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Cork Bird Report 1970

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Since the discontinuation of the Cork Bird Report a number of local observers have felt the need to put on record the results of ornithological work in the county during 1970. Consequently it was decided to produce this report for private circulation.

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GREAT NORTHERN DIVER Gavia immer

May records: one at Ballycotton Bay on 3rd. One stayed in Schull Harbour to at least 24th.

Records east of the Old Head, Kinsale, were scarce. At Ballycotton recorded on only 17 dates throughout the year and over four only twice (maximum eight on 25th November).

GREAT CRESTED GREBE Podiceps cristatus

Breeding: one nest with eggs at the Bearagh; at least three pairs on Lough Allua (two nests found) and one pair with young at Ballycotton.

One at Killerran Lake on 2th February and one on the sea at Ballycotton on 17th and 28th October were the only non-breeding records from outside Cork Harbour.

SLAVONIAN GREBE Podiceps auritus

Two at Dunmanus Bay on 18th January (TCK, TO'K, 2V) were at the same locality as a pair in January 1969 and again in 1971.

STORM PETREL Hydrobates pelagicus

Small numbers of the species were seen inside Cork Harbour, near Fort Carlisle, during a very large passage of seabirds off Roche's Point on 8th August (A.R.).

LARK SHEARWATER Procellaria rufinus

A raft of about 1,000 birds off Roche's Point on 8th August was feeding on a large school of Sprats (A.R.).

SOOTY SHEARWATER Procellaria grisea

A very large and unprecedented movement was recorded from a number of points during August and September.

At Cape Clear a total of 3210 passed the island between 15th August and the end of the month. In September 699 were recorded (CCSC).

Exceptional numbers were seen off Kizen Head in the periods 10th-20th and 22nd-26th August. Sea-watches twice daily produced very large numbers of the species often outnumbering

Manx, and on a few occasions passage was estimated to be in excess of 1,000 per hour going west. On 22nd August a raft of the species off the head was considered to contain about 6,000 birds (PJW).

At Dursley Head a total of 1,175 was seen during 60 hours sea-watching between 2nd and 25th August. The highest rates of passage were reached on the latter days of the period, peaking at 48 per hour west and 116 per hour east on 25th (JG, JM).

LITTLE EGRET Egretta gazetta

Four records: one at Ballycotton from 19th April to 2nd May (numerous observers). One at Timoleague on 2nd May (GAN et al). One at Clonakilty from 16th May stayed to June 1971. (numerous observers). One at Ballycotton on 8th June (CDH). There are nine previous county records.

NIGHT HERON Nycticorax nycticorax

An adult at Ballycotton from 6th July was last seen on 3rd August (DD, TCK, DO'S, KP et al). There are nine previous county records but this is only the third in the present century.

SPOONBILL Platalea leucordia

Ballycotton: one from 21st February to 1st March (PO'F, DO'S). Two flew east past the Lighthouse on 17th April (Lightkeepers) and one on the small island on the same date (DO'S). One on 31st July (IA, LC). One at Ballymacoda on 26th December (NJO'F).

TEAL Anas crecca

A male of the American race A. c. carolinensis at Ballycotton Lake from 15th February was last seen on 3rd April. This is the third consecutive year in which the species has been recorded at this locality in spring.

GADWALL Anas strepera

The maximum recorded at Ballycotton during the year was 66 on 19th December. The pattern of records was very similar to 1969 (CBR 7:7) but there was a peak of 44 in mid-February. The only record from another locality was a male at Roandonagan Lake on 21st May (PBL) and 24th (JJH).

WIGEON Anas penelope

Summer: recorded at Ballycotton on a number of dates in May and July, and once in June (a male on 20th).

PIRTAIL Anas acuta

Early dates: two at Ballycotton on 20th July and seven on 23rd.

SHOVELER Spatula clypeata

None summered at Ballycotton (cf. CBR 7:7).
The maximum winter count was 91 on 1st February.

SCAUP Aythya merula

All records: nine males and four females off Hop Island on 27th March and 1st April (CDH). Two at Ballycotton Lake on 15th and 16th September and one on 25th. One, a male, near Ashgrove on 8th December (WJO'F).

POODER Aythya ferina

Early date: two females at Ballycotton on 20th July.

GOLDEN EYE Bucephala clangula

Few were reported apart from the regular flock at Cork harbour. A pair near Baltimore on 16th December (FMcC), records from West Cork are very unusual.

LONG-TAILED DUCK Clangula hyemalis

.. male and four females at Courtmasherry on 9th January, then up to three regularly to 22nd March (CDA, TCK, KF, JTL). Two females at the north side of Great Island on 17th January (CDH, KF, IS). One at Ballycotton on 24th October.

VELVET SCOTER Melanitta fusca

One at Duncannon Bay on 18th January (TCK, TO'K, AV).
This is only the sixth Cork record in over 50 years.

GREY LAG GOOSE Anser anser

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Ten at Ballycotton on 1st January, 14 on 5th and ten flying north on 8th. Twelve flying north over the Lighthouse on 12th December (JL-W, DO'S).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE Anser albifrons

Three at Ballycotton on 3rd January (PO'F, DO'S).

BENICK'S SWAN Cygnus bewickii

26 at Ballycotton on 1st January and 15 on 2nd to 4th (PO'F, DO'S). Seven at Lissagriffon on 9th January. (CDI).

BUZZARD Buteo buteo

One at Ballycotton on 19th April (DO'S). This is only the fourth recorded occurrence of the species in Co Cork in the past 70 years. The records have been in April, May, July, and November.

HEB BARRIER Circus cyaneus

Migration: one, a female, flying steadily west at height over Roche's Point on 17th October (PAC, KP, MA).

QUAIL Coturnix coturnix

The three records in 1969 bring to seven the total of known occurrences in the county since 1953. One found dead at the Old Head, Kinsale, on 20th May (GA?). Two pairs at Roche's Point for a few weeks in late May - early June (AK). One heard calling in a hayfield at Broomfield, Middleton, in the second week of July was subsequently caught and found to be a female with an injured wing. (KP).

CORMORANT Grus grus

Numbers were very low throughout the whole county during the summer, with the species totally absent in some areas.

LAPWING Vanellus vanellus

A very large influx into Ballycotton in January peaked at 8,000 on 25th, but most had departed again by the end of the month.

Autumn passage at Ballycotton recorded from late June but little movement until late October and a peak of 1,500 on 18th.

IRISH PLOVER Charadrius alexandrinus

One at Ballycotton on 23rd April (DC'S).
This is the ninth Irish record and the first in Co Cork.

GREY PLOVER Charadrius squatarola

Ballycotton: up to 15 in January and February. Two distinct peaks in spring passage, one in mid-March and the other in mid-April.

Autumn passage at Ballycotton from mid-August with a very similar pattern to 1968 and '69, peaking in late September. At Ballynacoda a build-up in numbers in autumn peaked at 48 on 8th September.

LESSER GOLDEN PLOVER Charadrius dominicus

One at Lisagriffon on 19th and 20th August (FJN).
This is the tenth Irish record and the fourth in Co Cork.

DOWITCHER Limnodromus griseus/scolopaceus

One at Ballycotton from 13th December to April 1971.
This is the fifth Cork record of the genus, all since 1966.

JACK SKIPE Lymnocyptes minimus

There were more records than in any recent year, all at Ballycotton. The 16 records were in January (2), February (1), October (5), November (6) and December (2). All except one (four on 7th November) referred to one or two birds.

SCOTCHCOCK Scolopax rusticola

Migration: one at Ballycotton on September 21st (TCK).

WHIMBREL Numenius phaeopus

Ballycotton: spring passage from mid-April to early May peaking at 120 on 2nd May. Recorded irregularly in summer. Light passage during late July and early August. Regular movement in September, up to 15 daily; few in October-November, apart from a flock of 30 on 7th November.

GREEN SANDPIPER Tringa ochropus

Passage at Ballycotton from 8th August to 20th September, with over one only on 25th August (threes).

HOOD SANDPIPER Tringa glareola

One at Ballycotton on 10th May, another on 8th June and two on 9th were the first Cork records for the months. Two on 7th July. Autumn passage from 7th August to 1st September was very light with a maximum of only three on any day (8th and 22nd). One on 20th December. There was no record from outside Ballycotton.

COCK OF SANDPIPER Tringa hypoleucos

One at Douglas on 1st April was probably a migrant but may have wintered. Autumn passage through Ballycotton was similar to 1969 (CBR 7:10), with peaks of 34 on 12th and 18th July, but there were more in September and one on 2nd October.

REDSHANK Tringa totanus

A pair performing distraction display at Ballymacoda on 21st June (DO'S). This is only the second case of proved breeding in Co Cork in recent years.

SPOTTED REDSHANK Tringa erythropus

Ballycotton: recorded in every month. Up to four daily in January and singly in February. Spring passage peaked at five on 31st March and 26th April. Up to seven daily in June. Autumn passage similar to 1969 (CBR 7:10), with a peak of eight on 10th October. at Ballymacoda, 18 on 28th June and an autumn peak of 16 on 8th September.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS Tringa flavipes

One at Douglas from 27th March to 1st April (CCM, RI, KF). This may have been the bird seen at Tivoli in December 1939. One at Ballycotton on 23rd September was joined by a second on or before 4th October. Both stayed to at least 11th October and one to 22nd November. There are four previous Cork records of the species, two in 1967 and two in 1969.

KNOT Calidris canutus

The first arrivals in autumn were singles at Ballycotton on 15th July and at Lissagriffon and Tivoli on 2nd August. At Ballycotton, none in the period January to June. Recorded on six dates in August from 3rd, but over two only on 23rd (14). Up to nine almost daily in September, scarcer in October and only one in November.

PURPLE SANDPIPER Calidris maritima

There were only five records, all at Ballycotton, on 15th February (four), 19th March (six), 14th August (four), 9th December (three) and 21st (two).

LITTLE SPINTAIL Calidris minuta

For the first year since 1966 there was no spring record. The first were two at Ballycotton on 22nd August, then up to eight daily to the end of the month. Two peaks in September, on 17th (22) and on 29th (24). No large arrival in October and only one in November (on 2nd). There were only two records outside Ballycotton.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER: Calidris fuscicollis

One at Tivoli on 4th October (CCM). This is the eight Cork record of the species, all since 1966.

AIRD'S SANDPIPER Calidris bairdii

One at Ballycotton from 15th September to 26th (CCM, DO'S, et al). This is the fourth Cork record of the species, two previous ones being in 1966 and 1969 (two).

PECTORAL SANDPIPER Calidris melanotos

Up to three daily at Ballycotton between 16th September and 7th October. Probably only three birds were involved. Two at Lissagriffen on 9th September stayed to at least 22nd (SH, KP et al). One at Clonakilty on 9th October (CCM).

DUBLIN Calidris alpina

An arrival of the species in May was noted at a number of localities. At Ballycotton the peak was 350 on 3rd, the birds moving on almost immediately.

CORKLAW SANDPIPER Calidris testacea

A smaller autumn passage than in 1960 but above the average of the past five years. The majority of records were from Ballycotton and the species was relatively scarce elsewhere. One at Ballycotton on 26th July was the first but there was no further record until 22nd August when six arrived. After 26 on 24th August numbers fluctuated in September, up to 17 (16th and 21st), and in October to 21 (11th). Up to two in November until 7th and one on 20th December.

RUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER Tryngites subruficollis

One at Ballycotton on 2nd September (DO'S), it or another on 8th (DD, SH, DO'S, KP) and one on 13th which was not the bird of 8th (PO'F, KP). There are only eight previous Cork records of the species, six of them in 1962.

RUFF Philomachus pugnax

The maximum reported in winter was 36 at Ballycotton on 25th January. Spring passage at Ballycotton from late February to mid-April, peaking on 21st March (21) and on 4th April (27). None mid-April to late July. Autumn passage followed the usual pattern, peaking on 18th September (29) but with another later peak of 25 on 5th October. Few records in November, but over five twice, 21 on 5th and 22 on 22nd. In December the maximum was 20 on 23rd. One at Lissagriffen on 6th May was a male in breeding plumage (CCK).

AVOCET Recurvirostra avocetta

One at Belvelly on 17th January (CDH, KP, LS) was the only record.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE Phalaropus tricolor

One at Ballycotton on 13th September (PO'P, KP) stayed to at least 25th (CCH, KO'D, BO'M, DO'S et al). This is the third Cork record of the species, all since 1967.

GLAUCOUS GULL Larus hyperboreus

Five records in the months January, March, April, May and December. There has been a decline in the number reported in the last three years from 13 in 1968 and nine in '69.

ICELAND GULL Larus glaucooides

A further 1969 record brings to three the number for the year.

One, second winter, at Douglas on 27th March was the only record from outside Ballycotton. At the latter a series of sightings from January to December involved at least six different birds.

MEDITERRANEAN GULL Larus melanocephalus

One, in second summer plumage, at Clonakilty on 29th August (KP). This is the sixth Irish and fourth Cork record of the species.

LITTLE GULL Larus minutus

Two first winter birds at Dunmanus Bay on 9th were the first January records in the county (CDH, RCH). A notable feature of the reports of the species was the very high proportion involving more than one bird. One, first winter, at Kilkerran Lake on 22nd March. Two immatures at Rosscarbery on 15th August. Three immatures separately off the Old Head, Kinsale, on 8th September. Two immatures at Ballycotton on 25th September, two on 11th October, five on 12th and three on 17th.

SABINE'S GULL Xema sabini

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adults recorded singly on five occasions. Ballycotton: 11th, 13th and 29th August and 21st September. Old Head, Kinsale, 8th September. (DD, MAH, TCK, CCM, TO'K, DO'S).

KITTiwAKE Rissa tridactyla

A recount of the Old Head, Kinsale, colony was made on 7th June. Two sections which had been separated in 1989 were counted, one showing a loss of 20% and the other an increase of 57%; overall, an increase of 12%.

BLACK TERN Chidonais niger

One in summer plumage at Ballymacoda on 21st June (DO'S). Recorded on 11 dates at Ballycotton between 23rd August and 18th October with up to three daily (7th September). Two in Cork Harbour, near Roche's Point, on 1st September.

WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN Chidonais leucopterus

One, going into winter plumage, off Roche's Point on 1st September (P.M.). The two previous Cork records of the species were in 1938 and 1958.

COMMON TERN Sterna hirundo

ARCTIC TERN Sterna macrura

A very large movement of terns off Roche's Point on 8th and 9th August consisted mostly of Common and Arctic. On the former date an estimated 5,000 were feeding on a shoal of Sprats (S.P.).

The main passage at Ballycotton was in mid-August, peaking at 300 on 18th.

BOBRATE TERN Sterna dougalli

Two records: singles at Ballycotton on 3rd August and 21st September.

LITTLE TERN Sterna albifrons

Early date: one at Ballycotton on 11th April.

SANDWICH TERN Sterna sandvicensis

As in previous years adults with young arrived at Ballycotton in late June. The main passage was in mid-August with a maximum of 180 on 10th and 17th. Up to 100 in September and to 20 in early October.

RAZORBILL Alca torda

A recount of two sections of the Old Head, Kinsale, colony on 7th June showed a 36% increase on the 1969 census.

MURRELET Uria algae

Two sections of the Old Head, Kinsale, colony recounted on 7th June showed a decrease of 38% on the 1969 count.

TURTLE DOVE Streptopelia turtur

Reported from a number of areas during the breeding season. Autumn passage was very light, with no record at Ballycotton for the first time in three years.

CUCKOO Cuculus canorus

Late date: one at Shanagarry on 17th September.

SHORT-EARED OWL Nisio flammeus

One at Ballycotton on 14th January and two on 10th (PO'F, DO'S). One at Ballymacoda on 22nd November (WJO'F).

SWIFT Apus apus

at University College, Cork, from 16th April (TCK), the earliest Irish record, but scarce until 4th May when a widespread arrival was noted. The last reported were three at Ballycotton on 16th September.

KINGFISHER Alcedo atthis

Breeding records were very few and the species was absent from many former haunts.

HOOPOE Upupa epops

None in spring for the first year since 1967.
One at Youghal on 23rd September (Irish Times 28/9/70) was the first autumn record since 1966.

SWALLOW Hirundo rustica

Autumn passage at Ballycotton from August to mid-October with peaks on 19th August (3,000) and 10th October (100). Irregular in late October and in November to 22nd.

HOUSE MARTIN Delichon urbica

Passage at Ballycotton from August to late September and one on 2nd October. The heaviest movements were on 19th August (120) and 6th September (30).

SAND MARTIN Niraria nigeris

Spring arrival was generally very late.
Autumn passage at Ballycotton in August and September only. The strongest movement was on 15th August (1,000) and 6th September (70). The last were five on 27th September.

SWALLOW Certhia ceranthe

Spring migrants at the Old Head, Kinsale, from the first week of March.
Autumn passage at Ballycotton from August to October; over ten twice in August, up to six in September and to 11 in October.

WHINCHAT Saxicola rubetra

One near Dursley Sound on 26th June and one near Syries about 29th (PB).
Only three reported in autumn, two at Ballycotton and one at the Old Head, Kinsale.

REDSTART Phoenicurus phoenicurus

One at Ballycotton on 25th September was the only record.

BLACK REDSTART Phoenicurus ochruros

One wintered in the area of University College and was present until March (TCK).
Up to two at Ballycotton in January and one in February. Scarce in autumn, the only records coming from Ballycotton, and ever two only once (six on 1st November).

GLASSHOPPER W. WEAVER Locustella naevia

About 15 at the Old Head, Kinsale, on 15th May after a large fall of migrants (TCK, MV).

BLACKCAP Sylvia atricapilla

A number of birds wintered in '69/70 and again in '70/71. Recorded in only two new squares during the breeding season.

WHITETHROAT Sylvia communis

Numbers during the summer, though higher than in 1969, were well below average.

CHIFFCHAFF Phylloscopus collybita

There was, as usual, a good scattering of winter records. After a large fall of migrants at the Old Head, Kinsale, about 100 phylloscopi were present on 15th May.

YELLOW WAGTAIL Motacilla flava

An adult male Blue-headed Wagtail M. f. flava at the Old Head, Kinsale, on 7th June (CDH, TCK).
One at Ballycotton on 22nd September and another on 25th were not assigned to any race.

WAXWING Bombycilla garrulus

One at Ballycotton Lighthouse on 11th October, two on 13th and one on 17th (JL-W).

BRAMBLING Fringilla montifringilla

One, a male, at Castlefreke on 27th December (TCK, KP).

SNOW BUNTING Plectrophenax nivalis

Two at Ballycotton Lighthouse on 19th March; one at Barley Cove on 4th October; one at Ballycotton on 24th November.

TREE SPARROW Passer montanus

Two pairs bred in the tower at Roche's Point and one pair nested in a tree nearby (MR).
Previously the species has always used artificial sites at this locality.

ADDENDARINGED PLOVER Charadrius hiaticula

At least two pairs bred at the Gearagh.
This is the first inland breeding record for Co Cork.

NIGHTJAR Caprimulgus europaeus

Singing at four localities between Glengarriff and Castle-townbere on 8th June (EMS, JTR3).

WHOOPEE SWAN Cygnus cygnus

Early date: one at Ring, Clonakilty, on 8th October (AMSH).