

# BIRDS OF DURSEY ISLAND, CO. CORK : 2012

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

Derek A. Scott



**Hoopoe *Upupa epops* : 28 March 2012**

**Photo: Fionn Moore**

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

<b>Month</b>	<b>Days with some coverage</b>	<b>Total</b>
January	1 – 20	20
February	3 – 5, 11 – 12, 17 – 19, 21 - 29	17
March	1 – 10, 17 – 19, 27 – 29, 31	17
April	6 – 8, 20 – 21	5
May	4 – 7, 11 – 31	25
June	1 – 30	30
July	1 – 4, 14, 20 – 21, 27 – 28	9

August	3 – 4, 7 – 10, 30 – 31	8
September	1 – 2, 14 – 16, 24 – 28	10
October	1 – 5, 7 – 31	30
November	1 – 29	29
December	7 – 9, 24 – 27, 30 – 31	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>209</b>

With a total of only 209 days with some birding activity on the island, coverage in 2012 was again rather poor. This was particularly the case in April (5 days), August (8 days) and September (10 days), and doubtless goes a long way to accounting for the rather low number of species recorded in the year. The author was present on the island on a total of 147 days as follows: 1 to 20 January; 21 February to 10 March; 11 May to 4 July; 10 October to 29 November; and 30 to 31 December. David Cooke visited the island almost every other weekend and spent a total 86 of days on the island, while Kieran Finch made eight trips to the island for a total of 18 days. On four of these occasions he was accompanied by Connor Finch. Kieran Grace and Tony Lancaster made their annual pilgrimage to West Beara in the autumn and visited the island on 25 dates between 1 and 28 October, reaching the Tip on all but one of these occasions. Although Fionn Moore visited the island only once, his three-day visit in late March coincided with an exceptional fall of migrants.

2012 was an unusual year for birds on Dursey, producing very few rarities and semi-rarities but a good crop of island rarities. The year total of 131 species (excluding feral pigeon) was quite respectable, given the poor coverage in early spring and early autumn, but included only one new species for the island, a Yellow-rumped Warbler in early October. This brings the total number of species recorded since September 1977 to 231. Other highlights of the year included a Hoopoe in late March, a male and a female Red-breasted Flycatcher in late May, a third Red-breasted Flycatcher in October, a Richard's Pipit in November, and a veritable 'invasion' of Bohemian Waxwings also in November. Island rarities included the second record of Long-tailed Tit, third records of Eurasian Hobby, Green Sandpiper and European Nightjar, fifth records of Black-tailed Godwit and Long-tailed Skua, fifth to seventh records of Common Pheasant, sixth record of Corncrake, and sixth and seventh records of Eurasian Bullfinch. However, the five Seatrack sea-watches in autumn were relatively unexciting, producing only one decent count of Sooty Shearwaters (184 on 15 September), very few skuas and terns, and no Balearic Shearwaters (see Table 1). For the first time since records began, a pair of Lesser Redpolls nested on the island and was successful in rearing four young. For the first time also, Goldfinches were recorded on many occasions throughout the spring and summer, suggesting that this species might also soon be nesting on the island. A pair of Blue Tits nested successfully in Kilmichael for the second year running, and a pair of Peregrines returned to the cliffs below Tilickafinna and probably bred again. One or two pairs of Sedge Warblers, two pairs of Great Tits, three or four pairs of Greenfinches and one or two pairs of Reed Buntings bred on the island, and Common Starlings continued to maintain a tenuous foothold, with three pairs nesting in 2012. Three pairs of Pied Wagtails nested, after only one in 2011, and at least one pair of Song Thrushes probably did so after an absence in 2011.

As usual, the year began with a 'Big Day' on 1 January. Despite there being only two

observers on the island, the day's total was a very respectable 42. Birds of note included a Red-throated Diver, a Merlin, 11 Purple Sandpipers, two Woodcocks, two Common Redshanks, two Ruddy Turnstones, an adult Iceland Gull and an immature Glaucous Gull. A Lesser Black-backed Gull was found the next day, and the Merlin and Glaucous Gull were seen again on 3<sup>rd</sup>. An immature Iceland Gull was found near the jetty on 5<sup>th</sup>; two Red-throated Divers and six Common Scoters flew past at sea on 8<sup>th</sup>, and there was another Red-throated Diver, a Great Northern Diver and a surprise Sooty Shearwater at sea on 11<sup>th</sup>. Two Purple Sandpipers, a Common Redshank and an adult Iceland Gull were seen on 14<sup>th</sup>, and the Common Redshank was seen again on 15<sup>th</sup>. The first Greenfinch of the year appeared on 18 January, along with a pair of Eurasian Bullfinches.

Coverage in late January and early February was poor, and nothing of note was seen until 11 February, when at least 27 Common Snipe, the first Eurasian Curlew of the year and a male Eurasian Bullfinch were recorded. The rest of the month was very quiet, the only birds of note being a Rook found dead near the jetty on 17<sup>th</sup>, two adult Iceland Gulls and an immature Glaucous Gull on 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the first Skylarks of the year on 24<sup>th</sup>.

Early March was also very quiet, producing little other than a Fieldfare on 5<sup>th</sup>, an immature Iceland Gull on 8<sup>th</sup> and a Merlin on 9<sup>th</sup>. A three-day visit in the third week of March produced a Wood Pigeon and the first Northern Wheatear and Goldcrest of the year on 17<sup>th</sup>, the first Chiffchaffs (five) on 18<sup>th</sup>, and a Black-tailed Godwit on 19<sup>th</sup>, while a three-day visit from 27 to 29 March coincided with a big arrival of migrants including three Black Redstarts, 30 Chiffchaffs, five Willow Warblers and 14 Goldcrests on 27<sup>th</sup>, and a Hoopoe, an early Barn Swallow, six Black Redstarts, at least 30 Northern Wheatears, a Ring Ouzel, a late Redwing, 40-50 Chiffchaffs, 30-40 Willow Warblers, eight Goldcrests, five Siskins and four Lesser Redpolls on 28<sup>th</sup>. The Hoopoe was still present on 31<sup>st</sup>, along with a Merlin, a Blackcap, four Chiffchaffs and a Goldcrest.

The only coverage in April was on 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. A Common Redshank, two Blackcaps, seven Willow Warblers and a Goldcrest were found on 6<sup>th</sup>; a Blackcap and five Willow Warblers were present on 7<sup>th</sup>; and a Blackcap and a Willow Warbler remained on 8<sup>th</sup>. Nothing of note was recorded on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, except for good numbers of Northern Wheatears.

Coverage was resumed on 4 May, when 14 Whimbrels, the first Collared Dove of the year, a Grasshopper Warbler and a Blackcap were found. The next day produced 42 Whimbrels, six Eurasian Curlews and the first House Martin, along with a good fall of night migrants including three Sedge Warblers, 21 Common Whitethroats, 15 Blackcaps, four Chiffchaffs, nine Willow Warblers and four Spotted Flycatchers. Most of these birds had moved on by 6<sup>th</sup>, but Whimbrel numbers had increased to 59, and a Merlin, a Purple Sandpiper and another Grasshopper Warbler were found. A male Ring Ouzel was seen on 7<sup>th</sup>, along with a possible Reed Warbler in Kilmichael Valley. There was then a short gap in coverage until 11 May, when a Reed Warbler was found in Tilickafinna, but the only other birds of note in the next six days were 17 Common Scoters on 12<sup>th</sup>, a Great Northern Diver on 14<sup>th</sup> and the odd House Martin and Chiffchaff. Things picked up again on 18 May, when four Whimbrels, a Sedge Warbler, two Blackcaps, three Chiffchaffs, a Spotted Flycatcher and a Lesser Redpoll appeared. The next day produced a Eurasian Hobby flying over Tilickafinna, along with a Sparrowhawk, a Common Sandpiper, two Collared Doves, 11 House Martins, four Sedge Warblers, a Common Whitethroat, two Willow Warblers and two Spotted Flycatchers. Most of these birds had disappeared by 20<sup>th</sup>, and there was then little of note until 25<sup>th</sup>, when a female Red-breasted Flycatcher appeared, along with a male Common Pheasant, the first Common Swift of the year,

six House Martins, a Sedge Warbler, a Blackcap, two Spotted Flycatchers and two Siskins. The female Red-breasted Flycatcher, which had frequented the gully above Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, could not be found the next day, but instead there was a fine male Red-breasted Flycatcher in the garden. Other birds on 26<sup>th</sup> included two Common Swifts, eight House Martins and four Spotted Flycatchers. A Wood Pigeon, a Turtle Dove, three Common Swifts and four more House Martins were recorded on 27<sup>th</sup>, and there was a male Pied Flycatcher in Tilickafinna on 28<sup>th</sup>. However, there was little of note on the last three days of the month except for the male Common Pheasant which was destined to stay on the island until at least 10 August.

The first half of June often produces a rarity on Dursey, but sadly this was not the case in 2012, and there was little of note other than a Spotted Flycatcher on 2<sup>nd</sup>, two Common Sandpipers on 3<sup>rd</sup>, a Great Skua on 8<sup>th</sup>, two Siskins on 9<sup>th</sup>, 29 Common Scoters and three Great Skuas on 10<sup>th</sup>, and eight Siskins on 11<sup>th</sup>, along with the odd Collared Dove, House Martin and Chiffchaff. A Green Sandpiper was an unexpected find on 16<sup>th</sup>, and this was followed by a Grey Wagtail on 17<sup>th</sup> – an unusual bird at this time of year. Another Siskin also appeared on 17<sup>th</sup>, along with a Lesser Redpoll. The rest of the month was very quiet, producing little other than two Siskins on 21<sup>st</sup> and a Collared Dove on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. A pair of Lesser Redpolls took up residence in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and nested successfully, but a male Chiffchaff which held a territory in the same garden from early May until at least 4 July failed to find a mate.

Coverage in July and August was again very poor. Other than the long-staying Common Pheasant, the only birds of note in July were three Eurasian Curlews on 20<sup>th</sup>, two Common Sandpipers and two Chiffchaffs on 21<sup>st</sup>, a Whimbrel and a Goldfinch on 27<sup>th</sup>, and a Eurasian Curlew, a Chiffchaff and a Goldfinch on 28<sup>th</sup>. The first of the five Seatrack sea-watches took place on 4 August and produced a Sooty Shearwater, over 1,000 Manx Shearwaters, four Storm Petrels and four Sandwich Terns, while elsewhere on the island there was an early Merlin and a family party of five Lesser Redpolls. The Common Pheasant was seen on 7, 8 and 10 August, and other birds at this time included a Sparrowhawk and a Common Sandpiper on 8<sup>th</sup>, another Sooty Shearwater on 9<sup>th</sup>, a Sparrowhawk and a Chiffchaff on 10<sup>th</sup>, and one or two Goldfinches on 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. The only birds of note on the last two days of the month were a Chiffchaff on 30<sup>th</sup> and a Eurasian Curlew, two Chiffchaffs and a Goldfinch on 31<sup>st</sup>.

September began with a Seatrack sea-watch on 1<sup>st</sup> which produced two Sooty Shearwaters, a Pomarine Skua and an Arctic Skua, but there was little elsewhere on the island except for seven Ruddy Turnstones and two Chiffchaffs. Four Eurasian Curlews and a Goldfinch were found the next day, but then there was a gap in coverage until 14<sup>th</sup>, when Ruddy Turnstone numbers had increased to 12. Another Seatrack sea-watch on 15<sup>th</sup> was more rewarding, producing 184 Sooty Shearwaters, 392 Manx Shearwaters, four Common Scoters, an Arctic Skua and two unidentified terns. A Great Northern Diver was also seen at sea, while birds on land included a Common Pheasant, an early Common Snipe, a Eurasian Curlew, a Sand Martin, a Whinchat, two Chiffchaffs, three Goldcrests, 15 Goldfinches and a Lesser Redpoll. There was another gap in coverage from 17<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, and the only birds of note on 24<sup>th</sup> were two Chiffchaffs and a Goldcrest. A Merlin was found on 25<sup>th</sup>, a Grey Wagtail on 26<sup>th</sup>, six Chiffchaffs, a Willow Warbler and 19 Goldfinches on 27<sup>th</sup>, and a Water Rail and the first Common Gull of the autumn on 28<sup>th</sup>.

October started well with a Jack Snipe, two Lapland Buntings and a Snow Bunting on 1<sup>st</sup>, a Whooper Swan, three Coal Tits and a Snow Bunting on 2<sup>nd</sup>, and four Coal Tits and a Yellow-rumped Warbler on 3<sup>rd</sup>. A new Common Pheasant appeared on 4<sup>th</sup>, along with a Sparrowhawk, a Sand Martin, a Willow Warbler and eight Siskins, and the Yellow-rumped

Warbler was seen again. There was a big influx of Coal Tits on 5<sup>th</sup>, when 26 were recorded, along with another Lapland Bunting and two Snow Buntings. A visiting birder found a Firecrest and a Common Rosefinch on the island on 6<sup>th</sup>, and saw the Yellow-rumped Warbler for the last time. There was little of note on 7<sup>th</sup> except for a five Chiffchaffs, another Willow Warbler, four Goldcrests and a Snow Bunting, but 8<sup>th</sup> produced at late Barn Swallow, two White Wagtails, a Common Redstart and, belatedly, the first European Golden Plover of the year. The first Hen Harrier of the year appeared on 9<sup>th</sup>, along with the first Redwing of the autumn and five Goldcrests. The Hen Harrier and possibly a new Common Pheasant were seen on 11<sup>th</sup>, along with a Grey Wagtail, two Coal Tits and two Snow Buntings, while at sea there were three Grey Phalaropes and a Great Skua. A sea-watch off the Tip the next day produced a Great Northern Diver, a Common Scoter, a Pomarine Skua and an immature Long-tailed Skua, but there was little on land other than 45 Goldfinches, eight Siskins and two Snow Buntings. A Water Rail was found on 12<sup>th</sup>, and a Long-eared Owl and five Common Crossbills appeared on 13<sup>th</sup>. A small harrier, either Montagu's or Pallid, was seen leaving the island on 15<sup>th</sup>, and a Corncrake was flushed in Kilmichael Valley. Also on 15<sup>th</sup>, two Coal Tits put in a final appearance and there were 35 Goldfinches and eight Lesser Redpolls. A Short-eared Owl, six Rooks and a Brambling were of interest on 16<sup>th</sup>, while on 17<sup>th</sup>, 12 Sooty Shearwaters and an Arctic Skua flew south off the Tip, a drake Mallard flew through the Sound and an adult Sabine's Gull was seen off the north coast. A brief period of south-easterly winds on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> produced a Garden Warbler, a Yellow-browed Warbler, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and another Lapland Bunting on 18<sup>th</sup>, along with the first Black-headed Gulls of the year, four Redwings and four Snow Buntings. A Lesser Whitethroat appeared on 19<sup>th</sup>; four Whooper Swans were seen in the Sound, and the first Grey Heron of the year was found near the jetty. On 20<sup>th</sup>, the wind swung round to the south-east, and for the next nine days, south-easterlies, easterlies and north-easterlies dominated. A Seatrack sea-watch on 20<sup>th</sup> produced a Sooty Shearwater, a Storm Petrel and a Pomarine Skua, while a Short-eared Owl and another Yellow-browed Warbler were found on the island. The 21<sup>st</sup> was very quiet, producing little other than another Brambling, but 22<sup>nd</sup> produced another Hen Harrier, a Jack Snipe and a third Yellow-browed Warbler. There was a noticeable arrival of migrants on 23<sup>rd</sup>, including a European Nightjar, two Black Redstarts, a Whinchat, 17 Redwings, a Mistle Thrush, a Garden Warbler, two new Yellow-browed Warblers, another Brambling and nine Common Crossbills, along with a few Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Goldcrests, Siskins and Lesser Redpolls. About 25 Fieldfares and 250 Redwings appeared on 24<sup>th</sup>, along with at least four more Black Redstarts, a Ring Ouzel, a Rook and two more Common Crossbills, and then on 25<sup>th</sup>, there was a major movement of thrushes, with large flocks arriving from the southwest throughout the day. The day's counts included 150 Blackbirds, 100 Fieldfares, 150 Song Thrushes and about 1,500 Redwings. Other birds of note on 25<sup>th</sup> included two Mallards, a Hen Harrier, three Northern Lapwings, six Woodcocks, 11 Chiffchaffs, 175 Chaffinches, three Bramblings, 15 Siskins and six Common Crossbills. Thrush and finch numbers remained high on 26<sup>th</sup>, with 100 Blackbirds, 60 Fieldfares, 100 Song Thrushes, 650 Redwings and 100 Chaffinches being recorded, while other birds of note included a Northern Lapwing, a Woodcock, a Short-eared Owl, four Black Redstarts, two Ring Ouzels, a Mistle Thrush, another Yellow-browed Warbler, another Brambling and another Common Crossbill. Few thrushes or finches remained on 27<sup>th</sup>, but a Brent Goose flew by at sea, and there were two Hen Harriers, another Woodcock, three Short-eared Owls, three Black Redstarts, a Jackdaw, another Brambling and 10 Siskins on the island. A Water Rail, a Wood Pigeon and a late Northern Wheatear were of interest on 28<sup>th</sup>, while 29<sup>th</sup> produced two island rarities, a Stock

Dove and a party of nine Long-tailed Tits, both in Tilickafinna. A flock of 15 Barnacle Geese flew south over Kilmichael in the afternoon of 30<sup>th</sup> and another Mistle Thrush appeared, but 31<sup>st</sup> was very quiet, with nothing of note.

Coverage in November was very good, with observers present on every day of the month except 30<sup>th</sup>, but the weather was poor, with north-westerly, westerly and south-westerly winds dominating throughout the month, some rain on every day except 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, and long periods of thick mist and drizzle. The 1<sup>st</sup> produced little other than a Snow Bunting, but five Bohemian Waxwings appeared on 2<sup>nd</sup>, along with two Great Skuas, a Grey Wagtail and a Chiffchaff. The final Seatrack sea-watch of the year on 3<sup>rd</sup> produced four Sooty Shearwaters, two Manx Shearwaters, seven Common Scoters and a Great Skua, and a Black Redstart was found at the Tip. Another Bohemian Waxwing appeared briefly on 5<sup>th</sup>, along with a Woodcock, a Brambling and a Snow Bunting. The next ten days were rather quiet, producing little other than a Chiffchaff on 8<sup>th</sup>, a Sooty Shearwater on 9<sup>th</sup>, a Blackcap on 10<sup>th</sup>, two Common Crossbills and a Snow Bunting on 11<sup>th</sup>, two more Blackcaps, another Chiffchaff and two Bramblings on 14<sup>th</sup>, and a Eurasian Curlew, a Fieldfare and another Brambling on 15<sup>th</sup>, along with a succession of Great Northern Divers. Following a day of light variable winds, a Richard's Pipit appeared in Tilickafinna on 16<sup>th</sup>, along with another influx of Blackbirds, four Fieldfares, nine Redwings, two Mistle Thrushes, 230 Common Starlings and a Snow Bunting, while another Brent Goose flew by at sea. A *tristis* type Chiffchaff arrived in Tilickafinna on 17<sup>th</sup>, where it remained until at least 28<sup>th</sup>, and another Bohemian Waxwing put in a brief appearance on 18<sup>th</sup>. A Red-throated Diver on 21<sup>st</sup> was the only one of the autumn. Three Twites were seen on 23<sup>rd</sup>, along with a Grey Wagtail and another Chiffchaff. A late Sooty Shearwater, a Manx Shearwater, a Black-headed Gull, a Rook and a Snow Bunting were seen on 24<sup>th</sup>, and yet another Bohemian Waxwing appeared on 25<sup>th</sup>. This was followed by three more Bohemian Waxwings on 27<sup>th</sup>, along with the last Great Northern Diver of the year and two more Rooks. A Mistle Thrush, a Brambling, three Siskins and a Lesser Redpoll were seen on 28<sup>th</sup>, but the only birds of note on 29<sup>th</sup> were four Fieldfares.

Coverage in December was very poor, with visits only on 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The only birds of note were single Common Redshanks on 7<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, a Glaucous Gull on 30<sup>th</sup>, and a few Redwings, Chaffinches and Goldfinches.

2012 was another rather poor year for mammals on Dursey Island. There was only one sighting of a Common Otter (on Christmas Day) and only three records of Pygmy Shrew, two of which relate to dead individuals. A Common Pipistrelle was seen emerging from its roost in Tilickafinna on 22 occasions and on one occasion it was joined by a second individual, but these were the only records of bats on the island. Grey Seals were unusually scarce throughout the year, with no sightings of more than three individuals and none at all in June, July and August. Brown Rats, however, had a good year, and were seen on many occasions in the summer and autumn. The only unusual cetacean was a Bottle-nosed Dolphin in the Sound on 1 June. Common Dolphins and Risso's Dolphins seem to have had average years, with totals of 12 and seven sightings, respectively, but Harbour Porpoises were unusually scarce throughout the year, and there were only seven sightings of Minke Whale, one of which related to a dead individual. It was also a poor year for Basking Sharks, with only four sightings in spring.

2012 was a poor year for the resident butterflies on Dursey Island, undoubtedly because of the very poor summer. The season began with an early Red Admiral on 1 March. Green Hairstreaks, Graylings and the first broods of Green-veined White and Common Blue did fairly well, but Wall Browns, Meadow Browns and the second broods of Green-veined White and

Common Blue seem to have fared badly, and there were only single records of Small Copper, Peacock and Dark Green Fritillary. A Holly Blue was seen in late March but, unusually, there were no reports of Large White or Small White. It was also a poor year for immigrant butterflies and moths, with only one sizeable arrival of Red Admirals, Painted Ladys and Silver Ys in early June, a small influx of Small Tortoiseshells in mid-September, and a small influx of Red Admirals and Silver Ys in October. Only three Humming-bird Hawk-moths were seen, one in March, one in June and one in July, and no unusual moths were reported. The season ended with a Silver Y on 5 November and a very late Red Admiral on 28 November. For the first year since 2001, no dragonflies were observed on the island.

**Note:** The Systematic List that follows incorporates the observations of Dan Ballard (DB), David Cooke (DC), Connor Finch (CF), Kieran Finch (KF), Kieran Grace (KG), Geoff Hunt (GH), Tony Lancaster (AL), Tony Mee (TM), Fionn Moore (FM), Paul Rowe (PR), Joanna Scott (JS) and Larry Toal (LT). The author wishes to express his appreciation to these observers for providing details of their observations.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

### **Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*

One flew west off the Northwest Tip on 1 January; two flew west off Tilickafinna on 8 January; one flew west off Tilickafinna on 11 January; and one flew west off Tilickafinna on 21 November (DS).

### **Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*

The only record in the early part of the year was of one flying west off Tilickafinna on 11 January. The spring passage was very poor, the only record being of one flying west off Tilickafinna on 14 May. However, there were far more records than usual in autumn. The first was a bird flying west off Tilickafinna on 15 September (DC, TM). Single individuals were then recorded on 11 dates between 12 October and 27 November, with two birds on 18 October and 12 November. Several of these records relate to birds flying over the island or through the Sound. On 18 October, an adult flew south through the Sound and an immature bird flew south over Kilmichael; single birds flew south through the Sound on 20 October and 15 November; and a bird flew north over the gap in Tilickafinna on 27 November. One bird was seen feeding in the Sound on 30 and 31 October and again on 5 November. The other records were of birds flying south off the Tip on 12 October and 3 November, and west off Tilickafinna on 11, 12 (2), 13 and 21 November.

### **Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*

Present throughout the year and a common breeding bird. Some 70 birds were already prospecting the cliffs below Tilickafinna on 8 January, and there were over 200 moving north off the Tip on 19<sup>th</sup>. Very common throughout the spring and summer. Birds were already beginning to return to the cliffs on 2 October, almost three weeks earlier than normal, and there were some large movements in November, e.g. 688 flew north and 254 flew south off the Tip on 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 388 flew west off Tilickafinna on 4<sup>th</sup>. On 25 November, 130 were counted on the sea below the nesting cliffs in Tilickafinna.

### **Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

A bird flying west off Tilickafinna at 10:55 on 11 January was extraordinary (DS). The next were not until August, when singles were recorded off the Tip on 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. Two flew south off the Tip on 1 September, and 174 flew north and 10 flew south off the Tip on 15 September. Small numbers were recorded flying south off the Tip in October: one on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12 on 17<sup>th</sup>, one on 20<sup>th</sup> and six on 23<sup>rd</sup>. Four flew north off the Tip on 3 November, and singles were seen flying west off Tilickafinna on 9 and 24 November.

### **Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

First recorded off the Tip on 18 March (DC), then common to abundant offshore throughout the spring and summer until early September. Many thousands flew west off Tilickafinna on 10 June, and on 17 June, a bird was heard calling at night over Tilickafinna. Over 1,000 were seen off the Tip on 4 August, and 392 flew north off the Tip on 15 September, but most had disappeared by the end of September, and the only record in October was of one flying south off the Tip on 2 October. Two flew north off the Tip on 3 November, and one joined a feeding frenzy of Gannets off Tilickafinna on 24 November.

### **European Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Four flew north off the Tip on 4 August (KF); one was found dead near the Cable Car on



1 October (KG, AL); and one flew southwest off the Tip on 20 October (PR).

**Northern Gannet** *Sula bassana*

Common to abundant offshore throughout the year.

**Great Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Present throughout the year in small numbers. Up to 13 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 25 were recorded on many dates in the Sound, but the only higher count was of 40 on 27 May. Three pairs again nested on the High Cliffs.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*

2012 was another very poor year for this species, with only six records of single birds near the jetty and Illanebeg on 19, 20, 21, 22 and 24 October and 2 November. It is possible that only one bird was involved.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*

An adult flew north through the Sound at then turned east at 08:55 on 2 October (KG). A family party of four (two adults and two immatures) was seen resting on the water in the Sound and then flying off southeast at about 14:15 on 19 October (DC). These were the seventh and eighth records of Whooper Swans for Dursey Island.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*

A flock of 15 was seen flying south over Kilmichael in the late afternoon of 30 October (Christian & Sheila Kostner).

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*

A first-winter Pale-bellied Brent Goose flew west off Tilickafinna then north round the Tip at 11:40 on 27 October (DS), and another Pale-bellied Brent Goose flew west off Tilickafinna then north round the Tip at 09:15 on 16 November (DS). These were only the seventh and eighth records of Brent Goose for Dursey Island.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

A drake flew through the Sound at about 09:00 on 17 October (KG, AL), and two females flew east over the fields below Kilmichael in the morning of 25 October (KG). These were only the third and fourth records of this species on Dursey since 1979.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*

The first of the year were six flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 January. However, the next were not until 12 May, when flocks of nine and eight flew west off Tilickafinna. Flocks of nine and 20 flew west off Tilickafinna on 10 June, and four flew north off the Tip on 15 September. Single birds were seen flying south off the Tip on 12 and 15 October, and north off the Tip on 20 October. Four flew west off Tilickafinna and another four flew north off the Tip on 28 October, and five flew west off Tilickafinna on 30 October. Unusually, a pair was seen resting on the sea below the Tip on 3 November, and later the same day, five flew west off Tilickafinna.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*

2012 was a good year for Hen Harriers on Dursey, with records on nine dates between 9 and 29 October, involving at least four birds. A 'ring-tail' was seen in Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 9 October and in upper Kilmichael Valley on 11<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL). Another

'ring-tail', thought to be a first-winter male, was seen in Tilickafinna on 22<sup>nd</sup> and in Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 23<sup>rd</sup> (KG, AL, DS). A 'ring-tail', thought to be a first-winter female, was seen hunting over the Western Hill on 25<sup>th</sup> and in Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 26<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL, DS). An adult female in primary moult spent all day in Tilickafinna on 27<sup>th</sup>, and another 'ring-tail' flew west along the north side of the island the same day (DS, JS). The moulting adult female spent much of the day in Tilickafinna on 28<sup>th</sup> (DS, JS), and another immature bird was seen on the High Cliffs in the afternoon (KG, AL). Finally, a 'ring-tail' was seen hunting over the Western Hill on 29<sup>th</sup> (DS).

**Harrier sp.** *Circus pygargus/macrourus*

A small 'ring-tail' harrier, either a Montagu's or a Pallid, was seen flying east round the High Cliffs in Tilickafinna at 08:30 (JS) and east over the East Fields at 09:30 (AL) on 15 October.

**Eurasian Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*

2012 was a poor year for this species, with records on only 12 dates. There was only one record in spring: a female over the High Cliffs on 19 May. The first of the autumn was a bird on 8 and 10 August. However, the next was not until one on 4 October. A first-winter male arrived in Tilickafinna on 11 October and was then seen in and around Scott's garden on 13<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The only other record was of a bird on 20 October, which may have been the same immature male.

**Common Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*

Formerly a resident breeding species on Dursey, the Kestrel now occurs only as a visitor from the mainland and is becoming increasingly scarce, particularly in the first five months of the year. In 2012, the only records before mid-June were of an immature bird on 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15 January, a single bird on 12 February, an immature on 8 March, and two birds on 28 March. A male in moult appeared in Tilickafinna on 15 June, and was seen again on 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Single birds were seen on 28 July and 10 August, and there were two individuals on 1 and 15 September. Thereafter, one or two birds were seen on many dates to 16 November, with three birds present on 15, 20 and 25 October and four birds on 16 October. One bird was seen almost daily from 17 to 28 November, but there were no sightings in December.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*

A female was recorded at various locations around the island on 1, 3 and 11 January. There were three records in spring: an adult male in Tilickafinna on 9 March, a female or immature bird on the High Cliffs on 31 March, and a female or immature bird on 6 May. The first of the autumn was unusually early, a bird on the High Cliffs on 4 August (KF), but the only other early autumn record was of a bird in Ballynacallagh on 25 September. One or possibly two birds were recorded almost daily from 13 to 23 October, and three birds (a male and two females) were present from 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>. Two females were seen on 29<sup>th</sup>, and single females on 31 October and 2, 4 and 5 November. An adult male was seen chasing pipits in Ballynacallagh on 19 November, and a female or immature was recorded on 7 and 8 December, and again on 27 December.

**Eurasian Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*

A bird was watched flying lazily east over Tilickafinna fields at 11:00 on 19 May (DC, DS). This was only the third record of a Hobby on Dursey Island.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*

For the second year running, a pair of Peregrines defended a territory on the cliffs in

Tilickafinna and may have bred successfully, as an immature bird was seen with one of the adults on 25 October. One or both adults were seen on a total of 28 dates between 1 January and 17 June, and on 19 dates between 4 October and 31 December. The lack of records in July, August and September was presumably because of the very poor coverage in Tilickafinna in these three months. On 28 March, the male was seen devouring a Puffin on the cliffs at the Northwest Tip (FM). The birds were particularly noisy and conspicuous between 13 May and 16 June, and were often seen chasing off Ravens and Hooded Crows. On 16 May, the male was seen chasing off another adult male Peregrine. The pair was watched displaying over the nesting cliff on 13 October, and there was much calling and chasing of Ravens on many dates in the second half of October and early November.

#### **Common Pheasant** *Phasianus colchicus*

A cock pheasant with a narrow white neck-ring appeared in the fields below Kilmichael on 25 May (DS) and remained on the island until at least 10 August. The bird spent most of its time in the Kilmichael area, especially around Cooke's garden where it foraged on bird-seed, but it was also seen walking west through Tilickafinna fields as far as the last houses on 15 June. It was often heard calling. No pheasant was observed during the period 30 August to 2 September, and it is possible that a cock pheasant seen in Kilmichael on 15 September (DC) was a different individual. A male pheasant seen in Kilmichael on 4 and 9 October (KG, AL) may have been the bird of 15 September or yet another individual. However, a bird seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 and 13 October (DS et al.) and on the track in Kilmichael on 14 October (photographed by J.G. Harrington) was certainly not the long-staying 'ring-necked', as it lacked any trace of a white neck-ring. It was also thought to be a different individual from that seen on 4 and 9 October (KG, AL). Thus it seems that at least three Common Pheasants made it across to Dursey Island in 2012. These are the fifth, sixth and seventh records of pheasants on Dursey Island, the first being as recently as 2008. According to local sportsmen, there has been a big increase in Common Pheasants in West Beara in recent years.

#### **Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*

One was seen by the stream in Kilmichael Valley on 28 September (DC); one was seen in upper Kilmichael Valley on 13 October (AL); and one was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 October (JS).

#### **Corncrake** *Crex crex*

One was flushed in the fields below the pumping station in Kilmichael Valley on 15 October (KG). This is only the sixth record of a Corncrake on Dursey Island since records began in 1977, although it was formerly a common breeding bird on the island.

#### **Eurasian Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*

The small resident population of Oystercatchers in the Dursey area seems to be stable, judging by counts at the high tide roost near the jetty on the island. High counts included 18 on 1 January, 25 on 5 February, 18 on 21 February, 13 on 31 March, 16 on 25 September, 19 on 15 November and 14 on 27 December. Apparently only one pair bred on Illanebeg, but it seems likely that there were at least three or four pairs breeding elsewhere on the island.

#### **European Golden Plover** *Pluvialis apricaria*

2012 was another poor year for this species on Dursey, the only records being of single

birds on six dates in October. Single birds were seen on the summit of the Western Hill on 8, 11 and 17 October (KG, AL). On the latter date, the bird was seen flying high to the east over Tilickafinna at 15:25 (DS). A bird flew east over Kilmichael on 26 October (KG); a bird was seen near the Martello Tower in the morning and flying east over Tilickafinna in the afternoon of 27 October (DS, JS); and a bird was seen on the summit of the Western Hill on 28 October (AL).

**Northern Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*

One flew east high over the sea off Tilickafinna at 10:30 on 25 October. A second bird landed in the fields below Tilickafinna at 13:20 that afternoon, but soon flew off to join a third bird on the Western Hill (DS, JS, KG, AL). One was found in the fields by Gerald's Pond below Kilmichael in the morning of 26 October (KG).

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*

Although there had been no records in the latter part of 2011, eleven were found at the usual roost site on Lower North Slope on 1 January (DS). One was seen there on 14 and 15 January (DC, CF, KF, PR), and there was also one on Illanebeg on 14 January (CF, KF). The only other record was of one on Illanebeg on 6 May (CF, KF).

**Jack Snipe** *Limnocryptes minimus*

One was seen on the Western Hill on 1 October (KG), and one was flushed in the Main Bog on the north slope on 22 October (AL).

**Common Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*

Numbers of snipe were relatively low at the start of the year, with only seven being recorded on 1 January, but there was some influx later in the month, with counts of 16 on 14 January and 27 on 11 February. Numbers dwindled in late February, and no more than three were recorded in a day in March. Two on 31 March and one on 6 April were the last of the wintering birds, and two in the Kilmichael area on 5 May were presumably late migrants. The first of the autumn was a bird near the Martello Tower on 15 September. Snipe were then recorded in small numbers on 17 dates between 2 and 27 October, the highest counts being seven on 20<sup>th</sup> and six on 25<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter, no more than three were recorded in a day to the end of the year, except on 31 December, when seven were counted.

**Eurasian Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*

Two were flushed at The Waters on 1 January (DC), but these were the only ones in the early part of the year. The first of the autumn were six at the west end of the island on 25 October, including one bird flying in off the sea at the Tip (KG, AL). One was found by the track near the Cable Car on 26 October (KG, AL); one flew into Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 07:40 on 27 October (DS); and one was flushed in Kilmichael Valley on 28 October (KG). The only other record was of a bird flying into Scott's garden at 07:15 on 5 November (DS).

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*

One was flushed from the rocky shore east of Kilmichael Valley on 19 March (DC). This was only the fifth record of a Black-tailed Godwit on Dursey.

**Eurasian Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

Fourteen were seen on 4 May, followed by 42 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 59 on 6<sup>th</sup>, the latter including one flock of 57 at the West Wall near the Tip (DC, CF, KF). The only other records in spring were of one at the Sound on 11 May and four near the Cable Car on 18 and 19 May (DS). The only record in autumn was of a bird seen flying across the Sound from

the mainland to the island on 27 July (FM).

**Eurasian Curlew** *Numenius arquata*

Although recorded on only 14 dates, curlews were seen in eight months of the year. Single birds were recorded on Illanebeg on 11 and 12 February and 17 and 19 March. Six were seen near the Cable Car on 5 May. Three were seen at the east end on 20 July, and these were followed by one on 28 July, two on 3 August, one on 31 August and four on 2 September. Single birds were seen near the Cable Car on 15 September, in Kilmichael on 26 September, and on Illanebeg on 16 October. The last was a bird flying through the Sound on 15 November.

**Common Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

The Common Redshank seems to be establishing itself as a regular winter visitor to Dursey Island in tiny numbers. Two birds were found on 1 January: one on Illanebeg and one on the Lower North Slope (DC, DS). One was found again on Illanebeg on 14 January (CF, KF), and there was one again on the Lower North Slope on 15 January (DC, PR). A bird seen on Illanebeg on 6 April (DC) may well have been the bird seen there in January. A Redshank was also found on Illanebeg on 7 and 25 December (DC) and was probably a returning winter visitor. Prior to October 2010, there had been only two records of Common Redshank on Dursey Island, but one or two birds have now been present in three successive winters.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

One was found foraging along the stream in Kilmichael Valley at 16:30 on 16 June (DS). It was last seen an hour later flying off east over Ballynacallagh. This was only the third record of a Green Sandpiper on Dursey Island, the two previous records having been in August 1978 and August 2009.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

One was seen in the cut by Illanebeg on 19 May (DC). There were two on Illanebeg on 3 June and 21 July, and one in the same area on 8 August (DC).

**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*

2012 was another average year for this species on Dursey Island, with records on 13 dates and a maximum count of 12. The only records in the early part of the year were of one on the Lower North Slope and one on Illanebeg on 1 January, two on Illanebeg on 3 January, three on Illanebeg on 14 January, and singles on Illanebeg on 11 and 23 February. The first of the autumn were seven on 1 September. There were 11 on Illanebeg on 14 September, one at Kilmichael Point on 14 and 15 September, and two on the north coast below the Martello Tower on 16 September. These were followed by two near the jetty on 2 October, one at Kilmichael Point on 16 October, three near the jetty on 21 October, and 12 at Kilmichael Point on 23 November.

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*

Three flew south off the Tip at around mid-day on 11 October (KG, AL).

**Unidentified small waders**

Three flew north off the Tip on 15 September.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

2012 was a poor year for this species off Dursey Island with only three records, all in autumn. One flew south off the Tip on 1 September (DC, PR); a dark-phase bird flew south off the Tip on 12 October (KG, AL); and a light-phase bird flew northeast off the

Tip on 20 October (PR, DS).

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*

After a good year for this species in 2011, 2012 was probably the worst ever with only three records, all in autumn. Single birds flew north off the Tip on 1 September (DC, PR) and 15 September (KF et al.), and one flew south off the Tip on 17 October (KG, AL). An unidentified skua flying north off the Tip on 4 August may have been this species.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*

An immature bird flew south off the Tip at around mid-day on 12 October (KG, AL). This was the fifth record of this species off Dursey Island.

**Great Skua** *Catharacta skua*

2012 was a very poor year for this species off Dursey, although poor coverage in April and September could go a long way to accounting for the paucity of records. The only records in the first half of the year were of one flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 June and three flying west off Tilickafinna on 10 June. Single birds were seen off the Tip on 11 and 20 October; a bird was watched chasing gulls off Tilickafinna on 22 October; two flew west off Tilickafinna on 2 November; and one was seen off the Tip on 3 November.

**Sabine's Gull** *Larus sabini*

An adult bird in winter plumage was seen flying southwest off the northwest coast of the island at around mid-day on 17 October (KG).

**Blackheaded Gull** *Larus ridibundus*

2012 was another poor year for this species, with only six records, all between 18 October and 24 November. Two adults and a first-year bird flew north off the Tip and an adult was seen in the Sound on 18 October. There was an immature bird in the Sound and an adult flew north off the Tip on 19 October. An adult was seen in the Sound and an adult flew south off the Tip on 20 October. Two flew south off the Tip on 28 October; two adults flew west off Tilickafinna on 2 November; and there was an adult with a feeding frenzy off Tilickafinna on 24 November.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*

Up to four individuals were seen in the Sound or off the Tip on 10 dates in January and February, and two were still present in the Sound on 5 March, but these were the last of the spring. The first bird of the autumn was seen on 28 September. One or two birds were seen in the Sound or off the Tip on 15 dates in October and 11 dates in November, the only higher counts being three off Tilickafinna and the Tip on 19 October and at least eight off the Tip on 20 October. One in the Sound on 28 November was the last.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*

A single bird was seen in the Sound on 1 January. Three adults were seen near the breeding site on the north coast on 11 February, and at least 12 adults appeared around the breeding site in Tilickafinna on 23 February. Thereafter, present around the breeding sites throughout the spring and summer. The highest counts were 45 feeding with Herring Gulls in Tilickafinna fields on 8 March, and 35 near the West Wall on 6 May. Only four pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were located during the census of breeding sea-birds in 2000, but it now seems that at least 15-20 pairs are breeding on the island. The main departure of the breeding population occurred in August, and the only birds seen after 1 September were single adults off the North Cliffs on 4 October and off Tilickafinna on 22 October, 2 November and 24 November.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

Common throughout the year and nesting at the usual sites. There were an estimated 350 birds on the island on 1 January.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*

An adult was found roosting with other gulls on Illanebeg on 1 January (DS). This was undoubtedly that bird that had been seen near the jetty on 31 December 2011. A first-winter bird was found roosting with other gulls near the jetty on 5 January (DS), and an adult was again on Illanebeg on 14 January (DC, PR). Two adults flew west together off Tilickafinna at 09:10 on 23 February (DS), and a first-winter bird was found feeding with other gulls in Tilickafinna fields on 8 March (DS). It is possible that only three birds were involved.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*

A second-winter bird was seen foraging at sea off the Lower North Slope on 1 January and flying southeast off Tilickafinna on 3 January (DS). A first winter bird flew west off Tilickafinna at 09:35 on 23 February (DS). An immature was found roosting with other gulls near the West Wall on 30 December (KF).

**Great Blackbacked Gull** *Larus marinus*

Common throughout the year, but not known to nest on the island.

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

Present offshore throughout the year, but scarce in spring, summer and early autumn, with no more than 27 recorded in a day from the beginning of May to the end of September. The only high counts in the early part of the year were of 100 off the Tip on 1 January and 50 flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 January. The first big movement of the autumn was on 11 October, when 400 flew south off the Tip. Thereafter, numbers remained high until mid-November, with counts of 200 on 16 October, 440 on 20 October, 250 on 2 November and 700 on 3 November, mostly of birds flying south off the Tip or west off Tilickafinna. Eighty-six flew west off Tilickafinna on 13 November, but from then until the end of the year, no more than 50 were recorded in a day.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*

Four flew north off the Tip on 4 August (KF). The only other terns recorded in 2012 were two unidentified terns flying north off the Tip on 15 September.

**Common Guillemot** *Uria aalge*

Present offshore throughout the year. High counts of unidentified auks (mostly this species) included 200 off the Tip on 1 January, 300 flying west off Tilickafinna on 8 January, 260 off Tilickafinna and the Tip on 11 January, 800 flying south off the Tip on 11 October, 1,000 flying south off the Tip on 18 October, 900 flying south off the Tip on 20 October, 500 flying west off Tilickafinna on 2 November, and 800 off Tilickafinna and the Tip on 3 November.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*

Present offshore in small numbers throughout the year.

**Black Guillemot** *Cepphus grylle*

Recorded in very small numbers on 20 dates from 1 January to 12 June, mostly in the Sound but also occasionally off Tilickafinna and the Tip. The only counts of over three were on 18 March, when six were recorded, and 9 June, when there were four in the Sound. There were far more records than usual in the second half of the year, with single birds being seen in the Sound on 20 July, 2 and 27 September, 5, 11, 15 and 27

November, and 25 December, and two birds in the Sound on 5 November.

**Atlantic Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*

One was watched being devoured by a male Peregrine at the Tip on 28 March (FM). Three flew west far out off Tilickafinna on 14 May, and five flew west off Tilickafinna on 10 June (DS). The only other record was of two birds flying north far out off the Tip on 20 October (PR).

**[Rock Dove** *Columba livia*]

One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 5 May. One was seen on the High Cliffs on 12 May and in Scott's garden on 13 May. One flew in from the southwest and landed near the Martello Tower on 25 May. One was seen in Ballynacallagh on 3 June. A very tired individual arrived in Scott's garden in the afternoon of 28 June and quickly took up residence in the greenhouse, but despite being fed, was found dead on 1 July. All records almost certainly relate to lost racing pigeons.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*

One flew in from the west and landed in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 09:40 on 29 October (DS, JS). It was still present at 11:25, but not seen thereafter. This was only the eleventh record of a Stock Dove on Dursey Island and the first since 2007.

**Wood Pigeon** *Columba palumbus*

One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 17 March (DC); one flew east over Tilickafinna at 09:25 on 27 May (DS); and one was present in Scott's garden from 11:20 to at least 14:15 on 28 October (KG, DS).

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*

2012 was an average year for this species on Dursey, with records on 16 dates between 1 May and 28 June, involving 14 individuals. The first was one in Kilmichael from 4 to 7 May. Two in Kilmichael on 19 May were joined by a third on 20 May, and all three were seen in Ballynacallagh the next day. Two remained in Ballynacallagh until 25 May. Another bird was found in Ballynacallagh on 29 May, and one spent the whole of 4 June and the early morning of 5 June calling in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna. A flock of six appeared in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 10 June, and one flew west through Tilickafinna on 22 June. A striking leucistic bird arrived in Scott's garden at 21:00 on 27 June and remained in the garden for the whole of the next day.

**European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

One was seen perched on the cables over the Sound at about 09:30 on 27 May (Dan Ballard).

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*

One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna in the morning of 14 October (DS, JS).

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*

One was seen near North Pond west of Bernie's Well on 16, 20 and 26 October (KG, CF, DS). One was flushed on the hillside above Scott's garden in Tilickafinna (JS) and two were flushed in the fields above Kilmichael on 27 October (AL). One was flushed near Ovenbird Hedge in Tilickafinna on 28 October (AL). At least three individuals were involved, and possibly as many as six,

**European Nightjar** *Caprimulgus europaeus*

A female or immature bird was watched flying back and forth low over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 19:05 on 23 October (DS, JS). This was only the third record of a



European Nightjar on Dursey Island, and the first in autumn.

**Common Swift** *Apus apus*

One flew south over the gap in Tilickafinna at 11:35 on 25 May; two flew east over Tilickafinna between 11:00 and 11:35 on 26 May; and three flew south over the gap in Tilickafinna at 10:05 on 25 May (DS).

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*

One was found by the track near the old post office in Kilmichael on 28 March, and was watched for two hours (FM). Although it was not seen the next day, a Hoopoe seen by the big hedge below Kilmichael on 31 March (KF) was presumably the same bird. This was the seventh record of a Hoopoe on Dursey, and the earliest by three days.

**Eurasian Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*

The first of the year were five birds on the Western Hill on 24 February. There were at least a dozen birds in Tilickafinna by 28 February, including many in song. Common and conspicuous throughout the spring and early summer, but remarkably inconspicuous in late summer and autumn. No more than six were recorded in a day in August, and no more than four in September. The only records in the first half of October were of single birds on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. One was seen in Tilickafinna on 23 October; four flew east over Tilickafinna and three were seen near the Martello Tower on 25 October; and five flew east over Tilickafinna on 26 October. These were the last of the year.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*

There were only two records, both in autumn: one was seen flying over Ballynacallagh on 15 September (DC), and one was seen flying west over Kilmichael on 4 October (KG).

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*

The first of the year was a bird in Ballynacallagh on 28 March (FM). Coverage was poor in April and no more were seen until 4 May, when the local breeding birds were already in residence. The only evidence of passage in spring was on 25 and 26 May, when there were counts of 20 and 15, respectively. Most of these were birds flying east over Tilickafinna. As usual, about six pairs bred on the island. There was some increase in numbers in early August, with 22 being recorded on 9<sup>th</sup>, and at least 14 were still present on 15 September, but the breeding population seems to have left the island a little earlier than usual, as none was recorded in the last week of September or first week of October. A bird seen flying east at the Tip on 8 October was the last of the year (KG).

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*

After an exceptionally poor year for this species in 2011, 2012 was above average, with records on 12 dates between 5 May and 10 June. The first was a bird over East Fields in Ballynacallagh on 5 May (KF), and this was followed by two at the Martello Tower, one in Tilickafinna and two near the Tip on 6 May. Birds were then seen flying east or west over Tilickafinna on 16 May (1), 19 May (9), 25 May (6), 26 May (5), 27 May (4), 1 June (2), 3 June (1) and 6 June (1), and over Kilmichael on 19 May (1), 26 May (3), 5 June (1) and 10 June (1).

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi*

One was heard calling several times over Tilickafinna fields at 09:30 and again at 13:50 on 16 November, but a search of the area failed to reveal the bird (DS). This was the fifteenth record of a Richard's Pipit on Dursey Island.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*

Present throughout the year, and the commonest breeding passerine on the island. At least 15 birds remained on the island throughout the winter of 2011/2012, and some birds were already in song by 23 February. There were signs of passage in early March, when a flock of 35 was seen in Tilickafinna on 1<sup>st</sup> and over 40 were recorded on 3<sup>rd</sup>. The species was very common throughout the spring, summer and autumn. A noticeable influx occurred on 8 October (KG), and counts of 50 were recorded on 12<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, but numbers dwindled rapidly at the end of October and thereafter no more than a dozen 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 12 were recorded in a day.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*

2012 was another very poor year for Grey Wagtails on Dursey Island, with only seven records all involving single birds. The first, however, was unusual: an immature bird in Kilmichael Valley on 17 June (DS). One was seen in Ballynacallagh on 26 September; one was seen in Tilickafinna on 11 and 15 October; and one was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 16 October, 21 October and 2 November.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*

Although present throughout the year, Pied Wagtails remained scarce on Dursey Island in 2012. Only one bird was resident on the island in January (a male in Kilmichael), but a second individual appeared briefly near the jetty on 14 January. The Kilmichael bird seemed to have found a mate by 3 February, and there were three birds on the island on 4<sup>th</sup>. More birds gradually found their way onto the island in March and April, and three pairs nested, a pair in the sheds near the jetty, a pair in Ballynacallagh and a pair in Kilmichael. However, a male that took up residence in Tilickafinna was unable to find a mate. The first two juveniles of the year appeared in Ballynacallagh on 10 June. By late June, there were at least six juveniles on the island, with some of these finding their way out to Tilickafinna. About 12 birds were still present on the island in the first three weeks of October, but numbers then dwindled to only six in early November, four in late November and three in December. Two **White Wagtails** *M. a. alba* were seen at the Tip on 8 October (KG, AL).

**Bohemian Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*

Prior to 2012, there had been only four records of waxwings on Dursey Island: in October 2004 (2), October 2005 and January 2011. However, there was an unusually large invasion of waxwings into Ireland in late October and November 2012, and at least eleven individuals made it as far southwest as Dursey. The first were four birds that arrived in Scott's garden at 07:55 on 2 November (DS, JS). One of the birds fed briefly on *Rosa rugosa* berries, but the other birds were restless and after a few minutes, all four flew off to the northeast. Three hours later, another individual appeared in the garden and started to forage in the *Rosa rugosa*, but this too soon lost interest and after a couple of minutes flew off east (DC, DS, JS). Three days later, on 5 November, a bird was seen flying in from the south at 12:55 and alighting in Zuma garden in Ballynacallagh (DS). This bird stayed for only a few seconds, before flying off high to the east. On 18 November, a very tame and obviously tired individual appeared in Scott's garden at 08:45 (DS, JS). It fed for a while on *Rosa rugosa* berries, but spent most of its time sleeping deep inside in a willow thicket. It was last seen flying off to the northwest at

09:25. On 25 November, a first-winter bird arrived in Scott's garden at 09:45 and stayed for about five minutes before flying off high to the north-northeast (DS). Finally, on 27 November, three waxwings flew into Scott's garden from the south at 09:50 (DS). These birds stayed for only a few seconds before flying off to the east.

**Winter Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*

A common resident, widespread over the entire island.

**Duncock** *Prunella modularis*

A fairly common resident, largely confined to the village areas. Birds were watched nest-building in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 8 March.

**European Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*

A common resident, particularly in the village areas. There were no signs of any big arrival of immigrants in late autumn.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*

2012 was quite a good year for this species, with six individuals in late March and about ten or eleven individuals in late October and early November. Three birds were seen in Upper Kilmichael Valley on 27 March, and these were still around on 28<sup>th</sup>, when there were also three near O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna (FM). The first of the autumn were a striking adult male and a female/immature in Tilickafinna on 23 October (KG, AL, DS). Six individuals were recorded on 24<sup>th</sup>: two near the Tip, three in Tilickafinna (including the adult male), and one near the old school in Kilmichael (KG, AL, DS). There were still two near the Tip and one in Tilickafinna on 25<sup>th</sup>, and one in Tilickafinna and 26<sup>th</sup>, when there were also three near the old school (KG, AL, DS). The adult male was seen again in Tilickafinna on 27<sup>th</sup> along with a female/immature, and there was one in East Fields in Ballynacallagh (KG, AL, DS). Only one was seen on 28<sup>th</sup>, a female/immature on the track on the High Cliffs (KG, AL), but the adult male was seen again in Tilickafinna on 29<sup>th</sup> (DS). The last was a female/immature on the south side of Moil Mor near the Old Lighthouse on 3 November (PR). This may well have been a wintering bird, as a female/immature was seen in the same area on 1 January 2013 (FM & Forrest Moore).

**Common Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

The only record was of an immature male by the track on the High Cliffs on 8 October (KG, AL).

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*

2012 was another very poor for year for Whinchats, with only two birds being recorded: one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 15 September (DC, KF, TM), and one in and around Scott's garden on 23 and 24 October (DS, JS).

**Common Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*

Present throughout the year, but very scarce until the middle of March (with no more than five being recorded in a day), and much reduced in numbers from about mid-October, although there were still at least a dozen on the island at the end of the year. A male was already in song in Tilickafinna on 23 February, and a pair was already feeding young at a nest in gorse scrub in Upper Kilmichael Valley on 28 March. The island's breeding population was conservatively estimated at 20 pairs (FM). The birds seem to have had another good breeding season, and large numbers of juveniles were observed in May and June. A striking leucistic bird was present in the Kilmichael area for about a week in early October (DC, KG, AL).

**Northern Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*

The first of the year was one in Tilickafinna on 17 March (DC). There were at least 30 birds, mostly males, on the island on 28 March, including a bird showing the characters of the Iceland/Greenland race *leucorhoa* (FM). Thereafter common throughout the spring and summer, with the first fledged juveniles appearing on 12 May. Most of the island's breeding population had departed by the end of August, and no more than seven were recorded in a day in the first half of September. Three or four were recorded on several dates in late September and early October and there were six on 9 October, five on 11 October and one or two on nine dates to 25 October. The last were singletons in East Fields on 27 October and in Kilmichael on 28 October.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*

There were two records in spring: a male by the track west of O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM), and a male in East Fields on 7 May (KF). The only records in autumn were of a female in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 24 October (KG, AL, DS), and a male in Kilmichael and a female in Tilickafinna on 25 October (KG, AL).

**Common Blackbird** *Turdus merula*

A fairly common resident. No more than a dozen were recorded in the early part of the year. Three or four pairs again bred in Tilickafinna, where birds were first heard in song on 5 March. There was a major influx in late October, with at least 25 present on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 50 on 24<sup>th</sup>, 150 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 100 on 26<sup>th</sup>. Numbers then dwindled to 50 on 27<sup>th</sup> and 20 on 28<sup>th</sup>. A much smaller influx occurred on 16 November, when 30 were recorded, and there were signs of another small arrival in Tilickafinna on 24 November, but few if any of these migrants stayed around, and only about 20 birds were still on the island at the end of the year.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*

One at Zuma in Ballynacallagh on 5 March was the only record in the early part of the year. The first of the autumn were 25 birds moving east through Tilickafinna on 24 October. At least 100 arrived from the west during the big movement of thrushes on 25 October, and there were still at least 60 on the island the next day. However, only four were seen on 27<sup>th</sup>. Singletons were recorded on 30 October and 2 November, and there were nine in Tilickafinna on 5 November and two there on 6<sup>th</sup>. From 15 to 29 November there was a trickle of birds through the island involving one in 15<sup>th</sup>, four on 16<sup>th</sup>, one on 17<sup>th</sup>, two on 24<sup>th</sup>, two on 27<sup>th</sup>, two on 28<sup>th</sup> and four on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*

After a count of nine on 1 January, no more than four were recorded in a day in January and no more than two in February and early March, suggesting that the wintering population was much smaller than usual. One or two birds were seen in the Kilmichael area on many occasions in spring and summer, and it seems likely that at least one pair bred. A single bird in Tilickafinna on 2 July was probably a juvenile that had been reared on the island. Numbers remained very low until 10 October, when the first few migrants appeared. Numbers increased to seven on 23<sup>rd</sup> and at least 15 on 24<sup>th</sup>, and there was a major arrival on 25<sup>th</sup>, when at least 150 were present on the island. Numbers had fallen to 100 on 26<sup>th</sup> and only about 15 remained on 27<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter, up to ten were recorded on many occasions to the end of the year.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*

Small numbers of birds were recorded on the island on 12 dates in January and February, the highest counts being 12 on 18 January and seven on 11 February. The only records in March were of single birds in Tilickafinna on 1<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The first of the autumn was unusually early: a bird in Kilmichael on 9 October (KG). However the next were not until four arrived on 18 October, followed by two on 19<sup>th</sup>, two on 21<sup>st</sup> and one on 22<sup>nd</sup>. Seventeen on 23 October marked the beginning of a huge arrival. At least 250 passed eastwards over the island on 24<sup>th</sup>, while on 25<sup>th</sup>, large flocks of thrushes, mainly Redwings, were seen flying in from the southwest throughout the day. A total of 1,270 Redwings were counted passing through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and it was estimated that there were at least 1,500 on the island. At least 650 birds were present the next day, including 230 flying east through Tilickafinna, but only 40 remained on 27<sup>th</sup>, 20 on 28<sup>th</sup>, 12 on 30<sup>th</sup> and five on 31<sup>st</sup>. Small numbers (maximum nine) were recorded on 17 dates in November, and up to seven were recorded on four dates in the last week of December.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*

The first of the year was a bird in Kilmichael on 23 October (KG). This was followed by single birds in Tilickafinna on 26 and 30 October (DS). Two birds which arrived in Tilickafinna at 08:50 on 16 November roosted in Scott's garden and were last seen at 07:50 the next morning flying off to the east (DS). A bird flew west through Scott's garden at 09:00 on 28 November (DS).

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*

One was in Kilmichael Valley on 4 May (DC), and one was heard in song at The Waters on 6 May (KF). In addition, a bird thought to be a Grasshopper Warbler was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 5 May (KF).

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Two pairs of Sedge Warblers probably bred in the boggy fields below Kilmichael, but proof of breeding was lacking. The first of the year were three birds in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 5 May and one there the next day (KF). Another migrant was seen in Scott's garden on 18 and 19 May (DS). On the latter date, there were also two birds in song in John Michael's Bog below Kilmichael and one bird in song in Upper Kilmichael Valley. Single birds were seen in song in John Michael's Bog on 25 May, 27 May, 3 June and 28 July and in the marshy fields near Gerald's Pond on 30 June and 28 July. There were no records of birds on passage in autumn.

**European Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

2012 was a very poor year for this species on Dursey Island, with only one definite record: a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 May (DS). However, a bird thought to be this species was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 7 May (KF).

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*

After a good year in 2011, 2012 was a very poor year for this species, with only one record: a bird in Kilmichael Valley on 19 October (KG, AL, DS).

**Common Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*

For the first year since 2004, there was a substantial fall of Common Whitethroats in spring. A total of 21 birds were recorded all over the island on 5 May (KF). However, only three were seen the next day and only two on 7<sup>th</sup> (KF). The only other record was of a female in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 19 May (DS).

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*

2012 was yet another poor year for this species, with only three records, all in the second half of October. Single birds were seen in Kilmichael on 17 October (KG, AL), and in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 18 October and 23 October (DS).

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*

There was one decent fall in spring, but the autumn passage was poor, with no more than four birds being recorded in a day. The first of the spring was a male at The Waters on 31 March (KF). There were two males in Kilmichael Valley on 6 April, and one on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. One was seen on 4 May, but 15 were counted on 5<sup>th</sup> (five in East Fields, four in Kilmichael Valley, one in Kilmichael and five in Tilickafinna). Two remained in Kilmichael Valley on 7<sup>th</sup>. Two females appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 18 May, and there was a male in song there on 25, 26 and 27 May. In autumn, up to three were recorded on ten dates from 3 October to 25 October. Four were seen on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, and two on 29<sup>th</sup>. Thereafter, the only records were of a female that frequented the bird-feeders in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael from 10 to 16 November, a male in Cooke's garden on 14 November and a male in Scott's garden, also on 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*

2012 saw this species return to form, with records on eight dates in October involving six birds. The first was one in Kilmichael Valley on 18 and 19 October (KG, DC, DS). This was followed by a bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 20 October (DS et al.) and a bird in Kilmichael Valley from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> (Larry Toal et al.). There was another bird in Scott's garden on 23<sup>rd</sup> (DS et al.) and also bird on the north cliffs near Gull-bathing Area (KG). Finally, a bird was found by the track on the High Cliffs on 26 October (KG, AL).

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*

The first of the spring were four in Kilmichael Valley and one in Tilickafinna on 18 March (DC). There was an exceptional fall in late March: at least 30 were seen on the eastern half of the island on 27<sup>th</sup> and 40-50 on the island as a whole the next day (FM). However, only four were recorded on 31 March (KF). None was recorded on either visit in April, but up to four were recorded on several dates in early May. A male established a territory in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna sometime before 11 May and remained until at least 4 July, singing vigorously and being joined by a second individual on 15 and 16 June, but apparently to no avail. Another bird was seen in song in Kilmichael Valley on several dates from 26 May to 6 June. The first of the autumn were two birds on 21 July and one on 28 July. One or two were recorded on 10 dates between 8 August and 24 September. There was a small fall on 27 September, when six were recorded, and then up to five were recorded daily to 22 October. Seven were counted on 23 October, followed by four on 24<sup>th</sup>, 11 on 25<sup>th</sup>, nine on 26<sup>th</sup>, five on 27<sup>th</sup>, two on 28<sup>th</sup> and one on 29<sup>th</sup>. Single birds were recorded in Kilmichael Valley on 2 November, in Tilickafinna on 8<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, and in Kilmichael Valley on 16<sup>th</sup>. On 17 November, a bird showing the characters of *tristis* (Siberian Chiffchaff) arrived in Scott's garden where it remained until at least 28 November (DS). The last arrival of the year was a bird in Kilmichael Valley on 23 November.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*

The spring passage began with an exceptional fall at the end of March. Five were seen in Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael on 27<sup>th</sup>, and there were 30-40 on the island the next day (FM). Seven were seen on 6 April, followed by five on 7<sup>th</sup> and one on 8<sup>th</sup>. There was

a small fall on 9 May, when nine were recorded, but only single birds were seen on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The only other records in spring were of one in Tilickafinna and one in Kilmichael Valley on 19 May, one in Kilmichael on 26 May, and one in song in Tilickafinna on 26 and 27 May. The only birds in autumn were single individuals in Kilmichael Valley on 27 September (DC), in Tilickafinna on 4 October (KG, AL), and at the West Wall near the Tip on 7 October (KG, AL).

#### **Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*

Goldcrest numbers seem to be getting back to normal after an exceptionally poor year in 2010 and a modest recovery in 2011. The first of the year were single birds in Tilickafinna on 17 March and Kilmichael on 18 March (DC). There was a notable fall in late March, when 14 were counted on 27<sup>th</sup> and eight on 28<sup>th</sup> (FM). The first of the autumn were three on 15 September, two on 16<sup>th</sup> and one on 24<sup>th</sup>. Up to three were recorded almost daily from 4 to 20 October, with four on 7<sup>th</sup>, five on 9<sup>th</sup> and four on 11<sup>th</sup>. Numbers increased to six on 23<sup>rd</sup>, but the only ones after then were two on 24<sup>th</sup>, two on 25<sup>th</sup> and one on 26<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus*

A bird was reported on the island by Geoff Hunt on 6 October, but no further details are available.

#### **Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*

The spring passage was about average for this species, but there were no records in autumn. The first of the year were three in Kilmichael Valley and one in East Fields on 5 May (KF). There was still at least one in Kilmichael Valley on 6<sup>th</sup>, and two there on 7<sup>th</sup>. One was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 18, 19 and 20 May, and there was one in Kilmichael Valley on 19<sup>th</sup>. Two were found on 25<sup>th</sup> (one in Tilickafinna and one in Ballynacallagh), and there were four on 26<sup>th</sup> (two in Tilickafinna and two in Kilmichael Valley) and 27<sup>th</sup> (one in Tilickafinna, one on the High Cliffs and two in Kilmichael Valley). One bird remained in Tilickafinna on 28<sup>th</sup>. The last was a bird in Kilmichael Valley on 2 June (DC).

#### **Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*

2012 was exceptional for this species on Dursey, with two birds turning up in spring as well as one in autumn. The first was a female which spent the whole of 25 May from 09:40 to at least 18:15 foraging in the gully above Scott's garden in Tilickafinna (DS). This bird could not be found on 26<sup>th</sup>, but a superb red-breasted male was found in Scott's garden at 10:10 that morning. This remained in the garden until at least 18:00, spending much of its time foraging from the base of an *Escalonia* hedge, but had gone by the next morning (DS, JS). A first-winter bird was found in Scott's garden at 14:00 on 18 October and was still present at 18:05 (KG, AL, DS). These were the ninth, tenth and eleventh records of Red-breasted Flycatcher on Dursey Island.

#### **Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

2012 was another very poor year for this species, with only one record: a male in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from 09:25 to at least 13:45 on 28 May (DS).

#### **Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus*

A very active flock of nine arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 07:30 on 29 October. After spending about 15 minutes in the garden, the birds flew off high to the west. An hour later, they reappeared in the garden, but stayed for only a few seconds before flying off high to the east (DS). This was only the second record of Long-tailed

Tit on Dursey Island, the first being on 11 October 2008.

**Coal Tit** *Parus ater*

2012 was a good year for this irruptive species. The first were three in Kilmichael on 2 October, followed by four in the same area on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (KG). There was a big arrival on 5<sup>th</sup>, when 20 were found in the gorse in upper Kilmichael Valley, along with one in Ballynacallagh, one in lower Kilmichael Valley and four in Kilmichael (KG, AL). At least three were seen in Kilmichael on 7<sup>th</sup>, and there were two at the West Wall near the Tip on 11<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL). One was seen in Kilmichael Valley on 13<sup>th</sup> (KG); there was one in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 14<sup>th</sup> (DC); and there were two in Cooke's garden on 15<sup>th</sup> (DC, KG).

**Blue Tit** *Parus caeruleus*

A pair of Blue Tits again bred successfully on Dursey Island, following on from their first successful attempt in 2011. Six birds were present on the island in January and February, but only four were seen in the first half of March, and only two or three remained into the spring. The breeding pair chose to nest in the gable end of Kostner's house in Kilmichael which was undergoing major renovation works at the time. Despite the constant disturbance, the pair managed to rear at least two young to fledging. The first fledged juvenile was seen out of the nest on 15 June, and an unmated adult was present in the second half of June. Only the three adults and two juveniles were seen in July, August and September, but there was an influx in early October, when up to eight were recorded. One bird appeared in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 14 October, and two appeared there on 16 October. There were still at least five birds on the island on 10 November, but only three or four birds remained on the island to the end of the year.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*

Once again, Great Tits were present throughout the year, and two pairs bred successfully. Seven birds were recorded on 1 January, but no more than five were seen later in January or in February, March and April, and only two pairs were present in May. One pair bred in Ballynacallagh and had at least four juveniles on the wing by 2 June. The other pair bred in Kilmichael Valley and was still feeding young in the nest on 5 June. Ten were recorded on 22 June, but no more than six were recorded in July, August and September. There were some signs of an influx in October, with as many as 12 being recorded on several dates from 12<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, and 13 on 19<sup>th</sup>, including one in Tilickafinna. Two also appeared in Tilickafinna on 25 and 26 October. However, no more than five were recorded in a day in November, and no more than four in December.

**Eurasian Magpie** *Pica pica*

Magpies had a poor year on Dursey in 2012. Only one pair was resident on the island and this may have attempted to breed in Ballynacallagh or Kilmichael, but no fledged juveniles were recorded. A third bird appeared on 18 March and again from 25 May to 5 June, but it was not until 28 September that a third bird put in another appearance. As usual, a few 'commuters' came across from the mainland on fine days in late autumn and flew all the way out to the last houses in Tilickafinna before turning back. These included six on 1 October, three on 15 October, five on 29 October, four on 30 October and six on 16 November. Thereafter, only the resident pair was recorded, and these birds were still present at the end of the year.

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*



Present throughout the year, with some eight to ten pairs breeding on the island. Once again, a large flock appeared in late summer and autumn, spending much of its time foraging near the Tip. High counts included 52 on 21 July, 53 on 10 August, 52 on 1 September and 62 on 24 September.

**Western Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*

The only record was of a bird which appeared on one of the chimney pots on Scott's house in Tilickafinna at 12:40 on 27 October (DS, JS). The bird stayed in and around the garden until 13:05 and then flew off high to the east.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*

One was found dead near the jetty on 17 February (DC). A party of six flew west over Kilmichael on 16 October (KG, AL); one flew west over Tilickafinna on 24 October (DS); one flew west over Kilmichael on 24 November (DC); and two were seen flying east off the island near the jetty in the early afternoon of 27 November (DS).

**Hooded Crow** *Corvus cornix*

Present throughout the year. Several pairs bred on the island, and there was regular commuting by birds from the mainland. No unusual flocks were recorded, and the highest count was only 15.

**Common Raven** *Corvus corax*

Present throughout the year. A pair nested on the cliffs in Tilickafinna and reared four young, while another pair bred somewhere near the east end of the island and reared three young. Small numbers of 'commuters' flew across from the mainland on fine days in early spring and autumn, but the only counts of more than 10 in a day were 11 on 1 October and 22 on 13 October.

**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*

Three pairs of Starlings bred on the island in 2012. No more than seven birds were recorded in January and early February, but 15-20 were present on several dates from 5 to 19 February, and a flock of 110 appeared on 11 and 12 February. Numbers were low in late February and throughout March, except on 18 March when 23 were recorded. By early April, only seven birds remained on the island. Pairs nested in the Finch house in Ballynacallagh, in the pumping station in Kilmichael Valley and in the Murphy house in Kilmichael. The first four or five fledged young were found in Kilmichael Valley on 18 May, and by 29 May, there were at least 12 juveniles on the island. There was an influx of juveniles from the mainland in the second half of June, with numbers increasing to 40 on 19<sup>th</sup> and 100 on 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, but many of these soon left, and no more than about 50 were recorded in July. A flock of 153 appeared on 9 August, but otherwise numbers remained under 50 throughout August and September. Only 20-30 birds were present on the island in the first 24 days of October, but 122 passed through on the day of the big thrush arrival on 25<sup>th</sup>, and there were 70 on 26<sup>th</sup>. From then until early December, flocks of varying sizes visited the island on fine days, while half a dozen birds were resident in Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael. High counts included 90 on 11 October, 100 on 15 October, 230 on 16 October, 164 on 29 November and 120 on 12 December. Fifteen birds were present on 25 December, but only five could be found on the last day of the year.

**Common Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*

Four birds were recorded on 1 January, but then only two were seen throughout the rest

of the month, a female in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna and a female in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael. A third bird was seen occasionally in February, but only two remained in the first nine days of March and then only one to 17 March. There were no later records in spring, and the first of the autumn was not until early October, when up to six were recorded daily from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>. Numbers increased to nine on 15<sup>th</sup> and there were 30 on 19<sup>th</sup>, followed by 10 from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup>, 21 on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 50 on 24<sup>th</sup>. There was a big arrival from the southwest on 25 October, when about 175 passed through Tilickafinna, and at least 100 were present on the island on 26<sup>th</sup>, but numbers fell rapidly to 25 on 27<sup>th</sup> and only seven on 28<sup>th</sup>. Another influx occurred on 5 November, when 42 were recorded, and there were smaller influxes of 19 on 24 November and 14 on 28 November, but otherwise no more than nine were recorded in a day in November and early December, and only three or four were present on the island at the end of the year.

#### **Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*

2012 was a very good year for Bramblings on Dursey, with records on 12 dates between 16 October and 28 November, involving at least 15 individuals. The first was a first-winter bird in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 16 October (DS). Another bird appeared in Scott's garden in the afternoon of 21 October and obviously roosted there, as it was seen again early the next morning (DS, KG, AL). A bird seen in Scott's garden in the afternoon of 23 October was probably a different individual (KG, DS). One flew east over Scott's garden at 17:20 on 24 October; three flew east through the garden between 11:00 and 11:10 on 25<sup>th</sup>; and one flew east through the garden at 10:35 on 26<sup>th</sup> (DS). Another three individuals flew east through Scott's garden at 08:25, 10:20 and 12:15 respectively on 27 October, and one spent the morning in Scott's garden on 5 November (DS). A male and a female were seen at the bird-feeders in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 14 November; a bird spent ten minutes in Scott's garden at 09:25-09:35 on 15 November, before flying off east; and a male spent five minutes in Scott's garden at 08:45-08:50 on 28 November, before flying off west (DS).

#### **European Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*

As in 2011, no Greenfinches were present on the island at the start of the year. However the first of the year appeared as early as 18 January: a male in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael. Six or seven had arrived by 11 February, and there were still only seven in early March, but numbers then increased to 11 on 17 March and 14 on 18<sup>th</sup>. Up to a dozen were recorded on many dates in April and early May. Three or four pairs nested in Ballynacallagh and Kilmichael, but a male in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna seems to have been unable to find a mate. The first fledged juvenile was seen on 20 May, and by 28 July, there were at least 18 birds on the island, mostly juveniles. Eighteen were still present on 8 August, but most of these disappeared and fewer than 10 remained on the island in late August, September and the first half of October. There was a small influx on 16 October, when 18 were recorded, but numbers dwindled to nine by the end of the month. Up to seven were recorded on many days in November, and there were nine on 14<sup>th</sup> and 12 on 16<sup>th</sup>, but only six remained in early December and only four on 25<sup>th</sup>. Three were seen on 27 December and two on 31<sup>st</sup>, but none could be found on the island on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

#### **European Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*

2012 was an unprecedented year for Goldfinches on Dursey in that small numbers of birds were recorded regularly throughout the spring and summer, suggesting that this

species is about to colonize the island. Two birds roosted in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on the night of 31 December/1 January, and there was one in this garden on 11 January and three there on 28 February. A bird was seen in Kilmichael on 17 March; there was a bird in song in Scott's garden on 28 March, and there were single birds in Kilmichael and Tilickafinna on 31 March and in Tilickafinna on 8 April. Up to three birds were seen on ten dates in May, and pairs or single birds were seen on six dates in June, on 27 and 28 July, on four dates in August, and on 2 and 14 September. Most were seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna or at Zuma in Ballynacallagh. The usual influx in autumn began with 15 on 15 September. Thereafter, small flocks were recorded almost daily until the end of November, with high counts including 25 on 26 September, 19 on 27 September, 45 on 12 October, 24 on 13 October, 35 on 15 October, 28 on 18 October, 20 on 19 October, 25 on 25 October and 15 on 16 November. At least five birds were around at the end of November and there were still five on 9 December, but these were the last of the year.

#### **Eurasian Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*

2012 was unusual for this species, as there were several records in summer, but the autumn passage was unexceptional. The first of the year were five birds flying east near Kilmichael on 28 March (FM). A pair was seen on the bird-feeders in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 9 June (DS). A flock of eight passed through Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 June; one flew west over this garden on 17 June, and two flew west on 21 June (DS). The next were not until early October, when eight were seen at the Tip on 4<sup>th</sup> (KG). Eight were seen again on 12<sup>th</sup>, and then small numbers were recorded almost daily to 29<sup>th</sup>, the only counts exceeding five being seven on 19<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 15 on 25<sup>th</sup>. Most birds were seen in the early morning flying east or west over Tilickafinna. The only records in November were of one on 11<sup>th</sup>, three on 14<sup>th</sup>, one on 16<sup>th</sup> and three on 28<sup>th</sup>, all flying over Tilickafinna.

#### **Common Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*

Linnets were not recorded on the island until the last few days March, by which time the breeding population had returned in force. The first fledged juveniles were seen in Tilickafinna on 26 May, but once again the breeding season does not appear to have been very good, as the numbers in late summer and autumn were relatively low. The highest counts were only 105 on 16 September, 125 on 2 October and 70 on 19 October. Numbers declined rapidly in late October to 30 on 25<sup>th</sup>, eight on 29<sup>th</sup> and only two on 30<sup>th</sup>. However, a few birds reappeared on fine days in November: four on 6<sup>th</sup>, single birds on 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, a flock of 11 on 17<sup>th</sup> and a single bird on 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*

A party of three flew west low over Scott's garden in Tilickafinna at 11:20 on 23 November (DS). This was the first record of Twite on Dursey Island since the wintering flock of 14 in early 2010.

#### **Lesser Redpoll** *Carduelis (flammea) cabaret*

After a fairly good year for this species on Dursey in 2011, 2012 was exceptional, with the species breeding successfully on the island for the first time since coverage began in spring and summer in 1993. The first of the year were four birds in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM). A single bird was seen in Scott's garden on 18, 19 and 20 May and again on 17 June, and then a pair appeared 20 June. These birds remained in the garden until at least 4 July, and were seen feeding at least one recently fledged

juvenile on 30 June, when there was also an adult in Kilmichael Valley (DS, JS). An adult and four juveniles were seen at The Waters on 4 August (KF); there was a bird in Tilickafinna on 8 August (DC), and one was seen on 15 September, although this latter could have been an early autumn migrant. Lesser Redpolls were recorded in very small numbers almost daily from 3 to 27 October, the only counts in excess of three being eight on 15<sup>th</sup>, four on 19<sup>th</sup>, six on 22<sup>nd</sup>, four on 23<sup>rd</sup> and five on 27<sup>th</sup>. Most were seen flying east or west over Tilickafinna. The only records in November were of one flying west over Tilickafinna on 5<sup>th</sup>, one flying east over Tilickafinna on 8<sup>th</sup>, and one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*

2012 was the best year since records began for Common Crossbills on Dursey Island, with sightings on six dates between 14 October and 11 November, involving 25 individuals. The first were five immature birds that arrived in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna from the east at 09:00 on 14 October (DS, JS). The birds fed in a row of conifers for a few minutes and then disappeared. One of these birds was a well-marked individual of the extremely rare variant *rubrifasciata* which has two white wing bars. A flock of nine flew east high over Tilickafinna at 09:15 on 23 October (DS); an adult male spent ten minutes in the conifers in Scott's garden at 09:20-09:40 while another bird flew east high overhead on 24 October; a single bird flew east over Tilickafinna at 09:00 and a party of five circled over Scott's garden before flying off to the east at 11:40 on 25 October; and another adult male spent five minutes in Scott's garden at 17:25-17:30 on 26 October before flying off high to the east (DS). Finally, on 11 November, two adult males arrived in Scott's garden at 08:25 and foraged in the conifers for an hour and a half before flying off to the east (DS).

**Common Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

A bird was reported on the island by Geoff Hunt on 6 October, but no further details are available.

**Eurasian Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

A male and a female were seen in and around Cooke's garden in Kilmichael in the early afternoon of 18 January (DS), and a male was seen in Stapleton's garden in Kilmichael on 11 February (KF). These were the sixth and seventh records of Bullfinch on Dursey Island, the first being as recently as October 2005.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** *Dendroica coronata*

An immature bird was found by KG in Kilmichael Valley in the morning of 3 October and seen by AL that afternoon. It was seen again in the same area the next day (KG, AL) and by Geoff Hunt on 6 October. The form concerned was nominate *coronata*, which is now often split off from the western form *auduboni* as a separate species, Myrtle Warbler. This was the first record of a Yellow-rumped Warbler on Dursey Island and only the 14<sup>th</sup> Irish record.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*

2012 was another poor for this species with only three records. Two were seen on 1 October; one on the Western Hill and one on the North Cliffs (KG). Another bird was seen on the Western Hill on 5 October (KG, AL), and there was also one there on 18 October (KG, AL).

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Like 2011, 2012 was a good year for this species, with records on 22 dates between 1

October and 24 November, although the highest single-day count was only four. The first was a bird on the track east of Tilickafinna from 1 to 5 October (KG, AL). A bird was seen at the Tip on 5 and 7 October, and there was a male on the Western Hill on 8 October (KG, AL). Two birds were seen on the Western Hill on 11 October (KG, AL) and there were two males on the hill above Tilickafinna on 12 October (DS). There was another bird at the Tip and a male above the Main Bog on 13<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL); a bird flew west over Tilickafinna on 14<sup>th</sup> (DS); and there was still one at the Tip on 15<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL). A male was seen near Bernie's Gully in Tilickafinna on 17<sup>th</sup>, and there were four birds on the south slope of the Western Hill on 18<sup>th</sup> (KG, AL). The male near Bernie's Gully was seen again on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>; there was another bird in Tilickafinna on 19<sup>th</sup>, and another bird on the north slope on 20<sup>th</sup> (CF, KG, AL, DS). Unusually, a bird was seen near the east end of the island on 22 October (Larry Toal). A bird that flew in from the east and landed briefly on one of the chimney pots on Scott's house in Tilickafinna on 1 November was also unusual (DS). The only other records relate to birds flying over Tilickafinna: one flew west on 5 November; one flew east on 11 November; one flew west on 16 November; and one flew east on 24 November (DS). It seems likely that at least 15 birds, and possibly as many as 20, were involved in this string of records.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Once again, it seems probable that Reed Buntings were present on Dursey Island throughout the year, although there were very few records in July and August and none in September. Two males and two females were seen on many dates in January and early February, and five birds were recorded on several occasions between 12 February and 5 March. However, probably only one pair remained on the island after mid-March. This pair commonly fed in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael and bred in John Michael's Bog, where the male was heard in song on several occasions and seen carrying food on 6 June. The birds seem to have been unsuccessful, as there were only four records of single birds between late June and early October. There was a small influx in mid-October, with two birds appearing in Tilickafinna on 14<sup>th</sup>, followed by three on 15<sup>th</sup> and five on 23<sup>rd</sup>, two of which remained until 29<sup>th</sup>. There were also two birds in Kilmichael on 19<sup>th</sup> and a bird in East Fields on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The only records in November were of single birds in Tilickafinna on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, but one was found in Kilmichael on 9 December, and there were two in Kilmichael and one in Ballynacallagh on the last day of the year.

## MAMMALS

### **Pygmy Shrew** *Sorex minutus*

Two were heard near Gerald's Pond in Kilmichael on 31 March (KF); one was found dead in Kilmichael on 19 May (Christian Kostner); and two were found dead on the track on 20 May (DC).

### **Common Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

The only records of bats on Dursey Island in 2012 came from Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, where a single Common Pipistrelle was seen emerging from under the eaves of the house at dusk on 22 occasions between 18 January and 19 November (DS, JS). On 23 October, the bat emerged at 18:50 hrs and was joined by a second bat, presumably this species, at 19:05, but this was the only occasion on which two bats were seen together. The latest time of emergence was 22:31 on 21 and 23 June; the earliest times were 17:13 on 18 January and 17:15 on 19 November.

### **Brown Rat** *Rattus norvegicus*

Brown Rats did well on Dursey Island in 2012, and were recorded on 21 occasions between 7 May and 3 November. One or two individuals were recorded on 11 occasions in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna, and single individuals were recorded in Kilmichael on eight occasions. The only other records were of singletons on the High Cliffs on 29 June and in Ballynacallagh on 20 July.

### **Common Otter** *Lutra lutra*

The only record was of one found sheltering in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 25 December (DC).

### **Grey Seal** *Halichoerus grypus*

2012 was a very poor year for Grey Seals around Dursey Island. No more than three were recorded in a day, and there were no sightings between 21 May and 13 September. Sadly, some local fishermen continue to shoot seals on the island. The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Days with sightings	6	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	5	4	3
Maximum count	2	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	3	2	2	1

### **Common Dolphin** *Delphinus delphis*

2012 was an average year for this species off Dursey Island, with records on 12 dates, mostly in autumn but with one unusually early record in January. Six of the records were of schools moving west or east off Tilickafinna, and the remainder were of schools off the Tip. Three unidentified dolphins off the Tip on 15 September may have been this species.

Date	Total	Locality	Observers
29 Jan	25	Moving north far out beyond the Calf at 11:05-11:10	DS, JS
21 Jul	60	Off the north coast of the island, north of Kilmichael	DC

01 Sep	3	Off the Tip	DC, PR
14 Oct	20	Moving east close inshore off Tilickafinna at 08:20-08:25; feeding and returning west further out at 09:50.	DS, JS
19 Oct	40	Feeding with Gannets off Tilickafinna at 12:00-12:40 and then moving off to west. 10 moving west off Tilickafinna at 18:20-18:45 were possibly part of the same group.	DS, JS, KG, AL
25 Oct	5	Off the Tip in the early afternoon	KG, AL
26 Oct	20	Off the Tip at 12:00-13:00	KG, AL
27 Oct	10	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 12:00-12:30	DS, JS
30 Oct	20	Feeding and moving west off Tilickafinna at 09:15-09:20	DS
03 Nov	6	Feeding off the Tip at 10:45	PR
16 Nov	6	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 08:10	DS
25 Nov	12	Moving west off Tilickafinna at 10:20	DS, JS

**Bottle-nosed Dolphin** *Tursiops truncatus*

The only sighting was of a single individual in the Sound in the afternoon of 1 June (DC).

**Risso's Dolphin** *Grampus griseus*

2012 was another average year for this species, with a total of seven sightings between 18 March and 11 November. Four of the sightings related to a group of 10-12 individuals of various sizes, possibly the same individuals in all cases.

Date	Total	Locality	Observers
18 Mar	3	Off southwest coast near the Tip	DC
16 May	12	Moving east close inshore off Tilickafinna at 13:15; several small individuals leaping	DS, JS
20 May	2	Close inshore off Tilickafinna at 10:05; some leaping	DS
09 Aug	3	Off southwest coast near the Tip	DC
13 Oct	12	Moving east close inshore off Tilickafinna at 09:10-09:20; several small individuals	DS, JS
05 Nov	12	Moving east close inshore off Tilickafinna at 13:45, and returning west at 14:00-14:45; several small individuals	DS, JS
11 Nov	10	Moving north close inshore off the Tip from 10:45; several small individuals	JS

**Harbour Porpoise *Phocaena phoceana***

Apparently present around the island throughout the year, but numbers were much lower than they have been in recent years. There were very few records in late spring and early summer and, unusually, there were no large gatherings in the autumn, the highest count being only 11 on 20 October. Most commonly encountered off the Tip and northwest coast, but also seen on a number of occasions below Tilickafinna and in the Sound. The monthly distribution of records was as follows:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Days with sightings	7	2	3	0	1	3	0	2	6	10	7	2
Maximum count	6	3	1	0	1	2	0	6	10	11	6	2

**Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata***

2012 was a poor year for this species off Dursey Island, with only seven sightings, all between 9 June and 24 November. One of the sightings related to a large dead individual floating in the water close inshore off Tilickafinna on 2 November. On 10 June, a large individual was watched breaching six times far out to the south of Tilickafinna in the early afternoon.

Date	Total	Locality	Observers
09 Jun	1	Moving west fairly close inshore off Tilickafinna at 12:00	DS
10 Jun	1	Breaching six times far out to south of Tilickafinna at 12:00	DS, JS
19 Oct	1	Moving east far out off Tilickafinna at 12:45 and moving back west close inshore at 14:25	DS
23 Oct	2	With feeding frenzy of sea-birds off the Tip at 13:00	KG, AL
02 Nov	1	Large dead individual drifting east close inshore off Tilickafinna at 16:40-16:50	DS, JS
03 Nov	1	Feeding fairly far out off Tilickafinna at 09:45	DS
24 Nov	1	With feeding frenzy far out off Tilickafinna at 12:40-13:00	DC

\*\*\*\*\*

**REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS**

**Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara***

2012 was a rather poor year with only four records: one (lacking most of its tail) in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM); three by the track on the High Cliffs



on 6 May (KF); one on Lakdar Road west of The Waters on 6 June (DC); and one in Ballynacallagh on 30 August (DC).

**Common Frog** *Rana temporaria*

Fresh frog spawn was found in Gerald's Pond below Kilmichael on 4 February (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*

After several good years, 2012 was rather poor, with only four records. One was seen feeding in the Sound near the Cable Car on 29 March (FM), and there were six individuals off the south coast of the island between Illanebeg and the Tip on 31 March (KF). Two were seen in the Sound on 4 May (DC), and one was seen off the south coast near the Holy Well (Ballynacallagh) on 5 May (KF).

\*\*\*\*\*

## BUTTERFLIES

### **Green-veined White** *Pieris napi*

The first of the season was unusually early: one in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM). This was followed by two on 7 April, then up to 10 on many dates to the 17 June and singletons on 29 and 30 June. Small numbers were recorded on several dates in August and early September, the maximum count being 14 on 8 August. Three on 15 September were the last except for an unusually late and apparently fresh individual in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 11 October (DS). As usual, most individuals were recorded in the Kilmichael area and at The Waters.

### **Green Hairstreak** *Callophrys rubi*

2012 was a reasonably good year for this species on Dursey. Three on 5 May were the first of the season; then recorded commonly until the end of June, with high counts of 29 on 2 June, 32 on 6 June, 19 on 28 June and 20 on 29 June. Five on 30 June were the last. As usual, much the largest colony was on the rough hillside between The Waters and the High Cliffs.

### **Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas*

There was only one record of this species on Dursey in 2012: two individuals in Kilmichael on 20 May (DC).

### **Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus*

Although rather late in making an appearance, the first brood appears to have done fairly well, but the second brood was poor. The first of the season were single individuals on 19 and 25 May. The species was fairly common in early June, with at least 20 on 3<sup>rd</sup>, 20 on 5<sup>th</sup> and 18 on 6<sup>th</sup>, but the only records thereafter were of two on 9<sup>th</sup> and one on 19<sup>th</sup>. The only records relating to the second brood were of three individuals on 2 September and three on 15 September, but coverage was poor in August and September.

### **Holly Blue** *Celastrina argiolus*

One was seen flying up from the south cliffs and across the fields west of O'Leary's house in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM). A small colony of Holly Blues was found in Ivy Gully in Tilickafinna in April 2006, but this is the first record of the species on the island since then.

### **Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta*

2012 was another rather poor year for this immigrant, with only one sizeable influx in early June and three or four much smaller arrivals. The first of the year was a very tatty individual in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 1 March (DS). The first arrival of migrants occurred in late May, with five appearing on 25<sup>th</sup>. Singletons were recorded on 26 and 28 May and 1 June, and then there was a marked influx on 3 June, when 25 were recorded, mostly in the fields below Kilmichael and Tilickafinna. Twenty-two were still present on 5<sup>th</sup> and at least 20 on 6<sup>th</sup>, but numbers then dwindled rapidly to five on 9<sup>th</sup> and three on 11<sup>th</sup>. One or two were then recorded on nine dates to the end of the month. Coverage in July, August and September was poor, and the only records were of singletons on 14 July and 8 August, four on 30 August, two on 31 August and 1 September, and singletons on 14, 15, 27 and 28 September. Up to three were found on six dates between 8 and 22 October, and then there was a small influx on 23<sup>rd</sup>, when 10 were recorded. Numbers dwindled to six on 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, four on 29<sup>th</sup> and

two on 30<sup>th</sup>. The only other record was of a very late individual on the High Cliffs on 28 November (DS) – the last butterfly of the year.

**Painted Lady** *Cynthia cardui*

2012 was yet another very poor year for this species on Dursey, with only one small influx in early June and scarcely any in summer and autumn. Fourteen appeared on 3 June, mostly in the fields below Kilmichael, but numbers rapidly dwindled to three on 5<sup>th</sup>, two on 6<sup>th</sup> and one on 9<sup>th</sup> (DC, DS). The only other records were of singletons on 28 July (DC), 15 September (KF) and 3 October (KG).

**Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae*

One was seen in Kilmichael on 28 March (FM), but the next was not until the second half of September, when there was a small influx involving at least six on 15<sup>th</sup>, two on 26<sup>th</sup>, three on 27<sup>th</sup> and one on 28<sup>th</sup>. The only other record was of one in Kilmichael on 27 October (KG, AL).

**Peacock** *Inachis io*

2012 was another very poor year for this species on Dursey, with only one record: a single individual in Kilmichael on 31 August (DC).

**Dark Green Fritillary** *Argynnis aglaja*

The only record of Dark Green Fritillaries on Dursey in 2012 was of two individuals at The Waters on 4 August (KF). However, coverage during the main flying season (July and first half of August) was very poor.

**Wall Brown** *Lasiomata megera*

2012 was a very poor year for this species on Dursey, with both broods faring badly. One in East Fields on 5 May was the first of the season (KF). Small numbers were then recorded on nine dates to 6 June, but the highest count was only seven on 20 May. The first record of the second brood was of nine individuals on 10 August, but thereafter only one to four were recorded on six dates to 15 September.

**Grayling** *Hipparchia semele*

Up to eight individuals were recorded on seven dates between 28 July and 15 September (DC, KF).

**Meadow Brown** *Maniola jurtina*

2012 was another poor year for this species on Dursey. There were no records in late June and early July, and there was almost no coverage in the middle two weeks of July. Thus the first of the season was not until 20 July, when five were recorded. Thereafter, recorded commonly until 16 September, but the only counts to exceed 20 were of 41 on 4 August and 27 on 15 September.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MOTHS

**Six-spot Burnet** *Zygaena filipendulae*

Recorded on six dates between 28 July and 15 September, mostly in very small numbers, but 51 were counted at The Waters on 4 August (KF).

**Fox Moth** *Macrothylacia rubi*

A male flew through Scott's garden in the evening of 23 May; at least 10 males flew

through this garden on 25 May, and there was one there on 6 June (DS).

**Emperor** *Pavonia pavonia*

One was found by the track up to the Martello Tower on 6 May (KF).

**Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum*

2012 was a very poor year for this species, with only three records: an unusually early individual was seen in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 28 March (FM); there was one in Cooke's garden in Kilmichael on 2 June (DC), and one was seen on the High Cliffs on 14 July (DC).

**Silver Y** *Autographa gamma*

2012 was yet another poor year for this species on Dursey, with no significant influxes. The first of the year were seven on 3 June, mostly in the fields below Kilmichael. Five were still present on 5<sup>th</sup> and three on 6<sup>th</sup>. Singletons were recorded on 28 and 30 June. One was found on 20 July, and there were two on 15 September. Five appeared in Tilickafinna on 23 October, and there were two there on 25 October. A late individual was present in Scott's garden in Tilickafinna on 5 November (DS).

No attempt was made at light-trapping this year. The only nocturnal moth of note was a Small Fan-footed Wave *Idaea biselata* found in Zuma garden in Ballynacallagh on 3 August (KF).

\*\*\*\*\*

**DRAGONFLIES**

No dragonflies were recorded on the island during the year.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Table 1: Seatrack sea-watches from Dursey Tip, August – November 2012**

Date	04/08	01/09	15/09	20/10	03/11
Time	07:15-10:15	08:00-10:00	08:00-11:00	09:00-12:00	08:30-11:30
Wind	NW - NNW	NE	W	SSW	WSW
Force	4-5	4-5	3	4>5	5>7
Observers	KF	DC, PR	KF, TM	CF, KF, PR, DS	PR, DS, JS
Great Northern Diver					2
Northern Fulmar	++	++	2	54	942
Sooty Shearwater	1	2	184	1	4
Manx Shearwater	1,039	164	392		2
Storm Petrel	4			1	

Northern Gannet	++	++	++	++	++
Common Scoter			4	1	2
Small wader sp.			3		
Pomarine Skua		1		1	
Arctic Skua		1	1		
Great Skua				1	1
Unidentified skua	1				
Black-headed Gull				1	
Common Gull				8	
Kittiwake	8	27	7	416	465
Sandwich Tern	4				
Unidentified tern			2		
Razorbill/Guillemot	19	31	45	919	647
Atlantic Puffin				2	