

Rare birds in Guernsey



2013

La Société Guernesaise
Ornithological Section

Report on rare birds in the Bailiwick of Guernsey in 2013

Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, Herm, Jethou, Brecqhou 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 which is organised through the Ornithological Section of La Société Guernesiaise. The members of the committee for 2013 (M.P.Lawlor, M.A.Guppy, A.J.Bisson, J.P.Down, J.Hooper) would like to thank all the observers and photographers who sent in details of their rarity observations.



**LA
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The systematic list is based on the BOU British List. Although the Committee's area covers Guernsey, Alderney and Sark, there is currently no formal Bird Recorder for the smaller two islands. For each record, the following information is given where available; number of birds, age and sex if known, date and location of first sighting, further 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 records there have been from that island (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 in Guernsey.

Cover illustration : Long-tailed Skua *Sterna longicauda*,
migrating past Jaonneuse Point, 14th September 2013 *by Mark Lawlor*

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)

One, from October 2012 until 25th February, Vale Pond, photo, 4th Guernsey record.

Sixteen, from October 2012 until 14th March, Colin Best NR, photo, 5th Guernsey record.

The birds which arrived in the autumn of last year, all stayed for the full winter period, returning north in the early spring. Unfortunately, none of these birds returned later in the year.

(Breeds on the Arctic tundra, in Greenland, Iceland and Svalbard, wintering in NW Europe)



M.P.Lawlor, L'Eree

White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)

Twelve, 2nd to 8th March, Colin Best NR, photo.

This flock paused for a week's feeding during their spring migration northwards. Very few White-fronted Geese winter in northern France, so one suspects that they had not come far. There is a small local population of feral White-fronts on the island, so it can be difficult to identify truly wild birds, especially single birds. However, when a large flock such as this suddenly turns up, it is more straightforward.

(Breeds on the Russian Arctic tundra, wintering in NW Europe, mainly in the Netherlands)



A.Loaring

Pale-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*)

One, 18th to 23rd October, Vazon, Perelle & Jaonneuse, photo (J.P.Down, M.C.Simmons, A.J.Bisson, et al.)

Still a surprisingly rare sub-species of Brent Goose, despite the wintering flock just over the water in Jersey.

(Breeds on the Arctic tundra, in Greenland and Canada, wintering in NW Europe)



A.Loaring

Black Brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*)

One, from December 2012 until 31st March, Vazon and other west coast sites, photo, 3rd Guernsey record.

The long stay of this individual meant that all three distinct forms of Brent Goose were recorded on the island in 2013.

(Breeds on the Arctic tundra, in North America and Siberia, wintering mainly in western United States)

Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*)

Two, juveniles, 29th July, Rue des Bergers NR, photo, 25th Guernsey record (A.J.Bisson, et al.)



R.Carre

This is the third year running that we have had young juvenile Purple Herons visiting the island in mid to late summer. We presume that these are post-breeding wanderers from colonies in nearby France. The two birds were seen together and spent quite some time high in the waterside willows. One bird had more black on the head than the other and slightly darker plumage (both birds are shown here).

(Breeds in marshland throughout central and southern Europe, wintering in sub-saharan Africa)



M.Cunningham

Stone Curlew (*Burhinus oedichnemus*)

One, 24th March, Rue des Hougues, St. Andrews, photo, 28th Guernsey record (W.R.Turner, et al.)

A brief sighting of a migrant bird, no doubt resting before it crosses the Channel to England. This is the earliest record for 30 years, of a species that used to be regularly recorded in the winter months. The last five sightings have all been of one-day birds, seen between late March and late April.

(Breeds mainly in central and southern Europe, also England, northern population migrating south to winter in southern Europe and Africa)



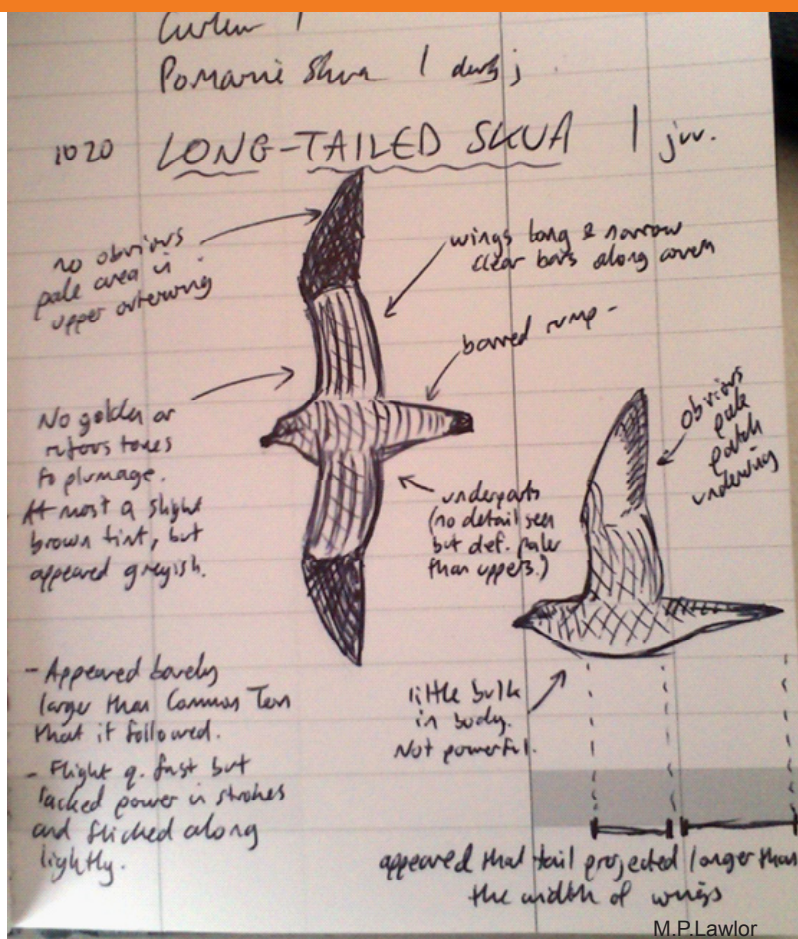
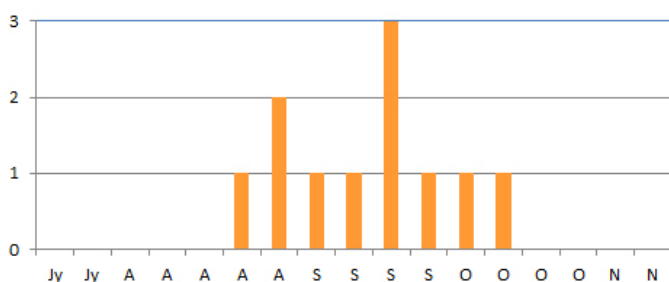
M.A.Guppy

Long-tailed Skua (*Stercorarius longicaudus*)

One, juvenile, 14th September, west past Jaonneuse Point, 11th Guernsey record (M.P.Lawlor, J.Hooper, K.Jehan, C.J.Mourant, W.R.Turner)

A large slice of luck is needed to identify Long-tailed Skua from the island. It is presumed that the species passes regularly offshore within the annual passage of skuas, but the birds need to be close enough inshore to see them properly. The graph below shows the two-month window of opportunity to see one.

(Breeds in the Arctic tundra, winters in the southern oceans.)

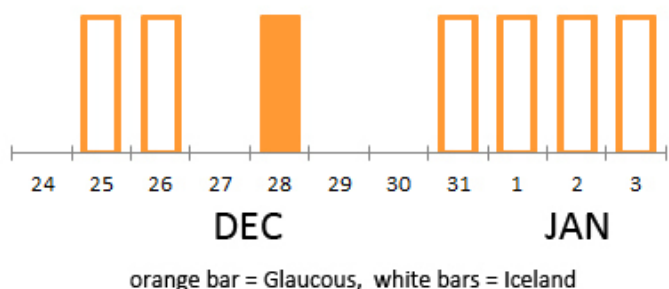


Glaucous Gull (*Larus hyperboreus*)

One, first-winter, 28th December to 2014, Chouet & Grandes Havres, 19th Guernsey record (P.K.Veron, et. al.)

Rather surprisingly this is the first Glaucous Gull to be discovered in the period between Christmas and New Year, despite this being a traditional time to search for white-winged gulls. At least six different Iceland Gulls have been found during the festive period.

(Breeds in the Arctic, winters slightly further south)



Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)

One, on seven dates between 19th February and 18th May, Pleinmont (and various locations in west and centre of island).

As usual, a visiting Rook being very elusive whilst here. Nearly all Rooks appear on the island in early Spring and often stay for quite a while.

(Resident in middle latitudes of Europe, birds from northern parts of the range move south in winter.)



A.Loaring

Short-toed Lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*)

One, 18th to 21st April, Fort Le Crocq, then Sous les Jardins, near Grande Mare, photo, 8th Guernsey record (*J. Hooper, A. J. Bisson, et. al.*).

This bird was found initially on the headland at Fort le Crocq, and was surprisingly relocated in a field along Sous les Jardins, by Rue des Bergers, the next day. It is unusual for such a small bird to be refound at a different location. The eight local records have alternated between spring and autumn, and this bird is the earliest by about three weeks.

(Summer visitor to southern Europe, wintering in Africa)



M.Cunningham

Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*)

One, juvenile, 11th August, Claire Mare, trapped.

Two, juveniles, 17th August, Claire Mare, trapped, photo.

(C. J. Mourant, J. Hooper, M. Hooper).

Intensive bird ringing in the reedbeds of the Claire Mare resulted in three birds being recorded this summer, the best showing in recent years of this globally-endangered species.

(Rare breeding species in eastern Europe, wintering in tropical west Africa.)



M. Hooper

Rose-coloured Starling (*Pastor roseus*)

One, adult or first-summer, 12th to 15th August, Route Militaire, Vale, photo, 36th Guernsey record.

One, first-winter, 30th September to 1st October, Claire Mare, photo, 37th Guernsey record (T. Henry, et. al.).

We continue our run of records, the latter bird being a typical youngster in autumn, the former bird, more unusually, a 'pink one'. It regularly visited a garden bird table and may have arrived a little earlier than the date stated.

(Breeds in south-western Asia and also, variably in far-eastern Europe, wintering in India.)



A.Loaring



C.Bale

Desert Wheatear (*Oenanthe deserti*)

One, first-winter male, 18th and 19th November, L'Ancrese/Pembroke, photo, 6th Guernsey record (*H. Rouillard, et. al.*).

An incredible hat-trick, with Desert Wheatear turning up on the island three years in a row. Even though we are getting used to the species appearing in late autumn, it is worth remembering how rare it is nationally. There have been only about 140 Desert Wheatears recorded in Britain since records began, which means 1 in 25 of these have turned up in Guernsey. However, looking solely at records post-2000, there have been 28 birds seen in Britain, which means that more than 1 in 7 British records are from Guernsey. Only the large counties of Kent and Norfolk have had more sightings in this period, so we are certainly punching above our weight. Just why this is the case is not obvious.

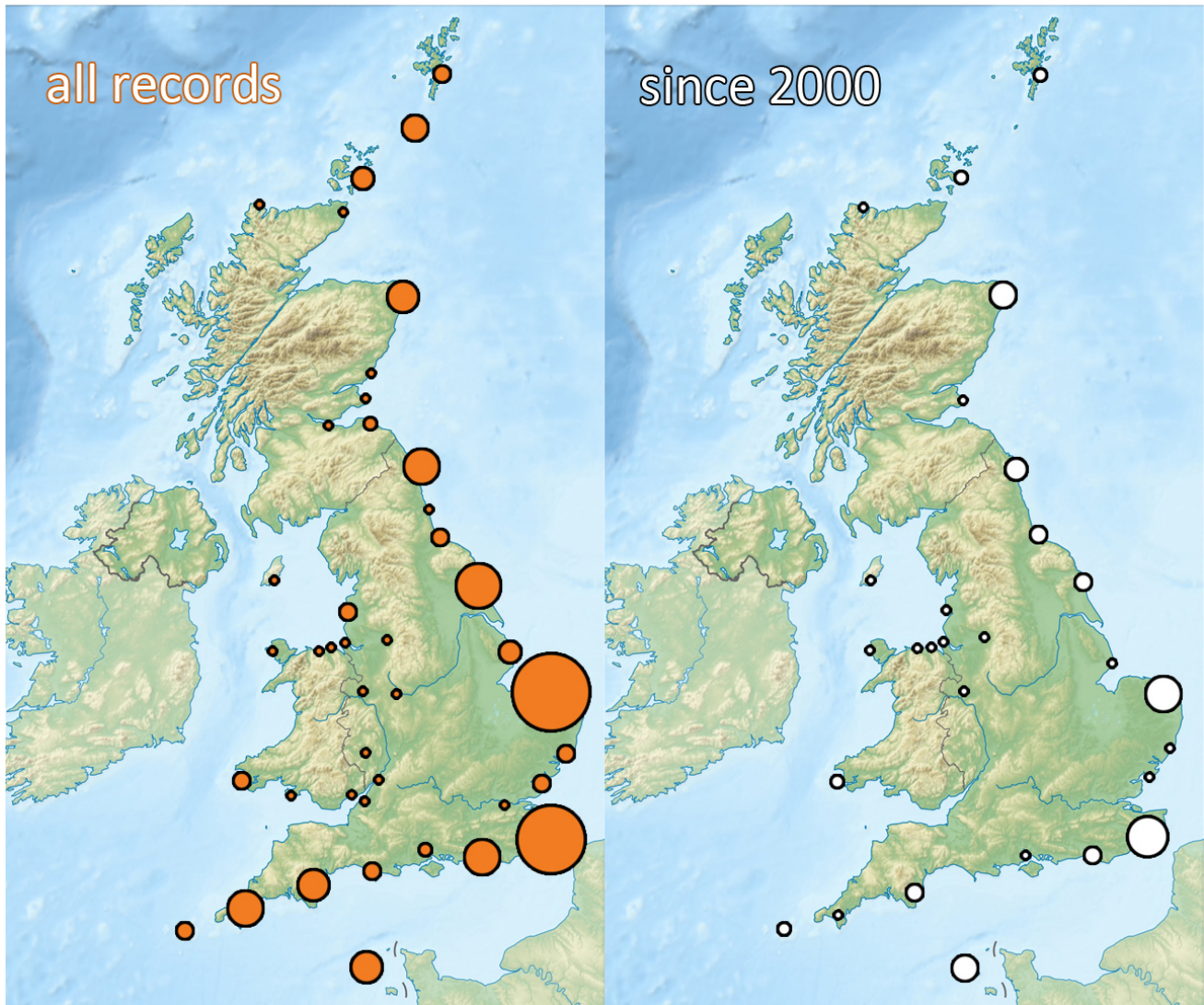
(Breeds in the deserts of central Asia, Arabia, the Middle East and North Africa. Mainly a short-distant migrant, but the more easterly populations migrate longer distances.)



R.Ferbrache



M.Cunningham



Desert Wheatear records in Britain

Common Rosefinch (*Carpodacus erythrinus*)

One, juvenile, 22nd September, Pleinmont, photo, 4th Guernsey record (M. A. Guppy, J. M. Medland, et. al.).

This bird was extremely elusive, spending long periods deep in a maize field. Still surprisingly rare on the island, this is only the second individual seen in the autumn.

(Breeds in central and north-eastern Europe, wintering in India.)



A. Gidney

Alderney

Albatross sp. (*Thalassarche* sp.)

One, 21st October, at sea, just north-west of Alderney (G. Backhurst).

An albatross was watched from the deck of the Condor Ferry as it made its way towards Weymouth. It was almost certainly a Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*) but the views were not quite clear enough to be certain of this. However, with a Black-browed Albatross being seen at various points in the English Channel over the last couple of years, it is highly likely that this was the same individual that was well-photographed last year.

(Breeds in colonies on islands in the Southern Oceans such as the Falklands, dispersing at sea throughout the southern hemisphere in the non-breeding season. A very rare, but regular, wanderer into the northern hemisphere)

Scarce species in Guernsey

Below is a list of other rare sightings in Guernsey in 2013. The species below occur too regularly to be classified as official rarities, and are generally labelled "scarcities". 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, since 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 few reports of birds are not included due to circumstances indicating a high likelihood of a mistake being made.

Pintail (*Anas acuta*)

2 (m+f), Vale Pond, 17th to 25th Feb.
1 (m), Rue des Belles & Rocquaine, 7th to 12th Mar.
3, past Jaonneuse, 13th Oct.

Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

1 (m), Vale Pond & Marais Nord, 28th Mar to 14th Apr.
1 (f), Colin Best NR, 31st Mar.

Pochard (*Aythya ferina*)

1 (m), Reservoir, 7th & 8th Jan.
1 (m), Claire Mare, 18th Jan.
3, Reservoir, 20th Jan.

Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)

1 (imm m), Fort Hommet, 8th Jan.
5 (4m+f), Fort le Marchant, 16th Feb.
3, Chouet, 10th Nov.

Goosander (*Mergus merganser*)

1 (f), Chouet, 5th Apr.
3 (f), past Jaonneuse, 26th Oct.

Red-throated Diver (*Gavia stellata*)

1, Jaonneuse, 11th Oct.
1, past Chouet, 12th Nov.
2, past Jaonneuse, 13th Nov.

Pintail
Rue des Belles
A.Loaring



Garganey
Marais Nord
A.Loaring



Spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)

- 1, Claire Mare, 8th to 10th May.
- 1, Vale Pond, 22nd Jul.
- 1, Claire Mare, 27th Jul.

Red-necked Grebe (*Podiceps grisegena*)

- 1, Jaonneuse, 2nd Feb.

Black-necked Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*)

- 1, Vazon, 13th Mar.
- 1, Vazon, 25th Jul.

Honey Buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*)

- 1, Barras Lane, 28th Apr.
- 1, Fauxquets Valley, 18th May.
- 1, Talbot Valley, 8th Aug.
- 1, Pleinmont, 22nd Sep.
- 1, Mont Marche, 6th Oct.

Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)

- 1 (f/i), Jerbourg, 27th Mar.
- 1 (f/i), Le Gouffre, 16th May.
- 1 (f/i), Pleinmont & Mont Herault, 15th to 28th Aug.
- 1 (f/i), Le Picquerel, 18th Aug.
- 1 (f/i), South coast cliffs, 21st to 26th Sep.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

- 1, Reservoir, 21st Mar.
- 1, St. Sampsons Harbour, 1st Apr.
- 1, Jaonneuse, 7th Sep.

Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*)

- 2, Colin Best NR, 12th & 13th Mar.
- 1, Colin Best NR, 21st Nov.
- 5, Colin Best NR, 28th Nov.

Little Ringed Plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

- 1, Colin Best NR, 13th Mar.
- 2, Colin Best NR, 24th to 28th Mar.
- 4, Pleinmont, 24th & 25th Mar.
- 3, Colin Best NR, 7th & 8th Apr.
- 1, Colin Best NR, 13th to 15th Apr.
- 1, Claire Mare, 12th Jul.

Knot (*Calidris canutus*)

- 2, L'Eree, 4th Mar.

Little Stint (*Calidris minuta*)

- 1, Colin Best NR, 23rd Sep.
- 2, L'Eree, 29th Sep.



Spoonbill
Claire Mare
M.Lawlor



Black-necked Grebe
Vazon
A.Loaring



Hen Harrier
Pleinmont
D.Scott



Avocet
CBNR
S.Levrier

Pomarine Skua (*Stercorarius pomarinus*)

1, Jaonneuse, 31st Aug.
 1, Chouet, 6th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 9th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 13th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 14th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 16th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 19th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 20th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 3rd Nov.
 1, Jaonneuse, 4th Nov.
 1, Jaonneuse, 10th Nov.
 1, Jaonneuse, 13th Nov.
 1, Chouet, 19th Nov.

Black Tern (*Chlidonias niger*)

1, from pelagic trip, 25th Aug.
 2, Chouet, 8th Sep
 4, Jaonneuse, 14th Sep.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

21, Jaonneuse, 25th Aug.
 2, Chouet, 1st Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 10th Sep.
 3, Jaonneuse, 14th Sep.
 3, Jaonneuse, 16th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 17th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 18th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 19th Sep.
 1, Jaonneuse, 10th Sep.
 1, Chouet, 11th Oct.
 1, Perelle, 2nd Nov.

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

1 (f-w), Cobo, 30th Jan to 2nd Feb.
 4, Jaonneuse, 5th Oct.
 4, Chouet, 12th Nov.
 1 (f-w), Perelle & L'Eree, 26th to 28th Dec.

Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*)

1, Mont Marche, 6th to 8th Mar (first seen 2012).
 1, Grand Pre, 30th May.
 1, Petit Bot, 2nd to 9th Jun.
 1, Mont Marche, 6th to 8th Jun.
 1, Les Vicheries, 24th Jun.
 1, Le Gouffre, 25th Jun.

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*)

1, Bordeaux, 5th May.
 1, Talbot Valley, 27th May.

Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*)

1, Colin Best NR, 22nd Sep.

Little Stint
 CBNR
 M.Cunningham



Little Gull
 Cobo
 C.Bale

Turtle Dove
 Mont Marche
 A.Gidney



Wryneck (*Jynx torquilla*)

- 1, Mont Herault, 10th Aug.
- 1, Fort le Marchant, 23rd to 31st Aug.
- 1, Pezeries, Pleinmont, 27th Aug.
- 1, Paradis, 1st to 7th Sep.
- 1, St. Saviours, 23rd Sep.
- 1, La Folie Lane, Vale, 27th Sep.
- 1, Mares a Fil, Beaucette, 29th Sep.
- 1, Claire Mare, 29th Sep.
- 1, Pleinmont, 29th Sep to 6th Oct.
- 1, Fort le Crocq, 30th Sep to 1st Oct.
- 1, Route de Carteret, 30th Sep.

Golden Oriole (*Oriolus oriolus*)

- 1 (m), Herm, 26th May.
- 1, Petit Bot, 2nd Jun.

Coal Tit (*Periparus ater*)

- 1, Ronde Cheminee, St. Sampsons, 7th Feb.
- 2, Pine Forest, St. Martins, 10th to 12th Feb.
- 2, Saumarez Park, 13th Feb.

Woodlark (*Lullula arborea*)

- 6, Rue des Hougues, 2012 to 6th Jan.
- 1, Bordeaux, 30th Jan.
- 1, Rue des Hougues, 31st Mar.

Yellow-browed Warbler (*Phylloscopus inornatus*)

- 1, Pezeries, Pleinmont, 2nd to 3rd Oct.
- 1, Valniquets, Pleinmont, 13th to 16th Oct.
- 1, Delancey Park, 14th Oct.
- 1, Brock Road, St. Sampsons, 17th Oct.
- 1, Heritage Walk, LMDC, 26th Oct.
- 1, Icart, 31st Oct.

Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*)

- 1, Saumarez Park, 26th to 28th Apr.
- 1, Rue a L'Eau, 30th Apr.
- 1, Petit Bot, 4th May
- 1, Icart, 28th Sep.

Lesser Whitethroat (*Sylvia curruca*)

- 1, Pleinmont, 15th Apr.
- 1, Herm, 27th Apr.
- 1, Pleinmont, 28th Apr.
- 1, Pleinmont, 1st May.
- 1, Pleinmont, 6th May.
- 1, Mont d'Aval, 6th & 7th May.
- 1, Claire Mare, 7th Nov.
- 1, Trinity, Pleinmont, 7th to 14th Dec.

Melodious Warbler (*Hippolais polyglotta*)

- 1, Prevote, 2nd Sep.
- 1, Corbiere, 14th Sep.
- 1, Bordeaux, 24th Sep to 6th Oct.

Wryneck
Claire Mare
C.Bale



Wood Warbler
Icart
A.Loaring



Lesser Whitethroat
Trinity
M.Hooper



Melodious Warbler
Bordeaux
A.Loaring

Blue-headed Wagtail (*Motacilla flava flava*)

1, Vazon, 27th & 28th Apr.
1, Colin Best NR, 4th May.
1, Claire Mare, 10th May.

Richard's Pipit (*Anthus richardi*)

1, Pleinmont, 30th Sep.
1, Pleinmont, 22nd Oct.

Tawny Pipit (*Anthus campestris*)

1, Creux Mahie, 22nd Sep.

Water Pipit (*Anthus spinoletta*)

1, Fort le Crocq, Vazon & L'Eree, 2012 to 13th Mar.
1, Belle Greve Bay, 1st Jan to 3rd Feb.
up to 3, Vazon, 29th Mar to 7th Apr.
2, Pleinmont, 24th Oct.
1, Fort le Crocq, 10th Nov to 2014.

Lesser Redpoll (*Carduelis cabaret*)

1, Pleinmont, 17th May.

Common Crossbill (*Loxia curvirostra*)

14, Pleinmont, 13th Jul.
2, Pleinmont, 14th Jul.
4, Pleinmont, 9th Aug.

Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)

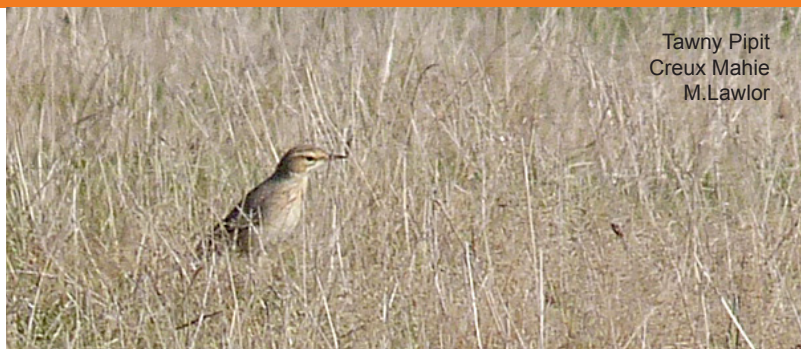
1, Pleinmont, 25th & 26th Mar.
1, Chouet, 20th Oct.
2, Rousse, 4th Nov.
1, Fort Grey, 7th Nov.
2, Vazon, 8th & 9th Nov.
1, Fort le Marchant, 9th Nov.
3, Fort Doyle, 13th Nov.

Lapland Bunting (*Calcarius lapponicus*)

1, Pleinmont, 29th Sep.
1, Mont Herault, 14th Oct.
2, Pleinmont, 6th Oct.

[Waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*)]

An injured bird from late 2012, was rehabilitated and released, and subsequently seen as follows:
Ville au Roi, 6th Jan.
Les Croutes, 14th Jan.



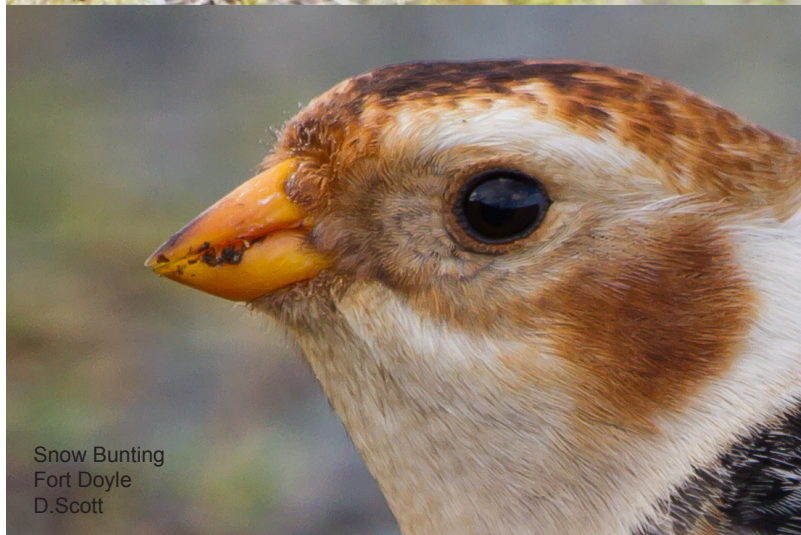
Tawny Pipit
Creux Mahie
M. Lawlor



Water Pipit
Vazon
V. Froome



Snow Bunting
Pleinmont
K. Jehan



Snow Bunting
Fort Doyle
D. Scott