

BAILIWICK OF GUERNSEY RARITIES REPORT - 2005

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

An uninjured - but no doubt confused – adult bird was found wandering along Le Bordage in town on 30th September, until it was rescued and taken to the Animal Shelter. It left there the next day and eventually made Vale Pond its temporary home. On 4th October it was joined by another adult bird and a juvenile – so quite possibly reuniting with its lost family. Unfortunately one bird died, but at least one stayed on the island into 2006. This is the first record since 1994.

BLACK BRANT *Branta bernicla nigricans*

In February, the second Black Brant for Guernsey joined the regular Brent Goose flock which winters along the island's East coast. It was first located on Herm on 5th February and was seen on and off at various locations until 3rd April. **(W.R.Turner, C.J.Mourant, et al)**

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

A single bird was flushed twice from a grassy field at Le Catoroc on 8th June. This is the first record of Quail for ten years. **(J.Hooper)**

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*

A juvenile bird was very skulking in reeds at St. Saviours Reservoir on 8th August. The first record since 1999. **(Car.Kinnersly)**

SACRED IBIS *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Surprisingly, the bird which was present on the island during the last week of 2004, suddenly reappeared at Vingtaine de l'Epine on 28th January. It was then seen regularly at various sites in the North of the island until 25th March.

MONTAGU'S HARRIER *Circus pygargus*

A 'ring-tail' Montagu's Harrier – probably a 1st-summer bird – spent a short while in the late afternoon, flying around, as well as resting in, the arable fields at Rue des Buttes, St. Andrews. This is only the 9th record of this species for Guernsey. **(M.A.Guppy, L.Guppy, W.R.Turner)**

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

A single bird was seen at La Claire Mare Nature Reserve on 24th August. **(J.Hooper, et al)**

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

One spent a day at the Vale Pond on 15th May.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*

One was present on L'Eree Old Aerodrome for most of the day on 22nd September. **(A.J.Bisson, et al)**

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*

After the disappointment of last year's short-staying bird, the island was treated to a much more obliging individual feeding with Ruff on the saltmarsh pools of L'Eree Old Aerodrome between 10th and 17th September. **(V.E.Froome, et al)**

SABINE'S GULL *Larus sabini*

An adult bird was seen and photographed at sea to the NW of Guernsey during the pelagic trip of 24th September.

Another bird, this time a juvenile, flew West past Jaonneuse Point on 2nd October. **(M.A.Guppy, W.R.Turner)**

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

The regular wintering adult bird was seen either in Belle Greve Bay or the Town Harbour on many dates until 11th March. Disappointingly it did not reappear in the second winter period. It was first sighted in February 1997.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*

A single bird was observed sitting on a telephone wire along La Rue de la Hougue de Noirmont, Vale on 10th June. **(I.J.Hall)**

TAWNY PIPIT *Anthus campestris*

Although Tawny Pipits are regularly seen in autumn, a single bird found at Pleinmont on 23rd April was much more unusual. **(W.R.Turner, et al)**

WATER PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*

The beach at Pulias proved a very popular feeding ground for insect-eating birds in the late-autumn, and a Water Pipit joined the numerous Rock Pipits there from the 20th November. It stayed in the same area until the end of the year. **(M. P. Lawlor, et al)**

DESERT WHEATEAR *Oenanthe deserti*

Guernsey's third record was a male discovered on 13th November on the stony beach at Chouet. It proved to be very elusive, regularly flying around the headland out of sight, but it was also seen again the next day.

(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al)

On the 25th November a similar bird suddenly appeared on the beach at Pulias and was much more obliging. It showed very well until at least 29th November and was enjoyed by many. **(M.P.Lawlor, et al)**

Some observers considered that two different birds were involved in these sightings, but photographs of the Chouet bird were not good enough to be certain of this. There were more Desert Wheatears than usual seen in NW Europe this autumn.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

A surprising report was of a first-winter Barred Warbler which died when it flew into a shed at La Rochelle, Vale in early November. This is only the 5th record for the island. **(K.Stevens)**

PALLAS'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

On 13th November, one was trapped at the ringing site at Ty Coed, Vale which is located near Marais Nord. This is the 14th island record. **(P.K.Veron, M.Veron, et al)**

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

There were two very brief sightings this year. The first was seen in the trees around Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 4th October. **(J.Hooper)**

The second was nearby, at Vaux de Monel, Pleinmont on 17th October. **(L.Thomson)**

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Three birds appeared in the fields at Pleinmont on 2nd October and were present there on and off until at least 16th October. **(A.J.Bisson, M.A.Guppy, R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson, et al)**

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

The juvenile bird which wintered in gardens in St. Martins was last noted on 16th February.

A juvenile was seen regularly in the Fort Doyle to L'Ancrese Common area from 20th September to 3rd October. **(A.J.Bisson, et al)**

A further juvenile was a brief visitor to the beach at Belle Greve Bay on 21st October. **(R.J.Murphy, L.Thomson)**

This species currently averages more than 2 records per year in Guernsey.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

The excellent finch migration in autumn 2005 included unusually large numbers of Hawfinch reaching Western Europe. A few of these reached the island, starting with a male bird trapped and ringed at Trinity Cottages, Pleinmont on 14th October. **(J.Hooper)**

A further 3 birds were found along the Saumarez Nature Trail on 19th October.

A final sighting was of a single bird along the cliff path at Icart on 10th December. **(L.Thomson)**

CIRL BUNTING *Emberiza cirius*

A male bird was present near the rubbish tip on Herm on 13th November. This is the first record since 1997 of this declining species. **(L.Thomson)**

[Category D record]

RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina*

An unusual sighting was of a female-type Red-crested Pochard which flew past Jaonneuse Point on 6th August. **(W.R.Turner, M.A.Guppy)**

This species has not been officially recorded in Guernsey before, but the species is common in waterfowl collections, and has a high escape likelihood. The Rarities Committee felt that the circumstances suggested it may well have been wild, but this could not be investigated due to the brevity of the sighting. Category D is the category for species for which the escape probability is high enough to preclude a species from the island's official bird list.

RECORDS FROM ALDERNEY

BLACK KITE *Milvus migrans*

One was seen flying above Bonneterre and Tourgis Road on 10th May. **(M.P.Atkinson)**

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

A single bird was found feeding in Crabby Bay on 8th November. Only the island's 2nd official record. **(J.G.Sanders)**

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

One seen at Telegraph Bay on 11th April. **(M.P.Atkinson)**

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*

A male red-spotted bird was found singing along the edge of a sheep field at La Giffoine on 8th June. This is the third Alderney record. **(M.P.Atkinson, R.Neal)**