

# Rare Birds in Guernsey



# 2018

La Société Guernesiaise - Ornithological Section

# Report on rare birds in Guernsey in 2018

The islands of Guernsey, Herm, Jethou, Lihou and associated islets

*Mark Lawlor and the Bailiwick of Guernsey Rarities Committee*

The following records have been submitted to, assessed by and accepted by the Bailiwick of Guernsey Rarities Committee (BGRC) which is organised through the Ornithological Section of La Société Guernesiaise. The members of the committee for 2018 (M.P.Lawlor, A.P.Loaring, K.Childs, B.G.Wells, M.C.Simmons, J.Horton, P.K.Veron, L.Higgins) would like to thank all the observers and photographers who sent in details of their rarity observations.



**LA  
SOCIÉTÉ  
GUERNESIAISE**

The systematic list is based on the BOU British List. Although the BGRC's area covers the whole of the Bailiwick, this report focuses on the rare bird sightings from Guernsey. However, the accepted records from Alderney and Sark are also included for completeness and interest. For each record, the following information is given where available; number of birds, age and sex if known, dates, locations, whether it was trapped or photographed, the names of the finder(s), and whether it was seen by anyone else (*et al.*). For each species, it states how many previous Guernsey records there have been (if known) and there is a comment on the birds natural range and migrations. There are also the editor's comments and analysis of sightings for some species.

**Cover picture** : Iberian Chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus ibericus*) by Tony Loaring



# Guernsey

## Pale-bellied Brent Goose

*Branta bernicla hrota*

**One, 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> April, Mouissonniere Beach, Herm, photo (J. P. Down, J. Brown, et. al.).**

Despite the proximity of wintering flocks in Jersey and Normandy, this race of Brent Goose continues to be rare in Guernsey. As can be seen on the photo, this individual was wearing coded colour rings. Information received from the ringing scheme tells us that this bird is a 6 year old male which has wintered near Unville, Normandy for the last four years. It was ringed in Down, Ireland where it regularly stops off on migration each year.

*(Breeds in Arctic Canada, Greenland & Svalbard, wintering in north-western Europe)*



Pale-bellied Brent Goose - JPDowm

## Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

**One, 24<sup>th</sup> February to 24<sup>th</sup> March, Colin Best Nature Reserve, plus various other locations close to West coast, photo - 5<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

After the first bird noted in 1993, this species has now been recorded in four out of the last fifteen years and looks set to become a little more regular on the island.

*(Introduced American species, breeding throughout northern Europe)*



Canada Goose - RAFerbrache



## Pink-footed Goose

### *Anser brachyrhynchus*

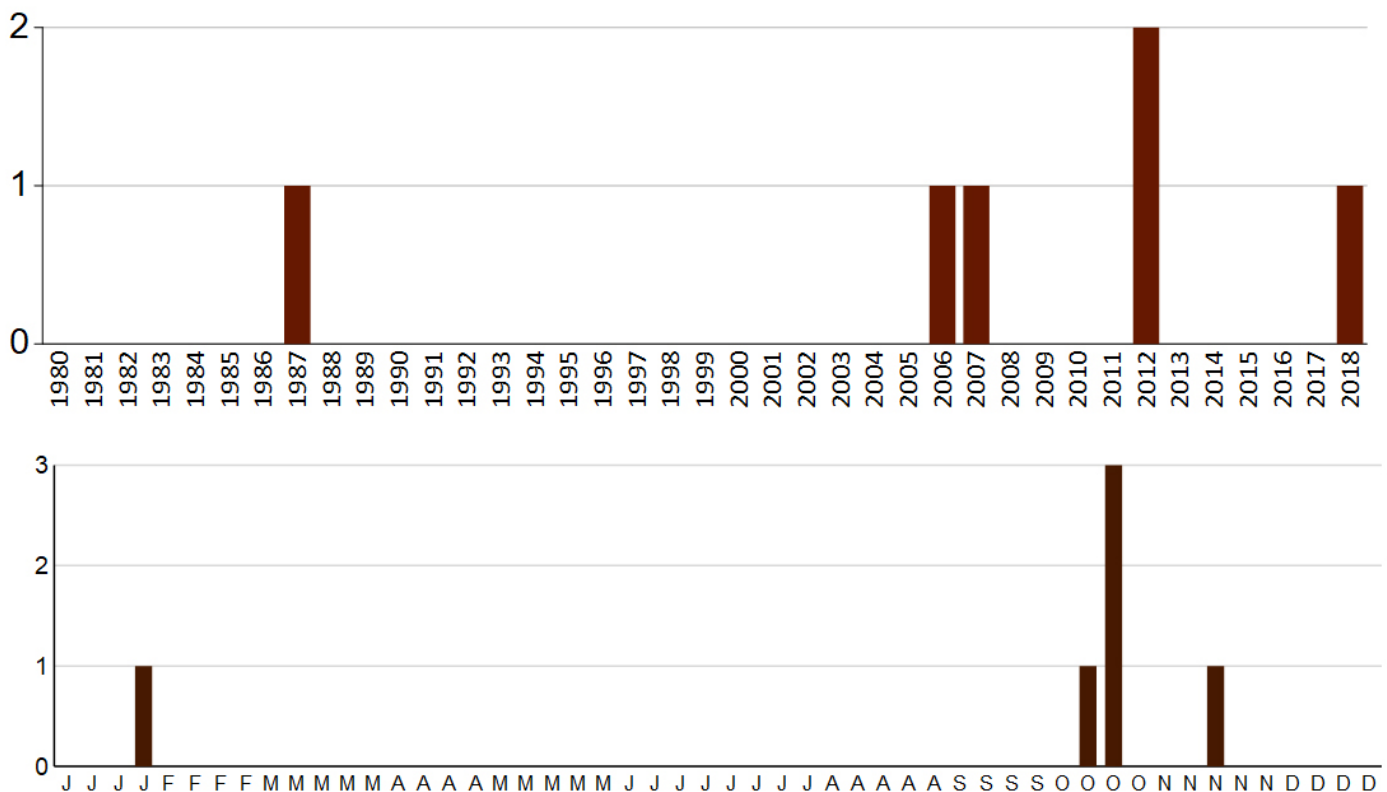
**Two, 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November, Rue des Hougues, St. Andrews and nearby fields, photo (J. Hooper, et. al.) - 6<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

These geese were quite elusive, disappearing for a few days before reappearing nearby. They were probably the same pair that were discovered in Alderney soon afterwards.

*(Breeds in the far north, in Greenland, Iceland & Svalbard, wintering in NW Europe)*



Pink-footed Goose - RA Ferbrache



**Figure 1** : Pink-footed Goose records in Guernsey by year and by week.

The first record of Pink-footed Goose in Guernsey was in 1987 when two birds were present at the Grande Mare for a couple of weeks at the end of January. There were then no more records until 2006 when the species became a little more regular, with now 5 records in 13 years. This increase in records coincided with a large increase in wintering birds in southern England. The species used to be quite uncommon in the southern half of England but now large flocks winter in East Anglia with smaller groups elsewhere. They also winter on the continent between Denmark and Belgium and this may also be a source of our birds.

All the recent records here have been in late autumn which indicates that these are birds that have likely “overshot” their wintering grounds and travelled across the English Channel. The timing of the arrivals in Guernsey reflects this, as the 2006 to 2012 records were all in the small window between 13<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October, one of the peak times for Pink-foot migration in the UK. So this year’s November arrival was later than usual.

Once arrived most of the Pink-footed Geese in Guernsey have tended to stay the whole winter, leaving early the following spring. The records have been of mostly single individuals, but a huge flock of 16 birds wintered at L'Eree during 2012 to 2013.





Pink-footed Goose - APLoaring

## Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

**One, adult, 2017 to 11<sup>th</sup> April, Rue des Hougues, Castel, plus various other locations in the vicinity, photo.**

This bird arrived late last autumn and continued to be seen in its favoured fields until it departed in spring.

*(A common breeding species throughout the far north of Europe, wintering in large flocks in north-western Europe)*



Whooper Swan - RAFerbrache



## Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*

**One, probably first-winter male, 21<sup>st</sup> March, Little Russell and Belle Greve Bay, photo (W. R. Turner, M. A. Guppy, et. al.) - 20<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

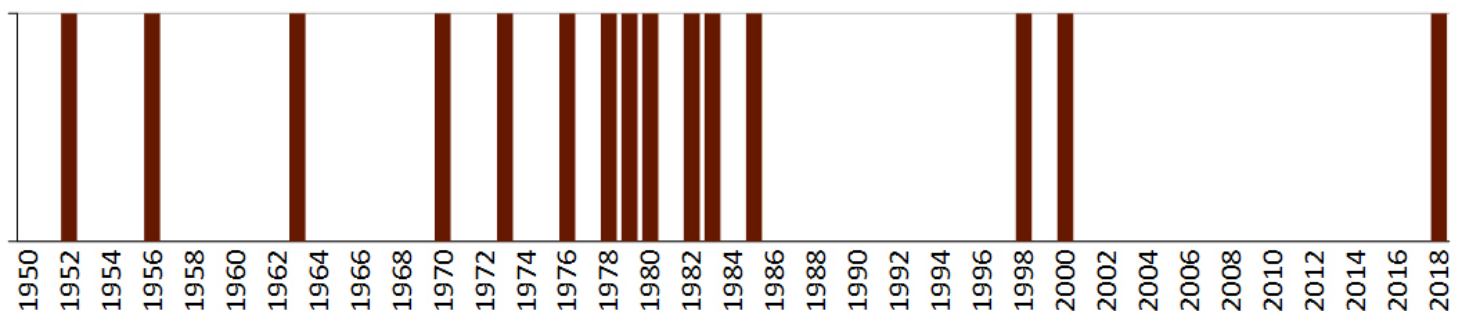
This bird surprised a couple of birders when it flew past the Trident on its way back from Herm one afternoon flashing its white wing patches. The bird headed for the outer reaches of Belle Greve Bay where it could be watched for a short while distantly from Salerie. It was very elusive however, and soon departed from the area.

*(Breeds in the far north of Scandinavia & Russia, wintering mainly on northern European seas.)*



Velvet Scoter - WRTurner

Despite this bird being (at least) the 20th record for Guernsey, Velvet Scoter is currently a very rare species locally, the last accepted record being way back in 2000. This wasn't always the case as can be seen from the chart below. In the late 70s and early 80s there were many sightings, with 11 of the 20 records just in the decade between 1976 and 1985. This period was also good for other rare 'seaduck' with multiple records of Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Goldeneye and even Smew. Seabird populations in the Bailiwick seem to ebb and flow and are no doubt linked to food availability and weather patterns. Perhaps there will be another seaduck boom in future years but, with increasing global warming, these northern species are more likely to become rarer and rarer.



**Figure 2 :** Years that Velvet Scoter has been recorded in Guernsey.



## Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

**One, 9<sup>th</sup> September, Hurd Deep, at sea, c.13 miles NW of Guernsey, photo (J. P. Down, M. A. Guppy, J. Hooper, A. P. Loaring, C. I. Massey, A. Marquis, C. J. Mourant, R. J. Murphy, M. C. Simmons, D. Spicer, L. Thomson, W. R. Turner) - 3<sup>rd</sup> Guernsey record.**

Despite annual pelagic trips out from Guernsey, there was a large gap of 14 years between the first and second records of Wilson's Petrel in local waters. So it was a little unexpected that the 2018 pelagic would find the third, only one year after the second. It was a full boat of 12 lucky birders that had prolonged views of this rare ocean wanderer. The Wilson's Petrel was closer to Guernsey than last year's bird, not quite right over the Hurd Deep but a little before the trench drops away. It is interesting to note on the map overleaf that the bird was almost in the exact same area of sea as the 2003 bird.

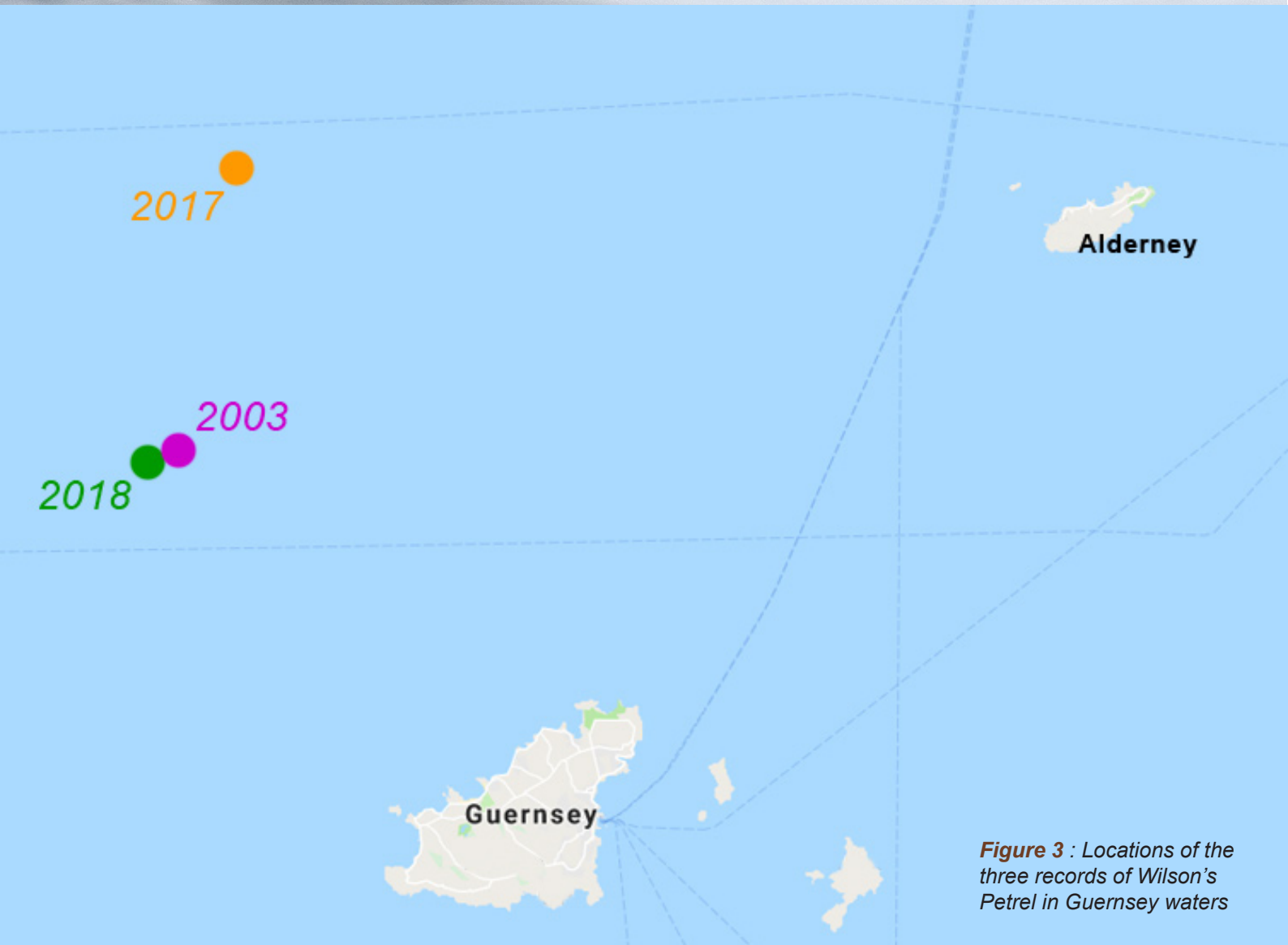
*(Breeds on islands in the southern hemisphere, migrating north to summer in the North Atlantic. Rarely seen from land, this is a very pelagic species)*



Wilson's Petrel - APLoaring



Wilson's Petrel - AMarquis



**Figure 3 :** Locations of the three records of Wilson's Petrel in Guernsey waters



## Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

**One, first-year, 2017 to 2<sup>nd</sup> May, various locations (mainly in Castel parish), photo.**

Originally arriving as part of a group of 10 Glossy Ibises that arrived in October 2017, this was the only individual which decided to overwinter on the island. It often spent time in the Rue des Bergers area and would often delight birdwatchers by standing right in front of the hide. It eventually succumbed to its migratory urges and departed.

*(Breeds in colonies throughout southern Europe. Wanders widely in the non-breeding season.)*







Glossy Ibis - MPLawlor

## **Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

**One, 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> May, over Fauxquets Valley, then various locations around the island, photo (A. P. Loaring, et. al.) - 13<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

**One, 9<sup>th</sup> November, over Fort Doyle, photo - 14<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

It was looking as though Black Kite would be overtaking Red Kite in number of records, but Red has surged ahead again by four records. The first bird toured the island and was seen by many observers, whilst the second record was a quick snap of a bird passing overhead. Looking closely at the photo of the Fort Doyle bird, there is a rather dead rat in its talons!

*(Breeds in western and central Europe and is partially migratory. Reintroduced widely in the UK)*





Red Kite - Fauxquets - APLoaring



Red Kite - Fort Doyle - DScott

## **Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*

**One, adult, 29<sup>th</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August, Claire Mare, photo** - 23<sup>rd</sup> Guernsey record.

A very elusive bird was present in the reedbed for four days in the summer time. A patient wait in the hide was required if you wanted to see this bird and even then it was generally on view for just a few seconds. This was the first sighting for seven years and represents the earliest ever 'autumn' record, the first ever in July.

*(Summer visitor, breeding in central and northern Europe, wintering mainly in Africa. Rare and local in France and UK.)*





Spotted Crake - DScott

## Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

**One, 17<sup>th</sup> May, Colin Best NR, L'Eree, photo (M. A. Guppy, et. al.)** - 1<sup>st</sup> Guernsey record.

A wader was discovered mid-morning on the saltmarsh at L'Eree but, as waders often are, it was a little tricky to identify. However, a few distant photographs were taken which luckily identified the bird as a Semipalmated Sandpiper, a first record for the island of this tiny North American 'peep'. Unluckily though, the bird did not stay around and was only present for less than an hour and a half in total and so only a few birders caught up with it. Due to increasing records on this side of the Atlantic it was a species that everyone was looking out for, but an autumn record would have been a little more predictable than a spring one.

*(Breeds in the far north of North America, wintering in Central and South America)*



Semipalmated Sandpiper - AStoaling



## **Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

**One, first-winter, 7<sup>th</sup> January to 12<sup>th</sup> April, Havelet and then numerous locations around the island, photo (M. A. Guppy, et. al.) - 27<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

There were regular sightings both on the coast and inland, sometimes on the same day, and there is a chance that two separate birds were involved. However, none of the photos proved this and so we presume it was just one very mobile bird, perhaps resting and roosting by the sea and flying inland each day to feed in the fields.

*(Breeds in the high Arctic of Greenland and Canada, wintering in the northern Atlantic including NW Europe)*



Iceland Gull - WRTurner

## **Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

**One, first-winter, 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> January, Chouet, Fort Doyle & elsewhere, photo (M. A. Guppy, M. P. Lawlor, et. al.) - 22<sup>nd</sup> Guernsey record.**

A very typical arrival date for this species which averages less than one record a year at the moment. The average length of stay of a visiting Glaucous Gull is much less than for a typical Iceland Gull, as exemplified by this year's birds.

*(Breeds on Arctic coasts, wintering in northern Europe)*





Glaucous Gull - AMarquis

## Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

**One, juvenile/first-winter, 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September, Perelle & L'Eree, photo (M. A. Guppy, et. al.)**  
- 1<sup>st</sup> Guernsey record.

A few decades ago, there was only one species of large grey-backed "Herring" Gull across Europe, until the southern birds were split as a separate species, the Yellow-legged Gull. Not too long after that, the eastern and western forms of Yellow-legged Gull were also split into two species, the former becoming Caspian Gull. This gave birdwatchers a new species to look out for and one was finally found on the island in 2018. It can be a tricky bird to identify and there may have been other previous birds which have gone under the radar. But sharp eyes picked out a subtly distinctive young bird on the beach at Perelle in September in amongst the other immature gulls. Once the combination of features were learnt, it was not too difficult to pick out from the others.

*(Breeds in eastern Europe and central Asia, increasingly wintering in western Europe)*



Caspian Gull - MPLawlor



Caspian Gull - AStoaling





Caspian Gull - APLeaving

## Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

**One, second-winter, 2017 to 15<sup>th</sup> May, various locations, photo.**

2017's star bird was still present at the start of 2018. Its appearances were typically ephemeral but were always exciting. After it left the island the bird appeared on the south coast of England for the first time causing rather a large twitch for British birders. Later in the year it was also seen in Wales.

*(Breeds along the East coast of North America, wintering slightly further south)*



Royal Tern - RAFerbrache

## Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

**One, 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> October, Pleinmont, photo (M. A. Guppy, W. R. Turner, et. al.)** - 1<sup>st</sup> Guernsey record.

**Two, 17<sup>th</sup> November, Pleinmont, photo (W. R. Turner, M. P. Lawlor, et. al.)** - 2<sup>nd</sup> Guernsey record.

Common Swifts leave Europe en masse very early in the autumn, so any swift seen after the start of October is of particular interest to birders. A sighting of a swift on a very late date hints that it may possibly be a Pallid Swift as these have a history of turning up in northern Europe late in the autumn. However, the spanner in the works is that Pallid Swift is possibly the most difficult rare species to identify as they are so similar to Common Swift, which also sometimes occur very late. In the past, the odd late swift has been seen on the island which has been suspected of being a Pallid but it has never been proved, especially as the birds move so fast it is difficult to see any detail in the field. However, this year's birds were so well photographed that an identification was able to be made. Another factor which helped the identification was that this year saw the biggest ever influx of Pallid Swifts into the UK with between 30 and 50 birds found, much outnumbering the number of late Common Swifts.

The October bird actually arrived before the main influx but it stood out because it had a very distinct, 'paddle-winged' structure. It was found late-morning on 15<sup>th</sup> before disappearing for a few hours in the afternoon. Luckily it reappeared over Pezeries later in the afternoon. It was reported briefly the next morning. The two birds which appeared together in November were at the very end of the influx and were probably birds which were heading back south. One of these had a distinctive displacement in the primary feathers and matched up with photos of a bird seen in Norfolk and Kent during the previous week, so was probably the same bird. This scruffier bird split off and flew north but the more pristine bird was present over the headland for the next few hours.

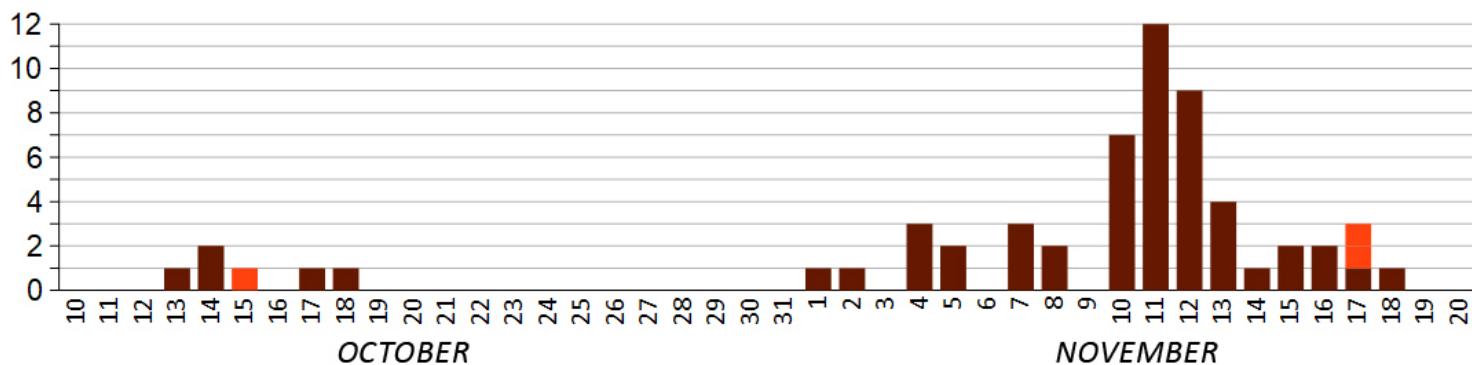
*(Breeds in southern Europe, wintering in Africa.)*



Pallid Swift - October - APLoaring (left & top), AStoaling (right)







**Figure 4 :** Pallid Swift influx into UK in autumn 2018 showing number of birds reported each day, highlighting the dates of the Guernsey birds (orange)



Pallid Swift - November (2nd bird) - MPLawlor

## Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

**One, juvenile, 13<sup>th</sup> September, found injured near Le Friquet, photo - 29<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

There isn't much detail about this record as we were passed on the photo by the Animal Shelter. None of the 8 records since the turn of the century have stayed for more than a single day, so Red-backed Shrike has been quite an elusive species for many.

*(Breeds across most of continental Europe, wintering in Africa)*



Red-backed Shrike - GSPCA

## Penduline Tit *Remiz pendulinus*

**One, first-winter female, 25<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October, Pleinmont, photo (A. D. Marquis, et. al.) - 5<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

The last Penduline Tit on Guernsey was seen in 1993 so it has been rather a long time to wait, especially with multiple records from other parts of the Channel Islands within this time. It was worth the wait though as this cracking bird showed very well during its week-long stay. One would generally expect this species to be feeding in its favoured habitat of a reedbed rather than on the top of a coastal headland, but it found that the tall crops in the Societe seed fields were a good substitute. Late autumn is the best time of year to find this species as four of the five sightings have been between 23<sup>rd</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> November. The first bird, in 1967, was in February.

*(Breeds in southern Europe, wintering in Africa.)*





Penduline Tit - AStoaling



Penduline Tit - AMarquis



**Siberian Chiffchaff***Phylloscopus collybita tristis***One, 11<sup>th</sup> January, Vazon, photo (M. P. Lawlor).**

A Chiffchaff showing the characteristics of this race was found feeding on the vrac on the beach one evening in the middle of winter. The true status of this subspecies on the island is a little unclear due to identification difficulties, but it is quite likely a more regular visitor than records suggest.

(Breeds in northern Russia, wintering mainly in India)



Siberian Chiffchaff - MPLawlor

**Iberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus ibericus*

**One, first-year male, 22<sup>nd</sup> April to 6<sup>th</sup> May, Saumarez Park, photo (M. A. Guppy, et. al.) - 1<sup>st</sup> Guernsey record.**

An unusual song from the trees near the pond at Saumarez Park alerted a sharp-eared birder to this bird. Although the bird in question didn't look especially different to a typical Common Chiffchaff, it did not produce the usual repeated two-note refrain of that species. This individual's song was more complex, consisting of three parts - firstly 3 or 4 'chiff' notes, followed by two upward-inflected whistly notes, then a few faster, irregular 'chiff' notes at the end. Once it was confirmed that it was an Iberian you could see that it was a bit brighter than a typical Chiffchaff, and photos showed that it had mixed-age primary feathers, which confirmed that it was a first-year bird (both adult Iberian and all Common Chiffchaffs should not show this feature). The bird showed exceptionally well for more than two weeks. Iberian Chiffchaff was once considered a race of Common Chiffchaff but has been split as a separate species. It has a very restricted range but has become more commonly seen in northern Europe in recent years and has even bred in the UK.

(Breeds in Iberia and North Africa, wintering in tropical West Africa.)



Iberian Chiffchaff - MPLawlor



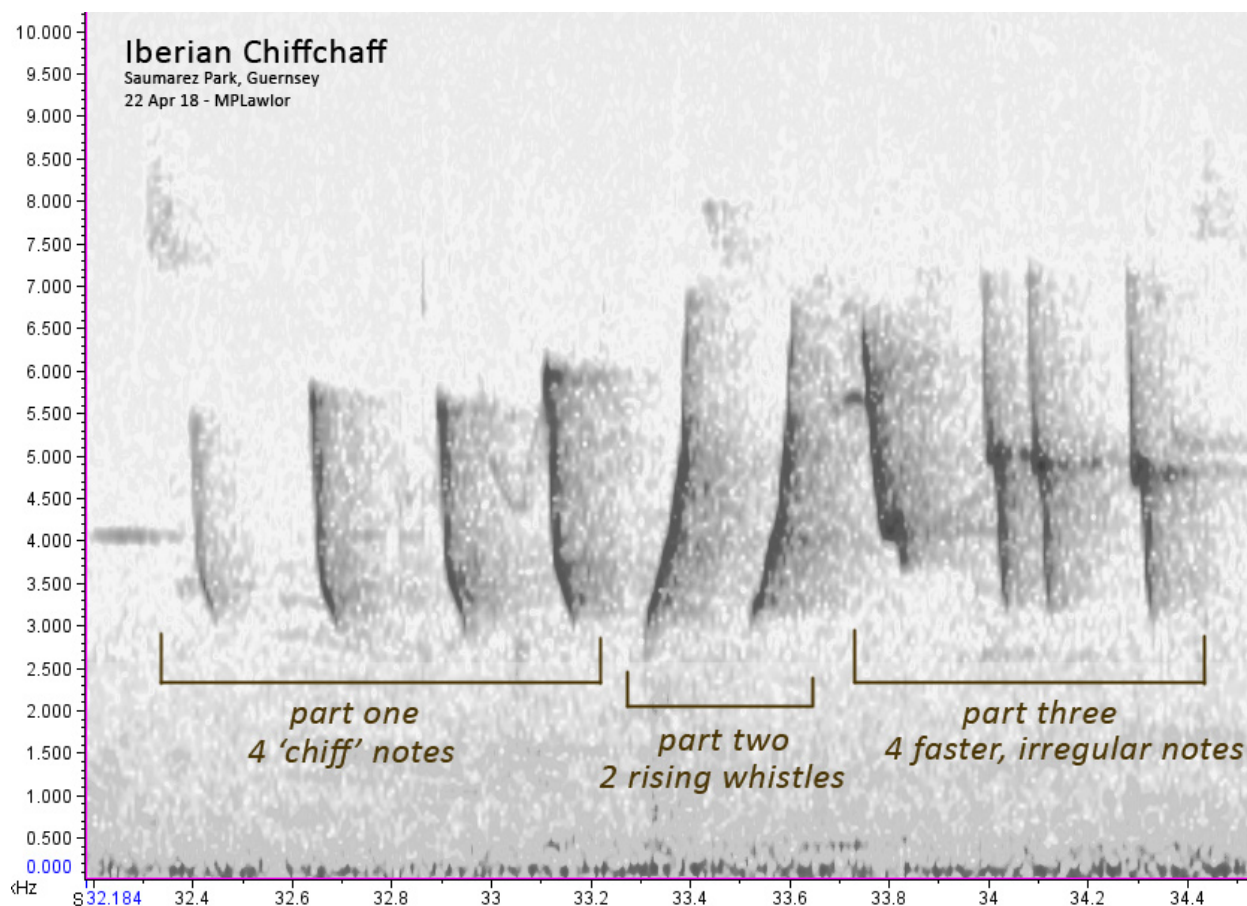


Iberian Chiffchaff - APLoaring



Iberian Chiffchaff - APLoaring





**Figure 5 :** Sonogram/Spectrogram of recording of Iberian Chiffchaff song, Saumarez Park, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019

## Aquatic Warbler

*Acrocephalus paludicola*

**One, trapped for ringing, 11<sup>th</sup> August, Claire Mare, photo (C. J. Mourant, et. al.).**

Mid-August is a typical date for Aquatic Warbler in Guernsey as they move west from their breeding grounds. This is the first bird caught for three years. Whether any arrive on the island or not often depends on the wind direction and weather. A brisk easterly breeze and a rainy night is the most likely scenario to bring one here.

*(Breeds in eastern Europe, wintering in Africa)*



Aquatic Warbler - APLoaring



## Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus*

**One, adult, 24<sup>th</sup> June, Les Laurens, Torteval (W. R. Turner) - 47<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

**One, juvenile, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> September, Rousse, photo - 48<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

**One, juvenile, 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October, Pleinmont, photo (M. A. Guppy, et. al.), probably same, 13<sup>th</sup> October, Fort Le Crocq - 49<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

The third year running that a pink bird has been seen but this is the first June record since the influx of 2002. The last blank year was in 2010 and the island is now one record away from 50.

*(Breeds in south-eastern Europe and Asia, wintering in southern Asia. Small numbers move west in the Autumn.)*



Rose-coloured Starling - Rousse - APLoaring

## Red-breasted Flycatcher

*Ficedula parva*

**One, female, 28<sup>th</sup> May, Fort Hommet headland, photo - 26<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

This bird was retrospectively identified from photos and represents a very unusual spring record of the species. The only previous spring bird was one reported on Herm in April 1984.

*(Breeds in eastern Europe, wintering mainly in India)*



Red-breasted Flycatcher - DCarre



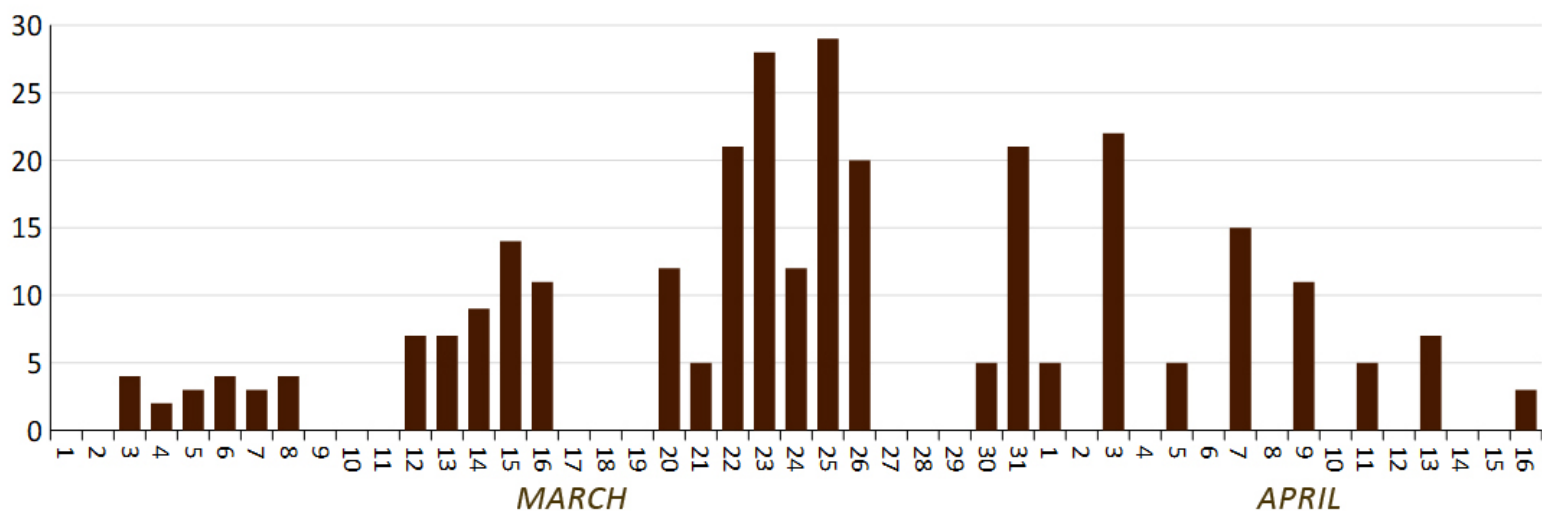
## Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

**Up to 29, from 2017 to 16<sup>th</sup> April, Foulon Cemetery, photos - 39<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

**One, 14<sup>th</sup> April, Rue des Hougues, St. Andrews - 40<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.**

After the unprecedented large influx into the island in Autumn 2017, just three birds remained, frequenting the cemetery at Le Foulon where their favoured food, Yew berries, could be found. After New Year the numbers seen at the cemetery started to vary and as many as 6 birds could be found at various times in January and February. The birds were never constantly there and could be seen to fly in and fly out throughout the day. An additional seventh bird was seen on 12<sup>th</sup> March and this heralded a sudden increase in numbers, with 14 on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 21 on 22<sup>nd</sup> and the maximum accurate count of 29 on 25<sup>th</sup>. It was very hard to count how many birds were present at any one time as they rarely flocked together and they spread out across the cemetery, constantly moving between trees. So there may have been more birds than it appeared. Thereafter the flock gradually diminished until the last was seen there on 16<sup>th</sup> April. These birds were no doubt spring migrants that were flying over Guernsey on their way back east which were attracted to a food source, perhaps by the calls of their own species. It was iterally impossible to record with accuracy when and how many of these birds arrived, so the 39<sup>th</sup> Guernsey "record" of Hawfinch involves this spring influx into the Foulon. An additional migrant bird was seen at Rue des Hougues also.

*(Resident breeder throughout Europe, with northern birds wandering further south in autumn and winter)*



**Figure 6 :** Maximum counts of Hawfinch in Foulon Cemetery per day during March and April 2019



Hawfinch - MCunningham



## **Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

**One, first-winter, 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October, Pleinmont, photos (A. J. Bisson, et. al.)** - 6<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.

**One, first-winter, 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> November, Pleinmont, photos (W. R. Turner, M. A. Guppy, et. al.)**  
- 7<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.

This species has always been a strangely absent autumn rarity in Guernsey but with 4 records in the last 6 years, it has become much more regular. Both the birds this year were feeding in La Société's seed fields so perhaps it was lack of suitable feeding habitat which was keeping the records down. These were the first records for October and November as the previous birds were seen in June, August and September.

*(Breeds in eastern and central Europe, wintering in southern Asia)*



Common Rosefinch - October - AStoaling

## **Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra*

**One, 29<sup>th</sup> September, Pleinmont, photo (M. A. Guppy, W. R. Turner, et. al.)**  
- 8<sup>th</sup> Guernsey record.

Another species that is increasing, with 3 in the last 5 years. These birds have not been very forthcoming however and they seem to disappear as soon as they are identified. The snap to the right was the only photo taken of this short-staying individual.

*(Resident breeder throughout central and southern Europe, rarely wandering)*



Corn Bunting - WRTurner





Common Rosefinch - November - A Stooling



# Alderney

Below is a list of the rare birds submitted to, and accepted by, the Bailiwick Rarities Committee from the island of Alderney in 2018. For more details of these Alderney birds, please contact the Observatory or visit their website.

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Two, fields near south cliffs, 28th December to 2019 (*J. Horton, et. al.*).

**Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*

One, Longis Pond, 21st June (*J. Horton, et. al.*).

**Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

One, Barrackmasters Lane, 30th August (*P. K. & C. Veron*).

**Black Kite** *Milvus migrans*

One, Giffoine, 28th May (*M. A. Guppy, et. al.*).

**Rough-legged Buzzard** *Buteo lagopus*

One, Mannez Lighthouse, 30th October.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

One first-winter, Saye Bay, 3rd March to 1st May (*J. Horton, et. al.*).

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*

One, trapped, Longis Nature Reserve, 30th August (*J. & D. Horton, J. Hart*)

One, trapped, Longis Nature Reserve, 31st August (*J. & D. Horton, J. Hart*)

**Fan-tailed Warbler** *Cisticola juncidis*

Up to four, Longis Common, 2nd to 5th August.

**Rose-coloured Starling** *Pastor roseus*

Two adults, Giffoine, 26th May (*M. A. Guppy*).

One adult, Platte Saline/Colin Bott, 5th to 9th June.

**White-spotted Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica cyanecula*

One male, Mannez Lighthouse, 24th March (*J. Hart, et. al.*).

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*

One, Whitegates, 10th October (*J. Hart, et. al.*).

**Cirl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*

One male, Braye, 28th March (*L. Sanders*).

One first-winter female, trapped, Essex Farm, 9th April (*J. Horton, et. al.*).



# Sark

Below is a list of the rare birds submitted to, and accepted by, the Bailiwick Rarities Committee from the island of Sark in 2018. For more details of these Sark birds, please search for the “Sark Bird Sightings” Facebook group.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

One, Petit Champ area, 16th May (J. Gill, J. & M. Mauger).

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One calling, La Forge, 19th April to 4th May (J. Birch, et. al.).

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Two, 16th February.

**Girl Bunting** *Emberiza cirlus*

One male, Kensey, 19th March (S. Drillot).

## Scarce species in Guernsey

Below is a list of other rare sightings in Guernsey in 2018. The species below occur too regularly to be classified as official rarities, and are generally labelled “scarcities”. Some years, a scarce species may occur in higher-than-usual numbers and will be missing from this section (for practical reasons). Since these species are not official rarities, no formal report form has had to be completed, and no assessment has taken place by the Rarities Committee. So, as these records are ‘unchecked’ they are listed with the assumption of correct identification by the observer, and the proviso that an error may have been made on occasion. A handful of reported scarcities have been omitted from this list as it was judged that there was a high likelihood of a mistake being made. Some may be the same bird moving between locations.



Garganey pair - A. St. Omer



### **Garganey (*Spatula querquedula*)**

2 (pr), Claire Mare, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr.

### **Gadwall (*Anas strepera*)**

4 (3m 1f), Claire Mare, L'Eree & Grande Mare, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
2 (pr), Rue des Bergers, 28<sup>th</sup> Aug.

### **Pintail (*Anas acuta*)**

1 (m), Colin Best NR, 7<sup>th</sup> Jan.  
3 (2m 1f), Vale Pond, Rue des Bergers, CBNR, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar.  
1 (m), Colin Best NR, Grande Mare, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
1 (m), L'Eree, Claire Mare, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov to 2019.

### **Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)**

1 (f), Claire Mare, 27<sup>th</sup> Jan to 4<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
1 (f), Grande Mare, 5<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
3 (2m 1f), Perelle, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
1, Reservoir, 1<sup>st</sup> Dec.

### **Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)**

1 (f), L'Eree, Perelle, 7<sup>th</sup> Jan to 9<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
1, Perelle, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
1 (f), Paradis, 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
Up to 3 (2f 1m), Rocquaine to Vazon, 18<sup>th</sup> Nov to 2019.

### **Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*)**

1, Jaonneuse, 27<sup>th</sup> Aug.

### **Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)**

1, Rousse, Grandes Rocques, 21<sup>st</sup> Dec to 2019.

### **Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)**

1, Belle Greve Bay, 1<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan, perhaps same 25<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
1, Vazon, 8<sup>th</sup> Jan.

### **Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)**

2, over Rocquaine, 8<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1 (j), Claire Mare, Vale Pond, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Jun.  
1, over Fort Saumarez, 25<sup>th</sup> Jul.  
1 (j), Pleinmont 29<sup>th</sup> Sep, then Claire Mare, 30<sup>th</sup> Sep to 2019.

### **Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)**

1, Rue des Cambrees, Tort., then in SA & SM, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
2, Colin Best NR, Reservoir, 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May.  
3, Rue des Hougues, C., 25<sup>th</sup> Aug (1 to 31<sup>st</sup>, various sites)  
5, Rue a Fresnes, C., 17<sup>th</sup> Sep. (*maybe same as above*)  
2, Route des Hougets, 20<sup>th</sup> Sep. (*maybe same as above*)  
2, Icart, 27<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
Up to 7, Rue des Bergers (& dispersing), 29<sup>th</sup> Oct to 2019.



Gadwall - RDB, Aug - RA Ferbrache



Pochard - CM - AStoaling



Red-necked Grebe - DCarre



Black-necked Grebe - BGB - AMarquis





Spoonbill - CM, Jun - APLoaring



Cattle Egret - RDB, Dec - APLoaring



### Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

- 1, L'Eree area, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr.
- 1, Colin Best NR, 15<sup>th</sup> Apr.
- 1, Jethou, 16<sup>th</sup> Apr.
- 1, Fauxquets, 21<sup>st</sup> May.
- 1, Claire Mare, 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct.
- 1, Pleinmont, 26<sup>th</sup> Nov.

### Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*)

- Up to 4, Fauxquets (& wandering), 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Sep.
- 1, Vale Pond, 13<sup>th</sup> Sep.
- 1, Les Fauconnaires, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep.
- 1, Fauxquets, 20<sup>th</sup> Sep.
- 1, Chouet, 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

### Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

- 1 (f/i), Rue des Bergers, 23<sup>rd</sup> May.
- 1 (f/i), Colin Best NR, 20<sup>th</sup> Aug.
- 1 (f/i), Rue des Hougues, Castel, 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Aug.
- 1, by Airport, Fauxquets, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep.
- 1 (f/i), La Planque, 21<sup>st</sup> Sep.
- 1, Camp du Roi, 25<sup>th</sup> Sep.
- 1 (f/i), Airport, Fauxquets, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct.

### Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

- 2, Colin Best NR, 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Mar (2 birds 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> only).



Hen Harrier - RdHougues - APLoaring



Avocet - APLoaring



Osprey - La Capelle Is, Apr - APLoaring



### Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

3, Rue des Hougues, SA, 2<sup>nd</sup> Apr.  
1, Colin Best NR, 24<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1, Colin Best NR, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> May.

### Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

1, Colin Best NR, 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
1, Colin Best NR, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
3, Colin Best NR, 30<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
2, Vale Pond, 21<sup>st</sup> Jun.  
1, Vale Pond, CBNR, Vazon, 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
1, Pulias, 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug.

### Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> May.  
1, Vazon, 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> Aug.

### Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*)

3, Colin Best NR, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar.  
1, Grand Pre, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

### Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*)

2, Vazon, 18<sup>th</sup> May.  
2, Vazon, 13<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
2, L'Eree, 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug.

### Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*)

1, Fort Doyle, 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Jan.  
Up to 5, Rousse, 20<sup>th</sup> Mar to 6<sup>th</sup> May.  
1, Jaonneuse, 30<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
2, Vazon, 25<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
2, Rousse, 28<sup>th</sup> Nov.

### Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

1, Claire Mare, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug.

### Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

1, Belle Greve Bay, 7<sup>th</sup> Jan.  
1 (ad), past Chouet, 20<sup>th</sup> Jul.  
1 (imm), from pelagic, 9<sup>th</sup> Sep.  
1 (j), past Jaonneuse, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep.  
1 (2nd-yr), Vazon, 14<sup>th</sup> Sep.  
1 (j), Pulias, 21<sup>st</sup> Sep.  
1, past Chouet, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep.

### Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

1, past Jaonneuse, 8<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
3, past Chouet, 10<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
1, past Chouet, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sep.  
1, past Jaonneuse, 1<sup>st</sup> Nov.



Black-t Godwit - Pulias - RA Ferbrache



Knot - Shingle Bank - AP Loring



Curlew Sandpiper - Vazon - AP Loring



Little Stint - AP Loring



### **Pomarine Skua** (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

2, past Chouet, 6<sup>th</sup> May.  
1, past Jaonneuse, 25<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
1, past Jaonneuse, 1<sup>st</sup> Oct.  
1, past Jaonneuse, 26<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
5, past Jaonneuse, 27<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### **Turtle Dove** (*Streptopelia turtur*)

1, Petit Bot, 6<sup>th</sup> May.  
2, Les Genats, 23<sup>rd</sup> Jun.  
1, Capelles, 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct.  
1, Rue de Simons, 10<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### **Hoopoe** (*Upupa epops*)

1, La Pomare, SPdB, 10<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1, Airport, 5<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Wryneck** (*Jynx torquilla*)

1, Mont Herault, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep.  
1, Prevote, 1<sup>st</sup> Sep.  
1, Rozel Rd, SPP, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sep.  
1, opposite Houmet Paradis, 6<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Sep.  
1, Lihou Island, 9<sup>th</sup> Sep.

### **Golden Oriole** (*Oriolus oriolus*)

1 singing, Bluebell Woods, 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> May.  
1 singing, Trinity, Pleinmont, 28<sup>th</sup> May.

### **Rook** (*Corvus frugilegus*)

1, Rue a Fresnes area, 9<sup>th</sup> Jan to 16<sup>th</sup> Feb.

### **Coal Tit** (*Periparus ater*)

2, Saumarez Park, 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
1, Foulon, 26<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
1, Les Adams, 12<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1, Reservoir, 21<sup>st</sup> Apr.

### **Woodlark** (*Lullula arborea*)

1, Mont Herault, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
2, Mont Herault, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, Pleinmont, 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct.  
4, Mont Herault, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.  
1, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> Nov.

### **Wood Warbler** (*Tringa glareola*)

1, Herm, 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr.  
1, Saumarez Park, 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Apr.  
1, Water Lanes, 28<sup>th</sup> Apr.

### **Yellow-browed Warbler** (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

1 to 2, Pleinmont, 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, Pleinmont, 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
1, Pleinmont, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Nov.



Wryneck - M Herault - MAGuppy



Woodlark - M Herault - MAGuppy

### **Melodious Warbler** (*Hippolais polyglotta*)

1, Jaonneuse, 7<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
1, Mont Herault, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Sep.

### **Lesser Whitethroat** (*Sylvia curruca*)

1, Le Douit Lane, V, 27<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
3, Pleinmont, 7<sup>th</sup> May.  
1, Fort Hommet, 16<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, Prevote, 21<sup>st</sup> Oct.

### **Dartford Warbler** (*Sylvia undata*)

1, South coast cliffs, 21<sup>st</sup> Mar to 19<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1, Pleinmont, 14<sup>th</sup> Apr.



### Blue-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flava*)

1, Claire Mare, Fort le Crocq, 14<sup>th</sup> Apr.  
1, Rue des Hougues, C., 27<sup>th</sup> Aug.  
2, Mont Herault, 8<sup>th</sup> Sep.

### Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

1, L'Eree Shingle Bank, 15<sup>th</sup> Jan to 7<sup>th</sup> Mar.  
1, Fort Le Crocq to Claire Mare, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct to 2019.

### Lesser Redpoll (*Acanthis cabaret*)

1, Pleinmont, 10<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, Pleinmont, 20<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

11, over Rue de la Vallee, T., 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
13, over Pleinmont, 31<sup>st</sup> Oct.  
1, over Pleinmont, 6<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
1 (f/i), Saumarez Park, 10<sup>th</sup> Nov.  
1, over Pleinmont, 12<sup>th</sup> Nov.

### Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*)

2, Pleinmont, 1<sup>st</sup> Sep.  
1, Pleinmont, 29<sup>th</sup> Sep to 8<sup>th</sup> Oct.

### Lapland Bunting (*Calcarius lapponicus*)

1, over Pleinmont, 4<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, over Pleinmont, 24<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
1, over Pleinmont, 12<sup>th</sup> Nov.

[N.B. The photo below shows a bunting at Pleinmont on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov. From this single photo, opinion was divided on its identity. It is either a Yellowhammer or a Cirl Bunting, both species being rarities on the island]



Blue-headed Wagtail - FLC - AMarquis



Ortolan - 1st Sep - APLoaring



bunting sp. - ABott