 2005

Pleinmont, 21st to 24th September (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al).

The third in four years after a ten year gap. This bird was quite approachable and delighted many observers during its stay. The highlight of the year for many.



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Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

11th, 12th and 13th records – last recorded 2005

Juvenile, past Jaonneuse, 9th November (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson).

Juvenile, past Chouet, 10th November (M.A.Guppy).

Juvenile/First-winter, past Fort le Crocq, 7th December (J.Hooper)

All autumn records previously were in September and October and so all these three are late individuals. This species is becoming regular off our northern coast.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

5th record – last recorded 2004

First-winter, La Mare de Carteret playing fields, 18th February (J.M.Medland, et al).

First found on the playing fields, this bird soon moved onto the adjacent beach, but it did not stay for very long at all.



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Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

13th, 14th & 15th records – last recorded 2006

First-winter, Jaonneuse Bay and Grandes Havres area, from 2006 to 27th January.

First-winter, L'Eree, 9th & 10th January (D.J.R.Andrews, et al).

First-winter, near Airport, 14th February (P.K.Veron). Presumed same, injured then released by Animal Centre on 27th February and seen at Reservoir on 16th March.

First-winter, Chouet, 22nd December to 2008 (M.P.Lawlor, et al).

There were at least 9 different individual 'white-winged' gulls seen during the year. There have been only 21 Glaucous and Iceland Gulls seen previously on the island, showing just what a large influx it was.



© JHooper



Chouet, Dec © MPLawlor

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*

last recorded 2006

First-winter, Bordeaux or Mont Cuet Tip, 16th January to 10th April (first appeared in December 2006).

This Canadian subspecies of Iceland Gull (or hybrid or intergrade with Thayer's) seen briefly in 2006, suddenly reappeared at Bordeaux and stayed for a while, enabling everyone to study it properly. After seemingly departing, it again reappeared a couple of times at the rubbish tip.



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Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

11th, 12th and 13th records – last recorded 2006

First-winter, Jaonneuse & Grandes Havres area, from 4th January to 19th February. Presumably the bird seen at L'Eree in December 2006, also noted at Grandes Rocques, Belle Greve Bay and the Reservoir.

Another First-winter, Jaonneuse & Grandes Havres area, between 7th & 21st January.

First-summer, Town Harbour, 6th May (A.J.Bisson, V.E.Froome, A.R.Grange, R.Lihou).

First-winter, Belle Greve Bay, 18th December (B.G.Wells et al). Also noted at Vazon and L'Eree before the end of the year.

Four birds in one year is unprecedented. We should remember that the species is still a very rare bird, with just 9 records prior to the above four birds. Unfortunately, the second bird collected some oil on its plumage during its stay here.



Jaonneuse, Jan © VEFroome



Grandes Havres, Jan © BGWells



Belle Greve Bay, December © BGWells

Dark-breasted Barn Owl *Tyto alba guttata*

7th record – last recorded 2006

L'Ancrese Common, 8th to 13th September (D.J.R.Andrews et al).

This is the second year running that his central and eastern European race of Barn Owl has been recorded on the island. It is very rare in Britain, but ringing recoveries have shown that this subspecies does winter in western France, and so may not be as rare here as is thought.

Bee-eater *Merops apiasta*

13th record – last recorded 2005

Pleinmont, 18th May (L.Thomson).

This bird came in off the sea, circled for a while then carried on North. There were also Bee-eater sightings in Sark and Jersey around this time.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

7th & 8th records – last recorded 2006

2, Rue des Vallees, Castel, 21st October (L.Thomson).

4, Herm, 23rd October (L.Thomson)

It was a very good year for migrant Woodlarks in Jersey also – it is surprising that Guernsey does not record the species more often since it is quite a common migrant on the coasts of nearby France.

Shorelark *Eremophila alpestris*

10th record – last recorded 2003

Mont Herault/Pleinmont, 8th to 10th April (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al).

Although primarily occurring in October and November, this is the island's 3rd spring record of Shorelark. The photographs show what a splendid bird it was.



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Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

4th record – last recorded 1989

Juvenile, Claire Mare, 26th October (R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson).

One of the rarest birds of the year, this Mediterranean swallow fed for a short while over the pond at the Claire Mare with other hirundines. During the same week, three others were noted in Western Britain. There have been no records since three were seen in three years during the eighties.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

5th record since 1998 - last recorded 2006

**Up to 3, area around Candie Road, Castel, 3rd to 11th March
(J.E.Brown, R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al).**

Early spring does seem to be a good time of year to catch up with Rook in Guernsey. Despite being present for more than a week, these birds were very difficult to see.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

30th & 31st records – last recorded 2006

Juvenile, Claire Mare area, 8th to 11th September (D.J.R.Andrews et al).

Juvenile, L'Islet, 14th October (C.Kinnersly, P.K., M. & S.Veron)

Guernsey has now had 23 birds in the last 11 years.

Alderney

Great White Egret *Ardea alba*

Clonque Bay/Platte Saline, 7th February (C.C.Michel).

A new species for Alderney, this bird was resting on the waters edge briefly.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus*

Over Valongis, 30th December (A.H.Riley).

The second Alderney record.

Whiskered Tern *Chidonias hybrida*

Mannez Pond, 11th May (V.E.Froome, A.R.Grange, et al).

A big surprise for everyone at the opening of the new hide, this being a new species for the whole Bailiwick. Unfortunately it seemed to pass straight through.

Previous year : 2006

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*

Juvenile, at sea a few km North of Alderney, 27th October 2006 (D.Chown, L.Soanes).

The second record for Alderney.

Compiled by **Mark Lawlor** (*Rarities Committee Chairman/Guernsey Bird Recorder*)



Buff-breasted Sandpiper © PHillion