

BIRDS OF DURSEY ISLAND, CO. CORK : 2011

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

Derek A. Scott



European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster* : 4 June 2011

Photo: Derek Scott

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

| Month | Days with some coverage | Total |
|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| January | 1 – 15, 21 – 23, 29, 30 | 20 |
| February | 4 - 28 | 25 |
| March | 1 – 20, 26, 27 | 22 |
| April | 4, 8 – 10, 21 – 25, 29, 30 | 11 |
| May | 1, 12 - 31 | 21 |
| June | 1 – 17 | 17 |
| July | 11 – 14, 22 – 24 | 7 |

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|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| August | 5 – 7, 16 - 31 | 19 |
| September | 1 - 30 | 30 |
| October | 1 - 31 | 31 |
| November | 1, 4 – 6, 18 – 20 | 7 |
| December | 3, 28 – 31 | 5 |
| Total | | 215 |

With a total of only 215 days with some birding activity on the island, coverage in 2011 was the second worst since 2003 and way below the best coverage of 302 days achieved in 2005. Coverage was particularly poor in April, July, November and December, but there were also significant gaps in early May, late June and early August. Sadly, Brendan Finch passed away on 1 April and his weekly visits to the island were sorely missed. The author was present on the island on a total of 172 days as follows: 1 to 15 January; 4 February to 15 March; 12 May to 17 June; 16 August to 1 November; and 30 to 31 December. David Cooke visited the island almost every other weekend and spent a total 66 of days on the island, while Connor and Kieran Finch were able to visit the island for long weekends on average once a month and put in a total of 31 days on the island. Once again, Kieran Grace and Tony Lancaster made their annual pilgrimage to West Beara in the autumn and visited the island on 21 dates between 26 September and 28 October, reaching the Tip on all but three of these occasions.

Despite the rather poor coverage, 2011 was the second best year ever for birds on Dursey Island, producing a total of 140 species (excluding feral pigeon) and three new species for the island, American Golden Plover, Grey-cheeked Thrush and Rose-coloured Starling, bringing the total number of species recorded since September 1977 to 230. The highlights of the year included a Little Auk in January, a European Bee-eater and a Common Rosefinch in June, three Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a Long-tailed Skua, a Wryneck, a Tawny Pipit and a Common Rosefinch in September, and an American Golden Plover, two Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a Wryneck, a Richard's Pipit, a Grey-cheeked Thrush, a Barred Warbler, a Red-breasted Flycatcher, a Rose-coloured Starling, a Common Rosefinch and an Ortolan Bunting in October. Island rarities included the second and third records of Pectoral Sandpiper, third record of Pink-footed Goose, fourth records of Black-throated Diver, Common Pheasant and Bohemian Waxwing, fifth records of Sanderling and Eurasian Bullfinch, and sixth record of Whooper Swan. Sea-watching was very rewarding in autumn, producing counts of up to 1,670 Sooty Shearwaters, 27 European Storm Petrels, nine Pomarine Skuas, 17 Great Skuas, 33 Sabine's Gulls and 875 Arctic Terns, along with a few Great Shearwaters, three Balearic Shearwaters and small numbers of Grey Phalaropes. A pair of Blue Tits bred in Kilmichael – the first confirmed breeding record of this species on Dursey – and a pair of Peregrines bred on the cliffs below Tilickafinna. Two pairs of Sedge Warblers, a pair of Great Tits and at least four pairs of Greenfinches bred on the island, and a pair of Reed Buntings probably did so. However, there were only two breeding pairs of Common Starlings and one pair of Pied Wagtails, and for the first time since records began, there were no Song Thrushes breeding on the island.

As usual, the year began with a 'Big Day' on 1 January. This produced a respectable total of 41 species including two Great Northern Divers, two Golden Plovers, 125 Common Snipe, 33 Woodcocks, two Ruddy Turnstones, a Lesser Black-backed Gull, five Fieldfares, 62

Redwings and two Mistle Thrushes. A Merlin and two Common Redshanks were found the next day and there were still lots of Snipe and 13 Woodcocks about. A Curlew appeared on 3rd, when there were still two Mistle Thrushes, one of which lingered until 11th. A Bohemian Waxwing put in a brief appearance in Tilickafinna on 7 January; there was a Greenshank and a Black-headed Gull at the jetty on 8th, and a female Common Teal was found near Gerald's Pond on 9th. There was a male Common Teal on Gerald's Pond on 14th and the female was back on 22nd, when there was also a Jack Snipe on the North Slope. Two Red-throated Divers, six Common Scoters and a Little Auk were seen off the Tip on 23rd; the male Common Teal was back on the pond on 29th, when there was another Mistle Thrush, and both male and female Common Teal were together at the pond on 30th.

February was rather quiet, the only birds of note being the male Common Teal on 7th, a Jack Snipe in the Main Bog on 8th, three Purple Sandpipers, a Redshank and a Greenshank on 11th, a Redshank on 12th, a high count of 12 Turnstones on 15th, the first Manx Shearwater of the year on 19th, a party of six Golden Plovers on 21st, and a Red-throated Diver, a Merlin and the Redshank again on 27th. Redwing numbers dwindled from over 40 in the first week of February to only a couple by the end of the month.

March began very quietly with little other than a Red-throated Diver on 2nd, a Merlin on 4th, and a Red-throated Diver and a Glaucous Gull on 8th. The first Chiffchaff of the year arrived on 13th, along with another Merlin, and 15 Common Scoters flew west off Tilickafinna on 14th. The first three Wheatears appeared on 16th; there was a male House Sparrow in 'song' in Kilmichael from 18th to 20th, and on the latter date, a Common Pheasant was heard calling in the rough fields below Kilmichael. There was a good arrival of migrants on 26 March, including six Black Redstarts, 11 Wheatears, two Redwings, four Blackcaps and 16 Chiffchaffs. A Purple Sandpiper, a Redshank, two Black Redstarts and the first Willow Warbler were seen on 27th, while 28th produced a White Wagtail, six Black Redstarts, at least 40 Wheatears, three Willow Warblers and a Brambling.

Coverage in April was poor, with observers present only on 4th, 8th-10th, 21st-25th and 29th-30th. The only bird of note on 4th was a Hen Harrier, but the weekend of 8-10 April produced good numbers of Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs and Willow Warblers, along with a Tree Pipit and a Whinchat on 9th and four Sand Martins on 10th. The last Merlin of the spring was seen on 9th. The period 21-25 April produced several Grasshopper Warblers, along with the first Collared Dove of the spring and a Garden Warbler on 23rd, a Red-throated Diver, a Great Northern Diver and three Great Skuas on 24th, and a Rook on 25th. The month ended with a nice assortment of birds including a Hen Harrier, four Whimbrels, a Turtle Dove, a Ring Ouzel, a Grasshopper Warbler and the first Sedge Warbler on 29th, and the Turtle Dove, the Ring Ouzel, two Grasshopper Warblers and three Jackdaws on 30th.

The Turtle Dove was still around on 1 May, as were two Grasshopper Warblers, while new arrivals included 17 Whimbrels, a Common Sandpiper, a Collared Dove and the first Spotted Flycatcher of the year. However, there was then a gap in coverage until 12 May, when the only migrants were a couple of Chiffchaffs. North-westerly and south-westerly winds dominated for the rest of the month, and the main interest was at sea, with good numbers of Great Northern Divers and Great Skuas passing west off Tilickafinna or north off the Tip, along with an Arctic Skua on 16th, a Sooty Shearwater on 22nd, a Red-throated Diver and three Arctic Terns on 24th, an Arctic Skua and an Arctic Tern on 26th, and another Arctic Skua on 27th. The only land-birds of note were a few Whimbrels, single Collared Doves on 15th and 20th, and a Turtle Dove which arrived in Tilickafinna on 22nd and remained until 2 June.

The long run of westerly winds ended on 1 June, and calm conditions on 2nd produced the first three House Martins of the year, a Spotted Flycatcher and a Jackdaw. A light north-easterly breeze on 3rd produced three Collared Doves, three Common Swifts, a Sedge Warbler, a Common Whitethroat and two Willow Warblers, and these were followed, in spectacular fashion, by a European Bee-eater and a Common Rosefinch on 4th, along with another Collared Dove, two more Common Swifts and a late Blackcap. Only two Collared Doves and the Spotted Flycatcher remained on 5th. The Spotted Flycatcher was last seen on 7th, and the only other birds of note in the next ten days were a Great Northern Diver and an Arctic Tern on 8th, a Grey Heron and a Lesser Redpoll on 11th, two Common Swifts and a House Martin on 12th, an Arctic Skua and a Great Skua on 13th, and another Lesser Redpoll on 17th.

In the two months from 18 June to 15 August, the only coverage on the island was on 11-14 July, 22-24 July and 5-7 August. The first visit in July produced four Curlews, two Common Sandpipers and a couple of Willow Warblers, along with 22 Common Scoters off the Tip on 12th and a Goldfinch in Kilmichael on 14th. The second visit produced a summering Purple Sandpiper on Lower North Slope, five Curlews, a Common Sandpiper and a Great Skua on 23rd, and a Whimbrel on 24th, as well as the odd Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler. The visit in early August (a 'Seatrack' weekend) produced a Great Shearwater, two Sooty Shearwaters and three Common Scoters off the Tip on 6th, as well as a Sparrowhawk, three Whimbrels and a Common Redshank on 6th, and the Sparrowhawk and three Willow Warblers on 7th.

Full-time coverage was resumed on 16 August and was then continuous until 1 November. The third week of August was very quiet, with little other than a House Sparrow on 17th, a Sparrowhawk from 19th, and 15 Sooty Shearwaters, an Arctic Skua, a Great Skua, four Sandwich Terns and four House Sparrows on 20th, along with a couple of Willow Warblers throughout. A flock of 18 House Sparrows joined the four already in Kilmichael on 22 August, when the first Goldfinch of the autumn appeared. The first Goldcrest was found on 24th, and the first Grey Wagtail on 26th. A sea-watch from the Tip on 28th produced 110 Sooty Shearwaters, two Balearic Shearwaters, a Storm Petrel and two Arctic Terns. A short period of north-easterly and south-easterly winds at the end of the month produced the first Golden Plover of the autumn on 30th, and a Tree Pipit, a Yellow Wagtail, another Goldcrest and a Spotted Flycatcher on 31st.

The south-easterly breeze continued until 1 September, when a Reed Warbler and a Common Rosefinch arrived in Tilickafinna, along with another Spotted Flycatcher. However, the wind was back in the north-west by 3rd, and thereafter north-westerly or south-westerly winds dominated until 25 September, reaching gale force on several occasions between 6th and 18th. The sea-watching during this period was excellent, producing unprecedented numbers of Sooty Shearwaters, Sabine's Gulls and Arctic Terns. Highlights included a Great Shearwater on 7th, a Black-throated Diver on 8th, a Great Shearwater, a Balearic Shearwater, 27 Storm Petrels, a Grey Phalarope and seven Common Terns on 10th, a Great Shearwater on 12th, a Sabine's Gull on 13th, three Great Shearwaters, 576 Sooty Shearwaters, a Sabine's Gull and 125 Arctic Terns on 14th, three Sabine's Gulls on 16th, 1,672 Sooty Shearwaters, seven Grey Phalaropes, 33 Sabine's Gulls and 775 Arctic Terns on 17th, 1,158 Sooty Shearwaters, a Long-tailed Skua and seven Sabine's Gulls on 18th, four Sabine's Gulls on 20th, three Grey Phalaropes on 22nd, three Grey Phalaropes on 24th, and 27 Storm Petrels, seven Grey Phalaropes and a Sabine's Gull on 25th. There were a couple of short periods of south-easterly winds during this period, on 8th/9th and 15th, and there was a steady trickle of other migrants, but numbers were generally low. Birds of note included a Sand Martin on 3rd (the only one of the autumn), a Ringed Plover on 6th and 7th (the only one of the year), a Sanderling on 7th and 8th, a Wryneck on 11th, a Yellow Wagtail on

15th, a Pectoral Sandpiper, a Turtle Dove, a Tawny Pipit and a Pied Flycatcher on 16th, a Garden Warbler, the first Lesser Redpolls of the autumn and an early Snow Bunting on 20th, a Lesser Whitethroat on 22nd, another Yellow Wagtail and a Reed Warbler on 24th, and three Buff-breasted Sandpipers, another Reed Warbler and another Snow Bunting on 25th. The month ended quietly with little of note other than the long-staying Lesser Whitethroat (which remained until 7 October), a long-staying Reed Warbler (which also remained until 7 October), a few Goldcrests, and a Little Egret and the first two Blackcaps of the autumn on 30th.

October started well with a Whinchat, another Reed Warbler, two more Lesser Whitethroats, 14 Chiffchaffs, 10 Goldcrests, a Coal Tit and the first little party of Siskins on 1st, a Firecrest from 2nd to 4th, two more Buff-breasted Sandpipers, a Wryneck, yet another Lesser Whitethroat, a Garden Warbler and an Ortolan Bunting on 3rd, and four Pink-footed Geese, a Richard's Pipit, a Yellow Wagtail, a Lapland Bunting and four Snow Buntings on 4th. The next nine days were rather quiet, the highlights being a Common Redstart on 6th, a Grey Phalarope and two more Lapland Buntings on 7th, another Pectoral Sandpiper on 10th, and up to five Snow Buntings on most days. However, the wind swung round to the south-east on 13th, and 14th turned out to be an extraordinary day, producing two first records for Dursey Island, a Grey-cheeked Thrush and a Rose-coloured Starling, as well as six Black Redstarts, a Common Redstart, a Ring Ouzel, a Mistle Thrush, a Barred Warbler, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Brambling, along with nine Blackcaps, 10 Chiffchaffs and a House Sparrow. The Grey-cheeked Thrush and Rose-coloured Starling were seen briefly again the next day, and a third new species for Dursey Island turned up in the form of an American Golden Plover, but the only other new arrivals on 15th were an early Fieldfare and another Lapland Bunting. Nine Pomarine Skuas flew south off the Tip with over 1,100 Kittiwakes on 16th; the American Golden Plover was seen flying off high to the south, and there was another Common Redstart, the first Redwing of the autumn and another House Sparrow on the island. The 17th was very quiet, but two Black Redstarts, two Ring Ouzels, another Lesser Whitethroat and a Common Rosefinch were found on 18th, the latter frequenting the bird feeders at Zuma until 25th. Eight Whooper Swans flew north through the Sound on 19th, when other finds included a Northern Lapwing, over 20 Common Snipe, three Black Redstarts, five Redwings and two Rooks. The first Woodcock of the autumn was seen on 20th, along with the last two Pomarine Skuas and another Coal Tit. A new Ring Ouzel appeared on 21st, and the only Yellow-browed Warbler of the autumn was found on 22nd, along with 15 Golden Plovers, a Brambling and seven Snow Buntings. A Water Rail and a Woodcock were of note on 24th, as were a Short-eared Owl, a Tree Pipit and a female Bullfinch on 25th. A Glaucous Gull flew south through the Sound on 26th, and the Short-eared Owl was seen again. A Common Redshank reappeared on the south-east coast on 27th; the female Bullfinch turned up again, and a late Barn Swallow appeared in Kilmichael. Goldfinch numbers peaked at 60 on 28th, but there was little of note in the last few days of the month except for a Goldcrest and the Bullfinch again on 28th, a Fieldfare on 31st and a few Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs.

Coverage in November was very poor, with observers present only on 1st, 4th-6th and 18th-20th. The only birds of note on 1st were two Merlins and a Lesser Redpoll. A sea-watch on 5th produced a late Sabine's Gull, two Black-headed Gulls and an unidentified tern, while on land there were a few Redwings, a Black Redstart and a female Bullfinch (presumably the same individual that had been around in late October). Good coverage of the island on 6th produced a Grey Heron (only the second of the year), two Sparrowhawks, two Fieldfares, a Blackcap, a Goldcrest, a flock of 400 Starlings and seven Lesser Redpolls. The weekend of 18-20 November

coincided with a fall of migrants including five Woodcocks, two Black Redstarts, a very late Whinchat, a Blackcap and eight Chiffchaffs on 19th, and a very late Wheatear and 19 Fieldfares on 20th. The long-staying female Bullfinch was seen on 18th and 19th, and there was Common Redshank still around on 20th.

Coverage in December was also very poor, with visits only on 3rd and from 28th to 31st. The only birds of note on 3rd were two Merlins, a Woodcock and a late Chiffchaff. There was still a Common Redshank in the Illanebeg area on 28th, 29th and 30th; a Great Northern Diver appeared in the Sound on 28th, and an adult Iceland Gull flew past the jetty on 31st.

Although 2011 was undoubtedly a good year for birds on Dursey, it was not so good for mammals. There were only three sightings of Common Otters (single individuals in February, April and October); Brown Rats were very scarce, and there were no reports of Pygmy Shrews. Grey Seals were recorded in every month of the year except June and July, but numbers were very low except on 1 and 2 January, when 17 and 13 were counted, respectively. Small bats were observed on a total of 15 days, but all except three of the records relate to a single Common Pipistrelle roosting under the eaves of Scott's house in Tilickafinna. The four regular cetaceans off Dursey Island, namely Common Dolphin, Risso's Dolphin, Harbour Porpoise and Minke Whale, appeared in reasonable numbers, but these were the only species recorded. On the other hand, it was quite a good year for Basking Sharks, with sightings of up to three individuals on seven dates in spring. An Ocean Sunfish was seen off the Tip on 6 August, and a large Leatherback Turtle was seen off Tilickafinna on 21 August.

The butterfly season began very early with a Painted Lady flying north-east along the north coast on 11 February. This was followed by a Peacock on 21 February, two Small Tortoiseshells on 23 February, and another Painted Lady on 28 February and 1 March. The resident butterflies seem to have had mixed fortunes, with the earlier species, such as Green-veined White, Green Hairstreak, Small Copper and Common Blue, doing fairly well, and the later species, notably Peacock, Dark Green Fritillary and Meadow Brown, doing badly. At least three Orange-tips were seen near the east end of the island in late April, and there was a Speckled Wood in Tilickafinna in early June, but the colony of Large Whites that became established in Tilickafinna in 2010 seems to have failed, as only two or three individuals were seen on the island in 2011. It was a rather poor year for immigrant butterflies and moths, with only one substantial arrival of Red Admirals, Painted Ladys, Small Tortoiseshells and Silver Ys on 21-25 April, a small arrival of Red Admirals on 1-3 September, and two small arrivals of Red Admirals and Silver Ys on 15 October and 24 October. The first Humming-bird Hawk-moth of the year appeared on 21 September, and from 30 September to 27 October, Humming-bird Hawk-moths were recorded almost daily, although probably no more than six individuals were involved. Two Painted Ladys arrived on 24 October, and one of these and a Red Admiral lingered on in Tilickafinna until 27 October. The season ended with a very late Red Admiral on 19 November.

2011 was a poor year for dragonflies on Dursey, with only four individuals being recorded. Three of these were unidentified hawkers *Aeshna* sp. in Tilickafinna in September and October, but the other was a new species for Dursey Island: a female Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* found on the north slope of the island on 26 October.

Note: The Systematic List that follows incorporates the observations of David Cooke (DC), Connor Finch (CF), Kieran Finch (KF), Kieran Grace (KG), Tony Lancaster (AL), John Lynch (JL), Tony Mee (TM), Fionn Moore (FiM), Forrest Moore (FoM), Richard Moores

(RM), John Power (JP), Paul Rowe (PR), Joanna Scott (JS) and various ‘twitchers’ (on 14, 15 and 16 October). The author wishes to express his appreciation to these observers for providing details of their observations.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*

2011 was a good year for this species, with records on nine dates in seven months of the year. Two were seen off the Tip on 23 January (DC, JL). Single birds flew north off the Tip on 11 February, west off Tilickafinna on 2 March and south off the Tip on 8 March (DS, JS). One was seen off the Tip on 24 April (DC), and one flew west off Tilickafinna with two Great Northern Divers on 24 May (DS). One flew west off Tilickafinna on 18 September; two flew south-west off the Tip on 22 September, and one flew west off Tilickafinna on 7 October (DS).

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*

An adult still partly in summer plumage flew north off the Tip at 09:35 on 8 September (DS, JS). This was only the fourth record of this species off Dursey Island.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*

The only records in the early part of the year were of two in the Sound on 1 January and one in the same area the next day. However, there was a very good spring passage, which began early with one off the Tip on 24 April. A total of 45 birds were seen flying west off Tilickafinna on 10 days between 15 and 28 May, the highest counts being 13 on 24th and 16 on 25th. The latter included one flock of eight birds. Two birds (an adult and an immature) were seen resting on the sea off Tilickafinna in the evening of 21 May, and there was one in the Sound on 28 May. The last of the spring was one flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 June. The first of the autumn was one flying west off Tilickafinna on 24 September. Two flew east off the North-west Tip into the Kenmare River on 1 October; an adult still in summer plumage flew west off Tilickafinna on 7 October; and another adult flew west off Tilickafinna on 18 October. The only other record was of one in the Sound on 28 December.

Northern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Present throughout the year and a common breeding bird. Rather scarce at the beginning of January, but some 35-40 birds were already prospecting the cliffs below Tilickafinna on 9th and 11th, and there were over 50 at the Tip on 23rd. Hundreds were present at the main breeding sites by 8 February. Very common throughout the spring, summer and early autumn, but much reduced in numbers in late September and the first half of October, especially on relatively calm days. Numbers increased again in late October, and some birds were already back on cliff ledges by 20 October (one day earlier than in 2010).

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*

One flew north off the Tip on 6 August (DC, PR). One flew west off Tilickafinna at 09:00 on 7 September (DS). One was watched feeding with a large flock of Manx and Sooty Shearwaters between the Tip and the Cow from 09:45 to 10:15 on 10 September before eventually flying off to the south-west (DS, JS). One flew west off Tilickafinna at 09:10 on 12 September, and three flew west off Tilickafinna between 07:40 and 09:45 on

14 September (DS). This was the best year for Great Shearwaters off Dursey Island since 2000.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*

2011 was an exceptional year for this species, with the first ever record in spring and unprecedented numbers in autumn. One was seen flying west off Tilickafinna with large numbers of Manx Shearwaters at 07:40 on 22 May (DS). The first of the autumn were two flying north off the Tip on 6 August, nine flying north and four flying south off the Tip on 20 August, and one flying west off Tilickafinna on 22 August. Some 110 were seen flying south off the Tip during a three-hour sea-watch on 28 August (FiM, FoM), and then large numbers were recorded on most days from 3 to 22 September, with counts exceeding 100 on nine occasions: 133 flew north and four flew south off the Tip on 3 September; 259 flew south and at least 50 more were feeding off the Tip on 10 September; 331 flew west off Tilickafinna on 13 September; 576 flew west off Tilickafinna on 14 September; 1,672 flew north and three flew south off the Tip on 17 September; 1,158 flew west off Tilickafinna on 18 September; 111 flew west off Tilickafinna on 20 September; 123 flew west off Tilickafinna on 21 September; and 386 flew north and two flew south off the Tip on 22 September. Thereafter, small numbers were recorded on 12 dates to 18 October, the highest counts in this period being eight flying south off the Tip on 25 September, 10 flying south off the Tip on 5 October, and six flying west off Tilickafinna on 18 October – the last of the year.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Single birds were seen flying south off the Tip on 19 February and north off the Tip on 8 March (DS). There were no further records until 28 March, when one was seen off the Tip (FiM), but there were about 50 off the Tip on 4 April (KF). Then common to abundant offshore throughout the spring and summer until early September. Many thousands were seen flying west off Tilickafinna in the late evening on 21, 22 and 23 May, and there were counts of 1,244, 1,351 and 1,785 during the Seatrack sea-watches on 23 July, 6 August and 20 August, respectively. Several thousand flew south off the Tip between 11:00 and 14:00 on 28 August, and large numbers were still present in early September, with counts of 359 on 3rd, 506 on 7th and 314 on 10th, but numbers then declined rapidly to 81 on 13th, 52 on 14th, 46 on 17th and 13 on 25th. The only records thereafter were of three off the Tip on 1 October, two off the Tip on 5 October and again on 16 October, and two flying west off Tilickafinna on 17 October.

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*

Despite the considerable amount of time spent sea-watching in 2011, only three Balearic Shearwaters were recorded: two flying south off the Tip on 28 August (FiM, FoM), and a fairly dark individual flying south-west off the Tip on 10 September (DS).

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

The first of the year was one seen off the Tip on 28 August (FiM, FoM). Two were seen feeding off the Calf on 6 September (DS); 26 flew south-west off the Tip and one flew west off Tilickafinna on 10 September (DS, JS); 27 flew south off the Tip between 08:30 and 10:00 on 25 September (DS); and one flew south off the Tip on 5 October (KG, AL).

Northern Gannet *Sula bassana*

Common to abundant offshore throughout the year.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Present throughout the year in small numbers. Up to 16 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. Counts of 30 were recorded on many dates in the Sound, but the only higher counts were of 35 on 5 February and 70 on 16 May (mostly in a single feeding flock in the Sound). Three pairs nested on the High Cliffs.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

An adult was seen feeding on the shore between Illanebeg and the jetty at low tide on 30 September (DC). This may have been the bird that was present in Garinish harbour from 5 to 22 October (KG, AL), and was the seventh record of the species on Dursey Island, the first being as recently as September 2009.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

2011 was an exceptionally poor year for this species, with only two records: a bird was seen circling over the High Cliffs in the evening of 11 June (DC), and one was seen on Illanebeg on 6 November (KF). This compares with totals of 28 and 23 records in 2009 and 2010, respectively. Perhaps the unusually severe weather in December 2010 hit the West Beara herons hard.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

A party of eight flew east along the south side of the island, north over the Sound and north-east towards Kenmare at around 10:20 on 19 October (KG, AL). This was only the sixth record of Whooper Swans for Dursey Island.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*

A party of four was flushed from the top of the cliffs west of Gull-bathing Area in late morning on 4 October – a day of thick mist (KG). The birds flew off west towards the Tip. Judging by the four piles of droppings found near the West Wall, it seemed likely that the birds had spent the night of 3rd/4th roosting on the island. This was only the third record of Pink-footed Goose on Dursey Island.

Common Teal *Anas crecca*

One or two birds were seen on or near Gerald's Pond in the fields below Kilmichael on six dates between 9 January and 7 February: a female on 9 January (DS); a male on 14 January (DS); a female on 22 January (DC) and 29 January (KF); a male and a female together on 30 January (KF); and a male on 7 February (DS). It is likely that only two birds were involved.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

2011 was somewhat unusual in that there were very few records during the main passage period in the second half of June and July because of poor coverage at that time, but far more records than usual in September and October. The first of the year were unusually early: six off the Tip on 23 January (DC, JL). Parties of five and 10 flew west off Tilickafinna on 14 March (DS). The only records in summer were of a flock of 22 off the Tip on 12 July (DC) and three flying north off the Tip on 6 August (DC, PR). However, between one and four individuals were recorded on 15 dates between 28 August and 20 October, almost invariably flying west off Tilickafinna or north off the Tip, the only exceptions being two flying south off the Tip on 3 October and two flying south-west off the Tip on 10 October. It is possible that all these September and October records relate to a small group of birds (perhaps only three males and one female) that had taken up

residence in the general area. The last of the year was a lone male flying north off the Tip on 20 October (KG, AL).

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

After several good years for this species on Dursey, 2011 was very poor with only two records, both in spring. A female was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 4 April (KF), and possibly the same bird was seen around Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 29 April (KF).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

Unusually, there were no records in spring. The first of the year was a bird on 6 and 7 August (DC). A large female was seen at various points around the island from 19 to 24 August. Two females were seen flying east together over Tilickafinna on 30 August, when an immature male also appeared in Tilickafinna. This young male remained in Tilickafinna until 1 September, when there was also a female in Tilickafinna. Possibly the same young male was seen in Ballynacallagh on 9th and Kilmichael Valley on 23rd. A female was seen in Ballynacallagh on 25 September and in Kilmichael the next day. An adult female was seen in Tilickafinna on 7 and 11 October; an immature male was seen in Kilmichael on 14 October and in Tilickafinna on 15 October; and there was a female in Kilmichael on 18 and 19 October. The last of the year were two birds seen over the High Cliffs on 6 November (KF).

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Recorded throughout the year, but once again there was no evidence of breeding on the island. Single birds were observed on five dates in January and three dates in February. Two birds (a male and a female) were present on 26 and 27 March, but the only records in late spring and early summer were of single birds on 4, 21, 22 and 29 April, 16 May, 11 June, and 14 and 23 July. Single birds were seen on 5, 18, 21, 22 and 23 August, but then suddenly six appeared together in Tilickafinna – apparently a family party that had come over from the mainland. Thereafter, up to four Kestrels were recorded almost daily until mid-October. Two birds lingered until the beginning of November and two were recorded on 19 November, but the only other records were of single birds on 20 November and 30 December.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

Single females were recorded at various locations around the island on 2, 4, 8 and 22 January, 27 February, 4, 13, 15 and 26 March and 8 and 9 April, and may have been the same wintering individual throughout, commuting from the mainland on fine days. However, an adult male in Tilickafinna on 13 March was obviously a spring migrant. The autumn passage began with a bird near the jetty on 12 September, but there was then a gap until 3 October, when one was seen in Kilmichael. An immature male was seen at the Tip on 10 October, and probably this bird was seen again on 11th, 13th and 14th. Two birds were recorded on 18th, and then one or two birds were seen almost daily to 1 November, when there was a female in Tilickafinna and an immature male near the Sound. The only later records were of one on 19 November and two on 3 December, but one was seen on 1 January 2012, suggesting that there was again a bird wintering in the general area.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*

For the first time since 2005, a pair of Peregrines definitely bred on the island, this time selecting a nest-site on a steep cliff on the south side of Tilickafinna. One or both adults were seen on a total of 46 dates in every month of the year and were particularly

conspicuous in late May and June, when they were often observed carrying prey to the nest. It is not known how many young fledged as none was recorded in late summer and early autumn, but a large juvenile was seen in Tilickafinna on 31 October and 1 November, and on the latter date was seen accompanying the adult female. The adults were watched displaying over the nesting cliff on 20 and 29 October and hopefully will return to breed in 2012.

Common Pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*

One was heard calling from bracken below Stapleton's house in Kilmichael on 20 March (DC). This bird was in the same area as the male seen on 19 November and 10 December 2010 and may well have been the same individual. This was only the fourth record of a Common Pheasant on Dursey Island, the first being as recently as 2008.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*

One was seen along a track below Stapleton's house in Kilmichael on 24 October (KF).

Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*

After declining steadily in the 2000s, the small resident breeding population of Oystercatchers on Dursey Island seems to be increasing again. Most observations were on the south-east coast from the jetty and Illanebeg west to Kilmichael Point and on the north-west coast from the North-west Tip to Lower North Slope. High counts (mostly of birds at the high-tide roost near the jetty) included 15 on 26 February, 30 on 17 March, 20 on 23 July, 14 on 17 September, 17 on 19 September and 14 on 3 December. It seems likely that at least four and possibly five or six pairs bred on the island.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

The only record was of a very tired first-winter bird on the greensward near the North-west Tip on 6 and 7 September (DS, JS).

European Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

2011 was a poor year for this species on Dursey, with records on only 10 dates. There were at least two on the island on 1 January and one on 7th, but the only other records in the first half of the year were of a party of six near the Martello Tower on 21 February and one flying over Tilickafinna on 25 February. The first of the autumn was a bird heard flying over Tilickafinna on 30 August. Another was heard over Kilmichael on 10 October, and on 22 October a flock of 15 arrived from the west and landed on the hillside above Tilickafinna. These birds were still present on 24 October and at least one was heard calling over Tilickafinna on 25 October. The last record was of two over Kilmichael on 19 November.

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

One was first seen flying around over the Western Hill and Tilickafinna fields on several occasions between 16:40 and 17:40 on 15 October. It was seen again at 08:25 the next morning on the western slope of the Western Hill, but when flushed flew off high to the south, calling repeatedly (DS, JS). This was the first record of an American Golden Plover on Dursey Island.

Northern Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

One was seen in the fields below Kilmichael in the morning of 19 October (KG).

Sanderling *Calidris alba*

A first-winter bird was found on the greensward near the North-west Tip in the morning of 7 September (JS) and was still present in the morning of 8th (DS, JS). This was only the fifth record of a Sanderling on Dursey Island.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*

One was seen flying west and calling repeatedly over Tilickafinna fields near O'Leary's house at 10:10 on 16 September (DS). A very confiding first-winter bird was found at the small stream near the West Wall at 09:45 on 10 October (KG). The bird stayed around long enough for AL and DS to see it, but after 15 minutes or so, flew off to the east. These were only the second and third records of Pectoral Sandpiper on Dursey Island, the first having been as long ago as 19 September 1979.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*

2011 was another poor year for this species, with only six records and none in the latter part of the year. Three birds were seen at the usual site on the Lower North Slope on 11 February (DS), and there were two at this site on 26 February (KF) and single birds on 27 February (CF, KF) and 14 March (KF). One was seen on Illanebeg on 27 March (KF). A bird in summer plumage was seen on the Lower North Slope on 23 July (KF) – the first record of a summering individual on Dursey Island.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*

A first-winter bird was found at the summit of Maoil Mor (near the Old Lighthouse) at 07:50 on 25 September (KF). The bird disappeared for a while, but was rediscovered in the same area at 11:00. It eventually moved down to the top of the cliffs on the south side of Maoil Mor where it joined up with two other first-winter birds (CF, KF, DS). All three were last seen at 11:45 back on the summit of Maoil Mor. Just over a week later, two tame first-winter birds were discovered in an area of short grass on the north slope below the main bog at 13:30 on 3 October (KG, AL). These were the tenth and eleventh records of Buff-breasted Sandpipers on Dursey Island.

Jack Snipe *Limnocyptes minimus*

One was seen on the north slope near the west end on 22 January (CF), and possibly the same bird was seen in the main bog on the north slope on 8 February (DS).

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Large numbers of Common Snipe were still present on the island at the beginning of the year, following the extremely severe weather in late December 2010. About 125 were recorded on 1 January and at least 90 on 2 January. Many of these soon moved off, but there were still at least 40 on 29 January. No more than 10 were recorded in a day in February and no more than four in a day in the first half of March. Two on 19 March, one on 27 March and one on 9 April were the last of the spring. The first of the autumn did not appear until 7 October, when two were found near the school in Kilmichael. These were followed by one on 8th, one on 14th and two on 18th. There was a marked influx on 19 October, when 22 were recorded, including a flock of seven in Kilmichael and a flock of 13 in Tilickafinna. Thereafter, no more than five were recorded in a day to the end of the year, except on 8 November, when eight were counted.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

As for the Common Snipe, 2011 began well with large numbers lingering on after the cold weather in December 2010. No less than 33 were counted on 1 January and 13 were seen the next day, but these disappeared and there were no further records in the early part of the year. The first of the autumn were single birds in bracken near the summit of the Western Hill on 20 October (AL) and in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 24 October (DS). There was a small influx in the third week of November, with one on 18th and five on 19th (DC), but the only other record was of one on 3 December (DC).

Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

The first of the spring were four on Illanebeg on 29 April and a flock of 17 on Illanebeg on 1 May (KF). One was seen on Illanebeg on 15 May, and there was a party of five near the Cable Car on 16 May. A single bird was heard calling by the Sound on 17, 27 and 28 May. The first of the autumn was unusually early - a single bird on 24 July. Three were recorded on 6 August, and two flew west off Tilickafinna on 22 August. A single bird was observed at various points around the island on 26 and 28 August and 3, 10, 11, 17 and 22 September, and a bird flew south-west off the Tip on 3 September.

Eurasian Curlew *Numenius arquata*

As in 2010, Eurasian Curlews were recorded on a total of 27 dates, although this year the maximum count was only five. One was seen on Illanebeg on 3 and 14 January, and possibly the same bird was present on Illanebeg on 29 April and 1 May. Four birds were present in the Kilmichael area and on Illanebeg from 11 to 14 July, and five were seen in Kilmichael Valley on 23 July. Up to four were then recorded on six dates to 26 August. A single bird was seen on Illanebeg on 3 September and flying south through the Sound on 9 September, and possibly the same individual was seen on Illanebeg on 30 September and 2 and 8 October. Three were seen on Illanebeg on 24 October, but thereafter only single birds were recorded on 27, 29 and 31 October, 6 and 20 November and 3 December, mostly on Illanebeg.

Common Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Two birds apparently wintered on the island in 2010/2011: a bird on the shore between Illanebeg and Kilmichael Point (seen on 2, 4 and 7 January, 22 and 27 February, and 27 March), and one at 'Purple Sandpiper Point' on Lower North Slope (seen on 2 January and 11 February). A bird seen on Illanebeg on 6 August (DC) may have been a passage migrant. However, a bird seen on Illanebeg on 26 October was probably a returning winter visitor, as one was seen here again on 20 November and 28, 29 and 30 December. Prior to October 2010, there had been only two records of a Common Redshank on Dursey Island, one in October 1998 and one in July 2008.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

The bird found wintering on the shore around the Sound and Illanebeg in November and December 2010 was seen near the jetty on 8 January (DS) and again near Kilmichael Point on 11 February (DC).

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was seen on Illanebeg on 1 May (KF). Two were seen on Illanebeg on 11 July, with one of these remaining until at least 14th (DC). A bird seen on Illanebeg on 23 July (KF) and 24 July (DC) may have been this long-staying individual.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

2011 was an average year for this species on Dursey Island, with records on 14 dates and a maximum count of 12. One below the North Cliffs and one at Kilmichael Point on 1 January were followed by four at the jetty on 5 February, three at Gull-bathing Area on 6 February, a flock of 12 near the jetty on 15 February, three on Illanebeg on 26 and 27 February, four on Illanebeg on 14 March and six on Illanebeg on 4 April. One flew south-west off the Tip and one was seen on Illanebeg on 10 September. There was one at Kilmichael Point on 8 October and three in the same area on 24 October. Up to three were seen at Kilmichael Point and on Illanebeg on 28, 29 and 30 December.

Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*

One was seen resting on the water in the Sound at 16:00-16:20 on 10 September – a day of strong south-westerly winds (DS). A party of seven flew north off the Tip at 07:25 on 17 September; three flew south-west off the Tip at 10:10 on 22 September; three flew south off the Tip at 08:55 on 24 September; and seven flew south-west off the Tip between 09:50 and 10:30 on 25 September (DS). One flew south off the Tip at about 13:00 on 7 October (KG, AL).

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*

2011 was a good year for this species off Dursey Island, although unusually all nine records were in autumn. A dark-phase adult flew west off the North-west Tip on 10 September (DS); two immatures flew north off the Tip on 17 September (DS); a dark-phase immature and a light-phase immature flew south off the Tip on 1 October (DS); a dark-phase bird flew north off the Tip on 3 October (DC, TM); and a dark-phase immature flew west off Tilickafinna on 13 October (DS). On 16 October, a total of nine birds flew south-west off the Tip between 09:10 and 11:15 during a very big movement of Kittiwakes (DS, JS). A bird flew west off Tilickafinna on 17 October (DS); a light-phase adult flew south-west off the Tip on 18 October (KG, AL); and a light-phase bird and a dark-phase bird flew south off the Tip on 20 October (KG, AL).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

2011 was the best year for some time for this species off Dursey Island, with records on four dates in spring and 19 dates in autumn. Single dark-phase birds flew west off Tilickafinna on 16, 26 and 27 May, and a dark-phase bird flew north off the Tip on 13 June (DS). The first of the autumn were two birds flying north off the Tip on 6 August (DC, PR), one flying north off the Tip on 20 August (DS), and one off the Tip on 28 August (FiM, FoM). Five flew south off the Tip on 3 September (DS). Then one to three were recorded on 13 dates from 8 September to 16 October, mostly flying north or south off the Tip, but with single birds flying west off Tilickafinna on 10, 14, 16, 18 and 20 September. Three dark-phase birds flew west off Tilickafinna on 17 October (DS), and one dark-phase bird flew south off the Tip on 24 October (KG, AL).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An immature bird flew north off the Tip at 10:00 on 18 September (DS). This was only the fourth record of this species off Dursey Island.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*

There was a good spring passage and there were some unusually high counts in autumn, although few birds were recorded after the third week of September. The first of the spring were three off the Tip on 24 April. A total of 20 birds were seen flying west off Tilickafinna on seven dates between 15 and 24 May, the highest counts being four on 15th and eight on 23rd. One was seen chasing Gannets off the Tip on 13 June, and one was seen flying north off the Tip on 23 July. Up to three were recorded off the Tip or Tilickafinna on nine dates from 20 August to 12 September. The main passage occurred during the ten-day period from 13 to 22 September, when a total of 63 birds were counted flying west off Tilickafinna or north off the Tip. The highest counts were seven flying west off Tilickafinna on 13th, 11 flying west off Tilickafinna on 14th, 17 flying north off the Tip on 17th, 14 flying west off Tilickafinna on 18th, and nine flying north off the Tip on 22nd. However, the only birds recorded after 22 September were three off the Tip on 1 October and one off the Tip on 10 October.

Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*

The prolonged westerly gales in the second week of September produced an unprecedented influx of this species into the waters off Dursey Island. The first was an adult flying north-west far out off Tilickafinna on 13 September (DS). Another adult flew west off Tilickafinna on 14 September, and three more adults flew west off Tilickafinna on 16 September (DS). On 17 September, a total of 33 birds, almost all adults, were counted passing north off the Tip between 07:30 and 11:00 (DS, JS). Seven flew west off Tilickafinna between 09:20 and 10:30 on 18 September, and four flew west off Tilickafinna between 08:10 and 08:15 on 20 September (DS). A first-winter bird flew south-west close inshore off the North-west Tip at 08:50 on 25 September (DS). The next (and last) was six weeks later: a bird seen flying north off the Tip on 5 November (KF).

Blackheaded Gull *Larus ridibundus*

2011 was another poor year for this species, with only four records. An adult at the gull roost near the jetty on 8 January was unusual (DS). This bird had a yellow darvic ring on its left leg. Two adults flew south off the Tip on 1 October (DS); an adult and an immature flew north off the Tip on 16 October (DS); and two flew north off the Tip on 5 November (KF).

Common Gull *Larus canus*

Up to eight individuals were seen in the Sound and off the north coast on 11 dates in January and February, and five were still present in the Sound on 4 March, but the only other records in the early part of the year were of single birds on 12 and 13 March. A first-summer bird flying west off Tilickafinna on 3 June was very unusual (DS). The first of the autumn were an adult and a first-winter bird flying north off the Tip on 22 September. Two first-winter birds flew north off the Tip on 1 October, one flew south-west off the tip on 16 October, and there was an adult in the Sound on 17 October. There were three off the Tip and two in the Sound on 20 October and an adult in the Sound on 31 October, but surprisingly these were the last.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Single adults were recorded at various points around the island on 1, 7, 11 and 14 January and 11 February, and two adults were seen together at the gull roost near the jetty on 15 February. A flock of eight adults flew south through the Sound on 17 February, and the next day there were at least three adults calling over the cliffs below Tilickafinna. Numbers had increased to 11 by 19th and thereafter the species was recorded daily, with counts of 20 or more on many dates. As usual, some 10-15 pairs nested on the cliffs below Tilickafinna and along the north-west coast. The main departure of the breeding population occurred in mid-August, but more birds than usual lingered on to the end of the month and there were still 11 adults present on 3 September. Up to three birds were then recorded on six dates to 1 October. An adult in the Sound on 20 October was the last of the year.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Common throughout the year and nesting at the usual sites.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides*

An adult flew south-west past the jetty and over Illanebeg at 14:30 on 31 December (DS) – a welcome last minute addition to the Dursey year list.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*

A first-winter bird was found in a large gull roost on the Lower North Slope on 8 March

(DS, JS), and a first-winter bird flew south through the Sound at 10:25 on 26 October (DS, JS).

Great Blackbacked Gull *Larus marinus*

Common throughout the year. On 15 June, a pair was showing territorial behaviour on top of a small stack in the bay north of the Cable Car, but there was no sign of a nest. (This species is not known to have nested on Dursey Island in recent decades). The regular day roost on Lower North Slope east of Gull Bathing Area held at least 210 birds on 11 September, 220 (mostly adults) on 22 September, and 200+ on 25 September, 10 October and 16 October.

Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Present offshore throughout the year, but scarce in spring, summer and early autumn, with maximum counts of only six in April, 57 in May, 51 in June, three in July, 29 in August and 50 in September, suggesting that there were only a few tens of pairs breeding on the offshore islands. High counts in the early part of the year included 100 off the Tip and 350 off the north coast on 11 February, and 300 off the Tip and 50 off the north coast on 19 February. Numbers remained low in the first half of October, when no more than 50 were recorded in a day, but there was a very big movement on 16th, when over 1,100 flew south off the Tip between 08:40 and 11:40. Counts of 200 were recorded on 19th and 24th, mostly of birds flying south off the Tip, but no more than 80 were recorded in a day to early November, and very few were seen after that.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Four flew north off the Tip on 20 August; six flew south off the Tip on 10 September; two flew south-west off the Tip on 11 September; and one flew south-west off the Tip on 25 September (DS).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Groups of four and three flew south-west off the Tip during a big movement of terns on 10 September (DS).

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

2011 was an exceptional year for this species off Dursey Island, with unprecedented numbers in autumn. The first of the year were three feeding with Kittiwakes off Tilickafinna on 24 May and one flying west off Tilickafinna on 26 May. One flew west off Tilickafinna on 8 June. The autumn passage began with two flying south off the Tip on 28 August. Arctic Terns (or terns that were almost certainly Arctic) were then recorded on 14 dates from 3 to 25 September, mostly flying west off Tilickafinna or north off the Tip. The highest counts were 119 flying south-west off the Tip on 10th, 26 flying west off Tilickafinna on 13th, 125 feeding and moving north off the Tip on 14th, 25 flying west off Tilickafinna on 16th, 875 feeding and moving north off the Tip on 17th, and 124 moving north off the Tip on 18th. The only records after 25 September were of three flying south off the Tip on 7 October and single birds flying south off the Tip on 16 and 24 October. An unidentified tern was seen flying north off the Tip on 5 November (KF).

Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*

Present offshore throughout the year. High counts of unidentified auks (mostly this species) included 300 off the north coast on 19 February, 500 flying west off Tilickafinna on 22 May, 500 flying north off the Tip on 14 September, 850 flying north off the Tip on 17 September, 550 flying west off Tilickafinna on 20 September, 550

flying north and south off the Tip on 1 October, and 1,010 mainly flying south off the Tip on 16 October.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Present offshore in small numbers throughout the year. A count of at least 100 on 11 February was unusually high.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

Recorded in very small numbers on 18 dates from 1 January to 27 May, mostly in the Sound but also occasionally off the Tip. The only count of over two in a day was on 13 March when there were three at the Tip. The only records after 27 May were of two in the Sound on 12 July and one in the Sound on 28 December.

Little Auk *Alle alle*

One flew north-east off the Tip on 23 January, passing beyond the Calf and between the Cow and the North-west Tip (DC, JL). This was the seventh record of Little Auk off Dursey, with two of the previous records relating to dead birds.

Atlantic Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Small numbers were seen flying west far out off Tilickafinna on six dates between 15 May and 8 June, the highest counts being 12 on 15 May and nine on 18 May. Two were seen off the Tip on 8 and 13 June, and 48 flew south off the Tip on 23 July. There were three off the Tip on 6 August; single birds off the Tip on 20 and 28 August, and two off the Tip on 3 September.

[Rock Dove *Columba livia*]

The only records were of racing pigeons. One was seen at the Old Lighthouse on 15 May; one circled the cliffs below Tilickafinna on 23 May; and one was seen in Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 4 and 5 June. Two arrived in Scott's garden on 10 June and were still present when the Scotts left on 17 June. A fresh corpse was found near the jetty on 20 August, and a bird appeared briefly in Tilickafinna on 18 September.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

2011 was a poor year for this species on Dursey, with records on only seven dates between 23 April and 5 June, involving only eight or nine individuals. The first of the year was one in Tilickafinna on 23 April. One was seen in Ballynacallagh on 1 May; one was seen in Tilickafinna, Kilmichael and East Fields on 15 May; and there was another bird in Tilickafinna on 20 May. Three arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 3 June, and these were probably the same three birds that were seen in Ballynacallagh the next morning. However, another bird arrived in Scott's garden that evening. Two birds were present in Scott's garden in the early morning of 5 June, but these soon disappeared and were the last of the year.

European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

One frequented Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from 29 April to 1 May (KF), and another very tame individual remained there from 22 May to 2 June (DS, JS). A third individual was seen very briefly in Scott's garden on 16 September (DS).

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

One was flushed from bracken in the westernmost field in Tilickafinna in the late morning of 25 October and was seen again in Tilickafinna fields in the morning and afternoon of 26th (AL, DS, JS).

Common Swift *Apus apus*

At least three were heard calling high over Tilickafinna in the morning of 3 June; two

flew west high over Tilickafinna at 08:25 on 4 June; and there were two feeding over the Western Hill in the morning of 12 June (DS, JS).

European Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*

A bird appeared on the wires near the gap in Tilickafinna at 17:15 hours on 4 June. It soon moved to Scott's garden where it remained until 17:40 before flying off high to the north-east. At 18:10, it was heard calling in the distance over Kilmichael, but was not seen again (DS, JS). This was the second record of a European Bee-eater on Dursey Island, the first being on 29 April 2008.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*

2011 was a poor year for this species, with only two records: one was seen by the track in Kilmichael Valley on 11 September (DS), and one was seen in Stapleton's garden and later in the bracken below Kilmichael on 3 October (KG).

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

The first of the year were two birds on the Western Hill on 11 February, followed by five on 19th and single birds on 26th and 27th. Fairly common from early March throughout the spring and summer, but becoming inconspicuous after the middle of August. No more than eight were recorded in a day in the first three weeks of September, but a single flock of at least 20 appeared on the Western Hill on 24 September, and 25 were seen on 30 September, including one flock of 20 in Kilmichael. Thirty-five were counted all over the island on 1 October; there were over 40 at the west end on 3 October, and still 30 on 4th and 25 on 5th, but numbers then dwindled rapidly to eight on 11th, and only one or two in a day in the second half of October. The last of the year was a single bird on 18 and 19 November.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

There were only two records all year: four birds were seen on 10 April (DC), and one flew west over Tilickafinna with Barn Swallows on 3 September (DS).

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

There was no coverage on the island between 11 and 20 April, when this species usually arrives on Dursey, and by 21st the local breeding birds were already in residence. There was little evidence of any through passage in spring, with numbers exceeding a dozen in a day only on 23 April (16) and 12 May (20). As usual, about six pairs bred on the island and numbers increased to 26 in a day in mid-July, as fledged juveniles appeared on the wing. There was some influx of migrants in the third week of August, when up to 40 were recorded in Tilickafinna, but numbers had dropped back to 20 in the last week of August and no more than 10 were recorded in a day in the first three weeks of September. Five were still present on 24 September, and four were recorded on 1 and 2 October, but the only records thereafter were of one on 5 October, two on 12th, five on 14th and one on 27th.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*

2011 was an exceptionally poor year for this species, with only two records: three flew west over Tilickafinna on 2 June (DS), and there was one at the Old Lighthouse on 12 June (JS).

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

One was flushed off the track on the ridge above O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna in the morning of 4 October (KG). The bird flew off into the mist and could not be relocated. This was the fourteenth record of a Richard's Pipit on Dursey Island and the first since

October 2007.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

One flew west low over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:35 on 16 September, calling repeatedly (DS). It appeared to drop down into the fields below O'Leary's house, but could not be relocated. This was only the third record of a Tawny Pipit on Dursey Island.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

One was seen near Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 9 April (FiM), echoing birds in Tilickafinna on 9 April 1995 and 8-9 April 2000. There were two records in autumn: an early bird near the east end of the island on 31 August (Dan Ballard), and a late bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 25 October (DS). The latter flew off high to the north-east at 09:45.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*

Present throughout the year, and the commonest breeding passerine on the island. Possibly fewer than ten birds remained on the island throughout the winter of 2010/2011, but birds were already in song by 28 February, and then the species was very common throughout the spring, summer and autumn. There were signs of passage on several dates in September and the first half of October, but counts never exceeded 60 in a day, and no more than 15 were recorded in a day in the second half of October. Thereafter, no more than ten were recorded in a day to the end of the year.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus*

A fairly common resident around the coastline, occasionally coming into the interior of the island, especially during gales. Up to 15 were recorded in a day.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

2011 was a fairly poor year for this species, with only four records, all in autumn. The first was a bird near the east end of the island on 31 August (Dan Ballard). One flew east over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:20 on 15 September (DS), and one flew south-west over the hill behind O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna at 10:35 on 24 September (DS). A first-winter bird was seen amongst cattle in the fields below Kilmichael in the morning of 4 October (KG), and almost certainly the same individual was seen in Tilickafinna fields on two occasions that afternoon (DS).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

2011 was a very poor year for Grey Wagtails on Dursey Island, with only six records involving no more than eight birds. Single birds flew west over Tilickafinna on 26 August and 16 September, and one flew east over Tilickafinna on 24 September. Two were seen at the Tip and one was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 1 October, and there was one in the fields below Kilmichael on 14 October and one in Kilmichael Valley on 26 October. It is possible that the breeding population in West Beara suffered badly during the very severe weather in December 2010.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Present throughout the year, but much scarcer than usual, particularly in the latter part of the year. For the first time since records began, no Pied Wagtails bred in Tilickafinna. Six or seven birds were present in January, but no more than three were recorded in February and March. Four were seen on a couple of occasions in April, but only one pair apparently nested on the island, in Ballynacallagh. One juvenile appeared in Ballynacallagh on 10 June, and this bird and two adults were seen on several occasions in July and early August, but it was not until 20 August that numbers began to increase

again, with birds moving over from the mainland. Up to seven birds, mostly juveniles, were seen in late August and the first three weeks of September, and then up to 12 were present from late September to mid-October, but by the end of the month only four remained. No more than three were seen in November and early December, and only a single male lingered on (in Kilmichael) to the end of the year. One **White Wagtail** *M. a. alba* was seen in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FiM).

Bohemian Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*

An adult arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 11:15 on 7 January, but stayed for only a couple of minutes before flying off high to the north-east (DS, JS). This was only the fourth record of Bohemian Waxwing on Dursey Island.

Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident, widespread over the entire island. Birds were already in song by 27 February.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*

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

European Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

A common resident, particularly in the village areas. The first fledged juveniles were recorded on 18 May. A small influx occurred on 14 and 15 October, when at least 10 were recorded in Tilickafinna.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

2011 was quite a good year for this species, with perhaps as many as 10 birds in spring and 15 in autumn. There were three at The Waters and three in Tilickafinna on 26 March (KF); one at Kilmichael school and one on the High Cliffs on 27 March (CF, KF); and six in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FiM). At least six arrived on 14 October: three at the Tip, one at Gull-bathing Area and two in Tilickafinna (KG, AL, DS). Six were seen the next day, when there were five in Tilickafinna and one on the High Cliffs (DS, JS). One of these remained in Tilickafinna on 16th (DS). There was one on the High Cliffs and one in Kilmichael on 18 October (KG, DS), and two above Kilmichael and one at the Tip on 19th (KG, AL). One was seen at O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 5 November (KF), and there was one near the Cable Car and one on the cliffs north of the Martello Tower on 19 November (KF).

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

A first-year male was seen by the track west of Kilmichael on 6 October (DS). Another first-year male was seen in Kilmichael on 14, 15 and 16 October (visiting birders, DS), and a female/immature was present near O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 16 October (visiting birders).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

2011 was a very poor for year for Whinchats, with only three birds recorded: one in spring and two in autumn. A male was seen in Tilickafinna on 9 April (FiM). One was seen in the fields below Kilmichael on 1 October (KG) and below Stapleton's House on 2 October (DC). A very late individual was seen in upper Kilmichael Valley on 19 November (KF).

Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

Present throughout the year, but very scarce until early March (no more than six in a day) and after the end of November (no more than four in a day). A male was already in song in Tilickafinna on 26 February, and the breeding seasons seems to have been

reasonably good, with three broods already fledged in the Kilmichael and Ballynacallagh areas on 29 April.

Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first of the year were three on the High Cliffs on 16 March and two the next day (DC). Eleven were seen on 26 March (CF), and no less than 40 were counted on 28th (FiM). Thereafter common throughout the spring and summer, with the first fledged juveniles appearing on 25 May. Most of the island's breeding population had departed by the end of August, and no more than five were recorded in a day until 24 September, when 10 were seen, with numbers increasing to 11 on 26th. There was another influx in early October, with at least 25 present on 3rd, but numbers decreased to eight on 4th and no more than three to 18th. There was one at the Cable Car on 20 October; one at The Waters and one in Tilickafinna on 26 October; and a very late individual on the High Cliffs on 20 November (PR).

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

A first-winter bird was found by AL in O'Leary's garden in Tilickafinna at 11:25 on 14 October and was watched closely until 12:30 (KG, AL, RM, DS). The bird could not be relocated later that afternoon, but was seen briefly on the track beyond O'Leary's house the next morning (JP). Thorough searches later that afternoon and the next day failed to reveal the bird. This was the first record of a Grey-cheeked Thrush on Dursey Island.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

The only record in spring was of a male at The Waters on 29 and 30 April (KF). There were three records in autumn, probably involving four individuals: a bird around Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 14 October (KG, DS); a bird in East Fields and a bird in Tilickafinna fields on 18 October (KG, AL); and a male in East Fields on 21 October (AL).

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula*

A fairly common resident. There were still large numbers around at the start of the year, following the big hard-weather movements in December 2010. At least 38 were recorded on 1 January and 35 on 2nd. Numbers then declined gradually to about 20 in early February. Birds were already in song in Tilickafinna on 23 February, and the first fledged young were found in East Fields on 29 April. Three or four pairs nested in Tilickafinna, but the survival of juveniles seems to have been poor. Numbers in autumn were rather low, although there were signs of small influxes in the first few days of October and again on 19 November. Only about a dozen birds remained at the end of the year.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*

Five were seen on 1 January, and one or two were recorded almost daily to 8 January, but the only other record in the early part of the year was of one at East Fields on 22 January. The first of the autumn was rather early: a bird seen at The Waters on 15 October (JP). However, the only other records were of two in Tilickafinna on 27 October, one in Tilickafinna on 31 October, two in upper Kilmichael Valley on 6 November, and a flock of 19 in Ballynacallagh on 20 November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

For the first time since records began in 1993, it appears that no Song Thrushes bred on Dursey Island. Only 15 were recorded on 1 January and 18 on 2nd, despite the big hard weather movements in December 2010, and numbers steadily dwindled to no more than

10 in late January, nine in early February and four in late February. One or two individuals were recorded on several occasions in March, but the only records in April were of a single bird on 21st and 23rd. Thereafter, none was recorded until 26 September, when a single bird was seen in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael (AL). This was followed by one at The Waters on 1 October and one near the Tip on 3 October. There was an influx of migrants on 15 October, when seven were found in Tilickafinna, and from then until the end of the year small numbers (maximum six) were recorded almost daily.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*

Numbers were fairly high at the start of the year, following the cold weather in December 2010, but sadly there were also many corpses. Sixty-two birds were counted on 1 January and 52 on 2nd. Fifty were still present on 14 January and 40 on 10 February, but numbers then dwindled to 15 on 19 February and only one or two in the last few days of the month. The only records in March were of three on 7th and two on 26th, and these were the last of the spring. The autumn passage was very poor. A single bird was seen in Ballynacallagh from 16 to 18 October, but the only other records in October were of five in Tilickafinna on 19th and one on 25th. Two or three were present on 5 and 6 November, and there were five on 20 November and 3 December, and six on the last day of the year.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

Two were seen with a mixed flock of thrushes near the jetty on 1 and 2 January, and one of these lingered near the east end of the island until 11 January (KF, DC, DS). Possibly the same individual was seen in Kilmichael on 29 January (KF). The only other record was of a single bird that arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in the evening of 14 October and was seen again in Tilickafinna fields the next day (DS).

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

One was seen in Tilickafinna on 21 April, and there was one in Kilmichael on 23, 24 and 25 April (DC). A bird was seen and heard in song in East Fields on 29 and 30 April and 1 May; there was also a bird in the boggy fields below Kilmichael on 30 April, and another at The Waters on 1 May (KF).

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Two pairs of Sedge Warblers bred on Dursey Island this year; a pair in the boggy fields below Kilmichael and a pair in Kilmichael Valley. The first of the year was one in song in the fields below Kilmichael on 29 and 30 April and 1 May. Three were seen in the fields below Kilmichael on 15 May, and on 28 May, a pair was showing agitated behavior in John Michael's Bog and there was also a bird in song in Kilmichael Valley. Thereafter birds were seen and heard in song on several occasions in John Michael's Bog and Kilmichael Valley, and two pairs were seen carrying food on 23 July. It is not known if either pair was successful, as the only subsequent records were of two in Kilmichael Valley on 24 July and one below Kilmichael on 7 August. The only evidence of spring passage was a bird at The Waters on 1 May and a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 3 and 4 June. There were no records of birds on passage in autumn.

European Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

2011 was a rather poor year for this species on Dursey Island, with only four individuals recorded in autumn. The first was a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on

1 and 2 September (DS). A bird was seen in Ovenbird Hedge in Tilickafinna on 24 September (CF, KF, DS), and one arrived in Scott's garden on 25th and remained there until 7 October (DS et al.). One was found in Kilmichael Valley on 1 October and seen again on 3rd (KG, AL).

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

A first-winter bird was found in Bernie's Gully (on the north side of Tilickafinna) at 14:00 on 14 October (KG). The bird eventually flew off east along the north cliffs. This was the tenth record of a Barred Warbler on Dursey Island.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

2011 was a very good year for this species on Dursey, with records on 14 dates between 22 September and 18 October, involving five individuals. The first was a bird which arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 22 September and remained there until 7 October (DS et al.). There were two other birds on 1 October: one in Mike's Bog in Tilickafinna (DC, TM) and one at Zuma in Ballynacallagh (KG, AL). One was found in the fields below Kilmichael on 3 October and seen again in the same area on 7 October (KG, AL), and there was one in the Big Hedge near Kilmichael Valley on 18 October (KG).

Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Amazingly, there were fewer records of Common Whitethroat than Lesser Whitethroat on Dursey in 2011. The only bird in spring was a female in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 3 and 4 June. The only records in autumn were of a bird in Ovenbird Hedge in Tilickafinna on 16 September and a bird at The Waters on 1 and 2 October.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

2011 was yet another poor year for this species, with only three records, one in spring and two in autumn. A bird was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 23 April (DC); there was one in Kilmichael Valley on 20 September (DS), and another bird was found in Kilmichael Valley on 3 October (KG, AL).

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

As in 2010, both the spring and the autumn passages were unexceptional, with no more than four birds being recorded in a day in spring and no more than nine in autumn. The first of the spring were two females in Kilmichael Valley and two females in Tilickafinna on 26 March (CF), and a male and a female in Kilmichael Valley and a male in Tilickafinna on 27 March (KF). Up to three were recorded on eight dates in April, and there were three on 1 May, but the only other record in spring was of a male in song in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 4 June (DS). The first of the autumn were a male in Kilmichael Valley and a female in Scott's garden on 30 September and two males in Scott's garden on 1 October. Six birds were found on 2 October, but only two remained until 4th. There was then a gap until 10 October, when another male arrived in Tilickafinna. Thereafter Blackcaps were recorded almost daily to the end of the month, with the highest counts being nine on 14th, five on 16th, seven on 18th, five on 22nd, seven on 24th and five on 25th. A female was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 6 November (KF); there was a bird in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 19 November (DC), and probably the same individual (a female) was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 20 November (KF).

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

After four good years in a row for this species, 2011 was very poor, with only one

record. A bird was seen at Zuma in Ballynacallagh in the early afternoon of 22 October (DS).

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

The first of the spring was one in Kilmichael Valley on 13 March (KF). There was a notable fall on 26 March, when 16 were recorded (CF), and smaller numbers (maximum seven) were recorded on all visits in April. A male that probably arrived in Scott's garden in late April took up territory and sang regularly throughout May and early June and was still there when coverage was interrupted on 16 June. The only other birds in May and June were single birds in Tilickafinna on 1 and 12 May and one in Kilmichael Valley on 12 June. The first of the autumn was a single bird in Kilmichael Valley on 22 and 23 July (KF). Single birds were recorded on 16 and 20 August and 11 and 14 September. Thereafter, recorded almost daily to the end of October, mostly in single figures, but with 14 on 1 October, 12 on 2nd, 11 on 3rd, 10 on 14th, 12 on 18th, 10 on 19th, 17 on 22nd and 10 on 24th. Single birds were found in Kilmichael Valley and Ballynacallagh on 4, 5 and 6 November, and there was a small fall in the third week of November, when five were recorded on 18th, eight on 19th and four on 20th. One in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 3 December was the last of the year (DC).

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The spring passage began early but there were no big falls. The first was a bird in song in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 27 March (KF), and there were three birds in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FiM). Small numbers (maximum five) were recorded on all visits in April and three birds were still present on 1 May, but the only other record in spring was of two birds on 3 June, including one in song in Scott's garden. The first two juveniles of the autumn appeared on 11 July, and one or two were then recorded on 12th, 13th, 14th, 22nd and 23rd. Three on 7 August were followed by two on 17th and 18th, one from 21st to 26th, and another from 28th to 30th. Up to three were recorded on many dates from 31 August to 2 October, but the only higher count was of five on 24 September. One bird lingered on in Tilickafinna until 15 October, and there was a very late individual in Kilmichael Valley on 25 and 26 October (KF).

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

After an exceptionally poor year for this species in 2010, 2011 showed some return to form, although there were no records in spring. The first of the year was a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 24 and 25 August. This was joined by a second on 26 August and two were still present on 31st, although only one remained on 1 September. Single birds were found in Kilmichael Valley on 2 and 10 September, at The Waters on 24 September, in Kilmichael Valley on 25 September and in Scott's garden from 26 to 30 September. An influx occurred on 1 October, when 10 were recorded, but numbers dwindled to eight on 2nd and only two on 3rd and 4th. Thereafter only single birds were recorded on 10, 13, 14, 25 and 28 October. A late individual was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 6 November (KF).

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus*

A bird was found at Zuma in Ballynacallagh in the afternoon of 2 October (DS), and was seen again in this garden on 3rd and 4th (KG, AL).

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

2011 was a very poor year for this species, with only two birds recorded in spring and only three in autumn. One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 1 May, and one

that arrived in this garden at 19:00 on 2 June remained until 7 June. The first of the autumn was a bird that arrived in Scott's garden at 13:00 on 31 August. This was joined by a second bird on 1 and 2 September, but only one remained on 3rd. Another bird appeared in Scott's garden on 20 September and this remained until 25th.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

A first-winter bird was found in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:10 on 14 October and remained in the garden until dusk (DS, KG, AL, RM). This was only the eighth record of a Red-breasted Flycatcher on Dursey Island and the first since 2006.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*

2011 was a very poor for this species, with only one record: a bird by the track on the High Cliffs in the afternoon of 16 September (DS, JS).

Coal Tit *Parus ater*

One was found with a tit flock in upper Kilmichael Valley on 1 October (AL). This bird was seen again in Kilmichael Valley on 2 October, and then remained on the island until 12 October, frequenting the bird feeders at Zuma in Ballynacallagh and in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael (DC, KG, AL, DS). Another, much yellower individual, was seen in Cooke's garden on 20 October (DS).

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*

For the first time since at least 1993, a pair of Blue Tits bred successfully on Dursey Island. Four or five birds were present on the island in January and February, but only three remained in March, a pair in Kilmichael and a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. The latter was last seen on 4 April. The pair in Kilmichael nested in the wall of an old house in the centre of the village. The birds were seen carrying food to the nest in late May and June, and up to three fledged juveniles were seen in late July and August. One of these juveniles appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 30 August and remained there until 4 September. A major influx occurred in autumn, beginning with a party of six that arrived in Tilickafinna on 20 September. These birds stayed around until the end of the month, and then there was another arrival on 1 October, when 25 were recorded, including one party of 14 in Tilickafinna. Small flocks totaling about 35 were recorded all over the island on 3 October, and at least 25 were still present on 11 October. Between 15 and 20 were recorded on most days to 27 October, but numbers fell to 12 on 28th. Twelve were still present on 6 November, but only six were seen in late November and only four remained until the end of December.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Present throughout the year, although only one pair bred on the island this year. Six or seven birds were present in the first three months of the year, including a pair in Scott's garden until at least 15 March, but only four birds were seen in April, a pair in Kilmichael and a pair in Ballynacallagh, and only the latter remained in May. This pair nested in Finch's house in Ballynacallagh and produced at least five young, which were first seen on 28 May. Seven birds were recorded on several occasions in June, and up to six in July, August and the first three weeks of September. Two birds appeared in Tilickafinna on 20 September, and there were five there on 24 September. At least 10 were present on the island on 1 October, including seven in Tilickafinna, but there were no further signs of any immigration, and numbers remained at no more than nine until the end of the month. Only eight were recorded in November and only six in December: a pair in Ballynacallagh, a pair in Kilmichael and a pair in Tilickafinna. These six birds

were still present on the last day of the year.

Eurasian Magpie *Pica pica*

No more than two were recorded in a day in January and February, but three were present in early March and four were recorded on 17 and 18 March and 24 April. However, only one pair remained in May. This pair nested in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna but was unsuccessful, presumably because one of the adults was predated, as only one bird was seen between the middle of June and late September. Two birds appeared in Tilickafinna on 24 September, and there were three in this area from 26 September to 4 October. There were four birds in Tilickafinna on 19 October, five in Tilickafinna and one in Ballynacallagh on 20 October, and eight in Tilickafinna on 27 October. Three remained until 29 October, but only two individuals were present on the island in November and December, both surviving to the end of the year.

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Present throughout the year, with some eight to ten pairs breeding on the island. For the first time for several years, a large flock appeared in late summer and autumn, spending much of its time foraging near the Tip and roosting on the cliffs below Tilickafinna. High counts included 34 on 20 August, 40 on 10 September, 44 on 3 October, 50 on 10 and 14 October, and 40 on 16 October.

Western Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Three were seen in Kilmichael on 30 April (KF), and one flew south-west high over Tilickafinna at 10:55 on 2 June (DS).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*

One was seen in Kilmichael on 25 April (DC). This was the first record of a Rook on Dursey Island in spring. Two birds flew onto the island near the Cable Car at 10:20 on 19 October (KG, AL) and were found the next day feeding in the fields west of Ballynacallagh (DS).

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Present throughout the year. Several pairs bred on the island, including a pair on Illanebeg, and there was regular commuting by birds from the mainland. Usually no more than 15 were recorded in a day, but up to 20 were seen in October, including a flock of 13 which frequented the Ballynacallagh area for a few days in the third week of the month.

Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Present throughout the year. A pair nested on the High Cliffs and reared four young, while another pair appeared occasionally at the east end of the island, apparently as commuters from the mainland. Small influxes of birds from the mainland occurred on fine days in spring and autumn, but the only counts of more than 10 were 26 on 8 September, 15 on 1 October, 14 on 14 October, 11 on 25 October and 15 on 28 October. No more than four birds were recorded in November and December.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Once again, only two pairs of Common Starlings bred on the island, although numbers in late winter, late summer and autumn were higher than they have been for several years. Small flocks (up to 42) were recorded on many occasions in January and early February, and a flock of 200 appeared in Kilmichael on 10 February. A flock of 110 was present from 17 to 21 February, but only 30 remained on 25th. Small flocks continued to visit the island on fine days in March, with these including 50 on 11th and 50 on 19th, but

after 21 on 26th, only eight birds remained to the end of April. Two pairs were found nesting in May, a pair in Finch's house in Ballynacallagh and a pair in Kilmichael, and both of these had four fledged young on 27 May, when there were also single adults in Tilickafinna and Kilmichael. No more than 13 were recorded in a day in June, but the first post-breeding flocks of mostly juveniles appeared in early July, and about 300 were present on 11th, 12th and 13th. There were still 300 on 22 July, but numbers then dropped to 200 until 17 August, 150 until 25 September, 80 until 30 September, 55 until 11 October, 30 on 14 October and 20 on 18 October. Thereafter, only five or six individuals remained permanently on the island, although flocks of 30 to 80 occasionally visited the island on fine days, and a large flock of at least 400 appeared over The Waters on 6 November. The last flock to appear was a flock of 50 on 3 December, and only four birds were present at the end of December.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

A very confiding first-winter bird appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 10:15 on 14 October (DS). After foraging in the garden for about 40 minutes, it flew up to join a passing flock of Common Starlings and disappeared to the west. Soon after, it was seen with Common Starlings on the roof of a ruined building in Tilickafinna (KG, AL), and at 11:25 it was seen flying high to the east with the starling flock (DS, RM). Presumably the same bird was seen with Common Starlings in Ballynacallagh the next morning (JP). This was the first record of a Rose-coloured Starling on Dursey Island, although there have been several records on the nearby mainland.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A male was seen in song in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 18, 19 and 20 March (DC). A female appeared briefly in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 17 August (DS). A party of four was present in Kilmichael on 20 and 21 August, and these birds were joined by a flock of 18 in the morning of 22 August (DC), but all 22 birds had disappeared by that afternoon. An adult male was seen at Zuma in Ballynacallagh on 14 October (KG, AL), and there was a female at Zuma on 16 October (KG).

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Four birds were recorded on 1 and 2 January, but then only one was seen throughout the rest of January, in February and up until 14 March. There were no later records in spring, and the first of the autumn was not until two appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 24 September, one of which remained until 26th. Three more appeared in Scott's garden on 1 October, and there were four in the Kilmichael area on 4th. Thereafter, up to five were recorded almost daily to 24 October, with 11 appearing on 13th. A total of 18 flew west over Tilickafinna in the morning of 25 October, and there were eight on 27th and nine on 29th, but numbers did not exceed five again until 19 November, when there were six. Seven were seen on 20 November, but only three remained on 3 December and these were still present at the end of the year.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

A female was seen in O'Leary's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FiM). This was the first record of a Brambling on Dursey Island in spring, all previous records having been between 8 October and 20 November. There were two records in autumn: a bird by the track west of O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 14 October (KG, AL), and a bird flying west over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 22 October (DS).

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

For several years, Greenfinches have remained throughout the winter on Dursey Island, frequenting bird feeders in the gardens in Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael. However, in 2010, birds disappeared at the end of November and none was present on the island in early January 2011. The first of the year was a pair in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 29 January. A male was seen in Kilmichael on 10 and 12 February, and there was a male in song in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 16 February. Numbers then built up to 10 by 26 February and 12 by 27 March. Birds were observed nest-building as early as 26 March, and at least four pairs bred on the island, including a pair in Ballynacallagh, two pairs in upper Kilmichael Valley and a pair in Tilickafinna. At least three of these pairs were seen with fledged young, and the pair in Tilickafinna was successful in rearing a second brood, which fledged on 14 June. However, most of the young birds either moved off the island or perished, and no more than 12 were recorded in a day in July, 11 in early August, and six in late August and September. A small influx occurred at the very end of September and in early October, with numbers increasing to 13 on 2 October, and thereafter up to 13 were present throughout October. Sixteen were counted on 5 and 6 November, but these disappeared, and the only other record was of a single bird on 3 December, the last of the year.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

The first of the year were two in Kilmichael on 22 and 23 January. However, the only other records in the first half of the year were all in Tilickafinna: two on 4 March, one on 14 March, two on 26 March and two on 23 April. A single bird in Kilmichael on 14 July and another in Tilickafinna on 22 August were unusually early. The main autumn migration began with two on 20 September and 11 on 22nd. Thereafter, Goldfinches were recorded almost daily until the end of October, although numbers were not especially high. The only counts exceeding 15 were 50 on 16 October, 20 on 20 October, 25 on 24 October, 24 on 26 October, 50 on 27 October and 60 on 28 October. Six were still present on 5 November and four were seen on 20 November, but these were the last of the year.

Eurasian Siskin *Carduelis spinus*

There were no records in spring, and the first of the autumn was not until 1 October, when four arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. There was one bird there the next morning, and a flock of 10 flew west over Tilickafinna on 4 October. One was seen in Tilickafinna on 13 October, and six were seen flying east off the island at 09:00 on 16 October. There was a small influx in late October beginning with one on 20th, followed by 20 on 22nd, two on 24th, three on 25th and eight on 27th, mostly flying west over Tilickafinna in the morning.

Common Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*

Linnets are usually only summer visitors to Dursey Island, arriving mostly in the second half of March and departing in the second half of October. However, 45 were found roosting in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in late December 2010 and these birds were still present on 1 January. They continued to roost in the garden, in gradually diminishing numbers, throughout January, February and early March, and only about 10 remained by the middle of March. Numbers built up again in late March and early April, and the species was common throughout the spring and summer. The first fledged juveniles were seen in Tilickafinna on 19 May, but the breeding season does not appear to have been very good, as the numbers in late summer and autumn were lower than

usual. No more than 100 were recorded in a day in August and September (as compared with up to 300 in 2010), and the highest count in the first half of October was only 70. Numbers declined rapidly in the second half of October to 12 on 20th, three on 25th and 26th, and single birds on 27th and 30th. The only records in November were of two on 1st, three on 6th and one on 19th.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis (flammea) cabaret*

2011 was a fairly good year for this species on Dursey, with two records in spring and a reasonably good passage in autumn. A male was seen in song flight over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 June, and possibly the same individual was singing over the garden on 17 June. The first of the autumn were two birds over Scott's garden on 20 September. Eight flew through the garden on 24 September, and there were two in the garden on 26th. Up to four were recorded on 11 dates from 1 to 23 October, mostly in Tilickafinna, and there were seven in Tilickafinna and two in Ballynacallagh on 25th. These were followed by five in Tilickafinna on 27th, three on 28th and one on 1 November. The last of the year were seven in Kilmichael Valley on 6 November.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

A female or immature male arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:30 on 4 June (the same day as the European Bee-eater), but stayed for only about 10 minutes (DS, JS). A first-year bird was seen in Scott's garden at 18:10 on 1 September, but this soon disappeared and could not be found again (DS). Another first-winter bird was found visiting the bird-feeders at Zuma in Ballynacallagh in the morning of 18 October (KG, AL). This bird obligingly remained until 25 October, appearing regularly at the feeders and allowing close views as it competed with Greenfinches and tits for the peanuts (KF, KG, AL, DS). These were the 17th, 18th and 19th records of Common Rosefinch on Dursey Island.

Eurasian Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A female flew in from the west and landed in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 10:30 on 25 October (DS). It remained in the garden until 11:25 and then flew off high to the east. Probably the same female was seen at Zuma in Ballynacallagh at 09:45 on 27 October and back in Scott's garden from 11:05 to at least 15:10 later the same day (AL, DS, JS). The bird presumably roosted in the garden, as it was seen flying off high to the east at 08:55 on 28th (DS). A female seen in Kilmichael Valley on 5 November (KF) may well have been the same individual, as may also a female seen in and around Scott's garden on 18 and 19 November (DC). Assuming that all these observations relate to a single female, this was only the fifth record of a Eurasian Bullfinch on Dursey.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*

After a very good year for this species in 2010, 2011 was very poor with only three records. One was heard calling over the hill above Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in the morning of 4 October and over the Western Hill that afternoon (DS). Two were seen near the Tip in the late morning of 7 October (KG, AL). One was seen on the track in Tilickafinna and later with a flock of Meadow Pipits over Scott's garden on 15 October (JP, DS).

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*

2011 was a good year for this species, with the first bird, a dull female, appearing on the track on the High Cliffs on 20 September (DS), three days earlier than the previous earliest record in autumn. The next was a well-marked male at the North-west Tip on 25

September (CF, DS). Four very tame and apparently tired birds were found at the gap in Tilickafinna on 4 October (DS), and there were five on the track on the High Cliffs on 6 October (DS). One of these (a bright male) was seen again on the High Cliffs on 7, 10, 11, 12 and 16 October (KG, AL et al.), and there were also four at the West Wall on 7th (KG, AL), one on the Western Hill on 10th and 12th (KG, AL), and one at the North-west Tip on 16th (DS). Four birds flew east high over Tilickafinna in the late morning of 22 October (DS), and there were also three at the Old Lighthouse that afternoon (JS). Three individuals were found on 24th: one at the Old Lighthouse, one on Cromwell Cliff and one in Tilickafinna (KF). There was still a bird at the Tip on 25 October (AL), and two flew east high over Tilickafinna in the morning of 26 October (DS).

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*

A male in good plumage was found foraging with a party of Meadow Pipits in a field below O’Leary’s house in Tilickafinna at 14:00 on 3 October (AL). The bird stayed around in this area until at least 14:45, when it was also seen by KG and DS. This was the 13th record of an Ortolan Bunting on Dursey Island and the first since 2008.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Once again, Reed Buntings were probably present on Dursey Island throughout the year, but were remarkably inconspicuous in summer and early autumn, probably because after breeding they favour the rough fields west of Kilmichael and below The Waters – areas that are seldom visited in summer. Two females and a male were seen on several occasions in Stapleton’s garden and Cooke’s garden in Kilmichael in January, February, March and April, and the male was first heard in song in the boggy fields below Kilmichael on 17 March. A pair was seen in John Michael’s Bog on 28 May, and the male was seen again in this area on 29 May. Whether or not the birds bred is unknown, as the next record was not until 23 July, when a single bird was seen at The Waters. There was then a long gap in records until 24 September, when a bird appeared in Tilickafinna. This was followed by five in Stapleton’s garden on 2 October. Thereafter, up to five were recorded in a day on many occasions to the end of October, with eight on 24th and 25th and 10 on 27th. The latter included a group of eight in the fields below Stapleton’s house and two in Tilickafinna. After five in Tilickafinna on 1 November, the only records were of a single bird on 19 November, a female on 30 December and a male on 31 December, although four birds were found on the island on 1 January 2012.

MAMMALS

[Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*]

For the first year since 2002, there were no reports of this species on Dursey Island.

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

2011 was another good year for bats on Dursey Island, with one or two individuals being recorded on 15 dates. However, all except three of the records relate to a single individual roosting under the fascia board on the front of Scott's house in Tilickafinna. This individual (positively identified as a Common Pipistrelle in 2010) was recorded on 13 dates between 3 June and 24 October, with the latest time of emergence being 22:35 on 13 June and the earliest, 18:56 on 24 October. The bat was also seen going to roost under the fascia board at 06:10 on 20 August and 06:30 on 3 September. A second bat, presumably also a Common Pipistrelle, was present in Scott's garden in the early morning and again in the late evening of 3 September, but did not appear to be roosting in the house.

Unidentified bats

A small bat was seen flying around outside a shed in Kilmichael at night on 2 October (DC), and another small bat was seen flying back and forth along the south coast just east of Kilmichael Valley during the daytime on 4 November (KF).

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*

2011 was a poor year for this species, perhaps because of the extremely severe weather in December 2010. There were only six records: two in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 2 January; single individuals in Scott's garden on 19 February and 5 March; single individuals in Kilmichael on 18 and 20 March; and two in Scott's garden on 15 June.

Common Otter *Lutra lutra*

2011 was a better than average year with four sightings: one was seen in the Sound on 23 January (DC, JL); a very sleepy (or dead) individual was seen lolling about in the surf below the High Cliffs on 7 February (JS); one was seen by the stream in Kilmichael Valley on 23 April (DC); and one was seen running down the fields east of Kilmichael Valley in mid-afternoon on 22 October (DS). DC also found signs of recent otter activity on Illanebeg and at Kilmichael Point on 8 October.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*

Recorded in every month of the year except June and July; there were no records from 29 May to 19 August. The highest single-day counts were 17 on 1 January and 13 on 2 January, but thereafter the highest count was only seven on 20 and 28 October. The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

| | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|
| Days with sightings | 5 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 3 | 4 |
| Maximum count | 17 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 3 |

Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

2011 was another good year for this species off Dursey Island, with records on 20 dates,

mostly in autumn but with two unusually early records in spring. Most records were of schools feeding and moving west or east off Tilickafinna, but small numbers were seen off the Tip on a couple of occasions, and on 1 October a school of about 40 passed north-eastwards between the Tip and the Cow into the Kenmare River (Bay).

| Date | Total | Locality | Observers |
|--------|-------|---|----------------|
| 28 Feb | 50+ | 50+ moving west far out off Tilickafinna at 11:50-11:55, and at least 6 returning east close inshore at 13:10-13:55 | DS, JS |
| 02 Mar | 12 | Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 16:30 | DS, JS |
| 05 Aug | 5 | Off the Tip | DC |
| 18 Aug | 20 | Moving east far out off Tilickafinna at 12:30 | DS, JS |
| 21 Aug | 6 | Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 15:30 | DS, JS |
| 22 Aug | 25 | In small feeding groups off Tilickafinna from 09:35 to 10:45 | DS, JS |
| 28 Aug | 20+ | 10 feeding and moving east off Tilickafinna at 09:05; also 20 feeding off Tilickafinna at 19:00 | DS, JS |
| 29 Aug | 20 | Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 18:40-19:40 | DS, JS |
| 30 Aug | 20+ | 20 feeding and moving east off Tilickafinna at 13:25-13:45, also 6 feeding close inshore off Tilickafinna at 16:45 | DS, JS |
| 03 Sep | 2+ | 2+ feeding off South-west Tip at 10:00 and possibly the same 2+ feeding off Tilickafinna in late afternoon | DS, JS |
| 05 Sep | 4+ | Feeding far out to SW of Tilickafinna at 08:50-09:15 | DS |
| 07 Sep | 2+ | Feeding far out off Tilickafinna at 10:10 | DS |
| 10 Sep | 6 | Moving south-west off North-west Tip at 11:25 | DS, JS |
| 14 Sep | 60+ | 6+ feeding far out off Tilickafinna at 07:50, and 60+ feeding and moving west close inshore at 10:00-10:30 | DS, JS |
| 20 Sep | 6 | Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 08:50-08:55 | DS |
| 01 Oct | 40 | Moving NE off NW Tip into Kenmare River at 08:35-09:00 | DS |
| 08 Oct | 4 | Moving west fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 09:00 | DS |
| 11 Oct | 4+ | Moving west fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 09:00 | DS |
| 19 Oct | 20+ | 20 off Tilickafinna in morning, and 6 feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 16:45-17:00 | KG, AL, DS, JS |
| 20 Oct | 30 | Off north-west coast of island at 12:00 | AL |

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

After a very poor year for this species in 2009 and a very good year in 2010, 2011 was about average, with a total of eight sightings between 14 March and 14 October. At least two individuals were seen breaching on 14 March and again on 4 June, but there were no observations of large schools or family groups.

| Date | Total | Locality | Observers |
|--------|-------|---|-----------|
| 14 Mar | 6 | Large individuals close inshore off Tilickafinna from 13:20-18:25; at least two individuals were seen breaching | DS, JS |
| 17 Mar | 1 | Off the Tip | DC |
| 24 Apr | 1 | Off the Tip | DC |
| 30 Apr | 6 | Close inshore below Cromwell Cliff (Tilickafinna) | KF |
| 04 Jun | 4 | Large individuals moving west close inshore off Tilickafinna at 12:50; two individuals were seen breaching | DS, JS |
| 28 Aug | 1 | Moving west close inshore off Tilickafinna at 09:40; possibly the same individual off Cromwell Cliff at 19:30 | DS, JS |
| 22 Sep | 2 | Off the South-west Tip from 08:45-09:30, apparently feeding | DS, JS |
| 14 Oct | 1 | Large individual off North-west Tip in early afternoon | KG, AL |

Harbour Porpoise *Phocaena phoceana*

Present around the island throughout the year. Most commonly encountered off the Tip and north-west coast, but also seen on many occasions below Tilickafinna and in the Sound. As is typical, numbers were highest in late summer and early autumn, with the peak counts coming in September (maximum of 60 on 14th). The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

| | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
|---------------------|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|---|---|
| Days with sightings | 6 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 15 | 15 | 1 | 2 |
| Maximum count | 16 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 20 | 60 | 12 | 9 | 2 |

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

2011 was an average year for this species off Dursey Island, with sightings on three dates in spring and early summer and 20 dates between 11 July and 19 October. Most records relate to only one or two individuals, but three individuals were seen together off Tilickafinna on 22 August and 18 September. Most of the sightings were of individuals feeding off Tilickafinna, but there were seven sightings off the Tip. One was seen

breaching far out off Tilickafinna in the afternoon of 16 October.

| Date | Total | Locality | Observers |
|--------|-------|---|-----------|
| 24 May | 1 | Moving west close inshore off Tilickafinna at 10:05 | DS |
| 02 Jun | 1 | Off Tilickafinna at 12:15 | JS |
| 15 Jun | 1 | Moving west close inshore off Tilickafinna at 11:45 | DS |
| 11 Jul | 1 | Off the Tip | DC |
| 21 Aug | 1 | Moving east fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 15:30 | DS |
| 22 Aug | 3 | Feeding fairly far out off Tilickafinna and eventually moving off west from 08:20 to 10:00 | DS |
| 24 Aug | 1 | Feeding fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 15:00 | DS |
| 26 Aug | 2 | Moving east far out off Tilickafinna at 11:05 | JS |
| 03 Sep | 1 | Off the South-west Tip at 08:20 | DC |
| 05 Sep | 1 | Moving west fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 09:40 | DS |
| 06 Sep | 1 | Off the South-west Tip at 10:15 | DS, JS |
| 13 Sep | 1 | Feeding off Cromwell Cliff (Tilickafinna) at 10:15 | DS |
| 14 Sep | 3+ | One off Tilickafinna from 07:35, joined by another in mid-morning; two off the South-west Tip in afternoon. | DS, JS |
| 17 Sep | 1 | Feeding close inshore off Tilickafinna at 09:00-10:30 | DS, JS |
| 18 Sep | 3+ | Feeding fairly close inshore off Tilickafinna at 08:15-11:00 | DS, JS |
| 20 Sep | 2+ | Feeding fairly close inshore off Tilickafinna at 08:15-10:45 | DS, JS |
| 21 Sep | 1 | Moving east fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 09:00 | DS |
| 22 Sep | 1 | Off the South-west Tip in morning; possibly the same individual off Tilickafinna in afternoon | DS, JS |
| 25 Sep | 1 | Moving NE close inshore off North-west Tip at 09:10 | DS |
| 30 Sep | 1 | Feeding with Gannets far out off Tilickafinna at 11:00 | DC |
| 01 Oct | 2 | Moving NE far out off North-west Tip at 09:10 & 09:30 | DS |
| 16 Oct | 1 | Breaching far out off Tilickafinna at 15:00 | DS |
| 19 Oct | 1 | Feeding fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 17:10-17:45 | DS |

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*

A rather poor year with only six individuals recorded between 17 March and 18 August. One in Ballynacallagh on 17 March (DC); one on the High Cliffs on 27 March (KF); one on the High Cliffs on 1 May (KF); one in Scott’s garden on 16 June (JS); one by the track in Kilmichael Valley on 11 July (DC); and one in Scott’s garden on 18 August (JS).

Leatherback Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*

A large individual was seen moving west off Tilickafinna at 15:45 on 21 August (DS, JS, DC). This was the first record of a Leatherback Turtle off Dursey Island since 2000 when no less than four individuals were recorded between 10 August and 2 October.

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*

Frog spawn was found in Gerald’s Pond below Kilmichael on about 22 January (DC), but no frogs were seen during the summer. The species was introduced in this area in 2005.

FISHES OF NOTE

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

2011 was probably another good year for this species off Dursey Island, but coverage was rather poor in April and early May when most are usually seen. There were sightings on seven dates between 9 April and 13 June, the highest count being three on 30 April.

| Date | Total | Locality | Observers |
|--------|-------|---|-----------|
| 09 Apr | 1 | Close inshore off Illanebeg | FiM |
| 24 Apr | 1 | In Dursey Sound | DC |
| 29 Apr | 2 | One in Dursey Sound and one off Illanebeg | KF |
| 30 Apr | 3 | Two off South-west Tip and one off Tilickafinna | KF |
| 14 May | 2 | Off the south coast below the High Cliffs | DC |
| 03 Jun | 1 | Breaching far out off Tilickafinna in mid-morning | DS |
| 13 Jun | 1 | Breaching far out off Tilickafinna in morning | DS |

Ocean Sunfish *Mola mola*

One was seen off the Tip on 6 August (DC).

BUTTERFLIES

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

The breeding colony that was established in Scott's garden in 2010 seems to have failed, as only two butterflies were seen in the garden in 2011, one on 20 May and one on 3 June (DS). The only other record was of a single individual in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 2 and 3 September (DC).

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

The first of the season were six on 8 April; then present in good numbers throughout the rest of April, May and early June, with peak counts of 31 on 29 April and 15 on 1 May. One on 13 June was the last of the first brood. Fairly common again from 11 July to early September, with peak counts of 11 on 13 July, 12 on 20 August and 16 on 21 August. Four on 24 September and one on 25th were the last of the year. As usual, the main colonies were in Kilmichael Valley, in the boggy fields below Kilmichael village and at The Waters, west of Kilmichael, but there was also a small colony in the boggy fields in Tilickafinna and odd individuals were occasionally seen elsewhere on the island.

Orange-tip *Euchloe cardamines*

A male in Kilmichael Valley on 23 and 24 April (DC), and two in East Fields and one in Kilmichael Valley on 29 April (KF). This species is probably only a straggler to the island from the mainland, as none had been seen on the island since 2002, when a male was found in Tilickafinna on 8 May.

Green Hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*

2011 was another very good year for this species on Dursey and the season was unusually protracted. Eleven on 21 April were the first of the season; then recorded commonly until mid-July, with high counts of 16 on 29 April, 17 on 30 April, 66 on 10 June, 65 on 13 June and 19 on 11 July. Four were recorded on 14 July, followed by one on 23 July, but these were not the last. Amazingly, two individuals were seen on 20 August – one in Scott's garden (DS) and one in Ballynacallagh (DC) – and an extraordinarily late individual, still in good condition, was watched closely in Scott's garden on 3 September (DS). The largest colony was on the rough hillside between The Waters and the High Cliffs, but there were also colonies on the hill above the Cable Car, in East Fields, at several localities in Tilickafinna, and in the Main Bog on the north slope.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

2011 was a fairly good year for this species, with records on 15 dates between 23 April and 26 August. The first brood did well, but the second brood seems to have fared badly. The first of the year were seven on 23 April, followed by three on 29th and four on 30th. One or two were then recorded on eight dates in May. A very worn individual in Scott's garden on 15 June was the last of the first brood. The only evidence of a second brood was one in Kilmichael on 5 August and one in Scott's garden on 24 and 26 August. The species was recorded in East Fields, Kilmichael Valley, the Kilmichael area, The Waters and Scott's garden in Tilickafinna.

Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*

The first brood appears to have done fairly well, but the second brood was rather poor. The first of the season were at least two at The Waters on 30 April and 1 May (KF).

Thereafter, fairly common until at least 17 June (when coverage was interrupted), with peak counts of seven on 22 May, 15 on 11 June and 12 on 13 June. Four on 11 July, two on 12 July and three on 13 July were presumably late individuals of the first brood. Recorded almost daily in small numbers from 17 August (after another gap in coverage) to 8 September, with peak counts of seven on 21 August and six on 31 August and 3 September. Thereafter, the only records were of one on 13 September, two on 16 September, one (in Tilickafinna) on 22 September and one (below Kilmichael) on 24 September.

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

2011 was a poor year for this immigrant, with the only three small influxes: in the last week of April, the first week of September and third week of October. The first influx began with the arrival of three individuals on 21 April. There were two the next day, followed by 12 on 23rd, 10 on 24th and four on 25th. None was recorded in May, and the only records in June and July were of single individuals on 4 June, 12 July, 13 July and 24 July. One was present in Scott's garden on 18, 20, 30 and 31 August. Five appeared in Scott's garden on 1 September and there were at least six on the island on 2nd and three on 3rd, but the only other record in September was of two on 16th. Five appeared in Tilickafinna on 15 October, and five were recorded on the island on 16th. Four were still present on 22 and 24 October, with two of these remaining on 25th and one lingering on until 27th. A very late individual was seen in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 19 November (DC).

Painted Lady *Cynthia cardui*

2011 was another very poor year for this species on Dursey, with only one influx in spring, none in summer and only two individuals in autumn. However, the first of the year were unusually early: one was seen flying north-west along the north side of the island near the Tip on 11 February (JS), and one was seen (and photographed) in Scott's garden on 28 February and 1 March (DS, JS). A sizeable influx occurred on 23 April, when 33 were counted around the island, and at least 42 were present on 24th, but numbers then fell to 21 on 25th (DC). There were no further records until 24 October, when two were found in Ivy Gully in Tilickafinna (AL). One of these remained until 27 October (AL).

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

The first record of the year was of a hibernating individual disturbed in O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 7 January. The first free-flying individuals were two in Scott's garden on 23 February, followed by one in Scott's garden and one on the High Cliffs on 4 March, one in Scott's garden on 13 March, and two in Kilmichael and one on the High Cliffs on 27 March. One was seen on 8 April, and there was a small influx in the last week of April, with eight on 23rd, six on 24th, four on 25th and two on 30th. None was recorded in May or June and the only records in July were of two on 12th and three on 13th. One was present in Scott's garden from 30 August to 1 September, and there were two in Cooke's garden on 2 September. The only other records were of one in Cooke's garden on 3 September, one in Scott's garden on 14 September, one in Cooke's garden on 20 September, and one in Ballynacallagh on 16 October.

Peacock *Inachis io*

2011 was one of the poorest years on record for this species on Dursey, with only two

sightings, both in the early part of the year. One was seen at The Waters on 21 February (JS), and one was seen in Kilmichael on 8 April (DC).

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*

The only record of a Dark Green Fritillary on Dursey Island in 2011 was of a single individual seen along Lakdar Road east of the High Cliffs on 11 July (DC). However, coverage during the main flying season (July and first half of August) was unusually poor and this could at least partly account for the lack of records.

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria*

A fresh individual was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 4 June (DS), and presumably the same individual was seen again in the garden on 10 June (DC). This species was first recorded on Dursey in 2010, and could be establishing a foothold on the island.

Wall Brown *Lasiomata megera*

The first of the season were three on 23 April (DC); then common until late May, with high counts of 59 on 30 April and 63 on 14 May. Small numbers (maximum five) were recorded in the first few days of June, and the last of the first brood were singletons on 6 and 11 June. Coverage in the first half of August was poor, and the species was common by 16th. Thereafter, up to 22 were recorded in a day to the end of August. Numbers dwindled rapidly in early September from 11 on 3rd to two on 8th and one on 14th and 16th – the last of the second brood. There were no signs of a third brood this year.

Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

The season began very early with one on Lakdar Road (The Waters) on 10 June (DC). Coverage was interrupted in the second half of June and early July, and the next was not until one on 11 July. Then fairly common throughout the rest of July and August, with a peak count of 12 on 22 August. The only records in September were of two on 3rd, two on 8th and one on 11th.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

The Meadow Brown seems to have had a very poor year on Dursey. There was no coverage on the island in late June and early July, and the first observation of the season was on 11 July, when 21 were recorded. Only small numbers were recorded in late July and early August, but numbers increased somewhat in the second half of August, although the highest count was only 30 on 20th. Numbers dwindled rapidly in September from 10 on 2nd to six on 3rd, three on 8th and two on 11th and 13th. The only records thereafter were of one on 22 September, two on 24th and one on 25th.

MOTHS

Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*

Coverage was poor in the early part of the flying season and the first was not recorded until 17 August, when one was seen in Scott's garden. Fifteen were counted on 20 August, but then no more than six were seen in a day in late August. The only records in September were of singletons on 2nd, 3rd and 8th, and a very late individual seen in the

fields below Kilmichael on 24 September (KF).

Northern Eggar *Lasiocampa quercus callunae*

One was seen in Scott's garden in the evening of 22 August (DS).

Fox Moth *Macrothylacia rubi*

At least 12 flew through Scott's garden in the evening of 2 June, followed by three on 3 June, one on 11 June and one on 16 June. Elsewhere on the island, there was one in Kilmichael and one in Ballynacallagh on 4 June, two on the High Cliffs on 13 June, and four near the Cable Car and one in Tilickafinna on 15 June.

Emperor *Pavonia pavonia*

A major emergence of this species was observed on 29 April, when 35 were seen on the hill below the Martello Tower and 15 were seen on the lower north slope of the island (KF). Only one was found the next day: a female on the High Cliffs (KF).

July Belle *Scotopteryx luridata*

One was netted near the school in Kilmichael on 24 July (KF).

Treble Bar *Aplocera plagiata*

Two were netted on the hill above the Cable Car on 29 April (KF). This species had not previously been recorded on Dursey Island.

Brown Silver-line *Petrophora chlorostata*

One was netted at The Waters on 15 August (KF).

Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum*

2011 was another rather poor year for this species, with only about nine individuals being recorded. The first was in Scott's garden on 21 September and this was followed by one in Tilickafinna fields and one in Cooke's garden on 30 September. Hummingbird Hawk-moths were recorded almost daily from 1 to 27 October, although probably no more than six individuals were involved: a long-staying individual in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from 1st to 27th, another at Zuma in Ballynacallagh from 3rd to 27th, and single individuals on the West Hill on 15th, in Cooke's garden on 16th, in O'Leary's garden on 22nd and in Kilmichael Valley on 27th.

Crimson Speckled *Utetheisa pulchella*

One was seen (and photographed) in Tilickafinna fields on 25 October (AL). This was the second record of this rare migrant from the continent on Dursey Island, the first being on 24 October 1996, when two individuals were found near the west end of the island. The similarity in dates is striking.

Silver Y *Autographa gamma*

2011 was another poor year for this species on Dursey, with only one influx in spring and only small numbers in autumn. The first of the year were two on 21 April and one the next day, but the main arrival occurred on 23rd, when 52 were counted (DC). There were still at least 50 on the island on 24th but only 25 on 25th, when coverage was interrupted. There were no further records until 15 October, when five were found in Tilickafinna. These were followed by two on 16th, two on 22nd, 12 on 24th, five on 25th, two on 26th, seven on 27th and one on 29th. Most were seen in Tilickafinna, but there were also records from Kilmichael Valley (on 25th and 27th), The Waters (on 27th) and the High Cliffs (also on 27th). A late individual was seen in Scott's garden on 5 November (KF).

No attempt was made at light-trapping this year. Nocturnal moths of interest included a total

of seven **Angle Shades** *Phlogophora meticulosa* (two on 8 April, two on 24 April and singletons on 12, 22 and 28 May), and five full-grown larvae of the **Puss Moth** *Cerura vinula* found in and around a willow bush in O'Leary's garden in Tilickafinna on 6 September. The Puss Moth had not previously been recorded on Dursey Island.

DRAGONFLIES

Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii*

A female was netted (and photographed) on the north slope of the island on 26 October (KF). This was the first record of this rare migrant on Dursey Island and came only a day after the Crimson Speckled.

Unidentified hawk *Aeshna* sp.

Large hawkers were seen passing quickly through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 3 September, 6 September and 28 October (DS, JS).
