

Calf of Man Bird Observatory



Annual Report **2015**

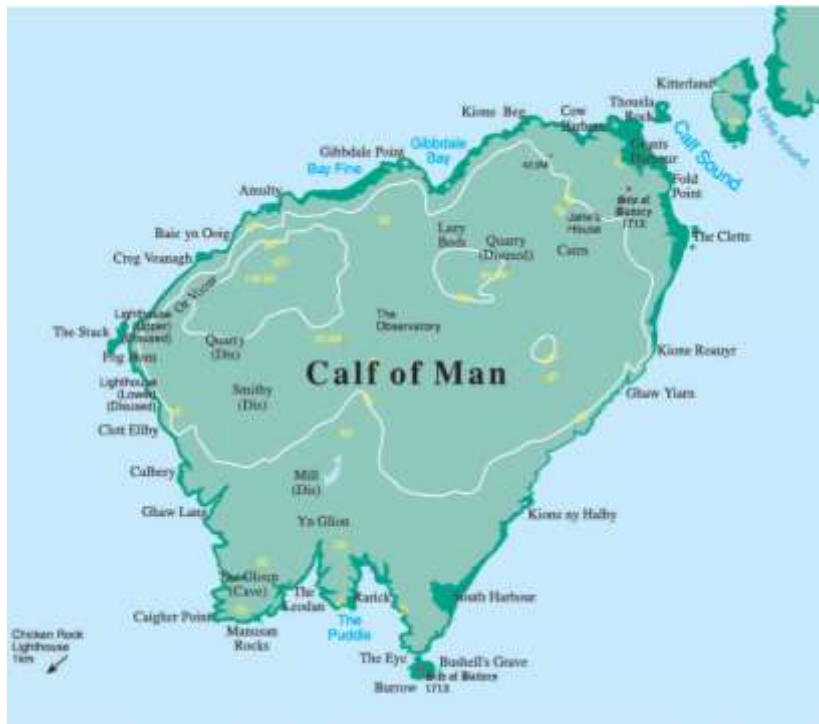


Manx National Heritage
Eiraght Ashoonagh Vannin

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Map of the Calf of Man



The Calf of Man Bird Observatory

The Calf of Man is a rocky islet extending to approximately 616 acres and it is situated half a mile off the south-west coast of the Isle of Man in the middle of the Irish Sea. The Calf is owned and administered by Manx National Heritage (MNH) and it is run as a Bird Observatory and Nature Reserve. The island is an ideal place to study many aspects of bird life, with around 33 species breeding annually, and it is located on one of western Britain's major migration routes. Breeding seabirds include Manx Shearwater, Fulmar, Razorbill and Shag and colonies of the three larger *Larus* gull species. You can also see a variety of species around the island such as Peregrine, Hen Harrier, Chough, Raven, as well as other rare and unexpected migrants.

Since 1959 organised ornithological work has been carried out on the Calf of Man from spring to autumn each year by wardens. As an accredited Bird Observatory since 1962, the Observatory meets British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) requirements. Currently, MNH contracts Manx Wildlife Trust to employ an Ornithological Warden and an Estate Warden to provide a seasonal presence on the Calf from March to November. Bird ringing is an integral part of the Observatory's work and ringing demonstrations are often held for the public.

Between 1959 and 2015, 246,733 birds (159 species) have been ringed on the island. Trapping is carried out using a variety of conventional traps including Heligoland and Crow Traps and mist nets.

Visitor Information

The Estate Warden and Ornithological Warden are in charge of the day to day running of the islet and visitors must at all times follow their advice and instructions.

The Calf of Man is open to the public daily. The Manx Museum and National Trust and its Bye-Laws, require that certain conditions **MUST** be observed at all times. These regulations are made in the best interests of preserving those aspects of the Calf of Man that we all treasure and enjoy.

PLEASE HELP US TO MAINTAIN THIS BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT BY OBSERVING THE FOLLOWING:

- There must be no interference with bird life or other wildlife.
- Climbing tackle and climbing is strictly prohibited.
- Dogs are not permitted.
- No camping and lighting of fires.
- Vessels must not be left unattended at any of the harbours at any time to ensure that the Calf visitor/supply boats have access to the harbours at all times.
- No fishing from 1st April to 31st July.
- Visitors must leave no litter.
- From May to July visitors must keep to paths and tracks and keep out of enclosed fields.
- Manx National Heritage expects the behaviour of visiting parties to be of a high standard. In the event of misbehaviour by any group, individual, or lack of adequate control by the adult in charge of children, the wardens have the authority to terminate the visit and ask the individual/ group to leave the islet at their own expense.
- Manx National Heritage operates a no smoking policy at all of its properties.

Visitor accommodation is available in the Observatory during the summer season – normally, from May to mid-September. The accommodation consists of self-catering hostel style accommodation for up to 8 people with a visitor kitchen, lounge and log burner. Intending over-night visitors must pre-book accommodation by contacting the Calf Bookings Officer, Manx National Heritage, Manx Museum, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3LY Tel: 01624 648015. During the summer season, private operators run visits to the Calf from Port St Mary. The vessels operate depending on weather conditions and demand. For more information, please contact:

- Steve Clague – Port St Mary Boat Excursions (Scraayl) Tel: (07624) 490615
- Chris Burton & Jason Fleming – Shona Boat Trips
email: shonaboattrips@manx.net
Tel: (07624) 322765 or (07624) 480682
- Caroline & Phil Roriston – Isle of Man & Calf Boat Trips (Vagabond)
Tel: 07624 490488 or 07624 466522

Calf of Man Bird Observatory

Annual Report 2015

Ornithological Warden – Judit Mateos

Estate Warden – Harry Savage

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ORNITHOLOGICAL WARDEN'S REPORT

This year the season started on the 18th of March, when the Estate Warden, Harry Savage, and I landed on the Calf on what I later learned to be exceptionally calm waters. We were accompanied by Duncan Bridges, from Manx Wildlife Trust, Kate Hawkins, from Manx National Heritage, and Kevin Scott, ringer-in-charge, who helped settle us in. Ringing and observations started immediately and we slowly adjusted to what was to be our new life for the next 8 months.

After a failed attempt to leave the Calf on 11th November, and a second on 18th, the Observatory finally closed down on 20th November, and with sorrow we had to wave goodbye to the island that had been our home for the last few months.

The weather was in general mild, with constant moderate winds in spring and occasional storms at the end of March and beginning of May; this resulted in some species breeding earlier than previous years and a good migration of Willow Warblers. May, however, was particularly wet and affected the success of breeding birds, especially gulls. After storms at the beginning of June, we experienced a long dry and hot spell, turning to a relatively wet summer. The Meadow Pipit and Crow traps that worked so well catching fledglings in previous years, with fresh water bait, were of no use in 2015. In September, we enjoyed excellent weather, with lots of sun and very light winds which brought us good migration until autumn proper arrived in the second half of October. We ended the season with increasing winds and hardly any sun, very typical autumn weather at the Calf, accompanied by big flocks of Thrushes. Wind in this period was predominantly southerly, resulting in seabird migration being scarce and giving lower numbers compared with other years.

Throughout the year, the Observatory continued its participation in several recording programmes and sharing data with different parties. Besides the recording of daily observations and area coverage surveys carried out throughout the season, ringing was undertaken in every possible morning during spring and autumn migration at the Observatory garden. After mid-September, the ringing station at the Withy was run simultaneously. In autumn, seawatching took place in north-westerly winds from the beginning of September and Hen Harrier winter roost surveys took place in September and October, contributing to the National Hen Harrier programme.

During the summer months, passerine trapping only took place with the Meadow Pipit trap and two Crow traps, as well as targeting territorial Wheatears and Rock Pipits with spring traps. During the breeding season, 56 nests of 14 species were monitored, and whenever possible, fledglings and parents were ringed. Ringing also took place in gull and Shag colonies with the result of 40 Shag, 14 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 189 Herring Gulls, 41 Great Black-backed Gulls and 1 Razorbill pulli ringed. Colour-ring projects for gulls, Rock Pipit, Wheatear and Chough were continued, whilst surveys of seabird colonies took place following the guidelines of the Seabird Monitoring Handbook for Britain and Ireland. Breeding Choughs were monitored in line with the national Chough survey programme, whilst most efforts during the summer months were devoted to monitoring Manx Shearwater colonies, with an attempt to standardize the monitoring methodology for the Calf (see separate report). Night-time ringing efforts, either with mist nets or trapping by hand, resulted in 137 Manx Shearwaters and 108 Storm Petrels being processed.

All this work would not have been accomplished without the help and support of many devoted people, with volunteers contributing to the Manx Shearwater monitoring, bird observations (a list of

contributors can be found at the end of the report), bird ringing and maintenance of the Observatory. Two of them require a special mention: Luis Carretero, who not only came to visit me from SPAIN but spent all his holidays from his normal work putting his hand down Manxies' burrows and being bitten (that's the type of holiday we all dream about!) and Richard Cope, who brought us all the expertise and enthusiasm of an ex-warden in love with the island. Many thanks to Juan Clague and Anne Kaye, who connected us to the outside world and brought us weekly boats full of groceries! Thanks also to Duncan Bridges, Shaun Murphy, Kate Hawkins and Kevin Scott for their support and guidance. Several guests and volunteers supplied us with the most appreciated item: chocolate! And finally, a big thank you, to the other Calf inhabitant this year, Harry Savage.

Judit Mateos

ESTATE WARDEN'S REPORT

On the Estate side, after a couple of months of reliance on the tractor for all Calf transport, morale was boosted by the arrival of a new ATV (All Terrain Vehicle). After much consideration of the merits of alternative vehicles, a Polaris Ranger was finally squeezed on the boat *Scrayll* in June and shipped over to the Calf. Funding for the new acquisition was gratefully received from the Friends of Manx National Heritage.



Polaris Ranger all-terrain vehicle on the boat Scrayll

Another significant milestone during the year was the replacement of the channel marker into South Harbour. A casualty of the January 2013 storms, the absence of the marker, allied with some large projecting stones in the bottom of the harbour, had made navigation into this harbour tricky in the intervening period. Manx National Heritage staff and volunteers, working day and night between tides, managed to partially reinstate the marker with some ingenious use of flotation devices courtesy of Geoff Mitchell. The final reinstatement of the marker remains a work in progress.

An important continuing element of the work programme was the bait monitoring in connection with the Manx Shearwater Recovery Project. After detecting an unwelcome rodent visitor at Cow Harbour last autumn, we had decided to leave the contingency grid in place over winter for monitoring purposes. The one visit to the Calf we managed during the winter period was in early February, when a small group checked as many bait points as possible. No signs of 'longtails' were found on that visit. Although we did not have time to get around the whole island grid, we managed to check the coastal areas and most of the central bait points.

All seemed to be going well until early July, when a tip-off from an overnight guest prompted Harry to set up a camera trap in the Observatory garden, resulting in the disappointing image of a live 'longtail' working its way round to the compost bin. The animal, a full-grown male, was caught in a kill trap shortly afterwards.



Camera trap image of live 'longtail' in the Observatory garden

During the year MNH, in conjunction with the project partners, reviewed the Biosecurity Plan with the aim of providing a robust but realistic strategy for minimising the risk of rat incursions. This included concentrating the monitoring points in the coastal areas (especially on the north east coast facing the Sound), along walls and around buildings, and standing down the previous bait points in open areas where rat runs are less likely to be.

Volunteers meanwhile continued with the considerable on-going task of reinstating the Sea Field drystone wall, while good in-roads were made into pond clearance at the Withy. Other routine maintenance tackled included giving the front of the Observatory a well-deserved lick of paint.

Shaun Murphy/Kate Hawkins

MONTHLY SUMMARIES

March

This year the season started on the 18th, with wonderful weather and a garden full of Goldcrest. Thanks to the efforts of Kevin Scott setting nets up, ringing could start the next morning, when a total of 98 Goldcrest were ringed. Other interesting birds caught were two Starlings and singles of Lesser Redpoll, Dunnock, Sparrowhawk, Fieldfare and a beautiful Reed Bunting first ringed on the Calf in 2009.

In terms of observations, a group of 15 Turnstones was seen at Cow Harbour on the 23rd, a Short-eared Owl was seen on the 20th and a Sand Martin on the 21st – first sign of spring?. On the 18th, a Blue Tit and two Skylarks were heard. Auks and gulls were regularly recorded with a Common Guillemot identified on the 24th and six Black Guillemots seen on the 28th. Peak counts for gulls were recorded on the 24th with 480 Herring Gull, 81 Lesser Black-backed Gull and 85 Great Black-backed Gull.

Towards the end of the month, we experienced proper Calf winds and bird trapping and observations decreased. However, following an overnight storm, a Starling was found in the office at 4am one morning – although we never discovered how it got in.

Total number of species: 48

April

April brought us strong winds from all directions, so there were not many suitable ringing mornings. However, migration continued and a wave of migratory Goldcrest gave way to Willow Warblers with 94 individuals ringed in a single morning on the 7th, and 109 on the 23rd. In total, 473 Willow Warblers were ringed this April.

Together with the “Willies”, the first Barn Swallow was seen on the 4th and the first Blackcap on the 9th, and they accompanied us to the end of the month in variable numbers. Sand Martins were counted occasionally and House Martins were recorded on the 20th, 22nd and 26th. On the 10th, a Grasshopper Warbler was ringed and a male Redstart was seen at the Withy on the 18th, coinciding with a Wheatear ringed in the morning. The first Sedge Warbler, Whitethroat and Redstart to be ringed this year were caught on the 19th and continued being recorded and ringed every now and then.

While some new species were arriving, others stayed with us a bit longer. Three Lesser Redpolls were ringed on the 7th, three more on the 16th and one was heard on the 18th. A Brambling arrived with a group of Goldfinches on the 5th and the same individual was recaptured on the 6th.

Some waders were seen this month with a group of 21 Turnstone recorded on 21st at Cow Harbour, six Curlews on the 6th and two Shelducks on 16th. The Shelducks were seen previously on the 5th at the Puddle and kept appearing occasionally. Two Mallard eggs were found predated on 21st at the Withy. A Jack Snipe was flushed from the dub on the 4th and 21st, and another (or the same one) from the Withy on the 10th. Oystercatchers were regular, with a peak count of 24 on the 22nd.

In terms of “unusual” sightings, a Magpie was seen at the Observatory on the 20th & 23rd. On the 18th a Collared Dove stayed

around the garden all morning but avoided all nets, traps and bait and was seen again on the 19th. A single Woodpigeon was recorded on the 2nd, 4th, 18th & 23rd - and may have been the same individual staying at the Calf all month. A Skylark was singing in the Sea Field on the 5th when a male Pheasant surprised us in the Front Field and was recorded almost continuously afterwards until the 23rd.

A flock of 25 Starlings was recorded in the garden on the 4th and two Starlings were seen on the 7th, but none afterwards. The last Fieldfares recorded this April were a group of seven on the 3rd, the last Song Thrush on the 5th and the last Redwing also on the 5th. No Reed Buntings were heard after the 13th.

Gulls were seen in big numbers in April with a group of 509 Herring Gulls sheltering in a valley during a particularly windy day, although the highest count of this species was 603 on the 22nd. The highest count of Great Black-backed Gulls was 91 on the 28th, and the highest for Lesser Black-backed Gulls was 76 on the 22nd. Noteworthy Auk numbers included a group of 100 Razorbills on the 5th, 17 Guillemots on the 17th and a group of 13 Black Guillemots on the 13th. Gannets were seen on the west coast of the Island whilst Cormorants were in low numbers but with regular sightings.

Total number of species: 64

May

May was characterized by wind and some fairly wet days which resulted in few ringing mornings and relatively few observations. Migration gave way to breeding and birds were seen busying around with nesting material or worms.

Herring Gull nests were detected at the beginning of the month and the first chicks were seen hatching on the 18th, earlier than in 2014. Rock Pipits and Wheatears were also seen carrying material on that

day. On the 3rd, a family of Raven was seen at the lighthouses with three fledglings. The first Eider nest was found on the 9th, with a further 23 active nests located and several other predated nests found during this month, with hatching starting around the 30th. A new Eider colony was identified at Kione Beg and would be worth checking in future years. Also on the 9th, the first Great Black-backed nests were found, which hatched on the 30th and 31st. A Cough survey revealed good numbers of possibly occupied breeding sites, including most of the historical ones. The two being monitored, at the Silo and Lower Lighthouse, hatched around the 10th and were later colour-ringed. On the 16th, a Shelduck nest was found at Kione ny Halby and is the first confirmed record of this species breeding in the Calf of Man; although last year they attempted on Kitterland but unfortunately both breeding attempts failed. Several Manx Shearwater burrows were showing signs of occupancy and they were checked on the 16th, 17th and 18th, with the result of one ringed adult.

This year again, a Hooded Crow nest was found and ringed at Cow Harbour. Two Oystercatcher nests were found and monitored during the month. While some passerine fledglings were ringed towards the end of the month including Blackbird, Goldfinch, Stonechat; others still carrying nesting material included Meadow Pipit and Linnet. Similarly, a Chiffchaff was recorded singing almost daily at the Observatory garden towards the end of the month.

The first Cuckoo and Spotted Flycatcher was seen on the 9th and the latter were regularly seen afterwards, whilst another Cuckoo was heard in the garden on 23rd & 24th but avoided all nets. Two Garden Warblers were caught on 13th May and recorded again on the 14th. Female Whinchats were recorded on the 13th, 14th and 21st, a single record each time. House and Sand Martins were regular in small numbers, as were Sedge Warblers, whilst Blackcap numbers were low compared to April, with the last one recorded on 23rd. May had just two records of Reed Buntings with singles on the 16th & 18th.

Despite the low netting effort this month due to winds, a couple of interesting controls were caught with a French Sedge Warbler caught on the 8th and a Blackcap from Denmark on the 13th! The last Goldcrest of spring was ringed on the 31st and recaptured next day.

May also saw the first Kittiwakes around the island, with records on the 3rd, 9th, 14th, 16th and 28th. Pigeons were scarce but regular and on 5th May a group of 15 unidentified doves were chased after by three Peregrines. A House Sparrow was caught in the mist nets on the 8th. Skylarks were recorded on the 1st, 5th, 13th and 23rd, a single individual each time. On the 9th, two Curlews were seen at the Sound, three more on the 14th, and two on the 31st. A group of three Starlings were feeding near the Meadow Pipit trap during the evening of the 14th but were cautious enough not to go in. A single Turnstone was seen at Cow Harbour on the 15th. Finally, Chough groups were occasionally recorded on the Calf and sometimes seen crossing the Sound. The first of these groups was recorded on the 12th, with eight individuals, and the larger number on the 21st with 30 individuals.

Peak counts of common species this month were 564 Herring Gulls and 83 Eiders on the 7th, 100 Lesser Black-backed Gulls on the 9th, 85 Wheatears, 120 Swallows and 132 Great Black-backed Gulls on the 13th and 185 Meadow Pipits on the 23rd.

Total number of species: 71

June

June started with gales and rain which decimated the newly born gulls, then turned into proper spring weather and ended up with changeable windy and foggy days.

Breeding was at its best and a number of pulli were ringed including totals of 183 Herring Gull (100 of which were colour-ringed), 33 Great

Black-backed Gulls, 14 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 23 Shags. The survey of Manx Shearwater breeding colonies took most of the effort but night netting on calm and dark nights brought us 36 Shearwaters (3 of them controls) and 13 Storm Petrels in the nets. On the second half of the month, Chough families started to fledge and breeding could be confirmed successfully at two of the sites. The biggest group of non-breeding Choughs was seen on the 6th at Gibdale and contained 38 individuals (another group was seen on the 2nd in the Central Glen with 21 individuals).

The first Wheatear fledglings were seen on the 7th, on the 21st a brood of Mallards were seen at the Withy but were never re-sighted, presumably predated by gulls. Eider chicks were seen regularly and on the 8th a Great Black-backed Gull was seen taking an Eider chick at South Harbour. The first Chough fledgling was seen on the 17th from the Silo pair, and on the 21st there were three fledglings present. On the 28th, the pair at the Burroo was seen with two fledglings. A pair of Peregrines showed breeding behaviour at the north of the island. Further Sand Martins were seen on the 23rd and 24th prospecting a nest site at the Silo but did not breed.

In terms of regular observations, six new species were recorded for 2015 at the Calf this month. A Merlin was seen on the 6th, whilst a Grey Heron was seen and photographed at the Withy on the 7th and 9th. Puffins were also seen for first time this season with a single on the 7th and two on the 12th. The first Black-headed Gull of the year was seen at Kione Roauyr on the 27th and a group of seven Redshanks passed near the lighthouses on the 11th and 12th. A single Lapwing was seen in the south of the island on the 11th.

Among the common but irregular visitors, we recorded two Curlews seen in the Central Glen from the 8th to the 12th, and one seen afterwards on the 18th, 19th, 22nd and 28th. However, the most remarkable record was a flock of 15 flying west across the Puddle. Black Guillemots were recorded only twice (two individuals on the

12th and one on the 22nd). Cuckoos visited us on three occasions (9th, 14th and 15th), Collared Doves made five appearances (a single individual on the 5th, 10th, 11th and 15th, and two individuals on the 21st) and Starlings on three (a single individual on 15th, a flock of 21 at the Observatory on the 23rd and a flock of 16 on the 30th). Sightings of Cormorant were frequent at the Sound and were normally formed by adults and recently fledged youngsters. Kittiwakes were recorded on four days, the most remarkable being a flock of 32 birds flying past South Harbour on the 28th.

Some passerine species went completely quiet this month, either because their migration had finished or they settled to breed. A Chiffchaff was heard singing daily in the back garden for the first half of the month and went quiet afterwards until reappearing at the beginning of July – did it actually breed? Willow Warblers were also very quiet with just three individuals ringed in the first fortnight. Only one Whitethroat was recorded on the 11th and Spotted Flycatchers disappeared completely after the 9th. A Goldcrest was heard on the 8th and 9th after three single records in May. Also Reed Buntings were visible once more, with scarce sightings that included a family with one young seen at the Twin Fields on the 8th. Blackcaps were heard or ringed on four occasions in the middle of June and a Song Thrush with brood patch was ringed on the 16th. Robins were largely absent but breeding may have occurred with a single bird trapped with brood patch on the 3rd. House Martins were not seen after the 8th.

Peak counts of most common species this month were 41 Eiders, 87 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 65 Great Black-backed Gulls and 59 Wheatears, all on the 8th. 134 Razorbills were counted on the 7th and 122 Guillemots on the 16th. Peak counts of Shags were 126 on the 12th and 43 Oystercatchers on the 8th. The maximum count of Herring Gulls took place on the 28th, with 546 recorded. It is worth noting that on the 8th, 17 Rock Pipits were recorded.

Total number of species: 62

July

The month started with the same highly changeable weather as the end of June, very foggy mornings, clearing in the afternoon and cloudy in the evening, with some rain and wind. It improved slightly as the month passed and cloudy skies provided good conditions for Manx Shearwaters and Storm Petrels ringing, with 48 Manx Shearwaters and 84 Storm Petrels ringed in total, plus several controls. Manxies were often heard over the house at night. Interesting birds ringed this month included a Razorbill on the nest and a young Oystercatcher.

The breeding season was reaching its end, most of the young gulls having fledged by the end of the month and the last few passerine nests were ringed. Many species disappeared from the island after breeding and while common in previous months, their sightings were few and celebrated. This was the case for the previously regularly seen Eider, with only 27 bird-days in July (as opposed to 650 in May and 352 in June). Shelducks were not seen at all this month and there was only one observation of Mallard on the 15th. Razorbills and Guillemots were hardly seen after the 14th, although a total count of 123 Razorbills took place on the 12th. Only two Black Guillemots were seen this month, one on the 1st and one on the 10th. Peregrines, on the other hand, were more conspicuous, often seen on the north coast after fledgling one young. Goldfinches and Linnets were also increasing their numbers as new birds joined the flocks, while Wheatears dispersed and their observations gradually decreased in number. Between the 8th and the 15th, Reed Buntings were recorded on five occasions.

Probably the most remarkable observations were the first Greenfinch so far on the 3rd, two and then one Common Sandpipers at Cow Harbour on the 1st and 21st respectively, and a Ringed Plover at South Harbour on the 23rd. A single sighting of a Black-headed Gull took place on the 5th at the Sound, and a Kittiwake at Kione Roauyr on the

22nd. A single record of a Chiffchaff took place on the 4th, a Willow Warbler on the 29th and a family of the otherwise secretive Blackcaps was seen on the 29th at the Observatory garden. Woodpigeons visited us on the 11th, 12th and 23rd, and a Collared Dove was sighted on the 29th. Starlings were common but irregular, ranging from a flock of 50 birds on the 1st to a single one on the 21st. Curlews were seen on several occasions mostly during the second half of July, the biggest flock totalling 16 birds. Cormorants were common in small numbers all month in the Sound but included two birds at Culbery on the 27th. As for Chough, they were regularly seen in families or small flocks, with the biggest grouping of 17 individuals. I estimate a minimum of five families in the island.

Peak counts of the most abundant species were 534 Herring Gulls and 88 Great Black-backed Gulls recorded on the 27th on the western side of the island. The highest count of Lesser Black-backed Gulls took place on 29th, with 89; the best day for Shags was the 27th with 87.

Total number of species: 51

August

In August, the weather continued unpredictably, often clear and sunny in the mornings and rainy by mid-afternoon. We still enjoyed some sunny and warm afternoons, especially in the first half of the month. In terms of birds, it was definitely a month of change. The breeding season was pretty much over though some nests were still active in the first half of the month, with the last to fledge being a brood of Swallows on the 27th. By the end of the month, gulls abandoned the breeding colonies and could be seen wandering around on the fields or at sea. Chough broke their well-defined family groups and continued flocking. The greater of those was seen flying along the Central Glen on the 31st and it was estimated to contain about 50 individuals. Shags also started to flock and form rafts off the coast, the biggest containing 81 individuals, and groups of Swallows

sat at the telephone cable some mornings. Oystercatchers and Linnets were also seen in big groups, the biggest being a group of 24 Oystercatchers seen at Cow Harbour on the 21st (two of them were yearlings), and 60 Linnets also at Cow Harbour on the 23rd. In the first fortnight, passerine species like Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, Robins and Willow Warblers visited the garden once more.

Common Sandpipers started to become more regular, as were Curlews. Three Eiders were seen flying over Cow Harbour on 2nd. Mallards surprised us when, after more than a fortnight without observations, they were recorded again on the 8th, 10th and 21st. A single Redshank was recorded on the 15th. Doves visited us occasionally; a Feral Pigeon was recorded on the 13th and a Stock Dove on the 17th, although both avoided all nets and baits. Single Collared Doves were seen on the 7th and 12th and a group of three was recorded at the Observatory on the 30th August. A Reed Bunting was recorded on the 8th, Greenfinches on the 12th and 17th and a Whitethroat on the 18th. A flock of 56 Kittiwakes was recorded off the east coast on the 15th and two were seen flying very close to the western cliffs on the 24th. The most remarkable of all observations, however, may be a Great Skua seen on the 21st flying near the coast at the Cletts, just to be chased away by Herring Gulls at Kione Roauyr. A Goldcrest was trapped and ringed on the 17th August. Although the month finished without a clear migration, many Robins and Willow Warblers were ringed when autumn mist netting resumed mid-month.

As for Storm Petrels and Manx Shearwaters, their season was also approaching its end. On the 17th, the last attempt of the month for night mist netting took place with only six Storm Petrels trapped. A visit to the Manxie colonies on the 27th produced a young bird trapped and ringed but no adult calls were heard at all. However, on the 30th a full grown Manx Shearwater was seen near the Observatory. A young bird caught at their burrow on the 27th was still very downy.

Peak counts of common species were 101 Shags and 24 Oystercatchers counted on the 21st, 52 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 339 Herring Gulls and 51 Great Black-backed Gulls on the western half of the island on the 24th and 34 Gannet off the east coast on the 27th. Also on the 27th, up to five Cormorants were recorded at the Sound. For passerines, the peak count of Meadow Pipits took place on the 24th with 47 individuals and of Wheatears on the 11th with 23.

Total number of species: 50

September

September was in general a good month, both in terms of weather conditions and migration. Several sunny and warm days made our work comfortable, mild winds allowed many days of mist netting and moderately windy ones brought us birds from north and east.

It was also a month in which many new species of birds finally appeared this season. Such is the case of the Teal, with one individual seen on the 13th, 26th and 30th either at the Withy or Mill Giau; Snipe, ringed on the 10th at the Withy and recorded again on the 23rd, 24th and 26th; Golden Plover, first heard on the 23rd over the Withy field and recorded almost daily afterwards (two individuals on the 30th); a Whimbrel was recorded on the 10th; Common Gull, recorded regularly in small numbers during the second half of the month; Tree Pipit, with two records on the 14th, and singles on the 16th and 22nd; Mistle Thrush, a single record on the 8th; Jackdaw, a flock of 12 flying over on the 25th; a single House Sparrow was seen at the Withy on the 26th and at the Observatory on the 27th (maybe the same individual?); and Coal and Great Tits were seen in moderate numbers during the second half of September.

Not-so-usual species were also recorded this month. Buzzards were seen regularly throughout the month; a single record of Osprey on 14th; three Wigeon were seen on a seawatch on the 17th; six Crossbills flew over the Island on the 25th; Arctic Skuas were recorded on

seawatches on the 21st and 22nd, a single individual each day; occasional Red-throated Divers were seen migrating along the coast (peak count of six on the 30th); a Water Rail was heard at the Withy on the 28th and a Reed Warbler was trapped in the newly repaired Heligoland on the 14th.

Breeding completely finished with the fledgling of the last shearwaters at the beginning of September. The last attempt at trapping young was on the 13th which resulted in some captures and some adults were still heard during those nights. Though a further attempt took place to trap Storm Petrel at the beginning of the month, none were captured. Raven and Chough flocks dispersed, and adults were seen resuming their breeding territories.

The beginning of the month was characterised by an “explosion” of wagtails and *Phylloscopus* warblers, neither species having been seen for some time. Towards mid-month, Spotted Flycatchers made their reappearance and the second half of September saw big numbers of finches. Skylarks were often recorded flying over, as were Swallows (the peak of passage took place in the middle of the month, with 179 individuals recorded on the 14th and 123 on the 16th). A flock of 26 House Martins flew over the Withy on the 14th, as did six on the 16th and two on the 25th.

Seawatching conditions were good from 17th to 22nd September, when high numbers of several gull species were recorded along with auks, ducks and skuas. The 21st was exceptionally good and peak counts for several species took place from Culbrey: 10 Common Scoters, 130 Shags (although the highest count was 200 on the 7th flying north from the Puddle), an Arctic Skua and two Great Skuas, 130 Great Black-Backed Gulls, 210 Kittiwakes, seven Guillemots, 142 Razorbills and 87 unidentified Auks. Highest numbers for other seabirds include 38 Fulmars on the 22nd, 39 Manx Shearwaters on the 22nd, 318 Gannets on the 17th, two Black-headed Gulls on the 22nd and three Common Gulls on the 18th. Away from the seawatching, a

peak count of Lesser Black-Backed Gulls took place on the 14th with 34 individuals. 30 Oystercatchers were counted at the Sound on the 29th and 275 Herring Gulls were recorded on the 27th. Up to nine each of Cormorants and Curlews were regularly seen between Cow Harbour and the Cletts.

Finally, raptors were regular and increasing in numbers. A roost count of Hen Harriers on the 21st saw two ringtails and a grey male. On the 27th, a fight for a small passerine between a Merlin and a Sparrowhawk took place at the Observatory garden and resulted with the escape of the passerine and the Merlin dining on the Sparrowhawk. A Mallard was seen on the 9th, an Eider (moulting to breeding male plumage) on the 14th and three Shelducks on the 17th. A Ringed Plover and a Common Sandpiper were recorded on the 14th, two Turnstones on the 24th and a single on 28th and a Redshank on the 20th. A Collared Dove visited us on the 14th and on the 23rd, and three Woodpigeons were seen flying over the island on the 29th.

Total number of species: 88

October

Nice weather still accompanied us until mid October and migration continued its course. The second half of the month was characterized by clouds, wind and rain, more typical of a Calf autumn, and brought us big numbers of thrushes along with 12 new species for the year.

Geese and swans were first seen this month – a pale bellied Brent Goose on 12th and a Whooper Swan on 13th. A Grey Plover was recorded on the 2nd and a Dunlin on the 4th. Woodcocks appeared on the 25th and sightings became regular thereafter. Short-eared Owls were back on 14th after a breeding season somewhere else and could be found roosting on the moorland. On 29th October, a Long-eared Owl was also detected. The most exciting record, however, was the long-awaited Yellow-browed Warbler with two individuals trapped and ringed on the 14th.

Migration of certain species was reaching its end. Swallows became irregular with two sighted on 25th providing the last record following the previous one on the 15th. There were only two records of House Martin, six individuals on the 8th and four on the 13th and a single Sand Martin flying over on the 8th. Numbers of wagtails gradually decreased and White Wagtails were last seen on the 7th. Grey and Pied Wagtails were still recorded until the end of the month in small numbers, mainly singles. Wheatears were scarce and irregular and disappeared on 17th but included two Greenland looking ones on the 13th. Finally, a Redstart was present between 4-6th.

On the contrary, Skylark, finches and Goldcrest continued moving in good numbers. Bramblings were first seen this autumn in October, with three individuals on the 17th, a single record on the 25th and four individuals on the 28th. Twite were seen towards the end of the month with three on the 28th and six on the 30th. Numbers of Lesser Redpolls, however, were decreasing and a peak of 82 Goldcrest was recorded on the 8th.

The biggest increases, however, were the thrushes and Starlings. Fieldfares were first recorded on the 15th, Redwings on the 7th and Mistle Thrush on the 8th and all became regular afterwards. Ring Ouzels were recorded on the 7th and 17th, a single record each time. The highest counts of thrushes were 76 Blackbirds on the 27th, 140 Fieldfares on the same date, 28 Song Thrushes and 30 Mistle Thrushes on the 28th, and 153 Redwings on the 18th. On 14th October, the record of 112 Redwings included at least two Icelandic ones. Rooks were also seen for first time this month, the first record dating from the 4th and together with Jackdaws, becoming regular throughout the month. The highest counts took place on 15th, when 104 Jackdaws were recorded, and on 28th, with 17 Rooks. Magpies were only recorded on the 2nd and 13th, with one and three individuals respectively.

House Sparrows and Tits were sometimes seen, wandering from the main Island. Blue Tits were last recorded on the 16th, with five individuals and Coal Tits on the 25th. Only Great Tits records continued into November. Sightings of House Sparrows took place between the 8th and the 17th, with up to eight individuals. There was only one record of Crossbill, a single individual on the 26th and the occasional Woodpigeon visited the Observatory during October.

As for waterbirds, several duck species were recorded: two Shelducks and an Eider on the 12th and four Teal on the 26th. Mallards were regular and Common Scoters were seen on three occasions, three, four and five individuals each. Red-throated Divers were seen on the 1st and 28th and Great Northern Divers on the 22nd and 24th, a single individual each record. On the 22nd, one Arctic and three Great Skuas were recorded on a seawatch. Numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls were very low but regular and peak counts of Herring, Great Black-backed Gulls and Kittiwakes did not exceed 223 (on the 12th), 122 (on the 5th) and 222 individuals (also on the 12th), respectively. Some Common Gulls and Black-headed Gulls continued being recorded, with peak counts on a seawatch on 12th being 64 Black-headed Gull and 34 Common Gulls. There was only one sighting of Manx Shearwaters this month, with three individuals recorded on a seawatch on the 22nd. Auks were last seen on 24th with four unidentified individuals and Fulmars were scarce but spread over the month.

Oystercatchers and Curlews were recorded almost daily, with up to 36 and 16 individuals respectively. Sightings of Golden Plover were more common in the first fortnight and included a group of nine on the 11th. Lapwings were seen on a few occasions during the month, one or two individuals each time, as were Grey Heron, Water Rail and Snipe, except for a flock of eight flying over the Observatory on a foggy morning and another of six the next day. A Jack Snipe was flushed on the 1st and 19th and single Redshanks were recorded on

the 20th and 31st. A group of 22 Turnstones was recorded on the 23rd and another of 20 on the 28th, but otherwise they were very scarce. Finally, a female Pheasant was recorded from 19th to 28th.

Total number of species: 94

November

Constant rain and strong winds were prevalent after the 4th and delayed the closing of the Observatory. After several attempts to leave the island, the wardens finally left on the 20th.

Thrushes and Starlings continued moving in relatively big numbers, and while some species disappeared, others started to arrive. The last record of Reed Buntings was on 1st November, Lesser Redpolls were last seen on the 2nd, Blackcaps disappeared on the 6th and Great Tits on the 4th. Two "*tristis*"-type Chiffchaffs were recorded on the 5th and 6th November, while another continued calling in the garden to the end of the season. Buzzards and Short-eared Owls were occasionally seen and on the National Hen Harrier Count, a single was recorded coming to roost.

A large flock of Twite were recorded at Cow Harbour on the 2nd November. On 18th and 20th November, 1016 and 1041 Herring Gulls respectively were recorded looking for shelter in the east of the island. Among them, some other gulls were also counted; Great Black-backed Gulls, a few Lesser Black-backed Gulls and one Common Gull. During a seawatch on 20th November, 17 Kittiwakes were recorded going south with strong north westerly winds. Kittiwakes were also seen on 3rd (two birds) and 19th (five) and one Black-headed Gull was recorded on the 3rd, along with two Common Gulls. The most important record this month, however, was an adult male Black Redstart seen at the office window during the morning of 3rd November. This was the first record and the only one of the season.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

The nomenclature and taxonomic order follows that published by the British Ornithologists' Union (BOU) in Ibis 155: 635-676 (2013) and subsequent BOURC reports (available online at <http://www.bou.org.uk/british-list/bourc-reports-and-papers>). When the vernacular British name differs from the vernacular International English one (IOC), the international name is given in brackets. The local Manx name is given in grey when known.

A total of 116 species of birds were recorded at the Calf of Man during 2015.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Number of species	48	63	61	62	51	50	88	99	63
Number of new species	48	17	10	6	2	2	20	12	1
Accumulated number of species	48	65	75	81	83	85	105	115	116

Bird-days are the number of birds recorded in total. They take no account of the number of individuals. For example, five Blackbird bird-days could be five birds on one day or the same single seen on five dates

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*

Ollay Chiaullee

The only record dates from 13th October, when an individual was seen crossing the Sound and flying over the Calf.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

Guïy feie

A single individual was recorded, flying low over South Harbour on 3rd November.

Brent (Brant) Goose *Branta bernicla*

Only one record this season, an individual recorded during a seawatch on 12th October.

Goose sp. *Anser spp.*

A group of 31 unidentified geese was seen flying over the island, from South Harbour to Gibdale, on 3rd November.

(Common) Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*

Thunnag y Scape

There were several records in spring, the first one on 5th April, but normally up to two birds were often moving along the coast between Cow Harbour and South Harbour. From 28th April records of a single bird were common and on 16th May the other bird was found sitting on a nest and ringed at Kione ny Halby.

This species has previously been suspected as breeding on the island, but no definite proof has been collected. Although the nest never showed signs of predation, on 31st May it was found empty but no ducklings were ever seen. The last sighting of the species in the Calf during the breeding season was 5th June.

The only record for the species during autumn was two individuals flying past the island on 12th October.

(Eurasian) Wigeon *Anas penelope*

Thunnag veg feie

The only record is three individuals seen on a seawatch on 17th September.

(Eurasian) Teal *Anas crecca*

Thunnag Laaghag

Only recorded in autumn with singles on 13th, 26th and 30th September; being seen either at the Mill Pond or at Mill Giau. A further four birds were recorded on 26th October.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Thunnag feie

Seen regularly in spring, possibly up to two pairs except on 11th May, when five sightings were recorded. At least one pair attempted to breed at the Withy in April, as predated eggs were found at the end of the month. A second attempt succeeded and on 21st June, 11 ducklings and a male were seen at the Withy, though never afterwards.

Sightings were very few in July, August and September with occasional records in Mill Giau or at the Sound. Up to three individuals were seen regularly again in October and November.

(Common) Eider *Somateria mollissima*

Laagh Loughlinagh

Abundant around the Calf during the breeding season, it was recorded from the opening of the Observatory on 18th March with gradually increasing numbers, reaching a peak of 55 individuals on 16th and 17th May. 23 nests were found and monitored in different areas of the island, with a success of 52 % (n=23, unknown outcome 17 %). Many other nests were found predated or after hatching. Ducklings started to hatch at the end of May and though many were seen predated by gulls, some groups were recorded around the Calf during June.

After 25th June, sightings were irregular and under 10 individuals. There were only three sightings of a single individual after 9th July (16th, 28th and 29th), one record on 2nd August when three individuals were seen flying over Cow Harbour, and a single individual recorded

on 14th September at the Sound. In October, a further single was recorded on the 12th.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird	31	252	650	352	27	3	2	1	0
Days									
Max	10	41	83	41	10	3	1	1	0
counts									

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*

Only recorded during seawatches in autumn; with two singles on 18th, 10 on 21st, three on 22nd September and five more sightings on 12th October.

(Common) Pheasant *Phasianus colchicius*

A pheasant call surprised us on 5th April and a male was then heard or seen around the island almost daily until the 23rd, presumably the same individual. On 8th and 23rd, calls in different parts of the island were recorded but it could not be established if they were two different individuals or a very mobile individual. A female was recorded in autumn, from 18th to 28th October.

Red-throated Diver (Red-throated Loon) *Gavia stellata*

Lhargey Mooar

Only recorded in autumn, normally during seawatches; sightings were of one to six individuals between 15th to 30th September, with a further two singles recorded on 1st and 28th October.

Great Northern Diver (Great Northern Loon) *Gavia immer*

Arrag Vooar

Two records: one individual seen on 22nd and another on 24th October.

Diver sp.

An unidentified Diver was recorded on 12th October.

(Northern) Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*

Eean Croymmagh

Abundant and regular throughout most of the season; however, it was a poor season for breeding productivity. From the 50 nests counted, only two chicks were seen on the ledges.

In autumn, sightings of individuals flying along the coast became less frequent, with the majority of sightings relating to birds seen during seawatches.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird	4	111	190	327	182	71	200	27	0
Days									
Max	1	32	37	42	23	25	45	11	0
counts									

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

Scraayl

The breeding study was started in mid-May, when several occupied burrows were found at the Kione ny Halby colony and one adult was ringed. It is estimated between 103 and 464 pairs bred this year, but productivity could not be assessed. Several attempts were made at catching birds at night and during July and August they were sometimes heard over the farmhouse.

There are very few records of them at sea and they were mainly made in September during seawatches, the highest count being 39 and taking place on 17th September. During October and November, they were recorded only twice more, three birds on 22nd October and two on 20th November. For more details on breeding, see the Manx Shearwater’s report on page 122.

(European) Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Kitty Varrey

2105 was a relatively good season for Storm Petrel ringing, with 108 individuals trapped at South Harbour, Kione ny Halby and Gibdale between 16th June and 18th August, 13 of them being previously ringed somewhere else. Breeding of this species could not be confirmed this year.



(Northern) Gannet *Morus bassanus*

Gant

Common throughout the season, becoming more regular and in higher numbers as the summer months progressed before dropping off in October. Just after fledgling time they were regularly seen feeding in Calf coasts, reflecting the importance of its waters. Most of these individuals were adults although some young were occasionally seen.

In autumn, highest counts took place during seawatches and corresponded to migratory birds.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	6	20	84	224	68	168	1780	5	28
Max counts	3	10	30	30	27	19	318	4	12

(Great) Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Arragh Vooar

Cormorants were regularly seen in low numbers throughout the season, mostly at the Sound and becoming more abundant after August, with a maximum count of nine individuals recorded on several occasions in September & October, with up to four in November. In autumn, besides the highest counts being made at the Sound, there were also some birds counted in the east and south of the island.

(European) Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Fannag / Feeagh Varrey

A very common species on the Calf, being seen regularly sitting on the cliffs by the breeding colonies and flying along the coasts. In autumn, numbers were lower and concentrated in rafts out to sea or flying birds.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	729	153	413	752	569	523	1138	740	69
Max counts	77	31	60	126	87	101	200	77	13

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

Coayr / Coayr ny Hastan / Coayr Glass

One individual recorded on 7th and 9th June at the Mill Pond. One or two individuals were recorded around the island most days in September, October, and November.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*

Hen Harriers were recorded from the beginning of the season hunting over the Calf. Up to two different individuals were counted on many days during spring and a maximum of four during autumn. A roost watch in September produced three birds, but the same area surveyed during the national coordinated count in October saw none and in November just one. Although it has been recorded breeding on the Calf in the past, no breeding evidence was recorded this year.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*

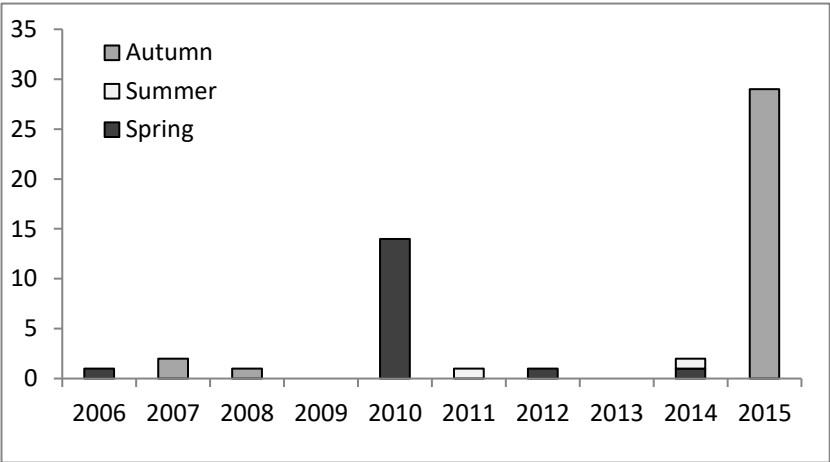
Shawk / Shirragh / Shirragh ny Giark

A regular visitor, which became less frequent during the breeding season but numbers increased from September, when it was a regular sight around the Observatory. A maximum of three individuals per day were recorded during autumn. On 27th September a young bird was attacked and eaten by a Merlin at the Observatory garden.

(Common) Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

It has been an extremely good year for Buzzards, with two young birds becoming semi-resident through the autumn with the first individual seen from 12th September. On 18th September and 1st October two different individuals were recorded, otherwise records were of single birds.

Except for 2010, previous records have never exceeded more than two bird-days per year, with many years with no records at all.
Bird Days of Common Buzzard per year and season.



(Western) Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

A single record this season, an individual observed flying past the island on 14th September. Except for 2006, where five birds were recorded, sightings of this species are scarce in the Calf.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	3	1	2	0	0	2	5	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus**Drean Ushtey*

First recorded at the Withy on 28th September, with up to two individuals recorded almost daily in October, and one of them was caught and ringed on the 1st. Three individuals were present on 1st November.

(Eurasian) Oystercatcher *Haemantopus ostralegus**Garee breck / Bridgeen*

Abundant throughout much of the season with a maximum count of 43 individuals on 8th June. The species bred around the Calf in the usual places. A maximum of three young were noted in the post-breeding flock at Cow Harbour by the end of the summer. A further chick was ringed at South Harbour, but fledgling could not be confirmed.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	50	149	229	284	170	130	211	335	39
Max counts	14	24	25	43	15	24	30	36	11

(European) Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria**Ushag Reeast/Fedjag Reeast*

There were no spring records. The first sighting took place on 25th September in the Withy Field with one or two seen on many dates to 16th October, with six on 5th, a maximum of nine on 11th and four the next day. From 16th October, there were only three more records (28th and 29th October and 2nd November), of a single bird each.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

A single record of a bird flying over on 2nd October.

(Northern) Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

Earkan

The first record was of a single seen in the Sea Field on 14th June but then no further records until October, when one or two individuals were recorded on several days around the south of the Calf.

(Common) Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*

Feddag Ainnit

Just two records of this species; one at South Harbour on 23rd July and a single heard as it flew over the Observatory on 14th September.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

A very poor showing with just the one individual recorded on the Calf this season, on 10th September.

(Eurasian) Curlew *Numenius arquata*

Crottag

Records were scarce during spring and summer and involved low numbers but gradually lead to a regular count of around ten individuals almost daily during September, October and November. Most of the observations were made at the Sound, with occasional sightings on the south or east coasts.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird	6	7	27	33	29	108	194	35	38
Days									
Max	3	3	15	16	15	9	16	9	9
counts									

(Ruddy) Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Goblaghan

Turnstones were first seen on 25th March at Fold Point - a flock of 25 individuals. Another flock of 21 was recorded on 15th April, and a single bird on 14th May. They were not seen again until 24th

September, when two birds were recorded. Records became more regular towards October, when several flocks were encountered during the second fortnight with 22 on the 23rd and 20 on the 28th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpine*

Breck ny Traie

Only one recorded this year, a single bird on 4th October.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

The species made its appearance in July, when two individuals were seen at Cow Harbour on the 1st, and a single on the 21st. Three single records in August on 3rd, 23rd & 26th and one on the 14th September.

(Common) Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Goblan Marrey

Except for a group of seven seen on 11th and 12th June, there was just a single individual on 20th September and on 20th and 31st October.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*

There were three April records in spring, with singles flushed from the Dub on 4th and 21st and out of the Withy on 9th. In autumn, further sightings of singles took place at the Withy on 1st & 19th October and 1st November.

(Eurasian) Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*

Ushag Rennee

Records were concentrated from the end of October and involved just single birds. They were flushed from Bay Fine area or the Withy on a regular basis from 25th October. In November, records rose to a maximum of three individuals per day (2nd), when birds were also seen around the Observatory.

(Common) Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Coayr Heddagh

One individual caught and ringed at the Withy on 10th September. A single was recorded regularly afterwards, on 23rd, 24th and 26th. In October and November, sightings of one or two individuals were common, flying over the island or flushed, except from 27th to 29th October, when up to eight individuals were recorded together.

Arctic Skua (Parasitic Jaeger) *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Singles were seen during seawatches on 21st and 22nd September. A further record of one individual took place on 22nd October.

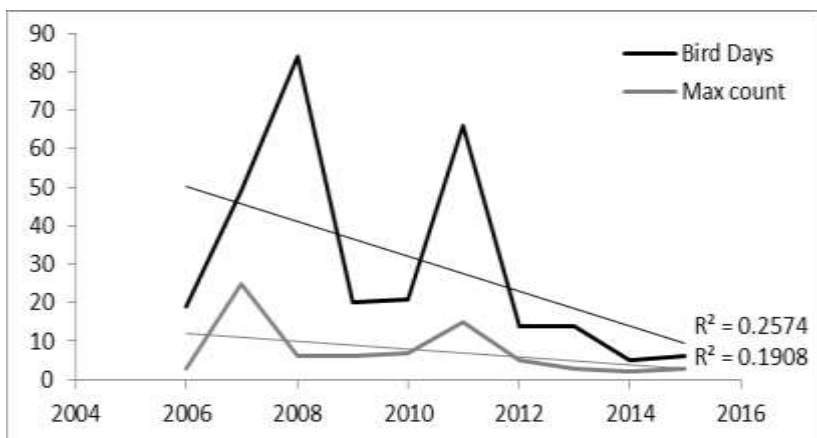
Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

The first record dates from 21st August when a single was seen being chased away by gulls at Kione Roauyr. Two birds were seen on a seawatch on 21st September and further three on 22nd October.

(Atlantic) Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Pibbin / Poltag

Scarce. Three individuals were seen flying past the Calf on 7th June and two on 12th. A further individual was recorded on 4th July. Surprisingly, two individuals were found predated in the Calf, one mid-July at the Cletts and the other one found in August by the Twin Fields. Although data from the last few years show a decline in numbers, it also presents oscillations, making it difficult to determine if the trend is significant. However, the last confirmed breeding record on the Calf dates from 1985.



Evolution of bird days and maximum counts of Puffin since 2006.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grille*

Caillagh Ghoo

The first Black Guillemots of the season, a group of six, were seen on the 28th March and the species was then recorded in small numbers (up to 13) during the following months until July, when a single individual was seen on the 1st and then 10th. It probably did not breed, continuing with the trend of the last few years.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	6	18	9	3	2	0	0	0	0
Max counts	6	13	5	2	1	0	0	0	0

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of nests	-	-	1	-	1	(3)	1	(4)	(3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Number of occupied nests since 2000. Dash indicates missing data whilst parenthesis denotes possible nests.

Razorbill *Alca torda*

Coltrag

Razorbills were first seen on 5th April, when around 100 were counted along the East coast from the supply boat and there was only one other record from April with two individuals on the 16th. Its presence kept increasing during May and June, with a maximum number of 134 on 7th June. The last record during breeding season dates from 22nd July, with four birds. They were found breeding in Gibdale, Kione ny Halby and the Burroo. In autumn, Razorbill were regularly recorded on seawatches flying past the island in September and October. Its numbers ranged from a single sighting to a highest number of 142 on 21st September. The last record of the species this year is from 28th October.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	0	102	297	1085	394	0	368	97	0
Max counts	0	100	68	134	123	0	142	37	0

Guillemot *Uria algae*

Stronnag / Chennell

The only sighting of Guillemots in March took place on the 24th with one individual recorded. A single entry for April of 17 birds counted on the 16th, gave way to more regular and increasing numbers during May and June when they could often be seen on their breeding ledges. It was last seen on 22nd July during breeding season, with seven encounters, and was recorded again during autumn flying past the island in low numbers. During September and October, an adult and a young bird were found almost daily at the Burroo.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	1	17	63	597	43	0	27	33	0
Max counts	1	17	26	120	22	0	7	6	0

Auk spp.

Sometimes, auks were seen out at sea, too far away for the species to be recognized.

(Black-legged) Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*

Perragh

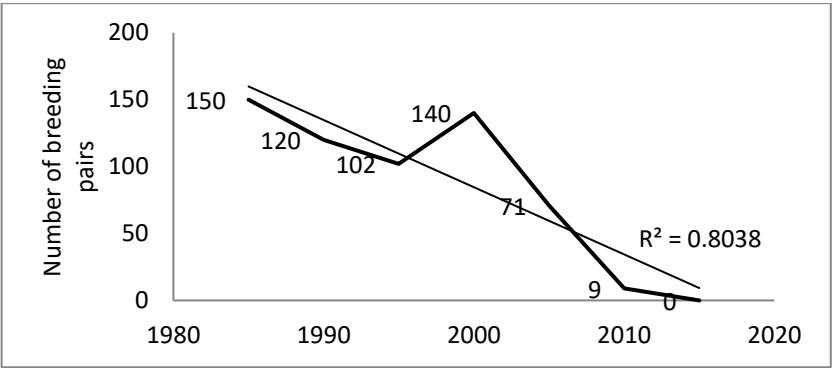
In 2015, sightings were relatively scarce compared to previous years, and took place mainly on autumn seawatches.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	0	0	12	37	1	58	392	725	19
Max counts	0	0	7	32	1	56	211	222	12

2015 was yet another year without any Kittiwakes breeding on the Calf. Except for 13 occupied nests recorded in 2013, there has not been any breeding evidence of this species since 2011.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of nests	140	-	65	-	-	71	104	-	-	51	9	5	0	13	0	0

Number of occupied Kittiwake nests during the last few years. Dash indicates data missing.



Population trend of breeding Kittiwakes on the Calf of Man since the 1985. Data shows a steep decline and there is no breeding evidence nowadays.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

Pirragh

First seen on 27th June when an individual flew past Kione Roauyr. On 5th July, another bird was recorded in the same area. Only two records from September, with two individuals seen on 22nd September during a seawatch and another on 28th. The species became regular in October, in small numbers except for a count of 64 individuals on the 12th. The latter being the second highest ever count for the Calf.

Common (Mew) Gull *Larus canus*

Foillan Vane

It was not recorded until autumn, but then became regular in small numbers between 14th September and 18th November. Larger numbers were seen during seawatches, with 34 on 12th October.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Foillan Saggyrt

Recorded daily around the breeding colonies; from the opening of the Observatory until the end of the breeding season, with a maximum count of 100 on 9th May. In autumn, counts dropped to a maximum of five except for 16 on 10th September, 34 on 14th and seven on 18th November. Breeding occurred at the usual colonies with the result of 14 pulli ringed and colour ringed. 57 nests were recorded during the Seabird Breeding Survey, the first seen on the 7th May at The Wall.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	139	298	653	608	354	242	82	28	8
Max counts	81	76	100	87	89	52	34	5	7

(European) Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

Foillan

This species bred in all the usual colonies in typical numbers (a total of 327 nests were recorded during the Sea Bird Breeding Survey), although those in South Harbour and East Rarick showed low success. The first nests were seen on 1st May at the Burroo and the first chicks on 17th May at Cow Harbour. In total, 189 chicks were ringed, 100 of them with colour rings. By the end of August they had abandoned the breeding colonies and were most frequently seen flying along the coast.



	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	205	614	634	518	473	409	208	189	295
	9	6	1	9	1	4	7	4	3
Max counts	480	613	564	546	534	339	275	223	104
									1

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*

Juan Mooar

Present throughout the season in relatively stable numbers. A total of 37 nests were counted on the Seabird Breeding Survey, 16 of which were monitored, with a success rate of 81%. The first nests were seen on 7th May at the Burroo and Kione ny Halby and the first chicks on 31st May. 41 of these chicks were ringed, some of them also colour ringed.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird	248	750	781	615	520	337	103	103	344
Days							6	1	
Max counts	85	91	132	65	88	52	392	122	75

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*

Calmane Gorrym

A single individual, recorded on 18th August, managed to avoid all nets in the back garden.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*

Calmane keylley

Woodpigeons were first seen on 18th March and were recorded in all months throughout the season, except in June and November, albeit irregularly and in low numbers. All records are singles except a group of three recorded on 29th September and two on 8th October.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Recorded occasionally from 18th April to 23th September, normally singles but three individuals were counted on 30th August.

(Common) Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

Cooag

Cuckoos were only recorded in May (10th, 21st and 24th) and June (9th, 14th and 15th), always around the Observatory garden and a single male in each occasion. It was not recorded breeding.

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*

Hullad / Kyone chayt

Only one bird was seen this season, on 29th October, when disturbed from the Withy. Except for 2014, when three records took place, sighting of Long-eared Owls this season follow the trend of the last few years. It was however, reported more frequently during the 80s and 90s.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	1	1	0	1	1	(1)	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	3	1

Numbers in parenthesis denote unconfirmed record.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

There was a single sighting in spring, one individual on 20th March. In autumn, Short-eared Owls were recorded roosting at Big Park and flying over the island at dawn from 14th October, records ranging from one to three individuals.

(Common) Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Stannair Ruy

Common and regular throughout the season, with one or two individuals often recorded in the island; becoming more abundant in autumn, with up to four individuals almost daily. Apparently, it did not breed.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

The only record before autumn passage was of a single on the rather unseasonal date of 6th June. After September, up to three individuals were recorded almost daily until 3rd November. On 27th September, a Merlin was seen killing and eating a Sparrowhawk in the Observatory garden.

Peregrine (Falcon) *Falco peregrinus*

Shirragh y Ree

Seen regularly throughout the season, one pair bred successfully, with a single chick fledging on 12th July.

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

Caaig

Recorded daily; fourteen pairs held territory in the early part of the season, with two fledged broods from five definite breeding attempts. The two monitored nests hatched around the 10th May and fledgling of the surviving one took place on 17th June. After fledging, feeding groups were forming and sometimes flocks wandered from the main island, with a maximum of 38 birds recorded on a single group on 6th June. From September, adults returned to their territories and young birds dispersed

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	148	313	428	487	568	502	631	556	134
Max counts	30	28	41	52	62	57	42	33	21

(Eurasian) Magpie *Pica pica*

Pieanat/ Piannad

Only two records in spring with a single bird around the Observatory on 21st& 23th April. In autumn there were again two more records with a single bird recorded on the 2nd October and three on the 13th.

(Western) Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Caaig/ juan teayst

First seen on 25th September, when a group of 12 birds flew over the island. Jackdaws became more regular during October, especially around mid-month, when big flocks were counted, with a peak count of 104 on 15th.

Rook *Corvus ferrugineus*

Trogh

Rooks were not seen this year until 4th October, when an individual was recorded. Afterwards and during the month of October, several other encounters took place, concentrated in the middle of the month but with a maximum of 17 recorded on the 28th.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*

Recorded most dates throughout the season, possibly bred. Slightly more numerous in spring, maximum counts of 11 on 27th March and 14 on 13th May, otherwise most counts were of less than 10 birds.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

Fannag Ghllass

Present throughout the season with a total of 1142 bird-days, and bred. From the three chicks ringed at a nest in Cow Harbour, one was later recovered dead at a Great Black-backed Gull nest.

Hybrid Crow (Carrion x Hooded)

Hybrids of these two species were regularly recorded (150 bird-days) and small family groups were seen at the end of the summer as indication that hybridization takes place in the Calf.

(Northern) Raven *Corvus corax*

Feeagh/ Feeagh Vooar

Present all year with counts of up to 15 birds being relatively commonplace and a maximum count of 19 on 28th October. At least one pair bred with the first fledglings recorded on 1st May from the Lighthouse family. In autumn, pairs returned to their territories with the addition of possibly two new pairs.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*

Ushag y fuygh

Recorded almost daily from the start of the season until 21st April, with up to 40 birds seen on several dates in spring; further singles were seen on 2nd & 21st-22nd May and 8th-9th June. During autumn migration the first two arrived on 17th-18th August, with a further single on 30th-31st. Records became frequent from 7th September with daily counts between 10 – 30 occurring on many dates through to the end of October and maximum counts of 49 on 19th September and 82 on 8th October. Smaller numbers continued to move through well into November, with the last record of the season being on the 19th.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	376	243	3	2	0	6	486	529	40
Max counts	40	30	1	1	0	2	49	82	10
Ringed	98	85	1	0	0	4	218	223	7

(Eurasian) Blue Tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*

Drean Gorrym

A single heard on the day of our arrival was the only spring record. During the autumn six arrived on 28th September and 2nd October, five were present on 1st & 16th October, a single on 4th and two on 8th, 9th & 12th October.

Great Tit *Parus major*

Drean Mooar

Recorded almost daily from 19th September to 4th November, mostly around the Observatory and occasionally at the Withy, with a maximum of 12 on 26th September.

Coal Tit *Periparus ater*

Recorded on nine dates between 26th September to 25th October, mostly singles or twos but four were recorded on the 8th October and three on the 25th.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Ushag Tappagh/ Ushag y Tappee / Usagh Happagh / Ushag Cabbagh

Recorded occasionally singing and displaying in spring with two on 18th March & singles on 5th April, 1st, 5th, 13th and 23rd May. During autumn migration recorded between 16th September and 3rd November, with maximum counts of 137 individuals on 8th October and 104 on the 25th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*

Gollan Geinne

Sand Martins made their appearance on 21st March, a single individual, and was occasionally recorded in small numbers until 16th May. On 23rd and 24th June, one and two individuals, respectively, were seen prospecting holes at the Silo but none stayed to breed. A single encounter took place during autumn migration, on 8th October.

(Barn) Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Gollan geayee

The first Swallows arrived on 4th April, with numbers slowly increasing until they became a daily sight in May, with a peak of 120 individuals counted around the island on 13th May. Some pairs stayed to breed in the Farmhouse and Jane’s House. Autumn migration brought counts of up to 179, on 14th September, whilst in October numbers were low and irregular with a last record of two birds on the 25th.

(Common) House Martin *Delichon urbicum*

Gollan Thie

Three singles were recorded in April, on 20th, 22nd and 26th. Records of one or two birds occurred on seven occasions in May plus 10 on the 13th and four on 23rd whilst in June, two on 5th, eight on 7th and nine on 8th, were the last records of spring migration. There were no mid-summer records and the first of autumn migration were 26 on 14th September followed by six on 16th and two on 25th. In October, there were just two records with six on the 8th and the four on 13th.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Two individuals were trapped and ringed on 14th October, one at the Withy and one at the Observatory, which compares well with other years.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	0	1	1	1	2

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

Beealerey

Recorded from the start of the season with the peak of spring migration being around mid-April and a maximum count of 30 on 16th; occasional records, of up to five birds, were recorded during May and a single bird was heard singing daily in the garden from 3rd to 8th June.

Further singles were recorded on 4th July and on four dates in August and it is possible that breeding went unnoticed. Autumn migration generally involved less than 10 birds, although the peak occurred during the second half of September, with a maximum count of 27 on 16th. Up to seven were recorded during the first half of October but from 11th just one or two were recorded with ringing data showing that two adults remained in the garden until the closing of the Observatory.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Drean vane

A good spring passage was recorded with a total of 473 being trapped and ringed in April. First recorded on 5th April and the maximum count of 119 (109 ringed) took place on the 23rd. Spring migration continued in small numbers throughout May with a maximum of 10 on 8th. Three singles were recorded in early June (8th, 11th & 16th) but then there were no records until 28th July.

Passage during August was very poor with one or two birds recorded on just nine dates plus high counts of four on 8th and five on 18th & 22nd. During September, up to four birds were seen on 10 dates up to the 15th, with the final singles seen on 26th & 28th.

(Eurasian) Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*

Bayrn dhoo

Recorded in spring between 9th April - 23rd May and in autumn between 29th July - 6th November; with additional mid-summer records of five on 11th, two on 13th and singles on 16th & 18th June. Spring migration was at its peak during the second half of April, with high counts of 30 on 16th, 23 on 19th and 60 on 21st. Autumn migration recorded up to three birds on many dates and peaks of five on 10th October and four on 4th November.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*

Kiaulleyder garee

Only recorded in May, when two individuals were ringed at the Observatory on 13th and then recorded again on 14th.

(Common) Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*

Fynnag ny Keylley

A single on 19th April and two on 21st were the first records of the year. Further spring records were few and far between with singles on four dates in May, three on 8th and a peak of five on 21st plus a single on 11th June. Autumn migration was even poorer with just a single on 18th August, two records of singles on 17th & 19th September and the last of the year on 2nd October.

(Common) Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

This was a very poor year for the species, the only record being an individual trapped and ringed at the Observatory garden on 10th April.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	8	3	8-13	7	13	28	3	50	8	3	15	24	6	6	10	1

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

One to three recorded regularly during April from 19th and in May between 8th -25th May, with a peak of five on 13th. Single individuals were recorded in autumn on 14th and 17th September.

(Eurasian) Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

The only record was an individual caught and ringed on 14th September.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	3	3	0	0	1

(Eurasian) Wren *Troglodyte troglodytes*

Drean

Very common species throughout the season, with a number of pairs breeding successfully across the island. Although numbers remained constant during spring and summer, they started to increase in September to a peak of 29 individuals recorded on 15th October.

(Common) Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Truitlag

Species seen throughout the season although irregularly. During autumn, numbers increased to a maximum of 905 individuals counted on 25th October.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*

There were just four single records with individuals seen on 7th & 17th October and 4th & 20th November.

(Common) Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Lhondhoo

Recorded daily from the beginning of the season until the Observatory closed; several pairs bred in the garden, Withy and Mill Giau. During autumn, numbers peaked to a maximum of 111 on 2nd November.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilalris*

Ushag sniaghthey

Up to four were seen on four dates towards the end of March and seven on 3rd April were the only records in the first half of the year. The species became regular and abundant after 15th October, to a maximum of 142 birds recorded on 1st November.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*

Lhon/ Thresh len

Recorded in all months except in May, with generally low numbers during spring, but becoming more regular and abundant from September. Although sightings were very scarce during the summer months, the capture of an adult in breeding condition in June and recently fledged young in July and August, confirm this species bred around the Observatory.

Autumn migration was evident from 7th September with up to four recorded almost daily from 15th to the month's end. During October numbers increased with double figure counts on 12 dates with a maximum of 47 on 29th October. Numbers decreased quite rapidly after 37 on 2nd November with just single figure counts through to the close of the season.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus**Lhon Geayee*

One or two records between 19th-21st March and a single on 5th April were the only records in the first half of the season. Autumn migrants were recorded from 7th October with almost daily records through until 4th November. There were several reasonably large arrivals with 112 on 14th (including two birds of the “northern” race *T.i.coburni*, 153 on 17th October and 235 on 2nd November.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus**Lhon Keylley*

The first record of the year was a single around the Observatory garden on 8th September. There were no further records until 8th October where after records became almost daily to 19th and again from 25th – 30th, with a peak of 30 on 28th October. One or two were recorded on seven dates in November plus five on the 20th.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata**Skybbyltagh breck*

The first sighting of the species was a single on the east coast on 9th May; with the exception of nine on 13th May, the remaining records related to just 1-4 birds seen on 19 dates up to 9th June. Autumn records consisted of just singles (except two on 14th) recorded almost daily between 10th and 19th September.

(European) Robin *Erithacus rubecula**Cleean jiarg/ Spittag*

Present all year and bred. Spring passage involved fairly low numbers with a maximum of 10 on 20th March and 15 on 5th April. From mid-April records were of just one – three birds, with just five singles in May and one on 3rd June. Autumn passage was evident from 7th August and built slowly through the month to a peak of 11 on 30th. Passage was more consistent from September with up to 30 recorded regularly until 7th November, with a peak of 47 on 6th October.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*

Only one bird was seen this season: an adult male sitting outside the office window on the morning of 3rd November; a very poor year.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bird Days	5	6	10	11	6	23	2	8	2	2	4	4	4	3	2	1

(Common) Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Spring passage consisted of singles on six dates in April from 18th plus a single on 1st May and two on 13th. In autumn, singles were recorded on 4th, 5th and 6th October.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*

There were only three records of Whinchat this season. A single individual was ringed on 13th May and further singles were seen on 14th and 21st May.

(European) Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*

Boid y chonne / Kione dhoo y eeigyn

Recorded almost daily from the beginning of the season to its end, with a maximum count of 11 on 14th October; several pairs bred across the island.

(Northern) Wheatear *Oenanthe Oenanthe*

Claggan cloaie

Recorded almost daily from 19th March to 17th October; numbers increased as birds arrived from the wintering grounds, to a maximum of 85 birds recorded on 15th May. A short period of no sightings at the beginning of September marks the departure of the breeding population and the arrival of a migratory one. On this second wave, two individuals were identified as “Greenland” race (13th October).

Several pairs bred across the island, the first record of a Wheatear carrying nesting material dates was on 22nd April and the first fledglings were seen on 7th June.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	14	250	549	599	373	182	53	15	0
Max counts	6	49	85	59	39	23	8	5	0

Duncock *Prunella modularis*

Drean mollagh /Bogh Keeir

Seen on nine occasions during March and April, in ones or twos, but never during summer months. It became more regular and abundant after 13th September, with numbers increasing slowly until a peak of 16 on 9th October.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Jallyn

After an extremely good year for House Sparrows in 2014 (49 bird-days), only 14 bird-days were recorded on 2015, with a peak count of four on 8th October. Except singles seen on 8th May, 26th and 27th September, all records took place during October.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*

Ushag Ghlass

The first of the year was a single bird recorded on 1st May. Grey Wagtails were recorded in considerable numbers around mid September, with the odd record extending into November. The first record of the autumn was on 8th September and peak count of 19 individuals on 16th.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba yarrellii*

Ushag Vreck/ Ushag voltee

Present all year with two peaks corresponding to migrating times and another in July most likely reflecting fledging of locally bred young. Records were almost non-existent for a short period of time between the end of July and September, probably the time between departure of the breeding population and the starting of migration. Several pairs bred in the island.



	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	41	85	65	41	80	13	26	54	3
Max counts	9	11	6	4	6	2	8	15	2

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*

Only recorded during autumn migration, between 2nd September and 7th October; the greatest passage took place the first week of September, with a peak count of 20 individuals, although records continued until the end of the month. In October, 15 birds were recorded on the 1st.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*

Records were few and restricted to September; two individuals were heard on 14th and singles were recorded on 16th and 22nd.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis**Tweet/Cheet/Ushag y Veet*

Present all year in big numbers, reaching a peak in April and May and decreasing again after breeding. Numbers rose again during autumn thanks to big migrating flocks recorded in the second half of September and occasionally in October. Many pairs bred successfully across the island.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	641	1755	1637	1147	1329	420	2616	1966	144
Max counts	129	202	185	130	157	47	806	457	74

(Eurasian) Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus**Fushag Varrey*

Rock Pipits were recorded all season in variable numbers. Several pairs bred.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	6	21	64	80	31	15	263	371	62
Max counts	2	5	9	17	10	4	44	27	27

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*

A single individual was ringed on 5th April and recaptured on the 6th. They were back in autumn, from 17th October to 4th November, a total of 21 bird-days were recorded.

(Common) Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*

Ushag y Choan /Ushag veg vreck

A common species in the Observatory garden and vegetable patch, with higher numbers recorded in autumn. Recently fledged birds were recorded in July and August, confirming breeding. Peak numbers were recorded during the second half of October with a high count of 105 on 31st.



	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	39	99	87	40	11	12	93	91	13
Max counts	10	10	8	4	3	4	62	105	8

(European) Greenfinch *Chloris chloris*

Corkan Keylley glass

Greenfinches were recorded all months from July, albeit in very low numbers; with just singles recorded on 3rd July, 12th & 17th August before a slight increase in the regularity of occurrences in September. The species remained scarce, however, with only six records in September, nine in October and four in November, with a maximum count of six on 26th September.

(Common) Linnet *Linaria cannabina**Fillip ny Kempey / Ushag y lien*

Present all season in big numbers, with several pairs breeding successfully. After breeding, birds flocked in feeding groups and in autumn, passage flocks were recorded flying over the Calf.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	21	246	413	305	563	428	757	875	28
Max counts	8	65	55	45	110	71	107	120	16

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*

Twite visited us at the end of the season with three on 28th and six on 30th October recorded flying over the islet plus a flock of 31 was seen at Cow Harbour on 2nd November.

Lesser (Common) Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret**Bytermmyrn dhone/Lossan ruy*

Small numbers were recorded in spring, with just four records in March and three in April, with a maximum of four on 21st March. The main passage of Redpolls occurred in autumn from 14th September, when big flocks were recorded flying over and many individuals were tape lured to the nets. Passage was at its strongest during the second half of September with high counts of 60 on 19th, 80 on 26th & 50 on 27th September and 58 on 2nd October.

(Red) Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*

Only two records this season, a group of six birds flying over the island on 25th September and a single individual on 26th October.

(European) Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Lossey ny Keylley / Kiark my Leydee

Very abundant around the Observatory garden all season, where several pairs bred successfully. After breeding the species became more dispersed and could often be seen feeding on thistles around the fields. Spring migration peaked during the first half of April when daily counts often reached 30 individuals, with a high count of 50 on 5th. Following the breeding season, records became more sporadic until autumn passage proper started from mid-September, when daily counts often were in the region of 20-50 birds.

	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov
Bird Days	116	506	227	351	554	393	270	491	47
Max counts	25	50	19	38	46	32	51	50	15

(Eurasian) Siskin *Spinus spinus*

Only recorded during autumn passage, from 9th September; the main period of migration occurred during the second half of September, with a peak count of 40 on 14th. Passages of mainly single figure counts during October and the early part of November, high counts of 11 on 3rd, 12 on 9th & 26 on 25th October and 19 on 3rd November.

(Common) Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Pompee ny Guirtlagh

Recorded all season, almost daily from 20th March to 8th April at the Observatory. Records afterward were irregular and scarce, singles except for 8th June, when a pair with a dependent chick was seen, confirming breeding. In autumn, Reed Buntings were recorded almost daily at the Withy from 25th September to 2nd November, mostly with counts of 1-4 birds, although six on 8th & 14th and eight on 14th October indicate the main period of autumn passage.

Escapes:

Great Horned Owl *Bubo virginianus*

An individual was often seen roosting at the Upper Lighthouse and was flushed from Mill Giau and Back Field twice. Native to North America, it is common in captivity and was presumably a bird escaped from the main-island and the same individual recorded in 2014.

RINGING REPORT

The reasonable total of 3458 birds of 60 species were ringed in 2015; this was despite mist netting mornings during spring being limited due to wind and summer ringing taking a lower priority to allow a greater level of Manx Shearwater monitoring. It was also a fairly wet summer, which may account for low numbers of young pipits, Stonechat and Wheatear, which are normally lured to the traps with fresh water.

On a more positive note, both ringing sites at the Withy and Observatory were run simultaneously during the autumn, which helped to increase ringing numbers after a poor summer. Record numbers of incubating Eiders were trapped and the annual total for Lesser Redpoll was broken whilst the second highest ever total for Redwing was achieved. Contrastingly, the numbers of Shag and Razorbill chicks were low compared to previous years. This year, adult Manx Shearwaters were trapped and ringed at all five historical colonies, and chicks at four of them; while Storm Petrels were trapped at Gibdale, Kione ny Halby and South Harbour. The increase of Eiders trapped and the number of nests found and monitored indicates an increase of its breeding numbers at the Calf.



Colour ringing programs continued for Choughs, gulls, Rock Pipit and Wheatear. Resightings of colour-ringed Choughs were low but included birds from 2014 and 2013. However, colour ringed gulls continue to produce interesting results both locally and abroad. Despite enthusiastic efforts to ring Rock Pipits by some volunteers, only one could be trapped. Several

colour-ringed Wheatears from 2014 were retrapped or re-sighted this year despite the challenge of reading the small inscription and several more from 2015 were re-sighted. However, the best record of this species arrived from Germany, when a bird hatched on the Calf last year was re-sighted in Heligoland during the spring.

Some unusual species were ringed this year, such as an incubating Shelduck (the first for the Calf), a Snipe (the second since 2000), a Water Rail (the third since 2000), a Reed Warbler, a Brambling and two Yellow-browed Warblers.

In total, 39 birds were recovered away from the Calf, including, for the first time, an Eider. However, it is not only recoveries that provide details of the history of Calf birds but a number of retraps show that some birds are faithful to the Calf of Man being caught or re-sighted year after year on the island. Several Eider females were found breeding very close to previous years' nests and data from Manx Shearwater recaptures prove they will sometimes return to breed in the same colony they were born. One exception to this being a bird born in South Harbour in 2010; it was found possibly breeding in The Cletts in 2015. This movement between local colonies is also quite common among Herring Gulls. Although passerines are known to have a very low survivorship rate, there are some "oldies" around the Observatory with some regulars being captured and recaptured almost every year. The longevity record for passerines this year was held by a male Reed Bunting first ringed in 2009 as an adult.

Many thanks to all that contributed to the ringing activities this season: Kevin Scott, Tom Keggin, Luis Carretero, Robert Pell, Mark Fitzpatrick, Ian Beggs and Richard Cope.

Summary of newly ringed birds in 2015:

Top ten species:

Monthly totals:

	Annual total for new birds		Monthly totals for new birds	Number of species
Goldcrest	636	March	183	17
Willow Warbler	506	April	1008	26
Lesser Redpoll	218	May	180	28
Chiffchaff	212	June	353	26
Blackcap	197	July	195	11
Herring Gull	189	August	85	15
Robin	164	September	570	26
Goldfinch	137	October	785	26
Blackbird	114	November	97	15
Manx Shearwater	105	Annual total	3456	60

Original ringing year of species re-trapped or re-sighted in 2015 that were previously ringed in the Calf:

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2001	2000	1999	1991
Manx Shearwater	1	1	1	-	3	2	-	1	-	5	-	-	1	1	-
Storm Petrel	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shag	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Eider	1	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oystercatcher	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Herring Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Meadow Pipit	6	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pied Wagtail	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Robin	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wren	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stonechat	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wheatear	3	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Blackbird	7	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Great Tit	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chough	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chaffinch	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Goldfinch	19	2	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reed Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

RINGING TOTALS

	Ringed 2015			Recoveries	
	Full grown	Pulli	Total	Grand Total	2015 1959-2015
White-fronted Goose		0	1		0
Pink-footed Goose		0	1		0
Brent Goose		0	1		0
Teal		0	4		0
Mallard		0	21		4
Shelduck	1	1	1		0
Eider	9	9	40	1	1
Goldeneye		0	1		0
Fulmar		0	136		3
Manx Shearwater	105	2	107	856	3 24
Storm Petrel	94		94	5240	7 557
Gannet		0	1		0
Cormorant		0	7		3
Shag		40	40	7544	572
Grey Heron		0	1		0
Hen Harrier		0	50		3
Sparrowhawk	2	2	208		15
Kestrel	2	2	142		10
Merlin	1	1	36		1
Peregrine		0	9		0
Grey Partridge		0	14		0
Water Rail	1	1	38		0
Corncrake		0	7		0
Moorhen		0	38		0
Coot		0	1		0
Oystercatcher	1	1	292	1	6

Ringed Plover		0	1		0
Lapwing		0	27		2
Purple Sandpiper		0	32		1
Dunlin		0	1		0
Jack Snipe		0	12		0
Snipe	1	1	35		1
Woodcock		0	24		2
Whimbrel		0	1		0
Curlew		0	25		0
Redshank		0	21		0
Greenshank		0	1		0
Green Sandpiper		0	1		0
Common Sandpiper		0	4		0
Turnstone		0	36		0
Common Gull		0	1		0
Lesser Black-backed Gull		14 14	378	2	20
Herring Gull		189 189	14073	8	481
Great Black-backed Gull		41 41	2666	1	137
Kittiwake		0	939		22
Guillemot		0	618		31
Razorbill		1 1	1358		78
Puffin		0	7		0
Stock Dove		0	3		0
Woodpigeon	2	2	29		2
Collared Dove		0	46		0
Turtle Dove		0	15		2
Mourning Dove		0	1		1
Cuckoo		0	113		1
Scops Owl		0	1		1
Long-eared Owl		0	22		1

Short-eared Owl			0	62	1
Swift			0	1	0
Hoopoe			0	4	0
Wryneck			0	22	0
G. S. Woodpecker			0	5	0
Skylark			0	61	0
Sand Martin			0	50	0
Swallow	24	7	31	3674	39
House Martin			0	69	1
Tree Pipit			0	468	2
Meadow Pipit	33		33	14764	37
Rock Pipit	1		1	248	0
Yellow Wagtail			0	1	0
Grey Wagtail	4		4	568	2
Pied Wagtail	3	4	7	1313	3
Waxwing			0	1	0
Wren	50	6	56	4109	5
Duncock	46		46	2255	11
Robin	164		164	9353	58
Thrush Nightingale			0	1	0
Nightingale			0	9	0
Bluethroat			0	9	0
Black Redstart			0	104	0
Redstart	4		4	1343	7
Whinchat	2		2	728	3
Stonechat	13		13	2449	9
Wheatear	52	6	58	3405	1 17
Ring Ouzel	1		1	303	4
Blackbird	114	4	118	16628	182
Fieldfare	5		5	258	0

Song Thrush	79	79	7865	48
Redwing	90	90	1697	2
Mistle Thrush	2	2	238	6
Grasshopper Warbler	1	1	398	0
Sedge Warbler	13	13	5273	1 20
Marsh Warbler		0	5	0
Great Reed Warbler		0	1	0
Reed Warbler	1	1	33	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler		0	1	0
Icterine Warbler		0	13	0
Melodious Warbler		0	18	0
Blackcap	197	197	2984	3
Garden Warbler	2	2	652	4
Barred Warbler		0	27	0
Lesser Whitethroat		0	93	0
Whitethroat	23	23	6428	14
Subalpine Warbler		0	18	0
Sardinian Warbler		0	1	0
Greenish Warbler		0	7	0
Pallas's Warbler		0	2	0
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	2	37	0
Dusky Warbler		0	2	1
Western Bonelli's Warbler		0	3	0
Wood Warbler		0	74	2
Chiffchaff	212	212	9546	2 34
Willow Warbler	506	506	40061	1 70
Goldcrest	636	636	39609	2 132
Firecrest		0	60	1
Spotted Flycatcher	17	17	4246	19

Pied Flycatcher		0	349		2
Red-breasted Flycatcher		0	16		0
Long-tailed Tit		0	273		3
Coal Tit	5	5	467		5
Blue Tit	13	13	1869		43
Great Tit	50	50	1429		31
Treecreeper		0	62		0
Golden Oriole		0	5		0
Red-backed Shrike		0	10		0
Great Grey Shrike		0	3		0
Woodchat Shrike		0	3		0
Magpie		0	390		6
Chough	1	5	6	467	42
Jackdaw		0	20		1
Rook		0	7		0
Carriion Crow		0	2		0
Hooded Crow		3	3	105	2
Raven		0	6		0
Starling	34	34	1679		17
House Sparrow	5	5	207		1
Tree Sparrow		0	115		0
Chaffinch	114	114	10304	1	83
Brambling	1	1	48		0
Serin		0	1		0
Greenfinch	3	3	3344	1	69
Goldfinch	137	137	3659	4	22
Siskin	2	2	438		4
Linnet	15	15	2442		6
Twite		0	3		0
Lesser Redpoll	218	218	1199	3	10

Common (Mealy) Redpoll	0	18	2
Crossbill	0	10	0
Common Rosefinch	0	15	0
Long-tailed Rosefinch	0	1	0
Bullfinch	0	5	0
Hawfinch	0	4	0
Yellow-rumped Warbler	0	1	0
Song Sparrow	0	1	0
Yellowhammer	0	13	0
Ortolan Bunting	0	1	0
Rustic Bunting	0	1	0
Little Bunting	0	2	0
Reed Bunting	22	22	818
Red-headed Bunting	0	3	0
Northern Oriole	0	1	0
TOTAL	3136	322 3458	246694 39 3071

Pullus, Pulli = Bird, birds still in downy stage.

RECOVERIES AND CONTROLS

Recaptures of ringed birds continue giving information about local movements, migration patterns, wintering areas and longevity. The following is a list of re-trapped or resighted birds of which we received subsequent news of in 2015, of interest were records of birds from the Netherlands, Denmark, France and Belgium. Colour-ringed gulls continue to produce an interesting series of observations in Eire, SPAIN and PORTUGAL, whilst closer to home a Manx Shearwater was sadly found dead six years after it was ringed, a Storm Petrel almost 19 years of age and an Oystercatcher of 24 and still alive!

Recoveries are birds ringed on the Calf and observed elsewhere, whilst Controls refer to birds ringed away from the Calf.

Key to codes used in this report

Age codes:		Capture type:	
0	Unknown or not specified	A	Alive and probably healthy - fate unknown
1	Nesting or chick not yet able to fly	R	Recaptured and released by a ringer
2	Full grown, year of hatching unknown	S	Sick or injured, not known to have been released
3J	Young in juvenile plumage and able to fly freely	X	Found dead
3	Definitely hatched during current calendar year	XL	Found long dead; over a week
4	Hatched before current calendar year, exact year unknown	XF	Found freshly dead; less than a week
5	Definitely hatched during last calendar year	VV	Rings read in the field, not by a ringer
6	Hatched before last calendar year, exact year unknown	RR	Rings read in the field by a ringer
		+F	Shot or intentionally killed by man – fres

Manx Shearwater

EL87660	4	N	20/05/09	Calf of Man
	4	R	23/07/15	Calf of Man 6 yrs, 64 days
		X	29/07/15	Mull of Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland 65 km, N, 6 yrs 70 days
EL87943	4	N	13/07/15	Calf of Man
		R	18/07/15	Skokholm, Pembrokeshire, Wales 263 km, S, 5 days
EY88207	4	N	16/06/15	Calf of Man
		XL	10/07/15	Port Logan Bay, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland 75 km, N, 24 days

Storm Petrel

2359888	4	N	02/07/96	Calf of Man
		R	12/06/15	Priest Island, Highland, Scotland 435 km, N, 18 yrs 345 days
2474968	4	N	19/07/97	Calf of Man
	6	R	03/07/15	Lunga, Treshnish Isles, Argyll and Bute, Scotland 289 km, NNW 17 yrs 349 days
2591800	4	N	13/07/15	Calf of Man
	4	R	16/07/15	Skokholm, Pembrokeshire 263 km, S, 3 days

2591823	4	N	12/07/11	Calf of Man
	6	R	03/07/15	Fladda, Treshnish Isles, Argyll and Bute, Scotland 289 km, NNW, 3 yrs 356 days
2591834	4	N	02/08/11	Calf of Man
	6	R	03/07/15	Lunga, Treshnish Isles, Argyll and Bute, Scotland 289 km, NNW, 3 yrs 335 days
2591935	4	N	16/07/15	Calf of Man
	4	R	30/07/15	Skokholm, Pembrokeshire, Wales 263 km, S, 14 days
2633306	4	N	24/07/15	Calf of Man
	4	R	06/08/15	Ballyreagh, Londonderry, N. Ireland 174 km, NW, 13 days

Eider

HT95047	4F	N	26/05/10	Calf of Man
	6F	R	28/05/13	Calf of Man 3 yrs 2 days
	6F	R	13/05/14	Calf of Man 3 yrs 352 days
	6F	R	25/05/14	Calf of Man, 3 yrs 364 days
	6F	R	16/05/15	Calf of Man 4 yrs 355 days
		XL	21/10/15	Langness, Isle of Man 12 km, E, 5 yrs 148 days

Oystercatcher

FR90823	1	N	15/06/91	Calf of Man
		VV	14/08/15	Dawlish Warren, Devon 396 km, SSE, 24 yrs 60 days

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GR64661	1	N	10/07/12	Calf of Man
	5	VV	16/07/13	Angeirs, Matosinhos, Porto, PORTUGAL 1451 km, SSW, 1 yr 6 days
	5	VV	14/08/13	Torreira, Aveiro, PORTUGAL 1506 km, S, 1 yr 35 days
	6	VV	27/03/15	Cordoba, SPAIN 1798 km, S, 2 yrs 260 days
GR64667	1	N	10/07/12	Calf of Man
	3	VV	27/08/12	Esmelle Beach, Ferrol, Coruna, SPAIN 1195 km, SSW, 48 days
	5	VV	08/11/13	Vil de Matos, Coimbra, PORTUGAL 1554 km, S, 1 yr 121 days
	5	VV	09/11/13	Vil de Matos, Coimbra, PORTUGAL 1 yr 22 days
	7	VV	28/07/14	Praia de Mira, Coimbra, PORTUGAL 1540 km, S, 2 yrs 18 days)
	7	VV	10/10/14	Vil de Matos, Coimbra, PORTUGAL 2 yrs 92 days)

GR64679	1	N	13/07/12	Calf of Man
	5	VV	09/11/13	San Sebastian, Guipuzcoa, SPAIN
				1210 km, S, 1 yr 119 days
	7	VV	16/01/14	Quarteira Port, Faro, PORTUGAL
				1904 km, S, 1 yr 187 days
	7	VV	18/02/14	Quarteira Port, Faro, PORTUGAL 1 yr 220 days
	8	VV	29/01/15	Quarteira Port, Faro, PORTUGAL 2 yrs 200 days
	8	VV	28/02/15	Quarteira Port, Faro, PORTUGAL 2 yrs 230 days
	8	VV	04/03/15	Quarteira Port, Faro, PORTUGAL 2 yrs 234 days



Herring Gull

GN11456	1	N	08/07/04	Calf of Man
		XL	19/07/15	Port Grennaugh, Isle of Man 16 km, ENE, 11 yrs 11 days
GN53191	1	N	10/07/07	Calf of Man
	8	VV	30/10/14	Strandhall, Isle of Man 8 km, ENE, 7 yrs 112 days
GN53345	1	N	25/06/11	Calf of Man
		R	14/07/11	Calf of Man 19 days
	5	VV	15/07/12	Bray Harbour, Wicklow, Eire 127 km, SW, 1 yr 20 days
	6	VV	20/03/13	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 327 km, SW, 1 yr 268 days
	9	VV	07/02/14	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 2 yrs 227days
	9	VV	26/02/14	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 2 yrs 246 days
	9	VV	05/08/14	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 3 yrs 41 days)
	8	VV	14/01/15	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 3 yrs 203 days)
	8	VV	23/02/15	Ballycotton Pier, Cork, Eire 3 yrs 243 days
	8	VV	27/06/15	Calf of Man, 4 yrs 2 days
	8	VV	09/08/15	Calf of Man, 4 yrs 45 days
	8	VV	13/08/15	Calf of Man, 4 yrs 49 days
GR64580	1	N	30/06/12	Calf of Man
	7	VV	25/07/14	Port St Mary, Isle of Man 6 km, ENE, 2 yrs 25 days

GR08519	1	N	29/06/11	Calf of Man
		X	30/07/15	Slegaby, Isle of Man 27 km, ENE, 4 yrs 31 days
GR64890	1	N	23/06/14	Calf of Man
	3	VV	30/12/14	Cheekpoint Harbour, Waterford, Eire 246 km, SW, 190 days
	5	VV	04/06/15	Sean Walsh Park, Dublin, Eire 133 km, SW, 346 days
GR64929	1	N	23/06/14	Calf of Man
	5	VV	11/02/15	Sandycove, Dublin, Eire 121 km, SW, 233 days
GR64952	1	N	24/06/14	Calf of Man
	5	VV	29/03/15	Hayle Estuary, Cornwall 432 km, S, 278 days
GR64974	1	N	28/06/14	Calf of Man
	5	VV	19/03/15	Ardglass Harbour, Down, N. Ireland 56 km, WNW, 264 days
GR98888	1	N	23/06/15	Calf of Man
		X	29/06/15	Port Erin, Isle of Man 5 km, NE, 6 days
GR64755	1	N	28/06/13	Calf of Man
	5	VV	21/05/14	Peel Hill Quarry, Isle of Man 20 km, NNE, 327 days

GR64828	1	N	03/07/13	Calf of Man
	5	VV	17/03/14	Peel, Isle of Man 20 km, NNE, 257 days
	5	VV	28/03/14	Peel, 268 days
	5	VV	15/09/14	Peel, 1 yr 74 days

GR64915	1	N	23/06/14	Calf of Man
	3	VV	15/09/14	Peel, Isle of Man 20 km, NNE, 84 days

Great Black-backed Gull

HT95168	1	N	24/06/14	Calf of Man
	5	VV	03/04/15	Lagnagoppoge, Strangford Lough, Down, N. Ireland 56 km, NW, 283 days

HT95148	1	N	05/07/13	Calf of Man
	3	VV	11/09/13	Skomer Isle, Pembrokeshire, Wales 259 km, S, 68 days
	5	VV	13/03/14	Camel Estuary, Cornwall 391 km, S, 251 days
	5	VV	26/10/14	Camel Estuary, 478 days
	5	VV	12/12/14	Camel Estuary, 525 days

HT95167	1	N	24/06/14	Calf of Man
	3	VV	23/10/14	Lampau, Ouessant, Finistere, FRANCE 622 km, S, 121 days

Chough

EL87888	1	N	14/05/14	Calf of Man
		XL	06/07/14	Aldrick, Isle of Man 2 km, NNE, 53 days)

Wheatear

D401357	3J	N	23/06/14	Calf of Man
	RR		12/04/15	Helgoland, GERMANY 829 km, E, 293 days
	5M	R	14/04/15	Helgoland, Germany 295 days)
D401386	3J	N	25/06/14	Calf of Man
	3J	R	02/07/14	Calf of Man 7 days
	3	VV	29/08/14	Derbyhaven, Isle of Man 12 km, E, 65 days

Sedge Warbler

Z075956	4	N	25/05/15	Calf of Man
	4	R	16/08/15	Slapton Ley, Devon 426 km, S, 83 days

Chiffchaff

ENK659	4	N	29/10/14	Calf of Man
	4	R	04/01/15	nr. Martson Moretaine, Bedfordshire 361 km, SE, 67 days
HXL711	5	N	08/05/15	Calf of Man
	4	R	12/05/15	South Walney Bird Obs, Cumbria 105 km, E, 4 days

Willow Warbler

HKN171	4	N	16/04/15	Calf of Man
		X	16/04/15	Port St Mary, Isle of Man 5 km, ENE, 0 days

Goldcrest

ENK449	3F	N	27/09/14	Calf of Man
	3F	R	05/11/14	Ballagawne, Isle of Man 7 km, NE, 39 days

ENK630	3M	N	13/10/14	Calf of Man
		X	18/03/15	Carleton, Blackpool 119 km, ESE, 156 days

HXL824	3F	N	16/09/15	Calf of Man Isle of Man
		X	17/09/15	near Silecroft, Cumbria 97 km, E, 1 day

Chaffinch

Y362862	5F	N	28/03/12	Calf of Man
		X	24/04/15	Stonethwaite, Cumbria 119 km, ENE, 3 yrs 27 days

Greenfinch

TL31787	3M	N	01/10/11	Calf of Man
		XL	21/04/15	Castletown, Isle of Man 11 km, E, 3 yrs 202 days

Goldfinch

D400017	1J	N	05/07/13	Calf of Man
	5M	R	30/04/14	Leswalt, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland 100 km, N, 299 days)

D401016	5F	N	16/04/14	Calf of Man
	4F	R	03/03/15	Loughan, Londonderry, N. Ireland 164 km, NW, 321 days

D401024	5F	N	17/04/14	Calf of Man
	6F	R	28/02/15	Doran's Farmyard, Thomastown, Kildare, Eire 154 km, WSW, 317 days
Y362893	6	N	05/04/12	Calf of Man
		X	20/04/15	Dungannon, Armagh, N. Ireland 127km, WNW, 3yrs 15days
Z075091	3F	N	12/10/14	Calf of Man
	5F	R	12/04/15	Leswalt, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland 100 km, N, 182 days
Lesser Redpoll				
L215359	5	N	23/04/11	Calf of Man
	6	R	05/01/15	Lakenheath Fen, Suffolk 397 km, ESE, 3 yrs 257 days)
D400950	3	N	24/10/13	Calf of Man
	6F	R	15/05/14	Leswalt, Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland 100 km, N, 203 days
Z075655	2	N	26/09/15	Calf of Man
	3	R	25/10/15	Northward Hill, High Halston, Medway 462 km, SE, 29 days
Z076352	3	N	08/10/15	Calf of Man
	3	R	20/10/15	Sandwich Bay Estate, Kent 520 km, SE, 12 days

Controls 2015

Gannet

1248427	1	N	26/06/87	Ailsa Craig, South Ayrshire
	4	XL	16/09/14	Calf of Man 135 km, S, 27 yrs 82 days

1312829	1	N	01/07/95	Ailsa Craig, South Ayrshire
	4	X	02/04/14	Calf of Man 135 km, S, 18 yrs 275 days

Manx Shearwater

EX61365	1	N	26/08/11	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down, N. Ireland
		XL	31/08/15	Calf of Man, 84 km, SSE, 4 yrs 5 days

EX61517	1	N	02/09/11	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down, N. Ireland
	4	R	17/08/15	Calf of Man, 84 km, SSE, 3 yrs 349 days

EX96442	3	N	13/09/11	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down, N. Ireland
	4	R	18/06/15	Calf of Man, 84 km, SSE, 3 yrs 278 days

EX97924	4	N	23/07/14	Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down, N. Ireland
	4	R	16/06/15	Calf of Man 84 km, SSE, 328 days
	4	R	18/06/15	Calf of Man, 330 days

FB39138	4	N	25/08/15	Porth Ysgaden, Gwynedd
	4	R	04/09/15	Calf of Man 128 km, N, 10 days
Storm Petrel				
2580142	6	N	27/06/13	Eilean An Taighe, Western Isles, Scotland
	4	R	16/07/15	Calf of Man 436 km, SSE, 2 yrs 19 days
2582362	4	N	29/06/14	Windfarm, Wexford, Eire
	4	R	15/07/15	Calf of Man 233 km, NNE, 1 yr 16 days
2650958	4	N	30/08/10	Sheepand Harbour, Ardglass, Down, N. Ireland
	4	R	16/07/15	Calf of Man 55 km, ESE, 4 yrs 320 days
2661155	4	N	02/08/14	Eyemouth, Scottish Borders
	4	R	17/08/15	Calf of Man 266 km, SW, 1 yr 15 days
2665802	4	N	20/07/12	Sanda Island, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute, Scotland
	4	R	15/07/15	Calf of Man 144km, SSE, 2 yrs 360 days
2665969	4	N	03/08/12	Sanda Island, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute, Scotland
	4	R	16/07/15	Calf of Man 144km, SSE, 2 yrs 347 days

2678106	4	N	17/07/13	Tuallgh Point, Donegal, Eire
	4	R	16/07/15	Calf of Man 221 km, SE, 1 yr 364 days
2685804	4	N	26/07/14	Skokholm, Pembrokeshire, Wales
	4	R	15/07/15	Calf of Man 263 km, N, 354 days
2688319	4	N	18/07/14	Fife Ness, Scotland
	4	R	24/07/15	Calf of Man 284 km, SSW, 1 yr 6 days
2702288	4	N	15/08/14	Sheepand Harbour, Ardglass, Down, N. Ireland
	4	R	24/07/15	Calf of Man 55 km, ESE, 343 days
Robin				
NLA.				
AX62874	3	N	17/09/14	Castricum, Noord-Holland, NETHERLANDS
	5	R	20/04/15	Calf of Man 628 km, W, 215 days

Our first foreign control for this species

Sedge Warbler

FRP.

7498367	3	N	14/08/14	Lac de Bairon, Sauville, Ardennes, FRANCE
	4	R	08/05/15	Calf of Man 827 km, NW, 267 days

Blackcap

DKC.

AX37407	5M	N	29/04/15	Blavand Flugestation, Ribe Amt, DENMARK
	5M	R	13/05/15	Calf of Man 843 km, W, 14 days

Our first control from Denmark for this species

Goldcrest

AHD580	3M	N	05/09/15	Eskmeals, Cumbria
	3M	R	08/09/15	Calf of Man 95 km, WSW, 3 days

Chaffinch

Z055599	2F	N	05/11/14	Ballagawne, Isle of Man
	4F	R	19/03/15	Calf of Man 7km, SW, 134 days

Lesser Redpoll

BLB.

13403752	4M	N	19/11/13	Sommethonne, Luxembourg, BELGIUM
	4M	R	15/04/14	Calf of Man 862 km, NW, 147 days

Our first foreign control for this species

2015 NON-AVIAN REPORT

Mammals

Pygmy Shrew *Sorex minutus*

One or two recorded infrequently and mostly around the Observatory, between 13th June and 11th November, with a maximum of three on 10th July and 26th October.

Mouse Spp.

A single recorded on 12th June was thought most probably to be a Wood Mouse.

Brown Rat *Rattus norvegicus*

Despite continuing efforts to eradicate the species from the Island, a single was recorded around the Observatory garden between 27th June and 8th July when it was finally caught in a kill trap.

Bat species

An un-identified bat, thought perhaps to be a Pipistrelle was seen on 28th October.

Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

The ever present Rabbit population appeared generally healthy, although a number of animals were recorded with Myxomatosis during the season. Black Rabbits were recorded regularly with up to three individuals seen throughout the season and a peak of six on two occasions in May.

Grey Seal *Halichoerus gryphus*

Recorded around the coastline of the Calf almost daily, with major haul out sites at Cow Harbour, The Cletts, The Puddle and, to a lesser extent, South Harbour seeing the greatest concentrations.

The table below shows the maximum count for each month of the season.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Max.	65	117	178	140	114	120	82	158	74

A record total of 63 pups were recorded during the autumn.

Sharks and Cetaceans

Basking Shark *Cetorhinus maximus*

A poor year; a single record on 18th August.

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

Singles were recorded on 27th July and 17th & 18th September.

Common Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Only recorded in autumn with at least one animal being seen on 7th & 12th August and a series of records during the second half of September and through October. In September records were six on 16th; one on 17th, 10 on 18th; three on 23rd and four on 29th & 30th and in October, singles on 1st, 2nd & 6th; five on 3rd; six on 12th; 15 on 13th; four on 16th and 19 on 18th.

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

A reasonable showing of records during the summer and autumn, starting with six on 23rd June, a single the following day and three on 3rd July before a peak count of 20+ were seen on 7th August. This was followed by at least one animal on 12th August and then seven on both 3rd & 18th September and two on 20th & 21st.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
D-days	-	-	-	7	3	21	18	2	-
Max.	-	-	-	6	3	20	7	2	-

Reptiles

Common Lizard *Lacerta vivipara*

The first Lizards were found on 18th March, with individuals being recorded around the island until 6th October, with a maximum of 15 seen on 21st April. Up to seven were seen during the summer months but then only one or three individuals were seen during the summer.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
L-days	2	27	10	9	4	7	11	1	-
Max.	1	15	7	5	3	1	3	1	-

Bugs and Bees

Beetles

Details are given of the maximum monthly count for each species recorded.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Minotaur beetle (<i>Typhaeus typhoeus</i>)	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Carabus granulatus</i>	-	1	1	4	3	7	1	1	-
Violet Ground Beetle (<i>Carabus violaceus</i>)	-	-	1	1	2	7	1	-	-
<i>Leistus spinibarbis</i>	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
<i>Leistus cf. fulibarvis</i>	-	-	-	2	1	3	1	-	-
<i>Otiorhynchus clavipes</i>	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dor beetle (<i>Geotrupes stercorarius</i>)	-	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	1
Tiger Beetle (<i>Cincidela campestris</i>)	-	-	1	7	2	-	-	-	-
<i>Silpha atrata</i>	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
<i>Pterostichus nigrita</i>	-	-	1	5	4	23	7	1	1
<i>Pterostichus cupreus</i>	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-
<i>Amara aulica</i>	-	-	1	3	6	7	1	-	-
Leaf beetle sp.	-	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	-
<i>Cincidela campestris</i>	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Cucurnelidae</i> sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

Bees

Details are given of the maximum monthly count for each species recorded.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Buff-tailed Bumblebee (<i>B.terrestris</i>)	1	3	4	2	1	1	3	1	-
White-tailed Bumblebee (<i>B.lucorum</i>)	-	19	14	8	3	30	250	10	-
Garden Bumblebee (<i>B.hortorum</i>)	-	1	1	1	-	5	1	-	-
Brown-banded Carder Bee (<i>B.humilis</i>)	-	-	2	5	1	-	-	-	-
Common Carder Bee (<i>B.pascuorum</i>)	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Red-tailed Bumblebee (<i>B.lapidaries</i>)	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Ivy Mining Bee (<i>Colletes herediae</i>)	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-
Carder Bee sp.	-	-	1	7	4	3	10	10	-
WT Bumblebee sp.	4	5	6	3	-	-	25	30	-
Bumblebee sp.	-	3	100	100	-	10	35	0	-
Miner Bee	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	-

Odonata

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta*

Singles were recorded on 12 dates between 17th September and 21st October.

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum*

First recorded on 19th September when the monthly peak of 10 was seen. Low single figure counts were made during the last week of September and through October, to the last record of three on 20th October. A peak count of 15 was recorded on 2nd October.

Fish

Eel *Anguilla anguilla*

Singles were seen in the Millpond on the 17th and 25th October.

Slugs

Details are given of the maximum monthly count for each species recorded.

	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Common Garden Slug (<i>Arion distinctus/hortensis</i>)	-	-	-	-	-	16	5	-	-
Tree Slug (<i>Limax marginatus</i>)	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Lemon Slug (<i>Limax tenellus</i>)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-
Large Red Slug/Black Slug (<i>Arion rufus/ater</i>)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

BUTTERFLY REPORT

Nathan Wilkie, Estate Warden 2017 & 2018

It would appear that this year, as with many other years, it was not possible to undertake the weekly butterfly transects. It is assumed that this was due to numerous reasons including; lack of time due to other tasks with a higher priority and also requiring good weather, the changeable and often unsuitable nature of weather on the Calf and the length of the transect.

2015 was a poor year for butterflies in the British Isles, with 35 of the 58 species monitored through the UKBMS declining from 2014. 2015 was also a late season for butterflies in the British Isles with two-thirds of species appearing later than the 10-year average and 90% having a later mean flight date than 2014.

(http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

Butterflies also appeared to have had a poor year on the Calf in 2015, although it is difficult to compare with previous years due to differing levels of effort. As Figure 1 shows, 2015 had an especially poor year, with the lowest total abundance recorded since 2006. This represents a steep decline since a 10 year high in 2013 of 4,212 records to only 859 records in 2015, which continued the decline from 1,697 records in 2014. As this report is being written retrospectively it is also possible to compare 2015 with 2016 and 2017; thankfully the steep decline since 2013 did not continue into 2016, but the totals for 2016 and 2017 were still below the average since 2006.

Comparisons in this report have been done using data from 2006 to 2017, and although records of butterflies on the Calf predate this, unfortunately utilising this data is not currently possible. Data up until 2017 was utilised as this report was not written until in 2018.

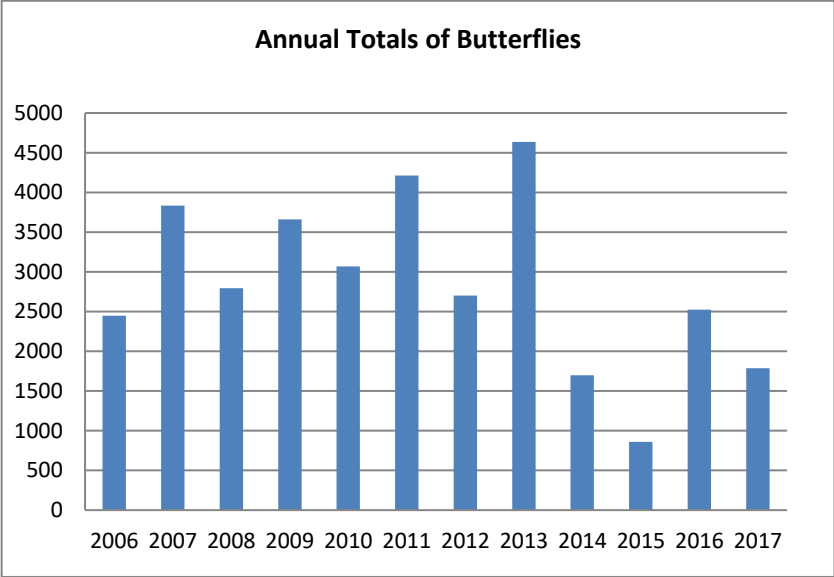


Figure 1

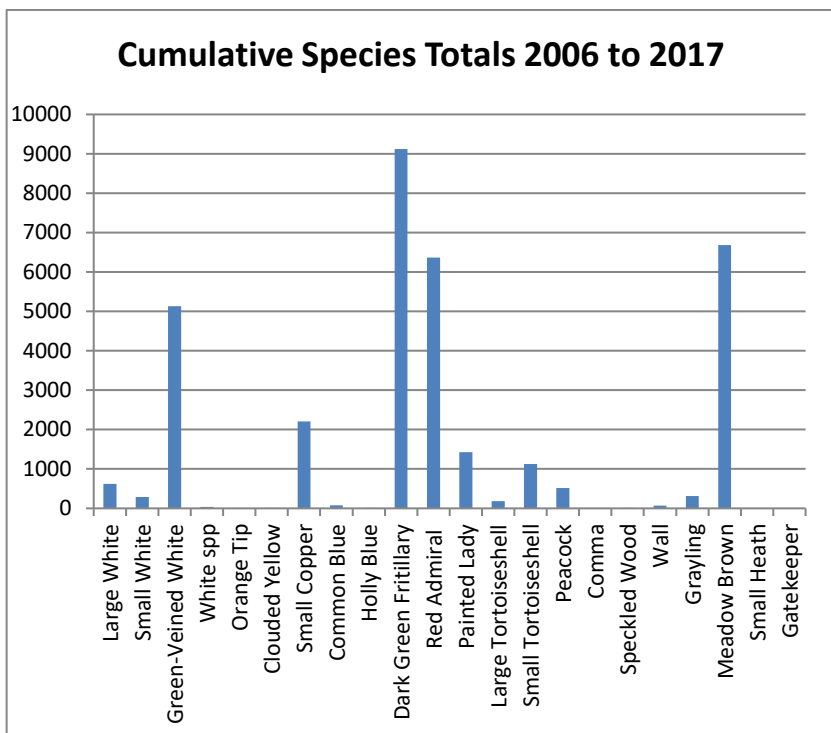


Figure 2

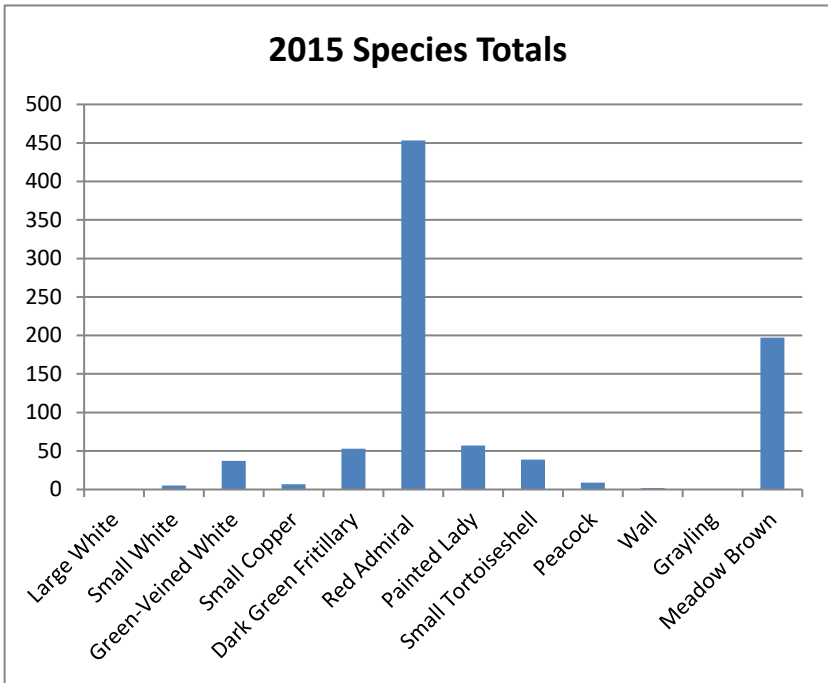


Figure 3

Systematic List

Large White *Pieris brassicae*

No Large Whites were recorded in 2015, which was also the case the year before. The 10 year average for this species on the Calf since 2006 is 59 records, highlighting just how poor this year was for this butterfly. In contrast, the rest of the British Isles had a 59% increase from 2014. This species has declined by 20% in the British Isles since 2006. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

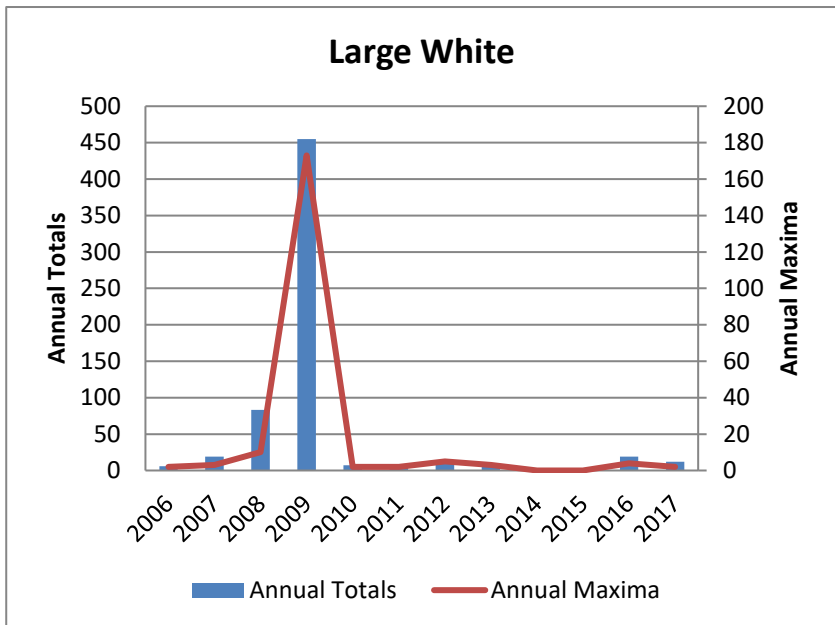


Figure 4

Small White *Pieris rapae*

5 records between the 16th September and 6th October, with a peak count of 2 on the 16th September.

Although 5 records represents a poor year and is below the 10 year average of 25 records, there have been 4 years with fewer records of this species over the last 10 years. Small Whites in the British Isles as a whole experienced a 4% increase since 2014. This species has remained stable in the British Isles over the last 10 years with only a 1% decrease. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

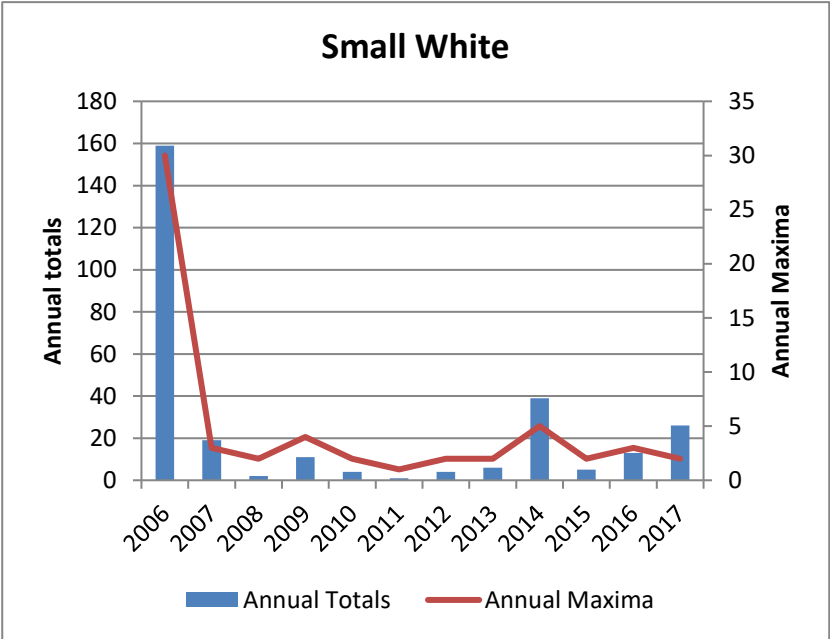


Figure 5

Green-veined White *Pieris napi*

37 records between the 7th May and 15th September, with a peak count of 4 on the 18th August.

This often abundant species on the Calf experienced its worst year over the 10 year period, with 37 records being drastically lower than the 10 year average of 429, this 91% lower abundance than the 10 year average is so severe that it is unfortunately worth noting that recording effort would appear to be a key variable in the data from 2015. The previous year, however, was also a poor year for Green-veined White on the Calf with only 120 records; a dramatic change since 2013 when 781 were recorded, which was the highest since 2006. Green-veined Whites also experienced a poor year in the British Isles, with a 40% decrease from the previous year, the species has increased by 38% since 2006. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

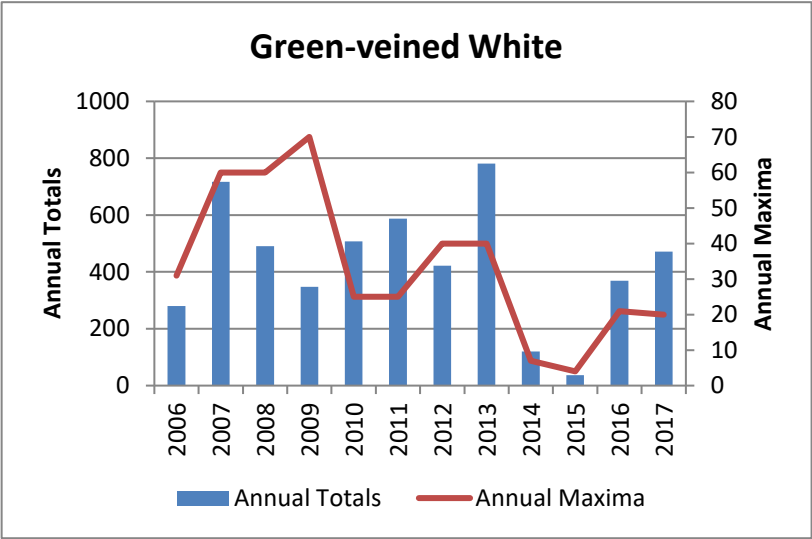


Figure 6

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas*

7 records between the 5th July and 29th September, with a peak count of 1 on 7 different days.

This is the lowest total of Small Coppers recorded on the Calf in the last 10 years, and markedly below the 10 year average of 200. Small Copper also had a poor year in the rest of the British Isles, with a decrease of 24% from the previous year, this species has also declined 43% since 2006. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

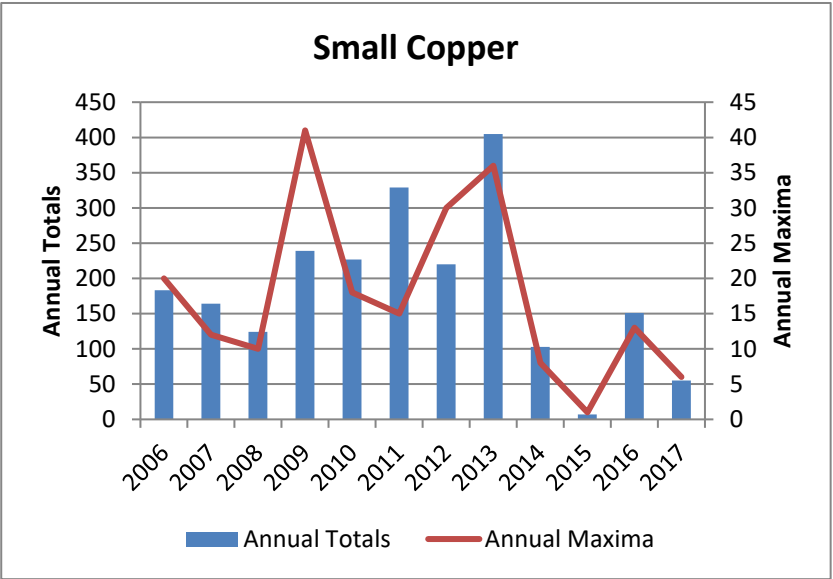


Figure 7

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja*

53 records between the 22nd May and 7th August, with a peak count of 9 on the 28th June.

Dark Green Fritillary is the most abundant species on the Calf, with a 10 year average of 851 records a year, the 53 records for 2015 is substantially down on this average. The abundance of this species in the British Isles as a whole has been reasonably stable for the last 10 years, with a 6% increase since 2006. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

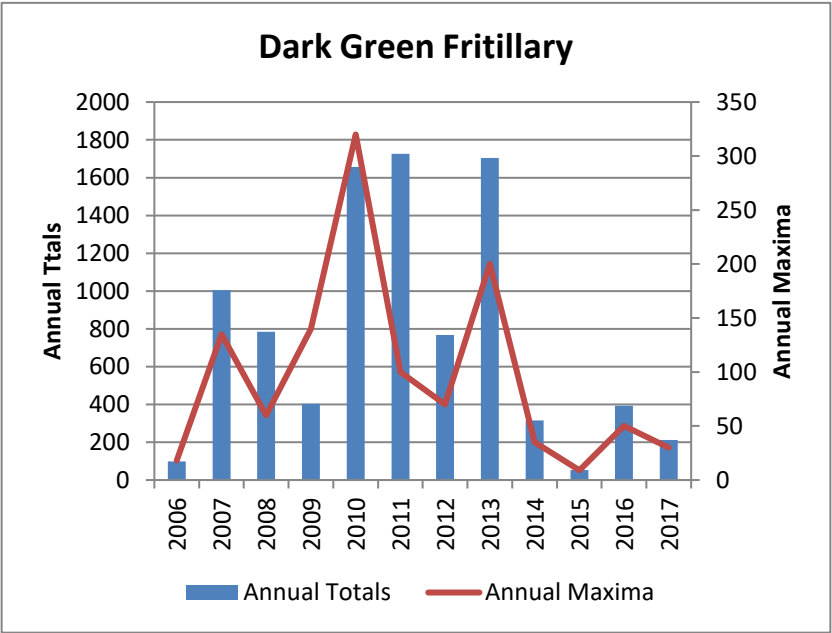


Figure 8

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta*

453 records between the 5th June and 1st November, with a peak count of 83 on the 6th October.

Red Admiral is the third most abundant species on the Calf since 2006. The 453 records in 2015 was much closer to the 10 year average (520 records) than with many of the other species for 2015. Interestingly, 18% of the Red Admirals recorded on the Calf in 2015 were on one day, 83 on the 6th October, potentially representing a bit of a fall of this migratory species as they were heading south. There was also a period of relatively high abundance for four days later in October, with between 25 and 42 recorded between the 13th and 17th. This species had a poor year in the British Isles as a whole, with a 40% decrease in comparison with 2014; this species has also declined 45% in the previous 10 years. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

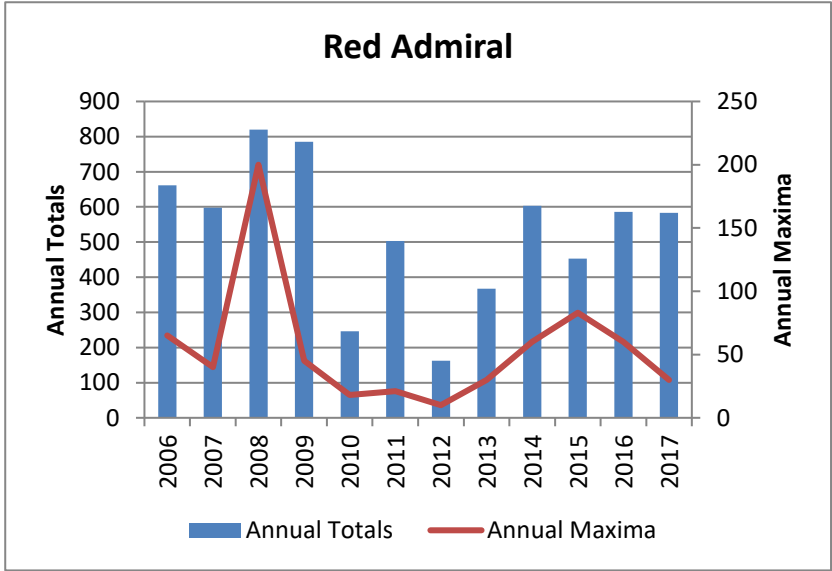


Figure 9

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui*

57 records between the 7th June and 20th October, with a peak count of 5 on the 13th September.

This is just over half the 10 year average of 103, although this average is inflated by 636 records in 2009. In the British Isles as a whole, this species had a much better year than in 2014, with a 186% increase, however, over the previous 10 years Painted Lady decreased by 88%. (UKBMS Annual Report 2015).

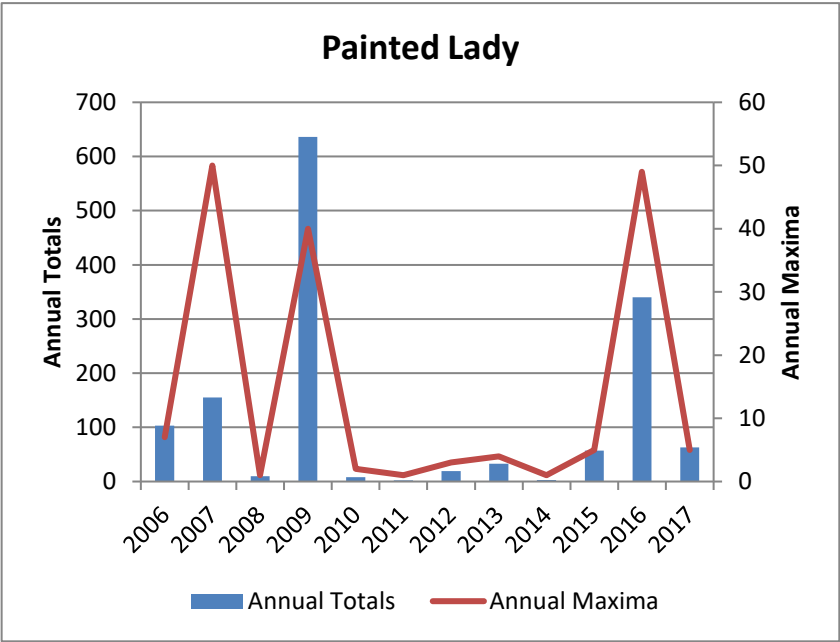


Figure 10

Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

39 records between the 4th June and 18th, with a peak count of 8 on the 16th September.

As Figure 11 shows this species experienced a decline every year since 2011. 39 records is substantially below the 10 year average of 99 records. This species also experienced a poor year in the British Isles as a whole, with a 44% decrease from 2014

(http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

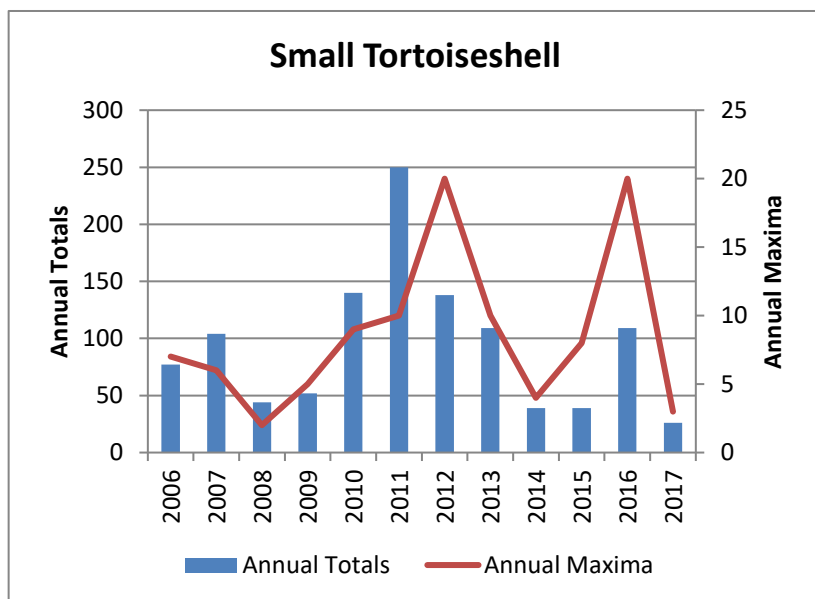


Figure 11

Peacock *Inachis io*

9 records between the 7th May and 6th October, with a peak count of 1 on every day it was recorded.

This year's records represent the joint second lowest total for this species since 2006 and is substantially below the 10 year average of 49 records, however, this figure is inflated somewhat by a very high total of 299 records in 2006. Peacock experienced a relatively poor year in the British Isles as a whole with a 21% decrease from 2014 (http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

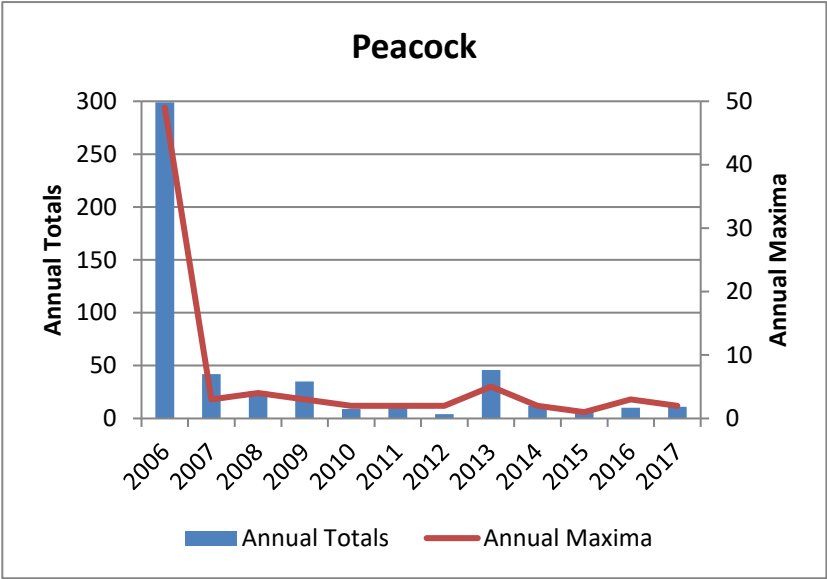


Figure 12

Wall *Lasiommata megera*

2 records between the 13th August and 4th September, with a peak count of 1 on both days.

Only 2 records represent a poor year for this species on the Calf; the 10 year average is 6. Wall also experienced a poor year in the British Isles as a whole with a 44% decrease from 2014

(http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

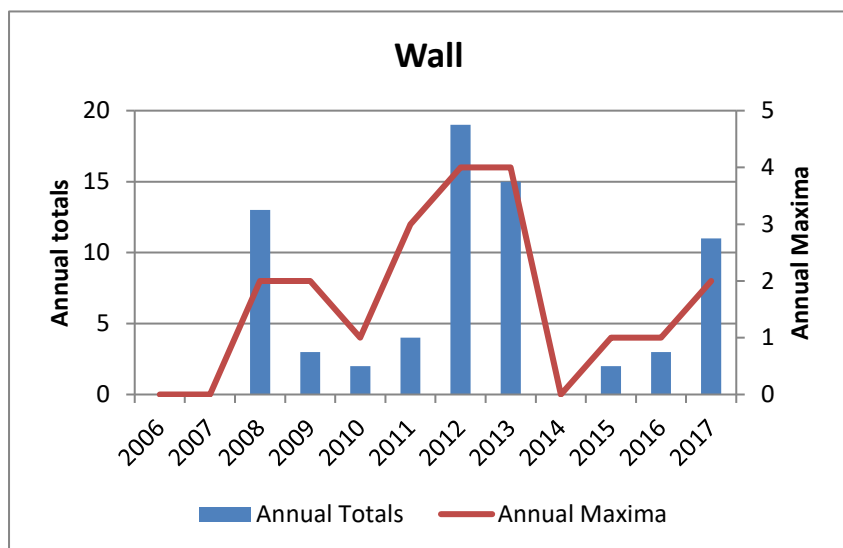


Figure 13

Grayling *Hipparchia semele*

0 records.

No records obviously represent a poor year for this species on the Calf; substantially below the 10 year average of 28. The lack of records could potentially be due to the fact that this is a generally a lesser-known species and it simply may have not been identified. This species had a poor year in the British Isles as a whole, with a 38% decrease from 2014

(http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

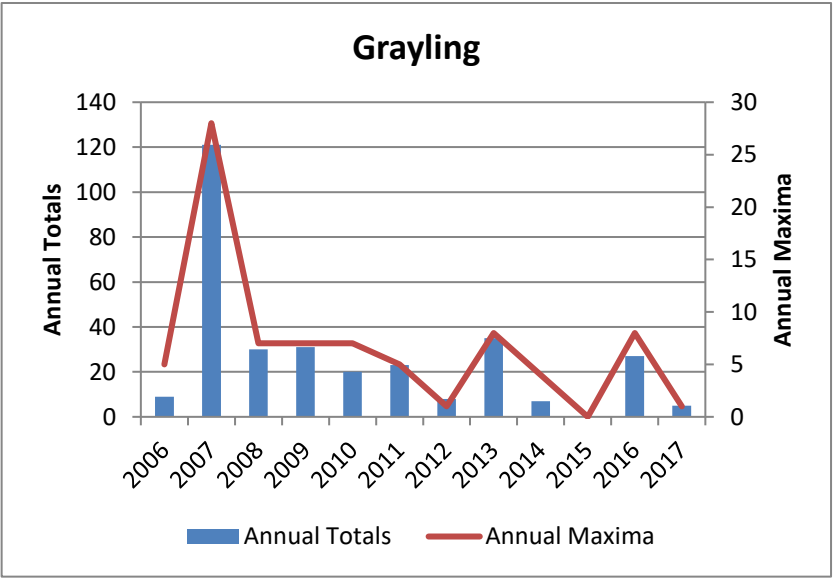


Figure 14

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina*

197 records between the 8th July and 21st September, with a peak count of 28 on the 11th of August.

This species is the second most numerous on the Calf since 2006, as shown by Figure 2. Although Meadow Brown was the second most abundant species on the Calf in 2015, as shown by Figure 3, 2015 was also the worst year for the species since 2006, as shown by Figure 2. This species experienced a reasonable year in the British Isles as a whole, with a 13% increase from 2014

(http://www.ukbms.org/docs/reports/2015/Butterfly%20Ann%20Report%202015_Final_LR.pdf).

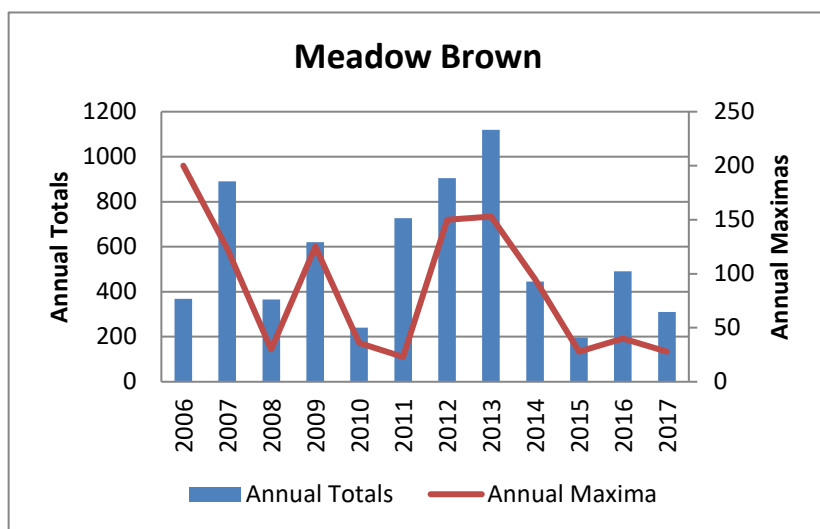


Figure 15

MOTH REPORT

The following species accounts use the nomenclature from "A checklist of the Lepidoptera of the British Isles" by Agassiz, D.J.L., Beavan, S.D. & Heckford R.J. 2013

12.036 ***Monopis laevigella*** **Skin Moth**

One recorded on 27th August

12.048 ***Psychoides filicivora***

Three recorded between 19th and 24th October

35.146 ***Teleiopsis diffinis***

One recorded on 27th August

48.001 ***Anthophila fabricana***

One recorded on 14th October

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

One recorded on 21st May

63.031 ***Udea ferrugalis*** **Rusty-dot Pearl**

One recorded on 11th October (migrant species)

63.052 ***Nomophila noctuella*** **Rush Veneer**

Five recorded between 21st September and 9th October (migrant species)

63.064 ***Scoparia ambigualis***

One recorded on 27th August

63.072 ***Eudonia delunella***

One on the 27th August was the first Calf record and the 9th Manx record

63.089 ***Agriphila tristella***

Four recorded between the 27th and 31st August

63.095 ***Agriphila geniculea***

One recorded on the 27th August

69.01 ***Macroglossum stellatarum*** **Humming-bird Hawk-moth**

Two individual records on 9th July and 13th September

70.049 ***Xanthorhoe fluctuate***

Garden carpet

One record on 27th August

70.09 ***Eulithis testate***

Chevron

One recorded on the 27th August

70.095 ***Chloroclysta siterata***

Red-Green carpet

One recorded on the 4th October

70.131 ***Mesotype didymata***

Twin-spot carpet

One recorded on the 27th August

70.168 ***Eupithecia nanata***

Narrow-winged pug

One recorded on the 29th May

70.222 ***Petrophora chlorosata***

Brown Silver-line

Six recorded between 29th May and 20th June

72.003 ***Hypena proboscidalis***

Snout

One recorded on the 27th August

72.026 ***Arctia caja***

Garden Tiger

One recorded on 9th May

- 72.031 ***Tyria jacobaeae*** **Cinnabar**
Fifteen recorded between 18th May and 11th June
- 73.001 ***Abrostola tripartita*** **Spectacle**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.015 ***Autographa gamma*** **Silver Y**
Thirty six recorded between 10th September and 22nd October
(migrant species)
- 73.113 ***Phlogophora meticulosa*** **Angle Shades**
Three recorded between 13th and 21st October
- 73.119 ***Helotropha leucostigma*** **Crescent**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.131 ***Luperina testacea*** **Flounced Rustic**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.144 ***Denticucullus pygmyia*** **Small Wainscot**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.162 ***Apamea monoglypha*** **Dark Arches**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.254 ***Cerapteryx graminis*** **Antler moth**
One recorded on 27th August
- 73.271 ***Ceramica pisi*** **Broom Moth**
One recorded on 29th May
- 73.286 ***Hadena perplexa capsophila*** **Pod Lover**
One recorded on 29th May

73.291 <i>Mythimna pallens</i> One recorded on 27 th August	Common wainscot
73.312 <i>Euxoa obelisca</i> One recorded on 27 th August	Square-spot Dart
73.313 <i>Euxoa tritici</i> One recorded on 27 th August	White-line Dart
73.314 <i>Euxoa nigricans</i> One recorded on 27 th August	Garden dart
73.317 <i>Agrotis exclamationis</i> One recorded on 7 th July	Heart and Dart
73.338 <i>Lycophotia porphyria</i> One recorded on 27 th August	True Lover's Knot
73.342 <i>Noctua pronuba</i> One recorded on 27 th August	Large Yellow Underwing
73.345 <i>Noctua comes</i> One recorded on 27 th August	Lesser Yellow Underwing
73.348 <i>Noctua janthe</i> Two recorded between 13 th August and 27 th August	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing
73.357 <i>Xestia xanthographa</i> Three recorded between 27 th August and 11 th September	Square-spot Rustic
73.365 <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i> Two recorded between 27 th August and 6 th September	Autumnal Rustic

BUMBLEBEES AT COW HARBOUR – A CASUAL OBSERVATION

Mark Fitzpatrick

At midday on 11th September 2015 Ian Beggs and I went to Cow Harbour to try to ring Rock Pipits. It was sunny but, with a south-westerly wind of approximately Force 5-6, it was far too windy for ringing. We noticed 400 to 600 worker bumblebees on a flat area of



approximately 6 metres by 8 metres between the Cow Harbour shed and the slipway. None were flying, possibly because of the risk of being blown out to sea, instead they were slowly walking around apparently randomly on the close-cropped grass, moss, lichen and

rocks. There was no obvious focal point around which they were clustered. We did not see any bees emerging or entering a nest. On revisiting the site later in the afternoon there were only a few bees remaining. It is not clear what happened to the rest of them. Dr David Buckingham of the RSPB said that the only similar incident he had seen was: “a *Bombus terrestris* nest that had just been dug out by a badger, presumably resulting in the death of the queen. The workers were staggering around rudderless for the next few days, before order was somehow restored. My interpretation of that observation was that the workers were no longer under chemical control by the queen and didn’t know what to do with themselves.”

We were not sure of the exact species. Annie and Bob Haycock (former Calf warden) thought they were Buff-tailed Bumblebees (*Bombus terrestris*) while David Buckingham said they appeared to be White-tailed Bumblebees (*Bombus lucorum agg.*). They can be hard to separate and both have been recorded on the Calf.

MANX SHEARWATER REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Manx Shearwaters are known to have bred in the Calf of Man in huge numbers. The first written record of this species dates back to Viking times. From 1337 to 1786 records demonstrate they were considered a delicacy and were hunted for meat and oil, used as a currency and sold at a high price. Until 1676 they were referred to as Puffins, but they were given a different name to distinguish them from the real Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*): Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*).

According to written records, the Manxies (affectionate name for *Puffinus puffinus*) were almost wiped-out from the Calf in 1791, its disappearance attributed to the arrival of Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*). Despite Manx Shearwaters having been recorded in suitable habitat during numerous breeding seasons since the creation of the Observatory in 1959 (Lockington, 1978), their breeding could not be confirmed until 2000 (Bagworth, 2000). Since then, monitoring of breeding numbers has taken place on the Island and in 2012 the “Manx Shearwater Recovery Project” started, increasing and focusing efforts in rat eradication in order to re-establish original numbers of the only bird with a Manx name.

METHODOLOGY

In 2015 breeding colonies were monitored following three different methodologies (sample quadrat method, intensive monitoring and prospecting monitoring) and correction factors were calculated for three of these colonies. To determine occupancy, a Manx Shearwater call was played on a mobile phone at the entrance of the burrow, any physical signs of occupation were noted down as well as signs of adults, chicks or eggs. For details, see Seabird Monitoring Handbook for Britain and Ireland (Walsh *et al.*, 1995).

For the sample quadrat method, the same 30 circular quadrats (6 per colony) of 30 m² each within the five historical colonies (South Harbour, Kione ny Halby, Kione Roauyr, The Cletts and Gibdale) randomly selected in 2014 were surveyed in 2015. The estimated number of definitely occupied burrows was calculated as follows:

$$\left(\frac{\text{Total number of responses at colony} \times \text{Correction factor at colony}}{\text{Area of quadrat} \times \text{number of quadrats at colony}} \right) \times \text{Colony area}$$

In the intensive monitoring, all burrows within the colony were monitored, and the result contrasted to the sample quadrat method. In order to assess occupancy, different signs were considered according to which the burrow was classified as possibly occupied or definitely occupied. Possibly occupied burrows are those showing physical signs of occupation like excrements, scratching or flattened grass at entrance but with no definite proof of occupation like response to playback or adult seen. Definitely occupied burrows were therefore, those in which the egg, chick or adult were seen or touched. Also included were burrows with down at entrance during the fledgling stage, and those vocalizing out of the survey period; since several clues other than response to playback were used to designate definitely occupied burrows, those responded to playback are compared to those definitely occupied.

In order to determine possibly occupied burrows from 2014, the same extrapolation used in the previous section for estimating occupied burrows is used here, without multiplication with a correction factor.

Additional areas around the colony and other locations around the island were monitored to identify new colonies. When and where signs of occupation were found, the usual protocol was carried out.

RESULTS

Sample quadrat method

Final estimates of occupied burrows differ considerably from those calculated in previous years (145 burrows in 2015, 424 in 2014 and 249 in 2013). The difference is greater in some colonies than others and especially remarkable in the case of South Harbour (Table 1). The total difference may account in part because the colony at Kione Roauyr was surveyed too late in the season when adults are not found in the burrow during the day, and so no responses were obtained. Even without considering Kione Roauyr for the analyses, occupied burrows in 2015 are still lower than in 2013 (Hayward, 2013), and significantly lower than in 2014 (Crane, 2014).

	Burrows with signs of occupation		Responses to playback		Estimate of occupied burrows		
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2013
South Harbour	7	13	1	6	34	207	85
Kione ny Halby	12	17	4	3	67	50	47
Kione Roauyr	19	7	0*	4	0*	80	54
The Cletts	7	21	1	3	13	40	41
Gibdale	8	7	2	3	31	47	22
TOTAL	53	65	8	19 (15)	145	424 (344)	249 (195)

Table 1. Estimate of occupied burrows in 2015, using the same colony area as in 2014 and same calibration factor.

(Burrow response to playback was not recorded in Kione Roauyr during 2015 – this was likely due to monitoring taking place after most adults would have left the burrow. It is expected that there were occupied burrows in the colony. Numbers in parenthesis correspond to the estimates omitting Kione Roauyr colony.)*

Intensive monitoring

Numbers of possibly occupied burrows and definitely occupied ones differ greatly both in 2014 and 2015 (Table 2). The real number of occupied burrows is probably an intermediate figure (97 to 450 in 2015, 424 to 630 in 2014). In all cases, the Manx Shearwater breeding population in 2015 drops from the previous two years.

	Possibly occupied burrows		Responses to playback	Definitely occupied burrows		
	2015	2014	2015	2015	2014	2013
South Harbour	79	224	11	24	207	85
Kione ny Halby	108	142	29	41	50	47
Kione Roauyr	179	70	-	Min 2	80	54
The Cletts	61	140	14	23	40	41
Gibdale	23	54	5	7	47	22
TOTAL	450	630	59*	Min 97	424	249
Bay Fine	8		2	2		
The Puddle	9		-	4		
TOTAL	464		61*	Min 103		

Table 2. Numbers of possibly and definitely occupied burrows in 2015 and 2013. Dash indicates the playback experiment was not conducted in these colonies because survey took place after adults left the burrow.

Prospecting survey

In Bay Fine, a group of eight burrows were found with signs of occupation, two of which responded to playback. An intensive monitoring conducted in 2013 revealed several small colonies at the north of the island and may have included that one (Hayward, 2013). There are, however, grounds to believe this is a new sub-colony. A further colony was identified this year in the Puddle. The discovery took place after fledgling, with down left by chicks at the entrance of

the burrow being evident: young are known to sit near or at the entrance of their burrow 'star-gazing' prior to fledging. Being late in the season, it could not be monitored to estimate numbers or extension of the colony. A minimum of nine burrows were thought to have been occupied well into September, four of them fledgling successfully.

DISCUSSION

The number of Manx Shearwater breeding on the Calf of Man in 2015 is estimated to be between 103 to 464 pairs, representing a considerable decrease from the previous year (424-630 pairs, Crane, 2014). That may account for methodological considerations, as although sample quadrats were randomly selected, they may have fallen in an especially dense colony section; or it may be due to other environmental factors or natural fluctuations of the population for which we have no data. Occupied burrows, however, were identified at new places around the island, indicating that shearwaters are colonizing new places and numbers are possibly increasing. This suggests the decrease in numbers identified this year could be a singular event and is unlikely to represent a population trend.

Monitoring the breeding population on the Calf continues to be challenging. Several burrows known to be occupied did not respond to the playback experiment. As suggested previously (Hayward, 2013), it may be due to the shape of the burrow. They are particularly deep and twisted and birds may not hear the playback, we may not hear their response, or they may not respond because they did not feel threatened. Equally, assessing occupation by seeing or touching the occupants is not possible as burrows are longer than a man's arm. Attempts to use an endoscope also failed in the past as it could not follow the bends in the burrows. Besides assessing occupation by physical signs is also problematic because immature birds visit the colony during summer months (Lockley, 1942; Brooke, 1990), thus leaving signs that could lead to an overestimate.

Despite all the challenges encountered in this monitoring, it is important to continue providing an estimate of numbers in the historical colonies to detect changes in the population early enough to deploy conservation measures, if necessary. If the monitoring is to follow the sample quadrat method, it is suggested that a new approach to quadrat selection is adopted, with a random function using a computer program (ex. Excel, ArcGIS, etc.) every year, as well as increasing the number of quadrats to sample. However, the discovery of new colonies is also important as it may suggest colonies can not only increase in density but also by extension. It could be accomplished by surveying the whole island on a single season, for which a huge number of observers will be need, or it could take place gradually by surveying small sectors every year.



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