

BIRDS ON LUNDY 2017

by

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BIRDING YEAR

A total of 146 species (147, subject to acceptance of a record of Little Bunting) were recorded during 2017. The all-time Lundy bird list increased by one species (to 327) when the British Birds Rarities Committee accepted the record of a Pallid Swift, seen over Millcombe on 25 October 2016; not only a first for the island, but also the first accepted record for Devon (see page 70).

Spring migration

March

After a smattering of early migrants, the first significant widespread movement of the spring was noted on 22nd with the arrival of over 20 **Wheatears**, including the first three females of the year and three returning colour-ringed Lundy-breeding males. Also recorded were 130 **Meadow Pipits**, 46 **Skylarks**, six **Stonechats**, eight **Cormorants**, 12 *alba* **Wagtails**, seven **Sand Martins**, three **Black Redstarts**, six **Chiffchaffs**, an early **Willow Warbler**, 10 **Goldcrests**, a **Firecrest** and two **Redwings**. The first **Linnet** of the year was reported on 20th. There was a fall of 60+ **Chiffchaffs** on 23rd. Two **Jackdaws** on 24th & 25th increased to three on 26th and four on 27th, when all left to the north. **Manx Shearwaters** of breeding age were already visiting burrows at the Old Light colony on the evening of 25th. 110 **Sand Martins** and 25 **Swallows** moved north in the lee of the West Side on 26th and a **Grey Heron** flew over the Village. An influx of migrants on 27th included 20 **Willow Warblers**, the first three **Blackcaps** of the year, two male **Ring Ouzels**, 15 **Song Thrushes**, a female **Bullfinch**, and an **Osprey** drifting quickly north-north-east past the Castle and along the East Side, mobbed by gulls as it went. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** on Pondsburry showed characteristics of the continental breeding race *Larus fuscus intermedius*. Numbers of **Puffins** in Jenny's Cove reached 99 (the first of the year having been seven rafting birds at Jenny's on 16th). Two of the **Robins** seen on 28th had the greyish tones and pallid orange breasts associated with continental birds.

April

Unsettled weather with showers and longer spells of rain at the end of March, gave way to predominantly dry and often sunny conditions during the first ten days of April, with high pressure ruling the roost. Clear skies brought frequently sunny days to the island, but chilly nights, whilst daytime temperatures were pegged back by winds mainly from the north and west, though there was a short-lived incursion of warmer, continental air during the weekend of 8th/9th. There was another **Osprey** on 2nd, an influx of **Swallows** on 6th & 7th (counts of 78 and 100 respectively), a modest arrival of 20 **Willow Warblers** on 7th, and first records for the year of single **Sandwich Tern** (1st), **Redstart** (9th) and **Grasshopper Warbler** (8th). In general however, visible migration was sluggish, as is often the case in fine weather, when birds tend to overfly Lundy having little need to make landfall on a remote island. Lingering winter birds included **Great Northern Diver**, **Red-necked Grebe** and the odd **Redwing**. Continued anticyclonic conditions, but a slack pressure gradient (with hardly an isobar contour showing between the Mediterranean and southern Britain on the pressure charts for 12/13 Apr) surely aided the arrival of Lundy's fourth

Night-heron, which flew past a startled Warden and other island staff as they bumped down to the Landing Bay by Landrover on 13th. It proved to be an elusive visitor, playing hide-and-seek around Lametor until 21st. Arrivals over the same period included a very early **Wood Warbler** (13th) and a male **Pied Flycatcher** (12th & 13th), both firsts for the year and both in Millcombe. The 17th brought the first **Sedge Warbler** of 2017 – in the iris bed in Millcombe Pond – and second **Tree Pipit**, this one on a more typical date, below the Battlements.

Writing in the logbook on 19th, Dean Jones noted: *“One of the best days yet. The first **Whitethroats** of the season were seen – one at Quarter Wall and one along the Terrace. Three **White Wagtails** were at the top of St Helen’s Field and a single **Fieldfare** was at Quarter Wall. Two **Sedge Warblers** were caught and ringed in Millcombe in the early morning, along with good numbers of **Blackcaps**, **Willow Warblers** and **Chiffchaffs**. Two **Lesser Redpolls** were feeding amongst a flock of seven **Linnets** above Benjamin’s Chair. A steady passage of **Swallows**, **Sand** and **House Martins** was noted, along with an obvious arrival of **Wheatears** (including a fabulous Greenland male). A beautiful male **Redstart** was catching insects along Quarter Wall.”*

In common with both Skokholm and Bardsey Bird Observatories, Lundy witnessed a substantial fall of warblers and other migrants on the morning of 20th, when thick cloud and patchy light drizzle moving south-east across Wales and the Bristol Channel grounded large numbers of birds after days of fine, dry weather. Chris Dee ringed 149 new birds, including 85 **Willow Warblers**, 29 **Blackcaps**, 16 **Chiffchaffs**, 16 **Sedge Warblers** and two **Grasshopper Warblers**. A British-ringed **Reed Warbler** was controlled (Lundy’s first Reed Warbler of the year) along with a **Sedge Warbler** bearing a French ring – see Systematic List and *Ringing Report* for details. Elsewhere there was a **Little Egret** feeding among rockpools off Lametor, two **Green Sandpipers** at various locations in the south of the island, two **Ring Ouzels** at the Quarries, a female **Redstart** in Millcombe, a male **Pied Flycatcher** at Brambles and a **Collared Dove** (present since 18th).

Continued good weather for mist-netting brought further excellent ringing totals, including 113 on 21st, 85 on 22nd, 118 on 23rd and 178 on 24th, before strong north/north-easterlies set in for a couple of days, reducing the activity of migrants and ringers alike. The total of 178 on 24th included 88 **Willow Warblers**, 24 **Blackcaps**, 16 **Chiffchaffs**, 14 **Sedge Warblers**, eight **Whitethroats**, two **Grasshopper Warblers** and one each of **Firecrest**, **Lesser Whitethroat** (first of the year), **Spotted Flycatcher** (also a first for the year) and male **Pied Flycatcher**. A male **Ring Ouzel** would also have featured in the ringing totals had it not managed to find its way out of a mist-net. A notable movement of hirundines during the afternoon of 23rd included 400 **Swallows**, 50 **Sand Martins** and 40 **House Martins**. Chilly northerly winds eased on 28th and another **Osprey** headed north off South West Point, whilst the first **Cuckoo** of the year was heard calling. The 29th saw an adult **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** in the Landing Bay and a male **Yellowhammer** at Quarter Wall. Also reported were one or two **Buzzards**, a **Jackdaw**, the first **Garden Warbler**, three **Pied Flycatchers** and a **Lesser Redpoll**. There was a steady passage of **Swallows**, conservatively estimated at 500. The month closed with the **Red-necked Grebe** still in the Landing Bay on 30th, along with four first-summer **Black-headed Gulls**. The day’s otherwise modest ringing total of 39 included a notable four **Redstarts** and five **Garden Warblers**.

May

The first part of the month was dominated by cold easterly or north-easterly winds, which, as is typical for Lundy, often made conditions challenging for both observation and ringing. The 1st brought an intermittently singing **Scarlet Rosefinch** that evaded being seen during its brief morning stay in the Millcombe/St John’s area. Five **Swifts** (the first of the year), a **Short-eared Owl** (near Pondsburry), two **Jackdaws**, a **Bar-tailed Godwit** (in South West Field), a **Stock**

Dove and a late **Redwing** also put in appearances. The long-staying **Red-necked Grebe** in the Landing Bay bade farewell on 2nd, and a brood of newly fledged **Blackbirds** was in lower Millcombe, whilst a typically flighty **Hoopoe** was seen briefly in Gannets' Combe on 3rd. The 5th saw a significant movement of 145 **Swifts**, 565 **Swallows**, 123 **House Martins** and 30 **Sand Martins**. Flocks of **Swifts** were arriving along the West Side and crossing the middle of the island directly into the north-east headwind, whilst the hirundines tended to stay in the lee of the West Side. Among other arrivals were **Cuckoo** (2 or 3), **Garden Warbler** (1), **Redstart** (2), **Whinchat** (3), **Yellow Wagtail** (5) and **Tree Pipit** (2). Two female **Blue-headed Wagtails** joined **Yellow Wagtails** feeding among the ponies in Barton/St Helen's Fields on 5th & 6th, whilst clear skies, much lighter winds and higher temperatures on 7th gave a window of opportunity for delayed migrants to flood north. In line with observations along the mainland coast of North Devon, **Swallows** were particularly abundant, with a "highly conservative" estimate of 1,000 entered in the LFS logbook, alongside 400+ **House Martins** and 100+ **Sand Martins**. A **Wood Warbler** was in Millcombe.

There was a notable fall of 25-30 **Spotted Flycatchers** on 13th and a male **Subalpine Warbler** graced the Ugly on 14th. There were tantalising reports of a male **Golden Oriole** in Millcombe/St John's Valley on the afternoon of 16th and morning of 17th, but unfortunately no description or observer contact details were entered in the logbook. A very late **Fieldfare** put in an appearance on 17th. As expected, numbers of migrants dropped off during the second half of May, though there were still northward pulses of **Swifts**, hirundines, **Spotted Flycatchers** and a handful of warblers, among them two mist-netted **Chiffchaffs** that showed prominent pollen 'horns' suggesting these individuals were recently arrived from habitats well to the south of the UK and belying the species' reputation as an habitually early migrant. Unusual sightings included a **Hobby** on 21st and a **Little Egret** on 23rd and again on 30th. The month ended with the arrival of an RSPB-led team of volunteers to carry out the periodic island-wide census of breeding seabirds (see 'Breeding birds' panel below for a summary of results). They were greeted on 27th by a **Red-rumped Swallow**, seen over Quarry Beach and Millcombe, and seen on 28th over the Village. Not quite as rare, but still unusual for Lundy, was a **Rook** on 29th & 30th.

June

The month got off to a fine start with an adult **Rose-coloured Starling** in St Helen's/Barton Field. Presumably the same **Red-rumped Swallow** seen on 27 & 28 May was over Lameton on 2nd and near Quarter Wall Copse on 3rd, whilst a late **Reed Warbler** also put in an appearance on 3rd. Single **Grey Herons** and **Golden Plovers** on three dates each were perhaps the first evidence of post-breeding dispersal and the onset of ornithological 'autumn'!

First dates for spring migrants

13 March	Swallow, Wheatear	13 April	Wood Warbler
14 March	Chiffchaff, Firecrest, Tree Pipit	17 April	Sedge Warbler
15 March	House Martin	20 April	Reed Warbler
16 March	Puffin, Sand Martin, Willow Warbler, Ring Ouzel	19 April	Common Whitethroat
20 March	Black Redstart, White Wagtail	22 April	Whimbrel, Yellow Wagtail
27 March	Blackcap	24 April	Lesser Whitethroat, Spotted Flycatcher
08 April	Grasshopper Warbler, Common Redstart	28 April	Cuckoo
12 April	Pied Flycatcher	29 April	Garden Warbler
		01 May	Swift, Whinchat

Breeding season

Seabirds

The results of the RSPB-led breeding seabird census of cliff-nesting species were as follows:

Species	2008	2013	2017	% change 2013–2017
Fulmar	170	209	227	+9
Shag	63	112	55	-51
Kittiwake	151	127	238	+87
Guillemot	3,302	4,114	6,198	+51
Razorbill	1,045	1,324	1,735	+31
Puffin	14	80	375	+369

All of these species bred successfully in 2017. Breeding censuses of **Manx Shearwater** and large gulls will be completed in 2018. **Storm Petrels** were found to be nesting at North Light for the first time and there was again evidence of breeding in the vicinity of the Old Light shearwater colony, though successful breeding was not confirmed at either site.

Landbirds

Teal bred successfully for the third successive year, with at least two different broods seen on Pondsburry in Jun. **Spotted Flycatchers** were confirmed breeding for the first time since 1997 when three fledged juveniles were watched being fed by adults at Quarter Wall Copse on 17 Jul. Successful breeding was also confirmed for: **Mallard, Oystercatcher, Woodpigeon, Peregrine, Carrion Crow, Raven, Skylark, Swallow, Wren, Starling, Blackbird, Robin, Wheatear, House Sparrow, Dunnock, Pied Wagtail, Meadow Pipit, Rock Pipit, Chaffinch, Linnet and Goldfinch**. There was evidence of breeding territories/behaviour for the following additional species: **Water Rail, Kestrel** (early in the season only), **Chiffchaff** and **Whitethroat**. **Willow Warbler** and **Blackcap** were both singing in the last week of May, but there was no further indication of territory-holding birds.

Autumn migration

July

The Met Office summed up July as “a generally unsettled month, with only brief fine spells.” On Lundy it was particularly cool and rainy at the start of the month and again from about 20th onwards, no doubt having adverse impacts on late nests, recently fledged young and early migrants alike. There were further single **Grey Herons** on 2nd & 6th. A single juvenile **Black-headed Gull** was in Gannets' Bay on 9th and an adult **Common Gull** perched on Mouse Island on 12th. Ten **Swifts** on 6th was the highest count of the month and a trickle of hirundines included a **House Martin** on 4th and three **Sand Martins** on 12th. Warblers were already on the move, with single **Sedge Warblers** on 17th & 23rd and seven **Willow Warblers** on 23rd. Also noted during the second half of the month were a **Whimbrel** (18th), three **Cormorants** (23rd), a **Cuckoo** (23rd & 24th), single **Curlew** and **Black-headed Gull** (both 25th), and a **Turnstone** in the Landing Bay on 29th. A Force 7 south-westerly on 28th produced 80 **Gannets** off South West

Point and a **Storm Petrel** close in off South End. Lundy or Devon rarities included a **White Wagtail** on 2nd (an unusual date), a long-staying **Rook** which put in regular appearances from 2nd onwards (possibly the same bird as seen at the end of May), an equally long-staying juvenile **Marsh Harrier**, first seen on 22nd and remaining into Aug, and a **Little Egret** on 23rd.

August

Seawatching during a spell of rough weather in the first week of the month yielded at least 10,000 **Manx Shearwaters** off North End on 5th, a **Sooty Shearwater** and 136 **Gannets** on 6th, plus the first **Bonxies** (Great Skuas) of the season on 5th & 6th. Conditions remained on the cool and unsettled side for most of the month. As usual, though, warbler and hirundine passage gradually became more evident, with **Willow Warbler** counts reaching 13 on 12th and 40+ on 23rd & 26th, alongside small numbers of **Whitethroats**, **Sedge Warblers**, **Reed Warblers**, **Grasshopper Warblers** and **Goldcrests**, whilst 10 **Blackcaps** on 31st marked the start of that species' main autumn movements. Also towards the end of the month came the season's highest counts thus far of hirundines: 20 **Sand Martins** on 23rd & 26th, 200 **Swallows** on the latter date and 10 **House Martins** on 25th. There were small falls of 30 **Spotted Flycatchers** on 26th and 6 **Pied Flycatchers** on 27th, whilst singles of **Turtle Dove** (24th), **Garden Warbler** (22nd to 24th), **Lesser Whitethroat** (23rd & 24th), **Whinchat** (25th), **Yellow Wagtail** (25th) and **Tree Pipit** (five dates 20th-30th) injected further variety of migrants as August drew towards a close. A scattering of passage waders included one or two **Ringed Plovers** on three dates, single **Common Sandpipers** on 13th & 25th, a **Green Sandpiper** on 16th, two **Curlews** on 22nd and juvenile **Dotterels** on 24th & 27th. The juvenile **Marsh Harrier** was present throughout, 31st being the final day of its almost six-week stay. A **Little Egret** was in the Devil's Kitchen on 13th & 14th and a **Kingfisher** put in an appearance in the same area two days later. Among passerine scarcities were a juvenile **Crossbill** in Millcombe on 10th, a first-year **Nightingale** ringed in Millcombe on 25th, a juvenile **Rose-coloured Starling** sighted in various places between lower Millcombe and Tillage Field on 26th, and the long-staying **Rook**, last reported on 26th.

September

September continued the run of unsettled weather with a succession of low-pressure systems arriving off the Atlantic. The Met Office observed "*an unusually high number of rain days across England and frequent north-westerly winds*" up to 19th, including the passage of Storm Aileen on 12th & 13th. The last 10 days were milder with mostly southerly winds, but these brought further cloud and rain. Movements of several common migrants typically peak during September and in 2017 counts of the following were all the highest of the autumn, and indeed the year: 250 **Sand Martins** (16th), 2,000 **Swallows** (18th), 60 **Chiffchaffs** (14th), 300 **Blackcaps** (14th, when 92 were ringed) and 300 **Goldcrests** (26th). **House Martins** reached 150 on 16th and **Meadow Pipits** 520 on 30th, but numbers of both species continued building into October. The last departing **Sedge Warbler** was seen on 7th, the last **Swift** on 11th, the last **Reed Warbler** on 18th, the last **Whitethroat** on 25th and the last **Whinchat** on 26th. Conversely, 'firsts' of the autumn included **Firecrest** on 7th, **Grey Wagtail** on 9th, **Snow Bunting** on 11th and **Ring Ouzel** on 15th. There were further scattered records of **Pied Flycatcher**, **Yellow Wagtail** and **Tree Pipit** and a maximum of three **White Wagtails** on 17th. Single **Redstarts** on 25th & 26th were – depressingly – the first and last of autumn. Among non-passerines were **Grey Herons** on five dates (including two on 20th & 21st), a **Lapwing** on 15th, two **Golden Plovers** on 17th, a **Common Sandpiper** on 18th and three **Arctic Skuas** on 18th & 19th. Atlantic storms brought Lundy's 15th **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** to the Airfield on 11th & 12th and were likely also responsible for the arrival of an even rarer wader – by Lundy standards – when an unsuspecting visitor captured smartphone images of a **Red-necked Phalarope** on Pondsburry on 23rd, only the third record for the island. Other scarcities included the season's first **Yellow-browed Warbler** and **Lapland Bunting** on 16th and a **Hobby** over Brambles on 26th.

October

After further cool Atlantic weather during the first week, much of October saw a persistent south-westerly flow, bringing warm and humid conditions with low cloud and patchy rain and drizzle at times. The passage of ex-Hurricane Ophelia on 16th/17th, followed by Storm Brian on 21st, brought exceptional winds to the island, even by Lundy standards. The shipping forecast for 16th was: "*Cyclonic, mainly south or south-west, 5-7, increasing severe gale 9 to violent storm 11, occasionally hurricane force 12 later*". Generally, then, conditions were not conducive for much in the way of visible migration or falls of nocturnal migrants from continental Europe, and this was reflected in unremarkable counts for most species until the end of the month, when a change of weather from 25th onwards saw some very busy days indeed.

The autumn's final big movement of hirundines, on 6th, comprised 800 **Swallows** and 700 **House Martins**. There are regularly big arrivals of **Chiffchaffs** and **Blackcaps** during October, but this year's passage was more 'steady as she goes' with continuous movement but modest maxima of just 20 **Chiffchaffs** (on 18th & 26th) and 40 **Blackcaps** (on 26th). **Goldcrests** featured throughout the month, with several dozen present on many days and influxes of 200 on 12th and 100 on 25th/26th by far the highest counts. **Firecrests** were seen on 17 days, peaking at 10 on 27th. The last departing summer migrants included **Sand Martin** and **Pied Flycatcher** on 8th, **Spotted Flycatcher** on 13th, **Garden Warbler** and **Wheatear** on 27th, **House Martin** on 29th and **Swallow** on 30th. Although the first few **Redwings** were seen on 9th, it was the last week of the month before there was any real arrival of winter thrushes or finches. The big change came on 26th when a migrant-filled day brought 1,000+ **Redwings**, 100+ **Song Thrushes**, 50+ **Blackbirds**, the first two **Fieldfares** of the season, a **Mistle Thrush**, 5,500 **Chaffinches**, 15 **Bramblings** and 350 **Siskins**. Some 255 birds were ringed that day and the 27th was also busy. A nationwide influx of **Hawfinches** was reflected on Lundy with the first arrivals on 7th and a maximum of 15 on 26th. Other notable species during the month included: juvenile **Hobby** (5th), **Yellow-browed Warbler** (7th, 8th, 12th & 18th), **Turtle Dove**, **Short-eared Owl** and **Hen Harrier** (8th), **Crossbill** (9th), two **Balearic Shearwaters** and a **Pomarine Skua** (11th), **Snow Bunting** (12th, 15th & 26th), **Olive-backed Pipit** (13th), **Red-breasted Flycatcher**, **Barred Warbler** and three **Lapland Buntings** (15th), **Little Bunting** (17th), two **Purple Sandpipers** and another **Short-eared Owl** (25th), **Ruff** (26th), **Red-throated Pipit** (26th/27th), male **Bullfinch** and six **Long-tailed Tits** (27th), **Little Egret** and another **Red-breasted Flycatcher** (28th), five **White-fronted Geese** (30th), and **Coal Tit** and female **Bullfinch** (31st). A **Red-throated Diver** was off South Light on 11th, the first **Great Northern Diver** of the season was in the Landing Bay on 14th, and the first **Black Redstart** was logged on 15th.

November

The excitement of late October did not extend far into November in the case of most species, and although there were 2,000 **Chaffinches** and 96 **Siskins** on 1st, such numbers were not maintained as the weather reverted to the largely westerly rut it had been stuck in for much of the late summer and autumn. The exceptions were **Redwings**, with moderately high counts on some days (e.g. 238 on 3rd, 370 on 13th and 100+ on 30th) and **Bramblings**, which reached their highest numbers for many years, peaking at 50 on 1st and 52 on 14th – brief periods of northerly winds presumably helping them on their way. Scarcities included a **Coal Tit** (seen regularly throughout the month and presumed to be the bird that arrived on 31 Oct), **Mistle Thrush** (1st), a remarkable diversity comprising two **Little Egrets**, two **Mediterranean Gulls**, **Arctic Skua**, **Stock Dove**, **Yellow-browed Warbler**, **Dartford Warbler** and **Lapland Bunting** (2nd), **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** and **Olive-backed Pipit** (14th), **Grey Heron** (15th), **Common Scoter** (up to 40 on 15th/16th), **Manx Shearwater** (two unusually late birds on 23rd) and **Lapwing** and **Jack Snipe** (30th). The month ended on a cold note as Arctic air was dragged down across the country, though the more wintry effects stayed to the north of Lundy.

Early winter

December

December brought frequently cold, windy and at times wet conditions, including the passage of Storm Caroline on 7th and Storm Dylan to close out the year on 30th/31st, though the worst of the weather continued to remain north and east of Lundy (Exmoor and the Welsh uplands were blanketed by snow on 11th, for example). The **Jack Snipe** that arrived on the last day of November was still present on 1st, whilst the **Lapwing** lingered until 5th. **Teal** reached their early-winter peak of six on 26th, one or two **Great Northern Divers** were in the Landing Bay throughout the month, and other regularly reported species included up to three **Water Rails**, a single **Merlin**, a **Firecrest**, the long-staying **Coal Tit**, a lone **Stonechat**, good numbers of **Blackbirds**, **Song Thrushes** and **Redwings**, and a pair of **Goldfinches**. Single **Chiffchaffs** put in appearances on 2nd & 11th, as did a **Sparrowhawk** and a **Black Redstart** on 9th. Dean Jones found three adult **Mediterranean Gulls** in the Landing Bay on 3rd (the first time this species has been reported from Lundy in winter), whilst the following day (4th) Dean wrote: *"I had four more **Med Gulls** today, all adult birds feeding in a superb mixed seabird frenzy this afternoon. Alongside them were Harbour Porpoise, 400+ **Kittiwakes**, two adult winter **Black-headed Gulls**, one 2nd calendar-year **Common Gull**, 200+ **Herring Gulls**, eight **Great Black-backed Gulls**, a single **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, seven **Gannets**, three **Shags** and 363 **auk spp.** (mostly **Razorbills**). Really exciting stuff; it was hard to get up and go back to the office after that!"*

Nomenclature and sequence

These follow The British List (summarised 9th edition, updated version posted on the BOU website January 2018) maintained by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU). Where different from the species name in common usage (e.g. Robin), the international English name applied by the BOU (in this case European Robin) is given in square brackets after the scientific name.

The numbers of birds given in the tables, where included, are taken from the LFS Logbook and give the monthly maxima and, in most cases, the number of days on which the species was reported. It should be noted that some of these counts may not be truly representative of the numbers of birds present and are perhaps more reflective of periods (particularly spring and autumn) when observer coverage is higher.

Assessment of records of rare birds

Records of species and sub-species that are vagrants to Britain (in 2017, Red-throated Pipit) are assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC). Records of species classified as 'nationally scarce migrants' or which are otherwise rare in Devon (e.g. Night-heron, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Little Bunting) are considered by the Devon Birds Records Committee (DBRC). In

Keeping in touch with Lundy bird news and information

The website www.birdsoflundy.org.uk linked to the 2007 publication *The Birds of Lundy* includes updates to the species accounts up to the end of 2017. Further updates will be added as new observations continue to build on the knowledge gained from 70 years of intensive study by the LFS. Complementing this long-term archive is an online blog www.lundybirds.blogspot.co.uk through which visiting birdwatchers and ringers may contribute news of the latest sightings. This relies completely on voluntary contributions. If you would like to become a 'co-author' of the blog, meaning that you can post your own updates, please send an email to gen@birdsoflundy.org.uk.

addition, records of 'Lundy vagrants', species that are regularly encountered on the mainland but rare on the island (e.g. Great Crested Grebe, Dartford Warbler), are assessed by the Lundy Bird Recorders.

In all cases, records of species that are rare – whether at national, county or island level – must be accepted by the relevant committee or recorder as being adequately documented. This helps to ensure that the ornithological records kept by different bodies, including the LFS, form a coherent whole, and that high standards of assessment are shared and applied. The unpredictable nature of birdwatching means that even the most experienced and knowledgeable observers are sometimes unable to clinch the identity of a suspected rarity; perhaps it was not seen for long enough, was too far away, or the weather was too bad for crucial plumage details to be picked out. In other cases the distinguishing features are so subtle that photographs and/or examination of the bird in the hand may be required. The assessment of a rarity record as 'not proven' should be seen in this context; it does not necessarily mean that those assessing the record think the observer was mistaken.

Observers are asked to ensure that supporting notes for all records of rare species are entered in the LFS Logbook (which contains guidelines on what information to provide) as soon as possible after the sighting has been made. Please take care to ensure that your name(s) and contact details are included – and legible! Photographs and video-clips are especially welcome and these can be emailed to the Lundy Bird Recorders at gen@birdsoflundy.org.uk.

Observers' names are included below for all accepted 2017 records of species that are national rarities, nationally scarce migrants and/or Lundy vagrants, as well as for some other reports of particular interest.

Birds seen during boat crossings

Sightings during boat crossings are generally only included in the main list when it is clear that the birds in question were close to the island. There is a separate listing at the end of the report for other crossing records of interest. Observers are strongly encouraged to submit records for the coastal waters of the North Devon mainland, including the Taw & Torridge Estuary, to the Devon Bird Recorder (recorder@devonbirds.org).

Acknowledgements

As always we are grateful to the island residents and visitors, whether or not they class themselves as birdwatchers, who contribute sightings to the LFS Logbook and to the database maintained by Devon Birds; the annual bird report is a distillation of thousands of hours of observation by many dozens of individuals. In particular we must single out the outstanding contribution made by Lundy Warden Dean Jones, together with his colleagues from the wardening and ranger teams, including seasonal volunteers.

Special thanks go to Devon Birds for working closely with us on the assessment of rarity records, especially Karen Sims, Devon Birds database manager, who provided a file of all 2017 Lundy records, including those submitted via *BirdTrack*, to help ensure consistency between the respective bird reports published by Devon Birds and the LFS. Others who have helped us in various ways include Chris & Carol Baillie, Helen Booker, Charles Crundwell, Chris & Mandy Dee, John Duffy, Rob Duncan, Tim Frayling, Paul Holt, Andy Jayne, Mike Langman, Philip & Helen Lymbery, Steve McAusland, David & Elisabeth Price, Martyn Roper, Alan & Sandra Rowland, Kevin Rylands, Alfredo Sánchez Tójar, Grant Sherman, Aaron Sibma, Luke Sutton, Richard & Rebecca Taylor, Tony & Ann Taylor, Martin Thorne, Chris Townend, Jon Turner, Steve Waite, Nik Ward, Joanne Wilby, Mark Worden and Justin Zantboer.

The Birds of 2017

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

[Brant Goose]

Lundy vagrant. Sixteen previous records; the last in Oct 2015.

An adult of the Dark-bellied race *B. b. bernicla* was in the Landing Bay during the late afternoon and evening of 29 Apr (Chris Baillie, Tim Davis *et al.*). A Dark-bellied bird was watched for about 10 minutes as it flew erratically over the island several times, in the vicinity of Gannets' Combe, on 14 Nov (Robert & Helen Gooderham). It was later seen standing on the Landing Beach (Siân Scott). These are the 17th & 18th LFS records, 12 of which have been in autumn.

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis*

Lundy vagrant. Sixteen previous records, most recently in 2014.

Two in Tent Field c.17.30 hrs on 18 Mar and at Quarters Pond c.09.00 hrs the next morning (Zoë Barton & Dean Jones). Soon after on 19th, heard over Quarters and seen in flight over Lighthouse Field and later photographed on Pondsburry (Alan & Sandra Rowland) – see colour plate 3. This is the 17th LFS record, the last being in Oct 2014.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*

[Greater White-fronted Goose]

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity. Ten previous records; the last in Nov 2013.

Five flying down the East Side on 30 Oct turned and appeared to drop down over the Airfield. All were adults, but could not be assigned to race (Andy Jayne). Andy was leaving the island on a helicopter flight that morning and didn't have time to go up the island to try and locate the birds on the ground. This constitutes the 21st LFS record. Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Resident breeding flock of feral origin; unknown numbers of wild birds occur from time to time.

The first winter period maximum was 11 on 9 Mar. Successful breeding confirmed: broods of recently hatched ducklings were seen between 26 Apr (f plus 12 y) and 17 Jun (f plus 10 y at Rocket Pole Pond). The peak post-breeding counts during the autumn and second winter period were 14 (2 m & 12 f) on 8 Oct and 13 (3 m & 10 f) on several dates in the last week of Dec, so rather little net change over the year.

Maximum monthly counts of fully grown birds

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	8	11	8	13	11	10	14	11	14	11	13

Teal *Anas crecca*

[Eurasian Teal]

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor in small numbers; rare in summer. First breeding record in 2015; bred again in 2016.

Successful breeding confirmed for the third successive year: two displaying males and four females were on Pondsburry on 24 Mar; a female and three young were seen there on 21 May, followed by two females and six ducklings the next day. A juv was seen on Quarter Wall Pond on 7 Jul, with two there on 24th (Mike Archer).

Maximum count of fully grown birds for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	2	7	5	4	3	3	3	2	2	3	6
–	2	6	10	10	4	9	3	1	5	3	8

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Uncommon passage migrant.

Four records: two females were in the Landing Bay on 24 Feb (Martin Thorne); a single male flew E past North Light on 27 Oct (Andy Jayne); about 40, in small groups of four to eight, passed off the Ugly in the space of five minutes mid-morning on 15 Nov (Martin Thorne); and a flock of c.30 flew north along the East Side at 11.00 hrs the following day (Tony Taylor).

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

[Red-throated Loon]

Rare passage migrant and winter visitor.

Two were off Rat Island 24-26 Feb (Martin Thorne), whilst singles were seen off Rat Island on 27 Feb (Martin Thorne) and off the Castle on 11 Oct (Chris Baillie).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

[Black-throated Loon]

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity.

One was in the Landing Bay, 24-26 Feb (Martin Thorne). Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

[Common Loon]

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers, mainly October to March.

During the first winter period and spring there were sightings on 14 dates from 13 Feb to 14 Apr, mostly involving single birds, but two on 13 Feb & 6 Apr. The first of the autumn was one on 14 Oct. There were sightings on a further 17 dates to 31 Dec, including two on 9 & 10 Dec, but otherwise single birds only. As usual almost all records came from the Landing Bay area, though one was off Quarry Beach on 31 Dec. Writing in the log on 9 Dec, Warden Dean Jones reported: "Two feeding in close to Miller's Cake at 13.30 hrs. One bird caught a definite monkfish/anglerfish and the other a rather large, pale-yellow flatfish."

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

[European Storm Petrel]

Increasingly recorded during the breeding season in recent years; probably a response to the eradication of rats. First confirmation of successful breeding in 2014. Also a passage migrant and visitor to Lundy waters from other breeding colonies.

Recorded between 1 Jun and 24 Aug, with evidence of breeding at North Light and probable breeding around Old Light shearwater colony. At least two were flying around the top of the gully at Old Light shearwater colony at 23.30 hrs on 1 Jun (Richard Taylor & Tony Taylor). Playback of Storm Petrel calls at North End on 9 Jul produced two responses from burrows (Dean Jones). A single bird was heading west close in to Shutter Rock on 28 Jul (Dean Jones). One was heading west off South West Point on 3 Aug (Dean Jones). At least five were seen coming into burrows at North End after 23.00 hrs on the night of 5 Aug (Dean Jones). Singles mist-netted (not tape-lured) at night at Old Light shearwater colony on 21 & 22 Aug had large brood patches (Rebecca & Richard Taylor, Tony Taylor *et al.*). Eighteen were mist-netted at North End on 24 Aug, including at least six caught without the use of a tape lure (Rosie Hall, Dean Jones, Rebecca & Richard Taylor). One bird on the latter date had been ringed previously at The Lizard, Cornwall in Jul 2016 – see *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

[Northern Fulmar]

Common breeder; recorded in all months, mainly from January to September.

The all-island RSPB-led seabird survey produced a total of 227 apparently occupied nests, a figure 9% higher than the 209 nests counted in 2013 and in fact the highest total since the current periodic all-island surveys began in 1981. The early spring maximum of 153 birds was recorded on 31 Mar. As usual, numbers were at their lowest in autumn when most birds leave inshore waters during post-breeding dispersal and moult. The breeding ledges were already being reoccupied by early Dec, with 24 at Long Roost on 5th (Alan & Sandra Rowland).

**Maximum count for each month
(from the logbook; excluding the seabird census)**

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	50	153	120	133	80	64	25	8	3	1	24

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity. Five previous records, the last in Oct 2013.

One was off North End on 6 Aug (Dean Jones); the 6th LFS record. Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Common breeder and passage migrant; usually seen from late March to September; occasional records in October.

Recorded between 25 Mar (birds present in the Old Light colony – see below) and the unusually late date of 2 Nov (off the East Side – Dean Jones). The only counts of more than 300 were during the period 3-9 Aug when there were 538 on 3rd, a “highly conservative” 10,000+ passing off North End between 16.30 hrs and dusk on 5th (Dean Jones & Zoë Barton), 1,121 on 6th and 639 on 9th. There were only six daytime counts reported for Sep/Oct, with four of these in single digits.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	300	200	200	300	10,000	200	13	2	–

Ringling studies continued, with most work carried out at the main breeding colony north of Old Light. Several calling birds were heard there on the night of 25/26 Mar; some from burrows underground, others in flight; two birds ringed on Lundy in previous years (2009 & 2014) were retrapped (Dean Jones, Tim Jones, Tony Taylor). Unfavourable weather conditions and moon phases in Sep restricted the number of chicks ringed to 119 (plus two recently fledged birds), but 242 adults were newly ringed and there were 157 recaptures of birds ringed in previous years. Among these were 16 birds originally ringed as chicks, the oldest being from 2005. Even older was a bird ringed as an adult in 2004 – see *Ringling Report* (page 66) for details. All the retrap data contributes to understanding of the breeding population’s age structure, productivity and recruitment. Since shearwaters usually spend at least two years prospecting for a nest site and pairing up before they lay, it was a delightful surprise to find a female incubating an egg in May 2017, in one of the nestboxes installed in Mar 2016. This enabled her, and later her partner, to be ringed as confirmed breeding adults. They reared a chick that was a healthy 100g heavier than its parents when it was ringed in mid-Aug.

Report on 2017 burrow census – contributed by Helen Booker, RSPB

A team of RSPB and Natural England staff and volunteers hoped to report another sizeable increase in the Manx Shearwater population, repeating the surveys undertaken previously in 2001, 2008 and 2013. The results were mixed; although the anticipated increase was not evident, numbers were similar to 2013 and birds were found in new areas. Surveying involves playing an audio soundtrack of shearwater calls at all potential nesting burrows and recording the number of holes from which an incubating bird responds. In 2017 a greater proportion of the team used MP3 players of various types for playback, as well as mobile phones and the traditional hand-held cassette players. The survey was timed to coincide with the mid to late incubation period for maximum occupancy of burrows. It was mostly conducted between 27 May and 3 Jun, with the aim of completing any unfinished areas between 6 and 10 Jun. A separate response rate calibration exercise was carried out in parallel with the main survey by checking the same 110 marked burrows every day.

The survey was completed along the south, west and north coasts of the island but little was covered on the east coast due to adverse weather conditions. The response to the various devices was somewhat variable – a particular type of (unbranded) MP3 player, new for this survey, proving to produce a noticeably low response rate. The result was therefore only partial and has left questions over the reliability of the data. The team is returning in 2018 to complete coverage of the unsurveyed parts of the island (including areas where rhododendron has been removed), to re-do some of the areas covered in 2017 and to repeat the calibration exercise. All data will then be reviewed and analysed to produce a new population estimate for the island.

Thanks to all the team who took part in the survey and to the Landmark Trust and island team for supporting it.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Scarce autumn visitor and passage migrant; Devon rarity.

Two off the North End on 11 Oct (James Diamond, Tim Jones) was the only record in an unusually poor year for this species. Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps grisegena*

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity. Five previous records, the last in 1996.

Records of a single bird in the Landing Bay on 13 & 28 Feb, regularly from 15 to 30 Mar, and again from 9 Apr to 2 May (Dean Jones *et al.*) are considered to relate to an overwintering individual that had been present in the same area since December 2016 (see *2016 LFS Annual Report*). The periodic gaps between sightings were due to a combination of low observer coverage (especially Jan to mid-Feb) and spells of rough weather. By mid-Mar the grebe was already showing clear signs of breeding plumage, which had developed quite extensively by the time of its departure in early May. This is only the 6th record for the island, the first since Feb/Mar 1996, and by far the longest-staying individual. Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

Lundy vagrant. Five previous records, the last in 2003.

One in the Landing Bay, in full breeding plumage, on 28 Feb (Dean Jones) was the first for the island since Sep 2003 and only the 6th occurrence since LFS records began. Four have been in autumn and two in spring.

Night-heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

[Black-crowned Night Heron]

Nationally scarce migrant. Three previous records, the last in 1990.

One in flight over the Landing Bay flew through the Devil's Kitchen and disappeared behind Lametor on the morning of 13 Apr (Dean Jones). It was relocated on the south side of Lametor, below South Light and just above the tide line at 19.30 hrs that evening (Dean Jones, Rob Waterfield). It reappeared briefly in the Devil's Kitchen at c.16.00 hrs on 17 Apr before flying off west (Dean Jones). It was seen again in the Landing Bay by island staff member Mike Jones on 21 Apr. This is the first Lundy Night-heron since March 1990 and only the fourth ever for the island. Record accepted by DBRC.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Uncommon visitor; recorded throughout the year but most regular during late summer and early autumn.

One on 26 Mar was the only record for the first five months of the year. Thereafter, seen on 18 dates from 13 Jun (one) to 15 Nov (one), with maxima of two on 7 Jul and 20-21 Sep, and three on 8 Oct. The latter involved two birds watched from the Castle flying low over the sea towards Hartland Point in calm conditions and excellent visibility during the early evening. They were

followed a few minutes later by a third bird flying on a similar trajectory. All were calling loudly as they left the island, but it was unclear whether they had started their flights from Lundy or were simply passing close to the South End, perhaps having crossed from the Welsh mainland (Tim Davis & Tim Jones).

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	–	–	1	2	1	2	3	1	–
–	–	1	–	–	3	3	2	5	4	1	–

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Scarce but increasing passage migrant.

One around rock pools off Lametor on 20 Apr (Dean Jones). Presumably the same bird was flushed from below the Beach Road and flew up Millcombe where it spent time around the pond and then on the lawn of Millcombe House on 22 Apr. Sadly, this individual was later found dead; the corpse was emaciated and it was thought the bird may have died from starvation (Martin Thorne, Dean Jones). One was in the Landing Bay on 23 May and perhaps the same bird was seen again on 30 May. One flew south off the Terrace on 2 Jun (Steve Compton, Roger & Rosy Key). One was in the Devil's Kitchen on 13 & 14 Aug (Dean Jones & Zoë Barton) – see colour plate 3. One flew below Benjamin's Chair on 28 Oct (Andy Jayne). Two flew north along the East Side on 2 Nov (Paul Holt).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*

[Northern Gannet]

Common offshore from spring to autumn; less frequent in winter; formerly bred.

The highest counts of the year occurred in late Jul and early Aug, with 80 on 28 Jul, 145 on 3 Aug, 136 on 6th and 124 on 9th. The spring and autumn peaks were 30 on 1 May and 50 on 11 Oct.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	17	9	20	30	16	80	145	43	50	16	20

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

[European Shag]

Common breeder; uncommon from October to February.

The all-island RSPB-led seabird survey produced a total of 55 apparently occupied nests, a figure that is just under half of the 112 nests counted in 2013 and the lowest total recorded by the periodic census since 2000. The reason for this is unclear and it will be interesting to see if counts from 2018 (even though there will be no complete census) point towards a real decline. Higher counts, all coming at the end of the breeding season, included 66 on 12 Jul, an amazing 305 on a round-the-island trip at high tide on 21 Aug (Dean Jones) – on the face of things, at odds with the apparently lower breeding population – 175 on 23 Aug and 192 on 26 Aug.

Maximum count for each month (from the LFS logbook; excluding the seabird census)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	27	29	19	46	25	66	305	28	16	5	4

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

[Great Cormorant]

Regular spring and autumn migrant, typically in flocks overflying the island; formerly bred; occasional in winter.

The peak count during spring passage was 14 on 28 Mar. Higher counts of autumn migrants included 17 on 23 Aug and 12 on 12 Oct. One on 28 Dec was the only record during the second winter period.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	2	14	6	4	4	3	17	9	12	–	1
–	2	8	1	5	2	3	3	14	6	–	1

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

[Western Osprey]

Rare passage migrant and Devon rarity.

There were three spring records of single birds. One flew past the Castle, over the mouth of Millcombe and along the East Side, mobbed by gulls and corvids, on 27 Mar (Tim Davis, Tim Jones, Tony Taylor). One off the Terrace on 2 Apr flew quickly north (Solomon Gilbert). One was mobbed by Great Black-backed Gulls as it flew east over Shutter Rocks on 28 Apr (Martin Thorne). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

[Eurasian Sparrowhawk]

Common spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; has bred at least once.

During the spring there were single birds on eight dates from 20 Mar to 1 May. As usual, more frequent and more numerous in autumn, being recorded on 35 dates between 16 Sep and 9 Dec, with a maximum of three on 19 Oct. Two were present on three dates in Oct; all other records were of single birds.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	1	3	1	1
–	–	2	5	1	–	–	–	4	21	9	1

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

[Western Marsh Harrier]

Rare passage migrant, mainly in spring; Devon rarity.

A juvenile ranged widely over the island during the period 22 Jul to 31 Aug (Philip & Helen Lymbery, Zoë Barton & Dean Jones *et al.*). Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus**Uncommon spring and autumn migrant and rare winter visitor.*

A ringtail, thought likely to be a first-year bird, soaring off the East Side on 8 Oct (James Diamond) was the only record for the year. The bird was seen gaining height before gliding high across the island to the north-west.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

[Common Buzzard]

Uncommon visitor; formerly a breeding resident.

At least one, probably two, over the southern half of the island on 29 Apr. One was seen heading high towards Hartland Point and not turning back, around lunchtime that day, so further sightings during the afternoon, and again during 1-4 & 7 May (ranging widely along the East Side from Gannets' Combe to South Light) appeared to confirm the presence of a second bird (Tim Davis & Tim Jones *et al.*). One on 22 Aug flew north over Pondsburry and up the West Side beyond Jenny's Cove (Rebecca & Richard Taylor).

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus**Common passage migrant in small numbers; occasional winter visitor; bred annually 2007 to 2013 and in 2015; no proof of breeding in 2014 or 2016.*

The first record of the year was of one on 6 Mar. Two were 'singing' from St Helen's Field, after

dark, at 20.15 hrs on 24 Mar (Tim Davis, Tim Jones, Tony Taylor), and one was 'singing' near Quarters Pond at 03.00 hrs on 23 May (Dean Jones) and on the night of 25/26 May (Tony Taylor), but with no subsequent proof of successful breeding. There were no records at all between 13 Jul and the first bird of autumn on 8 Sep, but from then until the end of the year there were occurrences on 58 days, with a maximum count of nine on 15 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	4	2	2	3	1	–	2	7	9	3
–	–	6	1	22	22	1	–	10	23	13	12

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

[Eurasian Oystercatcher]

Common breeder and passage migrant; recorded throughout the year but scarcer in late autumn and winter.

The highest counts of the year were 27 on 19 Mar and 30 on 27 Mar; 31 on 3 May; 26 on 16 Jun (including a flock of 18 at Brazen Ward); and 28 on 18 Aug. Successful breeding confirmed: a bird was sitting on a nest at Slipper Rock on 21 May; a pair of adults were seen feeding limpets to a chick on the Landing Beach on 20 Jun; and a chick was on Miller's Cake on 7 Aug (Mike Jones & Emily Trapnell).

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
8	6	30	14	31	26	16	28	12	18	20	5

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

[Northern Lapwing]

Uncommon passage migrant. Formerly a common breeder, spring and autumn migrant and occasional winter visitor, but major decline in recent decades.

The only records were single birds on 25 Mar, 15 Sep, 27 & 30 Oct and 30 Nov-5 Dec, plus two on 28 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	1	1
–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	3	1	5

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

[European Golden Plover]

Regular spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; irregular winter visitor.

In spring there were singles on 27 Mar and 4, 21 & 22 May. One on 23 Jun was presumably an early returning failed or non-breeder, but there were no further records until the autumn proper, with records on 13 dates from 17 Sep (two) to 15 Nov (one), including a maximum of 10 on 12 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	2	10	1	–
–	–	1	–	3	1	–	–	2	9	2	–

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

[Common Ringed Plover]

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; occasional winter records.

The only spring records were in May: two on 5th, one on 6th and four on 10th. Return migration was similarly sparse, with singles on 3 & 4 Aug followed by two on 16th.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*

[Eurasian Dotterel]

Uncommon but virtually annual spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; Devon rarity.

Two records: a juvenile on the Airfield on 24 Aug (Rosie Hall, Dean Jones, Richard & Rebecca Taylor *et al.*); and two juveniles photographed at the North End on 27 Aug (David White & Alice Hasted) – see colour plate 4. Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus**Increasingly uncommon spring and autumn migrant in small numbers.*

During spring passage there were records on 19 dates from 22 Apr (one) to 24 May (one), with maxima of eight on 1 May, 20 on 4th (including a flock of nine at North Light and others scattered along the West Side) and five on 13th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

[Eurasian Curlew]

Increasingly uncommon spring and autumn migrant in very small numbers; occasional winter visitor (most recently in 2010); formerly bred.

There were records on just eight dates, all involving ones and twos: two on 24-26 Feb; one on 29 Apr; one on 25 Jul; two on 22 Aug; one on 1 Sep; and one on 30 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	2	–	1	–	–	1	2	1	1	–	–
–	3	–	1	–	–	1	1	1	1	–	–

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica**Rare passage migrant; has occurred in winter.*

One in South West Field on 1 May (Neil Trout) was seen again at Pondsburry on 2 May (Martin Thorne) and 5 May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones).

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa**Rare passage migrant; one winter record.*

One was in Brick Field at approximately 19.00 hrs on 4 Jun (D. Mantijay).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

[Ruddy Turnstone]

Increasingly uncommon spring and autumn migrant and rare winter visitor.

Just two records: one in the Landing Bay on 18 May and one feeding near the jetty, on rocks below the beach building, on 29 Jul (both Dean Jones).

Ruff *Calidris pugnax**Rare passage migrant; has occurred in late winter.*

One was in Lighthouse Field near Stoneycroft on 26 Oct (Gavin Bennett, Dean Jones).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina**Regular spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; apparent decline in recent years; very rare in winter.*

Spring migrants were recorded on 10 dates from 26 Apr (one) to 8 May (three), with a maximum of 10 on 6 May. In autumn there were records on just three dates from 25 Oct (one) to 1 Nov (one), with a maximum of just two on 27 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	1	10	–	–	–	–	2	1	–
–	–	–	2	8	–	–	–	–	2	1	–

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Rare passage migrant; occasional winter visitor.

Two birds were circling MS Oldenburg as she approached the Landing Bay on 25 Oct (Gavin Bennett, Rob Duncan, Justin Zantboer *et al.*).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Calidris subruficollis*

Nationally scarce migrant. Fourteen previous records, most recently in September 2011.

A juvenile was on the Airfield on 11 & 12 Sep (Tim Frayling, Dean Jones, Mark Worden *et al.* – see colour plate 4). The 15th LFS record and the first since a juvenile at North End, 2-4 Sep 2011. Record accepted by DBRC.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

[Eurasian Woodcock]

Regular passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers, mainly October to March.

Recorded on a total of 14 days, Jan-Mar and Oct-Dec. During the first winter period, one on 25 Jan was followed by two on 2 Feb, two on 24 Feb, five on 25 Feb and two on 26 Feb. The only record later in the spring was of a single bird on 20 Mar. The first autumn migrant was one on 26 Oct, followed by two on 28th. In Nov there were singles on 1st, 7th & 10th, three on 14th and two on 15th. The last of the year was one on 2 Dec.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	5	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	3	1
1	4	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	5	1

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Uncommon migrant and winter visitor, mainly late September to March.

Records on three dates involved two individuals: one flushed from near the main track Heinkel wreck on 8 Oct (James Diamond); and one flushed at Kistvaen Pond on 30 Nov (Dean Jones) was seen in the same area the following day, 1 Dec (Alfredo Sánchez-Tójar).

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

[Common Snipe]

Common passage migrant and winter visitor.

The spring maximum was six on 1 & 28 Mar. The last of the spring was a single bird on 6 May. The first autumn migrant was one on 19 Aug, whilst the highest autumn count was eight on 12 Oct. Eight was also the peak of the second winter period, on 28 Dec.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	1	6	2	1	–	–	1	1	8	3	8
–	2	11	4	1	–	–	1	3	15	7	5

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity.

A juvenile photographed on Pondsburry on 23 Sep (Andy Hauser & Jean Shotter); only the third record for the island, following single birds in Nov 1955 and Oct 1960. Record accepted by DBRC.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Scarce but regular spring and autumn migrant; very rare in winter.

The only spring records were one at the bottom of Montagu Steps on 4 May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones) and two, location unspecified, on 5 May (Martin Thorne). During autumn passage there were singles on 13 & 25 Aug in the vicinity of Rat Island and the Landing Bay, and on 18 Sep heard from Quarry Beach (all Dean Jones).

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Rare spring migrant; uncommon autumn migrant.

The only spring records were for late Apr. Two circled lower Millcombe at c.11.30 hrs on 20th but didn't land (Chris Dee). Later the same day one was reported from the pond outside Barton Cottages and two were flushed from Rocket Pole Pond in the afternoon (Dean Jones). One flushed from Pondsby at c.15.00 hrs on 21st flew off north (Chris & Mandy Dee). One was at the Devil's Kitchen at 10.30 hrs on 22nd (Mandy Dee). The sole autumn passage record was of one flushed from Brick Field Pond on 16 Aug. It circled west, calling, before returning to the pond (Rebecca & Richard Taylor).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

[Black-legged Kittiwake]

Common but declining breeding species; uncommon from September to January.

The all-island RSPB-led seabird survey produced a total of 238 apparently occupied nests, a figure 87% higher than the 127 nests counted in 2013 and the highest total from comparable surveys since 327 nests were counted in 1996 and 237 in 2000. However, this apparently encouraging result was not reflected in breeding success. Studies undertaken by the island wardening team showed that productivity at the Threequarter Wall Buttress colony equalled the lowest recorded since the current methodology was initiated in 2007: seven chicks fledged from 57 apparently occupied nests within the study area at the start of the season. The Jenny's Cove colony fared much less badly: 47 chicks fledged from 47 apparently occupied nests within the study area at the start of the season. It is hoped to monitor the Threequarter Wall Buttress site using a camera in 2018 to try to understand better the reasons for this colony doing so poorly, though it is thought that south-westerly storms in early Jun washed out the lower nests at least. The colour-ringed adult observed in the Aztec Bay colony in 2015 (left leg: orange over white; right leg: green over red or reddish orange) was again present there on 4 May (Chris Baillie).

Outside the breeding season the highest counts included 400+ on 23 Feb; 460 on 18 Sep; 500+ on 16 Nov; 400 on 23 Nov; between 400 and 450 on 4, 8 & 23 Dec; and 500+ on 28 & 29 Dec.

Maximum count for each month (from the LFS logbook; excluding the seabird census)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	400	267	40	341	40	236	317	460	40	500	500

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Uncommon visitor throughout the year, mainly July to September; occasional severe-weather influxes.

Recorded on 10 dates. Late-winter/spring birds occurred on 28 Mar, an adult in breeding plumage in the Landing Bay (Kevin Welsh) and 30 Apr, four first-summer birds in the Landing Bay (Tim Jones). In 'autumn', there were singles on 9 & 25 Jul, a juvenile at Gannets' Bay and a first-summer bird in the Landing Bay (both Dean Jones); three first-winter birds around Rat Island on 13 Aug (Dean Jones); an adult on Seal Rock on 23 Aug (Dean Jones); a first-winter bird off the Ugly on 21 Oct (Dean Jones); an adult over Millcombe on 26 Oct (Andy Jayne & Justin Zantboer); two feeding offshore on 27 Oct (Andy Jayne & Justin Zantboer); and two adults off the East Side on 4 Dec (Dean Jones).

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaeetus melanocephalus*

Lundy vagrant, though records have increased substantially during the last three years.

An adult and a first-winter bird roosting on the water within a mixed gull flock approximately a mile off Rat Island on 2 Nov, were seen from the island RIB during seal surveys (Dean Jones).

Three adults were close in to the Landing Bay on 3 Dec (Dean Jones); four adults were part of a mixed gull 'feeding frenzy' off the East Side on 4 Dec (Dean Jones); and an adult was off Rat Island on 9 Dec (Dean Jones).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

[Mew Gull]

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor; mainly September to April.

Five were seen close to the island from MS *Oldenburg* at the start of the crossing to Ilfracombe on 28 Mar (Tim Davis & Tim Jones). In 'autumn' there were singles on 12 Jul (an adult on rocks south of Mouse Island – Dean Jones), 10, 21 & 22 Oct and 4, 9 & 16 Dec.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Breeds; present in all months, but generally fewer in winter.

The highest count of the year was of 114 birds and 34 apparently occupied nests during a land-based circumnavigation of the island perimeter on 3 May (Tim Davis). Successful breeding confirmed. A breeding census of large gulls is due in 2018.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	12	40	9	114	11	44	38	25	10	10	80

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

[European Herring Gull]

Common but declining breeding species; present all year but fewer in winter.

The highest count of the year was of 525 during a land-based circumnavigation of the island perimeter on 3 May (Tim Davis). Successful breeding confirmed. A breeding census of large gulls is due in 2018.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
20	59	300	71	525	47	295	120	40	196	178	200

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Common but declining breeding species; passage migrant; uncommon in winter.

The highest count of the year was of 299 during a land-based circumnavigation of the island perimeter on 3 May (Tim Davis). Successful breeding confirmed. A breeding census of large gulls is due in 2018. One showing characteristics of the Scandinavian breeding race *L. f. intermedius* was at Pondsby on 27 Mar (Tim Davis & Tim Jones) – record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder. A bird colour-ringed as a nestling on Lundy in Jun 1995 was seen at Courant de Mimizam, Landes, south-west France in late Jan 2016 – see *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details. This is the fourth consecutive year that (presumably) the same returning individual, approaching 21 years of age at the time of the most recent observation, has been reported at this site. So far there have been no sightings at Mimizan between early Nov and late Jan, suggesting that the bird could be staging there en route to/from wintering grounds further south.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
60	15	77	40	299	91	123	20	6	23	37	30

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Uncommon passage migrant, late March to early October.

One in flight over the Landing Bay for about 10 minutes on 15 Apr (Dean Jones) was the only confirmed record of the year.

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

Rare spring migrant and uncommon autumn migrant; has occurred in winter.

There were singles on 5 & 6 Aug (from Puffin Slope and North End, respectively – Dean Jones) and 22 Aug (off the East Side – Martin Thorne). In Oct, there were one to three birds on six dates, 11th to 25th, with a maximum of three on 11th (off the East Side – Tim Jones). These were followed by singles on 14 Nov (one south off the East Side – Tony Taylor), 27 Nov (chasing Kittiwakes in the Landing Bay – Dean Jones) and 24 Dec (one flying north off the Landing Bay – Dean Jones).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

[Pomarine Jaeger]

Lundy vagrant.

Two records: one off North End on 9 Jun (Bart Donato) and one off the Castle on 11 Oct (Chris Baillie). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

[Parasitic Jaeger]

Uncommon passage migrant, mainly in autumn.

Confirmed records involved: one off the East Side on 22 Aug (Martin Thorne); a pale-morph bird off North End and two off the East Side on 18 Sep (Dean Jones); and three pale-morph birds off the East Side the following day (Jan Swan & Andy Turner).

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

[Common Guillemot, Common Murre]

Common and increasing breeder, though still in smaller numbers than formerly; uncommon from August to October, then sporadic visitor to breeding ledges during late autumn and winter.

The all-island RSPB-led seabird survey produced a total of 6,198 birds, representing a 51% increase over the number recorded in 2013, and by far the highest total since the regular seabird census commenced in 1981. Successful breeding confirmed: chicks (estimated to be 2-5 days old) were first seen on 4 Jun at St Mark's Stone. Productivity was very good within that colony, being the highest recorded for any of the years when comparable surveys were conducted (2007 & 2013-2017), with an average of 0.72 chicks fledged from 147 breeding pairs (Dean Jones).

Maximum logbook count for each month (from the LFS logbook; excluding the seabird census)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	365	1,212	322	2,213	400	100	2	37	12	18	7

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Common and increasing breeder, though still in smaller numbers than formerly; uncommon between August and February.

The all-island RSPB-led seabird survey produced a total of 1,735 birds, representing a 31% increase over the number recorded in 2013, and the highest total since the regular seabird census commenced in 1981. Successful breeding confirmed: many chicks were being fed within the large burrows and boulder scree beneath the Jenny's Cove Puffin colony by mid-Jun (Dean Jones).

Maximum logbook count for each month (from the LFS logbook; excluding the seabird census)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	500	237	462	100	50	4	1	60	–	76

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

[Atlantic Puffin]

Uncommon but gradually increasing breeding species; formerly bred in large numbers; very rare between mid-Aug and mid-Mar.

The first of the year were seven rafting in Jenny's Cove on 16 Mar (Anne Coombs, John King), but there were no further records until the last week of the month: 41 on 25th, 58 on 26th, 99 on 27th and 97 (20 on the water and 77 on land) on 29th. Peak counts during the remainder of the breeding season included 107 on 20 Apr, 100 on 12 & 27 May, 253 on 16 Jun and (remarkably) the same total on 1 Jul. There were still 200 to be seen as late as 20 Jul, falling a few days later to 45 on 24th. The RSPB-led breeding census found 375 birds, representing a 369% increase over the total recorded using the same methodology in 2013. Successful breeding was confirmed, with frequent fish provisioning first noted on 9 Jun at burrows in Jenny's Cove. Overall productivity fared well with an estimated 80 chicks fledged from 130 burrows, equivalent to 0.62 chicks per nesting pairs (Dean Jones). The last was a single bird on 6 Aug.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	99	107	100	253	253	1	–	–	–	–

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia*

Common visitor in small numbers, mainly between spring and autumn.

The first of the year was a single bird on 12 Apr and the last on 8 Sep. This period coincides almost exactly with the pigeon racing season, indicating that most, if not all, Feral Pigeons stopping on or passing through Lundy are from racing stock.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	1	8	20	3	4	3	–	–	–
–	–	–	3	14	16	6	3	2	–	–	–

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Uncommon but regular spring and autumn migrant.

Four records: one on 1 May, two on 20 May, one on 26 May (below Long Roost – a very unusual location for this species) and one on 2 Nov.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

[Common Wood Pigeon]

Probably breeds in most years; spring and autumn migrant in small numbers; sporadic in winter.

Two on 10 Feb and again on 7 Mar. Seen regularly from mid-Mar onwards, with a spring maximum of nine on 25 Mar and eight on four other dates during the month. Successful breeding confirmed: a pair were mating in Millcombe on 29 Apr (Tim Jones) and a recently fledged juv was seen near Millcombe House on 5 Jul (Mike Archer). The last of the year were singles on 1 & 3 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	2	9	8	5	4	5	7	6	7	1	–
–	1	15	20	18	12	15	20	19	7	2	–

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

[European Turtle Dove]

Increasingly scarce migrant, still fairly regular in very small numbers in spring but rare in autumn.

Two records: one seen briefly in Millcombe and St John's Valley on 24 Aug (Rosie Hall, Rebecca & Richard Taylor, Tony Taylor) and a first-winter bird photographed by the main track on the unusually late date of 8 Oct (Julian Arkell).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

[Eurasian Collared Dove]

Regular migrant, usually in small numbers, especially in spring; summer resident in some years; has bred; has overwintered.

Recorded on 31 dates between 18 Apr (one) and 24 Aug (one), with a maximum of six on 22 & 26 May, including, on 22nd, five at Long Roost and one at Gannets' Combe.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	1	6	4	1	3	–	–	–	–
–	–	–	5	12	6	1	7	–	–	–	–

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

[Common Cuckoo]

Uncommon and declining spring and autumn migrant; probably bred regularly in the past; breeding confirmed just twice since 1999 (in 2007 and 2012).

Singles on 28-30 Apr, two on 5 May, one on 29 May and singles on 23 & 24 Jul were the only records in what appears to have been a very poor year for this species.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant and rare winter visitor.

One on 1 May was the only spring record. In autumn there were singles on 8, 25 & 31 Oct.

Swift *Apus apus*

[Common Swift]

Common spring and autumn migrant and non-breeding summer visitor.

Recorded on 37 dates between 1 May (four) and 11 Sep (one). Numbers only reached double digits twice in May, with 14 on 4th and a spike of 145 on 5th, when many birds were seen flying in off the sea along the West Side during a period of strong easterly winds, which appeared to have displaced arriving migrants further west than intended (Tim Davis & Tim Jones). Higher counts during the summer included 20 on 18 Jun and 10 on 6 Jul, while Aug brought sightings of one to three on just four dates towards the end of the month.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	–	145	20	10	3	1	–	–	–
–	–	–	–	16	10	7	4	1	–	–	–

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

UK vagrant.

2016 record

The record of one over Millcombe on 25 October 2016 (Carol & Chris Baillie, Gavin Bennett, Rob Duncan, James McCarthy, Simon Slade, Ellie & Justin Zantboer) has been accepted by BBRC. This is the first record for Lundy and the first accepted record for Devon (see page 70).

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

[Eurasian Hoopoe]

Nationally scarce migrant.

One was in Gannets' Combe on 3 May (Tim Davis); record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder. There have been sightings of this flamboyant but often elusive species in four of the last five years, all in spring, between late Mar and mid-May.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

[Common Kestrel]

Common visitor in small numbers, mainly in spring and autumn; has bred (most recently in 2005).

Following scattered sightings of single birds from mid-Jan to mid-Mar, a male and female were seen regularly from late Mar until the third week of May, with occasional reports of a third bird. A

female was watched migrating north from North Light, until lost to view, on 2 May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones). Jun brought just three records of a single bird and there were no reports in Jul until the last week of the month. This pattern of sightings suggests that a pair may have held territory during the spring, but that breeding was either not attempted or unsuccessful. Numbers in autumn were unusually low, perhaps indicative of a poor breeding season generally for Kestrels.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	3	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	–	–
1	1	9	15	16	3	4	5	6	7	–	–

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor in small numbers; very rare in summer.

In late winter and spring there were records on 17 dates from 18 Feb to 9 May. All involved single birds with the exception of two on 25 & 28 Mar. During autumn migration there were singles on 8 & 20 Sep, followed by sightings on 30 dates in Oct/Nov and a further eight dates in Dec. The majority of these also concerned single birds, but there were two on 9 & 25 Oct and 13-15 Nov, and three on 8 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	1	2	1	1	–	–	–	1	3	2	1
–	1	8	2	6	–	–	–	2	18	11	8

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

[Eurasian Hobby]

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant.

A single bird was seen daily 20-22 May (Seb Loram & Ryan Burrell *et al.*). In autumn there were singles on 26 Sep (over Brambles – Chris Dee & Andy Turner) and 5 Oct (a juvenile near Tibbetts – Zoë Barton *et al.*).

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

[Peregrine Falcon]

Breeds; recorded in all months in recent years.

There were six occupied territories. Three pairs reared a total of five young to fledging, whilst a fourth nest failed at the chick stage. Data provided by Luke Sutton from his ongoing study of Lundy Peregrines (see @LundyPeregrine on Twitter).

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*

[Western Jackdaw]

Rare spring migrant; very rare autumn migrant and winter visitor.

In late Mar there were two on 24th & 25th, three on 26th and four on 27th (Tim Davis & Tim Jones *et al.*) – all four birds were seen flying north above the Terrace on the latter date, apparently leaving the island. Later in the spring there was one on 29 & 30 Apr, followed by two in Lighthouse Field on 1 May (Neil Trout).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

Rare spring migrant; very rare autumn migrant and winter visitor.

One on 29 & 30 May (Chris Townend) and, what was considered to be the same long-staying individual, on a further 19 dates up to and including 26 Aug (Dean Jones, Richard & Rebecca Taylor, Tony Taylor *et al.*). Most sightings were from the vicinity of Tillage Field and the pig-sty.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Breeds; present throughout the year.

The pre-breeding maximum was 49 on 22 Mar, whilst the autumn peak was 48 on 9 Oct, suggesting

indifferent to poor breeding productivity. Pairs nested at traditional sites in the south-east of the island, including Millcombe and Quarter Wall Copse, but also elsewhere on the sidelands and fledged young were seen in the late spring.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
40	28	49	32	44	31	31	36	45	48	37	42

Raven *Corvus corax*

[Northern Raven]

Breeds; present throughout the year.

The highest pre-breeding count was eight on 26 Feb. Successful breeding confirmed: an adult was commuting back and forth carrying food to Halfway Wall Bay on 21 & 22 Mar and two fledged young were being fed by adults between the north end of the Terrace and Halfway Wall on 3 May; a pair of adults were feeding four quite lively but still largely pink young in a nest between Benjamin's Chair and the Devil's Limekiln on 23 Mar, and four fledged young were seen on the sidelands above this nest site on 2 May (Tim Jones). Following fledging of young, there were peaks of 12 on 3, 21 & 25 May. Twelve were reported again on 23 Aug, 25 Oct & 5 Dec, then 13 on 6 Dec, but the highest count of the year by some way was of 20 on 16 Sep when "a mobile gang of presumed adolescents flew over the village area in at least two separate groups calling very loudly" (Dean Jones).

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	8	7	6	12	8	8	12	20	12	8	13

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Uncommon autumn migrant and very rare spring migrant; occasional in winter.

Sightings, probably involving just one long-staying individual, were made on 14 dates from 29 Oct (Millcombe and also feeding with Chiffchaffs and Goldcrests along a wall above Benjamin's Chair – Andy Jayne & Dean Jones) to 30 Dec (in Quarter Wall Copse – Dean Jones & Zoë Barton). Most reports were from Millcombe, with one additional sighting in Quarter Wall Copse on 14 Nov. This bird overwintered, being seen again in late Jan and early Feb 2018.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

[Eurasian Skylark]

Common breeder; common spring and autumn migrant; sporadic in winter with influxes during exceptionally cold weather.

After two on 25 Jan and six on 4 Feb, the first singing bird was reported on 7 Feb (Dean Jones). Counts rose to 13 on 18 Feb and 20 on 26th, 46 on 22 Mar and 51 on 3 May. Over 30 territorial (singing) birds were counted on 1 & 2 May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones), but there was no systematic census and no reports of confirmed breeding were received. In Oct, 50 on 8th and 46 on 17th were the only counts higher than 20. In Nov, 46 on 2nd was the only double-digit count, and nine on 16th the only other count of more than five. At the very end of the year, there were singles on 23 & 24 Dec, three on 28th and two on 30th.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	20	46	15	51	20	18	11	12	50	46	3

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasional in summer.

Spring passage was recorded between 16 Mar (one) and 1 Jun (two), with higher counts (all those ≥40) including 110 on 26 Mar, 75 on 27 Mar, 42 on 17 Apr, 50 on 23 Apr, 40 on 2 May, and

100+ on 7 May. A trickle of returning migrants was noted from 12 Jul, with one to three on 15 further dates until the end of Aug when more definite passage included 20 on 23rd and 26th. The only really significant count of the autumn, however, was 250 on 16 Sep – part of a substantial movement of hirundines on that day. The last of the year was a single bird on 8 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	110	50	100	2	3	20	250	1	–	–
–	–	8	16	11	1	9	13	9	1	–	–

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

[Barn Swallow]

Common and at times abundant spring and autumn migrant; a few pairs breed in most years.

Spring passage was recorded between 13 Mar (one) and mid-Jun (10 on 15th was the last occasion when counts exceeded the handful of individuals breeding on the island). There were only three counts of 500 or more in a day: 500 on 29 Apr, 568 on 5 May and 1,000+ on 7 May. Successful breeding confirmed: pairs bred at the Timekeeper's Hut (= Felix Gade memorial) where a nest with three or four young was found on 1 Aug (Peter Williams), and at Tillage/Brick Field pig-sty, where a recently fledged juvenile was seen on 4 & 5 Jul (Mike Archer; see colour plate 5), and a nest built unusually low to the ground contained a second brood of at least three chicks on 6 Aug (Dean Jones).

Autumn passage was noticeable from the last week of Aug, with 200 on 26th and 171 on 27th. As usual, movements peaked between mid-Sep and early Oct, with counts ≥ 500 including 1,200 on 16 Sep, 2,000 on 18 Sep, 1,500 on 25 Sep, 800+ on 6 Oct and 500 on 8 Oct. The last of the year was one on 30 Oct. See *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details of a Swallow ringed on Lundy in Sep and controlled two days later in the Channel Islands.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	26	500	1,000	16	11	200	2,000	800	–	–
–	–	8	22	22	18	21	25	26	27	–	–

House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

[Common House Martin]

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasional during summer and has bred.

Spring passage was noted between 15 Mar (one) and 25 Jun (four), with counts ≥ 50 on 23 Apr (50), 5 May (128) and 7 May (400+). On 26 May, Tony Taylor noted: "*House Martins prospecting possible nest sites on the east side of Old House; birds were landing in crevices but no obvious signs of building yet.*" After lone birds on 4 Jul and 18 Aug, the first real sign of autumn migration was 10 on 25 Aug. Numbers were generally low in Sep, with the only counts ≥ 50 being 150 on 16th and 100 on 25th. It was not until the first week of Oct that numbers peaked at a notable 700+ on 6th, with 70 on 9th. The last of the year was a single bird on 29 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	3	50	400	6	1	10	150	700	–	–
–	–	4	13	20	12	1	2	10	15	–	–

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*

Nationally scarce migrant.

One was over Quarry Beach and later over Millcombe (Charles Crundwell, Chris Townend) on 27 May and over the Village on 28 May (Richard Taylor). What was presumed to be the same bird was seen near South Light on 2 Jun (Richard & Rebecca Taylor, Tony Taylor), then feeding

below the Castle at 11.10 hrs and at Quarter Wall Copse at 13.10 hrs on 3 Jun (Dean Jones, Chris Townend). These sightings constitute the 10th record for Lundy (the last in May 2012) and the sixth in spring. Record accepted by DBRC.

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*

Rare autumn migrant and very rare spring migrant; has overwintered once.

Six were trapped and ringed in Millcombe on 27 Oct (Rob Duncan, Justin Zantboer *et al.*).

A ring found in a Peregrine pellet in Jul came from a Long-tailed Tit that had been ringed in Apr 2016 – see *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Very common spring and autumn migrant with occasional mass arrivals; breeds sporadically.

After an early individual on 16 Mar, the end of the month saw the start of migration proper, with 20 on 27th and 15 on 28th. As normal, movements peaked in Apr, but numbers were unusually low, with 150 on 20th and 100 on 24th the only three-digit counts. However, passage extended well into May, including a relatively high count of 40 on 5th. Although one to four birds were recorded on several dates during the second half of May, including a singing male on the Terrace during the last week of the month, there were no records at all in Jun, indicating that breeding did not take place in 2017. A trickle of return passage was noted from 17 Jul and during the first three weeks of Aug, with the highest count in this period 13 on 12 Aug. Numbers picked up at the end of Aug, with 41 on 23rd, 40 on 26th and 23 on 27th, but were notably low in Sep, with 15 on 14th the only double-digit count. Following an unusually high count for Oct of five on 10th, the last of the year was one on 26 Oct. A bird showing characteristics associated with the northern race *P. t. acredula* was in lower Millcombe on 31 Oct (Paul Holt).

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	20	150	40	–	7	41	15	5	–	–
–	–	1	20	16	–	6	22	13	3	–	–

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

[Common Chiffchaff]

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasional in midsummer and winter; breeds sporadically.

The first spring migrants were three on 14 Mar, followed by 21 on 16th, then (higher counts only) 60 on 23rd and 30 on 28th. As for Willow Warbler, numbers in Apr were unusually low, with 40 on 20th and 30 on 24th the only counts >20. A bird controlled on Lundy on 27 Apr had been ringed near Land’s End five days previously – see *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details. Singing males were holding territory in Millcombe (two), St Helen’s Copse and Quarter Wall Copse in late May and early Jun, but there was no other evidence of breeding. There was no real sign of autumn passage until mid-Sep, when there were 11 on 13th, 60 on 14th and 20 on 15th, followed by 30 on 25th, with intervening lower counts that continued almost throughout Oct; 20 on 18th and 26th being the unusually modest maxima for that month. A trickle of movement continued until mid-Nov, after which single birds were recorded on seven scattered dates, the last of these on 11 Dec. Singles showing characteristics of ‘Siberian’ Chiffchaff *P. c. tristis* were trapped and ringed in Millcombe on 2 May and 26 & 27 Oct. Another was seen in lower Millcombe on 31 Oct. These four records of Siberian Chiffchaff have been submitted for review by DBRC, though Devon Birds policy is to ascribe individuals definitively to subspecies level only when this is supported by evidence from DNA analysis.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	60	40	10	5	6	4	60	20	11	1
–	–	14	18	28	16	14	13	24	25	15	2

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix**Uncommon spring and autumn migrant, occurring with declining frequency.*

Singles on 13 & 30 Apr and 8 May were the only records for the year.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus**Nationally scarce migrant.*

There were records on 10 dates, from 16 Sep to 2 Nov, involving at least 10 individuals: one calling from St Helen's Copse on 16 Sep (Nik Ward); one in Millcombe on 25 Sep (Chris Dee); one in Smelly Gully, lower Millcombe on 7 & 8 Oct (Tim Davis, Dean Jones); a different bird along the Upper East Side Path above St Helen's Copse on 8 Oct (Tim Davis, Tim Jones); one at Quarry Pond on 12 Oct (Chris Baillie, Julian Bowden *et al.*); one near the stonecrusher on 18 Oct (Chris & Carol Baillie); three trapped and ringed on 26 Oct (Rob Duncan, Justin Zantboer *et al.*); an unringed bird near the stonecrusher on 30 Oct (Andy Jayne); one in the same area on 1 Nov (Paul Holt); and one feeding near Brambles on 2 Nov (Mike Beck). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus**Common spring and autumn migrant, generally more numerous in spring. Breeds sporadically.*

Spring migration was noted on 27 days from 17 Apr (one) to 21 May (two), with peak counts of 17 on 20 Apr, 15 on 23 & 24 Apr and eight on 1 May. There was no evidence of breeding. The first returning migrants were single birds on 17 & 24 Jul, after which passage was recorded on just seven further dates from 16 Aug until the last of the year on the comparatively early date of 7 Sep. All of these dates involved single birds, with the exception of two on 26 Aug. See *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details of movements within Britain of two Sedge Warblers handled on Lundy in late Apr and early May. In addition, a first-year bird ringed at Donges, Loire-Atlantique, north-west France, in Aug 2015 was controlled on Lundy in Apr 2017 (see *Ringing Report* for full details). This is the third Sedge Warbler to be ringed at the same French reedbed site in late summer and controlled on Lundy during a subsequent spring migration. Altogether, there have been six Lundy Sedge Warbler movements to or from the Loire-Atlantique, reflecting not only the importance of wetlands in this region for fattening-up prior to trans-Mediterranean and trans-Saharan flights in autumn, but also the intensive ringing effort there. Since 2002, thousands of Sedge Warblers have been ringed annually in Donges; over 10,000 individuals were handled in 2011 alone! These have generated numerous controls in other countries, the great majority in the UK.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	17	8	–	1	2	1	–	–	–
–	–	–	14	13	–	2	6	1	–	–	–

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

[Eurasian Reed Warbler]

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant.

During spring passage, recorded daily 20-25 Apr, with single birds on most of these days, but two on 22nd. Further singles were noted on 28 & 29 May and 3 Jun. Returning migrants were recorded on seven dates between 2 Aug and 18 Sep. All were single birds with the exception of two on 2 Aug. A bird controlled on Lundy on 20 Apr had been ringed on the Isles of Scilly two days previously – see *Ringing Report* (page 66) for full details.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

[Common Grasshopper Warbler]

Common spring migrant; uncommon autumn migrant.

Spring migrants were recorded on 14 dates from 8 Apr (one) to 4 May (one), with a maximum of

four on 23 & 28 Apr. The only records during autumn passage were of single birds on five dates, 16-31 Aug.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	4	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
–	–	–	11	3	–	–	5	–	–	–	–

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

[Eurasian Blackcap]

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasional in midsummer and winter. Successful breeding confirmed for the first time in 2016, following a breeding attempt of unknown outcome in 2015. There were no records during the first winter period. Spring passage was noted from 27 Mar (2m, 2f) until the end of the first week in May. Numbers were low (one to five birds only) during the first 18 days of Apr, but there was a noticeable influx of 50 on 19th, followed by daily counts of between 30 and 50, up to and including 24th. The final double-digit count of the spring was 17 on 1 May. Although song was heard in Millcombe on 22 & 23 May, the only occurrence in Jun was of one on 3rd and there were no sightings at all in Jul, meaning that there was no repeat of the successful breeding recorded in 2016. A trickle of migrants (one to three birds only) was noted from 8 Aug, but it was the last day of the month before the first noticeable influx of 10 occurred. Movements peaked during the period 9-19 Sep with counts of 50 or more on eight days, including maxima of 300 on 14th and 200 on 15th. Passage continued throughout Oct, but there were no major influxes, with 30 on 7th & 9th and 40 on 26th the highest counts. Small numbers continued to be noted regularly until 16 Nov, after which the last of the year (a single f) was seen on 30 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	4	50	17	1	–	10	300	40	7	–
–	–	3	22	21	1	–	12	24	25	9	–

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Regular spring and autumn migrant, usually in small numbers.

Spring migrants were noted on 11 dates from 29 Apr (one) to 22 May (one), with peak counts of seven on 30 Apr and five on 7 May. In autumn, recorded on nine dates from 22 Aug (one) to 27 Oct (one), with a maximum of four on 10 Sep.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	7	5	–	–	1	4	1	–	–
–	–	–	2	9	–	–	3	2	4	–	–

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

Nationally scarce migrant.

A first-winter bird in Millcombe on 15 Oct (Chris & Carol Baillie, Richard Campey *et al.*) was the first since Oct 2014 – see colour plate 5. Record accepted by DBRC.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Uncommon but annual spring and autumn passage migrant; has bred once (2002).

During spring migration, recorded on seven dates from 24 Apr to 7 May. Single birds on 24 & 27 Apr and two on 30th were followed in May by two on 1st and singles on 2nd, 3rd & 7th. Single birds were recorded on five dates during autumn passage: 23 & 24 Aug, 14 Sep and 8 & 28 Oct.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

[Common Whitethroat]

Common migrant in spring and autumn; breeds occasionally.

Spring migration was noted from 19 Apr (two), with peak counts of nine on 24 Apr and 11 on 7 May. Noticeable passage had thinned out by mid-May, after which there were scattered records of single birds on 12 dates from 20 May (male song-fighting on the Terrace) to 12 Jul, plus two on 27 Jun, but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. The first and only notable influx during autumn migration concerned 10 on 26 Aug. The last of the year was a single bird on 25 Sep.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	9	11	2	1	10	2	–	–	–
–	–	–	9	14	7	3	9	4	–	–	–

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata**Lundy vagrant. Eight previous records, most recently in Oct 2015.*

A male near Brambles on 2 Nov (Paul Holt) was only the 9th record for Lundy, six of which have now been in autumn.

Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans**Nationally scarce migrant.*

One was on the side of the Ugly near the top of the 'Steps of Doom' on 13 May (Dean Jones). Record accepted by BBRC as an unraced individual.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*

[Common Firecrest]

Uncommon spring passage migrant, more regular and more numerous in autumn; has wintered.

In spring there were four scattered records of single birds, on 14 & 22 Mar, 24 Apr and 7 May. In autumn, recorded on 26 dates from 7 Sep (one) to 14 Nov (one), with maxima in Oct of four on 12th, seven on 15th, eight on 26th, 10 on 27th and seven on 28th. All other autumn records involved one to three birds. At the end of the year, a single bird was seen on five scattered dates from 2 to 28 Dec – an overwintering female that was subsequently re-sighted in late Jan 2018.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	1	1	–	–	–	2	10	2	1
–	–	2	1	1	–	–	–	4	17	5	5

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus**Common spring and autumn migrant, most numerous in autumn; has bred; occasional in winter.*

The first of the year was a single bird on 17 Feb, either an early migrant or an overwintering bird that had gone undetected in Jan. Spring passage was noted on 31 dates from 1 Mar (three) to 4 May (one), with peaks during Mar of 13 on 16th, 10 on 22nd and 14 on 23rd. Autumn migrants were recorded on 74 dates from 12 Aug (one) to 16 Nov (four), after which there were scattered records of one to three birds, either late migrants or individuals attempting to overwinter, on a further 13 dates from 19 Nov to the end of the year. Peak counts during autumn migration (all those ≥100) were: 150 on 14 & 19 Sep, 300 on 25 Sep, 150 on 28 Sep, 200 on 12 Oct and 100 on 25 & 26 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	1	14	3	1	–	–	16	300	200	10	3
–	1	16	14	1	–	–	14	25	25	13	10

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

[Eurasian Wren]

Common breeding resident.

The highest count of the year was 40 on 3 May. Territory-holding birds in early May, away from the main strongholds in the south-east of the island and along the East Sidelands, included those at Quarter Wall Pond, the Devil's Limekiln, the Earthquake, near Dead Cow Point, the bottom of Punchbowl Valley at Jenny's Cove, the western end of Halfway Wall, near Knight Templar Rock, Gannets' Combe and North Light. Successful breeding confirmed: a fledgling was seen near the stonecrusher on 20 May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones). The autumn maximum of 37 on 9 Oct was unusually low in comparison with recent years; poor summer weather may have reduced breeding success.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
3	9	24	25	40	4	31	23	20	37	28	17

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus*

[Rosy Starling]

Nationally scarce migrant.

A breeding-plumaged adult was in St Helen's Field, immediately outside Barton Cottages, on 1 Jun (Dean Jones, Tony Taylor), and a juvenile was in Millcombe and in Tillage & St Helen's Fields on 26 Aug (Richard & Rebecca Taylor, Tony Taylor) – see colour plate 6. Rose-coloured Starlings have now been seen on Lundy in three of the last four years. Records accepted by DBRC.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

[Common Starling]

Resident; breeds; common spring and autumn migrant, often in large numbers.

The spring pre-breeding maximum was 90 on 21 & 26 Mar. Successful breeding confirmed: adults were seen commuting back and forth to nest sites, carrying food, on 29 Apr; 37 occupied nests were counted on 3 May, including those in the Church, Village and Old Light complex (Tim Jones), and the first fledgling was seen by the Ranger's Shed on 9 May (Dean Jones). The post-breeding summer peak was 130 on 8 Jul, while autumn movements brought 200 on 25 Sep, 347 on 25 Oct, 660 on 27 Oct, 530 on 31 Oct, 200 on 1-3 Nov, 500 on 13 Nov, and the year's peak count of 1,260 on 18 Nov, mainly moving south towards Hartland.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
40	nc	90	70	66	58	130	80	200	660	1260	130

nc = no count

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus**Uncommon but regular spring and autumn migrant in very small numbers.*

Spring migrants were noted on 12 dates from 16 Mar (one) to 10 May (one), including two birds on 27 Mar and 20, 22 & 23 Apr. Autumn passage records occurred on 15 dates from 15 Sep to 14 Nov. With the exception of two on the first date, all of these records concerned single birds.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	2	2	1	–	–	–	2	1	1	–
–	–	3	8	1	–	–	–	8	5	2	–

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

[Common Blackbird]

Common breeding resident; irregular spring migrant and common late-autumn migrant; occasional winter influxes during hard weather.

Successful breeding confirmed: there was no full breeding-season survey, but an adult was carrying food in lower Millcombe on 29 Apr, where a fledged brood was seen on 2 May (Tim Jones); a recently fledged juvenile was in Millcombe on 5 Jul (Mike Archer); and adults were carrying food at St Helen's and Quarter Wall Copses and along the Terrace (two pairs) in late May. During autumn migration there were no significant influxes until the end of Oct, with 50 on 26th and 34 on 28th. Numbers remained high in the first week or so of Nov, with 33 on 2nd and 32 on 7th, whilst further movements brought 29 on 13 Nov and 2 Dec, followed by a high count for late Dec of 24 on 23rd.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	6	15	18	20	8	6	10	12	50	33	29

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Common late-autumn migrant but rather scarce in spring; winter visitor in variable numbers, with occasional hard-weather influxes.

One on 25 & 26 Jan and two on 18 Feb were the only records during the first winter period. Spring passage saw records of single birds (perhaps one long-staying individual) on seven dates from 19 Apr to 3 May, then a further lone individual on the late date of 17 May. Autumn migrants didn't appear until the last week of Oct, when two on 26th and 20 the following day were the vanguard of significant arrivals estimated at 150 on 28th, 225 on 30th and 200 on 31st. These numbers were not maintained into Nov, when the highest counts were 42 on 1st and 35 on 13th.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	2	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	225	42	8
2	1	–	4	4	–	–	–	–	6	13	5

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Common migrant in early spring and, especially, late autumn; winter visitor in variable numbers, with occasional hard-weather influxes.

There were four scattered records of between two and 20 in Feb. However, writing in the LFS logbook, Dean Jones noted for the night of 18/19 Feb: "Possibly hundreds if not thousands of Redwing over the village c.23.00 hrs onwards. Conditions clear and calm. Frequency of calls heard was very high. However, many of these could be from birds attracted to the now continuous light emitted from the village (generators running all night)." Numerous calls were heard from c.22.00 hrs on both of the next two nights, when there was thick fog and little wind, but the overall numbers of birds involved were considerably lower. Later in the spring there were 10 on 1 Mar and sightings of ones and twos on 12 further dates from 7 Mar to 14 Apr, including one at Jenny's Cove on 31 Mar. The last of the spring was a single bird in Millcombe Wood on 1 May. Autumn passage commenced with four on 9 Oct, but there were only sporadic records of small numbers until mass arrivals during the last week of the month, after which Redwings continued to be logged on the majority of days until the end of the year. Peak counts included 1,000+ on 26 Oct, 800 on 28th, 350 on 29th, and over 200 on five other dates in the last week of Oct and first week of Nov. A further arrival brought 370 on 13 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	20	10	1	1	–	–	–	–	1,000	370	70
–	4	10	3	1	–	–	–	–	14	19	20

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Common migrant in early spring and late autumn; winter influxes during hard weather. Occasional resident and sporadic breeder prior to 2010.

During late winter and spring there were records on 14 dates from 5 Feb (three) to 1 May (one), with evident migration peaking in late Mar when there were 11 on 27th. There were no further records until the first autumn migrants: four on 6 Oct, which paved the way for regular sightings of one to three birds until the last week of the month, when a significant influx (coinciding with a mass arrival of other thrushes) brought 100+ on 26th and over 30 on 27th and 31st. Alongside Redwings and Blackbirds, Song Thrushes remained a feature of island birding until the end of the year, including a high count for late Dec of 16 on 28th.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	3	11	1	1	–	–	–	–	100	18	16
–	2	7	4	1	–	–	–	–	16	21	22

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Rare spring migrant; uncommon autumn migrant; rare summer and winter visitor.

During autumn migration one was seen on four dates during the period 26-30 Oct, followed by three on 1 Nov and two on 18 Nov.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

Common spring and autumn passage migrant; irregular breeder.

Spring migrants were recorded on 25 dates from 24 Apr (two) until at least 11 Jun, peaking at an estimated 25-30 birds on 13 May. Successful breeding was confirmed for the first time since 1997, three fledged juveniles being fed by adults at Quarter Wall Copse on 17 Jul (Dean Jones). Autumn passage was noted on 30 dates from 21 Aug (five) to 13 Oct (one), with maxima of 12 on 23 Aug and 30 on 26 Aug. Numbers did not reach double digits on any other date.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	2	25	1	5	30	3	1	–	–
–	–	–	1	20	3	1	11	15	7	–	–

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

[European Robin]

Common breeding resident in small numbers; uncommon spring migrant; common autumn migrant in moderate numbers.

A modest early-spring passage saw counts reach 14 on 21 & 27 Mar. Two birds seen on 28 Mar had the greyish tones and pallid orange breasts associated with continental birds (Tony Taylor). Successful breeding confirmed: the first fledged young of the year were seen near Millcombe House on 17 May (Dean Jones); other pairs successfully fledged young in May on the Terrace (two pairs, either end of the Terrace Trap platform) and at Lone Pine Gulch (Tim Davis, Mandy Dee, Tim Jones); and adults were carrying food just south of Quarter Wall Copse on 20 May. Noticeable autumn movements commenced on the early date of 23 Aug, when 17 were counted, coinciding with a small fall of Willow Warblers and Spotted Flycatchers. Higher counts included 25 on 18 Sep and 7 Oct, followed during the rest of Oct by 30 on 8th, 32 on 9th, 40 on 12th and 24 on 18th. Twelve on 30 Dec was a high count for the time of year, and the only double-digit count during the month, perhaps suggesting a small influx from the mainland.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	5	14	8	10	4	8	17	25	40	17	12

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*

[Common Nightingale]

Lundy vagrant. Nine previous records, most recently in 2010.

A first-year bird was mist-netted and ringed in Millcombe on 25 Aug (Tony Taylor); the first Lundy record since one was ringed in May 2010. Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

[European Pied Flycatcher]

Uncommon spring migrant; common autumn migrant, usually in small numbers; occasional records in midsummer.

In spring there were records of migrants on 10 dates from 12 Apr to 6 May. All concerned single birds, with the exception of three (a male & two females) on 29 Apr and two (both females) on 4 May. Autumn passage was noted on 16 dates from 23 Aug (one) to 8 Oct (one), with a maximum of six on 27 Aug. There were three on 26 Aug, three on 3 Sep and four on 18 Sep, but all other records were of ones and twos.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	3	2	–	–	6	4	1	–	–
–	–	–	7	3	–	–	5	9	2	–	–

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva**Nationally scarce migrant.*

There were two records in October: one in the Terrace Trap willows and later at Quarry Pond on 15 Oct (Richard Campey) and one in Millcombe on 28 Oct (Andy Jayne). Records accepted by DBRC.

2016 addition

One was in Millcombe in the vicinity of the walled gardens and lower slopes of the Ugly on 1 Oct (Paul Sterry, Tim Jones). Record accepted by DBRC.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Common late-autumn migrant, usually in small numbers; uncommon spring migrant; has overwintered.

During the first winter period, single birds were noted on 25 & 27 Jan (the latter at Jenny's Cove) and 4 Feb. Spring passage was recorded on 13 dates between 20 Mar (a single female type at the Earthquake) and 30 Apr (a single female type on the Battlements), followed by two late singles on 28 May and 18 Jun. The peak spring count was five on 23 Mar (four at Benjamin's Chair and one in the Landing Bay). Autumn migrants were seen on 10 dates from 15 Oct (one) to 3 Nov (one), with a maximum of just three on 26 & 27 Oct. Subsequent records of single birds on 29 Nov and 12 Dec may have been late migrants or, perhaps more likely, wintering individuals, given that two were seen at the end of Jan 2018.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	1	5	3	1	1	–	–	–	3	1	1
2	1	7	6	1	1	–	–	–	8	3	1

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

[Common Redstart]

Common but declining spring and autumn migrant in small numbers.

Spring passage was noted on 10 dates from 9 Apr (one male) to 5 May (two), with maxima of six on 30 Apr and 1 May and three on 3 May; all other records were of single birds. The only records during autumn migration concerned single birds on 25 & 26 Sep.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	6	6	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
–	–	–	6	4	–	–	–	2	–	–	–

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

Uncommon spring migrant; more regular in autumn; occasional records in midsummer.

The only spring passage reports were during the period 1-17 May: a single male on 1st, two females and a male on 5th, two on 6th, three on 7th and one on 17th. In autumn, one outside Quarters on 25 Aug was followed in Sep by one on 14th, two on 16th & 17th and further single birds on 25th & 26th – surprisingly, the last of the year.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	–	3	–	–	1	2	–	–	–
–	–	–	–	5	–	–	1	5	–	–	–

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

[European Stonechat]

Breeds occasionally (most recently in 2015, following a five-year gap); regular spring and autumn migrant; sporadic in winter.

Ones and twos were recorded on 22, 25 & 26 Jan and 4 & 18 Feb. Spring passage was noted from the last week of Feb, with seven on 24th, 14 on 25th, six on 26th and 11 on 28th, followed by Mar peaks of seven on 3rd, eight on 9th and six on 22nd. However, the later spring and summer period, Apr to Aug inclusive, brought just six well-scattered records of single birds, with no evidence of breeding. Autumn movements were noted from mid-Sep to early Nov, with maxima of five on 16 Sep, eight on 8, 9 & 12 Oct, 11 on 18 Oct, and six on 26 & 27 Oct and 2 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	14	8	1	1	1	1	1	5	11	6	1
3	6	10	2	1	1	1	1	10	19	12	4

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

[Northern Wheatear]

Summer visitor; breeds; common spring and autumn migrant.

The first of the year was a single male on 13 Mar. Following several further records of up to three in a day, new arrivals brought the total to 21 birds by 22nd (including the first three females and the first returning colour-ringed males) with 24 on 27th. Migration continued during Apr but there were no major influxes and counts didn't exceed 30 until the second half of the month, when there were 40 on 20th & 23rd. Things didn't change much into May, with 40 on 2nd, 50 on 3rd & 10th and 51 on 21st (perhaps representing pulses of Greenland Wheatears *O. o. leochorhoa* passing through) being the highest totals reported. The first fledglings of the year were below Benjamin's Chair on 17 May (Dean Jones). A count of 94 on 7 Jun presumably included a number of fledged family parties. Autumn passage was even more modest than in spring, with small influxes noted in late Aug (21 on 23rd) and late Sep (16 on 21st), but nearly all other counts in single digits. The last record was of two on 27 Oct.

The colour-ringing project under the BTO Retrapping Adults for Survival scheme entered its fifth year. A further 51 birds were newly colour-ringed, whilst 48 birds marked in previous years (2013-2016) were resighted. One of the latter, ringed in 2015, was seen on Guernsey on 13 Mar (2017), then back on Lundy 11 days later. The breeding population within the main study area, from the

Castle, along the south and west coast as far as Halfway Wall, was estimated at 53 pairs, and for the island as a whole, 121 pairs (data provided by Tony Taylor; see also *Ringing Report*, page 66).

Request. *Further birds will be colour-ringed in 2018 and 2019 so please continue to record sightings in the LFS logbook. Photos are particularly appreciated and can be sent to gen@birdsoflundy.org.uk.*

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	24	40	51	94	25	21	16	5	–	–
–	–	11	15	24	21	15	27	14	12	–	–

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Common breeding resident; present throughout the year; possible immigration obscured by resident population.

The highest counts recorded in the LFS logbook were 150 on 13 Oct and 200+ on 30 Nov. Aaron Sibma has contributed the following update on behalf of the Lundy Sparrow Project:

After an average 2016 when it comes to number of broods (146), 2017 turned out to be surprisingly different. The 2017 breeding season started extremely early; by the time of the team's arrival on Lundy on 22 April, many pairs already had chicks of at least a few days old. The first egg was estimated to have been laid around 31 March. What sparked this early onset of the breeding season is only speculative, but could have been the relatively mild winter, followed by some early warm weather in spring. Unfortunately, most of these early broods did not make it. A lot of chicks died during a cold spell that lasted for a few days. It is likely that the parents had to spend too much time keeping the chicks warm, leading to less time to provision food. The cold spell also affected the food source for their chicks – insects – negatively. After the loss of entire nests, most birds waited for a week or so before they started laying again. These broods, after the first, early wave, fared a lot better.

At the end of the season we had accounted for 218 broods, which is a lot more than in 2016. A total of 317 chicks were ringed; ringing takes place when the chicks are 10-12 days old and close to fledging. When looking at the fledgling to brood ratio, the 1.45 fledglings per brood in 2017 was a lot lower than in 2016, when there were 1.73 fledglings per brood. The higher number of broods seemed to affect the number of fledglings, perhaps due to competition. This was evidenced by the occasional discovery of live chicks on the ground, which had clearly been pulled out of the nestboxes by competing adults. Some other chicks were pecked to death in the nest, but thankfully such occurrences remained rare. The Lambing Shed area, containing 30-40 nestboxes, was very little used in 2016. It was speculated that the renewal of the roof in autumn and winter had disturbed the birds in their usual winter habits, which include searching for and selecting their eventual nest site. However, in 2017 it was back in business, with the Lambing Shed hosting many sparrow broods. Given that the area was not disturbed during winter 2016/2017 prior to the 2017 breeding season, birds had time to prospect and claim nestboxes, which they took full advantage of. In November, we returned to Lundy for about a week to catch surviving fledglings and adults. This led to a total of 199 captures involving 144 individuals. It was clear the numbers were still high from the previous breeding season.

Maximum count for each month (LFS Logbook entries only)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
nc	nc	50	48	61	30	50	62	75	150	200	86

nc = no count, but present

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Breeding resident in small numbers; small influxes of passage migrants detected occasionally in autumn.

There were signs of birds passing through Lundy in late Mar, with counts of eight on 22nd and 11 on 27th – the latter the highest count for the island since 2005. This total was exceeded in the autumn when there were 13 on 9 Oct (the highest since Oct 2004), and eight or nine on six other dates during Oct, suggestive of both a good breeding season and some passage movement. Successful breeding confirmed: song was heard in lower Millcombe on 30 Apr and a pair were feeding fledged young by the gas store on 21 May, when there were two males singing in Millcombe (Tim Davis & Tim Jones). A territory-holding singing male was heard between the Terrace and Quarry Beach on 30 Apr and in the same area in late May, and one was singing above White Beach on 22 May.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	1	11	4	5	3	2	5	7	13	8	5

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

[Western Yellow Wagtail]

The British race M. f. flavissima is an uncommon spring migrant, regular early autumn migrant in small numbers and occasional summer visitor. Formerly more numerous, particularly in autumn. The continental race M. f. flava 'Blue-headed Wagtail' occurs occasionally in spring; all other races are vagrants.

Spring migrants were recorded from 22 Apr to 21 May. All sightings involved single birds with the exception of seven on 5 May. Two female Blue-headed Wagtails *M. f. flava*, keeping company with Yellow Wagtails and feeding around the ponies, were in Barton, St Helen's and Tillage Fields on 5 & 6 May (Tim Davis, Tim Jones, Joanne Wilby *et al.*). Records of Blue-headed Wagtail accepted by Devon Bird Recorder. In autumn, there were just two records, of single birds on 25 Aug and 13 Sep.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	–	1	7	–	–	1	1	–	–	–
–	–	–	5	4	–	–	1	1	–	–	–

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Uncommon spring migrant; common autumn migrant in small numbers; occasional summer records; rare in winter.

Following three singles on 10, 14 & 16 Mar, there were no further reports in spring until mid-May, after which there was an unusual series of records of single birds on seven dates from 14 May to 27 Jun – perhaps a long-staying individual? Autumn passage was recorded on 27 dates from 9 Sep (one) to 3 Nov (one). With the exception of three on 8 Oct, all records were of ones and twos.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	2	3	2	–
–	–	3	–	4	3	–	–	14	11	2	–

Pied / White Wagtail *Motacilla a. yarrellii* / *M. a. alba*

[White Wagtail]

Pied Wagtail nests most years in small numbers and is a common spring and autumn migrant, but rare in midwinter. White Wagtail occurs annually during both spring and autumn migrations.

Pied Wagtail: The only record during the first two months of the year was of one on 17 Feb. Spring passage was evident from mid-Mar, with nine on 16th followed by double-digit counts on

seven dates later in the month, peaking at 15 on 26th. Breeding confirmed: two recently fledged juveniles were in Millcombe on 5 Jul (Mike Archer). There were no significant influxes during the early autumn, the highest Sep count being eight on 17th. Numbers increased in Oct, however, with 15 on 8th and 24 on 12th. The last of the year was a single bird on 10 Nov.

White Wagtail: In spring there were singles on 20 & 23 Mar, two on 24th, four on 27th & 28th and two (males) on 31st, then three on 19 Apr, five on 2 May, singles on 5 & 6 May, two on 8 & 10 May and one on 31 May. An adult female was feeding around Tillage Field/Brick Field pig-sty on the unusual date of 2 Jul (Dean Jones). The only autumn records were in Sep: two on 7th, one on 11th and three on 17th. Records of White Wagtail accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Maximum count for each month: (Pied Wagtail (top) & White Wagtail (bottom))

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	1	15	6	8	4	6	5	8	24	4	–
–	–	4	3	5	–	1	–	3	–	–	–

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Breeds; very common passage migrant in spring and autumn; scarce or absent in winter.

The first evident pulse of spring passage occurred in the second half of Feb when there were 25 over the Village on 17th and 50 on 18th, with further small influxes during the first two weeks of Mar. It was the end of Mar before migration was in full swing, however, with peaks of 300 on 23rd and 500 on 25th. Successful breeding confirmed but no estimate was made of the breeding population. The main period of autumn passage was mid-Sep to mid-Oct, with maxima of 300 on 16 Sep, 520 on 30 Sep, 700 on 8 Oct and 850 on 12 Oct. Numbers declined during the second half of the month, leaving only single-digit counts in Nov & Dec, with the exception of 33 on 14 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2	50	500	27	60	40	60	80	520	850	33	7
1	7	17	12	16	13	19	18	24	22	13	12

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant.

One was on the flanks of the Ugly on the unusually early date of 14 Mar (Dean Jones). Thereafter, one below the Battlements on 17 Apr, one on 1 May and two on 5th (over Ackland's Moor and Quarter Wall). In autumn, single birds were recorded on eight dates, 20 Aug to 16 Sep, followed by four on 17 Sep and further singles on 21st, 25th & 28th. The last of the year was one on 7 Oct.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	1	1	2	–	–	1	4	1	–	–
–	–	1	1	2	–	–	5	7	1	–	–

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

Nationally scarce migrant. Three previous records, most recently in Oct 2012.

One in Millcombe on 13 Oct (Tim Davis, James Diamond, Tim Jones). Record accepted by DBRC. There were tantalising records of 'probable' Olive-backed Pipits, based mainly on flight calls, in the south-east of the island on five additional dates during the period 26 Oct to 14 Nov (the latter remaining under consideration by DBRC), suggesting that a single long-staying but elusive individual could have been present.

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus*

UK vagrant. Ten previous records, most recently in Dec 2016.

One found in Brick Field during the late afternoon of 26 Oct was still present early on the morning of 27 Oct before flying off to the south-west at 08.15 hrs (Andy Jayne). The 11th Lundy record, four of which have been since 2013. Record accepted by BBRC.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

[Eurasian Rock Pipit]

Common breeding resident; extent of migratory or dispersive movements involving Lundy unknown.

The highest counts of the year included 19 on 22 Mar, 26 on 3 May (during a complete walk of the island's perimeter – Tim Davis), 18 on 23 Aug, 17 on 15 Oct, 20 on 14 Nov and 14 on 26 Dec. Successful breeding confirmed: an adult was feeding fledged young at North End on 7 Jun.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1	4	19	4	26	12	5	18	12	17	20	14

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

[Common Chaffinch]

Resident, breeding annually in small numbers. Common, at times abundant, on autumn passage; noticeable spring passage rarely recorded; winter influxes in some years.

The only real evidence of spring passage were counts in mid-Apr of 26 on 13th, 15 on 14th and 10 on 17th. All other late-winter and spring records were in single digits, consistent with the island's small breeding population. A female was carrying nesting material near the Blue Door on 29 Apr (Tim Davis & Tim Jones), single singing males were holding territory in Millcombe and St Helen's Copse in late Apr/early May and at Quarter Wall Copse in late May (Tim Davis & Tim Jones) and two recently fledged young were seen in lower Millcombe in the late spring (Dean Jones). Mid-Sep brought the first sign of autumn movements, with 12 on 14th, but it was another month before migration started in earnest: 33 on 12 Oct rose to 100 on 15th, 275 on 19th, 650 on 25th and peaked at 5,500 on 26th, 4,360 on 31st and 2,000 on 1 Nov. Thereafter, numbers declined to 600 on 3 Nov and 130 on 14th – the last three-digit count of the year. Twelve on 28 Dec hinted at a small arrival of winter visitors, following much lower counts earlier in the month. See *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details of the recovery in West Devon of a Lundy-ringed Chaffinch.

Maximum count for each month

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	3	9	26	6	2	3	4	12	5,500	2,000	12

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

Uncommon spring migrant; annual autumn migrant in variable numbers; occasional in winter.

During autumn migration there were records on 22 dates from 12 Oct (three) to 24 Nov (two), with maxima of 15 on 26 Oct, 40, 50 and 25 during the period 31 Oct to 2 Nov and a further influx of 52 on 14 Nov, with 26 the following day. This represents the strongest showing of this species for many years; the last time numbers exceeded the 2017 peak of 52 was a quarter of a century ago, when there were 56 on 30 Oct 1992.

Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Lundy vagrant and Devon rarity.

The autumn of 2017 saw an unprecedented irruption of Hawfinches of as yet unclear continental origin across much the UK. Lundy did not get quite the numbers encountered elsewhere in the country, but there were nevertheless records on at least 16 dates between 7 Oct and 3 Nov, with a maximum of 15 on 26 Oct. Two feeding on blackberries on the side of the Ugly on 7 Oct left

high to the east at 07.55 hrs on 8 Oct (Tim Davis, James Diamond, Tim Jones). Five were in Millcombe on 14 Oct (Tim Davis, James Diamond, Tim Jones *et al.*) and at least seven on 15 Oct (Richard Campey *et al.*). Two in Millcombe on 17 Oct (Malcolm Shakespeare) remained to 19th, when one was found dead (Chris & Carol Baillie). Five (including the moribund bird) were in Millcombe on 18 Oct (Dean Jones & Eddie Stubbings). A female was in Millcombe on 20 Oct (Dean Jones). Two were in Millcombe on 25 Oct (Andy Jayne). At least 15 were present on 26 Oct, when constant movement was noted with birds coming in off the sea; one was trapped and ringed (Rob Duncan, Andy Jayne, Justin Zantboer *et al.*). Of four on 27 Oct, two were trapped and ringed (Rob Duncan, Andy Jayne, Justin Zantboer *et al.*). Thereafter, one on 28 Oct (Andy Jayne); four on 29 Oct (Andy Jayne); two in Millcombe and one in St Helen's Copse on 31 Oct (Paul Holt); and finally, singles in Millcombe on 1 & 3 Nov (Paul Holt). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Bullfinch *Phyrrhula pyrrhula*

[Eurasian Bullfinch]

Rare spring migrant and very rare autumn migrant. One winter record.

The only spring records were of a female that remained in the same blackthorn bush, though feeding actively, at the head of St Helen's Combe on 27 & 28 Mar (Tim Davis & Tim Jones, Dean Jones) and a female – potentially the same individual – ringed in Millcombe on 21 Apr (Chris Dee). In autumn there was a male in Millcombe on 27 Oct (Justin Zantboer) and a female in St Helen's Combe on 31st (Paul Holt).

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrina*

Nationally scarce migrant.

A singing male was heard around Millcombe and St John's Valley during the morning of 1 May (Chris Baillie, Tim Davis & Tim Jones). Record accepted by DBRC.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

[European Greenfinch]

Scarce spring migrant in small numbers; uncommon autumn migrant; occasional visitor in summer and winter.

One on 8 Sep was the first of the year. Later in the autumn there were records on 12 dates from 7 Oct to 16 Nov; all of these involved ones and twos, with the exception of five on 2 Nov.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

[Common Linnet]

Common breeder; irregular spring and autumn migrant; more numerous in autumn; occasional in winter.

There were no records until the commencement of spring migration towards the end of Mar, when ones and twos on 20th-22nd increased to 11 on 25th and 30 on 26th & 27th. Movements continued throughout Apr (maximum 33 on 29th) and peaked in early May, with 90 on 2nd and 97 on 5th – probably a mix of passage birds and island breeders. Successful breeding confirmed: e.g. family parties of recently fledged young seen on 5 Jul (Mike Archer). Post-breeding flocks were noted from late Jul, when there were 100+ on 23rd, rising to 250 on 16 Aug. Autumn passage was noted through Sep and peaked at 300 on 8 Oct. Numbers dwindled rapidly after mid-Oct, barely reaching double digits in the second half of the month. The last of the year was a single bird on 24 Nov.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	30	33	97	30	100	250	120	300	5	–
–	–	10	20	22	12	20	19	21	22	6	–

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*

Uncommon spring and autumn migrant in variable numbers, but more frequent than formerly; rare in winter.

The only spring passage records were two on 19 Apr, one on 29 Apr and singles on 1 & 2 May. Autumn migrants were recorded on 23 dates from 6 Oct (two) to 12 Nov (one), with maxima of 10 on 27 Oct and six on 1 Nov. Most other counts were of one to three birds.

Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

[Red Crossbill]

Rare summer and autumn migrant; occurring sporadically, but occasionally in large numbers during 'invasion' years.

One was in Millcombe on 10 Aug (R.M.R. James) and one was heard calling loudly as it circled Millcombe on 9 Oct (James Diamond).

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

[European Goldfinch]

Breeds in small numbers; common spring and autumn migrant; irregular in summer and winter.

After ones and twos in Feb and early Mar, the onset of spring passage brought five on 18 Mar, 13 on 21st & 23rd and 10 on 27th & 31st. Showing a similar pattern to Linnet, migration continued throughout Apr and into May, but without any especially notable numbers; 15 on 14 & 29 Apr, 22 on 1 May and 17 on 18 May being the maxima. Successful breeding confirmed after adults were seen collecting nest material in Millcombe on 2 & 30 May (Tim Jones, Tony Taylor): a pair feeding three juveniles in Millcombe on 3 Jun (Rebecca & Richard Taylor), and family parties in Millcombe and near Tillage Field pig-sty on 5 Jul (Mike Archer). Post-breeding numbers reached 20 on 10 Jul and 23 on 23 Aug, with autumn migration bringing peaks of 30 on 14 Sep and notable totals during the first half of Oct of 120 on 8th, 130 on 9th, 70 on 12th, 75 on 14th and 90 on 15th. Numbers then fell away rapidly and did not exceed low single digits after 10 on 2 Nov, though ones and twos continued to be seen until the year's end. See *Ringing Report* (page 66) for details of a Lundy-ringed Goldfinch controlled on the North Devon mainland.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	2	13	15	22	9	20	23	30	130	10	3
–	5	20	20	26	18	18	21	23	26	13	10

Siskin *Spinus spinus*

[Eurasian Siskin]

Late autumn migrant in greatly varying numbers; rare in spring.

In spring, ones and twos were present daily, 25-27 Mar, followed by four on 13 Apr, one on 27 Apr and one on the late date of 28 May. The first of the autumn was a single bird on 7 Oct, the forerunner of what became quite a strong passage, with records on 33 dates from 7 Oct (one) to 21 Nov (one), and counts ≥ 100 (all in Oct) comprising 125 on 15th, 350 on 26th, 100 on 27th and 183 on 31st. The Nov maximum was 96 on 1st.

Maximum count for each month (top) and number of days recorded (bottom)

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
–	–	2	4	1	–	–	–	–	350	96	–
–	–	3	2	1	–	–	–	–	23	11	–

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

Lundy vagrant.

One on 29 Apr: a male flew up from the ground just to the west of the main track at Quarter Wall and perched alongside Linnets (Sam Bosanquet). This is the first record since 2014 of what was once a regular visitor and even bred until the middle of the twentieth century.

Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*

Nationally scarce migrant.

One on the Terrace flew off in the direction of the Timekeeper's Hut and Quarry Pond on 17 Oct. Record under consideration by DBRC.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

[Common Reed Bunting]

Regular autumn migrant in very small numbers; rare and increasingly irregular spring migrant; very rare in winter.

One on 26 Apr was the only spring record. During autumn passage there were records on 15 dates from 4 Oct to 24 Nov, with the highest count being six on 1 & 24 Nov. Most other records were of ones and twos.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

[Lapland Longspur]

Uncommon but regular autumn migrant; rare spring migrant; very rare in winter. Devon rarity.

Records on six autumn dates: one on the ground near Threequarter Wall on 16 Sep (Geoff Edmond); three over the water tanks on 15 Oct (Richard Campey); one over Brick Field on 25 Oct (Andy Jayne); one on the Airfield and in flight over Lighthouse Field on 26 Oct (Andy Jayne); one very flighty and mobile individual seen several times between Middle Park and North Light, and also briefly on the ground just west of the main track near Tibbetts on 27 Oct (Andy Jayne); and one south over the Rocket Pole on 2 Nov (Paul Holt). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Uncommon but regular autumn migrant in small numbers; uncommon spring migrant; rare in midwinter. Devon rarity.

Records on 7 autumn dates between 11 Sep and 18 Nov: one near Pondsbury on 11 & 12 Sep (Mark Worden *et al.*); one at North End on 12 Oct (Julian & Maggie Bowden) – see colour plate 8; one on the Terrace on 15 Oct (Richard Campey); one on the Airfield on 26 Oct (Andy Jayne); one over Millcombe on 3 Nov (Paul Holt); and one calling over the Stonecrusher area on 18 Nov (Tony Taylor). Records accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

BBRC/DBRC DECISIONS PENDING

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

One off the Landing Bay on 17 Oct 2016. At the time of writing (Sep 2018), this record remains under consideration by BBRC.

BBRC/DBRC DECISIONS ON RARITY RECORDS ASSESSED AS 'NOT PROVEN'

Eastern Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans cantillans/albistriata*

One, Millcombe, 14 Apr. BBRC assessed the record as proven at species level, but not at sub-specific level. This is reflected in the main Systematic List.

BIRDS SEEN ON THE CROSSING TO OR FROM LUNDY

Records of birds seen close to the island are incorporated in the main list, above. Other reports of interest for the 'open sea' part of the crossing are given below, but we do not cover the North Devon shoreline or the Taw & Torridge Estuary. Records for these areas should be submitted to the Devon Bird Recorder (recorder@devonbirds.org).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

A flock of 12 off Bull Point during the crossing from Ilfracombe to Lundy on 23 Jul (Martin Thorne).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

[European Storm Petrel]

Two off Bull Point on the crossing from Ilfracombe to Lundy on 23 Jul (Martin Thorne). One feeding at sea about 20 minutes out from the island on the crossing to Lundy on 25 Jul (Dean Jones). Five on the outward crossing from Ilfracombe on 15 Aug (Rebecca & Richard Taylor, Tony Taylor).

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

[Leach's Storm Petrel]

Two on the crossing from Ilfracombe to Lundy on 17 Oct (Eddie Stubbings). Record accepted by DBRC.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

One on the crossing to Lundy on 27 Apr (Martin Thorne).

Great Skua (Bonxie) *Stercorarius skua*

Two on the crossing from Ilfracombe to Lundy on 23 Jul (Martin Thorne).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

[Pomarine Jaeger]

An adult with tail-spoons about halfway across during the morning crossing from Bideford to Lundy on 26 Oct (Martin Thorne). Record accepted by Devon Bird Recorder.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

[Long-tailed Jaeger]

An adult still in breeding plumage about halfway between Lundy and Ilfracombe during the afternoon/evening crossing on 16 Sep. Record under consideration by DBRC.

RECORDS EXCLUDED FROM THE MAIN REPORT

The following reports are considered unsubstantiated for the reasons given. We would be delighted to receive further information that could enable any of these reports to be confirmed.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

One on 27 Apr – scarce on Lundy but no information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Black-headed Gull *Croicocephalus ridibundus*

One on 26 Feb and four on 3 Apr – scarce on Lundy but no information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

One on 1 Apr – scarce on Lundy but no information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

[Parasitic Jaeger]

Singles were reported on 13 & 16 Oct and three on 14th; plus one on 2 Nov. No information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

One was reported on the highly unusual date of 23 Jul but no information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

Singles were reported on 1 Jun & 10 Sep, and two on 28 Oct – very scarce on Lundy but no information on location, circumstances or observer provided.

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*

One along the Lower East Side Path, below Tibbetts, on 24 May – nationally scarce migrant and the information provided was insufficient to confirm the record.

One “at bottom of cattle field, flitting from post top to post top along fence” on 13 & 14 Jun – nationally scarce migrant but no description or observer contact details provided and therefore no submission could be made to DBRC.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

[Eurasian Golden Oriole]

A male was reported independently by two visitors during the afternoon of 16 May and further reported flying up St John's Valley from Millcombe on the morning of 17 May – nationally scarce species but no description or observer name(s)/contact details provided and therefore no submission could be made to DBRC.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

One along the East Side on 25 Sep – nationally scarce migrant but no description or observer contact details provided and therefore no submission could be made to DBRC.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

[Common Redstart]

One reported on the very early date of 22 Mar, when potential confusion with Black Redstart (more likely in Mar) would need to be ruled out, but no supporting information or observer name provided.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

A flock of about eight were reported from the track below Old Light on 26 Jan, but no descriptive details were provided for what is a Devon category B rarity.