



▲ Bird Observatory Council AGM, Feb 2025 (photo: D Balmer).

BIRDS ON LUNDY 2024

Joe Parker (Lundy Warden)

Another bumper year was enjoyed by Lundy Bird Observatory, which has just celebrated its second birthday, with only one more year of probation to go until we earn our full Observatory status in February 2026! Highlights included:

- Record total of 169 species were recorded during 2024
- New maximum count for **Purple Sandpiper**
- Lundy's second **Green-winged Teal**, **Pallid Swift** and **Spoonbill**
- A long-staying **Short-toed Lark**
- Unprecedented influx of **Snow Bunting** and **Cory's Shearwater**
- A record **Wheatear** breeding season
- Highest **Manx Shearwater** nest box occupancy to date
- Ten colour-marked **Yellow-browed Warbler** as part of a national project
- Excellent coverage: 97% of census days recorded
- First documented breeding of **Yellow Wagtail** for Lundy
- Second-highest annual ringing total on record

While records from the entire island are collected, the Lundy Bird Observatory core 'census' recording area covers a distance of approximately five km, sampling all habitats present within the southern quarter of the island. The route is walked daily during spring and autumn migration, and periodically during the summer and winter months. The defined recording area covers most sites south of Quarter Wall, encompassing the vegetated combs of Millcombe and St John's Valley, the rugged sea cliffs of Benjamin's Chair, freshwater habitats around Rocket Pole, and the grazed, semi-improved grasslands and drystone walls bordering South West Field, Old Light, Ackland's Moor and the Village. In 2024, the census route was covered on 97% of required survey days, comfortably exceeding the threshold laid out by the Bird Observatory Council, who are the body responsible for our accreditation.

Lundy Bird Observatory Census Route



▲ Lundy Bird Observatory daily census route.

The New Year and early spring

The new year opened with very unsettled weather, delaying any quality birding to kick-start the birding calendar. Undeterred, a trip down to Brazen Ward on 2nd was rewarded with a record-breaking count of 13 **Purple Sandpiper** at high tide, only to be broken again by an additional individual during a subsequent visit on 13th January!



▲ Green-winged Teal on Pondsbury, 28th January
(photo: Joe Parker).

A winter seal census was conducted along the east coast on 28th January as part of Cornwall, Devon and SW Wales wide study coordinated by Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust. It would have been rude not to have checked Pondsbury en route to North End and a preliminary long distance scan on approach revealed a small group of **Teal** and **Mallard**. A closer inspection kicked up two **Common Snipe** and quickly revealed eight **Eurasian** and a drake **Green-winged Teal** – incredibly only the second island record (the previous record dates back to May 2006). At times it was looking like the American vagrant had paired up with an Eurasian counterpart, lingering until 1st April before finally moving on.

After the usual winter clearout, by 1st February the first returning **Skylark** appeared, confirmed by a between season re-trap encountered during a nocturnal ringing session on the Airfield. Another check of Pondsbury, this time on 5th March, yielded a stonking adult **Iceland Gull**, the first and only record of the year. This species is an annual vagrant with one record per year on average. The bird was roosting with a flock of **Herring**, **Lesser Black-backed** and **Great Black-backed gulls** on Pondsbury before flying off towards the west coast. Twelve days later (17th March), another 'white-winged gull', this time an adult **Glaucous Gull**, was discovered dead on the island just south of Gannets' Combe during the feral livestock annual count. The bird was promptly swabbed for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and fortunately came back negative. In fact, over the course of the season I'm pleased to report that zero positive cases were logged on the island.

▼ Early returning Skylark photographed during nocturnal ringing session (photo: Joe Parker).



Spring migration

The first **Chiffchaff** occurred on 9th March, followed by the first **Wheatear** the following day. By 16th March, two female **Merlin** were seen along the Southwest Field boundary and the North End. This coincided with our first **Swallow** of the year and a mini arrival of **Wheatear** and **Chiffchaff**, plus two **Puffins** off Jenny's Cove. The migration tap began to open on 21st March with the arrival of 45 **Chiffchaff** and 26 **Goldcrest**. Incredibly, the 42 **Goldcrest** logged on 26th March was the highest spring total for many decades, although this count did not beat the 60 on the 27th-31st March 1989 or the 50 on the 27th-28th March 1974. March featured a notable count of 511 **Puffin** on 26th, with Jenny's Cove doing most of the heavy lifting, and the remaining 41 individuals all logged at The Battery. By 31st, we had resumed our ever-popular seabird stations at Jenny's Cove for the breeding season.



▲ One of the many Chiffchaff seen feeding on the floor in Millcombe on 17th March (photo: Thomas Weston).

By 2nd April, the lingering southerly wind resulted in another little arrival of migrants to the island, including a **Short-eared Owl** being mobbed by **Herring Gull** over **Millcombe**, a **White Wagtail** in St Helen's Field and a **Black-headed Gull** feeding in Tillage Field. Then the migrant inspiring southerly winds quickly changed to a westerly wind overnight. This seemed to stir a little displacement of some of our long distance, high Arctic waders leading to a small arrival on the island. This was noted when a **Eurasian Curlew** was heard in flight and a **Golden Plover** was seen flying over the Village heading south on 3rd, both the first of the year. Following Storm Kathleen's 65 mph gusts, a slight ease in the wind and a change to south-easterlies on 8th April resulted in a bit of movement at dawn. The standout highlight was a stunning male **Pied Flycatcher** who was the first of the year, followed by the first **Sandwich Tern** the subsequent day.



▲ Golden Plover near Quarry Cottage, 24th April (photo: Thomas Weston).
▶ First Pied Flycatcher of the year (photo: Thomas Weston).



After a couple of fogged out days, the 12th April brought the first three **Grasshopper Warbler** of the year, the first female **Redstart** of the year (going back and forth around the Heligoland Trap), a male **Pied Flycatcher** in the willows in Quarry Pond and a fall of **Willow Warblers**, **Chiffchaff** and **Blackcap** with a high proportion along the East coast. Added to these were a passage of **Linnet** and **Goldfinch**, with the highest count of the year for the former, an arrival of new **Wheatear**, four late **Redwing** and a steady passage of hirundines.

Two **Night-heron** – an adult and a sub-adult – on 13th marked the fifth island record. They were first seen in lower Millcombe, in the area between the gates of Millcombe House drive and the gas store just after 08.00 hrs on 13th. Both birds were seen intermittently over the next few days, mainly in the lower Millcombe area, including Smelly Gully, Brambles Gully and the eastern end of Millcombe Wood. Less often, one or the other was seen in flight over the Lower East Side Path near St Helen's Combe/the Ugly, or over the Landing Bay. At times, both roosted in trees in Brambles Gully, or in Millcombe Wood, enabling many visitors to enjoy excellent views. However, after the initial sighting when both birds were together, they were always seen separately. The sub-adult, which appeared to struggle more than the full adult to maintain its physical condition, was last seen by the stream at the mouth of Smelly Gully on 16th, whilst the adult was finally seen perched in a tree by Millcombe Pond at noon on 21st.



▲ Adult Night-heron in Millcombe, 13th April (photo: Thomas Weston).



▲ Male Whinchat along the Upper East Side Path (photo: Richard Campey).

The exciting morning continued upon discovery of a male **Golden Oriole** in Millcombe, coinciding with a notable early influx of Golden Oriole to South West England. It was seen intermittently – at times showing extraordinarily well – over the next week, though could be typically elusive for long periods, frustrating the efforts of many searching for it. Sightings were nearly all in Millcombe, though also occasionally in St Helen's Combe. It was last seen in Millcombe on 20th. Although completely silent during almost all of its prolonged stay – perhaps surprisingly for an adult male – it was heard sub-singing very briefly once or twice. During the evening of 19th it was watched for about 15 minutes as it hunted for large caterpillars in the blackthorn scrub between the Ugly and the top of the walled gardens in Millcombe, perching shrike-like to scan for prey, then pouncing once located and taking its prize back to the cover of a nearby sycamore tree to knock off coarse hairs before consumption. This sequence was repeated at least three or four times. This individual marks the 12th record of the last decade, eleven of which have been in spring. It was also the second earliest Golden Oriole ever recorded on Lundy.

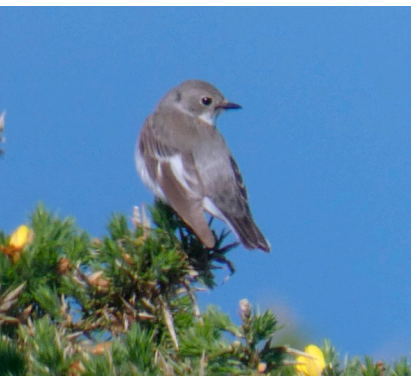
Spring overshoots continued through the week, with a **Purple Heron** on 15th April, a **Woodchat Shrike** on 18th April and the island's eighth **Little Ringed Plover** on 21st. After a couple of quieter days, the first **Teal** brood appeared on 27th, with a female spotted with 10 ducklings on Pondsburry. A slight northerly breeze on 28th broke the trend as cool weather led to an increase in migrants and a slight fall overnight. Walking through Millcombe Pines, the appearance of a female **Pied Flycatcher**, and small flocks of **Willow Warbler** totalling 30 was a welcome surprise. Quarter Wall Pool was illuminated with the first **Whinchat** of the year and a **Stone-curlew** briefly graced the nearby track.

Species diversity increased through early May and a run of notable records included the ninth occurrence of **Little Ringed Plover** and only the second **Spoonbill** record, both logged on 10th, swiftly followed by a **Wood Sandpiper** and **Osprey** logged the next day. A second spring **Woodchat Shrike** for the year appeared on 14th, accompanied by a possible **Montagu's Harrier**, although frustratingly the latter went unconfirmed. Following reports of a male and a female **Golden Oriole** in Millcombe on 11th, and a female-type seen on 12th, there were daily records in the Millcombe



▲ Golden Oriole in the hand, 18th May (photo: Sam Pitt-Miller).

area from 14th to 19th, with up to three individuals present – a male (singing at times) and two female-type birds (multiple observers). One of the latter was trapped and ringed in Millcombe on the morning of 18th. The red-letter Millcombe ringing session also featured a **Nightingale** in the hand, the twelfth to be ringed on Lundy. At the same time, a female subalpine warbler sp. was photographed feeding in gorse bushes just west of Ackland's Moor Pond during the late afternoon and later relocated near Pointless Wall that evening. What was almost certainly the same individual was seen moving south along the drystone wall at the main track gate in Quarter Wall at 09.05 hrs on 18th, but could never be pinned down to species.



A female **Tufted Duck** was seen at Pondsbury during the afternoon of 19th and remained up to and including 24th, representing the 26th island occurrence. Meanwhile, a striking grey-cast female flycatcher sp. on 21st had the team reaching for literature to separate flycatchers. The grey rump was particularly striking in this individual, however the white primary patch was too reduced to make a convincing case for Collared Flycatcher. One for the British Birds Records Committee, but most likely to be left unproven. Correspondence with neighbouring Skokholm Bird Observatory and an instructive image of a bird in the hand would support the Lundy flycatcher being within the pale range for **Pied Flycatcher**. A stunning bird nonetheless!

◀ Lundy flycatcher spp., 21st May (photo: Thomas Weston).

Summer

May came to a close with a **Lapwing** on 30th and a late **Reed Warbler** trapped and ringed in Millcombe. June opened with a **Red Kite** on 5th, struggling to depart the island with poor visibility shrouding Wales from view. Following on from **Yellow Wagtail** records pertaining to ones and twos during spring passage on 17 dates from 13th April to 17th May, a single male was logged regularly in Barton Field from 8th June, being joined by a female **Blue-headed Wagtail** from 17th June onwards. Sightings of both birds – especially the female – became more sporadic later in the month and the pair's discreet behaviour prompted strong suspicions that a breeding attempt might be underway. Successful breeding was confirmed in July when the male was seen carrying food in Barton Field on 6th, and a nest containing four well-grown young (all of which were ringed) was found there on 7th. This is the first fully documented record of breeding on Lundy, following unsubstantiated reports dating back to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the last of these concerning a pair said to have bred in 1930 (Wynne-Edwards & Harrison, 1932). Mixed pairs of Yellow and Blue-headed Wagtails are recorded regularly in the UK (e.g. as reported in Bird Atlas 2007–2011), particularly in southern England, closest to the geographical intergrade between the two races. The hybrid offspring are commonly referred to as 'Channel Wagtails'.

By 14th June, our first **Manx Shearwater** chick had hatched within our study colony and a busy night survey for the same species that evening resulted in the oldest bird caught being originally ringed as an adult in 2007. At the time this bird was potentially already four years old making it at least 22 years old! Over the course of the season, a record total of 1,049 **Manx Shearwater** were encountered during ringing efforts. 2024 celebrated the highest shearwater nest box uptake to date, with 10 chicks fledging, two failing at egg stage, one failing at chick stage and prospecting activity detected in up to seven additional boxes.

The first **Puffling** was observed on 26th June, followed up the next day with a ringing session at our **Herring Gull** productivity site resulting in a total of 23 chicks ringed. Broods of one and two were most frequently encountered, with a single brood of three being the most

► Lundy Bird Observatory team conducting shearwater ringing (photo: Joe Parker).



▲ Recently hatched Manx Shearwater chick in the hand (photo: Joe Parker).



noteworthy. The birds were only metal ringed this year, but plans are in the pipeline to colour ring the colony in the future to understand the lives of our breeding gulls better. In recent years, numbers have crashed on the island for large gulls, possibly due to low breeding success and potentially poor adult survival with HPAI not helping the numbers. Overall, seabird productivity ended poor-to-average. A poor season was recorded for **Kittiwakes** stemming from starvation, suspected predation and poor weather. **Puffin** and **Guillemot** had an average season and **Fulmar** nest site occupation continues to decline. However, positives can be drawn from the RSPB-led HPAI impact assessment census of Jenny's Cove. The survey conducted in early June found promising increases in the Jenny's Cove **Guillemot** (+26%), **Razorbill** (+75%), **Puffin** (+34%) and **Kittiwake** (+61%) populations compared to data from 2023. **Fulmar** remained in the red, clocking up a worrying 19.5% decrease across Jenny's Cove when compared to the previous season, which is in line with the general trend since the seabird recovery project was completed in 2004.

Autumn migration

An evening of ringing in Millcombe with the hope of catching some migrants resulted in the first juvenile **Willow Warbler** of the 'post breeding season' and a nice mix of juveniles of **Linnet**, **Robin** and **Goldfinch** on 17th July offered the first hints at autumn passage to come. A little more movement on 23rd involved a **Whimbrel** at Gannet's Rock, two **Green Sandpipers** on Pondsburry and a **Lapwing** on Barton's Field, plus an island rarity in the form of a **Little Egret** flying north past the Landing Bay. Appearances from **Greenshank**, **Ringed Plover** and **Curlew** (alongside the ever-present **Oystercatcher**) the following day resulted in the lofty heights of seven different wader species logged on the island over 48 hours.

By the end of July, **Willow Warbler** passage was well underway and after a lull in mid August, the first **Water Rail** since the spring was heard on 24th. A flyover **Turnstone** was spotted heading north up the east coast, five **Willow Warblers** demonstrated a small arrival of this species, with another few noted on the plateau, and there was a single **Goldcrest** in Millcombe Pines, and a single **Spotted**

Flycatcher in the trees near the Gas Store, with at least another four encountered elsewhere. The first southerly winds for a while encouraged a fall of scarcities on 28th and the day started brilliantly with a **Wryneck** in Millcombe on census, in between heavy showers and thick fog. There was also a small fall of flycatchers: island day totals were nine **Pied Flycatcher** and eight **Spotted Flycatcher**. Overhead, two **Tree Pipits** called south in the morning. The fog lifted at 2pm and a **Melodious Warbler** was later found on the east coast just south of Gannet's Coombe. The bird showed very well, popping up among the bracken and granite over the course of several hours. On the walk back a further two **Wryneck** were flushed from the east coast path, one at the stile at Three Quarter Wall and one at North Quarry. Two **Whimbrel** were present and the first post-breeding flock of five **Common Snipe** flew over the village.



◀ Melodious Warbler at Gannets' Coombe, 26th August
(photo: Angus Croudace).

A drop in strength and a slight NE wind resulted in another excellent day of autumn passage on 30th August. Standout highlights included a **Wryneck** around the Quarry/Quarry Beach area, a **Melodious Warbler** in Millcombe, a **Green Sandpiper** circling the island, a **Redshank**, **Ringed Plover**, **Whimbrel** and **Curlew** over the Village, a late **Swift** among a large hirundine flight and a **Great White Egret** off the east coast. All of this came to an abrupt halt the following day owing to strong easterly winds bracing the island. The next big fall was on 3rd September, featuring 430 **Willow Warbler** and 32 **Spotted Flycatcher**, the latter trumped on consecutive days from 7th-9th with 42, 42 and 57 individuals respectively. The count on 9th represents the second highest autumn count of recent years and coincided with a **Red-backed Shrike** and movement of 184 **Blackcap**, only exceeded by the 240 **Blackcap** logged on 24th. The 10th was greeted with a big clear out of common and scarce migrants, but a seawatch from South West Point in strong westerlies yielded a **Pomarine Skua** for the effort. Heavier showers downed some migrants on 12th, with a female type **Common Redstart**, our second autumn **Whitethroat** and our fifth **Wryneck** of the autumn all dumping into Millcombe mid-morning.

A **Kingfisher** flashed through the Landing Bay on 13th September, logged while the Island Warden was swimming! While an attempt to catch **Storm Petrel** in the Landing Bay later that evening was unsuccessful, two **Ringed Plover**, the sixth and seventh ever ringed on the island were a reasonable substitute. Between 14th-15th September, a **Little Bunting** was logged around the gardens in front of Paradise Row/Quarters, becoming the 24th record for Lundy, the sixth consecutive year, and the earliest ever in autumn. Prior to 2011 there had been no September occurrences on the island. A **Turtle Dove** flushed near Tibbetts on 15th seems likely to have been the same individual seen flying from the Upper East Side Path by Barton Field towards the Tavern and former stonecrusher area but then lost to view on 16th and photographed on the main track between Pondsburry and Tibbetts later that evening. Sadly, these were the only sightings of the year for this species. A first-winter **Red-breasted Flycatcher** seen on the side of the Ugly near the top of the 'Steps of Doom' that run between Millcombe and St Helen's Combe became the second earliest recorded for the island. Presumably the same individual was relocated in Millcombe Pines on 18th, remaining to 21st.

The stellar September run continued with a **Great Spotted Woodpecker** on 18th, **Osprey** and **Knot** on 19th, **Lapland Bunting** on 20th, **Wood Warbler** on 21st and **Short-toed Lark** on 22nd. The latter constitutes the 24th island record and quickly settled into island life, remaining along the main track near Pondsburry to Halfway Wall between 23rd Sep to 11th October. By 26th, the island welcomed the eagerly anticipated first **Yellow-browed Warbler** of the autumn which was recorded on at least 23 dates, with a maximum of five on 23rd October. Ten individuals were trapped and colour-ringed during October as part of a nationally coordinated programme of colour marking in an attempt to shed light on the onward movements of migrating **Yellow-browed Warblers** in autumn. Amazingly, one of these birds, ringed in Millcombe on 24th October, was re-sighted (and photographed) just a few days later at Lower Moors, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly, on 4th November! This was the first movement of any distance registered under the colour-marking project.

► Long-staying Short-toed Lark (photo: T Williams).



A first-winter **Purple Heron** was clocked flying north approximately 1 km off the east coast on 6th October. Shortly after, a run of **Barnacle Goose** records ensued, kick-starting with seven logged on 8th, shortly dwarfed by a flock of 14 touring the island on 11th before a separate individual settled into Barton Field between 18th-28th October. Overall, these added up to the 13th to 15th Lundy records. Three **Whooper Swan**, two adults and a juvenile, were seen flying north up the west side of the island on the morning of 10th, as well as being independently picked up distantly over Gannets' Combe by passengers on the MS Oldenburg.

An unprecedented total of 37 **Cory's Shearwater** were seen by multiple observers over the 17th October: for perspective, there are only two previous Lundy records, both involving individual birds, in 2011 and 2023. The **Cory's Shearwater** influx continued with 35 seen the next day, with all but one of the records before midday. Unprecedented numbers were recorded off the Isles of Scilly during October 2024 and it seems probable that the Lundy birds comprised the outermost edge of larger feeding aggregations in the Celtic Sea/South West approaches, possibly nudged towards the island by prevailing weather patterns on 16th/17th. Elsewhere, seawatching produced two **Arctic Skua**, two **Great Northern Diver**, and five adult **Mediterranean Gull**.

An **Ortolan Bunting** found among grass tussocks near the main track on Castle Hill on the morning of 18th October remained in the same general area until 22nd. It was often rather elusive, spending part of its time concealed within the rough grassland but at other times could be watched feeding in the open along the track, on the Castle 'turning circle' and on Castle Parade. Despite the continuing warm weather, autumn steadily progressed with an increase in thrushes through late October. 352 **Redwing** were counted on the 27th, and the first **Mistle Thrush** and **Fieldfare** of the autumn were encountered on the 26th and 28th respectively. **Swallow** numbers gradually decreased to single figures. The influx of **Hawfinch** into southern England produced four on the 25th, and three on the 26th, including one ringed. A **Cetti's Warbler** joined the party on 26th, trapped and ringed in the 'Secret Garden', Millcombe and becoming the eighth record and seventh ringed.



▲ Ortolan Bunting near the Castle, 17th Oct (photo: Richard Campey).



▲ Pallas's Warbler on the Terrace, 29th Oct (photo: B Hughes).

The eighth **Pallas's Warbler** was found on the Terrace during the morning of 29th October at the southern end of the Terrace near the Heligoland trap. It was quite mobile, moving between willow clumps and bracken cover, but often showed at close range, at times with a **Yellow-browed Warbler**. November then welcomed an unprecedented **Snow Bunting** arrival, logged on at least 22 dates between 7th October to 13th November, with the first individual at North End on 7th, and an October maximum of seven on 22nd. An exceptional influx at the start of November brought colossal counts (for Lundy) of 42 on 1st and 44 on 2nd, including flocks of 12 and 29 seen simultaneously. Twenty-five were feeding in South West Field on 6th November, while 14 were still present at South West Point on 13th November (including at least two ringed individuals). Nocturnal ringing sessions resulted in nine **Snow Bunting** being ringed, including singles on 24th and 30th October, one on 4th November, and five on 5th November. The counts of 42 and 44 logged on 1st and 2nd November equalled, then exceeded, the previous record day-total for Lundy of 42, set some 74 years previously on 9th November 1950! Prior to the autumn of 2024, the all-time ringing total for the island (1947 to 2023) stood at just 12!

Finally, a run of late autumn records saw a drake **Pochard** in the Landing Bay on 8th: only the tenth island record and the first since 2003. The subsequent day boasted a drake **Shoveler** on Rocket Pole Pond – only the 16th record for Lundy – before the wildfowl bonanza continued the day after that with a **Great Crested Grebe** flying past Lametry – only the 8th island record! To round off the season, a **Dartford Warbler** and **Richard's Pipit** occurred on 12th November and a **Pallid Swift** was documented over Millcombe and the Landing Bay area during the late morning and early afternoon on 16 November, representing only the second island record (first appearance on the Lundy list back in 2016).

Reference:

Wynne-Edwards VC and Harrison TH (1932) *A bird census on Lundy Island* (1930). *Journal of Ecology* 20:371-379.

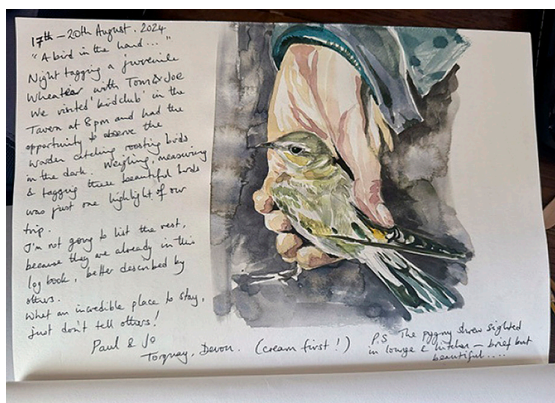
The Wheatear Re-trapping Adults for Survival (RAS) project

As a result of the rat eradication on Lundy Island in the early 2000's, the number of ground nesting birds and our seabird populations have increased. One of the success stories has been the **Wheatear**. To understand how the population dynamics of the **Wheatear** changes each year, a British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Re-trapping Adults for Survival (RAS) project measuring the survival of the species was set up in 2013 by Tony and Ann Taylor and is now in its 12th year.

The BTO RAS projects use amazing techniques to understand survival rates by looking at re-encounter rates of individuals within a population. In this writeup, 'survival rate' indicates the proportion of birds that survive and return to the site to breed each year; and 're-encounter rates' provide a measure of the probability of a bird's presence being detected should it have survived and returned. In theory, the higher the re-encounter rate, the more precise the survival estimate should be.

In 2024, the Wheatear RAS team arrived on the 18th May and left on the 8th June. Using spring traps, a total of 61 newly colour-ringed birds were captured between Castle Hill and Halfway Wall on the west coast during this RAS study period. This included 24 breeding males and 35 breeding females. Two of the birds were captured with metal rings only. These birds had not lost any colour rings but were nestlings that had been ringed on the island in 2023 showing some great site fidelity.

Throughout the same period that the catching was being undertaken, a total of 63 adults that had been colour-ringed in previous years were re-sighted. These included 35 males and 28 females. Through looking at the life histories of the birds recorded, we know that the oldest of these birds were three females, ringed in 2016, 2019, and 2021. As they were already adults when originally ringed, this makes them at least nine, six and five years old respectively. It is amazing to think that the 2016 female has crossed the Sahara at least 18 times during her life so far. Additionally, with 63 ringed females, and at least six in the study area that were not able to be caught for colour ringing, there were an estimated 69 pairs in the RAS study site in 2024. This is the highest number of pairs ever recorded in the RAS study site. Through the resighting, we know the adult survival between 2023 and 2024 was 55% with the average annual survival since 2013 being 56%.



▲ Watercolour of a Wheatear in the hand (credit: Paul Clarke).

Through monitoring the pairs, a total of five broods, totalling 20 chicks, were found within accessible nests and metal-only ringed when they were of appropriate sizes. This is a small proportion of the total number of nests that were found in 2024, but compared to the previous years, this is a record for the RAS study.

NB: The systematic list, dates of migrants, breeding and ringing records can now be found on the Lundy Bird Observatory website (<https://lundybirdobs.org.uk/>)