



# Cape Clear Bird Observatory Annual Report 2019



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REPORT NUMBER 29

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**Photographs:** All photographs in this report were taken by Steve Wing except where otherwise indicated

# INTRODUCTION

This is the 29th Annual Report of BirdWatch Ireland's Cape Clear Bird Observatory (CCBO). Founded in 1959, the observatory is located at North Harbour on Cape Clear Island, situated eight miles (13 kilometres) off the coast of west Cork.

Cape Clear is one of the best places in Europe to observe seabird migration, especially during the late summer months. In addition, spring and autumn on Cape both feature large numbers of migrant songbirds

moving through on their way to and from their breeding grounds. Amongst them are usually one or two strays from North America or Siberia.

Cape Clear Bird Observatory is visited annually by many birdwatchers, ringers and general wildlife enthusiasts. The long tradition of bird and biodiversity recording on the island makes this observatory a beacon for environmental research, education and monitoring in Ireland.

## THE OBSERVATORY'S 60th ANNIVERSARY

2019 marked the 60th anniversary of Cape Clear Bird Observatory. To celebrate this milestone, we held what proved to be a very successful **Wildlife Festival** in the first two weeks of September. Guided wildlife walks, bird-ringing demonstrations, whale-watching, family wildlife days, moth-trapping, dragonfly-recording and many excellent talks were just some of the highlights of the festival fortnight.

At the launch of the festival, the Observatory was honoured to host broadcaster and educator **David Lindo**, aka The Urban Birder (*pictured*), who, after declaring the event open on Monday, September 2nd, gave an interesting, eye-opening presentation on urban birding, especially on birding in Kikinda, the 'owl city' of Serbia.

This was followed on the Tuesday by the two Tims, **Tim Davis** and **Tim Jones**, from north Devon, who gave a hugely enjoyable and evocative talk about the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel – its birds, natural history and landscape. Their talk resulted in many requests to organise a trip to the island.

Wednesday evening's talks were similarly entertaining. **Paddy Sleeman** from University College Cork provided great insights into Ireland's owl populations, their diets and the risks they face. His talk was followed by what was more of a theatrical performance by **Diarmuid O'Driscoll**, who came armed with ten random articles he had found on Cape Clear

Island and proceeded to relate stories woven around each one. A magical and captivating evening.

On Thursday, **Steve Stansfield**, chairman of the **Bird Observatories Council**, and his wife **Emma**, gave an in-depth talk on the work of the bird observatories of Great Britain and Ireland, the huge datasets assembled by those observatories and how the information is

being used in conservation and research. They followed this with a short, rapid-fire presentation on 'their' island, Bardsey, located off the North Wales coast, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Friday night talk was very special, as we welcomed back to Cape again **Tom and Stephanie Green**, wardens of Cape Clear Bird Observatory in 1968/69. They delivered a talk on the early years of the observatory, which was established in 1959. Many former and present 'Capers' were in attendance and a very sociable and sentimental evening was enjoyed by all.

Saturday was another double-header, firstly with **Andrew Power** and friends giving a preview of their wonderful documentary about the conservation of the terns of Rockabill Island in north Dublin – brilliant footage and very well put together.

This was followed by **Michael O'Keeffe** explaining how light affects the way we see birds. Simple, you might think but seriously, not so. An incredibly complex subject matter explained very well.







Participants in the 2019 CCBO Bird Race outside Cotter's Bar

On Sunday evening, we welcomed back former CCBO warden **Sam Bayley**, who discussed his colour-ringing project on Lesser Black-backed Gulls on Cape. He is already getting some amazing results from recoveries and resightings. We look forward to hearing more from him in the future.

Monday was the turn of the **National Biodiversity Data Centre**, located in Dungarvan, Co Waterford, and its director, **Liam Lysaght**, who spoke of the many ways volunteers can help with biological surveys and record their results. Earlier, he led a butterfly walk on the island in very testing conditions.

Ecologist **Geoff Oliver** gave a very interesting talk on Tuesday about Wexford's lagoons, their changing properties and how some new examples are developing. While many are not faring well, hope remains for the future of this very special habitat.

This was followed on Wednesday night by an impromptu talk on the birds of Tanzania by myself,

**Steve Wing**, after the planned speaker had to cancel.

On Thursday, **Pádraig Whooley** of the **Irish Whale and Dolphin Group** gave a great talk on the whales to be seen off west Cork and beyond, and he entertained us with some wonderful stories. It really is amazing just what, and how much of it, still survives in the seas around us.

The last talk of the festival was given by **Dick Coombes** of **BirdWatch Ireland**, on the migration hotspot of Point Pelee in Canada (which is just a few miles from Detroit, Michigan) – all the North American birds we hope to see in the autumn contained in one humorous presentation, full of 'oohs' and 'aahs.'

To conclude the festivities, Cape Clear's second ever **bird race** was held on the Saturday, starting at midnight and ending at 6.00pm later that day in Cotter's yard. Great fun was had by all, with the winning team scoring 56 of the 64 species seen overall. It goes to show that, the more eyes you have on the island, the more species will be seen. – **Steve Wing**



A selection of prizes for the 2019 CCBO raffle



Steve Wing presents prizes to the CCBO Bird Race 2019 winning team (from left): David Reese, Nicholas Mitchell, Tony Nagle, Paul Moore.



# SURVEYING & MONITORING



Garden Warbler outside Ciaran Danny Mike's, 19th May, 2019



Siberian Chiffchaff, Nordy Wood, 28th December, 2019

## Daily Log

The Daily Log (of birds sighted on Cape Clear) was called nightly from 5th April until 3rd November, with casual observations being entered from 1st January up to 13th November.

Our thanks to Mary Cadogan and Geoff Oliver for the winter records they provided, supplementing the records in the Daily Log.

## Seawatching

A total of 6,875 hours of seawatching was carried out during 2019. The monthly breakdown of hours is shown in Table 1, below.

The numbers of each of the species recorded were generally down on last year's totals, a fact supported anecdotally by observations from whale-watchers from their many boat trips during the year. Birds and cetaceans seemed to be further offshore than usual, over 15 km on most days. Great Shearwaters were only recorded on two days, and Cory's Shearwaters on only seven days. More details in the systematic list (page 6).

## Bird ringing

A full season of bird ringing was completed, with both spring and autumn migrations covered, albeit at relatively low intensity. The totals for the year were:

<b>New birds ringed</b> .....	1,372
<b>Subsequent captures</b> .....	418
(this figure includes retraps and controls, the new BTO term)	
<b>Total number of birds ringed</b> .....	1,790
(of 46 species)	

### Top three species

Lesser Black-backed Gull .....	381
Sedge Warbler .....	156
Storm Petrel .....	155

The CES (Constant Effort Site) site in East Bog was re-opened after a one-year hiatus, which sadly means we had to start from scratch again. However, we can use the data from previous years' CES work to assess population levels, site fidelity, etc. A more detailed description of the year's activities is provided in the Ringing section (page 11).

## Moth trapping

As with last year, very little moth trapping was carried out at the Observatory in 2019. A list of records submitted to the Moths Ireland website by visitors to Cape is included at the end of this report.

**Table 1.** Hours of seawatching carried out per month by Cape Clear Bird Observatory in 2019

Month	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
<b>Totals</b>	0	195	640	695	905	2125	1530	785	0

# WILDLIFE REPORT 2019

## Birds

In what was generally a rather poor year for rarity records, we had a Cape first (**Red Kite**), one American passerine (**Red-eyed Vireo**) and a second record for Cape and fourth for Ireland: a **Hume's Warbler**. Generally, numbers of most passerines were down on the previous year, with **Whitethroat** being one of the few that increased.

## Systematic List

### Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A group of six, presumably a family, was seen on the lake, Lough Errul, on 22nd and 23rd October.

### Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

One, the seventh record for Cape Clear Island, was seen flying past the North Harbour on 15th October.

### Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*

One was seen at Lough Errul on 27th October.

### Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

One was seen at Lough Errul on 23rd May.

### Teal *Anas crecca*

Three seen on 20th and 22nd February, six on 5th March, two on 21st September, one on 20th October, and four on 27th October.

### Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

**Highest count:** four passing South Harbour on 21st May.

### Great Shearwater *Ardenna gravis*

In a poor year for the species, the only records were of one on 21st July and four on 22nd August.

### Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*

Recorded on seven days in July/August as follows: 135 on 21st July, nine on 22nd July, three on 6th August, one on 18th August, two on 21st August, one on 22nd August and one on 23rd August.

### Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

**First date:** 9th July. Ten on 21st July. **High counts:** 150+ on 22nd August, 84 on 4th September. **Last date:** three on 12th October.

### Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Sporadic, never numerous. **High counts:** circa 2,500 on 4th June, 6,500 wph (west per hour) on 14th July,

6,600 wph on 19th July, 7,550 wph on 27th August, 600 wph on 12th September. **Last date:** one seen on 18th October.

### Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Five seen on 21st July and one on 2nd September.

### Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

**High counts:** 84 on 20th July, 150 on 21st July, and 150+ on 16th August.

### Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

A poor year for the species: two on 21st July.

### Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*

One in winter plumage, Lough Errul, 4-20th December.

### Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Regular all year. **Maximum count:** 23 (including chicks). A resident breeding species on the island, it seems to be increasing on Lough Errul, year on year.

### Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

One present at Lough Errul from 17th to 26th April.

### Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Low numbers recorded passing in the spring, apart from 1,850 on 2nd May. Fewer in the autumn, with 627 the highest hourly figure.

### Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

One was seen flying south over the fish farm at Knockannamaurnagh on 16th October – the eleventh island record.

### Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

One seen on 2nd October. One (probably the same bird) seen on 13th October.

### Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Present throughout the year, with high counts of eleven on 17th and 27th September.



Osprey flying over the fish farm on 16th October, 2019



Pomarine Skua

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

A single female stayed on the island for much of the spring, but left in May.

**Red Kite** *Milvus milvus*

One was observed being harassed by gulls and crows over North Harbour on 15th May, before heading north over the island – the first record of the species for Cape Clear Island.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

Birds were heard calling in the Waist early in the year and later on in East and West Bogs. Young heard in East Bog during the summer.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Singles on 1st, 7th and 19th September.

**Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Singles on 1st, 19th, 20th and 24th October.

**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*

One seen on 2nd October.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

One seen on 16th May.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**First date:** 20th July. Singles in August. **Last date:** 25th September.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

One seen on 14th September.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One seen in Central Bog on 17th August.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

A single bird calling on 15th May. **Highest count:** five on 19th August (the autumn peak).

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Singles on 12th and 28th May. **Highest count:** eight on 10th August (the autumn peak).

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

Two seen on 23rd April. Highest counts of six in both September and October, mainly in Tradooncleara, Knockannamaurnagh.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*

One bird heard on 13th May.

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Three, on 18th October, found off the Bill in bad weather after a search specifically for this species.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*

One daily from 23rd to 26th April, six on 12th May and six on 21st July. Highest August count: five on 22nd. Seven on 2nd September, four on 18th October.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Three on 21st July, one on 21st, 22nd and 30th August, one on 4th September and singles up to 17th October.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Two on 9th June, reflecting a poor year for records of skuas, shearwaters and other seabirds close inshore.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

A high count of twelve on 9th October.

**Mediterranean Gull**

*Ichthyæetus melanocephalus*

One on 3rd July, one on 23rd August, one on 30th September, one on 2nd, 11th and 12th October, and four on 13th October.

**Little Gull** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

One seen on 9th September.





Woodchat Shrike, Wheatear Fields, April 2019



Red-eyed Vireo, Brid's Garden, Ballyieragh, 16th October, 2019

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis*  
One was seen from the ferry on 18th April.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*  
Two seen on 21st April, and twelve on 23rd May.

**Auk species**  
High count of 3,500 wph on 2nd May.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*  
High count of 90 on 12th October.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*  
One present from 1st to 6th May. Four on 19th May.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*  
**High counts:** 27 on 1st September, 19 on 1st October.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*  
One from 20th to 23rd April, three on 24th May, one on 1st July, and one on 1st September.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*  
One on 7th and 8th May and one from 9th to 14th June.

**Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*  
One seen on 12th May.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*  
Singletons seen on 2nd and 19th October.

**Swift** *Apus apus*  
Two seen over Bullaun on 29th June, two on 21st July.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*  
One was present above the High Road from 11th to 13th October, the only record in this year.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*  
Up to two birds seen irregularly.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*  
One seen on 23rd May.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*  
One pair bred this year.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*  
One, a juvenile, was present along the Low Road from 7th to 10th September.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*  
One in the Wheatear Fields from 19th to 25th April. One, a juvenile, near the Post Office on 25th and 26th August. One (considered a different bird) along the Low Road from 1st to 13th September.

**Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus*  
One found in the Priest's Garden on 12th October. It relocated to Seamus and Brid's Garden, where it stayed until 24th October.

**Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*  
Resident population estimated at 18 birds in 2019. Visiting birds bumped the total up to 28 on 8th October.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*  
Two in Comillaun area from 24th January to 25th February. **High count:** eleven on 15th October.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*  
Up to six birds seen regularly in the spring. Some large movements recorded in the autumn, with a high count of 32 on 20th October.

**Marsh/Willow Tit** *Poecile palustris/montanus*  
One in the Priest's Garden briefly on 20th October and seen again briefly the following day. (Record not being submitted for adjudication.)





Hume's Warbler, Nordy Wood, 4th November, 2019



Firecrest, Post Office, The Glen, 8th October, 2019

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

**First date:** one on 29th March. **Last date:** one on 19th October.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

**First date:** one on 31st March. **High counts:** 2,000+ on 28th July, 400 on 7th September. **Late dates:** two on 19th October, two on 5th November.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbicum*

**First date:** 14th March. **High count:** 250+ on 7th September. **Last date:** 51 on 2nd October.

**Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

Three seen on 19th and 20th October.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

**First date:** 6th April. **High count:** 50 on 15th April. **Last date:** one on 27th October.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

**First date:** 7th April. **High counts:** 30 on 15th April, 75 on 21st October.

**Siberian Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus c. tristis*

Three seen on 25th and 26th October, and one on 27th and 28th October. This is a subspecies of Chiffchaff that is being considered for full species status.

**Yellow-browed Warbler**

*Phylloscopus inornatus*

**First date:** one on 6th October. **High counts:** two on 7th October, two on 4th and 5th November. **Last date:** one on 7th November.

**Hume's Warbler** *Phylloscopus humei*

One was caught and ringed on 4th November and stayed until the 7th. This was Ireland's fourth, and Cape Clear's second, record of the species.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

**First date:** 20th April. **High count:** 26 on 15th May. **Last date:** one on 14th September.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

One on 23rd April, two on 11th, two on 24th August, two on 7th and 8th October. **Last date:** One on 18th October.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*

One was present in Michael Vincent's Garden from 11th to 14th October.

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*

One at the lake on 29th August, and one between the lake and Michael Vincent's Garden on 5th September.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

One present on 20th April.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

**High counts:** three in March, 16 in April, two in May, 24 on 8th September, 19 on 14th October.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

One seen on 23rd April, one on 23rd and 24th August, one on 8th September, one on 1st and 6th October.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Curruca curruca*

One on 13th May, and one from 14th to 19th October.

**Whitethroat** *Curruca communis*

**First date:** 30th April. **High counts:** 25 on 3th May, 17 on 20th August. **Last date:** two on 28th September.

**Western Subalpine Warbler** *Curruca iberiae*

One seen on 25th April.

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapilla*

One seen on 29th September, two on 6th October, four on 11th October and singles up to 25th October.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

**First date:** three on 9th April.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Unusually low numbers, with only small murmurations in the autumn.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

One seen on 19th October.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

**First date:** four on 20th October. Twelve on 28th October.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

**First date:** one on 11th October. **High count:** 47 on 20th October.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

**High count:** 25 on 19th October.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

**Spring:** two on 16th May. **Autumn:** one on 5th August. **High count:** three in September. **Last date:** one on 6th October.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Spring:** single male around the Waist on 18th and 19th April. **Autumn:** one on 9th and 25th August, singles on 14th, 20th and 25th September, two on 21st and 24th September and one on 20th October.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

The only record was of one at the Youth Hostel on 7th November.

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

One on 19th and 21st September and one on 12th October.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

Four seen on 21st September, one on 27th September, three on 2nd October, two on 6th October and one on 9th October.

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Last date:** 17th October.



Northern Wheatear

**Greenland Wheatear** *Oenanthe o. leucorhoa*

One seen at Tradooncleara on 16th October. This is a subspecies of Northern Wheatear that breeds in north-east Canada, Greenland and Iceland.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

An amazing total of 35 on 7th September.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*

One seen on 13th May.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

A pair in Cotter's Garden throughout May and June.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

One seen on 6th May.

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrina*

One escaped from a mist net on 6th June. One seen near the Waist on 7th September. One in Mary Leonard's Garden from 11th to 14th October.

**Common Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

One seen on bird feeder (where?) on 11th and 12th July.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

One seen briefly in the Waist on 24th October.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

One seen near the fish farm at Knockannamaurnagh on 16th October.

## Bird ringing

2019 was a moderately quiet year for bird ringing. A combination of factors influenced the number of days the nets were opened, while there was a drop in the numbers of migrant species in spring and autumn, e.g. only one Black Redstart was recorded. The 'sacrificial crop' field failed to produce any significant catches, but there is always hope for next year. The table below shows the species totals for the year.

**Table 2.** Bird species ringed on Cape Clear in 2019 and the numbers of each species ringed. **Note:** N = new ring; S = subsequent capture (i.e., a retrap or a control).

Species	N	S	Total
Storm Petrel	153	2	155
Shag	2		2
Sparrowhawk	1		1
Water Rail	1		1
Great Black-backed Gull	1		1
Herring Gull	7		7
Lesser Black-backed Gull	314	63	377
Arctic Tern	1		1
Rock Dove	11	6	17
Jackdaw	1		1
Blue Tit	45	57	102
Great Tit	33	23	56
Sand Martin	1		1
Swallow	10		10
House Martin	1		1
Willow Warbler	60	5	65
Chiffchaff	86	24	110
Siberian Chiffchaff	3	1	4
Yellow-browed Warbler	3		3
Hume's Warbler	1	1	2
Sedge Warbler	99	57	156
Reed Warbler	7	2	9
Blackcap	61	2	63
Lesser Whitethroat	1		1
Whitethroat	39	3	42
Firecrest	1		1
Goldcrest	91	21	112
Wren	79	36	115
Blackbird	33	21	54
Redwing	2		2
Song Thrush	20	5	25
Spotted Flycatcher	1		1
Robin	59	47	106
Stonechat	19		19
House Sparrow	16	5	21
Duncock	42	23	65
Grey Wagtail	1		1
Pied/White Wagtail	1		1
Meadow Pipit	1		1
Chaffinch	8	1	9
Bullfinch	1		1
Greenfinch	18	4	22
Linnet	9		9
Goldfinch	24	5	29
Siskin	2		2
Reed Bunting	2		2
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>1372</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>1786</b>



The tables below (3a, 3b) show the grand totals for the six decades that ringing has taken place on Cape Clear. Some of these birds, especially the seabirds, were not actually ringed on the island but were ringed within Roaringwater Bay, with CCBO rings. The tables show how the trends have changed over the years, with Storm Petrels being by far the most ringed species in the earlier years, but with a much greater preference for passerines in more recent times.

**Table 3a.** The numbers of each bird species ringed on Cape Clear in each of the decades since ringing commenced there

	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	1959-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19	1959-2019
Fulmar	23	0	48	21	0	5	97
Manx Shearwater	1	0	9	79	3	2	94
Storm Petrel	0	8	9674	3204	285	1062	14233
Leach's Petrel	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Gannet	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Cormorant	0	0	0	21	0	0	21
Shag	0	0	8	14	0	6	28
Grey Heron	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sparrowhawk	2	0	15	4	2	6	29
Kestrel	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Merlin	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Peregrine	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Water Rail	0	0	0	1	0	9	10
Moorhen	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Oystercatcher	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
Dunlin	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Common Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Snipe	12	3	2	0	0	1	18
Lesser Yellowlegs	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Spotted Sandpiper	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Sabine's Gull	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Lesser Black-backed Gull	1	0	396	422	0	588	1407
Herring Gull	22	6	240	58	0	35	361
Great Black-backed Gull	7	0	250	92	0	7	356
Arctic Tern	0	0	0	0	0	28	28
Guillemot	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Razorbill	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Black Guillemot	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Rock Dove	0	0	0	0	0	87	87
Woodpigeon	2	0	5	2	0	0	9
Collared Dove	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Turtle Dove	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Scops Owl	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Long-eared Owl	0	2	0	1	0	0	3
Short-eared Owl	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hoopoe	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wryneck	1	0	1	2	1	0	5
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Skylark	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Sand Martin	0	0	1	1	2	2	6
Swallow	94	7	148	174	83	149	655
House Martin	2	0	6	9	3	9	29
Tree Pipit	1	0	1	1	0	1	4
Meadow Pipit	34	1	36	206	141	64	482
Rock Pipit	18	0	23	13	11	20	85

	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	1959-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19	1959-2019
Grey Wagtail	3	2	13	3	14	17	52
Pied/White Wagtail	73	15	97	50	51	38	324
Wren	85	61	254	218	169	365	1152
Dunnoek	245	56	148	135	155	271	1010
Robin	313	120	363	261	302	402	1761
Thrush Nightingale	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Nightingale	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Black Redstart	1	0	9	2	4	1	17
Redstart	0	1	10	6	2	2	21
Whinchat	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Stonechat	116	17	52	36	34	82	337
Wheatear	18	0	3	11	0	2	34
Grey-cheeked Thrush	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Ring Ouzel	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Blackbird	171	60	221	165	147	232	996
Song Thrush	76	14	72	79	133	149	523
Redwing	0	5	3	27	5	35	75
Mistle Thrush	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Fieldfare	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Grasshopper Warbler	0	0	0	3	1	10	14
Aquatic Warbler	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sedge Warbler	17	1	13	46	91	393	561
Reed Warbler	19	4	21	33	35	36	148
Olivaceous Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Icterine Warbler	4	1	7	2	0	0	14
Melodious Warbler	6	0	9	3	0	0	18
Subalpine Warbler	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Barred Warbler	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
Lesser Whitethroat	2	0	4	4	6	7	23
Whitethroat	49	5	35	56	60	115	320
Garden Warbler	25	16	42	16	26	9	134
Blackcap	18	28	111	117	157	391	822
Arctic Warbler	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Greenish Warbler	1	0	0	1	1	0	3
Pallas's Warbler	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Hume's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	5	49	9	28	85	178
Radde's Warbler	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bonelli's Warbler	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
Wood Warbler	0	0	13	4	2	1	20
Chiffchaff/Siberian Chiffchaff	83	63	491	287	544	598	2066
Willow Warbler/Northern WW	56	53	584	258	340	280	1571
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Goldcrest	135	224	1788	1062	524	699	4432
Firecrest	4	8	33	6	10	16	77
Spotted Flycatcher	24	13	65	32	18	22	174
Red-breasted Flycatcher	6	1	6	3	1	0	17
Pied Flycatcher	32	14	79	45	38	9	217
Long-tailed Tit	6	0	5	12	1	14	38
Coal Tit	0	0	24	61	130	19	234
Blue Tit	40	55	166	158	174	264	857

	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	1959-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19	1959-2019
Great Tit	5	13	57	70	102	220	467
Treecreeper	0	1	2	1	1	0	5
Golden Oriole	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Red-backed Shrike	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Magpie	5	0	10	11	1	3	30
Jackdaw	0	0	1	1	0	8	10
Hooded Crow	0	0	12	8	0	3	23
Raven	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Starling	27	0	5	5	14	2	53
House Sparrow	248	82	57	135	47	197	766
Red-eyed Vireo	0	0	3	1	1	0	5
Chaffinch	27	17	27	55	68	111	305
Brambling	0	3	0	3	3	5	14
Greenfinch	155	29	149	151	159	340	983
Goldfinch	0	3	3	24	20	229	279
Siskin	2	64	72	99	205	79	521
Linnet	88	0	43	43	17	26	217
Redpoll	0	0	1	8	11	63	83
Crossbill	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Bullfinch	4	0	6	2	7	6	25
Hawfinch	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Common Rosefinch	0	0	0	0	5	1	6
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Blackpoll Warbler	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Lapland Bunting	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Snow Bunting	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Rustic Bunting	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Yellowhammer	81	10	5	0	0	0	96
Ortolan Bunting	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Little Bunting	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Reed Bunting	21	1	10	12	1	15	60
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Indigo Bunting	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bobolink	0	0	1	0	0	0	1

**Table 3b.** Breakdown of numbers of birds ringed on Cape Clear in each of the decades since ringing commenced there

	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
	1959-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19	1959-2019
Number of species ringed	66	46	90	89	66	78	1886
Species of passerines ringed	51	42	68	69	61	62	1696
Number of passerines ringed	2450	1078	5486	4257	4114	6129	23514
Total number of birds ringed	2531	1097	16150	8187	4406	7969	40340
Total number ringed excluding Storm Petrel	2531	1089	6476	4983	4121	6907	26107



## Selected recoveries

Here, below, is a selection of ringing recoveries made in 2019 (data received from the BTO) **Note:** The age codes used here by the BTO are the standard method of recording the age of a bird. M = Male. F = Female. 1 = Ringed as a nestling. 3J = Juvenile bird of this year with some juvenile feathers still present. 3 = Bird of this year that has completed its post-juvenile moult. 4 = Adult bird but exact year of birth not known. 6 = Adult bird that was NOT born the previous year, but could have been any year before that. 0 = Found dead.

### Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

<b>2637172</b>	4	27/7/2019	St Justinian, St David's, Pembrokeshire, Wales
	4	18/8/2019	Focarrig, Cape Clear <b>22 days, 294 km, 2610 W</b>
<b>2745285</b>	4	17/8/2019	Focarrig, Cape Clear
	4	27/8/2019	Lundy, Devon, England <b>10 days, 338 km, 960 E</b>
<b>2722829</b>	4	22/7/2018	Skokholm Island, Pembrokeshire, Wales
	4	17/8/2019	Focarrig, Cape Clear <b>391 days, 294 km, 2650 W</b>

### Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

<b>GH82607</b>	1	16/6/1991	Cape Clear
	4	29/8/2019	Matosinhos, Porto, Portugal <b>10,301 days (28 years!), 1,798 km, 1300 SE</b>
<b>GV86192</b>	1	3/7/2019	East Calf Island, Cape Clear
	0	17/9/2019	Calf Island (skeleton found on a beach) <b>76 days, 3 km, 2120 SSW</b>

### Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

<b>HH16646</b>	4	1/6/2019	Utsira, Rogaland, Norway
	4	5/7/2019	Cape Clear <b>34 days, 1,258 km, 2260 SW</b>

### Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

<b>S391735</b>	3	1/8/2018	Lychett Bay, Poole Harbour, Dorset, England
	4M	18/6/2019	Cape Clear <b>321 days, 529 km, 2790 W</b>
<b>AVA4983</b>	3J	5/7/2019	Cape Clear
	3	29/7/2019	Donges, Loire-Atlantique, France <b>24 days, 707 km, 1310 SE</b>

### Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

<b>AVA4847</b>	6	22/4/2019	Cotter's Garden, Cape Clear
	4	27/8/2019	Lundy, Devon, England <b>124 days, 338 km, 960 E</b>

An interesting movement of this bird, which was recorded as a breeding bird on Lundy, an island in the Bristol Channel. Also of note is the fact that it was retrapped on the same day as a Storm Petrel that had been ringed on Lundy! – see above.

## CES Ringing Report

The CES ringing season ran from 3rd May until 2nd September, with 11 of the 12 scheduled visits made (we were unable to carry out the last visit owing to bad weather). This year's CES differed from that in 2017 in having one less net – at the landowner's request – and the missed 12th visit. Otherwise, the number of birds caught were almost exactly the same as in the 2017 season, with just a few differences in species.

**Table 4.** The CES ringing results from 2017 and 2019 compared

Species	2017			Species	2019			
	1st year	Adult	Total		1st year	Adult	Total	
Wren	33	9	42	Wren	22	5	27	↓
Blue Tit	10	2	12	Blue Tit	15	5	20	↑
Reed Warbler	1	0	1	Reed Warbler	2	0	2	↑
Dunnock	3	7	10	Dunnock	6	10	16	↑
Robin	11	5	16	Robin	20	6	26	↑
Whitethroat	10	5	15	Whitethroat	15	11	26	↑
Willow Warbler	11	8	19	Willow Warbler	8	2	10	↓
Chiffchaff				Chiffchaff	1	2	3	↑
Greenfinch	3	0	3	Greenfinch				↓
Blackbird	5	6	11	Blackbird	1	13	14	↑
Water Rail	2	0	2	Water Rail				↓
Swallow	1	4	5	Swallow	6	3	9	↑
Sand Martin				Sand Martin	1	0	1	↑
House Martin				House Martin	1	0	1	↑
Stonechat	21	1	22	Stonechat	17	2	19	↓
Song Thrush	0	4	4	Song Thrush	3	5	8	↑
Snipe	0	1	1	Snipe				↓
Sedge Warbler	89	86	175	Sedge Warbler	58	73	131	↓
Pied/White Wagtail	1	0	1	Pied/White Wagtail				↓
Meadow Pipit	0	1	1	Meadow Pipit	1	0	1	↔
Linnet	1	4	5	Linnet	2	0	2	↓
Lesser Redpoll	0	4	4	Lesser Redpoll				↓
Great Tit	7	1	8	Great Tit	3	2	5	↓
Grasshopper Warbler	3	4	7	Grasshopper Warbler				↓
Blackcap	1	0	1	Blackcap				↓
Reed Bunting	3	7	10	Reed Bunting	1	1	2	↓
							x	
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>323</b>	

East Bog, a Constant Effort Site

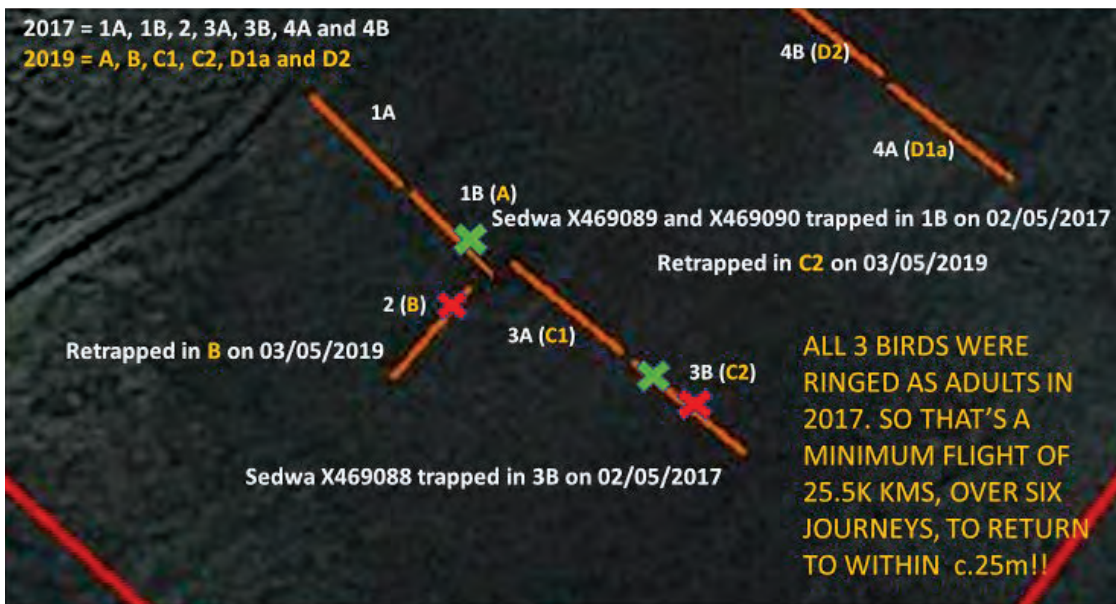


When I looked back at the 2017 details, I was amazed to see that the missing net in 2019 had 'caught' 40 birds and that the missing 12th visit had 13 birds. Add these two figures to the 2019 total and the result is just one more bird than in 2017! Constant Effort? Fairly!

One of the most interesting bird-related events of the year happened on the first morning of the CES season, the 3rd of May. On the first net round, I extracted two **Sedge Warblers** from net C2 that transpired to have sequential ring numbers, X469089 and X469090 and, on

the very next net round, I trapped X469088 in net B. When I checked the original ringing data later in the day, I found that all three had been ringed on 2nd May, 2017, as adults, less than 30m from where I had retrapped them!

It really does highlight the reasons why we do the Constant Effort ringing and it shows the power of site fidelity. The diagram below is a screenshot from a presentation given at the All Ireland Ringing Conference, highlighting this amazing sequence of recoveries.



## Seabird census

A sea-borne survey was carried out in 2019, involving a boat trip around the island and counting all nests and/or individuals encountered. The figures for this year, as well as selected surveys from previous years, are shown in the table below. Two significant sets of data are for Fulmar, up from 120 to 601, and Herring Gull, down from 662 to 71.

**Table 5.** Comparison of seabird breeding numbers on Cape Clear in five selected years from 1963 to 2019

Species	Nest/Individual	1963	1967	1983	1986	2019
Fulmar	Nest?	120	126	448	350	601
Shag	Nest?	139	89	67	66	118
Herring Gull	Nest?	662	606	568	172	71
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Nest?	36	49	45	103	144
Great Black-backed Gull	Nest?	83	97	119	76	66
Razorbill	Individual	522	364	149	n/c	27
Guillemot	Individual	282	50	63	n/c	71
Black Guillemot	Nest?	44	16	n/c	n/c	33
Oystercatcher	Nest?	11	11	12	n/c	10



## Mammals

Despite some glorious spring and summer weather and flat sea conditions, the number of cetacean sightings in 2019 was remarkably low. In conversations with the Baltimore whale-watching boat crews, it transpired that they were having to travel some 15 miles offshore before finding any whales or dolphins.

**Grey Seals** *Halichoerus grypus* and **Rabbits** *Oryctolagus cuniculus* were seen daily, and **bats** (probably *Pipistrellus* species) observed throughout the summer, but these animals were not always recorded.



Common Dolphin, south of Cape Clear, 12th July, 2018

## Systematic List

Please note, a lizard, turtle and shark are treated here as 'honorary members' of the mammalian grouping, though of course they are two reptiles and a fish, respectively. Frequent sightings of Atlantic Grey Seal, Rabbit and bats are not included in this list.

### Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*

A single record of one in South Harbour on 25th August.

### Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena*

*phocoena*

**High counts:** four in July, 10 in August, 30 in September.

### Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

**High counts:** up to 200 on 12th May, 20 in July, 16 in August, 150+ in September, 20 in October.

### Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops*

*truncatus*

Six on 28th May, three on 4th September, six on 9th September, three on 2nd October.

### Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

A single animal on 18th July.

### Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

One on 21st and 22nd July, one on 22nd, 25th and 29th August, up to five on 13th September, one on 18th October

### Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae*

A single record of one on 19th August.

### Otter *Lutra lutra*

One on 12th May, one on 2nd September and then one daily from 14th to 27th September and up to three until 16th October. One individual was caught on camera, stealing and eating chickens from inside a coup at the top of the Glen.

### Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*

**High counts:** 30 on 24th August, 11 on 16th October.

### Leatherback Sea Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*

A single record of one passing South Harbour on 19th August.

### Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

One on 30th June.



Common Lizards, South Harbour, 5th September, 2018

## Butterflies and moths

The lepidopteran highlight of the year has to be Cape Clear's first record of a **Comma** butterfly, found by Sean Rua's Pier in the North Harbour in October. For the more common species, a monthly breakdown of sightings is detailed in the tables below, with an explanatory note for any high counts.

### Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

There was a huge influx of Painted Ladies in August, with over 1,000 on the 3rd, 200+ on the 5th, 600+ on the 7th and 300+ on the 8th.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	51	148	3083	347	10	0	3639

### Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

A high count of 150+ on 2nd August (it explains the peak in the table below).

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	2	7	5	78	358	169	148	0	767

### Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*

A single individual was seen on the 29th and 30th August, two on 13th September, three on 14th September and another singleton on 19th September. The last records of the year were of singletons on 12th and 13th October.

### Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Low numbers were recorded sporadically from 4th August onwards. **High counts:** 70 on 7th September, 60 on 14th September. **Last date:** 5th October.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	0	15	294	1	0	310

### Comma *Polytonia c-album*

One found by Jim Fitzharris on 14th October, and photographed by himself and Steve Wing, on the ivy-clad cliffs above Sean Rua's Pier, North Harbour. It was the first record for Cape Clear Island.

### Peacock *Inachis io*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	0	39	5	2	0	46

### Large White *Pieris brassicae*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	5	23	77	1	0	0	106

### Small White *Pieris rapae*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	16	11	14	2	0	0	43

### Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	2	2	0	8	3	0	0	15

### Orange Tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

First date: Four on 21st April. High count: 40 on 22nd May. Last date: 14th June.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	73	203	15	0	0	0	0	0	291

### Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

First date: Four on 16th April. Two distinct peaks in numbers showed the two generations. Last date: 19th October.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	34	239	144	73	271	269	12	0	1042

### Wall Brown *Lasiommata megera*

Regularly recorded, but never in high numbers.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	81	8	14	69	14	9	0	186

### Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

A total of 34 records, with 25 of these in August. Last date: 16th October.

### Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

First date: three on 3rd June. Seen regularly from then until 24th September.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	126	27	106	67	0	0	326

### Holly Blue *Celastrina argiolus*

Only two records this year, both on 20th May.

### Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*

Two were seen on 9th and 11th June in the Central Bog area.

### Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

First date: 20th June. High counts: 60+ on 7th July, 100+ on 18th July, 300+ on 20th July, 50+ on 3rd August and 7th August. Last date: 7th September.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	46	814	310	4	0	0	1174

### Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus*

The only record of the year was of one on 6th September.

### Ringlet *Aphantopus hyperantus*

706 of the 707 sightings were in July. High counts: 150+ on 18th July, 100+ on 19th July. Last date: 2nd August.

### Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

As with previous years, most records of this species were from the Blanan' track and nearby lands.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	9	3	2	0	0	14





Comma butterfly, Sean Rua's Pier, North Harbour, Cape Clear Island, 14th October, 2019

**Dark-green Fritillary** *Speyeria aglaja*

Mainly seen around the bogs and the Wheatear Fields in Ballyieragh.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	1	0	4	3	2	0	0	10

**Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellataru*

A disappointingly quiet year for the species.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	0	1	3	8	0	12

**Cinnabar moth** *Tyria jacobaeae*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	0	199	10	0	0	0	209

**Six-spot Burnet** *Zygaena filipendulae*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	2	104	35	12	0	0	0	153

**Silver Y** *Autographa gamma*

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL
0	0	0	29	40	1	3	0	0	73

**Emperor moth** *Saturnia pavonia*

One record only, on 1st May.

As mentioned earlier, little moth trapping was carried out over the year. Table 6 (below) shows the species caught.

**Table 6.** Moth species trapped, and numbers of individuals recorded, on Cape Clear Island in 2019

Code	Taxon	Vernacular	Records	Individuals
1.004	<i>Micropterix aruncella</i>		2	3
3.003	<i>Korscheltellus fusconebulosa</i>	Map-winged Swift	3	19
3.005	<i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Ghost Moth	1	1
11.012	<i>Psyche casta</i>		2	26
12.036	<i>Monopis laevigella</i>	Skin Moth	2	11
15.017	<i>Calybites phasianipennella</i>		4	7
18.001	<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	Diamond-back Moth	6	10
20.019	<i>Argyresthia conjugella</i>	Apple Fruit Moth	2	3
28.009	<i>Endrosis sarcitrella</i>	White-shouldered House-moth	1	1
32.036	<i>Depressaria radiella</i>	Parsnip Moth	2	2
35.146	<i>Teleiopsis diffinis</i>		2	6
38.025	<i>Elachista atricomella</i>		5	6
41.002	<i>Blastobasis adustella</i>		9	23
44.001	<i>Alucita hexadactyla</i>	Many-plumed Moth	1	2
45.044	<i>Emmelina monodactyla</i>	Common Plume	1	1
46.001	<i>Schreckensteinia festaliella</i>		2	18
48.001	<i>Anthophila fabriciana</i>		2	2
49.025	<i>Pandemis cerasana</i>	Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix	2	6
49.026	<i>Pandemis heparana</i>	Dark Fruit-tree Tortrix	2	2
49.031	<i>Zelotherses paleana</i>	Timothy Tortrix	1	1
49.039	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>	Light Brown Apple Moth	2	3
49.07	<i>Acleris rhombana</i>	Rhomboid Tortrix	1	2
49.139	<i>Cochylis atricapitana</i>		14	27
49.164	<i>Celypha cespitana</i>		2	2
49.166	<i>Celypha lacunana</i>		16	46
49.193	<i>Endothenia quadrimaculana</i>		2	6
49.194	<i>Bactra lancealana</i>		2	2
49.214	<i>Ancylis badiana</i>		8	13
49.24	<i>Epinotia immundana</i>		2	3
49.285	<i>Epiblema scutulana</i>		2	2
54.008	<i>Zygaena filipendulae</i>	Six-spot Burnet	2	2
62.001	<i>Aphomia sociella</i>	Bee Moth	6	19
63.016	<i>Anania fuscalis</i>		2	2
63.025	<i>Anania hortulata</i>	Small Magpie	1	1
63.031	<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>	Rusty-dot Pearl	5	7
63.033	<i>Udea lutealis</i>		2	2
63.052	<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>	Rush Veneer	3	4
63.069	<i>Eudonia angustea</i>		2	9
63.074	<i>Eudonia mercurella</i>		10	14
63.089	<i>Agriphila tristella</i>		9	18
63.093	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>		6	16
63.099	<i>Catoptria pinella</i>		2	2
65.008	<i>Thyatira batis</i>	Peach Blossom	1	1
66.008	<i>Macrothylacia rubi</i>	Fox Moth	1	1
69.004	<i>Agrius convolvuli</i>	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	1	1
69.01	<i>Macroglossum stellatarum</i>	Hummingbird Hawk-moth	1	1
69.016	<i>Deilephila elpenor</i>	Elephant Hawk-moth	1	2
70.009	<i>Idaea subsericeata</i>	Satin Wave	2	4
70.011	<i>Idaea dimidiata</i>	Single-dotted Wave	1	1
70.013	<i>Idaea biselata</i>	Small Fan-footed Wave	7	9

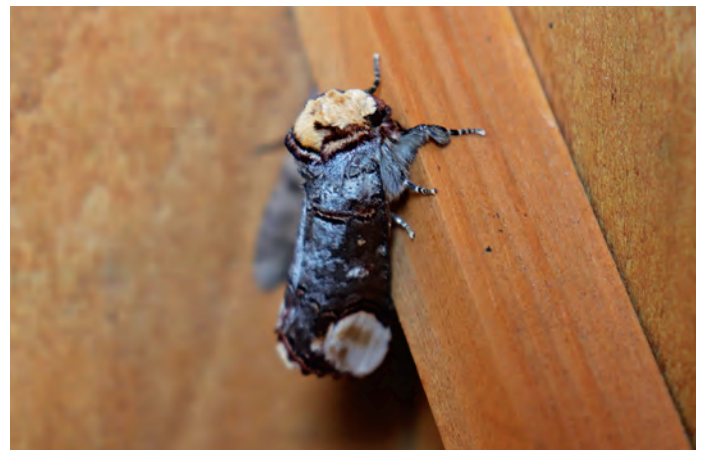
Code	Taxon	Vernacular	Records	Individuals
70.045	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>	Shaded Broad-bar	1	1
70.047	<i>Nycterosea obstipata</i>	Gem	1	1
70.052	<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>	Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	6	8
70.053	<i>Xanthorhoe designata</i>	Flame Carpet	1	1
70.054	<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	Silver-ground Carpet	3	3
70.061	<i>Epirrhoe alternata</i>	Common Carpet	1	1
70.074	<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	July Highflyer	2	4
70.081	<i>Thera obeliscata</i>	Grey Pine Carpet	1	1
70.087	<i>Cosmorhoe ocellata</i>	Purple Bar	2	2
70.094	<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>	Small Phoenix	1	1
70.097	<i>Dysstroma truncata</i>	Common Marbled Carpet	11	14
70.098	<i>Dysstroma citrata</i>	Dark Marbled Carpet	1	1
70.1	<i>Colostygia pectinataria</i>	Green Carpet	3	6
70.103	<i>Lampropteryx suffumata</i>	Water Carpet	1	1
70.141	<i>Gymnoscelis rufifasciata</i>	Double-striped Pug	2	2
70.147	<i>Eupithecia tenuiata</i>	Slender Pug	1	1
70.151	<i>Eupithecia pulchellata</i>	Foxglove Pug	2	3
70.173	<i>Eupithecia centaureata</i>	Lime-speck Pug	1	1
70.184	<i>Eupithecia exiguata</i>	Mottled Pug	1	1
70.19	<i>Eupithecia subfuscata</i>	Grey Pug	2	2
70.207	<i>Lomaspolis marginata</i>	Clouded Border	2	9
70.222	<i>Petrophora chlorosata</i>	Brown Silver-line	7	34
70.237	<i>Selenia dentaria</i>	Early Thorn	7	12
70.24	<i>Odontopera bidentata</i>	Scalloped Hazel	3	3
70.252	<i>Biston betularia</i>	Peppered Moth	1	2
70.262	<i>Selidosema brunnearia</i>	Bordered Grey	1	1
70.265	<i>Alcis repandata</i>	Mottled Beauty	2	2
70.277	<i>Cabera pusaria</i>	Common White Wave	1	1
70.278	<i>Cabera exanthemata</i>	Common Wave	1	1
70.28	<i>Lomographa temerata</i>	Clouded Silver	1	1
70.297	<i>Pseudoterpna pruinata</i>	Grass Emerald	1	1
71.025	<i>Phalera bucephala</i>	Buff-tip	1	1
71.028	<i>Clostera pigra</i>	Small Chocolate-tip	1	1
72.001	<i>Scoliopteryx libatrix</i>	Herald	1	1
72.015	<i>Calliteara pudibunda</i>	Pale Tussock	1	2
72.019	<i>Spilosoma lutea</i>	Buff Ermine	6	30
72.02	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>	White Ermine	5	18
72.022	<i>Diaphora mendica</i>	Muslin Moth	6	62
72.031	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Cinnabar	9	61
72.036	<i>Nudaria mundana</i>	Muslin Footman	1	1
72.061	<i>Schrankia costaestrigalis</i>	Pinion-streaked Snout	2	2
73.001	<i>Abrostola tripartita</i>	Spectacle	1	1
73.002	<i>Abrostola triplasia</i>	Dark Spectacle	1	1
73.015	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	Silver Y	1	1
73.045	<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	Knot Grass	2	10
73.052	<i>Cucullia umbratica</i>	Shark	2	2
73.053	<i>Cucullia chamomillae</i>	Chamomile Shark	3	3
73.061	<i>Stilbia anomala</i>	Anomalous	1	1
73.096	<i>Hoplodrina octogenaria</i>	Uncertain	1	1
73.113	<i>Phlogophora meticulosa</i>	Angle Shades	3	6
73.114	<i>Euplexia lucipara</i>	Small Angle Shades	2	8
73.121	<i>Gortyna flavago</i>	Frosted Orange	4	12
73.123	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Rosy Rustic	9	86
73.131	<i>Luperina testacea</i>	Flounced Rustic	7	13
73.134	<i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>	Large Wainscot	1	1



Code	Taxon	Vernacular	Records	Individuals
73.144	<i>Denticucullus pygmina</i>	Small Wainscot	12	28
73.154	<i>Apamea remissa</i>	Dusky Brocade	4	7
73.162	<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	Dark Arches	10	17
73.176	<i>Oligia fasciuncula</i>	Middle-barred Minor	1	1
73.189	<i>Agrochola lota</i>	Red-line Quaker	1	1
73.193	<i>Omphaloscelis lunosa</i>	Lunar Underwing	1	1
73.216	<i>Cosmia trapezina</i>	Dun-bar	1	1
73.233	<i>Aporophyla nigra</i>	Black Rustic	2	23
73.242	<i>Orthosia incerta</i>	Clouded Drab	1	1
73.244	<i>Orthosia cerasi</i>	Common Quaker	1	5
73.249	<i>Orthosia gothica</i>	Hebrew Character	5	16
73.254	<i>Cerapteryx graminis</i>	Antler Moth	3	3
73.261	<i>Polia nebulosa</i>	Grey Arches	2	3
73.267	<i>Lacanobia oleracea</i>	Bright-line Brown-eye	5	20
73.27	<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Dot Moth	1	1
73.271	<i>Ceramica pisi</i>	Broom Moth	4	8
73.276	<i>Sideridis rivularis</i>	Campion	2	3
73.281	<i>Hadena bicurris</i>	Lychnis	1	1
73.285	<i>Hadena caesia</i>	Grey	1	1
73.291	<i>Mythimna pallens</i>	Common Wainscot	1	1
73.293	<i>Mythimna impura</i>	Smoky Wainscot	1	1
73.295	<i>Mythimna vitellina</i>	Delicate	2	2
73.296	<i>Mythimna unipuncta</i>	American Wainscot or White-speck	1	1
73.317	<i>Agrotis exclamationis</i>	Heart and Dart	3	7
73.327	<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	Dark Sword-grass	3	9
73.328	<i>Axylia putris</i>	Flame	3	3
73.329	<i>Ochropleura plecta</i>	Flame Shoulder	15	138
73.332	<i>Diarsia brunnea</i>	Purple Clay	1	1
73.333	<i>Diarsia mendica</i>	Ingrailed Clay	2	2
73.334	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Small Square-spot	13	47
73.338	<i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i>	True Lover's Knot	3	3
73.342	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	Large Yellow Underwing	8	8
73.345	<i>Noctua comes</i>	Lesser Yellow Underwing	3	3
73.348	<i>Noctua janthe</i>	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	2	3
73.357	<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	Square-spot Rustic	9	126
73.359	<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>	Setaceous Hebrew Character	1	1
73.365	<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	Autumnal Rustic	3	8
	<i>Acleris laterana/comariana</i>		6	7
	<i>Mesapamea secalis</i> agg.	Common Rustic agg.	9	37
	<i>Oligia strigilis</i> agg.	Marbled Minor agg.	1	1



Elephant hawk-moth, Bird Observatory, 6th July, 2019



Buff-tip, Bird Observatory, 10th July, 2019

## Dragonflies

### **Emperor** *Anax imperator*

The first record of Emperor dragonfly in a fairly good year for the species was of two on 1st August. This was followed by three on 25th, two on 26th and one on 29th August. September saw a continued presence, with singletons on 4th and 29th, two on the 14th, 19th and 20th, and four on the 7th. **Last date:** 5th October. Most records were from either the lake or the West Bog area.

### **Common Hawker** *Aeshna juncea*

**First date:** one on 10th August. Two on 13th and one on 16th August. The species was recorded several times during September, with up to four seen.

### **Southern Hawker** *Aeshna cyanea*

One on 31st August was only the second record for Cape Clear Island.

### **Migrant Hawker** *Aeshna mixta*

Singletons on 3rd, 5th and 10th September; five on 7th September.



Common Hawker

### **Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum*

One was seen on 29th and 30th August. Up to six in a day were recorded in September. **Last date:** two on 13th October.

### **Ruddy Darter** *Sympetrum sanguineum*

One on 20th September.

## Other taxa

### Jellyfish

#### **Portuguese Man o' War** *Physalia physalis*

A sighting of 20+ in South Harbour on 28th September heralded the arrival of quite extraordinary numbers over the four weeks that followed. Most were washed up on the beach at Ineerbeg and below the Youth Hostel. It was sad to see all of these beautiful, if deadly, creatures dying on our shores.

Initially, the numbers dropped back to six on 1st October, but then increased to 108 on 8th, with 130+ on 10th and 400+ on 12th. The 13th October saw 600+ on the rocks or still afloat. There were 830 on 14th October, 770 on 16th and 870 on 17th October, before numbers started to drop rapidly. **Last date:** two on 27th October.

#### **Crystal Jellyfish** *Aequorea victoria*

A single record of 12 on 10th September.

#### **Lion's Mane Jellyfish** *Cyanea capillata*

One on 14th October.



Portuguese Man o' War, South Harbour, 30th September, 2019



# A SELECTION OF RARITY REPORTS FROM THE PAST 60 YEARS

## Hume's Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* – trapped and ringed on Cape, 4th November, 2019

### By Steve Wing

The morning of the 4th of November dawned bright and calm, encouraging me to leave behind the Annual Report writing and to open up the nets for, potentially, the last ringing session of the year. How fortuitous was that decision!

Having opened the nets in the Nordy Wood first, I moved into Cotter's Garden to gauge how much movement there was and would it be worth opening both sets of nets. There appeared to be quite a few Goldcrests in the garden, so I opened the five nets there. Two Goldcrests were caught as I was setting the nets, which was a promising sign, so I returned to the Nordy Wood with some enthusiasm! Checking the nets there produced a Chiffchaff and what appeared to be a rather dull Yellow-browed Warbler, my identification based on hearing a Yellow-browed calling as I entered the copse. I thought no more than that it was a dull, brown-looking Yellow-browed Warbler. I ringed it and it escaped my grasp on its way to the weighing cone.

I continued to hear a Yellow-browed Warbler calling, along with a harsher, shorter call – similar but noticeably different. Then, at 11.20am, I trapped the Yellow-browed Warbler and was amazed at how different this bird looked in the hand to the first individual, and the alarm bells started ringing – loudly! I keep a Collins Bird Guide app on my phone, so I checked the call of Yellow-browed Warbler – no problems there – and then checked the Hume's Warbler call. It was the second call I had been hearing on and off all morning, for sure. I played the calls a few times to see if either bird reacted, with negative results for both.

I put the news out that I had seen and heard what appeared to be a Hume's Warbler and I was very pleased when Seamus Enright called to say he would be on the late ferry. It was even more pleasing to find out



Hume's Warbler, Nordy Wood, The Waist, 4th November, 2019

he had sound-recording gear with him!

We were up early the next morning, nets open, ears primed and bins at the ready. It wasn't long before both birds were heard calling, infrequently but often enough for Seamus to capture a sound bite.

Then, at 10.00am, the bird found its way back into the net and this time I processed it with the knowledge of what to check. P2 was equal in length to P7/8, which ruled out Yellow-browed but fell nicely for Hume's. Many photos were taken, the position of P2 was checked more than once, and the bird was released back into the Nordy Wood.

It remained there for another two days, allowing brief but good, clear views in the undergrowth, preferring a short length of the stream to feed above.

This constituted Cape Clear's second, and Ireland's fourth, record of this species.

## Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula* – trapped and ringed on Cape, 27th October, 2013

### By Eamonn O'Donnell

Was it faith or a fluke that I opened page 394 of Sibley's *The North American Bird Guide* two days before I travelled to Cape Clear Island? We will never know, but I am awfully glad I did, because little did I know then that in two days' time the images on that particular page would come flooding back to me....

The weather on Cape during the morning of 27th October, 2013 was dull and there was a south-westerly gale sweeping the island. I had a quick look in some of the gardens, but the wind was making seeing anything very difficult, with little showing other than a few Chiffchaffs, Goldcrests and a couple of long-staying Yellow-browed Warblers, so I headed to the nearest



seawatching place. Conditions at sea were horrendous, as was the light, and very little was passing, with only small numbers of Kittiwakes, Fulmars, Gannets and three Sooty Shearwaters seen in 30 minutes. The light was too bad to continue seawatching, with the sun's glare making it impossible to identify anything, so I left with the intention of checking the bogs. However, the gale was blowing through them too, so I knocked that idea on the head. I decided to head back towards the gardens as they were somewhat sheltered in comparison to the bogs — a decision I will always be thankful that I made.

I went straight back to the famous Cotter's Garden and, on entering, went up to the back of the garden, where it was less windy — here, I hoped, I might actually be able to see some birds. Again, the usual Goldcrests and a handful of Chiffchaffs were on show and it looked like it was turning into another dull, uninspiring day's birding. Out of the gloom, a bird appeared in full view in the bracken about 20 feet away, so I went through the motions of lifting my bins expecting yet another Goldcrest but... WALLOP! This bird had no crown stripe, and its head, crown, nape and mantle were uniformly plain olive-grey. It had a prominent white eye-ring and lots of white on the wing.

"Oh God," I thought. "That is an *Empidonax* flycatcher!" I faltered. "Oh, no it isn't! It has the wings of a Goldcrest," I mooted. "Wait a minute! What about the bird on page 394 in Sibley that I was looking at just a few days ago?!"

Then the bird vanished over the hill, and I thought that was going to be that — it was going to be a bird that would haunt me until my dying day. But then...



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cotter's Garden, 27th October, 2013

what was that?! The same bird had magically re-appeared, and was closer still. I would not let myself believe what I was looking at. It was the bird on Sibley page 394 — a Ruby-crowned Kinglet! I needed help.

The October bank holiday weekend usually brings between 20 and 30 birders to Cape, but a combination of a couple of poor years for rarities and forecasted storms kept everybody away. As a result, I was the only visiting birder, but there were three resident birders on the island. I could not contact Steve Wing, former warden, on his mobile phone, and I did not have his home number, so I contacted his neighbour, Geoff Oliver — also a birder — asking him about Goldcrests not showing a crown stripe. He told me that on some birds it can be mostly hidden, and on juvenile birds not present at all.

I told him about my bird and that I really needed others to see it, so he phoned Steve to tell him that I was getting excited about a Goldcrest with no crown stripe in Cotter's Garden, and I needed others to see it.

It is a two-minute walk from Steve's house to Cotter's, and so, after five minutes, I was getting anxious that nobody had arrived. I called Geoff back and it was then that he realised I genuinely might actually be onto something good! He gave me Steve's house number and Mary Gade, his partner and also a birder, told me he was on the way. All this time the bird was feeding in the sycamores and in the ferns, showing very well, within 10 feet of me. Steve then arrived with my friend Kerri Gorentz (who is not a birder).

He saw the bird immediately and got very excited, very quickly, as he knew that Goldcrests do not look like this at the end of October. However, we remained cautious, as we had no experience of Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Geoff arrived soon after. He was particularly



Goldcrest and Ruby-crowned Kinglet during their ringing

interested in the way the eye-ring was split top and bottom, and in that the bird appeared to hold its bill slightly upwards.

None of us had a camera good enough to get shots in the field, and we felt that if we were to confirm the bird's identity we would need to trap it. Steve, being a licensed ringer, went to get a net and came back shortly afterwards with Mary and a pile of books. Within the pages of *The Crossley ID Guide* we found a perfect match to our bird. We then knew we had a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and that if it was ever to be accepted (or believed!), we would need a photo.

Steve put one small net up and, unbelievably, within five minutes, we had the bird in the hand. By pure chance, we also trapped a Goldcrest! We took the birds back to Steve's house to take photos indoors, in case the unthinkable happened.

Now we needed an expert to confirm what we all believed. Who better than our old friend Killian Mullarney, who, thankfully, was sitting in front of his computer when we called him. I had left to go to Geoff's house to try to load my photos onto his computer, as I hadn't brought my lead – never thinking I would ever actually need it – but this didn't work.

Killian was now looking at the photos and was back on the phone to Steve, who handed the handset to me when I walked back in. "Hello, Killian," I said. "Eamonn, you have a Kinglet, 100% sure, congratulations," was the reply. I jumped so high I almost hit the roof! Finally, after 34 years' birding, I had found something good. Very good, in fact, a true mega! I was in a state of shock, but it was time to get the news out.

The bird was released very soon after. Then we all went for a pint.

## Description

The bird was a juvenile/female. The overall impression was that it was bigger and bulkier than the nearby



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cotter's Garden, 27th October, 2013

Goldcrests, with a bigger head and stout neck. Wing and tail length appeared similar to Goldcrest's. Its crown, face, nape and mantle were all uniform olive-grey. Throat, breast and underparts were uniform off-white, with buff-yellowish flanks. A prominent white eye-ring was distinctly split on the top and bottom of the eye. All primaries, secondaries and greater coverts were black with yellow-green edges, which were quite prominent in the field. One prominent white wing-bar was contrasted by an adjacent black bar, similar to Goldcrest's, with an almost totally hidden second white bar present also. The tertials were also black with a prominent white edge – these edges were of a consistent width the full length of the feather, which is a diagnostic feature of Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

All tail feathers were black, edged yellowish-green, matching the wing colour. All tail feathers were sharply pointed and the tail was slightly notched. The bird had a black eye, blackish legs and yellow feet. The bill was mostly black with a slightly paler base and was quite thin, with a longish appearance. There were a few pale feathers at the base of the upper bill. The bird did not call in the field.

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## Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius* – High Road & Cotter's Garden, 16th to 19th October, 1988

### By Nick Watmough

Sunday morning, 16th October, 1988 on Cape Clear was damp and misty with a light south-easterly breeze. A new Red-breasted Flycatcher and new Yellow-browed Warbler in Cotter's Garden bode well and persuaded Willie McDowell, Anthony McGeehan, Denis Weir and myself to spend the rest of the morning working Ballyieragh.

At around midday, we were returning to the Observatory when Anthony, Denis and I decided to

check a thicket about 100m off the High Road. Something small flitting about in the bushes (we never discovered what it was) had attracted our attention and we surrounded the thicket to try and sort it out.

Suddenly, Denis said quietly but clearly, "There's a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in here." After the initial shock, Anthony and I were quickly at his side, but the sapsucker had dropped below the level of the perimeter dry-stone wall and was lost to view.

We split up and, after five anxious minutes, I saw it



through a gap in the vegetation. A small woodpecker with speckled grey-brown upperparts, a scarlet crown and a large, white, longitudinal wing patch. I called the others over, but it again disappeared from view. After a further 15 minutes it re-appeared and all of us, plus Willie (who had by now returned, wondering what had kept us), obtained more complete views.

It was now early afternoon and many of the birders on the island were leaving on the mailboat at 3.00pm, so it was essential to find everyone quickly. Willie's strategically placed note (at the top of the lane on the High Road) had the first birders running down the track towards us within 10 minutes. However, the noise they made on arrival disturbed the sapsucker, which promptly flew out of the thicket, over the heads of the newcomers. Fortunately, it flew straight into Cotter's Garden, where it was quickly relocated and seen by almost everybody on the island.

Soon it turned up in a mist net and was taken to the Observatory, where it was determined to be a first-year female.

The sapsucker was then released back into Cotter's



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 16-19th October, 1988

Garden. It stayed there for four days, during which time it was seen by nearly one hundred British and Irish birders.

**See also:** Nick Watmough. *Birding World* 1: 392-393

## Blue-winged Warbler *Vermivora pinus* – Cotter's Garden, 4th to 10th October, 2000

### By Steve Wing

On Tuesday, 3rd October, 2000, the after-effects of Hurricane Isaac hit south-west Ireland, with torrential rain and winds reaching 80mph. Birders on Cape Clear Island, Co Cork, spent the day sheltering; one or two efforts were made to venture out, but they were decidedly short-lived!

The following morning saw a complete change. The day dawned with a gentle breeze and blue skies and, it has to be said, a great deal of anticipation. Three of us left the Bird Observatory at about 8.00am with plans to split up and cover as much of the island as possible. I went straight to the Waist, while Willie McDowell searched the bushes alongside Cotter's Hill, and Denis went into Cotter's Garden.

It was Denis who hit the jackpot almost immediately! As he entered the garden, he was greeted with a call that sounded "not unlike a Myrtle Warbler." After a few seconds, a bird appeared in the bushes, very briefly, showing a bright yellow front, a green back and bluish-grey wings. Denis whistled to Willie, who was quickly at his side. "What have you got?" "I think it's an American!" "An American WHAT?" "Well I reckon it might be Blue-winged."

I received a very broken phone call on my mobile,



Blue-winged Warbler, Cotter's Garden, 4-10th October, 2000

telling me to get down to Cotter's to see a.... The signal disappeared just as the species was to be announced, not once, but twice! I did not wait for the third effort and just ran. By the time I reached them, Willie and Denis were staring into a bank of bracken and not looking particularly excited. "What is it?" I demanded. "And where is it?"

Having by now had good views and confirmed that it



was indeed a Blue-winged Warbler, they told me what it was... and related the sad news that it had dropped into the bracken and had not been seen since. We split again, to try to relocate the bird, which Denis did within five minutes – back in the same place where he had first found it.

The bird showed well and there was no mistaking it. It was a stunning, bright individual and, without doubt, a bird to be shared: we quickly telephoned other birders on the island and on the mainland.

The bird stayed until 10th October and gave excellent views to the many birders who visited, although it did become more and more mobile as the days passed. Food appeared to be no problem for it, as it fed almost continuously before taking short breaks to digest the many grubs it was catching. In all, about 600 birders visited the island to see this gem, the first Blue-winged Warbler to be recorded in the Western Palearctic.

**See also:** Steve Wing. *Birding World* 13: 408-411

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## Redhead *Aythya americana* – Lough Errul, 12th July, 2003

### By Joe Hobbs

On Saturday, 12th July, 2003, Geoff Oliver called in to Steve Wing to let him know there was a Pochard on Lough Errul. As that represented a very good record for Cape, Steve suggested they both return to take a look, especially as Geoff expressed the opinion that it did look “a bit different.”

Back at the lake, they agreed it did not look quite right for Pochard, so the *Collins Bird Guide* was consulted, followed by a phone call to Killian Mullarney.

The potential of hybrids and their identification was discussed – and eventually ruled out – before the identification of Redhead was clinched: it was a first for Cape Clear and Ireland.

It obliged by remaining faithful to Lough Errul for four days, providing great views for the many that twitched it.

**From:** *A List of Rare Birds at Cape Clear Island*, by Joe Hobbs



Redhead, Lough Errul, 12th July, 2003