



BRANCH MATTERS

Because the Galway branch AGM was postponed from January till late February, the February issue of the *Newsletter* was out before the AGM had taken place. Hence this late summary of the proceedings at the meeting. The meeting was well attended by 18 members of the branch.

After the chairman's welcome the secretary's annual report was presented. This will in due course be accessible through our Web site at www.birdwatchgalway.org. In the last two annual reports I wrote the following in the conclusion: "... we also keep trying to cater for all different interests represented in *BirdWatch Galway*, be it indoor or outdoor activities, common birds or rare birds, regular counts or occasional surveys, short outings or weekend outings, *BirdWatch* business meetings or social gatherings."

During 2011 it had become almost impossible to realise these lofty objectives. We certainly did not get out on any day or weekend outings, we did not have monthly branch meetings and we had fewer talks. Slowly, the branch was reducing its activities, despite the increasing numbers of *BirdWatch* members. Staff members at *BirdWatch* Ireland headquarters had, on several occasions, promised to help revitalise the branch. They seemed to think there were enough Galway members paying their membership to *BirdWatch* to warrant this.

After the presentation of the treasurer's report, the next item on the agenda was the (re-)election of officers. The outgoing chairman and secretary had made it very clear that they would not stand for re-election so, not for the first time, a plea was made for volunteers to come forward to fill the posts. Unfortunately, nobody did. Some members made suggestions for activities to be organised and some offered to put in some energy, but to date, nothing has materialised.

Jamie Durrant, the Membership Development Officer with *BirdWatch* Ireland, was present at most of the meeting and he drew on his experience with one of the other *BirdWatch* branches where a similar situation had developed. A total change of personnel, of the type of activities and of locations seemed to have 'cured' the situation there so he suggested aiming at the same type of clean-slate approach in Galway. He also suggested that he and Niall Hatch (Development Officer *BWI*) would take

matters in hand and approach Galway members in due course. Since then a couple of members have come forward to offer help and I have passed their details on to Jamie and Niall. Anyone else, who might like to get involved, could contact them directly at jdurrant@birdwatchireland.ie and nhatch@birdwatchireland.ie so that they can take it from there. We can only hope that *BirdWatch* members in Galway are going to be catered for by a revived branch.

In the meantime, Tom Cuffe is still running the monthly first-Saturday-of-the-month outings at Nimmo's Pier, Neil Sharkey is continuing to edit the quarterly *Newsletter*, Deirdre Comerford holds the finances in check and Chris Peppiatt is keeping the records and producing the quarterly bird report and also continuing to organise the Galway Bay counts. They all deserve great credit for their continued efforts and I hope they get all the support they need.

Marianne ten Cate

BIRDWATCH GALWAY FACEBOOK

Tom Cuffe has set up a *BirdWatch* Galway Facebook page and already it is attracting lots of followers and interesting comments.. Jimmy Mongan reported the first Cuckoo on April 24th! There is an official link but it is just as easy to put – Facebook *BirdWatch* Galway - into a Google search. Or click on www.facebook.com/BirdWatchGalway. Do look it up and register – it is the ideal way for members to keep in touch and learn more about Galway birds.

Well done and thanks, Tom. Hopefully there will be a link to the *Newsletter*.

NS

A DAY OUT IN THE CAPE

I was lucky enough to spend two and a half weeks of last February in South Africa, with 12 days on the Cape peninsula followed by 5 days in the Kruger National Park. I spent most of my time birding, thanks to my cousin who is a keen photographer of natural history, especially birds. The two of us visited various birding sites around the peninsula, including Rondevlei Nature Reserve, Cape Point and Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens. The site that really made an impression, though, was Strandfontein Sewage Works (and not because of the smell...). I was fortunate to visit Strandfontein twice, both times in the

company of a professional ornithological tour guide, John Tinkler of Aperture Wild (www.aperturewild.co.za).

The first visit with John was part of a full day's birding tour, covering four sites in the Hottentots Holland region of the Eastern Cape and finishing at Strandfontein. John collected my cousin, my father and me at 6:30am on Sunday 5th February, and we headed out of Fish Hoek along the coast road towards Hottentots Holland. Driving along the coast we soon had sightings of Kelp Gull, Hautlaub's Gull and a hovering Black-shouldered Kite.

Our first stop was on the cliffs on the N2 on the way to Betty's Bay. Our target species here was Cape Rock Thrush. On alighting from the vehicle, we immediately had views of Cape Francolin (or Spurfowl, as it is now known) and Cape Bunting. The buntings were everywhere, posing on rocks and the low fynbos vegetation. Eventually, after much phishing, a very obliging male Rock Thrush appeared, perching, fittingly, on top of a large boulder. This beautiful bird is endemic to South Africa, and was a great way to start the tour.

Next up was Rooi Els, another coastal site and a hotspot for Cape Rockjumper. This stop involved a walk along a coastal road which is in the lea of the mountains, and despite being around 8:00am, it soon became extremely warm. Rock Martins and Lesser-striped Swallows swooped around us, Orange-breasted Sunbirds, endemic to the fynbos biome, fed on the low vegetation and White-necked Ravens soared overhead. John suddenly stopped as a burst of birdsong caught his attention. After about 10 minutes the culprit finally showed himself – a Victorin's Warbler, an endemic species of the Western Cape. We got good views of this individual as he continued to sing and flit around in the undergrowth. After a couple of hours at Rooi Els, we decided to move on despite missing out on the Rockjumper.

Our next destination was Stony Point, which houses one of only two mainland breeding colonies of African Penguins, as well as having four (yes, four) species of cormorant. The African Penguins (formally Jackass Penguin, but the name was considered offensive...) were loitering with intent on the beaches and rocks around the boardwalk, and Cape Wagtails fed on the beach amongst the seaweed. Of more interest were the cormorants that were



hanging around on the rocky shore. White-breasted (with a white breast!) and Cape (with a yellow gular patch) Cormorants were easily identified, and, after carefully picking through the birds, Bank and Crowned quickly followed. This brief stop proved to be well worthwhile.

We now headed inland to the Harold Porter Botanical Gardens for lunch and more fynbos LBJs (or more accurately, more little brightly-coloured jobs). We picked up some interesting species here, including Olive Thrush, Cape Robin-chat, Black Saw-winged Swallow, Sombre Greenbul and Fiscal Flycatcher. The highlights, though, were found on a forested walk up to a damn over Disa Kloof stream. Firstly we had brief, tantalising views of a female Paradise Flycatcher. John and I then continued up to the damn, whilst Dad and my cousin relaxed on a park bench. On approaching the damn, we quickly spotted an African Black Duck on the stream, attempting to hide under overhanging trees and bushes. A Giant Kingfisher then flew past and, just as we were about to return to the others, the Paradise Flycatcher put in another, more obliging appearance. To cap it all, an Olive Woodpecker then flew into a tree behind the park bench where the others were resting, a species that John hadn't expected at the gardens. At about 3:00pm we decided to move on the sewage works at Strandfontein, a drive of about an hour.

When we arrived at Strandfontein, John's vehicle came into its own. The roof of the back lifts on a series of levers, enabling birders (and photographers) to stand in the back and obtain better views of birds, whilst sheltered from the sun by the roof. John also provides sandbags, on which to rest scopes and cameras. So, with John at the wheel and the rest of us standing in the back, we set off to explore the network of pools that can be viewed from the dirt and (occasionally soft) sand roads that run between them.

One of the first birds we saw was a Black-shouldered Kite perched on top of a dead tree. Other raptors recorded here were Steppe Buzzard and African Marsh Harrier, which accorded us superb views as it glided over the reed beds. One general observation from the day was that raptors were pretty thin on the ground (and in the air!), so to see these species was almost a relief.

The pools contained good numbers of waterfowl, including Red-billed and Cape

Teal, Cape Shoveler, Yellow-billed Duck, Southern Pochard and Egyptian Goose. Spur-winged Goose was also seen in large numbers feeding between pools in the company of Sacred Ibis. Three species of Grebe were also seen, namely Great-crested, Black-necked and, most common of all, Little Grebe, one flock of which contained around 60 individuals.

There were also lots of Barn Swallows, White-throated Swallows and Brown-throated Martins zipping around and perching on any available branch or wire. It was quite humbling to see the Barn Swallows after their long migration south, and to think that they would soon be following me back to colder, damper climes.

Other notable species seen around the pools included Wood Sandpiper, Little Stint, Avocet, Black-winged Stilt, Greater Flamingo, Great White Pelican, Glossy Ibis, Caspian Tern, Swift Tern... At times there seemed to be so much going on that I struggled to note everything. Another highlight of the day was provided by the adult Spotted Eagle Owl that flew across the front of the vehicle. John then spotted, amazingly, two juvenile owls resting in the dunes. As one last treat, we spotted Maccoa Duck on one of the pools near the entrance to the site.

It was after 7:00pm when we finally left Strandfontein, exhausted after a long day but exhilarated by the quality of the birding and the number of species seen. This was the first time that I'd hired a professional guide whilst on holiday, and it really did add to my experiences in the Cape. John proved to be knowledgeable and passionate about birds, and was determined to find endemic species wherever possible. We ended up with over 90 species in the day, always assuming that I managed to note down everything

Pete Capsey

THE NEWSLETTER AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS

As I mentioned in the 75th edition of the *Newsletter* your editor tries to keep up with developments but, it must be admitted, at a snail like pace. The overall format is still way behind some similar efforts which are often dressed out in 'all singing and dancing' colour and have various other bells and bangles enhancement. I particularly find adding photographs and other illustrations technically

difficult. However, I have some 'tech' suggestions that may be helpful.

I was recently given a Kindle reader by my family and have become something of a convert. After some trial and error I was able to transfer the *Newsletter* on to it and this makes for perfect and easy reading. If you need help and assistance just contact me. The I-Pad is another perfect way to read the *Newsletter* – no more small print! Again, just let me know if you have any problems with it.

Separate to this is another suggestion. If you see a bird and you have an idea of what it is but are not sure, go to You Tube - get it on the Google menu. Key in the possible bird names and in every case there will be many 'live' examples of the bird in question. Finally, we now also have a Facebook site and there are 'blog' links, both of which are great additions to our overall efforts to keep Galway BirdWatch members in the picture.

NS

YOUTHFUL TALENT

At one of his recent heritage education school sessions Tom Cuffe was showing a slide of a Goldcrest when an observant 8 year old pointed out that it was a female. He knew the difference! Do you, dear reader? I didn't, even after 50 or more years of birdwatching. With interest and perception like that who can doubt the long term future of Galway birdwatching.

NS

THE SHORE OF LOUGH 'WINSHIN'

Lough Funshinagh is a large wetland on the west side of Lough Ree, just north of Athlone. Locally, the name is always pronounced "Lough Winshin" – you tend to get puzzled looks if you pronounce it any other way! It was well known to birdwatchers in the early part of the 20th century as a breeding location for black-necked grebes. By the time I went to live in Athlone (early 1970's) it was heavily overgrown with reed and rushes and attracted very little attention.

It is a turlough, essentially – and empties out unpredictably. Attempts in recent years by local farmers to "improve" the drainage have increased the frequency but in the old days it was possible for many years to pass between incidents of complete emptying. The first time I witnessed such an event, I arrived to find a man walking across the muddy lake basin carrying a trident! To be exact, it was a farmyard fork modified by flattening the tines. The owner was using it to catch the large pike



and eels trapped in the remaining small pools and near the swallow-hole. He turned out to be a local farmer called Jack Kiline and was an excellent naturalist. When Dick Devlin and I, egged on by Richard Nairn of the then IWC, formed a branch of the Irish Wildbird Conservancy in Athlone, Jack became a stalwart member - the only one I have ever known to turn up to branch outings on a tractor!

Other incidents associated with the emptying of the lake come to mind. A typical visit to Lough Winshin would always show up a few Grey Herons, as you might expect. One day, I arrived to find about **SIXTY** of them clustered around a small pool, gorging themselves on the trapped fish and eels. As I approached, they struggled to take off, like heavy bombers leaving a small airfield to bomb the Ruhr. Several shed part of their load as they went! More recently, as the intervals between emptying grew shorter, the Inland Fisheries staff arrived and electrically fished out the pools to transfer the stock to elsewhere.

I carried out I-WeBs surveys on Winshin and some neighbouring areas for a number of years. Highlights included the spectacle of huge Golden Plover flocks over the lake – I recall one or two that compared with the roosting flocks of Starlings we know. Hen Harriers quartering the reeds, a great variety of duck and a good sprinkle of migrant waders at either end of the season meant that Sunday morning visits to this local wilderness were always a treat. Hard frosts produced large areas of thin ice and the spectacle of Whooper Swans struggling to land in a dignified manner. Summer should have led to expeditions to see what was breeding in the extensive and dense cover – but I was far too busy sailing on the nearby Lough Ree to have time for that!

Martin Ryan

WELL DONE GALWAY

I have been helping to validate the Atlas records for Co. Galway and other western counties and can say that the contribution by Galway birdwatchers has been really outstanding. Something in the region of 50,000 records were logged by about 250 individuals plus four years of I-WeBS, Garden Bird Survey, CBS, and Birdtrack records. Well done; we all look forward to the finished product. **NS**

MY PATCH – A SECOND INSTALLMENT!

To recap – My Patch is the stretch from 'The Second Rock' west to the golf driving range. (For non-swimmers, 'The Second Rock' is the second rock east of the diving tower at Blackrock, where the yellow-painted shelter just off the Prom is.) My Patch has a range of habitats from shingle, mudflat, reef and rock, to Galway Bay behind all that. West of the diving tower and to the north there is the Galway Golf Club, which has a few fresh water ponds with plenty of reeds and a good area of scrub.

Summer 2011 was good for arctic skuas, chasing (mostly) sandwich terns. A lot of the action took place over the walkway between the golf club and the shore. The birds were flying low and screeching. Most people walking there saw nothing until, once or twice, the terns led the skuas below head height – then it was people screeching, quite funny!

On a sadder note, the golf club mowed two sections of scrubby ground near the golf driving range in late June/early July; I saw it on July the 4th. I knew where four nests were in those areas, two of reed bunting and two, probably, of meadow pipit - all destroyed.

The first Brent Geese, 25 of them, on September the 8th. Later, some small flocks were on the golf fairways – I recorded, and reported, a ringed individual, AFWW. They weren't on the golf course for long – golfers didn't like the pool I was told.

In early April, a pair of dabchicks (Little Grebes) started building on the pond where Mute Swans have nested for years. A pair on the same pond last year failed to hatch young, as happened to the mutes that I had seen on the nest. The mutes have left the area, except for infrequent visits.

I was on a walk-walk, (i.e. no scope or binoculars, getting exercise!) on April 18, part of which included My Patch. I was horrified to see the above pond being stripped. It had become covered in floating weed, but, at a guess, about 80% of the reeds were cut. I saw one dabchick flying back and forth.

Finally some late updates:
Four Sand Martins flew over the ponds on April 14. On Saturday 21 April, the dabchicks on the above pond were feeding at least three young.

Brendan Dunne

GARDEN WARBLERS IN MOYCULLEN

The Garden Warbler is listed as a scarce summer visitor to Ireland, breeding in small numbers in areas of dense deciduous woodland with good undergrowth in parts of the midlands and the north. It is a shy, unobtrusive bird that does not easily lend itself to observation. Even when seen it is a relatively nondescript bird, being brown and dumpy and almost featureless. It is this lack of features which often seals the identification for those observers lucky enough to get a glimpse! More often than not its song gives the presence of the Garden Warbler away but even this presents problems. To the unfamiliar or, as in my case tone deaf, ear the songs of Garden Warbler and Blackcap are extremely similar. With practice the two can be told apart with little difficulty but for the novice it can be a daunting task. It has a similar musical song to the Blackcap's but the song is a little scratchier and tends to sing from low cover rather than higher up in bushes or trees as the Blackcap does.

Garden Warblers' had only ever been recorded breeding twice in Co. Galway - at Ross Lake, Rosscahill in 1982 and at Fortuna in 1989 - and are at best only a scarce passage migrant so when I received a call from Marianne in June 2010 about possible Garden Warblers' in Moycullen I was interested but cautious. May Cashman and her sister, a retired nun, Sister Josephine, had heard Garden Warblers singing near the retirement home where Sister Josephine was a resident. They were fairly certain they were not Blackcaps, having been familiar with the call of Garden Warbler from time spent in England. "Where are they?" I enquired. "Michelle", was the answer. That's convenient. I live in Micelle. "Where in Micelle?" I asked. "Not far from your house, at the rear of the nursing home". Right under my feet! Early on the morning of the 25th of June 2010 I visited the site. It was getting late into the summer for singing warblers but it was a warm sunny day and worth a few hours of my time. I was familiar with the site and knew there was a good population of Blackcaps in the area. Had I been hearing Garden Warblers as well as the Blackcaps in the past and not realised what I was listening to? Upon arrival there was a number of warblers in full song. After twenty minutes I had seen a few Willow Warblers, a number of Blackcaps and a Garden Warbler! Not only did I see it but also



it sat out in full view in a gap in cover and sang its heart out for ten minutes. Two more hours revealed the presence of at least another three singing males in the vicinity. These were the first Garden Warblers I had seen in Co. Galway and here they were only a few hundred meters from my house and more than likely breeding. A number of return visits over the next few weeks were not as successful and it wasn't until 2011 that I managed to prove breeding at the site when I observed a male carrying food on 27th June. Of all the records I submitted to the recent BTO Breeding Atlas project I think those of the Garden Warblers in Micelle were among the most satisfying. To May and Sister Josephine I say a huge thank you. All credit for the find goes to them.

Aonghus O Donail

DOTTEREL AND GLOSSY IBIS – WHAT HAVE THEY IN COMMON?

The connection between these two species is that they are two prime Galway rarities found since the last *Newsletter*.

Congratulations to May Cashman and her Tuam birdwatching colleagues on finding the Glossy Ibis on March 15th near Moylough. It is the first for Galway in nearly 30 years. Well done May and others. For splendid photographs of this and other birds just click on Tom Cuffe's web site at <http://birdsgalway.blogspot.com/>

Also look at his Orgami link and other links.

The second remarkable record was the recent find of three Dotterel at Truska, Ballyconneely, by Aonghus O Donail. Dermot Breen has some really fine photos of them and other birds on his blogspot at <http://dermotbreen.blogspot.com/>

Copy to Google search if there is any difficulty in accessing either site. Both are well worth visiting.

NS

BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 1st Quarter 2012

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 3rd August 2012

2nd January: Ad. Win. Forster's Tern, again present, Kinvara. (1)

2nd January: 4-1st Win. Iceland Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

2nd January: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

3rd January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull & 3-1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).

4th January: 2 (Ad. & 3rd Win.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

4th January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Gorteen Bay, Nr. Roundstone (Dermot Breen).

4th January: 2-1st Win. Iceland Gull & 1-2nd Win. Glaucous Gull, Roundstone (Dermot Breen).

4th January: 2 Purple Sandpiper, Blackrock, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).

5th January: Juv. Pallid Harrier, again present, Lough Corrib. (2)

5th January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, 3 km East of Clifden (Dermot Breen).

5th January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Steve Bierley)

5th January: 1-2 (2nd Win. & prob. 1st Win) Kumlien's Gull, 4 (3-1st Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).

5th January: 2nd Win Kumlien's Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).

6th January: 2nd Win. Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, again present, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour.

6th January: Ad. Win. Iceland Gull, Clifden (Dermot Breen).

6th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull, 8 (3-1st Win., 3-2nd Win, 3rd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).

6th January: male Blackcap, Toureen, Nr. Ballinderreen (Paul Troake).

6th January: 3 (2-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

6th January: 2 (1st Win. & 4th Win.) Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

7th January: Pink-footed Goose, male ring-necked Duck X Tufted Duck hybrid & Blue-winged Teal X Shoveler hybrid, Rostaff Lake (Dermot Breen).

7th January: 2 White-tailed Eagle, Lough Inagh (John Brittain).

7th January: 1st Win. Garganey, Belclare Turlough (Dermot Breen). (3)

7th January: 4 (2-1st Win. & 2 Ad.) Iceland Gull & 2 (2nd Win. & Ad.) Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).

7th January: 4-1st Win. Iceland Gull, again present, Waterside, Galway City.

7th January: 2 Velvet Scoter, Galway Bay, Nr. Parkmore Quay, Doorus (Paul Troake). (4)

7th January: 80+ Common Scoter, Island Eddy (Paul Troake).

7th January: Little Egret, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Patrick Costello).

8th January: 3 (2-1st Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).

8th January: 2nd Win. Iceland/Kumlien's Gull, Ballyloughaun, Galway City (Dermot Breen).

8th January: male American Wigeon, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen). (5)

8th January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Oranmore (Dermot Breen).

8th January: 2nd Win. Iceland Gull, Spotted Redshank & Whimbrel, Kilcaimin (Dermot Breen).

9th January: 105 Pintail, 80+ Black-tailed Godwit & Peregrine, Ahapouleen Turlough, Maree (Paul Troake).

9th January: Merlin, Mweenish Island, Ballinacourty (Paul Troake).

9th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 4 (3-1st Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

9th January: 4 (3-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Rossaveal (Dermot Breen).

10th January: 2 (1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Kumlien's Gull & 6 (4-1st Win. & 2 Ad.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
11th January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Kinvara (Paul Troake).
12th January: 2 Common Buzzard, Cloghboley, NW of Ardrahan (Paul Troake). (6)
12th January: 2 Crossbill, Moyglass (Shane O'Neill).
13th January: Twite, Galway Harbour Enterprise Park, Rinmore Point, Galway City (Chris Peppiatt).
13th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 4 (1st Win., 2nd Win, 3rd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).
13th January: 3 (2-1st Win. & 2nd Win) Iceland Gull, Mutton Island, Galway City (Michael Davis).
13th January: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, again present, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour.
13th January: Little Auk, South Sound, Galway Bay (Peter Tyndall).
14th January: 2 Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Dervla O'Dowd, Helen Carty & Chris Peppiatt).
14th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 4 (3-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
15th January: Fem./Juv. Merlin, Cooke's Corner, Shantalla, Galway City (Aonghus O'Donaill).
15th January: 2-1st Win. Iceland Gull, again present, Waterside, Galway City.
15th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 1st Win. Iceland Gull, again present, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City.
15th January: Ruff & 78 (one neck-collared) Greenland White-fronted Goose, Glenamaddy turlough (Dermot Breen).
15th January: Fem. Hen Harrier wing tagged green 'E' (from Slieve Aughty breeding population), Lough Corrib.
18th January: Peregrine & 2 Yellowhammer, Cloghboley, NW of Ardrahan (Paul Troake).
19th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull, 8 (2-1st Win., 4-2nd Win, & 2-3rd Win) Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).
20th January: 2 Long-tailed Duck & Sandwich Tern, Aughinish causeway (Paul Troake).
21st January: 6 (4-1st Win. & 2-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & 2nd Win. Kumlien's/Iceland-type Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
21st January: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
25th January: Great Skua, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donaill).
26th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's-type Gull & 7 (6-1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Michael Davis).
26th January: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Long Walk, Galway City (Steve Bierley)
27th January: 2nd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 6 (3-1st Win., 2-2nd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).
27th January: Twite, Rinville Point, Oranmore (Peter Tyndall).
29th January: 7 Iceland Gull, 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Ad. Mediterranean Gull & 2 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
30th January: Chiffchaff, Cahermore, Nr. Kinvara (Paul Troake).
30th January: Peregrine, Lydacan (Paul Troake).
2nd February: 12 Yellowhammer, Cloghboley, NW of Ardrahan (Paul Troake).
3rd February: 2-2nd Win. Iceland Gull, Clifden Quay (Dermot Breen).
3rd February: 3 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier (Kevin Jarvis).
4th February: 7 (4-1st Win., 2-2nd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & 2nd Win. Kumlien's/Iceland-type Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
4th February: Chiffchaff, NUI Galway, Galway City (Ann Fleming).
5th February: Short-eared Owl, Barranny, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen). (7)
5th February: Redhead Smew, Great Northern Diver & 2 Lesser Black-backed Gull, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen).
5th February: 3 (2-2nd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Michael Davis).

5th February: 11 (6-1st Win., 4-2nd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
5th February: Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Waterside, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
6th February: 2 Long-tailed Duck & Fem. Merlin (chasing a Dunlin), Traught (Chris Peppiatt).
10th February: 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Ann Fleming).
11th February: 18 Chough, Ballyconneely golf course (Miryam & Michael Harris).
12th February: 40 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen).
14th February: 5 (3-1st Win & 2-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
14th February: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Rinvylye Head (Dermot Breen).
14th February: 6 Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Richard Bonser).
14th February: 4 Sandwich Tern, Glaucous Gull & Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Rossaveal (Richard Bonser).
15th February: Fem. Merlin, Barranny, Lough Corrib (Chris Peppiatt).
15th February: 2 (1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Steve Bierley).
16th February: 4 (1st Win. & 3-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 4 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
18th February: 3-1st Win. Iceland Gull & 2 Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Chris Cook).
18th February: Kingfisher, Clifden Bay (Miryam & Michael Harris).
19th February: Male Green-winged Teal, Belclare Turlough (Dermot Breen). (8)
19th February: Spotted Redshank, Tawin (Chris Cook).
19th February: 35 Scaup, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Chris Cook).
19th February: 5 (4-1st Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull, Ad. Ring-billed Gull & 3 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
21st February: Male American Wigeon X Wigeon hybrid, 2 Shelduck & 35 Little Egret, Rahasane Turlough (Dermot Breen).
22nd February: 2-3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull, 6 (3-1st Win & 3-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & 2nd Win. Glaucous Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
23rd February: 6 Tree Sparrow, Newbridge, Nr. Moylough (Graham Mitchell).
23rd February: Spotted Redshank, Brandy Harbour (Dermot Breen).
23rd February: 3 Sandwich Tern, Newtownlynch Pier (Paul Troake).
23rd February: 12 (7-1st Win., 4-2nd Win. & Ad.) Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
25th February: 1st Win. Mediterranean Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Paul Slade).
26th February: 9 (6-1st Win. & 3-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull & Ad. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Paul Slade).
26th February: 3 Gadwall, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Paul Slade).
26th February: 2-1st Win. Glaucous Gull & 12 (4-1st Win., 6-2nd Win. & 2 Ad.) Iceland Gull, Spiddal (Paul Slade).
26th February: 6 (Ad. Male & 5 ringtail) Hen Harrier & 40 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Lough Corrib (Paul Slade).
26th February: 2 (1st Win. & 2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Rossaveal (Michael Davis).
26th February: 22 Whooper Swan, 16 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Pink-footed Goose, 2,000 Wigeon, 250 Teal, 102 Pintail, 122 Shoveler, 2 Ruff, 41 Little Egret & 2 Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Pete Capsey). (9, 10)
29th February: 3rd Win. Kumlien's Gull & 7 (4-1st Win & 3-2nd Win.) Iceland Gull, Ross Beach, Ballynakill Harbour (Dermot Breen).
2nd March: Peregrine, over Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
4th March: Male Green-winged Teal, Coole River, Nr. Gort (Chris Peppiatt).

4th March: 46 Whooper Swan, 2,500 Wigeon, 500 Teal, 52 Pintail, 46 Shoveler & 41 Little Egret, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
7th March: Short-eared Owl, found dead in road, Castlecreevy, Corrandulla (Kevin Hardiman).
9th March: 5 (3-1st Win., 2nd Win. & 3rd Win.) Iceland Gull, Curhownagh fish farm, Errislannan (Dermot Breen).
10th March: 2 Iceland Gull, Ardfry (Dermot Breen).
10th March: 13 Iceland Gull & 5 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
11th March: 9 Iceland Gull & 2nd Win. Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
11th March: 68 Whooper Swan, 56 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 1,500 Wigeon, 550 Teal, 4 Pintail, 2 Shoveler, & 100 Black-tailed Godwit, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
11th March: Black-necked Grebe, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen).
12th March: Russian White-fronted Goose, Rahasane Turlough (Ralph Sheppard).(11)
14th March: 3 Whooper Swan, 51 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 26 Little Egret & 2 Peregrine, Rahasane Turlough (Paul Troake).
14th March: Glossy Ibis, Mullaghmore Lake, Nr. Moylough (Mae Cashman & Catherine King). (12)
20th March: House Martin & 17 Greylag Goose, Rosmore, Nr. Woodford (Shane O'Neill).
22nd March: White-tailed Eagle, Boliska Oughter, Spiddal (Aonghus O'Donail).
22nd March: Wheatear, Sandwich Tern & 91 Black Guillemot, Mannin Beg, Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen).
22nd March: 75 Sandwich Tern & 4 (3 Ad. & 1st yr.) Mediterranean Gull, Corranroo Bay (Paul Troake).
22nd March: 2 Mediterranean Gull, Newtownlynch Pier (Paul Troake).
22nd March: 5 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Letterfir (Aonghus O'Donail).
24th March: 3 Willow Warbler, Ballinderreen (Paul Troake).
24th March: Swallow, Headford (Keith Hammond).
25th March: Whooper Swan, 15 Mute Swan, 57 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 18 Wigeon & 14 Black-tailed Godwit, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
27th March: Common Tern, Spiddal (Steve Bierley).
28th March: White-tailed Eagle, reported Tully Cross.
28th March: Whimbrel, Grattan Road, Salthill, Galway City (Michael Davis).
28th March: Ruff & Willow Warbler, Ahapouleen Turlough, Maree (Paul Troake).
28th March: 17 Red-throated Diver, 6 Pintail, 2 Long-tailed Duck & Wheatear, Mweenish/Carrowmore, Nr. Tawin (Paul Troake).
29th March: 2 Black-throated Diver, Bundouglas (Dermot Breen).
29th March: 32 Greenland White-fronted Goose & leucistic Grey Heron, Rahasane Turlough (Paul Troake).
29th March: Male White-tailed Eagle, 'Star' Roundstone Bog (per Dermot Breen).
29th March: 15-20 Manx Shearwater, Inishmore ferry (Penny Insole).
31st March: Spotted Redshank, Corranroo Bay (Paul Troake).
31st March: Red-necked Grebe & 100 Common Scoter, Aughinish (Paul Troake).

NOTES:

- (1) The Forster's Tern from the previous quarter was present in the Kinvara/Parkmore/Traught/Newtownlynch area until the 27th of February at least. This bird has returned to winter in Galway Bay for a number of years now.
- (2) The Pallid Harrier, present since November 2011, remained until the end of the quarter.
- (3) The Garganey from Rostaff Lake on 11th December 2011 was relocated at Belclare Turlough.
- (4) Presumably the same two Velvet Scoter were seen in the same area on the 14th January and two (1st Win. Male and a female) were again seen at Traught on the 11th of February.
- (5) The drake American Wigeon was present until the 29th of March.
- (6) Two Common Buzzard (presumably the same birds) were present at the same site on the 28th of December 2011.
- (7) Short-eared owls were seen at the same site on the 23rd of February, 11th of March (two birds) and the 13th of March.
- (8) The Green-winged Teal was again present on the 15th of March.
- (9) This Pink-footed Goose was also at Rahasane turlough on the 11th of March, 12th of March, 14th of March, 24th of March and the 25th of March.

(10) Ruff were also present at Rahasane turlough on the 4th of March (one bird), 11th of March (two birds), 24th of March (one bird) and the 25th of March (one bird).

(11) The Russian White-fronted Goose was again present on the 13th of March.

(12) The Glossy Ibis was also present on the 17th-19th of March, 21st March, 25th March and 27th of March. It was also seen in the second quarter of 2012 (April and May).

OTHER BEASTIES:

5th February: 4 Otter, Galway Harbour Enterprise Park, Rinmore Point, Galway City (Chris Peppiatt).

HIGHLIGHTS:

Pallid Harrier, Glossy Ibis, Black-necked Grebe, Russian White-fronted Goose, 2 Pink-footed Goose, American Wigeon, 2 Green-winged Teal, Garganey, Smew, at least 2 White-tailed Eagle, at least 3 Short-eared Owl, 2 Twite, Forster's Tern wintered again, 2nd Win. Kumlien's/Iceland Gull type at Nimmo's Pier and other Kumlien's further West.

First Summer migrants: House Martin (20th March); Wheatear (22nd March); Swallow (24th March); Willow Warbler (24th March); Common Tern (27th March); Whimbrel (28th March); Manx Shearwater (29th March).