



CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE BIRDWATCH GALWAY

www.birdwatchgalway.org
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY
Telephone: 086 1680856 e-mail: neilsharkey@eircom.net
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This is a local forum newsletter –
contributions and comments are
most welcome.
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BRANCH MATTERS

On 20 January BirdWatch Galway had its Annual General Meeting with its usual agenda of secretary's report, treasurer's report, (re-)election of officers and other business. The AGM was attended by 16 members, most of whom regularly attend our monthly branch meeting. However, it was nice to welcome some new members, too.

As the core members of the branch committee normally stay in office for three years, the chairman (Pat Finnegan), secretary (Marianne ten Cate) and treasurer (Deirdre Comerford) agreed to stay on for one more year and were re-elected unanimously. Other designated tasks will also continue to be carried out by Neil Sharkey (editor of the *Newsletter* and help with the accounts), Chris Peppiatt (web-site, Galway Bay counts, records and quarterly bird reports), Tim Griffin (Nimmo's Pier outings), Brendan Dunne (Nimmo's Pier and Dawn Chorus Day records), Pat Finnegan (talks), Mary Finnegan (attendance book), Deirdre Comerford (merchandise) and Marianne (outings, Corrib counts and merchandise). John Carey volunteered to coordinate fieldwork for the new *Atlas of Birds of Britain and Ireland* while Padraic Keirns and Michael Davis are key figures in respect of the maintenance of the Small Wood and the Rostaff hide.

Apart from attending to the above *chores* most of these members also contribute to I-WeBS counts, the Brent Goose counts (Martin Byrnes in particular) and Atlas counts. So, there is no time to ever be idle and it would be really nice to be able to share a few of these recurring tasks with some of our other 270 members! If you think you might be able to help in one way or another, please pick up the phone and give me a ring at 091-552519. Just having a chat about it does not commit you to anything yet!

The Secretary's Annual Report can be viewed in full on our web-site, www.birdwatchgalway.org. Chris Peppiatt informed us that this site attracted 4,855 visits during 2009 and, interestingly, these came from 22 countries - birdwatching is a truly international activity! Please, don't forget that you can submit your sightings to the web-site so that they will be entered in our quarterly bird reports and, ultimately, in the *Birds of Galway* publication.

As a small voluntary organisation we heavily depend on the goodwill of others in the Galway community. We have received such in abundance from several quarters. The Galway Civic Trust has again been very helpful by making their FÁS team available to work on the Rostaff hide. Tom Kenny and Peadar O'Dowd have given us great publicity in their weekly columns in the *Galway Advertiser* and the *Connacht Sentinel* respectively and Galway Bay FM has regularly broadcast our events on *Community Diary*. NUI Galway has, again, given us permission to use the sports grounds at Dangan for our annual Dawn Chorus event and Gar Hartigan facilitated access for us there. To all of them we are very grateful for their support.

In turn, BirdWatch Galway has reached out to other interested parties and contributed to a number of events and organisations by sharing information, offering advice, taking part in events and giving talks or leading walks.

I hope that this report gives you a fair idea of what BirdWatch Galway does and that it may encourage you to become more actively involved with us, in whatever way suits you best.

Marianne ten Cate

CHOOSING BINOCULARS FOR BIRDWATCHING

This is a short guide to choosing binoculars. I'm no expert and I've made many mistakes along the way, so this article is aimed mainly at beginners (or upgraders) in the hope that they will not make the same mistakes.

The first general rule of birdwatching binoculars (I'll shorten the word to "bins" from here on) is:

the higher the magnification, the less detail you see. This is because high magnifications let in less light. You'll have a bigger image but it may be so dark you may not see it properly. Brightness is far more important than image size when trying to identify that difficult bird. Many beginners fail to grasp this concept. It is far more important to get the specification right rather than getting fixated on particular brand names just because they have a good reputation. The wrong spec from a big brand name is an expensive mistake.

Bins are specified by magnification X objective lens size. Thus, 8 X 42 means 8 times magnification X 42mm diameter objective lens. The bigger the objectives, the more light they leave in and the brighter the image. The higher the magnification, the darker the image. A pair of bins has aptly been described as "a collection of compromises". Designers have to balance magnification versus brightness, large objectives vs. weight, wide field of view vs. edge to edge sharpness and a whole lot more.

The ideal ratio of magnification to objective lens is 1:5 or higher. Thus 8 X 42 (1:5.25) is good. 8 X 50 is better and brighter but some may find the extra weight of 50mm's too heavy. Popular specs for birding are 8 X 30 or 32; 7,8 or 10 X 40 or 42; 8, 10 or 12 X 50. Above 10X handshake becomes a problem and detracts from the image. I can just about manage 10X but not 12X. 8 X 42 seems the ideal compromise for most birders. If you prefer compacts 7 X 30 is good. 8 X 30 just about acceptable and 10 X 30 almost useless in poor light.

So, what bins should a birder buy? I'll give some suggestions based only on bins that I have used or I know of by reputation or recommendation from other birders. (All non-Euro prices quoted are based on buying online. For sterling add about £15-£20 for post & packing. For US\$ add about \$25 for p&p. If you buy from a retail outlet in Ireland expect to pay a lot more – sometimes up to or over 50% more).

Starting at the bottom you could pick up a real bargain pair of Bresser for about €30 the next time they come on special offer at Aldi or Lidl. Bresser do make good bins at rock bottom prices but those prices allow only minimal quality control. Make sure you open boxes and check them (for collimation and eye relief especially) before buying.

If you don't want to take a gamble on Bresser (I wouldn't) and want good bins from a reputable manufacturer you could buy 8X42 Bushnell Natureview Plus Porro prisms for £89. These are one of the best value bins I have ever come across. The brightness and clarity delivered for £89 simply beggars belief. I have never seen a test or review of budget bins in a birding magazine where they did not get either 'best in test' or 'best value for money'. Unfortunately, they are not waterproof. Bushnell do a range of Natureview bins, so make sure you specify Natureview Plus. They also do waterproof Natureview Roof prisms for £129, though they are not as highly regarded optically as the Natureview Plus.

Porro prisms are easier and cheaper to make than roof prisms, so in the low to mid price range you get better optical quality for your money with porros.

If waterproof is a must you could try 8X40 Nikon Action Extreme (often shortened to Action EX) for £115. This is the upgraded waterproof version of Nikon Actions. Don't confuse the names if buying. They're not quite as good optically as the Natureviews, but not that far behind. As the name Extreme suggests, they are built to be tough, rugged and durable. They are a good buy if you do a lot of rugged outdoor activities.

Moving into the mid price range, I would look no further than some of the excellent quality bins coming out of China lately. The better ones are usually designed and ordered by American companies, made in China, but subject to American quality control. One particular group of almost identical bins causing a big stir at the moment are Zen-rays, Hawke Frontier, Promaster, Atlas and more. I think they are all made at the same factory. I bought a pair of ZEN ED2 8x43 about two months ago for \$400. They are **BRIGHT**, razor sharp and a joy to use. The optical quality is staggering – easily equal to some of the top European Alpha models. The value is unbeatable at the moment. I paid just under €400 for them including VAT and import duty. If these had a Zeiss, Leica or Swarovski logo on them I would expect to pay about €1400 - €2000 for them. I am reluctantly and grudgingly coming to admit to myself that I actually prefer them to my beloved Zeiss Victory FLs. The only unknown factor at the moment is build quality. Only time will tell.

If you want to buy, you can only buy direct from <http://www.zen-ray.com/store/>. You may get lucky and not get caught at customs for vat and import duty. If so, expect to pay about €310 for them. Why so cheap?

1. They are made at very low cost in China.
2. Zen-Ray are based in Oregon, USA – a state that has no sales tax.
3. They don't advertise, thus saving massively on costs.
4. They only sell direct to the public, thus cutting out big retailer's mark up.
5. They are competing directly against Hawke Frontiers - an established manufacturer with a good reputation, so must keep prices down. (The Zen ED2 are better and brighter. The older Zen ED are the equivalent of Hawke Frontiers).

Is now a good time to buy Chinese bins? Probably not. Given the way the Chinese optics industry has geared itself up for massive overproduction, my feeling is that prices can only fall. We will also probably see a whole range Zen ED2 clones shortly under different brand names, forcing prices down.

I won't deal with bins in the top price bracket, as generally you will pay big money for a marginal increase in quality over the mid priced bins. Of the four big names: Zeiss, Leica, Swarovski and Nikon, I think Nikon consistently deliver the best value (not necessarily the best optics) across all price ranges. Swarovski are by far most expensive. What you pay for is Swarovski's legendary after sales service. They seem reluctant to charge for repairs, even when caused by misuse by owners. There is a story going around about a man whose bins were well and truly chewed by his pet Labrador. Swarovski repaired them free of charge.

Some other bins are worth mentioning as they are regarded by optics enthusiasts as among the best bins ever made:

- 8X32 Nikon SE Porros (not waterproof);
- 8.5X42 Swarovski EL;
- 8X33 Kowa Genesis Prominar XD33;
- 8.5 X44 Kowa Genesis Prominar XD44 (very heavy);
- 8X42 Zeiss Victory FLs. All these bins are sheer class.



One other point: Never, ever buy zoom bins. They are a waste of money.

If you want to buy online, the following UK online shops have a good reputation and track record:

<http://www.acecameras.co.uk/content/scopes.asp>
<http://www.warehouseexpress.com/category/BinocularsAndScopes.aspx>
<https://www.cliftoncameras.co.uk/>

It's not a good idea to buy online without trying out and handling the bins first. Don't rely on my or anybody's recommendations. What might suit one person may not suit another. If you wear glasses eye relief is very important. The best way to try out bins it is to get out and meet other birders. If you see bins that might suit you don't be afraid to ask for a look. Most birders will oblige.

If you'd like more info on technical terms, etc or what to look for when choosing bins, this is an excellent site: <http://www.birdwatching.com/optics.html>.

Look especially at

<http://www.birdwatching.com/optics/myths2006-1.html> and at

http://www.birdwatching.com/optics/binocular_advisor/

If you'd like to read generally unbiased reviews and discussions on various models by birders look here:

<http://www.birdforum.net/forumdisplay.php?f=112>

Good luck with your search.

Bear in mind that whatever bins you buy, modestly priced or expensive, the day will come when the bird you're looking at will be either too small or too dim to see properly. That's when you need to start thinking about a scope. Hopefully by then the Chinese will have brought out a new wonder scope at a sensible price to challenge the grossly overpriced Alpha models.

Brendan Power

CHICKENS ARE BIRDS

Retired to a rural home I wanted some animals around me and opted for chickens. I have since discovered that they are incredibly stupid and all they want to do is eat, poo and look for ways to die.

They are also cute, funny, lovable and great company when no one else will talk to me, and they give me eggs to eat every day.

In September I took delivery of a small (20 square feet) coop made of timber and galvanised wire mesh, 4 chickens, a bag of layers pellets and a bag of woodshavings at a total cost of €380. I made a 30 square foot tunnel myself which attaches to the coop to give some extra free range space. My granddaughter named the chooks (she is Australian) Cinderella, Snow white, Bel and Barbie Mariposa. Unfortunately, Snow white passed away after 2 weeks.

The practical side of poultry keeping is relatively easy and inexpensive and my small flock take about 3 hours per week to look after. A coop can be knocked together from bits and pieces and 15 week old pullets can be bought for around €8 each. The average urban or rural garden has enough space to carry 3 or 4 hens who will each provide a fresh egg every 36 hours. You don't need a rooster. All the information you need is available on the web, covering everything from space and nutrition to health and housing. Feed for 3 birds will cost around €10 per month and for that you will get 60 eggs. Supermarket eggs are cheaper and less trouble but home laid, free range eggs are fresher, tastier and healthier.

Joe Smith

IRBC

Congratulations to Dermot Breen on becoming a member of the IRBC (Irish Rare Birds Committee).

The IRBC has an important role on all matters pertaining to the status of Irish birds and it is a great tribute to Dermot's status as an ornithologist and birdwatcher that he has been invited to join the committee. We all offer him our best wishes and continued success.

NS

BIRDS IN POETRY

The Midsummer Cushion, a collection of some six hundred poems and ballads, was completed by John Clare between 1827 and 1831. Difficulties with publishers and lack of finance meant that only a selection from the manuscript was published in 1835. The complete volume did not appear for 150 years. Hedge Sparrow shows all the characteristics of Clare's verse – grace, accurate observation and love of nature.

Pat Finnegan

HEDGE SPARROW

The tame hedge sparrow in its russet dress
Is half a robin for its gentle ways
& the bird loving dame can do no less
Then throw it out a crumble on cold days
In early march it into gardens strays
& in the snug clipt box tree green & round
It makes a nest of moss & hair & lays
When e'en the snow is lurking on the ground
Its eggs in number five of greenish blue
Bright beautiful & glossy shining shells
Much like the firetails but of brighter hue
Yet in her garden home much danger dwells
Where skulking cat with mischief in its breast
Catches their young before they leave the nest

John Clare

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME

Saturday 6 February, short outing Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.

Non-members and children are welcome to join these Saturday outings.

Saturday 13 February, roving outing for the new *Atlas of Birds of Britain and Ireland*; if interested in taking part, please contact John Carey at jjgcarey@hotmail.com.

Wednesday 17 February, monthly branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm. All members are welcome to attend the monthly meetings

Weekend 26-28 February, outing to Kerry with 2 nights stay near Tralee. Immediate booking with Marianne at (091) 552519 or mariannetencate@gmail.com advised as places are limited.

Friday 5 March, talk by Niall Hatch, Development Officer with BirdWatch Ireland, *The East Coast Nature Reserve*, Anno Santo, 8pm.

Saturday 6 March, short outing Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.

Galway Bay count – date to be confirmed

Wednesday 24 March, monthly branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm.

Weekend 26-28 March, All Ireland BWI/RSPB conference, Sligo.

Saturday 3 April, short outing Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.

Wednesday 21 April, monthly branch meeting, Anno Santo, 8pm.

Saturday 1 May, short outing Nimmo's Pier with Tim Griffin *et al.*, 10.30am.

MtC

BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 4th Quarter 2009

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 7th February 2010

1st October: Juv. Long-billed Dowitcher & Great White Egret, Rahasane Turlough. (1) & (2)
1st October: Short-eared Owl & 2 female/Imm. Marsh Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail & Tom Cuffe). (3)
2nd October: Lesser Whitethroat, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).
2nd October: Sooty Shearwater & 5 Arctic Skua, Slyne Head (Aonghus O'Donail).
3rd October: Kingfisher, Clifden Harbour (Miryam & Michael Harris).
4th October: Red-breasted Flycatcher & Garden Warbler, Slyne Head (Alex Lees).
4th October: 6 Little Egret, Juv. Peregrine, ringtail Hen Harrier, 2 Gadwall, 2 Shoveler, 200 Mallard, 500 Wigeon, 200 Teal, 1,500 Golden Plover, 50 Dunlin, Redshank, 5 Curlew, 200 Lapwing & Swallow, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
4th October: 4 Ruff & 50 Swallow, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Tarpey & Tony Mee).
4th October: Spotted Flycatcher, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).
5th October: 2 Lapland Bunting, 2 Snow Bunting, Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat & 20 Chiffchaff, Inishmore (Dermot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
5th October: Arctic Skua, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
6th October: 2 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 3 Stock Dove, 2 Blackcap, 2 Lesser Whitethroat, 6 Chiffchaff, Lapland Bunting & 2 Snow Bunting, Inishmore (Demot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
6th October: 2 Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Tom Chadwick).
7th October: Garden Warbler, 4 Blackcap, 2 Lesser Whitethroat, 5 Willow Warbler, 16 Chiffchaff, Lapland Bunting & 3 Snow Bunting, Inishmore (Demot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
7th October: 2 Arctic Skua, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
8th October: Jack Snipe, 2 Garden Warbler, 3 Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, 16 Chiffchaff & 2 Snow Bunting, Inishmore (Demot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
9th October: 3 Garden Warbler, 3 Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, 17 Chiffchaff, 5 Willow Warbler & 2 Lapland Bunting, Inishmore (Demot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
10th October: 3 Garden Warbler, Blackcap, Lesser Whitethroat, 23 Chiffchaff & 4 Willow Warbler, Inishmore (Demot Breen <i>et al.</i>).
10th October: Peregrine, Aillebrack, Ballyconeely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
10th October: 120 Ringed Plover & 30 Red-breasted Merganser, Mannin Bay, Ballyconeely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
11th October: 11 Little Egret, Juv. Peregrine, 200 Black-tailed Godwit & 4,000 Golden Plover, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & Neil Sharkey).
11th October: Kingfisher, Traught (Pete Capsey & Neil Sharkey).
11th October: Merlin, Ballyconeely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
11th October: Redwing, over Loughrea (Pete Capsey).
11th October: 2 ringtail Hen Harrier, Peregrine, Merlin, 3 Kestrel & 10 Little Egret, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
12th October: Yellow-browed Warbler, Garden Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat, 8 Chiffchaff & 3 Redwing, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
14th October: 1st yr Cedar Waxwing, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan). (4)
15th October: Fem. Hen Harrier with prey, Headford Rd., Nr. Ballindoooley, Galway City (Molly Malcolm).
16th October: Juv. Hen Harrier, Whooper Swan & Little Egret, Ballindiff Bay, Luimnagh, Lough Corrib (Deirdre Comerford).
16th October: Sooty Shearwater, Whooper Swan, 10 Redwing, 2 Fieldfare, 2 Lesser Redpoll, Blackcap & 15 Chiffchaff, Inishbofin (Hugh Delaney).
16th October: Fem/Imm. Merlin, Inishshark (Dermot Breen).
17th October: Common Buzzard, Clonboo (Pete Tyndall).
17th October: Curlew Sandpiper & 6 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Cuffe).
18th October: 2 (Ad. & Juv.) American Golden Plover & 5 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Aonghus O'Donail & Michael Davis).
19th October: 3 Ad. Win. Mediterranean Gull, Mannin Bay, Ballyconeely (Dermot Breen).
19th October: Male Snow Bunting, Aillebrack, Ballyconeely (Dermot Breen).
21st October: Male Snow Bunting, Keeraunduff Hill, Nr. Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
22nd October: 4 ringtail Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
22nd October: Greenland Wheatear (ssp. <i>leucorhoa</i>), Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
23rd October: Male Hen Harrier, Keeraunduff Hill, Nr. Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
23rd October: Common Buzzard & 5 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Aonghus O'Donail & Tom Chadwick).
24th October: 2 Chough, Dog's Bay, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
24th October: Juv. Peregrine, Murvey, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
25th October: 2nd Win. Glaucous Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
26th October: Female Pied Flycatcher, Chiffchaff & 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Mannin More, Ballyconeely (Alan Lauder).

26th October: 4 Ruff & 5 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Glenamaddy Lake (Martin Ryan).
26th October: 4 ringtail Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
27th October: 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Mannin Beg, Ballyconeely (Dermot Breen).
27th October: Juv. Fem. Hen Harrier, Boliska Eighter (Aonghus O'Donail).
29th October: Ad. American Herring Gull, Docks, Galway City (Tom Cuffe). (5)
30th October: Common Sandpiper, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
31st October: Blackcap & 5 Chiffchaff, Inishmore (Peter Phillips).
1st November: 3 (Male & 2 Fem.) Hen Harrier, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
3rd November: 2 Little Auk, 2 Sooty Shearwater, Blue-phase Fulmar, 2 Great Skua, Snow Bunting & 7 Chiffchaff, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).
4th November: Juv. American Golden Plover, Belclare Turlough (Aonghus O'Donail).
6th November: Black Tern, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
6th November: Little Auk, Lettermullan (Aonghus O'Donail).
6th November: 1st Win. Little Gull, Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
6th November: Leach's Petrel, Tully Pier (Dermot Breen).
7th November: Common Sandpiper, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe <i>et al.</i>).
7th November: Ad. Ring-billed Gull (this individual has returned for the last seven winters), Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).
8th November: Sub-adult White-tailed Eagle (wing-tagged from Kerry reintroduction project), Curra, Lough Corrib, Nr. Moycullen (Marianne ten Cate <i>et al.</i>). (6)
8th November: Great Northern Diver, Knockferry, Lough Corrib (Marianne ten Cate <i>et al.</i>).
8th November: Ferruginous Duck X Pochard hybrid, Tufted Duck X Scaup hybrid & Female Red-crested Pochard, Menlo-Angliham, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen).
9th November: Ad. Win. Forster's Tern, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis). (7)
10th November: 2 Black Redstart, 2 Chiffchaff & 2 Eider, Inishbofin (Dermot Breen).
14th November: Drake Lesser Scaup, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen). (8)
15th November: Green-winged Teal X Teal hybrid, Belclare Turlough (Dermot Breen).
15th November: 7 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 6 Whooper Swan, 105 Wigeon, 40 Tufted Duck, 30 Teal, 3 Shoveler, 34 Lapwing, 37 Curlew, 9 Redshank, Greenshank & Little Egret, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John Carey).
15th November: Woodcock, Derryclare Lake (Miryam & Michael Harris).
19th November: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
19th November: Merlin, Loughrea (Pete Capsey).
20th November: Grey Phalarope, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
22nd November: Leach's Petrel, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
23rd November: 1st Win. Sabine's Gull, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Tim Griffin). (9)
23rd November: Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 1st Win. Iceland Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
24th November: 1st Win. Little Gull, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Michael Davis).
24th November: Leach's Petrel, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).
26th November: Waxwing, Tirellan Heights, Galway City (Mary Cuffe).
26th November: 5 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Tom Cuffe).
26th November: 1st. Win. Little Gull, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City. (Tim Griffin)
28th November: Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
30th November: 3/4 Twite, Sliabh Rua, Nr. Headford (Neil Sharkey).
4th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
4th December: 4 (3 Ad. & 1st Win.) Mediterranean Gull & 28 Common Scoter, Mannin Bay, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
5th December: 4 Black-throated Diver, 2 Sandwich Tern & Twite, Traught (Dermot Breen).
5th December: Black-throated Diver, Roundstone (Dermot Breen).
6th December: 1st Win. Little Gull, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (David O'Keeffe).
12th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
13th December: Black Redstart, Kilonan, Inishmore (Chris Peppiatt).
16th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
19th December: Hen Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tom Cuffe).
20th December: Barn Owl, Ballyhale, Headford (Tom Greaney).
24th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
25th December: 2 Purple Sandpiper, Salthill promenade, Galway City (Michael Davis).
25th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
27th December: Black Redstart & 2 Purple Sandpiper, Salthill, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
28th December: Male Ferruginous Duck X Pochard hybrid, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen).

28th December: Kingfisher, Cashel, Connemara (Barbara Lee).
28th December: 3 Great Northern Diver & c. 300 Redwing, Dog's Bay/Gurteen (Miryam & Michael Harris).
29th December: Black Redstart, Clifden (Miryam & Michael Harris). (10)
31st December: 4 Gadwall, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Neil Ellis). (11)
31st December: 200 Ringed Plover, Ballyloughane, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
31st December: Dipper, Salmon Weir Bridge, Galway City centre (John Carey).
31st December: 2 Jay, Killagoola, Moycullen (Trudy McDermott).
31st December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.

NOTES:

- (1) The Long-billed Dowitcher from the last quarter was present until the 3rd of October.
- (2) The Great White Egret was present in the area during the whole quarter; it was seen at Rahasane Turlough on the 2nd, 4th, 9th, 10th and 11th of October, at Kilcolgan on the 20th of November and at Ballyloughane on the 31st of December.
- (3) Single female-type Marsh Harriers were recorded in the lower Lough Corrib area on the 11th and 25th of October, the 8th of November and the 19th of December.
- (4) This is the first Irish record of Cedar Waxwing.
- (5) The returning adult American Herring Gull was seen sporadically in the docks and Nimmo's Pier area on a number of dates during November and December.
- (6) The White-tailed Eagle was present at Lough Corrib again on the 10th of November.
- (7) The returning adult Forster's Tern was present during the whole quarter and was reported on a number of dates in the Nimmo's Pier and Mutton Island areas.
- (8) The Lesser Scaup was present at Lough Rea again on the 16th of December.
- (9) The Sabine's Gull was present at Blackrock until the 26th of November.
- (10) The Clifden Black Redstart was still present the next day (30th of December).
- (11) The Salthill Black Redstart was still present into the next quarter.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Red-breasted Flycatcher, at least two Lapland Bunting, Yellow-browed Warbler, Cedar Waxwing (first for Ireland), Waxwing, Pied Flycatcher, 5 Black Redstart, Blue-phase Fulmar, White-tailed Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Sabine's Gull, Grey Phalarope, Long-billed Dowitcher and 3 American Golden Plover. Long stayers/returning birds included Great White Egret, American Herring Gull, Forster's Tern, Lesser Scaup, Marsh Harrier and an individual Ring-billed Gull that has been present for seven winters.

First Winter migrants: Short-eared Owl (1st October); Snow Bunting (5th October); Greenland White-fronted Goose (6th October); Jack Snipe (8th October); Redwing (11th October); Fieldfare (16th October); Whooper Swan (16th October); Waxwing (26th November).