

A List of Rare Birds on Cape Clear Island  
Non Passerines

Compiled by Joe Hobbs

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South Dublin Branch  
of  
BirdWatch Ireland  
*www.southdublinbirds.com*

Version 1.0

Published 2018

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**Cover:** Sunrise and the Old Lighthouse ruins on Cape Clear Island, Cork.

**Photo:** Victor Caschera.

## Introduction

Cape Clear Island is three miles distant from the Fastnet Rock. They are located at the entrance to Roaringwater Bay, Cork, at the southwest extremity of Ireland. To the south and west are the Celtic Sea and Atlantic Ocean. This note is a list of rare non passerines recorded at both.

## Systematic List

The Systematic List includes records that have been published in at least one of Ussher & Warren (1900), Kennedy *et al.* (1954), Irish Bird Reports (1953 to 2003) and Irish Rare Bird Reports (2004 to 2015).

Some IRBC [Appendix I](#) and [Appendix II](#) species/subspecies from 2017 that have yet to be published are included when the evidence is compelling and not controversial. These are not counted in any summary of occurrences.

A list of references is on page 19. A map of Cape is on page 20.

Ranges quoted are very general, with the intention of providing a broad indication of breeding and wintering ranges only. For polytypic species, the form that is recorded or likely to occur in Ireland is quoted. Species are monotypic unless otherwise stated.

## Reports and their Citations

Irish Bird Reports from 1953 to 1976 were stand-alone publications, thereafter incorporated in *Irish Birds* until the final report for 2003.

Irish Bird Reports from 1953 to 1976 are cited thus: *IBR* ‘report number’: ‘report page number’.

Irish Bird Reports from 1977 to 2003 are cited thus: *Irish Birds* ‘volume number’(‘volume issue number’): ‘page number’.

Irish Rare Bird Reports from 2004 onwards are published in *Irish Birds* (see the [IRBC website HERE](#) for a brief explanation of the change).

Irish Rare Bird Reports are cited thus: *Irish Birds* ‘volume number’(‘volume issue number’): ‘page number’.

## Statistics

National statistics quoted are to 31st December 2015 *per* Irish Rare Bird Reports.

## Locations

Specific locations on the island are quoted whenever known. Blannan is a common abbreviation for the headland Blannanarraguan, which can be translated as ‘Rock of the Bream’.

## Hyperlinks

Links to web pages are indicated [in this colour](#).

## Taxonomy

Scientific nomenclature and species order follows version 7.3 of the IOC World List (Gill & Donsker 2017).

## Websites Cited

Irish Birding: [www.irishbirding.com](http://www.irishbirding.com)

## Cape Clear Bird Observatory

Cape Clear Bird Observatory (CCBO) or just 'the Obs', was founded in 1959 by some British birders who were interested in investigating the island's potential for observing and recording bird migration. Its first home was the old Coastguard Station in South Harbour (subsequently taken over by An Óige and run as a youth hostel for many years), then in 1960 moving to the building known as 'Stroma' just off the A1 (or Leaca Mhór) for 1961 and 1962.

While at Stroma the observatory committee began successful negotiations to acquire Harbour House in North Harbour, eventually taking possession of the building on 22nd March 1963, where the Obs remains to this day.

In 1999 the Observatory came under the management of BirdWatch Ireland, and soon after, major renovations were made to the building.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all the photographers for allowing me include their great pictures and to Steve Wing and Geoff Oliver for all their help compiling this list and to Cólín MacLochlainn for allowing me include his superb map of Cape.

Joe Hobbs, January 2018.



The famous Cotter's Garden, looking towards North Harbour,  
(photo: Tom Shevlin).

North Harbout from the A1,  
(photo: Dick Coombes).



The Glen and Lighthouse Roads, with the Priest's House, School and Youth Hostel,  
(photo: Tom Shevlin).

Adult male **Redhead**, Lough Errul, 13th July 2003,  
(photo: Kieran Fahy).



## Systematic List

**Blue-winged Teal** *Spatula discors*

Previously assigned to *Anas discors*.

**Range:** Southern Canada and USA. Winters south of breeding grounds as far as Brazil and central Chile.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1986** One: Female or immature, Lough Errul, 25th September to 14th October (*Irish Birds* 3(3): 461).

**Status in Ireland:** Rare with 113 records.

**Redhead** *Aythya americana*

**Range:** Southern Alaska to Newfoundland and south to central USA. Winters coastal areas of California and northern Carolina south to Peru and northern Brazil.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**2003** One: Adult male, Lough Errul, 12th to 15th July (*Irish Birds* 7(4): 552), found by Geoff Oliver and Steve Wing, this was the first Irish and sixth Western Palearctic record.

On Saturday, 12th July 2003, Geoff Oliver called in to Steve Wing to let him know there was a Pochard on Lough Errul. As that represented a very good record for Cape, Steve suggested they both return to take a look, especially as Geoff expressed the opinion that it did look 'a bit different'. Back at the lake they agreed it did not look quite right for Pochard so the *Collins Bird Guide* was consulted followed by a phone call to Killian Mullaney. The possibility that it was a hybrid was discussed but eventually ruled out before the identification of Redhead was clinched, a first for Cape and Ireland. It obliged by remaining faithful to Lough Errul for four days providing great views for the many that twitched it.

**Status in Ireland:** To date, the Cape bird is the only Irish record.

### **Surf Scoter** *Melanitta perspicillata*

**Range:** Western Alaska through central Canada to Labrador. Winters south of breeding range.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1985** One: Female or immature, South Harbour, 9th October (*Irish Birds* 3(2): 301), found by Chick McNally and Michael O'Donnell.

**1993** One: Adult male, past Blannan, 15th April (*Irish Birds* 5(2): 216).

**Status in Ireland:** Scarce with 222 records.

### **White-billed Diver** *Gavia adamsii*

An alternative name is Yellow-billed Loon.

**Range:** Mainly along Arctic Ocean coasts as far north as 78°N in the Holarctic. Winters in coastal waters of the northern Pacific and Norway.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**2004** One: Immature, probably a first-summer, past Blannan, 31st May (*Irish Birds* 8(1): 109), found by Ciaran Cronin, this was the ninth Irish record.

**2006** One: Adult, off Coosadouglas and wandered around Roaringwater Bay off Hare Island and Sherkin Island, 27th October to 2nd November (*Irish Birds* 8(3): 397).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare with seventeen records.

### **Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*

Polytypic with three subspecies.

**Range:** [ssp. *exasperatus*] South Shetland, South Sandwich Island, coastal Antarctica. Disperses locally and north throughout all oceans.

**Known occurrences:** These are records of birds seen from Cape and does not include those encountered on pelagics in the Celtic Sea.

**1995** Five: One, off Blannan, 18th July (*Irish Birds* 5(4): 450), found by CCBO Warden Dave Boyle, this was the tenth Irish record; One, off Blannan, 20th July (*Irish Birds* 5(4): 450); One, off the Bill of Clear, 27th July (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 66); Two, 19th August, one at 18:15 and a second at 20:00 (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 66).

**1996** Two: One, off Blannan, 17th August (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 66); One, off Blannan, 18th August (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 66).  
**2000** Two: One, 1st August (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 83); One, 23rd August (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 83).  
**2001** One: One, 17th August (*Irish Birds* 7(2): 221).  
**2003** One: One, 17th July (*Irish Birds* 7(4): 554).  
**2006** One: One, 4th September (*Irish Birds* 8(3): 398).  
**2007** One: One, 17th August (*Irish Birds* 8(4): 587).  
**2009** One: One, 29th August (*Irish Birds* 9(2): 257).  
**2010** One: One, 19th July (*Irish Birds* 9(2): 289).  
**2017** One pending: One, 10th August (*per* Irish Birding website).

A nearby record was one was observed at 1.6 nautical miles south of Blannan on 12th August 1995 (*Irish Birds* 5(4): 450).

**Total records:** Fifteen records and one pending from 2017 not yet published.

The earliest was on 17th July and the latest was on 4th September.

**By month:**

- July - 5
- August - 9
- September - 1

**Status in Ireland:** Scarce trans-equatorial passage migrant mainly off the west and southwest coasts from the southern Atlantic with 275 records.

### **Black-browed Albatross** *Thalassarche melanophris*

**Range:** Islands and headlands in the Southern Ocean, from Cape Horn to Antipodes Island.

**Known occurrences:** Three records.

**1963** One: Adult, past Pointanbullig flying west, 24th September (Fitzharris 1997, *IBR* 11: 8), found by M. Shrubbs, R.J. Johns & B.A.E. Marr, this was the first Irish record.

**1995** One: Adult, past Blanan flying west, 2nd May (*Irish Birds* 5(4): 449), found by CCBO Warden Dave Boyle, this was the seventh Irish record.

**1996** One: Adult, past Blanan flying west, 22nd August (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 64), found by R. Mundy, this was the ninth Irish record.

A couple of nearby records were an adult or sub-adult observed by Eric Dempsey at 1.6 nautical miles southwest of Blannan on 9th September 1995 (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 64) and one observed between Cape and the Fastnet Rock on 16th August 2000 (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 83).

An unidentified albatross that was most likely this species was off Cape on 2nd September 1967 (Fitzharris 1997, *IBR* 15: 16).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare ocean wanderer from the southern hemisphere with twelve records. In addition, there are three records of unidentified albatrosses that are most likely to involve this species.



### **Gadfly Petrel sp.** *Pterodroma* sp.

Irish records of gadfly petrels have yet to be identified to species. There are three likely candidates; **Zino's Petrel** *Pterodroma madeira*, **Fea's Petrel** *Pterodroma feae* and **Desertas Petrel** *Pterodroma deserta*. All three breed on Atlantic islands, dispersing to sea outside the breeding seasons. Historically, the forms *madeira* and *feae* were treated as subspecies of Soft-plumaged Petrel.

#### **Known occurrences:**

**1974** One: One, 5th September (Enticott 1999, *IBR* 23: 6, *Irish Birds* 6(1): 65), found by Jim Enticott this was the first Irish record.

**1990** One: One, seen independently from Bullig and Blanan, 26th August (*Irish Birds* 4(4): 574 & 6(1): 65), found by Dave Bird, Peter McDermot *et al.*, this was the third Irish record.

**1993** One: One, off Blannan, 11th August (*Irish Birds* 4(4): 574 & 6(1): 65), found by Dave Bird this was the ninth Irish record.

**1995** One: One, west past Blannan at 12:10, and, presumed same, west past Blannan at 19:45, 27th July (*Irish Birds* 5(4): 449).

**1996** One: One, west past Blannan, 22nd August (*Irish Birds* 6(2): 288).

**1997** One: One, 24th August (*Irish Birds* 6(2): 288).

**1998** One: One, 8th September (*Irish Birds* 6(3): 380).

**1999** One: One, 18th August (*Irish Birds* 6(4): 546).

**2002** One: One, 11th September (*Irish Birds* 7(3): 390).

**2006** One: One, 31st August (*Irish Birds* 8(3): 398).

**2007** One: One, 22nd September (*Irish Birds* 8(4): 587).

**Total records:** Eleven records.

The earliest was on 27th July and the latest was on 22nd September.

#### **By month:**

- July - 1
- August - 6
- September - 4

**Status in Ireland:** Rare passage migrant to Irish waters, mainly off the west and south-west coasts with 107 records.

### **Barolo Shearwater** *Puffinus baroli*

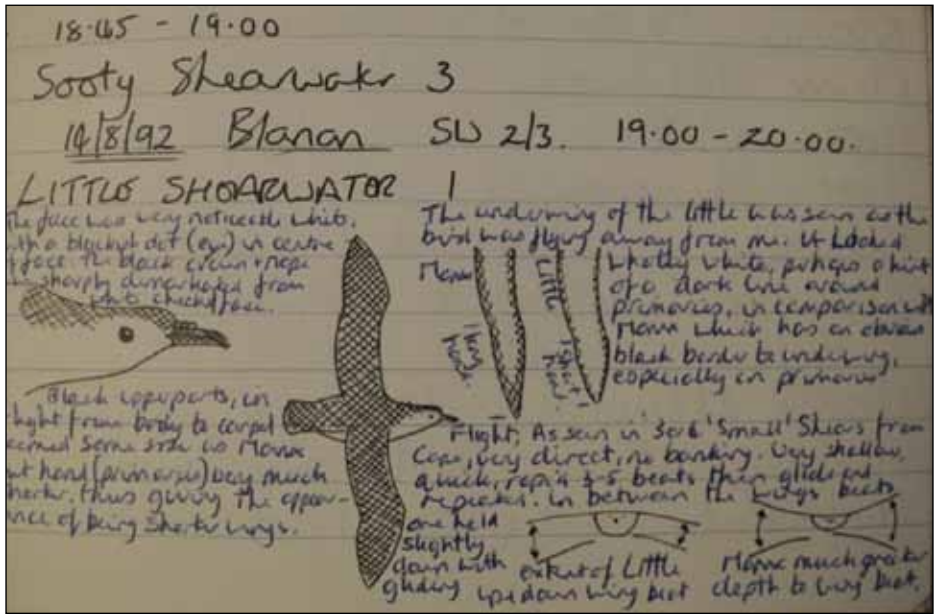
Alternative names are Little Shearwater and Macaronesian Shearwater.

**Ranges:** Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands.

**Known occurrences:** Four records.

**1978** Two: One, off the Bill of Clear, 24th September, was joined by a second on 25th and 26th September (IRBC 1999, *Irish Birds* 1(3): 416), these were the second and third Irish records and the first since 1853.

A page from Dave Bird's notebook entry of the 14th August 1992, showing a sketch of the 'Little' Shearwater that passed Blannan that day, (photo: Dave Bird).



**1992** One: One, off Blannan, 14th August (IRBC 1999, *Irish Birds* 5(1): 82), found by Dave Bird, this was the fifth Irish record.

**1993** One: One, flew west past Blannan, (IRBC 1999, *Irish Birds* 5(2): 212), found by Dave Bird, this was the sixth Irish record.

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare with 24 records mainly off the west and southwest coasts during August.

**Little Bittern** *Ixobrychus minutus*

Polypitic with three subspecies.

**Range:** [nominate ssp.] Central and southern Europe and north Africa east to western Siberia, northwest Iran and northwest India. Winters in Africa.

**Known occurrences:** Three records and one at Fastnet.

**1953** One: One, Fastnet Rock, 12th April (*IBR* 1: 8), killed striking the lighthouse.

**1966** Two: Male, Lissamona, 1st May (*IBR* 14: 16), found exhausted and later died; One, Cummer, 1st May (*IBR* 14: 16), taken by a cat. Not a good year for Little Bittern on Cape.

**1979** One: Male, O'Regan's Garden, High Road, 15th to 16th May (*Irish Birds* 1(4): 557).

**Status in Ireland:** Rare with 56 records, mainly as a spring overshoot from Europe.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

Polytypic with four subspecies.

**Range:** [n nominate ssp.] Widespread in saltwater wetlands across much of Europe, Asia and Africa. Some northerly populations migrate south to winter, others are sedentary.

**Known occurrences:** Five records.

**1978** One: Immature, Cotter's Garden, 24th April (*Irish Birds* 1(3): 417), landed in a Scots Pine, where it was promptly mobbed by Hooded Crows, causing it to depart northwards towards the mainland.

**1994** Three: Adult and two second-years, Lighthouse Road, 3rd May, with the adult and one second-year remaining to 4th May (*Irish Birds* 5(2): 329).

**2007** One: Juvenile, Lough Errul, 25th October (*Irish Birds* 8(4): 588).

**Status in Ireland:** Rare with 80 records, mainly occurs as a spring overshoot from Europe.



**Cattle Egret**, Lough Errul, 29th March 2017,  
(photo: Mary Cadogan).

### **Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis*

**Range:** Widespread, from southwest Europe to Caspian Sea, Africa and Canada south to the Guianas.

**Known occurrences:** One record and one pending from 2017 not yet published.

**2007 One:** One, 25th December in to 2008 (*Irish Birds* 8(4): 588).

**2008 Zero:** One, from 25th December remained to 22nd January (*Irish Birds* 9(1): 84).

**2017 One pending:** One, Lough Errul, 28th to 30th March (*per* Irish Birding website).

**Status in Ireland:** Scarce with 256 records. Previously a very rare vagrant with just ten records between 1976 and 2005. There followed an unprecedented influx of 223 birds over two years beginning in late 2007.

### **Purple Heron** *Saxicola maurus*

Polytypic with four subspecies.

**Range:** [nominat ssp.] Much of mainland Europe and parts of north Africa east to Kazakhstan and Iran in marshy areas with dense vegetation. Winters sub-Saharan Africa.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1965 One:** One, Central and West Bogs, 2nd May (*IBR* 13: 14), found by Tim Sharrock and S.C.L. Fogden, this was the second Irish record.

**1970 One:** One, off Blannan, 26th August (*IBR* 18: 19), found by Peter Bacon, this was the third Irish record.

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare with 25 records, mainly as a spring overshoot.

### **Great White Egret** *Ardea alba*

Polytypic with four subspecies.

**Range:** [nominat ssp.] Europe to central Asia, Russian Far East, northeast China and Japan. Winters south-central Europe, Africa and Persian Gulf to south China and Korea.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1997 One:** One, West Bog, 26th October (*Irish Birds* 6(2): 291), found by Paul Keogh and Tony Murray, this was the third Irish record. It was observed leaving Cape heading in the direction of Schull and was later found at Croagh River estuary on 31st October remaining there until 3rd November.

**Status in Ireland:** Rare with 76 records, many as spring overshoots and some have over-wintered.

### **Frigatebird sp.** *Fregata* sp.

None of the frigatebirds recorded in Ireland has been identified to species. The most likely candidate is Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1973 One:** Probably a male, 24th August (Husband & Smith 1975, *IBR* 21:8), found by D.N. Smith and C.I. Husband, this was the first Irish record.

**Status in Ireland:** Extremely rare with four records.

## **Honey Buzzard** *Pernis apivorus*

**Range:** Europe and western Asia. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1972** One: One, in flight over the School House, 23rd August (*IBR* 20: 13), found by J. Cassidy and D. Woodward.

**2000** One: Juvenile, in flight over Olly Gully towards the Wheatear Field, 25th September, and East Bog, 26th September (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 91), found by Sean Farrell.

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant or passage migrant with 34 records.

## **Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis*

Polytypic with ten subspecies.

**Range:** [n nominate ssp.] Much of Europe and northern Morocco. Mainly sedentary.

**Known occurrences:** Three records of the nominate race.

**1983** One: One, Central Bog, 31st October (*Irish Birds* 2(4): 556), found by Clive Hutchinson.

**1988** One: One, Ballyieragh, 12th October (*Irish Birds* 4(1): 89).

**1992** One: Male, Telephone Exchange, Windmills and Alderwood, 19th September (*Irish Birds* 5(1): 87).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare resident in the northeast where there are probably only a handful of breeding pairs in mature woodland and, although there are no confirmed records, possibly in the southwest. Scarce vagrant with 112 records.

## **American Goshawk** *Accipiter gentilis atricapillus*

The North American race of Goshawk.

**Range:** North America.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1974** One: One, Cotter's Garden, 5th October (*IBR* 22: 11), found by Gordan D'arcy, this was the sixth, and to date, most recent Irish record.

**Status in Ireland:** Extremely rare vagrant with six records.

## **Montagu's Harrier** *Circus pygargus*

**Range:** Northwest Africa, south and central Europe east to the Urals. Winters in sub-Saharan Africa, Indian Subcontinent and Sri Lanka.

**Known occurrences:** Three records.

**1969** One: Immature, Central and West Bogs, 1st November (*IBR* 17: 32), found by P. Walker.

**1973** One: Immature, North Harbour, 19th August (*IBR* 21: 13), found by Chris Heard.

**1981** One: Ringtail, West Bog and Wheatear Field, 24th October (*Irish Birds* 2(2): 209), found by Clive Hutchinson.

**Status in Ireland:** Passage migrant and vagrant with 87. Has bred occasionally.

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

Polytypic with four subspecies.

**Range:** [n nominate ssp.] Northern Europe and Asia. Winters to the south of breeding grounds.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1963** One: One, Killycaforavane, 13th October (*IBR* 11: 16), flying southwest.

**1980** One: One, Comillane and The Glen, 16th October (*Irish Birds* 2(1): 97).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant or winter visitor with 47 records and a single record of the Nearctic race *sanctijohannis*.

## **Spotted Crane** *Porzana porzana*

**Range:** Western Europe to central Asia. Winters Africa and Pakistan.

**Known occurrences:** Three records and two at Fastnet.

**1895** One: One, Fastnet Rock, 20th August (Ussher & Warren 1900), taken.

**1949** One: One, Fastnet Rock, 28th August (Kennedy *et al.* 1954), killed striking the lighthouse.

**1959** One: One, 9th to 15th October (*IBR* 7: 10).

**1967** One: One, Central Bog, 10th September (*IBR* 15: 26), heard only.

**1975** One: Adult, The Waist, 8th to 9th October (*IBR* 25: 13).

**Status in Ireland:** Very difficult to assess its true status on account of its secretive nature. Possibly occurs as a vagrant or rare summer visitor from Africa to suitable wetlands. Has bred in the past and possibly still does in very small numbers.



**Crane**, in flight over The Glen, 5th November 2011,  
(photo: Aidan G.Kelly).

## **Crane** *Grus grus*

**Range:** Northern Eurasia. Winters north Africa.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**2011** One: Adult, in flight over the Post Office and The Glen heading southwest towards Ballyieragh, before turning and departing away to the north until out of sight, 5th November (*Irish Birds* 9(3): 460), found by Aidan G. Kelly.

**Status in Ireland:** Rare vagrant or winter visitor with 197 records mostly to southern counties, including an influx of 77 in 2011. Historically abundant up to the Middle Ages and probably occupied bogland in the south midlands until sometime in the 17th century.

## **Stone Curlew** *Burhinus oedicanus*

Polytypic with five subspecies.

**Range:** [n nominate ssp.] Western and southern Europe to the Balkans, Ukraine and the Caucasus. Winters west Africa.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1988** One: One, East Bog, 10th May (*Irish Birds* 4(1): 90), found by Dave Borton, this was the seventeenth Irish record.

**1996** One: One, Wheatear Field and Fирbreaga, 8th to 9th May (*Irish Birds* 5(1): 72), found by Dave Boyle.

In addition, there was one on nearby Sherkin Island from 20th to 21st March 2010 (*Irish Birds* 9(2): 294).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant with 27 records mainly as a spring overshoot.

## **Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

**Range:** West Europe and Mediterranean region to central and southeast Asia and Taiwan and sub-Saharan Africa and Madagascar. Disperses more widely in winter.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**2009** One: One, Lough Errul, 22nd March to 4th April (*Irish Birds* 9(2): 261), found by Steve Wing.

**Status in Ireland:** Rare vagrant with 57 records mainly as a spring overshoot.

## **Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*

**Range:** Temperate Europe and western and central Asia. Winters Africa and southern Asia.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1963** One: One, 23rd April (*IBR* 11: 23).

**Status in Ireland:** Scarce winter visitor and vagrant with 156 records. Two pairs bred successfully at Tacumshin Lake, Wexford in 1938. In May 1954 two birds were again observed at the same location but did not remain to breed.

**American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*

Previously lumped with Pacific Golden Plover as Lesser Golden Plover, both now regarded as full species.

**Range:** Alaska and northern Canada. Winters southern South America.

**Known occurrences:** Four records.

**1998** One: Juvenile, West Bog, 20th September (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 93), found by John Diggin and Noel Linehan.

**2002** One: One, in flight over the High Road, 19th October (*Irish Birds* 7(3): 394), found by Mark Carmody and Ciaran Cronin.

**2009** Two: Two, Wheatear Field, 9th October (*Irish Birds* 9(2): 262), found by Paul Kelly.

**Status in Ireland:** Scarce vagrant from tundra regions of northern Canada with 288 records.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus*

Polytypic with three subspecies.

**Range:** [nominat ssp.] Across much of North America in boreal forest. Winters north-west South America.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1996** One: First-year, Comillane, 18th October (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 72).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant with 22 records.



Pages from Eugene Archer's notebook showing sketches of the **Killdeer** at Comillane on 18th October 1996, (photo: Eugene Archer).



## **Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

**Range:** Northern Europe to northeast Siberia and northwest Alaska. Winters north Africa.

### **Known occurrences:**

**1966** One: One, 19th September (*IBR* 14: 29-30).

**1976** Two: One, Wheatear Field, 24th to 29th September (*Irish Birds* 1(1): 79); One, Wheatear Field, 28th September to 1st October (*Irish Birds* 1(1): 79).

**1977** Two: One, Bill of Clear, 17th to 20th August was joined by another on 19th and 20th August (*Irish Birds* 1(2): 255).

**1980** One: One, Fирbreaga, 1st October (*Irish Birds* 2(1): 99 & 2(2): 230).

**1982** One: Adult, 18th September (*Irish Birds* 2(3): 386).

**1983** One: Juvenile, 4th to 6th October (*Irish Birds* 2(5): 557).

**1984** One: Juvenile, 12th to 13th October (*Irish Birds* 3(1): 111).

**1985** One: Juvenile, Fирbreaga and Wheatear Field, 8th to 12th October (*Irish Birds* 3(2): 304).

**1989** One: Juvenile, Fирbreaga, 17th October (*Irish Birds* 4(2): 240).

**1994** One: Adult, Lighthouse Road, 3rd May (*Irish Birds* 5(2): 338).

**1996** One: One, Wheatear Field, 7th to 12th April (*Irish Birds* 6(1): 73).

**2000** One: Juvenile, 25th to 27th September (*Irish Birds* 7(1): 93).

**2005** One: One, 22nd October (*Irish Birds* 8(2): 379).

**Total records:** Fifteen records.

### **By month:**

- April - 1
- May - 1
- August - 2
- September - 5
- October - 6

**Status in Ireland:** Uncommon spring and autumn passage migrant with 326 records. Has bred successfully on at least one occasion at Nephin More, Mayo in 1975.

## **White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*

**Range:** Alaska and northern British Columbia to Newfoundland and south to New England. Winters South America.

**Known occurrences:** Two records and one pending from 2017 not yet published.

**1966** One: One, Lough Errul and East Bog, 8th September (*IBR* 14: 35).

**1967** One: One, East Bog, 4th October (*IBR* 15: 30).

**2017** One pending: One, Lough Errul, 26th to 27th August (*per* Irish Birding website).

**Status in Ireland:** Uncommon vagrant with 334 records that has occurred in most coastal counties as well as inland at Lough Neagh, Armagh and at Lough Boora Parklands, Offaly.



**Dowitcher sp.** *Limnodromus sp.*

Birds not specifically identified as either Long-billed or Short-billed Dowitcher.

**Range:** [n nominate ssp.] Eastern North America. Winters Central America and West Indies.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1967** One: One, 4th October (*IBR* 15: 27).

**1978** One: One, 27th to 28th September (*Irish Birds* 1(3): 426).

**Status in Ireland:** There are about 42 records of dowitcher that are not specifically identifiable. Most are assumed to be Long-billed Dowitcher.

**Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor*

**Range:** West and central Canada and northern USA. Winters southern South America.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1974** One: One, Lough Erril, 24th August (*IBR* 22: 14).

**Status in Ireland:** Rare vagrant with 89 records.

### **Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*

**Range:** Northern Alaska, Canada, Europe and Asia. Winters at sea on tropical oceans.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1960 One:** One, 16th to 17th September (*IBR* 8: 16).

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare and irregular summer visitor. Rare spring passage migrant.

### **Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius*

**Range:** Most of North America. Winters southern USA and South America.

**Known occurrences:** Three records and one pending from 2017 not yet published.

**1983 One:** Juvenile, 1st to 15th October (*Irish Birds* 2(4): 561).

**1987 One:** Juvenile, 4th to 10th October (*Irish Birds* 3(4): 626).

**1989 One:** Juvenile, South Harbour, 28th September to 13th October (*Irish Birds* 4(2): 242), trapped on 28th September, possibly had been present since 21st September.

**2017 One pending:** Juvenile, South Harbour, 5th to 13th October (*per* Irish Birding website), trapped on 5th October, taken by a Sparrowhawk.

Once it finds its way to Cape, Spotted Sandpiper appears to find the island very agreeable remaining for fifteen, four, fourteen and nine days respectively, and the most recent record's stay was ended prematurely.

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant with 46 records.



**Spotted Sandpiper**, South Harbour, 10th October 2017,  
(photo: Dick Coombes).



### **Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria*

Polytypic with two subspecies.

**Range:** [nominate ssp.] British Columbia through southcentral Canada to Quebec and Labrador. Winters Central America and West Indies south to Argentina.

**Known occurrences:** Two records.

**1974 One:** One, 15th to 17th September, flooded field behind the Obs (Cook & Ewins 1975, *IBR* 22: 12), found by Oran O'Sullivan and Peter Ewins, this was the second Irish record. It was originally identified as a Wood Sandpiper when observed briefly on 15th September. A number of attempts were made to trap the bird but they all failed as the bird either ducked under or over the mist net on three occasions.

**2008 One:** Juvenile, Central Bog, 27th to 30th August (Haslam 2008, *Irish Birds* 9(1): 92), this was the fourth Irish record. First observed when it flew low overhead some birders watching a Yellow Warbler. While searching for it in Central Bog shortly after, Brian Haslam relocated it and a Northern Waterthrush almost simultaneously!

**Status in Ireland:** Extremely rare vagrant with six records.



### **Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes*

**Range:** Alaska south to southcentral Canada and east to James Bay. Winters southern USA through Mexico, Central America and West Indies to Tierra del Fuego.

**Known occurrences:** Three records and two pending from 2017 not yet published.

**1991** Three: Juvenile, Lough Errul, 25th to 28th August, was briefly joined by two others on 27th August (*Irish Birds* 4(4): 589).

**2017** Two pending: One, over Lighthouse Road and at Central Bog, 26th August (*per* Irish Birding website); Juvenile, over Cotter's Garden and at Lough Errul, 1st to 2nd October (*per* Irish Birding website), trapped.

**Status in Ireland:** Rare vagrant with 154 records.

### **Ross's Gull** *Rhodostethia rosea*

**Range:** Taymyr peninsula east Kolyma River and western Greenland, Spitsbergen and Cheyne Islands, Prince Charles Island and islands in Penny Strait and Churchill. Winters mainly in the Arctic at the edge of the pack ice with some birds moving further south.

**Known occurrences:** One record.

**1995** One: Adult, Fish Farm, 24th February (*Irish Birds* 6(2): 303), found by Michael O'Donnell who initially observed it from the Cape Clear ferry.

**Status in Ireland:** Very rare vagrant from the High Arctic with 22 records.

## White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*

**Range:** Eastern Europe to eastern Siberia and northeast China.

**Known occurrences:** One record and one pending from 2017 not yet published.

**2005** One: Adult, Gascanane Sound, 20th July (*Irish Birds* 8(3): 387), presumed the same individual was at Sherkin Island the previous day.

**2017** One pending: Adult, flying west along the north side of the island, 1st July (*per* Irish Birding website), first observed from a boat heading to the Calf Islands.

**Status in Ireland:** Rare vagrant from central Europe and further east with 104 records.

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Looking west-northwest from Central Bog, with the Old Lighthouse in the distance, (photo: Dick Coombes).



Map of Cape Clear Island, showing places of main interest to birders, (map: Cólín MacLochláinn).

## South Dublin Branch of BirdWatch Ireland

The South Dublin Branch of BirdWatch Ireland the national NGO wild bird conservation group, has over 1000 members in the south city and south County Dublin catchment area.

When the original Dublin branch of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy split in three, the South Dublin branch was formed in 1984 as 'Dublin Southside' with Maurice Bryan appointed as chairman. Our first indoor meeting was a film show at the Hotel Victor, Rochestown Avenue on Tuesday, 6th November 1984 followed by an outing to the North Bull Island on Saturday, 10th November. By the end of 1985 the branch had changed its name to the present one and our outdoor events were moved to take place on Sundays.

The branch organises meetings, slide shows, local and coach field trips between September and June and sometimes in July. Our members are active in many local and national conservation projects. Non-members are more than welcome to all of our events.

Our indoor events take place on the first or (very occasionally) second Tuesday of the month. From September 2017 they will be held in the Killiney Function Room of the Graduate Pub. The Graduate is adjacent to Killiney Shopping Centre on Rochestown Avenue where there is ample free outdoor parking. Unless otherwise stated, our meetings begin at 8pm. Admission to indoor meetings is free, however we would be very grateful for any contribution made towards the cost of the meeting room.

Outdoor events are available to all and with the exception of trips made by coach, are free of charge. Coach outings generally cost around €35.00 per person or €25.00 for children, students or pensioners. When taking part in outdoor events, wear clothing suitable for the time of year and location and although we often take in a visit to shops around lunch time it is wiser not to rely on that completely for food and drinks during the trip.

More details of all our activities and events, both indoor and outdoor may be found on our branch website at: [www.southdublinbirds.com](http://www.southdublinbirds.com).