



**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**

So far we have had a very 'soft' winter and the weather on the continent has been equally mild in many areas so it is not surprising that the expected winter visitors of the bird variety have not turned up in the usual big numbers - yet. At the time of writing there seems to be a change in the weather and a forecast for colder conditions around areas like the Waddensea, too, so we may see an influx of waders and wildfowl soon.

The I-WeBS season is in full swing and, apart from a postponed Corrib count, all counters seem to have been able to cover their areas in some measure of comfort during the first half of the season. Anybody who is not on the regular counter panel but would like to get involved, should contact either Chris Peppiatt [chris.peppiatt@iol.ie](mailto:chris.peppiatt@iol.ie), me [mariannetencate@gmail.com](mailto:mariannetencate@gmail.com) or the I-WeBS coordinator in HQ, Helen Boland [hboland@birdwatchireland.ie](mailto:hboland@birdwatchireland.ie) to make a start. We are always on the lookout for people who are prepared to spend some time and effort once a month from September to March.

But a much more pressing matter is to find members prepared to become involved in the general running of the branch. At last year's AGM the committee was due to be discharged from their duties but as there was nobody available to replace the officers (chair, secretary and treasurer) we limped on after a fashion, reducing the number of events and abandoning the monthly branch members meetings. I, for one, am not willing to let this situation continue after the AGM on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February, so I am appealing to all of you to seriously consider taking up one of the posts. Of course, the 'old' committee will be on hand to give support and guidance to start with so nobody should feel that they cannot do the job – it is not rocket-science you are invited to! Please, do not feel shy to put yourself forward; we do not stand on ceremony and you can do it discreetly by contacting me by mail or phone (091-552519) if you would like to find out more about what it entails and requires.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the AGM on Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8pm in the Anno Santo Hotel on Threadneedle Road, Salthill.

**Marianne ten Cate**

**BIRDING IN LEBANON**

Birdwatching might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of Lebanon. However, this tiny country, whose land area is less than those of Galway and Mayo combined, has 395 bird species on its list and plays host to hundreds of thousands of migrating birds each year.

Lebanon is situated in the middle of one of the world's major migration routes, at the eastern end

of the Mediterranean Sea and at the meeting point of three continents. If you keep your eyes pointing upwards in Spring and Autumn you are likely to see migrating flocks of Storks, Pelicans, Eagles, Honey Buzzards and many more raptor species. In Autumn 2006, at one site east of Beirut, 72410 soaring birds of 34 species were counted over 39 visits. At another site, I myself saw an estimated 17000 White Storks passing over my head in the space of about half an hour, in April 2008.

The importance of Lebanon for birds is reflected in the fact that, despite its small size, it currently has 15 sites which have been designated as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) by BirdLife International.

The bird habitats of Lebanon are extremely diverse and include:-

Internationally important wetlands with many species of warblers, herons and waterfowl, on passage, wintering or as summer breeders.

Pine, oak and cedar forests holding a large part of the global breeding population of Syrian Serins as well as many of the commoner Mediterranean species.

High rocky mountains (highest point 3088m/10,131ft) with snow on the ground for 7 months of the year. Birds found here include Crimson-winged Finch, Bimaculated Lark, Shore Lark and Tawny Pipit. The mid-level slopes and ridges of the mountains are also often the best places to see large passages of soaring birds.

Semi-desert and dry scrub. Desert birds are mostly restricted to one area in the north but include Cream-coloured Courser, Bar-tailed, Desert and Temminck's Larks, Long-billed Pipit, Mourning Wheatear, Scrub Warbler, Pale Rock-Sparrow and Trumpeter Finch.

There are also coastal salt-pans (where Broad-billed and Terek Sandpipers are frequently seen) and coastal headlands (where almost anything could turn up).

However, Lebanon is not without its environmental problems, most notably large-scale bird-hunting and uncontrolled development. Lebanon's political problems also have a knock-on effect on birds and indeed all of nature – political instability leads to reluctance to enforce rules and scares away potential (human) visitors, including birdwatchers, who might be able to show the government that Lebanon's greatest asset is its biodiversity.

However, although there are some areas where it is best to go with a local guide, Lebanon is still a viable destination for the intrepid birder and there are many sites that can be visited easily using a hire car. Lebanon's small, but growing number of birders is very friendly and keen to meet up with visiting birders.

**Colin Conroy**

**GALWAY BIRD FORUM**

Can I again recommend this to Newsletter readers. The forum acts as a clearinghouse for latest bird news in County Galway. There is always something of interest including excellent photographs and it is well worth keeping in touch with it. Just key in 'Galway Bird Forum' into Google. **NS**

**PATIENT WISDOM**

Some birds seem essentially symbols of old age. Who ever heard of a young owl? Aren't they always wise old owls? Rather faded or white in colour, they are bespectacled and beaky with penetrating, steady, dark eyes. Smooth and silent in flight they are discrete and unobtrusive. They portray wisdom.

A different aspect of old age might well be expressed by another bird. The bird that comes to mind in the Heron. One can see it stretching out its long neck, unfolding its great spindly shanks and taking gingerly to the air. But these great, ungainly birds are anything but clumsy. The Heron patiently waits, calm and still, camouflaged on the banks of a river or lake ready to strike with deadly accuracy at a passing fish.

It can then fly to the top of a tree and balance precariously on the edge of its huge nest – intricately woven into the highest branches – and there regurgitate the fish with loud rattling into the hungry beaks of its fledglings.

So, rising slowly, let us flap away about our business unperturbed and with unhurried rhythm. Let us not forget to home and pray (if it is our custom to do so!) for wisdom as we go about our daily chores, and for patience and calm, in the swirling uncertainties of present day life. (Adopted from an article in *Flights of Fancy* by Fr Michael Sweetman S.J.) **NS**

**SOME BOOK REVIEWS**

**The Running Sky: A Birdwatching Life**

by Tim Dee Jonathan Cape, 2009

This is not your standard birdwatchers guide by any means. It is more a personal reflection on the how birds interact with our lives. In the course of a year, Tim Dee writes a series of essays in exquisite prose, in which he interweaves observation as well as emotional and intellectual responses to birds.

From storm petrels on the Shetlands, via starling roosts in Somerset to an eccentric character called the 'Major' in rural Zambia, Dee bring us on this fascinating voyage of discovery.

One reviewer describes it as "serious and playful" – it will entertain and challenge, and will certainly make us more reflective. Unlikely to be found in the local bookstore, you will have to order it in or obtain on-line.



Aidan O Colmain

### Birders: Tales of a Tribe

By Mark Cocker

Vintage,  
2002

This book has been likened to Nick Horby's best seller *Fever Pitch*, about an addicted football fan, as it tells the tale of what motivates and drives the birdwatching 'twitcher'. Cocker was intrigued as a teenager to discover a pigeon in the attic and there began an interest in birds that proved to be life-long.

What drives a person to hitchhike to an isolated Scottish island to see a rare Steller's eider, only to turn around and hitch back home again? A run-in with an angry farmer on whose lands he and a friend were trespassing to see a rare bird, resulted in them being sprayed with liquid manure. He was in constant fear as a teen of being labelled a nerd by the local girls, none of whom he actually knew. But birders or twitchers, like the obsessive football fan, are single-minded, dedicated individuals whom outsiders find difficult to appreciate or understand. Despite the sometimes bizarre rituals, they show a commendable enthusiasm.

This is a stylish and humorous book that would be appreciated – and understood – by all birdwatchers. Even those who don't have an interest will likely be stimulated, and maybe even enthused by the read. Recommended.

Aidan O Colmain

**The Big Year** A 2011 movie, starring Steve Martin, based on an original book by Mark Obmascik (2004), is a story of three competing birdwatchers who decide to dedicate a year to spotting the rarest birds in North America. I have not seen it, though it is available for rental from Xtravision. The film reviewers were mostly unimpressed, though they often are! At best it was given the labels, 'charming', 'inoffensive', 'amiably ridiculous', and 'engaging, but low-key'. I would be interested to hear from anyone who has seen it.

Aidan O Colmain

### FORSTER AND HIS TERN

The Forster's Tern habitually gracing Inner Galway Bay has become a favourite among the Galway birding fraternity and a 'must see' for visiting birding enthusiasts. Who was Forster?

Johann Reinhold Forster (1729-1798) was originally a clergy-man in Danzig. He became a naturalist and accompanied James Cook, the famous British explorer of the Pacific Ocean on his second voyage around the world from 1772 until 1773. The voyage extended further into Antarctic waters than anyone had previously reached. Forster discovered five new species of penguin. However, he gained a reputation as a constant

complainer and troublemaker. His complaints of Cook continued after his return and became public, destroying Forster's career in England. He went to Germany and became Professor of History and Mineralogy. Unpleasant and troublesome to the end Forster refused to relinquish his notes of the voyage. They were not found and published until 50 years after his death.

His son Johann George Adam (1754-1794) was also on Cook's voyage as an artist and has a number of birds scientific names after him. Fosters Tern was first named and described by the American Thomas Nuttall in 1835.

From 'Whose Bird' Bo Beolans and Ml. Wilkins.

NS

### TREE SPARROWS INCREASE.

While it is a fact it is nevertheless disheartening to be constantly reading of the decline of many of our bird species. A recent Wings edition had three if not four items on 'birds in peril'. So it is really good to read in the IBN and Irish Birds that Tree Sparrows are increasing around the country and are doing so without any special protection. Galway did not figure in the areas of increase but it would be interesting to hear of any sightings or records within the county. They could be reported via our website [www.birdwatchgalway.org](http://www.birdwatchgalway.org) or directly to Chris Peppiatt at [chris.peppiatt@iol.com](mailto:chris.peppiatt@iol.com)

NS

### BIRDWATCHING COURSES

I have been asked to let members know of the following courses being run by Eric Dempsey All queries to Eric. NS  
Some details:

This winter and spring sees another series of weekend workshops which will take place in the lovely surroundings of Sycamore Hill, near Newcastle, Co. Wicklow. This peaceful location, set in rolling farmland, is ideally situated with Kilcoole, Birdwatch Ireland's Blackditch Nature Reserve and the Wicklow Mountains all within a short driving distance while the birdwatching haven of Wexford is little over an hour's drive away. The emphasis on these courses is practical indoor workshops followed by outdoor fieldtrips. Workshop for February 2012

Sat 25th & Sun 26th Feb - Bird of Prey Weekend Workshop – Everything you wanted to know about Ireland's wonderful raptors. Late winter and early spring is perhaps the best time to find birds of prey as our wintering population is high and resident birds can be very obvious in the air. This weekend includes a morning workshop on Sat followed by an afternoon field trip in Wicklow in search of various birds of prey.  
On Sunday 26th Feb, we will then hold a field trip to Wexford to look for Peregrine Falcon, Merlin and Hen Harriers. Cost: €125 to include tea/coffee on arrival, full attendance at our indoor

workshops, full lunch on Sat, attendance on our afternoon field trip on Sat and our field trip to Wexford on Sunday. Small number of places still available.

New workshops for spring include 'Spring Migration' weekend and 'The Language of Birds (bird songs explained)' – dates to be announced.

Full details can be found on our new and improved website at

[www.birdsireland.com](http://www.birdsireland.com)

### 2011 RARITY REVIEW

Here's a quick round up of rarities recorded in Galway during 2011. There were three potential new species recorded for the county - Montagu's Harrier x2, Pallid Harrier and Red-throated Pipit. 2011 was one of the best years for rarities though 2008 was marginally better. The county list finally crossed the 300 mark with Pallid Harrier having the honours and with Red-throated Pipit it finished up on 301. A total of 210 species were recorded within the county during the year, one ahead of the previous year. Below is the list of rarities recorded in 2011, taken from the Irish Rare Bird Committee's Provisional List (presumed returning birds not double counted).

1 Green-winged Teal, 1 Lesser Scaup, 1 Surf Scoter, 2 Smew, 1 Wilson's Petrel, 1 "Continental" Cormorant (potential first county record of this subspecies), 2 Bittern (or is it a single returning bird?), 1 Great White Egret, 2 Montagu's Harrier, 1 Pallid Harrier, 1 Hobby, 5 Cranes, 1 Stone Curlew, 2 Dotterel, 3 American Golden Plover (one of which was seen in Clare three weeks earlier), 2 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 4 White-rumped Sandpipers, 2 Baird's Sandpiper (just one previous record), 3 Buff-breasted Sandpiper, 12 Long-tailed Skua, 1 American Herring Gull, 1 Thayer's Gull, 1 Forster's Tern, 1 Red-throated Pipit, 1 "Blue-headed" Wagtail (potential first county record of this subspecies), 3 Barred Warbler, 1 Rose-coloured Starling and 10 Common Rosefinch.

2011 will long be remembered as a record year for the numbers of American waders and Galway was similarly blessed with good numbers. There are only two previous county records of White-rumped Sandpiper so four in one year was notable. Semipalmated and Buff-breasted Sandpipers smashed all national records but were relatively underrepresented in Galway with only two and three respectively recorded. To put this into perspective Clare had sixteen Buff-breasts while Mayo had eleven Semipalmated Sandpipers!

It was yet again a relatively quite Autumn out on the islands during the Autumn with Inishmore in particular having a very poor year for passerines. One notable event was the appearance of no less than 8 different Common



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Rosefinches on Inishbofin on a single day in September. Slyne Head fared somewhat better than either of the islands with Red-throated Pipit, 2 Barred Warblers and Common Rosefinch. Add to this 2 juvenile Dotterel, juvenile and adult American Golden Plovers, 3 Buff-breasted Sandpipers, 1 White-rumped Sandpiper and 7 Pectoral Sandpiper (last species not technically a rarity).  
**Dermot Breen**

**FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME**

**Saturday 4 February:** Short outing at Nimmo's Pier; also suitable for beginners.  
Gather at the slip way at **10.30am**. The outing will take about an hour and a half. Children are welcome if they are accompanied by an adult.

**Wednesday 22 February:** The Annual General Meeting of the Galway Branch. Anno  
**Santo Hotel Threadneedle Road, Salthill, 8pm.**  
**Please come along and help shape the branch and its programme of events for the next season. Your thoughts and suggestions will be very much welcomed and appreciated.**

**Saturday 3 March, 7 April and 5 May:** Short outings at Nimmo's Pier, as above.  
In March there will one more Galway Bay count this winter. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Chris Peppiatt at [chris.peppiatt@iol.ie](mailto:chris.peppiatt@iol.ie) or phone 086-3125356 / 091 –862566

## BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2011

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012

1st October: 2 Blue-headed Wagtail, Barna Pier (Aonghus O'Donaill). (1)
1st October: 2 Buff-breasted Sandpiper, again present, Truska, Ballyconneely. (2)
1st October: Pectoral Sandpiper, Ballyconneely Bay (Dermot Breen).
1st October: Common Rosefinch, Barred Warbler (again present), 3 Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff, Bullfinch & 10 Coal Tit, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen). (3)
2nd October: Black Swan, 58 Mute Swan, 380 Mallard, 350 Teal, 650 Wigeon, 2 Pintail, 3 Shoveler, 3 Tufted Duck, 11 Little Egret, Sparrowhawk, male Peregrine, 700 Golden Plover, 360 Black-tailed Godwit, 240 Lapwing, 55 Curlew, 18 Snipe, 12 Dunlin, 8 Ruff, Curlew Sandpiper & Green Sandpiper, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
2nd October: 2 (Juv. & Ad.) Spotted Redshank & 2 Juv. Ruff, Kilcaimin (Dermot Breen).
2nd October: 9 Redwing, Derryclare Lough (Miryam & Michael Harris).
3rd October: Juv. Baird's Sandpiper, Ad. Semipalmated Sandpiper & 100 Dunlin, Loch Phort Chorrúch, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (4, 5)
3rd October: Juv. Curlew Sandpiper, Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher & Blackcap, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
3rd October: Black Tern & 11 Ruff, Rahasane turlough (Tom Tarpey).
4th October: 2 American Golden Plover, Ad. & Juv (still present), Truska, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (6)
4th October: 42 Mute Swan, 270 Mallard, 150 Teal, 650 Wigeon, 2 Tufted Duck, 7 Little Egret, 1,000 Golden Plover, 350 Black-tailed Godwit, 550 Lapwing, 44 Curlew, 15 Dunlin, 9 Ruff, & Redshank, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
4th October: Spotted Flycatcher, 3 Chiffchaff & Blackcap, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
5th October: 22 Arctic Skua, 2 Pomarine Skua, Great Skua, Juv. Sabine's Gull & Little Stint, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
6th October: 4 Arctic Skua, Pomarine Skua, Curlew Sandpiper & Little Stint, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
7th October: Juv. Turtle Dove, 3 Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff & Little Egret, Kilonan, Inishmore (Dermot Breen). (7)
8th October: Hobby, Aillebrack, Slyne Head, Nr. Ballyconneely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
12th October: Barred Warbler, Chiffchaff & Little Egret, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Joe Adamson).
12th October: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Theo Campbell).
12th October: 7 Arctic Skua & Curlew Sandpiper, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
14th October: 19 Arctic Skua & Great Skua, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
16th October: 60 Mute Swan, Black Swan (escape), 52 Mallard, 140 Teal, 2,000 Wigeon, 25 Tufted Duck, 14 Shoveler, Peregrine, 1,500 Golden Plover, 500 Lapwing, 400 Black-tailed Godwit, 110 Curlew, 3 Dunlin, Ruff & Mediterranean Gull, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
18th October: 6 Arctic Skua, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
19th October: Fem. Merlin, Common Tern, Arctic Skua & 7 Whooper Swan (flying South), Mutton Island, Galway City (Chris Peppiatt).
19th October: Reed Warbler & Barred Warbler, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen). (8, 9)
20th October: 4 (2-1st Win. & 2-Ad.) Mediterranean Gull, Mannin Bay, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
20th October: 73 Arctic Skua & 4 Pomarine Skua, 15:20 - 17:20, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donaill).
20th October: Raven, in a suburban garden, Carragh Hill, Salthill, Galway City (Michael Davis).
23rd October: 64 Mute Swan, Black Swan (escape), 20 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 90 Mallard, 150 Teal, 1,600 Wigeon, 10 Tufted Duck, 3 Shoveler, Peregrine, 1,500 Golden Plover, 450 Lapwing, 500 Black-tailed Godwit, 35 Curlew, 30 Dunlin, 2 Ruff, 4 Snipe, 1 Greenshank, 23 Redshank, 20 Redwing & 2 Fieldfare, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
23rd October: Merlin, Ballyconneely (Miryam & Michael Harris).
24th October: Juv. Dotterel, Aillebrack, Slyne Head, Nr. Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (10)
26th October: Snow Bunting, Aillebrack, Slyne Head, Nr. Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
26th October: Sparrowhawk (with kill) & 2 Little Egret, Mutton Island, Galway City (Sarah Bonham).

29th October: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
29th October: Spotted Redshank, Tawnagh Bridge, Nr. Traught (Paul Troake).
29th October: 2 (1st Win & 2nd Win.) Mediterranean Gull, 3 Sandwich Tern, Black-throated Diver & 2 Snow Bunting, Newtownlynch Pier (Paul Troake).
30th October: 89 Mute Swan, 2 Whooper Swan, 29 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Pink-footed Goose, 50 Mallard, 70 Teal, 2,000 Wigeon, 30 Tufted Duck, 11 Pintail, 2 Shoveler, 2 Little Egret, Peregrine, 600 Golden Plover, 700 Black-tailed Godwit, 180 Lapwing, 7 Curlew, 43 Dunlin, 3 Greenshank & 11 Redshank, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
31st October: Ad. Mediterranean Gull & 3 (2-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Ring-billed Gull, South Park & Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
31st October: Brambling, Ballinderreen (Paul Troake).
1st November: 2 Wheatear & 2 Juv. Arctic Tern, Aughinish (Paul Troake).
2nd November: Marsh Harrier, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail).
2nd November: 1st Win. Little Gull, Inveran (Aonghus O'Donail).
4th November: Red-throated Pipit, over Slyne Head, Nr. Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
4th November: Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).
5th November: 75 Mute Swan, 4 Whooper Swan, 29 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 80 Teal, 1,000 Wigeon, 12 Tufted Duck, 2 Pintail, 10 Shoveler, 1,500 Golden Plover, 291 Black-tailed Godwit, 450 Lapwing, 2 Curlew, 15 Dunlin, Greenshank, 16 Redshank & Chiffchaff, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
5th November: Juv. Pallid Harrier, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail & Dermot Breen). (11)
6th November: Ad. Forster's Tern & 4 Sandwich Tern, Newtownlynch Pier (Dermot Breen). (12)
6th November: 10 Twite, Wheatear & 12 Long-tailed Duck, Galway end of Aughinish causeway (Dermot Breen).
6th November: Juv. Swallow, Kinvara (Dermot Breen).
6th November: 7 Twite, Inisheer (Liam Kane).
9th November: 5 Common Crane, Frenchfort, Oranmore (per Martin Byrnes).
12th November: Juv. Hen Harrier, Milltown, Nr. Tuam (Chris Benson).
14th November: male Lesser Scaup, Rahasane turlough (Tim Griffin).
14th November: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tim Griffin).
20th November: Bittern, Muckrush, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donail). (13)
22nd November: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
24th November: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).
26th November: Ad. Pomarine Skua, Waterside, Galway City (Michael Davis & Mark Davis).
10th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
11th December: Fem./Imm. Garganey, Rostaff Lake (Dermot Breen). (14)
14th December: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
14th December: 2nd Win. Glaucous Gull, Crompaun Bay, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
16th December: Grey Phalarope, Renville, Oranmore, Galway City (Frank Flanagan).
17th December: Juv. Great Northern Diver, Lough Rea (Marianne ten Cate).
18th December: Redhead Smew, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen). (15)
19th December: 2 Snow Bunting, Rinvyle Point (Dermot Breen).
19th December: Black-throated Diver, Derryinver Pier, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
20th December: Ad. Fem. Surf Scoter, off Inishturbot (Dermot Breen). (16)
21st December: Common Buzzard, near Failmore River, Maam (Dermot Breen).
22nd December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
24th December: Ad. <i>argentatus</i> Herring Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).
28th December: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen). (17)
28th December: 2 Common Buzzard, Cloghboley, NW of Ardrahan (Paul Troake).

**NOTES:**

- (1) A single Blue-headed Wagtail was present here on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 and a single bird was again present here on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2011.
- (2) These Buff-breasted Sandpipers had been present since the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2011.
- (3) This Barred Warbler had been present since the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2011.
- (4) The Baird's Sandpiper was also seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (5) The Semipalmated Sandpiper was also seen on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (6) The Juvenile American Golden Plover had been present from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2011 and was also recorded (at either Truska or Aillebrack) on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (7) The Turtle Dove was also present on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (8) The Reed Warbler was still present on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (9) This Barred Warbler was also present on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October.
- (10) This or another Juvenile Dotterel had been present at Truska from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2011. The bird at Aillebrack and was also present on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of October and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November (5<sup>th</sup> county record, or 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> county records).
- (11) The Juvenile Pallid Harrier was present until the end of 2011.
- (12) The regular adult Forster's Tern was present in the Traught/Newtownlynch/Kinvara area until the end of 2011.
- (13) The Bittern was also recorded on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December.
- (14) This Garganey was relocated in the area during the first quarter of 2012.
- (15) A redhead Smew (possibly/probably the same bird) was present during the first quarter of 2012.
- (16) The Surf Scoter was also recorded on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.
- (17) These birds were also present on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December.

**OTHER BEASTIES:**

- 15th December: Otter, Mutton Island, Galway City (Chris Peppiatt).  
20th December: Otter, River Corrib, Nr. Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).  
28th December: Sperm Whale, stranded dead, Omev Island.

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

Surf Scoter, Lesser Scaup, Garganey, Bittern, 5 Common Crane, Pallid Harrier, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, 2 Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, 2 American Golden Plover, Dotterel, Grey Phalarope, Turtle Dove, Red-throated Pipit, Yellow-browed Warbler, 3 Barred Warbler, Common Rosefinch, 2 Blue-headed Wagtail, 10-17 Twite.

First Winter migrants: Redwing (2<sup>nd</sup> October); Fieldfare (23<sup>rd</sup> October); Greenland White-fronted Goose (23<sup>rd</sup> October); Snow Bunting (26<sup>th</sup> of October); Brambling (31<sup>st</sup> October); Smew (18<sup>th</sup> December).