



CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE BIRDWATCH GALWAY

www.birdwatchgalway.org
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY
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Issue No. 64 Feb 2009

This is a local forum newsletter –
contributions and comments are
most welcome.
Distributed by e mail only

BRANCH MATTERS

At our Annual General Meeting on the 14th of January we had a look at the number of members of BirdWatch Galway (305 at present). For the second year in a row the number has fallen slightly. It is unlikely that this is due to a fall in interest in birds and their welfare. It is more likely that members have forgotten to pay their subscription to BirdWatch Ireland or that in these times of economic recession BirdWatch may have dropped a few notches on the list of priority bills to be paid. Furthermore, it is now much easier to access BirdWatch news, both nationally and regionally, through the Internet and our website without the necessity to be a paid up member of the organisation. Yet, the organisation needs your financial support if it is to continue its vital work for the conservation of wild birds and their habitats. Therefore, I beg all of you, who read this to continue to pay your subscription, take out a membership or renew it if it has lapsed. And, of course, to all who did pay and read this, here is a word of thanks for your continued support.

The core of committee members has remained the same as last year:- Pat Finnegan chairing the monthly Wednesday night meetings and organising the Friday night talks, Deirdre Comerford looking after our finances and merchandise, Neil Sharkey producing the quarterly BirdWatch Galway Newsletter, Chris Peppiatt looking after our website www.birdwatchgalway.org and compiling the quarterly bird report, Tim Griffin leading the monthly Saturday outings at Nimmo's Pier, assisted by Tom Cuffe and Brendan Dunne, who keeps the records of these outings and also of the Galway annual Dawn Chorus event in May and I looking after the secretarial work and the merchandise.

You can find the annual report for 2008 on our website. The AGM was attended by 11 members – most of whom also regularly attend the Wednesday night meetings. As I have said many times before, the monthly meetings can be attended by anybody interested in the activities of the branch or BirdWatch Ireland in general. You will be more than welcome to give it a try!

On behalf of BirdWatch Galway I would like to sympathise with one of our active members, Bridget Browne and her family on the loss of their son who tragically died just before Christmas. I hope that Bridget will soon join us again and that birdwatching may give her some solace in this difficult time.

Best wishes to you all for a good 2009 with plenty of birdwatching activities.

Marianne ten Cate

A BIRDER'S REVIEW OF 2008

So how was 2008 for you? As we move into February in the New Year, I thought it would be a good idea to review 2008 from a birding perspective.

For me 2008 started with the usual I-WeBS counts at Rahasane Turlough. There wasn't anything particularly unusual from the early counts, although Greenland White-fronted Geese (81), Wigeon (5,000) and Golden Plover (6,500) were all present in good numbers in February.

As the seasons moved into spring, a trip to the Slieve Aughty Mountains just south of Loughrea proved to be a real eye-opener. John Carey, Neil Sharkey and I set out one Sunday morning to investigate this under-watched part of the county, not really knowing what to expect. We ended up seeing 5 species of raptor (Hen Harrier, Common Buzzard, Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Merlin) plus Jack Snipe and, best of all, two pairs of Crossbill at the Derrybrien wind farm. What a day!

Another I-WeBS count in April at Rahasane produced 14 Little Egrets feeding together at the crannog, a truly wonderful sight. There were also hundreds and hundreds of Sand Martins moving over the turlough, feeding on the plentiful supply of flying insects. I always find it amazing to watch migration in action, to reflect on the journey that these small birds carry out to get to their breeding grounds. My first Willow Warblers of the new spring were also present, singing from the hawthorn bushes.

In the middle of May, Janet and I headed to the Golden Sands resort on the Bulgarian Red Sea coast for a well-earned break. The resort borders the Golden Sands National Park, a huge area of mixed woodland. Most mornings would find me stomping around the woods before it got too hot; it was great to see so many woodland species. Star birds included Black Woodpecker, feeding on the ground and on the trunk of a tree, and Lesser Grey Shrike, perched on a tree outside the hotel. Golden Orioles were commonplace, as were Wood Warblers, Tree Sparrows and Great-spotted Woodpeckers.

Back to Ireland for the "summer", and what a wash-out it proved to be. An adult Mediterranean Gull in summer plumage was a highlight at Rahasane in July, but the turlough hardly dried out all summer. The water levels this winter have been very high, which may be as much a consequence of the wet summer as of the rain we've had during the winter.

At the start of August I headed over to South Wales to visit my parents. Dad and I ventured down to Goldcliff Wetlands near Newport to see if the breeding Avocets were still in evidence. We were rewarded with a morning's fantastic birding. The first highlight was a female Marsh Harrier quartering the wetland, the first time I'd seen this species in the British Isles. This was followed by superb views of a pair of Little Owls and then, to finish, an obliging Spoonbill posed in front of one of the viewing platforms. Add to these species the Green and Common Sandpipers, the dozen Snipe feeding on the mud and the Black-tailed Godwit, and the lack of Avocets seemed a minor disappointment.

September proved to be an amazing month, with Long-billed Dowitcher, Pectoral Sandpiper and Curlew Sandpiper all turning up together at Rahasane. Greenshank and Ruff were also present, contributing to one unforgettable visit to the turlough.

I was back at Goldcliff in October, and this time the Avocets obliged, with 10 of them feeding on the mud of the Severn Estuary. The Little Owls were also present, in what we later learned is their usual place. After the ornithological fireworks of the August visit, this one felt like a disappointment!

Mid-October at Rahasane was productive for the common species, with the first Whooper Swans and Greenland White-fronted Geese of the season putting in an appearance. Golden Plover numbers reached 7,000, just in time for the Golden Plover survey. They provided a fabulous spectacle as they twisted and turned in flight over the turlough.

Early in November Neil and I ventured into the Slieve Aughties again, and once again we were not disappointed. The visit started well, with the first stop flushing two Jack Snipe from a boggy field and a Common Buzzard soaring into view at the second stop. The Derrybrien wind farm produced the highlight, though – a male Snow Bunting in full winter plumage. He appeared totally unfazed by our presence, letting us get to within 6 feet of him. His plumage almost sparkled against the peaty blackness of the soil. It seems ironic that two visits to the wind farm had produced excellent views of birds that are normally difficult to see in the open.

Later that month, a visit to Lough Rea with John Carey resulted in a chance encounter with Dermot Breen and a drake Lesser Scaup. More of a surprise for Lough Rea was a flock of 42 Greylag Geese.

So we headed into December, with Christmas and the New Year getting ever nearer. It was a quiet month for me, but Christmas Eve did provide a Dipper in the moat next to O'Dea's Hotel in Loughrea, followed by a pair of Blackcaps in our garden on St. Stephen's Day. The Blackcaps are still with us, with the female tirelessly protecting the bird feeders from all-comers, including the male Blackcap. She has also adapted to feeding on the fat balls and peanut feeders like a tit, unusual behaviour for a warbler.

So these were some of the highlights of my 2008. Overall it was a good (birding) year for me. I was lucky to see species I hadn't seen before, and go on trips to places that I hadn't visited before with interesting companions. I'm just hoping for more of the same in 2009.

A belated Happy New Year to you all.

Pete Capsey

CANTABRIA – A DIFFERENT SPAIN

You say to people that you were on holiday in Spain and immediately you may be asked about sun, beaches and apartments – the majority view of a Spanish holiday.

However our family holiday was in Cantabria – not a destination that gets instance recognition.

Cantabria is part of what is known as 'Green' Spain part of a string of Spanish provinces that run along the north coast of Spain bordering the Bay of Biscay and the Atlantic. It is a small province amounting to only 2% of the Spanish land mass and the same amount of population. Apart from a 50/60 km coastal strip it is – to put it mildly mountainous. The capital and only large city is Santander – much in the news in the present banking turmoil with the local Bank of Santander possibly one of the 'better' and stronger world banks.

Our base was a large 'Posada' house part of a rural tourism scheme like Ireland's 'rent a cottage' scheme. The house was originally a farmhouse dating back to 17th century situated at a 500m elevation but actually in a 'bowl' surrounded by higher mountains. Despite the elevation small green fields clung to the slopes broken up by tracks deciduous forests. The driving was a succession of fairly challenging roads encompassing fairly hair-raising climbs and descents. Farming consists almost entirely of small dairy enterprises supplemented by sheep and horse rearing. The whole area – indeed almost all of Cantabria – is a national park strictly protected. Overall it is one of the most unspoiled habitats I have ever visited. From our house we could view a series of small villages – each a gathering of medieval red tiled houses complete with a ruined church but still roofed and bells still in place although long silent. The weather was temperate – warm some days – other days cool with mountain mist shrouding all heights. There was very little rain.

What of the birds? As you would expect the birds were of wooded and upland habitat. Overall numbers were low – just short of 40 species overall. Nevertheless for me there were some good firsts – Orphean Warbler – who never ceased calling near to the house, Pied Flycatcher, Crag Martins endlessly soaring high overhead, a Melodious Warbler seen while scanning from the edge of a terrifyingly steep cliff, views of a brilliantly striking Firecrest putting our local Goldcrest in the shade, Cattle Egrets in some lowland fields. A party of Nuthatches with their loud calling as they moved from tree to tree, Black Redstarts abounded in the small farmyards and a lucky view of a Tree Pipit was a real bonus. Down on the coast the absence of seabirds was quite a disappointment – I only



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noted Herring Gulls – makes you realise how lucky we are in Galway. However three birds were a the centre of my Cantabrian birds Griffon Vulture, Buzzard and Tawny Owl. While Vultures, for some reason, do not rate as highly as the large raptors nobody could fail to be impressed by their sheer size and effortless soaring. All day large numbers of these great birds soared overhead sometimes as many as twenty at any one time the overall effect is to produce an image of a huge pair of wings with little body. Backing up this great sight as it were was the constant presence of Common Buzzards often too in large numbers. All of this to a backdrop of the Buzzards constant mewing *pee-oo*. Then when dusk came the *pee-oo* call was replaced by the *hoooo...ho,ho'ho'* of Tawny Owls coming from every direction. So the days passed in this peaceful quarter of Spain.

NS

BIRDS IN POETRY

The Crane Bag of Irish mythology was made by Manannán mac Lir and was reported to contain a number of his prized possessions such as his shirt and knife. Another interpretation proposed that the Crane Bag contained the letters of the ogham alphabet and that the ogham symbols were inspired by the legs of the crane in flight. This extended version links the alphabet with the first origins of poetry and explains the allusions in this evocative poem 'First Poetry' from Moya Cannon's latest book *Carrying the Songs*, published by Carcanet Press.

Pat Finnegan

First Poetry

For Henry and Deirdre Comerford

These were, perhaps, the original poetry
swallows, terns, or grey-lag geese,
returning, unnoticed at first,
over the sea's rim,
or through the same dip in the hills,
in tune with the lift and fall of the seasons,
returning from nowhere,
or from an unknown terrain
which must consequently exist –

*the warm countries,
the frozen regions,
the isles of the blest,
Indies of the mind.*

They needed, for no obvious reason, two worlds
in which to feed and breed,
so they needed a capacity for sustained flight,
a fine orientation,
an ability to sleep on the wing
an instinct for form and its rhythms
as each took its turn to cut the wind.

As they flocked or spelled their way high over April
they needed hunger, and faith
and vital grace.

Moya Cannon

With kind permission from Moya.

SUMMARY OF RARE BIRDS IN GALWAY 2008

2008 was a bumper year in Galway producing the best total of species ever recorded in a single year with a total of 215 species. Seven new species for the county were also recorded – Lesser Scaup (2 birds), "soft-plumaged" Petrel, Wilson's Petrel, Little Blue Heron, Hobby (two birds), Western Sandpiper and White's Thrush. The list of rarities was also record breaking with about thrice the normal number of species being recorded. Typically the passerines/songbirds rarities proved to be scarce. Probably the most obvious omission from the county yearlist was an American passerine considering how well Inishmore and Inishbofin were covered during the autumn and also considering the number of American passerines seen in the South-west.

It was a good year for wildfowl with the following being recorded; Canada Goose (possibly of wild origin), American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal (one previous record, fem/imm, Portumna, Oct 1962), Surf Scoter (2 birds between Silver Strand and Nimmo's Pier), Lesser Scaup (drake at Loughrea in February and again in November and female at Angliham in November) and Ring-necked Duck. An incredible total of 20 individuals of the last species were recorded thanks mainly to a Western Palearctic record breaking flock of 15 birds on Inishmore in October. This is all the more amazing we you realized the there have only been 3-4 previous records for the county! One glaring omission from the yearlist was surprisingly Green-winged Teal which aren't even an official rarity now. Other "waterbirds" and seabirds included Black-necked Grebe, "soft-plumaged" Petrel, Wilson's Petrel, Bittern, Cattle Egret (three of the four remaining from December 07), Little Blue Heron, Great White Egret and Long-tailed Skua (2 birds). The Little Blue Heron was surely the "biggest" bird of the year in Galway and probably in Ireland (it was the only addition to the Irish list in 2008). It attracted large numbers of twitchers mainly from the UK. Two pelagics were organized out from Cleggan producing some quality birds.

Waders also featured prominently in 2008 which were as follows – American Golden Plover, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper (2 birds from the Omev Island and nearby) and 2 Long-billed Dowitchers (6 Pectoral Sandpipers also recorded). All these birds were found at just three sites; Omev Island/Strand, Inishmore and Rahasane Turlough. The first site hasn't been checked on any scale during the autumn and I'm sure it along with a few other select wetlands in west Connemara will continue to prove productive for American waders in the years to come.

It was a relatively quiet year for gulls in Galway with a new first-winter American Herring joining the long staying adult bird at Nimmo's Pier early in the year. There could have been upwards of 6 Kumlien's Gulls seen, mostly at Nimmo's of course but with single birds at Rossaveel and Clifden. The Forster's Tern was again present between Nimmo's, Traught and Tawin. A single Little Auk was also recorded off Silver Strand in November.

Snowy Owl was recorded in the county again for the third year in a row. They were recorded from three different sites with one bird being seen (near Spiddal) and the presence of a feather (near Maam Cross) and a pellet being found (near Ballyconneely).

The best passerine of the autumn was undoubtedly the White's Thrush that only put in a one day appearance on Inishbofin in October. As for the rest of the passerines – Water Pipit, Barred Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Rose-coloured Starling and 2 Greenland/Iceland Redpolls. All but the Water Pipit were picked up on either Inishmore or Inishbofin. There was also a very respectable supporting cast (especially by Galway standards!) of passerines on Inishmore – Turtle Dove, Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Whinchat (2), Reed Warbler (3), Garden Warbler (6), Lesser Whitethroat, Yellow-browed Warbler (7+) and Pied Flycatcher.

So here's hoping for a similarly productive 2009 though I don't think we'll bet 2008 total for a while, though I'd love to be proved wrong!

Dermot Breen

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Saturday 7 February, short outing with Tim Griffin *et al.* at Nimmo's Pier, 10.30am

Sunday 8 February, Atlas Tetrad at Ballyloughan. Meet in the car park at 10.30am.

13-15 February, outing to Co. Dublin with visits to Bull Island,, Howth Head and Baldoyle, Malahide and Rogerstown Estuaries. For booking (mini-bus and hotel) contact Marianne at 091 – 552519 or mariannetencate@gmail.com.

Wednesday 18 February, branch meeting, Anno Santo Hotel, Threadneedle Road, Salthill, 8pm.

Brian Caffrey will attend and give an update on the Atlas Project. **All members are welcome to attend**

Saturday 7 March, short outing with Tim Griffin *et al.* at Nimmo's Pier, 10.30a11

Saturday 14 March, Galway Bay count. For details contact Chris Peppiatt 091-862566 or chris.peppiatt@iol.ie

Wednesday 18 March, branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm. Please, come along. **Saturday 4 April**, short outing with Tim Griffin *et al.* at Nimmo's Pier, 10.30am

Wednesday 15 April, branch meeting, Anno Santo Hotel, 8pm.

Friday 17 April, talk on *The changing fortunes of Red Grouse in Ireland: what does the future hold?* Results of the national Red Grouse Survey 2006-08 by Sinéad Cummins, coordinator of the Red Grouse Survey. Anno Santo Hotel, 8pm.

Saturday 2 May, short outing with Tim Griffin *et al.* at Nimmo's Pier, 10.30am

Thanks

In this the first 2009 edition of the newsletter and the 16th year of its publication can I thank all contributors especially those of the past year. Thanks in particular to Pat – for the poetry and Marianne for the branch news and much else. Thanks to Chris for the hard work on the web site and Bird Report. Dermot and Pete get Oscars as joint winners of 'Contributors of the Year'. That does not mean that I have overlooked all you others who weighed in – to all I am most grateful. Start or keep writing.

NS

BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 4th Quarter 2008

A QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT BY CHRIS PEPPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 3rd March 2009

2nd October: 2 Grey Phalarope, 2 Great Skua & 3 Arctic Tern, Rossadilask, Cleggan (Dermot Breen).

3rd October: 12 Snipe in flight, Loughrea bypass (Pete Capsey).

3rd October: 2 Juv. Lapland Bunting, Doonloughan/Mannin Beg (Dermot Breen).

4th October: Juv. Long-billed Dowitcher, Barr an Pointe, Inishmore (Dermot Breen). (1)

4th October: Pied Flycatcher, Inishbofin (per BINS).

5th October: Little Blue Heron, relocated from 24th September and confirmed, Barnaderg Bay, Ballynakill Harbour, Nr. Letterfrack. (2)

5th October: Juv. Hobby, 4 Garden Warbler, 2 Yellow-browed Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Spotted Flycatcher, Siskin & 9 Barnacle Goose, Inishmore (Dermot Breen). (3)

5th October: 4 Pectoral Sandpiper & Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Rahasane Turlough (Owen Foley). (4)

5th October: Lesser Whitethroat, Inishmore (James Gilroy & Alex Lees).

6th October: 6 Yellow-browed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Whinchat, 'rostrata' Redpoll, Turtle Dove, Sabine's Gull, 50 Coal Tit & Jack Snipe, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).

6th October: Tree Pipit, Nr. Kilmurvey, Inishmore (James Gilroy).

6th October: 2 Whimbrel, Barnaderg Bay, Ballynakill Harbour, Nr. Letterfrack (Neil Sharkey).

6th October: Black-necked Grebe, Letterfrack (per BINS).

6th October: Crossbill, Inishbofin (per BINS).

6th October: Long-tailed Duck, Letterfrack (Mark Stewart).

6th October: Juv. Barred Warbler & Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishbofin (Eric Dempsey).

6th October: Juv. Little Stint, Rahasane Turlough (Richard Bonser).

7th October: Juv. Rose-coloured Starling, 7 Yellow-browed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler & Spotted Flycatcher, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).

7th October: Short-eared Owl, 2 female Marsh Harrier & 4 (Ad. male, Juv. male, Ad. female & Juv. female) Hen Harrier, Curraghline (Aonghus O'Donail & Paraic Reaney). (5)

8th October: 15 (11 eclipse male & 4 female/Juv.) Ring-necked Duck, Cowrough Lake, Inishmore (James Gilroy). (6)

8th October: Yellow-browed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, Garden Warbler, Whinchat, 17 Chiffchaff & 'rostrata' Redpoll, Inishmore (Dermot Breen *et al.*).

8th October: Lesser Whitethroat, Slyne Head (David Knight).

8th October: Spotted Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick).

8th October: 4 Merlin & 2 Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Tom Chadwick).

9th October: 2 Juv. Sabine's Gull, Inishbofin ferry (Craig Nash).

9th October: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Aughrusbeg Lough (Tom Lowe, Keith Langdon & Michael Hoyt).

9th October: 4 Jack Snipe & Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishmore.

10th October: Female/Juv. Blue-winged Teal, 7 Whooper Swan & 2 Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishmore (Teal: Richard Moores, per Dermot Breen).

11th October: 2 Yellow-browed Warbler, Yellow Wagtail & possible Red-eyed Vireo, Inishmore (per Dermot Breen).

11th October: Pied Flycatcher, Inishbofin (Craig Nash).

11th October: Yellow-browed Warbler & 'rostrata' Redpoll, Doonloughaun, Nr. Ballyconneely (Alan Lauder).

11th October: Spotted Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick).

12th October: Red-breasted Flycatcher, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).

12th October: summer plumaged Black-throated Diver, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Rob Vaughan).

13th October: Juv. Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Hugh Dealaney).

13th October: Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishmore.

14th October: Great White Egret, 4 Hen Harrier (including one tagged in west Clare this summer) & Kingfisher, Curraghline (Aonghus O'Donail & Barry O'Donohoe). (7)

14th October: Pied Flycatcher, Inishbofin (per BINS).

15th October: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).

16th October: Male Blackcap, Carragh Hill, Salthill, Galway City (Pam Davis).

17th October: 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Pintail, 2 Chiffchaff & 2 Blackcap, Inishmore (Derek Charles).

18th October: Blackcap, Inishmore (Derek Charles).

18th October: Spotted Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (John Carey).

19th October: Juv. Long-tailed Skua & Juv. Pomarine Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).

19th October: 3 Great Skua & 7 Arctic Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Tom Chadwick).

20th October: Pomarine Skua, 6 Great Skua & 4 Arctic Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).

20th October: 21 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 12 Whooper Swan, 40 Shoveler, 8 Pintail, 7,000 Golden Plover, 5 Black-tailed Godwit, 1,500 Lapwing, 30 Dunlin & Spotted Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John Carey).

22nd October: Spotted Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (Brendan Power).

24th October: Ad. Win. Mediterranean Gull & Ad. Win. Little Gull, north of the N18 between Kilcolgan and Clarinbridge (John Murphy).

25th October: 2 Leach's Petrel, Baile na hAbhainn (Tom Chadwick).
26th October: Storm Petrel & 2 Grey Phalarope, Barna (Paul Troake).
26th October: Storm Petrel, Mutton Island, Galway City (Paul Troake).
26th October: Ad. Win. Little Gull, Galway City (John Murphy).
27th October: Barn Owl, Nr. Aughrim (Pete Capsey).
27th October: Brambling, 4 Chiffchaff, Blackcap & 100 Redwing, Inishbofin (Peter Phillips).
27th October: Brambling, 3 Chiffchaff, 2 Blackcap & 50 Redwing, Inishbofin (Peter Phillips).
28th October: Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
28th October: 2 Grey Phalarope, Cill Éinne, Inishmore (Hugh Dealaney).
29th October: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
30th October: Redwing, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
30th October: 1st Win. Grey Phalarope, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Paul Troake). (8)
31st October: Black-throated Diver, Coral Strand, Carraroe (Dermot Breen).
31st October: Hen Harrier, Menlo (John Forde).
31st October: Common Buzzard, over Gentian Hill, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
1st November: Spotted Redshank, Belclare Turlough (Dermot Breen).
1st November: Ferruginous Duck X Pochard hybrid, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen).
1st November: 5 Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail, Dermot Breen & John Keogh).
2nd November: Little Stint & Spotted Redshank, Traught (Tom Chadwick).
2nd November: Juv. Lesser Scaup, eclipse drake Ring-necked Duck, 5 Scaup, Ferruginous Duck X Pochard hybrid, Tufted Duck X Pochard hybrid, Marsh Harrier & 4 (inc. male) Hen Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen). (9)
2nd November: Male Snow Bunting, Common Buzzard, Kestrel & 2 Jack Snipe, Derrybrien, Slieve Aughties (Pete Capsey & Neil Sharkey).
2nd November: 250 Shoveler & 2,000 Coot, Lough Rea (Pete Capsey & Neil Sharkey).
4th November: drake Lesser Scaup, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).
4th November: Goldcrest found dead, Ballybrit, Galway City (Ger O'Donohoe).
5th November: Juv. American Golden Plover, Omev Strand (Dermot Breen). (10)
5th November: 21 Twite & Ad. Win. Forster's Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Paul Troake). (11)
5th November: Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
8th November: Ringtail Hen Harrier, Coarsefield, Nr. Lough Corrib (Tom Cuffe).
10th November: 10 Grey Phalarope & 7 Storm Petrel, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
10th November: Grey Phalarope & Black-throated Diver, Coral Strand, Carraroe (Aonghus O'Donail).
10th November: Little Auk, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Paul Troake).
10th November: 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Claddagh Beach, Galway City (Paul Troake).
11th November: 2 Common Sandpiper, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Barry Cooper).
12th November: Eider, Gowland Strand, Lettergesh (Dermot Breen).
12th November: 3 Grey Phalarope & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Spiddal (Paul Troake).
15th November: Red-necked Grebe, Common Scoter, Long-tailed Duck & 6 Purple Sandpiper, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Paul Troake). (12)
15th November: Chiffchaff, Salthill, Galway City (Paul Troake).
16th November: Drake Lesser Scaup, Long Point, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen).
16th November: 20 Whooper Swan, 200 Wigeon, 10 Pintail, Sparrowhawk, 2,000 Golden Plover, 700 Lapwing & 40 Black-tailed Godwit, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John Carey).
16th November: 42 Greylag Goose, Lough Rea (Pete Capsey & John Carey).
16th November: 3 ringtail Hen Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).
19th November: Juv. Sabine's Gull & 2-1st Win. Iceland Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
20th November: 2 male Hen Harrier (adult & 2nd Win.), Curraghline, Nr. Lough Corrib (John Keogh).
21st November: 2 Purple Sandpiper, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
21st November: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
21st November: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Michael Davis).
22nd November: 4 ringtail Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Nr. Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
22nd November: 3-Ad. Ring-billed Gull, 1st Win. Iceland Gull & possible 3rd Win. American Herring Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
23rd November: 37 Whooper Swan, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tom Cuffe).
23rd November: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
23rd November: Pink-footed Goose, Inishbofin.
24th November: Hoopoe, Traught (Chris Meehan). (13)
24th November: Snowy Owl, reported Kilronan, Inishmore (Áine Iarnain).
25th November: female Ring-necked Duck & male Scaup X Tufted Duck hybrid, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen).
25th November: 72 Greenland White-fronted Goose & Greylag Goose, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen).

27th November: 4 Crossbill & Fieldfares, Furbo (Pádraig Keirns).
27th November: Fieldfares, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
27th November: 3 Ad. drake Ring-necked Duck, Lough Acogga, Nr. Lettercraffroe (Jen Fisher). (14)
28th November: Little Egret, Streamstown Bay, Clifden (Dermot Breen).
28th November: Male Hen Harrier, Roundstone Bog (Dermot Breen).
28th November: Long-tailed Duck, 3 Common Scoter & Merlin, Dog's Bay/Gurteen Bay, Roundstone (Dermot Breen).
28th November: 14 Snow Bunting, south slope of Bohaun mountain, Crumlin East, Nr. Cornamona (Paul Troake).
28th November: female Long-tailed Duck, Claddagh Beach, Galway City (Paul Troake).
29th November: Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (John Murphy).
29th November: 64 Greenland White-fronted Goose & Greylag Goose, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Chadwick).
29th November: 2-Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 4 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
1st December: 2-1st Win. Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
1st December: 2 Hen Harrier, 50 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 2 Little Egret & at least 2 Water Rail, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
2nd December: 2 female Long-tailed Duck, Coral Strand, Carraroe (Aonghus O'Donail).
2nd December: Red Grouse, Lough Nuala, Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
4th December: 2 (Ad. female & ringtail) Hen Harrier & Little Egret, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
5th December: Female Hen Harrier & 2 Pink-footed Goose, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail). (15)
6th December: 2 ringtail Hen Harrier, female Merlin & several Water Rail, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Chris Peppiatt).
6th December: Little Egret, Ballyloughane, Galway City (Liz Quinn).
6th December: Ad. Win. American Herring Gull, Galway City docks, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
6th December: 3 (2-1st win. & 3rd Win.) Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Michael Davis).
9th December: 32 Greenland White-fronted Goose & female Marsh Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Tom Chadwick).
9th December: 3-Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 4 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (John Murphy & Michael Davis).
14th December: 2 Little Egret, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Brian O Carra).
14th December: 69 Shelduck, 20 Scaup & 3 Gadwall, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
15th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
16th December: 3-1st Win. Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
16th December: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Bunowen (Dermot Breen).
18th December: 3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull, Clifden Quay (Dermot Breen).
20th December: 3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull, again present Clifden Quay.
20th December: 3-1st Win. Iceland Gull, 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, 1st Win. Glaucous X Herring Gull hybrid & 2 Crossbill, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
20th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, 2nd Win Kumlien's Gull, 2-Ad. Ring-billed Gull & Ad. female Surf Scoter, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen). (16)
20th December: 3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull, again present Clifden Quay.
21st December: 3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull, Dooghbeg Point (Dermot Breen).
21st December: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, again present Clifden Quay.
24th December: 2nd Win. Iceland Gull, Galway Docks, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
24th December: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
26th December: 3rd Win. Iceland/Glaucous Gull, part of leg missing, Waterside, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
31st December: 5 (4-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Ronan McLoughlin).

NOTES:

- (1) The juvenile Long-billed Dowitcher was present until the 10th of October.
- (2) The juvenile Little Blue Heron was present until the 22nd of October.
- (3) The juvenile Hobby was also present on the 6th of October.
- (4) The 4 juvenile Pectoral Sandpipers were present until the 7th of October.
- (5) The Short-eared Owl was present until the 4th of December. Single Female-type Marsh Harriers were also seen in the area until the end of the quarter, with 2 again on the 14th of October and one near Headford on the 28th of November.
- (6) These Ring-necked Duck were seen arriving together as a flock off the sea. At least 12 of the birds were still present until the 11th of October, with a single eclipse drake remaining until the 28th of October.
- (7) The Great White Egret, present since August 2008, was also seen on the 15th and 17th of November and on the 25th of December.
- (8) The 1st winter Grey Phalarope was present until the 1st of November.
- (9) The juvenile Lesser Scaup was also seen on the 15th of November.
- (10) The juvenile American Golden Plover was present until the 13th of November.
- (11) The adult winter Forster's Tern was still present at the end of the quarter.
- (12) The Red-necked Grebe was present until the 21st of November.
- (13) The Hoopoe was present until the 27th of November.
- (14) These 3 Ring-necked Duck were present until the 20th of December.

(15) These two Pink-footed Geese were present until the end of the quarter.

(16) This female Surf Scoter (possibly one of the two seen in the previous winter) was still present at the end of the quarter.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Hérons: Little Blue Heron, Great White Egret.

Waders: Long-billed Dowitcher, American Golden Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Semi-palmated Sandpiper, 4 Pectoral Sandpipers and 21 Grey Phalarope.

Wildfowl: 3 Lesser Scaup, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck (minimum 15, maximum 20), Surf Scoter, 3 Pink-footed Geese.

Raptors and Owls: Snowy Owl, Short-eared Owl and Hobby.

Gulls, Skuas and Terns: American Herring Gull, 4 Sabine's Gulls, several Kumlien's Gulls, Long-tailed Skua and Forster's Tern.

Others: Hoopoe, Turtle Dove, Tree Pipit, Pied Flycatcher, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Rose-coloured Starling, a number of Yellow-browed Warblers, Barred Warbler, Yellow Wagtail, Lapland Bunting, at least two '*rostrata*' Redpolls and a possible Red-eyed Vireo.