

BIRDS OF DURSEY ISLAND, CO. CORK : 2009

with notes on mammals, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, moths and dragonflies

Derek A. Scott



Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* : 10 November 2009. Photo: Kieran Finch

Days on which there was some coverage by the author, David Cooke, Brendan Finch, Kieran Grace and/or Tony Lancaster.

Month	Days with some coverage	Total
January	1 – 24, 31	25
February	1, 6 – 8, 14, 15, 19 – 22, 26 – 28	13
March	1, 3 – 9, 13 – 17, 21, 22, 28, 29	17
April	2 – 5, 9 – 13, 18, 19, 25, 26, 30	14
May	1 – 31	31
June	1 – 8, 12 – 14	11
July	3 – 31	29

August	1 – 17, 29 – 31	20
September	1 – 30	30
October	1 – 5, 7, 9 – 14, 16 – 29, 31	27
November	1, 5 – 10, 15, 19 – 30	20
December	1 – 20, 24, 28 – 31	25
Total		262

The author was present on the island on a total of 197 days as follows:

- 1 to 22 January
- 26 February to 1 March
- 3 to 9 March
- 30 April to 8 June
- 3 July to 17 August
- 29 August to 4 October
- 21 to 29 October
- 19 November to 20 December

Coverage was relatively poor in 2009. The Cable Car was out of operation from the end of April until the end of September, making it difficult for David Cooke and Brendan Finch to visit the island at weekends, and the author was away for long periods in March, April, June, August, October and November. There were significant gaps in coverage in the second half of March and April (only 15 visits during the period 18 March to 29 April), the last three weeks of June (only three visits during the period 9 June to 2 July), and the second half of August (no visits during the period 18-28). David Cooke was present on the island on a total of 71 days, while Brendan Finch was present on a total of 68 days. Once again, Kieran Grace and Tony Lancaster made their annual pilgrimage to West Beara in the autumn, and visited the island on 18 dates between 3 and 28 October, reaching the Tip on all but two of these visits.

Even allowing for the relatively poor coverage, 2009 was a poor year for birds on Dursey Island, although it did produce a new species for Ireland – Red-flanked Bluetail. The total of 115 (excluding feral pigeon) was well below the best ever (133) and the lowest since 2004. Two species were added to the island list, Little Egret and Red-flanked Bluetail, bringing the total number of species recorded since September 1977 to 224. The year produced only two semi-rarities – Golden Oriole and Red-backed Shrike – and both of these were in spring. Highlights from an island perspective included the second records of Eurasian Hobby, Green Sandpiper and European Nightjar, the third record of Wood Warbler, the fourth record of Sanderling, the fourth and fifth records of Brent Goose, and the sixth and seventh records of Water Rail.

The spring migration was quite good, particularly in the second week of May and in late May and early June, and the autumn migration began reasonably well with a prolonged period of easterlies in September producing a steady trickle of the commoner migrants and the island's first Little Egrets, but October was poor with no big falls and no rarities (although a Mourning Dove and a Blackpoll Warbler were found on the nearby mainland). The highlight of the year – the Red-flanked Bluetail – came in the second week of November, but sadly the bird stayed only

one day and was seen by only four observers. Sedge Warbler, Great Tit, Greenfinch and Reed Bunting again bred successfully on the island, but there was no evidence of breeding by Peregrine, Common Kestrel or Ringed Plover, and there were only three breeding pairs of Common Starlings.

As usual, the year began with a 'Big Day' on 1 January. This produced a very respectable total of 43 species including a Grey Heron, a Merlin, a Northern Lapwing (that had arrived the previous day), two Jack Snipe, a Woodcock, two Iceland Gulls and two Snow Buntings. Other interesting finds in January included a Great Northern Diver on 3rd, a Glaucous Gull on 4th, single Woodcocks on 5th and 8th, a Merlin on 12th, two Fieldfares on 16th, a Merlin on 18th, another Glaucous Gull on 20th, and a Merlin and a Woodcock on 23rd. Small numbers of Blue Tits, Great Tits, Chaffinches and Greenfinches frequented the bird-feeders in Ballynacallagh, Kilmichael and Tilickafinna, along with the occasional Goldfinch and Reed Bunting, and one or two Redwings were present throughout the month. February was quiet as usual, with little of note other than 12 Golden Plovers and four Fieldfare on 6th, a Merlin, a Water Rail, another Golden Plover and a peak count of 11 Purple Sandpipers on 7th, a Glaucous Gull, three Fieldfare and a Mistle Thrush on 14th, the first Manx Shearwaters, a Merlin and another Water Rail on 20th, a Glaucous Gull on 21st, and a Sparrowhawk on 28th.

March began well with a Great Northern Diver, a Hen Harrier, a Sparrowhawk and an Iceland Gull on 1st. A Merlin was seen on 7th, and the Hen Harrier was seen again on 14th, 16th and 17th. The 14th also produced another Iceland Gull. Two Black Redstarts appeared on 16th, along with the first Northern Wheatear and Blackcap, another Great Northern Diver, a Merlin, a Golden Plover and the only Grey Wagtail of the spring. There were three Black Redstarts and four Northern Wheatears on 17th, as well as another Sparrowhawk. A fall at the end of the third week of March produced 12 Chiffchaffs and four Goldcrests on 21st and two more Black Redstarts on 22nd, when there was yet another Glaucous Gull. The month ended quietly with a Merlin and five Chiffchaffs on 28th.

April began quietly, with little of note other than four Chiffchaffs and a Chaffinch on 2nd, a Blackcap on 4th, a Blackcap and five Chiffchaffs on 5th and the first Barn Swallow and Willow Warbler on 11th. There was a substantial fall of Willow Warblers on 18th, when 17 were recorded, along with the first Collared Dove of the spring, a Grasshopper Warbler and a Goldcrest. Coverage was poor in the latter part of the month, but a sea-watch from the Tip on 26th produced a Red-throated Diver, five Great Northern Divers, two Common Scoters and a Pomarine Skua, while elsewhere on the island there were three Whimbrels and the first Common Whitethroat.

The first nine days of May was very quiet, with little other than a Collared Dove on 3rd, a Great Skua on 7th, and an Arctic Skua and three Great Skuas on 8th, along with the odd Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler and a long-staying Chaffinch. A period of light easterly winds in the second week of May produced a Grasshopper Warbler, four Sedge Warblers, two Common Whitethroats and a Blackcap on 10th, a Wood Pigeon and another Blackcap on 11th, a Collared Dove, three House Martins, a Garden Warbler, three Blackcaps, a Wood Warbler, the first Spotted Flycatcher and two Lesser Redpolls on 12th, and three House Martins and a Golden Oriole on 14th. All these birds soon moved off, and the next two weeks were very quiet, the only birds of note being six Pomarine Skuas and an Arctic Skua on 17th, a Great Northern Diver, four Collared Doves, three House Martins and a Tree Sparrow on 20th, and another Wood Pigeon on 23rd. The wind swung round to the east again on 29 May and the next few days produced an excellent crop of good birds along with a huge arrival of Painted Ladys and Silver Ys, at least

seven Hummingbird Hawk-moths and three Striped Hawk-moths. Notable birds included a Eurasian Hobby, a Reed Warbler and an unidentified shrike, possibly a Woodchat, on 30th, three Collared Doves, 12 Common Swift, four Spotted Flycatchers, a female Red-backed Shrike and a Lesser Redpoll on 31st, a Wood Pigeon, a European Nightjar, two House Martins and the Red-backed Shrike on 1 June, four Common Swifts and two Tree Sparrows on 2 June, and two Common Swifts and a Willow Warbler on 3rd. There were still three Spotted Flycatchers on 3rd and the Wood Pigeon and one of the Tree Sparrows lingered until 4th, but the only bird of note on 5th was a long-staying Chiffchaff. Two Tree Sparrows reappeared on 6th and were seen again on 7th, while an owl flushed in upper Kilmichael Valley on 6th and 7th could have been either Short-eared or Long-eared. The only other new arrivals at this time were a Collared Dove and a Lesser Redpoll on 7th. The only birds of note in the second week of June were five Common Scoters and a Collared Dove on 12th and a House Martin on 14th, after which there was a break in coverage until 3 July.

As usual, July began quietly, with nothing of note except a long-staying Chiffchaff (which lingered until 12th). A party of four Common Crossbills appeared on 6th, and these were followed by another individual on 7th, three more on 8th, and another single bird on 12th. Eighteen Common Scoters passed by at sea on 9th; the first Sooty Shearwater of the season passed by on 11th, along with 11 more Common Scoters and a Great Skua; and there was another Great Skua on 12th. The rest of the month was very quiet, with nothing of note other than a Willow Warbler from 21st to 23rd, a Wood Pigeon and two Willow Warblers on 25th, and nine Whimbrels passing by at sea on 26th.

There was little of interest in the first 12 days of August except a Common Scoter on 2nd, a Sparrowhawk on most days from 3rd, a Sooty Shearwater on 4th, a Sedge Warbler and two Willow Warblers on 7th, 20 Common Scoters on 8th, and a Grey Heron, a Whimbrel and a Sand Martin on 9th. However, a Green Sandpiper appeared on 13th, along with four Willow Warblers. Another Grey Heron appeared on 15th, but there was nothing of note on 16th and 17th, and coverage was then interrupted until 29 August, when the only birds of note were a Sparrowhawk and two Willow Warblers. A period of bad weather at the end of the month produced nothing other than a Sanderling at the Tip on 30th.

September began well with 54 Sooty Shearwaters, four Great Skuas and two Sandwich Terns passing at sea, a Ringed Plover at the Tip and the first Lapland Bunting of the autumn on 1st. The bad weather persisted until 6th, and the only other birds of note were the Sanderling (which was last seen on 7th), a Sparrowhawk on 2nd, a Grey Heron on several dates from 3rd, two Sand Martins and four Willow Warblers on 5th, and a Sedge Warbler on 6th. On 7 September, the weather took a turn for the better, and for the next two weeks, the winds were mainly easterly and the conditions fine. There was a steady trickle of migrants throughout the period, but very little that was unusual other than the island's first Little Egrets. The first of these appeared in Kilmichael Valley on 10th. An emaciated bird was found in Tilickafinna the next day, and three birds flew north round the Tip on 13th. Other birds of note included a Reed Warbler and a Common Whitethroat on 7th, a Whimbrel on 8th, the first Merlin of the autumn and four Sand Martins on 9th, six Sand Martins, 12 House Martins, the first Goldcrests and a Lesser Redpoll on 10th, two Hen Harriers and a Spotted Flycatcher on 11th, three Siskins on 12th, a Hen Harrier, a Common Redstart, two Whinchats, a Reed Warbler, two Garden Warblers and a Lapland Bunting on 13th, a second Common Redstart and three more Siskins on 14th, three House Sparrows on 15th, two more Lapland Buntings on 16th, two more Common Redstarts and two Common Whitethroats on 17th, another Lapland bunting on 18th, and another Whinchat on

19th. The last week of September was relatively quiet by comparison, producing little of note other than a Black-headed Gull on 23rd, a Snow Bunting on 25th, a Mistle Thrush on 27th, and a Turtle Dove and another Common Redstart on 28th, although the steady trickle of commoner migrants continued.

The weather in October was very broken and there were few periods of easterly winds. The steady trickle of common migrants continued and there were good numbers of some species, such as Redwing, Chiffchaff and Goldfinch, but like September, the month failed to produce any real rarities or even semi-rarities. Birds of note included three Black-headed Gulls on 3rd, two Hen Harriers and a House Sparrow on 5th, an Arctic Tern, a Whinchat and a Yellow-browed Warbler on 9th, another Yellow-browed Warbler on 10th and 11th, a Hen Harrier, the first Redwings (4) and a Lapland Bunting on 12th, a Ring Ouzel and another Yellow-browed Warbler on 13th, a Common Redstart and two Black Redstarts on 14th, an early Woodcock, three Black Redstarts, three Ring Ouzels, the first Fieldfare and two Yellow-browed Warblers on 16th, a Black Redstart on 17th, a Black Redstart, a Lesser Whitethroat and a Garden Warbler on 18th, a Common Redstart, three Black Redstarts and a Snow Bunting on 20th, four Black Redstarts and two Snow Buntings on 22nd, a Barn Swallow and a Snow Bunting on 23rd, two Snow Buntings on 24th, a Lesser Whitethroat on 26th, a Wood Pigeon on 28th, and a Short-eared Owl on 31st.

November began quietly with little other than a Blackcap and 11 Chiffchaffs on 1st, and single Chiffchaffs on 5th and 6th. However, a Black Redstart was found on 7th, and an interesting assortment of birds appeared on 8th, including a Red-throated Diver, three Great Northern Divers, a Brent Goose, the first Purple Sandpipers of the autumn (five), four Woodcock, a late Barn Swallow and seven Chiffchaffs. The next day (9th) produced little other than another Woodcock, but a fall of migrants on 10th produced the highlight of the year – a Red-flanked Bluetail – along with four Wood Pigeons, five Black Redstarts, 10 Fieldfares, 22 Redwings and 11 Chiffchaffs. The bluetail apparently left that night, as it could not be found by the small army of twitchers who visited the island the next day, and by 15 November, when the island was next visited by a ‘regular’, there was nothing of note other than the odd Redwing and a Chiffchaff. The second half of the month was less exciting, but nevertheless produced a late Sparrowhawk on 20th, a Glaucous Gull on 21st, a Ringed Plover on 22nd and 28th, 57 Fieldfare, 50 Redwing, a Mistle Thrush, a Chiffchaff and eight Lesser Redpolls on 28th, a Great Northern Diver, a late Sooty Shearwater and another Brent Goose on 29th, and another Chiffchaff and a Lesser Redpoll on 30th.

Coverage in December was better than usual, with breaks only from 21st to 23rd and 25th to 27th, and produced an unusually rich assortment of birds for this time of year. The first birds of note were two Mistle Thrushes, an exceptionally late Barn Swallow and a Chiffchaff which arrived along with 60 Redwings on 4th. No less than five Balearic Shearwaters were found feeding off the north-west coast of the island on 10th, along with 12 Manx Shearwaters. A Balearic Shearwater was seen off Tilickafinna on 12th, and there were three off the Tip on 13th, when other birds of note included two Black Redstarts, another Mistle Thrush, a Chiffchaff and a Lesser Redpoll. Six Balearic Shearwaters were seen off the Tip on 14th, along with a late Great Skua and a Black-headed Gull, and there were now at least six Black Redstarts on the island, as well as a Jack Snipe and a Glaucous Gull. Only two Black Redstarts were seen the next day, but one of these lingered until 17th, when the Mistle Thrush was last recorded. A Great Northern Diver appeared in the Sound and a Snow Bunting flew over Tilickafinna on 18th, and a Woodcock was seen on 19th. By 20th, the numbers of

Fieldfare and Redwing had increased to 13 and 83 respectively, and when coverage was resumed on 24th, there were about 50 Fieldfare and 200 Redwing on the island. Other birds of note on 24th included two Great Northern Divers, two Grey Herons and a Golden Plover. The last few days of the year produced a Black-headed Gull on 28th, a Northern Lapwing and a Woodcock on 30th, and two Great Northern Divers, another Woodcock, six late Lesser Black-backed Gulls and about 100 Redwing on 31st.

As regards mammals and other large creatures, 2009 was a poor year for Common Otters, with only one sighting of a single individual in July. It was an average year for Grey Seals, with records in every month and as many as 11 individuals recorded in a day. An American Mink was seen in January, and may have been the individual seen in August 2008. Small bats were observed on three occasions, and one of these was identified as a Common Pipistrelle. There were only two reports of Pygmy Shrews, and sadly both of these were of dead animals. The year was fairly good for cetaceans, although once again there was nothing particularly unusual. The highlight was provided by two Killer Whales that stayed around for two days in early February. Harbour Porpoises were present in unusually large numbers in the autumn, while Common Dolphins were recorded on nine dates, Bottle-nosed Dolphins on five dates and Minke Whales on 24 dates. It was, however, a very poor year for Risso's Dolphins, with only two records of three individuals in mid-April. There was no repeat of the exceptional influx of Basking Sharks that occurred in 2008, and there were only three sightings of this species in 2009.

2009 produced an exceptional immigration of Painted Ladys at the end of May and a big arrival of Red Admirals and Painted Ladys in the second week of September, but was otherwise unexceptional for butterflies. The unusually heavy rainfall in July and August seems to have had a detrimental effect on the numbers of some resident species and certainly had a negative impact on observer effort. There were no very early butterflies, the first of the season being a Red Admiral on 22 March, and there were no records of unusual species on the island. The last butterflies of the year were two Painted Ladys on 8 November. The light south-easterlies in late May that brought in the big numbers of Painted Ladys also brought in at least 400 Silver Ys, seven Hummingbird Hawk-moths and three Striped Hawk-moths, and there was a huge invasion of Silver Ys in the second week of September, with numbers peaking at about 4,000 on 13th, but no moth-trapping was attempted and no new species of moth were added to the island list. However, the year was better than average for dragonflies, with observations on six dates between 9 September and 7 October, involving 13 individuals of at least two species.

Note: The Systematic List that follows incorporates the observations of David Cooke (DC), Brendan Finch (BF), Connor Finch (CF), Kieran Finch (KF), Kieran Grace (KG), Tony Lancaster (AL), Pat Lancaster (PL), Tony Mee (TM), Paul Rowe (PR) and Joanna Scott (JS). The author wishes to express his appreciation to these observers for providing details of their observations.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

2009 was another poor year for this species, with only two records: a bird flying north off the Tip on 26 April (BF), and a bird off the Tip on 8 November (DC).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

One flew south off the Tip on 3 January (BF). Singletons flew north off the Tip on 1 March and 16 March (BF). One was in the Sound and four flew north off the Tip on 26 April (BF). One flew north high over the island east of Tilickafinna at 12:30 on 10 May, and one flew west at sea off Tilickafinna on 20 May (DS). Two birds, still in breeding plumage, flew south over the island at Kilmichael on 20 October, and another bird, also in breeding plumage, flew south-west off the Tip on 22 October (KG, AL). One flew north off the Tip on 29 November (DS). Three were seen off the Tip on 8 November (DC). There was one in the Sound on 18, 19 and 20 December, and two there on 24 and 31 December (DC, BF, DS).

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Present throughout the year and a common breeding bird. Some birds were already prospecting the cliffs as early as 18 October.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

The first of the autumn was one flying west off Tilickafinna on 11 July (DS). One flew north off the Tip on 4 August, and a total of 54 flew north off the Tip between 09:55 and 10:30 on 1 September. One was seen off the north coast on 23 September, and there were singletons off the Tip on 16 and 18 October, two off the Tip on 20 October, and two off the Tip on 2 November. One circling off the Tip and eventually flying south on 29 November was unusually late (DS).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

The first of the season were three off the Tip on 20 February followed by one on 21st (DC). Common to abundant offshore from mid-March throughout the spring and summer until early September, but then no more than five were recorded in a day during the second half of September. The only records in October were of six off the Tip on 8th, one off the Tip on 9th and two off the Tip on 22nd. None was recorded in November, but at least 12 birds appeared in the middle of December following a prolonged period of westerly and south-westerly gales: one was seen off the Tip and there was a flock of 11 feeding off the north coast on 10 December; one flew east off Tilickafinna and there were two off the north coast on 12 December; five were seen off the Tip on 13 December; and there were at least four feeding off the Tip on 14 December.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Unprecedented numbers of this species appeared with small numbers of Manx Shearwaters in the second week of December following the prolonged gales in late November and early December. At least five were seen foraging off the north coast of the island along with 11 Manx Shearwaters on 10 December (DS, JS); one flew east close inshore below Tilickafinna on 12 December (DS); three were seen off the Tip on 13 December (BF); and six were found amongst a feeding frenzy of Gannets, gulls and auks off the Tip on 14 December (DS, JS).

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Only three records, all of single birds off the Tip: one flying north on 31 July (JS); one flying south on 2 August (DS); and one flying south on 5 August (DS).

Northern Gannet *Sula bassana*

Common to abundant offshore throughout the year.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Present throughout the year in small numbers. Up to eight were recorded in a day,

mostly in the Sound or flying along the south and north coasts to and from the breeding colony on the Cow.

European Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Present throughout the year, nesting at several localities around the island. High counts included 48 on 1 August, 51 on 25 October, 47 on 31 October, and 39 on 22 November.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

An immature bird was found by DC foraging in the fields near Gerald's Pond below Kilmichael at 15:00 on 10 September. The bird remained in this area until at least 15:30, when it was seen by DS. It was quite active and appeared healthy. At 15:40, it was seen flying to wet fields in upper Kilmichael Valley, and at 16:30 it was seen flying east over Ballynacallagh towards the Sound. Remarkably, at 18:00 the next day, Bernie O'Leary found an exhausted immature bird being harassed by his cattle in one of the eastern fields in Tilickafinna. The bird was captured and taken into care at the Scott's house, but all attempts to force-feed it failed, and it died during the night (BO, DC, DS, JS). Two days later, on 13 September, a party of three Little Egrets was seen flying north low over the sea off the Tip at 11:00 (BF). These constitute the first records of this species on Dursey Island. The origin of these birds is unknown, but given the emaciated condition of the Tilickafinna bird, it seems likely that they were lost migrants from continental Europe rather than 'commuters' from the nearby mainland.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

A good year for this species, with a total of 28 records. One in East Fields and near the jetty on 1 January was unusual, and was undoubtedly the same individual as that seen in East Fields on 26 December 2008. All other records were between 9 August and 24 December. The first of the autumn was an immature bird near the jetty on 9 August, and this was followed by two immature birds near the jetty on 15 August. One was seen flying across the Sound onto the island on 3 September, and single birds, probably the same individual, were seen on 4th, 5th and 7th. Three were present on 10th (including two in Tilickafinna), one was seen in Kilmichael on 11th, and one was seen on Illanebeg on 12th. Two immature birds were seen on Illanebeg on 26 and 27 September. An adult was seen on Illanebeg on 4 October, and there was a bird near the jetty on 11 October. There were two birds on Illanebeg on 16 and 17 October, and single birds near the jetty on 18 and 20 October. A single bird was again present near the jetty on 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 21 November. At 09:35 on 17 December, an immature bird flew in from the west and alighted in a tree in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. After resting for about five minutes, it took off again and flew off to the east. Possibly this individual was seen near the jetty on 18 and 20 December. The last of the year were two near the jetty on 24 December.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

One flew north into the Sound, passed over Illanebeg and headed off south-west along the south side of the island at 16:50 on 8 November (BF). One flew north low over the sea off the Tip at 11:15 on 29 November (DS). These constitute the fourth and fifth records of this species on Dursey Island.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

2009 was a poor year for this species, with only eight records. The first of the year were two off the Tip on 26 April (BF). A party of five passed by off the Tip on 12 June (DC). A flock of 18, mostly males, flew west off Tilickafinna on 9 July; a flock of 11 males flew west off Tilickafinna on 11 July; a single male flew north off the Tip on 2 August; a

flock of 20 flew west off Tilickafinna on 8 August; and three groups totalling 16 individuals flew west off Tilickafinna and north off the Tip on 27 September (DS). A single bird was seen off the Tip on 8 November (DC).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

A fairly good year for this species, with a total of nine records, four of which were in spring. A female was seen by Gerald's Gate on 1 March (BF), and possibly the same individual was seen at Ivy Gully on 14 March, at the High Cliffs on 16 March and at Stapleton's garden on 17 March (BF). A female marked with two orange wing tags was seen flying west over Tilickafinna at 11:00 on 11 September (DC), and an unmarked individual, probably an immature male, was seen flying east over Tilickafinna at 11:55 the same morning (DS). The female had apparently been tagged as a juvenile in the Ballyhoura Mountains on the Cork/Limerick border in spring 2009. This bird spent much of the morning of 13 September foraging over the West Hill in Tilickafinna (DS). Two birds, an adult male and a female, were seen in Kilmichael on 5 October (KG, AL), and the adult male was seen over Scott's garden on 8 October (JS). A female was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 12 October (KG, AL).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

The first of the year was a bird in Scott's garden on 28 February and 1 March. The only other spring record was of a bird in Scott's garden on 17 March. The first of the autumn were a female in Scott's garden on 3 August and an immature male in Scott's garden on 5 August. Thereafter, single individuals were recorded on nine dates to 10 September and one or two individuals on 18 dates from 11 September to 21 October. Three were recorded on 17 September, including two females moving east together high over Tilickafinna. Single individuals at the High Cliffs on 10 November and over Scott's garden on 20 November were the last of the year.

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded throughout the year, but once again very scarce in the early part of the year, with no evidence of breeding on the island. Single birds were observed on 1, 3 and 24 January, 15 February, 15, 16 and 17 March, and 2 and 12 April. A male appeared over the High Cliffs and Tilickafinna on 10, 20 and 29 May, and there were two males on the island on 30 May. Single birds appeared again on 4 and 8 June and 5 July. Two birds were recorded on 23 and 26 July, increasing to three on 30 July, and thereafter up to three were recorded on many dates to 14 October, with four on 5 August and 13 September. There were still two birds around until 8 November, but thereafter only single individuals were recorded on 10 and 16 November and 13, 14, 15 and 20 December.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single birds were seen on nine occasions in the first three months of the year: in Kilmichael on 1 January, in Tilickafinna on 18 January, in Kilmichael on 23 January, in Kilmichael on 7 and 20 February, in Tilickafinna on 7 March, at the Tip on 16 March, at the Waters on 17 March, and in Kilmichael Valley on 28 March. Autumn passage began with a bird in Kilmichael on 9 September and another in Kilmichael and Ballynacallagh from 25 to 27 September. Two birds were seen on 5 October and then one or two birds were recorded almost daily to 26 October. Thereafter, single birds were recorded on eight dates to 11 November. The last of the year were one in Kilmichael Valley on 21 November and one in Tilickafinna on 30 November.

Eurasian Hobby *Falco subbuteo*

One flew west over Tilickafinna fields and then north over the island at the gap near the end of the track at 13:00 on 30 May (DC, BF, DS). This was only the second record of a Eurasian Hobby on Dursey Island, the first being as long ago as October 1983.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

Again rather scarce, especially in the first half of the year. A pair of adults was seen at the Tip on 1 March, but otherwise the only records in the first eight months of the year were of single adults on 21 February, 14 and 17 March, 11 and 18 April, 10 and 11 May, 3 and 4 June, and 11, 18 and 26 July. Single birds, mostly adults, were recorded on 11 dates between 1 September and 8 November, and two birds (an adult male and an adult female) were seen on 3 and 9 September, but the only record of an immature was a bird in Tilickafinna on 11 September. An adult male and/or an adult female appeared in Tilickafinna on six dates between 3 and 20 December, with both birds being seen together on 10th and 20th. There was a single bird near the jetty on 24 December, and one flew over Kilmichael on 28 December.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

One was flushed by DC's dog in Mike's Bog, Tilickafinna, on 7 February (DC), and one was seen by the stream in Kilmichael Valley on 20 February (DC). These were the sixth and seventh records of a Water Rail on Dursey Island.

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

Present throughout the year in small numbers, mainly around the Sound and Illanebeg, but also occasionally below Tilickafinna, at the Tip and along the north-west coast. Numbers during the first nine months of the year were comparable to those in 2006, 2007 and 2008, but there were very few birds about in October, November and December. The highest monthly counts were as follows: eight in January, 12 in February, 15 in March, 13 in April, five in May, six in June, eight in July, four in August, 13 in September, three in October, six in November, and two in December. It seems likely that at least three pairs attempted to breed on the island, but it is doubtful if they produced any young.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

There was no evidence of birds establishing territories on the island, and the only records were of a bird heard calling over the Tip on 1 September (DS), and a single bird on the greensward near the jetty on 22 and 28 November (BF, DS).

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

An average year for this species, with three records in spring and a series of records between early September and late December. A flock of 12 was seen on the hill above Kilmichael on 6 February (DC); one was heard calling over Ballynacallagh the next day (BF); and one was heard calling over Kilmichael on 16 March (DC). The first of the autumn was a single bird on 10 September (DC). Single birds appeared in Kilmichael on 4 October and Tilickafinna on 7 October, and these were followed by two on 16 October, one on 20 October, at least 14 on 22 October, one on 25 October, four on 1 November and two on 7 November. A flock of 30 was seen near the Martello Tower on 16 November (JS) and one was seen in Kilmichael on 24 December (BF).

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

The first-winter bird that arrived in the fields below Kilmichael in the evening of 31 December 2008 was last seen on 2 January 2009 (DC, PR *et al.*). A single bird was

found in Kilmichael on 30 December and seen again on Illanebeg on 31st, but could not be found the next day (DC, BF). These were only the tenth and eleventh records of Northern Lapwing on Dursey, and the first since 2004.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A first-winter bird was found by the small stream near the West Wall on 30 August and remained in this general area until at least 7 September (DS, JS). This was only the fourth record of a Sanderling on Dursey Island and followed on quickly from the third record on 6 September 2008.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

Another very good year for this species, thanks to frequent coverage of the regular roost site on the lower north slope of the island (east of Gull-bathing Area) by BF, although numbers were somewhat lower than in 2008. Up to 11 birds were recorded at this site on eight occasions between 1 January and 14 March (when there were three), and up to eight birds on seven occasions between 8 November (when there were five) and 19 December. Monthly maxima were as follows: January – 5; February – 11; March – 6; November – 8; and December – 2. The only other record was of a single bird at Kilmichael Point on 31 December (DC).

Jack Snipe *Limnocryptes minimus*

Only two records involving three individuals: one in Kilmichael Valley and one at North Pond on 1 January (BF, CF); and one at the stream near the West Wall on 14 December (DS, JS).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Fairly common and widespread during the early months of the year and again from October to the end of the year. The highest counts were 23 on 1 January and 24 on 30 December (days with unusually good coverage), but otherwise numbers seldom exceeded five in a day. The last in spring were two birds on 10 April. The first of the autumn were a bird near Kilmichael school on 8 September and two at Gerald's Pond on 12 September. One or two individuals were recorded on a further seven dates in September, and up to six were recorded on many dates in October, November and December.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

2009 was a good year for this species with records on 11 dates. One above Ballynacallagh on 1 January (BF); one on the track on the High Cliffs after dark on 5 January (DS); one on the track at the Waters before dawn on 8 January (DS); and one in Kilmichael Valley on 23 January (DC). The first of the autumn was unusually early: a bird in Kilmichael on 16 October (KG, AL). A small influx occurred in early November, with two in East Fields and two by the track to the Martello Tower on 8th (BF, KF), one in Ballynacallagh on 9th (BF, KF), and one in Tilickafinna on 10th. One was seen near Gerald's Gate after dark on 19 December; there was one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 30 December, and one was seen in East Fields on 31 December (BF).

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

2009 was a very poor year for this species, with only six records and no large flocks. The only records in spring were of three birds near the jetty on 26 April and one bird flying west over Tilickafinna in the evening of 10 May. The autumn migration began early with seven birds flying south-west off the Tip on 26 July, but the only other records were of single birds on 9 August, 8 September and 23 September.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

After quite a good year in 2008, 2009 was one of the worst years ever for Eurasian Curlews on Dursey, with only five records of single birds. One bird flew east off Tilickafinna and was later seen at the Sound on 10 September (DC, DS). Presumably this individual was seen around Illanebeg on 11 September (DC) and heard at the Tip on 12 September (BF). One was seen on Illanebeg on 26 September (BF), and one was seen near the east end of the island on 18 October (KG, AL). It is possible that all five records relate to a single individual.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

One, flushed from a small boggy area in Tilickafinna fields at 13:55 on 13 August, flew off south-west towards the Tip (DS). This was only the second record of a Green Sandpiper on Dursey Island, the first being of a bird at Kilmichael Point on 19 August 1978.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

2009 was the worst ever year for this species on Dursey Island, with only nine records and no more than two birds in a day. Single birds were recorded near the Cable Car on 1 January (CF) and near the jetty of 18 January (BF). There were two on Illanebeg on 21 February, and single birds on the Lower North Slope on 15 March (KG) and on Illanebeg on 16 March (BF). The only records in the latter part of the year were of two on Illanebeg of 9 September (DC), one on Illanebeg on 12 September (KF), one near the jetty on 7 November (BF), and one on Illanebeg on 31 December (BF).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

One flew north off the Tip on 26 April (BF), and six light-phase adults (in two parties of three) flew west off Tilickafinna in the afternoon of 17 May (DS).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Another poor year for this species, with only two records. A dark-phase bird flew west off Tilickafinna on 8 May, and a light-phase bird flew west off Tilickafinna on 17 May.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

The spring passage was very poor with only two records: one flying west off Tilickafinna on 7 May, and three flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 May. The first of the autumn was a bird flying west off Tilickafinna on 11 July, followed by another flying west off Tilickafinna on 12 July. Four flew north off the Tip on 1 September; one flew north over the West Hill on 7 September; there were single birds off the Tip on 10 and 26 September; and three flew west off Tilickafinna on 30 September. The only record in October was of a single bird off the Tip on 16th, but three flew north off the Tip on 2 November and there was one off the Tip on 3 November. A very late individual was watched harassing a Balearic Shearwater off the Tip on 14 December (DS, JS).

Blackheaded Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Another poor year for this species, with only four records, all in the second half of the year: an immature flying north off the Tip on 23 September (DS); two immatures in the Sound and an adult off the Tip on 3 October (BF, KG, AL); an adult flying north-east off the Tip on 14 December (DS); and an adult in the Sound on 29 December (DC).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Nine on 1 January and eight on 16 January, but otherwise only one or two in a day on 13 dates to 15 March, mostly in the Sound. The first of the autumn was a second-year bird in the Sound on 26 September, followed by an adult and an immature feeding off

Tilickafinna on 30 September. Up to three birds were recorded on five dates in October but the only record in November was of a single bird in the Sound on 28th. Up to four birds were recorded on nine dates in December.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

An adult flew north-east off the Tip on 1 January (DS, CF). The first spring migrants were six on 26 February, and these were followed by six on 7 and 8 March. Thereafter, up to 20 were recorded in a day throughout the spring and summer, with several pairs breeding on the island. The main departure occurred in early August, and the last of the island population were recorded on 17 August. The only later records were of one on 29 December and six at a gull roost near the jetty on 31 December (DC).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common throughout the year and nesting at the usual sites. The highest single count was about 120 on 29 November.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

A reasonable year for this species, with three records: an adult in the Sound (PR) and a second-winter bird near the jetty on 1 January (PR, BF); an adult flying along the north side of the island on 1 March (BF); and one off the Tip on 14 March (BF).

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

2009 was a good year for this species after a year without any records. There were five records in the early part of the year, involving at least two individuals: one flew west along the north coast on 4 January (BF, KF); an adult was found resting with other gulls near the jetty on 20 January (DS); one was seen near the jetty on 14 February (BF); a second-winter bird was seen off Kilmichael Point on 21 February (DC), and possibly the same second-winter bird was seen on Illanebeg on 22 March (BF). A second- or third-year bird was seen at Gull Bathing Area on the north coast on 21 November (BF), and a second-winter bird was seen resting on the top of Illanebeg on 14 December (DS).

Great Blackbacked Gull *Larus marinus*

Common throughout the year. There were about 150, mostly adults, at the day roost on the North Slope east of Gull Bathing Area on 1 January, and at least 120 in this area on 29 November.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Present offshore throughout the year, but definitely much scarcer than usual this year. The only counts exceeding 50 were 100 on 7 May, 60 on 8 May, 90 on 9 October, 200 on 18 October and 150 on 22 October.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Two flew north off the Tip at 11:00 on 1 September (DS). An unidentified tern flying north off the Tip the same morning was probably also this species.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

One flying south off the Tip on 9 October (KG, AL).

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Present offshore throughout the year. The highest counts of unidentified auks (mostly this species) were 1,000 off the north coast on 1 January and 1,000 again on 13 and 14 December.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Present offshore in small numbers throughout the year. The highest count was 50+ off the north coast on 14 December.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Single individuals appeared in the Sound on 24 January and 6 February. There were four in the Sound on 21 February, three on 22nd and one on 28th. Then recorded on 18 dates between 13 March and 19 July, mostly in the Sound or off the Tip. On most occasions there were only one to four birds, but five were recorded on 15 March and six on 16 March. The only records after 19 July were of one in the Sound on 26 September, one in the Sound on 20 October, one flying south off the Tip on 22 October, three in the Sound on 13 December, three in the Sound and two off the Tip on 14 December, one in the Sound on 18 December, and two in the Sound on 20 December.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

A poor year, with only four records during the summer months: one at sea off Tilickafinna on 17 May; one flying west off Tilickafinna on 11 July; two flying south off the Tip on 26 July; and three on the sea off the Tip on 3 August. There were, however, two records in October: a bird on the sea off the Tip on 9 October (KG, AL), and six birds off the Cow on 10 October (BF).

[Rock Dove *Columba livia*]

Two racing pigeons flew east over Tilickafinna on 10 May, and a flock of 50 flew east along the north coast on 30 May. Three birds were recorded on 31 May. One arrived in Kilmichael village and another flew west over Tilickafinna on 1 June. The Kilmichael bird remained until 7 June and was then apparently killed by a cat. Another bird arrived in Tilickafinna on 7 June and remained until at least 13th, while a bird was present in Kilmichael on 12th and 13th. One flew west over Tilickafinna and out to the Tip on 13 September, and another bird flew west over Tilickafinna on 14 September. A very tame racing pigeon arrived at the Scott's house at 15:00 on 19 September, took up residence and remained until at least 19 December, when the Scotts left.

Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*

2009 was a good year for this species on Dursey, with records in both spring and autumn. One was present in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 and 12 May (DS); another individual appeared briefly in Scott's garden in the afternoon of 23 May (DS); and a third individual arrived in Tilickafinna on 1 June, took up residence in Scott's garden, and remained there until 4th (DS). One was present in Cooke's garden in Tilickafinna in the late morning and early afternoon of 25 July (DC, DS). One flew east over Ballynacallagh on 28 October (AL, PL), and four were flushed from the garden at Zuma in Ballynacallagh on 10 November (BF).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

2009 was a relatively poor year by recent standards, with records on only ten dates between 18 April and 12 June, involving only about 12 individuals. One in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 18 April was the first of the season (BF). This was followed by one in Kilmichael on 3 May (DC), one in Scott's garden on 12 May (DS), and a party of four in Scott's garden on 20 May (DS). A bird seen in Tilickafinna in the morning of 31 May (BF) may have been one of the two seen in Kilmichael that afternoon (DC). One of these was still present in the Kilmichael area on 1 June. A bird arrived in Scott's garden on 2 June and remained until 3rd (DS), and another individual was calling in Scott's garden on 7 June (DS). The last of the year was a bird in Kilmichael on 12 June (DC).

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

One flew west through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 13:00 on 28 September (DS).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

One in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 17 October (DC). This was the ninth record of a Long-eared Owl on Dursey Island.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

One near Bernie's Well in Tilickafinna on 31 October (BF). An owl flushed from the ground in upper Kilmichael Valley on 6 and 7 June was probably this species, but was not seen well enough for the identification to be confirmed (KF).

European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*

One was seen flying east near the pumping station in Kilmichael Valley at 22:35 on 1 June (DC). This was only the second record of a European Nightjar on Dursey Island, the previous record being on 5 June 1998.

Common Swift *Apus apus*

Twelve were seen flying east over the island in small groups on 31 May; at least four flew east over Tilickafinna on 2 June; and two flew west over Tilickafinna on 3 June.

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

The first of the year were two in Kilmichael and one on the High Cliffs on 14 February, followed by four on 20th and five on 22nd. Common from the end of February throughout the spring and summer, but becoming inconspicuous after the middle of August. Up to 12 almost daily in the first three weeks of September and 15 on 23 September, but then no more than four in a day except on 17 October when there were five and 20 October when there were six. The only records after 23 October were of a single bird on the High Cliffs on 6, 7 and 8 November.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

There were no records in spring, but a better than average series of records in autumn: one flying west over Tilickafinna on 9 August; one in Tilickafinna and one in Kilmichael on 5 September; one flying west over the West Hill on 7 September; four in Tilickafinna on 9 September; six with a large flock of Barn Swallows in Tilickafinna on 10 September; and two in Tilickafinna on 15 September.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

The first of the spring were single birds in Kilmichael Valley on 11 and 12 April (DC) and another bird at the Tip on 12th (BF). There was no evidence of any significant through passage in spring, with numbers never exceeding a dozen in a day. About half a dozen pairs bred on the island and the first fledged juveniles were seen on 5 July (as in 2008). Numbers began to build up in early August, with at least 30 present on 9th, including 20 in Tilickafinna, and there was a substantial movement in the second week of September. There were at least 75 on 9 September, including a flock of 70 in Kilmichael, and at least 150 on 10 September, including a flock of 120 on the wires above Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. Numbers then fell rapidly to 40 on 11th, 20 on 12th, 16 on 15th, three on 16th and 17th and only one on 19th and 20th. None was recorded in the last ten days of September, but there were three in Ballynacallagh on 9 October (KG, AL), one in Kilmichael on 23 October (KG, AL), one in Kilmichael Valley on 8 November (BF), and an exceptionally late individual flying west over Kilmichael village at 09:20 on 4 December (DC).

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

A poor spring with only five records: three flying east over Tilickafinna on 12 May; three over the cliffs in Tilickafinna on 14 May; two at the Tip and one over the north

slope on 30 May; two flying east over the West Hill on 1 June; and one in Kilmichael Valley on 14 June. Also recorded on five occasions in September: one with Barn Swallows in Kilmichael on 9th; 12 over Cromwell Cliffs on 10th; six over the north slope on 11th; and one around Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 15th and 16th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Present throughout the year, and the commonest breeding passerine on the island. Substantial numbers remained on the island throughout the winter of 2008/2009, with up to 60 birds being present in early January. Very common throughout the spring, summer and autumn, with obvious signs of autumn passage on many dates in September and early October, the highest counts being 150 on 14 September and 120 on 4 October. However, no more than 50 were recorded in a day after the middle of October and only small numbers remained on the island in late November and December.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

A common resident around the coastline, occasionally coming into the interior of the island, especially during gales. Up to 20 were recorded in a day.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

One in Tilickafinna on 16 March was the only record in spring. The autumn passage began with an unprecedented total of nine moving west through Tilickafinna in the morning of 7 September. Only one was seen the next day, but seven moved west through Tilickafinna in the morning of 9 September. Thereafter one or two individuals were recorded almost daily to the end of October, with three being present on 23 October. Single individuals were recorded on eight dates in November, mostly in Kilmichael Valley or Tilickafinna. There was one in Tilickafinna on 10 December, and one in Tilickafinna and one in Ballynacallagh on 13 December.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Present throughout the year, but unusually scarce in January when there were no more than five individuals on the island. Probably only four pairs bred on the island, as numbers never exceeded eight in a day until the middle of May, when the first fledged young appeared (on 12th). Then up to ten in a day in summer, up to 15 in September, and up to 10 in October. Thereafter no more than six in a day until 31 December, when eight were recorded.

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident, widespread over the entire island.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

A fairly common resident, largely confined to the village areas.

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Unusually scarce in the first six months of the year, presumably because of high winter mortality. Early nesting attempts seem to have been fruitless, and the first fledged juveniles were not seen until 12 May, but the later broods seem to have been very successful and by autumn the numbers of Robins on the island appeared to be almost back to normal.

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*

A well-marked first-winter bird, presumably a male, was found by BF and KF by the track between Kilmichael and the Waters at 13:45 on 10 November. The bird was seen later that afternoon by JS and John Lynch and was still present at 16:45, but could not be located the next day, despite a thorough search by about 25 hopeful twitchers. The bird

was carrying a ring on its right leg, and is now thought to have been the Red-flanked Bluetail ringed at Spurn Head Observatory on the Yorkshire coast on 18 October 2009. This was the first record of a Red-flanked Bluetail on Dursey Island and the first record for Ireland.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

2009 was a very good year for this species, after a poor year in 2008. There was a good spring passage in the second half of March, with one in Kilmichael and one in Tilickafinna on 16 March (DC, BF), three in Tilickafinna on 17 March (DC, BF), and two on the north side of the island near the Tip on 22 March (BF). Autumn passage began with one in Tilickafinna and one on the North Cliffs on 14 October (KG, AL), followed by two in Kilmichael and one in Ballynacallagh on 16 October (BF, KG, AL), single birds on 17 and 18 October (DC), one in East Fields, one in Tilickafinna and one on the North Cliffs on 20 October (KG, AL), a male on the High Cliffs on 21 October (KG, AL), and one in Kilmichael Valley, one in Tilickafinna and two at the Tip on 22 October (KG, AL). One was seen on 7 November (DC), and five appeared on 10 November (the same day as the Red-flanked Bluetail): one on the High Cliffs, three in Tilickafinna and one by the West Wall (BF, KF). At least six birds arrived during a period of easterly winds in the second week of December: two were found on the High Cliffs on 13th (BF, DS) and there were six birds the next day: one on the High Cliffs, two in Tilickafinna and three at the West Wall (DS). The two birds in Tilickafinna were still present on 15th, and one of these remained until 17th (DS).

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A good year for this species, with six records involving seven individuals, all in autumn. A dull female was found on the cliffs near the Old Lighthouse on 13 September (KF). This bird was still present the next day, along with another dull female in O'Leary's garden in Tilickafinna (DS). Two females appeared together in Scott's garden on 17 September (DS), and there was another female in Scott's garden on 28 September (DS). There was a female by the track between Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 14 October (KG, AL), and a first-winter male at the Tip on 20 October (KG, AL).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

2009 was a poor year for Whinchats, with only four records. Two dull first-winter birds appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 13 September and one of these was seen near O'Leary's garden the next day. A rather more brightly coloured individual appeared in Scott's garden on 19 September (DS), and there was a male at the Tip on 9 October (KG, AL).

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Present throughout the year, but relatively scarce until the middle of March and after the end of October. 2009 appears to have been another good breeding season, and the species was very common in autumn.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first of the year was one near the school in Kilmichael on 16 March (DC, BF). This was followed by three in Tilickafinna and one near the jetty on 17 March, six along the track on 21 March, and at least 11 scattered about the island on 22 March (BF). Thereafter, common throughout the spring and summer. Most of the island's breeding population had departed by the end of August, and many of the birds seen thereafter were probably passage migrants. There was a small influx in the middle of September,

with nine on 13th, six on 16th and seven on 19th, and also on 9 October, when five were recorded, but otherwise only one or two were recorded in a day until 20 October. Single individuals on 22, 23 and 25 October were the last of the year.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

One in Ballynacallagh on 13 October (KG, AL), and one in Ballynacallagh, one in Kilmichael and one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 16 October (BF, KG, AL).

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A fairly common resident. Four or five pairs nested in Tilickafinna, but the first broods fared badly. There was a noticeable influx of migrants on 20 October, when 26 were counted, and a further small influx in the second week of December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

The only records in the early part of the year were of two in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 16 January (DS) and three in Ballynacallagh on 14 February (BF). The first of the autumn was one in Tilickafinna on 16 October (KG, AL). This was followed by one in Kilmichael on 20th, another in Tilickafinna on 21st, a flock of seven in Tilickafinna on 22nd and 23rd, three on 24th and 25th, and a single bird on 31st. The only records in the first three weeks of November were of a single bird on 6th and 8th and a total of 10 on 10th, including a flock of eight in Kilmichael Valley. However, there was a big influx on 28 November, when 57 were recorded, including a single flock of 52 flying north-east high over Tilickafinna. Fifty were present on 30 November, including a flock of 45 in Tilickafinna, but most of these quickly moved off. Three to five were recorded almost daily in the first two weeks of December, increasing to 10 on 16th and 13 on 20th. At least 50 were present on 24 December, and there were still about 25 on the island on 31 December.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Present throughout the year, with numbers swelled by wintering birds in the early part of the year and again at the end of the year. Eighteen were recorded on 1 January and 14 on 7 February, but after five on 8 February, no more than four were recorded in a day until 20 October, when a count of six suggested that an arrival had taken place. Numbers increased gradually in November and early December, with counts of 10 on 30 November and 12 on 13 and 18 December. As usual, several pairs bred on the island and were conspicuous in song in early spring (first heard on 15 January), but the birds were then remarkably inconspicuous throughout late spring and summer.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

One or two birds were recorded on eight dates in the first three weeks of January, and 18 were found on 31 January, but the only other records in the first part of the year were of four on 14 February and a single bird in Kilmichael on 14 March. The first of the autumn were four on 12 October and one or two on 13th and 14th. At least 29 arrived on 16 October, and thereafter some birds were present on the island until the end of the year, although numbers fluctuated widely from as few as one or two to as many as 200. High counts included 25 on 22 October, 30 on 23 October, 22 on 10 November, 50 on 28 November, 30 on 29 November, 27 on 30 November, 60 on 4 December, 30 on 5 December, 34 on 6 December, 50 on 13 December, 35 on 14 December, 30 on 18 December, 65 on 19 December, 83 on 20 December, 200 on 24 December, 34 on 28 December, and 100 on 31 December.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

2009 was a very good year for this normally very scarce migrant on Dursey Island. One was seen in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael on 14 February (BF). One flew in off the sea, paused briefly in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and then headed off high to the north-east at 12:15 on 27 September (DC, PR, DS). One appeared on the hillside above Scott's garden at 09:45 on 28 November; it gave two short bursts of song from the electricity wires, and then headed off slowly eastwards (DS). Two were seen in Ballynacallagh on 4 December (DC). One was seen at several localities in Tilickafinna and on the High Cliffs on 13, 14 and 15 December (DS), and probably the same individual was seen again in Tilickafinna on 17 December (DS).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 18 April (BF), and one was watched singing from a bramble patch in the marshy fields below Kilmichael on 10 May (DS).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Once again, Sedge Warblers bred successfully on Dursey Island. A bird was found in song in the boggy fields below Kilmichael on 10 May; a bird was seen and heard in the same area on 12 May, 31 May and 7 June, and two birds were seen there on 12 June. At least three birds were present on 12 July: a bird in song, a bird carrying food and giving alarm calls, and a recently fledged juvenile, and there were at least two birds on 19 July, including a juvenile. Breeding was first proven on Dursey Island in 2005, when a pair bred near the pumping station in Kilmichael Valley, and was suspected in the boggy fields below Kilmichael in 2007 and 2008. The spring passage was very poor, with only one 'fall' in the second week of May. Three birds were found on 10 May in addition to the one in the fields below Kilmichael: one in Tilickafinna, one in Kilmichael Valley and one at Gerald's Pond. There was a bird in song in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 May, three in this garden on 12 May and one here on 14 May. The only records in autumn were of one in Scott's garden on 7 August, and one in Kilmichael Valley on 6 September.

European Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

A rather poor year, with only one spring record and two autumn records. All three records were of single birds in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna: one on 30 May, one on 7 September and one on 13 September (DS).

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

There were two records, both in October: a bird at the West Wall near the Tip on 18 October (KG, AL), and a bird at the base of the cliffs at the Tip on 26 October (KG, AL).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Yet another poor year, with only three records in spring and two in autumn. One in East Fields on 26 April (BF), two in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna (including a male in song) on 10 May (DS), and one in Scott's garden on 12 May (DS). One in Scott's garden on 7 September, and two there on 17 September (DS).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

A poor year, with only three records, one in spring and two in autumn: a single bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 12 May (DS), two birds in Scott's garden on 13 September (DS), and a single bird in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 18 October (DC).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

The spring passage was poor and the autumn passage scarcely any better, with no more than eight birds recorded in a day. The first of the spring was a male in Tilickafinna on 16 March (BF). There was a male in Kilmichael Valley on 4 and 5 April; a male in Tilickafinna on 10 May; two females in Tilickafinna on 11 May; and two in Tilickafinna and one in Kilmichael Valley on 12 May. The first of the autumn was a male in Tilickafinna on 13 September. This was followed by two males on 16 September, a male on 17th, a male and a female on 19th, a male on 20th and a male on 27th. Two appeared on 30 September, followed by one on 1 October, four on 2nd, six on 3rd and one on 4th. There was then a gap of almost two weeks before the next: one in Kilmichael Valley and one in Kilmichael village on 16 October. Four appeared on 17 October, and these were followed by three on 18th, two on 21st, eight on 22nd, three on 23rd, one on 24th, two on 25th, and one on 26th and 27th. A male in Kilmichael Valley on 31 October and 1 November was the last of the year.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

2009 was the third good year in a row for this species on Dursey Island, with records on five dates between 9 and 16 October, involving five individuals. The first was a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 9 October (KG, AL, JS). One was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 10 and 11 October (BF); one was seen along the North Cliffs near the Tip on 13 October (KG, AL); and there was one in Scott's garden and one in Kilmichael village on 16 October (KG, AL).

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

One appeared briefly in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in the morning of 12 May (DS). This was only the third record of a Wood Warbler on Dursey Island, the previous records being on 28 April 1999 and 16 August 2006.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

The spring passage began with an arrival of at least 12 on 21 March and 13 on 22 March (BF). Five were present on 28 March, followed by four on 2 and 3 April, and five on 5 April. Chiffchaffs were recorded on all further visits in April and almost daily from 1 May to 7 June, but counts exceeded two only on 18 April (3), 12 May (4) and 31 May (5). A long-staying individual took up residence in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on or about 10 May and was still there on 7 June, when coverage was interrupted. This bird, obviously a male, spent a great deal of time in song, and was observed displaying to presumed females on several occasions. When coverage was resumed on 3 July, there was still a Chiffchaff in Scott's garden – presumably the same individual. This was last seen on 12 July. The autumn migration began with singletons in Tilickafinna on 2, 7, 10 and 12 August, but the next were not until a single on 6 and 7 September and three on 10 September. Thereafter, one to four were recorded daily to 24 September, increasing to eight on 25th, 10 on 26th and 27th, eight on 28th and nine on 30th. Present throughout October, mostly in small numbers but with counts exceeding ten on 9th (17), 13th (19), 17th (15), 20th (21), 22nd (14) and 31st (17). Eleven were still present on 1 November, but only one was seen on 5th and 6th. Another influx then occurred, with numbers increasing to three on 7th, seven on 8th, four on 9th and 11 on 10th. Thereafter, single individuals appeared on several occasions in late November and early December: in Tilickafinna on 15 November, in Kilmichael on 21 November, in Tilickafinna on 28 November, 30 November and 1 December, in the fields below Kilmichael on 4 December, in Tilickafinna on 11 December and in Kilmichael Valley on 13 December.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The spring passage was rather poor, with only one fall in the third week of April, but the species was much commoner than usual in autumn, with one individual lingering until late October. The first of the spring was a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 April (BF). There was a substantial fall on 18 April, when at least 17 were recorded around the island, and eight were seen the next day. However, the only other records in spring were of one in Scott's garden on 2 and 3 May, one in Scott's garden and one in Kilmichael Valley on 10 May, one in Kilmichael Valley on 12 May, one in song in Scott's garden on 13 May, and one in song in Kilmichael Valley on 3 June. The autumn migration began with two young birds in Scott's garden on 21 July, one of which remained until 23rd, and one in Scott's garden and one in Kilmichael Valley on 25th. Two on 7 August were followed by one on 10th, four on 13th, one on 16th and two on 29th. Willow Warblers were recorded on every day from 3 to 20 September, mostly in ones and twos, but with four on 5th, six on 10th, and five on 12th and 13th. One was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 25 and 26 September, and one was seen in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 3, 4, 11, 16, 17 and 18 October, in East fields on 20 October and back in Cooke's garden on 21, 23 and 25 October. All of these October records are thought to relate to the same long-staying individual.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

The spring migration was again very poor, with only three records: one in Kilmichael Valley and three in Tilickafinna on 21 March, one in Tilickafinna on 22 March, and one in Kilmichael on 18 April. The autumn migration was unusual this year in that most of the records were in September. The first of the autumn were two birds in Kilmichael Valley and one in Tilickafinna on 10 September, and one in Ballynacallagh, one in Kilmichael Valley and one in Tilickafinna on 11 September. One on 12th and two on 13th were followed by six on 14th, one on 15th and two on 16th. One of the latter remained in Tilickafinna until 20th. Another bird appeared in Tilickafinna on 29 September, and was followed by one in Ballynacallagh on 30th. The only records in October were of one in Tilickafinna on 2nd and 4th, and one in Kilmichael on 12th. A single bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 6 November was the last of the year.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

A rather poor year, with records on only eight dates in spring and five dates in autumn. One in Scott's garden and one at the Waters on 12 May were the first. Another arrived in Scott's garden on 30 May; it was joined by a second on 31st, when there was also a bird in Kilmichael Valley. The two birds in Scott's garden were still present on 1st and 2nd, and were joined by a third on 3rd, while there were two in Kilmichael Valley on 1st. Another bird appeared at the Waters on 3rd, when there was a single bird in Kilmichael Valley. A bird in Kilmichael Valley on 6 and 7 June was probably a different individual. The first of the autumn was a bird in Scott's garden on 11 September. This was still present on 12th, when another appeared in Ballynacallagh. Four were present on 13th: two in Scott's garden and two in Ballynacallagh, but only two remained on 14th: one in Scott's garden and one in Ballynacallagh. The only other record was of a bird at the Tip on 9 October (KG, AL).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

At least seven birds that had been around since September 2008 were still present throughout January and the first half of February, but no more than four were present in

the first half of March and only a pair remained by 22 March. This pair, which frequented Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael, was seen on a number of occasions in April and May, and was watched courtship feeding in Ballynacallagh on 7 June. Breeding may have been attempted, as a bird was seen entering a potential nest-hole in a cottage in Ballynacallagh on 14 June (BF), but that was the last observation of a Blue Tit on the island until 4 September, when one appeared in Stapletons' garden. Another appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 7 September; there were two there on 8th and four on 9th. Thereafter, up to four were recorded on many dates to the end of the year, with one individual taking up residence in Scott's garden, and three birds moving about between Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael.

Great Tit *Parus major*

For the fourth year running, Great Tits were present on the island throughout the year. Seven birds were recorded on 1 January, but numbers declined steadily to six on 18 January, five on 20 February, four on 28 February and three on 16 March. Thereafter, only a pair remained throughout the spring. These birds were seen carrying food to a nest-hole in Gerald's barn in Kilmichael on 30 May and 7 June. Five juveniles fledged and were seen travelling around in a group in the Kilmichael area on 25, 26 and 27 July. One of the juveniles soon disappeared and no more than two adult and four juveniles were recorded until early September. Two appeared in Tilickafinna on 9 September, followed by four on 10 September (when there were also three in Kilmichael) and four on 19 September. Four birds were recorded on many occasions to 6 December, and there were five on 20 October, five on 31 October and six on 1 November. However, only three birds remained after 6 December, and these were still present at the end of the year.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

A dull-coloured female or immature male flew into Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from the south-west at 08:20 on 14 May. It stayed only a few minutes and then moved off up the hillside to the north-east (DS). This was the seventh record of Golden Oriole on Dursey Island, with the first being recorded as recently as 2003.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*

A female was present in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from 09:25 on 31 May to at least 19:10 on 1 June (DS, DC, BF). This was the tenth record of a Red-backed Shrike on Dursey Island.

Unidentified shrike *Lanius* sp.

A shrike seen briefly by BF above Ballynacallagh in the early afternoon of 30 May might well have been a Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator*, but unfortunately the bird flew off high to the north-east and could not be relocated despite a thorough search.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

Six were present on the island in the first three weeks of January, but only two pairs remained throughout the spring and attempted to breed. A pair built a nest in a tall Olearia at Zuma in Ballynacallagh and a pair built a nest in a conifer in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, but both pairs deserted as a result of disturbance. The Tilickafinna pair made a second attempt in one of the ruined houses in the village, but apparently failed as no fledged juveniles were recorded. Up to four birds were recorded on many occasions to the end of September, but only three were recorded in October, except on 5 October when eight birds were present. Only two birds remained on the island in November and

December – one in the Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael area and one in Tilickafinna.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Present throughout the year, with about ten pairs breeding on the island. The maximum counts in each month were as follows: 25 in January; 10 in February; 15 in March; 10 in April; 25 in May; 20 in June; 20 in July; 20 in August; 25 in September; 20 in October; 12 in November; and 20 in December. 2009 was unusual in that there were no observations of large flocks in late summer and autumn and no indications of big communal roosts on the island.

Hooded Crow *Corvus (corone) cornix*

Present throughout the year. Several pairs bred on the island, but breeding success was very poor and numbers were unusually low in July and August. Counts rarely exceeded 12 in a day, but 15 were recorded on 11 and 13 September, and there was a single flock of 17 in Kilmichael on 5 October.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Present throughout the year. A pair again bred in Tilickafinna and reared two young. Another pair may have bred near the east end of the island, but it is unlikely that they reared any young as numbers rarely exceeded six or seven until the end of June. Influxes of birds from the mainland occurred on fine days in early spring and late summer and autumn; the highest counts in spring were 10 on 20 February and eight on 16 March; the highest counts in late summer and autumn were 20 on 20 July, 16 on 8 August, 36 on 29 August (in one flock), 12 on 13 September and 10 on 5 October.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

2009 was another very poor year for Common Starlings on Dursey Island, with the local breeding population amounting to just three pairs. Very few birds were present on the island in the first three months of the year: seven were seen on 2 January and 6 February, but otherwise no more than six were recorded until early June. Three pairs were present in April and May; two pairs nested in houses in Kilmichael village and a pair probably nested in a house in Ballynacallagh. The first juveniles were observed on 3 June, when seven were found in Kilmichael along with a lone adult. There was some immigration of young birds from the mainland in July, with numbers increasing to 30 on 12th, 45 on 15th, 30 on 20th and 50 on 25th, but these birds soon disappeared and no more than 12 were recorded in August and early September. A flock of 19 appeared on 11 September, but thereafter only seven or eight were present on the island until the end of October. There were several small influxes in November (12 on 8th, at least 65 on 10th, 75 on 11th, 30 on 29th and 11 on 30th) and December (65 on 10th, 24 on 12th, 14 on 17th, nine on 20th, 14 on 24th and 28 on 28th), but otherwise counts did not exceed five in a day and none was recorded on the last day of the year.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A poor year, with only four individuals appearing on the island. Two females arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:40 on 15 September, and were joined by an immature male at 12:35 that afternoon. The females soon left, but the male remained until 17 September (DS, JS). There was a female in Scott's garden for much of the day on 5 October (KG, AL, JS).

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

A single bird flew in from the west at 08:15, circled around over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, and then flew off high to the east on 20 May (DS). Two very noisy birds

appeared in Scott's garden at 11:00 on 2 June and stayed for about 40 minutes (DS). A single bird (possibly one of these two) spent the whole of the next day in the garden and was last seen at 09:00 on 4 June (DS). None was recorded on 5 June, but two birds arrived in Scott's garden at 07:20 on 6th and remained there throughout the rest of that day and much of the next (DS). It is possible that the June records relate to just two birds that were wandering about the island. If so, these records constitute the eighth and ninth records of Tree Sparrow on Dursey Island. All records have been between 4 May and 7 June.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Four birds were recorded on 1 January and on many dates to 24 January, but no more than three were seen later that month and in early February. Two birds lingered on until at least 22 February, and one was still present on 15 March. The only other records in spring were of a bird in Kilmichael Valley on 2 April (DC), and a female which arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 30 April and remained until 8 May. The first of the autumn were two females in Scott's garden on 14 September, followed by single females on 20th and 24th, and two females again on 28th. Three individuals were then resident on the island to the end of the year, but there were several small influxes on fine days, with counts of six on 10 October, five on 16 October, 11 on 17 October, 15 on 22 October, five on 25 October, six on 8 November, 12 on 10 November, 10 on 28 November, 10 on 14 December and six on 19 December.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

For the fifth year running, Greenfinches were present throughout the year and bred successfully. Fourteen were seen on 2 January, and there were still at least 13 on 16 January. Up to 12 individuals were recorded on many occasions in late January, February and March, and up to ten in April, May and early June, but probably only one pair bred successfully. This pair was seen with two recently fledged juveniles in Kilmichael Valley on 19 May. No more than six birds were recorded in the first three weeks of July, but 12 were seen on 25th, 26th and 27th. Thereafter between 10 and 12 individuals were seen on many occasions to the end of the year. There were no significant influxes in October, and numbers exceeded 12 only once, on 22 October, when there were 18.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

This year, the island's tiny wintering population lingered on until early March: three birds were recorded on 1 January, then one or two on eight occasions to 19 January, and singletons on 8 February, 14 February, 28 February, 5 March and 6 March. There was a typical scattering of spring records: two in Tilickafinna on 19 April; two in Tilickafinna on 30 April; one in Tilickafinna on 24 May; and two in Kilmichael Valley on 30 May. The first of the autumn were two in Tilickafinna on 7 September, followed by 15 on 10th, 19 on 11th, 22 on 12th and 55 on 13th. Thereafter good numbers were recorded on most dates until late October, with high counts of 35 on 24 September, 25 on 26 September, 50 on 2 October, 60 on 10 October, 25 on 12 October, 25 on 20 October and 40 on 22 October. Most had disappeared by the end of October, and no more than eight were recorded in November and December, except on 8 November, when there were 11, and 15 December, when there were 15.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

2009 was a very poor year for this species, with only two records: a party of three flew

east over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:20 on 12 September, and possibly the same party of three flew west over Scott's garden at 08:10 on 14 September (DS).

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

As in 2008, the first of the year was on 15 March, when a single bird was seen in Ballynacallagh (BF). This was followed by three in Kilmichael Valley the next day. Only small numbers were recorded in late March and early April, but the species was common by the end of April. The birds seem to have had a good breeding season and were already gathering in flocks by 25 July, when 100 were recorded. Numbers remained high throughout August and September, with counts of 100 on several dates and 115 on 11 September. At least 130 were present on 3 October, but numbers then decreased steadily to 80 on 4th, 50 on 5th, 20 from 12th to 22nd, and 10 on 28th. None was recorded in November, but a very late individual appeared in Tilickafinna on 14 December (DS).

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis (flammea) cabaret*

2009 was a fairly good year for this species on Dursey, with three records in spring and an unusually prolonged passage in autumn and early winter. Two noisy males appeared briefly in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 10:30 on 12 May; a male was in song in Scott's garden between 11:30 and 13:00 on 31 May; and a bird flew west over Scott's garden at 09:05 on 7 June. The first of the autumn was a bird flying east over Tilickafinna on 10 September. Redpolls were then recorded flying over Tilickafinna or in Scott's garden on seven dates from 17 to 30 September: two on 17th, one on 20th, three on 23rd, seven on 24th, two on 28th, one on 29th and one on 30th. The only records in October were of one flying west over Tilickafinna on 4th, one in Ballynacallagh on 17th, and five flying west over Tilickafinna on 22nd. Eight were recorded in Tilickafinna on 28 November, including a party of six flying east; one flew west over Tilickafinna on 30 November; and one appeared in Scott's garden on 13 December.

Common Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Another good year for this species, with four records involving nine individuals. Two red males and two females arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 08:30 on 6 July and after feeding in conifers for 45 minutes, flew off high to the east (DS, JS). A dull juvenile was present in the conifers in Scott's garden from 08:30 to 16:30 on 7 July (DS, JS). A red male and a female arrived in Scott's garden at 19:30 on 8 July and remained until dusk, while a third individual flew east over the garden at 19:40 (DS). A red male came up from the track near Gerald's Pond in the afternoon of 12 July and flew up to Cooke's garden (DS).

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

An average year with five records involving six birds between 1 September and 12 October: a very tame bird was found with Meadow Pipits near the gap in Tilickafinna at 12:30 on 1 September (DS); one was found on the north slope near Gull Bathing Area on 13 September (KF); two flew east over Tilickafinna at 18:25 on 16 September (DS); one flew east over Tilickafinna at 08:30 on 14 September (DS); and one was found at the Tip on 12 October (KG, AL).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

2009 was an unusual year for this species in that there were records from five months of the year, although no more than two individuals were recorded in a day. Two males flew in from the sea and landed on the top of the cliffs at the North-west Tip at 11:40 on 1 January (CF, DS, JS). The first of the autumn was a dull individual on the track on the

High Cliffs on 25 September (DS). One was found near the Martello Tower on 20 October (DC) and again on 21st (JS). There were two in this area on 22nd (JS), one on 23rd (JS) and one on 24th, when there was also one on the High Cliffs (JS). Singletons were found near the end of the track in Tilickafinna on 25 October (DC, TM), near the Martello Tower on 31 October (JS), and on the track on the High Cliffs on 11 November (JS). The last of the year was a bird flying west over Tilickafinna at 10:25 on 18 December (DS).

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Reed Buntings were again present on Dursey Island throughout the year and bred successfully. Up to four individuals were recorded on many occasions in the early months of the year, mainly in the Kilmichael area. Two pairs bred: a pair in the boggy fields below Kilmichael and a pair in upper Kilmichael Valley. The birds in the fields below Kilmichael were seen carrying food on 30 May and 7 June; a recently fledged juvenile was seen in this area on 12 July, and three juveniles were seen here on 19 July. The female in upper Kilmichael Valley was seen carrying food to the nest on 31 May. The birds became very inconspicuous in late summer, but began to wander more widely in September, with single individuals appearing in Tilickafinna on several occasions. Three or four birds were recorded on many occasions in October, November and December, and there were counts of five on 12 October and six on 22 October, 10 November and 30 November. Most records were from the Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael and the Waters, but up to three birds were seen in Tilickafinna on several occasions.

MAMMALS

Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*

There were only two records, both of dead animals: one found recently dead in one of the outbuildings in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 9 January (DS); and a recently killed individual found in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael on 12 October (KG, AL).

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

One over Cooke's garden at dusk on 8 September, identified with the aid of a bat detector (DC).

Unidentified bats

2009 was a very poor year for bats, with only the above record of a Common Pipistrelle and two records of unidentified small bats, probably also Common Pipistrelles: one over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 22:40 hrs on 2 June (DS), and another over this garden at dusk on 10 October (BF, JS).

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*

Single individuals were recorded in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 19 January, 18, 19 and 25 April, 25 May, 16 July, 15 August and 27 October. The only other records were of two in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael on 28 March (BF), one in Kilmichael on 21 May (DC), and one on the High Cliffs on 26 October (DS).

American Mink *Lutreola lutreola*

One ran off the track east of Ballynacallagh and disappeared into a culvert on 20 January (DS). This was the third record of a mink on Dursey Island, and followed on rapidly from the previous record of an individual in Kilmichael Valley on 16 August 2008. An animal that was flushed out of the bracken in Kilmichael Valley by DC's dog on 24 October was almost certainly a mink (DC).

Common Otter *Lutra lutra*

A poor year, with only one record: a single individual was seen on the cliffs just west of the North-west Tip on 26 July (JS).

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*

Recorded in every month of the year, but very scarce in late spring and summer. The highest single-day counts were 11 on 2 January and 10 on 12 December. The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Days with sightings	5	3	2	5	3	2	3	2	1	10	9	7
Maximum count	11	3	4	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	8	10

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

2009 was another average year for this species, with a total of nine sightings, all except one being between 15 July and 30 September.

Date	Total	Locality	Observers
2 Jan	30-40	Off the Tip	BF
15 Jul	15	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 16:00	DS

16 Jul	10	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 07:25	DS
27 Jul	200	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 12:30	DS, JS
28 Jul	10	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 09:00	DS
4 Aug	30	Feeding off the Calf and moving north	JS
15 Sep	30	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 07:55-08:50	DS
16 Sep	6	Feeding with Gannets off Tilickafinna at 18:15	DS
30 Sep	20	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 18:55-19:25	DS

Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

2009 was a slight improvement on the three previous years, with at least five sightings: a school of 18 off the Tip on 21 February (DC); a school of 10 moving west off Tilickafinna at 11:25-11:45 on 13 September (DS); a school of 10 feeding with Gannets off Tilickafinna on 5 October (JS); a school of eight off the Tip on 12 October (KG, AL); and a school of 12 off the Tip and Calf on 15 October (JS). Ten dolphins moving east off Tilickafinna in the afternoon of 8 October were probably also this species (JS). It is possible that all the October records relate to the same school of 10-12 individuals.

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

2009 was one of the worst years on record for this species, with only two sightings: a group of three off Tilickafinna on 11 April (DC, BF), and possibly the same group of three moving north of the Tip at 11:40 on 18 April (BF).

Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca*

Two individuals, a large male and a presumed female, were seen off the north-west coast of the island and off Tilickafinna between 11:05 and 14:25 on 7 February, and off the south coast of the island between 09:20 and 12:00 on 8 February (DC, BF, PR).

Harbour Porpoise *Phocaena phocaena*

Present around the island throughout the year, but recorded infrequently in spring and early summer. Unusually large numbers were seen feeding off Tilickafinna in September, notably on 14th, when there were at least 100, and 26th, when there were about 70. The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Days with sightings	4	1	3	1	0	2	6	6	15	14	8	6
Maximum count	11	4	14	2	0	6	10	15	100	30	30	12

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

2009 was another good year for this species, with a total of 24 sightings between 20 May and 17 October.

Date	Total	Locality	Observers
20 May	1	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 18:25	DS
2 Jun	1	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 13:05	DS

3 Jun	1	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 07:50	DS
4 Sep	1	Breaching and moving east off Tilickafinna in evening	DS
8 Sep	1	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 18:40	DC
9 Sep	2	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 19:00-19:30	DS
10 Sep	3+	Feeding off Tilickafinna all day	DC, DS
11 Sep	2	Feeding off Tilickafinna from 08:15 to 13:00	DC, DS
13 Sep	4+	Feeding off Tilickafinna from 09:00 until evening	DS
14 Sep	4+	Feeding off Tilickafinna and the Tip all day	DS
15 Sep	3+	Feeding off Tilickafinna all day	DS
16 Sep	2+	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 17:00-18:30	DS
17 Sep	1	Off Tilickafinna at 13:30	DS
24 Sep	1	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 16:00	DS
26 Sep	1	Feeding off Tilickafinna from 08:45 to 19:15	DC, DS
27 Sep	3+	Feeding off Tilickafinna from 11:05 to 18:00	DC, DS
28 Sep	1	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 07:55-09:00	DS
29 Sep	2	Moving east off Tilickafinna at 08:25-09:00	DS
30 Sep	1	Feeding off Tilickafinna at 08:15 and again at 19:15	DS
2 Oct	2	Off Tilickafinna at 08:20-09:30	DC
3 Oct	1	Breaching seven times far out off Tilickafinna at 09:30	DS
8 Oct	2	Off Tip then off Tilickafinna	JS
10 Oct	1	Off the Cow	BF
17 Oct	1	Off Tip	DC, KG, AL

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*

Recorded only in Kilmichael Valley, where there were singletons on 11 April, 13 June, 14 June, 25 July and 1 August, and two individuals on 20 September (DC, BF).

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*

Five little frogs were found around Gerald's Pond below Kilmichael on 30 May (DC). The species was introduced in this area in 2005.

FISHES OF NOTE

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

An average year with only three sightings: one was seen basking in the Sound on 2 May (DC); two large individuals cruised west below Cromwell Cliff at 19:30-19:50 on 10 May (DS); and one was seen below the High Cliffs in the early afternoon of 6 June (BF).

Ocean Sunfish *Mola mola*

One was seen off the Tip at 15:00 on 27 July (JS).

BUTTERFLIES

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

Only two records: one in Kilmichael Valley on 30 May (DS), and one by the track west of Kilmichael on 7 June (BF).

Small White *Pieris rapae*

One in Kilmichael on 30 May (DC). One in a garden in Kilmichael and one at the Holy Well east of Ballynacallagh on 12 September (BF, KF).

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

The first of the season were singletons in Kilmichael Valley on 2 and 4 April; then up to 12 were recorded on many dates until early June. Six in Kilmichael Valley on 13 June and one on 14 June were the last of the first brood. The first of the second brood were 12 in the Kilmichael area on 12 July and 12 in the same area on 19 July. Thereafter, up to 10 were recorded on many dates to 15 September. The last of the season were two in Kilmichael Valley on 19 and 20 September. As usual, the great majority were in the Kilmichael and Ballynacallagh areas, especially Kilmichael Valley and the boggy fields below Kilmichael village, although there were also a few individuals in Scott's garden and the boggy fields in Tilickafinna.

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*

At least ten were found on the north slope of the island between Kilmichael and the Martello Tower on 31 May (DC). Then up to four were recorded on seven dates to 14 June, on the High Cliffs and at several localities in Tilickafinna.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

2009 was a very poor year for this species, with records on only four dates. One by the track west of Ballynacallagh on 31 May (DC); two in the Kilmichael area on 2 June (DC); one at the Waters on 6 June (BF); and one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and one on Tower Hill on 4 September (JS).

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

The first brood appears to have done well, but the second brood was very poor. The first of the season were three near Kilmichael Point on 31 May, followed by nine in the Kilmichael area and two in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 1 June. Then recorded on many occasions to 14 June, with high counts of 22 on 6 June and 18 on 7 June. The first of the second brood was a fresh individual near the jetty on 11 August. Then recorded in very small numbers on ten dates to 14 September, the highest count being six on 12 September. One at Kilmichael Point on 27 September was the last.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

A good year for this immigrant, with a small influx in late May, a big arrival in the second week of September and substantial numbers in the second and third weeks of October. A singleton on the High Cliffs on 22 March was the first butterfly of the year (BF). Five appeared with a big arrival of Painted Ladys on 30 May, and there were at least 25 on the island the next day. Numbers then decreased to 10 on 1 June, seven on 6 June and two on 7 June. Two were present in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 6 and 7 July, followed by one on 1 August, two on 7 August and one on 15 August. A big arrival occurred on 10 September, with most individuals appearing from midday onwards. At least 20 passed through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and about 30 were recorded elsewhere on the island. There were at least 80 on the island on 11

September, including 30 at the west end, and over 100 scattered all over the island the next day. Numbers had increased to at least 200 on 13 September, when most were recorded on the north side of the island. Numbers then decreased to 100 on 14th, 20 on 15th and 16th, 10 on 17th, five on 19th and two on 20th. Three appeared on 30 September, and one or two were recorded in the first few days of October. Numbers then increased to 10 on 7th, 15 on 9th, 16 on 14th, 20 on 16th and at least 40 on 17th. There were still at least 12 on 18th, 19th and 20th and nine on 22nd, but only two on 24th, four on 25th and one on 28th. One in Ballynacallagh on 31 October was the last of the year (BF).

Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*

A very good year for this species, with a huge influx at the end of May and a much smaller influx in the second week in September. The first influx began on 30 May. About 100 were counted at the west end of the island in the morning, and the first individual appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 10:15 hrs. By early afternoon, there were at least 15 in Scott's garden and 30 in the surrounding fields. At least 150 were recorded in the Kilmichael and Ballynacallagh areas that afternoon, along with another 20 on the High Cliffs, and numbers continued to increase in Tilickafinna. The number of individuals seen was estimated at 340, but many individuals were moving rapidly in a NW or WNW direction, and it was clear that many hundreds more, if not thousands, were passing through unnoticed. Numbers had increased considerably the next day, when there were several thousand feeding on thrift at the west end of the island, at least 200 in Scott's garden and hundreds scattered over the rest of the island. Again, many individuals were moving off in a NW or WNW direction and by evening only a few remained in Scott's garden. The number seen was conservatively estimated at a minimum of 4,000. Most of these had left by the next day (1 June), when only about 400 were recorded (300 at the west end of the island, 25 in Scott's garden and 75 on the rest of the island). There were still 200 at the west end and about 50 elsewhere on the island on 2 June, but only eight were recorded on 3rd, five on 4th and three on 5th. A small influx occurred on 6th, when 60 were recorded, and 40 were still present the next day. Coverage was then intermittent for the rest of June, and the only records were of two on 12th, six on 13th and one on 14th. Three were recorded 3 July and again on 5th, followed by two on 7th and 8th and one on 9th. One was seen in Scott's garden on 19 July and on five dates from 30 July to 8 August. The second big influx of the year began on 9 September, when a single individual appeared in Kilmichael. This was followed by three on 10th, 16 (mostly at the west end) on 11th, 50 (mostly at the west end) on 12th, and 75 (all over the island) on 13th and 14th. Only five remained on 15th and 16th, three on 17th, and two on 19th and 20th. Singletons on 27 September, 9-11 October and 18 October were followed by three on 22 October and one on 24th October. There was then a small influx on 31 October, when 13 were found scattered over the island, but only one remained the next day. Two individuals in Tilickafinna on 8 November were the last butterflies of the year (BF).

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

2009 was an unusual year for this species, with only one record in the first half of the year but a substantial influx in September. One was seen in Kilmichael on 31 May. The influx in September began with two in Tilickafinna on 10th and two in Tilickafinna and one in Kilmichael on 11th. Twelve were recorded on 12th, followed by 25 on 13th and 15 on 14th. Most of these were at the west end of the island and in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. There were still four in Scott's garden on 15th and singletons on 16th and 20th. One in Kilmichael on 25, 26 and 27 September and one in Scott's garden on 10 and 16 October were the last.

Peacock *Inachis io*

Another very poor year for this species, with records on only seven dates and probably no more than eight individuals involved. The first was a very faded individual on Cromwell Cliff near the west end of the island on 11 April (DC, BF). There were two in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 29 August, and one of these was seen again on 31 August. Another was seen in Scott's garden on 10, 11, 12 and 13 September; there was one at Zuma in Ballynacallagh on 10 and 11 September; and singletons were found in Kilmichael Valley, Kilmichael village and Ivy Gully on 12 September.

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*

The only records in 2009 were of one or two individuals in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on seven dates from 7 July to 5 August. Unfortunately, the main area for this species in the rough fields below Tilickafinna was never visited during the flying season.

Wall Brown *Lasiomata megera*

One in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 20 May was unusually late for the first of the season. Up to 14 were then recorded on ten dates to 13 June. The first of the second brood were two on 13 August. Thereafter, up to six were recorded on seven dates to 13 September. A late individual in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael on 10 October (BF) may have been from a third brood.

Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

An unusual year for this species, with several individuals lingering on until late September and early October. The first of the season were two on the High Cliffs on 23 July. Then up to four were recorded on eight dates to 13 September. Late individuals were recorded at North Pond on 23 September, in Tilickafinna on 24 and 27 September, and on the High Cliffs on 11 October.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

The first of the season were three on 15 July and one on 16 July; then up to five were recorded on nine dates to the end of the month. Fairly common in the first half of August, with the highest counts being 40 on 1st and 30 on 15th. Up to 12 were recorded in a day in late August and the first half of September, but no more than three in a day in the second half of September. One or two individuals were recorded on eight dates in the first two weeks of October, and an unusually late individual was found on 20 October (KG, AL).

MOTHS

The following day-flying moths were recorded.

Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*

2009 was a very poor year for this species on Dursey, with records on only four dates. There were three in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 9 July, at least ten in the fields below Kilmichael on 19 July, two in Scott's garden on 24 July, and four in Tilickafinna fields on 13 August.

Northern Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus callunae*

Single males flew through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 8, 10 and 16 August, and there was one over the West Hill and one in Tilickafinna fields on 13 August.

Fox Moth *Macrothylacia rubi*

Single males flew through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in the evening on 9, 20, 23 and 24 May (DS).

Emperor *Pavonia pavonia*

A very large caterpillar was found in the heather on the north slope of the island just west of Bernie's Well on 2 August (DS, JS). The only previous record of this species on Dursey Island was a female caught in a light-trap in Tilickafinna on 6 April 2007.

Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata hibernica*

One near Gerald's Gate west of Kilmichael on 12 July (DS).

Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*

There was a significant influx at the end of May, along with a big arrival of Painted Ladys: seven appeared on 30 May including four in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, one in Kilmichael and two in Ballynacallagh (DC, DS). Three were still present in Scott's garden the next day and one remained on 1 June. The only other records were of single individuals in Scott's garden from 13 to 16 September, on 20 September and on 24 October (DS, JS), and a single individual at Zuma in Ballynacallagh on 1 November (BF).

Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica*

At least three individuals arrived with a big influx of Painted Ladys at the end of May. Two were watched feeding on *Escalonia* flowers in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from 22:00-22:30 on 30 May (DC, DS, JS) and a third individual was found by the pumping station in Kilmichael Valley at 22:30 that same evening (DC). One was seen again in Scott's garden at 15:00 the next day and two were present that evening (22:10-22:40), as well as the individual in Kilmichael Valley. The two in Scott's garden were still present the following day (22:15-22:30), but only one individual was seen on 2 June (at 22:25) and none was recorded thereafter. The only previous record of this rare immigrant on Dursey Island was of one in Tilickafinna on 11 June 2007.

[**Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae*]

None was recorded on Dursey Island this year, after a very poor season in 2008.

Silver Y *Autographa gamma*

After one of the worst years on record in 2008, 2009 produced two big invasions – in late May and the middle of September. The late May invasion began on 30th, when about 60 arrived at the west end of the island during the afternoon. About 400 were recorded on 31st, including 80 on the north slope, 200 in and around Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and about 100 in Kilmichael Valley in the late evening. There were at least 200 on 1

June, including 50-100 in Scott's garden, and still about 50 in Scott's garden on 2 June, but numbers then decreased to 25 on 6th, six on 7th and two on 13th. Singletons were recorded in Scott's garden on 3, 5, 6 and 26 July, and there was one in Kilmichael on 5 July. None was recorded in August, but one appeared in Kilmichael on 5 September. The big arrival in mid-September began with one in Kilmichael and two in Tilickafinna on 10 September, and 11 at the west end of the island and four in Tilickafinna on 11th. There were several thousand on the north slope of the island on 12th, and several hundred moved east through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna between 20:10 and 20:45 that evening. An estimated 4,000 were present the next day, mainly near the west end of the island, but numbers had fallen to about 300 on 14th, and only 15 on 15th, mostly in Scott's garden. Numbers then dwindled to 10 on 17th, five on 19th, three on 20th and one on 23rd. The next was not until one on 5 October, followed by six on 7th, one on 10th, one on 18th, and three on 20th. There was a small arrival on 22 October, when eight were recorded in Tilickafinna and 12 in Kilmichael and Ballynacallagh. At least five were still present on 24th and six were recorded on 25th, but these were the last of the year.

No attempt was made at light-trapping this year, largely because of the very wet weather. Nocturnal moths of interest included an Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa* attracted to the lights of Scott's house in Tilickafinna on 26 September.

DRAGONFLIES

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

A female was seen by the track in Kilmichael village on 10 September (DS), and there was a male in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 13 September (DS). Unidentified darters, probably this species were recorded as follows: one in Scott's garden on 10 September (DS); two at Gerald's Pond, one in Stapleton's garden and one in Scott's garden on 12 September (KF, DS); and one in Tilickafinna fields on 13 September (KF).

Unidentified hawk *Aeshna* sp.

One flew west through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 9 September (DC, JS); singletons were seen in Kilmichael Valley and in Ballynacallagh on 12 September (KF); one flew south-west through Scott's garden on 30 September (DS); and one was seen in Scott's garden on 7 October (JS).



Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livernica* : 2 June 2009. Photo: Derek Scott