

GUERNSEY RARITIES REPORT - 2004

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis fabalis* **WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons albifrons*

The four European White-fronted Geese and a Taiga Bean Goose which appeared at L'Eree Aerodrome in December 2003 were present until 3rd January this year.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

An individual of this species frequented the pond at Saumarez Park on 18th and 19th February. There were no physical indications that it was a recent escape from captivity, and although quite tame, it is assumed it was a visitor from the UK. This is only the island's second sighting. (J.P.Down et al)

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

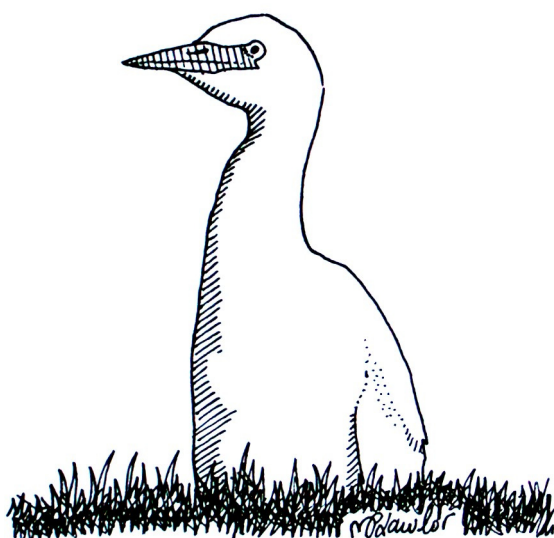
A single bird flew East past Chouet headland, late afternoon on 26th September, only the fifth island record. (M.A.Guppy)

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*

A bird was discovered in the reedbed at Claire Mare on the unusual date of 1st September. Most Guernsey Bitterns are Winter visitors. (J.M.Anderson, M.C.Simmons et al)

CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*

The highlight of a very busy first two months, was this visitor from Southern Europe, which toured the fields between St. Sampsons/Track Marais and La Ramee for over a month. It was first seen flying off from the former site on 6th February and could be very difficult to pin down as it liked to feed in hidden fields. The last sighting was on 14th March. This is only the second record for Guernsey, the first being way back in December 1964 when a flock of 4 birds was seen. (A.J.Bisson et al)



SACRED IBIS *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

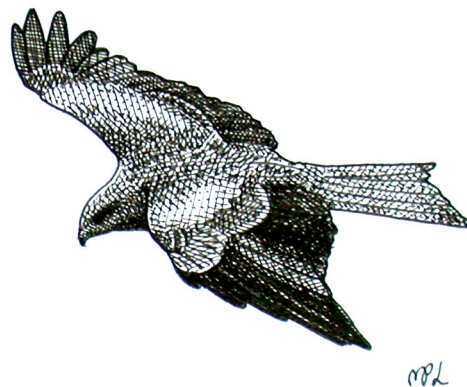
On 27th December a Sacred Ibis flew in and landed in the wet field behind Claire Mare NR. It was very elusive for a couple of days before settling down in a field along Rue des Bergers, where it could be watched feeding on worms. This bird was initially seen in Alderney the previous week and it disappeared on 31st December. **(G.D.Atkinson et al)**



This is the first Sacred ibis seen in Guernsey. Although a native of sub-saharan Africa, a population of over a thousand birds breeds in the wild on the Southern edge of Brittany, France.

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

A Black Kite gave a spectacular display over Fauxquets Valley during the afternoon of 1st May. This was only the 3rd island record and was exactly five years to the day since the previous one. **(M.A.Guppy et al)**



Much more surprising was a bird which appeared low over the ringing station at Pleinmont on 25th September. It immediately disappeared, but was seen briefly in the Talbot Valley later in the day. Autumn Black Kites are much more unusual than spring birds. **(J.Hooper, C.J.Mourant et al)**

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

An exhausted or stunned bird was picked up by a member of the public near Bordeaux on 9th August. It was kept overnight before being ringed and released at the Claire Mare the next day.

There was a further record of Spotted Crane in 2004 when one appeared at Claire Mare NR on 17th September. **(R.J.Murphy, E.A.Thomson et al)**. These are the first birds seen since 1996.

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

One was present at St. Sampsons/Track Marais briefly on 29th January. **(C.J.Mourant)**

STONE CURLEW *Burhinus oedicnemus*

A single bird flew East over Les Ammareurs with a Whimbrel on 18th April. **(M.A.Guppy)**

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*

A bird was photographed on Herm Common on 19th September, where it accompanied Golden Plovers and a Dotterel. This is the first record for ten years of this North American wader. **(J.T.Aslett et al)**

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Although records of this species have increased in recent years, the island's first ever Spring sighting was one which flew East over Jaonneuse on 7th May. **(R.J.Murphy, E.A.Thomson)**

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini*

Sabine's Gulls have never been seen in Spring in Guernsey, so a first-year bird flying East close past Chouet on 7th April is especially notable. **(J.Hooper)**

A second record this year was a group of three juvenile birds, again past Chouet, on 26th September – a much more typical time of year. **(M.A.Guppy)**
These are the 7th and 8th island records.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

The Island's 4th record of this North American gull was an adult discovered on the beach at Belle Greve Bay on 15th January. It was also seen the next morning but soon departed. The first since 1996. **(B.G.Wells et al)**

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Our old friend 'Droopy' was seen in the Town Harbour or Belle Greve Bay until 27th February. On 23rd September it returned for its eighth winter out of nine, and could be seen irregularly until the end of the year.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

The first ever Turtle Dove to spend a Winter in Guernsey was a first-winter bird in fields along Pont Vaillant from 7th December until the year end. **(M.P.Lawlor)**

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

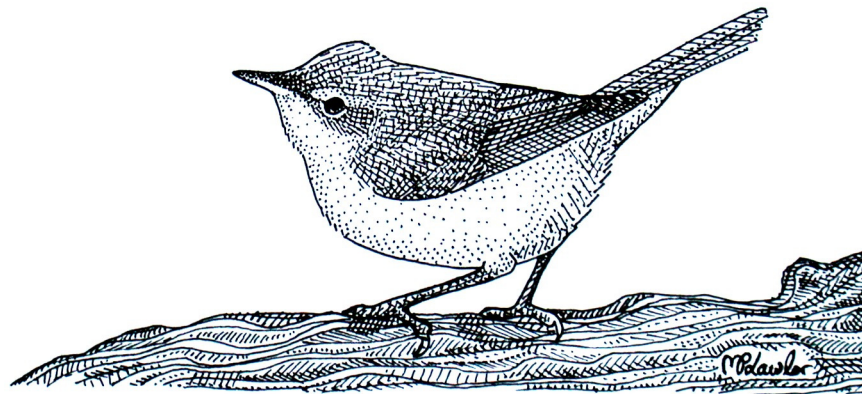
A winter-plumaged bird was discovered feeding along the edge of the water in a flooded field between Claire Mare NR and L'Eree Aerodrome on 2nd January. It reappeared in a similar field to the East of the reserve on 17th and 18th January. This is the 13th record for Guernsey. **(M. P. Lawlor et al)**

FAN-TAILED WARBLER *Cisticola juncidis*

After last year's bird, it was not a huge surprise to hear another singing male at Claire Mare NR this year - the island's 3rd record. However, this time he was accompanied by a female bird – both of which were trapped for ringing - so hopefully this is a sign that breeding may occur very soon. These birds were present between 30th July and 31st August (and possibly to the end of October). **(R.J.Murphy, E.A.Thomson et al)**

BLYTH'S REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

A bird was trapped and ringed at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 14th October – the first record of this Eastern European species for the Channel Islands. The species is very difficult to differentiate from Reed Warbler in the field but luckily not so difficult in the hand. Upon release, it disappeared into the dense undergrowth and was not seen again. **(J.Hooper et al)**



BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

Guernsey's fourth Barred Warbler was found in a hedge at Pleinmont on 18th October. Although typically elusive, a few birdwatchers managed to see it. **(A.J.Bisson et al)**

PALLAS'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

A single bird fed in the trees at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont for a short period on 29th October – the island's 12th record. **(R.J.Murphy, E.A.Thomson)**

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

A female bird spent a few hours in the scrub around Pleinmont watch-house car park on 9th June. **(A.J.Bisson et al)**

On 3rd September, a female or juvenile bird was seen in the afternoon on L'Ancrese Common. **(J.P.Down et al)**

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*

A juvenile bird was discovered in the field next to the Claire Mare NR mid-morning on 6th August. It was very secretive and showed itself to only four birdwatchers before it disappeared half an hour later, never to be seen again. This is the 8th island record. **(A.J.Bisson et al)**

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

With a 6 year gap since the last record, a Bird Race team was surprised to see a Rook flying East along the cliffs at Mont Herault on 2nd May. **(A.J.Bisson, V.E.Froome, A.Grange, R.Lihou)**

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

Another excellent year for the species which now totals 26 records, 18 of which have been in the last eight years.

A juvenile bird was seen with Starlings at La Catiaroc on 10th September. It was seen irregularly in the L'Eree/Fort Saumarez/Fort le Crocq area until 4th October. **(J.Hooper et al)**

A second juvenile bird was present with a large Starling flock at Rouse between 26th September and 11th October. **(M.A.Guppy et al)**

The final juvenile bird was discovered in a Rue Maze, St. Martins garden on 3rd November. It was most unusual, as it decided to spend the Winter there – the first example of this species to do so in Guernsey – and could be seen regularly until the New Year. **(S.J.Cooper et al)**

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*

One of the surprises of the year was the discovery of a Corn Bunting in the car park at Jaonneuse Bay on 19th April. There are only a handful of Guernsey records for this declining species, the last being in 1976. It eventually showed well to most birdwatchers and was seen again the next morning before it departed. **(J.Hooper et al)**

Extralimital record

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*

The Guernsey birdwatchers pelagic trip of 4th September recorded the unusual sighting of a Red-necked Phalarope out at sea. As the boat was North-west of the Casquets at the time, this bird will be recorded as the first Red-necked Phalarope for Alderney. **(P.K.Veron et al)**