

Guernsey

Rare Bird
Report **2008**



Bailiwick of Guernsey Rarities Committee

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The following records were submitted to and accepted by the Rarities Committee.

Guernsey

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Claire Mare & L'Eree, October 2007 to 23rd May.

Scaup *Aythya marila*

First-winter male, Grande Mare Golf Course, December 2008 to 15th February.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*

12th record – last recorded 1998

Juvenile, passing Chouet seawatching hide, 22nd November (M.A.Guppy).

This bird was seen well as it flew by the hide at a relatively close distance. Although only seen once before 1979, this species became more regular during the 80's and early 90's, but like many seaduck, it is now very difficult to find.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*

2nd record since 1995 – last recorded 2005

Rue des Hougues, St. Andrews, 14th October (M.P.Lawlor).

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*

8th record – last recorded 2002

Passing Chouet seawatching hide, 5th October (M.A.Guppy).

Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

7th record since 1993 – last recorded 2004

Claire Mare, 7th December (C.Bale).



© C.Bale

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

6th record – last recorded 2007

Two birds, St. Andrews area, December 2007 to March 2008, one to 4th May.

Third bird, St. Andrews area, 17th February to 2nd March at least (M.A.Guppy, et al).

The winter of 2007-2008 saw a large influx of Cattle Egrets into the UK and on 17th February, three birds were seen together along Bailliff's Cross Road. The last date that all three birds were seen was 2nd March, and the last sighting of any bird was on 4th May – it was impossible to tell which individuals left or stayed.



© W.R.Turner

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

19th record – last recorded 2007

**Claire Mare, 2nd to 11th May
(L.Thomson, et al).**



© P.Hillion

White Stork *Ciconia ciconia*

9th record – last recorded 2001

Two, by Frossard House, St. Peter Port, 9th April (H.Nicol).

The finder was exceedingly surprised to see these birds outside his office window one morning. They were perched in large trees, presumably having roosted there the previous night since the group of trees are often used by Herons.

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

20th and 21st records – last recorded 2007

Two, adult and immature, Claire Mare, 16th and 17th June.

Juvenile, flew over Rue des Pres, 10th October (A.M.Smith).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

5th record – last recorded 2004

Grande Mare (and elsewhere), 26th and 27th April (A.J.Bisson, et al).

After two birds in 2004, it was thought that the species would probably become annual on the island, but this was the first record since. It wandered widely, mostly being seen between the Fauxquets Valley and the Reservoir.



© B.G.Wells

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Tryngites subruficollis

14th record – last recorded 2007

L'Eree Old Aerodrome, 26th May (M.A.Guppy, et al).

The first ever Spring record for the island, all others are from September or early October.



© M.A.Guppy

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

6th record – last recorded 2007

Adult, Saumarez Park, 2nd to 4th January (J.P.Down, et al).



© J.P.Down

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*

First-winter, Chouet area, December 2008 to 18th January.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

14th record – last recorded 2007

First or second-winter, Jaonneuse Bay, 14th November (L.Thomson, R.J.Murphy).

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

2nd record – last recorded 1993

First-winter female, Lihou Headland, 27th December (C. de Carteret, et al)

This brief sighting of a Snowy Owl on the rocks at tip of Lihou Headland was disappointing news to the local birders who missed out. However it was refound on Lihou Island early in 2009 and almost everyone got to see it. It is highly likely that this bird, and the Alderney bird below, came from North America, where there was an exceptional breeding season for Snowy Owls. This meant lots of young birds being pushed further south than is usual and a few crossed the Atlantic, perhaps hitching a ride on a ship.

Dark-breasted Barn Owl

Tyto alba guttata

9th record – last recorded 2007

Mont Herault, 11th February to 24th April (P.Hillion, et al).



© P.Hillion

Bee-eater *Merops apiasta*

14th, 15th and 16th records – last recorded 2007

Rue de la Ronde Cheminee, 27th April (J.M.Medland, et al).

Pleinmont, 3rd May (J.Hooper, et al).

Green Lanes, St. Peter Port, 27th June (L.Thomson).

Three sightings in one year is the best ever – a species that should increase as the climate warms.



© M.A.Guppy

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*

9th record – last recorded 2007

Mont Herault, 7th December (L.Thomson, et al).

Water Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*

15th & 16th records – last recorded 2006

Rousse, 19th January to 9th March (M.P.Lawlor, et al).

Fort le Crocq, 25th November to 2009 (M.P.Lawlor, et al).



© M.P.Lawlor

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

6th record – last recorded 2005

Pleinmont, 8th October (L.Thomson).

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

15th record - last recorded 2006

Saints Valley, 22nd & 23rd November (L.Thomson, et al).

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

32nd & 33rd records – last recorded 2007

Juvenile, Baubigny, 10th September (M.P.Lawlor).

Juvenile, Fort Hommet & Fort le Crocq, 28th September to 3rd October (J.P.Down, et al)

Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*

1st record

**Les Sauvagees, St. Sampsons, 29th November
to 3rd December**
(C. & P. Robinson, R.A. Ferbrache, et al)

Any redpoll is scarce in the island and so a bird visiting a feeder in a small garden was in itself noteworthy. When it was seen well, its large size and paleness indicated it was a Mealy Redpoll from northern Europe, rather than a Lesser Redpoll from the UK. These two redpoll forms were recently split and this appears to be the first documented record of Mealy (or Common) Redpoll for Guernsey.



© M.P. Lawlor

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

3rd record – last recorded 2006

Juvenile, Lihou Island, 4th August (G.D. Atkinson)

Why this species is so rare in the island is a mystery as it is a very regular visitor to the UK. This is the only autumn record so far and was very early indeed.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos*

1st record

Male, Rue des Hougues, St. Andrews, 25th & 26th May (M.A. Guppy, et al)

Without doubt, this was the rare bird highlight of the year. An exceptionally rare species and a beautiful one at that. A massive surprise for the finder, right in the middle of the island, but late spring is often a good time to find far-eastern species in Western Europe. There was an easterly airflow at the time which would have deflected an overshooting bird further west.



© P. Hillion

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

2nd record since 1997

Female, Pleinmont, 27th & 28th April (M.P.Lawlor, et al)

This bird was discovered on an excellent weekend for southern species and was the first chance most birders on the island had had to see Cirl Bunting in Guernsey. There were regular sightings in the 1970's but there has been only a handful of records since.



© P.Alexander

Alderney

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*

2nd record for Alderney

Crabby, 5th August (A.H.Riley).

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Battery Quarry and elsewhere, 16th April to 8th May (B.Caswell, et al).

Montagu's Harrier *Circus pygargus*

Female, Fort Albert, 7th May (M.Atkinson, A.H.Riley, R.Laband).

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

2nd record for Alderney

**Along the Odeon access road and then various locations, 10th November to 2009
(G.W.Salt, et al).**

Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

Rue de Crabby, 8th June (A.H.Riley).

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropsis daurica*

Braye Harbour, 27th April (C. & A.Rogers).

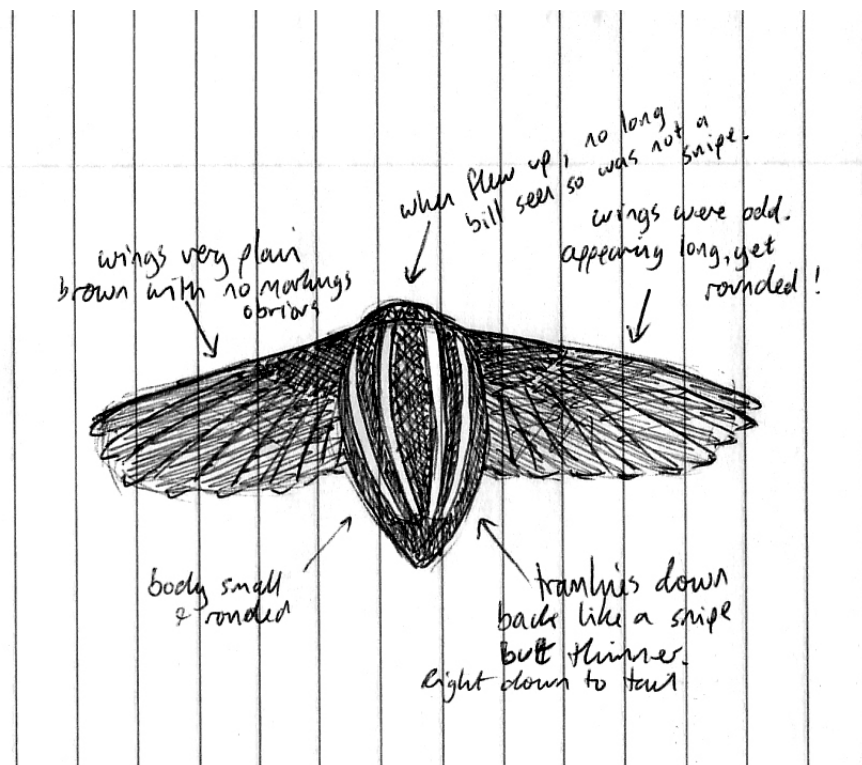
2nd record for Alderney

Fan-tailed Warbler *Cisticola juncidis*

About 7th record for Alderney

There were regular sightings of at least one bird, mainly along the South coast between Quoire and the Airport. It is thought that more than perhaps three birds were present on the island in May.

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



Quail sketch © M.P.Lawlor