



# Isle of Wight Ornithological Group Newsletter



Number 90

November 2021

## Recent Reports - The Island News Roundup

Compiled by *Robin Attrill*

*The reports of national or local rarities, included below, have not all been reviewed by the BBRC or the Joint Local Rarities Committee. Observers of species in these categories are encouraged to submit description details as necessary, ideally supported by photographs, and to please submit all of their records to the Bird Recorder, Robin Attrill, ideally by the end of January 2022. In addition, please submit November 2021 to February 2022 records for inclusion in the next newsletter to me by March 7<sup>th</sup> 2022.*

### Overview of the 2021 late summer and autumn period:

As is to be expected the autumn of 2021 produced a number of interesting reports including **American Golden Plover** and **Greenish Warbler**, both Island firsts. A summary of selected records is detailed below.

### *Gamebirds, Ducks, Geese and Swans:*

A single **Quail** heard calling at Brading during July 4<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> was the only one reported this year.

The first returning **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** were reported from Ryde on September 19<sup>th</sup>, with numbers there building to an excellent 1100 by October 18<sup>th</sup>. The Bembridge – Brading areas produced the only reports of **Greylag Goose** during the period, including a good count of 15 on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Occasional reports of **Egyptian Goose** included a report of eight at Bembridge Foreland on October 15<sup>th</sup>, a very high count for the Island of this increasing species.

As is usual for this four-month period, duck records of note were few in number. Small numbers of **Common Scoter** were widely reported from both the south coast and the Solent coast of

the Island with respective maxima of 23 at Wheelers Bay on July 21<sup>st</sup> and 15 at Fort Victoria on October 21<sup>st</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Returning dabbling duck counts included 222 **Wigeon** and 244 **Teal** at the Western Yar on October 27<sup>th</sup>, and 62 **Gadwall** at Brading Marsh on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

### *Seabirds & Herons (and their relatives):*

A marked influx of **Balearic Shearwater** to Island waters in late September and early October included counts of 12 at Wheelers Bay on September 27<sup>th</sup>, with 17 at SCP on the following day, followed by 38 at Wheelers Bay and 33 at SCP on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. These movements were accompanied by small numbers of **Sooty Shearwater**, with at least three at Wheelers Bay on September 28<sup>th</sup>, with two there on 30<sup>th</sup>, and singles at SCP on September 28<sup>th</sup> and October 2<sup>nd</sup>. The same two sites produced several reports of up to three **Manx Shearwater** during September 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. Excellent numbers of **Gannet** were reported in the same period with maxima of 550 at both SCP and Wheelers Bay on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 400 at SCP on October 4<sup>th</sup>. Three **Storm Petrel** were reported from a fishing boat off Freshwater Bay on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

The long staying **Purple Heron** was last reported from Brading Marsh on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Up to two **Bittern** were regularly reported from Brading Marsh during the period and **Cattle Egret** reports comprised two at both Brading Marsh and Rofford Marsh on August 9<sup>th</sup>, one at Brading on August 30<sup>th</sup>, one at SCP on October 15<sup>th</sup> and a remarkable flock of c.16 at Newtown on October 18<sup>th</sup>. **Little Egret** peaked at 47 at Quarr Pond on two dates in late August and up to four **Great White Egret** were regularly reported from the Brading Marsh area during the period, with the only other report comprising one at Newtown on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Two **Spoonbill** at Folly Lake on October 30<sup>th</sup> was the only report received, and a **White Stork** present in the Godshill - Sandford area during September 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> originated from the Sussex reintroduction programme and was subsequently satellite tracked to France. **Great Crested Grebe** once again bred successfully at Brading Marsh.

#### *Raptors and Owls:*

Single **Honey Buzzard** were reported from the south Wight downs on four dates during September 6<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> and five reports of **Red Kite** were received during September – October. A probable **Black Kite** passed Thorness Bay on July 13<sup>th</sup>, and three **Goshawk** reports were received.

The **White-tailed Eagle** project was augmented with the release of a further 12 birds during the summer, and widespread reports of up to five birds from this, and previous, releases were received during the period. Up to six **Marsh Harrier** frequented the Brading Marsh area throughout the period, with scattered reports of singles elsewhere, and a single **Pallid Harrier**, a potential second record for the Island, was reported from Compton Down on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Fourteen **Osprey** reports during July to September were all of single birds.

An astonishing report of a white phase **Gyr Falcon**, photographed whilst perched on a cross-Solent ferry on September 9<sup>th</sup>, unfortunately referred to an escaped bird. The nine **Merlin** reports received during late September and October, all related to single birds with the exception of two at SCP on October 16<sup>th</sup> and **Hobby** were very widely reported during the period with up to seven present in the Brading Marsh area in early July.

**Short-eared Owl** records were confined to the Culver/Bembridge Down area in October, with two on 10<sup>th</sup>, one of which remained for several days. **Long-eared Owl** was confirmed to have bred at Niton.

#### *Wading birds*

A juvenile **American Golden Plover**, seen and photographed at St Helens on October 14<sup>th</sup> is the first recorded on the Island. A **Dotterel** calling over Porchfield on the night of September 13<sup>th</sup> was the only report and, most unusually, no **Little-ringed Plover** were reported during the period.

Three **Little Stint** at Brading during August 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>, with one remaining until 30<sup>th</sup>, was an excellent record of a species that has been very scarce on the Island in recent years. Single **Ruff** were reported from Brading on September 1<sup>st</sup> and the Western Yar on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a **Sanderling** on the shore at Monks Bay on August 12<sup>th</sup> was unusual for the locality. Three **Green Sandpiper** at Thorness Bay on August 28<sup>th</sup> was similarly an excellent site record, with all other reports of the species coming from the Brading Marsh area during July September, with no count exceeding two birds. The regular **Spotted Redshank** returned to the Western Yar on July 15<sup>th</sup>, remaining throughout the period.

Few large counts of commoner species were reported but 83 **Curlew** at Newtown on September 8<sup>th</sup> was noteworthy, as was a report of an exceptional 19 **Greenshank** at Bembridge Harbour on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Gulls, Terns and Skuas:*

A count of 183 **Sandwich Tern** at Foreland on September 12<sup>th</sup> was a high autumn count for the Island. In contrast numbers of **Common Tern** were extremely low with 24 at Foreland on the same date the highest reported.

An extremely early **Glaucous Gull** was reported from Wheelers Bay on September 16<sup>th</sup>, whilst **Yellow-legged Gull** records comprised singles in the Sandown area during August 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, and one at Fort Victoria on September 14<sup>th</sup>. A count of 56 **Great Black-backed gull** at St Helens on October 10<sup>th</sup> was noteworthy. **Mediterranean Gull** continues to increase with 1000+ present at

sites along the Military Road on October 22nd, quite remarkable considering how scarce this species was formerly on the Island. Four reports received of **Little Gull** comprised singles at Foreland on September 12<sup>th</sup>, Fort Victoria on October 19<sup>th</sup>, SCP on October 29<sup>th</sup> and Ventnor on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Good numbers of **Arctic Skua** were present in Island waters in late September and October, with a peak of 13 past SCP on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The three reports received of **Great Skua** included a rare Solent record of one photographed at Cowes on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### *Near passerines:*

An **Alpine Swift** at Culver Down on August 14<sup>th</sup> was a rare autumn record, with a **Bee-eater** reported from Whippingham on July 2<sup>nd</sup> and a **Hoopoe** at Brading Marsh on August 1<sup>st</sup>. It was an excellent autumn for **Wryneck** with nine reports of singles received from sites across the Island between August 25<sup>th</sup> and September 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Nightjar** were reported from their usual sites during the summer with a nest with eggs found by chance by a visitor at Headon Warren. The only **Cuckoo** reported during the period were from Brading Marsh with singles on July 12<sup>th</sup>, and August 3<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. A **Ring-necked Parakeet**, a scarce visitor to the Island, flew south over Haddon's Pits on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### *Passerines:*

Post breeding aggregations of **Raven** are now a feature on the Island, with counts received including 12 at Chillerton on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 18 at WHD on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 22 at Culver on October 11<sup>th</sup>. The high numbers of **Jay** present in the UK, presumably continental birds displaced due to food supply issues, was also visible locally and marked by counts of 34 at Culver on September 29<sup>th</sup>, with 31 there on October 11<sup>th</sup>, and many other reports of up to 21 received from this location and WHD.

**Goldcrest** numbers were once again very low in the autumn passage period, with no double-figured counts received. In contrast **Firecrest** were widely reported from late August onwards with a

maximum of five at SCP on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Single **Woodlark** were noted at SCP on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Hirundine numbers, of the commoner species, were unremarkable other than a good total of 100 **Sand Martin** at Newtown on August 27<sup>th</sup>, and a single **Red-rumped Swallow** reported from Luccombe on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

The passerine highlight of the autumn, and indeed the year, was a **Greenish Warbler** present at Haddon's Pits on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. In common with the rest of the UK it proved to be a poor autumn for **Yellow-browed Warbler** on the Island, with singles at Gore Cliff on October 8<sup>th</sup> and Appley on October 9<sup>th</sup> the only reports received. This was somewhat compensated for by two autumn reports of **Wood Warbler** with singles at Quarr on September 3<sup>rd</sup> and SCP on September 21<sup>st</sup>. The commoner warblers were reported in modest numbers with species maxima of 85 **Chiffchaff** at Haddon's Pits on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 75 **Blackcap** at SCP on September 25<sup>th</sup> and 70 **Willow Warbler** at SCP on August 3<sup>rd</sup>,

A total of c.10 reports of **Grasshopper Warbler** were received from widespread locations from August 4<sup>th</sup> to September 22<sup>nd</sup> and an excellent pre-migration aggregation count of 40 **Sedge Warbler** was reported from Atherfield on August 10<sup>th</sup>.

Small numbers of **Ring Ouzel** were reported throughout October, with three at WHD on 30<sup>th</sup> the only record of more than two birds received. The first **Redwing** of the autumn were reported from Shanklin on October 7<sup>th</sup> but, unusually, no **Fieldfare** and no significant numbers of the commoner thrushes (**Blackbird**, **Song Thrush**, **Robin**) were noted during the period. Moderate numbers of **Spotted Flycatcher** were noted throughout the autumn passage with a peak of only 14 at Shanklin Down on August 27<sup>th</sup>.

The first **Black Redstart** reports of the autumn consisted of one at Luccombe on August 25<sup>th</sup> followed by singles at SCP and Ventnor on September 24<sup>th</sup>. Moderate numbers reported in October included a count of three at WHD on 16<sup>th</sup>. **Common Redstart** numbers were also generally modest, with a peak of 14 at Luccombe Down on August 29<sup>th</sup> the only report of more than seven birds received, with the same date producing the peak autumn counts of seven **Whinchat** and 51

**Wheatear** at WHD. **Stonechat** passage was conspicuous during September - October with a peak of 23 at Culver on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Pied Flycatcher** were widely reported in the period, with an excellent total of c.27 sightings, mainly of ones and twos but four were present at WHD on August 24th. **Yellow Wagtail** numbers peaked at 100 at Luccombe WHD on September 4<sup>th</sup>, **Grey Wagtail** passage included 10 past SCP on September 16th and an exceptional total of 2017 'alba' **Wagtail** passed east at Blackgang on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Counts of **Tree Pipit** peaked in late August with maxima of 12 at SCP on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 11 at Luccombe Down on 27<sup>th</sup>, whilst **Meadow Pipit** passage in the following weeks included 760 south at Haddon's Pits on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The largest counts of **Rock Pipit** were received from Bembridge Harbour, with up to 14 present on several dates in October.

Autumn finch movement produced a good showing of **Brambling**, including 14 over Haddon's Pits on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Peak counts of the commoner finches included 935 **Linnet** and 840 **Goldfinch** past Blackgang on October 10<sup>th</sup>. **Lesser Redpoll** maxima included 17 over Culver on October 26<sup>th</sup> and a good passage of **Siskin** included 63 over Haddon's pits on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. The seven **Common Crossbill** reports received comprised counts of one to three birds.

**Book review: *Where to Watch Birds in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (2021). Keith Betton. HELM. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.**

*Simon Linington*

This is a valuable revision of a book first published in 1989. It incorporates both new information and revised mapping, runs to 382 pages and costs £25 as a paperback or £22.50 as an ebook. Of these pages, 39 are devoted to the Isle of Wight which is reasonable when compared to coverage of mainland areas of comparable size. Ten Island sites are covered of which all but one are coastal or estuarine; the exception is the Ventnor Downs area though even that is close to

the sea. All ten sites will be familiar to most Group members though the birding opportunities offered by Fort Victoria and Thorness Bay may be slightly less well known to some.

The Island's contribution to the book is based on Keith Betton's visits during 2020 and the distilled experience from several well-known local birders. It thus represents a thorough representation of the best sites and so those visiting them can be assured of the best birding that the Island can offer. An introductory section to birding on the Isle of Wight includes useful travel information (both from the Mainland and once there). Each site description follows the format of the rest of the book and contains sections on Habitat, Species, Timing, Access (including nice clear maps), Facilities and Calendar. The section on Access is very helpful and in some cases minutely detailed. Although brilliantly useful today, there is the risk that some detail may quickly become outdated. The Calendar section summarises the information provided under 'Species'. My personal preference might have been to combine the two, dividing the text up under seasonal sub-headings and further refining the species covered to those that are both reliable and definitive at each site. Getting the species list right is a really difficult act as Keith Betton admits in the book's overall introduction. However, some species mentioned seem too widespread to include and others rather too occasional. For instance, Spotted Redshank is mentioned seven times on the Island pages and yet there was only one Isle of Wight record during the three year period 2015-2017. While the mouth-watering lists of scarcities and rarities give a flavour of what might turn up, without the context of frequency there is the danger of raising expectations beyond the realistic. Reduced species coverage might have created more space for the inclusion of some interesting secondary but accessible sites e.g., the Military Road, Parkhurst Forest, Firestone Copse, the old railway (now cycle) tracks and Brighstone Down. The 2016 Isle of Wight Bird Report noted that just 17 (out of 28,900) bird records were received that year from an area of 36km<sup>2</sup> (a tenth of the Island's area) in the central West Wight which perhaps illustrates the danger that honey-pot sites detract from the wider picture. So it is hoped that users of this book will be subsequently spurred on to explore more widely and, most importantly,

submit records of their findings thereby helping to fully map the changing fortunes of the Island's bird populations.

Obviously, the book is a must-buy for visitors to the Island, birders planning to move there and those Island residents just starting to dip their toes into birding. So will this book be worth buying by the majority of readers of this newsletter? The answer is yes. Books about Isle of Wight birding are even rarer than a decent south-east wind in April at St Catherine's. The information is an expert, up-to-date and handy summary of the best ten sites and the maps not only show recommended routes to explore but pinpoint locations mentioned regularly in birding circles. The timings sections give useful tips on how to get the best out of birding there. So far, no mention has been made about the mainland sites covered in the book. It is perhaps information about these that may be of particular interest for those Island birders wishing to make forays across the Solent. There is excellent information about the 'near Continent', covering sites within the New Forest and the Lymington area plus such rewarding day-visit locations as Blashford Lakes and Farlington Marshes NR, also quite a few that are much less known. Even further afield, Dorset offers fantastic birding not only at Portland Bill but at other sites such as Poole Harbour. To the far west of that county there is even the prospect of seeing a Dipper. All of these mainland sites are presented to the same high standard with valuable maps and access information as those for the Island.

On its back cover, the book says that it tells you where to seek eagles on the Isle of Wight. In this regard it fails but in so many other ways it succeeds. I would recommend that Group members make the relatively modest outlay and add this well-produced book to their birding libraries.

If you wish to obtain a copy of *Where to Watch birds in Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, reviewed by Simon Linington above, it can be obtained direct from Bloomsbury at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/where-to-watch-birds-in-dorset-hampshire-and-the-isle-of-wight-9781472985408/> for £20.45 including postage. The discounted price (code WTWB30) is valid until the end of 2021.

## British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) News Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

There was a total of 19 1-km squares covered in 2021 so thankfully we are slowly getting back to pre-Covid reporting levels. The squares represent a wide range of habitats which gives a more balanced view of the species overall presence. A total of 80 species were recorded from the two visits made to each site with the ten most recorded species as follows:

Position	Species	% of 1-km squares recorded
=1	Woodpigeon	100
=1	Jackdaw	100
=1	Blackbird	100
=4	Wren	95
=4	Goldfinch	95
=6	Carrion Crow	89
=6	Chiffchaff	89
=6	Robin	89
=9	Blue Tit	84
=9	Great Tit	84

While comparison to last year is fairly meaningless, due to lockdown restricting the survey to a single visit at best, it was noticeable that Blue Tit and Dunnock were not seen in as many squares as normal compared to previous years while Chiffchaff appeared to be more numerous.

Many thanks to the BBS surveyors for their contributions and if anyone is interested in taking part in the BBS for 2022, please contact me.

### Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)

Sixteen sites received coverage for the July 2020 to June 2021 count year. Local analysis of the counts, including trends, would be difficult to interpret as the majority of sites had no coverage for January 2021, one of the priority count months, due to Covid lockdown. Other sites also received less coverage than normal, hopefully the 2021-22 season will return to some form of normality.

Special thanks to all the counters for undertaking the counts and for once again following the changing Covid guidelines as requested.

The WeBS office recently carried out a review of the WeBS Site Priority Status and published their review in September.

The four statuses being used are: Very High Priority, Medium High Priority, High Priority and Lower Priority. Sites with a Very High or Medium High Priority are classed as key sites for WeBS.

Four aspects were used to score each site individually and then combined into a total score that determined the priority. These were:

1. Sites that hold nationally and internationally important numbers of waterbirds, according to the most recent five year mean of peak counts.
2. Sites that strongly influence one or more national species indices and trends.
3. Sites in two environmental strata that are currently under-represented in WeBS when estimating numbers of widespread waterbird species.
4. Sites that are nationally protected for waterbirds.

As a result of this review, six additional sites have been identified as key sites with Thorness Bay, Medina Estuary, King's Quay, Wootton Creek, Ryde Pier to Puckpool Point (Ryde East Sands) and Foreland joining the existing key sites Yar Estuary (Western Yar), Newtown Estuary and Brading Harbour (Brading Marshes RSPB Reserve and Bembridge Harbour).

The full review of the Isle of Wight WeBS sites is as follows:

#### **Yar Estuary (Western Yar)**

Status: Very High Priority

Upgraded from Medium High Priority status due to the site having a high total trend influence and the site being a SPA (Special Protection Area). Remains a key site for WeBS.

#### **Newtown Estuary**

Status: Very High Priority

Status remains unchanged as the site has a high total trend influence. It also hosts important numbers of three species (Dark-bellied Brent Goose, Pintail and Mediterranean Gull) while Spoonbill also exceeds the criteria as a site of national importance for this species. Newtown is also a SPA. Remains a key site for WeBS.

#### **Thorness Bay**

Status: Very High Priority

Upgraded from High Priority as the site hosts important numbers of one species (Mediterranean Gull). This site is needed for the nearby SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

#### **Carisbrooke Pond**

Status: High Priority

Upgraded from Lower Priority as the site has a high total trend influence.

#### **Towngate Pond**

Status: Lower Priority

Status unchanged.

#### **Medina Estuary**

Status: Very High Priority

Upgraded from High Priority as the site has a high total trend influence. Site is a SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

#### **King's Quay**

Status: Medium High Priority

Upgraded from Lower Priority as the site is needed for the nearby SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

#### **Wootton Creek**

Status: Very High Priority

Upgraded from Lower Priority as the site has a high total trend influence. Site is a SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

#### **Bathingbourne Reservoir**

Status: Lower Priority

Status unchanged.

#### **Ryde Canoe Lake**

Status: Lower Priority

Status unchanged.

#### **Ryde Pier to Puckpool Point (Ryde East Sands)**

Status: Very High Priority

Upgraded from High Priority as the site hosts important numbers of two species (Sanderling and Mediterranean Gull). Site is SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

#### **Hersey Nature Reserve**

Status: High Priority

Upgraded from Lower Priority as the site is a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest).

## **Sandown Meadows Nature Reserve**

Status: Lower Priority  
Status unchanged.

## **Sandown Canoe Lake**

Status: Lower Priority  
Status unchanged.

## **Brading Harbour (Brading Marshes/Bembridge Harbour)**

Status: Very High Priority  
Upgraded from Medium High Priority as the site has a high total trend influence. The site also hosts important numbers of one species: (Mediterranean Gull). Site is SPA. Remains a key site for WeBS.

## **Foreland**

Status: Very High Priority  
Upgraded from High Priority as the site has a high total trend influence. The site also hosts important numbers of one species: (Mediterranean Gull). Site is SPA. Upgraded to a key site for WeBS.

Thanks again to all the counters at these sites for their diligent work. It is your efforts which has enabled the Island to have a robust WeBS database.

Finally, after seven years as the BTO Regional Representative, I am considering stepping down from the role by 1st January 2023 at the latest. If anyone is interested in finding out more about what the role entails, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Contact details: **Jim Baldwin (BTO Regional Representative)**

Tel. (01983)721137 (home), 07528 586683 (mobile), email: wightbto@hotmail.com

## **New Members**

We welcome:

Pam Johnson – Shanklin

Rosie Reid – Cornwall

Oliver Watt – Dorking

## **November 2021 Bird Recorder update**

As the 2021 AGM did not take place, due to Covid-19 concerns, my annual update to the AGM is instead included in this newsletter. Below are listed a few items of current importance/interest.

**Records.** The distribution of 2021 records to the section writers of the bird report is intended to take place in the first quarter of 2022 so that the report writing can commence to a similar annual cycle to that used for the 2020 report. To enable this to happen please submit your 2021 records, ideally electronically, into BirdTrack, Going Birding or eBird, by the end of January at the latest. Please contact me if you need advice on these, or any other ways of submitting your sightings.

**IoW BBS.** It has been very pleasing to receive 20 completed surveys for 2021, close to the 21 received for the last pre-Covid year, 2019. This is the most valuable record that we have for determining local breeding bird population trends and it would be great to get additional survey squares covered in 2022. Please contact me if you would like to take on a square or two. A summary of the 2021 results will appear in a future newsletter.

**Rarities.** Just a (further) reminder that for both local (JLRC reviewed) and national (BBRC reviewed) rarities the onus is on the **finder** to submit the record for review! In summary:

- All 'local' rarities that are asterisked in the listing at the rear of recent bird reports need to be documented, ideally by photography but otherwise by completing a JLRC template which is available from myself.
- All 'BB' rarities need a BBRC submission.

Going forward a short summary of recent rarity review outcomes will be included in this newsletter, commencing with this issue. If you need any guidance or help with the process for either JLRC or BBRC submissions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very many thanks, Robin Attrill  
17 Waterhouse Moor, Harlow, Essex, CM18 6BA

## Forthcoming Field Meetings

All members and friends are welcome

### Western Yar

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2021 @ 09.00**

Meet at Yarmouth Station

Grid Ref: SZ357893

**Leader: Kevin Lover**

### Ryde to Seaview seawatch

**9<sup>th</sup> January 2022 @ 09.00**

Meet at the northern end of Ryde Canoe Lake

Grid Ref: SZ602926

**Leader: Derek Hale**

### River Medina

**6<sup>th</sup> February 2022 @ 09.00**

Meet at the bottom of Stag Lane

Grid Ref: SZ503917

**Leader: Dave Hunnybun**

### Brading Marsh

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2022 @ 08.30**

Meet at the St. Helens end of Laundry Lane and park near the old cattle sheds

Grid Ref: SZ620882

**Leader: Derek Hale**

### St. Catherine's Point for land and seawatch

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 @ 07.00**

Meet at the top of road to the lighthouse, members arriving later can go directly to the field west of the lighthouse.

Grid Ref: SZ500757

**Leader: Dave Hunnybun**

### West High Down

**24<sup>th</sup> April 2022 @ 08.00**

Meet at High Down quarry car park

Grid Ref: SZ325856

**Leader: Derek Hale**

New leaders would be very welcome. If anyone would like to lead a walk please contact Dave Hunnybun to discuss their preferred location.

## Recent rarity decisions

This is the first of a regular update on outcomes of the reviews of rarities by both the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and/or the Joint Local Rarities Committee (JLRC) that will be included in the newsletter. Recent 2021 JLRC record acceptances are:

- American Golden Plover, St Helens, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021
- Black-crowned Night Heron (2), Bembridge/Brading Marsh 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021, one bird remaining until 28<sup>th</sup>
- Iceland Gull, Borthwood, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, 19<sup>th</sup> April and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021, Tennyson Down
- Montagu's Harrier, Whale Chine, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- Penduline Tit (2), Brading Marsh, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021
- Purple Heron, Brading Marsh, 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021
- Red-rumped Swallow, Brading Marsh 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- Ring-necked Duck, Rookley Country Park 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 (from 2020)

The vast majority of the above were supported by excellent, and in some cases exceptional, photographs which are invaluable. A number of these will appear in the 2021 bird report along with full details of the observers etc for the above records.

To date, no 2021 record submissions have been reviewed and considered not proven by the committee.

The JLRC is still awaiting full details of the following reports and I would be grateful if they could be submitted to me as soon as possible

- Black Kite - Wheelers Bay, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021. No details received to date.
- Goshawk - All 2021 reports. No details received to date.
- Greenish Warbler - Haddon's Pits 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> September. Additional details awaited.

Very many thanks,  
Robin Attrill



## Looking Back 25 years ago Extracts from the 1996 Bird Report

**Cory's Shearwater** Two flew to the east at SCP on May 19<sup>th</sup> (DJH, *et al*). These passed through during unseasonable gales that also prompted an influx of Storm Petrels.

**Manx Shearwater** An excellent year at SCP with several high counts including a movement of 1231 east on June 29<sup>th</sup> occurring between 18.00 and 21.00 in a north-west force 4/5 wind (DJH, MSDH). This is greater than the previous highest yearly total, let alone daily count.

**Storm Petrel/European Storm-petrel** An exceptional year with a possible maximum of 22 birds recorded, all but one of which were at SCP.

**Purple Heron** An adult flew east low along the cliff at SCP on April 18<sup>th</sup>. It was initially sighted to the west of the lighthouse and gave close views as it carried along the coastline (MB, SRC, DJH, MSDH).

**Bewick's Swan/Tundra Swan** Five adults and seven immatures, found in a field near Atherfield on Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, moved to Brading/Bembridge Marsh on 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is the highest count ever made on the Island. The previous highest count was of nine on the Western Yar on January 8<sup>th</sup> 1985.

**Pintail** The count of 218 at Newtown NNR in November is the highest ever recorded on the Island, exceeding the 160 seen at this site in October 1976.

**Sand Martin** At least three pairs bred successfully at Knighton (DJH, *et al*). This is the first record of breeding on the Island since 1983.

**Tawny Pipit** One was seen at Culver Down on August 25<sup>th</sup> (JCG). This is the first Island record since two in September 1994.

**Bearded Tit** The continuing presence of a small breeding population in East Wight was confirmed by reports of a male and two female at Brading Marsh on March 6<sup>th</sup> (JWB, ML) and two juveniles at the Eastern Yar roadbridge at Bembridge on July 24<sup>th</sup> (GRS).

## Bird Report Editor's Update November 2021

### *Martin Hunnybun*

It was back in March that I last provided an update on progress on bird reports. At that time we were in the final stages of preparing the 2019 report (which had commenced in early January). Work was duly completed in mid-April and the report back from the printers at the end of that month. For the first time in several years, we were just about up to date!

Work on production of the 2020 Bird Report had commenced before the one for 2019 had been completed, using the compilation of 2020 records that was available at that time. There were several significant sets of additional records that were added subsequently to the databases through to the end of May, and it is taking more time than expected to incorporate those into the species summaries. I had hoped to complete the 2020 report by early autumn, but the target is now the end of this year.

As ever, it is enjoyable reflecting on some of the highlights from last year, including Island firsts that came in the form of Ring-necked Duck and Pallid Harrier. Papers on those finds have been prepared by Nick Lever, Keith Ballard and Mark Buckley. The number of photographs for potential inclusion in the reports continues to increase. Many thanks to everyone who made them available for consideration. This super shot of the Blyth's Reed Warbler by Keiron Vine is a contender for the cover....



# IWOG GARDEN BIRD SURVEY

## Summer 2021

A total of 44 completed forms were returned recording a total of 59 species.

From these a league table has been produced. Initially bird species were ordered according to the number of gardens they were reported in. In the case of tied positions a further ordering was done according to the total number of months recorded. Equally placed species are put in Voous order.

League Position	Species	Number of Gardens	League Position	Species	Number of Gardens
1	Woodpigeon	44	31	Stock Dove	10
2	Blackbird	44	32	Willow Warbler	10
3	Robin	44	33	Mallard	8
4	Blue Tit	44	34	Goldcrest	8
5	Dunnock	43	35	Pied Wagtail	5
6	Great Tit	43	36	Whitethroat	5
7	Magpie	42	37	Moorhen	4
8	Wren	40	38	Buzzard	4
9	Goldfinch	39	39	Kestrel	4
10	Jackdaw	38	40=	Grey Heron	3
11	House Sparrow	37	40=	Lesser Black-backed Gull	3
12	Collared Dove	37	42	Feral Pigeon	2
13	Starling	37	43=	Barn Owl	2
14	Greenfinch	36	43=	Treecreeper	2
15	Carrion Crow	34	43=	Yellowhammer	2
16	Long-tailed Tit	27	46=	Red-legged Partridge	2
17	Rook	26	46=	Swallow	2
18	Jay	26	48=	Mistle Thrush	2
19	Chaffinch	25	48=	Linnet	2
20	Coal Tit	24	50	Swift	1
21	Herring Gull	23	51	Garden Warbler	1
22	Great Spotted Woodpecker	23	52=	Little Egret	1
23	Sparrowhawk	23	52=	Cuckoo	1
24	Chiffchaff	23	52=	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *	1
25	Blackcap	20	52=	Little Owl	1
26	Green Woodpecker	18	52=	House Martin	1
27	Black-headed Gull	17	52=	Grey Wagtail	1
28	Song Thrush	13	52=	Redstart	1
29	Bullfinch	12	52=	Raven	1
30	Pheasant	11	52=	Siskin	1

### Scarce species

\*A Lesser Spotted Woodpecker was reported by Graham Biggs in his Alverstone garden in June. This is a very rare bird on the Island with only five records since 2000 ( three of which were in 2004).

This record is subject to acceptance by the Island Joint Local Rarity Committee.

The badly named Garden Warbler was recorded by Mike & Lyn Mackrill. They wrote “We were blessed with the presence of this warbler for May and June. Very vocal although a discreet bird.”

This species has declined considerably in recent years.

### Selected Migrants

Few true passage migrants were recorded in gardens this summer.

A Redstart visited the garden of Mark Buckley on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Garden Nesting

Breeding, involving 27 species, was recorded in 24 gardens. Four observers recorded that no birds nested in their garden.

The following table shows the number of gardens in which breeding for each species was recorded.

Blue Tit	14		Greenfinch	3		Swift	1
Robin	13		Goldfinch	3		Song Thrush	1
Blackbird	13		Wren	2		Blackcap	1
Woodpigeon	9		Jackdaw	2		Long-tailed Tit	1
Great Tit	5		Chaffinch	2		Goldcrest	1
House Sparrow	5		Rook	2		Starling	1
Collared Dove	4		Mallard	1		Jay	1
Dunnock	3		Moorhen	1		Carrion Crow	1
Magpie	3		Herring Gull	1		Bullfinch	1

Robin Attrill confirmed breeding of 18 species in his Rookley garden including Blackcap, Goldcrest and Bullfinch. He also reported an absence of House Sparrow!

Failed or reduced Blue Tit nesting attempts were reported from several observers.

An occupied Swift box was recorded by Sandie McAndrew.

Tim Henderson watched a female Sparrowhawk attempting to remove young House Sparrows from Swift nestboxes.

Jillian Williams erected a multiple-occupancy nest box for her few House Sparrows and had great success with three boxes being used.

## Observer Notes

“Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May. What a day, firstly whilst having lunch in the garden, we were astonished to see a male cuckoo fly into the garden and land by the bird feeders, unfortunately it was soon chased off by Blackbirds. Later in the afternoon a friend popped in to say she had just seen a Red Kite overhead and sure enough there it was flying over our garden and the adjoining farm field by the cycle path.” Fiona & Chuck Eccleston

“20<sup>th</sup> June. Every year Herb Robert seed heads are a magnet for Bullfinches and this day the family systematically went along a 24ft stretch of the garden stripping seed heads”. Val Gwynn

“1/8/21 House Sparrows nesting in Swift Boxes. Female Sparrowhawk at said Swift Boxes clinging to edge of opening trying to take young. May have had success in the past as the female is ever present around the area”. Tim Henderson

## Selected Mammals

Number of gardens visited:

Red Squirrel 17, Fox 23, Badger 15, Hedgehog 6, Dormouse 2.

It was good to see an increase in Hedgehog records.

## Many thanks to the following contributors:

R, Attrill, D. Bennett, D. Biggs, G. Biggs\*, M, Buckley, R. & J. Burgess, T. Butchers, C. Burland, B. Davies, C. & F. Eccleston, N. & V. Edwards, G Fruin, J. Garrett, P. Gaylor ,J. Gloyn, V. Gwynn, D. Hale, T. Henderson, S. Hughes, D. & M. Hunnybun, I. Jolliffe, T. Jolliffe, C. Kershaw\*, B. Lawter, K. Lover, J. Lucas, K. & A. Marston, M.& L. Mackrill, S. McAndrew, D. & S. Norris,,N. Pearce, D, Potts, M. Richardson, H. Searle, S. Simmonds, T. Snudden, T. Sztypuljak, T. Tearle, J, Thwaites Bennett, M. Tuck, A. Twyman, K. Welfare, R. Wendes and J. Williams.

A special welcome to the new contributors marked \*

J. Gloyn

**Due to the cancellation of the Group's AGM in October 2021 the Officer's Reports are included in this Newsletter.**

**Chairman's Review of 2020 – David Hunnybun**

- Due to Covid-19 only three field meetings were possible, January – March
- Robin Attrill resumed his role as Bird Recorder
- Martin Hunnybun resumed his role as Bird Report Editor
- In May a Brown Booby was recorded aboard a ship off Bembridge on the 8<sup>th</sup>
- Due to restrictions the Breeding Bird Survey did not take place
- Sadly we have lost six members since the last AGM – Michael Spiers, Tony Morgan, Peter Shanks, Sue Neale, John Cole and Margaret Burnhill
- Arguably the highlight of the year was a juvenile Pallid Harrier at Brading Marsh from September 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>
- Siskin movement during September/October was well over twice that of any previous annual autumn total
- 92% of members now receive their Newsletter electronically
- The Going Birding Website once again increased in popularity with statistics for the year showing 65,425 visits (14% up) by 6,819 users with a total of 223,614 page views (13%). There were 162 registered users who submitted 9,199 records (46% up)

**Membership Secretary's Report – David Hunnybun**

- The Membership at the end of 2020 stood at 136
- Six members did not renew their Membership for 2020
- During 2020 there were no new Members
- 89 Members paid their subscription by Standing Order
- 13 new Members have so far joined for 2021

**Treasurer's Report for 2019 – David Hunnybun**

- Subscription receipts for 2019 were marginally less than 2018
- Bird Report sales increased
- Bird Report printing increased due to extra copies
- Another set of ISBN numbers was required for this and future Reports
- The Statement of Accounts was audited by Wayne Petty

**Treasurer's Report for 2020 – David Hunnybun**

- Subscription receipts were slightly higher
- Bird Report printing covered the 2017 and 2018 Reports
- Newsletter printing costs reduced considerably due to commencement of email circulation, which in turn reduced postage costs

## Newsletter Editor's Report – David Hunnybun

- Three Newsletters were produced during 2019, numbers 82, 83 and 84
- Three Newsletters were produced during 2020, numbers 85, 86 and 87
- Jon Sparshott compiled the Recent Report analysis for all six issues
- James Gloyn produced the Garden Bird Survey and the Breeding Bird Survey results for both years
- Jim Baldwin again supplied well documented and informative details on BTO activities
- Mark Buckley formatted all Issues in quick turn round time
- Members are welcome to supply articles for inclusion. It would be nice to see some new names a contributors

## Bird Recorder's Report and Rarities Committee Report - Robin Attrill

Please find below a summary of key activities, relating to the last 12 month period and looking forward.

- **Inputs to 2020 Bird Report production:**

Collated 2020 records were submitted to the bird report section writers on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (target date 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021). A very few late records have been collated and will be incorporated into the draft report. The aim is to get the collated records out by end of 1Q in the following year as a matter of routine for future years. Timely submission of records is a dependency for this to happen....

- **Rarities Committee updates:**

A summary of British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and Joint Local Rarities Committee (JLRC) activities is detailed below. When submitting reports to either of these committees the value of photo/video and, where relevant, audio supporting materials cannot be overestimated.

- **BBRC update:**

Here is a summary of some more recent BBRC decisions relating to Island reported sightings:-

- 2018
  - Frigatebird Sp. – Seaview, 13<sup>th</sup> October - Not proven
  - Snowy Owl – near Burnt Wood, 20<sup>th</sup> February – Not proven
- 2019
  - Siberian /Stejneger's Stonechat (species group) – Culver 24<sup>th</sup> October – Not accepted
  - Pied/Eastern Black-eared Wheatear – Shanklin, 5<sup>th</sup> July (photographed) – Accepted as one of this species pair
- 2020
  - Brown Booby – off Bembridge, 9<sup>th</sup> May (photographed) - accepted

- **JLRC update:**

- Most reports continue to be photo-documented and are fast-track accepted
- For non-photo documented records please submit descriptions for relevant 'asterisk' records – see list at the back of the latest Bird Report
  - A few additions/deletions take place each year due to changes in the BBRC list, and changes in local frequency of occurrence
  - Please contact myself for a copy of the template for submissions
- Anonymous, ex Birdguides, records in BirdTrack remain a problem which I continue working on to resolve.

Outcomes of record reviews will be published periodically in the newsletter, commencing November 2021, ahead of inclusion in annual bird reports.

## Bird Recording Update:

### Record submission for 2021

- As per usual periodic submission is encouraged to assist with newsletter summaries – you do not have to wait until the end of the year. Please submit all of your 2021 records by the end of January 2022:
  - BirdTrack, the GoingBirding website and eBird are all suitable for this!
  - Please use either BirdTrack/GoingBirding/eBird if you can, or, failing that, the preference is the templates available in MS Word and MS Excel from the bird recorder
    - If you use Excel or Word tables a reminder please to....
      - **place just one record per line**
      - **do not merge cells**
      - **put dates in just one cell**
  - *Paper records, PDF submissions and text word docs remain acceptable but are not ideal as they require manual transcription*
- When submitting your records please continue to highlight population changes, especially any impacts of cold spells, habitat changes etc.
- 
- As in previous years please continue to submit detailed locality information for scarcer breeding birds, including....
  - Cetti's Warbler and Dartford Warbler (please be **very** specific re locations)
  - Stonechat, Nightingale, Peregrine, Raven (include grid refs)
- Please submit all records for key species including:-
  - all records for Turtle Dove and Grey Partridge
  - all breeding season records for Garden Warbler and Willow Warbler
- Rare Breeding Birds - as always please continue to be very mindful with respect to reporting breeding season records of RBB panel species, e.g. Goshawk and Red Kite and Little Ringed Plover, on any public social media forum.

### Summary

Local recording took a significant hit in 2020 due to Covid-19 but thankfully 2021 has seen a return to better coverage. Looking ahead it is particularly important that the local breeding bird surveys are run to the full in 2022 and beyond, as these remain our most valuable local resource regarding breeding bird population trends.

Hopefully we will be able to hold an AGM next spring at which I will be able to go through the above and deal with any areas of concern. In the meantime if you have any questions about any aspect of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

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