



CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE
BIRDWATCH GALWAY
www.birdwatchgalway.org
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY
Telephone: 086 1680856 e-mail: neilsharkey@eircom.net
Issue No. 72 Feb. 2011

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

BRANCH MATTERS

Our AGM took place on Wednesday 19th of January, and was attended by eleven members. Eight members sent apologies; one of those sent in a written submission.

The Secretary's Annual Report can be viewed on our website www.birdwatchgalway.org. The Annual Financial Statement is available on request from our Treasurer Deirdre Comerford or from Neil Sharkey (details above).

A few matters were raised by the committee:

- The mid-monthly Wednesday night members' meetings seem to have outlived their purpose as most members now communicate by Internet and reminders of events and activities are sent by email to those who have provided us with their email address. Therefore, it was proposed to discontinue these meetings and offer members the opportunity to meet informally after the monthly Nimmo's Pier outings and/or after talks. This proposal was unanimously accepted. Another proposal to start the talks earlier to facilitate socialising afterward was not accepted as 8pm seems to be as early as most members, especially those who have to travel furthest, can make it to the talks.

- It was proposed and accepted that the secretary deals with ongoing matters and in- and outgoing emails and to have an informal meeting once per quarter - or more often if and when needed - to be attended by the secretary, treasurer and anyone involved with current issues such as talks, counts, outings, publications or publicity.

- A proposal to reduce the number of talks was rejected, as the talks are the best-attended and most successful events hosted by the Branch. So, we will continue to offer two talks before Christmas and two after. **We are looking for someone willing to organise the talks.**

- It was proposed not to organise weekend outings anymore but continue to offer the Nimmo's Pier outings with Tim Griffin *et al.*, and also organise one or two day-trips per year. This proposal was unanimously accepted. As most people buy the BirdWatch merchandise on-line and the stock carried by the branch has lost its appeal, it was proposed and unanimously agreed to discontinue offering merchandise, unless we are required to do so at fairs etc.

- The Editor of the *Newsletter* made a further appeal to members to contribute articles and to volunteer as guest editor once in a while. The latter request still stands.

One of the members proposed to broaden the scope of the pre-Christmas picture show and it was agreed to look into this with Tom Cuffe who has so generously made his images available to the branch and shared the proceeds with us for the last four years.

As a result of the above decisions the secretary's workload has been lightened and I have, therefore, volunteered to stay in office for another year. Deirdre Comerford will continue to be our treasurer, Neil Sharkey will continue to edit the *Newsletter* but asks to be relieved of this once a year by a guest editor, Chris Peppiatt will continue to look after the Web-site, the records and the Galway Bay counts and we hope Tim Griffin will continue to lead the Nimmo's Pier outings and take the Dawn Chorus event in hand.

A written submission was made to the AGM by Kay Sinnott who urged us to do more for and with children. She made some very useful suggestions which will be put to HQ as well. As a result of the issues she raised we considered re-instating the Young Birdwatchers Club but, with the lack of volunteers we already have, we opted to at least promote the Nimmo's Pier outings in *Wings* and the local media as being very suitable for children and

beginning birdwatchers. John Carey and Colin Conroy will discuss this with Tim Griffin and make themselves available particularly to children at the Nimmo's Pier outings.

The meeting agreed that the Galway Branch is a very active and productive branch and we hope to continue to be so – **with your help!** Any offers of help in any form will be very welcome and all contributions from everybody are gratefully acknowledged.

Marianne ten Cate

2010 REVIEW

At least 209 species were recorded within county Galway in 2010, three up on the total for 2009. 26 species/subspecies rarities were recorded with a total of 39 individuals in all. Four new species were added to the county list – Pacific Diver, Thayer's Gull, Buff-bellied Pipit and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Amazingly, for the fourth year in a row now, Galway has added a new addition to the Irish List, this time in the form of the Pacific Diver which was picked up by Michael Davis and just two other lucky observers while undertaking the Irish Wetland Bird Survey of Galway Bay. Despite a large arrival of Irish twitchers the following day it was never seen again. Thankfully, most people caught up with the species a month later in county Clare.

Ducks of note included a Green-winged Teal, 3 Blue-winged Teal (part of a record national autumn influx), 3 Ring-necked Ducks and a Surf Scoter.

The best of the birds of prey were three White-tailed Eagles, a Red Kite, two Goshawks, two Hobby and a Snowy Owl (cheers Christ!).

The waders highlights were two Dotterels, four American Golden Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher and Lesser Yellowlegs (the first since 2003). The supporting cast included 3+ Little Stint, 6 Pectoral Sandpiper and 2 Wood Sandpipers.

If 2008 and 2009 were average or poor years for gulls then 2010 was close to abysmal. Iceland Gull numbers never came close to double figures for the entire year. Until very recently it was a normal state of affairs to see a dozen in a day at Nimmo's Pier alone. Little Gulls also appear to have largely abandoned Nimmo's in recent years with just a single bird present early and late in the year. The American Herring Gull was still present in January but hasn't been seen since. The Forster's Tern did, however, return in November for its eighth winter now. It seems highly likely that this is the same individual that summers in Lady's Island Lake, Co. Wexford and spends the autumn off north Dublin and Louth before arriving here.

The best of the passerines were a lovely spring Golden Oriole, a Buff-bellied Pipit, 3 Barred Warblers, a Rose-coloured Starling and of course the Inishmore Yellow-rumped Warbler. Some of the supporting cast included 1 Common Redstart, 5+ Black Redstart, 2 Whinchat, 4 Ring Ouzels (first autumn records for the county?), 4 Yellow-browed Warbler, including a notable inland record, 8 Pied Flycatcher and a Tree Sparrow. A large arrival of 50+ Lapland Buntings happened during late August and September which was restricted to the west of the county, mostly on Inishbofin.

A good invasion of Brambling and Waxwings occurred nationally during the autumn and winter and this was reflected in Galway with both being recorded far and wide in the county.

The county list now stands at 298 species. The 300 mark will surely be broken in 2011 but what will those two new species be, I wonder?

Dermot Breen

AN AMERICAN BIRDER IN CO. GALWAY

It all started, as so many things do, with an email from Marianne... The American birder and bird photographer, John McKean, would be spending a week birding in Co. Galway at the start of November. As he would be staying in Craughwell, close to Rahasane Turlough, my name was mentioned in dispatches...

John is attempting to photograph every bird he sees, and is making all of his photographs available to Cornell University to help with the various ornithological research projects they are carrying out. He says he is photographing the birds for the benefit of the birds, rather than his own (financial) gain.

After regular email communication with John, I arranged to pick him up at the guest house in Craughwell on Sunday November 7th, with the intention of spending the morning at Rahasane and, depending on the birds there, possibly moving out to the coast for the afternoon. The weather during the previous week was inclement, to say the least, and water levels were already high at Rahasane, so I feared the worst as the day approached.

I had warned John that waterproofs and thermals were likely to be the order of the day, so imagine my surprise when I awoke to a gloriously sunny day. I collected John from the guesthouse just after 8:30am (OK, so I missed the turning, but my excuse is that the sign for the guesthouse was hidden behind a "site for sale" sign...), and after brief introductions we hit the road.

My fears about Rahasane were realised, with water levels extremely high. We stopped at the gate closest to Craughwell, where we were able to track down 8 Black-tailed Godwits and 10 relatively co-operative Whooper Swans. Unfortunately, most of the birds were out of range for John's camera, but he was pleased to get Whooper Swan, as it was a species he hadn't photographed before. The highlight here, though, was a very inquisitive horse, convinced that the lens on John's camera was in fact a nosebag full of tasty morsels.

We moved down to the middle gate at the Poet's Graveyard, although I wasn't too confident that we'd see much. John did get some excellent shots of a couple of Robins, and waited in vain for a very uncooperative Goldcrest to pop out of cover, but after about half an hour we decided to move on to the coast.

We headed out to Traught Beach, just south of Kinvara. One of John's target species for the week was Shelduck, and I thought we'd have a reasonable chance of seeing them on the mud at Holywell Causeway. We stopped at the causeway and immediately spotted 3 Shelduck feeding out on the mud. We managed to get closer to the birds and John thought he'd got some reasonably good shots, along with Little Egret and various finches. The male Kestrel wasn't quite so confiding, though, and quickly flew off after putting up masses of finches.

From the causeway we headed down to the beach for a spot of lunch. Just as I'd opened the rolls and poured the soup, John thought he'd spotted an Oystercatcher (another target species) and was off down the beach at a rate of knots. It turned out that there were only (Ruddy) Turnstone rooting around at the water's edge, but he did get some excellent shots. It was the first time John had seen a flock of Turnstone, with around 120 birds being present. There were other people on the beach, and at one point I was treated to the sight of John trying to creep up on the Turnstone whilst a small child in a red anorak did his best to scare them.

The Rock and Meadow Pipits were also very confiding and made for some more good shots.

After lunch we braved the winds that were a portent of the storm to come, and set off to find more birds to



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photograph. Whilst picking through another large flock of mixed finches, John spotted something white flitting around. At first I thought it was probably a Pied Wagtail, but the mystery bird dropped down onto the rocks in front of us and turned out to be an albino Chaffinch. Very strange it was too. It seemed to be accepted by the other birds in the flock, but it really did stand out like a sore thumb, and it made me think it had to be a meal in waiting for a local predator.

We managed to pick out some Great Northern Divers in the bay, and a small gaggle of Brent Geese flew past, but by now the wind was picking up and rain was in the air, so at around 3:00pm we decided to head back to civilisation. The light was also getting worse, which was making it harder for John to get the shots he required. We got back to the guesthouse just as the rain began in earnest.

Overall I was disappointed with the relative lack of birds, but it was still a very enjoyable day's birding. The weather was, for the most part, good, and the company was excellent, which more than made up for the lack of birds. It's also interesting to go birding with someone from outside the British Isles, because what is common and everyday to us may be unusual to them. It certainly made me look at birds like boring Chaffinches and drab Rock Pipits through new eyes and appreciate the beauty of them.

As is usually the case, something *excellent* had resulted from that initial email from Marianne...

* John's photographs can be viewed at www.whywelovebirds.com. There is a section on the web site entitled "Birds by Trip", and his photos from the week in Co. Galway are there for all to see.

Pete Capsey

SLYNE HEAD – A HIDDEN GEM

Slyne "Head" which lies three kilometres off the Galway coastline is actually an archipelago and not a headland in the technical sense. I had the good fortune of visiting these special islands on three occasions during this summer undertaking tern surveys. Access to the islands can be difficult due to their remoteness, regular rough weather and treacherous sounds between the groups of small rocky islets. Oileán Imill, the westernmost island, is unusual in the fact that it has two lighthouses and these can be seen from far and wide from most spots along the west coast of Galway. They give a good indication of how far out west it is. The main lighthouse has been automated and unmanned since 1990.

Oileán Imill has been the site of a large Arctic Tern colony in the recent past. 324 pairs were recorded here during the last All Ireland Tern Survey in 1995. During our time out there we only encountered 34 pairs. Worryingly, we didn't manage to locate the missing birds anywhere along the South Connemara coastline during our survey. On our last visit there we came across a Peregrine, a few Great Black-backed Gull nests with tern eggs scattered around the immediate area and even an old Snowy Owl pellet. The last species has a special history with the island. Four birds, including adults and juveniles, were all seen/caught/"obtained" here during the summer of 1946. This would strongly suggest that a pair bred in the immediate area during that summer.

The Slyne Head archipelago is currently the only location in the county where Eider breeds. At least two nesting females were found this year and up to 18 birds were seen around the islands. Other seabirds found breeding on the islands included 20+ pairs of Fulmars, 20 pairs of Shags, 30+ pairs of Common Gulls and many Herring, Lesser & Great Black-backed Gulls.

Slyne Head is the location of a first for Ireland in the form of a Sora Rail on 11th April 1920, unfortunately picked up dead beneath the lighthouse. This fate must surely have befallen many migrants in the lighthouses' 174 year old history and I dread to think what must have occurred here down during the years. On one visit during the spring there was a rather lost looking Willow Warbler hopping around rock pools. As there is a complete lack of bushes on the islands, migrants have nowhere to hide and probably quickly fly onto the mainland in search of food and cover. Species as diverse as Leach's Petrel, Bittern, Jack Snipe, Grey Phalarope, Little Gull and Red-breasted Flycatcher have all been found under the lighthouse in the past. The south lighthouse has been out of commission since 1898 but today contains a nesting pair of Ravens, which must rely for food on the numerous breeding seabirds and grounded migrants here during the Spring.

Due to its location it has been proven to be a productive site for seawatching in Spring and Autumn. Large numbers of skuas on spring passage have been recorded here in the past. During the springs of 1979 to 1981 a total of 899 Pomarine Skuas and 39 Long-tailed Skuas were seen. Two weeks of seawatching were also carried out here in the autumn of 1969. Huge numbers of shearwaters were recorded passing e.g. 10 Cory's, 233 Greats, 1,856 unidentified large, 385 Sooty, 1,4523 Manx etc. On one of my visits to the islands with local boatman Martin O'Malley there were at least 2,000 Manx Shearwaters feeding in the waters just off Oileán Imill. It was an amazing experience moving through the water where birds seemed to be everywhere flying and diving left, right and centre.

There is every possibility that Slyne Head could hold its own against the likes of the Bridges of Ross, Kilmunin and Annagh Head. I look forward to visiting Slyne Head during the Autumn, fingers crossed and hopefully this location will provide some very interesting seabird records for the county in the coming years.

Dermot Breen

WINTERING GALWAY LITTLE EGRET

As many readers of this newsletter will know, Little Egrets have been known to nest in Galway for the last two years. In 2009 a colony containing 19 nests was discovered and 41 nestlings were ringed, 32 with individual colour rings. Of these, 11 individuals were re-sighted, some as far away as Cork and Kerry.

In 2010 the colony saw a big drop, down to just 5 nests, but this may be because the same breeding birds were naturally dispersing northwards in the second or subsequent years. As a consequence, just eight nestlings were ringed, but remarkably three of these have already been re-sighted. One bird, 'black' F, 'yellow' V, made the furthest journey ever recorded of a BTO ringed Little Egret – 2,133 kilometres south-west to be exact, ending up on the Azores!

This individual was seen by a Finnish bird ringer on 15th October 2010, who was on holiday at the time, and he also reported that it was in a small flock of five birds, the other four un-ringed. He later saw this bird again, some five kms south of the initial sighting – surely it wasn't heading still further south! It's remarkable that the bird found the tiny Portuguese islands in the middle of the huge north Atlantic and hopefully it will return safely to breed in the future. So, please look carefully at any Egrets you might come across either here or while on holiday abroad – you might not be the only tourist from these shores!

Chris Benson

WINTER ATLAS

This is the final year of the Atlas – it's hard to believe that the four years have almost passed. However it's not too late to make a contribution. The emphasis will be on Roving Records and any and all sightings can be reported. Contact Brian Caffrey at bcaffrey@birdwatchireland.ie or go to www.birdatlas.net

NEWSLETTER

After editing 72 quarterly editions of the BirdWatch Galway Newsletter I feel that both readers and myself would benefit from some fresh input into the content and layout. I therefore renew my appeal for a volunteer to edit an edition. I would very much appreciate help in this and am sure it would bring benefits all round. **NS**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 19 February: Roving outing for the new Bird Atlas. Anyone interested in going should contact our local organiser, John Carey, at jjcarey@hotmail.com by Wednesday the 16th of February. We will meet in the public car park behind the cathedral in Galway at 9.30am, divide into groups and go and rove around an allocated area in east Galway for about a few hours. If you live in east Galway and wish to start from there, **make sure to contact John beforehand.**

Saturday 5 March: Short outing with Tim Griffin *et al.* at Nimmo's Pier at 10.30am. These outings are very suitable for beginners and children are particularly welcome, provided an adult accompanies them.

Details of our last talk of the season will follow in March. Members will be notified by e-mail so, if you have not supplied us with your e-mail address yet, please let me know at mariannetencate@gmail.com.

MtC

BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 4th Quarter 2010

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 13th February 2011

2nd October: Buff-bellied Pipit, Truska Marsh, Nr. Slyne Head (Dermot Breen). (1)

2nd October: 4 Hen Harrier (2-2nd Win. male & 2 female), 4 Kestrel, 2 Peregrine & female Merlin, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).

2nd October: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Tom Cuffe). (2)

2nd October: Ad. Mediterranean Gull, South Park, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

3rd October: Garden Warbler, Nr. Slyne Head (Dermot Breen).

3rd October: 1st Win. male Blue-winged Teal, 5 Curlew Sandpiper, 6 Ruff & 200 Dunlin, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen). (3)

3rd October: 10 Little Egret, 66 Mute Swan, 1,000 Wigeon, 350 Teal, 40 Lapwing, 30 Curlew, 200 Black-tailed Godwit, 470 Black-headed Gull, Peregrine, Kestrel, House Martin & Treecreeper, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).

4th October: 3 Grey Phalarope, 2 Sooty Shearwater & Great Skua, off Ballyconneely (Aonghus O'Donail).

5th October: Fem. Garganey, 3 Curlew Sandpiper, Knot & 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen).

6th October: Juv. American Golden Plover, Truska Marsh, Nr. Slyne Head (Dermot Breen). (4)

6th October: Pied Flycatcher, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen).

9th October: Lesser Yellowlegs, Glenamaddy Turlough (Tom Cuffe). (5)

9th October: Ad. Curlew Sandpiper, Streamstown Bay (Dermot Breen).

9th October: 19 Little Egret, 76 Mute Swan, 5 Pink-footed Goose, 1,500 Wigeon, 120 Mallard, 88 Shoveler, 120 Teal, 7 Pintail, 2,500 Golden Plover, 380 Lapwing, 100 Dunlin, 320 Black-tailed Godwit, 64 Curlew, 5 Redshank, Greenshank, 6 Curlew Sandpiper, 8 Ruff, Sparrowhawk & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey). (6)

9th October: Redstart, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

10th October: Juv. Dotterel, Aillebrack, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen).

10th October: Yellow-rumped Warbler, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (7)

10th October: Juv. Little Stint & Pectoral Sandpiper, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).

10th October: Ad. American Golden Plover, 2 Little Stint, 2 Curlew Sandpiper & 6 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Aonghus O'Donail).

10th October: 3 Ring Ouzel, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

11th October: 2 Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Chiffchaff, Whinchat & Hobby, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney, Aonghus O'Donail, Tom Tarpey & Dermot Breen).

11th October: Swallow, feeding young at nest, Ballynew, Nr. Cleggan (Tim Gordon).

12th October: 2 Common Buzzard, over Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).

12th October: Little Stint & 3 Ruff, Rahasane Turlough (Chris Peppiatt).

16th October: Yellow-browed Warbler & Fieldfare, Milltown, Nr. Tuam (Chris Benson).

16th October: Common Buzzard, Claregalway (Jim Glennon).

16th October: 22 Whooper Swan, Belclare Turlough (Pauline Clerkin).

17th October: 4 Little Egret, 13 Whooper Swan, 28 Mute Swan, 11 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 1,000 Wigeon, 70 Mallard, 150 Shoveler, 110 Teal, 22 Pintail, 3,500 Golden Plover, 570 Lapwing, 65 Dunlin, 100 Black-tailed Godwit, 54 Curlew, 27 Redshank, 2 Greenshank, 2 Curlew Sandpiper, 8 Ruff, Kestrel & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).

17th October: Common Buzzard, Caherkelly, Nr. Ardrahan (Graham Johnston).

18th October: 32 Arctic Skua, 14 Great Skua & 2 Juv. Long-tailed Skua, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donail).

18th October: 4 Twite, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

19th October: 8 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Clochar na gCon, Nr. Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).

23rd October: 8 Blackcap, 4 Chiffchaff, 6 Goldcrest, Great Tit, Tufted Duck, Pintail, Rook & 30 Siskin, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).

23rd October: Brambling, Siberian Chiffchaff & Blackcap, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

23rd October: 14 Chough & Juv. Sparrowhawk, Dunloughan, Nr. Ballyconneely (Miryam & Michael Harris).

24th October: Barred Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler, 5 Chiffchaff (inc. 2 Northern), 13 Blackcap, 6 Goldcrest & 3 Brambling, Inishmore (Dermot Breen). (8)

24th October: 15 Whooper Swan, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

24th October: 8 Little Egret, 16 Whooper Swan, 24 Mute Swan, 38 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 1,500 Wigeon, 60 Mallard, 6,000 Golden Plover, 600 Lapwing, 200 Black-tailed Godwit, 30 Curlew, 20 Redshank, Greenshank & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).

24th October: White-tailed Eagle, Portumna Forest Park (Odile Hurst, Maedbh Hurst & Dermot Hurst).

24th October: Peregrine & fem. Hen Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).

25th October: Treecreeper, Moycullen (Miryam & Michael Harris).

25th October: Whimbrel, Ring Ouzel & 2 Blackcap, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

25th October: 3 Twite, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

26th October: Black Redstart, 3 Chiffchaff & 2 Blackcap, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

27th October: male Black Redstart, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

30th October: 6 Little Egret, 25 Mute Swan, 16 Shoveler, 42 Teal, 2 Pintail, 2,500 Wigeon, 39 Mallard, 7,000 Golden Plover, 2,000

Lapwing, 750 Black-tailed Godwit, 3 Snipe, 86 Curlew, 41 Redshank, 4 Greenshank, 86 Black-headed Gull & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
30th October: 10 Whooper Swan, Spotted Flycatcher, 2 Kestrel & Peregrine, Rossaveal (Sean McKeown).
30th October: 2-5 Jay & 2 Woodcock, Ballinahinch (Miryam & Michael Harris).
30th October: Red Grouse, Derrycunlagh, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
30th October: Fem. Long-tailed Duck, Dog's Bay (Miryam & Michael Harris).
31st October: 17 Whooper Swan, 45 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 2 Gadwall, 20 Dunlin, Raven & Sparrowhawk, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
1st November: Fem. Merlin & 5 Siskin, Maam Cross (Padraic Reaney).
1st November: 5 Red Grouse, Inveran (Padraic Reaney).
3rd November: 4 Brambling with 70 Chaffinch, Connemara National Park (Dermot Breen).
5th November: Greenland Wheatear, Omev Island (Dermot Breen).
5th November: Whimbrel, Barnaderg Bay, Nr. Letterfrack (Dermot Breen).
5th November: Fem. Brambling, Nr. Milltown, Tuam (Chris Benson).
7th November: 10 Whooper Swan, 22 Mute Swan, 3 Mallard, 200 Wigeon, 30 Lapwing, 12 Redshank & 8 Black-tailed Godwit, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey & John McKean).
7th November: 8 Brent Goose, 3 Shelduck, 20 Teal, 6 Great Northern Diver, 20 Lapwing, 25 Redshank, 30 Wigeon, 2 Red-breasted Merganser, 2 Little Egret, Kestrel, 12 Dunlin, 120 Turnstone & albino Chaffinch, Traught (Pete Capsey & John McKean).
10th November: Juv. American Golden Plover, Mannin Beg strand, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (9)
10th November: 2-1st Win Iceland Gull & 2-1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ballyconneely Bay (Dermot Breen).
12th November: 1st Win Iceland Gull, Bunowen Pier (Dermot Breen).
13th November: 1st Win Mediterranean Gull, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
13th November: Ad. Win Forster's Tern, Newtownlynch Pier (Tim Griffin). (10)
13th November: 1st Win Little Gull & Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
14th November: Drake Ring-necked Duck & Great Northern Diver, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen). (11)
14th November: Goshawk & Jay, Drumaveg, Moycullen (Padraic Reaney).
16th November: Carrion Crow, Sraith Shaile, Nr. Cashel (Michael Bell).
19th November: Cattle Egret, reported Oranmore-Rinville.
19th November: Snow Bunting & 2 Blackcap, Inishbofin.
20th November: Juv. American Golden Plover, Turloughmore (Dermot Breen). (12)
21st November: 12 Mute Swan, 51 Whooper Swan, c. 1,200 Wigeon, c. 150 Teal, 16 Mallard, 4 Shoveler, c. 1,000 Golden Plover, 27 Curlew, c. 250 Lapwing & 8 Redshank, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
21st November: Black Redstart, Kilonan, Inishmore (Aonghus O'Donail).
22nd November: Short-eared Owl, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (John Keogh). (13)
22nd November: Fem. Marsh Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin).
24th November: 50+ Waxwing, Dangan Heights, Galway City (Aonghus O'Donail). (14)
24th November: 1st Win. Fem. Surf Scoter, Maumeen, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (15)
27th November: Bittern, 5 (male & 4 ringtail) Hen Harrier, Peregrine, 2 Merlin & 2 Kestrel, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
28th November: 20+ Waxwing, Headford (Lucy Sharkey).
28th November: 20 Waxwing, Bushy Park, Galway City (Tim Griffin). (16)
29th November: Fem. Long-tailed Duck, Dog's Bay, Roundstone (Dermot Breen).
1st December: Albino Chaffinch, Woodcock, Merlin & Little Egret, Rossaveal (Sean McKeown).
1st December: 19 Snow Bunting, Tievebreen (Dermot Breen).
2nd December: 8 Waxwing, Briar Hill, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
3rd December: Snow Bunting, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen).
3rd December: 3 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
4th December: 25 Waxwing, Taylor's Hill, Galway City (Diarmuid Hennessy).
5th December: 31 Long-tailed Duck & 20 Common Scoter, off Aughinish causeway, border of Co. Galway/Co. Clare (Dermot Breen).
5th December: Woodcock, Island Eddy (Dermot Breen).
7th December: Red Kite, Glinsk (Dermot Breen).
8th December: 6 Waxwing, Knocknacarra, Galway City (Peter Duffy, John Murphy & Tim Griffin). (17)
8th December: Black-throated Diver & Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Rossaveal (John Murphy).
11th December: 3 Great Northern Diver, 2 Red-breasted Merganser & 200 Ringed Plover, Mannin Bay, Ballyconneely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
11th December: Jay, feeding at bird feeder in garden, Srue, Oughterard (Pat Egan).
13th December: Waxwing, Woodcock, Blackcap & Jay, Moycullen (Gerard Walshe).
14th December: redhead Goosander, Lough Fee, Connemara (Michael Bell).
14th December: Waxwing, Roundstone (Dermot Breen).

15th December: Common Buzzard, next to M6 at Doughiska, Galway City (Gerard Walshe).
17th December: Yellowhammer, Craughwell (Paul Troake).
17th December: Blackcap, Loughrea (Pete Capsey).
21st December: male Blackcap, Sea Road, Galway City (Deirdre Comerford).
21st December: 4 Waxwing, Moneenageisha, Galway City (Declan Callanan).
22nd December: Brent Goose, 4 Teal, 11 Wigeon, Merlin, 2 Peregrine, Water Rail, 2 Jack Snipe, 500 Snipe, 3 Woodcock, 5 Skylark, 150 Blackbird, 40 Fieldfare, 350 Song Thrush, 500 Redwing, 15 Mistle Thrush & fem. Brambling, Inishbofin (Dermot Breen).
24th December: 200 Whooper Swan, Kiltartan (Paul Troake).
24th December: 5 (male & 4 fem.) Brambling, garden, Knocknacarra, Galway City (Michael Davis)
26th December: Brambling, garden, Loughrea (Pete Capsey).
28th December: 7 Chough, Dog's Bay, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
28th December: 7 Little Egret, 6 Mute Swan, 7 Whooper Swan, 2 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 3,000 Wigeon, 300 Teal, 80 Mallard, 17 Shoveler, 53 Pintail, 33 Tufted Duck, 14 Dunlin, 6 Lapwing, 8 Snipe, 150 Black-headed Gull & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
29th December: several hundred Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, 250 Cormorant & 120 Coot, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
29th December: 1st Win. Little Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (John Murphy).
30th December: 10 Yellowhammer, Coldwood, Nr. Clarenbridge (Paul Troake).
30th December: Pintail & 2 Little Egret, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Frank Ward).
31st December: Male Green-winged Teal, Rusheenacholla, Carna (Dermot Breen).
31st December: 7 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.

NOTES:

- (1) The Buff-bellied Pipit (the first for Co. Galway) was also present on the 3rd of October.
- (2) An adult Ring-billed Gull was seen during the remainder of the quarter in the Mutton Island/Galway Docks/South Park beach/Nimmo's Pier area. There were two adult Ring-billed gulls at the latter site on both the 30th and 31st of December.
- (3) The Blue-winged Teal had been present since the third quarter (18th of September 2010) and was present until the 5th of October.
- (4) This American Golden Plover was again at Truska marsh on the 9th of October and at Aillebrack, Slyne Head on the 10th of October.
- (5) The Lesser Yellowlegs was again present at Glenamaddy Turlough on the 12th of October.
- (6) A small group of Pink-footed geese was recorded throughout most of October at Rahasane Turlough; these numbered 5 on the 10th of October, 3 on the 17th of October, 9 on the 23rd of October and 3 on the 30th of October.
- (7) The Yellow-rumped Warbler (the first for Co. Galway) was also present on the 11th of October.
- (8) The Barred Warbler was also recorded on the 26th of October.
- (9) The American Golden Plover was seen again at Truska marsh on the 12th of November and at Aillebrack on the 18th of November. Although seen in the same area as the bird that was present during October (see 4, above), this was (in the opinion of the observer) a different individual.
- (10) The adult Forster's Tern (which has been present in winter since 2003) was present until the end of the quarter, being mainly recorded in the Nimmo's Pier area of the city.
- (11) This Ring-necked Duck was also seen on the 23rd of November.
- (12) This American Golden Plover was also recorded on the 21st and 23rd of November.
- (13) The Short-eared Owl was also seen on the 27th of November.
- (14) These Waxwings were the first seen this winter and constitute the largest flock recorded. It is possible that later sightings were of dispersed fragments of this same flock, although the total number wintering in Co. Galway could have been substantially more than 50.
- (15) This Surf Scoter was seen again at Dog's Bay, Roundstone on both the 26th and 29th of November.
- (16) Presumably the same group of 20 Waxwings was seen at Rosscahill on the 29th of November and again at Bushy Park on the 30th of November.
- (17) A small flock of waxwings was seen repeatedly at Knocknacarra, with 8 on the 9th of December, 10 on the 11th of December, 4 on the 12th of December and 10 on the 15th of December.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Bittern, Cattle Egret, Green-winged Teal, Garganey, Ring-necked Duck, Goosander, Surf Scoter, 9 Pink-footed Goose, White-tailed Eagle, Goshawk, Red Kite, Hobby, 4 American Golden Plover, Dotterel, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, 3 Grey Phalarope, 2 Sooty Shearwater, 2 Long-tailed Skua, Yellow-rumped Warbler, 2 Yellow-browed Warbler, Barred Warbler, at least 50 Waxwing, 3 Pied Flycatcher, Redstart, 3 Black Redstart, 4 Ring Ouzel, Buff-bellied Pipit & Carrion Crow. Long stayers/returning birds included Blue-winged Teal, Forster's Tern, Marsh Harrier and two adult Ring-billed Gulls.

First Winter migrants: Pink-footed Goose (9th October), Redwing (10th October); Fieldfare (16th October); Greenland White-fronted Goose (17th October); Brambling (23rd October); Snow Bunting (19th November); Short-eared Owl (22nd November); Waxwing (24th November).