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Scarce and rare birds in Wales 2023



WELSH BIRDS RARITIES COMMITTEE

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Editor: Jon Green

Front cover photos:
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Bottom Left: Alder Flycatcher by Richard Brown
Top Right: Bay-breasted Warbler by David Astins
Bottom Right: Canada Warbler by Nick Bristow.

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Introduction

This is the twenty third annual report of the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee (WBRC), formerly the Welsh Records Panel (WRP) covering the occurrence of rare and scarce bird species in Wales in 2023. The table below summarises the number of scarce and rare birds recorded in Wales over the past ten years in terms of their historical occurrence:

	0-1 records	2-5 records	6-10 records	11-20 records	21-50 records	51-100 records	100+ records	Total
2023	6	9	6	12	31	34	104	202
2022	3	5	9	10	36	36	78	177
2021	2	7	8	21	15	16	62	131
2020	1	5	4	15	16	37	72	150

2023 was notable for three events. First, the influx of Alpine Swifts into the UK in April, secondly the large number of large Shearwaters off the southwestern approaches in July & August (51 Corys and 22 Greats), but mainly for the unprecedented arrival of Nearctic landbirds in September, bringing four new birds to Wales (Alder Flycatcher, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler and Canada Warbler). three Black and White Warblers (2nd – 4th Welsh records) and a Red-eyed Vireo (10th Welsh record). There was also the first Welsh Baikal Teal and Black-winged Kite (first for Britain), along with a Thrush Nightingale and Song Sparrow, both second Welsh records, on Bardsey in the spring.

This report follows the taxonomy, names and systematic sequence of the new British Ornithologists Union (BOU) British List (2023) and includes all those records assessed by the WBRC along with those accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) (shown in italics). Descriptions of scarce species were received from the County Recorders for all Welsh Counties and occasionally directly from the observers. The report includes many digital photos and WBRC welcomes the submission of any photographic evidence, but this ideally should be accompanied by a written description. Occasionally the Panel also receives descriptions of other bird species to assess from County Recorders and Editors - these are not detailed in this report. WBRC would like to thank everyone who submitted records, all the photographers, the County Recorders, Reg Thorpe, Phil Bristow and everyone else who has helped in the assessment process.

Rare and scarce bird species (assessed by WBRC) are defined as those occurring on average 5 times or fewer annually in Wales. WBRC consider species with an average of < 5 records per year over the previous 10 years. To be removed from the list of species considered by WBRC there has to have been an average of >5 occurrences per year in the previous 10 years with 5, or more, in 5 of those years and a combined total of more than 100 individuals. Any taxon that meets, or is close to, these criteria, will be considered for removal. The committee will also consider other factors such as population trends, distribution changes and identification issues. On occasions, if the rarity of a species increases nationally, BBRC takes over assessment of species previously considered by WBRC. As of 1st January 2023, the full list of species which WBRC consider is as follows:

Taiga Bean Goose	Tundra Bean Goose	American Wigeon	Green-winged Teal
Surf Scoter	Smew	Alpine Swift	Corn Crake
Spotted Crake	Red-necked Grebe	Stone-Curlew	Black-winged Stilt
American Golden Plover	Temminck's Stint	White-rumped Sandpiper	Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper	Red-necked Phalarope	Lesser Yellowlegs	Ring-billed Gull
Caspian Gull	White-winged Black Tern	White-billed Diver	Wilson's Petrel
Cory's Shearwater	Great Shearwater	Night Heron	Purple Heron
Golden Eagle	White-tailed Eagle	Montagu's Harrier	Black Kite
Rough-legged Buzzard	Bee-eater	Red-footed Falcon	Red-backed Shrike
Woodchat Shrike	Golden Oriole	Short-toed Lark	Shore Lark
Red-rumped Swallow	Greenish Warbler	Arctic Warbler	Dusky Warbler
Radde's Warbler	Pallas's Warbler	Barred Warbler	Icterine Warbler
Melodious Warbler	Marsh Warbler	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Nightingale
Bluethroat	Red-flanked Bluetail	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Penduline Tit
Citrine Wagtail	Olive-backed Pipit	Serin	Common Redpoll
Arctic Redpoll	Common Rosefinch	Corn Bunting	Cirl Bunting
Ortolan Bunting	Rustic Bunting	Little Bunting	

As of 1st Jan 2024, Little Auk will be added to the WBRC list.

Scarce races are considered on the same basis (i.e., all those occurring on average 5 times or fewer annually). However, it is acknowledged that the status, and in some cases the identification, of some races, is very uncertain. The WBRC welcomes well-documented submissions of races that observers consider to be scarce in Wales. Through this process we hope to establish the occurrence of these forms, but submissions will probably in most cases require detailed descriptions, photographic evidence and in some cases biometrics or a specimen.

BBRC have requested submissions of rare races (see Kehoe, C. 2006) and the WBRC will forward any claims that are considered sufficiently rare for BBRC to assess. Examples of races for which the WBRC would like to receive submissions are:

Black Brant Goose – *nigricans*
Iceland Gull – *kumlieni*
Lesser Whitethroat – *blythi*
Jackdaw – *monedula*
Snow Bunting – *nivialis*
Black-tailed Godwit – *limosa*
Grey-headed Wagtail - *thunbergi*
Robin – *rubecula*
Bullfinch –*pyrrhula*
Bar-tailed Godwit – *tamyrensis*
Coal Tit – *ater*
Dunnock - *modularis*
Redpolls – *islandica / rostrata*

Any subspecies not on the Welsh List and which does not meet the BBRC criteria as a rare subspecies should also be submitted to WBRC.

The report follows the format introduced last year and that printed in "Birds of Wales" (2021). Where two records probably relate to the same bird then only one is added to the total, while if two records are only possibly of the same bird, then both are added into the totals. In some cases, the figures suggest changes in occurrence in the last twenty years, although it should be noted that some apparent declines may be due, to some extent, to a decline in the habit of observers submitting descriptions or some apparent increases in improved identification criteria and better optics or cameras. Status comments have come from Birds of Wales 2021 and the main references of rarities and scarcities in the UK come from the BBRC report (Bacon et al 2023) and British Birds Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain (White & Kehoe 2020).

The names that appear after individual records are of those observers who sent in descriptions (if the finder is known then his /her name is included in italics) and are included here to show recognition of the time taken to produce a description and the observer's commitment to the nationally recognised system of rare bird record assessment, unless there is a specific request that their name is not shown.

The Panel consists of seven voting members, in 2023 they were: Steve Stansfield, Bardsey (Chairman), Richard Brown – Skokholm & Pembroke, Steve Culley – Anglesey, Chris Jones – Denbigh, Simon Murray – E & W Glamorgan, Paul Roberts E. Glamorgan, Robin Sandham – Caernarfon and a non-voting Secretary, Jon Green - Ceredigion. The longest serving member of the Panel retires, and a new member is elected annually by the Welsh County Recorders and the Council of the Welsh Ornithological Society. Potential candidates are proposed by County Recorders, anyone who is interested should contact their County Recorder or the WBRC Secretary.

Descriptions, photos, videos and any other relevant evidence of WBRC species should be submitted as soon as possible after the sighting (WBRC description forms are available from the Secretary / County Recorders and downloadable from the WOS Website), preferably via the County Recorder or alternatively direct to the **WBRC Secretary: Jon Green, Crud yr Awel, Bowls Road, Blaenporth, Cardigan. Ceredigion. SA43 2AR. (01239 811561).** The Panel are keen to receive any descriptions or photographs in electronic form at wrp@birdsin.wales.

As of August 2021, results of circulation are posted on X / twitter: http://mobile.twitter.com/_wbrc

Details of records submitted, but not found acceptable or currently pended for further information are found in Appendix 1.

Systematic list of accepted records in 2023

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis* *Corhwyaden Asgell-werdd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010–9	2020-2	2023
49	0	0	2	2	5	6	21	10	2	1

Breeds in North America, winters from southern US south to Argentina. Regular vagrant to Britain. Rare vagrant to Wales with a total of 50 accepted records, all of males.

Anglesey: male, RSPB Cors Ddyga 17 Feb (J. Oates, photo below left), assumed same individual as at Inland Sea in December 2022.

Pembroke: male, Marloes Mere 28 Nov – 3 Dec (PK Grennard *et al*, photo below right T. Evans).





American Wigeon *Maraca americana* *Hwyaden Wyllt*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010–9	2020-2	2023
25	1	0	0	2	2	6	7	5	1	1

This species breeds widely across northern North America and winters in the USA, Central and northern South America. The annual number of British records increased to 15-20 during 1990-2018, with the majority seen in Scotland and northern England (White and Kehoe 2020). It is a rare visitor to Wales and shows no sign of becoming more frequent. Several individuals are presumed to have returned annually and visited the same or neighbouring sites in successive years.

Anglesey: male, “storm” type, RSPB Cors Ddyga 2 Nov (I. Hawkins, photo M. Jones), then at Cefni Estuary 8-12 Dec.



Baikal Teal *Sibirionetta formosa* *Corhwyaden Baical*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeds E. Siberia from Yenisey River east to Anadyr & Kamchatka, north to 70'N, although breeding range believed to have contracted in recent years. Most winter South Korea and lower Yangtze River, China, with small numbers regular E. & S. Japan.

Brecon:
2CY+ male, Llangorse Lake 9 – 18 Jan (J. Lewis *et al*).
Photo by K. Noble.

First record for Wales and the eleventh for the UK.
An account of the finding of this bird is at page 36 of this report.



Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* *Hwyaden Benddu Fechan*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	1	3

Breeds from central Alaska through eastern Canada to Hudson Bay and south to Wyoming in the USA. It winters along both coastlines of North America, as well as Central America and the Caribbean. A rare visitor to Wales with only twelve records.

Pembroke: 1CY female, Bosherston Lakes 31 Oct – 1 Nov (C. Pickett *et al*).
1CY female, Penberi Res., St. Davids, 27 Nov – 18 Mar 2024 (S. Jones, C. Ryland *et al*).
1CY male, Bosherston Lakes, 8 Dec – 10 Feb 2024 (C. Pickett *et al*).



Bosherston October – November by C. Pickett.



Penberi by L. Lomax.



Three Greater Scaup with one Lesser Scaup, Bosherston, December by C. Pickett.



Same bird as left at Bosherston February by B. Haycock.

Smew *Mergellus albellus* *Lleian Wen*

Total 1967-2023	1967-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
367	23	35	75	129	67	34	2	2

Breeds central Europe, mainly a winter visitor to the UK. Added to WBRC list as of 1st Jan 2018 after many years of declining occurrence in Wales. The table above shows the number of Smew reported in the Welsh Bird reports since 1967, when the first Welsh Bird Report was published.

Gwent: male, River Usk from 22 Jan – 4 Feb (V. Picken et al, photo T. Chinnick), photo below left on X by T. Salkeld.

Anglesey: male, Llyn Cefni, 4 – 19 Mar (T. Williams, photo M. Jones below right).





Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* *Mor-hwyaden yr Ewyn*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-09	2010-9	2020-2	2023
84	0	0	0	4	16	15	15	24	9	1

Breeds northern North America, winters on the Atlantic coast, south to North Carolina.

Denbigh: Up to three returning males, Pensarn – Old Colwyn, from 25 Nov 2022 – 21 Apr 2023. Returning male there from 25 Oct (A. Davies, M. Pollard *et al*). Photo below by M. Curtin.

Anglesey: male, Benllech, 28 Jan – 6 Mar (M. Jones, photo R. Evans).



Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* *Gwennol Ddu'r Alpau*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
60	4	2	6	5	10	9	6	3	4	11

Breeds discontinuously around the Mediterranean, Turkey and east as far as the Himalayas.

E. Glamorgan: Penarth, 18 Mar (RJ Thomas), probably the same Lamby Lake, 19 Mar (L. Whitaker, photo taken from video by J. Wilson).
Possibly a different individual at Porthcawl, 20 Mar (DC Bolt, photo NP Roberts, P. Bristow), photo below left by NP Roberts.
Two Whitchurch 2 Apr (J. Aggleton).

Flint: Talacre / Gronant 22 – 29 Mar (photo J. Willis, N. Ecclestone) and at RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands, 30 Mar (per G. Jones).

Ceredigion Aberystwyth 22 Mar (S. Cox, M. Potter).

Denbigh / Caernarfon: two RSPB Conwy / Conwy / Llandudno / Llandudno Junction 28 Mar – 1 Apr (photo of one of them, below right by M. Jones).
Possibly a different bird RSPB Conwy, 14 Apr (J. Riley), also seen Bardsey 18 Apr, see below.

Caernarfon: Bardsey, 1 Apr (O. King).
Bardsey 18 Apr (EJ Stansfield, SD Stansfield), thought to be the same individual that was seen at RSPB Conwy due to dirty underparts.

Pembroke: St. Davids, 4 May (A.Zenner, T. De Winter).





The largest influx ever reported in Wales: compare this to a total of only seven in the whole of the UK in 2022. With such an influx it is impossible to say for certain how many birds were involved. WBRC has taken on board the views of locals as to whether records are linked.

Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* *Rhedwr yr Moelydd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
52	8	1	1	6	7	11	4	10	2	2

Its breeding range extends from southern and eastern England east to Central Asia and south to North Africa.

Pembroke:
St. Davids Airfield 10 Apr (N. Collins), photo right.

E. Glamorgan:
Sker 22 Apr (N. Donaghy).



Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* *Hirgoes Adeinddu*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
31	1	2	2	0	4	6	2	3	3	8

The nominate subspecies is found in central and southern Europe, Central and southern Asia and Africa. It is a scarce but increasing migrant to Britain and has bred on several occasions in England. While the number of records has increased dramatically in England, from an average of six a year in the 1990s to 26 in the 2010s, there has been no such increase in Wales.

Flint: Talacre, 4 May (D. Johnson).

Denbigh & Flint: two, River Clwyd, 25 Apr (J. Hickerton *et al*), photo below left.

Carmarthen & Gower: two Loughor Estuary 23 Apr (photos C. Brewer, P. Larkin).

Carmarthen: three, WWT Penclacwydd 28 Apr (L. Geddes, I. Griffiths *et al*), different birds to those at Loughor. Photo below right by T. Evans.





American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* *Corgwtiad Aur*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
30	0	0	0	0	2	0	9	10	4	5

Another long-distance migrant, the American Golden Plover breeds on costal tundra from extreme NE Siberia, east across N Alaska and Canada to Baffin Island. It migrates over the western Atlantic to wintering grounds in southern South America.

Anglesey:
Adult, Cemlyn 9 – 12 May (H. Smith *et al*), photo opposite.

Pembroke:
Adult, Skokholm 17 – 22 & 25 – 28 July (R. Brown, R. Dobbins *et al*), photo below right by R. Brown.

1CY St. Govan's Head, Castlemartin, 8 Oct (T. Phelps).

Adult, Gann 15 – 30 Oct (J. Williams, DJ Astins *et al*), photo below right by DJ Astins.

Ceredigion:
Adult, Ynyslas, 23 July (S. Cox). Possibly the Skokholm bird.







Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* *Corgwtiad Aur y Mor Tawel*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-59	1960-69	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1

Breeds in northeast Russia and western Alaska and is a long-distance migrant, wintering in north-east Africa, southern Asia and Australasia.

Gower & Carmarthen: 2CY+, Loughor River, Burry Inlet 13 June (B. Sewart).

The only previous records were of an adult at Oakenholt, ***Flint***, 2-4 Aug 1990 and a 2+CY at Malltraeth Cob, ***Anglesey*** 27-29 July 2021. There have also been two records of Pacific / American Golden Plover, an adult at Oakenholt 23 July 1989 and another at Cefn Sidan, ***Carmarthen*** on 26 July 1987.

Broad-billed Sandpiper *Calidris falcinellus* *Pibydd Llydanbig*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010 –19	2020 -22	2023
12	0	0	2	1	2	1	1	4	0	1

Breeds in northern Fennoscandia and Arctic Russia and migrates through eastern Mediterranean, Black and Caspian Seas to winter around the Arabian Peninsula and Indian Ocean coasts.

Anglesey:
2CY+, Inland Sea 31 May – 2 June (M. Sutton, L. Sutton *et al*). Photo right by M. Jones.



Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* *Pibydd Temminck*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
67	3	1	4	3	9	10	15	15	6	1

The Temminck's Stint, which breeds from northern Scandinavia eastwards across northern Siberia and winters in west and central Africa and south Asia, is a regular but rare passage migrant to Wales.

Gwent: Goldcliff 18 May (P. Bristow).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis* *Pibydd Bronllwyd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
77	0	0	1	10	20	7	10	21	7	1

Breeds in the High Arctic of Alaska and northwest Canada, and in the far east of Siberia, migrating overland to winter in northern Argentina and Uruguay (HBW). There has been a large increase in the numbers recorded in Britain over the last 50 years, increasing from an average of 15 a year in the period 1990-99, to 41 a year in 2010-19 (White and Kehoe 2020). Numbers have also increased in Wales, where it may be the commonest trans-Atlantic wader, since many of the Pectoral Sandpipers reaching Britain are thought to breed in Western Siberia.



Pembroke:
Dale Airfield, also seen at the Gann, 9 – 15 Sept
(S. Coates-Smith, DJ Astins *et al*). Photo right by DJ Astins.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* *Pibydd Cain*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
161	0	2	15	22	23	14	34	32	10	9

Breeds in Siberia and northern North America, and winters in southern South America, southeast Australia and New Zealand.

Anglesey: RSPB Cors Ddyga, 29 Apr (photo J. Riley), top left.
RSPB Cors Ddyga, 29 Aug – 27 Sept (per RSPB Warden, A. Williams, photo M. Jones).
Alaw Estuary, 13 Sept (M. Sutton).

Carmarthen: WWT Penclacwydd, 30 – 31 May (B. Beck *et al*), photo top right by L. Gravett.

Gwent: NWR Goldcliff, 13 – 20 July (photo H. Gregory).
NWR Goldcliff, 7 - 19 Sept (P. Bristow, B. Thomas, P. Lansdown, photo M. Creasser).

Caernarfon: Morfa Madryn, 21 Sept (Rhys Jones, photo C. Jones).
Penrhos floods, Caernarfon, 25 Sept (RI Thorpe).

Gower: Castell Du, Burry Inlet, 22 Sept (B. Stewart), photo bottom right.







Spotted Sandpiper *Acitis macularius* *Pibydd Brych*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010–9	2020-2	2023
13	0	0	1	5	3	0	2	1	0	1

Breeds in North America from western Alaska east to Newfoundland and south to California, Texas and North Carolina. Some birds winter in the coastal USA but most winter in Central and South America.



E. Glamorgan:
1CY, Sully Island Causeway, 10 Sept (M. Meehan), photo right.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* *Llydandroed Gyfgoch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
72	12	10	9	4	5	3	12	12	4	1

Pelagic during non-breeding season. Breeds northern Europe. A rare breeder in northern Scotland, the Western Isles and Shetland.

Anglesey: RSPB Cors Ddyga, 26 Sept-7 Oct (I. Hawkins *et al*).

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* *Melyngoes Bach*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
31	0	1	3	2	2	2	6	10	2	3

Lesser Yellowlegs breed in northern North America and winters from the USA south to southern South America. Dropped off BBRC's list onto WBRC's as of 1st January 2019.



Pembroke:
Llangwm 24 – 27 Aug (A. Bookless, P. Baber).
Skokholm 20 Sept (R. Dobbins *et al*).
Presumed same as above, Gann 22 – 25 Sept (C. Lewis, S. Dare *et al*), photo right by DJ Astins.

Gwent:
Goldcliff, 15 – 18 Sept (photo on twitter M. Creasser).

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus Philadelphia* *Gwylan Bonaparte*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
32	1	0	0	0	2	5	7	11	6	0

Breeds widely across N North America from W and C Alaska through Canada to James Bay. Winters locally on ice-free rivers and lakes in N USA, and S along both coasts of USA to Mexico and the Caribbean.



2021 Denbigh:
2CY+, Rhyl Golf Course 28 Sept (M. Duckham, A. Humphries-Jones *et al*).

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans* *Gwylan Caspia*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	13	1

Resident in much of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea. It also seasonally breeds from the Black Sea, across the north of the Caspian Sea to eastern Kazakhstan, and on the central Asian steppes. More recently the species appears to be spreading westwards in Europe and now breeds in small numbers in The Netherlands. Wintering grounds include the coast of south-west Asia (breeders from the steppes), the north-west coast of Africa, and around the Arabian Peninsula up to north-west India.

Pembroke: colour-ringed adult X290 Gann 8 Jan (DJ Astins).
2CY Nevern Estuary, Newport 18 Mar (G. Mee), then Teifi Estuary 4 – 5 Apr (B. Hughes *et al*).
The adult X290 was ringed in Germany. It has previously been seen at Llanrhystud, Ceredigion in March 2017, Nevern Estuary, Pembroke in July 2017, Gann in November 2020 and Gann November & Castlemartin December 2021.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni* *Gwylan Kumlien*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020 -2	2023
15	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	7	2	2

Breeds in Arctic Canada and winters on the east coast of North America from Labrador to New England, and also around the Great Lakes.

Pembroke: adult, Fishguard Harbour 13 Apr (L. Gravett, M. Gee).
2CY Teifi Estuary 15 Oct & 23 Nov (J. Green, B. Hughes).





Admittedly, the second record (photo on right) is at the paler end of the spectrum, but it fits WBRC criteria, as in there is contrast between the outer and inner primaries, due to the outer primaries having darker outer webs and paler inner webs.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* *Mor-wennol Ylfinbraff*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010–19	2020-22	2023
22	0	0	2	3	3	2	3	7	0	2

This species has a broad global but discontinuous population, from the coasts of North and South America, northern Africa and southern China, to the steppes of Central Asia. In Europe, it breeds primarily around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, particularly in Spain, but there are small colonies on the North Sea coasts of Germany and Denmark. European birds winter in coastal West Africa, south to the Gulf of Guinea.

Flint:
3CY+, RSPB Burton Mere, 19 Apr (L. Castell, G. Jones), also seen on the Cheshire side and at Idle Washland, Nottingham three days later. Photo below left by J. Gilbody.

Carmarthen & Gower:
3CY+, Morfa Bacas, Burry Inlet 7 June (B. Stewart), photo below right.





Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* *Mor-wennol Gawraidd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
15	0	0	1	2	3	3	1	1	3	1

This global seabird breeds on five continents, but in Europe is limited to the north coast of the Black Sea and the coasts of the northern Baltic Sea. The latter population winters in West Africa, as far south as the Gulf of Guinea. A total of 331 were recorded in Britain up to the end of 2020, about five a year on average over the last 30 years (Holt et al. 2021).

Carmarthen: 3CY+, Burry Port Harbour, Llanelli, 11 May (M. Harper).

Bridled Tern *Onychoprion anaethetus* *Mor-wennol Ffrwynog*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99	2000-09	2010–19	2020-22	2023
3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

West Indies & Atlantic population breeds Banc d'Arguin, Mauritania, Pagalu, Gulf of Guinea & widely throughout Caribbean, south to offshore N. Venezuela. Other populations breed from Red Sea & Arabian Gulf locally through Indian Ocean to SE China, Philippines & N. Australia. Northern populations migratory, wintering at sea to south of breeding areas.

Caernarfon: 2CY+, Hafan-y-Mor 6 – 9 Aug (J. Slattery *et al*), photo below by R. Sandham.

Previous Welsh records included a dead bird found at Three Cliffs Bay, Gower 11 Sept 1954 and one in the tern colony at Cemlyn, Anglesey, 1 – 23 July 1988.



Wilson's Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* *Pedtryn Drycin Wilson*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
22	0	0	0	0	2	7	4	0	5	4

Regarded as one of the world's most abundant seabirds, with a population of 4 – 10 million breeding pairs.
It breeds on islands in the southern hemisphere. Outside the breeding season it occurs in all the world's oceans.

Pembroke: Off Strumble Head, 9 July (L. Gravett).
Off Strumble Head, 3 Aug (L. Gravett, P. Bristow, M. Creasser).
Celtic Deep pelagic, 9 Aug (photo P. Leyshon).

Ceredigion: off New Quay 13 Aug (F. Fitzpatrick), photos below. The first record for Ceredigion.





Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris borealis* *Aderyn Drycin Cory*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
175	0	0	1	3	29	41	25	17	8	51

Breeds on Berlengas Islands (West Portugal) west to the Azores and south to the Canary Islands. It is pelagic outside the breeding season, most often seen off British and Irish coasts in late summer. Cory's Shearwaters are scarce passage migrants off the Welsh coast. The similar Scopoli's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* which breeds on Mediterranean islands and Cape Verde Shearwater *Calonectris edwardsii* from the Cape Verde Islands have never been recorded in Wales.

Pembroke: Off Strumble Head: One 16 July (L. Gravett, G. Mee *et al*.), four 29 July (M. Creasser), four 30 July (L. Gravett, G. Mee, M. Creasser *et al*.), three 31 July (L. Gravett, P. Bristow *et al*.), one 3 Aug (L. Gravett, P. Bristow, M. Creasser) and one 5 Aug (G. Mee).

Off St. Govan's Head, singles: 29 July, 30 July, 1 Aug (T. Phelps).

Off Skokholm: eight 31 July (R. Brown *et al*.), eight 1 Aug (R. Brown *et al*), three 12 Aug (R. Brown, G. Eagle) and one 19 Sept (R. Dobbins).

From Celtic Deep pelagics: two 9 Aug (C. Hurford), two 23 Aug (DJ Astins) and one 3 Sept (DJ Astins).

Caernarfon: one off Bardsey, 30 July & three on 31 July (SD Stansfield) and singles 22 Aug & 17 Sept (E. Turner).

Ceredigion: two off Mwnt, 1 Aug (R. Jones, M. Creasser) and one 8 Aug (R. Dobbins),

Anglesey: two off Cemlyn, 3 Aug (A. Davies per County Recorder).

Influx into south-west approaches in late July – August, linked to warmer water, suitable currents and increased food availability. Compared to the numbers reported off Cornwall and Scilly Isles (reports of thousands), the Welsh total is quite small, even so this year saw more Cory's reported in Welsh waters than ever before.



Cory's Shearwater, Celtic Deep pelagic 9 Aug by B. Jones.



Great Shearwater, Celtic Deep pelagic, 23 Aug by DJ Astins.

Great Shearwater *Ardenna gravis* *Aderyn Drycin Mawr*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-19	2020-2	2023
316	0	1	3	5	51	111	61	57	5	22

Late summer / autumn passage migrant that breeds in the south Atlantic. Pelagic during non-breeding season: completes clockwise migration around Atlantic Ocean occurring in British and Irish waters mainly during late summer and early autumn.

Pembroke: Off Strumble Head: one 30 July (L. Gravett, G. Mee *et al*) and two 5 Aug (G. Mee, M. Creasser *et al.*).

Off Skokholm: one 31 July (R. Brown) and two 31 Aug (R. Brown).

From Celtic Deep pelagics: two 9 Aug (C. Hurford), 12 on 23 Aug (DJ Astins, S. Murray) and one on 3 Sept (DJ Astins).

Caernarfon: One off Bardsey 31 July (SD Stansfield).

As with Cory's, influx into south-western approaches.

Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* *Crëyr Nos*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
63	10	0	2	2	4	18	7	10	0	10

In Europe it occurs as a summer visitor to wetlands across continental Europe to the south of Britain and Fennoscandia.

E. Glamorgan: Cors Crychydd Reen, Lamby 30 - 31 Mar (O. Yasseen, per D. Spittle).
Adult, Cosmeston Lakes, 15 May (GN Smith *et al*), photo below left.

Pembroke: adult, St. Brides, 7 Apr (photo S. Powell), photo below middle.
Up to three south Pembroke, site withheld, 8-21 Apr, two until 1 May and one until 11 May (photos T. Phelps), photo below right.

Carmarthen: 2CY, Dafen Pond, Llanelli, 27 – 29 Apr (A. Kirkhouse).

Caernarfon: Afon Wen 7 May (RI Thorpe).

Ceredigion: Adult and 2CY+, RSPB Ynyshir 3 June (M. Carter).

Additional record
2019 E. Glamorgan: 2CY Hensol Lake, 1 July (C. Wickham).





Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* *Crëyr Porffor*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
82	5	0	3	14	15	8	8	19	5	5

Dispersive migrant, from warmer temperate to tropical zones, southern Europe.

Pembroke: Castlemartin Corse, 6-11 May (C. Pickett *et al*), photo below.

E. Glamorgan: Cwm Bach Wetlands, 29 Apr – 3 May (N. Wroblewski, identification by MJ Bevan).
Kenfig, 25-26 Aug (N. Donaghy).

Carmarthen: WWT Penclacwydd, 20 - 21 May (RHA Taylor, photo R. Cleobury).

Caernarfon: Llanengan, 3 Apr (NJ & V Phillips *et al*, photo RI Thorpe).



Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* *Barcud ysgwydd-ddu*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Nominate race breeds across S & W Europe and Africa.

Montgomery: 1CY+, Glanmule, 18 Apr (L & M. Owen).

First accepted record for Britain. Presumed to be the same bird was subsequently seen at Brayden Marshes, Horsey & Trimingham, ***Norfolk***, 17 – 20 July, Felixstowe Ferry King's Fleet, ***Suffolk***, 20 – 21 July and at St. Osyth Marsh, ***Essex***, 21 – 22 July. An account of the finding of this bird is at page 38 of this report.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* *Boda Llwydwyn*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1

Breeds mainly in southeast Europe and Central Asia. It winters mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia but breeding records in Finland are now regular.

Pembroke: 1CY, Skokholm 23 Nov (R. Brown, G. Eagle *et al*).
Carmarthen: 1CY female, as above, WWT Penclacwydd, Carmarthen, 10 Dec – 14 Apr 2024 (B. Beck *et al*).
***Gower*:** 1CY female, as above, Crofty, 30 Nov (F. Ryan, per G. Harper), then Llanrhidian Marsh 30 Nov into 2024.

All this year's records are thought to relate to the same bird. The previous records came from neighbouring Skomer, ***Pembroke*** April – May 2013, Connah's Quay, ***Flint***, September 2017 and Skokholm September 2022.



2CY, Skokholm by R. Brown.



1CY at Penclacwydd by D. Ord.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* *Barcud Du*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
31	0	0	0	3	3	3	5	10	6	1

Breeds throughout continental Europe, most in Spain, France and Germany, with smaller populations in all, except maritime NW Europe and Scandinavia. To E, breeds European Russia to Kazakhstan and C Siberia. Nominate race winters Africa and NW Indian subcontinent. Other races are resident or dispersive in sub-Saharan Africa, Indian subcontinent, E and SE Asia and Australia.

Caernarfon:
Bardsey, 6 Sept (E. Betteridge).



White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* *Eryr Mor*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
22	18	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	1

Widely distributed across northern Europe and Asia, from Greenland to the Pacific Ocean. European strongholds are Norway and Russia. Over 120 pairs breeding in Scotland following the reintroduction program there. There has also been a similar programme of reintroduction into Ireland. More recently the Isle of Wight project has released individuals carry tracking devices. The totals in the table above do not include the Isle of Wight birds or those which are suspected of being escapes.

Meirionnydd:
Cwm Prysor, Trawsfynydd, 6 Dec into 2024
(G. Elias, J. Shrimpton *et al*).
Photo opposite J. Shrimpton.

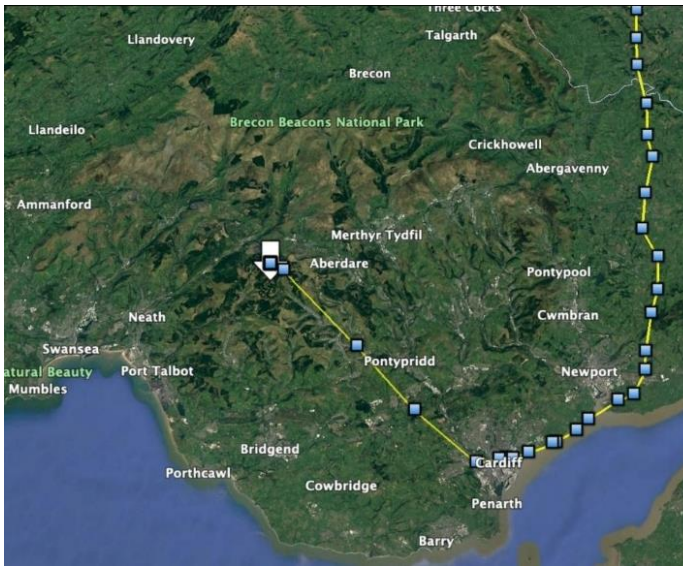


The three previous modern era records were of a 2+ CY on Skomer, ***Pembroke*** November 1993, a 1CY at Cors Caron, ***Ceredigion***, November 1997 and an immature over Dolwyddelan ***Caernarfon,*** March 2008.

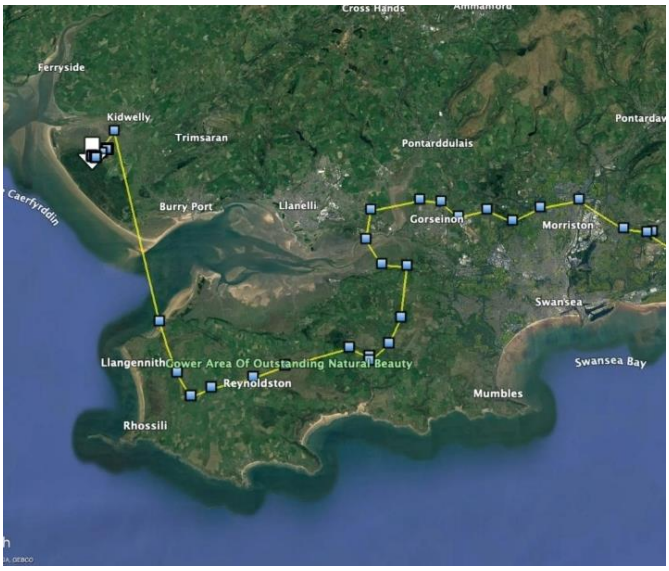
There have also been two recent, presumed escaped individuals at Castlemartin, ***Pembroke***, 16 Aug 2016 and at Fedw Fawr, ***Anglesey*** 13 June 2021.

Two satellite tracked, Isle of Wight re-introduction scheme birds were recorded in Wales this year, although neither was actually seen by observers.

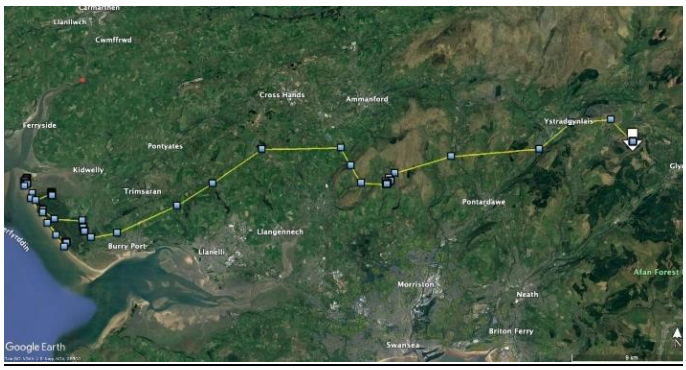
G487 in March.



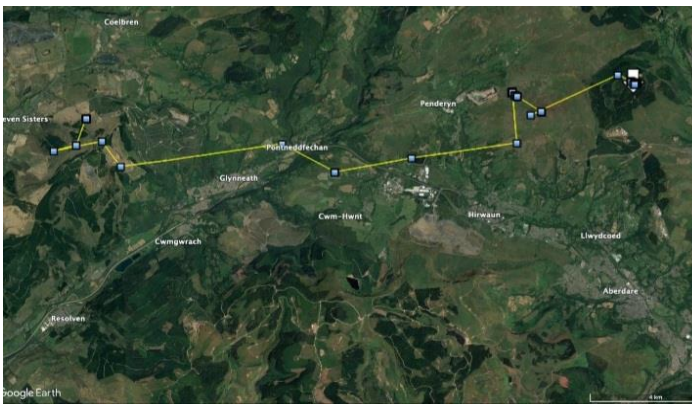
21 March



22 March



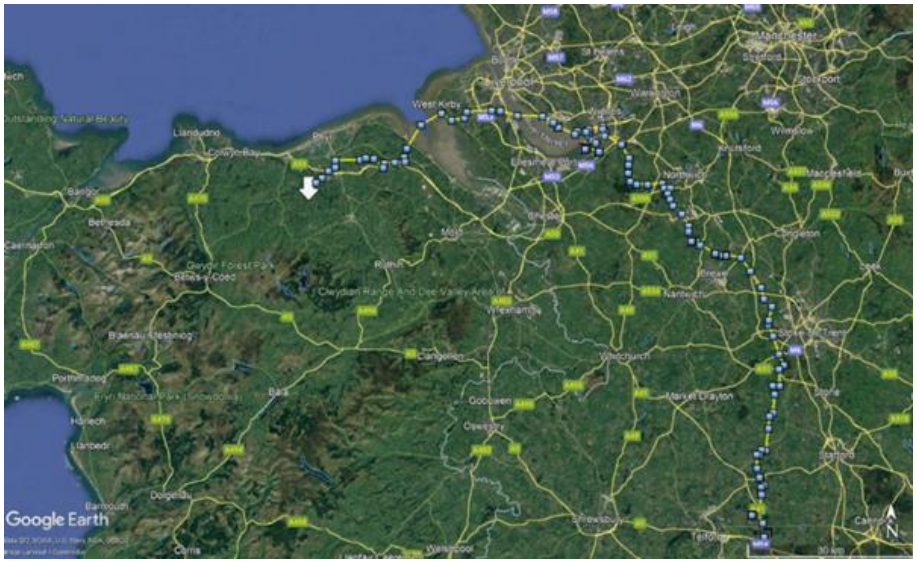
23 March

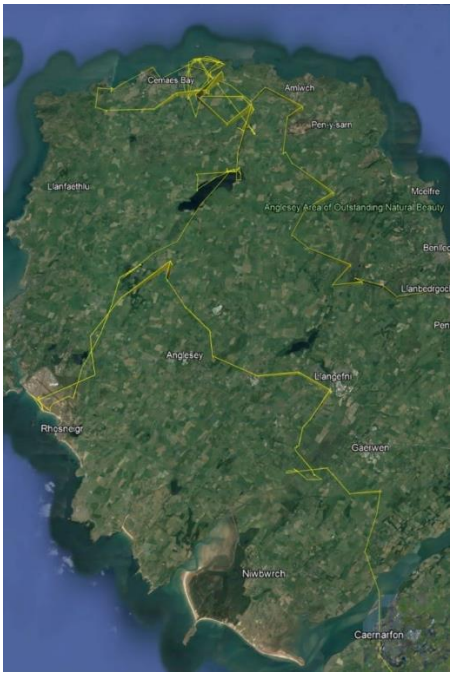


24 March

Then four days within the Mynydd-y-glog mountains in Hirwaun before flying east back towards the Isle of Wight.

G542, 3CY female, fledged in 2021, satellite tracked over North Wales, 23 June – 3 July.





Above on 23 June, then moved to Anglesey, right, 25 June – 3 July.

Previous Welsh records of satellite tracked Isle of Wight birds:
Ystrad Mynach & Rudy, ***E. Glamorgan*** April 2020, G816 Llangorse, ***Brecon***, April 2022 and G318 Whixall Moss, ***Denbigh***, August 2022.

Alder Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum* *Gwybedog Y Gwern*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeds S Canada from S British Columbia E to Nova Scotia, & NE USA from Michigan SE to New Jersey. Winters S America, mainly Columbia to Peru, but E to Venezuela and S to Argentina).

Pembroke:
1CY male, trapped and ringed on Skokholm 20 – 29 Sept (D. Woollard *et al*), DNA confirmed identification, photo by R. Brown.

First record for Wales and only the third for UK.
An account of the finding of this bird is at page 39 of this report.



Empidonax flycatcher *Empidonax sp.*
Caernarfon: 1CY+, Pen Cilan, Abersoch, 23 - 24 Sept (NJ & VE Phillips).
Submitted and accepted as an Empidonax species, the brief views meant that a firm identification was wisely not attempted by the observers.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* *Cigydd Cefngoch*

Total 1967-2023	1967-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
173	14	23	22	33	37	29	12	3

Breeds throughout most of mainland Europe. Table above shows data from 1967 onwards, with those from 1991 assessed by WBRC.

Pembroke: male, trapped & ringed Skokholm 28 May (R. Brown *et al*), photo below left.

Anglesey: male, Rhoscolyn, 2 June (A. Spottiswood, T. White), photo below right by M. Jones.

female, South Stack 5 – 6 June (S. Dodd).





Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* *Fireo Llygatgoch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
10	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1

Trans-Atlantic vagrant breeding from Canada south through the central and eastern USA and wintering in northern South America.

E. Glamorgan:
1CY+, Sker 21 Sept (N. Donaghy *et al*).
Photo right by N. Donaghy.

One of 23 recorded in the UK this year.
Of the previous nine records, three were on Bardsey ***(Caernarfon)*** and two on Skokholm ***(Pembroke)***, with singles at Aberdaron & Porth Meudwy ***(Caernarfon)***, Porth Clais (***Pembroke)*** and South Stack, ***Anglesey***.



Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* *Euryn*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
228	22	4	10	37	27	51	43	25	6	3

Scarce visitor, usually as spring overshoot, from Mediterranean Europe. Breeds NW Africa throughout Europe from Mediterranean north to southern Sweden & southern Finland, Russia, Turkey & Caucasus to NW Iran. Winters equatorial & southern Africa. A scarce summer visitor to Wales, recorded in all counties and particularly in Pembrokeshire. Most of the records fall in May and June as is to be expected with a species overshooting its continental breeding areas.

Pembroke: female / imm. Skokholm 3 May (R. Brown), photo below left.
Singing 2CY male, St. Ann's Head 31 May (D. Spittle *et al*).

Caernarfon: female/imm. Bardsey 31 May (P. Massey, photo E. Betteridge), photo below right.

Additional record:

2002 *Anglesey*: Singing, immature male, Pen-y-parc Woodlands, Beuamaris 19 May (S. Culley, T. Kearney, P. Brown).





'Nordic' Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* *Jac-y-do Llychlyn*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
29	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	6	2

Individuals showing features of the Nordic form *C. m. monedula*, include:

Anglesey:
two, Valley 1 – 8 Nov (L. Carter, S. Culley). Photos right by S. Culley.

The panel is not certain whether these records relate to genuine Scandinavian birds or whether the plumage characteristics they show are within normal variation for British Jackdaws. Therefore, the panel requests as many photographed records as possible to try to solve this dilemma.





Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* *Ehedydd Llwyd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
39	0	2	3	3	3	5	13	8	1	1

This migratory lark breeds in southern Europe, North Africa, Central Asia and parts of the Middle East, on open dry plains and arable fields.

Pembroke:
one summered Dale Airfield 29 May – 6 Sept (L. Gregory, A. Bookless *et al*).
Photo right by L. Gregory.



Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis rufula* *Gwennol Dingoch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
37	0	0	0	3	7	4	6	12	4	1

Breeds Iberia, southern France and northwest Africa; Balkans east to Japan and south to Sri Lanka; central Africa. The Western Palearctic population winters in Africa, south of the Sahara. A very rare migrant to Wales with 37 accepted records. Within the UK as a whole, numbers of accepted records increased steadily during the 20th Century, particularly since 2000, resulting in this species dropping from the BBRC's list onto the WBRC's.

Denbigh: RSPB Conwy 11 – 12 Apr (T. Gravett *et al*), photo below by M. Jones.



Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* *Telor Bonelli y Gorllewin*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
17	1	2	2	0	1	0	2	7	1	1

Breeds in western Europe as far east as Austria and as far north as France / Belgium. Winters along the southern edge of the Sahara.



Pembroke:
1CY trapped and ringed Skokholm 23 Aug (A. Corvin-Czarnodolski, R. Dobbins *et al*). DNA confirmed identification.

Pallas' Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus* *Telor Pallas*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
53	0	0	0	1	7	11	11	19	3	1

A scarce migrant to Wales, which breeds in the coniferous taiga forests of southern Siberia east of the Ural Mountains and in mixed forest as far south as Mongolia. It winters in southeast China and adjacent countries. Not surprisingly, the majority of British records are from the east coast of England and Scotland. Far fewer make it to the west.

Flint: Talacre 31 Oct (D. Johnson, photo below on X by M. Pollard).

Additional Record

2016 Anglesey: Breakwater Country Park, 16 Oct (KG Croft, N. Troup).





Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* *Telor y Gwerni*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
33	0	1	0	2	6	4	6	9	4	1

A small population breeds in south and east England, however the main breeding grounds are in Eastern Europe. A rare vagrant to Wales with 33 accepted records. All records are assessed by WBRC. Within the UK numbers of records appear to be stable or showing a slight decline, with annual means declining from 53 in the 1990s to 44 in the 2010s.



Anglesey:
Hen Borth, 10 – 15 Sept (M. Sutton).

Melodious Warbler *Hippolais polyglottal* *Telor Pêr*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
236	0	16	51	30	39	27	26	33	10	4

Breeds in open deciduous woodland and scrubby habitats in northwest Africa and western Europe and winters in Africa, south of the Sahara (HBW). In Britain it occurs more frequently in the south and west and is a scarce migrant to Wales, with almost twice as many records as Icterine Warbler, which tends to occur farther east and north.

Pembroke: Trapped and ringed Skokholm, 18 Aug (R. Dobbins, W. James *et al*), photo below left.
Kete, St. Ann's Head, 14 – 30 Sept (G. Mee *et al*), photo below right by DJ Astins.

Caernarfon: Bardsey, 18 - 23 Aug (E. Betteridge, SD Stansfield).
Porth Meudwy 21 Sept (A. Goodwin).





Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* *Telor Aur*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
129	0	2	20	14	26	30	16	12	8	1

This species replaces Melodious Warbler in northern and eastern Europe, and consequently occurs less frequently in Wales. It breeds in woodland from northeast France to western Siberia and north to Fennoscandia and winters in Africa south of the Sahara. It is a scarce migrant to Wales, where records increased during the second half of the 20th Century but have fallen since a peak in the 1990s. These trends mirror those for the rest of Britain, with an annual mean of 139 during 1990-99 but 78 in 2010-18 (White and Kehoe 2020).

Denbigh: RSPB Conwy, 7 June (T. Gravett, T. Wallis *et al*).

Barred Warbler *Curruca nisoria* *Telor Rhesog*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-59	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
118	1	2	20	6	13	18	22	29	5	2

The Barred Warbler nests in scrub and woodland across the farmed landscape in Europe, east of a line from Denmark to the Adriatic, through southern Russia and Central Asia to Mongolia. The southern edge of Fennoscandia is the northern limit of the breeding range. It winters in a fairly discrete area of east Africa, centred on Kenya. It is a scarce autumn migrant to Wales, although the number of records has increased during the last 30 years. Such a pattern has been evident across Britain, where the annual number of records was 84% higher in 2010-18 than in 1968-89 (White and Kehoe 2020b). It is believed that those found here are part of extended post-juvenile dispersal.

Anglesey: 1CY Holyhead Mountain 12 Oct (D. Shepherd), photo left.
Different 1CY bird, Holyhead Mountain 19 & 22 Oct (T. Gravett, D. Shepherd *et al*), photo right.





Siberian Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca blythi* *Llwydfron Fach*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0

Breeds in north central Siberia and Kazakhstan.

2016 Caernarfon: trapped and ringed Bardsey 28 Oct. DNA has only recently been analysed, confirming identification.

Western Subalpine Warbler *Curruca iberiae* *Telor Brongoch y Gorllewin*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1

Race *iberiae* breeds Iberian Peninsula, S France and NW Italy, race *inornata* breeds Morocco, N. Algeria, Tunisia & NW Libya. Winters Sahel from Senegal to Sudan.

Pembroke:
2CY male trapped and ringed Skokholm 24 June. DNA confirmed identification
(R. Brown, G. Eagle *et al).*

Previous Welsh records include individuals on Bardsey 18 Apr 2009 & 29 Apr 2011 and at Uwchmynydd, 19 – 30 Apr 2013, all ***Caernarfon***, and in ***Pembroke***: 2CY female Skomer, 20 May 2018, 2CY female Skokholm 8 May 2020 and another 18 July 2021.



Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Curruca cantillans* *Telor Brongoch Dwyrain*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-99	2000-09	2010-19	2020-22	2023
21	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	12	2	1

There are two subspecies: the nominate form that breeds in Sicily and southern Italy, and *C.c. albistriata* that breeds in the very northeast of Italy, the Balkans and western Turkey. Both are presumed to winter in the eastern part of the Sahel. There were 111 records in Britain up to end of 2020 (Holt *et al.* 2021).



Caernarfon:
2CY male, Bardsey 30 May (E. Betteridge, P. Massey, SD Stansfield *et al*).

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* *Bronlas Smotyn Coch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
54	1	2	8	9	6	10	9	6	2	1

The subspecies *svecica* breeds in northern Europe, northern Asia and Alaska and winters in north Africa and south Asia, while c*yanecula* breeds in Spain, central Europe from eastern and northern France and Netherlands east to Carpathian basin, north-west Ukraine and Russia. The majority of Bluethroat records in Wales, identified to subspecies, were Red-spotted *svecica*. White-spotted *cyanecula* individuals are now assessed by BBRC.



Pembroke:
1CY/female Skokholm 12 Oct (G. Eagle *et al*).

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* *Eos Fraith*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeds C & E Europe from S Scandinavia & Baltic countries to Romania & Ukraine, and E through temperate Russia to S Siberia. Winters E Africa, from S Kenya to Zimbabwe.

2022 Caernarfon: 2CY+, Bardsey 2 June (SD Stansfield, J. Hickerton *et al*).

The only previous Welsh record was of a 1CY, found dead on Bardsey, 20 Sept 1976.





Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* *Eos*

Total 1967-2023	1967-9	1970-9	1988-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
128	21	39	21	26	8	8	3	2

The Nightingale breeds in a broad band across much of central and western Europe, south to northwest Africa, and east in a scattered distribution to northwest China. In Britain it is now restricted to southern and eastern England, south of a line from the Severn to the Humber. It occupies a variety of habitats, including scrub and open woodland with thickets and dense patches of vegetation. Nightingales are migratory, wintering in tropical Africa south of the Sahara.

Nightingale is now recorded as a scarce migrant in Wales, though there have been no ringing recoveries to indicate the likely origins of passage birds. Since 1967 at least 128 individuals, including a few breeding birds, have been recorded in Wales.

Pembroke: Skomer 13 May (M & T Wallen).
E. Glamorgan: singing, St. Mellons, Cardiff 16 – 26 May (D. Manley).

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* *Cynffonlas Ystlysgoch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	1

Breeding range extends through the cool temperate forests of Russia to northern Japan and northeast China, with a small but expanding population in Fennoscandia.

Montgomery:

Dyfnant Forest, Vyrnwy, 29 Sept (S. Sharpe).



Previous Welsh records came from Bardsey, ***Caernarfon*** October 2007 & 2015, Skomer, ***Pembroke*** October 2010, Great Orme, ***Caernarfon*** October 2016 and Wern Ddu, Caerphilly, ***E. Glamorgan*** January – February 2017, immature / female Skokholm ***Pembroke*** 11 Oct 2021., Bardsey ***Caernarfon*** 29 Oct 2022 and Coed-y-Wenallt, ***E. Glamorgan*** 16-18 Oct 2022.

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* *Tinwen Isabelline*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
8	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	0

Breeds in western and central Asia. Winters from north-east Africa to central India. An extremely rare vagrant to Wales with eight accepted records, all since 1997. A total of 51 UK records to end of 2019, on average one or two a year.

2020 ***Anglesey:***
2CY+ male, Mynachdy, Carmel Head 30 Aug (M. Sutton). Photo right by M. Sutton.



Grey-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava thunbergi* *Siglen Benlwyd*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
20	0	0	0	3	5	5	1	3	2	1

Breeds in Fennoscandia, European Russia and northwest Siberia and winters in sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-east Asia.



Caernarfon:

male Morfa Nefyn 1 May (S. Roulston).

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* *Llinos Goch*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
181	2	0	3	7	23	41	41	45	14	5

Breeds central Europe, spring and autumn migrant to UK. Rare passage migrant to Wales with a total of 165 individuals recorded in the Principality. There has been a large increase in accepted records over the past fifty years, mirroring an increase in UK records, but numbers appear to be stable for the last thirty years (annual mean of around 150 records a year over the last three decades in the UK).

Pembroke:

F/imm. Skomer 14 Sept (DJ Astins).
Two f/imm. trapped & ringed Skokholm 1 Oct (R. Dobbins, W. James *et al*), photo right.
F/imm trapped & ringed Skokholm 6 Oct (R. Dobbins).



Caernarfon:

F/ imm. Bardsey 15 Oct (SD Stansfield, E. Betteridge).

Serin *Serinus serinus* *Llinos Frech*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
37	4	2	1	6	3	5	10	3	2	1

Resident in southern Europe and France, and in the breeding season extends its range into the rest of continental Europe west of Russia.

Anglesey: sound recording, South Stack 27 May (A. Clarke).

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* *Bras yr Yd*

Welsh Total 2004-2022	1967-9	1970-9	1988-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
28	-	-	-	-	4	2	21	1

The Corn Bunting, the largest European bunting, is resident or a summer visitor across Europe except Scandinavia, in north Africa and parts of the Middle East. WBRC will only now adjudicate on records away from the small breeding population around Bettisfield, ***Denbigh.***

Caernarfon: Great Orme 29 Apr (M. Hughes).

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis* *Bras Gyddfwyn*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-2	2023
6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	1

The White-throated Sparrow breeds across much of Canada, excluding the far north and west, and spends the winter in the southern USA (HBW). There were 50 records of this extremely rare trans-Atlantic vagrant in Britain to 2019 (Holt et al. 2019), with an average of one a year over the last 30 years.

Caernarfon: 2CY+ male, Bardsey, 4 June (J. Tragen, E. Betteridge, SD Stansfield *et al*) Photo below by Steve Stansfield.

The five previous Welsh records were on Bardsey, ***Caernarfon***, 1CY 15 Oct – 7 Nov 1970 & 11 June 2010, at sea off Point Lynas, ***Anglesey*** 26 May 2009, Cwrtnewydd, ***Ceredigion*** 24 June 2020 and in a Porthcawl garden, ***E. Glamorgan*** 25 June 2022.



Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia* *Bras Persain*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-19	2020-2	2023
2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeds throughout most of North America. Birds breeding in Canada and the north central USA migrate south in autumn to the southern states of the USA and northern Mexico.

Caernarfon:
2CY+, Bardsey 9 May
(E. Betteridge, SD Stansfield et al).

The only previous Welsh record was on Bardsey 5- 8 May 1970. Tenth record for UK.



Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* *Boblinc*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1

Breeds widely across S. Canada & N. USA, south to NE California & New Jersey. Winters Peru to S. Brazil & N. Argentina.

Pembroke: 1CY+, Skokholm 21 Sept (R. Brown *et al*, his photo below).

The previous Welsh records came from Skokholm 13 -14 Oct 2000 and in 2010, one at Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir, ***Gower*** 20 Sept and one on Skomer, ***Pembroke*** 8 & 11 Oct. This year's Skokholm record was one of three in the UK, the rest were on the Isles of Scilly.



Black and White Warbler *Mniotilta varia* *Telor Brith*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3

Breeds in central and eastern North America. Some migrate to Florida, Baja California and the Caribbean. Others go as far as northern South America to spend the winter.

Caernarfon:
1CY female, Bardsey 21 Sept (E. Betteridge, SD Stansfield *et al*), photo below left by SD Stansfield.
1CY female, Bardsey 23 Sept (SD Stansfield, EJ Stansfield *et al*), photo below right by SD Stansfield.
1CY male, Bardsey 27 Sept – 1 Oct (E. Betteridge, SD Stansfield *et al*).

The only previous record was on Skomer, ***Pembroke*** 10 Sept 1980. Three on Bardsey this year out of a total of five in the UK this autumn; the others were on Scilly and in Cornwall.





Magnolia Warbler *Dendroica magnolia* *Telor Magnolia*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Breeds from central British Columbia east to Newfoundland and south in USA to Minnesota, Wisconsin & Michigan to central West Virginia, NE Pennsylvania and NW New Jersey. Migratory, winters from C. Mexico through central America to Costa Rica and West Indies.

Pembroke: 1CY St. Govan's Head 20 – 26 Sept (T. Phelps *et al*.), photo below left on WhatsApp by M. Coller.
Gower: 1CY Baglan Bay, Britton Ferry, 24 – 29 Sept (G. Lewis *et al*), photo right from BirdGuides by H. King.

The first records for Wales and only the 3rd and 4th for Britain, the previous records were on St. Agnes, Scilly 27 – 28 Sept 1981 and on Fair Isle, Shetland 23 Sept 2012. An account of the finding of the ***Pembroke*** bird is at 40 of this report and the ***Gower*** bird is at page 42.





Bay-breasted Warbler *Dendroica castanea* *Telor Bronwinau*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Pembroke: 1CY, Ramsey 21 – 26 Sept (A. Perry, N. Stephens, DJ Astins *et al*.), photo below by G. Jepson.

The first for Wales, and only the second for Britain, the previous, a 1CY male, was at Land's End, Cornwall on 1 Oct 1995. An account of the finding of this bird is at page 43 of this report.



Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis* *Telor Canada*

Total	Pre 1950	1950-9	1960-9	1970-9	1980-9	1990-9	2000-9	2010-9	2020-22	2023
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Breeds C Canada to SE Canada & NE, E, NC USA. Winters Panama to N South America.

Pembroke: 1CY male, Elegug Stacks, Castlemartin, 23 - 25 Sept (T. Phelps *et al*.). Photo below by G. Jepson. The first for Britain. An account of the finding of this bird is at page 44 of this report.



APPENDIX I - List of records that were deemed NOT PROVEN

Many of these records were not accepted because WBRC/BBRC were not convinced, on the evidence before them, that the identification was fully established. Only in a very few cases were the Panel satisfied that a mistake had been made.

Species	**County**	**Site**	**Date**
Caspian Gull 2CY	***Pembs/ Ceredigion***	Teifi Estuary	26 Dec 2023
Tufted Puffin	***Caernarfon***	Porthoer	29 Sept 2023
Gull-billed Tern	***Ceredigion***	Llyn Brianne	2 June 2022
Cory's Shearwater	***Ceredigion***	New Quay	4 Aug. 2023
Black Kite	***Anglesey***	Penmon	26 July 2023
Gyr Falcon	***Denbigh***	World's End	13 Apr 2022
American Cliff Swallow	***E. Glamorgan***	Sker	22 Sept 2023
Marsh Warbler	***Pembroke***	St. Davids	29 June 2023
Black-throated Thrush	***Caernarfon***	Porth Meudwy	23 Oct 2023
American Robin	***Caernarfon***	Porthdinllean Golf Course	20 Apr 2022
Bluethroat	***Gwent***	Goldcliff	5 Nov 2023
Iberian Wagtail	***Caernarfon***	RSPB Conwy	6 May 2022
Serin, pair	***Brecon/Gwent***	Grwyne Fawr	9 Apr 2023

APPENDIX II - List of records that are still in BBRC/BOU circulation

Subalpine Warbler sp.	***Pembroke***	Skomer	30 May 2021
Red-throated Pipit	***Anglesey***	South Stack	1 Oct 2023
Great-tailed Grackle	***Pembroke***	Nolton Haven	26 – 29 Oct 2023

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White, S. and Kehoe, C., (2024), Report on scarce migrant birds in Britain in 2022, Part 2: non-passerines *British Birds* 117: 358-384, Part 2: passerines. *British Birds* 117: 412 – 437.

Unprecedented arrival of Nearctic landbirds in Wales, September 2023

The article in British Birds *(2024 -117, 292-307)* describes in detail the biggest single arrival of Nearctic landbirds ever recorded in Britain and Ireland, with around 99 individuals of 27 species (Lees *et al*). It links the mass overnight departures of migrants from New England and Nova Scotia (on the 14th & 15th September) with the quick -moving transition of ex-Hurricane Lee across the Atlantic reaching the European coastline on the 19th, when the first birds were discovered. In Wales, the first discoveries were made the following day and continued for another week.

20th Sept	Alder Flycatcher on Skokholm. Magnolia Warbler at St. Govan's.
21st Sept	Black and White Warbler on Bardsey. Red-eyed Vireo at Sker. Bobolink on Skokholm. Bay-breasted Warbler on Ramsey.
23rd Sept	2nd Black and White Warbler on Bardsey. Canada Warbler at Castlemartin.
24th Sept	Magnolia Warbler at Baglan Bay.
27th Sept	3rd Black and White Warbler on Bardsey, photo right by SD Stansfield.



Lees, A.C., Farnsworth, A., Curley, S.R. and Gilroy J.J., 2024, An unprecented arrival of Nearctic land birds in Britain and Ireland in September 2023 *British Birds 117, 292-307.*

First records for Wales in 2023

BAIKAL TEAL *Sibirionetta formosa* *Corhwyaden Baical*

A male at Llangorse Lake, ***Brecon***, 9 – 18 Jan. The following is an account of the finding of the bird.

A male bird was located from the hide at 11.18hr. by John Lewis, while he was counting Teal through the scope (unusually high numbers of 500+ were present, as the cold weather had brought birds which would normally be more dispersed around other sites, onto the lake). It was sitting in a resting fashion, with neck relaxed, (but awake) on the water amongst about 20 Eurasian Teal, which were part of a group of c. 200 about 150m NE of the slipway in front of the hide. All, including this bird were floating side-on to the observer and facing west into the wind. Picked up first by its vertical flank stripe and then identified by the following features:

- *slightly bulkier and bigger bodied than Eurasian Teal, with back higher off the water and with a bigger, more rounded head;*
- *prominent vertical white stripe between the pinkish-tinged breast and grey flanks;*
- *three prominent dark and white scapular plumes drooping over and contrasting with the plainer pale grey flanks and brownish upper body;*
- *distinctive face and head pattern, with a strong white supercilium, contrasting with the dark crown, pale buff-yellow face in front of and below the eye and crescent-shaped greenish-grey ear coverts and rear of the head and neck (the latter occasionally flashing bright green in the intermittent sunlight), neat dark grey bill;*
- *shorter, vertical white stripe at the rear of the flanks and contrasting with the black under the slightly raised tail*

The observer noted that this bird did not seem as brightly or strongly patterned on the head as the adult male he had seen at Greylake, Somerset in February 2022, lacking a prominent vertical black stripe in the middle of the yellow face and no visible white curved stripe separating the lower half of the neck from the breast (although the latter may have been hidden due to the resting position of the bird). An immediate thought was that this might be a first-winter bird, particularly since the 'green' colour on the head often appeared to look dark grey, but this fact seemed to be contradicted by the adult features on the rest of the body, particularly the scapular plumes.

Once identity was clear, the observer phoned Andy King, the Brecknock County Recorder at 11.28 and was joined by the latter at 11.50 (Observer 2).

During this 20-minute period and for several minutes after, the bird remained in the same location, mainly side-on, resting with the small group of Eurasian Teal, enabling further detailed observation:

- it was noted that the eye and its immediate surroundings were black with a small 'teardrop' of black feathering reaching down into the yellow face;
- at times the resting bird showed a small amount of white in the area of the eye (nictitating membrane?);
- the 'crescent' at the rear of the head which appeared dark grey in dull light showed bright green and irridescent in the sunlight and at certain angles;
- once, the bird turned tail-on for a couple of minutes, showing the black under-tail coverts and prominent white stripes down each side of the nape, contrasting with the dark central feathers (a reddish chocolate-brown) and coming together at the back of the neck;
- the bird also floated face on for a brief period, revealing this same pattern of white stripes from each corner of the dark grey bill and up each side of the forehead and crown, contrasting with the dark brown centre and also the pink-tinged breast;
- side-on and floating at rest, the white supercilium was strongest above and just behind the eye, becoming narrower above the lores and towards the top of the bill;
- due to the resting position of the bird, with the neck hunched up the feather pattern at the base of the neck was not visible;
- the speculum was not visible under wing coverts and drooping scapular plumes;
- the upper body (mantle and back) feathers could not be seen fully viewed but appeared to be a mid-brown colour.

Shortly after 12 noon, the bird twice stretched up and raised the front of its body above the water and also raised its wings for a few moments, revealing a whiter belly and prominent white axillaries and white on the middle of the under wing (greater coverts) contrasting with a dark fore (lesser coverts) and rear (flight feathers) of the underwing.
About two minutes later the bird flew off from the water with a small group of Teal (6-7 birds) revealing the upper wing pattern in flight. It could be distinguished from the Teal, even at some distance by the contrasting pattern on the secondaries, white at the rear next to dark band and a generally darker upper wing (primaries and coverts).

The group landed at the edge of the reedbed on the NW fringe of the lake just west of the sailing club at a distance of 600m. Even at this distance, the bird could be relocated on account of its bulkier profile and overall darker appearance than the Eurasian Teal, the vertical white stripe at the front of the flanks and the pale yellow-buff on the lower face. It was slightly larger than the accompanying Teal, but smaller than the few Wigeon that were also present at the reedbed edge.

The bird was observed resting at the reedbed edge until just before 12.30 hr when it took off again with a large party of Teal which then landed in the middle of the lake, halfway between the observers and the north shore reedbed (300m distant). Observer 1 (John Lewis) had to leave at this point, but the bird was relocated subsequently by Observer 2 (Andy King) who observed it until 13.30hr.

John Lewis

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS – OBSERVER 2:

As County Bird Recorder (Breconshire) living only 10 minutes away, I was delighted to get John's call whilst he was still viewing the bird. I also knew the significance of what he had found, both a Wales-first and a County-first! I went straightaway – I knew John Lewis as a capable birder, but I did not know his 'form' or familiarity with Baikal Teal. On arrival, he pointed the bird out to me, relatively close to the hide at Llangasty. I studied the features and agreed with his description above. I too believe this to be an adult male but was rather surprised how pale the head colouring was – although at certain angles the green head was very noticeable in spells of brighter sun. I would add that I estimated the Baikal Teal to be bulkier than Eurasian Teal with which it was associating by approximately 15%. General colouration, head pattern and double vertical stripes on the flanks were diagnostic. There had been a significant influx of Teal since my last count from that hide, December WeBS count, then of only 30 birds (typical here with the degree of flooding), to now 540 birds. All the Teal were jumpy, but at least that allowed a total count to be made of several groups flying about.

I had not been there long before the Baikal Teal flew up and dropped to the distant lake margins at the edge of a reedbed where most of the Teal were feeding. Even at 500-600 metres, having seen where the Baikal Teal landed, I was able to trace it moving through the scant reeds after John left – the vertical bright white shoulder-stripe was evident as it swam about there, contrasting with the equally-bright horizontal stripe of most of the male Eurasian Teal.

Andrew King – photo below by K. Noble.



BLACK-WINGED KITE *Elanus caeruleus* *Barcud ysgwydd-ddu*

An adult at Glanmule, ***Montgomery***, 18 Apr, the first for Britain. The following is an account of the finding of the bird.

Driving to work at 10:25, the bird was noticed (from the car) flying relatively low over a cereal field. A stream was also present nearby with adjacent Alder trees. A pull-in was available immediately adjacent to the bird; the car was parked and the bird observed with binoculars. The bird was observed initially relatively low over the field (foraging), before being harassed by a crow and slightly gaining height to around 20m above ground level (agl).

Following this, we exited the car and Laura attempted to obtain some images/video with the equipment we had available. I retrieved my scope from the back of the car and observed the bird through scope (hovering and in flight at varying heights) and binoculars. After three minutes of observation, during which time the bird continued foraging/hovering and occasionally dropped in height it drifted off to the west at around 10m agl, roughly following the course of the Afon Miwl. The bird was first observed at 10:25, with the final observation at 10:32. Viewing conditions were perfect throughout. It did not land or perch.

Initial impression when driving was of a pale, small (noticeably smaller than the adjacent Carrion Crow) and compact raptor behaving in an atypical way (brief periods of hovering) of any species typically encountered in this area (I complete many hours of breeding bird surveys in this location annually). Observations through binoculars immediately confirmed identification. During a recent trip to Morocco I (MO) had seen Black-winged Kite (on 28 March 2023) and as such this species unique appearance and characteristic flight style from fresh in my memory.

When observed through optics the overall impression was of a small raptor with relatively short/blunt tail, large head very pale (almost white underside). Dark wing tips were clearly visible on the underside, with the black being relatively substantial, extending through all primaries. This contrasted with the almost white remaining plumage. Underside of tail/vent area was all white.

The back of the bird was light grey, with dark carpal patches, with a largely white head. Through scope the dark area around the red eye were clearly visible.

I believe (although I am not 100% certain) that the secondaries on the underwing were pale (i.e. the bird was of the nominate race). Clear views of the underside through scope at close range did not indicate the presence of any rings/jesses.

The bird was active in flight, hovered with regularity throughout the period of observation, with occasional glides. When hovering wingbeat rate changed, recalling both Kestrel and Common Buzzard at different times.

***Martyn & Laura Owen**, photos below from images on iphone.*





ALDER FLYCATCHER *Empidonax alnorum* *Gwybwdog y Gwern*

One on trapped and ringed on Skokholm, ***Pembroke*** 20 – 29 Sept. The following is an account of the finding of the bird.

20th September 2023 saw myself, my girlfriend, Mollie, and our friend Christa, wake up to bright, clear skies which was in contrast to the day before where we felt the effects of Hurricane Lee, coming across from the Atlantic. We birded across the Island in excitement in the hope of finding any American birds but never actually thinking it would happen!

At around 1500 hours we headed towards the 'Gap' trying to catch up with a Wryneck that had been frequenting in the area for over a week. As we got there, I saw a bird flit up to the rocks, I raised my bins and within a second it flew out of view behind the rocks. In that one second view, I only had one thought in my head which was an image of the Acadian Flycatcher that was seen in Dungeness, Kent. I hadn't actually seen this bird in person, but I saw the countless pictures that were posted on that day. Apart from the Dungeness bird, I had no experience of Empidonax flycatchers, so I radioed through to the wardens straightaway in order to get more experienced eyes on it.

My friends hadn't seen the bird and had never heard of the flycatcher, so I did a quick google search to show them and I was massively relieved that it looked similar to the bird I had just seen. Fortunately, it is a quick 5-minute walk from the Observatory, so it wasn't long before everyone arrived. About 15 minutes after my initial view, it finally popped up on top of bracken and showed well for everyone where it continued to show on and off for the rest of the evening. Good views were had in gorgeous evening light with excellent photographs obtained. These were shared via Twitter and the general consensus was that it was an Alder Flycatcher.

Fortunately, it had survived the night and was seen the next day, eventually being trapped in a mist net. It was ringed and all biometrics recorded which all pointed to Alder. A loose feather and deposit were sent to Martin Collinson and Team at Aberdeen University where they confirmed, by its DNA, that it is an Alder Flycatcher. The bird was confirmed to be a male based on its wing length. Age is unknown.

D. Woolard - photo below by R. Brown.



MAGNOLIA WARBLER *Dendroica magnolia* *Telor Magnolia*

1CY individual was found at St. Govan's Head, ***Pembroke***, 20 – 26 Sept, the following is an account of the finding of the bird:

I returned to my home county of Pembrokeshire on Tuesday evening ahead of going to my brother Joe's graduation ceremony at the weekend, and with the anticipation of a few evening seawatches after work over the next few days.

For most of Wednesday I was working from home but 5pm soon rolled around and it was time to get out birding! My destination: St. Govan's Head, for an evening's seawatch. I pulled into the car park at St Govan's at about 5.45pm and by the time I'd got to my seawatching spot on the headland it must have been about 6pm. Ex-hurricane Lee had just passed through the UK. I knew it had the potential to produce American landbirds, but my interest was on the south-westerly winds and the prospect of some seabird passage! A walk around did cross my mind though, so I planned to squeeze in 30 minutes for a look around the headland, valley and bushes before it got dark. But this plan was flimsy, and if the seawatching was good I would stay there instead.

The seawatching was dire. The wind was strong but there was very little moving. Only a handful of Gannets offshore, and the occasional flurry of Kittiwakes went through. Looking back, I'm glad the seawatching was rubbish that evening but at the time I was grumbling to myself about the lack of birds! A dark phase Arctic Skua appeared offshore chasing a close group of Kittiwakes before proceeded off westward. This boosted my spirits a little and I carried on for another ten minutes or so with just another six Kittiwakes to add to my measly tally. I abandoned seawatching at 6.35pm, climbed back up to the cliff top and set off to cover the area with maybe 40 minutes or so left until sunset. At first my focus was on looking for a Buff-breasted Sandpiper on the headland, one of my favourite wader species. I knew a few spots that would be worth checking, and which would also take me past some areas of scrub and bushes. Whilst walking across the clifftop I got phone signal for the first time that evening and my phone buzzed with a message from my mate Matt Doyle "Empidonax Flycatcher on Skokholm!". Wow!

Could it happen here too?! My mind switched and I decided against my planned route and took the steep path into the small valley behind the headland. I replied to Matt saying, "I'm going to find my own at St Govan's watch this space," one last response came from Matt before I lost my phone signal again, "Miracles can happen".

The small valley at St Govan's only really has one large patch of blackthorn scrub that holds birds, so I made my way there and got to a good vantage to look over the cover. The occasional Blue Tit appeared in view and there were a few calling Robins. I began 'pishing' in an attempt to bring birds out of the cover. Upon doing so a small bird appeared to fly past me and dive into the blackthorn in front of me. It was only a flash of a view, but it looked bright! Yellow was the main colour I got and was there a flash of a white wing-bar? It was coming up to 6.45pm by now but unsure what I had just seen there was no way I was leaving the area until found out! I didn't want to jump to any crazy conclusions, so I waited at my current vantage and started to 'pish' again, hoping what I just saw would pop out. But nothing. A bird appeared; bins up quick… a goldcrest! Having no luck from my current vantage and determined to figure out what I had just seen I walked around to view the sheltered side of the scrub. Immediately I noticed birds flicking in the bracken but each one I followed materialised into Blue Tits.



Remaining patient I noted some movement again. The views were tantalising. A few flicks, then a shake of the bracken - I just couldn't get a clear view! A bird then flicked out of the denser vegetation and perched out in the open on a bracken stem. I managed to get my bins on it and wow it wasn't a Blue Tit! It had bright yellow underparts and two white wing-bars!

I just couldn't believe what I was looking at! I knew it was an American wood-warbler, but the species didn't come immediately to me. I started shaking and my legs turned to jelly. I was smiling but I couldn't even articulate any words to myself! I needed to get a photo, no one is going to believe this I thought! A few more flicking views and it perched up again. Relief! I reviewed my photos and had a couple more fleeting views of the bird, and at this point I was fairly sure I had a Magnolia Warbler in front of me!
I had to let people know this was here. But there was no phone signal in the valley! The bird seemed settled so after a little more watching I sprinted off up the valley side and back on to the cliff top where I had signal previously. I was shaking so much with the adrenaline I could barely type. I just about managed to get a coherent message together and a photo which felt like an age for it to send! Pressure off I sprinted back into the valley and to my delight the bird was still flicking about in the same area where I had left it. I spent the rest of the time watching and enjoying this stunning bird. It was an incredible experience. The Magnolia Warbler was feeding actively, spending most of its time in the bracken and flycatching occasionally. Just after 7.20pm it flew a short distance into a patch of gorse and became more elusive. I saw it once more at about 7.26pm as it darted back into the blackthorn presumably to roost. I did not see it again that evening. Thankfully the bird was re-found in the morning and showed well for a sizeable crowd. Over the course of the day, it moved out of the valley and into a large scrub patch to the north of the car park where it lingered for a week.

***T. Phelps* – photo by I. Bollen.**

*1CY Magnolia Warbler was found at Baglan Bay, **Gower**, 24 – 29 Sept. The following is an account of the finding of the bird, taken from BirdGuides:*

The morning of 24 September started like any other Sunday. I grabbed my bins and loaded my two Border Collies, Sam and Meg, into the car for quick walk down to Baglan Energy Park. This is a brownfield site on the grounds of the old BP petrochemical works at Baglan Bay – not the number one location for birding. The site comprises trees, bushes and overgrown areas of shrubs and brambles crisscrossed by tarmac roads and tracks.

Parking the car by the steel gate gave me two choices about which way to go: straight on and down towards the dunes and onto Aberavon beach or turn right towards the trees and bushes. Being a bit tired from the night before I took the easy option towards the trees – a good choice in hindsight. Having only been out around five minutes, I saw lots of movement in the bushes, mainly consisting of Blue Tits, European Robins and a couple of Blackcaps. Then ... bang! Up popped what I initially thought was a pimped-up Blue Tit. I immediately realised it was a species of American warbler, but which one? Never having seen any before, I could only guess.

A quick text to the local NPT Birds WhatsApp group soon had my phone buzzing with questions and directions. With my voice trembling and hands shaking did my best to describe the bird. I noticed that it was olive-green on the back and yellow underneath, with a white eye ring, two wing-bars and a fanned tail with white tail sides. Over the next two hours, a steady stream of birders – some local and few on their way back from Pembrokeshire – tried to connect with the warbler but were left frustrated. The bird only provided brief views to a handful of birders and the identity remained unresolved.

Unfortunately, I left the area because I had promised to take my wife shopping. Only 20 minutes later shopping was hastily postponed, and I was back on site. Someone had seen the bird well and called out a Magnolia Warbler! How relieved I was that someone else had managed to see it and identify it. I managed to get a couple more brief views before deciding to call it a day.

When I headed out that morning, little did I think that walking the dogs would have me finding Britain's fourth Magnolia Warbler. The third was only found a few days before – at St Govan's Head, Pembrokeshire, on 20 September. The next few days were overwhelming, with a steady stream of birders coming to see the warbler. Many good photos were taken. It just goes to show that you don't have to go to offshore islands or remote headlands to find a mega Yank, just spend time looking around your local industrial estate.

G. LEWIS – photo below by I. Curran.



BAY-BREASTED WARBLER *Dendroica castanea* *Telor Bronwinau*

Immature / female on Ramsey, ***Pembroke*** 21 – 26 Sept. The following is an account of the finding of the bird.

I woke on the 21st to the sound of a Kestrel calling at 0630am, there were plenty of birds hopping around the bungalow as I opened my curtains to peer outside. It seemed like a good day for birding though and knowing there had already been 'yanks' recorded in Pembrokeshire, at St Govan's and Skokholm, Nia and I were determined to find our own. Nia decided she would check the farm area and the South end, and I would do the North and East coast.

I wasn't having much luck on my sections, but a Great Tit was singing in Capel which by island standards is exciting as it was our first for the year! As I left Capel, I got a WhatsApp from Nia saying that she thinks she found something at the farmhouse, what looked like 'a cross between a fat Blackcap/flycatcher with a dark head'. Being super excited to hear this news I made my way quickly to the farmhouse. As I approached and scanned the valley and willows as I do every morning before I enter the farmhouse garden, something immediately caught my eye. It was no more than 5 metres away from me and was hopping around in the brambles, figwort and gorse.

Glancing at the distinctive white wing bars and yellow and green coloration I knew immediately this wasn't a British bird, it was a 'yank'! I got my camera out and tried to take as many photos of it as I could before getting completely overexcited and running into the farmhouse garden. Nia came straight out of the garden to see it. By this time the bird had disappeared into the gorse and brambles. I showed her the photos and we both agreed it was American but had no idea what species.

There are no books on the island that cover Nearctic bird species, so I quickly sent a screenshot to Dave Astins with the line "HELP, Please!!!" Dave saw the photo straight away and rang me incredibly excited. He swiftly sent photos from the Sibley pages and directed me towards Bay-breasted Warbler and Blackpoll Warbler. After looking through the photos I took, and the pages Dave sent, Nia and I settled on Bay-Breasted and were relieved to hear that Dave also agreed and those were his initial thoughts.

Dave told us that this one was a 1st for Wales and 2nd for Britain and after that, everything felt like a whirlwind. The 'fat Blackcap' never reappeared but the Bay-breasted Warbler kept us busy enough! The bird stayed for six days and in the moments of calm between managing everything that went with having a mega on the island, it was lovely to watch this unique little bird looking so at home in the island willows despite having just crossed the Atlantic in a hurricane.

Alys Perry – photo below by G. Jepson.



CANADA WARBLER *Wilsonia canadensis* *Telor Canada*

1CY male was found at Elegug Stacks, Castlemartin, ***Pembroke*** 23 - 25 Sept. The first for Britain. The following is an account of the finding of the bird.

I headed out this morning back to the Castlemartin ranges with the possibility of discovering more American landbirds following the unprecedented arrival on the British west coast (particularly in Pembrokeshire!) in recent days. Although in hope I didn't think it would actually happen...again!

I decided to walk the lane down to Stack Rocks, thinking that as a Magnolia Warbler turned up nearby at St Govan's Head the surrounding area could hold another Nearctic gem. I took my time down the lane stopping occasionally to check the scrubby habitat. As I neared the end of the lane near the Stack Rocks car park, I passed through an area of willows and scrub on either side of the road. There was plenty of activity here, including 3 Goldcrests, Blue Tits, Great Tits and 2 Blackcaps. I wandered up and down this section of the lane a few times and on my southward return a bird caught my eye in the edge of willows in the sunshine. It was obscured, but I could see it was bright blue and yellow! It flicked out a little further and I could see the whole bird including its necklace of grey streaks! It was a ***Canada Warbler****!!*

The panic then set in, and I managed to get a message out (with my hands shaking!) as the bird flicked though the willows and back to the understory. I saw it once more and it darted off and I lost it.
Gladly it was relocated by the many people who had come over from St Govan's and it stayed in the willow patch showing to the increasing crowd intermittently throughout the day.
Such an amazing bird. And as if finding a stunning Magnolia Warbler at St Govan's Head on Wednesday wasn't enough!

Toby Phelps – photo below by G. Jepson.



Status of White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* in Wales

The status of White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) in Wales is Category A/R1/F indicating that the bird has been recorded in an apparent Natural State since 1950 (Category A). Birds from conservation-focused re-introduction schemes (Category R1) have occurred and there are pre-1800 records which include fossil evidence (Category F).

Prior to 1950 all accepted records were considered as occurring in an apparent Natural State. These historical records frequently lack accurate dates, or in some cases even years, and, as with many historical records, it is often difficult to be sure of the reliability of the records. There are 18 accepted records of White-tailed Eagle prior to 1950 – the first in 1817 and the last in 1910. Of the 10 records with accurate months of occurrence all fell between November and April (Nov 1; Dec 1; Jan 1; Feb 2; March 4 and April 1).

A successful re-introduction scheme in Scotland began with birds being released in 1975. A self-supporting population becoming established in 2004, when White-tailed Eagle was added to Category C of the British List (BOURC 2004). There are no reports of any "marked" (colour-ringed, wing-tagged or satellite-tracked individuals) from the Scottish population in Wales and published bird reports for Southern England suggest that it is considered unlikely that they would occur there. This is what would have been expected as Wales and Southern England are beyond the likely juvenile dispersal distances of White-tailed Eagles from Western Scotland. (Whitfield et al 2009).

Another re-introduction scheme in Ireland commenced in 2007. Again there are no records of any "marked" individuals from this scheme in Wales, although birds have been recorded in Southern Scotland, Isle of Man and Northern England. If juvenile dispersal distances are similar to the Scottish birds, then it is unlikely that birds would reach Wales. In 2022 the non self-sustaining Irish population was 12 pairs that fledged 7 chicks so the number of unringed juveniles is currently very small.

A further, more recent, re-introduction scheme on the Isle of Wight commenced in 2019 and "marked" birds from this scheme have already been recorded in Wales, many locations in England and in Scotland. They appear to be much more likely to disperse longer distances than birds from the Scottish/Irish re-introduction schemes.

The re-introduction schemes have caused some confusion over whether any individual White-tailed Eagles post-1975 could be considered as Category A candidates. However, with all the Isle of Wight individuals to date being satellite-tracked and no evidence of Scottish or Irish individuals occurring there is no reason that all records which conform to an expected pattern should not be treated as Category A in Wales. In fact, there is evidence that increasing numbers of European individuals are occurring in Britain with recent records of birds from the Netherlands and Finland in Southern Britain supporting the likelihood that birds in Wales originate from these European populations. Avon, Dorset, Hampshire and Kent bird reports all contain recent records of White-tailed Eagles in Category A some of which are not marked individuals of continental origin.
Post 1950 there are 3 records of birds accepted into Category A in Wales:

- A 2nd/3rd winter individual on Skomer, Pembrokeshire 10 to 11.11.1993
- A 1st winter individual at Tregaron, Ceredigion 12.11.1997 (linked to records of same individual in Norfolk and Cheshire).
- An immature over Dolwyddelan, Conwy 28.03.2008

One record in Wales is currently in Category D. An adult at Fedw Fawr, Anglesey in June 2021 does not currently fit with previous occurrences of the species with no previous, even accepted historic records in June and no post-1950 records of adults.
There is one record of a known escapee in Wales – 1 3CY individual at Castlemartin Ranges, Pembrokeshire in August 2016.

Proposal
To be in line with counties in Southern Britain any White-tailed Eagle seen in Wales, within the expected pattern of previous occurrences in terms of date, should be considered as occurring in a Natural State (ie Category A) unless there is evidence that it can be attributed to one of the re-introduction schemes (by colour-ring, tag or satellite tracking) or considered as escape.

RI Thorpe.

References:
D. Philip Whitfield, Kevin Duffy, David R. A. McLeod, Richard J. Evans, Alison M. MacLennan, Robin Reid, David Sexton, Jeremy D. Wilson, and Andrew Douse. (2009): Juvenile Dispersal of White-Tailed Eagles in Western Scotland. *Journal of Raptor Research, 43(2):110-120.*
Various websites, including Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation.