

North Bull Island Bird Report

2023



Edited and compiled

by

Tom Cooney

Published online 1st January 2024
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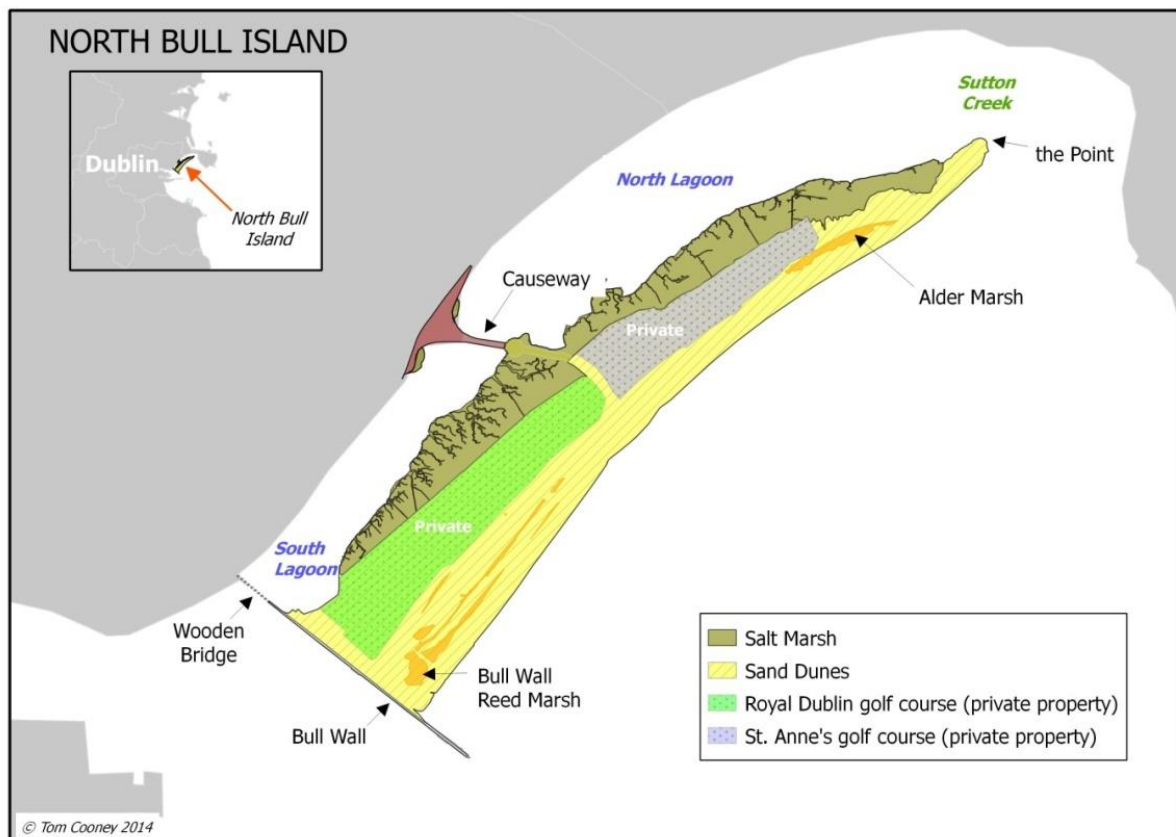
Editorial

This is the thirteenth annual report summarising bird occurrences of interest on North Bull Island (53°22'12.3"N 6°08'56.7"W), Dublin Bay, Ireland. North Bull Island became Ireland's first bird sanctuary in 1931 and is now a designated National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Great Egret was added to the island list in July. Other rare species included a Quail in June, a flock of four Alpine Swifts in March, an adult Sabine's Gull in July and a putative Grey-bellied Brant in March and April. Scarce or uncommon species included White-fronted Goose, Scaup, Slavonian Grebe, Green Sandpiper, Water Rail, Ring-billed Gull and Long-tailed Tit.

It was a very poor year for regular migrants and occasional visitors with only single reports of Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, Little Stint, Common Sandpiper, Little Gull, Common Whitethroat, Chiffchaff, Grasshopper Warbler and White Wagtail. There were no records of Spotted Flycatcher. It's possible the lack of records reflects lower coverage in 2023.

As in previous years, Ringed Plover and Little Terns were absent during the breeding season.



North Bull Island with some bird watching locations mentioned in this report.

Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without the goodwill and cooperation of birdwatchers who contributed observations and photographs in 2023. I wish to thank all contributors listed below including a group of unnamed students from University College Dublin (UCD).

List of Contributors

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Cover photo: Sabine's Gull (Mark Collins)

Systematic List

Gill, F., Donsker, D. and Rasmussen, P. (eds). 2023. *IOC World Bird List* (v 13.2). Available from www.worldbirdnames.org

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Common winter visitor

Latest spring date: Three on 5th May (Ciaran Dunne).

Summer: One on 1st June (Paul McMahon).

Earliest autumn date: Seven on 7th September (Mark Collins).

Dark-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor

Single birds at various locations on 10th January (Paul Milne), 12th February (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty), 14th February (Ciaran Dunne), 8th March (Paul Milne), 5th May (Ciaran Dunne) and 19th November (Sean Geraty).

A putative Grey-bellied Brant, an adult male, was reported on 25th March (Niall T. Keogh) and 4th April (Ciaran Dunne).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*

Very scarce

One on the north saltmarsh on 29th December (Derek O'Reilly).

This bird belongs to the Greenland race *flavirostris* and is the first record since 2014.



White-fronted Goose (Photo: Derek O'Reilly).

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*

Regular throughout the year

One or two reported regularly with maximums of eight on 27th May and six on 25th December.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce visitor during migration, occasional in winter

One on 8th (Grzegorz Burkowski) and 29th November (Mark Collins).

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Resident, common winter visitor

Highest winter counts: February: 310 on 4th (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty, Joe Geraty).
 October: 246 on 27th (Ciaran Dunne), 636 on 29th (Sean Geraty).
 November: 718 on 19th and 836 on 26th (Sean Geraty). December:
 889 on 3rd, 890 on the 13th (Niall T. Keogh), 739 on 26th (Sean
 Geraty, Luke Geraty) and 780 on the 29th (Niall T. Keogh).
Summer: Up to 30 in June (Ciaran Dunne, Jim Duffy) and successful nesting
 was reported.

The wintering populations is higher now than in previous decades and Shelduck are one of the few waterbird species in Ireland that are not in decline.



Shovelers (Photo: Mark Collins)

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

Winter visitor

Last spring date: One on 29th April and 2nd May (Ciaran Dunne).

High counts: January: 168 on 23rd (Mark Collins). February: 201 on 5th (Sean
 Geraty, Luke Geraty). December: 225 on 29th (Niall T. Keogh).

Most birds frequented the area near the River Naniken outflow on the south mudflats

GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

Scarce visitor

Four on 14th August (Jan Burkholder).

WIGEON *Mareca penelope*

Common winter visitor

Autumn arrivals: Two on 4th, three on 5th and four on 15th July at the River Santry outflow (Mark Collins) were early returning birds.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Winter visitor

Latest date spring: Three on 5th March.

Earliest date autumn: Three on 5th September.

Highest counts: January: 175 on 10th (Ciaran Dunne) and 115 on 23rd (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy). February: 170 on 19th (Sean Geraty), 115 on 23rd (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy). October: 132 on 27th and 68 on 26th December (Ciaran Dunne). December: 125 on 18th, 128 on 27th and 235 on 29th (Niall T. Keogh, Alan Dalton).



Pintail (Photo: Mark Collins)

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Common winter visitor

Summer: Two on 19th June (Paul Milne) were probably returning birds

Earliest date autumn: One on 19th July (Mark Collins).

Highest count: 869 on 12th February (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty) and 375 on 25th March (Niall T. Keogh). 435 in the south lagoon on 27th December (Alan Dalton).

Six at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh on 4th December (Mark Collins) was unusual.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Resident

Several reports of single birds with maximums of four on 19th June and three on 15th July in the south lagoon. A male on the Clontarf side of the Wooden Bridge on 18th November (Niall T. Keogh, UCD) was an unusual location for this species.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Vary scarce visitor

Female on 18th November near the Wooden Bridge (Niall T. Keogh) and what was presumably the same female in Sutton Creek on the 22nd (Dermot O'Mahony).

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Regular winter visitor in small numbers

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
6	-	8	3	3	-	-	9	1	12

As usual, small numbers were reported offshore but the records in May, June and July were unseasonal and noteworthy.



Long-tailed Duck (Photo: Derek O'Reilly)

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce winter visitor

Three records possibly referring the same birds.

Bull Wall: One on 29th October (Sean Geraty) and 24th November (Ciaran Dunne) was presumably the same bird observed at the Wooden Bridge on various dates up to the end of the year (Grzegorz

Sutton Creek: Burkowski, Justin Keating, Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty *et al.*).
Female or immature on 22nd November and two on 23rd (Paul Milne) with one on 24th (Ciaran Dunne) and 26th (Sean Geraty).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor

Up to five off the north end of the island to 20th March (Paul Milne, Ciaran Dunne, Grzegorz Burkowski) with one remaining until the 2nd April. Male near the Wooden Bridge on 18th November (Niall T. Keogh, UCD). Three at the same location on 11th and 25th December (Ciaran Dunne, Mark Collins).

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Regular in small numbers but very scarce in summer

Maximum monthly counts as follows:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
26	14	32	4	4	-	-	-	-	8	22	42

Highest concentrations were reported from Sutton Creek and the port side of the Bull Wall.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Vagrant

One calling repeatedly in the southern dunes on 21st June (Derek O'Reilly).

This is the fourth island record.

ALPINE SWIFT *Tachymarptis apus*

Vagrant

Four were seen flying over the beach on 20th March 2023 (Grzegorz Burkowski).

These birds were part of an unprecedented influx to Ireland from mid-March to early April.

In recent decades, on average, less than two birds were reported annually in Ireland but in 2023 in excess of 100 birds were recorded.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Frequent in spring and autumn, scarce in summer

Highest counts: 18 on 27th (Mark Collins) and 35 on 28th June (Ciaran Dunne).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Very scarce summer visitor

Single birds were reported regularly from 19th May to 21st June (many observers).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very scarce visitor

One on 1st September.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Very scarce winter visitor

One on 8th March on the north saltmarsh (Niall T. Keogh).



Cuckoo (Photo: Mark Collins)

COOT *Fulica atra*

Resident

Single birds reported on two occasions.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce winter visitor

Birds were reported in seven months of the year as follows:

Wooden Bridge: Up to six regularly in January (Ciaran Dunne, Niall T. Keogh) with two still present on 10th March. In October, five on 3rd (Paul Milne) and two on 25th (Ciaran Dunne). Ten on 18th (Niall T. Keogh, UCD). Five on 23rd November (Ciaran Dunne). Eleven on 29th December (Niall T. Keogh).

River Naniken: Two at the outflow on 21st January (Gavin Rothwell).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Mainly a winter visitor but occasional at other times

Highest monthly counts:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
160	70	50	24	-	3	1	-	88	-	17	54

The majority of sightings were from the Bull Wall and off the beach but one in the south lagoon on 7th June (Paul Milne) was an unusual date and location.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Rare

Sutton Creek: One on 20th and 21st January (Ciaran Dunne) and presumably the same bird again on the 7th February (Paul Milne).

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Up to 100 reported in mid-summer.

LAPWING *Pluvialis pluvialis*

Common in autumn, uncommon in winter

Autumn arrivals: Four on 3rd June (Mark Collins) with numbers increasing steadily to at least 40 in August.

Small numbers, usually less than 50 birds were reported in winter.



Lapwing (Photo: Niall T. Keogh)

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor

Up to 100 March (Niall T. Keogh *et al.*) with a maximum of 180 on 30th (Ciaran Dunne *et al.*).

Autumn arrivals commenced with 26 on the 3rd October with 94 were present on 3rd November (Mark Collins). 100 at the Wooden Bridge on 17th December (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Over 100 reported on several occasions in the early part of the year up to 23rd April with a maximum count received of 202 on 5th March (Sean Geraty). A total of 125 at high tide in the south lagoon on 29th December (Niall T. Keogh).

Earliest report in autumn was of ten on 13th August (Paul Milne).

The wintering population has undergone a serious decline in recent decades.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Former breeder, common passage migrant and winter visitor

Breeding: No birds were recorded at the former nesting site in summer.

Summer: One at the causeway on 16th June (Mark Collins).

Counts: 134 on the south end of the beach on 1st August.

The June bird was probably a migrant or early returning failed breeder.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Regular passage migrant

Maximum monthly counts as follows:

<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>
70	8	-	2	7	9	2	1



Whimbrel (Photo: Sean A. O'Laoire)

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Common winter visitor, passage migrant, small number summer

Summer: Six on 13th June (Jim Duffy).

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Count: 800 at roost on south saltmarsh on 18th February (Niall. T. Keogh, Neil Molloy). 1,380 in the south lagoon on 22nd December (Alan Dalton).

Summer: Six on 19th May (Paul Milne) and five on 1st July (Mark Collins).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Summer: Three on 6th June (Ciaran Dunne) and 120 on 19th June (Paul Milne).

Autumn arrivals: Numbers increased notably with 200 on 1st July increasing to 400 by the 7th (Mark Collins).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Reports in all months.

Beach: 50 on 29th October (Sean Geraty).

South lagoon: 105 on 8th March (Niall T. Keogh) and 72 on 22nd December (Alan Dalton).

Bull Wall: 26 on 19th February (Sean Geraty), six on 2nd and three on 17th May (Ciaran Dunne), 24 on 1st August (Mark Collins).

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Spring: 56 on 23rd April (Mark Collins) was the last report in spring.

Autumn: Six on 1st and 42 on 5th July. 205 on 18th October (Mark Collins) was a typical date for the arrival of wintering birds.

Winter: In the south lagoon, 1,120 on 22nd (Alan Dalton) and a minimum 2,500 on 26th December (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Scarce autumn passage migrant, rare at other times

A late migrant on 26th November (Mark Collins).

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Autumn passage migrant, rare in winter and spring

One on 16th October (Alexandre Godard).

A very poor year for this regular autumn migrant.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Maximum counts as follows:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
nc	150	450	37	7	400	nc	160	230	290	250	120

All reports were from the south end of the beach. The count of 400 on 7th June (Paul Milne) highlights the importance of beach habitat for this species throughout the year.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor

Bull Wall: One on 19th February (Sean Geraty) was the only report.

Very small numbers reported in Dublin Bay in the winter of 2022/2023 so it's not surprising that only one bird was recorded at North Bull Island.



Purple Sandpiper (Photo: Sean Geraty)

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor

Following the departure of the wintering populations passage was recorded as follows.

Spring passage: Following the departure of overwintering birds, spring passage was fairly light with a maximum of only 350 on 2nd May (Ciaran Dunne).

Summer: 80 on 31st May at the Bull Wall (Caran Dunne). 100 on the south end of the beach on 7th June (Paul Milne) with up to 50 reported there on several date to 6th July (Jim Duffy, Ciaran Dunne, Paul Milne, Mark Collins).

Autumn: 500 on the beach on 1st August (Mark Collins).

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Regular but scarce passage migrant

One on 30th October (Bradley Woolfenden).

A late record.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnecryptes minimus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Up to six were reported on several occasions on the north end of the island from 22nd January to 6th February (Proinsias Mac an Bheatha, Paul Milne, Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty, Joe Geraty, Dominic Kelly).

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Common winter visitor

Latest date spring: One on 18th April (Neil Molloy).

Earliest date autumn: Two on 30th August (Mark Collins).

Small numbers reported regularly in all months except May, June and July with maximum counts of 16 on 25th January (Paul Milne) and 10 on 4th February (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty, Joe Geraty).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Scarce and irregular migrant

One on 12th September (Mahta Mansouri).

Like other regular migrant species, 2023 was a very poor year for this species and also a late record.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Very scarce passage migrant

One on 18th April (Grzegorz Burkowski).

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Spring: 300 on 7th April (Jim Duffy) but small numbers remained to the end of the month.

Autumn: The first report was of 10 on 6th July (Mark Collins).

A leucistic bird was present on 18th February and 7th April (Mark Collins, Jim Duffy).



Redshank (Photo: Mark Collins)

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Very scarce passage migrant, rare in winter

One on 20th March (Grzegorz Burkowski).

Spring records are rare at North Bull Island.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

A typical spread of records with maximum monthly counts as follows (many observers):

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
14	12	14	-	-	-	1	6	16	22	18	49

Maximum numbers are usually recorded during autumn passage in July and August so 49 on 29th December (Niall T. Keogh) was unusually high.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Regular visitor mainly in spring

Bull Wall: April: 60 on 3rd (Neil Molloy), 12 on 18th and two on 27th (Tom Doyle, Ciaran O’Flanagan). May: 12 on 5th (Neil Molloy) and five on the 8th (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy, Ronan Toomey). June: ten on 16th (Mark Collins).

Wooden Bridge: 250 on 3rd May (Niall T. Keogh)

This is only the second time 250 have been recorded at the island.



Kittiwake (Photo Tom Doyle)

SABINE’S GULL *Xema sabini*

Very rare

Adult in breeding plumage on the beach on 29th July (Mark Collins).

Formerly a vagrant species, this is the third island record in ten years.



Sabine's Gull (Photo: Mark Collins)



Sabine's Gull (Photo: Mark Collins)

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common

Present throughout with lowest numbers in mid-summer.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Regular but scarce visitor

One at the Wooden Bridge on 13th February (Sean O'Sullivan).

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Uncommon visitor

Due to overlap in reports and long-staying birds the exact number to occur is unknown but a minimum of 16 were recorded (many observers). Highest numbers were in June and July.

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
1	0	3	0	0	7	3	1	0	1	0	0



Mediterranean Gull (Sean Geraty)

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Mainly winter visitor

Highest count: 1,000 on 18th February and 1,100 on 25th March in the south lagoon (Niall T. Keogh).

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce visitor

Adult north of the causeway on 18th (Tom Kilbane) and 22nd December (Alan Dalton).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Uncommon in summer, small numbers in winter

Maximum counts as follows: 22 on 11th April (Andy Burke), 52 on 22nd August and 45 on 18th October (Mark Collins).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Uncommon in summer, small numbers in winter

Adult on 23rd February (Niall T. Keogh) was the earliest reported. Sightings received for March, August and October with a maximum count of 15 on 25th March (Niall T. Keogh, Jim Duffy, Andy Burke).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Common passage migrant, occasional in summer

Earliest spring date: One off the Bull Wall on 18th March (Mark Carmody).

Latest autumn dates: One on 8th (Sean Geraty) and 18th October (Mark Collins).

Maximum counts: 138 on 9th August and 199 on 16th August (Ciaran Dunne).

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons*

Former colonial breeder, now rare visitor

Two in the north lagoon on 3rd August (Paul Milne)

This is the first record since June 2019.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Common in summer

Latest date: One on 10th November at the Bull Wall Ciaran Dunne).

Maximum counts: 25 on 8th May (Niall T. Keogh) and 78 on 15th September at the Bull Wall (Mark Collins).

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon summer visitor

One on 4th May (Niall T. Keogh) and two on 19th October (Mark Collins).

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Occasional

Reported regularly from the Bull Wall, off the beach and in Sutton Creek. Maximum monthly counts as follows:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
1	7	11	1	4	3	-	19	-	2	-	9

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Occasional visitor

Four on 7th and one on 25th March with one on 27th October.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grille*

Regular visitor all year

Bull Wall: January: two on 25th (Paul Milne). March: adult in breeding plumage on 8th and three on 25th (Niall T. Keogh). November: One on 18th Niall T. Keogh, UCD). December: One on 29th (Niall T. Keogh).

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Uncommon winter visitor

Maximum monthly counts reported were from Sutton Creek to the Bull Wall.

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
4	5	3	4	6	4	2

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce winter visitor

Single birds reported on 16th and 20th January, 12th and 20th March off the beach and Bull Wall (Ciaran Dunne, Sean Geraty). Only one report in the latter part of the year of a single bird off the Bull Wall on 11th December (Ciaran Dunne).

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Occasional spring to autumn

Reported from 16th June to 28th July with a maximum count of 25 on 6th July (Mark Collins, Ciaran Dunne).



Manx Shearwater (Photo: Mark Collins)

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Occasional offshore in summer

<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>
8	5	6	22	2	3	8	13	-	1

Fewer reported than in recent years but typically highest numbers in spring (many observers)

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Regular visitor all year

Maximum counts as follows:

The Point: 19 on 5th May, 39 on 21st July, 69 on 16th August and 55 on 8th October (Ciaran Dunne).

Bull Wall: 46 on 5th July and 95 on 30th August (Mark Collins).

River Santry outflow One at on 7th April (Jim Duffy).

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce visitor

Four reports from the vicinity of the Bull Wall. One on 18th May (Paul Milne), three on 25th March and 18th November with one on 29th December (Niall T. Keogh, UCD).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Non-breeding resident

The largest number reported was 19 on 7th July.

GREAT EGRET *Ardea alba*

Vagrant

One seen flying towards the Wooden Bridge on 29th July (Phil Clancy).

This is the first island record and likely to be the bird reported at Rogerstown on 15th July.

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Non-breeding resident

Common throughout the year with maximum counts of 62 on 23rd August (Sean Farrell) and 61 on 8th October (Sean Geraty).

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Regular visitor

Single birds reported at various location in all months except May and June (many observers).

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Regular visitor

Sixteen birds reported in all months except June September and December. Most reports were of single birds but two were present on 5th March and 16th July (many observers).

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
3	3	2	2	1	-	3	1	-	1	1	-

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor

Single birds, possibly all referring to the same bird on 25th (Proinsias Mac an Bheatha) and 27th October (Paul Milne) and again in November on 11th (Derek O'Reilly), 27th (Kevin Dooley), 28th (Mark Collins), 29th (Shane Thomas Quinn) and 4th December (Tom Cooney). Two on 29th December (Derek O'Reilly).

KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Scarce but regular winter visitor

Single birds reported from River Santry outflow in January, September, November and December (Tom Doyle, Jim Duffy, Mark Collins, Niall T. Keogh, Alan Dalton).



Common Buzzards (Photo: Mark Collins).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident

Single birds recorded on many occasions (many observers).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Single birds reported occasionally from January to 17th March and again from 21st October to the end of the year (many observers).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Regular visitor

Single birds reported regularly with two on 22nd August (many observers).

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*

Scarce

None reported for the first time since 2017.

Hybrid Carrion x Hooded Crow on 25th March at Santry River outflow (Niall T. Keogh).

HOODED CROW *Corvus corone cornix*

Resident

High counts: 50 on 23rd February and 25th March (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy), 61 on 22nd May (Sean Geraty), 74 on 24th May (Mark Collins), 56 on 8th October (Dominic Kelly).

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Occasional visitor

Single birds reported on 23rd February, 8th March, 2nd and 28th September, and 17th November with two on 2nd August.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder, lower numbers in winter

The only count received was of 17, some in song, on 25th March (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy).

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: Three on 20th March (Grzegorz Burkowski).

Reported regularly in spring and summer with a maximum count of 19 on 16th April.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: One on 7th April (Ciaran Dunne).

Highest count: 150 on 9th September (Mark Collins).

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: Five on 16th April (Mark Collins).

Highest count: 52 on 6th July (Jim Duffy).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*

Vagrant

One on 8th October (Noreen Baker).

The first record since 2020.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

Spring passage: Only three records. One on 3rd (Neil Molloy) and 18th April (Tom Doyle) with two on the 18th (Gerry Power).

Autumn passage: 12 on 1st and two on 17th August (Mark Collins).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Scarce but regular passage migrant

Autumn passage: One on 6th September (Tom Cooney).

This is lowest number reported for many decades.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Scarce but regular spring passage migrant, occasional in autumn

One on 18th April at the Royal Dublin Golf Course was the only bird reported (Gerry Power).

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Scarce but regular passage migrant

Up to two regularly at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh from 5th May to 21st August but nesting was not confirmed.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor

Spring: One in sand on 8th May near the Causeway 9Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy, Ronan Toomey). One the southern end of the island on 13th May (Tom Cooney).

A poor year for a species that probably occurs more frequently in May than reports suggest.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Scarce passage migrant

Spring: One on 2nd May.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in late autumn

Five on 30th December (Mark Collins) was the only report.



Goldcrest (Photo Mark Collins)

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident

Common throughout the year.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Small flocks of up to 200 in late summer.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Irregular passage migrant and winter visitor
None reported.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Uncommon winter visitor
One on 3rd January (Dominic Kelly) at St. Anne's Golf Course was the only report.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor
Single birds in the early part of the year.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Very scarce passage migrant
None reported for the second year in succession.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon resident
Small numbers, mostly less than nine birds, were recorded from many areas on the island in most months. Successful breeding was reported (many observers).



Stonechat (Photo Mark Collins)

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant, former breeder
Earliest spring date: Three on 26th March (Tom Doyle).

Latest autumn date: One on 19th October (Grzegorz Burkowski).

A poor year with maximums of only four on 28th April (Neil Molloy), one on 8th May (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy, Ronan Toomey) and three in 3rd August (Gerry Power).

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Scarce summer visitor

No reports.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Rare resident

Successful nesting reported at one site.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Occasional along mainland shore

One at River Santry outflow on 13th December (Mark Collins).

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Resident and passage migrant

Regular throughout the year.

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*

Scarce passage migrant

Autumn: Two on 28th September (Paul Milne).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common resident

Reported throughout the year.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Common resident

The only count received was a total of 33 at various locations, some in song, on 8th March (Niall T. Keogh, Neill Molloy).

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Uncommon winter visitor, probably under reported

Sutton shoreline: Four on 28th September and 11th December (Paul Milne).

North saltmarsh: Two on 23rd February and two on 8th March (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy). One on 26th December (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

Santry River outflow: One on 18th December (Niall T. Keogh).

South saltmarsh/lagoon: Eight on 23rd February (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy). Two on 18th November (Niall T. Keogh, UCD). Eleven on 22nd December (Alan Dalton).

Wooden Bridge: One on 29th December (Niall T. Keogh).

Bull Wall: One on 18th February (Niall T. Keogh, UCD).

A very good spread of records for a species often under-reported.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Highest counts: 70 on 5th February (Sean Geraty), 45 on 23rd February (Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy), 50 on 8th March (Niall T. Keogh), 40 on 28th

September (Paul Milne), 200 on 18th October (Mark Collins) and
110 on 3rd December (Sean Geraty).

Flocks were reported from the saltmarshes, sand dunes and Sutton shoreline.

LESSER REDPOLL *Acanthis cabaret*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Two on 6th (Tom Cooney) and 21st September (Grzegorz Burkowski).

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, occasional breeder

Small numbers, mostly less than ten birds, reported on the saltmarshes and at the causeway.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon resident

Birds reported from several locations in the breeding season.

Category C1

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Feral population

One on 4th and 5th May (Sean Mac Gowan, Niall T. Keogh, Neil Molloy) on the south end of the island. This bird showed characteristics of the feral large / *canadensis* type.

Conservation Issues

Although the North Bull Island is a legally protected site, numerous activities take place daily that have a negative impact on the island's habitats and wildlife.

The same activities that caused disturbances to birds and other wildlife in previous years were reported again in 2023. Wildlife and habitats on the island will continue to be under pressure in the National Nature Reserve for many decades into the future unless existing legislation designed to protect wildlife is enforced.