

BIRDWATCH IRELAND LOUTH BLOG 2008-2020

This blog is the current home page of the North Louth branch of Birdwatch Ireland, Ireland's largest conservation organisation. It mainly covers events and activities run by the branch.

A more interactive branch web forum may be found at <http://www.birdforum.com> (scroll down to Local Patch, then County Louth Local Patch. Breffni Martin, Founder and Chairman of North Louth Branch of Birdwatch Ireland.

DAY, DECEMBER 18, 2008

July to December 2008

Talks, Walks and Interpretative Panels

During August we facilitated the design and erection of several interpretative bird panels around Carlingford and environs in collaboration with Greenore Port.



We also had a poorly attended sea-watching outing to Clogherhead, though just as well because on that day, despite the fine weather, the birds did not cooperate!

In September we had our first talk of the Autumn season: Birds of America, given by Breffni Martin. In October Damian Clarke from the [Golden Eagle Trust](#) returned to give a very well attended talk on Buzzards.

In November Oscar Merne gave a talk on his many trips to Africa. Later in the month we joined the Cavan Branch of Birdwatch Ireland for an outing along the Navy Bank, the highlight of which was the flock of Twite at Soldiers Point.

During December we had two basic bird identification sessions with the Omeath Scouts Troop and on the 1st of that month we had our last talk of the year given by Anthony McGeehand from [RSPB](#)

Northern Ireland. This talk was preceded by our second AGM.

AGM

The meeting started just after 7pm. Present were Derek Watters, (Treasurer), Gerry O'Neill (Secretary) and Members Peter Philips, Peter Rooney, and Breffni Martin (Chair). Sandra McKeever couldn't make it and Enda Flynn resigned due to work commitments. We resolved to investigate ways to improve the goose situation in the vicinity of Lurgangreen and to improve communication on activities within the group generally. The programme for next year was also discussed. The meeting ended at 8pm in time for Anthony's talk.

Little Terns at Baltray

Members of the North Louth Branch volunteered for warden duty at Baltray beach during the nesting period in 2007 and 2008 and we covered the cost of insurance for the project. The cutting edge conservation effort, managed by the Louth Nature Trust, produced 40 odd successfully fledged Little Terns over the two years. Although Little Terns are not threatened globally, they are declining in Europe and Amber-listed by Birdwatch Ireland.

Sandra McKeever, Chairperson of the Louth Nature Trust will give an illustrated talk on the project on the 5th January 2009 at the Spirit Store on Dundalk Docks at 8pm - entry is free and all are welcome!





Nest, Nestling and Juvenile Little Terns

Press

Over the year we published several short articles in the local papers with the idea of getting people interested in birds and wildlife conservation in general. The first was on the disappearance of [Peregrine Falcons](#) from Slievenagolgh in the Cooley Mountains. This was followed with a piece on [Barn Swallows](#) and other hirundines, notably House Martins, who are particularly affected by changes housing and attitudes. Other initial pieces focused on the [Song Thrushes](#) practice of using stones to break snail shells and an episode of [rescuing a brood of lost Shelduck ducklings](#).



Shelduck duckling

Woodpeckers

Then in August, normally a quiet month for birding before the migration storm of September and October, we got a vague but credible report of a woodpecker being seen in a garden in Dunleer. It didn't take long to figure out that this was probably not a Lesser Spotted Woodpecker but more likely a juvenile Great Spotted Woodpecker, and as such suggested the possibility that Great Spotted Woodpeckers may be breeding in Ireland after an absence of at least several hundred years! To try to trigger more sightings we put [this item](#) in the paper. I got a few calls in the following month but nothing sure, then out of the blue came a call from someone with video footage, which sure enough turned out to be the real thing - except that it was an adult female! The presence of a female and juvenile bird in close proximity strongly suggests the possibility the birds were breeding, if confirmed this would be the first confirmed breeding in several hundred

years!



Great Spotted Woodpecker at Dromin (Photo Gerry O'Neill)

Bird Race

Because 165 birds were seen by one well-known birder in Louth in 2007 (a good number for a small North-Eastern county), an informal race started up to see if the record could be beaten. As it turned out 2008 would prove to be an exceptional year for Louth birding. After a particularly good run in Spring with Lapland Bunting, Bewick's Swan and Glaucous Gull, the summer also proved exceptional, particularly for seabirds with Sooty Shearwater, Balearic Shearwater, Sabine's Gull and Little Auk off shore. Then after news of the Great Spotted Woodpecker, very cooperative Osprey fish eagle turned up at Rockmarshal. Ospreys are increasingly regular in Louth as they migrate from Scotland and [Cumbria](#) to West Africa. It is possible that if a nesting platform were placed strategically around Lurgangreen or Ballymascanlon, they might be tempted to nest.



Osprey at Rockmarshal (Photo Peter Rooney)

Then when we thought the year was over a Grey Phalarope turned up at Balaggan Point.



Grey Phalarope (Photo Gerry O'Neill)

Grey Phalaropes are normally pelagic birds and only rarely come close to the shore so the opportunity to see one close up brought a good crowd.



Grey Phalarope Twitch - Balaggan Point

Then a week later a Spotted Sandpiper, an American vagrant and a very difficult bird to separate from our Common Sandpiper in the field, turned up at Giles Quay - amazing!



Spotted Sandpiper (Photo Derek Watters)

This county record was found by Frankie Carroll and had to go to [Killian Mullarney](#) for confirmation on the id.

Finally to round off the year we had an irruption of Waxwings, probably triggered by a berry failure in Scandanavia bringing the county total for 2008 to 182 species, which is the highest ever recorded as far as we know.





Waxwings at Muirhevnamore, Dundalk (Photo Peter Philips)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2008

Year Two - January to June 2008

We kicked off 2008 with a talk by Dick Coombes from [Birdwatch Ireland](#). Dick gave a fascinating account of a few trips to Iceland covering cetaceans, birds and hot springs.



Humpback whale diving

Then in February Peter Phillips gave a review of rare and scarce birds recorded in County Louth during 2007., the best of which were probably Forster's Tern and Long-billed Dowitcher at Cruisetown strand and Dundalk Docks respectively. It was also noted that evening that a well known Louth birder had seen 165 species in Louth in 2007, an impressive number for a small north-eastern county.





Long-billed Dowitcher and Forster's Tern, American visitors

The same evening Brian Caffery from BWI gave a talk on the current [Bird Atlas](#) work. In a diversion from birds, the Spring season of talks finished with two talks by Don Hodgers in March and April on [Odonata](#) first, then butterflies and moths.

Black Guillemots

The Black Guillemot conservation project was completed in April with the drilling of eight nesting holes on the north wall of Oriel Port at Clogherhead thanks to a donation of 1300 Euros from [Oriel Wind](#).



The work involved drilling into reinforced concrete while suspended on a crane - there's a lot of DIY in bird conservation!



Fortunately it was nice weather!

In May we had our annual [Dawn Chorus](#) outing, this time to [Mellifont Abbey](#) where we were greeted by a magnificent dawn at 5am. After a walk around the grounds we were received by the Monks and stayed in the refectory chatting, albeit slightly dazed after getting lost in the garden maze, and drinking tea until 7am.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2008

Foundation - 2007

In January 2007 we had two further events:

- Talk on **South African Birds** and other wildlife by Billy Clarke, a noted wildlife photographer
- Outing with local school as part of [CoastWatch Europe](#) event (this was featured on [rte news](#)).

Then, in February, following our trial period, we submitted a proposal to [Birdwatch Ireland](#) for founding the branch.

A further event birding weekend at Carlingford was organised on February 10th led by Eric Dempsey and attracted over 60 participants.



Carlingford biodiversity

In February, Steve Newton from Birdwatch Ireland came and gave us an account of the situation with Irish seabirds, Steve's speciality.

In April our own Peter Phillips gave an inspiring talk on bird conservation in Mauritius, followed by the more mundane, but nevertheless important, topic of bird conservation in County Louth.

On the 15th May we received confirmation that the Branch could be formed. Founder members were Enda Flynn, Gerry O'Neill (Secretary), Derek Watters (Treasurer) and Breffni Martin (Chairman).

During the following months we ran the following events:

- Sunday 20th May, 5am, **Spring Chorus Walk**, Ravensdale Park
- Monday 28th May 8pm Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks - Eric Dempsey, "**Here Today Gone Tomorrow**"
- A Talk about Extinctions and New Arrivals in Ireland
- Monday 11th June 8pm Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks - Don Hodgers, "**Spring Trip Report, Alicante, Spain**"
- Monday 3rd September 8pm Spirit Store Dundalk docks - John Lovatt, "**Birds of County Cavan**"
- Monday, 8th October, 8pm Spirit Store Dundalk Docks - illustrated talk by Kieran Buckley entitled "**Ireland's grey partridge - history, conservation and management.**"

Monday, 5th November, 8pm Spirit Store Dundalk Docks - illustrated talk by Sandra McKeever - "Little Tern Conservation at Baltray."



Little Terns

- Monday, 3rd December, 8pm Spirit Store - illustrated talk by Damian Clarke - "Raptor Reintroductions in Ireland"

This final talk of the year by Damian from the [Golden Eagle Trust](#) was one of our most popular with 64 people in attendance.

Black Guillemot Conservation

The refurbishment of the nesting holes for [Black Guillemots](#) at Giles Quay was supplemented by placing nesting boxes for the Black Guillemot Colony at Greenore Port.



Black Guillemots

AGM

During the summer Sandra McKeever and Peter Phillips joined the committee and the first AGM was held on the 3rd September 2007. Conservation projects covering geese at Lurgangreen, shellfish collection in Dundalk Bay, and Black Guillemots at Clogherhead, the third colony of this species in Louth.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2008

Before The Beginning - 2006

This website is about the North Louth Branch of [Birdwatch Ireland](#). Centred on Dundalk, [North Louth](#) is on the East coast of Ireland bordered by Carlingford Lough to the North and Clogherhead to the South. It encompasses [Dundalk Bay](#), the single most significant area for overwintering birds on the east coast of Ireland hosting over 60,000 wildfowl and waders at peak population. Other important bird areas are [Carlingford Lough](#), Ballymascanlon Bay, Lurgangreen and [Clogherhead](#). Inland are several bogs, marshes, mountain areas, rivers, ponds and woodlands. In fact all important bird habitats are present with the exception of a large freshwater lake. Despite this the national bird protection NGO did not have a branch in the area and many local people are unaware of the tremendous wildlife resources at their doorstep. This is what led a group of local birders to propose to set up a branch to try to generate more interest locally. To test the idea a thread was started on [Birdforum](#) in 2005 and several events were

organised during 2006, notably an outing and illustrated talk by [Eric Dempsey](#) in Carlingford that was covered by the [Nationwide TV show](#) (click on link to see clip). Other events during **2006** included the following:

January

- Field trip, talk and slideshow by Eric Dempsey

March

- Demonstration of birdwatching for beginners at Quay wall, Dundalk Harbour



Dundalk Docks

April

- Talk by Eric Dempsey and bird photo competition in Carlingford
- Field outing by Eric Dempsey
- Repair and refurbishment of Black Guillemot nesting holes at Giles Quay



Black Guillemots parading at Giles Quay

May

- Dawn Chorus event at Park Hotel Omeath

June

- Talk by Oscar Merne on Galapagos trip

July

- Field outing at dusk to Mulahattin to look for Long-Eared Owls, Woodcock and Grasshoper warbler (we had all three at the same time!)



September

- Talk at Monksland National School on Owls
- Field trip to Lurgangreen

October

- Talk by Niall Hatch on work of BWI

November

- Talk by Lorraine Benson on Gambia in Dundalk

December

- Talk by Niall Hatch in Carlingford



Dundalk Bay from Rockmarshal

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009

Geology of County Louth - an illustrated talk by Brendan McSherry, Heritage Officer for County Louth



Our next talk, on Monday 4th of January 2010 at the Spirit Store, will stray away from the birds of County Louth to the geology and geological history of the County. For such a small county Louth boasts geological features dating from three key geological periods in earth's history. Bird habitats such as Dundalk Bay, the Cooley Mountains or Carlingford Lough, are created through geological processes over millions of years, processes with which birds have evolved. For example, bird migration started with the ebb and flow of the ice ages. Bedrock geology determines the quality of soil and therefore habitat. Geological processes created the mountain peaks where the Peregrine Falcon nests as much as the submerged skerries and moraine where the Guillemot hunts.

Brendan qualified as a geologist and practiced as one for several years before getting into the heritage business, making him the perfect speaker to elucidate this fascinating subject.



Carlingford Mountain represents the eroded root of a much larger volcano that erupted during the Palaeogene Period which started 61 million years ago.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009

Birds of Prey of Ireland, an illustrated talk by Eric Dempsey

Eric Dempsey of **Mooney Goes Wild** will give an illustrated account of all of the **Birds of Prey of Ireland**, eagles, falcons, hawks, harriers, kites and owls at the Spirit Store (upstairs) at **8pm on Mon 7th December** Spirit Store. Eric is a very entertaining and knowledgeable speaker as well as a spectacular wildlife photographer.

He has authored several books and articles including "The Complete Guide to Ireland's Birds", "Where To Find Birds In Ireland" and "Birdwatching in Ireland". Eric will be available for book signing so this might be an opportunity to get Christmas present of a signed edition of one of his books for a birdwatching friend or family member.

This highly recommended talk is suitable for all levels and will end at 9pm.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 10:11 AM 9 COMMENTS:

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2009

Stormy Seas for Guillemots and Other Auks



This afternoon, in the storm, several dead Guillemots were washed up along the shore at Templetown Beach. Guillemots are members of the auk family, which are the northern hemisphere equivalent of penguins. These pigeon-sized birds generally spend the winter out on the Irish sea of further afield where they hunt for fish by diving deep under the water. Every year thousands die in storms, from injury, because they get oiled or simply because they are too young and inexperienced. Often the first problem is a failure to find fish, either because of the storm or because the fish species that they hunt are not there (primarily due to over-fishing but global warming is also probably a big factor). Once the bird can't fish it loses body fat and gets cold. When it gets cold it comes to the shore to get out of the cold water. Here it slowly starves and most birds are finished off by gulls or other predators.

However it is possible for them to overcome this if it is just a minor setback.

A few weeks ago neighbours dropped a Guillemot into the house. The bird had been sitting on the shore, apparently unable to fly and unwilling to get into the water. A quick examination revealed that the bird was starving (sharp keel bone) and had a minor soft tissue injury under its wing, like a shotgun pellet but it is just as likely that the bird swam into something like a piece of wire under the water. Critically both wings were intact with no sign of any break. Anyway after an hour or two's rest in a dark warm quiet place (a cardboard box with cloth bedding in the back room!) the bird was fed using initially slices of fresh mackerel fillet (if an auk will not feed itself it may be force fed by opening its beak wide and gently pushing bits of whitebait sized fish down into its crop (do not give water as it may go into the bird's airways)).



Please note that you should not try this unless you have good experience of handling birds - always seek expert advice!!!

After two days the bird, now ensconced in our bathroom, to the great consternation of my wife, though the delight of my children, was devouring a half fillet of mackerel and 20 or so defrosted whitebait a day and the injury was apparently healed. So we kept him one more day before releasing him near where he had been found.

The bird was initially reluctant to get into the water (never throw a bird in the air or water when releasing it) but after 10 minutes slipped into the water and the following day could be seen far out in the same area (its head parts were stained from force feeding).

Lessons: I had always heard that auks should be placed in the bath in a few inches of water. While this is true for a healthy bird, it is the wrong approach for a bird in poor condition, who will simply get wet and cold. The basis of this advice is that auks are very prone to burn marks on their keel and their hocks from sitting on a hard surface, so always place them sitting on something soft with the option to get into the water if they wish. Another mistake I made was using cold tap water, the sea (once you get away from the shore) is about 15 deg C even in winter, so adjust the temperature of the bath to 15 - 20 deg C. Finally, while frozen whitebait goes down very well with a Guillemot, it must be supplemented either by fresh fish or by "Fish Eaters Tablets" as frozen fish lacks several B vitamin that the bird requires daily.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Barn Owls

Thanks to everyone for coming along to the talk last night. As John Lusby explained, Barn Owls are in decline in Ireland, particularly in the North-east. If you have any sightings of Barn Owls, please

send the details to John at jlusby@birdwatchireland.ie or phone him at 05791 51676. If you find a dead Barn Owl, please double bag it and put in a freezer and/or else call John or myself 0879145363 to get it collected.

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 3:31 AM 2 COMMENTS:

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2009

Barn Owls in Ireland and the Discovery of the Greater White-toothed Shrew

On Monday November 2nd at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, John Lusby of University College Cork and BirdWatch Ireland will give an illustrated talk entitled "Barn Owls in Ireland and the Discovery of the Greater White-toothed Shrew". The talk will describe conservation efforts to reverse the decline of the Barn Owl in Ireland and the recent discovery of Ireland's newest mammal, the Greater White-toothed Shrew. John Lusby discovered this small mammal while studying the ecology and diet of barn owls. His talk will also cover the possible impact of this new mammal on the Irish environment.

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 6:10 AM NO COMMENTS:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2009

Eagle Talk

At 8pm on Monday October 5th at the Spirit Store Damian Clarke of the Golden Eagle Trust will give an illustrated talk entitled "What is Happening With Our Reintroduced Eagles?" The talk will tell the story of the reintroduction of both golden eagles and white tailed eagles, how the birds have fared and what threats they face in the future.

All are welcome!

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 2:49 AM NO COMMENTS:

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

Introduction to Birds and Birdwatching Talk in Carlingford

Breffni Martin will give a 60 minute illustrated talk from 8 - 9pm on Monday 28th September at the Heritage Centre in Carlingford. The talk is an introductory talk on birds and birdwatching. It will cover garden birds as well as the birds along the shore at Carlingford. Free entry and all are welcome!

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 6:59 AM NO COMMENTS:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2009

Herring Gull Rescue

A big thanks to the Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda for a 100 Euro donation to the branch. The donation follows the rescue of a juvenile herring gull that had gotten caught in a cavity in the hospital building. The cavity was overlooked by the windows of the emergency ward so that the patients had to look at a terrified and screaming juvenile gull while getting their head stitched. Meanwhile the parent gulls were frantically calling and swooping from above freaking out the rest of the patients in the block. But the spectacle of myself trying to catch the bird, then transporting it through wards and corridors to the roof must have made up for it.

As herring gull populations recover they are increasing nesting on the high buildings of towns and cities causing a potential nuisance problem. However herring gulls are red listed in Ireland and enjoy the highest level of protection the law can provide. It is illegal to interfere with herring gulls or their nests once eggs have hatched, but it is possible to replace fertile eggs with infertile ones to control the population under license from the NPWS.

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 3:15 AM NO COMMENTS:

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

Pelagic 2009



Our first branch pelagic yesterday (Sunday 13 September 09) made up in quality for what it lacked in quantity! Setting out at 2:30pm from Port Oriel at Clogherhead we immediately ran into several small rafts of manx shearwaters and guillemots. A few minutes later we crossed a few fulmars. The weather was fine with a gentle north-easterly breeze and a Beaufort 3 sea (a few white tops on the waves).



We cruised straight out 23 km in an easterly direction and started chumming. This immediately attracted several gulls (kittiwakes, herring gulls, great black backed gulls and a few common gulls) and terns (a few common and one sandwich), which in turn attracted our first good bird, a bonzie (great skua).



Observing that most of the manxies were to the north we headed towards Carlingford Lough for 10 or so kilometers until Eric picked out a distant great shearwater flying with a few manxies. Soon after that another bonxie arrived (possibly the same one), this time flying over the boat.



A few minutes later the star of the show made his appearance, a pomarine skua, who then sat on the water allowing the boat to approach to within 20 metres. Soon after that an arctic skua appeared in the distance, completing our quotient of skuas. We cruised home into a beautiful sunset, arriving after 7pm.

Thanks to Eric for spotting the birds and Oliver, our boatman, for bringing us out and home safely.



Final tally:

1000+ manx shearwaters

1000+ guillemots (many juveniles/1W)

50 gannets

7 razorbills (2 juvs)

500+ kittiwakes

3 fulmars

2 great skuas

1 pomarine skua

1 arctic skua

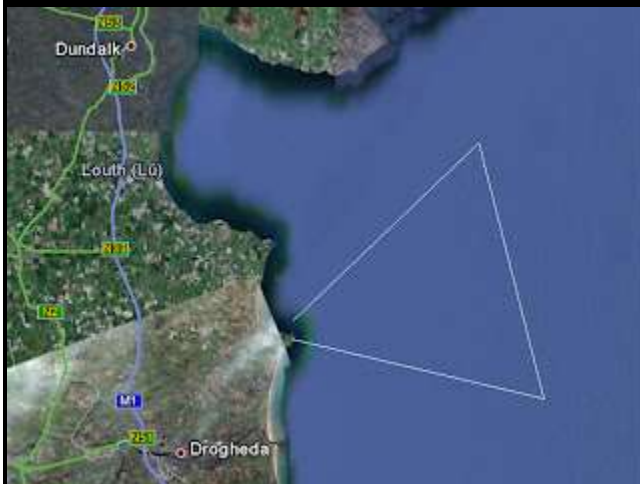
100+ herring gulls and assorted black-headed and great black backed gulls

6 common terns

1 sandwich tern

1 shag

12 cormorants



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2009

Blackrock Heritage Week

A introductory talk on birdwatching followed by an outing to Lurgangreen last week proved popular with the good people of Blackrock. it was particularly gratifying to see more than 30 people attending the talk, including several children. While its still a bit early for overwintering birds and wildfowl, there was still a good range on view at Lurgangreen, and the weather was thankfully dry and sunny! Species seen were mute swan, little egret, grey heron, black tailed godwit, bar tailed godwit, lapwing, redshank, mallard, great black-backed gull, common gull, black-headed gull and others...

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 8:49 AM NO COMMENTS:

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2009

Introduction to Birdwatching

Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk entitled "Introduction to Birdwatching" at 8pm in the community centre in Blackrock tomorrow Wednesday 26th August 09 as part of the - details on the Blackrock web site. This will be followed by an outing to Lurgangreen the following evening weather permitting.

A further outing will be to Clogherhead (meeting at Port Oriel at 12 noon) for sea watching.

These events are in support of Heritage Week.

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 5:45 AM NO COMMENTS:

New Panels at Dundalk Docks



In collaboration with the Heritage Council and Louth County Council, we placed two new bird panels on the Tain Bridge at Dundalk Docks. The panels look both upstream and downstream and show all of the birds typically seen in the area. The signs are [here](#).

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2009

Events 2009/2010

2009

Dundalk - Spirit Store - 8pm

August - we are in the process of arranging a pelagic boat trip to view seabirds in the Irish sea - anybody interested please contact myself at bmartin@regintel.com.

August 30th - Clogherhead 12 noon: walk along the headland and seawatching (targets: arctic skua, manx shearwater and storm-petrel, as well as auks, divers, terns and gulls)

September 7th - Niall Hatch from Birdwatch Ireland - Introduction to Birdwatching (especially garden birds)

October 5th - Damian Clarke from the Golden Eagle Trust - What is happening with our

reintroduced eagles?

November 2nd - John Lusby UCC - Barn Owls in Ireland and the discovery of the Greater White-toothed Shrew

December 7th - Eric Dempsey - Raptors of Ireland

Drogheda

Details and venue to be announced later:

Mid-September - Breffni Martin - Introduction to waders and shorebirds

Mid-October - Sandra McKeever - Little Terns at Baltray 2009

2010

Dundalk - Spirit Store - 8pm

January 4th - Brendan McSherry, Heritage Officer, Louth County Council - Geology of County Louth

February 1st- Maurice Eakin, National Parks and Wildlife Service - Flora of County Louth

March 1st - Billy Clarke - Birds of New Zealand

April 5th - Don hodgers - Louth Entomology Update

On the occasion of the first talk in September 2009, details of birdwatching outings will be announced. We will also provide details of local bird and wildlife news at the start of each talk.

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 6:35 AM NO COMMENTS:

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2009

New Birdwatching Facility at Carlingford



A new birdwatching facility was installed at Carlingford along the shore - the work was completed last week. The facility consists of a 10x telescope, an interpretative panel and a park bench. Two parking spaces are provided and the whole is mounted on a path that runs along the shore at Carlingford. The facility is the result of a collaboration between Greenore Port, Louth County Council, the Heritage Council and Birdwatch Ireland North Louth Branch.

The facility gives views over the mudflats and islands on the bay. It also affords views of the lough and the Mournes beyond. While the birdlife is fairly sparse over the summer months, with terns that nest on Green Island across the bay predominating. However in winter the bay is filled with over 3000 waders and wildfowl covering 30+ species. In particular at high tide the islands, which serve as high tide roosts for the birds, should provide close up viewing opportunities. The telescope is of robust design and should enable children as well as adults to use it.

Thanks to Greenore Port, The Heritage Council and Louth County Council for their support for the facility.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2009

Shelduck Ducklings

Shelducks nest in holes, either disused rabbit holes or holes they excavate themselves. The holes may be near the shore or half way up a mountain, generally well hidden under bramble or gorse. About this time of the year the ducklings hatch and the mother duck brings them to the shore, often pellmell down a small mountain stream, often at night, until they get to the shore.

Unfortunately the path to the shore is often obstructed by new housing developments, roads, piped

streams, weirs etc and as a result the ducklings often get stuck and separated from their parent. If this happens with shelduck ducklings, the first thing is to try to get the ducklings back to mother, and try to get them down to the shore. However if mother is gone, collect ducklings and bring them to the nearest part of the shore where shelducks gather and where there is wet mud and cover, and leave them. The ducklings will call and call and if mother gets within 100 yards or them she will come to the call. Shelducks are also known to adopt orphaned ducklings, indeed in late summer most of the adult birds leave their young to moult their flight feathers. During this month long phase in the shelduck lifecycle, the young birds are taken care of by "aunts" in huge nurseries of up to 100 ducklings.



Weir at Jenkinstown

Many shelducks nest in the Cooley mountains near Rockmarshal and elsewhere. Yesterday Owen McCann called about lost ducklings in the Jenkinstown area - they had become trapped in the same weir as last year and mother had departed over the fields with four of her 11 ducklings in tow, and a dozen crows and magpies swooping. Anyway to cut a long story short we rescued the ducklings with a net and brought them down to the shore at Rockmarshal and left them by the shore inside an old pipe that was lying around. Checking back a couple of hours later I was pleased to see that they had been indeed recovered by what I assume to be their parents. I imagine that the crows got the four who had the sense to avoid the weir. Shelducks like other ducks are prolific, producing up to 15 ducklings a year. It is part of shelduck ecology that the vast majority of these do not make it to adulthood (otherwise we would be up to our necks in ducks!) but where they get stuck as a result of human activity, it is worth attempting a rescue.



Ducklings reunited with parents

Shelduck ducklings are black and white with grey legs, quite unlike the brown and yellow mallard ducklings.

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2009

Evening Chorus Rathescar Lakeside Walk and Wildlife Reserve

Thanks to the 20 odd people who showed up at Rathescar on Sunday evening.



Looping around the outside of the walk we had the following singing males:

song thrush (6)

blackbird (4)
mistle thrush (1 pair)
robin (4)
long tailed tit (1 family group)
blue tit (1)
great tit (1)
willow warbler (1)
chiffchaff (2)
coot (at least 6)
moorehen (at least 4)
mallard (only 2 females showing)
little grebe (at least 1 pair)
chaffinch (8)
greenfinch (1)
wood piegon (3)
pheasant (2)
wren (9)
magpie (1)

and also distant rookerie but curiously no rooks in Rathescar itself!

A cuckoo was heard just before we arrived and called once or twice distantly. The woodland consists mainly of beech with some very fine oak. Willow dominates around the lake with dense stands of dogwood. There is a good deal of laurel and some rhododendron. The woodland floor is dominated by ivy. The canopy is generally closed. It is interesting to note that the more diverse wood and garden around Listoke house held about as many species and numbers despite its much smaller size. Nevertheless Rathescar is a beautiful place to go for a walk at any time of the day or year.

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009

Dawn Chorus and Evening Chorus 2009



Thanks to everybody for showing up at 5am last Sunday at Listoke House for the North Louth Birdwatch Ireland Dawn Chorus outing. About 35 people showed up at the beautiful walled Edwardian gardens, with their exquisite herbaceous border, lush undergrowth and mature trees, they making a superb habitat for birds. The highlight was no less than three male blackcaps singing in the main garden. Others were robin, blackbird, song thrush, wren, chaffinch, greenfinch, goldfinch, goldcrest and more. We finally broke up at 7am after coffee and tea generously served by our hostess.

A special thanks to Patricia and Patrick Barrow for facilitating the event.



Following requests from attendees, we will be running a second event at 8pm at Rathescar Lakeside

Walk and Wildlife Reserve. Directions here. Meet at the car parking area. For further information please ring Breffni 087 9145363.



Rathescar Lakeside Walk and Wildlife Reserve

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 5:18 AM NO COMMENTS:

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2009

How To Rescue Lost Mallard Ducklings



Mallard mother with young duckling

At this time of the year (from April) ducklings may get lost. This is not supposed to happen as ducklings, although capable of feeding themselves, are entirely dependant on their mother for warmth, security and guidance. This is how things are supposed to happen:

The mallard pair, male and female, will bond during the winter (these pair bonds can last for life) and a nest site will be found. They will choose a quiet place near water usually, but have been known to nest in the flowerbeds of shopping centres, in back gardens, near busy roads etc. The female lays eggs over about two weeks finally producing 10 - 15 eggs. Once all eggs are laid the female will sit on them and incubate for 30 or so days. During all this time the male will discreetly hang around the area protecting the nest and mother. Finally one day in April or later in the summer, the ducklings will hatch and the mother will lead them to water to feed at the edge and maybe to have a quick swim. The water is also the getaway in case a predator arrives so they will naturally go onto water when they are disturbed. Mallard ducklings can only tolerate being on water for short periods as they quickly get cold and need to return to the warmth under their mother's wing. They cannot produce the oil that insulates their mother yet and so obtain ill from being brooded by the mother. The ducklings will remain with their mother for a further eight weeks or so until they can fly and then are completely independent.

If you find a single duckling by itself it is critical to get it back to its mother as quickly as possible. Generally the duckling will call continuously for its mother and if there is no disturbance the mother will soon return. However if there is no sign of the mother after an hour or more and there is no obvious disturbance (you should observe from a hidden place), the duckling may be completely separated from its mother. This could have occurred for a variety of reasons, eg duckling or mother and brood could have been carried away on a stream, or frightened by a wild predator or domestic cat or dog, perhaps crossing a road, one duckling got left behind. So if the mother duck definitely cannot be found, put the duckling in a warm box with some wet porridge for feeding and a saucer of water for drink - duckling will eat some porridge and then drink water to swallow. Now try again to find the mother duck by backtracking from where the duckling was found.

If there is no sign of the mother there are three options:

Release the duckling at the nearest point to where you think it lost its mother ensuring that there are no predators or cats/dogs around; the mother may be hiding somewhere waiting for you to go away.

Contact an animal rehabilitation centre and ask them to take the duckling or find it a home.

Keep the duckling and rear it yourself until it is old enough to take care of itself (up to eight weeks)

- it will need food, warmth, access to muck/water, and a secure pen. Release it to a place where there are other mallard once its flight feathers have pushed. Details of caring for ducklings are [here](#):

Try to release it to another brood. Generally the new mother will not recognise its call and reject the duckling, even attacking it, but if there are many broods on the same pond, it may have a chance in the confusion, particularly if the duckling is a few weeks old.

Find a local farmer with ducks and put it in with his - a domestic duck may be less fussy than a wild one. I have even heard of a hen adopting a lost duckling.

Remember that ducks are very prolific and it is nature's way that only one or two of the brood of up to 15 ducklings will make it to adulthood. If it his were not so and every duckling survived to breed we would be quickly drowning in ducks!

This advice generally applies to all dabbling ducks (ducks that filter-feed on mud including pintail, teal, wigeon, gadwall, gargany and others). In the case of shelduck, lost ducklings are much more likely to be adopted by other ducks (aunts).



Mallard with older ducklings

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2009

Dawn Chorus 2009

Our next event is on Sunday 17 May 2009, which is National Dawn Chorus Day - this will take place at 5am on Sunday 17th May at Listoke House.

Listoke house has several acres of walled Edwardian Gardens and a good variety of birds. It is located two miles from Drogheda on the Ballymakenny Road, Drogheda, Co Louth . For more details about the house and gardens or directions, [click here](#) or phone: 353 (0) 41 983 2265.

For details about the Dawn Chorus, call Breffni on 087 9145363.

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2009

Events in April

Louth Insects, An Illustrated Talk by Don Hodgers, Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Monday 6th April 2009 at 8pm



Don Hodgers, who is well known for his many insect-related records in County Louth and environs, and spectacular macro photography, will give us an account of moths, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies in County Louth in a continuation of his previous two very popular illustrated talks.

All are welcome!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2009

Events in March

Events in March and April include the following:

March 2nd 8pm - Review of Birds in Louth 2008 and Historical Review of Rare Birds in County Louth - Breffni Martin and Derek Watters

2008 was an exceptional year for rarities in County Louth with 183 species being seen in the county including two county records but over the last century we have had other even more exceptional rarities!

March 8th 11am - **Navy Bank Walk** with the Cavan branch - all are welcome to this outing. Meet at Soldiers Point in Dundalk at or before 11am. There is a 4.8 metre tide at 9am so we will observe the waders on a receding tide.



View from Soldiers Point

April 7th 8pm - **Louth Entomology Update** - Don Hodgers

All events at Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk.

All are welcome!

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2009

Carlingford Birding Festival

Our birding weekend in Carlingford went down very well despite arctic conditions. We were fully booked for the weekend package with 20 participants mainly from the Dublin area with a few from elsewhere in the country. We started with dinner in the hotel on Friday evening, followed by a talk by Eric Dempsey on the winter waterfowl we were to see the following day at Oxford Island. Although the Ferruginous Duck and Bewick's swans failed to make an

appearance, the sight of thousands of ducks including Tufted, Pochard, Ruddy, Goldeneye, Mallard, Teal along with the Great Crested Grebes and others well made up for it. The high quality hides and walkways were welcome given the weather.



Great Crested Grebe

That evening Eric gave a second talk, this time covering the over-wintering waders we were to see on the Carlingford mudflats on the Sunday morning walk along the shore. We were joined by 15 or so local enthusiasts despite the now freezing east wind. The usual array of waders showed, in many instances hiding behind rocks to get out of the wind: Brent geese, Curlews, Redshanks, Oystercatchers, Dunlin and a Grey Plover. On the lough we found a Great Northern Diver taking shelter from the stormy sea. By now our group had whittled down to a hardcore dozen and were about to call it a day when an unusual looking grebe was seen off Carlingford Harbour. Initially misidentified by myself, it turned out to be a Red-necked Grebe, a Siberian species that I, like several others, had never seen before - so a great finish to the weekend!



Distant view of the Red-necked Grebe

Other than that the theme of the weekend was animal rescue, with a Lapwing being rescued from a

Grey Crow and a fisherman being persuaded to return a pike he had caught to Lough Neigh, then in Carlingford a distressed juvenile Common Shag was taken into care and successfully released the following day.

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2009

Events in February 2009

On Monday 2 February 2009, Éanna Ní Lamhna, president of An Taisce, writer, broadcaster and environmentalist will give a talk entitled

We Get The Environment We Deserve

at the Spirit Store, Dundalk docks, Dundalk at 8:00pm.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Events in March and April include the following:

March 2nd 8pm - Review of birds in Louth 2008 and historical review of rare birds in County Louth - Breffni Martin and Derek Watters

Apr 7th 8pm - Louth Entomology Update - Don Hodgers

All events at Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2009

Happy New Year!

Events in January

Monday 5 January: Review of Baltray Little Tern Project - a talk by Sandra McKeever, Chairperson of the Louth Nature Trust, at the Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8:00pm. All are welcome!



Little Tern adult

Monday 19 January: Introduction to Birdwatching around Louth - a talk by Breffni Martin in the Westcourt Hotel, Drogheda, starting at the earlier time of 7:30pm. All are welcome!



Mute, Bewick's and Whooper Swans in fields near Oxford Island

Friday 30th January to Sunday 1 February: Birding Weekend at Carlingford with Eric Dempsey, with talks and outings to Oxford Island for winter waterfowl and the mudflats at Carlingford for over-wintering waders). Accommodation in Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford, for those travelling but also open to all for the day outing to Oxford Island - for more details [click here](#).

POSTED BY NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND AT 6:31 AM 1 COMMENT:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2010

[Irish Hen Harrier Conservation](#)

Barry O'Donoghue of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, was scheduled to give an illustrated talk entitled *Irish Hen Harrier Conservation* at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk (see <http://www.spiritstore.ie/> for directions) on the 6th December 2010 at 8pm. This talk has been rescheduled and will be replaced by a talk by Breffni Martin on Irish Bird Folklore.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

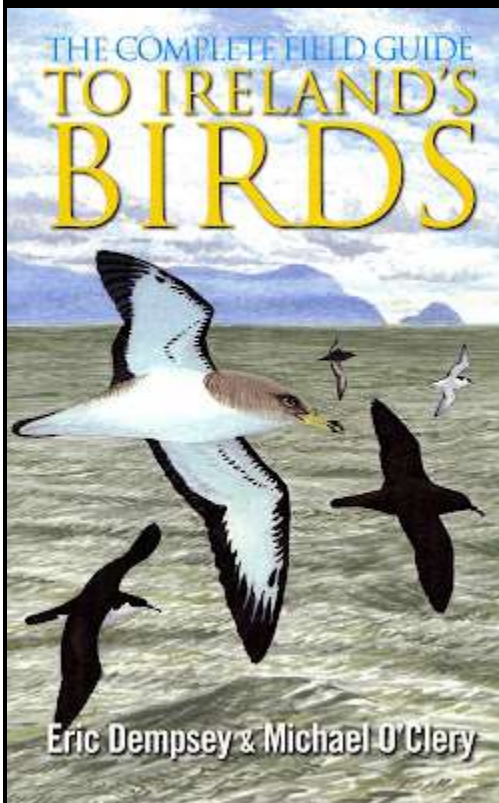
POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT 3:41 AM [NO COMMENTS:](#)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2010

[Eric Dempsey at the Spirit Store next Monday](#)

The ever popular Eric Dempsey will deliver an illustrated talk at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, on Monday, 1st November 2010 entitled "A Year In Birds". Eric will also be on hand to sign copies of his latest book, "The Complete Field Guide To Irish Birds", possibly a thoughtful present for a birdwatching friend!

The talk will start at 8pm as usual and all are welcome!



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2010

[Shorebirds of Ireland the Illustrated Talk](#)

In a follow-up to the photographic exhibition in the County Museum, Mark Carmody, co-author of the widely acclaimed book "Shorebirds of Ireland", will give an illustrated talk on the Shorebirds of

Ireland, that is to say waders, wildfowl and gulls at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks at 8pm Monday 4th October 2010. Dundalk bay holds the highest concentration of shorebirds in Ireland, all of which will be covered in this talk.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

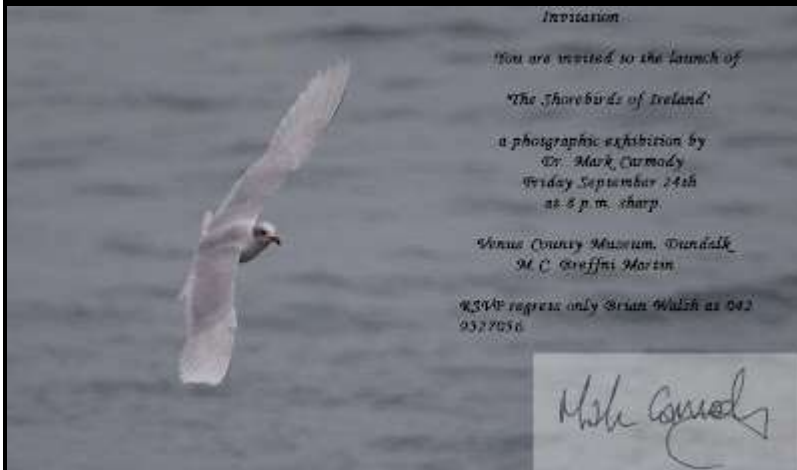
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2010

Shorebirds of Ireland - photographic exhibition by Mark Carmody, County Museum

Dundalk Bay holds the highest population of overwintering shore birds (waders, wildfowl, gulls and the like) in Ireland.

Next Friday the 24th September at 8pm, 2010, [The County Museum](#), Dundalk, in collaboration with the Louth branch of [Birdwatch Ireland](#), will run a photographic exhibition of Mark Carmody's wildlife photography. This exhibition covers photographs of Ireland's shore birds; these photographs were published earlier in the year by Mark in his book [Shorebirds of Ireland](#), co-authored with [Jim Wilson](#).

Drinks served afterwards. All are welcome!



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2010

Corncrakes!

This evening, Monday 6th September at 8pm in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Anita Donaghy, Corncrake Project Manager at Birdwatch Ireland will give an illustrated talk on the Conservation of Corncrakes in Ireland. This is of particular interest as we had several instances of

calling corncrakes in East County Louth last year.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2010

Update

Thanks to everybody who came along to the seawatch off Clogherhead on Wednesday. In the event we had manx shearwaters, fulmars, gannets, common and sandwich terns, razorbills, guillemots, cormorants, black-headed, common and great back-backed gulls, common scoter, grey heron, grey seals, and a glimpse of a light coloured unidentified cetacean. Despite a fresh south easterly the birds were quite a bit off shore, however as conditions strengthen over the weekend it might be well worth a try, particularly on Sunday.

Right now the forecast is a Beaufort 3 - 5 on the Irish Sea on Sunday. A 3 is go and a 5 is stay for the pelagic - if it's a 4 bring your sea sickness tablets!



MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2010

Seawatching and Pelagic

We would propose to run the seawatching outing on Wednesday from 6:30 - 8pm at Clogherhead meeting at the upper car park to walk out on the headland. Please bring telescope or binoculars. Nothing is guaranteed but we would hope to see good numbers of manx shearwaters as well as gannets, fulmars, terns, gulls and perhaps a skua or some storm petrels. There should be a few migrants on Clogherhead as well. All are welcome!

The pelagic is provisionally scheduled for next Sunday departing from Dun Laoghaire (the boat has unfortunately moved south for the summer and will not be back in Clogherhead until the winter). However this means we are further south and can check out the Kish bank. Several have reserved already, could they reconfirm this date, and could anyone else who is interested let me know. The pelagic will depart mid-morning and return late afternoon. If the sea is anything more than a Beauford 3, please be aware that we will cancel.

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [7:57 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2010

Seawatching and Pelagic 2010

We are organising a seawatching outing (viewing seabirds from the headland) from Clogherhead and a pelagic (trip in a boat out to Dundalk Bay to view seabirds closeup) during the next few weeks. For both outings we need to keep an eye on the weather, therefore dates will be announced here a few days before the outing (likely dates are 15, 22, 29th August or 5th or 12th September).



Little Terns at Baltray 2010

This years effort at Baltray produced 94 chicks from 43 pairs of little terns. Amazingly there was no predation at all, largely thanks to the effort of the many voluntary wardens; the overnight work in particular. We also had tremendous luck with the weather, with Spring tides arriving only after almost all fo the chicks had hatched (and so were able to move and avoid the water). The little tern protection scheme at Baltray is run by the Louth Nature Trust - full details of the season

are here.



TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2010

[Ornithology Birdwatching Course O'Fiach Institute Dundalk 2010](#)

Breffni Martin will be running a 10 week ornithological/birdwatching course at the O'Fiach Institute In Dundalk this Autumn. The details are [here](#). Download the pdf brochure. Classes will begin in September 21st 2010 and run from two hours, from 7 to 9pm. To sign up please contact the Institute.

The classes will be delivered in a relaxed manner and very much tailored to the interest and level of the attendees. We will try to include some outings. The following is the expected syllabus, this may be varied in accordance with interest and level of attendees.

Week 1

Introduction to birds: what are they and why are they important.
Identification of garden birds. Garden feeders, nesting boxes etc.

Week 2

Bird behaviour: what do birds do and why do they do it?

Identification of waders and shore birds.

Week 3

All about birds of prey.

Identification of birds of prey and owls.

Week 4

Territory, sexual behaviour and breeding.

Identification of countryside birds

Week 5

Bird migration: where do they go and why? Finding rare birds.

Identification of seabirds.

Week 6

Bird ecology: how birds interact with the environment.

Identification of wildfowl (ducks, geese and swans)

Week 7

Bird conservation: how are birds protected in Ireland.

Breeding birds in Ireland and the Irish bird atlas.

Week 8

Bird evolution: how did birds evolve?

Overwintering birds in Ireland - focus on Dundalk Bay and Carlingford Lough.

Week 9

Bird anatomy and health. How to deal with an injured or starving bird.

Rare and scarce birds in Ireland.

Week 10

Review of course

Bird identification quiz

THURSDAY, JULY 22, 2010

Events in Autumn/Winter 2010

August - pelagic off Clogherhead - date to be announced depending on weather conditions

August - seawatching outing off clogherhead - date to be announced depending on wheather conditions

Monday 6th September - corncrake conservation in Ireland - Anita Donaghy

Sunday 19th September, 1:00 pm - walk along Navvy bank, meet at Soldiers Point, Dundalk

Starting September 24th - photographic exhibition of shorebirds by Mark Carmody, Louth County Museum, Dundalk

Monday 4th October - Jim Wilson - shorebirds of Ireland (author of book of same title)

Monday 1st November - a year in birds - a photographic journey of Irish birds - Eric Dempsey

All illustrated talks starting at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, County Louth (<http://www.spiritstore.ie/>)

Email bmartin@regintel.com for more details.

Rescue of Herring Gull Chick

Jeanette from Drogheda rescued this [herring gull](#) chick which fell from its nest in Caple Street in Dublin. Herring gulls are increasingly nesting in urban areas, particularly along estuarine rivers.

When the chicks get lost or become trapped in various man-made structures, pandemonium often ensues with the terrified chick or juvenile bird calling for its parents, and parents swooping and screaming at terrified pedestrians trying to rescue chick. It should be remembered that herring gulls are highly protected in Ireland partly due to a recent collapse of up to 90% of their population following implementation of the landfill directive. Herring gulls are red-listed by [Birdwatch](#)



[Ireland](#) for this reason.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2010

Fifth Carlingford Birding Weekend - 28 - 30th May 2010

For the Fifth [Carlingford](#) Birding Weekend we decided to try something a bit different, focusing on the birds of the mountains rather than the shore. In the summer months the Irish shores are largely bereft of birds who spend our summer breeding further north in Iceland, Greenland, Canada, Scandinavia and further east. However we have several breeding species in the mountains that are of interest and these were our targets. The weekend started Friday evening with an illustrated talk by [Eric Dempsey](#) of [Mooney Goes Wild](#) at the Four Seasons Hotel. Then we were up at 7am on

Saturday morning to look for grasshopper warbler and cuckoo but were beaten back to the coast by unseasonable driving rain, and so spent the morning observing the black guillemots, dunlin, sanderling and others at giles quay, then other seabirds at balaggan point (shearwaters, gannets, terns). That night we returned to the Cooley mountains for woodcock and grasshopper warbler which duly performed. On the Sunday morning we went up to the mast on Annaverna and carefully made our way down where we found breeding wheatears and a jay, as well as all the other usual mountain birds (buzzard, kestrel, ravens etc).



Waiting for the roding woodcock to show in the Cooley mountains - they did show at 10:13pm, and the grasshopper warbler chimed in just after they left.

Over 60 species were seen over the weekend included the following:

1. Sand Martin

2. Whitethroat

3. Swallow

4. Blackbird

5. Song Thrush

6. Dunnock

7. House martin
[Redacted]

8. Shelduck
[Redacted]

9. Ringed Plover
[Redacted]

10. Little Egret
[Redacted]

11. Oystercatcher
[Redacted]

12. Redshank
[Redacted]

13. Curlew
[Redacted]

14. Wren
[Redacted]

15. Chiffchaff (Singing)
[Redacted]

16. Woodpigeon
[Redacted]

17. Feral Pigeon
[Redacted]

18. Black Guillemot
[Redacted]

19. Rock Pipit
[Redacted]

20. Sanderling
[Redacted]

21. Dunlin
[Redacted]

22. Hooded Crow
[Redacted]

23. Gannet
[Redacted]

24. Common Gull
[Redacted]

25. Sandwich Tern
[Redacted]

26. Cormorant
[Redacted]

27. Manx Shearwater
[Redacted]

28. Meadow Pipit
[Redacted]

29. Fulmar
[Redacted]

30. Greenfinch
[Redacted]

31. House Sparrow
[Redacted]

32. Mallard
[Redacted]

33. Great Black Backed Gull
[Redacted]

34. Herring Gull
[Redacted]

35. Black-headed Gull
[Redacted]

36. Swift
[Redacted]

37. Blue tit
[Redacted]

38. Goldfinch
[Redacted]

39. Jackdaw
[Redacted]

40. Rook
[Redacted]

41. Magpie
[Redacted]

42. Robin
[Redacted]

43. Starling
[Redacted]

44. Bullfinch
[Redacted]

45. Pheasant
[Redacted]

46. Great Tit
[Redacted]

47. Kestrel
[Redacted]

48. Chaffinch
[Redacted]

49. Long-tail tit (Calling)
[Redacted]

50. Woodcock
[Redacted]

51. Grasshopper Warbler
[Redacted]

52. Linnet

53. Willow warbler

54. Skylark

55. Wheatear

56. Raven

57. Grey Herron

58. Jay

59. Pied Wagtail

60. Buzzard

SUNDAY, MAY 30, 2010

New Bird Panel at Soldier's Point

A new bird panel by renowned wildlife artist [Micheal O'Cleary](#) has been erected at [Soldier's Point](#) at the end of the Navy Bank in Dundalk. This entirely original design and artwork was sponsored by [Dundalk Town Council](#) with contributions from local [Birdwatch Ireland](#) and [Louth Heritage](#). The panel shows the main species of bird that can be seen from the Navy Bank along with the different prey items that they feed on, emphasising how the shape and size of the birds bill is adapted to the kind of prey item on which they depend.



This new panel joins a previously erected panel and a telescope at the site. In further work to enhance the biodiversity interest of the area, several bird tables have been erected, and a LINNET plot is planned to provide feeding for overwintering birds.

MONDAY, MAY 24, 2010

Dawn Chorus - Thanks

Thanks to Derek Watters, Branch Treasurer, for covering our radio spot on Dundalk FM radio on the 15th May and to Peter Phillips for facilitating the event at 4am on Sunday 16th at Rathesker Woodland. Thanks also to everyone for showing up despite the weather. The predicted rain did not materialise but it was cold, which meant that when folks arrived there was complete silence, until a lone blackbird struck up starting the gradual buildup to the full chorus. A special thanks also to Brendan Sheils for help with identifying calls.

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2010

National Dawn Chorus Louth 2010

Our next event is the national dawn chorus which, for Louth, will take place at Rathesker Woodland Walk. Details of and directions to this woodland and pond area can be found here: <http://www.irelandtoireland.com/Ratheskar.html>.

Ratheskar is near Dunleer on just the other (west) side of the M1 and is accessible from all over County Louth. Meet at the carpark at 4am. All are welcome!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010

Louth Insects

On Monday 5th of March 2010, local entomologist Don Hodgers, will give an illustrated talk on Louth's insects. This is a follow-up to several previous popular talks covering damselflies, dragonflies, butterflies, moths and others. On this occasion Don will focus on moths, as one birding wag put it: "the true masters of the air"!

All are welcome to this talk which will take place in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk at 8pm.

Navvy Bank Walk March 2010

As I was unavailable to do the Navy Bank walk on Sunday 7th March, Gerry and Derek stood in. About 12 attended and the following species were observed along the shore / on the water: mute swan, brent geese, shelduck, wigeon, teal, GC Grebe, cormorant, buzzard, oystercatcher, golden plover, grey plover, lapwing, snipe, black-tailed godwit, curlew, redshank, turnstone, bh gull, common gull, herring gull, and rock pipit (and maybe a few more). Surprisingly no herons or egrets in the area - maybe the cold weatehr did for some of the local little egrets As I understand it several went on to observe the waxwing at Greenacres, the only one seen in County Louth this year.

Thanks to Gerry and Derek and to all who attended!

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2010

Cavan Branch Outing to Carlingford and environs



Sunday 28th February turned out to be a beautiful day on Carlingford Lough with cold clear light and a very high tide. After meeting at Templetown Beach where there were dozens of cormorants and shags in breeding plumage, and a single distant red-throated diver (thin on the ground this year, perhaps because of the colder than usual water temperature), we moved to the Carlingford shore where the rocky islands created by the high tide hosted dozens of birds of several species packed together making viewing and identification easy. Grey heron, curlew, bar-tailed godwit, oystercatcher, lapwing, turnstone, dunlin and ringed plover on the rocks along with

mallard, widgeon and light bellied brent geese were all on view, along with black headed, common, herring and great black-backed gulls. Later we swung around the Balaggan shore ending up back at Templetown beach where a single great northern diver obliged.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2010

Birds (and other wildlife) of New Zealand

On Monday 1st March 2010 at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Billy Clarke will give an illustrated talk on the wildlife (mostly birds) of New Zealand and it's subantarctic Islands. He will show photos taken on a cruise to these subantarctic islands and a subsequent tour around the mainland islands. These areas are a diversity hotspot for albatrosses (thirteen species), penguins ,cormorants and many other seabirds.

Many thousands of albatrosses were seen on this cruise. The mainland islands are largely devoid of native birds but the wildlife service of New Zealand has pioneered many innovative conservation techniques. Many critically endangered birds have been moved to offshore islands that have been cleared of introduced pests. It is possible to see such strange and fascinating birds as kiwi and takahe on these islands.

Billy is a laboratory technician in Biology in UCD doing research on Fallow Deer, Grey Squirrels and the extinct Giant Irish Deer. His hobby is wildlife photography and he also has painted plates for some bird and mammal guide books.

All are welcome and entry is free!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2010

Carlingford Birding Weekend 2010

A few people arrived early on the Friday afternoon so we went on a walk along the Carlingford shore. The tide was rising so the birds were all packed together to roost on the small rocky islands along the shore. In these circumstances it is possible to study the birds in relatively close quarters and observe identification features. Species present were dunlin, turnstone, ringed plover, lapwing, redshank, greenshank, bar-tailed godwit, curlew, little egret and grey heron as well as mallard, widgeon and teal. Returning along Shilties Lough, a small sea inlet along the shore, we had four little grebes and a snipe just before the light fell. That evening we all met at the Four Seasons hotel for Eric's illustrated talk about the winter waterfowl we were to see the following day at Oxford Island.



The weather on Saturday proved to be perfect given the arctic conditions up until then. At Oxford Island all the regular ducks were seen, mallard, teal, widgeon, pochard, tufted, and goldeneye, as well as flocks of whooper and mute swans. Everyone was very impressed with the excellent facilities at Oxford Island.

That evening we had a group dinner at the hotel. It has to be said that the food was generally excellent, as was the chat with many people staying up till after 2am! Luckily the start on Sunday morning was late and given the state of the tide, we decided to head for Annagassan where a snow bunting had been found. As luck would have it the bird showed very well, this arctic species being particularly confiding. On the way back to Carlingford we stopped at Lurgangreen to view waders and geese and Giles Quay for diving birds. Finally after lunch we did a final swing around the sites near Carlingford and picked up a peregrine hunting the Carlingford shore and a buzzard quartering the Locra, near Greenore.



A big thank you to everyone for being such enthusiastic participants and to Eric for his professional and entertaining guidance. We are planning a follow-up weekend in June to look for breeding summer birds both on the shore and in the



Cooley mountains.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010

[A Floral Ramble Through County Louth](#)

On **Monday 1st February** 2010 at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundak Docks, Dundalk, **Dr Maurice Eakin** will give an illustrated talk about the flora and ecology of County Louth entitled **A Floral Ramble Through County Louth**. The talk will cover Louth from the Boyne valley, through the depths of Ardee Bog to the heights of Clogherhead and the Cooley Mountains. The talk is suitable for anyone with an interest in the natural world and will follow up on Brendan McSherry's previous talk on the geology of County Louth.

Maurice Eakin is the District Officer for the National Parks and Wildlife Service covering counties Dublin, Meath and Louth. He took his PhD at Colraige University in Botany.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Direction to the Spirit Store can be found at <http://www.spiritstore.ie/>



Navvy Bank Outing

Thanks to everyone who came along to the Navvy Bank outing on Sunday! The weather was fantastic and we timed our visit perfectly to that moment when the tide starts to turn after high tide, and the birds start coming out onto the mud to feed. Species seen included:

Mallard

Teal

Wigeon

Grey Heron

Light-bellied Brent

Cormorant

Great Crested Grebe

Red-breasted Merganser

Ringed Plover

Dunlin

Knot

Redshank

Oystercatcher

Bar-tailed Godwit

Black-tailed Godwit

Curlew

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2011

Thanks!

A big thank you to everyone who came to our talks and outings during 2011. I forgot to post details fo Eric Dempseys talk about birds in the big freeze on December 5th 2011, and The Future of Bird Conservation in Ireland by Alan Lauder, Chief Executive, BirdWatch Ireland which was on Monday 7 November 8:00pm.

Our next talk is by Peter Philips of the Lough Nature Trust and is entitled Little Tern Protection Scheme at Baltray: Five Years On. Its on at 8pm on Monday 2nd of January at the Spirit Store Dundalk Docks.

All are welcome!

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [9:00 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2011

Where to Watch Birds and Other Wildlife in County Louth

Today at 8pm, September 12th Monday - Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk entitled **Where to Watch Birds and Other Wildlife in County Louth** at the Drogheda Museum and Martello Tower at Millmount (the old Governors House) - see <http://www.millmount.net/>

Entry is free and all are welcome.

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [2:35 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2011

South Down Wildlife

Our inaugural illustrated talk will take place this evening, 5th September 2011 at 8pm upstairs in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Co Louth (for directions see [The Spirit Store](#)). The talk is entitled "South Down Wildlife" and will be delivered by well-known Armagh birder, Joe Devlin. The talk will focus on the wildlife of south Down and will cover mainly birds but will also other animals, as well as sites in County Down which may be visited to see them.

As always entry is free and all are welcome!

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [3:15 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 2011

Sunday 7th August, 3pm

Seawatching from Clogherhead - meet at top of quay (not upper car park) - please let me know by email if attending.

We will be starting our autumn series of talks on **Monday 5th of September** with a talk on Birding in Northern Ireland covering sites, species and conservation. Subsequent talks are as follows:

September 12th Monday - Where to watch birds and other wildlife in County Louth - Breffni Martin (Drogheda - venue tbc - if anyone can suggest a suitable venue please let me know!)

September 18th Sunday, 3pm - Outing to Navy Bank, Dundalk - please email me if attending

October 3rd Monday - Hen Harriers in Ireland - Barry O'Donohue

November 7th Monday - The future of bird conservation in Ireland - Alan Louder - CEO Birdwatch Ireland

December 5th Monday - title tbc - Eric Dempsey

All talks, unless otherwise stated, in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk at 8pm.

Night Classes

I will also be running night classes in birdwatching and ornithology at the [O'Fiaich Institute](#) in Dundalk and the Institute of [Further Education at St Olivers in Drogheda](#) from end September. Course will cover basic bird identification, garden birds, wildfowl, waders, seabirds and birds of prey taking in bird conservation, bird behavior and ecology, bird habitats and sites, rehabilitation of injured birds, and much more. One outing will be included as part of the course.

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT 5:25 AM [NO COMMENTS:](#)

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2011

[Dawn Chorus 2011](#)

Thanks to everyone who showed up at 5am for the Dawn Chorus at the Ballymascanlon Hotel. As luck would have it we slipped in and out between two rain showers. On arrival a mistle thrush was singing from the top of one of the eucalyptus trees on the avenue. Walking first through the old walled garden and parkland, then along the river we picked up song thrush, blackbird, wren, dunnock, blackcap and many woodpigeons. Moving into the conifer plantation we listened to the terrifying vocalisations of the grey herons and little egrets feeding their young. We then moved up to the more open country and picked up a few distant finches (goldfinch, linnet) until we got to the dolmen where we finally found a robin, along with two more blackcaps, a song thrush and a blackbird all singing from the same copse. We finished up in the carpark where someone had brought

along some donuts, which we munched as the drizzle started in.



POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [10:06 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2011

Seventh Carlingford Birding Weekend

Seventh Carlingford Birding Weekend

27th - 29th May 2011

Carlingford is not only a spectacular medieval village with great cuisine, scenery and history, it is also a great location for birdwatching. Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay, the Cooley mountains, and hinterland all contain superb birding habitats. Following the successful birding weekend in May 2010 we have organised another birding weekend for the weekend of 27th May to 29th May 2011.

Schedule

Friday 27th May

19:30 - 20:30 Talk and slide show with Eric Dempsey Four Seasons Hotel

Saturday 28th May

7am- Bus to Mullaghattin woodland from 7:30 am to 10 am

Seabirds along Giles quay and Balaggan point 11 - 12:30 pm

1pm Lunch

3pm Carlingford area walk (optional)

7pm Group Dinner

8:30 pm Back to Mullaghattin woodland at until dusk (about 10:30) to be back to Carlingford before closing time!!

Sunday May 29th

10am - 12:30pm - Either back to woodland area, mountain area or shore depending on what we have missed or what rarity may have turned up in the general area.

The weekend will be guided by Eric Dempsey (professional guide, author, photographer, broadcaster) who some may know from Mooney Goes Wild. While nothing is guaranteed we would hope to see buzzard, woodcock, cuckoo, grasshopper warbler, raven, peregrine as well as a range of typical countryside birds and seabirds such as auks, shearwaters, fulmars and terns.

In terms of accommodation and cost:

Guide, transport, talk etc - 50 Euros per person assuming 20 participants

Group dinner at Four Seasons Hotel - 25 Euros per person

Accommodation - several hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs available, details on <http://www.carlingford.ie/index.php/accommodation>

To book please email bmartin@regintel.com

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [11:09 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 2011

[Moths, Dawn Chorus, Woodcock and Seabirds.](#)

Louth entomologist Don Hodgers will give an illustrated talk on Louth and Irish Moths on Monday 4th April 2011 at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk. The talk will focus on several moth discoveries in 2010, as well as moth ecology and conservation. This is our last talk of the season given the lengthening of the evenings. Our next talk will be in September. However we will run several outdoor events during the Summer starting with our Dawn Chorus outing on 15th May in the grounds of the [Ballymascanlon Hotel](#) just north of Dundalk (directions [here](#)). Towards the end of May we will run the Seventh Carlingford Birding Weekend (exact weekend to be confirmed) - please email bmartin@regintel.com if interested. Our last birding weekend produced woodcock, grasshopper warbler, cuckoo and others. During June and July we will run at least one pelagic boat trip onto Dundalk Bay. Previous outings have produced bonxie, pomerine skua, great shearwater as well as the usual range of seabirds that occupy the bay.

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [6:27 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2011

[Irish Red Grouse](#)

Kieran Buckley from the [National Parks and Wildlife Service](#) will give an illustrated talk on our native Irish Red Grouse on the 7th of March 2011 at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk.

The talk will present recent evidence pointing to the uniqueness of our red grouse as described at the [Irish Red Grouse Conference](#), and will also discuss the reintroduction of red grouse to the Cooley mountains. Kieran, who spearheaded the successful reintroduction of [grey partridge](#) in Ireland, is also the Louth County Ranger and has great familiarity with Louth wildlife issues.

Entry is free; all are welcome

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [5:14 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2011

[Irish Garden Birds](#)

Jamie Durrant from Birdwatch Ireland will give an illustrated talk entitled Irish Garden Birds at the [Spirit Store](#), Dundalk Docks, Dundalk on the 7th of February 2011 at 8pm. This replaces a talk previously scheduled about hen harriers.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [7:21 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2011

[Next Events](#)



On Wednesday, 26th Jan Padraig Whooley of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group will give an

illustrated talk on whales and dolphins in Irish waters starting at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk.

The Sixth Carlingford Birding weekend will also run this weekend (4, 5, and 6th February) - email me if interested bmartin@regintel.com details here: <http://www.carlingford.ie/index.php/events>

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT 3:38 AM [NO COMMENTS:](#)

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2011

Brent Geese

Our first talk of the year for 2011 will be on Monday next, 3rd January 2011 at 8pm at the Spirit Store. This month Dr Kendrew Colhoun of RSPB Northern Ireland and the Irish Brent Goose Study Group will give a talk on the fascinating life history and conservation of the population of Brent Geese that breeds in the high Canadian Arctic and overwinters in Ireland.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012

Irish Wetland Birds Training December 2012

On Sunday 2nd December, Birdwatch Ireland are holding an I-WeBS workshop at the lovely Ballybay Wetlands Centre, Derryvalley Farm, Ballybay, Co. Monaghan (www.ballybaywetlands.ie)

It will run from 10am - 1pm after which there will be a field visit to look at some of the wintering waterbirds on the wetlands near the centre.

This is a completely free event and we will provide tea and coffee and some light lunch.

The workshop is aimed at anyone who either already takes part or who is interested in participating in the survey. Everybody is welcome. We will provide information about wintering waterbirds, and about the survey itself, how to count, and a bit of waterbird ID, and hopefully we will be able to sign up a few new recruits. No wetland is too small! And there is bound to be one in your area.

We will be holding at least one other workshop this season which we will forward details of as soon as possible.

In the meantime let me know if you would like to come along to this one In Ballybay, Monaghan, so

I can gather some idea about numbers and how much refreshments to provide. And do please pass this information on to anyone you think may be interested in taking part in I-WeBS.

POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT [9:28 AM](#) [NO COMMENTS:](#)

[Louth Biodiversity - An Occasional Newsletter August 2012](#)

Wetlands

In Ireland, wetlands such as bogs, fens and the like, were traditionally seen as wasteful, and many were cut or drained. The last of the raised bogs (98% have been destroyed) are now belatedly well protected. In relation to other wetlands, the 2011 Planning and Development de-exempted drainage of an area of land greater than 0.1 ha, meaning that these now require planning permission. Concerns about drainage should be addressed to the council:
environment@louthcoco.ie.

Hedgerows

The closed season for the cutting of hedgerows, grassy verges and other vegetation ends on the 1st September. It is important to cut back hedgerows in winter to prevent them "legging up" which reduces their biodiversity value.

Pelagic

I am hoping to organise a pelagic from Greenore/Carlingford next week. The boat will go out from the mouth of Carlingford Lough for about 3 hours. The boat can take 10 people; assuming 8 sign up, the fee will be 50 euros per person. Date/time will depend on weather and tides. Please contact me if interested.

Hide/Bird Observatory

Thanks to Dundalk Town Council for ongoing development of the Soldiers Point area as a bird reserve. Please feel free to drop into the bird observatory there and sign the visitors book. We have high hopes of getting a hide in place at Lurgangreen near the mouth of the Fane in time for the winter birding season.

Talks

Our first talk of the year this year will be delivered by myself at the Spirit Store on Monday 3rd September at 8pm on the subject of Irish Waders. We will organise an outing along the Navy Bank for the following Sunday.

Terns

It was a bad year for breeding terns in County Louth with relatively few fledglings at Baltray and none at Green Island. Generally the heavy rain during the nesting season made it a poor year. Similarly the black guillemot colony was hit by high tides, with only a single juvenile getting away. The Greenore and Clogherhead black guillemot sites did well.

Woodpecker

A juvenile great spotted woodpecker was found in Ravensdale Forest Park strongly suggesting that they are breeding at that location - any further news on this very welcome!

Red Squirrels

Red squirrels are present in the Cooley mountains, notably at Revensdale. But grey squirrels are expanding all the time. Those interested in red squirrel conservation should contact the Gullion Red Squirrel Group:

www.ringofgullion.org/Red-Squirrel-Group.aspx

Workshops/Exhibitions

An exhibition of local wildlife photographer Enda Flynn (Cooley Wildlife Photos) will hold an exhibition on 8th-25th August in the Watch-house which is opposite the Harbour in Carlingford.

Further away, Eric Dempsey is also running an autumn series of workshops. See

www.birdsireland.com for details.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2012

Wetlands of Louth

Our first talk of the New Year will be on the 7th of January 2013 and will be entitled Wetlands of Louth. The talk will be given by Faith Wilson, an ecologist who has recently completed a survey of the [wetlands of County Louth](#) along with Peter Foss, Patrick Crushell, and Barry O'Loughlin of Wetland Surveys Ireland.

The talk will be given in the newly refurbished [Spirit Store](#) on Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, County Louth.

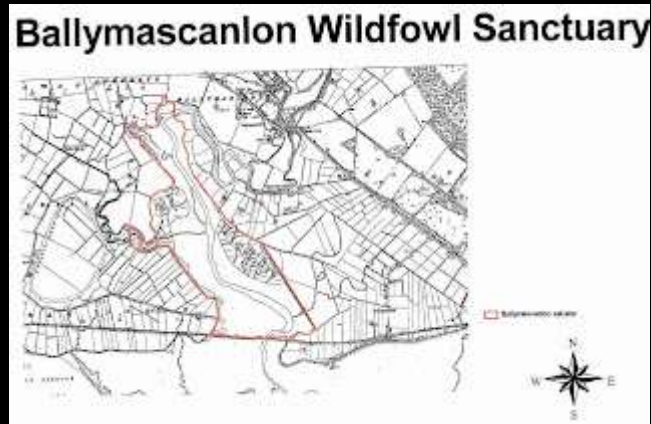
As usual entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni.

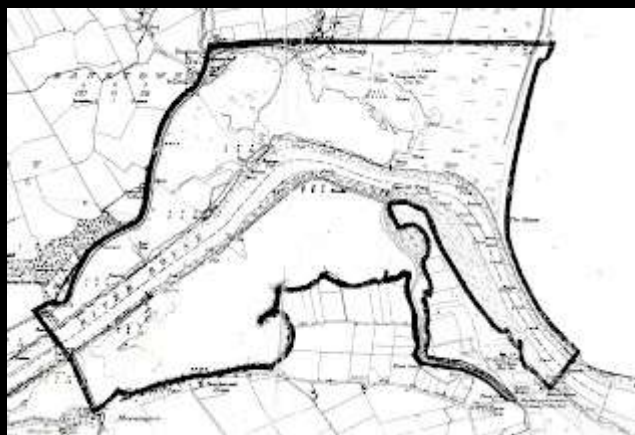
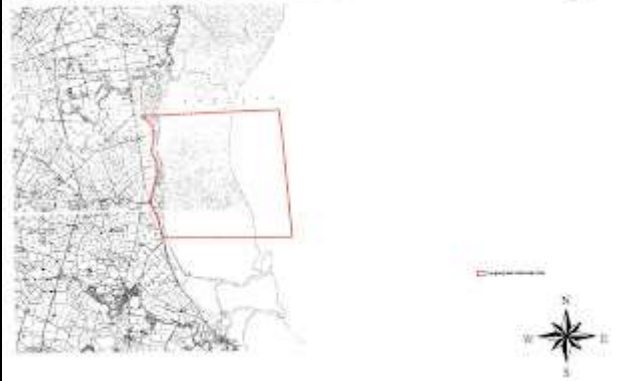
Louth Bird Sanctuaries

There are three bird sanctuaries in County Louth, at Ballymascanlon, Lurgangreen and The Boyne estuary. Maps are provided below. It is an offence to shoot or otherwise hunt birds in these areas.

In my experience the sanctuaries have been generally respected by the local gun clubs, though sometimes hunters from outside the county do shoot them, maybe from ignorance.



Lurgangreen Wildfowl Sanctuary



MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2012

Talk Cancelled!

Unfortunately we have to cancel the talk on waders scheduled for this evening (8pm, Spirit Store) because ongoing refurbishment of the venue upstairs means that the venue is unavailable - apologies for this and I hope nobody will be inconvenienced.

All the autumn talks are now deferred until the Spring starting early January.

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2012

Dawn Chorus 2012

National Dawn Chorus day is next Sunday 20th May. This year we are meeting at Kilcurry Church at 5am. The outing will consist of a short walk in the immediate area of the Church for an hour or so. Weather looks OK as of today but probably best to bring a raincoat and a pair of binoculars.

See you there!

Breffni

087 9145363

<http://maps.google.com/?ll=54.041853,-6.422367&spn=0.023839,0.054846&t=h&z=14>

DIRECTIONS TO Kilcurry Community Resource Centre: From North or South of Dundalk take the M1 Motorway to the Dundalk Town Centre / Castleblaney turnoff. At the Dundalk Town Centre / Castleblaney Turn towards Dundalk and drive straight until the road reaches a T Junction with you the minor road. Quinns Funeral Home on left and Harrys Bar in front of you. Turn left, cross over the bridge and at the next traffic lights turn left onto R177 Armagh Road . Travel out this road under 2 bridges approx 2 miles. Turn left at a Big Tree just on the corner. Signposted on the other side of the road for Kilcurry Community Resource Centre.

I will try to organise an evening chorus event near Drogheda next week. Stay tuned!

SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 2012

Louth entomologist Don Hodgers will give an illustrated talk entitled "The Scaled Wings - Moths and Butterflies, with an update on recent discoveries in Co Louth". The talk will cover the lifecycles of butterflies and moths, as well as covering recent discoveries in County Louth.

Louth entomologist Don Hodgers will give an illustrated talk entitled "The Scaled Wings - Moths and Butterflies, with an update on recent discoveries in Co Louth" at 8pm on Monday 2nd March at the Spirit Store. The talk will cover the lifecycles of butterflies and moths, as well as covering recent discoveries in County Louth.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2012

What's Happening With The Badgers!

Padraic Fogerty of the [Irish Wildlife Trust](#) will give an illustrated talk on badgers at the Spirit Store on Monday 5th March 2012 at 8pm. the talk will cover the natural history and ecology of badgers, as well as various threats, including cruent government policy in relation to badger culling - see <http://iwt.ie/2011/11/iwt-badger-campaign/>.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni

Andrew kelly - Wildlife Phtoography

Andrew kelly gave a great talk on wildlife photography on February 6th at the Spirit Store - thanks to everyone for coming along - Andrew's website is here: <http://akellyphoto.com/> - some fantastic shots for sale.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2012

Easterlies and cold snap

Weather this week may bring in some eastern birds - look out for redwings and fieldfares, and maybe a few waxwings, though its late. With luck maybe something like the Ardglass Ross's gull might turn up - this bird is still present at Ardglass harbour: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-16728762...> along with kumliens, iceland and glaucous gulls...

A few photos from a trip to Ardglass here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/breffni>

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2013

The State of Ireland's Birds

This evening at 8pm, Monday 13th December 2013, Brian Caffrey from Birdwatch Ireland will give an illustrated talk on The State of Ireland's Birds at The Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Co Louth. This talk coincides with the publication of the current Bird Atlas covering 2007 - 2011. Brian coordinated the Atlas work in Ireland and will cover the major trends in bird populations, as well as touching on the rarer breeding birds. Copies of the Atlas will be available for purchase. Entry is free and all are welcome!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2013

Birds and Bird Photography

On Monday 4 November: well known bird photographer Mark Carmody will deliver an illustrated talk entitled "Birds and Bird Photography" at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, County Louth upstairs at 8pm. Mark has co-published three bird books: Shorebirds of Ireland (2009), Freshwater Birds of Ireland (2011) and The Birds of Ireland: A Field Guide (2013). Entry is free and all are welcome! Breffni A floavour of Mark's photography: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/drcarmo/>

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

Waders of Dundalk Bay

Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk on the subject of Waders of Dundalk Bay at 8pm this evening, Tuesday 3rd of September, upstairs in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Co Louth.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2013

Little Terns at Baltray

The Louth nature Trust commissioned Birdwatch Ireland to run the colony this year, and as chance would have it, it looks like a record breaking one in terms of breeding birds at Baltray, with 89 active nests and more than 190 eggs; this is nearly double what was seen in previous years. All of these birds are due to hatch through the forthcoming spring tides, so things may bet a bit hairy.

The [Louth Nature Trust](#) would be very grateful to anyone who can volunteer a few hours to warden the site, particularly in the early morning, evening after 6pm and weekends.



POSTED BY [NORTH LOUTH BRANCH OF BIRDWATCH IRELAND](#) AT 3:08 AM [NO COMMENTS:](#)

Dawn Chorus

Thanks to everyone for coming along to the Dawn chorus at The Ballymascanlon Hotel at 5am. In the event the rain held off. We started in the walled garden where we picked up three tit species, robin, blackbird, blackcap and pied wagtail. Moving west to the stand of conifers we listened to the little egrets and grey herons squabbling over feeding their young. Walking up to the dolmen we added song thrush, dunnock, goldcrest, mistle thrush, greenfinch, goldfinch, chiffchaff and wren. Strangely we found no willow warbler. Returning to the hotel carpark we had a very confiding pair of treecreepers and goldcrests along with a particularly feisty robin.



THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2013

National Dawn Chorus, Sunday 19th May 2013

National Dawn chorus day is next Sunday. We will be meeting at 5am in the carpark of the Ballymascanlon Hotel just north of Dundalk and taking a walk around the grounds followed by coffee. We would expect to finish at around 6:30am.

All are welcome

Breffni

0879145363

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2013

Moths and Butterflies

Louth entomologist Don Rodgers will give an illustrated talk on Monday 1st April 2013 on the subject of butterflies and moths. The talk will take place at the Spirit Store (upstairs) and will start at 8pm.

Entry is free and all areas welcome.

Breffni

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013

Woodpeckers in Ireland - Dick Coomes

Mon 4th March 2013 Spirit Store Upstairs

Doors 8pm - FREE

Dick Coomes from Birdwatch Ireland will give an illustrated talk on the recent colonisation of Ireland by Great Spotted Woodpeckers. This extraordinary natural phenomenon was first detected a few years ago in Wicklow and Down, when Great Spotted Woodpeckers started appearing at garden bird feeders. Dick spent hundreds of hours tracking down the woodpeckers in Wicklow and will tell the story of how they invaded, where they came from and how they are likely to progress in Ireland.

Breffni

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 2013

Birds Through Irish Eyes

Legendary Irish birder, Anthony McGeehan, will give a talk entitled "Birds Through Irish Eyes" at 8pm on Monday 4th February 2013 upstairs at the Spirit Store.

Nobody has to travel far to see birds. The back garden will do. And there, not far from the kitchen window, are several species that conceal mysteries. Why do Coal Tits drop most of the seeds that they extract from feeders? A strange thing to do when the species probably possesses the largest brain of any Irish bird! As human birdwatchers, we seldom listen to what birds tell us. In the case of the ubiquitous Woodpigeon, no Field Guide interpretation has ever unraveled the key to its voice. So, from Coal IQ to cracking Woodpigeon's coded messages, the Feb 4th talk will concentrate on 'the birds under our noses'. There should be no shortage of inspiration as well as an incentive to try out tips for yourself. Anthony's talk carries on from the information in BIRDS THROUGH IRISH EYES, signed copies of which will also be available. Anthony will also touch on his famous "Magic Pelagic" talk at the end, possibly after a short break.....

Anthony has been interested in birds since childhood and, to paraphrase Groucho Marks, has gone from opera glasses to Swarovskis and extreme poverty.

As usual entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni

www.flickr.com/photos/breffni



Anthony McGeehan

SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2013

Wetlands of Louth.

Our first talk of the New Year will be on the 7th of January 2013 at 8pm and will be entitled Wetlands of Louth.

The talk will be given by Faith Wilson, an ecologist who has recently completed a survey of the wetlands of County Louth along with Peter Foss, Patrick Crushell, and Barry O'Loughlin of Wetland Surveys Ireland.

Wetlands are arguably Ireland's most important ecological resource, providing not only a refuge for wildlife, but also providing critical services such as clean drinking water and flood attenuation.

The talk will be given in the newly refurbished Spirit Store on Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, County Louth.

As usual entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2014

From Siberia to Saskatchewan: Why do so many northern hemisphere migrants reach Ireland? By Anthony McGeehan

Our next talk is on Monday 1st December and entitled **From Siberia to Saskatchewan: Why do so many northern hemisphere migrants reach Ireland?** By Anthony McGeehan (who will sign copies of his latest book, *Birds of the Homeplace*, a great Christmas gift). As usual the talk starts at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Co Louth. Entry is free and all are welcome!

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2014

Talk in Drogheda this evening, Monday 15 September 2014 is DEFERRED

The following talk has been unavoidably deferred due to the venue being unavailable because of illness: Monday 15 September: *Irish Garden Birds*, by Breffni Martin. St. Peter's Parish Hall, Drogheda, 8:00pm. I will organise a replacement talk in due course or when the venue again becomes available. Apologies for that!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2014

Forthcoming events

Forthcoming events: All indoor events are held in the Spirit Store (upstairs), Dundalk Docks at 8:00pm unless otherwise stated. Sunday 31 August: Seawatch and botany walk at Clogherhead : a Heritage Week event. Meet in upper car park, Port Oriel, Clogherhead, Co Louth, 4:00pm. Sunday 31 August: Beginning Birdwatching for Children (with craft activities): a Heritage Week event. Learn about waders and geese at the Lurgangreen Bird Hide and then make your very own flock of paper creations. Lurgangreen Hide, Dundalk, 12:00 noon to 2:30pm. Monday 1 September: *Irish Garden Birds*, by Breffni Martin. Spirit Store, 8:00pm. Monday 15 September: *Irish Garden Birds*, by Breffni Martin. St. Peter's Parish Hall, Drogheda, 8:00pm Monday 6 October: *Seabirds*: Dr Steve Newton - Spirit Store, 8:00pm. Monday 3 November: *Bird Reproductive Ecology: Everything you wanted to know about the love life of birds but were afraid to ask*, by Breffni Martin. Spirit Store, 8:00pm. Monday 1 December: *Terns, gulls and skuas: Their Identification and Ecology* (speaker to be confirmed). Spirit Store, 8:00pm

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2014

Dawn Chorus 2014

We will be meeting at the Ghan House in Carlingford tomorrow Sunday 18th May at 5am for the dawn chorus this year. As usual all are welcome! Breffni

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2014

Now covering all of County Louth

The North Louth branch is now the Louth branch following the demise of the Boyne Valley Branch. As a result we will be running talks and outings in the southern part of the county and Ardee in coming months. Breffni

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014

Global warming and its impact on birds and other wildlife

GLOBAL WARMING TALK On Monday 7th April 2014 at 8pm Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk on global warming and its impact on birds and other wildlife. The talk will outline the science behind global warming, its probable impacts, and its effect on birds and other wildlife. It will particularly focus on the north west Atlantic region, Ireland in particular. The talk will take place upstairs in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, Co Louth. Time will be available after the talk for questions/discussion. Entry is free and all are welcome! HIDE OPEN DAY On Sunday 19th April 2014 we will run an open day for our newly installed bird hide at Lurgangreen, named The Oscar Merne Bird Hide. The hide will be open to all members of the public from 11am until about 6pm. The hide is located at the end of the cul-de-sac immediately south of the Fane river at Lurgangreen. Please park safely along the main road and walk down to the hide. See <http://lurgangreenhide.blogspot.ie/?m=0> for details.

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2014

Oceanic Wonders & Migration on the Edge!

•"Oceanic Wonders & Migration on the Edge! - seawatching & the Seatrack project" - a talk by Niall Keogh. •The Spirit Store (upstairs), Dundalk, Monday 3rd March at 7:30pm

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2014

The Wild Bogs of Ireland

Nuala Madigan (Education Officer Irish Peatland Conservation Council) will give a talk entitled The Wild Bogs of Ireland at 8pm at the Spirit Store, Dundalk, Dundalk Docks. Boglands are one of Ireland's wild landscapes. They are thousands of years old often being described as living history books and are home to a great diversity of wildlife. This talk will explore peatlands from their

formation through to their modern uses and threats with particular attention to the diversity of species they support, including birds. Entry is free and all are welcome!

MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2014

Peter Phillips - Birding from Cape to Tory

Well known Louth birder Peter Phillips will give a talk entitled "Scarce and Rare Birds From Tory To Cape" Peter has been visiting both Tory Island off Donegal and Cape Clear Island off west Cork, arguably Irelands two hottest birding spots, for the last 15 odd years. The talk is an account of what he found over this time - it will also describe practical aspects of visiting the islands Upstairs FREE 8pm All are welcome!

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

Schedule 2015 to 2016

Monday 7th September 2015

Scarce Garden Birds - Breffni Martin - Spirit Store

Monday 5th October 2015

Birds of the Bay - Breffni Martin

Thursday 5th November 2015 7:30 pm

Crossmaglen community centre, O'Fiaich Square, Crossmaglen

Bird Identification talk focusing on garden birds: <http://www.ringofgullion.org/events/whats-that-bird-garden-bird-id-and-feeding/>

Monday 2 November 2015:

Wildlife Photography, by Enda Flynn. Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, 8:00pm.

Monday 23 November 2015:

Breffni Martin: Climate Change - What's happening and what's going to happen?

Monday 14 December 2015:

Eric Dempsey, author of Don't Die In Autumn: A Memoir, on a life spent watching Ireland's birds. Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, 8:00pm. Please note the change in date from that printed in Wings magazine.

Sunday 3 January 2015

Outing to Lurgangreen hide and surrounding area.

Monday 4 January 2016: Breffni Martin and Gerry O'Neill

Gulls: Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, 8:00pm.

Monday 1st February 2016: Jen Lynch

Bird Ringing at Home and Abroad

Monday 7th March 2016:

Climate Change - Prof John Sweeney, University of Maynooth

Saturday 7 May 2016

Dawn chorus event - Breffni Martin.

Meet at Creggan Parish Church, ^{GL}^{SEP}Glassdrumman Road, ^{GL}^{SEP}Creggan, ^{GL}^{SEP}Crossmaglen, ^{GL}^{SEP}BT35 9DX, at 5.00am (see www.ringofgullion.org/events/dawn-chorus-walk/).

Sunday 15 May 2016

Dawn chorus event - Breffni Martin.

Meet in car park of Ballymascanlon Hotel, Co. Louth, at 5.00am.

Sunday 15th May 2016

Evening walk at Clogherhead Breffni Martin.

Meet in upper car park, Port Oriel, at 7.00pm.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015

The Mysterious Plain Pouched Hornbills of SE Asia

Mon 2nd February Rachel Pearson will give an account of the conservation of hornbills in Malaysia by way of an illustrated talk. The talk is entitled "The Mysterious Plain Pouched Hornbills of SE Asia" - the talk will also cover the adventure whereby Louth-born Rachel ended up in Malaysia.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2015

Oystercatchers by Breffni Martin

Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk entitled "Oystercatchers" on Monday 5th January 2015 upstairs at the Spirit Store. Having spent the last three years watching oystercatchers at close quarters, this talk will focus on direct observations of oystercatcher behaviour and ecology, as well as their overall natural history and ecology. Entry is free and all are welcome!

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017

Schedule 2017 - 2018

Monday 6 November 2017

Rare and scarce birds on Cape Clear Island, by Peter Philips. The Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8.00pm.

Monday 4 December 2017

Ireland's woodpeckers, by Declan Murphy. The Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8.00pm.

Monday 1 January 2018

The ecology, birds, and habitats of Dundalk Bay, by Breffni Martin. The Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8.00pm.

Monday 5 February 2018

Peregrine Falcons, by Jen Lynch. The Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8.00pm.

Monday 5 March 2018

Our mysterious moths, by Don Hodgers. The Spirit Store, Dundalk, 8.00pm.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2017

[A Ramble through the Cooley Mountains](#)

Tomorrow, Monday 2nd October at 8pm, Derek Watters will give an illustrated talk entitled A Ramble through the Cooley Mountains upstairs in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk.

Derek is an experienced mountaineer and guide and has expertise in the mountain's natural history and wildlife including birds, mammals and wild flowers, as well as walks, tracks and conservation. It promises to be a very entertaining talk.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni

www.birdwatchireland.ie

www.louthnaturetrust.org

www.flickr.com/photos/breffni

twitter.com/louthbirdnews?lang=en

The Ecology of Carlingford Lough

The Ecology of Carlingford Lough, an illustrated talk by Breffni Martin, covering the natural history of Carlingford Lough since the Ice Age, including wildlife, birds, fish, benthos, habitats, and the impact of human activity.

Upstairs at the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks, Dundalk, 8:00pm.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

Autumn Schedule 2019

3rd September 2019

Bird in an Age of Extinction - talk by Breffni Martin

1st October 2019

Birds of Lough Ree - Coilin McLoughlin

5th November 2019

Wildlife Crime in Ireland - Superintendent Walker

7th December 2019

Climate Change - Impacts on Ireland - Prof John Sweeney

All talks take place in the Spirit Store, Dundalk Docks upstairs.

For details contact Breffni 0879145363

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2019

Bird in an Age of Extinction - talk by Breffni Martin



Spotted flycatchers have declined 87% since 1970

On Tuesday 3rd September 2019 at 8pm upstairs in the Spirit Store Dundalk Docks, Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk entitled Birds in an Age of Extinction.

About 2% of birds have gone extinct over the last few hundred years, and about a further 12% are under threat; about 22% of mammals and a staggering 33% of amphibians. This is between 100 and 10,000 times the background rate of extinction and tells us that we are currently living in an age of extinction. How great it will turn out to be depends on many factors. While birds have performed relatively well compared with other taxons, but up to 30% of what's left are threatened. For example spotted flycatchers used to be common but have declined 72% in the last 20 years. The talk will cover how this came about and what is likely to happen over the next few decades.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2019

Dawn Chorus 2019

We will meet at the car park at the Ballymascanlon Hotel at 5am and walk the perimeter starting towards the west and looping around the dolmen and back down along the river. All are welcome
See you there! Breffni

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2020

Shorebirds of Ireland

This evening Tuesday the 3rd of March 2020 at 8pm, Breffni Martin will give an illustrated talk on Irish Shorebirds at the Spirit Store upstairs.

Entry is free and all are welcome!



FRIDAY, JANUARY 31, 2020

Cooley Mountains 2019

Derek Watters, well know local mountaineer, guide and wildlife observer will give an illustrated talk on the Cooley mountains at 8:00 pm on Tuesday the 4th of February 2020 upstairs in the Spirit Store. The talk will cover a review of 2019 including updates of breeding birds and a visit by the British and Irish Botanical Society and what they discovered.

Entry is free and all are welcome!

Breffni



Buzzard being harried by a raven, Cooley mountains