

# North Bull Island Bird Report

## 2024



Edited and compiled

by

Tom Cooney

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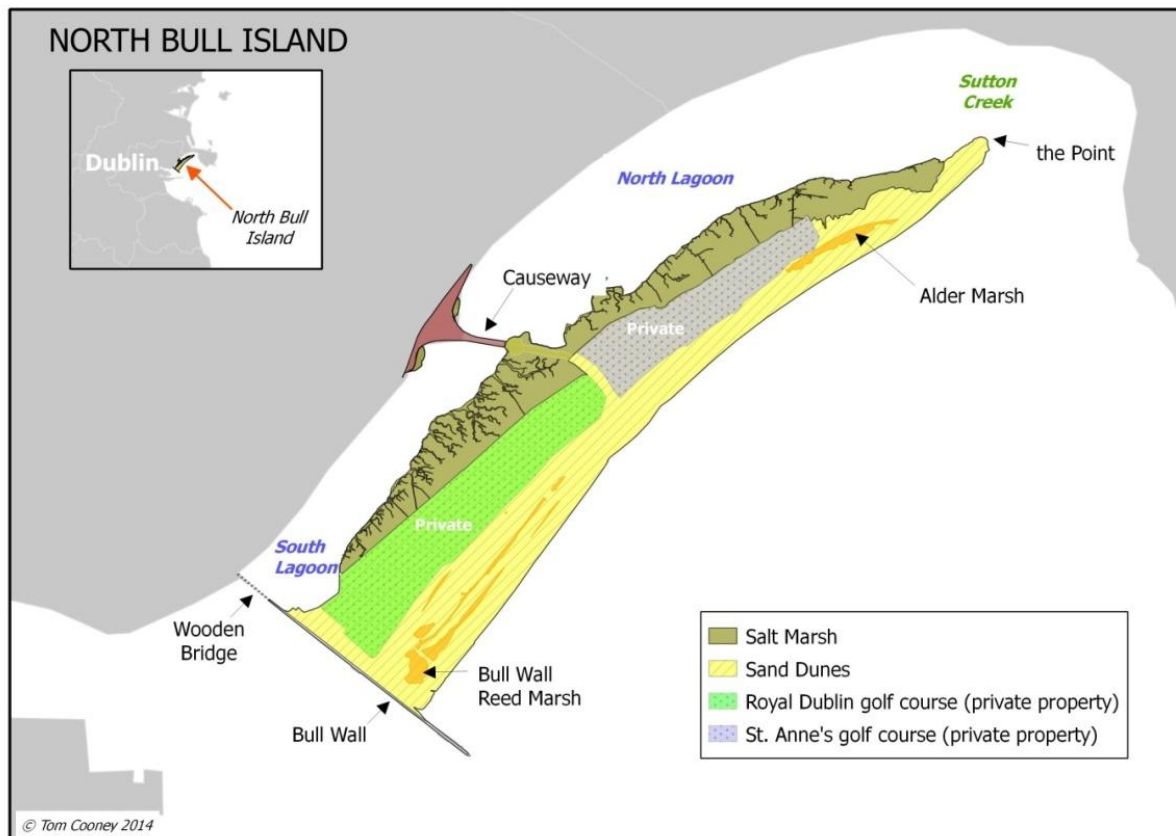
## Editorial

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

Sooty Shearwater was added to the island list in 2024. Other rare species included a Surf Scoter, Great White Egret and American Golden Plover. There were few reports of scarce species however Spoonbill, Goosander, Ring-billed Gull, Pink-footed Goose and Siskin were recorded. The year 2024 was also one of the poorest on record for regular passage migrants with no reports of Little Stint, Ruff and Curlew Sandpiper. In part, this may be due to fewer observers submitting their records.

Three birds fitted with satellite transmitters were recorded at North Bull Island in 2024. These included a Black-tailed Godwit, Kittiwake and Jack Snipe. Movements of these birds highlight the importance of North Bull Island for migratory species on the East Atlantic Flyway.

It has become apparent that there is confusion about the recording area for North Bull Island. Because it is important to main the integrity of the island list, a map delineating the reporting area will be uploaded to <http://www.bullislandbirds.com/> in 2025. In future, birds reported outside this area will not be included in annual reports and will not be added to the island database.



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

## Acknowledgements

This report would not be possible without the goodwill and cooperation of birdwatchers who contributed observations and photographs in 2024.

## List of Contributors

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Tom Doyle	Rosena McShane	
Ciaran Dunne		Gustavo Zoladz
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Cover photo: Buzzard (Mark Collins).

# Systematic List

Gill, F., Donsker, D. & Rasmussen, P. 2024. IOC World Bird List (v 14.2). Doi 10.14344/IOC.ML.14.2. <http://www.worldbirdnames.org/>

## **BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla hrota*

Common winter visitor

Latest spring date: Ten present up to 10th May (Paul Milne *et al.*) with one remaining to the 23rd May (Dermot O'Mahony *et al.*).

Earliest autumn date: A part of ten on 26th August (Paul Milne).

## **Dark-bellied Brent Goose** *B.b. bernicla*

Scarce winter visitor

In the early part of the year one or two were present from 9th March to 10th May (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty, Mark Collins, Joe Proudfoot and Paul Milne). One was on the south end of the island on 2nd and 31st October (Mark Collins, Paul Milne).



Dark-bellied Brent Goose (Photo: Mark Collins).

## **PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Very scarce visitor

One from 7th March to at least the 23rd April (Joe Proudfoot *et al.*).

**MUTE SWAN** *Cygnus olor*

Regular throughout the year

Several reports of one to four birds from March to August in the south lagoon.

**WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*

Scarce visitor during migration, occasional in winter

Single birds reported on 30th May (Mark Collins) and 11th October (Sean Mac Gowan).

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*

Resident, common winter visitor

Highest winter counts: 785 on 4th February (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty) and 500 on 30th October (Mark Collins).

Summer: 89 were present on 7th July (Sean Geraty). Several pairs bred.

**SHOVELER** *Spatula clypeata*

Winter visitor

Last spring date: One on 9th April (Mark Collins).

Earliest arrival date: Two on 2nd September (Ciaran Dunne).

High counts: 50 on 20th September (Philipp Gerasimov) and 122 on 31st October (Ciaran Dunne).

**WIGEON** *Mareca penelope*

Winter visitor

Last spring date: One on 11th May (Mark Collins) was very unusual.

Earliest arrival date: Two on 2nd August (Ben Clarke, Stephen Donnelly).

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*

Winter visitor

Latest date spring: No late dates reported.

Earliest date autumn: One on 23rd August (Mark Collins).

Highest counts: 162 on 11th January (Ciaran Dunne).

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*

Winter visitor

Latest date spring: Five on 7th April (Mark Collins).

Earliest date autumn: Five on 21st July (Sean Geraty).

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce resident

Five on 25th March and 16th April near the Bull Wall and nine at the River Naniken outflow on 27th June (Mark Collins, Peter Wittemann). One on 11th January (Paul Milne) on the south end of the island was unusual for this species.

**SURF SCOTER** *Melanitta perspicillata*

Vagrant

A female/immature was seen in Sutton Creen on the 15th, 19th and 22nd November (Paul Milne *et al.*).

This bird was reported at Baldoyle Estuary from 30th October and 4th November. There has been at least one previous record involving an immature in November and December 1958.

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*

Regular winter visitor in small numbers

Up to seven regularly in from January to 4th May and from 7th August to the end of the year (Ciaran Dunne, Paul Milne).

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*

Scarce winter visitor

In the early part of the year, one was present regularly near the Bull Wall but two were present on 8th and 11th April (Mark Collins, Ciaran Dunne). In the latter part of the year, one at the Bull Wall on 22nd October (Cian Cardiff) was probably the bird seen at Sutton Creek from 31st October to 15th November (Paul Milne, Aidan G. Kelly, Ciaran Dunne).



Long-tailed Duck (Photo: Mark Collins).

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce winter visitor

Sutton Creek: Two on 10th January (Ciaran Dunne).

Wooden Bridge: Six on 13th February (Ciaran Dunne) and one 29th December (Paul Milne). Five, one male and four females, on 27th December (Ciaran Dunne).

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*

Rare visitor

A female off the northeast end of the island on 24th November (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

This is the ninth record since 1929 and the first since 1986.



**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*

Regular in small numbers but very scarce in summer

Maximum monthly counts as follows:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
16	3	40	7	18	-	-	-	-	19	80	-

The majority of birds were seen off the Bull Wall or in Sutton Creek but up to seven frequented the south lagoon from January to early April. The November count was large the island.



Red-breasted Merganser (Photo: Holly Grogan).

**SWIFT** *Apus apus*

Frequent in spring and autumn, scarce in summer

Latest dates: Seven on 9th August (Jim Byrne) and one on 1st September (Stephen Bolger).

A poor year with low numbers reported but the bird in September was very late.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*

Scarce summer visitor

Earliest spring date: One on 20th May (Kevin Dooley).

Latest autumn date: One on 9th August (Derek O'Reilly).

Single birds reported regularly but two were present on 27th and 30th May (Mark Collins).

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*

Very scarce visitor

One on 30th August (Grzegorz Burkowski).

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*

Very scarce visitor

Single birds reported on 4th January (Grzegorz Burkowski) and 11th May (Mark Collins).

**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*

Very scarce winter visitor

Two on 15th and 17th June (Mark Collins) with one 18th June (Grzegorz Burkowski).

There are previous records for June but two at the reed marsh is very unusual.

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*

Resident

Up to four were reported from many areas on the island. Most records were from the Bull Wall Reed Marsh.

**COOT** *Fulica atra*

Resident

Up to four birds at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh in the early part of the year (Ciaran Dunne, Mark Collins, Sean Mac Gowan). One on the southern end of the island on 11th January (Paul Milne).



Little Grebe (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).



**LITTLE GREBE** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Scarce winter visitor

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

Wooden Bridge: Maximums of six on many dates but none were reported from mid-March to mid-September (Ciaran Dunne, Philipp Gerasimov).

Bull Wall Reed Marsh: One on 17th March (Ciaran Dunne) was an unusual location.

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus*

Mainly a winter visitor but occasional at other times

Highest monthly counts:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
62	-	58	14	-	-	-	22	-	28	93	-

Great Crested Grebes are still common visitors to deeper waters around the island with 50 to 100 birds wintering annually.

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

A minimum of 1,400 on 2nd February in the south lagoon.

Oystercatchers are common winter visitors to Dublin Bay with an average of 3,000 annually.

**GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Small numbers reported in spring and autumn but no summer records.

Over 300 overwinter in Dublin Bay annually, mainly at North Bull Island.

**GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Earliest autumn date: One on 26th August at the causeway (Paul Milne).

Counts: Over 1,000 would not be unusual in autumn but Golden Plover are generally quite scarce in winter. A flock of 84 was on the south mudflats on 13th January (Mark Collins).

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis dominica*

Vagrant

Juvenile seen and photographed on the beach on 9th November.

This is the third site record. Previous occurrences were in 1971 and 2009.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*

Former breeder, common passage migrant and winter visitor

Breeding: No birds were at the former breeding site.

Counts: 45 on 15th August (Mark Collins). Many reports of small flocks in the general vicinity of the Bull Wall.

**LAPWING** *Pluvialis pluvialis*

Common in autumn, uncommon in winter

Autumn arrivals: First post-breeding birds was a party of 12 on 7th July increasing to 40 by the 28th (Sean Geraty).

Small numbers, usually less than 30, were reported in winter.

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*

Regular passage migrant

Maximum monthly counts as follows:

<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>
11	8	1	1	3	1	1

Very low numbers were reported between 19th April to 15th October.

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*

Common winter visitor, passage migrant, small number summer

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

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Summer: Over 100 were present in May and a high count of 280 on 8th June (Mark Collins, Sean Mac Gowan).

Birds in late-May and June are undoubtedly second-calendar year birds that remain to moult.

Similar numbers belonging to the same age category over-summer and moult at Dundalk Bay.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Summer: 22 on 7th July may have been oversummering birds.

Autumn arrivals: 230 on 22nd July (Mark Collins).

High counts in late July are usually birds returning from their breeding grounds in Iceland.



Black-tailed Godwit (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**JACK SNIPE** *Lymnecryptes minimus*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Three on 5th February on the south saltmarsh was the only report.

**COMMON SNIPE** *Gallinago gallinago*

Common winter visitor

Latest date spring: One on 24th March.

Earliest date autumn: One on 5th September.

Small numbers reported from various locations but mostly from the Bull Wall Reed Marsh. Although Snipe overwinter on the island, it is also a stopover site for passage migrants. A bird fitted with a satellite tracker in Normandy (France) on 18th April 2024, left that location on 5th May and one day later was at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh. It remained on the south end of the island for less than 24 hours and departed early on the 7th May. It then spent several days in Mayo before the transmitted failed on the 15th May.



Common Snipe (Photo: Holly Grogan).

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*

Scarce and irregular migrant

One on 12th April and three on 8th July at the causeway.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Autumn: 15 on 7th July (Mark Collins) were the first returning birds reported. This increased rapidly to 336 by the 21st (Sean Geraty).

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*

Uncommon passage migrant and winter visitor

Highest counts received were 20 on 25th February and 14 on 5th September.



**TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*

Winter visitor and passage migrant

Causeway: 40 on 25th February (Sean Geraty).

Beach (south end): 26 on 25th February (Sean Geraty).

Bull Wall: Four on 16th March and six on the 19th May (Sean Geraty, Ciaran Dunne). Up to 33 in several dates in July and October (Philipp Gerasimov, Sean Geraty).



Turnstone (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*

Common winter visitor and passage migrant

Spring: 500-600 remained to mid-April.

Summer: Three on 23rd May were likely to be second-calendar year birds.

Autumn: Two on 4th and eight on 8th August were the first reports of autumn.

Winter: 2,200 at the Wooden Bridge on 13th January (Mark Collins) and 1,800 in the south lagoon on 9th March (Sean Geraty). 1,500 on south mudflats on 18th December (Mark Collins).

**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor

Maximum counts as follows:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
102	420	450	180	38	22	42	200	22	100	nc	172

Sanderlings were recorded in all months with highest numbers in the early part of the year.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

Very common passage migrant and winter visitor

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

Spring passage: Highest counts were only 65 on 24th May and 46 on 7th June (Mark Collins).

Autumn: 75 on 15th July (Ciaran Dunne).



Dunlin (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor

Bull Wall: One on 3rd February (Tom Cooney).

**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*

Uncommon summer visitor

Three on 7th August (Ben Clarke, Stephen Donnelly) was the only report.

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*

Common in summer

Latest date: One at the Bull Wall on the 5th September (Mark Collins).

Maximum counts: The highest count was only 30 at Sutton Creek on 21st June (Paul Milne).

**SANDWICH TERN** *Thalasseus sandvicensis*

Common passage migrant, occasional in summer

Earliest spring date: Two on 29th March (Paul Milne).

Latest autumn dates: Two on 5th September (Mark Collins).

Maximum counts: The only counts over ten were 12 on 20th April and 11 on 3rd September (Ciaran Dunne).



**LITTLE GULL** *Hydrocoloeus minutus*

Regular but scarce visitor

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

A very poor year but possibly overlooked.



Common Tern (Photo: Mark Collins).

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*

Regular visitor mainly in spring

Bull Wall:                      Reported from 16th March to 7th April with maximum counts of 22 on 25th March (Mark Collins) and 25 on 7th April (Tom Doyle).

A bird fitted with a satellite transmitter in NW France on 24th June eventually moved into the Irish Sea as far north as the Island Of Arran (Scotland). This bird stopped off at North Bull Island on 29th September when the transmitter failed.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Common winter visitor

Reports of over 100 birds in winter but lowest numbers reported in mid-summer.

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*

Uncommon visitor

Maximum monthly counts.

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
-	2	2	-	1	3	6	36	5	-	1	-

A typical seasonal spread of records with birds reported from many areas on the island. Peak numbers in August were recorded at the Bull Wall.

**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*

Mainly winter visitor

Highest count: Several hundred were present in the early and latter part of the year. Small numbers of second calendar year birds summered.

**RING-BILLED GULL** *Larus delawarensis*

Scarce visitor

Single birds reported on 15th January, 7th March and 29th March (Mark Carmody *et al.*).

It seems likely that all three reports refer to the same bird.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

Common

A bird showing features of *argentatus* race was present on 2nd January (Joe Proudfoot).

This race is rarely reported from the island.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*

Uncommon in summer, small numbers in winter

Highest counts in autumn were 43 on 25th August (Andy Burke) and 87 on 20th September (Mark Collins).

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*

Uncommon in summer, small numbers in winter

Less than ten were reported on several dates.

**BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cephus grille*

Regular visitor all year

Sutton Creek: Two on 19th November (Paul Milne).

Beach: 18 on 12th July off the beach (Ciaran Dunne) was unusually high for this location.

Bull Wall: Very few reports. Highest counts included four on 9th April and seven on 19th November.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*

Occasional visitor

The only reports were of nine on 22nd April and two on 12th July off the beach (Ciaran Dunne).

Of the three resident auk species, Razorbills are the least frequently reported.

**GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*

Occasional visitor

Maximum numbers reported in each month:

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
-	2	1	5	5	1	-	-	1	1	1	-

Although a common breeding species at Howth Head, Ireland's Eye and Lambay Island, Guillemots remain a very scarce visitors to the deeper waters around the island.



Guillemot (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata*

Uncommon winter visitor

<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
2	0	3	1	1	-	-	-	4	11	5	-

A typical spread of records. The small peak in October probably included birds on passage.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*

Scarce winter visitor

Maximum numbers reported in each month:

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

Regular numbers in winter but one on 12th July (Ciaran Dunne) was an unusual date.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Ardenna grisea*

Vagrant

One reported on 29th September (Michael Noonan) was the first record for the island.

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*

Occasional spring to autumn

Reported from May to July with peaks of 200 on 21st June (Paul Milne) and 27 on 12th July (Ciaran Dunne).

**GANNET** *Morus bassanus*

Occasional offshore in summer

Fewer than ten birds reported on most dates between 25th March and 5th July with a maximum of 12 on 12th May (Mark Collins *et al.*).

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Regular visitor all year

Bull Wall: 77 on 30th July (Mark Collins) and 40 on 26th August (Grzegorz Burkowski).



Shag (Photo: Mark Collins).

**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Scarce visitor

Highest counts were of eight on 11th January, four on 13th January and again on 9th March.

**SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*

Rare

One was reported to have been seen and photographed on 15th May (S. Chou).

This is the first report since 2020.

**LITTLE EGRET** *Egretta garzetta*

Non-breeding resident

The highest count was 57 on 17th September (Mark Collins).



Little Egret (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**GREAT WHITE EGRET** *Ardea alba*

Very rare

One on 28th October (Paul Houraghan).

This is the second island record.

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*

Non-breeding resident

Up to 22 were present regularly in July and August. Lower numbers at other times.

**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*

Regular visitor

Single birds reported on many occasions from various locations around the island.





Sparrowhawk (Photo: Mark Collins).

**COMMON BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*

Regular visitor

Highest number reported monthly as follows:

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

Although a relatively recent addition to the island list, Common Buzzards now occur regularly throughout the year. The majority of reports are from the causeway area or mainland coast but birds were seen on the saltmarshes on 24th March, 31st May and 16th June.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*

Scarce and irregular winter visitor

Single birds reported on 20th January (Jack Tynan), 23rd January (Conn O'Brien), 17th March (Proinsias Mac an Bheatha) and 7th October (Mark Collins).

**KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis*

Scarce but regular winter visitor

Single birds reported the River Santry outflow on 11th January and on 13th dates from 28th August to 3rd November (many observers). Two on 30th August was unusual (Domonic Kelly).

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*

Resident

Single birds reported from many areas on the island but two were present on 30th July.



Kestrel (Photo: Philipp Gerasimov).

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Single birds were seen regularly from January to the 26th April and again from 15th October to the end of 2024. The majority of reports were from the north end of the island.

**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*

Regular visitor

Single birds on many dates from January to 9th April and again from 9th July to the end of the year. Two were reported in January, March, October and December.



Peregrine (Photo: Mark Collins).

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone corone*

Scarce

One on 12th March. Four on 2nd April (Shane Thomas Quinn).

**HOODED CROW** *Corvus corone cornix*

Resident

High counts:                   58 on south saltmarsh on 24th March (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).  
   47 at the Point on 28th October (Ciaran Dunne).

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*

Occasional visitor

Six reports for January, May, September and October. Single birds were recorded but there were four on 8th August, three on 14th September and two on 7th October.

**COAL TIT** *Periparus ater*

Rare on island, occasional on mainland shore

Singles birds reported from Sutton shoreline on 12th July and 27th August (Paul Milne).

**BLUE TIT** *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Rare on island, occasional on mainland shore

One on 11th January at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh (Paul Milne).

Three on Sutton shoreline on 12th July and 27th August with one there on 28th October (Paul Milne).

**GREAT TIT** *Parus major*

Occasional on occasional on mainland shore

One on 27th August on Sutton shoreline (Paul Milne).

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*

Common breeder, lower numbers in winter

No unusual counts received.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: One on 24th March (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

High counts: 40 on 30th April at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh; 40 on 4th May on the Sutton shoreline (Paul Milne) and 120 on 7th July on the north end of the beach (Sean Geraty).

**BARN SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: One on 7th April (Mark Collins) was quite late for this species.

Latest autumn date: One on 7th October (Mark Collins).

No large numbers reported in 2024.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica*

Summer visitor and passage migrant

Earliest spring date: One on 7th April (Mark Collins).

Small numbers reported in summer.

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Uncommon but regular passage migrant

Spring passage: High count of 50 on 15th April on the south end of the island (Kevin Dooley). Smaller numbers at other times in April.

Autumn passage: One on 10th August at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh (Mark Collins).

**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*

Scarce but regular passage migrant

Spring passage: Two at Santry River outflow on 7th April (Mark Collins) and one at the Royal Dublin Golf Course on 11th April (Sean Mac Gowan).

Autumn passage: Single birds on 17th September at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh and the Alder Marsh on 7th October (Mark Collins).



**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Rare breeder, scarce passage migrant

All reports were from the southern end the island near the Bull Wall Reed Marsh. Up to five were reported between 5th May and 10th August (Proinsias Mac an Bheatha, Ciaran Dunne, Gerry Power, Mark Collins).

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*

Scarce but regular spring passage migrant, occasional in autumn

One heard reeling in the southern dunes on 2nd May (Tom Cooney).

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*

Scarce migrant and winter visitor

Single birds on 2nd and 9th (Tom Cooney, Grzegorz Burkowski) and on 27th July (Mark Collins).

**WHITETHROAT** *Curruca communis*

Scarce passage migrant

Alder Marsh: One on 30th May (Mark Collins).

St. Anne's Golf Course: One on 8th June (Sean Geraty, Luke Geraty).

Bull Wall Reed Marsh: One from 20th to 27th May (Sean Mac Gowan, Mark Collins, Stacia Somers).



Whitethroat (Photo: Mark Collins).

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*

Scarce passage migrant, mainly in late autumn

One on 2nd and 11th January (Joe Proudfoot, Paul Milne) and five on the 30th December (Mark Collins) at the Bull Wall Reed Marsh. Although not on the island itself, one was seen on the coastal path on 19th December (Paul Milne).





Goldcrest (Photo: Mark Collins)

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident

Common in most scrub habitats.

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Small flocks of up to 500 birds were reported in July and August.

**SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

Only two records of single birds on the 11th January and 26th October (Ciaran Dunne, Paul Milne).

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*

Rare breeder, scarce winter visitor

Single birds reported on several dates in the winter months.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*

Very scarce passage migrant

Two at the Alder Marsh on 4th September (Dominic Kelly).

Reports in autumn are very unusual.

**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*

Uncommon resident

Several pairs bred.

**WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Common passage migrant, former breeder

Earliest spring date: One on 24th March (Mark Collins, Edd Kealy).

Latest autumn date: One on 11th October (Sean Mac Gowan).

Very poor year with only a maximum of five reported.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Scarce summer visitor

Reports received of up to six near the causeway from January to May (several observers). On the Sutton shoreline, one on 18th June and three of 12th July (Paul Milne).

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*

Rare resident

Only one report of a single bird on 24th March (Mahta Mansouri).



Spotted Flycatcher (Photo: Dominic Kelly).

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*

Occasional along mainland shore

Several sightings of individual birds along the mainland side of the lagoons.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Resident and passage migrant

Several pairs bred successfully.

**White Wagtail** *Motacilla a. alba*

Scarce passage migrant

None reported.



**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*

Common resident

Small numbers reported in winter but common from spring to autumn.

**ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*

Uncommon winter visitor, probably under reported

There was a notable increase in the number of Rock Pipits reported in 2024. Birds were recorded in March, July and each month from August to December from various locations around the island. Single birds were seen on most occasions but two were present on 26th August, 5th September and 14th November.



Rock Pipit (Photo: Dominic Kelly).

**LINNET** *Linaria cannabina*

Resident, passage migrant and winter visitor

Highest counts: 120 on 26th August (Grzegorz Burkowski), 160 on 20th September and 250 on 7th October (Mark Collins).

Smaller flocks of up to 40 were also reports occasionally.

**REDPOLL** *Acanthis flammea*

Scarce passage migrant and winter visitor

One on 3rd November (Paul Milne).

**GOLDFINCH** *Carduelis carduelis*

Common passage migrant and winter visitor, occasional breeder

None reported on the island but small numbers recorded on the Sutton shoreline including 11 on 12th July (Paul Milne).

**SISKIN** *Spinus spinus*

Rare

Three on 16th April (Peter Wittemann) and one on 12th July (Paul Milne).

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Uncommon resident

Recorded nesting in many areas.



## **Conservation Issues**

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

The same activities that caused disturbances to birds and other wildlife in previous years were reported again in 2024. Wildlife and habitats on the island will continue to be under pressure in the National Nature Reserve for many decades into the future unless existing EU and Irish legislation designed to protect wildlife is enforced.