

TOS 471A

Welsh Birds

Vol 5 No. 5 2008

LIBRARY
HISTORY MUSEUM

13 NOV 2008

PRESENTED TO
TRING LIBRARY



**CYMDEITHAS ADARYDDOL
CYMRU
WELSH ORNITHOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**

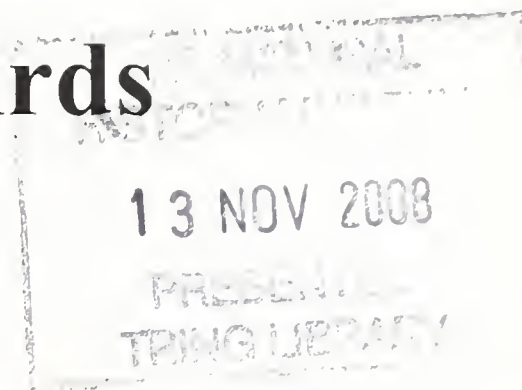
Charity No. 1037823



Above: Semi-palmated Sandpiper, Gann, Pembroke. S. Hinton
Below: Spotted Sandpiper, Llanishen Res., Glamorgan. RG Smith



Scarce and rare birds in Wales 2007



Introduction	p 332
Systematic List of Accepted Records	p 334
Pechora Pipit – a new species to Wales	p 351
Red-flanked Bluetail – a new species to Wales	p 353
Blue Rock Thruh in the Elan Valley	p 355
Eastern Race Subalpine Warblers on Bardsey	p 356

*Front cover photo, Pechora Pipit by Lyndon Lomax
Back cover photo, Red-flanked Bluetail by Steve Stansfield.*

**Published in November 2008 by
The Welsh Ornithological Society
Charity No. 1037823
Price - £6.00**

Introduction

This is the eleventh annual report of the Welsh Records Panel (WRP) covering the occurrence of rare and scarce species in Wales in 2007.

2007 was a year containing much excitement for those interested in scarce birds. Two new species for Wales were recorded – a fine male Red-flanked Bluetail enjoyed only by those staying on the island and the lucky few who managed to catch the only boat of the day and a magnificent Pechora Pipit that skulked through the flooded woodland of Goodwick Moor performing for hundreds of admirers during its stay. Records of Pacific Diver (currently considered a race of Black-throated Diver) from Pembroke in February and Glaucous-winged Gull in Carmarthen in March awaits the outcome of the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) and British Ornithologists Union Records Committee (BOURC) deliberations, but is expected to be confirmed. In addition the 2nd Welsh record of Blue Rock Thrush and 3rd Hume's Warbler were recorded.

	0-1 records	2-5 records	6-10 records	11-20 records	21-50 records	51-100 records	100+ records
2007	2	6	7	4	9	5	5
2006	1	5	4	5	18	12	12
2005	4	10	9	5	22	19	28

This report follows the taxonomy, names and systematic sequence of the new BOU British List (2003) and includes all those records assessed by the WRP along with those accepted by BBRC (shown in italics). In total the WRP processed over 60 records, most of which were for 2007 (lower than in recent years, reflecting a scarcity of WRP species – even though it was a bumper year for BBRC species). Descriptions of scarce species were received from the County Recorders of all Welsh Counties and occasionally directly from the observers. The report includes many digital photos and WRP welcomes the submission of any photographic evidence but this ideally should be accompanied by supporting evidence. Occasionally the Panel also receives descriptions of other species to assess from County Recorders and Editors. These are not detailed in this report.

Scarce species (assessed by WRP) are defined as those occurring on average 5 times or fewer annually in Wales. As of Jan. 1st 2007 the full list of species which the Panel considers is as follows: Bean Goose, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ferruginous Duck, Surf Scoter, Cory's Shearwater, Great Shearwater, Wilson's Petrel, Night Heron, Great White Egret, Purple Heron, White Stork, Black Kite, Montagu's Harrier, Rough-legged Buzzard, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Corncrake, Spotted Crake, Crane, Stone-Curlew, American Golden Plover, Kentish Plover, Temminck's Stint, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, White-winged Black Tern, Alpine Swift, Short-toed Lark, Wood Lark, Shore Lark, Bee-eater, Red-rumped Swallow, Red-throated Pipit, Tawny Pipit, Nightingale, Bluethroat, Aquatic Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Barred Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Radde's Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Rose-coloured Starling, Red-backed Shrike, Woodchat Shrike, Golden Oriole, Bearded Tit, Serin, Common Redpoll, Arctic Redpoll, Common Rosefinch, Corn Bunting, Cirl Bunting, Ortolan Bunting, Rustic Bunting and Little Bunting.

Scarce races are considered on the same basis (ie. all those occurring on average 5 times or fewer annually). However, it is acknowledged that the status, and in some case the identification, of some races is very uncertain. The WRP welcomes well-documented submissions of races that observers consider to be scarce in Wales. Through this process we hope to establish the occurrence of these forms but submissions will probably in most cases require detailed descriptions, photographic evidence and in some cases biometrics or a specimen.

BBRC have requested submission of rare races (see Kehoe, C. 2006 Racial identification and assessment in Britain, *British Birds* 99: 619-645 for extra guidance) and the WRP will forward any claims that are considered sufficiently rare for BBRC to assess. Examples of races for which the WRP would like to receive reports are Black Brant Goose – *nigricans*, Iceland Gull – *kumlieni*, “Caspian Gull” – *cachinnans*, Common Guillemot – *hyperborean*, Razorbill – *torda*, Little Auk – *polaris*, Great Spotted Woodpecker – *major*, Grey-headed Wagtail - *thunbergi*, Siberian Chiffchaff – *tristis*, Treecreeper – *familiaris*, Coal Tit – *ater*, Jay – *glandarius*, Jackdaw – *monedula*, Redpolls – *islandia / rostrata*, and Bullfinch – *pyrrhula*.

In the systematic list the figures following each species / race name refer to the number of accepted individuals in Wales up to 1991, since 1991 but not including 2007 and finally the number this year. Where two records probably relate to the same bird then only one is added to the total, while if two records are only possibly of the same bird, then both are added into the totals.

In some cases the figures suggest changes in occurrence in the last twenty years, although it should be noted that some apparent declines may be due, to some extent, to a decline in the habit of observers submitting descriptions or some apparent increases to improved identification criteria and better optics or cameras.

The names that appear after individual records are of those observers who sent in descriptions (if the finder is known then his /her name is included in italics) and are included here to show recognition of the time taken to produce a description and also the observer’s commitment to the nationally recognised system of rare bird record assessment, unless the submitted specifically requests that their name is not shown.

The Panel consists of six voting members, in 2007 they were: Reg Thorpe (Chairman) – Caernarfon, Phil Bristow – Glamorgan, Steve Culley – Anglesey, Chris Jones - Gwent, Simon Hugheston-Roberts – Caernarfon, Steve Stansfield - Bardsey and a non-voting Secretary, Jon Green - Ceredigion.

The longest serving member of the Panel retires and a new member is elected annually by the Welsh County Recorders and the Council of the Welsh Ornithological Society. WRP is always on the look out for new members, anyone who is interested should contact their County Recorder or the WRP Secretary.

Descriptions, photos, videos and any other relevant evidence of WRP species should be submitted as soon as possible after the sighting (WRP description forms are available from the Secretary / County Recorders and downloadable from the WOS Website), preferably via the County Recorder or alternatively direct to the WRP Secretary: Jon Green, Crud yr Awel, Bowls Road, Blaenporth, Cardigan. Ceredigion. SA43 2AR. (01239 811561).

The Panel are keen to receive any descriptions or photographs of electronic form, either on disc or by e-mail: welshrarebirds@tiscali.co.uk

No acceptable records of the following species were received by the Panel in 2007:

Bean Goose, Ferruginous Duck, Cory's Shearwater, Great Shearwater, Wilson's Petrel, Night Heron, Black Kite, Rough-legged Buzzard, White-tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle, Red-footed Falcon, Corncrake, Stone-Curlew, Temminck's Stint, Red-necked Phalarope, White-winged Black Tern, Alpine Swift, Red-rumped Swallow, Red-throated Pipit, Tawny Pipit, Nightingale, Marsh Warbler, Icterine Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Serin, Common Redpoll, Arctic Redpoll, Corn Bunting, Cirl Bunting, Rustic Bunting, Little Bunting and Corn Bunting.

Systematic List of Accepted Records in 2007

American Wigeon (6, 12, 1)

Anas americana

Chwiwell Americana

Breeds North America, winters south to Panama.

2007 Pembroke: male, Angle Bay since October 2006 until 2nd Mar., returning 14th Sept. and present into 2008 (C. Hurford et al).

2007 Meirionnydd: male, Glaslyn Estuary, 21st – 28th Jan. (Rh. Jones).

2006 Flint: male, Connah's Quay, 31st Jan. (C. Leighton).

The Flint male is considered the same individual that has been seen regularly over the last few years on the Dee, principally at RSPB Inner Marsh Farm, but not necessarily on the Welsh side of the border. The Pembroke male has been wintering in the same area for the last 5 years at least.

Green-winged Teal (10, 26, 2)

Anas carolinensis

Corhwyaden Asgell - Werdd

Breeds in North America.

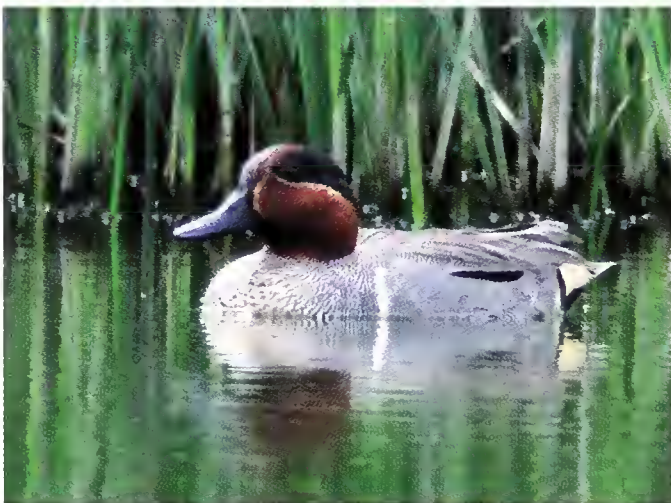
Anglesey: male, Llyn Parc Mawr, 6th Jan. (KG Croft).

Meirionnydd: male, Porthmadog, 14th Jan. (AG Goodwin).

Carmarthen: male, Penclacwydd, 24th May (D. Davidson).

Ceredigion: male, Aber Clettwr, Dyfi 19th Dec. (JA Davies, R. Jones).

The Ceredigion male is probably the same one that has been seen at the nearby RSPB Ynyshir reserve on and off over the last few years. Similarly the record from Anglesey was probably the same individual seen at RSPB Malltraeth reserve in late 2007.



Green-winged Teal, Penclacwydd,
Carmarthen May 2007
Photo. B. Stewart.



Ring-necked Duck, Uskmouth,
Gwent March 2007
Photo. N. Casburn

Ring-necked Duck (12, 22, 1)

Aythya collaris

Hywaden Dorchog

Breeds North America, winters south to Costa Rica.

Gwent: returning male, 27th Mar., NWR Uskmouth (C. Hurn, N. Casburn).

Ceredigion: male, Cwm Rheidol, 2nd Dec. (R. Liford)

The Gwent male has been regularly recorded on both sides of the Severn Estuary since 2001. For the first few years it was usually seen during the winter in Wales and then in England in the spring, but in the last few years it has only turned up in Wales for a few days each spring on the Gwent levels. The Ceredigion bird was subsequently seen near Aberystwyth in early January 2008.

Black Scoter (0, 2, 0)

Melanitta americana

Mor-hwyaden ddu

Breeds northern North America, winters on the Atlantic coast, south to North Carolina.

Caernarfon: male, off Llanfairfechan, 24th Sept. 2006 until 9th April 2007.

This bird has spent the last nine winters in the same area. Although reported on two dates in November 2007, BBRC have not included these in the Report on Rare Birds in Great Britain 2007 (British Birds 101 – 516). We await further details before these reports can be added to the WRP report. The only other Welsh record was off Newgale, Pembrokeshire, December 1991 – February 1992.

Surf Scoter (22, 20, 0)

Melanitta perspicillata

Mor-hwyaden yr Ewyn

Breeds northern North America, winters on the Atlantic coast, south to North Carolina.

Carmarthen: two males present in Carmarthen Bay in between Rhagwen Point and Pendine from the 17th Dec. 2006 until 25th Feb. 2007 (*N. Fairney, R. Hunt, per J. Lloyd*).

These are thought to be returning males seen in previous winters in Carmarthen Bay and last reported at this site during the 2004/5 winter.

Cattle Egret (5, 3, 1)

Bubulcus ibis

Creyr y Gwartheg

Common and widespread in S. Spain & Portugal with small expanding populations in France and Italy. North populations disperse outside the breeding season, mostly into Africa.

E. Glamorgan: juv., Kenfig, 5th Nov. (DG Carrington, N. Donaghy).

Gower: as above, Eglwys Nunydd Res., 6th – 7th Nov. (P. Bristow, MC Powell).

The large influx into Great Britain (principally SW England) totalling at least 90 individuals) finally brought one across the Bristol Channel, to Kenfig which moved to nearby Eglwys Nunydd on the following day. One can only guess at why more didn't follow immediately, but at least two more did by the following spring. The last Welsh record of this species was from Foryd Bay, Caernarfon in 1998. The above record represents the first for Glamorgan and both the listed recording areas.



Cattle Egret, Kenfig 2007. DG Carrington.

Great White Egret (5, 17, 3)

Ardea alba

Creyr Mawr Gwyn

Breeds Netherlands in small numbers and from Hungary eastwards to Japan and south Australia, Africa south of the Sahara also southern North, Central and South America. European population winters mostly in the north Mediterranean. This species dropped off the BBRC list of rare birds, onto the WRP list as of Jan. 1st 2006.

Anglesey: Plas Bog, 14th and 15th Sept.
(KG Croft, I. Sims).

Montgomery: Newtown area, from 7th Dec.
at least until March 2008
(G. Crowder et al).

Caernarfon: Spinneys NR., Traeth Lafan,
12th Dec. (per E. Evans).



Great White Egret, Spinneys 2007. E. Evans.

Purple Heron (38, 13, 2)

Ardea purpurea

Creyr Porffor

Dispersive migrant, from warmer temperate to tropical zones, southern Europe.

Anglesey: immature, Inland Sea, 15th – 18th Sept. (N. Rowbothom, KG Croft).

Ceredigion: immature, Teifi Marshes, 2nd Oct. (R. Bevan).

Interesting that there were two records of this elusive species this year in Wales and both were in autumn of immatures.

Black Stork (5, 0, 1)

Ciconia nigra

Ciconia Du

Anglesey: adult, Alaw Estuary, 31st July – 31st Aug. (KG Croft et al).

One of nine reported in the UK this year but only the 6th for Wales. The last records were from 1991 when three different individuals were recorded. In Pembroke one was seen on Skokholm and Skomer on 27th-28th April and another on Skomer, then on the mainland at Marloes on 29th July – 2nd Aug. At the other end of the country, one was seen at Carmel Head, Anglesey on 22nd June. The only other Welsh records came from Cwm Eigiau, Carneddau, Caernarfon in May 1989 and in the Uper Terne Valley, Radnor in August – September 1990.



Photo. Alaw Estuary, Anglesey July-August 2007. S. Evans.



Photo. Alaw Estuary, Anglesey July-August 2007. R. Stonier.

White Stork (- , 14, 1)

Ciconia ciconia

Ciconai Gwyn

Migrant in warmer Boreal to warm temperate zones, USSR, China and central Europe.

Gwent: Skenfrith, 28th Mar. (C. Floyd).

Montagu's Harrier (- , 11, 1)

Circus pygargus

Bod Montagu

Rare visitor and passagemigrant which formerly bred in small numbers.

Pembroke: male, Merlin's Bridge, Haverfordwest, 3rd May (S. Berry).

2006 Flint: 2nd year, Fenn's Moss, probably from 11th June – 1st July (S. Hughston-Roberts, RI Thorpe et al montage opposite).



The Flint individual was also recorded from the Shropshire part of the Fen and has already been published for that county. This record was pended last year to allow for a greater study of the features needed to eliminate Pallid Harrier (*Circus macrourus*).

Spotted Crake (, 28+, 1)

Porzana porzana

Rhegen fraith

Scarce breeding bird in Britain. Passage migrant.

Brecon: male calling, site and observer with-held, 30th Mar. – 4th Apr. at least.

Common Crane (19, 17, 1)

Grus grus

Garan

A rare visitor to Wales from Central Europe where it breeds, wintering in southern Europe around the Mediterranean and Africa.

Anglesey: Alaw Estuary, 4th June (KG Croft).

Kentish Plover (28, 12, 2)

Charadrius alexandrinus

Cwtiad Caint

Formerly bred in the UK. Now a scarce migrant from the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe.

Ceredigion: female, Teifi Estuary (also seen on the Pembroke side), 25th May (R. Dobbins).

Anglesey: female, Alaw Estuary, 29th May (KG Croft).

With the advantage of digital photos, it was possible to compare the plumages of these two females, which turned up only four days apart, proving them to be different individuals.

American Golden Plover (2, 5, 1)

Pluvialis dominica

Corgwtiad Aur

Breeds on coastal tundra from extreme NE Siberia, E across N Alaska and Canada to Baffin Island. Migrates over W Atlantic to wintering grounds in S South America. This species dropped off the BBRC list of rare birds, onto the WRP list, as of Jan. 1st 2006.

Ceredigion: 1st winter, Llanrhystud, 20th – 27th Oct. (A. Williams).

A county first.

Semipalmated Sandpiper (2, 2, 1)

Calidris pusilla

Pibydd Llwyd

Breeds on tundra of W Alaska, E across Arctic Canada to S Baffin Island and coastal Labrador. Has bred in extreme NE Siberia. Migrates across Great Plains and E seaboard of USA to winter in C America and shorelines of tropical South America to Brazil and Peru.

Pembroke: juv. Gann,
14th – 27th Oct.

(DJ Astins, P. Grennard).

One of three records in the UK this year, but only the 5th accepted record for Wales, following on from the one at Goldcliff in Sept. 2006. This was the second record for Pembroke, the only other record was from Skokholm in July 1964. The other Welsh records came from Ogmere Estuary, E. Glamorgan, in Sept. 1990 and Sept. 2001.



Photo. Gann, Pembs October 2007 S. Hinton

White-rumped Sandpiper (7, 3, 1)

Calidris fuscicollis

Pibydd Tinwen

Breeds N Alaska and arctic Canada. Migrates through USA to winter in Central and Southern America.

E. Glamorgan: 1st winter, Kenfig, also seen Sker Point, 29th Oct. – 8th Nov. (N. Donaghy et al). For such a “common-occurring Yank wader” in the rest of the UK, this species remains a good find in Wales. The last three have been adults at Gwent’s Goldcliff. There have been two earlier records from Glamorgan, albeit in Gower; at Blackpill 25th Sept. 1957 and in Swansea Bay 19th Mar. 1970.



White-rumped Sandpiper, Kenfig October 2007 by RG Smith.



Pectoral Sandpiper (65, 35, 1)

Calidris melanotos

Pibydd Cain

Breeds northeast Siberia and northern North America. Winters in southern South America.

Gwent: juv., Goldcliff, 14th – 22nd Sept. (photo. N. Casburn).

2003 Carmarthen: juv. WWT Penclacwydd, 6th – 7th Sept. & 25th Sept. (per B. Stewart).



Pectoral Sandpiper, Goldcliff September 2007 by N. Casburn.



Pectoral Sandpiper, Penclacwydd 2003 by B. Stewart.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (31, 15, 1)

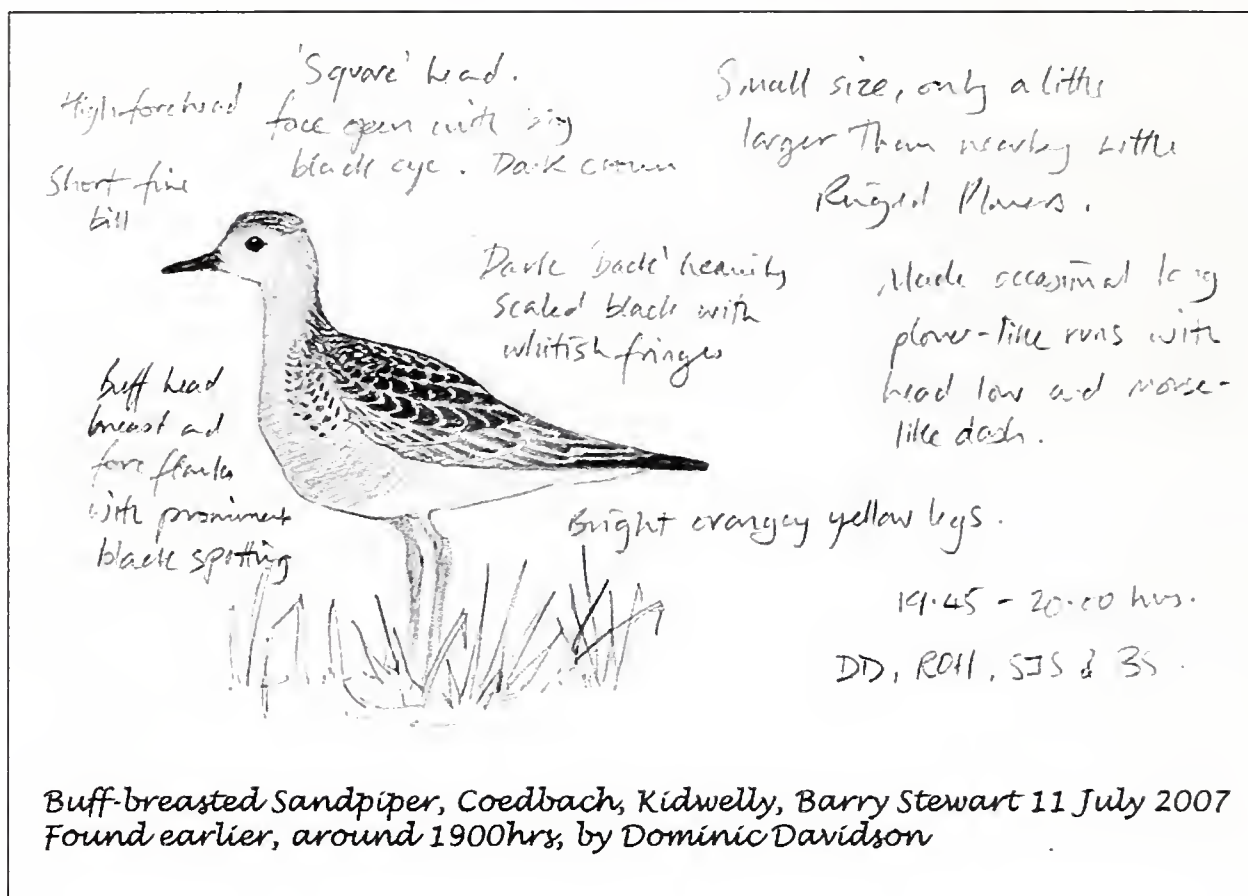
Tryngites subruficollis

Pibydd Bronllwyd

Breeds in Alaska and North-west Canada, winters in northern Argentina and Uruguay.

Carmarthen: adult, Coed Bach, 11th June (D. Davidson).

An unusual late spring record.



Long-billed Dowitcher (5, 5, 0)

Limnodromus scolopaceus

Giach Gylfin-hir

Breeds primarily in Arctic Siberia where range is expanding W to Lena River delta. North American range restricted to coastal tundra of W and N Alaska, and E to Mackenzie River. Migrates through USA to winter from coastal S USA to N Central America.

Anglesey: 1st winter Alaw Estuary & Inland Sea, 28th Nov. 2006 until 1st Apr. 2007 (KG Croft, R. Birch, S. Culley).



Long-billed Dowitcher, Inland Sea by M. Atkinson.



Spotted Sandpiper (9 , 0 , 1)

Actitis macularius

Pibydd Brych

Vagrant.

E. Glamorgan: 1st winter, Lisvane Res.
20th Oct. until 28th Apr.
2008 (P. Bristow).

Although ten other “Spot Sands” were seen in the UK this year, this individual was the longest stayer and the most twitched, especially as it could count on two year lists.

This was the first Welsh record since the one at Porth Colmon, Caernarfon on 29th Sept. 1981 and the third for Glamorgan, with others at Oxwich, 27th Aug. – 4th Sept. 1973 and at Aberthaw, 24th – 25th Aug. 1974.



Spotted Sandpiper. Lisvane, B. Stewart.

Gull-billed Tern (9 , 3 , 1)

Gelochelidon nilotica

Morwennol Ylfinbraff

Small populations in Germany and Denmark. Widespread though local in Spain but colonies are isolated and small elsewhere in Europe. To the east, breeds discontinuously from Turkey & SW Russia through Kazakhstan. The European population winters in coastal W. Africa.

Ceredigion: Dyfi Estuary, Ynyslas & Ynyshir, 2nd – 7th Aug. (R. Jones).



Photo Dyfi Estuary August 2007. R. Brown

Bee-eater (29, 11, 6)

Merops apiaster

Gwybedog y Gwenyn

Scarce visitor from Mediterranean Europe.

Pembroke: one, St. David's, 2nd May (PK Grennard).

Montgomery / Denbigh: five, Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, 27th May (photo. below by A. Cielecki).

The five in Montgomery were a county first and the first record of a flock in Wales since the 4 at South Stack, Anglesey in July 1987.



Roller (7, 2, 1)

Coracias garrulous

Rhol ydd

Rare vagrant from Mediterranean Europe.

Brecon/Carmarthen: 2nd summer, Usk Res
29th – 31st July

(A. Davies, R. Evans,
M. Hogan, J. Lloyd).

Gower: 2nd summer, Bryn
Common, Gower

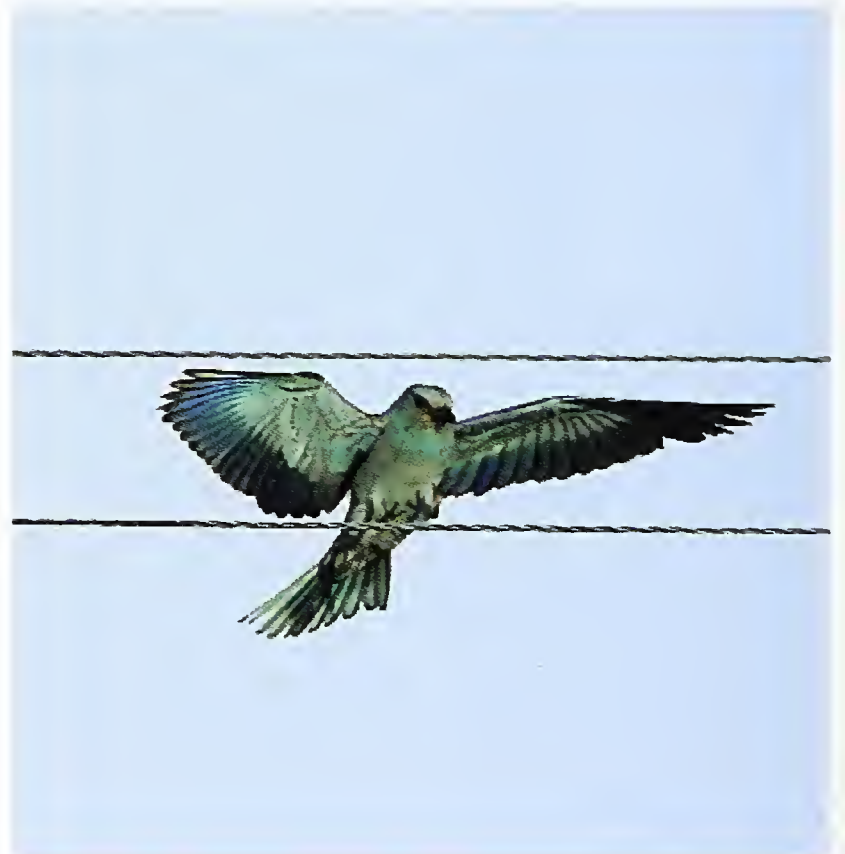
6th – 7th Aug

(B. Stewart et al).

Both records refer to the same individual.
The only other UK accepted records from
this year was of one at Easington,
Yorkshire in mid-July.

The last three records in Wales of this
species have all been from Pembroke.

Photo. opposite: Roller at Bryn Common,
Gower, August 2007. N. Casburn.



Short-toed Lark (12, 12, 1)

Calandrella brachydactyla

Ehedydd Llwyd

Rare visitor. Breeds from Iberia, southern France and NW Africa east to Manchuria.

Pembroke: adult, Skomer, 7th – 8th June (JG Brown).

Amazingly enough this was the first accepted record of this species on Skomer, compared to the nine on the nearby island of Skokholm.

Woodlark (- , 127, 2)

Lullula arborea

Ehedydd y Coed

Now widespread in Southern and Eastern England.

Caernarfon: Bardsey, 24th Oct. (D. Wright).

Uwchmynydd, 29th Oct. (M. Hughes).

Correction to last year's report, the photo published was of the Carmel Head, Anglesey bird, taken by S. Culley. A pair bred in south Wales in 2006 but unfortunately this was not repeated in 2007.

Shore Lark (-, 72, 1)

Eremophila alpestris

Ehedydd y Traeth

Irregular winter visitor from the northern Arctic.

Meirionnydd: Talybont, 18th & 21st Nov. (M. Bayley).

What was fast becoming an annual scarce bird to the shores of north Wales in the 1980's & 90's is now much rarer in Wales. This individual was found whilst walking the dog – like a few other species this year (such as the next species !).

Pechora Pipit (0, 0, 1)

Anthus gustavi

Corhedydd y Pechora

Vagrant. Breeds from NE Russia across Siberia. Winters SE Asia.

Pembroke: Goodwick Moor,
19th – 23rd Nov.,
(A. Rogers, S. Berry,
R. Dobbins).

The first accepted record for Wales and the latest British record, the previous latest was on the Scilly's on 28th Oct. 1994. There were three other accepted records of this species in the UK this year, all on Shetland.



Pechora Pipit, Goodwick by P. Morris.

Grey-headed Wagtail (10, 6, 0)

Motacilla flava thunbergi

Siglen Benllwyd

Rare visitor. Breeds Scandinavia. Winters Africa.

1987 Caernarfon: male, Bardsey, 11th May 1987 (B. Lewis, N. Barlow).

Originally identified, submitted and rejected by BBRC as a Black-headed Wagtail, the original description and photograph have been re-examined and is now accepted as a male Grey-headed.

Although this was a particularly dark-headed individual other features including the call proved that this was not a Black-headed Wagtail and the BBRC decision was correct. It is now added to the Welsh totals of this very scarce race.

Red-flanked Bluetail (0, 0, 1)

Tarsiger cyanurus

Cynffonlas Ystlysgochs

A small population breeds in NE Finland but the main range extends through cool temperate forests of N. Eurasia from E. Russia 7 Siberia to Kamchatka, N. Japan & NE China.

Caernarfon: adult male, Bardsey,
1st Oct. (B. Stammers,
R. J. Else et al.).

First record for Wales, and what a bird !
Seven other records were accepted in the
UK this year, a bumper crop.

Photo. opposite SD Stansfield.



Bluethroat (29, 14, 1)

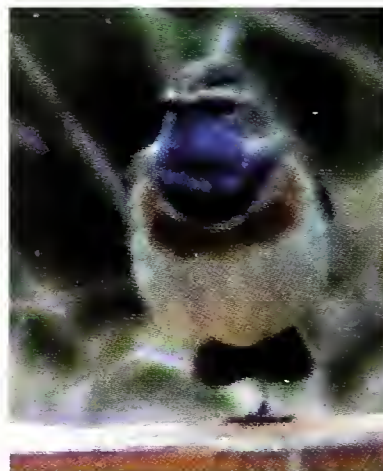
Luscinia svecica

Bronlas

Migrant, breeding in Arctic / Alpine to cool temperate zones of Europe (white-spotted race) and Scandinavia (red-spotted race).

Merionnydd: male, Arenig Fawr,
10th – 19th June
(H. Thomas, R. Sandham
et al).

Photos. opposite by R. Sandham.



Desert Wheatear (1 , 3 , 1)

Oenanthe deserti

Tinwen y Diffaethwch

Vagrant. Breeds North Africa and from Caucasus across central Asia. Asian breeders winter Arabian Peninsular to NW India.

Denbigh: male, Towyn, 20th Nov.

(S. Morris, M. Hughes).

Photo. opposite M. Hughes.

Five others were recorded in the UK this year, two in November and one at Crewe, Cheshire in December. Of those in Wales, the first was at Penclawdd, Glamorgan Gower in November 1989, the second from Peterstone, Gwent in December 1996, then came females on Skokholm, Pembroke in December 1997 & November 2003.



Blue Rock Thrush (1 , 0 , 1)

Monticola solitarius

Bronfraith Las y Graig

Vagrant. Breeds Mediterranean Basin. Winters within breeding range or to south.

Radnor: male, Elan Valley, 11th Apr. (Dr. S. & A. Bridgman, R. Spencer).

An amazing record, only the 6th for Britain but the 2nd for Wales after one at Moel-y-gest, Caernarfon on 4th June 1987.

Aquatic Warbler (41 , 33 , 1)

Acrocephalus paludicola

Telor y Dwr

A scarce autumn migrant from Central Europe.

Gwent: Uskmouth, 12th & 13th Sept. (L. Phillips).

Photo. P. Marshall.

Yet another one for Uskmouth, although this one was never caught.



Booted Warbler (0, 4, 0)

Hippolais caligata

Telor Bacsiog

Range expanding W, and breeds in S Finland. To E, occurs from C Russia and W Siberia to Yenisei valley and W Mongolia. Winters throughout Indian subcontinent.

2005 Caernarfon: Bardsey, 30th Aug. (SD Stansfield et al).

The first Welsh record was at Skokholm, Pembroke, 25th – 28th Sept. 1993. This was followed by one on Bardsey 25th – 26th Sept. 1998 and one on Skomer, Pembroke, 14th – 15th Sept. 2000.



Both photos. SD Stansfield.

Melodious Warbler (142, 44, 1)

Hippolais polyglotta

Telor Per

Breeds northeast Africa, Iberia, France, Switzerland and Italy. Winters in Africa, south of the Sahara.

Caernarfon: Bardsey, 18th June (D, Wright, photo SD Stansfield).



Eastern Subalpine Warbler (2, 1, 2)

Sylvia cantillans albistriata

Telor Brongoch

Of the four races of this species occurring through the Mediterranean basin this one breeds in SE Europe and winters along south side of Sahara. This race is assessed by BBRC.

Caernarfon: 1st summer male, Bardsey, 4th May (SD Stansfield, M. Archer, RJ Else).

1st summer male, Bardsey, 24th – 25th May (SD Stansfield, RJ Else).



Photos.: on the left 4th May by SD Stansfield,, on the right the bird on 25th May by RJ Else.

Barred Warbler (40, 31, 1)

Sylvia nisoria

Telor Rhesog

Breeds from north Italy, Germany and south Sweden eastwards to Mongolia. Winters northeast Africa south to Kenya and southern Arabia.

Caernarfon: 1st winter, Bardsey, 14th Oct. (photo SD Stansfield, M. Eldridge).



Raddes Warbler (3, 2, 1)

Phylloscopus schwarzi

Telor Radde

Breeds in S Siberia from Novosibirsk region E to Ussuriland and NE China. Migrates through E China to winter in N Burma, Indochina and C Thailand. This species dropped off the BBRC list of rare birds, onto the WRP list, as of Jan. 1st 2006.

Pembroke: Skomer, 17th Oct. (JG Brown).

The other Welsh records were: Skokholm 22 Oct. 1968 and on Bardsey 29th Oct. 1987, 18th Oct. 1990 and two 29th – 31st Oct. 2006.

Hume's Warbler (0, 2, 1)

Phylloscopus humei

Telor Hume

Caernarfon: Penrhyn Bay, 18th Nov. (M. Hughes).

One of only three recorded in the UK this year (others in Norfolk and Sussex).

The only other accepted records came from Strumble Head, Pembroke on 20th Nov. 1993 and in Caernarfon 14th Dec. 2003 – 4th Jan. 2004. A request to BBRC has been made to review the accepted record of an individual at Soldier's Point Anglesey in November 2000. The WRP believe this may have been published in error.

Red-breasted Flycatcher (126, 39, 2)

Ficedula parva

Gwybedog Brongoch

Breeds from southern Sweden south to Austria and Bulgaria eastwards across Siberia. Winters in Pakistan, India and southeast Asia.

Caernarfon: 1st year male Bardsey, 11th June (D. Wright).

Anglesey: 1st winter, Breakwater Quarry C.P., 2nd – 3rd Oct. (KG Croft).

1st winter, Soldier's Point, 20th Oct. (KG Croft).

Two individuals less than a mile and a month apart, both found by the same observer.

Photo. opposite from Breakwater Quarry by R. Jones.



Bearded Tit (- , - , -)

Panurus biarmicus

Titw Barfog

Resident in the UK (mainly the south East). Erruptive. Bred in Wales in one's or twos mid 1960's – 1980. Rare since.

Gwent: birds present and bred again at NWR Uskmouth, max. 7 on 24th & 25th Mar.

Following the successful breeding in the previous two years a small population appears to be establishing itself at the Uskmouth reed bed lagoons of the Newport Wetland Reserve. Up to 4 individuals were widely noted throughout the year at the site, with a max. of 7 on 24th & 25th Mar. Due to the secretive nature of the species the exact number of breeding pairs at this site is unknown, although breeding was again proved in 2007 with juveniles seen in July.

Golden Oriole (-, -, 1)

Oriolus oriolus

Euryn

Rare visitor from Mediterranean Europe.

Anglesey: male, Cemlyn, 9th June (T. White).

This species was added to the WRP list from 1st Jan. 2007.

Red-backed Shrike (-, 56, 0)

Lanius collurio

Cigydd Cefngoch

Breeds throughout most of mainland Europe.

South Wales: a pair attempted to breed for the third year running, but were unfortunately unsuccessful, presumably due to the inclement weather. Site and observers withheld. The adults were assumed to be returning birds.

Rose-coloured Starling (26, 48, 0)

Sturnus roseus

Drudwen Wridog

Breeds from Hungary and Balkans east to Kazakhstan and southern Iran. Occasionally erupts west in summer. Winters in the Indian region.

Carmarthen: juv. Kidweli, probably from early October 2006 – March 2007 (J. Dibble, per D. Moore).

Common Rosefinch (39, 65, 3)

Carpodacus erythrinus

Llinos Goch

Breeds from Germany and southern Sweden eastwards to Kamchatka and from Georgia eastwards to central China. Has bred in Britain on a few occasions. Winters in India, southeast Asia and southern China.

Ceredigion: male, Cwm Rheidol, 29th May (C. Maloney).

Caernarfon: immature, Bardsey, 12th – 13th Sept. (SD Stansfield, SC. Renouf et al.).

Glamorgan: immature / female, Nitten, Mewslade, Gower 22nd Oct. – 2nd Nov. (DC Bolt, RJ Rigdon, B. Stewart).

2006 Pembroke: immature / female, Skomer, 4th Nov. (JG Brown).



Bardsey. Photo. SD Stansfield.



Mewslade, Gower. Photo B. Stewart.

Correction to last year's report:

2006 Pembroke: Imm. / female, Goodwick, Fishguard, 8th June (S. Berry, A. Rogers).

Ortolan Bunting (105, 48, 1)*Emberiza hortulana**Bras y Gerddi*

Breeds continental Europe and Fenno-Scandia eastwards to northern Iran and Mongolia. Winters south Arabia and Sahel zone of the south Sahara.

Caernarfon: 1st w, Bardsey, 13th Sept. (D. Wright).

APPENDIX I - List of records that were deemed NOT PROVEN

Many of the records were not accepted because the Panel were not convinced, on the evidence before us, that the identification was fully established. Only in a very few cases were the Panel satisfied that a mistake had been made.

Wilson's Petrel	Strumble Head, Pembroke	5/8/07
Golden Eagle	Lake Vyrnwy, Montgomery	3/5/07
Corncrake	Ty Gwyn, Ceredigion	5 & 8/9/07
Common Crane	Cei Bach, Ceredigion	30/5/07
Stone Curlew	Strumble Head, Pembroke	7/9/07
Alpine Swift	Gwent	9/5/07
Short-toed Lark	Bardsey, Caernarfon	9/6/07
Woodchat	Abersycir, Brecon	24/5/07

APPENDIX II - List of records that have been PENDED for more information or requiring further assessment.

White-tailed Eagle	World's End, Denbigh	13/4/07
Caspian Gulls, 3+ various ages	GresfordFlash, Wrexham	October - December
Common Redpoll, 4	Borras, Wrexham	28-29/1/06
Common Redpoll	Bardsey, Caernarfon	3 on 11/5/06, 1 on 2/6/06 1 on 11/7/06, 1 on 20/10/06

APPENDIX III - List of records that have not been submitted.

An incomprehensive list, of birds claimed on Birdline or to county recorders, which at present have not been substantiated with a description. If anyone has information on any of these, please send it direct to the WRP Secretary. Thank you.

Corn Bunting	Shotwick Fields	May & June 2007
American Wigeon	Dyfi Estuary, Ceredigion & Montgomery.	13 th Oct. - 4 th Dec.
Corn Bunting	Shotwick Fields	May & June 2007

Pechora Pipit - a new species for Wales

Many people might not agree with me that finding a good bird has a large element of luck about it, a few things definitely went in my favour on 19th Nov. 2007. Firstly I arrived home from work quite early on that Monday so Bella my Jack Russell Terrier was still patiently waiting to go out for a walk, then when I arrived at the Flagpoles Car Park at Goodwick the tide was in so a walk along the Parrog was out of the question – I know, I'll go round the Moor .

There had been a period of heavy rain for the preceding days so the Moor was as wet as I had ever seen it, puddles everywhere , so myself & Bella splashed along the path with me saying to myself “ This will be a quick dash around the boardwalk then back home” . How wrong can you be!!

We crossed the small bridge and turned left to make our way to the boardwalk and I looked at the time on my mobile phone it was 2.48 pm. and I noticed how dark it was considering the time. After walking about 100 metres I saw a bird move under a small area of flooded willows, this is going to be a Robin I thought, no it was a Pipit. Strange place for a Meadow Pipit I thought, but after a second better look at the bird , when I was able to get a good look at it's strikingly white wing bars and white braces down it's back it was obvious this was no Mippit . So what is it ? I had an inkling but needed to confirm the detail. Due to the time most of the locals were at work or otherwise engaged however I eventually managed to one at home. After relaying to him what I had, he fancied it for a Red Throated or more likely a Pechora Pipit as all the questions he was asking me regarding the latter were ending in a yes answer, but the diagnostic feature was a small primary projection which would be difficult to see in the bad light.



Photo. R. Crossen.



Photo. P. Morris

Not long latter two other birders arrived. We watched the Pipit creep around under the willows until the light had almost gone with each minute passing making it more difficult to get the last piece of the jigsaw & we came to a decision to leave the bird as we felt in the conditions it would stay.

Unfortunately I had to work the next day so could not get back to the moor at first light but others did, and shortly after relocating the bird they got the primary projection, I remember I was somewhere between Llangurig and Rhyader when a text message came through on my mobile phone saying “got the projection it’s definitely a Pechora, the first for Wales, well done!!”

The Pipit was enjoyed by hundreds of people from all over the country with many of the local businesses benefittingbenefiting from the small influx of visitors, then as usual with our rarer avian visitors, at 2.30pm on Friday 23rd it climbed to the top of one of the trees in the area to which it had stayed faithful & flew off strongly to the Southwest, it’s brief stay on Goodwick Moor was over.

Adrian Rogers

Red-flanked Bluetail - a new species for Wales



On the morning of 1st October 2007 I was heading away from the Observatory when Richard Else, one of my Assistant Wardens, contacted me on the personal radio. Rather out of breath and garbled came a message that ended in “bluetail”! I asked Richard to slow down and confirm if he had just said bluetail. His response was slightly clearer, “yes, one of the visitors has just told me he has seen a bluetail at Tŷ Nesaf!”.

I asked Richard who had seen it, but he was unsure of the finders name. I decided speed was the best form of action now. I ran into my house, shouted upstairs to my wife Emma “Someone has had a bluetail at Tŷ Nesaf, I’ll see you there” and before she had time to reply I was running like a thoroughbred! By now Richard Else had arrived at Tŷ Nesaf and got on the radio, “Steve, it’s definitely a bluetail!” I passed one of the other visitors just leaving the Observatory and yelled the news at him, then as I was running radioed my other Assistant Warden, David Wright, and shouted the news at him. Within four minutes of hearing the initial message I had made my way to the site and was watching an absolutely ‘stonking’ male Red-flanked Bluetail. The bird was not just a red-flanked blueTAIL, but more of a red-flanked BLUE! Ben Stammers had actually found the bird and had seen a bluetail before on Fair Isle in 1993, so was fairly sure about the bird’s ID.

From my initial views it was obvious the bird was a male and, as I obtained more prolonged views, it became apparent the bird was probably an adult. There were no pale fringes or tips to the greater coverts and the upperparts were generally electric blue, though were ‘fogged’ with the brownish fringing of the bird’s fresh plumage.

After watching the bird for about five minutes and taking a few pictures and a set of notes, I went to the phone and alerted Alan Davies of Birdline North West. He immediately released the news and alerted other birders who may have been able to get across to the island the same day. I then returned to the area and continued to take many pictures of the bird as it worked its way up and down an old rusty fence on the outside of a small garden sheltered by a row of tall pines. The bird would occasionally disappear for short periods as it moved back into the garden. About midday the one and only boat 'full' of birders arrived. Just five people managed to make it, including Reg Thorpe and Simon Hugheston-Roberts (who incidentally now have the best record for twitching Bardsey – previous successes including Blyth's Pipit and American Robin!). After the bird had been well seen by all on the island and the twitching group had returned to the mainland I decided to attempt to trap the bird. I returned to the Observatory, had lunch and made my way back with spring traps, meal worms and ringing gear. I set the traps and decided that if the bird continued its current behaviour it would go along the fence, see the worms, drop to the ground and either be back on the fence post after six or seven seconds or else trapped in one of the traps. After about ten minutes the bird moved towards one of the traps, which had been placed at the base of the fence posts it favoured. The bird dropped down off the post and I began to count. When I got to ten I moved rather slowly to the trap, which was obscured from view by high vegetation, and saw inside it flashes of electric blue! The bird was removed from the trap, ringed, photographed and released back into the same area shortly after capture. It was last seen later in the day, but could not be relocated by the eight birders who made the journey the following day. In the hand the bird was confirmed as an adult male. The inside of the upper mandible was jet black (this is pale or even yellowish in immatures of most chats) and there were no signs of two generations of feathers, which suggested the bird had recently completed a full body and wing moult.



SD Stansfield.

Blue Rock Thrush – in the Elan Valley

On Wednesday 11th April 2007 while on a short break in Rhayader (mid-Wales) I, along with my wife, was on a walk in the Elan Valley. It was about 1:15 pm and we started off at the visitor centre with the intention to walk along the reservoirs. We stopped at the Caban quarry due to a Wheatear flitting about - my first for the year and not a bad start.

I thought I'd take this opportunity to scan the quarry and maybe find a Ring Ouzel. Just as I looked up a 'thrush-like' bird flew across the top of the quarry - was my luck in for a Rouzel? I located the bird straight away as it landed and sat looking down on us. Something wasn't quite right as the bird appeared blue. It flew and landed again but it was this moment that confirmed my initial thoughts that it was indeed a stunning male Blue Rock Thrush.

Typically I didn't have my scope with me as it was in the car at the visitor centre car park. I ran back for my scope, and on my return my wife said that the bird was still there. Out came the scope and 'ooooh my' what a bird. We continued watching it for the next one and a half hours as it flew around the top of the quarry feeding on bumblebees!

We couldn't get a signal on our mobiles, and we had to tell someone, so at about 3 pm we went back to the visitor centre and asked to see a Ranger - none was there was the reply, but the lady took the details and said she would inform them when they got back. So we went back to the quarry, where the bird was still present and showing superbly. Now the odd person was stopping and asking what I was looking at. At about 4:20 pm a car pulled into the car park at the quarry and three guys got out and asked what I was looking at: "Is it a Peregrine?" "Err, no it's a Blue Rock Thrush." "A what? You're kidding", came their replies. At last someone else had seen it! Around 10 minutes later two Rangers pulled up on the road behind us: they obviously weren't coming to see us about the thrush so I went to tell them what I was looking at. They couldn't get out of the van fast enough and sure enough they saw it too.

One of the Rangers then got in touch with the Head Ranger, who also happened to be the County Recorder; he arrived around 4:45 pm and managed to enjoy the bird as well. Between all of us we managed to get a couple of photos and a bit of video footage - if not the best then it would hopefully aid our sighting for submission purposes. It still continued to be active and seemed to be feeding well, catching the odd bumblebee and even a Common Lizard became a meal. At around 5:15 pm we lost sight of the bird and sadly that was last anyone saw of it.

Many people visited the site after the news had been disseminated via BirdGuides and other news services, but a search of the area the following morning confirmed that the bird had departed. This was one of my most memorable day's bird watching ever and, considering the rarity value, my best find to date.

Dr. S. Bridgeman (taken from Birdguides website).

Eastern Race Subalpine Warbler – on Bardsey

The two male Eastern Subalpine Warblers *Sylvia cantillans albistriata* caught on Bardsey in May 2007 were the fourth and fifth records of this race to be identified in Wales. The only previous ones were a male on Bardsey in 1984, a female there in 1985 and a male on Ramsey in 1993.

Most Subalpine Warblers recorded in Britain are of the nominate western race *S.c.cantillans*, which breeds in Southern Europe as far East as Italy. *S.c.albistriata* breeds further East, from Slovenia to Western Turkey. Both races are migrants that spend the winter in Saharan Africa, although *albistriata* winters slightly further east than *cantillans*.

The Bardsey birds were both males, making identification relatively straightforward. Male *albistriata* have distinctive underpart colouration, with the throat and upper breast deep brown-red, contrasting with a well-demarcated white belly. In *cantillans* the underparts are more pinkish, and this colour extends right down onto the belly. Male *albistriata* usually also has a broader white 'moustache' than *cantillans* and slightly darker grey upperparts.

Both birds were trapped and ringed, and biometric measurements in the hand confirmed the identification: *albistriata* are slightly larger than nominate birds, with slightly longer and more pointed wings.

Females of both races are very similar, and although *albistriata* birds are a touch colder and greyer in colouration they would be very difficult to identify in the field.

The following table compares in-hand measurements of the two Bardsey birds with typical measurements of the two subspecies (data from BWP volume VI).

	Wing length (mm)	Tarsus length (mm)	Tail length (mm)	Tail/wing ratio	Wing point
Typical male <i>cantillans</i>	58-63	18.4-19.7	49-55	0.85-0.98 (usually 0.9+)	P3/4/5
Typical male <i>albistriata</i>	62-67	18.7-20.7	48-56	0.84-0.94 (usually -0.9)	P3/4
4th May bird	64	20.2	Not measured	Not measured	P3/4
24th May bird	62.5	Not measured	53	0.85	P3/4

References

Cramp, S (ed.) (1992) The Birds of the Western Palearctic Vol.VI.

Shirihai, H., Gargallo, G., Helbig, A., Harris, A. & Cottridge, D. 2000. Subalpine Warbler: identification, ageing and sexing. *Birding World* 13: 234-250.

Rogers, M.J., & The Rarities Committee. 1985. Report on Rare Birds in Great Britain in 1984. *Brit. Birds* 78.

Rogers, M.J., & The Rarities Committee. 1986. Report on Rare Birds in Great Britain in 1985. *Brit. Birds* 79.

Richard Else

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take the opportunity of thanking all the observers for producing descriptions and the County Recorders for sending them on to WRP. We would also like to thank county recorders for their helpful comments on this document. We would also like to thank all those who contributed photographs and articles on "Firsts for Wales". We hope that more be send in and included next year. Please note that my contact e-mail address has changed from that printed on the inside cover of the last edition of Welsh Birds.

Jon Green, on behalf of the Welsh Records Panel

WELSH BIRDS

'Welsh Birds' is the journal of the Welsh Ornithological Society and is published thrice annually, in June, November (Rarities edition) and January (Welsh Bird Report and the Ringing Report).

Papers for Welsh Birds are welcomed by the Editor on any aspect of Welsh Ornithology. The Society is anxious that the journal should accurately reflect present ornithological activity in Wales. Thus we hope that all workers, professional or amateur, with results of bird studies in Wales, will always consider publishing information about these here. All papers will be reviewed by the Editor and an independent referee. Authors should follow the format of papers published in the journal and guidelines for authors have been drawn up and are available from the Editor (address inside front cover). Papers are accepted and published in either Welsh or English. Papers in Welsh should be supplied with captions to tables and figures in both Welsh and English and with an English summary. This follows standard international practice.

Short notes on interesting or unusual features of behaviour recorded in Wales are also welcome. An accumulation of such items is of considerable value. Notes should be short and succinct, ideally of not more than half a page in length. Notes may also be submitted in either Welsh or English.

The Editors of Welsh Birds have a number of back issues available for purchase.

Issue	Number in stock	Issue	Number in stock
Vol 1 (2)	6	Vol 3 (5)	5
Vol 1 (4)	8	Vol 3 (6)	4
Vol 1 (5)	2	Vol 4 (1)	9
Vol 2 (1)	2	Vol 4 (2)	6
Vol 2 (3)	6	Vol 4 (3)	25
Vol 2 (5)	1	Vol 4 (4)	52
Vol 2 (6)	5	Vol 4 (5)	18
Vol 3 (1)	7	Vol 4 (6)	8
Vol 3 (2)	2	Vol 5 (1)	38
Vol 3 (3)	6	Vol 5 (2)	10
Vol 3 (4)	6	Vol 5 (3)	10

Also Rare & Scarce Birds in Wales 2005 report.

Vol. 4 & 5 issues are available for £4, while older issues for £2 (including postage). Cheques payable to WOS. Please contact the Welsh Birds Editors, addresses below.

WELSH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY CYMDEITHAS ADARYDDOL CYMRU

www.welshos.org.uk

The Welsh Ornithological Society was founded by the Bird Clubs and Societies in the Principality for the benefit of birds in Wales.

Officers and members of Council as November 2007.

- President: David Saunders
- Chairman: D. Moore. Rowan Hose, Gors Road, Salem, Llandeilo. SA19 7LY.
- Vice-Chairman:
& Hon. Secretary I. Spence, Ty'r Fawnog, 43 Black Brook, Sychdyn, Mold. CH7 6LT.
- Membership Secretary
and Hon. Treasurer: A. Williams, 30 Fairfield, Penperlleni, Pontypool Gwent NP4 0AQ.
e-mail: mochdreboy@waitrose.com
- Editor: Welsh Birds: S. Tyler, Yew Tree Cottage, Lone Lane, Penallt, Monmouth.
NP25 4AJ
e-mail: steph_tyler2001@hotmail.com
- Editor: Welsh Bird Report: J. Green, Crud yr Awel, Bowls Road, Blaenporth, Cardigan.
SA43 2AR.
e-mail: welshrarebirds@tiscali.co.uk

- | | | | |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|
| Council Members: | J. Barnes | C. Jones | R. Pritchard |
| | D. Hewitt | A. King | R.H.A. Taylor |
| | B. Holt | J. Lloyd | R.I. Thorpe |
| | P. Howlett | S.J. Moon | A. Williams. |
| | P. Jennings | C. Parry | |

MEMBERSHIP

If you wish to join the Society, please complete the enclosed membership form and send it together with a cheque for the appropriate subscription made payable to the Welsh Ornithological Society to the Membership Secretary:

A. Williams, 30 Fairfield, Penperlleni, Pontypool Gwent NP4 0AQ.

Annual subscriptions: Member £15 Family Member £18



Above: Desert Wheatear, Towyn, Denbigh. M.Hughes.

Below: Roller, Gower. B. Stewart.



