



**CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE
BIRDWATCH GALWAY**

www.birdwatchgalway.org
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY
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This is a local forum newsletter –
contributions and comments are
most welcome.
Distributed by e mail only

BRANCH MATTERS

Spring has arrived at last and our busy winter bird monitoring season is well behind us. Now is the time again to monitor our breeding birds and I urge you all to submit all your bird sightings to the www.birdatlas.net web site which is still crying out for breeding evidence of our resident and summer-visiting avifauna. If the new Atlas of Breeding Birds of Britain and Ireland is to present a reliable picture of the distribution and numbers of birds, we need to get everybody's records in by the end of this summer. Please, don't be shy – every bird counts and the Atlas needs any indication of breeding, be it a bird carrying nest material or food for its mate and/or young, young birds shouting for parental attention or dead fledglings brought in by your cat! Do not assume that your neighbour will submit sightings of the Blue Tits nesting in your wall.

While on the topic of record-submissions: there are still some winter waterbird counts to be submitted, too. **Please, do not keep Helen Boland and Olivia Crowe waiting; they would love to receive your I-WeBS counts soon.**

No doubt, the dawn chorus is waking you up earlier and earlier as the **National Dawn Chorus Day** is coming closer. On the **15th of May** thousands of people will throw back the duvet at an earlier than usual time to get to their local dawn chorus event. In Galway this will take place again in the NUIG Sports Grounds at Dangan where the early risers will meet in the car park at **4.30am**. Experts will be on hand to help identify the birds by their calls as they gradually add to the crescendo of a full chorus. The outing will take about an hour and is for children and adults, beginners and experienced birdwatchers, but not pets. As you know, these outings are free of charge.

On **Sunday the 22nd of May** BirdWatch will be represented at the **Open Day and Green Fair in Brigit's Garden in Rosscahill** between Moycullen and Oughterard off the main road to Clifden). This free event hosts lots of stalls and activities for young and old and runs **from 1pm to 6pm**. Last year, we even had a blue tits' nest in the wall right next to our stall. So you can be birdwatching while visiting the fair. We are **looking for volunteers to help set up the stand and spend some time with us there.**

Following the inspiring talk in February by Dave Suddaby, BirdWatch Ireland Reserves Manager, we will visit the **Mullet Peninsula** and its array of habitats and birds on **Saturday the 28th of May**. The primary aim will be to hear and see Cormorant but we may also expect to see Peregrine, Merlin, Rock Dove, Chough and Twite, as well as the unexpected! We'll also keep our eyes peeled for Otter, Irish Hare, Dolphins and possibly Basking Sharks (if it is calm). If we have not connected with Cormorants during the afternoon we will listen for them into the evening, often along with drumming Snipe and reeling Grasshopper Warblers.

This will be a very long day-outing, leaving the Cathedral public car park in Galway at **8am**. To guarantee a place on the mini-bus, book early: mariannetencate@gmail.com or 091-552519.

Last but not least, we are still looking for a volunteer to organise the winter talks. Of course, some help and guidance will be offered, but if we do not get another branch member to come forward to look after the talks, we may have to go without them. That would be an awful shame as they are normally well attended and much enjoyed by all. If you would like to know more about what is involved, contact me at the above e-mail address or ring me for a chat.

Marianne ten Cate

INDIA FOR BIRDS AND NATURE LOVERS

My wife Maura and myself travelled to India for four weeks in March 2010. While the title might suggest that we planned a specific nature trip the main reason was to meet up with our daughter. She had been in Australia for 2 years and instead of going all the way to Australia we decided to meet half-way in India. We had planned our itinerary from Ireland, i.e. we booked all our hotels from here through the Internet. We also organised our taxis from one hotel to the next and airport pick-ups from here. Grogan Travel in Tuam arranged the flights Dublin to New Delhi and back from Kochi in Kerala as well as the internal flight from New Delhi to Chennai (Madras) and on to Madurai. The first three nights or so we stayed in New Delhi and were surprised by the very nice weather and the amount of people and traffic. Relaxing the first afternoon in the hotel garden I was surprised to see a good number of big black birds hovering above us. Since I wasn't sure I asked at the hotel and they just said "Black Eagles - plenty to eat for them around here". Obviously, there was a variety of other exotic looking birds around which I couldn't identify and really hadn't the time for it either. Another interesting stay from a wildlife point of view was the Gajner Palace Hotel in the Gajner Nature Sanctuary "a hotel in the midst of a densely wooded jungle". According to the hotel brochure in days past "Gajner Wildlife Sanctuary used to be royal hunting grounds of the Maharaja of Bikaner". There is a lake inside the sanctuary and we could see a variety of animals such as wild boars, tapirs, deer, antelopes, etc. According to the hotel staff there are also nilgai, chinkara, black buck, desert foxes, etc. In terms of rare birds we saw (well, actually they were pointed out to me by an American birdwatcher, who was there on a photo assignment) a number of Siberian cranes, Demoiselle cranes, white pelicans, rose-ringed parakeets as well as a large number of smaller birds such as house sparrows, robins, swallows, swifts etc. The rare birds as well as the other wildlife we could watch in the mornings and evenings as they were coming to the edge of the water. The lake had already receded a good bit by the 2nd week in March so the animals would have come closer to the hotel than usual. After more stops in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (where we visited the Taj Mahal) we moved South. Our next stop was the Gateway Hotel Pasumalai in Tamil Nadu State. We stayed there for three nights. This hotel is situated on a hill with a panoramic view of the famous Shri

Meenakshi Temple and the city of Madurai. The hotel is on extensive lands and has its own small bird sanctuary. A display in the grounds shows some of the birds which we could see, like yellow-throated bulbul and black bulbul, white-bellied treepie, Indian golden backed three-toed woodpecker (which the bird guide calls black-rumped flameback) and oriental magpie robins. They didn't seem to take much notice of their human neighbours so we could see them often from only a couple of meters distance. On the way to our final stop in Fort Kochin in Kerala State we passed through a spectacular sanctuary called Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. The scenery throughout this mountainous stretch was incredible. We stayed in Fort Kochin for five nights. While there we spent a day on a so-called Kerala Backwater Tour and again we admired an abundance of wildlife both in the water and above it. While I emphasised in my report the wildlife and birds in India I have to say that we found the whole trip fascinating - the people, life on the streets, the countryside, nature reserves and monuments. Again and again we could confirm the slogan of the Indian Tourism Board – *Incredible India*.

Willi Kiefel

BIRD GUIDES TO PLACES AFAR

Willi Kiefel is kindly offering his bird guides to India to any members lucky enough to be going that way. Inspired by this thoughtfulness can I too offer guides to the UAE and Middle East generally and also Australia and the USA. This is a good idea and other members might like to make similar offers.

NS

I-WeBS 13 – LUCKY FOR SOME.....

At the end of August the large white envelope landed on the mat with a significant thud. I knew what it was - the count forms for the new I-WeBS season, my 13th at Rahasane Turlough. It is with a mix of trepidation and excitement that I start a new season. There is always the possibility of rarities on autumn migration, as well as the prospect of trying to work out how to count the thousands of birds that use Rahasane every winter. When I opened the envelope, I found that Helen Boland, the I-WeBS coordinator, had included 3 blank forms with space to record 21 counts - not too much pressure then.

I had already completed a couple of counts early in August, to try and get the first migrants. Nothing too startling had turned up, although there were odd Greenshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Wigeon already present. For some reason, though, I went into September feeling uncharacteristically optimistic - my optimism initially proved misplaced, as September was pretty quiet as well. Wader numbers did start to build, with Curlew and Lapwing numerous and Snipe and Greenshank also present. Things started to pick up at the end of the month, with Wigeon, Teal and Shoveler starting to arrive. Wader numbers continued to grow, with an impressive 290 Black-tailed Godwit present on the 26th. Three Ruff also showed up.



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October is usually the month when numbers rapidly increase, October 2010 being no exception, justifying my earlier optimism. Wigeon and Golden Plover numbers both hit the thousands, with around 2,000 of the former and 7,000 of the latter present at the end of the month. October also yielded a Pectoral Sandpiper, feeding in a mixed flock of waders that included 6 Curlew Sandpiper, Dunlin and a juvenile Little Stint. Ruff numbers peaked at 8, an impressive count for Rahasane. Greenland White-fronted Geese numbers reached 45, the highest for the species so far but relatively low for the turlough.

Conditions in October were perfect for waders and birders alike. The waders were, more often than not, very confident, feeding in the shallows on the west side of the turlough and generally not taking too much notice of humans. The water levels seemed to create excellent feeding conditions and the birds took full advantage. Invariably a juvenile Peregrine was hanging around, just to make sure there was some level of disturbance to contend with.

November saw water levels almost reach the middle gate on the western side, with the consequence that most of the waders went in search of pastures new. There was also considerable disturbance from hunters - some going out in boats, which didn't seem particularly fair on the birds. High water levels make it almost impossible to count at Rahasane, because there isn't a suitably high vantage point to look across the water. Still, Wigeon numbers were in the thousands and Whooper Swan numbers hit 50.

December was almost a write-off (or should that be white-off?) due to the big freeze, but I managed to get down once at the end of the month. The visit did not produce that much, although 53 Pintail and 33 Tufted Duck were notable counts.

So the New Year rolled in and January was as quiet as December. Numbers of Greenland White-fronts reached 63 and Dunlin numbers reached approximately 350, both counts the highest of the winter. An oddity was a Black Swan that appeared on the 2nd, mixed in with over 250 Whooper Swan. This escapee (or Australian migrant?!) quickly achieved celebrity status, with a couple of the locals stopping me to tell me about this visitor. Rahasane was obviously to its taste, as it hung around into March.

Golden Plover numbers had dropped to the extent where a flock of 14 at the end of February was noteworthy, although Wigeon numbers held their own at around 3,500 for most of the winter. Shoveler numbers peaked in February, with a count of 66 on 26th. The Peregrine was still present, still causing chaos and lots of swearing from yours truly - there's nothing more frustrating than counting a flock just as a Peregrine goes over and everything takes to the air. The only thing you can do is enjoy the display.

March passed in unspectacular fashion, only a solitary Gadwall added a new species to the count. Greenland White-front numbers were still at 60 at the start of the month, but by the 20th

they had gone, presumably to start their long journey north to their breeding grounds.

As we move towards summer, I'm still counting. April produced 12 Gadwall on the 17th, the highest number I've ever seen there, and two glorious male Wheatears chasing each other around the dry stone walls. There were also 9 Whoopers still present, including one that seems to have an injured wing. It is great to see early spring migrants and the stragglers from winter in the one place.

So Easter came and my 13th I-WeBS count season is nearing its end. It has been a memorable season, mainly because conditions at the turlough have been superb and the birds have, for once, shown really well. So far, I have completed 23 counts, the three forms are full and a fourth has been started. During those visits I have recorded 79 species, two of which, Treecreeper and Little Stint, were firsts for me at Rahasane.

I'm already looking forward to hearing the thud of the envelope to signify the start of season 14. Now, I wonder if I should go out tomorrow to do another count. You never know what might turn up...

Pete

Capsey

A TALE OF TWO LAKES AND A PUB

A few years ago, as I stared into the yawning abyss of early retirement... Let's start again...

Having gleefully abandoned the daily commute from Kinvara to Athlone, I decided to revive some old interests of mine as the prospect of actually having some leisure time beckoned. Binoculars were dusted off, a small part of the pension money was invested in a decent scope and an email to Birdwatch Ireland established that the I-WEBS project could use a volunteer in Galway. Since I had enjoyed babysitting some small wetlands in South Roscommon for the scheme many years ago, this seemed like a good idea. The local Galway Branch clearly had Galway Bay under control so I suggested taking on two lakes near Glenamaddy (Kiltullagh Lake M6159 and Glenamaddy Turlough M635610), which hadn't been monitored on a regular basis for a long time. Thus began a routine that has become part of the long winter for me.

Both lakes are readily accessible and relatively easy to count with a telescope – although some parts of Glenamaddy Lake are rather remote. Water levels can vary quite a lot through the winter. Glenamaddy Lake emptied last August, leading to an influx of waders on migration. Unfortunately, I was sailing off the coast of Donegal at the time and knew nothing about it! Between them, the sites typically hold about 1,000 duck through the winter – mainly wigeon, mallard, teal, tufted duck and pochard with smaller numbers of shoveler and goldeneye. Smew and gadwall have turned up on occasion. Glenamaddy and a nearby bog lake support a flock of Greenland White-fronted Geese – my largest count was about 140 though 70-80 is more usual. Both sites hold small flocks of mute and whooper swans. Flocks of up to 5,000 golden plover and 2,500 lapwing occur

occasionally. Other than that, the range of waders I've picked up is rather disappointing so far. Ruff, dunlin, redshank, black-tailed godwit and snipe turn up occasionally.

And what about the pub in the title? Given that Glenamaddy village lies neatly between the two sites, my general routine has been to count Kiltullagh in the morning, have a light lunch in the village and count Glenamaddy in the afternoon. "Light lunch" is translated locally as "pint of stout", seemingly. People-watching in my regular hostelry is almost as entertaining as birding the lakes – and often a lot warmer! On a recent Sunday lunch-time visit the publican was valiantly trying to quieten a large, loud customer who had little chance of reaching closing time in a vertical state. Just as I was gathering myself together to head off to the lake, the drunk approached me and, in an exaggeratedly careful voice said to me: "Excuse me! Excuse me! Has my behaviour encouraged you to leave this establishment?" – the publican having said something to that effect to him, obviously. "God, no!" said I, "I don't need any encouragement to leave an establishment like this!". The publican collapsed in laughter – the drunk just looked puzzled!

For any other information on the sites, feel free to contact me at martinpatrickryan@gmail.com.

Martin Ryan

COUNTY GALWAY HERITAGE AWARDS

Congratulations to Tom Cuffe on receiving an award for the production of his video DVDs and photographic website available to schools and other interest groups. See www.iol.ie/~birdsgalway

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 15 May, National Dawn Chorus Day, 4.30am. Meet at Dangan NUIG Sports Grounds.

Sunday 22 May, Open Day and Green Fair in Brigit's Garden in Rosscahill, 1pm-6pm.

Saturday 28 May, branch outing to the Mullet Peninsula, Co. Mayo. Leaving Galway from the Cathedral public car park at 8am to meet Dave Suddaby in Belmullet at 11am. Bring enough sustenance for a long day and do not expect to be back in Galway before 9pm. Book your place on the mini-bus immediately as places are limited – mariannetencate@gmail.com or 091-552519.

Saturday 27 August, Heritage Week outing at Nimmo's Pier with Tom Cuffe, 10.30am. Monthly Nimmo's Pier outings with Tim Griffin *et al.* will resume on Saturday 1 October at 10.30am.

MTC

BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 1st Quarter 2011

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 20th July 2011

1st January: Juv. Mandarin Duck, Waterside, Galway City (Michael Davis). (1)
1st January: Ad. Win. Forster's Tern & 2 Ad. Win. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe). (2)
2nd January: 13 Little Egret, 12 Mute Swan, 251 Whooper Swan, Black Swan, 63 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 3,250 Wigeon, 43 Teal, 150 Mallard, 2 Shoveler, 54 Pintail, 45 Tufted Duck, 350 Dunlin, Golden Plover, 12 Lapwing, 47 Black-tailed Godwit, 3 Redshank, Snipe, 20 Black-headed Gull, Great Black-backed Gull & Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
3rd January: Twite, 1st Win. Little Gull & 15 Purple Sandpiper, Inis Meáin (Dermot Breen).
3rd January: 100 Coot & 8 Scaup, Lough Atalia (Neil Ellis).
3rd January: Common Buzzard, M6 between Galway City and Oranmore (Mark O'Mahony). (3)
5th January: Slavonian Grebe, Ardbear Bay, Clifden (Dermot Breen).
6th January: 2 redhead Goosander, Lough Muck, Connemara (Dermot Breen).
7th January: Bittern, Cregg River, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
8th January: Brambling & Blackcap, Knocknacarra, Galway City (Aoife Boyd).
8th January: male Black Redstart, River Walk, Gort (Barry Howell).
9th January: 150 Brent Goose & 25 Bar-tailed Godwit, Ballyloughane, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
13th January: 2 Ad. Win. Ring-billed Gull & 4 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
14th January: 2 Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Clodagh Glasgow & James Hayes).
16th January: Great Northern Diver, 15 Mute Swan, 155 Whooper Swan, 3,500 Wigeon, 4 Teal, 7 Mallard, 12 Tufted Duck, 60 Dunlin, 80 Curlew, 100 Lapwing, Black-tailed Godwit, 19 Redshank, 70 Black-headed Gull & Sparrowhawk, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey).
18th January: Dipper, Loughrea town (Pete Capsey). (4)
18th January: Waxwing, Newcastle, Galway City (Sean Kelly, Rachael Caffrey & Mary Caffrey).
19th January: Jay, Moycullen (Pádraic Reaney).
20th January: Twite, Inis Meáin (Pádraic Reaney).
21st January: Brambling, Luimnagh West, Lough Corrib (Deirdre Comerford).
21st January: male Blackcap, Crestwood, Menlo (Dympna Brennan).
23rd January: Peregrine, Oughterard (Pádraic Reaney).
24th January: 2 Ad. Win. Ring-billed Gull & 8 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
27th January: 20 Brent Goose, Trá Leitreach, Inis Meáin (Con Breen).
28th January: Common Buzzard, M6 just east of Ballinasloe (Pete Capsey).
28th January: 120 Whooper Swan & Black Swan, Rahasane Turlough (Mark Rutledge).
29th January: 2 redhead Smew, Lough Rea (John Murphy & Brian Finnegan). (5)
30th January: 5 Red-throated Diver, 2 Black-throated Diver, 4 Sandwich Terns & 5 Long-tailed Duck, Newtownlynch Pier (James Hayes & Clodagh Glasgow).
31st January: Yellowhammer & Merlin, Rossaveal (Sean McKeown).
31st January: 2 Gadwall, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Ann Fleming).
5th February: Ad. American Herring Gull, Nimmo's Pier & docks, Galway City (Tom Cuffe). (6)
5th February: 2 Ad. Win Mediterranean Gull & 6 Sandwich Tern, Newtownlynch Pier (Paul Troake).
5th February: Black-throated Diver & Common Scoter, Traught Beach (Paul Troake).
5th February: Common Buzzard, N17 at Cregboy (Martin O'Malley).
6th February: Drake Green-winged Teal & 55 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Belclare Turlough (Dermot Breen).
6th February: 2nd Win. Mediterranean Gull, Rostaff Lake (Dermot Breen).
6th February: Great White Egret & 4 ringtail Hen Harrier, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Tim Griffin). (7)
8th February: Common Buzzard, 130 Whooper Swan & 12 Gadwall, south of Moylough (Paul Troake).
8th February: 6 Gadwall, Mountbellew Bridge (Paul Troake).
8th February: 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Colin Conroy).
9th February: Juv. Merlin, Claddagh beach/Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).

13th February: Long-tailed Duck, Tawin (Chris Peppiatt & Marty Kerrane).
13th February: possible 3rd Win. Caspian Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (visiting Polish birder).
13th February: 10 Whooper Swan, Ballinakill Lough, Connemara (Miryam & Michael Harris).
13th February: Waxwing, Newcastle, Galway City (Sean Kelly).
15th February: Brambling & Blackcap, garden, Inchaboy, Gort (Gerry Slattery).
17th February: Fem. Brambling, garden, Ellagh, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
17th February: large roost of 20,000-30,000 Starling, dusk, Lackagh (Colm Broderick).
18th February: 3rd Win. Iceland Gull, 3rd Win. Glaucous Gull, 400 Herring Gull & unid. 1st Win. 'Viking Gull' resembling dark Kumlien's/Thayer's gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen). (8)
19th February: 2nd Win. Iceland Gull, 2-3rd Win. Glaucous Gull & Black-throated Diver, Rossaveal (James Hayes, Clodagh Glasgow & John Murphy).
19th February: Ad. Little Gull, Spiddal (James Hayes, Clodagh Glasgow & John Murphy).
20th February: 3rd Win. Glaucous Gull & Ad. Little Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
23rd February: White-tailed Eagle, (probably tagged) Derryclare Lough (Dermot Breen).
24th February: 3 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Stephen Lawlor).
25th February: 6 Purple Sandpiper, Salthill promenade, Galway City (Michael Davis).
26th February: 56 Whooper Swan, 18 Mute Swan, Black Swan, 58 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 3,000 Wigeon, 46 Mallard, 66 Shoveler, c. 150 Teal, 49 Pintail, 28 Tufted Duck, 3 Little Egret, 36 Dunlin, 88 Curlew, 6 Lapwing, 14 Golden Plover, 28 Redshank, 7 Lesser Black-backed Gull, 70 Black-headed Gull, 5 Common Gull & Peregrine, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
27th February: Short-eared Owl, picked up injured and later died, Castletaylor woodlands (John Furey).
3rd March: 40 Whooper Swan, 46 Mute Swan, Black Swan, c. 3,500 Wigeon, 98 Mallard, 34 Shoveler, c. 220 Teal, 12 Pintail, 14 Tufted Duck, 24 Little Egret, c. 160 Dunlin, 105 Curlew, 2 Knot, 14 Black-tailed Godwit, 18 Redshank & singing Chiffchaff, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
6th March: Canvasback-type <i>Aythya</i> hybrid, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Josh Jones & Oliver Metcalf).
6th March: 2 (1st Win. & 3rd win.) Glaucous Gull, Rossaveal (Josh Jones & Oliver Metcalf).
8th March: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, 2nd Win. Iceland Gull & Ad. ' <i>argentatus</i> ' Herring Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
9th March: Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Peter Gluth).
9th March: Glaucous Gull, again present, Rossaveal.
14th March: Common Buzzard, Pollataggle, Nr. Ardrahan (Paul Troake).
14th March: Ad. Iceland Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
15th March: Sand Martin, Milltown, Nr. Tuam (Chris Benson).
15th March: 5 Purple Sandpiper, Salthill promenade, Galway City (Colin Conroy).
19th March: Common Buzzard, Castletaylor, Nr. Ardrahan (John Dempsey).
22nd March: Barn Owl, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Martin O'Malley).
24th March: White-tailed Eagle, off Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
27th March: 2 Swallow & Willow Warbler, Crestwood, Menlo (Dympna Brennan).
28th March: Yellowhammer, Streamstown Bay (Dermot Breen).
28th March: Wheatear, Ballinderreen turlough (Paul Troake).
28th March: Common Buzzard, Caherpeak, Nr. Kilcolgan (Paul Troake).
29th March: Manx Shearwater, off Cleggan Head (Dermot Breen).
29th March: 5 Purple Sandpiper, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
29th March: Common Buzzard, Ballinderreen (Paul Troake).

NOTES:

- (1) The Mandarin Duck was the first record for Co. Galway, although almost certainly an escape.
- (2) The long-staying Forster's Tern from the last quarter was present in the Nimmo's Pier/South Park area and across the bay at Newtownlynch Pier intermittently until the 15th of March at least.
- (3) This Common Buzzard (possibly the same bird as seen in the same area in the previous quarter, 15th December 2010) was also seen on the 4th of January.
- (4) Also recorded at the same site on the 3rd of February.
- (5) The two Smew were again seen at Lough Rea on the 13th of February.
- (6) The adult American Herring Gull (presumably the same individual that has returned to the area for the last few years) was also seen on the 12th, 13th and 26th of February.
- (7) This Great White Egret is possibly the same bird that has been seen on a number of widely separated dates over the last few years.
- (8) This 'Thayer's-type' gull was also recorded at Rossaveal on the 12th, 13th and 26th of February.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Mandarin Duck, 2 Smew, 2 Goosander, Green-winged Teal, Slavonian Grebe, Bittern, poss. Caspian Gull (although no details provided), White-tailed Eagle, Short-eared Owl, Waxwing, Black Redstart, 4 Brambling, and Twite. Long stayers/returning birds included American Herring Gull, Forster's Tern, Great White Egret and 3 adult Ring-billed Gull. White-winged (Iceland and Glaucous) gulls were again fewer than recorded before 2010.

First Summer migrants: Sand Martin (15th March); Willow Warbler (27th March); Swallow (27th March); Wheatear (28th March); Manx Shearwater (29th March).