

LOUTH BIRD REPORT

2025



LOUTH BIRD REPORT

2025

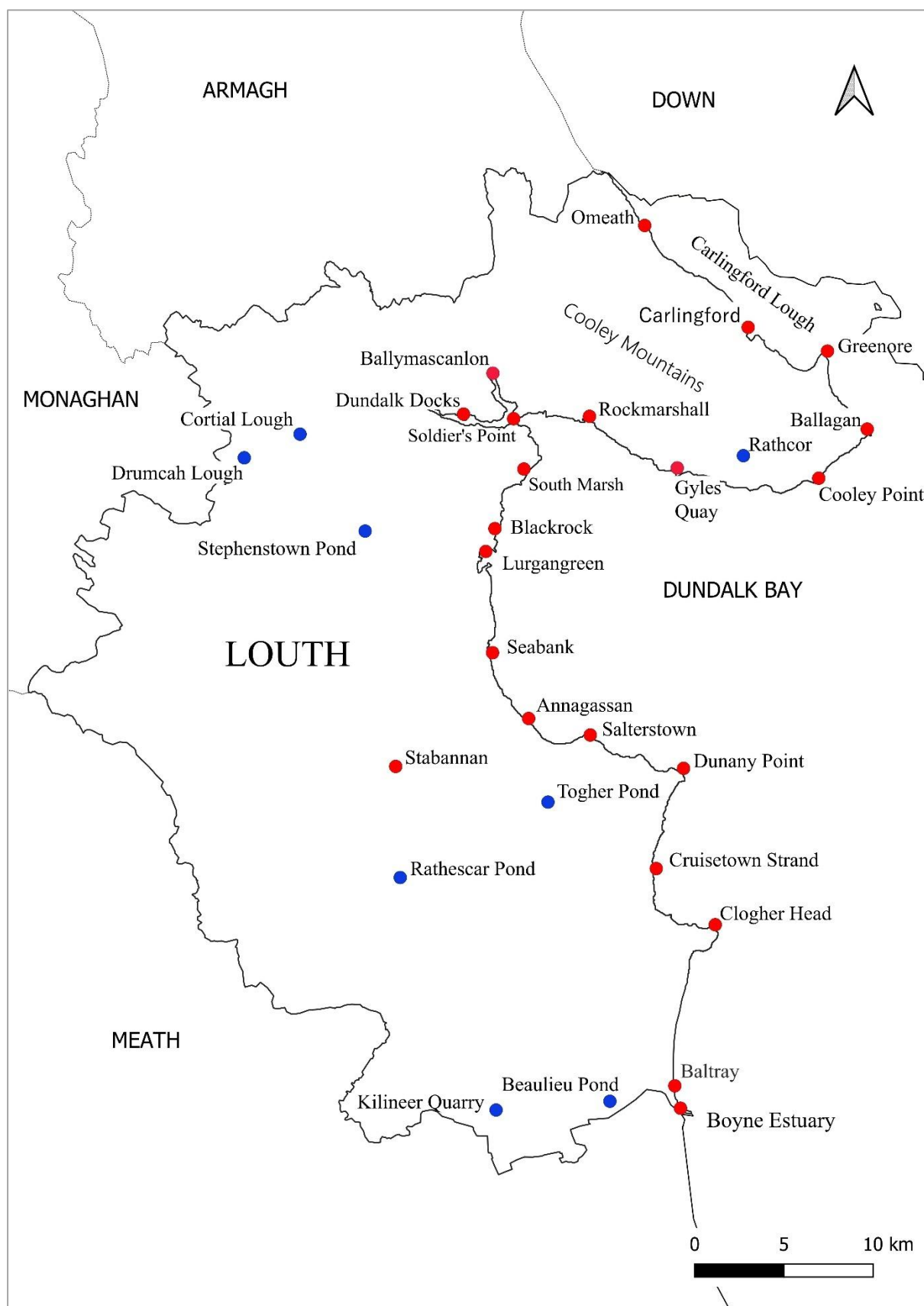
Edited and compiled by

Tom Cooney

CONTENTS

	Page
Map of birdwatching locations	1
Editorial	2
List of Contributors	3
Systematic List	4
References and data sources	44

Birdwatching locations in County Louth



EDITORIAL

This report documents notable bird occurrences in County Louth during 2025.

A total of 184 species were recorded from January to December. Other species may have occurred but remained undetected, unreported or the records could not be accessed. There were no additions to the county list but many rare and scarce species were recorded.

The year began with an overwintering Black Redstart from 2024 at Greenore and two Siberian Chiffchaffs at Ardee Road Brewery. February was largely uneventful, though a Green-winged Teal and a Snow Bunting made very brief appearances. Unexpected spring records included a Hoopoe in a residential garden at Kilkerley and a Crane near Ardee in March. Alongside the returning Least Tern to the Baltray Little Tern colony in May, there were also records of American Wigeon, White Stork, Spoonbill and Osprey. An unseasonal adult White-rumped Sandpiper at Ballagan Point stayed for only three days, but a second Osprey in mid-June remained in Dundalk Bay until early September. A small number of Little Gulls were present daily at Dundalk Harbour from mid-June through to late July.

The highlight of the nesting season was the success of Little Terns at Baltray, where a record number of chicks hatched. Ringed Plovers and Oystercatchers also bred successfully at this site. Formerly a rare visitor, Reed Warblers were confirmed to be nesting at several sites in the north of the county. Although suitable nesting habitat for Red Kites may be limited in County Louth, the appearance of two birds together in spring on the Cooley Peninsula was noteworthy. However, the discovery of a poisoned Red Kite at Dromiskin serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing threats to birds of prey in Ireland.

A Quail at Stabannon and migrating Wood and Green Sandpipers at Dundalk Bay enlivened an otherwise quiet July. Perhaps the most fascinating record of the year was a Dotterel, sound-recorded calling at night as it migrated over Dundalk in August. The long-staying Osprey at Dundalk Bay was joined for one day in August by the third Osprey of 2025. September brought a Lesser Yellowlegs and a Baird's Sandpiper, a record number of Glossy Ibises, two Spoonbills and a Marsh Harrier. With Atlantic low pressure producing strong southeast winds on the Louth coast, scarce seabirds figured prominently in September. Mid-month seawatching at Clogher Head produced two Leach's Petrels, two Sabine's Gulls, two Grey Phalaropes, two Sooty Shearwaters, both Arctic and Great Skuas, and unusually high numbers of Black Terns and Storm Petrels. Another Sabine's Gull at Dundalk Harbour gave excellent views for two days as it fed close to Soldier's Point. Regular passage migrant waders included above-average numbers of Curlew Sandpipers and Ruff, though Little Stints were very scarce. A juvenile American Golden Plover in October became the fourth Nearctic wader species of the year.

Noteworthy reports in November included Pomarine Skua, Marsh Harrier, Gadwall, Black Redstart, Snow Buntings, Whoopers Swans, Scaup and a flock of Twite at Gyles Quay that remained to the end of the year. In December, scarce waterbirds were represented by Slavonian Grebes, Long-tailed Ducks and a Velvet Scoter. In addition, multiple reports of Eiders along the coast between Salterstown and Baltray included the largest flock recorded in the past decade. A Manx Shearwater off Port Oriel in exceptionally calm and sunny conditions was an unusual sight in mid-December. As the year drew to a close two Bean Geese briefly joined a flock of Greylag Geese and several White-fronted Geese at Lurgangreen.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

This report is based on the sightings and photographs of the birdwatchers and photographers listed below including BirdWatch Ireland (BWI) Tolka branch outing reports. Their efforts made this report possible.

Katy Beckett
Jim Bowman

Cian Cardiff
Frank Carroll
Tom Carroll
Brian Carruthers
Stephen Casey
Simon Clark
Billy Clarke
Patrick Conway
Tom Cooney
John Cusack

Liam Daly
Hugh Delaney
Tommy Doherty
Jim Dowdall
Shawn Dowdall
Peter J. Doyle
Deirdre Duggan

Reamonn Fealy
Liam Feeney
Enda Flynn

Victor Garland
Sean Geeney
Sean Gibson
Brian Gormley

Tomás Hand
Steven Hoey
James Hussey

Dylan Jackson

Tom Kavanagh
Andrew Kelly
Aidan G. Kelly
Paul Kelly
Niall T. Keogh

Eamon Larrisey
Michael Latham
Larry J. Lenchán
Aaron Long
Paul Lynch

Michael Macking
Josep Manchado
Breffni Martin
Emma Mathews
Paul Milne
Neil Molloy
James Mullen
Brian Murphy
Gerard Murray

Mark McArdle
Brian McCloskey
David McCreedy
Dean McDonnell
Andrew McKeever
Liz McKenna
Michael McKiernan
Mike McLaughlin
John McNally

Cian O'Flaherty
Mel O'Hagan
Gerry O'Neill

Peter Phillips
Pat Pykett

Simon Robinson
Peter Rooney

Con Shanahan
Clifford Sharp
John Spottiswood
Fergal Stanley
Mark Stewart

Vincent Toal
Ronan Toomey
Jack Tynan

Neal Warnock
Derek Watters
Alan White
Gary Wilkinson

Cover photo: Merlin *Falco columbarius* (Fergal Stanley)

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Taxonomy and species sequence follows AviList Core Team. 2025. *AviList: The Global Avian Checklist*, v2025. <https://doi.org/10.2173/avilist.v2025>. Common bird names for species and subspecies are used in preference to those on the AviList checklist. The Irish Rare Birds Committee (IRBC) assesses reports of nationally rare species.

WHOOPE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Winter visitor

First date autumn: One at Seabank on 21st September (E. Flynn) with three at Lurgangreen the following day (S. Hoey).

Bellurgan: October: two first-winters on 22nd. November: at least two were sound recorded calling at night on 1st, 9th, 17th and 20th.

Dundalk Harbour: October: six flew in from the bay on 11th. November: four flew south over Shore Road Marsh on 18th. Six flew towards Shore Road on 21st.

Lurgangreen: October: five on 4th and 11th, ten on 26th. November: 24 on 22nd.

Nicholastown: 18 (11 adults, 7 first winters) on 17th November.

Commons Cross: 30 north of Commons Road on 4th and 38 on 6th November. Similar numbers were present in December. These were probably the birds also observed at Dromiskin on 18th November.

Seabank: Seven on 2nd November.

Salterstown: October: 17 on 12th, 19 on 26th. November: 30 (13 Juveniles) on 8th.

Annagassan: 24 on 22nd November were probably the birds at Lurgangreen the same day.

Stabannon: October: eleven on 11th, minimum of 40 flew over the M1 in the direction of Stabannon on 24th.

Ardee Bog: 40 to 50 on 18th November.

Corstown: December: 42 on 21st, 83 on 27th.

Cruisetown: Ten (6 adults, 5 first winters) on 13th November. Fourteen on 15th December (14 adults, 1 first-winter).

Clogher Head: October: two flew towards Cruisetown on 9th and 12 flying north on 26th. November: ten on 2nd and two adults flew south on 13th.

Drogheda: Four seen in flight on 25th November.

Boyne Estuary: Eight on 20th November.

Several sightings were likely of the same birds that had moved between sites.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla hrota*

Winter visitor

Last date spring: Five on 26th April.

First date autumn: Five on 13th August.

Recent winter averages of 1,500 at Dundalk Bay and 150 on the Boyne Estuary.

DARK-BELLIED BRENT GOOSE *B.b. bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor

Ballagan Point: One on 1st March (E. Larriskey).

Lurgangreen: Five on 28th March (B. McCloskey, C. Cardiff).

Seabank: One on 27th October (A. Kelly).

GREY-BELLIED BRANT *Branta b. ssp*

Very rare

Lurgangreen: Adult on 21st January (A.G. Kelly).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*

Rare

Lurgangreen: One from 18th to 26th September (E. Flynn *et al.*) and on 1st and 10th November (D. McDonnell).

Although of unknown origin, this bird arrived with the first Brent and Pink-footed Geese.



Canada Goose (Gerry O'Neill).

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Very scarce winter visitor

Lurgangreen: Two on 25th January (A.G. Kelly).

Seabank: Two on 29th November (A. Kelly).

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser anser*

Winter visitor

Dundalk: Six at Shore Road Marsh on 22nd November.

Lurgangreen: January: 33 on 14th and 80 on 25th. March: 64 on 31st March. October: six on 9th, 17 on 12th. November: 40 on 1st, seven on 9th, 12 on 22nd. December: minimum of 150 on 28th.

Castlebellingham: Two on 21st April.

Seabank: Ten on 31st January. 100 on 29th November.

Clogher Head: Ten arrived in off the sea north of the headland on 20th November.

Nocturnal recording: Birds were recorded calling over Stormanstown on 28th November.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Scarce winter visitor

Lurgangreen: Six on 25th January (A.G. Kelly) and 15 on 28th March (B. McCloskey, C. Cardiff). Fifteen on 28th December (G. O'Neill *et al.*).

Seabank: Six flying south on 18th October (F. Stanley).
Nocturnal recording: One calling on 20th October over Dundalk (G. O'Neill).

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Winter visitor

Lurgangreen: January: 30 on 5th (G. O'Neill). March: 64 on 31st (A.G. Kelly).
September: 35 on 20th (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy) with 80 there later that day (D. McDonnell, E. Larrisey *et al*). 150 on 22nd (S. Hoey), 68 on 23rd (A. Kelly), 300 on 26th (C. Cardiff), 194 on 27th (P. Phillips) and a minimum of 400 on 28th (C. Cardiff). October: eight on 9th (A. Kelly), c.100 on 12th (D. McDonnell). November: 284 on 1st (D. McDonnell). 400 flew towards Castlebellingham on 8th (A. Kelly).

Seabank: September: 28 on 20th (A. Kelly, D. McDonnell). October: 49 on 12th (E. Flynn). November: estimated 600 on 29th (A. Kelly).

Kilsaran: Estimate of 500 on 16th February.

Overwintering numbers have increased substantially within the last decade.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser serrirostris / fabalis*

Rare visitor

Two at Lurgangreen on 28th December (G. O'Neill).

Specific identification remains pending, but the birds were thought to be Tundra Bean Geese *A. serrirostris*.



Bean Geese (Gerry O'Neill)

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Resident

Breeding confirmed at a number of coastal locations. Several crèches of varying sizes were observed at Dundalk Bay and on the Boyne Estuary.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce winter visitor

Salterstown: Two regularly from January to late February with three on 2nd March.
Hermitage: One on 17th December.
Cruisetown: Three on 10th December increasing to four on 15th into 2026.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima mollissima*

Scarce winter visitor

Salterstown: Male flew south on 25th November (T. Cooney).
Hermitage: February: three females and four males on 8th (E. Flynn), seven males and four females on 9th (S. Clark). March: two males on the 19th (E. Flynn). December: fourteen on 9th (E. Flynn) and a total of 18, ten males and eight females, on 20th and a male on 27th (A. Kelly).
Clogher Head: October: male and three females south on 13th (N.T. Keogh). November: male north on 5th, two males and a female north on 13th (N.T. Keogh). December: male south on 10th, two females north on 15th (T. Cooney).
Termonfeckin: Sixteen (10 males, 6 females) on 2nd December (M. Stewart).
Baltray: Eleven on 20th November and ten on 16th December (L.J. Lenehan).
Increasingly common winter visitor mainly between Hermitage and Baltray.



Eiders (Enda Flynn)

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Common winter visitor

Salterstown: 200 on 31st January, 250 on 1st March and 100 on 9th March (A. Kelly).
Hermitage: 100 on 15th March (J. Hussey).
Cruisetown: November: 1,600 on 13th (N.T. Keogh) and 550 on 29th (A. Kelly). December: 350 on 21st (A. Kelly).
Clogher Head: February: 350 on 25th (C. Cardiff). September: 146 south on 7th (T. Cooney) and 267 south on 27th (A. Kelly). November: 180 on 22nd (N. Molloy/BWI Tolka Branch), 250 on 28th (A. Kelly).

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

Scarce winter visitor

Lurganboy: One off Port Beach on 23rd December (J. Hussey).

Clogher Head: November: two flew north on 1st and four (one male, three female) on 25th (N.T. Keogh). December: male flew north on 2nd (T. Cooney).

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula clangula*

Winter visitor

Lurgangreen: Highest counts were 53 on 22nd February and 39 on 8th December.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Non-breeding resident

Gyles Quay: 55 on 18th January.

Bellurgan: 43 on 6th December.

Salterstown: 85 on 31st March, 70 on 22nd June, 170 on 12th July and 35 on 8th November (A. Kelly).

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce visitor, rare breeder

Lurgangreen: One on 13th April (E. Flynn).

Seabank: Eight on 17th March (J. McNally) and a male on 22nd June 2025 (B. McCloskey).

Annagassan: Male on 22nd June 2025 (A. Kelly) was possibly the same bird at Seabank the same day.

A pair bred in 2024 but no information was received for 2025.

SCAUP *Aythya marila marila*

Scarce winter visitor

Cruisetown: November: female on 13th (N.T. Keogh) and eight (adult male, two first winter males and five female types) on 23rd (B. McCloskey, A. Kelly). Twelve (four males, six females, two first winter males) on 29th (A. Kelly). December: up to 13 on 2nd (T. Cooney), four on 7th (A. Kelly).

Clogher Head: Juvenile south on 1st October (N.T. Keogh).

Numbers have declined significantly in recent decades in line with the national trend.

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*

Scarce winter visitor

Lurgangreen: Male and female on 12th January.

Seabank: Four on 4th January.

Rathescar: January: three on 30th. March: six on 14th, eight on 16th. November: two on 27th.

GADWALL *Mareca strepera*

Scarce visitor

Lurgangreen: Male on 13th April (E. Flynn) and 24th May (A.G. Kelly). Seven on 19th September (A. McKeever) and one on 4th October (P. Kelly).

Nicholastown: Male and female on 17th November (D. McDonnell).

Annagassan: Male on 22nd October (R. Fealy).

Nicholastown is an unusual location as this species usually occurs at coastal sites.

WIGEON *Mareca penelope*

Winter visitor

Lurgangreen: Male from 8th May to the end of the month (B. McCloskey, A. Kelly) was joined by a second male from 4th and 16th June (T. Cooney, G. O'Neill, A. Kelly).

Nicholastown: 30 on 17th November (D. McDonnell).

Summer records are rare.

AMERICAN WIGEON *Mareca americana*

Vagrant

Lurgangreen: A first-year male from 5th to 8th May (B. McCloskey *et al.*).

This is the third record for County Louth.



American Wigeon (Fergal Stanley)

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Winter visitor

Bellurgan: February: 146 on 2nd and 139 on 7th between Rockmarshall and Bellurgan Quay.

Summer: Male at Lurgangreen from 24th May to 23rd June (A. Kelly *et al.*).

First date autumn: Two at Lurgangreen on 20th September (D. McDonnell).

Inland: Female/immature at Nicholastown on 17th November (D. McDonnell).

TEAL *Anas crecca crecca*

Winter visitor

Lurgangreen: 73 on 8th November (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy, C. Sharp).

Ardee Bog: Minimum of 100 on 18th November (S. Dowdall).

Summer: Four at Rathescar on 25th June (D. Duggan).

First date autumn: Four at Rockmarshall on 17th August.

Mid-summer records are unusual.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL *A.c. carolinensis*

Rare visitor

Seabank: One on 21st and 22nd February (A. Kelly *et al.*).

The most recent record was one at Lurgangreen in winter 2016/2017.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix coturnix*

Rare summer visitor

Stabannon: One singing on 3rd July (B. McCloskey).

Although rarely detected, this species possibly occurs annually.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus auritus*

Scarce winter visitor

Blackrock: One on 8th December (T. Cooney).

Hermitage: One on 13th December (E. Flynn).

Clogher Head: Three on 26th January (V. Toal).

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus canorus*

Summer visitor

Cooley Peninsula: One at Black Mountain on 29th April. Up to three were present from 3rd May to at least the 16th June at Mullaghatten /Annaloughan loop walk.

Salterstown: One flying over the sea on 4th June was chased by Black-headed Gulls.



Cuckoo (Fergal Stanley)

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus palumbus*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: Single flock of c.550 flew SW over Bellurgan on 2nd November.

Smaller migrating flocks were recorded regularly from mid-October to late November.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas oenas*

Scarce resident

Ardee: Two on 25th March.

Now a Red list species due to a recent severe decline in the Irish breeding population (Gilbert *et al.* 2021), however the status in Louth is unclear and needs clarification.

CRANE *Grus grus*

Rare visitor

A first summer bird near Ardee from 25th March to 6th April (B. McCloskey *et al.*).

The last record was a single bird at Lurgangreen on 26th February 2019.



Crane (Brian McCloskey)

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus aquaticus*

Resident

Recorded at many locations including Ardee Road Brewery in March, Bellurgan from March to June and at Dundalk racecourse in July.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus chloropus*

Resident

Mullaghatten: One was sound recorded on 3rd June (G. O'Neill).

This hillside site, 180 m asl on the Cooley Peninsula, was an unusual location since Moorhens are typically associated with lowland wetlands.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus ostralegus*

Resident and winter visitor

One pair bred successfully at Baltray and three juveniles were ringed.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola squatarola*

Winter visitor, small numbers oversummer

Dundalk Bay: A total of 24 were recorded on 6th June.

Nationally important concentrations occur at Dundalk Bay.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Winter visitor

Maximum site counts.

Dundalk Bay: 4,500 on 22nd February (S. Robinson).

Lurgangreen: 2,000 on 22nd November (N. Molloy/BWI Tolka Branch).

Seabank: Estimate of up to 2,000 on 18th October and 3,000 on 13th December.

Salterstown: 1,100 flew north into Dundalk Bay on 28th November (T. Cooney).

Cruisetown: 1,750 on 22nd November (N. Molloy/BWI Tolka Branch).

First date autumn: One at Dundalk Docks on 18th August. The first large flock of autumn was 150 on 20th September also at Dundalk Docks.

AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis dominica*

Rare visitor

Juvenile at Seabank on 18th October (A.G. Kelly).

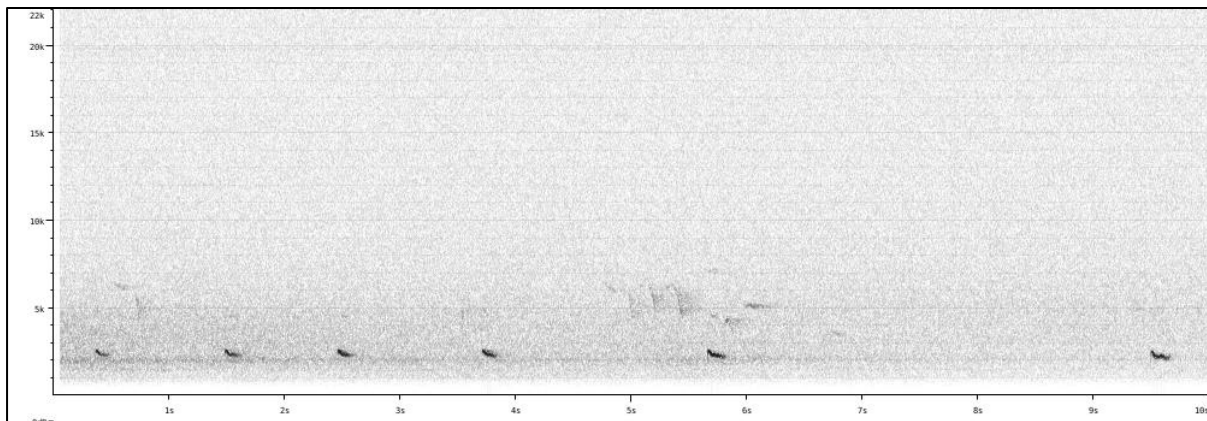
This is the third year in succession that this Nearctic species has been recorded.

DOTTEREL *Eudromias morinellus*

Vagrant

Dundalk: One sound recorded on migration at night on 22nd August (G. O'Neill).

This is the fourth record for Louth and an exceptionally rare recording of a nocturnal flight call in Ireland.



Spectrogram of Dotterel calls on 22nd August, Dundalk

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula hiaticula*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce breeder

Migration: Large flocks were recorded during spring passage from late April to mid-May. Up to 300 at Seabank in the first week in May and similar numbers at Bellurgan over the same period.

Breeding: Birds present in breeding habitat at several locations in May and June.

Breeding successful at Baltray

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Winter visitor, former breeder

Dundalk Bay: A total of 19 on 5th June were probably failed breeders or early returning migrants. The first juveniles were recorded on 3rd July.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus islandicus*

Regular passage migrant

Salterstown: April: 94 on 23rd, 150 on 26th (A. Kelly). May: 160 on 2nd (A. Kelly).

Summer: Two on 13th June at Bellurgan.

Spring passage peaks in late April and early May.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata arquata*

Winter visitor

Summer: Minimum of 270 on 28th June in Dundalk Bay.

The first juvenile Curlews of autumn were recorded in the third week in July. Nationally important concentrations occur at Dundalk Bay in winter.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica lapponica*

Winter visitor, small numbers oversummer

Summer: 194 on 12th June at Dundalk Bay.

Autumn: First returning adults in full breeding plumage on 8th July at Dundalk Harbour. 250 at Salterstown on 17th August.

Nationally important concentrations occur at Dundalk Bay.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa islandica*

Winter visitor, small numbers oversummer

Summer: 282 on 12th June at Dundalk Bay.

Satellite tagged birds ringed in Iceland and France spent several months in Dundalk Bay.

JACK SNIBE *Lymnocryptes minimus*

Winter visitor

Ardee: One flushed near the Old Bog Road on 3rd January (D. McDonnell).

Seabank: One on 8th November (A. Kelly) and 18th December (G. Wilkinson).

Boyne Estuary: One on 20th November (L.J. Lenehan).

This species occurs more frequently than reports suggest.

COMMON SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Winter visitor, passage migrant

Nocturnal recording: Earliest returning bird was recorded on 1st August at Bellurgan.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleucos*

Passage migrant

Rockmarshall: Two on 2nd and 17th August.

Dundalk Docks: March: one at the 10th. April: two on 17th. May: one on 24th. June: two regularly from 18th to at least 8th August with a peak of five on 15th July.

Annagassan: One on 7th April and two on 28th June.

Clogher Head: Single birds on 6th and 8th July, 9th and 12th September.

Earliest spring: One at Omeath on 5th March.

Latest autumn: One at Bellurgan on 21st October.

Nocturnal recording: Regular between from June to September at Bellurgan and Dundalk.
A typical spread of records with few birds in spring and peak numbers in July and August.

GREY PHALAROPE *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Rare

Clogher Head: Single birds on 6th (A.G. Kelly) and 10th September (T. Cooney).

There were also reports of Grey Phalaropes in Counties Dublin and Wicklow in September.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

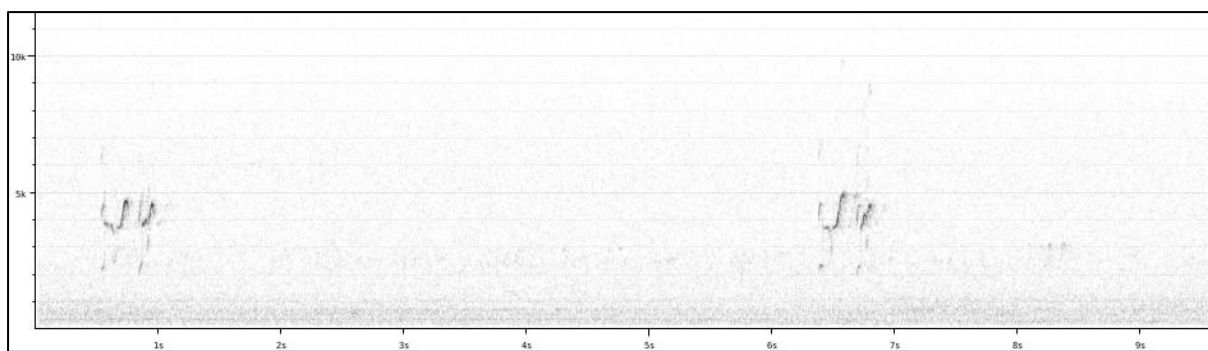
Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Ardee: One from 26th March to 2nd April (B. McCloskey).

Hermitage: One at a pond north of Dunany Point on 24th August (A.G. Kelly).

Nocturnal recording: Single birds record at Bellurgan on 28th and 30th July (T. Cooney) and Dundalk on 15th August (G. O'Neill).

Audio recording is proving to be an effective method for detecting this species at night.



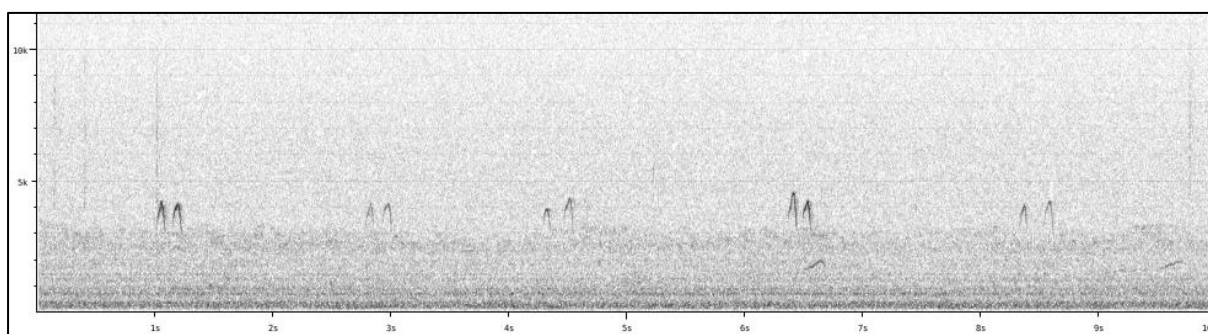
Spectrogram of Green Sandpiper calls on 28th July, Bellurgan

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Very scarce passage migrant

Bellurgan: One sound recorded calling after midnight on 26th July (T. Cooney).

This is the first record since 2021.



Spectrogram of Wood Sandpiper calls on 26th July, Bellurgan

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus totanus*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Summer: Total of 44 at Dundalk Docks on 9th June. The first juvenile of autumn was recorded at the same location on 30th June.

Nationally important concentrations occur in winter at Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay and the Boyne Estuary. Birds belonging to the subspecies *T.t robusta* also overwinter.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*

Rare visitor

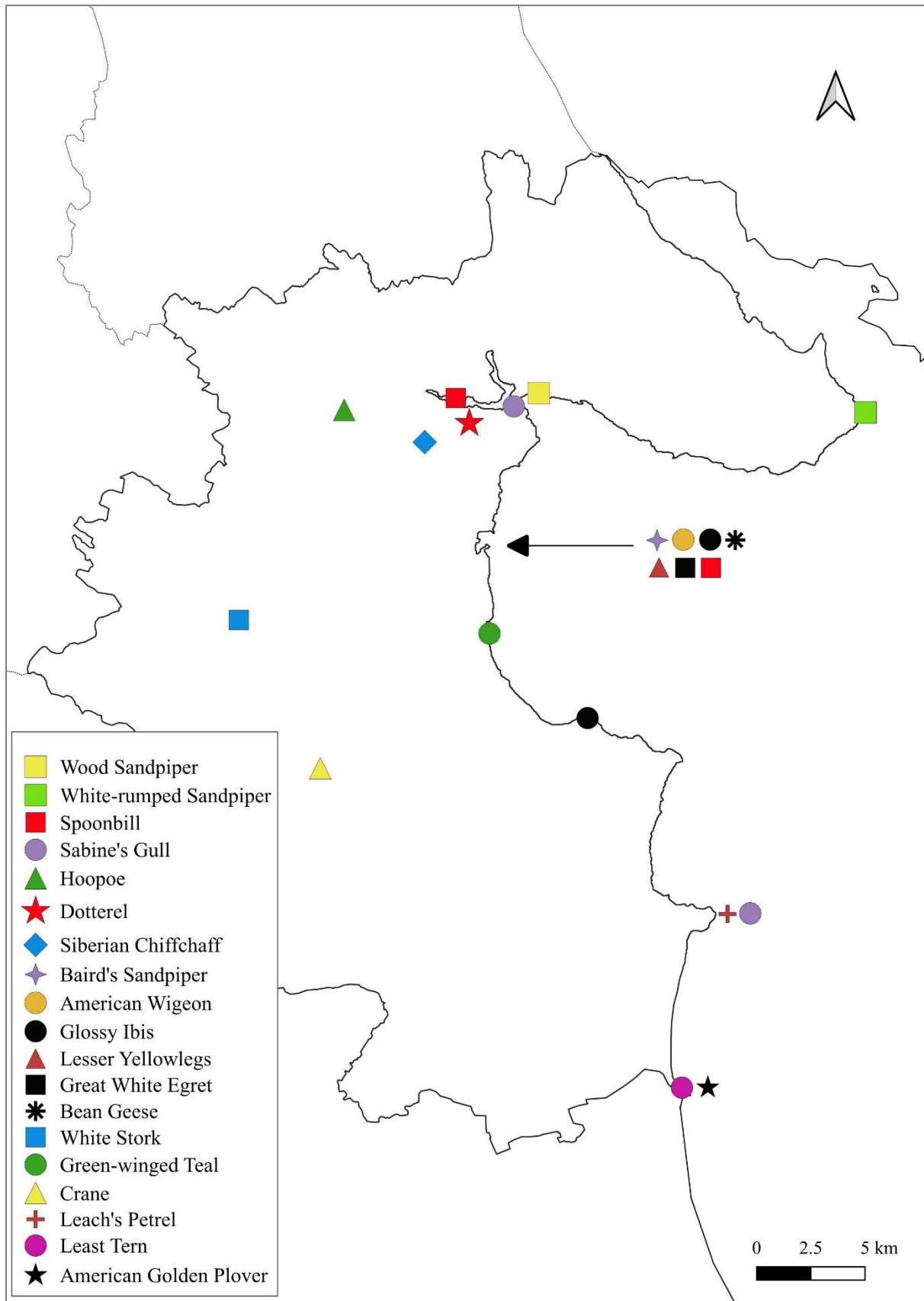
Juvenile at Lurgangreen from 28th September to 29th October (C. Cardiff *et al.*).



Lesser Yellowlegs (Fergal Stanley)



Lesser Yellowlegs (Fergal Stanley)



Geographic distribution of selected locally rare species recorded in County Louth in 2025. Species plotted at the locations where birds were first recorded. Symbols do not represent the number of sightings or the number of birds recorded.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce on passage and in winter

Dundalk Docks: One overwintered on the Castletown River was last reported on 13th April (many observers). The first sighting of autumn was at the same location from 3rd August (G. O'Neill *et al.*) to the end of 2025.

Lurgangreen: One on 23rd and 31st December (S. Hoey).

Boyne Estuary: One at Mornington on 18th October and 8th November (A.G. Kelly).

At least two birds wintered 2025/2026. The Mornington record is included because waders regularly move around this very narrow estuary to feed or roost.



Spotted Redshank (Gerry O'Neill)

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Winter visitor

Summer: Four at Dundalk docks on 26th May and one on 9th June.

Autumn: At Dundalk docks maximums of only 17 on 14th July and 11 on 20th September.

Winter: 12 in November and December at Dundalk docks.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres interpres*

Winter visitor, passage migrant

Salterstown: 222 on 1st March (A. Kelly) was an unusually high count.

RUFF *Calidris pugnax*

Regular passage migrant

Bellurgan: One on 3rd August.

Dundalk Docks: Up to 13 from late autumn 2024 to 26th April at Dundalk Docks/Castletown River (many observers). A female on 27th June into July was the first returning bird of 2025 and was joined several males after 2nd July. Numbers increased throughout autumn with up to seven from 25th July to the end of the year with a peak of 11 on 11th August (many observers).

Lurgangreen: Three on 3rd and two on 11th January with one on 30th January and 28th March. Two on 10th September with up to 23 from 21st to 28th. Numbers dropped in October but up to 14 remaining to mid-December.

Seabank: One on 9th September. Three on 4th October.

Although mainly a passage migrant, small numbers overwinter annually at Dundalk Docks. The first juvenile of 2025 was a single bird on 6th August.



Ruff (Tom Cooney)

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Regular passage migrant

Spring/Summer

Lurgangreen: One in breeding plumage from 25th to 29th June (E. Flynn *et al.*).
 Seabank: Adult in breeding plumage at Seabank on 22nd May with two on 25th and one on 26th (T. Cooney, A.G. Kelly).

Autumn

Rockmarshall: Juvenile on 9th October (T. Cooney).
 Dundalk Harbour: September: juvenile on 6th (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy) with up to four from 6th to 20th (J. Cusack, A. Kelly, A.G. Kelly, M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy). Two on 28th (J. Spottiswood). October: two on 1st (N. Warnock), eight on 5th (M. O'Hagan, A. Long), at least four on 6th (T. Cooney). Two at Navy Bank on 9th (P. Phillips).

Blackrock: Juvenile on 9th October (N.T. Keogh).
 Lurgangreen: September: three on 10th and 21st, nine on 26th and 23 on 27th (P. Phillips, B. McCloskey, S. Hoey, C. Cardiff). October: 25 on 4th (P. Kelly) and 20 on 6th (P. Pykett). Minimum of four on 9th (N.T. Keogh).
 Seabank: September: ten juveniles on 13th (A.G. Kelly) with 23 juveniles on 14th (B. McCloskey) and 12 on 16th (D. McDonnell). October: juvenile on 8th (T. Cooney). Two on 11th (A. Kelly).
 Clogher Head: Three juveniles on 9th September (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy, C. Sharp).
 Baltray: Moulting adult and juvenile on 24th August (A.G. Kelly).
 A good year for this passage migrant with at least three in spring/summer and a minimum of 60 in autumn.



Curlew Sandpiper (Aidan G. Kelly)

SANDERLING *Calidris alba alba*

Winter visitor, passage migrant

Ballagan Point: 40 on 4th June.
 Lurgangreen: 30 on 22nd February.
 Salterstown: 56 on 4th June. 145 on 28th November.
 Cruisetown: November: 200 on 22nd, 110 on 29th. December: 130 on 12th, 43 on 15th.
 Baltray: 71 on 21st May.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina alpina*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant.

Seabank: Up to 500 were present from late April to mid-May. Most birds were in breeding plumage and several in song.

Smaller numbers were seen at other coastal locations during spring passage. Migrant flocks in spring are mostly composed of *C.a. arctica* and *C.a schinzii*.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Scarce winter visitor.

Ballagan Point: One on 22nd October.

Clogher Head: February: one on 2nd. March: seven on 14th. December: two on 13th, three on 14th and four on 17th (E. Flynn, M. Stewart).

Clogher Head is the main site but Purple Sandpipers have also been recorded at Ballagan Point, Cooley Point and Salterstown.

BAIRD'S SANDPIPER *Calidris bairdii*

Vagrant

Lurgangreen: Juvenile on 4th October (P. Kelly)

There is the second county record of this North American species. The previous record was of a juvenile at Baltray from 31st August to 3rd September 1995.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce passage migrant

Seabank: Two juveniles on 13th September (A.G. Kelly) with one of 14th (A. Kelly).

Salterstown: Juvenile on 28th September (L. McKenna).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*

Vagrant from North America

Adult in breeding plumage at Ballagan Point from on 2nd to 4th June (E. Larrissey).

This is the fourth record for County Louth.



White-rumped Sandpiper (Tom Cooney)

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Regular passage migrant

Ballagan Point: Total of 16, including a flock of ten, on 4th August (E. Larrissey).

Templetown: Adult on 18th July (E. Mathews, B. Martin).

Lurgangreen: Two on 10th August (B. McCloskey, A.G. Kelly). A light phased bird on 26th September (C. Cardiff).

Salterstown: One on 10th August (A. Kelly).

Hermitage: Three on 14th September (E. Flynn).

Clogher Head: July: adult on 17th and two adults on 20th (T. Cooney). September: three on 1st (T. Cooney, G. O'Neill). Two on 3rd and dark phased adults on 6th and 7th (T. Cooney, A.G. Kelly). Four on the 9th (T. Cooney, M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy, C. Sharp) and three on the 10th (T. Cooney). Three on 15th (Brian McCloskey). Six (two light phase, two dark phase and two juveniles) on 17th (N.T. Keogh). October: two juveniles on 1st (N.T. Keogh).

No spring records but about 50 were recorded in autumn between 17th July and 1st October.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Very scarce passage migrant

Clogher Head: Light phased adult on 5th November (N.T. Keogh).

A very late record. Historically, most sightings have been of single birds but in the past, up to four have occurred on dates in May, August and early September.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Regular passage migrant

Clogher Head: September: single birds south on 9th (T. Cooney), 14th (B. McCloskey) and 17th (N.T. Keogh).

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Scarce summer visitor

Clogher Head: Two off Port Oriel on 11th and a total of 12 on 13th June (T. Cooney). Singles on 6th (A. Kelly) and 17th July (T. Cooney).

Puffins probably occur frequently in summer.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cepphus grylle arcticus*

Resident

Gyles Quay: 17 individuals on 13th April.

Clogher Head: 22 individuals on 7th April, 19 on 11th June, 20 on 6th July and 26 on 17th July.

Although the breeding population is quite small, it has increased from 23 (1998-2003) to 59 individuals (2015-2021) (Burnell *et al.* 2023).

RAZORBILL *Alca torda islandica*

Non-breeding resident

Clogher Head: Estimated 150 rafting offshore on 17th July. Minimum of 3,000 on 1st October (N.T. Keogh).

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge albionis*

Non-breeding resident, scarce in winter

Clogher Head: Estimated 500 rafting offshore on 17th July.

LITTLE TERN *Sternula albifrons albifrons*

Summer visitor, one breeding colony

Clogher Head: 12 on 17th July.

Breeding: A record total of 208 chicks hatched at the Baltray colony. Success rates were lower at other colonies on both sides of the Irish Sea.

LEAST TERN *Sternula antillarum*

Vagrant

Baltray: Adult at the Little Tern colony on 17th and 18th May (B. McCloskey *et al.*) but remained at other sites on the east coast until the end of July.

This bird has returned annually since the first sighting in 2021.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger niger*

Scarce visitor

Salterstown: September: four on 9th (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy, C. Sharp), two flying south on 10th (T. Cooney).

Cruisetown Strand: Juvenile on 13th September (A.G. Kelly).

Hermitage: Two on 14th September (E. Flynn).

Clogher Head: August: juvenile on 25th (T. Cooney). September: juvenile on 6th (A.G. Kelly) and at least five on 7th (T. Cooney). Minimum of 18 juveniles south on 9th (T. Cooney), four south on 12th (N.T. Keogh), one on 13th September (A. Kelly), 14 (one adult, 13 juveniles) on 14th (B. McCloskey) and two south on 17th (N.T. Keogh).

A good year for this species with most birds recorded after gale conditions in mid-September which brought strong southeast winds to the Louth coast. The total of 18 at Clogher Head is the highest since 27 were reported at the same location in September 2017.

SANDWICH TERN *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Clogher Head: 75 south in six hours on 17th September (N.T. Keogh).

Nocturnal recording: The latest autumn date was of one or two birds calling at Bellurgan on 11th November.

Winter: Adult at Clogher Head on 26th January (B. McCloskey, E. Flynn).

A pullus ringed at Hodbarrow RSPB, Cumbria in June 2019 was recorded on 22nd January 2021 at Gainsbaai Caravan Park, Republic of South Africa. It was observed roosting with a large number of terns at Rockmarshall on 17th August 2025.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Ballagan Point: Four on 4th July.

Cruisetown: 12 on 12th August (J. Manchado).

Five or less were noted in other locations.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo hirundo*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Clogher Head: Mixed flock of 1,000+ terns, mostly Common and Sandwich Terns, flew south between 7am to 8am on 1st September. In addition, several hundred were offshore for most of that morning. On 6th September a mixed tern flock of c.3,500, again mostly Common and Sandwich Terns, moved south in 1.5 hours.

Late date autumn: Four at Seabank on 26th October.

Commic terns: 505 at south at Clogher Head on 17th September.

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii dougallii*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Ballagan Point: At least 20 on 4th July (T. Cooney).

Cooley Point: Minimum of 30, including juveniles, on 18th July (B. Martin).

Clogher Head: One on 8th May (G. Murray). Two on 6th July (A. Kelly).

This species occurs more commonly than reported in 2025.

LITTLE GULL *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Scarce visitor

Ballagan Point: First winter on 12th October (G. O'Neill).

Cooley Point: One on 11th December (B. Martin).

Dundalk Harbour: Second calendar year at Castletown River on 8th June (G. O'Neill). Four first summers at Soldier's Point on 17th June (E. Larrisey *et al.*) with at least three remaining until 27th July. A fifth bird was present on 24th June. Second calendar year at Rockmarshall on 23rd June was probably one of the birds from Soldier's Point.

Cruisetown Strand: One on 20th August (G. O'Neill) and probably the same bird there again on 28th.

Clogher Head: Second calendar year on 26th January (B. McCloskey, E. Flynn). Adult south on 12th September (N.T. Keogh).

It is assumed the reports at Rockmarshall and at Dundalk Harbour in June and July refer to the same birds. It's unusual for Little Gulls to stay for prolonged periods in Louth.



Little Gull (Fergal Stanley)

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla tridactyla*

Regular spring to autumn, very scarce in winter

Clogher Head: September: 450 in 1.5 hours on 6th, 260 in six hours on 17th. October: minimum of 400 on 1st. November: 55 south on 5th.

Late Date: One at Clogher Head on 22nd November.

Winter: Ten at Clogher Head on 26th January (B. McCloskey, E. Flynn). After Storm Bram in December, 20 on 10th and four on 15th (T. Cooney).

SABINE'S GULL *Xemi sabini*

Rare visitor

Dundalk Harbour: Juvenile at Soldier's Point on 15th and 16th September (F. Stanley).

Clogher Head: Juveniles on 9th (T. Cooney) and 14th September (B. McCloskey).

Three is the highest number recorded in one year.



Sabine's Gull photos (Fergal Stanley)

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Present all year, common in winter

The first juvenile of 2025 was seen at Dundalk Docks on 13th June.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Scarce visitor

Ballagan Point: Juvenile on 16th August (E. Larrisey).

Dundalk Bay: Adults at Lurgangreen on 18th February (E. Flynn) and at Rockmarshall on 31st March (T. Cooney). A total of at least seven birds (three adults and four first summers) from 3rd June to early August. One to three of these birds were at Dundalk Docks regularly but there were also reports from Rockmarshall, Soldier's Point and Annagassan.

Cruisetown: Adult in winter plumage (T. Cooney) and second calendar year on 25th August (G. O'Neill). Two adults on 1st September (G. O'Neill).

Two of the first summers were ringed in Spain and the Netherlands.

RING-BILLED GULL *Larus delawarensis*

Rare

Last date spring: 15th February.

First date autumn: 24th August but seen periodically to the end of 2025.

This bird has wintered annually at Blackrock for the last decade.



Ring-billed Gull (Fergal Stanley)

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus argenteus*

Resident

Common throughout the year in coastal areas but also occurs regularly inland.

SCANDANAVIAN HERRING GULL *L.a. argentatus*

Very scarce winter visitor

Ballagan Point: Adults on 31st August (E. Larrisey) and 2nd October (G. O'Neill).

Dundalk: One at the Castletown River Dundalk on 6th January (G. O'Neill). Three at Shore Road Dundalk on 7th November with two on 11th December (G. O'Neill). Adult at the Castletown River Dundalk on 24th (G. O'Neill).

YELLOW-LEGGED GULL *Larus michahellis michahellis*

Scarce summer visitor

Dundalk Harbour: Sub-adult at Castletown River on 22nd May (G. O'Neill). Third-calendar year at Castletown River and Soldier's Point from 15th June to 27th July (E. Larrisey *et al.*). Adult at Soldier's Point and the Castletown River from 10th to 21st October (G. O'Neill).

Dundalk: Adult at Shore Road on 25th August (F. Stanley).

Lurgangreen: Third-calendar year at Lurgangreen on 20th August (G. O'Neill).

This species is most frequently reported from late June to the end of August.



Yellow-legged Gull (Fergal Stanley)

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Resident

Clogher Head: February: 74 on 9th. August: 104 on 31st. November: 70 on 28th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus graellsii*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Late dates: Single birds at Blackrock and Annagassan on 22nd November.

SCANDANAVIAN LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *L.f. intermedius*

Dundalk: One showing features of this subspecies at the Castletown River on 23rd February (G. O'Neill).

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Salterstown: April: 70 on 12th. October: 12 on 11th and 26 on 26th.

Clogher Head: September: 19 south on 7th in four hours, 37 on 10th, 11 south on 27th.
November: minimum of 48 offshore on 13th, 20 on 28th.

Summer: One north off Clogher Head on 11th June and one south on 17th July.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Carlingford Lough: 106 between Carlingford and the mouth of the lough on 23rd February (E. Larrisey).

Clogher Head: Two on 17th September were the first migrants reported in autumn.

The Carlingford count is the highest for that location for many years.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Rare, possibly annual visitor

Salterstown: One on 2nd January (S. Clark).

Clogher Head: Two on 6th April (S. Clark).

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus pelagicus*

Scarce non-breeding summer visitor

Ballagan Point: June: two on 8th (E. Larrisey). July: six on 6th (F. Stanley). August: three on 4th (E. Larrisey).

Clogher Head: July: four on 17th (T. Cooney). September: 18 on 1st (G. O'Neill, T. Cooney), minimum of 34 south on 7th and one on 10th (T. Cooney).

Increased monitoring in summer and autumn in recent years has confirmed that this species occurs regularly at Ballagan Point. The count of 34 at Clogher Head ranks among the highest recorded in Louth.

LEACH'S STORM PETREL *Hydrobates leucorhoa*

Rare

Clogher Head: Single birds on 6th (A.G. Kelly) and 7th September (S. Gibson).

These birds were recorded shortly after storm conditions in the Irish Sea brought strong and blustery SE winds to the Louth coast. This species was last recorded at Greenore in September 2012.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis glacialis*

Non-breeding summer visitor

Rockmarshall: One on 17th August.

Clogher Head: 44 flying south on 6th September with 19 south on 7th September were the highest counts.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Ardenna griseus*

Scarce but probably annual visitor

Cooley Peninsula: One, possibly two, on 2nd June with a large movement of Manx Shearwaters (B. Martin).

Clogher Head: Single birds on 31st August (A. Kelly) and 7th September (T. Cooney).

The June record was unusually early.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus puffinus*

Summer visitor

Ballagan Point: Large numbers reported in early June.

Cruisetown: 20 on 8th June.

Clogher Head: Up to 300 per hour, mostly north, on 11th June with larger numbers further from shore. Minimum of 1,000 mostly flying south on the 13th June with several hundred further out to sea. 36 south on 17th September.

Winter record: One off Port Oriel on 15th December (T. Cooney).

Winter records on the east coast of Ireland are very rare.

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia ciconia*

Vagrant

Tallanstown: One on 15th May.

This bird was one of a small number that arrived in Ireland during April and May.

GANNET *Morus bassanus*

Non-breeding resident, scarce in winter

Clogher Head: 250 south on two hours on 9th and 200 south on 17th September.
Minimum of 200 on 1st October.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*

Common visitor

Dundalk Lighthouse: 74 roosting on the lighthouse on 17th August.

Clogher Head: 65 flew north in one hour on 1st September.

GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*

Scarce visitor

Dundalk Harbour: One at Navvy Bank on 9th October (P. Phillips).

Lurgangreen/Seabank: Two on 8th and 22nd September (S. Hoey *et al.*) increased to four on 24th and 11 by the 28th (S. Hoey, E. Flynn, F. Stanley, B. McCloskey, C. Cardiff). In October, up to eight remained to the 6th and two until the 11th (N. Warnock, E. Flynn, S. Clark, D. McCreedy).

Salterstown: A flock of at least 30 photographed flying north on 6th September.

Birds recorded in Louth were part of an influx in September to various locations in Ireland.

Some reports undoubtedly refer to the same birds moving between sites.

SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia leucorodia*

Rare visitor

Dundalk Docks: One on 23rd May (T. Cooney) moved to Lurgangreen where it remained from 24th May to 26th June (E. Flynn *et al.*).

Lurgangreen: Two on 18th and 19th September (E. Flynn *et al.*).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta garzetta*

Resident

Rockmarshall: 33 on 16th August.

Bellurgan: 67 on 12th October feeding with gulls and herons on ebb tide.

Dundalk Docks: 53 from the docks to Soldier's Point on 27th July.

In late summer and autumn, flocks are regular at most coastal sites especially those with freshwater inflows.



Glossy Ibis (Cian Cardiff)



Spoonbill (Tom Cooney)

GREAT WHITE EGRET *Ardea alba alba*

Rare visitor

Lurgangreen: Two on 5th June (T. Cooney). One on 10th June (F. Stanley).

This is the first time two birds have occurred together in Louth.



Great White Egret (Tom Cooney)

SWIFT *Apus apus apus*

Summer visitor

Bellurgan: 18 at Bellurgan on 12th July.

Dromiskin: 50 on 17th July.

Earliest spring: One at Dundalk on 26th April (G. Murray).

Latest autumn: One at Shore Road Dundalk on 6th November (F. Stanley).

This species is seldom recorded in November.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba alba*

Scarce resident

Drumbilla: One seen flying in daytime on 24th December.

Bellurgan: One sound recorded several times in May and June.

Dundalk: One sound recorded on 6th August.

Beaulieu House: One on 16th March

Breeding: A pair raised three young at an undisclosed location.

Recent sightings, together with greater use of nocturnal sound recording devices, indicate that a small population is thinly spread throughout the county.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus flammeus*

Scarce winter visitor

Templetown Beach: One on 9th March (B. Martin).

Dundalk: One at Shore Road Marsh on 8th and 9th November (F. Stanley *et al.*).

Lurgangreen: One on 15th January (P. Pykett, L. Feeney).
Seabank: One on 2nd December.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus otus*

Resident

Killineer: One north of the quarry on 12th September (N.T. Keogh).

Juveniles recorded Tippings Wood, Bellurgan and Townley Hall.



Short-eared Owl (Fergal Stanley)

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus haliaetus*

Scarce visitor

Dundalk Bay: One at Bellurgan on 21st May and probably the same bird again on the 30th (T. Cooney). A different bird present from 17th June to 3rd September (E. Larrisey *et al.*). On 28th August it was joined by a second bird first seen at Seabank (M. Macking, J. McNally).

Formerly a very rare visitor, Osprey have occurred annually since 2008 with the exception of 2017. Most reports have been from locations within Dundalk Bay but in recent decades, birds have also been recorded at Carlingford Lough, Cooley Peninsula, Dunleer, Togher, Clogher Head, Drogheda and Baltray.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce visitor

Bellurgan: Ringtail flew south along the coast on 9th April (T. Cooney).

Dundalk: Female from 2024 at Shore Road Marsh from January to 10th March was also seen at Dundalk Docks and Seabank (F. Stanley *et al.*). It was joined by a second bird on 10th February Female/immature at Shore Road from 26th August to 9th November (F. Stanley *et al.*).

Seabank: Ringtail on 4th October (E. Flynn) and 20th November (J. McNally).

Castlebellingham: Female on 6th April (A. White).



Hen Harrier (Fergal Stanley)

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus aeruginosus*

Very scarce visitor

- Dundalk: Female/immature at Shore Road Marsh on 2nd December (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy).
- Seabank: Female/immature on 8th September (E. Flynn) and 16th November (A. Kelly, S. Hoey).



Marsh Harrier (Enda Flynn)

RED KITE *Milvus milvus milvus*

Occasional visitor

- Cooley Peninsula: One near Omeath on 2nd March (E. Larrissey) and two on 23rd April at Lislea (E. Flynn). One at Glenmore on 5th August (E. Flynn).
- Dundalk: Single birds at the dock on 29th May (T. Cooney) and near the M1 / Castleblaney Road on 4th June (P. Conway).
- Lurgangreen: One on 15th February and 15th June (A. Kelly).
- Dromiskin: A bird was found dead as a consequence of ingesting a banned pesticide (RTE News, 27th August). One on 22nd October (S. Geeney).

Castlebellingham: One on 12th (T. Cooney) and 17th August (S. Geeney).
 Mullens Cross: One on 22nd June (A. Kelly).
 Townley Hall: One on 7th February (T. Cooney).
 Drogheda: One near Ballymakenny College on 29th October (J. Hussey).



Red Kites (Enda Flynn)

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo buteo*

Resident

Stabannon: Eight on 30th March.

Ardee: Seven between Ardee and Dundalk on 13th April.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops epops*

Rare visitor

Kilkerley: One on 21st and 23rd March (C. Shanahan).

This bird was part of an unprecedented influx to Ireland from late March to early May.



Hoopoe (Con Shanahan)

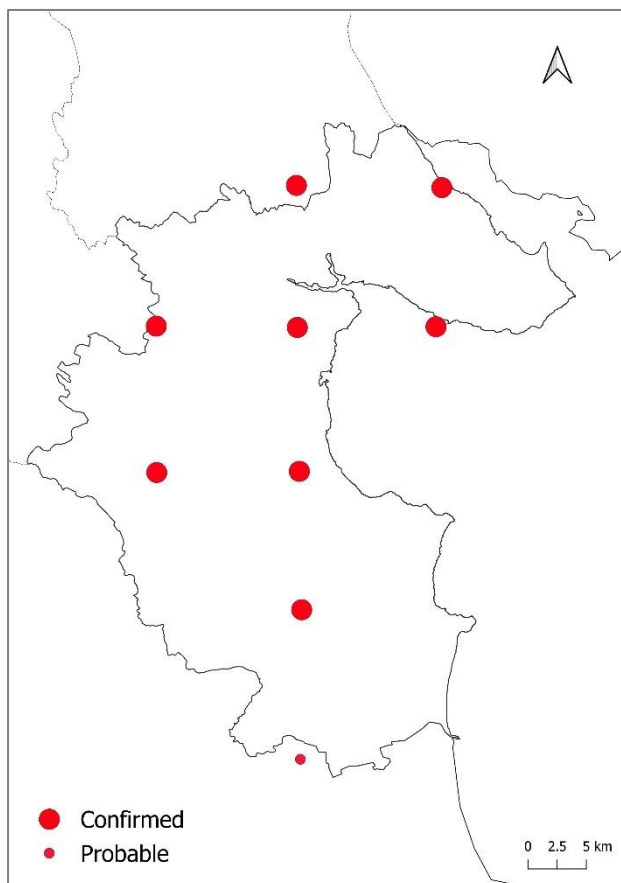
GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major anglicus*

Resident

Recorded at many locations. This species was largely absent from Louth during the *Bird Atlas* (2007-11), but it has since colonised most areas in the county. It is now a regular visitor to garden feeders at some locations.



Great Spotted Woodpecker



Breeding range in 2025

Map shows the breeding range of Great Spotted Woodpeckers in County Louth, including records for 2025, but breeding probably occurs in all areas. Symbols are plotted centrally in 10 x 10 km squares in the National Grid.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius aesalon*

Winter visitor

Bellurgan:

One on 26th October (T. Cooney).

Dundalk:

Single birds at Shore Road Marsh on 1st January (K. Beckett, S. Dowdall), 1st February (A. Kelly), 21st, 26th and 28th October (F. Stanley, N. Molloy, R. Toomey) and 18th December (F. Stanley). One at Soldier's Point on 18th December (G. Wilkinson) was probably the bird seen earlier that day at Shore Road Marsh. One at the docks on 22nd November and 10th December (C. O'Flaherty).

Lurgangreen:

Singles on 12th October (D. McDonnell) and 2nd December (M. McLaughlin, D. McCreedy).

Seabank:

One on 8th December (S. Geeney).

Knockabbey:

One on 10th November (Dean McDonnell).

Salterstown:

One on 26th October (A. Kelly).

Stabannon: One east of Ardee on 25th March (B. McCloskey).
 Clogher Head: First winter on 18th November (S. Dowdall).
 Ráth an Dairdisigh: One on 26th December (J. Mullen).



Merlin (Fergal Stanley)

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus peregrinus*

Resident

Knockabbey: One perching on an electricity pylon and hunting pigeons on 30th July (D. McDonnell).

Birds were observed at coastal sites throughout the year.

RAVEN *Corvus corax corax*

Resident

Cooley Peninsula: Six on 5th March and eight on 6th March (P. Milne).

Breeding reported at two lowland sites.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*

Occasional

Ballagan Point: One on 23rd February is a resident bird.

Bellurgan: One on 8th July.

Stabannon: One east of Ardee on 25th March, 31st March and 3rd April.

Salterstown: One on off the sea on 26th October.

Cruisetown: One on 11th October.

Clogher Head: One from 2024 present throughout 2025.

Baltray: One on 2nd and 22nd June.

Two hybrid Carrion *C.c. corone* x Hooded Crow *C.c. cornix* at Clogher Head in 2025.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis arvensis*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: Ballagan Point: Small flocks on several dates in late October and early November arriving in off the sea.

Bellurgan: first obvious diurnal passage noted on 5th October. A flock of 27 flew south over Bellurgan on 11th October. Flock of c.60 on south 29th October. Occasional on other dates.

Cruisetown: flock of at least 20 in off the sea on 2nd December.

Clogher Head: c.100 south on 5th November.

Nocturnal recording: Single birds recorded occasionally at Bellurgan and Dundalk.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Summer visitor

Earliest date: One at Seabank on 4th May.

Breeding was confirmed at many locations in the north of the county in May and June.

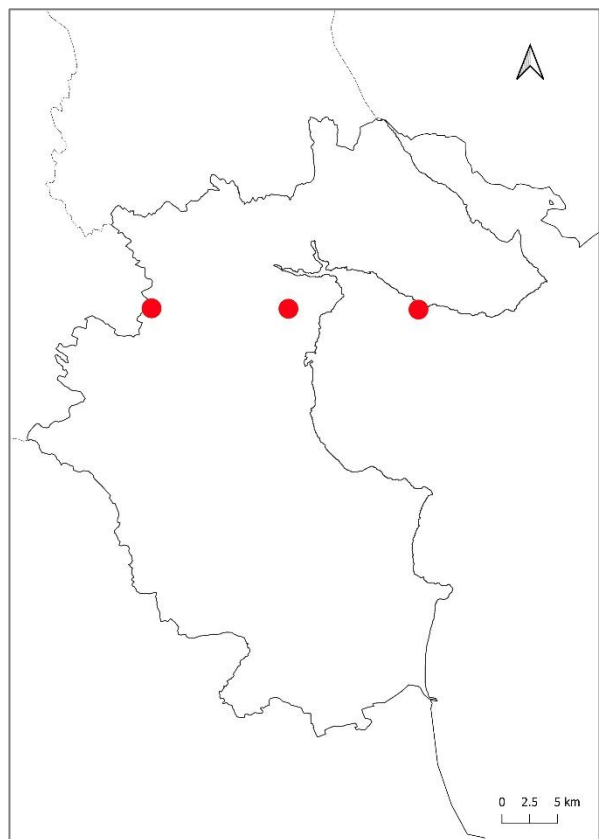
REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus scirpaceus*

Summer visitor

Between May and July, an estimated 26 to 31 territories were recorded in the 10 km² Ordnance Survey grid squares H90, J00 and J10 (see map). Symbols are plotted centrally within each 10 km² grid square. A number of potential sites were not surveyed. Although absent as a breeding species during the Bird Atlas (2007–11), Reed Warblers are now well established in the north of the county. An adult fitted with a metal ring was observed at a breeding site on 9th June.



Reed Warbler (Tom Cooney)



Breeding range in 2025

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia naevia*

Summer visitor

Annaloughan: One near the loop walk on 26th April (A. Kelly).

Dundalk racecourse: Two from 19th April into summer (F. Stanley). One on 19th June (T. Cooney) and three on 27th July (F. Stanley).

Stonetown: One reeling on 3rd May (B. McCloskey).
Knockabbey: One reeling on 14th April (D. McDonnell).
No migrants reported at coastal sites.



Grasshopper Warbler (Fergal Stanley)

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia riparia*

Summer visitor

Visible migration: Strong passage recorded regularly at Bellurgan in early September. Total of 15 south in six hours at Clogher Head on 17th September.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica rustica*

Summer visitor

Earliest date: One near Dundalk race course on 1st March (F. Stanley).

Latest date: One at Clogher Head on 13th November (N.T. Keogh).

Autumn passage: Visible hirundine migration was observed from late July with an estimated peak of 2,300 per hour at Bellurgan on 7th September. There were also large numbers of House Martins and Sand Martins on this date. At Clogher Head, 675 south in six hours on 17th September.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbicum urbicum*

Summer visitor

Visible migration: 750 south at Clogher Head in six hours on 17th September.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus trochilus*

Summer visitor

No noteworthy movements at coastal sites in spring or autumn. In the summer, birds were located nesting at many wetland habitats in the north of the county.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita collybita*

Summer visitor.

Earliest date: One in song at Ardee on 28th March.

Winter: One, occasionally two, at Ardee Road Brewery Dundalk from January to late March.

SIBERIAN CHIFFCHAFF *P.c. tristis*

Rare subspecies

One at Ardee Road Brewery Dundalk from 12th January to 30th March with a second bird present from 28th January to 1st February (G. O'Neill *et al.*).



Siberian Chiffchaff (Gerry O'Neill)

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla atricapilla*

Summer visitor, occasional in winter

Reports from coastal watchpoints as follows:

Ballagan Point: One on 29th October.

Clogher Head: Two on 12th and 17th September, 1st and 13th November.

Small numbers wintered 2024/25 and 2005/2026.

WHITETHROAT *Curruca communis communis*

Summer visitor

Earliest date: One at Mullaghatten on 3rd May (A. Kelly).

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: 840 south at Bellurgan in two hours on 29th October.

Although numbers were quite low in 2025, Starlings are one of the most common species recorded when visible migration is in progress. The highest count in recent years was 5,929 in 90 minutes on 2nd November 2021 at Rockmarshall on the north shore of Dundalk Bay.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus hibernicus*

Resident

Reported on River Dee at Ardee, River Flurry at Ballymascanlon and in Ravensdale.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos clarkei*

Resident and winter visitor

Nocturnal recording: Maximum of 81 calls in eight hours on 20th/21st October at Bellurgan.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus iliacus*

Winter visitor

Ardee: 40 on 26th February.

Visible migration: One at Rockmarshall on 9th October was the first migrant of autumn.

Nocturnal recording: First calls in autumn were recorded at Dundalk on 25th September (G. O'Neill). Peak of 691 calls on the night of 13th/14th October (G. O'Neill). Regular at Bellurgan from September into December.

The subspecies *T.i. coburni* also occurs in winter.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula merula*

Resident and winter visitor

Nocturnal recording: Maximum of seven in three hours on 4th November at Bellurgan.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Winter visitor

First date autumn: One at Clogher Head on 13th November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata striata*

Summer visitor

Multiple reports of adults and juveniles in August.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros gibraltariensis*

Very scarce winter visitor

Greenore: One from 1st December 2024 (E. Larrisey) remained in the port area until at least the 14th January.

Clogher Head: One from 26th November to the end of the year (M. Stewart *et al.*).

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor

Bellurgan: Male on 18th August.

Soldier's Point: Juvenile on 6th July.

Seabank: Juvenile on 28th June.
 Annagassan: Juvenile on 28th June.
Autumn passage: Two at Clogher Head on 17th September.
 There were also reports of migrant birds at coastal locations in spring and autumn.

GREENLAND WHEATEAR *O.o. leucorhoa*

Very scarce passage migrant

Gyles Quay: Two on 23rd September (P. Phillips).

Seabank: A male at Seabank on 27th September (B. McCloskey).



Juvenile Wheatear (Gerry O'Neill)

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus montanus*

Resident

Clogher Head: Seven (6 + 1) flew inland high over the headland and calling on 9th October (N.T. Keogh). Two separate flocks of 10 and 23 came in off the sea on 1st November (N.T. Keogh).

Visible southward migration along the coast was observed on both dates. Although this species is mostly sedentary; it seems likely that these birds were migrants.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Resident

WHITE WAGTAIL *M.a. alba*

Passage migrant

Ballagan Point: One on 1st March and 20 on 11th April (E. Larrisey).

Templetown Beach: 14 on 10th April (B. Martin).

Lurgangreen: Five on 28th March (B. McCloskey, C. Cardiff).

Seabank: One on 26th April (A. Kelly).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Resident and winter visitor

Clogher Head: 100 on the ground on 13th October with other migrant birds (N.T. Keogh)

Visible migration: Gyles Quay: 50 west on 23rd September (P. Phillips).
Bellurgan: 100+ per hour southwest on 9th October with many birds landing on shoreline and on buildings *etc.* (T. Cooney).
Smaller numbers regularly on other dates.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Scarce winter visitor

Cooley Peninsula: One on 4th March (E. Flynn).

Dunany Woods: One on 5th March.

Visible migration: One at Clogher Head on 1st November (N.T. Keogh).

Formerly regular in small numbers, now increasingly scarce visitors.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs gengleri*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: Bellurgan: 170 in three hours on 9th October was the highest count.

TWITE *Linaria flavirostris pipilans*

Annual but very local winter visitor

Gyles Quay: Minimum of 22 from 29th November into 2026 (E. Larrissey *et al.*).

Dundalk: Twenty at Shore Road on 16th January with at least ten on 20th (F. Stanley).

The birds at Gyles Quay were sound recorded on 15th December (XC1064691). Dundalk Bay is still the most reliable location on the east coast to see overwintering Twite.



Twite (Fergal Stanley)

LINNET *Linaria cannabina cannabina*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: Regular movement south at coastal sites in September and October.

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea cabaret*

Resident, winter visitor

Dundalk: 30 at Avenue Road on 19th December.

Visible migration: c.25 south on 5th November (N.T. Keogh).

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra curvirostra*

Very scarce and localised resident

Ravensdale: Three on 2nd March (E. Flynn).

Annaloughan: One at the Loop Walk on 19th January (A. Kelly) with four on 1st February and six on 12th April (F. Stanley). Male and female on 13th April (A. Kelly) with one on the 30th April. Four adults on 26th July (F. Stanley).

Nocturnal recording: Four calling on the night of 14th January over Dundalk Town (G. O'Neill).

The nighttime recording is highly unusual as all other reports have been in daytime.



Crossbill (Fergal Stanley)

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis britannica*

Resident and winter visitor

Visible migration: Most flocks of 20 to 30 birds passed south regularly at Rockmarshall and Bellurgan in September and October.

SISKIN *Spinus spinus*

Resident and winter visitor

Cooley Peninsula: Birds recorded in upland areas in March, June and July.

Visible migration: Clogher Head: migrating birds seen flying south at the headland on 13th October (N.T. Keogh).

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Irregular and scarce winter visitor

Cooley Peninsula: February: one on 27th at Anaverna (E. Flynn). November: two in the same area general on 12th and 22nd with one last reported on the 25th (E. Flynn, F. Stanley *et al.*). Four on 31st along the road to Claremont Cairn (Bavan), and one on the lane leading to Anglesey Mountain (E. Flynn, D. Watters).

Gyles Quay: One on 30th November (M. Stewart).

Clogher Head: November: one, possibly more, calling overhead at Port Oriel on 11th and one also heard calling on 25th (N.T. Keogh).

The appearance of birds in mid-November coincided with the arrival of a cold Arctic airmass and strong northeasterly winds.



Snow Bunting in February (Enda Flynn)



Snow Bunting in November (Fergal Stanley)

References and data sources

- Balmer, D.E., Gillings, S., Caffery, B.J., Swann, R.L., Downie, I.S. & Fuller, R.J. 2013. *Bird Atlas 2007-2011: the breeding and wintering birds of Britain and Ireland*. BTO Books, Thetford.
- Burnell, D., Perkins, A.J., Newton, S.F., Bolton, M., Tierney, T.D & Dunn, T. 2023. *Seabirds Count: A census of breeding seabirds in Britain and Ireland (2015–2021)*. Lynx Nature Books, Barcelona.
- Gilbert, G., Stanbury, A. & Lewis, L. 2021. Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 4: 2020–2026. *Irish Birds*, 43: 1–22.
- BirdWatch Ireland Tolka Branch outing reports <https://eBird.org>
- eBird Louth <https://ebird.org/region/IE-L-LH>
- Irish Birding. 2025. Available at: www.irishbirding.com
- Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS). 2025. Available at <https://irishwetlandbirdssurvey.ie>
- Louth Rare and Scarce Birds (WhatsApp group)
- LouthBirdNews (WhatsApp group)