



## CAIRDE EANLAITH NA GAILLIMHE BIRDWATCH GALWAY

[www.birdwatchgalway.org](http://www.birdwatchgalway.org)  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – EDITOR: NEIL SHARKEY  
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Issue No. 80 Feb. 2013

This is a local forum newsletter –  
contributions and comments are  
most welcome.  
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### IN MEMORIAM

In January, the world of ornithology and wild life generally suffered two great losses:

Eamon de Buítléar, who died on January 28<sup>th</sup>, had a national reputation far beyond his concern for Ireland's birds and, in the past few weeks, others have described and paid tribute to his huge achievements. I would like to highlight what a great friend and supporter he was to Galway birdwatching. Over many years he never failed to respond to our requests for advice or be with us on special occasions. In a letter to him quite recently, I reminded him of one such occasion when we asked him to launch the 1990 edition of our *Birds of Galway*. I recall meeting Eamon, despite his busy schedule, off a late evening train, walking with him to a nearby hotel where he did the launch honours and then leaving him back to a late train an hour or so later. That was the measure of the man who will be so much missed.

Oscar Merne, who died on January 17<sup>th</sup>, may not have been as widely known but was one of the outstanding pillars of Irish ornithology. He started life in the banking world but his great love for and interest in the welfare of Irish birds saw him devote a pivotal career in the state wildlife services under its various guises – FWS, Duchas, NPWS. His great achievement was to bring the importance of birds and their habitats to the fore in the drafting of state policy. He combined his great knowledge and reputation with unfailing courtesy and approachability as so many of us had the pleasure of encountering. Again, a great loss.

NS

### I-WeBS AND EDUCATION

The winter may not have been kind to farmers, who had to put up with saturated fields and local shortages of fodder, but it has been good for bird watchers as Irish-Wetland Birds Survey (I-WeBS) counters have not been short of weather windows to get their counts done. We are now almost at the end of another season.

Two counts of lower Lough Corrib were done in November and January respectively. On both occasions, we benefitted from good counting conditions, apart from a lot of disturbance from gun shots. In the past, these could be helpful as they put up birds which would otherwise have remained concealed – thousands of plover might rise and thus be counted. But, this winter, shooting didn't stir many birds at all and when it did we were looking at tens rather than thousands taking flight. Overall, numbers on the Corrib were down by at least 50% compared to the numbers in 2010 and before. We used to get well over 10,000 birds (as many as 30,000 occasionally), but now we only totalled 5,504 in November and 7,304 in January. As the January count coincides with the internationally co-ordinated wetland birds count, the European picture for the month should shed some

light on where 'our' birds were – if they were anywhere at all; they may have had poor breeding seasons, reflected in depleted populations. Who knows?!

The first two Galway Bay counts, in November and January, yielded unsurprising numbers but some surprising species. It seems that some migratory species have changed their arrival and departure times and this changes the species compositions at some of the count sites. For instance, higher than usual numbers of Common Scoter and Black-tailed Godwit were seen in mid-winter, while Brent Geese arrived somewhat later than usual.

The Corrib counts require the assistance of at least six people and the Bay counts should ideally be carried out by a minimum of 12. It is most heartening that we still manage to muster the help of so many people (and more) on a regular basis. Thanks are due to each and every one of those volunteering time after time. Most of them also look after their own I-WeBS site(s) on a monthly basis!

At the most recent Lough Rea I-WeBS count, we were visited by groups from St. Brendan's Boys National School, Loughrea, and Ballymana N.S. The two schools are working toward getting their water green flag. The fieldtrip was organised by Caitriona Cunningham, Green-Schools officer with An Taisce, and assisted by BirdWatch members Pete Capsey, Mary and Pat Finnegan and me. Children had been prepared for the fieldtrip with a classroom presentation by Caitriona and were then shown the species present on the lake. They were very keen, observant and appreciative!

In County Galway 211 schools are registered with the Green-Schools programme. Nationwide, 88% of all schools are registered. The success of the Green-Schools programme has been driven by the commitment of the pupils and their teachers and parents and other volunteers who are supported by An Taisce's Green-Schools staff and the Councils' Environmental Awareness Officers. For more information please visit [www.greenschoolsireland.org](http://www.greenschoolsireland.org).

Marianne ten Cate

### BIRD POPULATIONS IN CO. GALWAY

As most Galway birdwatchers know, the most recent bird atlas project ended last year and, all going well, the results will be published at the latest in 2014 – twenty years since the publication of the previous atlas, then confined to breeding status. On that occasion, the late Tony Wilde wrote an item for the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Galway Newsletter* – that of Summer 1994. It consisted of a series of questions on the breeding status of many of our county's birds. Sadly, this was to be the last article Tony wrote for the *Newsletter* before his untimely death in early 1995 so, for him at least, the questions remained unanswered.

The following was the article:

#### **Our Breeding Birds**

(Reprinted from the *BirdWatch Galway Newsletter* of June 1994)

*The publication of the Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland is another milestone for these two islands. More comprehensive than the first atlas and based on different recording techniques it presents maps not only on distribution but also abundance and population change. It delivers a lot of valuable information but, like any piece of research, turns up a multitude of questions – not least about breeding birds in County Galway.*

*Little Grebes – have they really declined? Are Hen Harriers breeding/about to breed in Connemara? What happened to all our Grouse, Grey Partridges and Corncrakes? Are Oystercatchers beginning to breed on inland lake islands? Are Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Lapwing and Curlew becoming scarcer in the west? Why are Kittiwakes producing so few chicks on Inishmore? Are there any Barn Owls left in County Galway? How are our river species such as Kingfisher, Dipper and Grey Wagtail faring these days? Have Wheatears really disappeared from the east of the county? Did Ring Ousels really breed in South Connemara? Where are Grasshopper Warblers nesting these days? Are Blackcaps on the increase? Have Tree Sparrows, Twite and Corn Bunting left Connemara? Are thrushes and Yellowhammer on the decline?*

*Questions questions! – only you can provide the information that will give the answers. If you have sightings, information or answers to any of these questions I would be pleased to hear from you. For each record please include:*

*Species name, date and time, location on 1/2 inch map (inc. grid ref.), habitat in which the species is nesting or thought to be nesting – and your name! I'll look forward to hearing from you.*

**Tony Wilde, Corrib Conservation Centre,  
Ardnassilagh, Oughterard.**

While it would not be at all true to say that Tony, at the time of writing the article, was a 'voice in the wilderness', it would be true that at that time detailed science-based knowledge of Co. Galway's birds was not in plentiful supply. The 1994 Breeding Atlas did, as Tony wrote, improve matters but only in a very generalised broadly regional way and eventually its methodology and results were not without some criticism!

The forthcoming combined Winter and Breeding Atlas promises to be a vastly better product. Computers, virtually unknown in bird recording twenty five years ago, dominated the new atlas – with online, square and tetrad selection, results reporting and roving records. In Co. Galway, over the past five years of the project over 300 individuals have posted well over 50,000 separate records – one person alone posting a



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truly impressive 10,000 sightings! So, hopefully for Galway as elsewhere, the atlas will be a treasure trove of precise information with species detail right down to 2km tetrad level – in effect finally ending the era of anecdotes and approximation.

Leaving the atlas aside, what changes in knowledge and of coverage has the past twenty years seen in Galway? I would say a considerable improvement. Whatever our current travails at branch level, there has been huge progress. Continued Galway Bay counts, and the advent of Lough Corrib, CBS and I-WeBS counts have made a major contribution. We also have a much better knowledge of raptors and owls, in general more coverage of the county, particularly of Connemara and further west, and a professional standard quarterly bird report. E-mail, mobile phones, superb digital photography, an online web site plus a web based bird forum have all contributed to better information sharing and creating a county wide community of keen well-informed bird-watchers in a way unimaginable even 20 years back. Then, we mainly relied on meetings, scarce and badly working land line phones and inky letters for often imperfect communication – those were the days my friend!

The result of all of this progress is that, even while we await publication of the new atlas, I can hazard some ‘inexpert’ answers to a few of Tony’s questions:

Grey Partridge are almost certainly absent, Grouse still hanging in there and Corncrake on the edge of being absent from the county. For Ringed Plover, Golden Plover and Lapwing we need to await the atlas but I doubt if the 20 years has brought anything positive. Common Gulls are probably ok. Wheatears in the east of the county? Were they ever present there in any numbers? Probably not. Ring Ouzel breeding. Corn Buntings certainly gone – as they are from all of Ireland - and Twite in Galway are only very occasional certainly not breeding. On the positive side, no one would dispute the great increase in Blackcaps or the arrival of Little Egret – unthinkable twenty years ago. Sighting Buzards is now not unusual. So to conclude, it is good to pay tribute to Tony’s short article of 1994 and to finally look forward to the definitive answers that the new atlas will hopefully provide.

NS

### RAPTORS

On Wednesday 16 January, John Lusby, the raptor officer with BirdWatch Ireland, presented *All about Raptors*, with special focus on Galway. This talk was to John’s usual high standard with suburb photography, an enormous amount of enthusiasm for his subject and an indept knowledge that gave everyone in the audience something to ponder on.

The talk focussed on species that definitely occur in our county but John pointed out that there are gaps in our knowledge about their

whereabouts, abundance and breeding success. Therefore, he repeatedly requested that people would inform him, or our branch record keeper, Chris Peppiatt, or any of the Iregional wildlife rangers, of sightings of raptors, with the date of the sighting and a precise location (grid reference if at all possible).

John and his raptor colleagues have great plans to map out breeding locations and to encourage breeding by erecting nest boxes and basket nests but they will need help with this very time and effort consuming task. There is no need for every one of us to don wet suits to venture out to remote islands in Connemara lakes – we will leave that to those young and energetic professionals – but we could greatly assist them by pointing them in the right direction with our sightings. So, if you regularly see raptors in your area, keep an eye on their movements, try to trace their flight routes or even locate their nests and make this information available to the experts via John’s email address:- jlusby@birdwatchireland.ie.

MtC

### GALWAY BIRD REVIEW FOR 2012

2012 was a year of huge contrasts in terms of good birding. Outside of a manic three week period in October, it was generally a very poor year for rarities but what a three week period it was! Ten new species for the county were reported, which I think must be a record. Seven of these ten were recorded in that three week period alone. A total of 212 species in all were recorded within the county, surprisingly the second best year in the last five years.

The undoubted highlight was, of course, the first record of Eastern Kingbird for the Western Palearctic on Inishmore (not Arranmore as originally reported on Twitter!) found by islander regular Hugh Delaney. This is the first record of any Kingbird species in Europe, a species that is normally restricted to the Americas. Two local birders and one very lucky Dublin birder managed to twitch it that evening; however, at least 60 twitchers the following day weren’t as fortunate. In the mayhem during the following day, at least two Yellow-rumped Warblers were also found with a Blackpoll Warbler there on the next day. The latter was found again by Hugh Delaney after the group of twitchers evacuated the island *en mass* after dipping the Kingbird. Who knows what else would have been found had a handful of them stayed on there for a few days? On the same day of the Eastern Kingbird discovery, two other county firsts were found – a Blyth’s Reed Warbler on Inishbofin and an all too short-staying Belted Kingfisher at Lough Fee in Connemara. Over the next fortnight Inishmore struck back again with four more county firsts - a belatedly reported Melodious Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Dusky Warbler and Olive-backed Pipit, the latter two birds again found by

Mr. Kingbird! The “OBP” attracted a few admirers as it was the first to be seen in Ireland since the early 1990’s. Hopefully, Hugh will have a little more competition out on Inishmore next Autumn! The other county firsts were another belatedly reported Arctic Redpoll which was photographed at Dog’s Bay, Roundstone back in April, Ortolan Bunting on Inishbofin in September and an American Coot at Murlach, Ballyconneely in November, which remained into 2013.

About 35 rarities were reported in 2012, which was a little down on recent years. This could probably be explained due to the very poor Autumn for American waders after a record breaking Autumn of 2011. In total there were just two American Golden Plovers and three Pectoral Sandpipers. One of those Pectoral Sandpipers was actually recorded in late May at Truska, possibly the first Spring record of an American wader for the county.

The winter of 2011/2012 was an influx winter for Iceland Gulls with good numbers at traditional sites like Nimmo’s Pier, Rossaveel and some of the Connemara fish farms. At least three Kumlien’s Gulls were between two fish farms near Clifden but surprisingly there were no good candidates at Nimmo’s nor Rossaveel. A noticeable feature of the Iceland influx was the scarcity of first-winter birds, most being second-winter or older. It must have been a very poor breeding season in Arctic Canada. The Forster’s Tern remained in Galway Bay yet again although there was no sign of the adult American Herring Gull at all. Other notable winter visitors included a male American Wigeon at Rahsane Turlough, 2 Green-winged Teal, Garganey, 2 Velvet Scoters, Smew, Russian White-fronted Goose, Red-necked Grebe, Little Auk, the overwintering Pallid Harrier, Marsh Harrier, 2 Short-eared Owls and a much appreciated Glossy Ibis near Moylough.

The Spring was typically quiet; however, it did produced a lovely “trip” of three Dotterels at Slyne Head, 2 different Turtle Doves and a great total of three Ospreys mostly on Lough Corrib. The Summer doldrums were livened up by an elusive male Red-footed Falcon, Roseate Tern, 2 Great Shearwater, a very early July migrant Wood Warbler on Inishark.

Other non-headline Autumn birds were a very late October Wilson’s Petrel, Great Shearwater, Bittern (returning bird), 2 Blue-winged Teal, Garganey, 4 Marsh Harriers, 2 Ospreys, Long-tailed Skua, Blue-headed Wagtail, Tree Pipit, Ring Ouzel, 2 Barred Warblers, Lesser Whitethroat, 3 Yellow-browed Warblers, 3 Pied Flycatchers, Red-breasted Flycatcher, *rostrata* Redpoll and 2 Common Rosefinch. The year finished up with our share of the national influx of Waxwings, mostly around Galway city. Also around the county at the end of the year were a Green-winged Teal with the American Coot, Ring-necked Duck and Siberian Chiffchaff. **Dermot Breen**

## BirdWatch Galway (Branch of BirdWatch Ireland) 4th Quarter 2012

QUARTERLY BIRD REPORT COMPILED BY CHRIS PEPPIATT

DATE OF ISSUE: 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013

2nd October: Great Shearwater, 4 Manx Shearwater, 3 Arctic Skua, Storm Petrel, & Puffin, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donaill).

3rd October: Juv. Common Rosefinch, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

3rd October: Snow Bunting, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

4th October: Wilson's Petrel & 2 Grey Phalarope, Baile na hAbhainn (Aonghus O'Donaill).

4th October: 9 Arctic Skua, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

4th October: 13 Whooper Swan, 190 Shoveler, 360 Black-tailed Godwit, 200 Golden Plover & Spotted Redshank, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).

5th October: Eastern Kingbird, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (1)

5th October: Blyth's Reed Warbler, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan). (2)

5th October: Belted Kingfisher, Lough Fee (Ger O'Donnell). (3)

5th October: 4 Pink-footed Goose & 11 Barnacle Goose, Inishshark (Dermot Breen).

6th October: Barred Warbler, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

6th October: 2 (poss. 3) Yellow-rumped Warbler, Kilmurvey/Kilronan, Inishmore (Stephen Lawlor).

6th October: 70 Coal Tit, Inishmore (John Lovatt).

6th October: Dipper, Loughrea (Pete Capsey).

6th October: 13 Whooper Swan, 190 Shoveler & Spotted Redshank, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).

7th October: Yellow-browed Warbler, Inishbofin (Richard Hunter).

7th October: Blackpoll Warbler, Dun Arann, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

7th October: Melodious Warbler, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (per Rare Bird Alert). (4)

8th October: Barred Warbler & Yellow-browed Warbler, (not known if same as those from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> or new) Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

8th October: Barn Owl, Curraghmore Bridge, Curraghline (Tom Greaney).

9th October: Common Rosefinch & 54 Chough, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan).

9th October: Tree Pipit, Yellow-browed Warbler & Snow Bunting, Bun Gabhla, Inishmore (Dermot Breen).

9th October: Wheatear, Sathill promenade, Galway City (John Curley).

10th October: Juv./1st Win. Woodchat Shrike, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Neil Warnock). (5)

10th October: 2 Whooper Swan & 20 White-fronted Goose, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).

10th October: 2 Black-throated Diver, 2 Red-throated Diver & Great Northern Diver, Traught beach, Nr. Kinvara (Pete Capsey).

11th October: 1st. Win. Mediterranean Gull, Lough Rea (Pete Capsey).

14th October: Fem./1st. Win. Blue-winged Teal, Rahasane turlough (Dermot Breen).

16th October: Lesser Whitethroat, 3 Brambling & 4 Snow Bunting, Inishbofin (Anthony McGeehan & Craig Nash).

17th October: Yellow-browed Warbler, Lesser Whitethroat & 5 Brambling, Inishbofin (Craig Nash).

19th October: Pink-footed Goose, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (6)

19th October: Pink-footed Goose, Omev Island (Dermot Breen).

19th October: Dusky Warbler, Sruthan, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (7)

20th October: Ring Ouzel, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

21st October: Yellow-browed Warbler & 2 Pied Flycatcher, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (8)

22nd October: Olive-backed Pipit, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney). (9)

22nd October: Red-breasted Flycatcher, Sruthan, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).

22nd October: Bittern, Cregg River, Nr. Clonboo (Ian Brophy).

22nd October: Ad. Win. Mediterranean Gull (German-ringed), Mannin Bay (Dermot Breen).

23rd October: 4 Yellow-browed Warbler, Garden Warbler, 6 Blackcaps, 3 Chiffchaff, Great Tit & 10 Long-tailed Tit, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney *et al.*).

24th October: Crossbill & Brambling, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney <i>et al.</i> ).
24th October: 400+ Fieldfare, Milltown, Nr. Tuam (Chris Benson).
25th October: Marsh Harrier, in off Galway Bay, flying towards Carraroe (Tom Tarpey).
25th October: Common Buzzard & Woodcock, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney <i>et al.</i> ).
25th October: 27 Greenland White-fronted Goose, in flight, Ballykine, Clonbur (Thomas Kuppel).
26th October: Common Buzzard, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
26th October: Common Buzzard, Kilcolgan (Martin O'Malley).
26th October: 2 Chough, Dog's Bay, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
27th October: Long-eared Owl, Slyne Head (Dermot Breen).
27th October: 32 Mute Swan, 6 Whooper Swan, 32 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 22 Shoveler, 600 Black-tailed Godwit, 2 Knot & Merlin, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
27th October: Ad. Mediterranean Gull, Rossaveal (Thomas Kuppel).
29th October: Slavonian Grebe, Angliham, Lough Corrib (Dermot Breen).
29th October: Ad. Win. Forster's Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Marcin Pisula). (10)
29th October: 14 Barnacle Goose, flying N. over Errislannan (Miryam & Michael Harris).
29th October: 37 Greenland White-fronted Goose, two flocks of 12 & 25 (at 16:00 & 16:20), flying NE over Milltown, Nr. Tuam (Chris Benson).
29th October: 33 Little Egret & 30 Greenland White-fronted Goose, Rahasane turlough (Geoff Hunt).
30th October: Male Blue-winged Teal & Spotted Redshank, Rahasane turlough (Paul Troake).
30th October: Common Buzzard, Loughgeorge (Martin O'Malley).
30th October: 3 Little Egret & 2 Greenshank, Rusheen Bay, Galway city (Ciaran Bruton).
31st October: Ad. Win. Mediterranean Gull & Ad. Win Ring-billed Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway city (Thomas Kuppel).
1st November: Ad. Win. Ring-billed Gull & 4 Sandwich Tern, Nimmo's Pier, Galway city (Tom Cuffe).
1st November: Short-eared Owl, Curraghline, Lough Corrib (Aonghus O'Donaill).
2nd November: Woodcock, 8 Long-tailed Tit, Blackcap & Goldcrest, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
3rd November: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Bunowen pier, Ballyconneely (Thomas Kuppel).
3rd November: Merlin, Rusheen Bay, Galway city (Bridget Browne & Chris Peppiatt).
3rd November: 2nd/3rd Win. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway city.
3rd November: 4 Spotted Redshank, Kilcaimin (Marianne ten Cate, Ann Fleming & Catherine King).
3rd November: Mediterranean Gull, Ballynacourty (Marianne ten Cate, Ann Fleming & Catherine King).
4th November: Waxwing, 2 Snow Bunting & Common Buzzard, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
4th November: White-rumped Sandpiper & Fem. Garganey, Rahasane turlough (Geoff Hunt & Mike Sheehy).
4th November: Dipper, Spiddal (Neil Ellis).
5th November: Waxwing, 2 Chiffchaff & Common Buzzard, Kilmurvey, Inishmore (Hugh Delaney).
6th November: 46 Whooper Swan, 41 Mute Swan, 1,500 Wigeon, 5 Pintail, 3 Shoveler, 200 Black-tailed Godwit & Kingfisher, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
9th November: 2 Waxwing, Ballynahinch Castle (Mike Duffy).
10th November: 12 Waxwing & Merlin, Moyard (Miryam & Michael Harris).
10th November: 51 Greenland White-fronted Goose, 2 Pink-footed goose, 94 Whooper Swan, 33 Mute Swan, 2,000 Wigeon, 4 Pintail, 142 Shoveler, 250 Black-tailed Godwit & Kingfisher, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).
14th November: 2 Spotted Redshank, Corranroo Bay (Paul Troake).
15th November: 3 Waxwing, over Shop Street, Galway city (Aonghus O'Donaill).
16th November: Woodcock, Roundstone (Miryam & Michael Harris).
16th November: 3 Waxwing, Carlton Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway city (Liz Quinn).
17th November: Waxwing, Kinvara (Jen Fisher).
17th November: 10 Waxwing, Knocknacarra, Galway City (Helen McGuinness).
18th November: 4 Waxwing, Knocknacarra, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).

19th November: 3 Waxwing, Ballybane, Galway City (Lar Ferris).
23rd November: 2 Snow Bunting, Brambling & 800 Golden Plover, Killeenaran (Paul Troake).
23rd November: 2 Brambling & Blackcap, Glenard Crescent, Salthill, Galway City (Brendan Dunne).
24th November: Barn Owl, Nr. Loughrea (Pete Capsey).
28th November: American Coot, Murlach, Nr. Ballyconneely (Dermot Breen). (11)
28th November: 3 Waxwing, Clydagh, Moycullen (Aonghus O'Donaill).
29th November: 3 Spotted Redshank, Ad. Mediterranean Gull & 2 Gadwall, Corranroo Bay (Paul Troake).
30th November: 5 Waxwing, between O'Brien's Bridge & Salmon Weir Bridge, Galway City (Aonghus O'Donaill).
1st December: 2 Waxwing, Clifden (Peter Phillips & Ger Murray).
1st December: 7 Waxwing, Tirellan School, Galway City (Aonghus O'Donaill).
1st December: 3 Waxwing, Moyola Park, Newcastle, Galway City (Conor Beehan).
1st December: Male Ring-necked Duck, Fem. Long-tailed Duck & Great Northern Diver, Lough Rea (Dermot Breen). (12)
3rd December: Brambling, Ellagh, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
3rd December: 12 Waxwing, Corrib Park, Seamus Quirke Road, Galway city (Anthony Lee).
5th December: 12 Waxwing, Tirellan, Galway city (Tom Cuffe).
5th December: 20 Waxwing, Tirellan, Galway city (Penny Insole).
5th December: 30 Waxwing, Ashgrove Road, Newcastle, Galway city (Aonghus O'Donaill).
5th December: Waxwing, Ellagh, Headford (Neil Sharkey).
7th December: 3 Sandwich Tern, Mutton Island, Galway City (Tom Cuffe).
8th December: Ad. Ring-billed Gull & flyover Waxwing, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Dermot Breen).
8th December: Purple Sandpiper, Salthill, Galway City (Joe Foley).
8th December: Sanderling, Barna pier (Joe Foley).
9th December: 10 Waxwing, Lough Atalia Road, Galway city (Martin O'Malley).
11th December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Killary Harbour (Dermot Breen).
12th December: Green-winged Teal, Murlach, Nr. Ballyconneely (Conor Foley & Shane Farrell).
15th December: 7 Waxwing, Thomas Hynes Road, Galway City (Derek Charles).
15th December: Ad. Win. American Herring Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Goeff Hunt & Mike Flannagan).
20th December: Siberian Chiffchaff, Chiffchaff & Ad. Glaucous Gull, Inishbofin (Dermot Breen). (13)
23rd December: Common Buzzard, Peregrine, Ruff, Spotted Redshank, 500 Black-tailed Godwit, 380 Golden Plover, 59 Whooper Swan, 340 Wigeon, & 230 Teal, Kiltiernan turlough (Paul Troake).
23rd December: 78 Whooper Swan, Lydacan turlough (Paul Troake).
23rd December: 119 Whooper Swan, Caherglassaun turlough (Paul Troake).
23rd December: 1st Win. Iceland Gull, Inishbofin (Dermot Breen).
23rd December: 1st Win. Glaucous Gull, Nimmo's Pier, Galway City (Tom Cuffe & Michael Davis).
23rd December: 2 Little Egret, 70 Brent Goose & 1,000 Dunlin, Rusheen Bay, Galway City (Neil Ellis).
23rd December: Juv. Fem. Peregrine & Fem. Merlin, Nr. Milltown, Tuam (Chris Benson).
26th December: Peregrine & ringtail Hen Harrier, Lough Corrib (John Gallagher).
31st December: 3 Scaup, Lough Atalia, Galway City (Chris Cook).

#### NOTES:

- (1) The Eastern Kingbird was a true 'megatick' and the first record for the Western Palearctic.
- (2) The Blyth's Reed Warbler was also seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. First co. Galway record.
- (3) The Belted Kingfisher was also seen on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October (at Lough Fee and later at Lough Maladrolaun) and on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2012 (Salt Lake, Nr. Clifden). First Co. Galway record.
- (4) This Melodius Warbler record is the first for the county, although the identity of the finder is unknown at present.
- (5) The Woodchat Shrike was also seen on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. First Co. Galway record.
- (6) This Pink-footed Goose was again present on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2012, while another or the same was present at Tramore, Inishmore on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2012.

- (7) The Dusky Warbler was also seen on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. First Co. Galway and 10<sup>th</sup> Irish record.
- (8) This Yellow-browed Warbler was again present on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012.
- (9) The Olive-backed Pipit was also seen on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of October 2012. First Co. Galway and 8<sup>th</sup> Irish record.
- (10) The returning wintering Forster's Tern was present until the end of the year and was specifically reported on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 8<sup>th</sup> December and 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 in the Nimmo's Pier/Mutton Island area.
- (11) The American Coot was present until the end of the year, being specifically recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. First Co. Galway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Irish record.
- (12) The male Ring-necked Duck was again present on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2012.
- (13) The Siberian ('*tristis*' race) Chiffchaff was again present on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2012.

#### **OTHER BEASTIES:**

10<sup>th</sup> November: Otter, Rahasane turlough (Pete Capsey).

23<sup>rd</sup> November: Otter, Killeenaran (Paul Troake).

#### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

A great Autumn, with the best October ever. American birds: Eastern Kingbird, American Coot, Blackpoll Warbler, 2 or 3 Yellow-rumped Warbler, Belted Kingfisher, 2 Blue-winged Teal, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck and American Herring Gull. Birds from Europe and Asia: Melodius Warbler, Barred Warbler, Bittern, Tree Pipit, Woodchat Shrike, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Olive-backed Pipit, Red-breasted Flycatcher, 2 Common Rosefinch, Siberian Chiffchaff and at least 7 Yellow-browed Warbler (2 or 3 on Inishbofin and 5 or 6 on Inishmore). Seabirds: Wilson's Petrel and Great Shearwater. Influx of Waxwing in early November with a minimum of 30 in the Galway city area and possibly as many as 20 more reported around the county. Eight county firsts in the quarter.

First Winter migrants: Whooper Swan (4<sup>th</sup> October); Barnacle Goose (5<sup>th</sup> October); Pink-footed Goose (5<sup>th</sup> October); Greenland White-fronted Goose (10<sup>th</sup> October).