SKOKHOLM

BIRD OBSERVATORY

Annual Report 2024

Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
De a Gorllewin Cymru
Wildlife Trust of
South & West Wales

Wardens' Report

Introduction to the Skokholm Island Annual Report 2024

It was a year like no other, a melting pot of inspiring Island developments, challenging events, exciting records and worrying trends. Earth is changing. The year 2024 will be remembered as the first in which the average worldwide temperature exceeded preindustrial levels by 1.5°C, this a threshold which the 2015 Paris Agreement stated should not be exceeded in order to 'avoid catastrophic climate impacts' (Copernicus, 2025). Globally it was the hottest year on record, with the last ten years now the warmest ten on record. Nationally temperatures exceeded the 1991-2020 average for eight months of the year, Wales experienced its warmest ever February and the UK its hottest ever May. By contrast, it was the wettest spring since 1986 and the coolest summer since 2015, whilst on Skokholm it was a year punctuated by storms, the 2023-2024 storm season seeing the greatest number since storm naming began. We must come to expect such unpredictable weather patterns, conditions which will inevitably impact wildlife. Recent years have seen an upturn in spring vagrants from the south and autumn vagrants from the distant west, this linked at least in part to climate disruption; although the 2024 addition of both Squacco Heron and White-rumped Sandpiper to the Island list was exciting, these events were somewhat overshadowed by concerns over the growing influence of climate change. It was a disastrous year for butterfly records on Skokholm, a reflection of serious declines across the UK and the declaration of a nationwide 'Butterfly Emergency' (Butterfly Conservation, 2024). Our Island wildlife faces threats far beyond

climate change. Following an alarming decline linked to bycatch by commercial fishing operations, Porpoise numbers were at their lowest ever, with counts falling 84% below the 11 year mean. A May lifeboat wreck in Steep Bay also highlighted the impacts of human activities at a more local scale.

There are always wins on Dream Island, this year seeing no shortage of amazing events. We were joined by great guests, skilled ringers and dedicated volunteers who contributed massively to recording and the Island infrastructure. Petrel Station II was completed in spring, with several boxes investigated this summer and a subsequent abandoned egg a promising sign for the future. Puffins again nested in the new Crab Bay Hide, indeed an attempt in one of the one-way glass boxes was watched from egg to fledgling Puffling for the first time; guided trips to witness its development were thoroughly enjoyed by our guests. Following a large drop in Guillemot numbers in 2023, along with a July corpse indicative of a late breeding season HPAI outbreak, it was good to see numbers stabilise this year, this due at least in part to a healthy population of younger birds.

The following report provides a full account of the 2024 season, documenting the fortunes of Skokholm's breeding birds, along with a detailed record of migrant birds and the non-avian wildlife encountered. Each species logged is addressed separately and all key information gathered during the season can be found under that species title; thus the details of first and last dates, peak numbers, breeding, ringing totals, ringing recoveries, specific projects and all other relevant information can be found in the one place. Following the success of our previous online reports, the Skokholm Island Annual Report 2024 has again been produced in a free to download, tree-saving, searchable PDF format. For any readers wishing to contribute to our work, a 'donate now' button is available on the source page.

The 2024 Season and Weather Summary

The season ran from 10th March to 3rd December and we welcomed paying guests from 22nd April to 1st October. The Island was thus occupied for a total of 269 days (including the arrival and departure

dates), this nine fewer than in 2023 but almost matching a 2013-2023 mean of 269.8 days. Following the contraction of Covid-19 by staff, the guest weekend of the 19th to 22nd July was cancelled, this also resulting in a rare four day hiatus in Blog posts (which had otherwise been updated during each day of Island occupation since the start of 2013). The Island was staffed by Wardens Richard Brown and Giselle Eagle, supported by Long-term Volunteers Gwennan Butler, Judith Kay, Emmanuel Jatta, Kayleigh Bargus and Hayley Land. Wendy James and Richard Dobbins took over wardening duties between the 11th and 24th August when staff departed for a holiday.

The following weather summary is compiled using observations noted during the daily Birdlog, meteorological measurements taken by the weather station at the Coastguard Lookout on Wooltack Point (4km to our northnortheast, managed by Natural Resources Wales and referred to as 'the weather station' from this point onwards) and wave height and wind data retrieved from the Mid Channel Rock Lighthouse Beacon (nearly 8km to our westsouthwest, owned by Milford Haven Port Authority and referred to as 'the beacon' from this point onwards).

A total of six named storms hit the UK between our departure from Skokholm in December 2023 and our return (the 2023 to 2024 storm season saw 12 named storms, the most since storm naming began in 2015). Storms Elin and Fergus arrived between the 9th and 11th December, bringing heavy rain and strong winds; the weather station registered a peak gust of 78.3mph at 1300hrs on the 9th, whilst gusts averaged at 63.8mph between 0600hrs and midnight. Storm Gerrit was next, bringing prolonged strong winds as it crossed the Island between the 27th and 28th December; the weather station recorded a hurricane force gust of 81.1mph at 2000hrs on the 27th. Storm Henk was the first of 2024; very heavy rain and violent storm force winds of up to 66.2mph were logged on 2nd January. Storms Isha and Jocelyn made landfall between the 21st and 24th January, these driven by a powerful jet stream intensified by the sinking of a pool of cold air southwards across North America and a dramatic temperature contrast (Met Office, 2025); storm force conditions were experienced at the weather station from 2200hrs on the 19th until 2000hrs on the 22nd, with the 21st seeing hurricane force gusts of up to 79.2mph.

Both England and Wales experienced their warmest February on record; rather worryingly, four of the ten hottest Februarys to date have been since 2019 (Met Office, 2025b). February was also incredibly wet, the 107.6mm collected at the weather station making it the wettest month of the year. The southern half of the United Kingdom logged record breaking rainfall, with the UK as a whole recording 32% more spring rainfall than the average (Met Office, 2025b).

Staff returned on 10th March following a late ringing trip to Kartong Bird Observatory in the Gambia. Whereas our 2023 return had been to a strikingly dry Island, with ponds well below capacity, a sharp contrast this March saw a saturated Island, the plateau boggy underfoot, ponds exceeding their limits and ephemeral pools scattered across low-lying land. The buildings had overwintered well however, with the interiors feeling surprisingly dry. Rain or drizzle was logged on 20 of 22 remaining March days and heavy hail fell on the 22nd; the 90.8mm of rain collected at the weather station made it the second wettest month of the year and the wettest March since 2004. Winds blew predominantly from the southerly quarter, with northerlies logged on only six dates. It was a largely fresh month, with winds of force five or above experienced on 57% of days; strong blows from the south were logged on the 12th and 13th and a force ten westerly was registered on the 23rd, resulting in rough seas. Temperatures were on the mild side of average, peaking at 12.3°C on the 31st.

April was a typically unsettled month. It began with the approach of Storm Kathleen, the 11th named storm of the 2023 to 2024 season and one which was regarded as unusually severe for the time of year. Lashing overnight rain on the 5th flooded Manx Shearwater burrows, this followed by two days of very rough weather. Gale force southwesterlies averaged 40.3mph between 2000hrs on the 6th and 1100hrs on the 7th, these punctuated by violent storm force gusts which peaked at 65.3mph at 2100hrs on the 6th. An average wave height of 12m, with regular waves in excess of 16m, was logged at the beacon that evening. Storm force winds continued through the early hours of the 7th, with gusts of 62.5mph and 60.6mph logged at 0300hrs and 0500hrs; unsurprisingly the sea remained rough until the 11th. Wet weather dominated, especially during the first half of the month; precipitation was logged on 63% of April days, with heavy rain noted on four of these, whilst hail showers were experienced on the 15th and 28th. The weather station collected 66.9mm of rain, making it the wettest April since 1999. Continuing wet weather led to the regular flooding of tracks, whilst a very slippery, algal covering emerged when waters receded on drier days; the decision was made to postpone the first visitor boat from the 19th to 22nd April due to concerns over the safety of the path network. The weather station collected a total of 325.6mm of rain during the four months from January to April; a total of 173.5mm was collected during the same period in 2023.

May was a more pleasant and noticeably drier month; precipitation was logged on 11 dates, with heavy showers recorded on only two of these. After an unsettled few days, the 4th saw the arrival of a high pressure system and a seven day quiet spell; five days of light northerlies were followed by two days of calm easterlies. Clear skies coincided with a major geomagnetic disturbance on the night

of the 10th, allowing for fantastic views of the aurora borealis; the solar storm could be seen as far south as the Canaries and Mexico and is regarded as the biggest geomagnetic storm to hit earth in over two decades (European Space Agency, 2025). It was the warmest May on record for the UK, with a mean temperature of 13.1°C being 2.4°C above average and 1.0°C above the previous 2008 record; in Wales the mean temperature matched the previous high (Met Office, 2025c), with calm conditions on the 11th seeing a peak of 20.0°C. Northerlies blew for 52% of days, making it feel cool on the Island, whilst winds were primarily from the easterly quarter between the 9th and 21st.

Northwesterlies blew for 11 of the first 12 days of June, bringing cooler than average temperatures for the time of year. It was a dry month, indeed the 17.2mm of rain collected at the weather station made it the driest of the year by some margin; the rain gauge contained 56% less than the 2019 to 2023 June mean (39.2 ±sd 25.7), whilst Winter Pond was gone by the 26th (this always the first of the three seasonal waterbodies to empty). Precipitation was recorded on just eight dates, this mostly falling as light drizzle, but with persistent rain logged on the 13th and heavy showers noted on the

evenings of the 14th and 15th. A wet mist descended on both the morning of the 23rd and on the evening of the 29th. June was a calm month overall, with winds exceeding a force four on only six occasions, these occurring between the 9th and 10th, the 13th and 15th and on the 27th. The only notable blow was the southwesterly logged between the 13th and 15th, this seeing force ten gusts between 0900hrs and 1500hrs on the 13th and peaking at 63.4mph at 1100hrs; this resulted in moderate to rough sea conditions. The only hot spell of the month occurred between the 23rd and 26th, with a high of 18.7°C recorded on the 26th.

July was an unsettled and cool month punctuated by regular spells of wet weather. The weather station collected a total of 54.2mm of rain, making it the second wettest July of the last ten data-years (2023 being the wettest). Precipitation, observed on 16 dates, often fell as isolated showers or light drizzle, whilst thunder and lightning over the mainland accompanied heavy showers in the early hours of the 7th. Heavy rain fell throughout the 15th and South Pond again contained water on the 16th. Regular and heavy showers fell on the 20th, whilst thick drizzle descended on the evening of the 22nd. A jet stream shifted to the south, which brought cooler than average temperatures in June, maintained its position for much of July, bringing cold Arctic air from the north (Met Office, 2025c); winds blew from the northerly quarter for 12 of the first 16 days of the month. By the 15th, the mean UK temperature was 2.0°C below average for the time of year, making it the coldest start to July since 2004 (Met Office, 2025c). The average daily maxima recorded at the weather station between the 1st and 15th was 15.3°C (it was 17.1°C in 2023), whilst the mean minima was 11.9°C (this 14.1°C in 2023). A hotter spell during the last week brought more typical July temperatures, with a high of 18.9°C logged on the 29th.

Warmer temperatures continued into August, with the daily maxima for the first fortnight averaging 18.2°C. A two day hot spell from the 11th saw a peak 2024 temperature of 23.4°C logged at the weather station; this high was not felt on the Island where a freshening eastsoutheasterly brought 100% cloud cover and a lingering drizzle. Due to a series of Atlantic low pressure systems, settled periods were largely short-lived, whilst Storm Lilian arrived on the 23rd, this the 12th and final storm of the 2023-2024 storm season. It was regarded as the most significant storm to affect the UK since Ellen and Francis in 2020; between 2200hrs on the 22nd and 0500hrs on the 23rd, storm force gusts averaged 57.5mph, whilst a peak hurricane force gust of 73.5mph was registered at 0200hrs on the 23rd. Precipitation was logged on 14 August dates, though this mostly fell as light showers or occasional drizzle and resulted in a typical rainfall total of 39.4mm. A thunder and lightning storm

was logged on the 5th. The last four days of the month saw a switch to calm conditions, with a force three easterly on the 31st bringing clear skies and warm temperatures which peaked at 20.3°C.

Hot conditions continued into September as warm humid air was drawn north from continental Europe (Met Office, 2025c). A monthly high of 20.5°C was logged on the 1st, whilst another warm spell between the 16th and 20th saw temperatures average 15.2°C, with the mean daily maxima reaching 18.4°C. It was an unsettled month, with precipitation logged on 16 dates; spells of heavy or very heavy rain were noted on the 4th and 10th and between the 25th and 27th, whilst lashing rain was experienced on the 29th. This resulted in an above average rainfall total, with 66.3mm well up on a 2014-2023 mean of 48.9 ±sd 27.7mm. Northerlies dominated, with 22 September dates featuring winds from this quarter. A week of gentle easterlies between the 16th and 22nd gave way to a run of fresher winds towards the end of the month, with the 29th seeing storm force southeasterlies from dawn; the period between midday and 2000hrs on the 29th was rough, with winds averaging 45.7mph, gusts averaging 64.6mph and a peak of 75.2mph at 1600hrs. Heavy rain saw North Pond go from empty to half full. Conditions improved dramatically as the wind backed eastnortheast between 2300hrs on the 29th and 0200hrs on the 30th, the mean speed just 11.4mph.

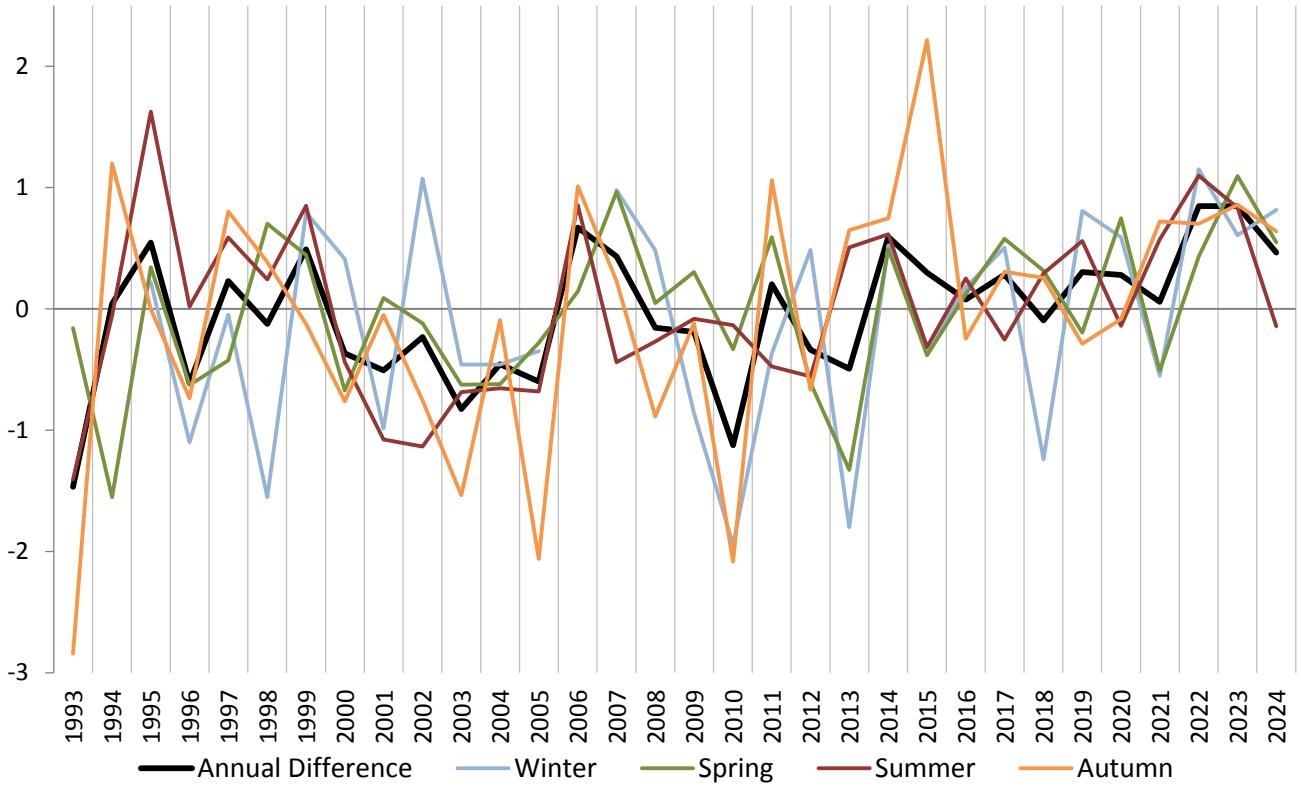
The first four days of October were dry, with a northeasterly wind freshening as it veered to the southeast and reaching force seven by the 5th. Wind speeds yo-yoed thereafter, but were largely unremarkable until the 20th when Storm Ashley hit, this the first named storm of the 2024-2025 season. From midnight until 0200hrs on the 21st, southwesterlies averaging 40.5mph were interspersed with gusts averaging 52.9mph; the maximum recorded speed was 70.3mph at 1700hrs on the 20th. The sea roughened to a six metre swell, with stiff southerlies for the following five days maintaining moderate conditions. Light northwesterlies on the 27th flattened the sea, whilst the last few days of the month were comparatively calm as winds toured the compass. Despite precipitation being logged on over half of October days, this was generally light or brief; only 67.3mm was collected at the weather station, this compared to the 151.5mm of last year and a 2014-2023 mean of 75.8 ±sd 39.8mm. For the most part, October temperatures hovered at the mild side of typical; the mean UK temperature was 0.7°C above the long-term average (Met Office, 2025c), with the 15.9°C logged at the weather station on the 25th being the local high.

Owing to a lingering high pressure system, a period of anticyclonic gloom dominated the first half of November, resulting in exceptionally dull, dry and mild conditions. Indeed the first ten days of the month saw an unshifting eight oktas of cloud cover, conditions which returned regularly until the 19th. The system then moved into the central north Atlantic, allowing for a southwards incursion of Arctic air and a second half to the month with noticeably cooler temperatures. Northerlies dominated from the 17th to the 21st, with brisker winds on the latter two dates and minimum and maximum air temperatures of 4.3°C and 6.4°C on the 20th and of 1.5°C and 4.1°C on the 21st. Storm Bert arrived on the 23rd, bringing heavy morning rain and lashing afternoon showers. Heavy rain caused disruption on the mainland, with 433 Welsh properties reported to have flooded, the majority of which were in the south; the 23rd was the wettest UK calendar day since 3rd October 2020 (Met Office, 2025c). The weather station recorded a gust of 70.9mph at 0400hrs on the 23rd and winds averaged gale force for the entire day. A five and a half metre swell arose, this accompanied by occasional ten metre waves, whilst the sea remained moderate or rough until the 25th. Storm Conall was next to arrive, bringing gale force southeasterly gusts on the 28th and 29th, however its impact on Skokholm was minimal compared with the southern counties of England. It was also much drier than Bert, with heavy showers only noted on the evening of the 29th. Despite

the wet conclusion to the month, the 41.8mm of rain recorded at the weather station was 46% below a 2014-2023 November mean of 77.8 ±sd 60.6mm.

The first two days of December were unsettled, mild and wet. The sea remained moderate, until a force five northwesterly during the late afternoon of the 2nd dampened the three and a half metre swell. Staff departed the Island during a light southeasterly on the morning of the 3rd, this ahead of Storm Darragh for which the Met Office issued a Red Weather Warning for wind in west Wales; the storm made landfall between the 5th and 6th December.

The extent to which the mean seasonal temperatures and the mean annual temperature differed from the long-term average at the weather station during each year between 1993 and 2024.



Midnight Glory Lifeboat Wreck

On the evening of 26th May, staff were alarmed to see a large tanker in close proximity to the Lighthouse Rocks. It was initially feared that the vessel, the Midnight Glory, was close to running aground on our southwest coast, but it soon became apparent that it had lost one of its unmanned lifeboats and was attempting to retrieve it. The lifeboat was lost during a routine drill, these typically performed whilst a vessel is at anchor (although this had seemingly not been the case on this occasion). As we watched from the Lighthouse compound, the captain performed figure-of-eight manoeuvres in an effort to secure ropes to the lost raft, with three failed rescues bringing the tanker so close to land that the voices of the crew could be heard (see the Marine Traffic track below). The Midnight Glory, sailing under the flag of the Marshall Islands, is a 183m long, 32m wide chemical/oil products tanker built in 2020, with a draft of 13.3m and deadweight capacity of 50,324 tonnes (Vessel Finder, 2025). The lifeboat drifted north past the Quarry, before being carried east along our north coast and into Steep Bay where it wrecked on boulders.

There were four main conservation issues. We were informed that the onboard fuel stores held around 190 litres of LSMGO (low sulphur marine gas oil), this likely to escape into the surrounding

waters. The lifeboat contained emergency food rations and the hatches were all ajar, raising concerns that there was the opportunity for rodents to be onboard. The destruction of the lifeboat would inevitably leave a substantial amount of debris. The very close proximity of hundreds of nesting auks and gulls meant that the salvage operation was going to have to be a delicate one, whilst the weather conditions proved unsuitable for such work for several days. Stations containing chocolate wax chew blocks established at the top of Purple Cove, near North Pond and at the Farm were monitored by staff, whilst trail cameras were set on lures of tinned fish dug into the ground. By 27th May the raft had rolled deeper into Steep Bay, sustaining rips to the outer shell and releasing foam into the cove. A large swell continued to batter the boat, with a substantial hole appearing on its starboard side by the 28th; this resulted in a fuel leak, the fumes from which drifted over the Island. Luckily the rough sea conditions meant that no seabirds were rafting or loafing in Steep Bay at the time, whilst the rapid circulation of water quickly dispersed the fuel. No oiled birds were encountered. Thanks to Biosecurity for Wales (administered by RSPB Cymru), Greg Morgan, Olivia Pargeter and Conservation Dog Jinx (a Cocker Spaniel trained to detect Brown Rats) visited on 29th May to check the cliff section above the wreck; Jinx did not identify any sign of rats. Given that rodents may remain at a wreck for a few days prior to exploring further afield, a follow up visit took place on 21st June; this survey strongly suggested that there had been no incursion.

Sea conditions were calm enough on 1st June to allow a team led by Gareth and John Reynolds to approach aboard Dale Sailing's barge the KitCat. Over the course of a few hours, they dismantled and salvaged what was left of the vessel, removing as much debris as they could without causing too much disturbance to the birds above; staff kept a close watch over the surrounding seabird colonies, with no birds seen to desert eggs or chicks during the operation. Given the wave washed nature of Steep Bay, the inevitable smaller pieces of debris left by the wreck were soon lost to the sea. The ship management team responsible for the Midnight Glory, V.Ships, made an ex gratia payment of £2500 to the Skokholm WTSWW budget in June, this, as stated in a 13th June email, was '…not just in

recognition of the important work the Trust does, but also in recognition of the support from [WTSWW] during the event'. A total of £11,826.80 was also claimed from the global port agency, S5 Agency World, via the Wildlife Trust's insurance company; this covered all costs incurred, including boat hire, staff time and the time and travel expenses of the RSPB biosecurity staff.

Spring Work Party

A Work Party team consisting of chefs Shirley Matthews and Alison Peck, alongside Howard Driver, Rob Smith and Phil Blatcher, arrived on the Wave Dancer on 1st April, this followed shortly after by the Helen Clare loaded with a new cooker, a supply of timber, 16 sheets of EKOply, four bags of lime, tins of paint, fuel, 20 gas bottles and new batteries for the solar system. Day-trippers John Hayes and Stephen Hyam, along with Richard Dobbins and the spring Long-term Volunteers, aided with the

landing. Thanks to Biosecurity for Wales, administered by RSPB Cymru, Greg Morgan and Jinx the Conservation Dog had already checked the cargo for stowaways. The weather then conspired against us, with Storm Kathleen hitting on the 6th, bringing 55mph gusts, 12m waves and the inevitable cancelation of the week two changeover boat; this meant no fresh supplies or personnel, but the food continued to be amazing and the team remained incredibly positive and productive. The annual limewashing again took priority, with all exterior walls and roofs cleared of loose lime prior to three coats of freshly mixed limewash. Bosun bedroom floor, the last of the guest bedrooms suitable for tiling, was scraped, levelled and tiled. Although we prioritise interior painting prior to the arrival of volunteers, communal areas including the toilets, Common Room and Wheelhouse received some attention following a winters' dormancy. Meanwhile in the Workshop, 30 new recycled plastic Wheatear nest boxes were built to replace those made of old rotting plywood. Howard created a framework of recycled plastic to support the access hatches of Petrel Station II.

Spring Long-term Volunteers

The role of spring Long-term Volunteer is exceptionally varied, with no two days being the same. Following the return of the seabirds, much time is spent assisting with the annual monitoring; this includes searching for colour ringed gulls and Puffins as part of our adult survival studies, helping with the Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel plot censuses, setting up the Fulmar productivity plots, Puffin productivity and kleptoparasitism monitoring and helping with the first phase of Manx Shearwater productivity and adult survival surveys. The work of the Bird Observatory continues throughout, this providing an opportunity to develop bird ringing skills and census techniques. With Puffins occupying the nest boxes in the new Crab Bay Hide, this year's spring volunteers also played an instrumental role as 'guides in the hide', taking each week's guests into the dark room to give them the opportunity to witness seldom-seen behaviour behind the one-way glass. Judith Kay and Gwennan Butler joined us as Long-term Volunteers for three months this spring. Judith is a former law librarian now pursuing a career in seabird conservation; before joining us, she assisted with the monitoring of Red-billed Tropicbirds in Cape Verde and a rat eradication programme on the Isles of Scilly. Gwennan joined us soon after completing her MSc; a trainee ringer, with aspirations to work with seabirds, she had previously volunteered at North Ronaldsay Bird Observatory. Judith and Gwennan were a reliable, enthusiastic and dedicated duo, setting the bar extremely high as the first

spring volunteers to lead the Puffin tours in the Crab Bay Hide. Their warm, friendly and patient personalities, along with an eagerness to impart their growing knowledge of Skokholm, made a really welcoming atmosphere for everybody who visited Dream Island during the spring.

We also welcomed Gambian-born Emmanuel Jatta, a Research Assistant from Kartong Bird Observatory (KBO) in the Gambia. Emmanuel began volunteering at KBO in 2010 and was appointed as Research Assistant there in 2018. We first met Emmanuel at Kartong just a few weeks before the start of his UK trip. Whilst wading through Gambian reedbeds, setting up mistnets and joking about Crocodiles, it was quickly evident that Emmanuel would become a valued member of the spring team on Skokholm. It was an honour that Britain's' first Bird Observatory was to become his first stop on a longer UK visit. With the support of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, we were able to accommodate both Emmanuel and Richard Dobbins (Chair of Skokholm Bird Observatory) from 1st April until 6th May. Emmanuel was able to experience many aspects of Bird Observatory life, from the spring Work Party and maintenance jobs, to running the trapping area at the Farm and Manx Shearwater ringing on the Transect. The experience was so positive that it is hoped we will be able to offer similar opportunities to other ringers from KBO in the near future.

Spring Migration Highlights

A **Little Ringed Plover** on 17th March was the first of 32 bird-days, this record tally the same as that logged between 2011 and 2023. The first three **Red Kite** arrived on the 24th, with 20 bird-days this year also a new high. The 28th saw the first documented occurrence of a non-*L. f. graellsii* **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, although its exact origins will remain a mystery. The ninth confirmed **Feral Pigeon** for Skokholm was at North Gully on 6th April. A minimum of 339 **Blackcap** on the 13th was the highest ever daycount, with 75 **Chiffchaff** on the same date the highest count since 2018. The following day saw the arrival of the first **Squacco Heron** for Skokholm, this the 16th for Wales; it was still present for a gale on the 15th. A **Greylag Goose** on the latter date was the 23rd Island record. A **Wood Sandpiper** on 18th April was a 13th spring record and the earliest to date. The 21st saw the first of an above average five spring **Cuckoo** bird-days, whilst the 22nd brought a **Bar-tailed Godwit** colour ringed in the Netherlands and the only **House Sparrow** of the year. A **Knot** on 24th April made this the 45th year with a sighting and a flyover **Great Northern Diver** on the 28th made this the 19th spring with a record. A **Grey Plover** on 4th May was the last of 11 2024 bird-days, this matching the third highest total to date. A brief **Yellowhammer** on the 12th was only the second to be seen since 2013

and a second **Feral Pigeon** on the 16th was just the tenth for Skokholm. A **Nightingale** on the same date was a ninth spring sighting and a **Wood Warbler** which arrived the following day was the seventh 21st century record. A **Sanderling** on 23rd May was the 46th Skokholm record.

A nominate **White-fronted Goose** seen each day between 27th May and 8th June made a brief visit to the Gann on the 28th, this only the fourth Skokholm record certainly attributable to this subspecies. A flyover **Curlew Sandpiper** on 1st June was a seventh spring record, whilst a **Mute Swan** on the 2nd took the all-time bird-days total to 19, 12 of which have been since 2014. A smart **Rose-coloured Starling** on the 4th was the eighth to be seen on Skokholm. A **Common Rosefinch** on 15th June was the 12th to be recorded during the first half of the year. Sightings of a **Spoonbill** on the 18th and 26th June were assumed to relate to the same near-adult, this the 17th Island record. A **Hooded Crow** on the 19th made this the 17th year with a sighting of this soon to be lumped (sub)species.

The Breeding Season

Although there were **Shelduck** chicks for the first time in five years, none fledged, whilst three pairs of **Shoveler** bred and two pairs produced ducklings, this a new high. **Woodpigeon** bred for the first time since 2007 and **Water Rail** were confirmed as breeding for only the fourth time since 1931. A **Lapwing** held an early breeding season territory for the second time since 2001. The **Great Black-backed Gull** population was the lowest since 2008. At least in part due to the impacts of avian influenza, the **Guillemot** population was below the lower limit given in the Skokholm Management Plan for the first time, however the **Razorbill** count was a new high. **Peregrine** was lost as a breeding species, this the first year since 1987 without at least one pair. Five breeding **Chough** pairs matched last year's record, however a lone **Raven** pair was down on all but two post-2006 years. A total of 16 **Skylark** territories matched the post-2018 high. Three **Swallow** pairs was the lowest total since 2004, but productivity was the best of the last 12 years. It was the first year with more than one breeding pair of **Stonechat** and only the fifth year with a breeding attempt. **Linnet** bred for the first time since 1998 and for only the fourth time. **Shag**, **Short-eared Owl**, **Chiffchaff**, **Reed Warbler**, **Whitethroat**, **Dunnock** and **Reed Bunting** did not breed, the latter for only the second time in 20 years.

A summary of the status of seabirds breeding on Skokholm in 2024.
The lower limits given here, taken from the Skokholm Island Management Plan, have been established by the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales and endorsed by the Seabird Subgroup of the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee. A green box is an attribute above its lower limit, a red box an attribute below the lower limit stipulated in the plan.

		Whole Island or Annual Plot Total (2023-2019 in parentheses)	Productivity (2023-2019 in parentheses)
Great Black-backed Gull		**Whole Island population:** not to drop below the 2016-2018 peak of 93 pairs	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 1.10 fledglings per breeding pair	
		64 nests (66, 78, 80, 83, 86)	1.03 (1.05, 1.30, 1.51, 1.40, 1.43)
Herring Gull		**Whole Island population:** not to drop below the 2019-2023 mean of 305	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.70 fledglings per breeding pair	
		313 nests (309, 309, 305, 301, 301)	0.93 (0.78, 0.69, 0.84, 0.33, 0.69)
Lesser Black-backed Gull		**Whole Island population:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 4600 pairs	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.60 fledglings per breeding pair	
		724 aia (715, 833, 935, 880, 1028)	0.80 (0.70, 0.53, 0.89, 0.12, 0.27)
Guillemot		**Whole Island population:** not to drop below the 2019-2023 mean of 5065	
Population	Not set	**Productivity:** not monitored on Skokholm	
		4989 aol (4992, 5515, 5065, 5101, 4654)	- (0.55-0.61 in 2013)

Razorbill		**Whole Island population:** not to drop below the 2019-2023 mean of 3429	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.80 fledglings per breeding pair	
		4333 aol (3552, 3965, 3356, 3517, 2755)	0.50 (0.55, 0.64, 0.47, 0.56, 0.63)
Puffin		**Whole Island population:** adult count not to drop below the 2019-2023 mean of 10,006	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.74 fledglings per breeding pair	
		10,000+ (12,192, 10,611, 11,245, 8534, 7447)	0.75 (0.79, 0.72, 0.80, 0.78, 0.76)
Storm Petrel		**Study plot population:** any measurable decrease in the population	
Population	Not set	**Productivity:** limit not yet set due to a lack of data	
		94 transect responses (92, 102, 86, No census, 89)	0.75 (0.80, 0.85, 0.80, 0.45, 0.74)
Fulmar		**Whole Island population:** not to drop below the 2019-2023 mean of 210	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.50 fledglings per breeding pair	
		198 aos (195, 224, 225, 207, 198)	0.41 (0.54, 0.52, 0.51, 0.51, 0.62)
Manx Shearwater		**Study plot population:** any measurable decrease in the population	
Population	Productivity	**Productivity:** 3 in any 5 consecutive years with less than 0.69 fledglings per breeding pair	
		639 sites in 8000m^2 (521, 710, 670, 730, 655)	0.72 (0.68, 0.69, 0.79, 0.68, 0.72)

A summary of breeding birds on Skokholm in 2024. Productivity is the average number of fledglings produced by each monitored pair ('-' indicates insufficient data).

	Total (2023-2019 in parentheses)	Productivity (2023-2019 in parentheses)
Canada Goose	4 pairs (4, 2, 3, 3, 2)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Shelduck	1 pair produced ducklings (0, 0, 0, 0, 3)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Shoveler	2 pairs produced ducklings (1, 0, 0, 0, 0)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Mallard	5 pairs produced ducklings (2, 3, 5, 1, 5)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Woodpigeon	1 pair (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)	2 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Water Rail	1 territory (1, 0, 1, 0, 0)	3+ (2, 0, 4, 0, 0)
Moorhen	5 pairs (5, 6, 5, 3, 3)	2.60 (1.40, 0.67, 2.80, 3.33, 2.00)
Oystercatcher	62 pairs (53, 61, 76, 54, 53)	0.50 (0.86, 1.00, 1.24, 0.70, 0.47)
Lapwing	1 territory (1, 0, 0, 0, 0)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Buzzard	1 pair (1, 1, 1, 1, 1)	2 (2, 3, 2, 2, 3)
Peregrine	0 pairs (1, 1, 1, 1, 1)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Chough	5 pairs (5, 4, 4, 3, 2)	1.00 (0.60, 2.25, 1.75, 2.00, 2.50)
Jackdaw	26 pairs (26, 27, 26, 25, 22)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Crow	11 pairs (12, 11, 11, 9, 10)	1.45 (1.00, 1.73, 2.27, 1.33, 0.70)
Raven	1 pair (1, 1, 2, 2, 2)	4.00 (3.00, 3.00, 4.00, 2.50, 2.50)
Skylark	16 territorial males (13, 13, 16, 14, 14)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Swallow	3 pairs (5, 6, 5, 5, 5)	6.33 (3.80, 4.50, 4.00, 2.40, 3.20)
Chiffchaff	0 territorial males (2, 0, 1, 1, 0)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Sedge Warbler	14 territorial males (14, 15, 14, 15, 15)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Whitethroat	0 pairs (0, 0, 0, 0, 1)	0 (0, 0, 0, 0, 2)
Wren	56 territorial males (66, 68, 71, 72, 69)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Blackbird	9 pairs (9, 9, 9, 7, 6)	4.22 (3.22, 2.44, 2.44, 3.57, 3.67)
Stonechat	2 pairs (0, 1, 1, 0, 0)	6.50 (0.00, 5.00, 9.00, 0.00, 0.00)
Wheatear	23 pairs (29, 30, 29, 23, 23)	2.26 (3.07, 3.10, 2.90, 1.96, 3.70)
Dunnock	0 breeding females (1, 0, 2, 1, 0)	0 (0, 0, 2, 3, 0)
Pied Wagtail	7 pairs (7, 6, 7, 7, 5)	1.71 (3.71, 3.50, 2.29, 1.71, 5.20)
Meadow Pipit	37 territorial males (45, 42, 43, 38, 33)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Rock Pipit	49 territorial males (56, 51, 45, 49, 49)	- (-, -, -, -, -)
Linnet	1 pair (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)	3 (0, 0, 0, 0, 0)
Reed Bunting	0 pairs (0, 2, 4, 5, 3)	0.00 (0.00, 1.50 0.00, 0.60, 0.67)

Autumn Migration Highlights

A **Kingfisher** on 29th July became the 19th record for Skokholm. Somewhat surprisingly, a **Balearic Shearwater** on 7th August was the only sighting this year. A **Red-backed Shrike** seen briefly on the 27th was almost certainly the juvenile present around Orchid Bog between the 29th and 31st, this the 17th autumn record. Three **Whinchat** on the 2nd were the first of an all-time record 116 September bird-days. A **Dotterel** on the 6th was presumed to be that which flew over twice the following day, this the 16th autumn record for Skokholm. The same date saw the second **Spoonbill** of the year, the 20th **Barred Warbler** for Skokholm, 12 **Yellow Wagtail** (the highest daycount since 1988) and what was alarmingly the only **Redstart** this year. Two **Osprey** on 7th September was a 21st Skokholm record and the first daycount of more than one, whilst 150 **Willow Warbler** was the highest daycount of the year and the first of three non-*M. f. flavissima* **Yellow Wagtail** was logged. More notably the 7th also saw 47 **Spotted Flycatcher** and 20 **Tree Pipit**, both new daycount records. A **Great Skua** on the 10th was the first of five autumn bird-days, these the first sightings since 2022 of a species heavily impacted by avian influenza (an average of 30.1 bird-days a year were logged between 2013 and 2022). The same day saw the only **Sooty Shearwater** of the year, whilst the 11th brought a second-year **Pomarine Skua**, this a 28th Island record. Another **Kingfisher** on 12th September was the 20th record and a **Marsh Warbler** ringed the following day was just a second for Skokholm and third for Pembrokeshire. A juvenile **Long-tailed Skua** on the 16th was only the sixth Island record, whilst a juvenile **Sabine's Gull** three days later made this the 11th year with a sighting. The 19th also saw a juvenile male **Pallid Harrier**, this the third Skokholm record in three years and the seventh for Wales; it remained until the morning of the 21st. Another **Common Rosefinch** present between 22nd September and 1st October was at least the 35th individual to be encountered on the Island. The 10,773 **Swallow** recorded on 1st October was the highest daycount since 2017. A juvenile **Red-footed Falcon** on the 3rd was the second for Skokholm and took the all-time Welsh total to 22, whilst the first of five **Yellow-browed Warbler** was found on the same date.

Two **Barnacle Goose** present on the 9th and 10th October arrived as part of an international movement of Arctic birds, whilst three with **Canada Goose** on the 29th and 30th October were of a more suspect origin. The 10th also saw the fifth Skokholm record of **Great White Egret** and the first definite **Siberian Chiffchaff** of the year, the latter the first of a record-equalling five autumn birds. It was unclear whether a **Great White Egret** on the 14th was a different individual. A **Snow Bunting** on 22nd October was the first of four autumn bird-days and a **Corncrake** two days later was only a second 21st century record. A juvenile **White-rumped Sandpiper** present at Winter Pond on the 2nd

and 3rd November was a first for Skokholm and third for Pembrokeshire. A **Goosander** the following day was a fourth Island record and raised questions regarding its subspecific identity. A **Wood Sandpiper** on the 4th was the last of four 2024 records and the latest to date, taking the total number of Island records to approximately 57. A pair of **Gadwall** on the 9th was a 23rd record and only the second to be logged in November. A **Richard's Pipit** on the 12th was possibly taken by a **Merlin**, this becoming the 21st autumn with a record. A count of 200 **Mediterranean Gull** on the 26th was the highest of the year, with the same date seeing the only **Little Egret** this year. Two **Red-throated Diver** on 1st December was the sole record. The 2024 sightings of **White-rumped Sandpiper** and **Squacco Heron** take the Skokholm list to 307, although this will shortly be 304 species following taxonomic revisions to the British list.

Autumn Long-term Volunteers

Autumn Long-term Volunteers are inevitably thrown in at the deep end, picking up from where the spring team leave off during the height of our visitor season. Seabird work still occupies a large proportion of their time, with Fulmar, Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel and Puffin productivity checks taking priority. Puffin kleptoparasitism monitoring and colour ring searching continues, whilst Storm Petrel population monitoring peaks. As autumn migration picks up pace, there are daily opportunities to assist with the trapping and ringing of migrant birds. Hayley Land and Kayleigh Bargus joined us as Long-term Volunteers for three months this autumn. Kayleigh, a trainee ringer with the Gower Ringing Group, had just finished studying for a degree in natural sciences and had recently returned from volunteering with Rob Thomas' Storm Petrel project in Portugal. Hayley, an experienced ringer holding a C Permit, had previously worked as a Field Assistant at Foxglove Covert LNR in North Yorkshire and joined us following a season volunteering at Skagen Bird Observatory in Denmark. Hayley stayed on at the end of the season to help with migration monitoring and with packing up for the winter.

Autumn Work Party and Solar System Upgrade

The autumn Work Party ran for a week from 13th September and began with the arrival of two boats. The first, the Dale Princess, carried volunteer chefs Shirley Matthews and Alison Peck, along with Nick Ainger, Nick Davison, Alun Lewis, Cath Myatt, Rob Smith, Phil Blatcher and Jon Coen. Their gear

was unloaded and they headed to the Farm, with Richard Dobbins taking this opportunity to net a Marsh Warbler; this was just a second for Skokholm and third for Pembrokeshire. The Lady Helen was the second vessel to arrive, this laden with three tonnes of gas, sand, firewood and building materials. A busy first day saw the Library rapidly emptied of its books, exposing one of the last and largest floors to be tiled, this a process which took the whole week to complete. Meanwhile volunteer mechanic Alun Lewis got straight on with repairing and servicing the Lighthouse generator, the Dumper Truck and the Gator, whilst the rotten uprights on the south side of the Central Block were replaced. Attentions turned to Orchid bog, where some landscaping work was required to repair an easterly dam which had sprung several leaks. The Orchid Bog Hide was also sanded and stained. New gull deterrents were installed on the Top Tank (this the holding tank for the Island's drinking water), whilst the Garage doors, Shop door and various window frames were sanded and painted. The Courtyard rainwater soak-away was unblocked and Manx Shearwater nest boxes were constructed and installed; if occupied, the latter can be incorporated into the new camera system in Petrel Station II. As always, delicious food was produced by Shirley and Alison, keeping everyone energised and raring to go each day. Remarkably for the time of year, and with the exception of the first two days, the weather was glorious; unusually the autumn Work Party arrived and departed on schedule.

A remarkably calm late autumn allowed for an additional delivery boat. On 31st October, the Wave Dancer arrived, laden with the materials required to replace the Central Block Drying Room, these kindly funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. We were helped by an amazing team of volunteers gathered by long-term supporters of the Island Rob and Gail Smith; Richard, Karen, Dave, Chris, Francis, Steve, Hywel and Island legend Steve Sutcliffe all helped to offload nearly a ton of materials, before passing a pile of rubbish back onto the boat, the latter a process which always feels particularly cleansing on an Island.

Following a 20th June recce by builder Chris Ward and his team, day-trips on the 4th and 5th September allowed for the installation of a new solar power system for the Central Block and Cottage. This replaced what had become an inefficient setup originally installed during the renovation period over 12 years ago. The new system, part of our Sustainable and Resilient Islands Project funded by UK Government, has more than four times the capacity of the old arrangement, maintenance free batteries and tells us exactly how much power we are generating, using and

holding in storage. Although dependent on funding becoming available, it is hoped that the solar systems that power the Wheelhouse and Lighthouse can also be upgraded in the coming years.

Skokholm Bird Observatory

Ringing Projects

Colour ringing birds allows us to recognise individuals without the need to retrap them; these projects typically generate more regular insights into survival, behaviour and movements than those using only conventional metal rings. Skokholm Bird Observatory has focussed its attention on such worthwhile studies. The Great Black-backed Gull colour ringing project, established in 2014, operated for an 11th year, whilst projects monitoring adult Herring Gull and Puffin survival also continued. Both gull species are fitted with a red darvic ring, inscribed with a unique four digit alpha numeric (for example W:001). An additional red ring has been fitted above the BTO metal ring on Great Black-backed Gulls since 2022; this was added to the project as a means of identifying birds which have lost their darvic ring through wear or damage, however it is also proving to be particularly obvious to birders looking for ringed gulls.

A Rock Pipit colour ringing project, trialled in 2023, began in earnest this year. A total of 85 birds were fitted with unique colour ring combinations between March and November, these consisting of three rings in addition to the BTO ring; two are small coloured rings and one is a white ring inscribed with a single black letter. Including the 2023 trial period, a total of 119 birds have now been colour ringed. The project will provide an insight into over-winter survival, as well as helping us to understand the local movements of individual birds; whilst the nominate race of this species is not thought to undertake long-distance movements, the easy-to-read ring combinations have the potential to reveal some interesting resightings.

The Wheatear study, begun by Ian Beggs in 2017, and which has developed into a Masters project with the University of South Wales, continued for a seventh year (there was a COVID-19 enforced hiatus in 2020). Efforts in the spring concentrated on targeting returning adults for the retrieval of geologgers fitted in 2023; these were the first British songbirds to be fitted with an accelerometer,

the devices providing an insight into the routes, stop-over points and timings used on migration. Of the 20 breeding birds fitted with devices, eight were seen this year and five were successfully trapped to allow for the removal of the tags. The results are to be published soon. Although Ian was unable to make his summer trip (during which fledglings are targeted for colour ringing), 17 juveniles and six adults were colour ringed this year, taking the colour ringed total to 126 adults and 441 of their offspring. Study birds are fitted with a green darvic ring, inscribed with a unique white alpha-numeric code, allowing for survival rates, pairings and movements to be determined without the need to retrap returning birds. Comparing the findings with those made by previous Wardens Peter Conder between 1947 and 1952, work which was published as part of his seminal monograph 'The Wheatear' (1989), and Michael Brooke in 1979 and 1980, is another aspect of the project.

Whilst handling birds for ringing, we occasionally observe parasitic Flat Flies. We thus continue to participate in the UK Flat Fly mapping project run by UK Hippoboscidae Recorder Denise Wawman since 2021. Specimens were collected and preserved for subsequent identification. Further information, including the 2024 results, can be found in the Invertebrates section of this report.

Visiting Ringers

Skokholm Bird Observatory continues to attract visiting ringers who assist with our monitoring work and provide additional coverage between April and September. During its first incarnation between 1933 and 1976, Skokholm Bird Observatory was famous as a site for visiting ringers to stay and contribute to ongoing research. It was a tradition we were keen to continue; between 2013 and 2023 we welcomed a total of 468 visiting ringers to the Island and we were pleased to be able to accommodate a further 61 this year. Aside from the thrill of ringing at a Bird Observatory during spring and autumn migration, two of the big draws for ringers are our long-term studies targeting Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel; there were 4335 Manxies handled this year (2800 of which were new) and 726 Stormies (637 of which were new).

Birds Ringed in 2024

A total of 9122 birds were caught and processed or resighted in 2024, this a new high, 18% up on last year and 38% up on the 2013-2023 mean (6631.6 ±sd 1434.4). Seabirds made up 59% of new birds ringed (the 2013-2023 mean is 50%, with a high of 60% in 2013 and a low of 37% in 2022, the

latter the result of bird flu restrictions). Manx Shearwater accounted for 76% of these and 45% of the overall total (the 2013-2023 mean is 32%, with another high of 45% in 2013 and a low of 20% in 2022). Seabirds made up 69% of the retrap total (birds caught or resighted which had previously been ringed on Skokholm) and Manx Shearwater accounted for 80% of seabird retraps and 55% of retraps overall (the 2013-2023 mean is 42%, with a high of 57% in 2014 and a low of 20% in 2021). There were 48 controls (birds caught or resighted which had been ringed elsewhere), this three more than last year and a tally fractionally up on a 2013-2023 mean of 46.5 ±sd 13.4. Seabirds contributed 79% of the total number of controls, whilst Storm Petrel were responsible for 89% of these and 71% overall. Along with two control waders colour ringed elsewhere, there were eight passerines encountered wearing non-Skokholm rings, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.4 (there were six in 2013, seven in 2014, ten in 2015, 14 in 2016, ten in 2017, 14 in 2018, ten in both 2019 and 2020, 12 in 2021, 11 in 2022 and ten last year).

A fine range of birds were once again caught and processed or resighted; a total of 71 species was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 64.73 ±sd 4.56 and matched the 2018 record (see table below). A **Bar-tailed Godwit** present from 22nd April had been colour ringed in the Netherlands and was the first to be resighted on Skokholm, whilst a **Ringed Plover** netted on 7th September was the first to be ringed since 1970; these take the total number of species processed since 2012 to 123. Species rarely processed included two **Mallard** (now with five ringed in 12 years), two **Cuckoo** (eight ringed), two **Woodpigeon** (five ringed), a control **Whimbrel** (two ringed), a **Short-eared Owl** (five ringed), two **Kestrel** (three ringed), a **Merlin** (six ringed), a **Wood Warbler** (three ringed), a **Marsh Warbler** (two ringed), a **Barred Warbler** (three ringed), a **Nightingale** (three ringed), a **House Sparrow** (ten ringed), a **Yellow Wagtail** (four ringed), a **Common Rosefinch** (ten ringed) and two **Greenfinch** (four ringed).

A ring found above the Old Well on 13th March was inscribed ‘BUXTON NEW COLLEGE OXFORD 002425’; a similar ring, 002360, was found in 2014, these part of a series commissioned by pioneering ornithologist John Buxton for use on Skokholm when rings were in short supply following World War II.

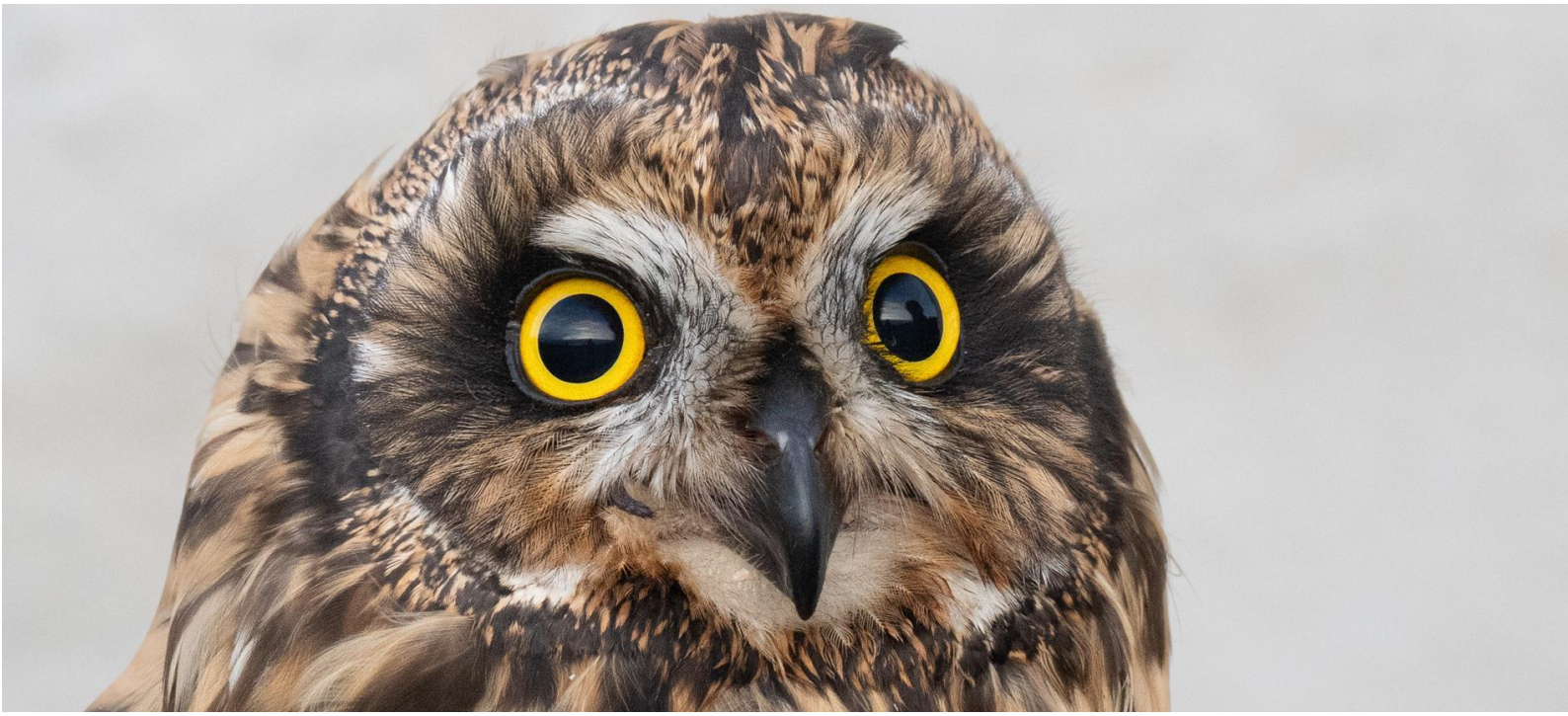
Details of each control, of the more interesting retraps and of where Skokholm ringed birds have been found, are given within the Systematic List of Birds, as is the total number of each species ringed between 1928 and 1976 and between 2010 and 2024.

The total number of New Birds, Retraps and Controls processed between 2012 and 2024, along with the number of different species handled.

	Total Birds Processed	New Birds (full grown)	New Birds (pulli)	Retraps	Controls	Species processed
2024	9122	5961	309	2804	48	71
2023	7743	4559	324	2815	45	64
2022	5561	3451	324	1754	32	65
2021	7476	5379	340	1682	75	68
2020	4442	2994	229	1181	38	68
2019	7170	4964	298	1853	55	58
2018	8417	6123	325	1905	64	71
2017	6030	4285	295	1411	39	69
2016	5979	4263	274	1394	48	58
2015	7245	5367	270	1563	45	67
2014	8439	5785	313	2303	38	59
2013	4446	3436	297	680	33	65
2012	697	648	2	46	1	25
Total	**82,767**	**57,215**	**3600**	**21,391**	**561**	**123**

Catching Methods

There are four Heligoland Traps (at the Well, in the Cottage Garden, alongside the Wheelhouse and to the west of the Garage), the first two of which are constructed on the footprints of those originally erected by Ronald Lockley in 1933 and 1935 and the latter of which was constructed in September 2022. These provide an invaluable method of trapping birds when blustery weather prohibits the use of mist nets. The Heligolands were driven regularly on every day of the season and with increased frequency on good fall days. There are five permanent mist nets in the vicinity of the Well: the six metre 'Well 6', the nine metre 'Well 9' (extended with a six metre net in 2014), the nine metre 'Stream Net' (a new site in 2015) and the six metre 'Ram Net' (a new site in autumn 2020 situated just above the hydraulic ram in Billy's Dyke). The nine metre 'Reedbed Net' (a new site in 2018) was not used for a second year. A further five permanent nets around the Farm are a six metre 'Courtyard Net', a nine metre 'Wheelhouse Net', two nine metre nets forming the 'Library Net' (the second added in the autumn of 2017) and a six metre 'Garden Net' (a new site in May 2023). A six metre 'Pond Net', first erected to the east of North Pond in autumn 2020, has been used in each subsequent autumn. The nets were opened on most occasions when conditions were suitable. Additionally four potter traps, eight spring traps, two very large spring traps and a perch trap were used to target rails, gulls, chats and pipits. The Gull Trap was moved from Home Meadow to the plain north of the Kitchen Wall (the site of the old 'House Trap'); it was regularly baited but only produced one Lesser Black-backed Gull this year (although not always effective, it has now taken 351 gulls since it was built in May 2013). Further seabirds were caught using a variety of methods, although the majority were trapped by hand in the colony. Adult and fledgling Manx Shearwater were trapped in study burrows and further adults were trapped after dark, all by hand and most along the Manx Shearwater Transect. Storm Petrel were mist netted in South Haven using an MP3 lure to attract birds towards the net.



The Heligoland Traps produced 1534 new birds, this a new high and 59% of the new non-seabird total; an average of 1072 new birds were taken from Heligolands in each year between 2013 and 2023 (with a high of 1435 in 2022 and a low of 741 in 2020), which accounted for between 29% (in 2018) and 70% (in 2013) of the new non-seabird total (with a mean of 47%). There were 447 Heligoland retraps, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 373 but down on four of these years (there were

highs of 500 in 2014 and 501 in 2018, a low of 239 in 2020). Seven controls was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.8 and matched the 2016, 2018 and 2023 totals as the highest during this period (there was a low of one in 2015). The Well, for a 12th consecutive season, proved the most productive Heligoland for new birds, providing 49% of the total. Although it was the second most productive trap last year, the Garage caught the fewest this year, contributing 13% of the new Heligoland birds total. The proportion of birds caught in each trap is nevertheless similar year on year, with the continuing success of the Well Heligoland no doubt due to the maturing corridor of vegetation which runs from South Haven and funnels migrants towards a trap where more extensive cover and standing water hold birds for longer. **Willow Warbler** was again the most commonly encountered species in the Heligolands, with 330 new birds very close to a 2013-2023 mean of 338 (there were highs of 616 in 2014 and 536 in 2022, lows of 181 of 2013 and 182 last year). **Blackcap** was the second most regularly trapped species, with a record 327 new birds (there was a previous high of 179 last year and a low of 65 in 2013, whilst the 2013-2023 mean is 124). A **Meadow Pipit** total of only 65 was down on the 147 of last year and meant that **Chiffchaff** was again in the top three most regular Heligoland species for an 11th time in 12 years; a total of 225 new **Chiffchaff** was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 161 and only down on the 234 of 2014 (there was a low of 85 in 2020).

Ringing highlights from the Well Heligoland included two each of **Mallard**, **Cuckoo**, **Collared Dove** and **Moorhen**, six **Water Rail**, an **Oystercatcher**, a **Snipe**, three **Grasshopper Warbler** and singles of **Garden Warbler**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Firecrest**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Redstart**, **Whinchat**, **Tree Pipit** and **Common Rosefinch**. Highlights from the Wheelhouse Heligoland included two **Woodpigeon**, a **Moorhen**, a **Sparrowhawk**, two **Yellow-browed Warbler** and singles of **Garden Warbler**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Black Redstart**, **Greenfinch** and **Lesser Redpoll**. The Cottage Heligoland produced a **Moorhen**, two **Water Rail**, singles of **Grasshopper Warbler**, **Garden Warbler** and **Nightingale** and two **Pied Flycatcher**. Scarcer species from the Garage trap included singles of **Great Black-backed**, **Herring** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, a **Crow**, three **Skylark**, a **Whinchat** and a **Lesser Redpoll**.

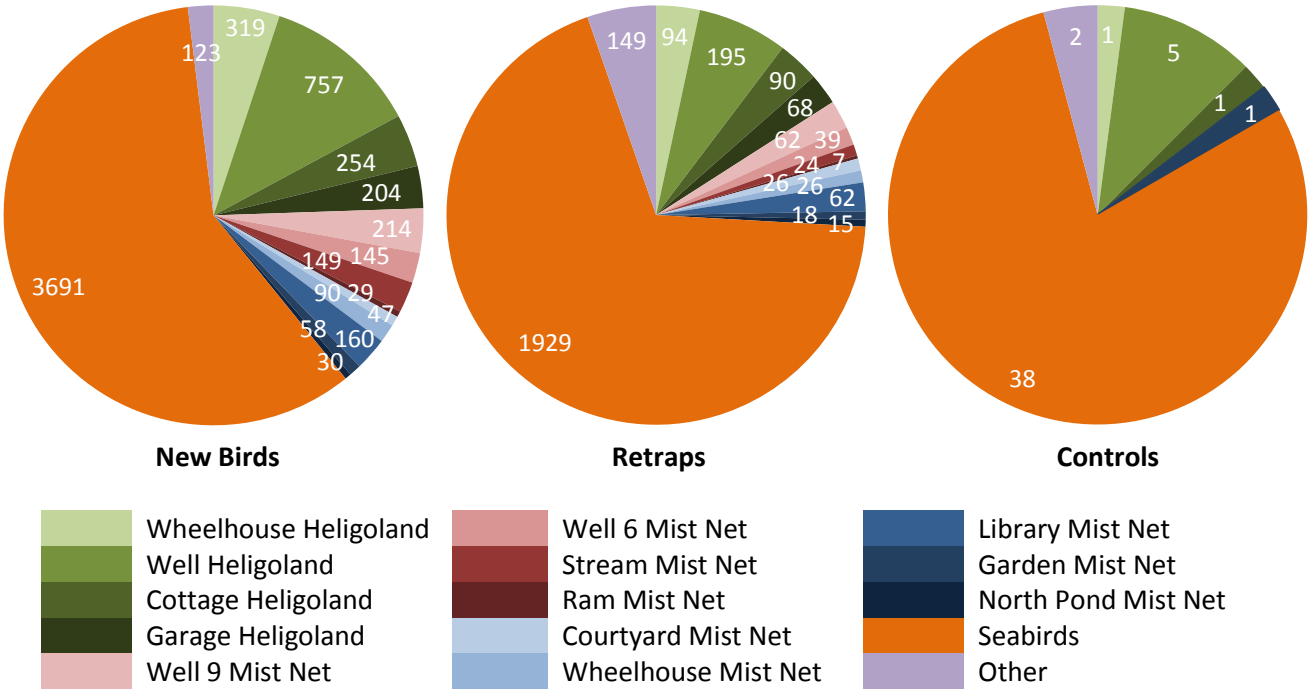
The number of Heligoland Trap pushes recorded during each month of 2024, the total number of new and retrap/control birds taken during these pushes and the mean number trapped per push.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total Pushes	388	857	1232	560	582	1002	1004	938	572	16	**7151**
New Birds	112	492	121	34	113	152	290	141	77	2	**1534**
Retrap/Control Birds	26	68	30	11	31	42	109	97	37	3	**454**
Avg. No. of Birds per Push	0.36	0.65	0.12	0.08	0.25	0.19	0.40	0.25	0.20	0.31	**0.28**

On 1st August 2019 we began recording the amount of effort put into pushing the Heligoland Traps, a practice which has since continued. A visit to a single trap is logged as one 'push', with a full circuit of the traps equating to four pushes (this three pushes prior to September 2022). A total of 7151 Heligoland pushes were recorded in 2024 (there were 4173 in 2020, 5027 in 2021, 5309 in 2022 and 6708 in 2023), with one push yielding an average of 0.28 birds (this 0.24 in 2020, 0.28 in 2021, 0.34 in 2022 and 0.25 last year).

The regular mist nets produced 922 new birds, this the fourth lowest total of the last 12 years; the 2013-2023 mean is 1186.6, with highs of 1673 in 2015 and 1925 in 2018, lows of 556 in 2013 and 757 in 2022. There were 279 mist netted retraps (the 2013-2023 mean is 323.7, with a high of 489 in 2018 and a low of 155 in 2013) and one control (the 2013-2023 mean is 4.5, with highs of seven in 2015, 2016 and 2018, lows of two in 2014 and zero last year). As has been the case for the past nine years, the nets around the Well provided the majority of birds, with the Well 9 and Well 6 nets catching 39% of new birds (the 2013-2023 mean contribution made by these nets is 49%, with a high of 88% in 2013 and a low of 33% in 2019 and 2023). The Library Nets were the most productive site around the Farm, catching 17% of new netted birds (19% last year). Excluding the non-permanent nets, the least productive netting sites were the Courtyard and the Ram (providing 5% and 3% of new netted birds respectively). **Willow Warbler** was again the most commonly trapped species in the Well nets, with 167 new birds, whilst **Sedge Warbler** and **Blackcap** were the second and third most abundant, with 62 and 60 respectively. **Willow Warbler** was also the most commonly netted species around the Farm, with 87 new birds. **Swallow** and **Blackcap**, the former sometimes attracted via the use of a tape lure, were the second and third most frequently encountered, with 45 and 42 respectively.

The number of new birds, retraps and controls trapped during 2024 and the proportion made up of seabirds, birds trapped in each Heligoland and birds from each regular mist netting site.



Highlights from the Well mist nets included singles of **Kestrel**, **Merlin**, **Yellow-browed Warbler** and **Marsh Warbler**, two **Grasshopper Warbler**, singles of **Garden Warbler**, **Barred Warbler** and **Lesser Whitethroat**, two **Firecrest**, three **Pied Flycatcher** and two **Whinchat**. Around the Farm the mist nets produced singles of **Collared Dove**, **Kestrel**, **Wood Warbler** and **Firecrest**, two **Pied Flycatcher**, a **Whinchat**, a **House Sparrow**, a **Yellow Wagtail**, four **Tree Pipit** and a **Greenfinch**.

Arrival and Departure Dates

The first arrival and latest departure dates of 2024 migrants, along with the extreme earliest and latest dates on which they have been recorded in the past, are documented at the beginning of each species account in the Systematic List of Birds. This year saw six records of a species outside of its period of previous occurrence, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.5; there were highs of seven changes observed in 2015, 2019 and 2022, a low of one in 2013. This year they were of a **Little Ringed Plover** on 17th March (the previous earliest were logged on the 27th in 2012 and 2022), a **Wood Sandpiper** on 18th April (the earliest was on the 22nd in 1973), a **Wood Sandpiper** on 4th November (the latest was on 22nd September 1966), a **Marsh Harrier** on 13th November (the latest was on the 4th in 2018), a **Whitethroat** on 6th November (the latest was on 30th October 1968) and a **Pied Flycatcher** on 6th April (the earliest was on the 10th in 1993). Additionally a female **Blackcap** on 2nd December was present on the same date as one in 1996. The following species were recorded close to their Skokholm limits: a **Barnacle Goose** on 9th October (earliest on 8th October 1987), a **Willow Warbler** on 22nd March (earliest on 19th March 2023), a **Reed Warbler** on 21st April (earliest on 17th April 2015), a **Grasshopper Warbler** on 12th April (earliest on the 7th in 1961 and 1966), a **Barred Warbler** on 6th September (earliest on 1st September 2001), a **Spotted Flycatcher** on 28th April (earliest on the 19th in 1966) and a **Wheatear** on 10th March (earliest on 2nd March 2003).

2023 Rarity Decisions and DNA Results

A first-winter female **Pallid Harrier** present during the morning of 23rd November was accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee as the second Skokholm record in two years and the fourth for Wales. A DNA confirmed first-winter **Alder Flycatcher** seen on seven dates between the 20th and 29th September was accepted as the first for Wales and the third for Britain. The identification of a silent juvenile **Western Bonelli's Warbler** present on 23rd August was also confirmed genetically, this becoming the fourth Western bird and fifth 'Bonelli's' for Skokholm. A DNA confirmed first-summer male **Western Subalpine Warbler** present on 24th June was also accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee, this the third Skokholm and fourth Pembrokeshire record and an 11th 'Subalpine Warbler' in 11 years (with all three species encountered between 2021 and 2023). A first-winter **Bobolink** present on 21st September was accepted as the second for Skokholm; there had been three previous Welsh birds and 33 previous British records.

A stunning **American Golden Plover** present between the 17th and 22nd July and again on the 25th, 27th and 28th July was accepted by the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee as the third for Skokholm. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Orchid Bog on 20th September was accepted as the second for Skokholm. Eight **Cory's Shearwater** logged on both 31st July and 1st August, along with three on 12th August and a single on 19th September were also accepted; there had only been eight previous records. A **Great Shearwater** on 31st July and two on 31st August were rarer in a Skokholm context; there had been five previous birds. A male **Red-backed Shrike** present on 28th May was accepted by the Committee as the 27th Island record, whilst a **Golden Oriole** present on 3rd May becomes the fifth live record. A juvenile **Melodious Warbler** ringed on 18th August was the 65th accepted individual for Skokholm, whilst a first-winter **Bluethroat** present on 12th October was a 15th record. Two **Common Rosefinch** ringed on 1st October, along with a third unringed bird on the 6th, were accepted by the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee (a ringed bird was also seen on the 2nd and 5th); there have now been at least 33 individuals. All 2023 rarities and scarcities were thus accepted by the relevant committees, meaning that there were indeed 155 species recorded during the year; this matched tallies in 1968, 1991, 2019 and 2021 as the seventh highest to date, up on a 2013-2022 mean of 153.2, although these totals will be amended in the future due to forthcoming taxonomic revisions (the current highs are of 166 species in 2017 and 165 in 2020). The acceptance of **Alder Flycatcher** takes the Skokholm list to 305 species, although the imminent lumping of **Green-winged Teal**, **Hooded Crow** and **Common Redpoll** will see this total drop to 302.

Research Projects

We were visited in late July by a team from the RSPB; researchers were keen to complete a scoping survey, with the hope of finding sufficient accessible Storm Petrel nest sites to make a tracking project viable. Annual searches of suitable habitat by staff suggested that this would be a difficult task and unfortunately this proved to be the case; the team were unable to find a sufficient number of sites to provide a subset of adults and a control group. Indeed only two new accessible sites were discovered, although at least these can be incorporated into our annual productivity monitoring.

Bird Observatory Fundraising and Donations

The Ticks Jar

The Ticks Jar is a Bird Observatory tradition which we brought to Skokholm in 2013; birders and ringers are encouraged to make a small donation if they see or ring a new species during their stay. An impressive £5140.79 was raised between 2013 and 2023 (this despite an 'empty Jar year' during the 2020 Island closure and a reduced number of guests the following year). The takings have funded a large variety of items over the years, including the Storm Petrel sound system, a 12 volt widescreen monitor and associated connecters which allowed for the creation of an impressive Storm Petrel viewing experience at the Quarry, UHF radios, bat detector accessories, local artworks, stools and fixtures for the Crab Bay Puffin Hide, books and framed rare bird photographs for the Library, donations to the Wildlife Genetics and Conservation Team at the University of Aberdeen, curtains for the guest bedrooms, gardening equipment for the maintenance of ponds and net rides, kitchen paraphernalia and ringing equipment. This year, the Ticks Jar contained £1138.10, this including monies raised by the sale of avian artworks, sourced and framed by Richard Dobbins. This year's Jar will initially be used to purchase new lined curtains for the volunteers' quarters, the materials for building Manx Shearwater nest boxes, a new communal BBQ, further kitchen equipment, the framing of more artworks, clearwing moth pheromones and books for the Library.

Bird Observatory Merchandise

We have been selling quality Skokholm Bird Observatory merchandise on the Island since 2013, with 100% of the profits contributing towards the work of the Observatory. Our range has expanded over the years, from the humble polo shirt to hoodies, fleeces, gilets, headwear, bumbags and mugs.

Since 2023 we have also stocked a range of natural history artworks, sourced and framed by Richard Dobbins. Isabel Brown crocheted some fantastic Skokholm wildlife themed keyrings, these proving extremely popular and raising £300.00 for the Island. Rochelle Hood again visited from Florida, donating lots of goodies to sell in the shop; she has been massively supportive since she first fell in love with Skokholm a couple of years ago and has donated hundreds of pounds worth of merchandise, including Puffin themed souvenirs and bags (uniquely created for the Island by Wendy Barnes Design), Skokholm inspired soap (made by Wild Goat Soap) and vocal plush Puffins. The proceeds reside in the Skokholm Observatory account and are used to purchase additional materials, such as those used for maintaining Heligoland Traps, or equipment, such as extra nets and rings.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Volunteers are central to the success of each season on Skokholm. We are hugely grateful to our 2024 Long-term Volunteers Gwennan Butler, Judith Kay, Kayleigh Bargus and Hayley Land who gave up three months of their lives to support every aspect of Island work. From seabird monitoring and daily census work to moth trapping and migrant ringing, from limewashing to emptying the toilets and cleaning on changeover days, their contribution was invaluable. Hayley also stayed on at the end of the season to assist with autumn migration monitoring, data inputting and winter preparations.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to Gambian ringer Emmanuel Jatta who spent over a month with us in spring and who approached every task with enthusiasm and a constant smile. In many ways life on

a Welsh Island could not be more different to the Gambia, yet Emmanuel embraced the adventure completely, even finding the first Squacco Heron for Skokholm.

Ellyn Baker, autumn Long-term Volunteer in 2023, returned in June to assist with Storm Petrel playback work, while Jodie Henderson, Long-term Volunteer in 2019 and 2021 and now Portland Bird Observatory Assistant Warden, returned for a 'holiday' but generously assisted with census work, changeovers, Manx Shearwater monitoring and nocturnal Storm Petrel ringing. Howard Driver deserves a special thank you, volunteering for a month in both spring and autumn for a 12th year; along with many other smaller jobs, he built and installed bespoke access doors at the back of Petrel Station II, boxed in the new hot water tanks in the Wheelhouse Pantry and faced the new solar panels outside the Library, his presence again priceless and an absolute pleasure.

Our Work Party volunteers also deserve a special thanks; without them, preparing the Island for the season and completing major tasks would be unachievable. We are grateful to everyone who took part in the spring and autumn Work Parties, as well as to those who manned delivery boats without even stepping ashore. We also welcomed a small number of short-term volunteers to undertake specific tasks; thank you to everyone who helped out. Rob Smith and Steve Roberts both assisted with transporting drinking water from the Well to underground Lighthouse tanks, whilst in spring Steve also refreshed the painted trail markers. Emyr Roberts helped decorate the Lighthouse interior, this no longer a futile task following works to reduce damp. He also carried out landscaping at the Farm to reduce trip hazards and integrate the solar panels into their surroundings. Julia Manning once again refreshed the Skokholm landing sign in South Haven, adding an inquisitive Grey Seal to the shearwaters and petrels. Wildlife Sound Recording Society members Nick Davison and Alan Wilkins continued to work on their project to recognise individual Storm Petrel by their calls, whilst Chris Payne used grant money from the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer to upgrade the camera system in the Petrel Station (this originally paid for by the British Birds Charitable Trust). Professor Chris and Mary Perrins again ran the moth trap during their visit in June. Chris Brown again created the report covers and Sandie Eagle again deep cleaned the bird bags over the winter.

We also thank our colleagues at the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales for the huge amount of work executed in the background which keeps Skokholm running smoothly. In particular, thank you to Jane Kokoch and Jon Cooper for organising guest bookings and to our Line Manager Lisa Morgan and Chief Executive Sarah Kessell for their support and success in securing grant funding for new projects. Lisa, together with Dave Astins, also provided invaluable mainland support, receiving and delivering Island provisions, post and groceries.

Thank you to Gareth Reynolds, John Reynolds and the staff and crews at Dale Sailing for another excellent year of ferrying guests and volunteers to and from the Island. We are especially grateful for the storage of materials at the Neyland boatyard, for your help transporting supplies to Skokholm and for the removal of scrap. Thank you also for your sensitive handling of the lifeboat wreck removal over the summer.

We again acknowledge and value the ongoing support of the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer, whose contributions included continued assistance to our Long-term Volunteers and financial support for the Island. This year, following the purchase of hardbound copies of the 2013-2021 Annual Reports which now reside in the Library, they donated a copy of the 2022 Report, as well as £385.00 of library books which were acquired at the excellent Portland Bird Observatory shop. We benefitted greatly from the support of Mark Burton who once more received, packed and delivered our monthly grocery shop to the boat. We are hugely grateful to Shirley Matthews and Stephen Hyam for sourcing, receiving and delivering the tuck-shop stock which is now almost entirely fair-trade produce; this service is much appreciated by both staff and visitors. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to Anna and Steve Sutcliffe for their continued kindness and support, generously providing us with advice, friendship and a mainland base before and after the season.

Following the success of our first mid-season holiday in 2023, we again took an August break this year. This was made possible thanks to Richard Dobbins (Chair of Skokholm Bird Observatory), Wendy James (Head of Bird Observatory Merchandise), Lisa Morgan and our autumn volunteers Hayley Land and Kayleigh Bargus who became Dream Island's caretakers in our absence.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who donated thoughtful and generous items to the Island this year. Every donation, from kitchen knife-sharpeners to buckets, from artwork to reference books, means so much. Special thanks go to our Floridian supporter Rochelle Hood for her kind gifts of trail cameras, USB plugs, torches and library books. We are also very grateful to long-time Bird Observatory supporter Mike Archer, who generously donated a complete set of hardbound British Birds journals, available for all to enjoy in the Library from next year. Kelvin and Eleanor Cawte kindly gifted a large framed map of the Island, this replacing the old faded one in the Cottage.

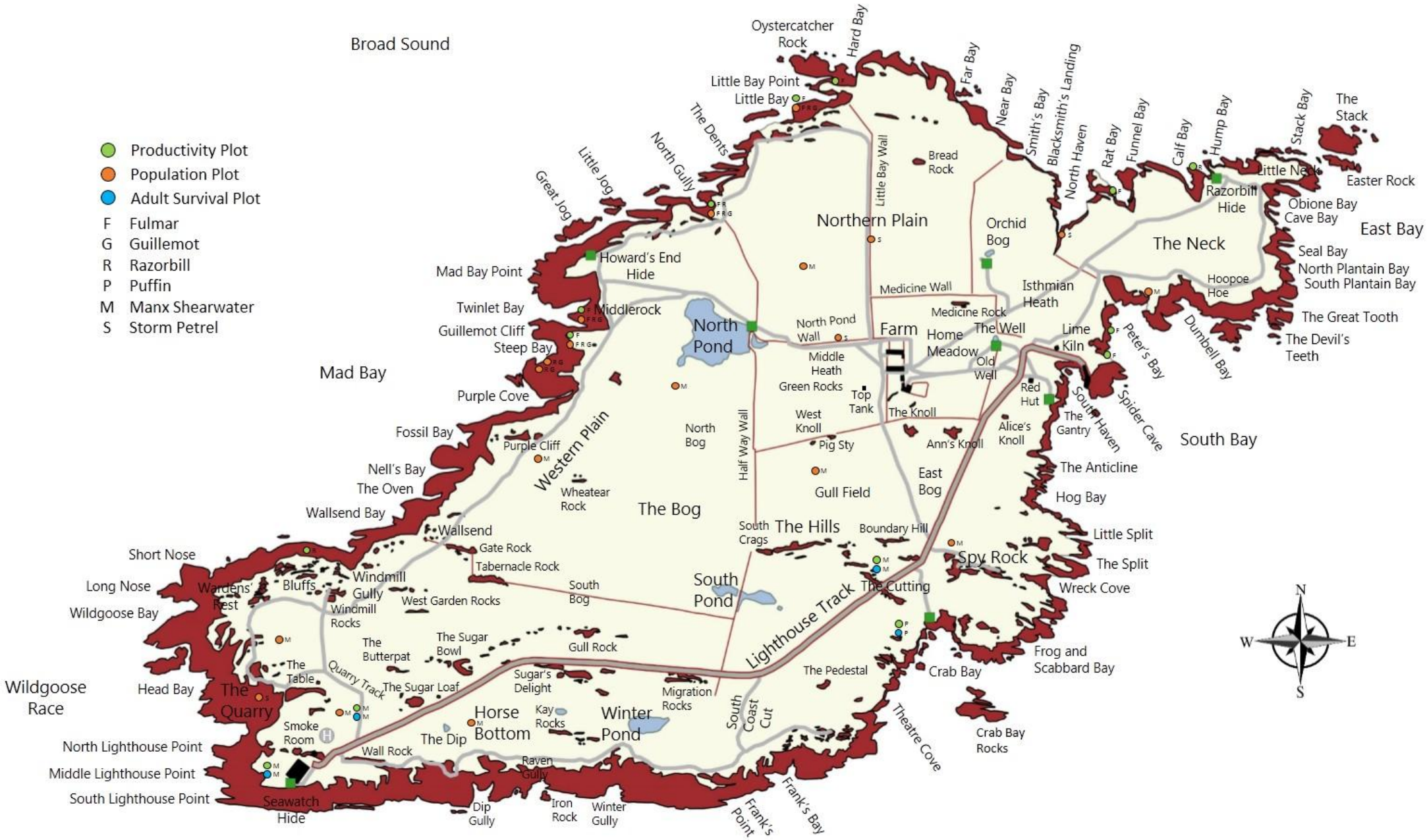
We are appreciative of external organisations who again supported our work; thank you to the Bird Observatories Council, the British Trust for Ornithology, the staff of Natural Resources Wales and the members of the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee and Seabird Subgroup. Mike Alexander again deserves special thanks for his unwavering support and kindness. We are also extremely

grateful to Greg Morgan, Olivia Pargeter and Jinx the Conservation Dog who carefully checked cargos for stowaways and who were instrumental in confirming that there was no rat incursion following the Midnight Glory lifeboat wreck (this work through Biosecurity for Wales, administered by RSPB Cymru). Thank you to the experts who contributed to our work this season; Professor Martin Collinson and his team at the University of Aberdeen again carried out DNA analyses on feather samples obtained from migrant birds, Denise Wawman identified our collection of Flat Flies for a fourth year and Billy Dykes (2014 Long-term Volunteer), along with County Moth Recorder Paul Warren, provided identification assistance and support during moth trapping sessions.

We were once again joined by many visiting ringers, this research and training remaining a core objective of Skokholm Bird Observatory. Our thanks go to everyone who contributed, particularly to Wendy James and Richard Dobbins of the Teifi Ringing Group for organising and hosting several visits, to Eric Wood and Robin King for supporting the Great Black-backed Gull colour ringing project and to Kenny Cramer for the annual (not) Northants Ringing Group takeover; the latter was another hugely successful week and Kenny once again donated a smorgasbord of useful items for both the Ringing Hut and for visitor enjoyment in general. Thanks to Ian Beggs who continued with the Wheatear project and to Jamie Gundry of Salford University who brought another group of keen undergraduates. We are also grateful to the ringers, birders and researchers from Europe, northwest Africa and the east coast of South America who observed and submitted sightings of Skokholm ringed bird; it is a real honour to be part of this exciting network.

Finally, a huge thank you to all of our 2024 guests who visited from near and far. A tangible buzz of excitement is created by your arrival and your wildlife records, whilst your companionship and generosity make Dream Island the welcoming and inclusive place that is cherished by so many.

Richard and Giselle


Productivity Plot
Population Plot
Adult Survival Plot
F Fulmar
G Guillemot
R Razorbill
P Puffin
M Manx Shearwater
S Storm Petrel
Broad Sound
Oystercatcher Rock
Hard Bay
Little Bay Point
Little Bay
Far Bay
Near Bay
Smith's Bay
Blacksmith's Landing
North Haven
Rat Bay
Funnel Bay
Calf Bay
Hump Bay
Stack Bay
The Stack
Little Neck
Easter Rock
Razorbill Hide
Obione Bay
Cave Bay
East Bay
The Dents
North Gully
Little Jog
Great Jog
Little Bay Wall
Bread Rock
Northern Plain
Orchid Bog
The Neck
Howard's End Hide
Mad Bay Point
Medicine Wall
Isthmian Heath
Seal Bay
North Plantain Bay
South Plantain Bay
Hoopoe Hoe
Twinlet Bay
Middlerock
Guillemot Cliff
Steep Bay
North Pond
North Pond Wall
Medicine Rock
The Well
Farm
Home Meadow
Lime Kiln
Peter's Bay
Dumbell Bay
The Great Tooth
The Devil's Teeth
Mad Bay
Middle Heath
Green Rocks
Top Tank
Old Well
Red Hut
Purple Cove
Fossil Bay
Purple Cliff
Western Plain
North Bog
Half Way Wall
West Knoll
The Knoll
Alice's Knoll
South Haven
Spider Cave
The Gantry
South Bay
Pig Sty
Ann's Knoll
Nell's Bay
The Oven
Wheatear Rock
The Bog
East Bog
Gull Field
The Anticline
Wallsend Bay
Wallsend
Gate Rock
Tabernacle Rock
South Crags
The Hills
Boundary Hill
Hog Bay
Little Split
Short Nose
Long Nose
Wardens' Rest
Bluffs
Windmill Gully
Windmill Rocks
West Garden Rocks
South Bog
South Pond
Spy Rock
The Split
Wreck Cove
Wildgoose Bay
The Cutting
Lighthouse Track
The Butterpat
The Sugar Bowl
Gull Rock
The Table
Quarry Track
The Sugar Loaf
Sugar's Delight
Migration Rocks
The Pedestal
Crab Bay
Frog and Scabbard Bay
Wildgoose Race
Head Bay
The Quarry
Horse Bottom
Kay Rocks
Winter Pond
South Coast Cut
Theatre Cove
Crab Bay Rocks
Smoke Room
The Dip
Wall Rock
North Lighthouse Point
Middle Lighthouse Point
South Lighthouse Point
Raven Gully
Seawatch Hide
Dip Gully
Iron Rock
Winter Gully
Frank's Point
Frank's Bay
N
W
E
S

Definitions and Terminology

The status summaries used in this report closely follow those established by Betts (1992) and used by Thompson (2007); they refer to the period prior to this season. Where the status has changed in the years subsequent to Betts' 'Birds of Skokholm', the current status is used but the change is noted. The definition of each status is as follows:

Status	Definition
Vagrant	1-10 records since 1927
Rare	11-50 records or breeding records
Scarce	1-5 birds, records or breeding pairs per year
Uncommon	6-50 birds or breeding pairs per year
Fairly Common	51-250 birds or breeding pairs per year
Common	251-1000 bird-days or breeding pairs per year
Abundant	1001-2500 bird-days or breeding pairs per year
Very Abundant	More than 2500 bird-days or breeding pairs per year

The systematic list below follows that of the British Ornithologists' Union (McInerny *et al*., 2017), but includes updates published in BOURC reports up to and including November 2020. The list is based on that of the International Ornithological Community and is likely to change shortly as the BOU adopt AviList, this an attempt to unify the three most widely used world checklists. The change is likely to impact the Skokholm list, with Island rarities Green-winged Teal, Hooded Crow and Common Redpoll set to become lumped with their more regular relatives.

The Systematic List of Birds

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* **Gwydd Canada**
Scarce Breeder and Common Visitor four in October 1952 were the first for Pembrokeshire

The majority of spring sightings were again of those which would attempt to breed on Skokholm, although there were six daycounts between the return of staff and 30th May which exceeded the four breeding pairs; there were spring daycount highs of 11 on the 16th and 20th April and 13 on 9th May, the peak down on a 2013-2023 mean spring high of 22.9. Four nesting pairs matched that of last year as the highest tally of the last six years, but was still well down on a 2010 peak of 41, the egg control measures designed to protect rare aquatic vegetation and implemented under licence since 2002 still working; this species colonised in 1999, the population increased to seven pairs by 2004 and numbers grew still further during the period that Skokholm was closed to the public, this leading to concerns over their impact on fragile seasonal waterbodies. Three pairs nested in the Bog and one pair nested to the north of Orchid Bog, with all bar one of the Bog pairs producing second clutches and all seven nests being located and destroyed. The most recent fledgling was a single in 2012, whilst there were highs of 38 in 2006 and a minimum of 40 in 2007. Seven adults were still present on 3rd June, although the only subsequent sightings prior to 12th September were of two on the 4th, 5th and 6th June and on 20th July (there were no August records for the third time in 15 years).

The number of territorial Canada Goose pairs, with the peak coinciding with low disturbance during the renovation period.

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
36	41	23	16	18	11	10	7	7	4	2	3	3	2	4	4

Although a late, typically post-sunset, arrival to the North Pond roost and an early departure inevitably lead to undercounting on occasion, 2024 coverage was comparable with that of recent

years. Sightings on five September dates peaked at 49 on the 27th, sightings on 14 October dates peaked at 110 on the 11th and 129 on the 29th and sightings on 20 November dates peaked at 119 on the 6th and 111 on the 10th; the peak autumn daycount was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 100.8 and was the highest since 2016 when counts reached 205. Birds lingered diurnally from 24th November, with daily sightings of up to six until 2nd December.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* **Gwydd Wyran**
Rare Nine spring records of up to five birds and 15 autumn records of up to ten birds
Earliest 8th October 1987 (9th October 2024) **Latest** 17th June 2021

Two arrived from the north at 0830hrs on 9th October and continued south past the Lighthouse, with what were probably the same two seen heading north over the Neck at 1030hrs and present on North Pond from noon; they were still on North Pond at 0900hrs the following day, but were not seen thereafter. Although a feral origin cannot be ruled out, it is very possible that these were Arctic birds; a Barnacle Goose satellite tagged in Greenland arrived to the Scillies with a small number of others on the 9th, this soon heading to north Wales and then west to usual wintering grounds along the west coast of Ireland, whilst further birds arrived to Ouessant Island, Finistère, France at the same time. The three birds which arrived with Canada Goose to North Pond on the evenings of the 29th and 30th October were perhaps more likely to be feral. The status of Barnacle Goose in Wales is confused by the large number of naturalised birds which breed in the Lake District and overwinter on the Dyfi Estuary, along with an increasing Pembrokeshire population, with Britain as a whole seeing an 88% increase in the number of occupied 10km squares between the 1988-1991 and 2007-2011 Atlases (Balmer *et al*., 2013)). Birds were first seen displaying on Skokholm on 8th May 2022, although a breeding attempt is yet to occur, whilst the number of birds breeding on Cardigan Island, Ceredigion has increased rapidly in the last decade (Dobbins, *pers*. *comm*.). There have been near-annual Skokholm sightings and 12 records since 2015, with April and October being the most likely months for an encounter (with 59 and 52 of an all-time 146 bird-days logged respectively).

Greylag Goose *Anser anser* **Gwydd Wyllt**
Rare 16 post-1953 spring records of up to five birds and six autumn records of up to seven birds

The late morning of 15th April saw one arrive from the east and continue northwest over Orchid Bog. April remains the best month for encountering this feral species, now with 11 separate records totalling 19 bird-days (there have been 72 bird-days in total, with eight in March, three in May, one in June, 13 in September, 23 in October (21 of which relate to the same lingering 1987 individual) and five in November). Sightings in six of the last 12 years reflect an increasing Pembrokeshire population; the eight highest WeBS maxima occurred in the eight years up to 2023 (Haycock, 2023).

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons* **Gwydd Dalcenwyn**
Rare Winter Visitor 24 previous records of between one and 40 birds, the majority in autumn
Earliest 12th October 1971 **Latest** 26th June 1992 (8th June 2024)

A nominate bird first found in the vicinity of North Pond on 27th May was almost certainly that reported over the Gann Estuary the following morning, although it had returned to North Pond by 1400hrs on the 28th and was logged on each date to 8th June, during which time it also visited the areas around South Pond and Winter Pond (CH, RD *et al*.). There are only three previous Island records attributed to *A. a. albifrons*, with a single between 28th April and 1st May 1990, two on 9th November 2002 and a single on 18th May 2014. The majority of Skokholm records have been of Greenland breeding *A. a. flavirostris*, with a neck collared individual recorded in November 2013. There have now been sightings in 20 years accounting for 187 bird-days, with 16 together in March 2010, 20 in April (including another 16 in 2010), seven in May, 19 in June (with 11 in 1992 along with the eight from this year), 96 in October (including 20 in 1974 and a skein of 40 in 1994), 28 in November (including 18 together in 1991) and a single in December 1982.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor* **Alarch Dof**
Rare only three records between 1966 and 1993, but more regular since 2014

An adult photographed at 1500hrs on 2nd June flew low over North Pond and out into Broad Sound (CH, TC). Four unidentified swans, probably of this species, headed south off South Haven on 26th June (FL *et al*.); sadly photographs were not clear enough to clinch the identification. The first Island records were of an immature at North Pond on 18th May 1966, an adult on 14th October 1981 and of five north on 5th May 1993. A westbound first-winter on 28th September and a southbound adult on 12th October 2014 were perhaps part of the herd of four which flew north over the Farm and through Broad Sound on 13th October, whilst it is also plausible that one of these adults accounted for sightings of singles at North Pond on the 10th and 22nd March, 23rd April and 4th October 2015. Most recently a juvenile rested briefly in Broad Sound on 16th September 2020. The recent increase in sightings mirrors what has been observed on the mainland; the Pembrokeshire breeding population more than doubled between the 1984-1988 and 2003-2007 surveys, during which time birds began breeding in more estuarine locations (Rees *et al*., 2008). In recent years breeding has been noted in the area of the Gann Pill near Dale (just over 7km to our east), with an irrigation pond close to that site also being used (Astins, *pers*. *comm*.).

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* **Hwyaden yr Eithin**
Scarce Breeder recorded in 59 years, almost annually since 1956 and first seen with young in 2006

A pair encountered on only five dates led to the lowest March bird-days total of the last 14 years, this well down on a 2013-2023 bird-days mean of 94.0 and a 2016 high of 207. April was similarly quiet, with singles on the 1st and 8th followed by counts of up to two on 14 dates; an April bird-days total of 29 was massively down on a 2013-2023 mean of 158.8 (there was a high during this period of 282 in 2015, a low of 58 in 2022). A second male present on three May dates and a second female present on 6th June were the only definite records of birds other than the lingering pair, a daycount high of three being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.9 and lower than anything logged during this period. Despite these low numbers, a female accompanied five North Pond ducklings at noon on 25th May, although these had seemingly all been lost by that evening; last year was the fourth consecutive year, but just the fourth year since 2009 and the fifth year since breeding was first confirmed in 2006, in which no chicks were seen. Although it is possible that the adults which swam their young towards St Ann's Head in 2016 managed to protect them through to fledging, it was only in 2011 that any chicks definitely went on to fledge from Skokholm. Two adults were noted on most dates until 12th June and a single was logged on the 14th and 15th, whilst an adult which flew from North Pond towards the mainland on 16th July was the last of the year; there were no records in either November or December, this for a third consecutive year but just the third time in 12 years.

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* **Hwyaden Lydanbig**
Rare Breeder and Uncommon Visitor bred in 1988, 1991-1996, 1999, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2023

There were no March records for the fifth time in 14 years, however sightings of up to four males and three females over 26 dates led to an April bird-days total of 81, this the third highest tally this century. There were May daycounts of up to three males and two females, although it became apparent that three females were nesting; a South Pond nest containing ten eggs on 29th April was abandoned by 5th May following a significant rise in water level, a female walked 11 ducklings from the Little Bay area towards North Pond on 17th May (the young were not seen again) and a female accompanied nine tiny ducklings at Orchid Bog on 6th June (one was taken by a Lesser Black-backed Gull that day and five were still present at 1130hrs on the 7th, however no chicks were seen thereafter); breeding was strongly suspected in 2003 and 2019 and confirmed in 12 years between 1988 and 2023, however no young are known to have successfully fledged from Skokholm.

A lone female on the 8th, 9th and 10th was the only bird seen in June following the loss of the ducklings, whilst sightings on seven July dates peaked at nine on the 19th, this the highest ever July daycount. Two were noted on each of the first three days of August, along with a single on the 4th,

this becoming only the 14th year with a record in this month. Sightings on eight November dates peaked at 15 on the 9th and five on the 16th and 17th; this becomes the 35th year (and ninth of the last 11) with a sighting during the last five months of the year, with the peak only being down on daycounts of 16 and 22 logged in November 1997 (the next highest autumn daycount is of nine).

Gadwall *Mareca strepera* **Hwyaden Lwyd**
Rare only 22 previous records of up to two birds

A pair at North Pond on the 9th was only the second November record and was the first since a drake logged on six dates in May 2019. There have now been 23 records accounting for 40 bird-days over 19 years, with all but five sightings occurring between 10th March and 14th July and with the majority falling in May (seven records totalling 16 bird-days).

Wigeon *Mareca penelope* **Chwiwell**
Uncommon Winter Visitor
Earliest 22nd August 1986 (17th September 2024) **Latest** 29th May 2017 and 2018 (9th April 2024)
1964: 1 trapped

It became the 46th March with a record, with sightings on eight dates between the 10th and 19th peaking at 11 on the 10th and ten on the 12th; although up on a 2013-2023 March bird-days mean of 37.3, there have been 16 March tallies up on the 42 of this year (with highs of 316 in 1948 and 151 in 1994). A male present at North Pond each day between the 6th and 9th made this the 21st April with a record, this the first since 2011. A group of 13 heading northwest on the 17th, along with a male heading in the same direction on the 24th, led to the fourth highest September bird-days total to date, this only down on the 20 of 1960, the 17 of 1994 and the 25 of 2013. The only October record was of eight at North Pond on the morning of the 19th, whilst sightings on ten dates between 10th November and 3rd December peaked at 13 on the 11th and took the autumn bird-days total to 73; although well down on an all-time high of 100 logged in December 1990, the peak autumn daycount was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.5, whilst the autumn bird-days total was up on a mean of 30.0 logged during the same period (the all-time highs are of 120 in 1990, 149 in 1991 and 103 in 2016).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* **Hwyaden Wyllt**
Scarce Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor
2 trapped
1936-1976: 10 trapped, 2018-2022: 3 trapped

There were sightings on all but one date between the return of staff on 10th March and 29th June, with highs of 11 on the 16th, 22nd and 28th March and on 5th May, along with 12 on 19th March (with a high of ten males on 28th March, but no more than three females confirmed during the period); the peak spring daycount was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.8, albeit well down on a high during this period of 19 in 2022 and on a post-War high of 31 on 13th June 1993. Despite the low peak daycount, five females were known to breed; only one duckling was confirmed at the Well on 23rd April, there were seven at North Pond on 5th May, nine at Orchid Bog the following day were certainly different, at least five were in the Isthmian Heath Bracken on 19th June and four were at Orchid Bog on 9th July. All five broods were recorded on only one date, with the former 16 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first chick mean (albeit later than youngsters first encountered on 17th April 2017 and 7th April 2021). Five broods was two more than the peak count listed by Thompson (2007) and was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.1, indeed it matched the 2019 and 2021 totals and was only down on the six broods of 2018. It is nevertheless over two decades since any fledglings were confirmed; there were occasional fledglings between 1985 and 2000, with a peak of 25 in 1988 (surprisingly so given that this was a period when gull numbers were more than twice what they are today). There were daily sightings of up to four adults between the 10th and 18th July and singles on 31st July and 2nd August.

September saw nocturnal counts from Orchid Bog of four on the 4th, six on the 12th and singles on the 15th and 17th, whilst four went over on the 30th; as with other ducks in autumn, this species regularly exhibits a post-dusk arrival and pre-dawn departure from roost sites, making an accurate assessment of numbers difficult. Sightings on 16 October dates included three nocturnal counts and diurnal highs of 38 on the 16th and 17 on the 20th. Counts on 14 November dates peaked at 25 on the 9th, 22 on the 10th and 27 on the 19th, whilst two on the 1st was the only count during the first three days of December. The autumn daycount high matched a 2013-2023 mean of 38.9 (there were peaks during this period of 68 in 2014 and 64 in 2018, lows of 15 in 2015 and 13 in 2017), whilst a July-December bird-days total of 321 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 303.9 (there were highs of 510 in 2019 and 756 in 2021, lows of 125 in 2013 and 139 last year).

Teal *Anas crecca* **Corhwyaden**
Common Visitor recorded in all months, but more regular in winter and possibly bred in 1936
1936-1976: 15 trapped, 2014-2018: 3 trapped

Sightings on 15 March dates from the arrival of staff on the 10th totalled 117 bird-days and peaked at 19 on the 10th and 20 on the 12th and 13th; there have been higher March daycounts in eight years this century, with a peak of 45 in 2014. A pair commuted between South Pond and North Pond on 12th April, these perhaps wholly responsible for sightings of up to two birds on 16 dates to 21st May; there was no indication of a breeding attempt, although this would be difficult to prove. A spring bird-days total of 144 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 185.4, this due in part to the later than average staff arrival (there were highs of 369 in 2018 and 341 in 2019 when staff arrived on 6th March and 28th February respectively). A single on 31st July, three on 1st August and one at Orchid Bog on the 3rd, 4th and 5th August were the last prior to three on the 23rd and 24th September. October saw a single on the 3rd and sightings on eight further dates from the 16th, these including a high of 25 at North Pond on the 20th and an eaten bird at the same location on the 29th. Bar the 15 present at North Pond on the 24th, counts on ten November dates were of no more than four, whilst four on the 1st was the only count during the first three days of December. The peak autumn daycount was little more than half a 2013-2023 mean of 47.3, whilst an autumn bird-days total of 105 was down on a mean of 195.5 logged during the same period (there were autumn daycount highs of 96 in 2016 and 110 in 2018, autumn bird-day highs of 628 in 2018 and 283 in 2021).

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra* **Môr-hwyaden Ddu**
Common recorded offshore in all months, but particularly from June to September
1936-1976: 11 trapped (oiled birds following rehabilitation)

The only spring record came on 26th March when a high group of at least 180 went south off the Lighthouse before heading north, south, north and finally south again. Records in 57 previous springs have seen daycount highs of 420 in May 1992, 176 in June 2016 and 210 in June 2017.

There were records on six July dates, with flocks of 20 on the 12th and 78 on the 29th, although 11 on the 13th and a single on the 25th were the only scoter seen in August. Numbers again increased in September, with sightings on 16 dates totalling 444 bird-days and including highs of 30 on the 17th (three groups), 54 on the 19th (six groups), 147 on the 25th (four groups) and 91 together on the 27th; the bird-days total was the second highest to be recorded in this month, only down on the 1411 of 1992. October counts on ten dates peaked at 37 on the 2nd, 17 on the 11th and 23 on the 30th, whilst records on four November dates to the 27th were of singles bar a group of eight on the 7th. An autumn bird-days total of 698 was 3.7% up on a 2013-2023 mean of 672.9, whilst the peak daycount almost matched a 2013-2023 mean of 146.2 (there were highs during the period of 249 in 2016 and 392 in 2017, the latter the all-time autumn daycount record). As is typically the case, most birds seen during the autumn were heading southeast, probably towards wintering grounds in Carmarthen Bay.

Goosander *Mergus merganser* **Hwyaden Ddanheddog**
Vagrant three previous records

A redhead seen low over Howard's End on 3rd November briefly settled on North Pond but was pursued by a male Shoveler and soon departed into a light southeasterly (GE, RDB); an arrival the day after a White-rumped Sandpiper led to fanciful questions regarding its origin (although Common Merganser *M. m. americanus* is yet to be confirmed in the Western Palearctic). Subspecific identification is theoretically possible, with North American birds exhibiting a more vertical end to the bill feathering (more pointed along the base of the upper mandible in Goosander), a thicker central bill area (thinner with a more steeply curved culmen in Goosander) and often a less steep forehead profile (Van Duivendijk, 2011); sadly the dark grey day meant that photographs of the North Pond bird were not sufficiently detailed to allow for a strong opinion to be formed, although the forehead profile perhaps suggested the more likely option. The first for Skokholm was logged in 1961, this 'a male offshore on October 23rd'; it came in a year which also saw Lesser Yellowlegs, Woodlark and Tawny Pipit added to the Island list (Glanville, 1962). More than two and a half decades elapsed before the next record, this of five redheads heading northwest into northerly winds on 4th June 1988 (Betts, 1989); as with the previous sighting, an exact location is not in the archives. Two redheads flew northwest off the Lighthouse on 22nd November 2021, these similarly into a light northnorthwesterly.

Swift *Apus apus* **Gwennol Ddu**
Fairly Common Migrant Common in some years and most regular in late spring
Earliest 15th April 1991 (28th April 2024) **Latest** 28th October 1976 (13th August 2024)
1955-1967: 13 trapped

Two on 28th April were one day earlier than the 2013-2023 first spring bird mean; there have been 222 earlier bird-days, including 23 this century and 118 in 1960. Counts of up to seven on eight dates led to a May bird-days total of only 17, this the second lowest of the last 12 years and well down on

a 2013-2023 mean of 49.1. Swift were only seen on seven June dates, with highs of ten on the 18th and nine on the 24th taking the bird-days total to 39, this up on four of the last 11 years but down on a 2013-2023 mean of 68.0. A minimum of 34 on 12th July was the highest daycount of the last five years (albeit only a little up on a 2013-2023 mean high of 29.5, down on 21st century highs of 89 in 2017 and 70 in 2019 and well down on all-time highs of 100 on 10th May 1948, 27th July 1948, 4th May 1950 and 11th May 1969 and of 150 on 8th May 1989). Up to six on nine further July dates took the bird-days total for the month to 54; despite the high of the 12th, the July total was down on five of the last 11 years. Singles on the 2nd and 10th, two on the 11th and one on the 13th were the only August sightings and the last of the year; the latter was 13 days earlier than the 2013-2023 last bird mean, indeed there have been 505 later bird-days including 128 in September and four in October. An annual bird-days total of 117 was 31.5% down on a 2013-2023 mean of 170.9 and the third lowest tally since 2013 (the all-time highs are of 515 in 1948, 457 in 1950 and 439 in 1977).

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* **Cog**
Scarce Migrant has bred, most recently suspected of having done so in 2006
Earliest 6th April 1960 (21st April 2024) **Latest** 8th September 1956 (21st August 2024)
2 trapped
1934-1976: 77 trapped, 2015-2020: 6 trapped

One along the Neck Wall on 21st April was nine days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have only been 15 earlier spring bird-days. A female was near North Gully on the morning of 29th April and a male sang from both the Hills and Spy Rock the following day. It would seem likely that singing males on the 4th and 11th May were different birds. Although a spring bird-days total of five was the highest since 2018 and up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.7, it was well down on peaks of 16 in 1951, 19 in 1957 and 17 in 1973 and 1976 (the most recent double-figure tally is the 13 of 1977). A juvenile at the Well on 11th July was probably that trapped on the 12th and recorded on the 13th, 14th and 16th. Similarly a juvenile between the Well and East Bog on the 30th and 31st July was probably that recorded on 1st August and trapped on the 3rd. It was less clear how many individuals accounted for daily sightings of a juvenile between the 8th and 11th August and on the 14th, 15th, 17th and 21st. An autumn bird-days total of 17 was only down on the 34 of 1937, the 23 of 1953 and the 37 of 1966, indeed it was massively up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.8 (there were highs during this period of eight in 2013 and 14 in 2018, the latter the only other double-figure autumn tally since the 12 of 1987). There have been 32 bird-days later than the last of this year, including 13 in September (the most recent of which was on the 1st in 2013).

Feral Pigeon *Columba livia domestica* **Colomen Ddôf**
Vagrant status clouded by the regular passage of racing pigeons

The vast majority of pet pigeons are marked with a closed ring squeezed over the foot of a growing squab. Racing pigeons marked in such a way regularly rest on Skokholm's buildings and cliffs, these grounded birds often failing to find the energy to continue with their journeys. Larger cohesive flocks which regularly pass over are almost certainly also racing pigeons. Although the systematic recording of such pets has been sporadic, a typical annual total is over 100 and up to 250 have been logged in a single day. Approximately 3000 pairs of Feral Pigeon were thought to nest in Pembrokeshire in 1988 (Donovan and Rees, 1994), a figure which may have increased to somewhere in the region of 5000 pairs by 2007 (Rees *et al*., 2008); nevertheless good views are required to confirm that a pigeon is not a wayward pet. The only Skokholm records attributable to genuinely wild birds are singles on 17th June 1958 and 14th April 1959, two which lingered around the cliffs between 27th April and 6th May 1980 and further singles on 1st July 1994, the 15th and 16th September 2017, 8th August 2020 and 26th August 2023. Different unringed birds at North Gully on 6th April and along the South Coast Cliffs on 16th May are here treated as the ninth and tenth Feral Pigeon for Skokholm (GE, RDB).

Stock Dove *Columba oenas* **Colomen Wyllt**
Scarce formerly Fairly Common, with up to 62 pairs breeding between 1967 and 1983
1967-1976: 28 trapped

There were two records this year, with one on 20th October, seen between the Bog and the Farm and later between Twinlet and Spy Rock, and a flyover from the east on 24th November which departed in a similar direction. There have now been records in 23 years since breeding was last confirmed in 1983, with only 23 bird-days across 13 years this century but sightings in nine of the last ten years (the 2015-2024 bird-days mean is 1.8). The four bird-days recorded last year was the highest annual tally since the five of 1990.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* **Ysguthan**
Uncommon Visitor has bred, most recently in a South Haven sea cave in 2007
2 trapped, 1 retrapped
1960: 1 trapped, 2017-2023: 3 trapped

Singles on eight dates in March led to a typical bird-days total, as did April sightings of two on the 13th and singles on the 21st and 27th. Encounters on ten May dates between the 5th and 20th were with singles bar the two present on the 11th, whilst a single on the 30th and 31st lingered around the Farm on the former date. Numbers increased in June, with sightings on 24 dates including groups of

four on the 3rd, six on the 6th and three on the 11th and 19th; although down on the eight of June 2022, the peak matched the second highest daycount since nine were noted in November 2001 (Skokholm daycounts have never been big, with highs of 18 in May 1960, 12 in April 1978 and 11 in August 1987 and May 1989). A bird took several twigs into the Courtyard Sycamore on 26th June, this the first indication of a breeding attempt for 17 years. Up to two were noted on all bar one July date, with one watched as it took hatched eggshell from the Courtyard to Home Meadow on the 13th. Two very large squabs were in a low nest near the trunk of the Sycamore on 1st August, one of which reached the Wheelhouse Heligoland on the 4th and one of which was trapped in the same place on the 15th. Daily August sightings were attributable to this family, with twigs again being taken into the Courtyard Sycamore on the 7th, but two adults last confirmed on the 26th. Indeed the only September sightings were of an adult and juvenile on the 1st and one in the Courtyard on the 13th. There were no October birds for a fourth time in 11 years, whilst singles on the 2nd and 7th November were the last of the year. Unsurprisingly a 2024 bird-days total of 173 was well up on a 2013-2023 mean of 28.1, indeed it was the highest since the 194 of 2003 (there were 111 bird-days in 2007, the year in which Woodpigeon last nested on Skokholm).

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* **Turtur Dorchog**
Uncommon Visitor the majority of sightings coming in spring. First recorded 7th June 1962
3 trapped
1965-1976: 31 trapped, 2013-2023: 12 trapped, 2 retrapped

Singles on three April dates included one singing at the Lighthouse on the 21st and one chased by Meadow Pipits on the 29th; this unnecessary display of awareness, which often befalls Collared Doves visiting Skokholm, has in the past even allowed a Jackdaw to locate a Meadow Pipit nest and take an egg. There were May sightings on 11 dates, all of singles bar two on the 5th, 10th and 30th and three on the 11th and 31st; a male was singing on five dates, but there was again no indication of nest building or prospecting. Similarly sightings on ten June dates were of singles bar the two present on the 1st and 12th, whilst a male sang on three dates and one was repeatedly struck by a Meadow Pipit on the 10th (photograph below). A mobile bird on the 13th was the only July record and the last of the year. A 2024 bird-days total of 34 was two down on that of last year, but up on eight of the last 11 years and a 2013-2023 mean of 26.9 (there was a high during this period of 40 in 2018, a low of 16 in 2021); there were 16 annual totals of more than 60 between 1970 and 2003, eight annual totals of more than 80 between 1970 and 1991 and highs of 108 in 1977, 92 in 1978 and 156 in 1985.

Daycounts peaked at eight in 1970, 1979, 1982 and 2018, nine in 1977, 1983 and 2003, ten in 1991 and 13 in 1974, although the 2013-2023 mean high is only 3.3.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* **Rhegen y Dŵr**
Uncommon Winter Visitor and Irregular Rare Breeder confirmed in 1929, 1931, 2012, 2021 & 2023
9 trapped
1936-1976: 19 trapped, 2013-2023: 36 trapped, 8 retrapped

Although one called from near Medicine Rock on the 11th, 22nd and 30th March, there were no April records for a second consecutive year and for just the second of the last 12 years. Singles at the Well on eight dates between the 11th and 21st May included one on a camera trap on the latter date, whilst a second was probably present on the 13th. There were June singles at the Well on the 6th and 10th, a probable small chick dashed along the Well Wall on the 24th and a more vocal adult was there on the 26th and 28th; a trail camera filmed an adult ringed on the left leg on the latter date. One was singing at the Well early on 7th July, with chicks confirmed there on the same date, however the only other encounters during the month were with singles on four dates; this becomes only the sixth year with a confirmed breeding attempt (a number which has increased in recent years, perhaps in part thanks to the use of trail cameras). It was unclear if a juvenile trapped in the Well Heligoland on 1st August had hatched on Skokholm. One was near Orchid Bog on the same date and there was one at the Well on the 10th, these followed by encounters on all but two August dates from the 13th, including regular sightings at Orchid Bog and highs of three on the 21st and four on the 22nd and 31st. The camera trap revealed an adult with a very small chick on 18th August, this more likely the result of a second brood rather than a second pair.

Birds became more vocal in September, with daily encounters and highs of 11 on the 21st, ten on the 26th and nine on the 28th; three adults and four juveniles were ringed during the month, with a juvenile taken from the Well Heligoland on the 19th and two taken from the same trap on the 20th all still growing their primaries and most probably hatched on Skokholm. As has been the case in each of the last 12 years, numbers peaked in October, with daily sightings and highs of 12 on the 14th, nine on the 16th and ten on the 22nd which took the bird-days total to 184; despite a breeding presence and at least three fledged young, the October total was down on that logged in five of the last 11 years, albeit up on a 2013-2023 mean of 151.6 (there were all-time highs of 222 in 2014, 281 in 2015 and 195 in 2018). There were November sightings on all but four dates, with highs of eight

on the 13th and 27th and of seven on the 18th and 26th; although in part due to a staff presence throughout the month, a bird-days total of 97 was only down on the 112 of 2014, the 123 of 2015 and the 113 of 2021. Eight bird-days in the first three days of December included four on the 1st.

Corncrake *Crex crex* **Rhegen yr Ŷd**
Rare Migrant and Former Rare Breeder previously a Scarce or Uncommon Migrant
1940-1971: 12 trapped

One on 24th October, flushed from East Bog to Ann's Knoll and then again to Gull Field, becomes the second 21st century and latest Skokholm record (RDB, GE); there have been only three other October bird-days. Unsurprisingly this was once a Skokholm breeding species, with the last confirmed breeding said to have occurred in 1930, but with singing males recorded regularly for two decades thereafter and bird-day totals of 18 logged between 2nd May and 3rd June 1949 (when one sang daily from nettles near the Wheelhouse between 24th May and 3rd June) and 68 between 29th April and 28th July 1951 (one with a damaged wing lingered and one was 'calling daily from the Bog in June'). Barring 1962, there were sightings in every post-War year to 1967 totalling 148 bird-days, with no more than seven a year after 1951 and with one on 14th March in 1948, 19 in April, 78 in May, 32 in June, six in July, two in August and ten in September. Two on 13th May 1967 was the last record of multiple birds. Post-1967 records were assessed for 'The Birds of Wales' (Pritchard *et al*., 2021), although the Skokholm total of accepted records was wrongly given as five on the map accompanying the Corncrake section; there were approximately 16 records over ten years between 1967 and 2000, with singles on 8th October 1968, 4th May 1969, on 17th April, the 14th and 16th May and the 15th and 20th September 1970, on 30th April, 13th May, 19th September and the 5th and 14th October 1971, on 22nd April 1974, 27th September 1975, 30th September 1983, the 24th and 25th September 1984, the 2nd and 14th September 1987 and on 26th May and between the 14th and 17th September 1999. A juvenile on 19th September 2022, skulking around the spring which feeds Orchid Bog, was the first 21st century record.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* **Iâr Ddŵr**
Scarce Breeder did not breed in 1937, 1939 to 1953, 1955 to 1966, 1974 and 1976 to 1995
4 trapped, 1 retrapped
1936-1970: 10 trapped, 2013-2023: 31 trapped, 10 retrapped

Sightings on 15 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th peaked at three on the 10th and tallied 19 bird-days, the total matching that of last year and only down on March highs of 31 in 2002, 23 in 2003 and 20 in 2018; early spring is typically quiet on Skokholm, a paucity of records which may reflect an absence of birds or just skulking non-breeding behaviour (the 2013-2023 March bird-days mean is only 9.8). Daily April sightings included an unusual record of one which lingered around the Wheelhouse Pond throughout the month and highs of six on four dates which took the bird-days total to 102, this a new high; the three highest April bird-day totals have occurred in the last three years. The Wheelhouse bird was last seen on 10th May and one was calling from the unusual location of Winter Pond on the night of the 20th, whilst at least three chicks were at Orchid Bog from the 25th and adults were feeding young to the south of North Pond Hide on the same date; the first 2024 chicks were eight days earlier than the first of last year, but on the same date as the 2013-2023 first chick mean. A pair at South Pond had fledged two by 22nd June, although there was no indication of a second brood at this site. No more than two first brood chicks were seen at North Pond, where Palmate Newts were regularly recorded as food items; both had fledged by 6th July. Up to three second brood chicks were seen regularly at North Pond during July, all three of which had fledged by 10th August. Two of the three first brood chicks seen at Orchid Bog went on to fledge, as did three second brood youngsters. Although there were regular records from the Well, chicks were not encountered until 7th July, with up to four then recorded until 25th July; it was unclear if any of these went on to fledge, with a juvenile at this site on 21st September potentially arriving from elsewhere.

A fifth pair were regularly heard between Gull Field, the Pig Sty and the Bog, although these proved very difficult to observe; a juvenile at East Bog on 22nd August was probably from this area, whilst one trapped in the Cottage Heligoland on 2nd September could have been this bird or from the Well.

Five pairs thus fledged a minimum of 13 young, this equating to a productivity figure of 2.60 fledglings per pair. Although down on the all-time record of six present in 2022, five breeding pairs matched that recorded in 2021 and 2023 as the second highest tally to date (the 2013-2023 mean is 3.5 pairs). Productivity was down on that recorded in five of the last eight years, but up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.12 ±se 0.30 (there were highs during this period of 3.50 in 2018 and 3.33 in 2020, lows of 1.00 in 2013 and 2014 and 0.67 in 2022). Despite high breeding numbers and above average productivity, sightings on 26 September dates tallied only 57 bird-days; although fractionally up on a 2013-2023 mean of 51.8, the total was well down on all-time highs of 119 in 2001, 112 in 2021 and 99 in 2022. Similarly sightings of up to two birds on ten October dates, which included the Cottage Heligoland youngster retrapped in the Library Net on the 29th, tallied only 13 bird-days; this was the fourth lowest total of the last 12 Octobers and less than half a 2013-2023 mean of 28.3. Up to two birds on 11 dates led to a November bird-days total of 13; although in part due to a staff presence throughout the month, there have only been seven higher November totals, with peaks of 64 in 2001 and 36 last year. There were no encounters in the first three days of December.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* **Pioden y Môr**
Fairly Common Breeder and Common Visitor previously an Uncommon Breeder
4 trapped, 1 retrapped, 11 resighted
1939-1976: 1882 trapped, 2014-2023: 94 trapped (including 79 pulli), 196 resighted, 2 controls

There were only six March dates from the return of staff on the 10th without a three-figure daycount, whilst bird-day highs of 151 on the 14th and 16th, 158 on the 27th and 30th and 161 on the 31st were exceptional; although down on two counts of 300 logged in 1932 and one of 300 in 1933, this year's peak was the highest subsequent March daycount, fractionally up on the 160 of 1951, 155 of 1988 and 2022 and 156 of last year. The largest roosts again formed in the vicinity of the Anticline, with highs of 149 on the 27th, 146 on the 30th and 144 on the 31st; although down on a high of 152 logged on the 10th and 13th March 2022, the peak was otherwise the largest Anticline spring roost this century. Following an April Anticline peak of 124 on the 6th, roosts there dropped to 110 on the 8th, 92 on the 9th, 72 on the 16th and no more than 22 thereafter, however a roost at North Pond increased to highs of 47 on the 5th, 53 on the 7th, 52 on the 11th, 76 on the 15th and 56 on the 30th. A scrape near North Gully contained an egg on 16th April and the majority were on territory by the end of the month; this was the earliest egg of the last 12 years, six days earlier than one in 2019.

A whole Island May census revealed 62 territories, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 55.45 ±sd 8.78 (there were highs during this period of 61 in 2017 and 2022 and 76 in 2021, lows of 40 in 2013 and 51 in 2014). Only five of the eight colour ringed adults breeding in 2023 were breeding this year, with two going missing and one found dead on 2nd May; a 2023-2024 return rate of 62.5% was the poorest of the last eight years, down on a 2017-2023 mean of 93.0%. Further dead adults on 15th April and 26th June took the total to three, this the same as in 2022 but one fewer than last year. North Pond roost counts during May reached 47 on the 4th, 55 on the 18th and 48 on the 26th (the May high was 35 in 2023, 46 in 2022, 61 in 2021, 47 in 2020, 55 in 2019 and 36 in 2018), whilst the June peaks were of 30 on the 6th and 27th and 31 on the 15th (the June high was 42 in 2023, 29 in 2022, 63 in 2021, 58 in 2020, 61 in 2019 and 58 in 2018). As in the previous 11 seasons, nests were selected for productivity monitoring during late April and early May (22 in total). Of these, ten pairs fledged young, these all singletons bar the two produced by a pair near Calf Bay. A productivity estimate of 0.50 fledglings per monitored pair was the third poorest value of the last 12 years, only up on the 0.36 of 2015 and the 0.47 of 2019 (the 2013-2023 mean is 0.93 ±se 0.12, with highs of 1.55 in 2014, 1.62 in 2018 and 1.24 in 2021). The first juvenile to be seen in flight was at the Gap on

18th June, this four days earlier than both the first of last year and the 2016-2023 first fledgling mean (the earliest during this period were logged on 16th June 2017). July North Pond roost counts reached 91 on the 6th, 68 on the 9th, 63 on the 11th and 70 on the 25th, the peak taking the daycount for the 6th to 123; there have only been higher July daycounts in three years, with 124 in 2012 and 2020 and 149 in 2018 (123 were also counted in 2019 and 2021).

There were sightings on all bar one August date, with highs of 40 on the 2nd, 46 on the 3rd and 37 on the 7th, but no more than 27 from the 21st and single-figure counts on four dates; a bird-days total of 615 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 702.2, albeit up on four August tallies during the period (there was a high of 943 in 2014). Although daily September sightings peaked at 21 on the 26th and 17 on the 28th, 18 daycounts were in single-figures, a bird-days total of 233 being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 349.6 (there were highs of 631 in 1974, 846 in 1989 and 566 in 2015). The only October date without an Oystercatcher was the 30th, with a peak of 32 on the 5th being the highest October daycount since 35 were logged in 1996 (the October daycount high is of 69 in 1988); although down on three of the last 11 years, an October bird-days total of 423 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 336.6. Encounters on all but three November dates tallied 462 bird-days and included highs of 30 on the 24th and 25th and 40 on the 29th; although it should be remembered that staff have not always been present throughout the month, the bird-days total was only down on the 590 of last year, whilst there have only been higher daycounts in three Novembers. December counts of 20 on the 1st and 21 on the 3rd both came from South Haven.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* **Cornchwiglen**
Scarce previously Common and an Uncommon Breeder, but last bred in 2000
1938-1976: 696 trapped

Sightings on 22 dates between the return of staff on 10th March and 5th April were of a lone, regularly displaying male, this joined by a second bird on the 11th and 17th which was believed to be female on the latter date; that this was the same male regularly recorded throughout last year seems likely. However singles on 25th May and between the 25th and 27th June were the only other breeding season records. Last year was the first since 2001 with a regular breeding season presence, indeed there were only 26 bird-days logged in either April, May or June between 2002 and 2022. At least one pair bred almost annually on Skokholm from Lockley's arrival, with numbers peaking at 12 pairs before the War and increasing during the 1950s and 1960s to a high of 27 pairs in 1966, the population then dropping to single-figures during the early 1970s and remaining so until 2000 when

the last two females had nests. This was seemingly always a sink population which suffered heavy egg and chick mortality due to gulls and corvids. There were no July sightings for the first time in four years and for the fourth time in 12 years, no August sightings for the second time in four years. One which arrived to North Plain on 18th September was again quite possibly the same male, this probably responsible for sightings on eight further dates in September, all bar two dates in October, all bar four dates in November and on two of the first three days of December. It was accompanied by a second bird on 30th September, on six dates in October and on the 4th and 7th November, whilst there were November daycounts of three together on the 3rd and 8th, seven together on the 9th, six together on the 10th and four together on the 11th; the peak daycount matched that of last November as the third highest of the last 13 years, only down on counts of nine and 11 in October 2015, however it was tragically down on all-time peaks of 400 in November 1927, 500 in February 1929, 400 in November 1931 and 540 in October 1958 (indeed a post-breeding flock numbering up to 150 birds was regular during September and October up until 1977).

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* **Cwtiad Llwyd**
Scarce records in 59 years since 1929, with a 1927-2023 annual bird-days mean of 2.49

A vocal flyover during rain on the 28th made this just the 11th March with a record. One at North Pond between the 1st and 4th April was joined by a second on the latter date, whilst a single there each day between the 6th and 9th took the bird-days total for the month to nine (this a new high, up on the seven of 2017). One on 4th May was the last of the year, a 2024 bird-days total of 11 matching the third highest to date, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.3 and only down on the 14 of 1993 and the 12 of 2020 (the former including a record daycount of six on 14th September).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* **Cwtiad Aur**
Uncommon or Fairly Common but only 29 bird-days between 2005 and 2012
1976: 1 trapped, 2018: 1 trapped

A flyover on the 14th made this the eighth 21st century March with a record; although cold weather can increase numbers, as in 2018 when the 'Beast from the East' produced March daycounts of up to 130 and a record monthly total of 234 (along with the emaciated corpses of 22 individuals), there have only been March bird-day totals of more than eight in nine years. One on the 8th and 10th made this the eighth April this century with a record, albeit the 48th to date. Numbers increased in May, with a flyover on the 3rd, three on the 9th, two on the 11th and further singles on the 12th and 13th

taking the bird-days total to eight; a daycount of 46 took the May 1967 total to a record 50, however the 2013-2023 May bird-days mean is 4.4 (the nine of 2019 and 11 of 2021 are the only post-1989 totals up on that of this May). Flyovers on 29th July and 24th August were the only autumn records prior to September when sightings on 13 dates included grounded birds on ten dates to the 19th and highs of four on the 7th, 9th and 10th and five on the 8th. Singles on nine dates, along with two over on the 23rd, led to the sixth highest October tally this century, whilst singles on three dates to the 7th made this the 23rd November with a sighting. A total of 43 bird-days during the second half of the year was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 51.5 (there were lows of 21 in 2013 and 2017 and 17 in 2016, highs of 159 in 2021 and 89 last year, with 90 in 1966 and 102 in 1971 the only other tallies up on that of 2023). The peak autumn daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 17.9 and the second lowest of the last 12 years, only up on the three of 2016 (there were all-time highs of 50 on 20th September 1950, 33 on 26th September 1992 and 27 on 18th September 2021).

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* **Cwtiad Torchog**
Uncommon but Scarce between 2004 and 2011
1 trapped
1956-1970: 3 trapped

An all-time March bird-days total of 59 was not added to, whilst it proved the poorest April of the last 11 years; singles on three dates from the 8th and two on the 28th led to a total less than half a 2013-2023 mean of 13.1 (there was an all-time high of 25 last year). May counts were more typical of late, with 38 bird-days logged over 18 dates, but a high of just four at North Pond on the 23rd; although the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 6.8, the total was up on a mean of 30.5 recorded during the same period (there were all-time highs of 52 in 2014 and 50 in 2021). June saw a single on the 2nd, six south over the Neck on the 6th and further singles on each date between the 25th and 29th; the peak daycount was a new June record, up on the four of 1989, whilst a record bird-days total of 12 was five up on the 1951 and 2015 tallies. A spring bird-days total of 55 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 47.1 (there were all-time highs of 59 in 1978, 62 in 2014 and 72 in 2021).

The total number of Ringed Plover bird-days logged each month (2023 to 2021 in parentheses), along with the maximum monthly daycount (2023 to 2021 in parentheses).

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
0	5	38	12	5	7	31	4	0
(0, 1, 0)	(25, 8, 20)	(21, 25, 50)	(3, 3, 2)	(1, 6, 1)	(9, 33, 26)	(15, 12, 9)	(5, 1, 0)	(1, 0, 0)
0	2	4	6	2	2	9	1	0
(0, 1, 0)	(10, 4, 3)	(2, 7, 16)	(2, 3, 1)	(1, 2, 1)	(1, 12, 9)	(4, 6, 2)	(1, 1, 0)	(1, 0, 0)

A flyover on the 19th and two over on both the 28th and 31st led to a total which matched the fifth highest to be recorded in July. Despite the fact that there was water in North Pond for the first half of the month, the only August records were of up to two birds on five dates, a bird-days total of seven matching the lowest of the last 12 years and well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 20.3 (there were all-time highs of 65 in 2016 and 33 in 2022). However numbers increased in September, with sightings on eight dates to the 21st and highs of eight on the 6th and nine on the 8th which took the bird-days total to 31; the only higher September tallies are the 41 of 1989, 39 of 2015 and 74 of 2016. It became the 33rd October with a sighting, with a flyover on the 2nd, one at Winter Pond on the 3rd and further flyovers on the 14th and 20th which were the last of the year. There were thus 47 bird-days in the second half of the year, this very close to a 2013-2023 mean of 48.1 (there were all-time highs of 59 in 1989, 68 in 2015 and 158 in 2016).

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius* **Cwtiad Torchog Lleiaf**
Rare but increasing, with 32 spring bird-days and four autumn birds accounting for 12 bird-days
Earliest 27th March 2012 and 2022 (**17th March 2024**) **Latest** 24th August 2016 (12th August 2024)

One seen in flight at 1210hrs on 17th March went on to settle at North Pond, this the earliest ever Island record; one seen in flight over both South Pond and North Pond on the 20th was also earlier than any seen in previous years. One briefly visited North Pond on 17th April, whilst one seen in flight over the Dip on the morning of the 21st remained at North Pond until the 24th. Two, first found together at Winter Pond on 8th May, were at North Pond on the 9th and 10th and at North Gully on the 11th, although only one returned to North Pond on the afternoon of the 11th and on the 12th. One seen sporadically at North Pond on eight dates between the 15th and 25th April arrived over the Neck with a second bird on the 18th, one arrived at 1610hrs on 30th May, one was to the north of North Pond on 31st May and one briefly appeared in the afternoon of 1st June. An adult was at North Pond on 1st July and flew over the Lighthouse at 0730hrs on the 2nd, whilst an adult at North Pond on the 11th and 12th August was the last of the year and only the fifth to be seen in this month. It is tempting to think that the same two individuals were responsible for the vast majority of 2024 sightings, indeed they were quite possibly the same two seen regularly at Marloes Mere between 9th April and 23rd May (the male was seen displaying on the latter date); it would seem only a matter of time before this species breeds in Pembrokeshire for the first time.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus* **Hutan y Mynydd**
Rare one spring daycount of five birds and 15 previous autumn records of up to two birds
Earliest 7th May 1960 **Latest** 16th October 1981 (7th September 2024)
1964: 1 trapped

One which headed southeast with three Ringed Plover on 6th September was perhaps that which flew north over the Island on two occasions the following day (GE, RDB). This becomes the 15th year and fourth of the last five years with a record, taking the all-time bird-days total to 75; birds lingering between the 2nd and 12th September 1964 and the 11th and 21st September 1974 (both 11 day stays) and between the 1st and 10th September 2022 (a ten day stay) account for 32 of these. Of the 16 autumn records now recorded (including the first in 1964), one on the 25th and 26th in 1970 is the only August sighting, 11 were in September (including birds in each year between 1971 and 1974) and four were in October.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* **Coegylfinir**
Common Visitor has seemingly overwintered on at least 22 occasions
1 control
1959-1974: 30 trapped, 2018: 2 trapped

One seen on 11 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th was probably that last noted on 26th November 2023. The same bird was likely responsible for sightings on eight April dates to the 16th, with eight on the 17th being the first definite spring migrants; the 2013-2023 first spring migrant mean is 12th April, with the earliest during this period logged on 3rd April 2016. There followed daily April sightings and highs of 18 on the 25th and 20 on the 27th which took the bird-days total to 179; although there have been higher daycounts in 20 Aprils, with peaks of 47 in 1989, 64 in 2003 and 45 in both 2016 and 2019, the total matched that of 2016 and was only down on the 249 of 2021. Whimbrel were logged on all but three May dates to the 31st, with highs of 14 on the 1st and 9th and of 18 on the 4th (including a bird colour ringed in Iceland), but no more than eight from the 10th and no more than two from the 22nd; the peak daycount matched the lowest of the last 11 years, this well down on all-time May highs of 41 in 1961, 50 in 1993 and 40 in 1997, whilst the total was down on that of eight of the last 11 Mays. There were no June birds for the first time since 2015. A combined April, May and June bird-days total of 360 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 373.2; highs of 504 in 2019 and 508 in 2021 were only down on the 615 of 1989.

As is invariably the case, autumn proved to be quieter than spring. Daily sightings from the 28th and a high of two on the 30th led to the poorest July total since 2012, this well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 27.4. However August counts were more typical, with sightings on all bar three dates and highs of seven on the 25th, 28th and 31st and eight on the 27th taking the bird-days total to an above average 88 (there were all-time highs of 169 in 1948, 172 in 1989 and 135 in 2015, with a 2013-2023 mean of

71.7). Counts of up to seven on all but one September date led to a bird-days total of 73, this the highest since 1989 and the ninth highest to date. Singles on 11 October dates were perhaps the same bird (with earlier sightings coming from the south coast and Quarry, later sightings from North Pond and North Gully), this certainly that recorded at the latter location on 19 dates in November and on 1st December. An autumn bird-days total of 197 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 164.5, albeit down on all-time highs of 259 in 1974, 326 in 1989 and 242 in 2015.

The total number of Whimbrel bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2021 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	11	179	181	0	5	88	73	11	19
2023	4	155	153	4	16	82	52	24	5
2022	0	128	263	1	33	53	53	1	0
2021	3	249	252	7	39	42	4	0	0
2024	1	20	18	0	2	8	7	1	1
2023	1	15	21	1	3	10	5	4	1
2022	0	27	33	1	8	4	7	1	0
2021	1	40	27	1	6	3	2	0	0

Ringing recovery Left tibia yellow over green, left tarsus (ISR) 594392, right tibia black over orange
Originally ringed as an adult, ÖNUNDARFJÖRÐUR, HOLTSODDI, NORTHWEST ICELAND 17th June 2021
Resighted as an adult, LIGHTHOUSE TRACK, SKOKHOLM 4th May 2024
Finding condition Colour rings read in field
Distance travelled 1898km at 153 degrees (SE)
Days since ringed 1053
We would like to thank Tómas Grétar Gunnarsson and Böðvar Þórisson of the South Iceland Research Centre for their correspondence regarding this bird.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* **Gylfinir**
Common Visitor previously Abundant and usually present throughout the year, but has never bred
1960-1976: 141 trapped, 2016-2022: 5 trapped, 3 controls

The drop in the number of Curlew visiting Skokholm has been alarming, with recent seasons proving the worst on record for this charismatic red-listed wader, a species which between 1994 and 2010 declined in the United Kingdom by 46% and in Wales by over 50% (BTO, 2016). Sightings on 18 March dates from the 10th peaked at five on the 10th and six on the 11th, but were of no more than three thereafter; a March bird-days total of 35 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 63.5, recent highs of 271 in 2013 and 147 in 2018 and all-time March highs of 1158 in 1965 and 1058 in 1967. April saw sightings of up to six on nine dates along with 15 together on the 8th, the latter group matching a 1998 daycount as the highest in April since the 16 of 1997 (higher April daycounts in 24 years peaked at 60 in 1970 and 50 in 1978). Singles on the 8th and 12th led to the lowest May total of the last 12 years, whilst singles on three dates from the 19th and six on the 30th led to the lowest June tally since 2016 (this 71.2% down on a 2013-2023 mean of 31.2). A March to June bird-days total of 81 was the third lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 143.4 and on all-time highs of 1366 in 1958, 1483 in 1959, 1248 in 1965 and 1478 in 1967. Curlews seen during early summer may have already departed their mainland Europe breeding grounds and reached coastal wintering quarters, as exemplified by the failed German breeder observed at North Pond on 16th June 2016.

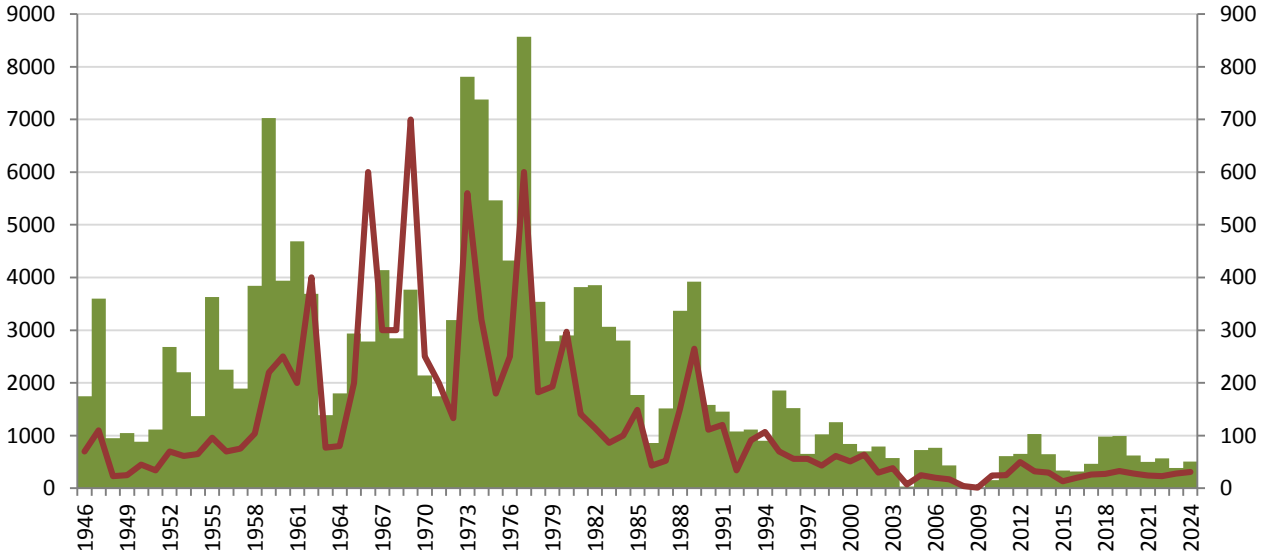
The majority of autumn records were again of birds which returned to Skokholm to roost but which were feeding elsewhere, with early departures no doubt leading to undercounting on occasion. Daycounts on 21 July dates were of six or less bar highs of nine on the 9th and 13th and eight on the 20th, the peak the second lowest of the last 14 Julys and well down on all-time highs of 140 in 1959,

149 in 1985 and 112 in 1988. August saw birds noted on 29 dates and highs of 31 on the 7th, 26 on the 8th and 24 on the 13th which took the bird-days total to 213, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 173.5 and on eight Augusts during this period; although there were perhaps even higher August tallies in the 1960s and 1970s, when Curlew were routinely logged as 'present' rather than being counted, totals of 2175 in 1959, 1521 in 1960 and 1897 in 1978 eclipse those of the 21st century. September counts on all but five days peaked at five on the 17th, a bird-days total of 47 being the third lowest of the last 14 years; the September total has reached four-figures on nine previous occasions, including a peak of 2069 in 1977. Although eight on the 8th was close to a 2013-2023 mean high of 9.0, sightings of up to three on 13 further dates led to the lowest October tally of the last 13 years. Sightings on 25 November dates were of no more than five bar the 15 present on the 26th, this peak the highest since 2014; that 47 years ago a herd of at least 600 were present on one November date is a sad reflection of the Curlew's plight. Up to three on each of the first three days of December included the tragic silhouette of one dangling plastic from its leg on the 1st and 2nd; daycounts during this month peaked at 193 in 1979.

The total number of Curlew bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2021 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	35	35	2	9	67	213	47	24	66
2023	34	12	7	10	73	148	42	38	16
2022	21	32	9	31	81	224	85	58	14
2021	19	26	30	38	118	90	110	28	26
2024	6	15	1	6	9	31	5	8	15
2023	5	2	1	2	19	28	5	3	3
2022	5	4	1	8	13	23	21	23	1
2021	5	3	3	6	24	11	8	3	3

The total number of Curlew bird-days (green) and the maximum daycount (secondary axis) logged in each year since 1946.



Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* **Rhostog Gynffonfrith**
Uncommon Visitor although occasionally Scarce or Fairly Common
1 control
1964-1974: 8 trapped

The first of the year on 22nd April had been colour ringed in the Netherlands in 2021 (see below); although the 2018 'Beast from the East' led to an influx into Pembrokeshire which included seven of

the 17 bird-days ever logged here in March, the first of spring typically arrives in April (the 2013-2023 first bird mean is 17th April). The same bird was probably responsible for daily sightings of a single until the 28th, although the tibia rings were only recorded on four further dates. A single at North Pond on the 6th and a group of six over on the 7th were the only May sightings, the peak only down on May daycounts of up to nine in 1966 and of 13 in 1991. A spring bird-days total of 14 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 16.6; there were highs during this period of 21 in 2016, 31 in 2019 and 73 last year, the 2023 tally only down on the 108 of 1966 when eight or nine were logged on ten dates. The only autumn records were of one off the Lighthouse on 12th September and one with North Plain Curlews on 4th November, the latter one of only three November bird-days following singles in 1967 and 2001. Two autumn bird-days was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 8.5; the highest autumn bird-days total of the 21st century is the 47 of 2016, whilst there have been five higher post-1927 tallies, peaking at 72 in 1950, 76 in 1979 and 257 in 1988 (the latter the product of an unprecedented September which saw 11 double-figure daycounts, including flocks of 43 and 21). Traditionally this was thought of as the commoner of the two godwit species to be seen on Skokholm, however since 2010 this has only proven to be the case in 2016, 2021 and 2023.

Ringing recovery Left tibia (NLA) 1651653, left tarsus green over black, right tarsus red over pale blue over black flag
Originally ringed as an adult male, TERSCHELLING, THE NETHERLANDS 10th May 2021
Previously recovered as an adult, TEXEL, THE NETHERLANDS 30th April 2023
Recovered as an adult, NORTH POND/NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 22nd, 23rd, 26th, 27th & 28th April 2024
Subsequently Recovered as an adult, TEXEL, THE NETHERLANDS 5th May 2024
Finding condition Colour rings read in field
Distance travelled 740km at 256 degrees (WSW)
Days since ringed 1078, 1079, 1082, 1083 and 1084
We would like to say a huge thank you to Job ten Horn of the Royal Dutch Institute for Sea Research for keeping us up to date with the movements of this bird. It was thrilling that he again found it on Texel just a week after it was on Skokholm.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* **Rhostog Gynffonddu**
Scarce or Uncommon Visitor but Fairly Common in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019
1971: 1 trapped, 2017: 1 control

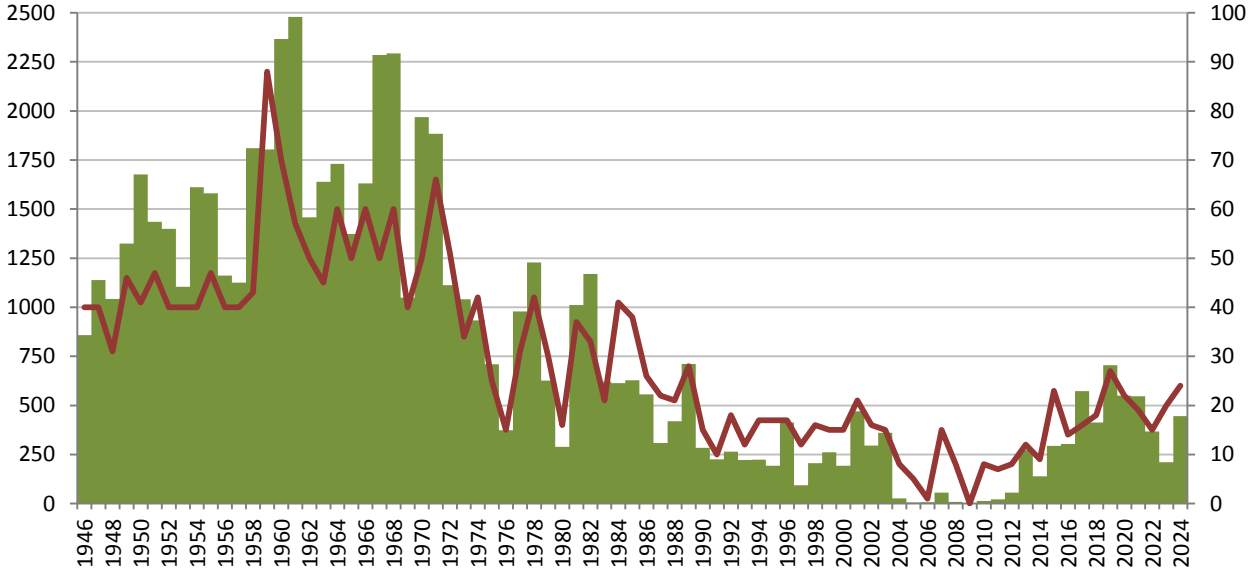
There were no March records for the second time in eight years, with four on 8th April the first of the year. One south over the Dip on 20th April was perhaps that recorded at either South Pond or North

Pond on each day between the 21st and 29th; an April bird-days total of 14 was only down on the 25 of 1957 and the 15 of 2017, 2022 and 2023. It proved the third most productive May to date, with sightings on 13 dates and highs of eight on the 5th and three on three dates to the 9th; although the peak was down on daycounts of up to 15 in 2015, 16 in 2016 and 20 in 2017, a May bird-days total of 27 was only down on the 31 of 2016 and the 35 of 2017. The only June record was of four on the 17th, this taking the all-time June total to 132, 78 of which have occurred since 2012. Brief singles on the 6th, 8th and 17th were the only records in a poor July, the bird-days total down on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.8. Similarly one at North Pond on the 12th was the only August bird-day, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 8.0. Nevertheless an annual bird-days total of 49 was the seventh highest to date, close to a 2013-2023 mean of 46.5; in contrast to the Bar-tailed Godwit, the nine most productive years for this species have occurred since 2012 (including a 2017 bird-days high of 149).

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* **Cwtiad y Traeth**
Common Visitor once Abundant and sometimes only Fairly Common in recent years
1956-1970: 12 trapped

Although Turnstone are no doubt under-recorded, due to their preference for spending the majority of time below cliffs and their sporadic use of visible high tide roosts, off-path coverage was similar to recent years (observations should thus be comparable). There were no March birds for only a third time in 14 years, with one on the Neck on 4th April thus the first of the year. Sightings on seven of the next eight dates peaked at eight on the 6th and six on the 7th, with a further two on the 25th taking the April bird-days total to 31, this the highest since 2001 but well down on 27 three-figure totals logged between 1947 and 1982 which peaked at 417 in 1947, 463 in 1949 and 441 in 1954. For a fifth year running, May proved the most productive month of the spring, with sightings on 12 dates and highs of five on three dates and six on the 30th which took the total to 33; although up on a 2013-2023 bird-days mean of 24.3, there were 15 three-figure May tallies between 1950 and 1974, including highs of 276 in 1965 and 1972 and 334 in 1967. There were no June birds for a seventh time since 2013; Turnstone were logged in 48 previous Junes, including annually between 1958 and 1976 and in 12 years between 1977 and 1999, with bird-day peaks of 109 in 1958 and 79 in 1961.

The total number of Turnstone bird-days (green) and the maximum daycount (secondary axis) logged in each year since 1946.



One at the Lighthouse on the 31st was the only Turnstone seen in July. There were 117 bird-days recorded in August, with sightings on 24 dates primarily coming from the Stack and including highs of 12 on the 18th, 11 on the 20th and 13 on the 24th; although the August bird-days total was 84.0%

up on a 2013-2023 mean of 63.6, it was well down on a mean of 353.2 recorded between 1946 and 1989 (when numbers peaked at 765 in 1960 and 781 in 1971). Daycounts on 24 September dates were all of ten or less bar highs of 24 at the Stack on the 4th, 14 between the Stack and the Devil's Teeth on the 17th and 18th and 12 on the 20th and 27th; the peak daycount was the second highest since 1989, however a bird-days total of 167 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 150.7 and down on four of the last seven Septembers (the 1946-1970 September bird-days mean was 426.0, with a high of 637 in 1950). There were daycounts of up to three on 13 October dates to the 17th, along with South Haven counts of 11 on the 19th, 16 on the 20th and 21st and eight on the 22nd which took the bird-days total for the month to 73; the peak was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 13.0, however the total was down on a mean of 102.6 logged during the same period and well down on all-time October highs of 442 in 1954, 389 in 1967 and 378 in 1968. Counts on eight November dates were of three or less bar the seven present on the 18th and 26th, the high being down on that logged in eight of the last nine years. An autumn total of 381 bird-days over 74 dates was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 354.2 over 64.9 dates and on all but four years during that period (there were highs of 555 in 2017, 676 in 2019 and 536 in 2020); the 2019 autumn total was the highest since 1982 when 871 birds were counted across 72 dates. Given that the majority of monthly totals doubtless consist of counts of the same individuals over multiple dates, the highest daycount made each year is telling; the 2024 daycount high of 24 was 72.7% down on an all-time high of 88 logged on 26th August 1959.

The total number of Turnstone bird-days logged each month (2023 to 2021 in parentheses), along with the maximum monthly daycount (2023 to 2021 in parentheses).

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
0	31	33	0	1	117	167	73	23
(0, 17, 25)	(10, 8, 1)	(46, 26, 41)	(0, 0, 9)	(2, 15, 14)	(19, 20, 109)	(39, 95, 107)	(68, 156, 151)	(26, 29, 85)
0	8	6	0	1	13	24	16	7
(0, 6, 4)	(3, 3, 1)	(20, 15, 19)	(0, 0, 3)	(1, 6, 6)	(3, 7, 15)	(4, 9, 18)	(6, 12, 14)	(5, 8, 11)

Knot *Calidris canutus* **Pibydd yr Aber**
Scarce usually singles, although occasionally more with 67 on 29th September 1958 the maximum 1956-1970: 8 trapped

The only record was of one at Oystercatcher Rock on 24th April, this becoming the sixth year with a sighting in this month. An annual total of one was down on a 2013-2023 bird-days mean of 4.3 and on highs during this period of ten in 2015 and 13 in 2018 (the 85 of 1958, 18 of 1962 and 31 of 1978 are the only totals up on that of 2018). There have now been Knot in 45 of 93 recording years, with encounters in every month bar December and 171 of 309 all-time bird-days coming in September.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* **Pibydd Cambig**
Rare with six spring records of up to two birds and nine autumn records of up to five birds
1936-1976: 2 trapped

A summer plumaged bird heading northeast over Green Heath and North Plain on 1st June was the first since 2020 when an adult lingered at North Pond between the 5th and 9th May (RDB). There have now been 22 individuals accounting for 36 bird-days logged over 15 years, with birds in every month between March and October and bird-day highs of 11 in May, six in August and seven in September.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* **Pibydd y Tywod**
Rare only 45 previous records, with 16 records totalling 22 individuals this century
1948-1968: 2 trapped

One photographed with three Dunlin at North Pond on the 23rd made this the third straight May with a record (RN); although there have been fractionally more bird-days recorded in the second half of the year, May remains the best month in which to encounter this species, now accounting for 29 of an all-time 84 bird-days. There have now been 26 spring records totalling 40 bird-days, including 12 records and 20 bird-days since 2013. One at North Pond on 4th August was the first autumn sighting since 2020 (RL); August remains the most likely month for an encounter in the second half of the year, now with 22 of an all-time 44 autumn bird-days. All but seven sightings have been of singles, with five on 4th September 1979 and 11 on 7th August 1994 being the daycount highs.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* **Pibydd y Mawn**
Common Visitor recorded in all months, but only Fairly Common in some years
3 trapped
1937-1976: 185 trapped, 2014-2019: 18 trapped

There were no March records for the fifth time in 14 years, the all-time March bird-days total remaining at 245. A flyover single on 18th April was one day later than the first of last spring and 24 days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean. Further singles on two dates, four on the 28th and three on the 29th took the April bird-days total to ten, this the lowest of the last 12 years and well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 36.0 (there was a high during this period of 67 in 2021, whilst the all-time highs are of 82 in 1953 and 1955, 115 in 1960 and 111 in 1966). Dunlin were noted on 23 May dates, with the only daycounts of more than six being 11 on the 6th and 19th, ten on the 7th and 19 on the 23rd; the peak May daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 22.9, whilst a bird-days total of 102 was down on a mean of 119.8 logged during the same period (there were all-time May bird-day highs of 193 in 1967, 167 in 2016 and 204 in 2020). Daily encounters with up to three birds to the 7th and two on the 11th took the June bird-days total to 18; the 2013-2023 June bird-days mean is 24.4, with all-time highs of 133 in 2018 and 36 last year. A spring bird-days total of 130 was 28.5% down on the 2013-2023 mean, however the autumn proved poorer still, a bird-days total of 34 being the third lowest of the last 12 years and 69.5% down on the mean for the same period. There were up to two July birds on four dates and August sightings of up to two on seven dates, both

monthly tallies being over 79% down on the post-2013 mean. Up to three on six September dates included one on the 7th which was on the Gann six days later (see below), the total being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 23.6 (there were all-time highs of 68 in 1958, 127 in 1981 and 69 in 2015). Singles on five dates led to a typical October tally (there were highs of 38 in 1960 and 48 in 1974), as did singles on three November dates to the 26th (there were highs of 15 in 1967 and 13 in 2016).

The total number of Dunlin bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2021 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	0	10	102	18	6	10	10	5	3
2023	0	51	69	36	1	4	10	11	11
2022	2	18	97	19	7	5	19	1	0
2021	0	67	129	11	8	15	14	3	2
2024	0	4	19	3	2	2	3	1	1
2023	0	13	17	14	1	2	2	6	1
2022	1	3	24	5	2	1	8	1	0
2021	0	22	25	3	2	8	2	2	1

Ringing recovery NT89522
Originally ringed as a first-winter, NORTH POND MIST NET, SKOKHOLM 7th September 2024
Recovered as a first-winter, GANN ESTUARY, DALE, PEMBROKESHIRE 13th September 2024
Finding condition Intentionally taken by ringer
Distance travelled 9km at 66 degrees (ENE)
Days since ringed 6
Although we have shown that other species of wader regularly commute between Skokholm and the Gann, this is the first Dunlin movement to be recorded since the Bird Observatory was reaccredited.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* **Pibydd Du**
Uncommon Visitor previously Fairly Common, but occasionally Scarce in recent years
1967-1976: 8 trapped

The sole spring record was of one at North Gully on 7th April; there was also a single last April, these the only birds in this month since 2001. 'Purps' were previously much more regular between March and June, with daycount highs of 30 in March 1966, 22 in March 1967 and 32 in March 1968,

sightings in every year between 1947 and 1989 and peak monthly totals of 101 in March 1967, 88 in March 1968 and 92 in April 1974. One with Turnstone at the Devil's Teeth on 11th September was still there the following day, one was at the Stack on the 18th and three were at the Devil's Teeth on the 26th, a bird-days total of six matching that of 2021 as the highest in this month since 2013. The three present on the Little Neck on 11th October were perhaps those last found in September, these the last of the year and making this the ninth 21st century October with a sighting. A 2024 bird-days total of ten was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 13.5 and on seven years during that period (there were highs of 32 in 2014, 20 in 2019 and 28 in 2020). Prior to 1983 three-figure annual totals were the norm, with record monthly tallies of 279 in August 1971, 234 in August 1978 and 229 in August 1979. As noted for Turnstone, it is likely that birds go under-recorded as they inhabit the spray zone at cliff bases, however the decline in records suggests a genuine lack of birds, this a sad reflection of the situation nationally and their red listing as a species of UK conservation concern.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* **Pibydd Tinwyn**
Vagrant no previous records

Given that this is one of the most frequently recorded Nearctic species in Britain, with 720 individuals documented between 1958 and 2023 (White & Kehoe, 2025), it is surprisingly rare in Wales, indeed there had only been 14 records of 15 individuals prior to 2024 (Pritchard *et al*., 2021). Only two of these Welsh records had come from Pembrokeshire, with singles on the Gann Estuary in September 1977 and on the Teifi Estuary in August 1991. The number of British records is rather variable from year to year, for example a total of 24 in 2022 dropped to seven in 2023, however it would appear that the number crossing the Atlantic is genuinely falling; following a peak in British records during the early years of this century, the lowest post-2000 annual total was logged in 2023, indeed this species is again close to requiring a British Birds Rarities Committee description (White & Kehoe, 2025). Despite increasing rarity and a lack of Welsh birds in general, it was surprising that there had not been a Skokholm record, particularly given that eight of the 44 wader species on the Island list had come from the Americas. A juvenile, first seen in flight with Starlings over North Plain

on 2nd November, was thus an exciting, albeit anticipated addition to the Island list (RDB, GE). Having flown over North Pond, east over the Farm, back to North Pond and then south over the Hills, it eventually settled at Winter Pond where it continued to feed the following day. The fourth for Pembrokeshire lingered on the Nevern Estuary between the 14th and 24th November.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* **Cyffylog**
Scarce Winter Visitor not recorded every year, but over 200 corpses found in February 1963
Earliest 15th July 1962 (5th November 2024) **Latest** 23rd April 1956
1956-1963: 3 trapped, 2018-2022: 2 trapped

As is so often the case, there were no spring birds this year; there have been records between 3rd March and 23rd April in only 22 previous years, including four of the last 13. One at Bread Rock on 5th November was the first of the year, this four days later than the 2014-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was at the Well on 23rd October 2018). There followed singles near South Pond on the 12th and at Sugar's Delight on the 13th (with a diurnal and a nocturnal encounter at the latter site presumed to be with the same bird); a November bird-days total of three was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.5, on six years during that period and on all-time highs of ten in 1968 and eight in 1991 and 2018. A winter presence would no doubt increase sightings; there were 93 bird-days in January 1982, including 47 on the 15th which is the highest daycount of live birds.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* **Gïach Cyffredin**
Common Winter Visitor and Passage Migrant breeding suspected in 1927 and 1965
1 trapped
1936-1976: 55 trapped, 2018-2023: 15 trapped, 3 retrapped

Counts on 12 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th included highs of 11 on the 17th and six on the 24th which took the bird-days total to 38; although due in part to a later than average staff return, the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 March mean of 20.3 (there were highs during the period of 38 in 2013 and 72 in 2019), whilst the total was down on a mean of 87.9 logged during the same period (there were all-time highs of 314 in 1971, 331 in 1973 and 313 in 2019). Sightings on 16 April dates to the 27th were all of four or less, a bird-days total of 30 topping a 2013-2023 mean of 26.0; April daycounts peaked at 20 in 1955, 1971 and 1995, whilst the bird-days total reached 105 in 1955, 139 in 1973 and 95 in 1977. Singles on the 5th and 8th took the 21st century May bird-days total to 33; there have been ten two-figure May totals, with a high of 31 in 1967. The last of 36 June bird-days occurred in 1999.

The total number of Snipe bird-days logged each month (2023 to 2021 in parentheses), along with the maximum monthly daycount (2023 to 2021 in parentheses).

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
38	30	2	0	10	24	44	72	105
(30, 44, 72)	(32, 16, 44)	(0, 0, 5)	(0, 0, 0)	(0, 7, 2)	(2, 13, 5)	(34, 50, 33)	(59, 67, 79)	(77, 36, 124)
11	4	1	0	5	6	6	9	17
(4, 6, 15)	(5, 3, 6)	(0, 0, 1)	(0, 0, 0)	(0, 1, 1)	(1, 2, 1)	(10, 7, 4)	(11, 20, 9)	(8, 8, 10)

There were July sightings of one on the 22nd, two on the 27th and 28th and five at North Pond on the 31st; the peak daycount was only down on the ten of 1968 and the seven of 1972, whilst a bird-days total of ten matched that of 2018 and was only down on five Julys (there were highs of 26 in 1955 and 24 in 1972). Sightings on 15 August dates were all of three or less bar the six which flew over the Farm on the 12th; although up on a 2013-2023 mean of 18.4, a bird-days total of 24 was down on 14 previous Augusts including a 21st century high of 42 in 2017 and all-time highs of 86 in 1947 and 1958 and 77 in 1982. Sightings on 20 September dates peaked at six on the 19th and tallied 44 bird-days, both the peak and the total down on respective 2013-2023 means of 8.9 and 50.2 (daycounts peaked at 15 in 1934 and 2018, totals at 145 in 1972, 83 in 2018 and 85 in 2020). There were 72 October bird-days noted over 22 dates, with highs of nine on the 9th and eight on the 25th; the total was well down on all-time highs of 273 in 1973 and 259 in 1975 and on a 2013-2023 mean of 82.2 (this a period which included peaks of 174 in 2018, 113 in 2019 and 131 in 2020). Snipe were encountered on 22 November dates, with highs of 17 on the 4th, 12 on the 12th and 15 on the 14th taking the total to 105; differing staff departure dates mean that November tallies are not directly comparable, however the peak daycount was down on that recorded in three of the last 11 years (November daycounts of up to 100 were logged before the War, with post-War highs of 30 in 1962 and 2010 and 40 in 1991). Singles were noted on each of the first three days of December; the eight highest December daycounts of between 30 and 100 were all logged between 1927 and 1930.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* **Pibydd y Dorlan**
Uncommon more regular in autumn
Earliest 21st March 1948 (17th April 2024) **Latest** 29th October 1975 (20th September 2024)
1938-1976: 22 trapped, 2018: 1 trapped

One at Crab Bay Rocks on 17th April was three days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 47 earlier bird-days, including four in March. There were further singles on 27th April, on the 5th, 6th and 11th May and on seven dates between the 19th and 30th June, with all bar two of these sightings coming from North Pond. This has never proven a common species in the first half of the

year, indeed the 12 bird-days logged this spring nearly doubled a 2013-2023 mean of 6.6 (the 21st century high is of 17 in 2016, the all-time high 27 in both 1950 and 1953). Encounters with up to two birds on four July dates from the 9th included one in the Crab Bay Puffin Plot on the 10th. August singles on the 12th and 13th led to a total 85.4% down on the 2013-2023 mean, however numbers increased in September, with counts on 11 dates to the 20th peaking at three on the 6th and 8th; there have been 51 later bird-days, including 20 in October and nine this century. All of the autumn records came from the coast bar one at North Pond on 11th July and a nocturnal flyover on 7th September. An autumn bird-days total of 24 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 27.5, on highs during this period of 58 in 2013 and 41 in 2022 and on all-time highs of 70 in 1947 and 64 in 1948.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* **Pibydd Gwyrdd**
Scarce not recorded every year, only four singles 1998-2012 and only 17 spring records
Earliest 2nd April 1997 (24th July 2024) **Latest** 21st October 1967 (6th September 2024)

There was no spring sighting for a fifth consecutive year; although spring birds have only been found in 15 previous years, this has included five of the last 14. A vocal flyover at 0340hrs on 24th July was thus the first, this followed by two over together on the 31st; the all-time July bird-days total now stands at 45, 18 of which have been since 2013, whilst there have been 16 earlier bird-days in this month. It became the 36th August with a record, with a flyover on the 1st, two around South Haven on the 8th and one at North Pond with a Wood Sandpiper on the 13th. A flyover late in the afternoon of 6th September was the last of the year, this on the same date as the sole 2023 record and taking the all-time September tally to 31. A total of eight autumn bird-days was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.8, albeit down on all-time highs of 31 in 1997, 13 in 2015, ten in 2017 and 15 in 2022.

Redshank *Tringa totanus* **Pibydd Coesgoch**
Uncommon most regular in July and August
1957-1974: 4 trapped, 2018-2022: 5 controls

There were no March records for only the fourth time in 13 years, two on 3rd April thus being the first of the year; an all-time March bird-days total of 105 includes 81 since 2013 and highs of 35 in 2018 and 30 in 2019. The only other records during the first half of the year were of singles on 12th April, the 3rd and 9th May and on 30th June; a spring bird-days total of six was well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 16.2 and on all-time highs of 14 in 1956, 18 in 2000, 22 in 2014, 52 in 2018 and 34 in 2019 (the ten present on 16th April last year more than doubled the previous spring daycount high).

Singles on four dates from the 9th led to a below average July total and included the first definite juvenile on the 13th. Although there were August records on only two dates, a minimum of 12 on the 11th matched a count on 7th July 1949 as the fourth highest in any month, only down on the 15 of 4th August 1939, 14 of 17th August 2001 and 27 of 24th August last year. Nevertheless a single on the 16th took the August tally to 13, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 15.5 and on five years during that period (there were all-time August highs of 30 in 1966, 34 in 2017 and 32 last year). Three were together on 6th September, one was logged the following day and one calling on the night of the 17th was the last of the year. There have been records in 19 previous Octobers tallying 34 bird-days (15 since 2012), in ten previous Novembers tallying 33 bird-days (25 since 2014) and December sightings in 1927, 2019 and 2020 (totalling four bird-days). An autumn 2024 bird-days total of 22 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 30.1 and on seven years during this period (22 were also logged in 2016 and 2020, whilst there were all-time highs of 53 in 1966, 41 in 2015, 52 in 2017 and 40 in 2023).

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* **Pibydd y Graean**
Scarce not recorded every year and only 12 spring records
Earliest 22nd April 1973 (**18th April 2024**) **Latest** 22nd September 1966 (**4th November 2024**)
1936-1976: 2 trapped

One over Crab Bay, low over Crab Bay Rocks and then south to sea on the 18th was just the second April record for Skokholm and the earliest to date (GE). One seen briefly at North Pond on 13th July soon headed east, this taking the all-time July bird-days total to seven (NM). One at North Pond on the 13th and 14th took the all-time August bird-days tally to 62, this remaining the most reliable month for a Skokholm encounter (the 12 of May and 21 of September are the next highest bird-day tallies). The last of the year was a surprise on 4th November, this seen over the Gap with a Dunlin and then alone on Winter Pond; it was 27 days later than the latest previous Pembrokeshire sighting and 43 days later than the latest previous Skokholm sighting (GE, RDB, photograph below). Including the first two Skokholm birds found in August 1955, there have now been approximately 57 records totalling at least 62 individuals and with birds noted on 101 dates, all logged over 33 years; there have been 15 records totalling 16 individuals and with birds noted on 24 dates since 2014.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* **Pibydd Coeswerdd**
Uncommon but sometimes Scarce and not recorded every year
Earliest 30th March 2019 (12th April 2024) **Latest** 9th November 1958 (3rd October 2024)

One during the afternoon of 12th April was four days earlier than the first of last year; there have been four earlier bird-days, including just one in March. One over at 0600hrs on 21st April and one over during the morning of 10th May were the last in what became the 39th spring with a sighting; a

maximum spring daycount of three in April 1966 took the total for that month to a spring record 13, whilst an all-time spring bird-days tally of 94 now includes 44 in April and 42 in May. The second half of the year saw singles on the 30th and 31st August, on the 2nd, 4th and 6th September and on the 1st and 3rd October, all flyovers bar one briefly grounded at Orchid Bog on the first day of October; there have been nine later bird-days, including just one in November. An autumn bird-days total of seven was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.6 (there was a high during this period of 11 in 2016), whilst an all-time autumn bird-days total of 426 logged over 66 years now includes 279 in August, 107 in September and all-time peak totals of 23 in 1955, 20 in 1964 and 22 in 1983.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* **Gwylan Goesddu**
Very Abundant a single pair attempted to breed in 1959
2018-2020: 5 controls

Although present offshore in all months, Kittiwake were again logged in smaller numbers than might be expected given the presence of 1572 breeding pairs on nearby Skomer. Sightings on 11 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th were of no more than 19, whilst a dead first-winter was in South Haven on the 26th; the 2013-2023 mean March high is 217.0, this well down on a 1980 record of 1500. With the exception of 310 on the 27th (296 of which were in Broad Sound) and 139 the following day, April daycounts were of no more than 32; although the highest since 426 were logged in 2015, the April daycount high was well off a 1981 record of 1000. No Kittiwake were seen in an hour of seawatching on the 29th, however the number of birds feeding close to Skokholm again increased in May, with seven daycounts of 80 or more and highs of 169 on the 15th and 300 on the 25th; although up on a 2013-2023 mean high of 251.1, the May peak was well down on the four-figure counts of the 1980s. June daycounts reached three-figures on ten occasions, with highs of 341 on the 2nd, 286 on the 16th and 300 on the 20th; the peak June daycount was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 287.4, albeit down on those logged in four years during the period. One over the Neck on 29th June was of note, records of Kittiwake over the Island being less than annual. That spring counts were down on 20th century totals is unsurprising; the Skomer population has steadily declined since the early 1990s, dropping by 32% between 2000 and 2015 and by over 16% between 2022 and 2023. Although down on 20th century daycounts of up to 2000, a July high of 932 on the 10th (including 620 off the Lighthouse) was the highest 21st century count in this month; nevertheless, daycounts of up to 119 on 28 further dates led to a July tally down on three of the last seven years.

The total number of Kittiwake bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2023 to 2019 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	69	706	1432	2651	1701	1189	1930	994	1269
2023	65	300	3503	3423	1494	1169	871	669	2532
2022	344	126	1313	1035	2451	3677	6381	1064	4884
2021	298	172	866	939	1217	368	461	2548	2650
2020	920	150	462	619	1656	4989	5455	7978	5530
2019	2152	361	597	2627	2136	1928	786	10414	3715
2024	19	310	300	341	932	243	382	171	175
2023	11	76	587	445	230	135	127	210	410
2022	174	83	214	203	863	681	1381	241	623
2021	81	63	91	254	244	51	258	531	437
2020	422	38	52	121	457	1170	1481	1542	1154
2019	919	65	171	640	262	332	388	3032	860

There were 18 on Crab Bay Rocks on 26th May, this taking the post-2012 May tally of birds ashore to 66 (all of which have been since 2019). Birds were ashore on 23 June dates, this a post-2012 high, with counts of 160 on the Stack on the 14th, 244 on the 16th (all on the Stack bar four on

Oystercatcher Rock) and 198 around the Neck on the 20th; the peak was the highest of this year and a June record, albeit down on highs of 250 and 261 in August 2018, 287 and 492 in August 2020 and 490 in August 2022. Birds were ashore on 13 July dates, with a high of 119 on the 2nd being the first post-2012 three-figure count in this month (birds were on the Stack and Crab Bay Rocks). Although birds were ashore on 13 August dates, counts were low, indeed a high of 55 at the Stack on the 2nd was well down on the daycounts listed above. Sightings on five September dates were all of two or less bar the 176 which took to Wild Goose Point on the 7th, this also a post-2012 high. One at the same location on 22nd September was the last of the year, taking the 2024 birds ashore total to 2007 over 55 dates; this was a new bird-day high, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 532.3 and previous highs of 1388 over 20 dates in 2020 and 1423 over 29 dates last year. There were two French ringed birds amongst the Wild Goose Point flock on 7th September (below photographs), the details of which are unlikely to be available soon due to the death of one of the project's organisers (see the 2018 and 2020 Seabird Reports for details of five French ringed birds). Correspondence regarding this sad loss highlighted that some French colonies are struggling, with Ravens devastating some areas and leading to the early departure of birds (which may explain the recent rise in numbers loafing here).


Seawatching effort increases in August and September as autumn passage attracts regular and prolonged observations, the dip in numbers usually logged at this time of year no doubt reflecting a genuine absence (which coincides approximately with the period of central primary moult). This August saw daycount highs of 128 on the 3rd and 243 on the 23rd, both the peak and a bird-days total of 1189 down on respective 2013-2023 means of 310.0 and 1776.4. Although September daycount highs of 304 on the 11th, 382 on the 16th and 204 on the 20th were well down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 537.5, a bird-days total of 1930 was close to a mean of 2082.8 logged during the same period (there were daycount highs of 1049 in 2017, 1481 in 2020 and 1381 in 2022, all well down on an all-time high of 5000 logged in 1978). The larger Broad Sound flocks which have formed in recent Octobers were again generally absent, with highs of 157 on the 12th and 171 on the 17th taking the bird-days total to 994, this 66.7% down on a 2013-2023 October mean of 2982.5 (there was a recent high of 10,414 in 2019). There was little change in November, with five three-figure daycounts including a high of 175 on the 24th (the 2013-2023 mean high is 1035.6, with peaks of 2820 in 2015 and 2548 in 2016, whilst the all-time high is the 8000 of 1968). A daycount of 312 on 1st December was the highest since September and hinted that birds were returning to Skokholm waters.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini* **Gwylan Sabine**
Rare records in ten previous years, totalling 25 bird-days

A juvenile which lingered off the Lighthouse for five minutes from 0805hrs on 19th September was the first since 2020 (RDB, GE). What was potentially the same individual was reported on BirdGuides on the 24th, this seen from the Irish ferry as it flew south 'near Skokholm'; the latter will not be

included in the Skokholm totals. Given the potential for birds to linger around productive feeding grounds, it is unclear quite how many individuals have been seen from the Island, however there have now been 26 bird-days attributable to approximately 22 individuals, with an adult on 30th August 2020, 15 bird-days in September, nine bird-days in October and one on 1st November 1980.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* **Gwylan Benddu**
Very Abundant during autumn and winter. Two pairs defended North Pond territories in 1968

Given the size of the Broad Sound flocks which gather each autumn and winter, it is surprising that there are so few spring records, this probably suggesting that Black-headed Gulls have already dispersed towards their breeding grounds by the time that staff return to Skokholm. An adult which briefly landed on Home Meadow during the afternoon of 6th April was the first of the year; although not unprecedented, this relatively unusual act raised Bird Flu concerns, particularly so given the infected adult found dead last May, however it was not seen again. Three adults over the Farm on the 12th led to another typical April tally. Four flew north on 7th May, a first-summer rested at North Pond on the 16th, two adults were together over the Island on both the 23rd and 24th and a lone adult circled on the morning of the 27th; a bird-days total of ten was down on that logged in 12 previous Mays, including highs of 23 in 1967, 30 in 1970 and 22 in 1971. One off South Haven on the 6th was the only June record; annual June sightings between 2013 and 2023 averaged 6.6 bird-days, whilst the all-time highs are the 26 of 1966 and the 28 of 1969.

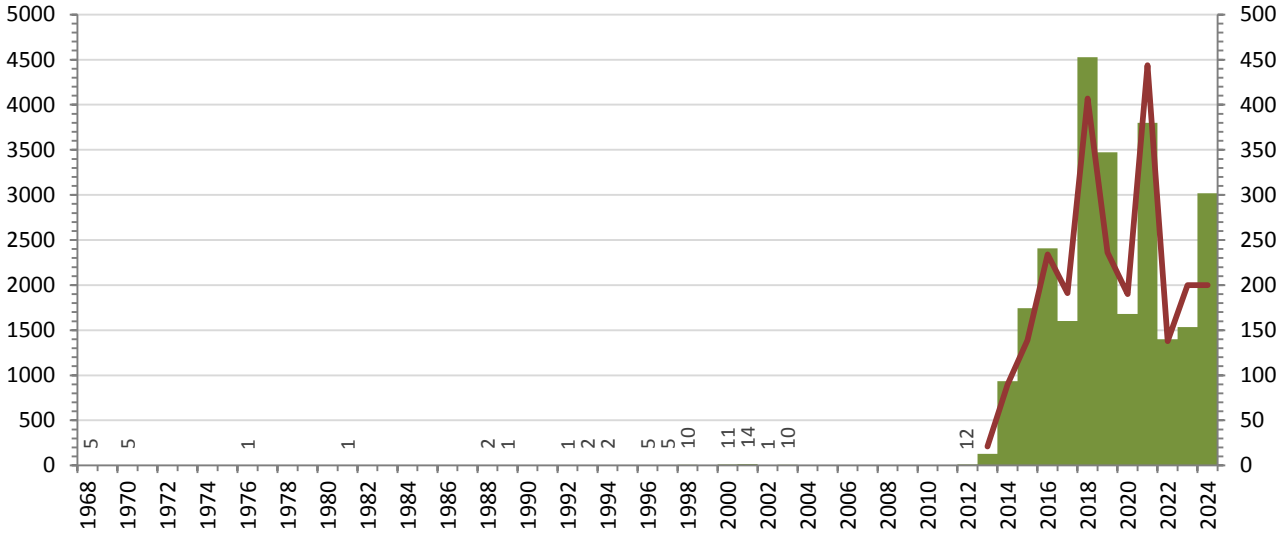
A juvenile at North Pond during the afternoon of 8th July was one day earlier than the 2013-2023 first juvenile mean (the earliest during this period arrived on 22nd June 2018, whilst the latest on 18th August 2023 perhaps reflected poor productivity due to HPAI). Sightings of up to nine birds on seven further July dates included counts of up to five juveniles and one on the Stack on the 18th; although well down on an all-time high of 102 in 2018, a July bird-days total of 27 was the third highest this century. However August proved disappointing, with eight on the 31st being the only one of seven daycounts to top two; an August total of 16 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 146.9 and all-time highs of 224 in 2019, 124 in 2020 and 1108 in 2022. That there were sightings on all but four September dates totalling 2110 bird-days was thus a surprise, the total eclipsing a 2013-2023 mean of 193.4 and a previous all-time high of 1225 in 2022 (there were no September birds at all last year)! September daycount highs of 254 on the 5th, 340 on the 16th and 214 on the 18th were all only down on the 415 of 1st September 2022, whilst up to 11 loafed on coastal rocks each day between the 15th and 18th. Sightings on 20 October dates were all in single-figures until the 23rd, after which highs of 94 on the 29th and 98 on the 31st took the total to 324, this massively down on a 2013-2023 mean of 2858.2 (the largest daycount during this period was the 1735 of 2017, the highest total the 10,147 of 2018, whilst earlier daycounts peaked at 2500 in 1992). Differing staff departure dates mean that November bird-day totals are not directly comparable, however peak 2024 daycounts of 352 on the 16th, 416 on the 27th, 371 on the 28th and 350 on the 30th were disappointing; the 2013-2023 peak November daycount mean is 897.4, with highs of 2400 in 2017 and 1466 in 2018. The only daycount of more than 12 during the first three days of December was of 263 on the 1st.

Mediterranean Gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus* **Gwylan Môr y Canoldir**
Abundant offshore during the autumn, but Rare prior to 2000 and first logged in 1968

Considering that there had only been a total of 76 bird-days up until the end of 2003, that there were no birds observed at all between 2004 and 2011 inclusive and that there were only four records in 2012, the 130 bird-days recorded over 21 2013 dates was exceptional. However there has followed a remarkable increase, primarily due to a rise in the number feeding in Broad Sound during October and November; the 2014-2023 bird-days mean is 2310.1, with highs of 4528 in 2018 and 3800 in 2021. Despite this huge increase, spring records are still rare, indeed there have only been 11 bird-days in February or March (nine of which were in 2019), whilst two adults off South Haven

on 14th April 2024 were the first in this month. There is yet to be a May sighting. An all-time June bird-days total of 13, all logged between 2014 and 2023, was not added to, however a juvenile in Broad Sound on the 31st made this the seventh July with a record and took the July total to 29.

The total number of Mediterranean Gull bird-days noted in each year since the first five logged in November 1968 (green) and the maximum daycount (secondary axis) in each year since 2013.



Perhaps surprisingly the only August record was of a juvenile off the Lighthouse on the 2nd; sightings in 11 previous Augusts total 192 bird-days, with highs of 11 in 2018 and 153 in 2022. Following four juveniles close in on the 5th, September sightings on a further 13 dates peaked at six on the 6th and nine on the 18th; a bird-days total of 46 was only down on the 145 of 2022, with the 27 of both 2013 and 2017 being the next highest tally. October sightings on 22 dates included highs of 45 on the 19th, 84 on the 21st and 82 on the 23rd (with up to 77 adults or second-winters and seven first-winters); an October bird-days total of 599 was the highest of the last five years, albeit well down on annual four-figure bird-day totals of up to 1961 logged between 2016 and 2019 (when daycounts reached 191 in 2017 and 243 in 2018). Although heavy rain and 59 knot gusts meant that there were no sightings on the 23rd, Mediterranean Gull were logged on every other November date, with 12 three-figure daycounts and highs of 195 on the 17th, 175 on the 20th and 200 on the 26th (all of the latter birds were adults or second-winters, with seven first-winters on the 20th the highest count); a November bird-days total of 2246 was only down on the 2547 of 2018 and the 2394 of 2021, whilst the peak daycount was a little up on a 2014-2023 mean of 194.7, but down on those logged on 14 previous dates (with highs of 361 and 407 in November 2018 and of 355 and 444 in December 2021). The last count of the year on 1st December was of 124 adults or second-winters and one first-winter; given the substantial number of Mediterranean Gulls being recorded in Skokholm waters, it is surprising how few are first-winters, for example the record 1st December 2021 count included no first-winters, whilst the first-winter daycount highs are of 12 in 2016, 33 in 2018 and 17 in 2022.

Common Gull *Larus canus* **Gwylan y Gweunydd**
Uncommon offshore during the late autumn and with only 35 bird-days between April and July

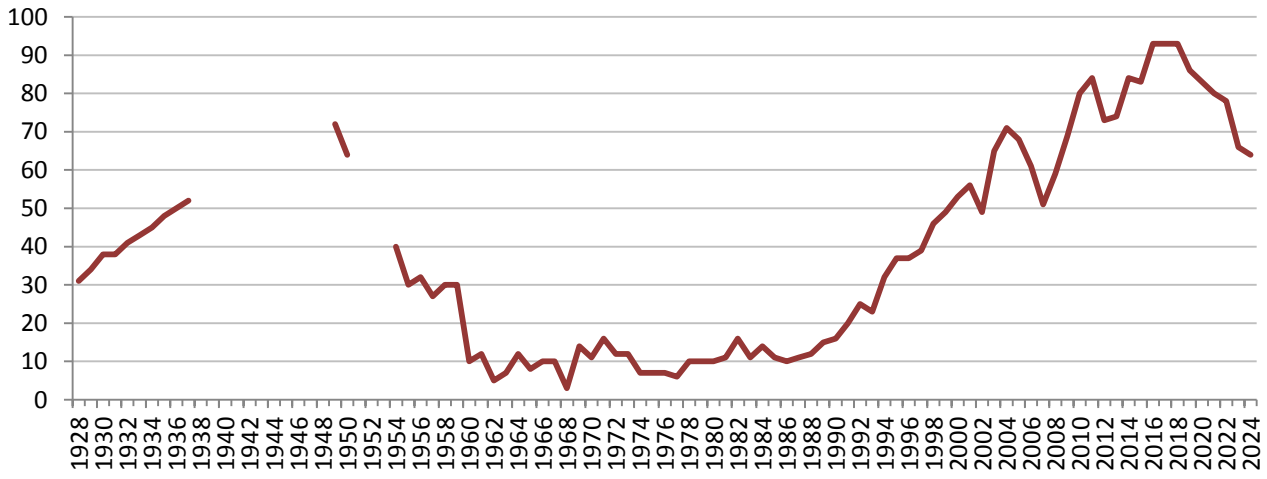
First-winters off the Quarry on the 11th and off the Lighthouse on the 31st took the all-time March bird-days total to 47, 17 of which have been since 2013. More unusually there was a first-winter off the Quarry on 12th April; there have been singles logged in eight previous Aprils, most recently with youngsters in 2013, 2015 and 2023. There were no further sightings until 7th September when two juveniles were off the Quarry, these 17 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was present on 26th August 2022, the latest on 17th October 2015). Lone youngsters on the 10th and 18th took the September bird-days total to four, this only down on highs

of five in 1998, seven in 2002, 33 in 2013 and six in 2022. Sightings on 12 October dates were of no more than three, these including the first adult of the year on the 11th and the scarce sight of a first-winter over the middle of the Island on the 17th; an October bird-days total of 19 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 43.6 (there were all-time highs of 121 in 1966, 130 in 1991 and 182 in 1992). Numbers again increased in November, with birds noted on 23 dates and highs of 28 on the 20th, 23 on the 26th and 39 on the 27th; although down on five 1967 daycounts of between 40 and 120, eight 1968 daycounts of between 50 and 150 and on four counts of between 45 and 50 in 1990, the November peak was otherwise only down on a daycount of 44 in 2018, whilst a bird-days total of 226 was only down on highs of 573 in 1967, 823 in 1968, 297 in 1990 and 247 in 2018. There were 16 on 1st December and two the following day. Although the 38 adults logged on 27th November was the 2024 peak, the highest count of first-winters was of five on 16th November and the highest count of second-winters was of five on 6th November.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* **Gwylan Gefnddu Fwyaf**
Fairly Common Breeder and Common Visitor
26 trapped (including 17 pulli), 2 retrapped, 74 resighted
1936-1976: 231 trapped, 2012-2023: 556 trapped, 15 retrapped, 373 resighted, 10 controls

Although staff were absent for the first nine days of the month, counts during the remainder of March suggested that birds were elsewhere. Peak March roost counts of 24 on the 13th and 25 on the 15th were down on a 2014-2023 peak March roost mean of 38.4 (there was a high of 71 last year, a low of 20 in 2020). A peak March daycount of 76 on the 11th was down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 104.7 and on that logged in all but two of these years (with lower highs in recent years mirroring the declining breeding population). April evening roosts reached 49 on the 8th, 43 on the 11th and 34 on the 29th, the peak down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 63.9, on those logged in all but three years during this period and on highs of 213 in 2013, 63 in 2015 and 58 in 2016 and 2017. April daycounts followed the pattern seen in March, with a peak of 112 on the 23rd being the second lowest April maximum of the last 13 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 138.8. Nests were mapped between the 4th and 20th May, this revealing 64 apparently incubating birds (the only nests not visited to confirm the presence of eggs were adjacent to the Bog Lesser Black-backed Gull colony and on offshore stacks); although the total matched the 20th highest on record, it was the lowest tally since 2008, 3.0% down on the 66 mapped last year, 22.9% down on a 2013-2023 mean of 83.0 ±sd 8.5 and well down on highs of 93 in 2016, 2017 and 2018. This became the sixth year in succession in which the total number of breeding pairs has fallen below the lower limit stipulated in the Skokholm Management Plan. A drop in adult survival is seemingly, at least in part, to blame for this decline in the breeding population (see below).

The number of Great Black-backed Gull breeding pairs 1928-2024 (where data exists). Control of numbers started in 1949 (destruction of both nests and adults) and stopped in 1985.



A colour ringing project, begun ten years ago, is providing an insight into how adult return rates influence the number of breeding pairs. Of 23 adults wearing rings in 2014, 19 (82.6%) returned for the 2015 breeding season; the number of nesting pairs dropped from 84 in 2014 to 83 in 2015. There followed an apparent increase in adult survival, during which time the breeding population increased to, and then stabilised at, 93 pairs; of 21 adults wearing colour rings in 2015, 19 returned in 2016 (90.5%), whilst 32 of 33 returned in 2017 (97.0%) and 32 of 36 returned in 2018 (88.9%). Of 43 adults wearing rings in 2018, only 34 (79.1%) returned in 2019, the breeding population dropping by seven pairs during the same period, whilst 37 of 43 birds (86.1%) returned in 2020 (the nest count dropped by three), 29 of 37 (78.4%) returned in 2021 (there were again three fewer pairs), 25 of 29 (86.2%) returned in 2022 (there were two fewer pairs) and 28 of 33 (84.9%) returned last year (there were 12 fewer pairs). This year saw 28 of 34 adults return (82.4%), whilst there were two fewer breeding pairs; this suggests that approximately 23 established adults did not return to breed in 2024 and that 19 new birds recruited in their place. Although what was apparently the largest drop in adult survival (logged in 2021) did not correspond with the largest drop in breeding numbers (the 15.4% decline recorded last year), it is interesting to note that the population has only increased or remained stable with adult survival of 88.9% or better. One potential issue is that the ringing of adults on the nest could deter them from returning (thus making survival appear lower than it is in reality), however if we exclude the data collected in the year after ringing (when any disturbance should take effect), the return rates remain at a similar 89.5% in 2016, 100% in 2017, 90.6% in 2018, 74.2% in 2019, 81.8% in 2020, 78.4% in 2021, 86.2% in 2022, 82.1% in 2023 and 82.8% this year; it thus seems likely that disturbance during ringing is not responsible for a decline in return rates.

The 2018 and 2019 return rates were previously reported as being lower than listed above. However a chance close encounter with a metal only ringed bird in 2020 revealed it to be an adult colour ringed in 2014 (which lost its colour mark between the 2017 and 2018 seasons). A close inspection of birds occupying territories from which colour ringed individuals had previously gone missing revealed a further darvic loss, this from another 2014 ringed adult (which had lost its ring between the 2018 and 2019 breeding seasons). Additionally W:142, ringed as an adult in 2016, lost its colour ring between the 5th and 6th June 2020; the dropped ring was found in the Puffin study plot, allowing the loss to be attributed to snapping rather than glue failure. Although the rate of ring loss is seemingly low, it will probably increase as the rings age; a careful check for metal rings is thus important, although reading the inscribed digits demands good views and significant patience. In an effort to better understand ring loss, an additional red ring was fitted above the metal ring on each

bird ringed from 2022 onwards; it is hoped that this ring will outlast the taller numbered darvic and thus draw attention to any birds with missing rings.

It is not clear what may have caused such seemingly high adult mortality since 2018, however interactions with the fishing industry, poisoning and the H5N1 strain of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) have previously been raised as areas for concern (although the only bird to test positive for the latter was an adult found along the South Coast Cliffs on 9th July 2023). Major leg injuries (including missing feet and snapped bones) and punctured torsos have occurred, wounds seemingly too severe to have been caused by anything other than anthropogenic means. Aggressive encounters with other gulls and extreme weather events have previously resulted in broken wings and apparent internal injuries, whilst it seems likely that undamaged corpses are the result of toxins (including those produced by *Clostridium botulinum*) or starvation (suggested as a probable cause of death following the necropsy of an adult found near North Pond on 30th May 2023). A full record of the injuries recorded in previous years can be found in the Skokholm Seabird Reports. The only injured Great Black-backed Gull encountered this year was a juvenile with a broken wing first seen above the Anticline on 20th October and which had walked to Home Meadow by 6th November; following an attack by a Raven on 20th November, it eventually died between the 25th and 26th. This species was again regularly observed behind fishing vessels, although as in 2023, flocks were smaller than of late; rod and line fishers brought a peak count of 14 to the 'Celtic Wildcat' on 19th April. An important step in understanding the Skokholm population will be to discover if such anthropogenic food sources are regularly exploited; additional food will increase survival, particularly during the winter or periods of low seabird and Rabbit numbers, however foraging around boats or mainland food sources also has the potential to seriously impact health.

Checks of any accessible and seemingly complete nests from 5th April failed to find any eggs until the 17th when a search of the area to the southwest of North Pond located a nest with three eggs; a further 20 nests were found to be empty and no other sitting birds were seen elsewhere. The first lone egg of 2023 was found on the 14th, whilst the 2013-2023 first egg mean is 15th April (with the earliest found on the 10th in 2014 (a single egg) and 2018 (a clutch of three) and the latest on the 25th in 2013). The first two chicks to be seen were at the same site to the southwest of North Pond

on 15th May, these two days later than the first of last year (but otherwise matching the first of 2021 as the earliest of the last seven years). Of 38 monitored nests, 16 pairs failed, eight pairs fledged a singleton, 11 pairs fledged two and three pairs fledged three. There were thus 39 young fledged, resulting in a productivity figure of 1.03 fledglings per monitored pair; productivity was the poorest since the 0.93 of 2014, 1.9% down on that of 2023, 26.4% down on a 2013-2023 mean of 1.40 (±se 0.07) and 5.5% down on the 1989-2004 mean of 1.09. This was the second consecutive year with below average productivity, this despite the fact that the loss of large chicks observed in 2023 was not repeated this year.

Productivity estimates 2002-2024 (average number of fledglings per monitored pair).

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
1.09	0.91	-	0.76	1.07	1.02	1.02	-	0.71	0.89	-	1.80
2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	
0.93	1.66	1.38	1.54	1.40	1.43	1.40	1.51	1.30	1.05	1.03	

The Great Black-backed Gulls are spectacular apex predators and an exciting component of the Skokholm seabird assemblage, however it is important that we monitor their impact on the Manx Shearwater population. Dead shearwaters were counted for an 11th consecutive year, the vast majority of which had been eaten by Great Black-backed Gulls (see the Manx Shearwater section for further details); a total of 2689 eaten corpses, comprising 2060 adults and 629 youngsters, were marked this year. The number of adults marked was the third lowest of the last 11 years, down on a record 3008 logged in 2020 and 10.2% down on a 2014-2023 mean of 2295.2 ±sd 452.7. The number of eaten youngsters was the lowest to date, 41.4% down on a 2014-2023 mean of 1073.3 ±sd 238.9 (a high of 1398 was recorded in 2016 and a previous low of 728 in 2022). The total number of marked corpses was the third lowest to date, 20.2% down on a 2014-2023 mean of 3368.5 ±sd 586.0. There are many factors influencing the number of corpses found; observer effort has been rather consistent, but possible or certain differences between years have included the number of Great Black-backed Gulls present (which may include differences in the number of shearwater specialists (Westerberg *et al*., 2018)), the number of shearwaters available (including differences in the number of prospecting individuals likely to spend longer on the surface), the frequency of optimal hunting conditions (governed primarily by the moon cycle and weather), the size of the

Rabbit population (which may provide an alternative food source) and the prevalence of puffinosis (which may make young birds easier to catch). Although the number of dead birds currently being found represents a relatively small proportion of the Skokholm shearwater population, there is clearly a benefit to understanding these relationships in greater detail. Ad hoc observations again suggested that shearwaters were regularly being dug out from their burrows this year (as opposed to being taken from the entrance or from above ground), although only one of 167 study burrows was seemingly accessed in this way (five of 166 study burrows were accessed via an excavated hole in 2023); this form of hunting has the potential to impact more than just the eaten individual, as it reduces the suitability of nest sites and the stability of the colony.

The percentage of Great Black-backed Gulls, colour ringed as near-fledglings, known to be alive in each subsequent year. The mean is that for the period prior to 2023.

Ringed in	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Mean
% not seen again	25.58	44.23	53.12	63.89	39.47	18.18	46.15	51.43	70.00	64.29	**45.78**
% seen again	74.42	55.77	46.88	36.11	60.53	81.82	53.85	48.57	30.00	35.71	**54.22**
% alive 1+ year	48.84	38.46	31.25	27.78	42.11	43.18	46.15	28.57	15.00	21.43	**35.70**
% alive 2+ years	37.21	32.69	18.75	22.22	42.11	36.36	41.03	22.86	5.00		**28.69**
% alive 3+ years	32.56	28.85	18.75	22.22	39.47	34.09	35.90	8.57			**27.55**
% alive 4+ years	30.23	26.92	15.63	19.44	31.58	34.09	15.38				**24.75**
% alive 5+ years	18.60	21.15	15.63	16.67	23.68	25.00					**20.12**
% alive 6+ years	16.28	15.38	15.63	8.33	13.16						**13.76**
% alive 7+ years	13.95	15.38	12.50	2.78							**11.15**
% alive 8+ years	11.63	11.54	12.50								**11.89**
% alive 9+ years	6.98	7.69									**7.33**
% alive 10+ years	6.98										**6.98**
% found dead	9.30	3.85	9.38	2.78	7.89	6.82	2.56	5.71	5.00	0.00	**5.92**

The colour ringing project initiated in 2014 is also providing information on juvenile survival and recruitment. Of 43 fledglings ringed in 2014, 32 (74.4%) have been resighted subsequently, including four which have been found dead. At least 21 birds (48.8%) definitely survived their first full year, 16 (37.2%) survived two years, 14 (32.6%) survived three years, 13 (30.2%) survived four years, eight (18.6%) survived five years, seven (16.3%) survived six years, six (14.0%) survived seven years, five (11.6%) survived eight years and three survived both nine and ten years (7.0%). The birds ringed as fledglings in subsequent years have provided similar results (see table above). Although these figures do not give an exact measure of juvenile survival, the birds ringed longer ago (of which more have

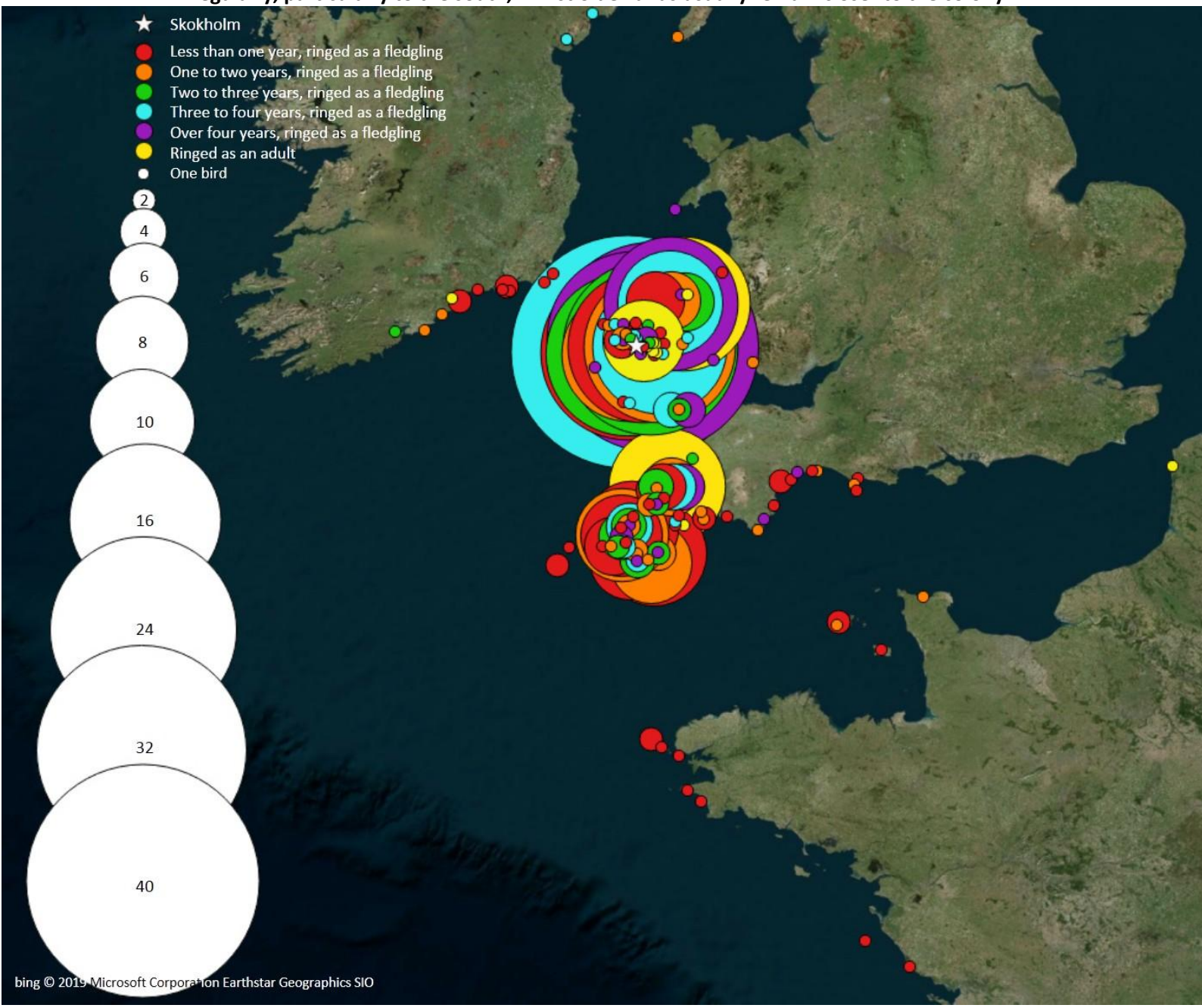
returned to Skokholm and for which there has been longer for them to be encountered on the mainland), suggest that at least 25% of fledglings are surviving to four years of age. Two ringed as fledglings in 2015 bred on Skokholm for a third straight year, whilst one ringed as a fledgling in 2016 bred for a second year and four ringed as fledglings bred for the first time (singles ringed in 2014 and 2015 and two ringed in 2016). Only time will tell whether this study provides a sound estimate of recruitment to the breeding population, something which may well be dependent on how many establish territories on Skokholm or Skomer (where they should be seen) as opposed to other less studied breeding sites. Of 75 youngsters which have so far returned to Skokholm at some point, 14 were first back as first-summers, ten as second-summers, 27 as third-summers, 16 as fourth-summers, five as fifth-summers and three as sixth-summers; it would appear that birds are most likely to first return in their third summer, with 8.46% of all youngsters ringed between 2014 and 2021 having first returned to the Island at this age (10.97% returned at this age, this including birds first back in earlier years).

Although resightings away from Skokholm will be somewhat biased by a preponderance of birders at the main roost sites in Cornwall, it seems likely that the typical southerly movements observed in young Great Black-backed Gulls reflect their genuine post-fledging distribution (see map below). Birds gravitate back towards Pembrokeshire as they get closer to breeding age (see both the table and map below). The ages given in the following table are known for birds ringed as near-fledglings, whereas 'adult' denotes a bird ringed at a minimum of four years which is thus of unknown age. All of these records were received since a similar table was published in the 2023 Seabird Report.

Darvic	Ring	Location	County/COUNTRY	Age	Date
W:004	MA37971	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	20/03/24, 22/06/24
W:064	HT94925	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Tenth-summer	04/04/24, 20/05/24
W:067	HT94927	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Tenth-summer	14/04/24
W:067	HT94927	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Eleventh-winter	16/12/24
W:077	HT94934	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Tenth-summer	14/05/24 (breeding)
W:077	HT94934	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Eleventh-winter	11/09/24
W:101	HT94964	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Ninth-summer	08/07/24
W:119	HT94979	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Ninth-summer	14/07/24 (breeding)
W:121	HT94981	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Ninth-summer	29/06/24 (breeding)
W:124	HT94955	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Ninth-summer	17/04/24 (breeding)
W:154	MA37811	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-summer	19/06/24 (breeding)
W:154	MA37811	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-summer	31/08/24
W:162	MA37820	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-summer	03/06/24 (breeding)
W:168	MA37826	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-winter	16/01/24
W:168	MA37826	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-summer	26/04/24 (breeding)
W:168	MA37826	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Ninth-winter	14/09/24
W:179	MA37838	Nevern Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-winter	16/01/24
W:179	MA37838	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Eighth-summer	29/04/24 (breeding)
W:222	MA37887	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Seventh-summer	26/06/24
W:246	MA37915	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	05/05/24
W:254	MA37919	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	20/08/24, 26/08/24
W:261	MA37906	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	03/04/24
W:261	MA37906	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	26/08/24
W:267	MA37924	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	18/08/24
W:274	MA37931	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-summer	03/08/24
W:278	MA37935	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-winter	13/01/24
W:296	MA37964	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-winter	29/03/24, 14/09/24
W:298	MA37967	Grassholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	18/08/24

W:303	MA46932	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	18/05/24
W:303	MA46932	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	08/07/24
W:305	MA37980	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	05/05/24
W:307	MA37982	Lowland Point	Cornwall	Fifth-summer	04/08/24

The movements of Skokholm ringed Great Black-backed Gulls 2014-2024. The different colours represent the different ages at which the birds were resighted. 81 resightings of birds ringed as fledglings and seen on Skokholm over four years later and 55 resightings of birds ringed as adults and seen on the Gann Estuary are omitted. Younger birds are seen further from Skokholm more regularly, particularly to the south, whilst older birds usually remain closer to the colony.



Darvic	Ring	Location	County/COUNTRY	Age	Date
W:315	MA37989	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	17/03/24, 31/08/24
W:317	MA37991	Marloes Mere	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	11/05/24
W:320	MA37994	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	15/03/24, 29/08/24

W:320	MA37994	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Sixth-winter	14/09/24
W:322	MA37996	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	26/04/24
W:322	MA37996	Marloes Mere	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	11/05/24
W:325	MA37999	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-summer	03/08/24, 21/08/24
W:332	MA46913	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	16/04/24
W:335	MA46916	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	12/04/24
W:343	MA46924	Newlyn Harbour	Cornwall	Fourth-winter	21/02/24
W:343	MA46924	Southerly Point, The Lizard	Cornwall	Fifth-winter	24/09/24
W:346	MA46927	Skomer Island	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	03/06/24
W:347	MA46928	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	12/03/24
W:347	MA46928	Camel Estuary	Cornwall	Fourth-summer	07/08/24
W:349	MA46930	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	16/04/24
W:349	MA46930	Sidmouth	Devon	Fourth-summer	04/06/24
W:349	MA46930	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	19/08/24
W:353	MA46937	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	16/04/24, 18/08/24
W:353	MA46937	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fifth-winter	07/09/24
W:358	MA46942	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-winter	21/01/24, 24/01/24
W:361	MA46946	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	15/04/24
W:364	MA46948	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	31/08/24
W:365	MA46949	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Fourth-summer	21/03/24
W:370	MA46956	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer	31/08/24
W:376	MA46963	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer	29/04/24
W:379	MA46966	Gothian Sands, Gwithian	Cornwall	Fourth-winter	17/12/24
W:384	MA46971	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer	15/04/24
W:392	MA46981	The Gannel, Newquay	Cornwall	Third-winter	24/01/24
W:392	MA46981	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer	24/05/24
W:392	MA46981	Grassholm	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer	18/08/24
W:392	MA46981	Gothian Sands, Gwithian	Cornwall	Fourth-winter	17/12/24
W:422	MA55414	Skokholm	Pembrokeshire	Second-summer	31/08/24
W:427	MA55420	Teifi River	Pembrokeshire	Adult	17/03/24
W:431	MA55424	Dawlish Warren	Devon	First-summer	11/04/24
W:432	MA55425	Whiting Bay, Waterford	IRELAND	Second-winter	20/09/24
W:433	MA55426	Ballycotton, Cork	IRELAND	First-summer	07/08/24
W:440	MA55433	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	First-winter	02/02/24
W:440	MA55433	Copperhouse Creek	Cornwall	Second-winter	27/10/24
W:453	MA55448	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult	16/12/24
W:463	MA55458	Perelle Beach, Guernsey	CHANNEL ISLANDS	First-winter	26/11/24, 31/12/24

Breeding season roosts again formed regularly in the Bog, with 23 counts of 25 or more between 15th April and 15th June being 15 more than logged during the same period last year. Roost counts reached 44 on 22nd May, 68 on 28th May and 39 on 5th June, the peak being the highest since the 82 of 27th May 2015, up on recent peaks of 56 in 2016 and 54 in 2022 and well up on a high of 35 recorded during the same period last year. The first flying fledgling was above Blacksmith's Landing on 1st July, this three days earlier than the first of last year and two days earlier than the 2014-2023 mean (the earliest during this period were recorded on 29th June 2022, the latest on 11th July 2021). The largest July roosts were of only 34 on the 3rd and 28 on the 4th, whilst more regular August roosts peaked at 45 on the 19th, 55 on the 27th and 54 on the 29th; the peak August roost reached 86 in 2021, 68 in 2022 and 66 last year. September counts mirrored the declining breeding population, with a daycount high of 104 on the 8th being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 185.9 (there were highs of 365 in 2013 and 249 in 2015), whilst roost counts peaked at 68 on the 9th, 92 on the 27th and 53

on the 30th (September roosts peaked at 40 in 2023, 95 in 2022, 48 in 2021, 130 in 2020, 113 in 2019, 135 in 2018, 183 in 2017, 193 in 2016, 179 in 2015, 52 in 2014 and 355 in 2013). Although October daycounts of 98 on the 2nd and 103 on the 19th were down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 132.7 (with peaks of 264 in 2013 and 175 in 2016), a bird-days total of 1143 was up on the last three Octobers and close to a 2013-2023 mean of 1217.2. Similarly November counts did not reflect the much lower breeding numbers seen of late; daycount highs of 50 on the 3rd, 56 on the 5th and 52 on the 25th took the bird-days total to 678, this the highest of the last six years (when staff have been present throughout). Counts during the first three days of December peaked at an all-time high of 67 on the 1st.

The first fledgling to be seen away from Skokholm was still on the Island on 4th October and had reached Perelle Beach, Guernsey by 26th November; the mean 2014-2023 first southwest resighting date is 28th October, with the earliest at Newquay Harbour, Cornwall on 10th August and the latest at Dawlish Warren, Devon on 11th April of the following year. The observer of the Perelle Beach bird highlighted a possible consequence of the additional red ring added for the purpose of monitoring darvic loss (see above), a ring which may inadvertently also increase the number of resightings:
'You may be interested to learn that this bird was very distant to me and it was the small bright colour ring on the left leg that alerted me to the fact that it was ringed at all. It was only then I noticed the coded colour ring on the right leg and decided I would endeavour to get the code. I assume that this is its intended purpose and as a colour ring hunter I can say that it worked a treat!'

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* **Gwylan y Penwaig**
Common Breeder Abundant Breeder in the 1970s
7 trapped (including 5 pulli), 44 resighted
1934-1976: 13,265 trapped, 2013-2023: 183 trapped, 31 retrapped, 137 resighted, 2 controls

March daycounts again fluctuated widely, with 80 or less logged on five dates, including lows of 45 on the 23rd and 33 on the 24th when birds fed and roosted away from Skokholm, but highs of 227 on the 12th, 248 on the 15th and 232 on the 26th when many were back on territory. Although not as large as those recorded in recent years, March roosts again included a good number of young birds, for example a North Pond roost of 30 on the 15th included 24 obvious subadults. April checks of seemingly complete nests failed to find an egg until the 20th when one was in Obione Bay (neighbouring nests were empty or still under construction); this was two days later than both the first lone egg of last year (found in Purple Cove) and the 2013-2023 first egg mean (see table below). Whole Island counts between the 12th and 16th May located 308 active nests, whilst an additional five were present on the east side of the Stack on 7th June; a total of 313 nests was four up on both the 2022 and 2023 totals, 2.4% up on the 2014-2023 mean (305.8 ±sd 9.8), very close to a 1984-2023 mean of 314.7 ±sd 44.3 and the highest tally since 2018. This was the third year in six in which the total has risen above the lower limit set in the Skokholm Management Plan. The number of breeding pairs has apparently stabilised at a level close to that seen in the 1930s (the 1928-1937 mean was 269.7 ±sd 17.5), counts well down on the 1970s peak. At least nine of the breeding birds located this year were apparent third-summers with retained coverts, tertials and tail (see photograph below).

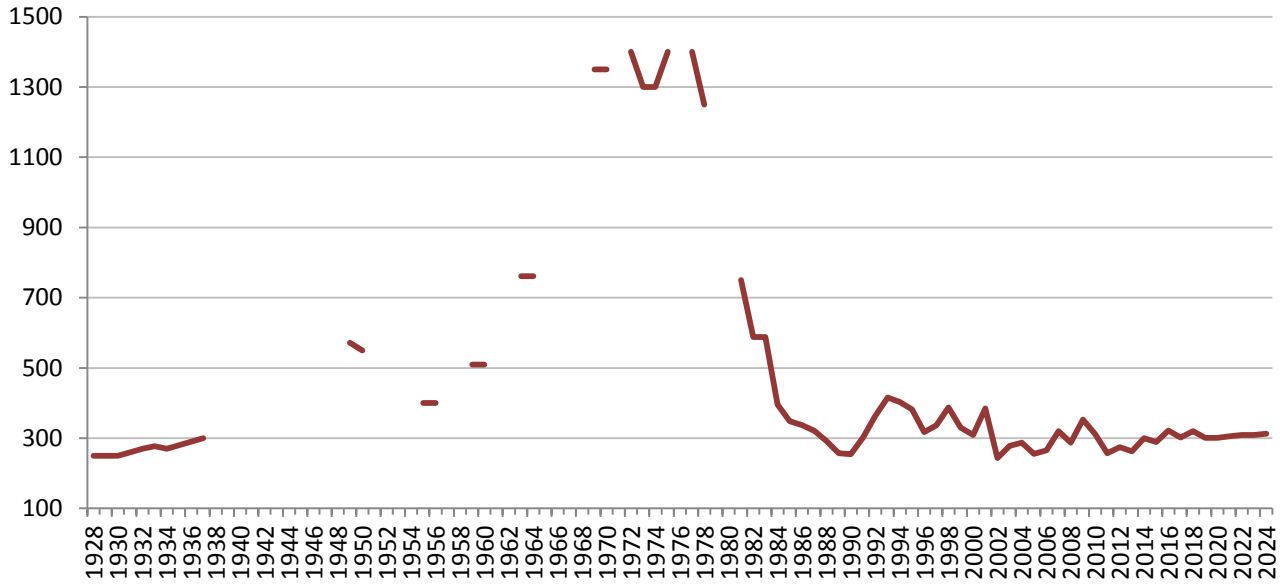
When in April the first egg was located in each year 2013-2024, along with the 2013-2023 mean.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Mean
18th	14th	25th	17th	18th	19th	18th	22nd	15th	17th	18th	20th	**18th April**

The number of breeding pairs and productivity estimates (average number of fledglings per sample pair) 2010-2024.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
312	257	274	263	300	289	322	302	320	301	301	305	309	309	313
0.82	0.67	1.15	0.72	0.70	0.66	0.86	0.70	0.73	0.69	0.33	0.84	0.69	0.78	0.93

The number of breeding pairs 1928-2024 (where data exists). The 1970s peak was attributed to the exploitation of local fish waste and the decline to botulism (Thompson, 2007).



The monitoring of adult survival in Herring Gulls has been undertaken on Skomer for many years, however recent struggles with trapping sufficient adults to produce a reliable estimate led to the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee recommending that a project be established on Skokholm in 2017. There were 13 adults colour ringed in 2017 (all trapped on the nest), 17 in 2018 (11 on the nest and six in the Gull Trap), ten in 2019 (nine on the nest and one in a Spring Trap), four in 2021 (all in the Gull Trap), 36 in 2022 (one on the nest and 35 in the Gull Trap) and one in the Gull Trap last year; a COVID-19 dictated staffing shortage meant that there were no adults trapped in 2020. Birds trapped away from the nest are only included in the adult survival sample in years after they have been found at a nest. Each bird is ringed with a red darvic inscribed W:9** or W:8** in white, the latter two digits identifying the individual. Of the 13 birds marked in 2017, 11 bred in 2018 (84.6%). Of 26 with rings in 2018, 17 (65.4%) were still alive during the 2019 breeding season, four of these Gull Trap birds (100% survival) and 13 nest trapped birds (59.1%); two of the nest trapped birds were only seen elsewhere and were seemingly not breeding, whilst two had changed nest site (one moved 370m and one moved 837m). Of 27 with rings in 2019, 20 (74.1%) were alive in 2020, five of these Gull Trap birds (100%) and 15 nest trapped birds (68.2%); six of the nest trapped birds

and two of the Gull Trap birds were not seen at a nest. All 21 with rings in 2020 were alive in 2021; five nest trapped birds and one Gull Trap bird were not found breeding (three were only seen on the mainland and two were not seen until the following year). Of the 22 alive in 2021, 20 (90.9%) were alive in 2022, seven of these Gull Trap birds (100%) and 13 nest trapped birds (86.7%); six of these were not seen at a nest, including two only seen on the mainland and two not seen until 2023. Of the 40 logged in 2022, 30 (75.0%) were alive last year, 20 of these Gull Trap birds (76.9%) and ten nest trapped birds (71.4%); one of the Gull Trap birds was not seen until 2024. Of the 42 alive in 2023, 33 (78.6%) were seen this year, 26 of these Gull Trap birds (81.3%) and seven nest trapped birds (70.0%); two of the Gull Trap birds were only seen at the Gann.

For a seventh successive year, the only colour ring resightings of live birds away from Skokholm came from mainland Pembrokeshire (but see ring recovery below). The number of days since ringing is given after the age at ringing.

Darvic	Ring	Location	County	Age at ringing	Date
W:977	GV83149	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Third-summer (3509)	24/01/24
W:974	GV22432	Johnston	Pembrokeshire	Adult (2212)	26/06/24
W:971	GV22440	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (2347)	09/11/24
W:965	GV83063	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (1964)	01/02/24, 02/10/24
W:958	GY02321	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (796)	24/01/24, 18/09/24
W:899	GY02325	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (851)	12/11/24
W:892	GY02310	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (848)	09/11/24
W:890	GY02307	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (566)	01/02/24
W:879	GY02338	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (3386)	09/11/24
W:878	GY02337	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (557)	24/01/24
W:876	GY02366	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (846)	09/11/24
W:873	GY02365	Gann Estuary	Pembrokeshire	Adult (558)	26/01/24

There was one colour ringed bird found dead this year (see recovery below), the post-2017 total now six. Unusually only one dead adult was recorded on the Island this year, this a long dead bird found at the Neck on 11th March; six dead adults were encountered in 2023, with nine in 2022 and three in both 2021 and 2020, this year's tally suggesting that highly pathogenic avian influenza was

not an issue this breeding season. Additionally a bird with a broken leg and swollen foot was near North Pond on 18th April, whilst a third-summer had a broken leg on 20th June. Injured Herring Gull are encountered most years (broken limbs and puncture wounds are most common, see previous Skokholm Seabird Reports); it would seem likely that interactions with fishing gear are responsible for some of these injuries, unsurprisingly so given how this species searches around boats for food (additionally a dead adult found in 2021 had been strangled by fishing line). Following four impacted birds in 2019, no incidences of oiling have been recorded for five years.

Chicks were present in two Peter's Bay nests on 15th May, this one day earlier than the first of last year and two days earlier than the 2017-2023 first chick mean. An adult nesting in South Haven was eating a young Wheatear on 6th June, although it was unclear whether it had killed the bird or found it dead (photograph below). The first flying fledgling was in Purple Cove on 2nd July, this on the same date as the first of last year and two days earlier than the 2013-2023 mean; the latest first fledgling noted during this period was aloft on 10th July in 2015, the earliest on 30th June in 2016 and 2021. Checks of the Neck productivity plot during July, where 138 pairs had established nests (one fewer than last year), located a maximum of 128 fledging-sized young (along with two smaller chicks which did not go on to fledge, one of these belonging to an apparent third-summer). The resulting 2024 productivity figure of 0.93 fledged young per pair was 19.2% up on the 0.78 of last year and 32.9% up on the 2014-2023 mean (0.70 ±sd 0.15); there was a high during this period of 0.86 in 2016 and a low of 0.33 in 2020, with the remaining years all seeing productivity of between 0.66 and 0.84 fledglings per pair. Disappointing 2020 productivity was linked to a period of rough May weather which resulted in low nests being destroyed by unseasonable 11 metre waves. Large seas also destroyed nests in 2022, the resulting productivity estimate matching the third lowest of the last decade. However the weather in May 2021 was even more unusual, with southwesterly winds gusting at up to 69mph and the Mid Channel Rock Lighthouse Beacon off St Ann's Head registering an average wave height of 11 metres and multiple waves of at least 16 metres; nevertheless overall productivity was 0.84, with the pairs not impacted by the storm doing particularly well. It remains to be seen if the more regular spring storms predicted by current climate change models will impact numbers or encourage birds to nest elsewhere.

August saw the customary post-breeding departure of both adults and fledglings, with a mean daycount of 66.1 being the fourth lowest of the last 12 years and down on a 2013-2023 mean of

80.6; although there were highs of 210 on the 1st (when 120 were feeding off Crab Bay), 185 on the 17th (when 160 were feeding together offshore) and 190 on the 30th (when 102 were off the Stack), there were 11 daycounts of 16 or less. Late summer counts of anting birds peaked at 133 on North Plain on 10th August and an adult was still feeding a fledgling in South Haven on the 25th. September is typically quieter for Herring Gulls on Skokholm, with this year seeing 12 daycounts of 16 or less, however highs of 140 on the 3rd (when 113 were in Broad Sound), 211 on the 7th (when 187 were off the Quarry) and 204 on the 16th led to a September bird-days total of 1660, this the highest of the last 12 years (although the peak daycount was down on the 242 of 2022 and the 220 of last year). October counts were below average, with no sightings on two dates, a further 12 dates with single-figure tallies and highs of 68 on the 24th and 98 on the 28th taking the bird-days total to 690 (the 2013-2023 October mean is 953.7, with a peak of 2014 in 2015). Numbers increased in November yet again, with birds regularly returning to their breeding territories and larger roosts again forming on occasion; although there were 12 daycounts of between ten and 78, five of more than 200 included highs of 300 on the 15th, 282 on the 16th and 413 on the 28th (when 365 roosted to the west of North Pond). A November bird-days total of 3562 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2847.4 (there were highs during this period of 4531 in 2015, 4454 in 2016 and 4287 in 2020), whilst the peak November daycount was the highest since 2017 (there were highs of 585 in 2015, 588 in 2016 and 612 in 2017). A daycount of 468 on 1st December included 110 roosting at North Pond, whilst 96 roosted on North Plain the following day.

Ringing recovery GV83187 (W:954)
Originally ringed as an adult, GREEN HEATH, SKOKHOLM 22nd May 2022
Last seen as an adult, GREEN HEATH, SKOKHOLM 5th May 2023
Recovered unknown species, PORTH CWYFAN, ABERFFRAW, ANGLESEY 28th July 2024
Finding condition Ring only on beach
Distance travelled 174km at 19 degrees (NNE)
Days since ringed 798
This would be the first post-2013 Skokholm ringed adult Herring Gull to be found away from Pembrokeshire, however the possibility that the ring drifted north following the death and decomposition of the bird cannot be ruled out.

***Larus* hybrid** *Larus argentatus* x *L. fuscus* (one possible record of *L. argentatus* x *L. michahellis*)
Scarce Breeder

Although Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull hybrids occasionally establish territories on Skokholm (photographs and further details are in the 2014 and 2015 Annual Reports), a metal ringed bird present around South Haven between 2020 and 2022 seemed more similar to a Yellow-legged Gull hybrid (see the 2020 and 2021 Annual Reports for photographs). The only hybrid seen this year, which appeared to be a typical Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull, was along the eastern arm of Purple Cove on 14th March and 5th April; birds at three sites accounted for four bird-days last year, whilst the only apparent Herring x Lesser in 2022 paired with a Lesser Black-backed Gull and produced a chick in Calf Bay.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* **Gwylan Gefnddu Leiaf**
Common Breeder previously a Very Abundant Breeder
16 trapped (including 14 pulli), 1 retrapped, 6 resighted, 2 controls
1938-1976: 11,912 trapped, 2013-2023: 689 trapped, 34 retrapped, 119 resighted, 21 controls

Peak March daycounts of 824 on the 18th, 829 on the 20th and 775 on the 26th were down on those logged in all bar one of the last 12 years, the peak down on a 2013-2023 mean March high of 1176.6 and a maximum during this period of 2091 in 2014. The number of birds within the colonies again fluctuated considerably during the day; for example the Pedestal colony contained 107 birds on the

morning of 11th March but only 33 that afternoon, 96 on the morning of 12th March but six that afternoon and 12 on the morning of 23rd March but 65 that evening. The larger communal roosts recorded in previous years were again generally absent; the majority of early season counts were of birds on territory, with the largest roosts forming at North Pond where there were highs of 55 on 16th March, 76 (including only four apparent subadults) on 25th March and 62 on 6th April. A more detailed description of how the gulls prepare for the breeding season was available in 2015 and 2016 due to the GPS trackers fitted by the British Trust for Ornithology in 2014 (funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change) which gave some idea as to when birds first returned to Skokholm (see the relevant Skokholm Seabird Reports for details of return dates and the range of over-wintering strategies used); the last of the functioning trackers and the base station were removed in 2017.

A strikingly dark individual with a distinctive wing pattern which frequented North Pond during the afternoon of 28th March was not a *L. f. graellsii* (above photographs). Although *L f. intermedius* and *L. f. fuscus* can be separated from each other as first-summers owing to their different moult strategies (perhaps so different as to suggest that the latter is a different species), older birds are seemingly indistinguishable; only the presence of a ring, added at a colony lacking hybrids, would have confirmed if the Skokholm bird was from a coastal area of mainland Europe (*L. f. intermedius*) or from northern Norway, the Baltic or northwest Russia (*L. f. fuscus*). Regardless of subspecies, this is the first non-*graellsii* Lesser Back-backed Gull to be encountered on Skokholm in 12 years. There are no Welsh records of the nominate (which are no doubt much rarer owing to their easterly migration to Ethiopia, Uganda and the Congo), whilst probable *L f. intermedius* (which typically overwinter in northwest Africa) are documented only infrequently (due at least in part to the difficulties surrounding subspecific identification).

April nest checks at Purple Cove, Middle Heath, Green Heath and the Neck located an egg at the former site on the 21st (another pair probably had an egg, whilst the other visible nests were empty); this was two days earlier than a nest found with two eggs last year and six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first egg mean, indeed it was the earliest of the last 12 years. Two eggs were at Steep Bay the following day. A notable count of 31 were feeding together on small fish off the Bluffs on 4th May, whilst May roosts between North Plain and the Bog peaked at 85 on the 15th, 104 (including seven apparent subadults) on the 23rd, 92 (including an unusually high 38 apparent subadults) on the 27th and 90 on the 28th.

When the first egg was located in each year 2013-2024, along with the 2013-2023 first egg mean.

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
3rd May	24th April	4th May	25th April	1st May	26th April	28th April
2020	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**		**Mean**
25th April	24th April	24th April	23rd April	21st April		**27th April**

A comparison of vantage point counts (of apparently incubating adults) and the number of nests (both empty and with eggs) located during walkthrough surveys of the same areas. The difference each year provided a correction factor to predict the number of nests (both empty and with eggs) which were actually present. The 2013-2019 means may be useful in years when walkthrough surveys are not possible/desirable.

Year	Vantage point count	Walk through count	Empty/ With egg(s)		Percentage of empty nests	Difference between counts (%)*	Correction (no empty nests)	Difference between counts (%)**	Correction (including empty nests)
2019	194aia	251	39	212	15.54	9.28	1.09	29.38	1.29
2018	266aia	321	16	305	4.98	14.66	1.15	20.68	1.21
2017	366aia	517	51	466	9.86	27.32	1.27	41.26	1.41
2016	550aia	789	139	650	17.62	18.18	1.18	43.45	1.43
2015	493aia	636	110	526	17.30	6.69	1.07	29.01	1.29
2014	613aia	827	135	692	16.32	12.89	1.13	34.91	1.35
2013	245aia	296	49	247	16.55	0.82	1.01	20.82	1.21
Mean					**14.03**	**12.83**	**1.13**	**31.36**	**1.31**

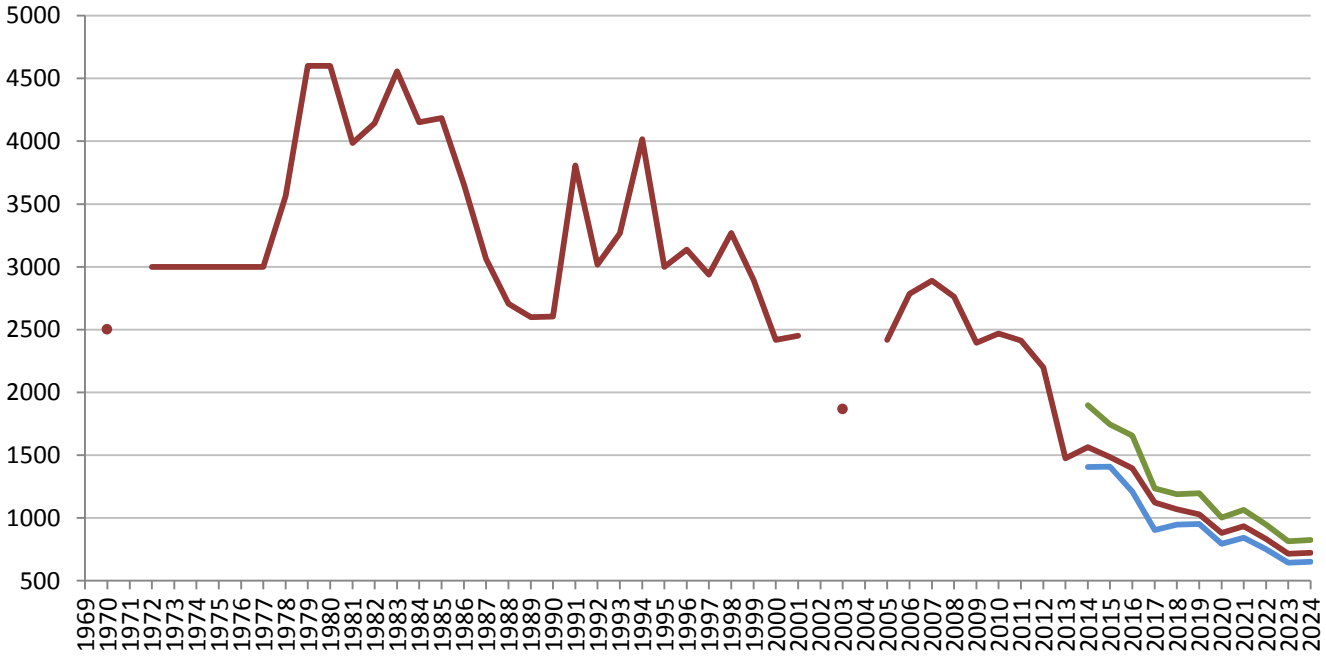
* How many more nests (containing eggs) were present than the number of apparently incubating birds seen (as a percentage).

** How many more nests (including empty nests) were present than the number of apparently incubating birds seen (as a percentage).

Vantage point counts of the inland breeding subcolonies and a full census of the coast nesting pairs were made between the 12th and 16th May, during which 651 apparently incubating adults were located; although up on the 643 of last year, this was otherwise the lowest count in over 50 years, a total 33.9% down on the 2014-2023 mean (985.6 ±sd 267.9). In an effort to reduce disturbance in the colony, the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee has suggested that the walkthrough surveys, which have traditionally been used to check the accuracy of the point counts, are no longer performed annually; there was thus no walkthrough for a fifth year (the lack of a walkthrough in 2020 was due to a COVID-19 dictated lack of personnel). The number of apparently incubating adults (as assessed using the vantage point counts) and the number of nests containing eggs (as located during walkthrough surveys) invariably differ, primarily due to incubating birds being hidden by vegetation (particularly in areas where there are no raised vantage points). Between 2013 and 2019 there were on average 12.83% more nests containing eggs than apparently incubating adults (although this was as low as 0.82% in a year with a particularly short breeding season sward height and as high as 27.32% when vegetation was taller (see table above)). The walkthrough surveys also reveal a variable number of empty nests; over the period 1991-2002 the count of empty nests varied

from 11-44% of the total number of nests (with a mean of 22.7% (Thompson, 2007)), although between 2013 and 2019 this dropped to between 4.98% and 17.62% (with a mean of 14.03%). It is unclear whether empty nests are second nests made by the pairs present, nests robbed of eggs or nests where adults are yet to lay. The breeding season is certainly a protracted one, with the first two 2024 chicks located on 17th May (the 2013-2023 mean is 24th May, with one on the 18th in 2021 the earliest and one on 6th June 2015 the latest) and the first flying fledgling at Green Heath on 27th June (the 2016-2023 first fledgling mean is 5th July, with the earliest on 30th June 2020), but with chicks still being fed at Purple Cove on 10th August. It would thus seem likely that some (but given their extremely close proximity to each other, not all), empty nests belong to additional pairs. Between 2013 and 2019 the total number of nests (including empty nests) was between 20.68% and 43.45% higher than the vantage point total (with a mean of 31.36%, see table above).

The total number of Lesser Black-backed Gull breeding pairs 1970-2024. Control measures started in 1984 (destruction of nests) and stopped in 1998. The green line is the population estimate if all empty nests are assumed to belong to additional pairs. The maroon line is the corrected population estimate based on a comparison of vantage point counts and the number of nests which contained eggs. The blue line is the uncorrected vantage point count total (of apparently incubating adults). A lack of walkthrough surveys means that the corrected 2020-2024 totals are based on the 2013-2019 means.



Of the 651 apparently incubating adults counted this year, 89 were in open (primarily coastal) areas where it was obvious that additional pairs were not present. A mean 2013-2019 correction factor of 1.13 (see table above) would suggest that the remaining 562 apparently incubating birds actually represented a total of 635 nests with eggs (giving a 2024 breeding population estimate of 724); this is the second lowest estimate of the post-War era, 34.4% down on the 2014-2023 mean (1103.1 ±sd 289.7). A mean 2013-2019 correction factor of 1.31 would suggest that the remaining 562 apparently incubating birds actually represented a total of 736 nests (including empty nests); this gives a 2024 breeding population estimate of 825, a total 35.3% down on the equivalent 2014-2023 mean (1275.0 ±sd 366.3) and only the third such post-War estimate of less than four figures (following the 947 of 2022 and the 814 of last year). The actual number of breeding pairs probably lies somewhere between these two estimates (724-825). Recent years have seen comparatively high vegetation during the count period, as was the case in 2017 when a higher correction factor was established, however this was not the case this year (although plant cover was lower than of late, the Bracken grew quickly during the survey period).

Lesser Black-backed Gull productivity is typically assessed by entering various subcolonies to ring as many near-fledglings as possible, the BTO rings becoming marks for a mark/resighting population estimate. However it has lately proven difficult to resight sufficient ringed fledglings to allow for a meaningful evaluation. In an attempt to increase the number of resightings, recent years have seen staff and volunteers re-enter the subcolonies (rather than observing fledglings at a distance with a telescope). A simple calculation, '(number ringed on first visit x number checked for rings on second visit) / number of birds found to have rings on second visit', predicts the number of near-fledglings within an area (which can then be compared with the number of pairs thought to have been present). Whereas the walkthrough surveys allowed for an accurate assessment of how many nests were in an area, a lack of walkthroughs from 2020 onwards means that productivity estimates are less accurate (as they are based on corrected vantage point counts). Visits to the Middle Heath and Green Rocks area during early July suggested that 30 near-fledglings had been produced by 46 pairs (the uncorrected vantage point count for this area was 41 pairs); the resulting productivity figure of 0.65 fledglings per pair was the fourth highest inland estimate of the last 12 years. The coastal slopes of Purple Cove were investigated for an eighth year as this discreet subcolony, with very short sward or rocky substrate, is seemingly suitable for an accurate fledgling count using a telescope; here 37 pairs produced a minimum of 36 fledglings, giving a productivity figure of 0.97 fledglings per pair (the 2017-2023 Purple Cove mean is 0.82 ±se 0.10, with a high of 1.21 in 2018 and a low of 0.54 in 2022). Purple Cove productivity has proven to be higher than that observed inland in each of the last seven years (albeit only marginally so between 2021 and 2023).

Combining data from Purple Cove and Middle Heath suggests that 83 pairs fledged 66 young; a combined productivity figure of 0.80 is the second highest estimate of the last 12 years, this double the 2013-2023 mean of 0.40 ±se 0.08 (there was a high during this period of 0.89 in 2021, a low of 0.12 in 2020). It is unclear why productivity was again above average this year, but this becomes the first year of the 21st century in which productivity has exceeded the lower limit set in the Skokholm Island Management Plan (only two of the last five years have seen productivity below 0.60). Ad hoc observations broadly mirrored the estimate; although fledglings across North Pond and North Plain could potentially have come from anywhere on Skokholm (and possibly elsewhere), a maximum of 97 on 19th July was the second highest count of the last seven years (only down on the 136 present in 2021 when productivity was thought to be higher than in any other year this decade). Although it should be remembered that the breeding population has fallen considerably during the same period, the 2014-2023 mean maximum is 101.8, with a high of 141 in 2014.

Lesser Black-backed Gull productivity estimates 2011-2024.

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
0.03	0.16	0.16	0.30	0.15	0.23	0.38	0.63	0.27	0.12	0.89	0.53	0.70	0.80

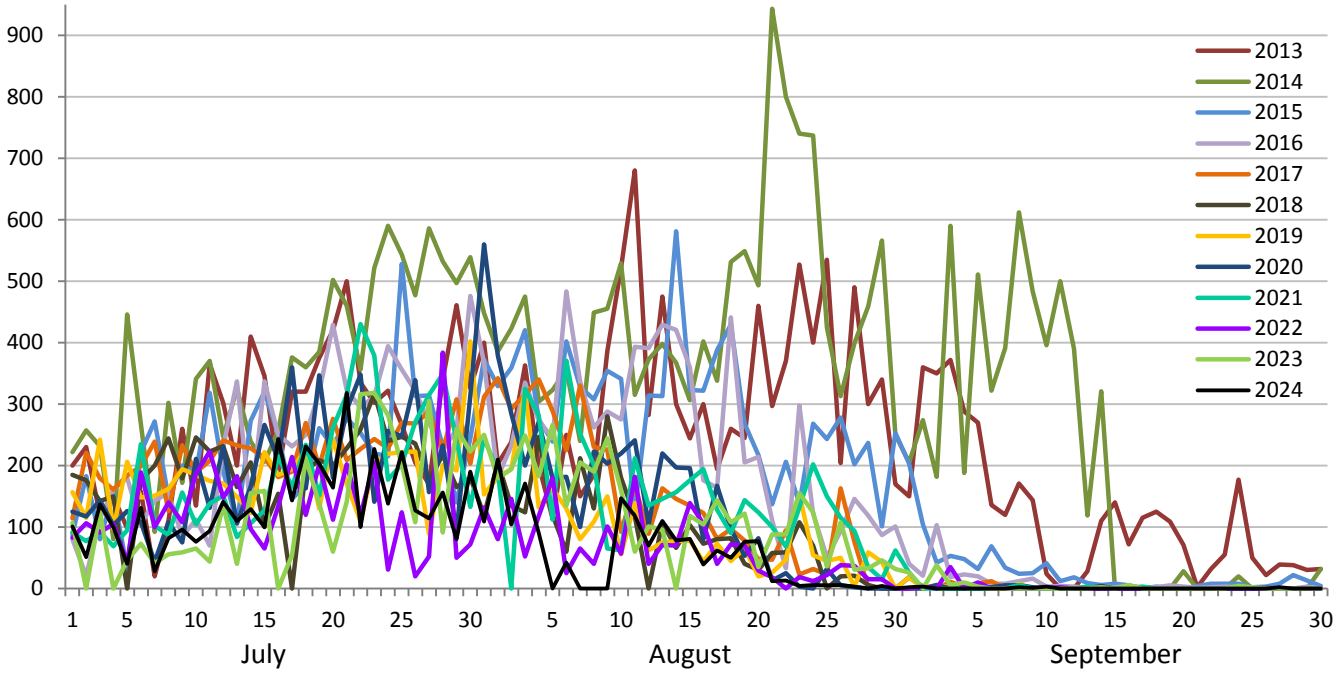
Although poor productivity seemingly helped drive the decline in the Skokholm breeding population, it also seems possible that disease may have taken its toll in some years. There were three dead adults encountered this year, all with no indication as to what had happened; birds were found in the Bog on 30th May, in Peter's Bay on 12th June and at Frank's Point on 29th June. Additionally a dead first-summer was at North Pond on 22nd June. A juvenile with a fishing lure hooked through its foot was over Little Bay on 30th July and found dead at North Gully on 1st August; the lure would have severely impacted feeding and probably also made the youngster an easy target for a predator (photograph below). There were ten dead adults found last year (along with a third-summer with a bloody head injury, an adult and a first-summer both with bloody broken wings but which were not found dead, three adults with broken wings later found dead, a bloody adult missing both feet and found dead the following day, a second-summer with a broken leg and an adult with two broken legs), nine non-fledglings found dead in 2022 (including one shot using an air gun), 14 adults in 2021 (along with one which had recently lost a leg), 11 adults in 2020 (including an uncoordinated bird (with a clean vent) found dead two days later, but not including two live birds with broken wings,

one with a broken leg and one missing a foot), two adults in 2019, 15 adults in 2018 (including a bird with a particularly dirty vent and a bird handed in live from a passing boat), three dead adults in 2017 and 21 dead adults in 2016 (which were thought to be diseased or poisoned, with the period before death characterised by very lethargic behaviour, fine shaking and an eventual loss of limb control (similar symptoms were seen in 2018 and 2021)). Although it is possible that aggressive interactions with other birds may have caused some deaths (indeed one body was inverted in much the same way as that of a Manx Shearwater), amputations likely result from human interaction (probably with the fishing industry), whilst disease or poisoning seem likely in many cases where intact bodies are found (although a Skokholm bird is yet to prove positive, HPAI may recently have had an impact).

As is typically the case, the number of birds using traditional roost sites increased during July; North Plain and the area around North Pond again proved to be the usual site for the largest post-breeding roost, with smaller numbers congregating at South Pond and on the Neck. This year saw the July roost reach 318 on the 21st; this matched that of last year as the third lowest July peak of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 437.5 and a high during that period of 590 in 2014. A cumulative July total of 4181 roosting birds was also the third lowest of the last 12 years and well down on highs of 8353 in 2013 and 11,226 in 2014. Whereas roost counts between 2013 and 2017 peaked in August, the last seven years have seen a more rapid departure of birds from the Island. This year saw an August peak of 210 on the 1st, this up on a 2022 high of 182 but otherwise the lowest maximum of the last 12 years (the 2013-2023 mean high is 439.2, with a peak of 943 in 2014). An August total of 1580 roosting birds was the lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5750.2 (between 2013 and 2015 the August total ranged between 8903 and 13,849, there were 7306 in 2016 and no more than 4364 since). The last three-figure roost count of the year was the 110 present on 13th August, this the earliest such count of the last 12 years; between 2013 and 2016 the last three-figure roost counts were logged in September, whilst the last of 2023 was on 26th August. September again proved to be quiet, with only 11 roosting birds noted during the month; although up on the eight of 2018, this was otherwise the lowest tally of the last 12 years, indeed the September roost total was in three-figures in 2015 and 2016, whilst in 2013 and 2014 it was in four (with a high of 5359 in 2014). Daycount highs of nine on the 3rd and 19 on the 9th contributed to an October bird-days total of 67, this down on a 2013-2023 bird-days mean of 142.4 (there was a 21st century October high of 658 in 2013). Sightings on all but four dates and highs of 26 on the 28th (including 24 roosting near North Pond), 31 on the 29th (28 at North Pond) and 32 at North Pond on

the 30th took the November bird-days total to 201, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 165.6 and the sixth highest November tally this century. A North Pond roost of 25 on 1st December took the daycount to 32, whilst 57 roosted on North Plain the following day, the latter the second highest December daycount to date, only down on the 80 present on the same date in 1992.

The number of Lesser Black-backed Gulls roosting on North Plain and in the vicinity of North Pond 2013-2024.



Ringing recovery Left leg mint green darvic with black 3NF, Right leg FH07803
Originally ringed as a juvenile, FLAT HOLM ISLAND, CARDIFF 2nd July 2006
Previously recovered as a juvenile, GLOUCESTER LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 17th July 2006
Previously recovered as an adult, GLOUCESTER LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 30th June 2010
Previously recovered as an adult, QUARTEIRA, FARO, PORTUGAL 6th and 8th October 2010
Previously recovered as an adult, FIGUEIRA DA FOZ, COIMBRA, PORTUGAL 10th November 2011
Previously recovered as an adult, EAST BOG, SKOKHOLM 31st July 2022
Previously recovered as an adult, EAST BOG, SKOKHOLM 17th March and 22nd, 23rd & 27th April 2023
Recovered as an adult, EAST BOG, SKOKHOLM 19th March 2024
Finding condition Darvic ring read in field
Distance travelled 154km at 283 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 6470
Given that this individual has now been seen six times in under two years, it would seem likely that it has recently switched nest site to an area closer to the Skokholm path network.

Ringing recovery GR77096
Originally ringed as an adult, HOME MEADOW GULL TRAP, SKOKHOLM 13th August 2013
Recovered as an adult, QUARTEIRA, ALGARVE, FARO, PORTUGAL 25th October 2024
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 1641km at 188 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 4091

Ringing recovery GR98281
Originally ringed as an adult, HOME MEADOW GULL TRAP, SKOKHOLM 16th June 2014
Previously recovered as an adult, PRAIA DE MIRA, AVEIRO, COIMBRA, PORTUGAL 30th October 2022

Recovered as an adult, PRAIA DE MIRA, AVEIRO, COIMBRA, PORTUGAL 27th December 2023 (sic)
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 1277km at 193 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 3481
The previous 2022 recovery was reported at the time to be GR98280 and recorded as such in the Annual Report 2022, however this was presumably revised by either the observer or the BTO when the 2023 resighting was made.

Ringing recovery GV83196
Originally ringed as a chick, GREEN HEATH, SKOKHOLM 14th July 2022
Recovered as a second-winter, MONTE GORDO, FARO, PORTUGAL 17th October 2023 (sic)
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 1622km at 187 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 460

Ringing recovery GY21024
Originally ringed as a chick, EAST BOG, SKOKHOLM 14th July 2024
Recovered as a first-winter, MONTE GORDO, FARO, PORTUGAL 13th December 2024
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 1622km at 187 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 152

Ringing recovery POL LV33347
Originally ringed as an adult, BRAÇO DE PRATA, LISBOA, PORTUGAL 24th January 2024
Recovered as an adult, NORTH POND WALL, SKOKHOLM 31st July 2024
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 1470km at 10 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 189
This individual was admitted to CRAS-LX, Lisbon's wildlife rescue centre, on 15th December 2023 with paralysis syndrome (several biotic contaminants are among the potential causes of this syndrome, with marine biotoxins, *Clostridium botulinum*, cyanotoxins and a virus all linked). The gull recovered and was released on the date of ringing. Previous Skokholm Long-term Volunteer, now Portland Bird Observatory Assistant Warden, Jodie Henderson, managed to photograph most of the ring and Skokholm House Mouse researcher Alex Figueiredo was able to track it down with the help of Paula Figueiredo at the Central Nacional de Anilhagem, Portugal.

The birds previously carrying GPS tags, along with an additional 48 non-tagged controls, were all fitted with yellow darvic rings with a black alpha-numeric code (number/letter:W e.g. 5A:W) in 2014. The colour ring is on the left tarsus and a BTO metal ring on the right. Although the number of encounters logged each year is unsurprisingly declining, the darvic rings have yielded a fantastic number of field resightings; the 73 ringed birds have produced 188 separate resightings of 38 different individuals away from Skokholm. The table below summarises resightings received since similar tables were published in the 2014-2023 Seabird Reports. As has been shown by the British Trust for Ornithology GPS tracking project on Skokholm, and at other British Trust for Ornithology tracking sites, Lesser Black-backed Gulls show a high degree of wintering site fidelity; this is reflected in the colour ringing data, with 19 birds having been resighted at the same location in more than one winter. Records of returning birds have come from several sites in Portugal and Spain, along with two in France, one in the Channel Islands and one in Morocco. This year saw 9J:W in Malaga for at least a ninth winter (it was there 2014-2015, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, along with this winter, whilst it was also recorded in Barbate Harbour, 51km to the south of Cadiz, in the winters of 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023). Five different individuals were seen on Skokholm this year, these including 8U:W

(GR98259) and 9J:W (the Malaga regular), neither of which had been seen on the Island since 2014; it is tempting to think that, as with 3NF (FH07803, see above), these birds may have changed nest location, allowing them to be seen from the path network.

Darvic	Ring	Location	Country	Date
8A:W	GR98247	Pontevedra, Galicia	Spain	03/08/24
9J:W	GR98265	Malaga Harbour	Spain	21/11/23 (sic), 27/12/23 (sic), 13/12/24

Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis* **Môr-wennol Bigddu**
Uncommon with the vast majority of records in August and September
Earliest 29th March 1984 (17th August 2024) **Latest** 25th October 1967 (11th October 2024)

There were no records during the first three months of the season for a sixth time in 13 years; there have been 173 previous bird-days logged in March, April or May, including 37 between 2014 and 2023 and highs of 20 in both 1980 and 2016. All-time bird-day totals of 129 in June and 140 in July were not added to, with a lone bird in Broad Sound on 17th August the first of the year; sightings in 42 previous Augusts peaked at 65 in 1983, 32 in 1992 and 34 in 1993, although the 2013-2023 bird-days mean is just 6.2. The only September sightings were of one on the 6th, two on the 7th and eight on the 11th, a bird-days total of 11 being close to a 2013-2023 mean of 13.5, albeit well down on all-time highs of 103 in 1966, 82 in 1994 and 60 in 2011. One in Broad Sound on 11th October was the last of the year; there have been 35 later bird-days, including 23 in 1967 and just one this century.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* **Môr-wennol y Gogledd**
Uncommon sometimes Fairly Common or Scarce, with unidentified 'commics' Common on occasion
Earliest 18th April 2018 (26th June 2024) **Latest** 27th October 2017 (12th September 2024)
1963-1967: 3 trapped

An adult heading west over the Neck and the Farm on 26th June was the only sighting during the first three months of the season; a total of 36 bird-days have now been logged between April and June, including seven this century and 19 in 1995. Two on 10th September and a single two days later were the only other sightings. A 2024 bird-days total of four was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 56.3 and on highs during this period of 91 in 2018, 229 in 2020 and 128 in 2022 (the only other three-figure tally is the 149 of 1997, whilst the peak daycounts are of 130 in September 1997, 71 in September 2016 and 78 in September 2022). There were no Common Tern this year, however up to four unidentified 'commic' tern were noted on two August dates from the 10th and three September dates to the 12th; a bird-days total of 14 was the third lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 139.0 and highs during this period of 198 in 2018, 436 in 2020 and 542 in 2022 (the only totals up on that of 2022 are the 582 of 1957, 1400 of 1958, 578 of 1977 and 713 of 2011).

Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* **Sgiwen Fawr**
Uncommon sometimes Scarce and much more regular in autumn
Earliest 4th April 2015 (10th September 2024) **Latest** 15th November 2015 (24th September 2024)
2015-2020: 1 trapped, 1 control

This species was decimated by avian influenza in 2022, with 2600 individuals found dead (this roughly 13% of the British breeding population and over 8% of the World population (Pearce-Higgins *et al*., 2023)); in reality the number of dead birds will have been much higher. Skokholm counts have reflected this, with 14 bird-days in 2022 (down on a 2013-2021 mean of 31.9) and tragically no sightings at all last year. One west off the Lighthouse at 0710hrs on 10th September was perhaps that heading east at 0800hrs and chasing Kittiwake at 1630hrs; the 2013-2022 first autumn bird mean is 28th July, with one on 19th August 2020 the latest first during this period. Further singles on the 16th, 18th, 22nd and 24th took the September total to five, this down on a 2013-2022 mean of 17.7 and on

all-time highs of 30 in 2018 and 2021 and 42 in 2019 (the all-time daycount high is the 14 logged on 28th September 1978). An all-time October bird-days total of 81, 52 of which have been since 2013, was not added to, whist four November bird-days were all in 2015 and 2016. Although it was a pleasure to again see Great Skua from the Island, a 2024 bird-days total of five was well down on a 2013-2022 mean of 30.1 and on all-time highs of 38 in 2018 and 2020, 43 in 2021 and 81 in 2019.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* **Sgiwen Frech**
Rare 27 previous records totalling 38 birds
Earliest 28th April 1997 **Latest** 16th October 1987 (11th September 2024)

A second-year chasing Kittiwake off South Haven at 0830hrs on 11th September was the first since a juvenile on 3rd October 2020 (RD). Of the 39 birds now recorded in Skokholm waters, eight have occurred in August and 14 in September, whilst May is the most productive spring month with seven logged (albeit this courtesy of a record daycount of five made on the 28th in 1991).

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* **Sgiwen y Gogledd**
Uncommon sometimes Scarce
Earliest 9th April 1996 (6th September 2024) **Latest** 15th November 2020 (12th October 2024)

There were no spring records; there have been 55 bird-days logged in April, May or June, with seven this decade and highs of eight in 1982, seven in 1993 and six in 2002. An all-time July bird-days total of 31, the most recent of which was in 2020, and an all-time August total of 115, the most recent of which were last year, were not added to. September saw singles on the 6th, 10th and 16th, two on the 17th and 18th and one on the 25th, a bird-days total of eight being down on that logged in only 13 previous Septembers. Two pale birds together off the Lighthouse on the 2nd and one chasing Kittiwake off South Haven on the 12th were the only October sightings and the last of the year, taking the all-time bird-days total for this month to 77, 19 of which were in 2019. Singles in 2020 and 2022 remain the only November bird-days. An annual bird-days total of 11 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 15.1 and on seven years during this period; there were highs of 30 in 2017, 27 in 2022 and 29 last year, with 51 in 1980, 36 in 1993 and 67 in 2004 the only higher totals (the latter courtesy of an astonishing 63 recorded on 5th September).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* **Sgiwen Lostfain**
Vagrant five previous records of up to two birds

A relatively close dark juvenile headed west off the Lighthouse at 0740hrs on 16th September (RDB, GE), whilst a probable was further out the following morning. The only other Skokholm records are of an adult which chased Kittiwakes off the Head on 4th October 1995, a juvenile off the Lighthouse on 21st October 2014, a juvenile on both the 22nd and 23rd September 2015, an adult through Broad Sound on 20th October 2017 and two juveniles in the same place eight days later.

Guillemot *Uria aalge* **Gwylog**
Very Abundant Breeder Common during the period 1928-1996, numbers then increasing rapidly
1 pullus trapped
1936-1976: 1021 trapped, 2014-2022: 7 pulli trapped, 27 controls

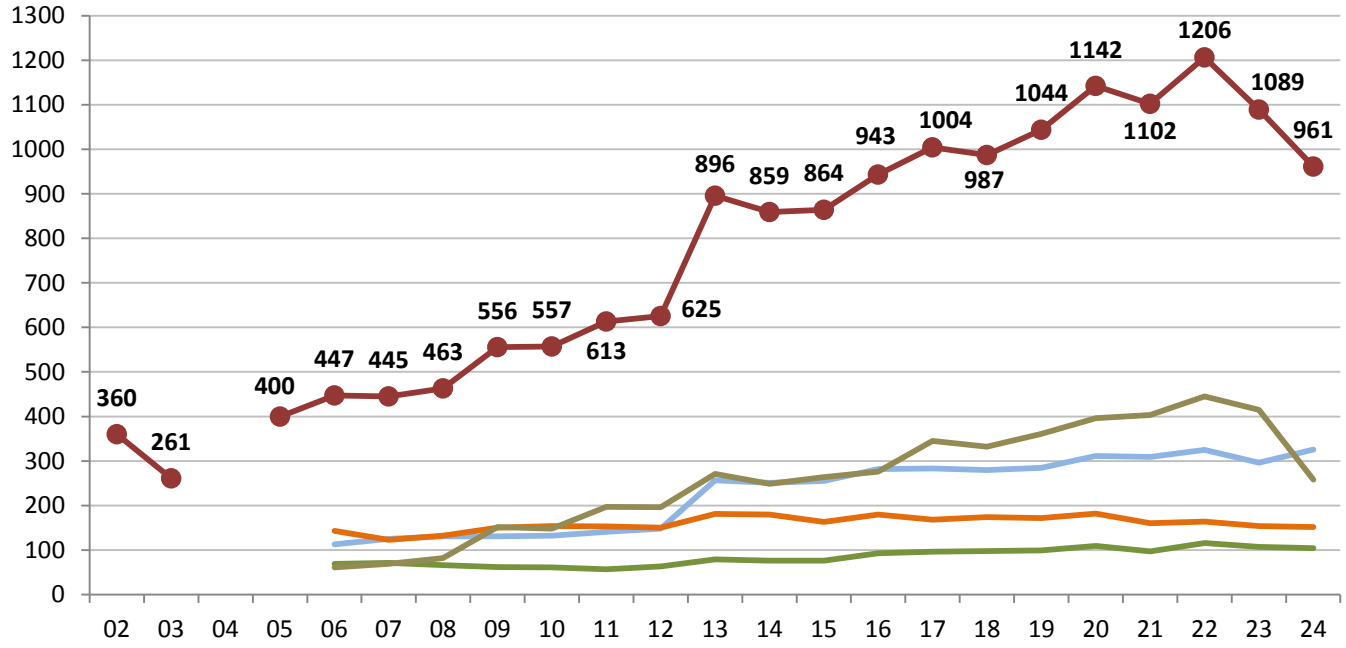
Staff did not return for the 2024 season until 10th March, meaning that a mean March daycount of 104.7 is not directly comparable with recent years, however it was significantly down on a 2013-2023 mean of 601.1 and the lowest of the last 12 years. This was in part due to a March daycount high of 1540 on the 11th, this the lowest March peak of the last 11 years and down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 3002.4 (with all bar two of the peak counts during these years occurring during the period staff occupied the Island this year). Although there were rough seas towards the end of the

month and precipitation on 20 of 22 days, the March weather was generally unremarkable and probably did not explain the low counts, however six named storms between December 2023 and March 2024 was more than average and perhaps impacted pre-breeding fitness. Customary departures for the sea continued in April, with 18 dates when counts of less than 600 were logged (including two dates without a sighting and five dates with between one and 19 birds present); there were 20 similar mass April departures last year, nine during an unprecedentedly early 2019 breeding season and an average of 15.6 between 2013 and 2023 (with a high of 25 in 2013). The first egg to be found was at North Gully on 26th April, a day which saw only 109 birds logged; the first 2019 egg (which was believed to be the earliest yet recorded in Wales (Birkhead, *pers. comm.*)) was found on 18th April and was perhaps the result of unusually high sea surface temperatures (Burton, M., 2019), however no other year has seen an egg earlier than that of 2024 (the 2013-2023 first egg date mean is 1st May, with the latest during this period found on 15th May 2014 following a winter of prolonged storms and significant auk wrecks).

The whole Island totals (adults on ledges suitable for breeding), mean plot totals, the range of totals over ten study plot visits, the standard deviation observed over the ten visits and the percentage of the Island total made up of study plot birds 2015-2024.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Island	3603	3949	4038	4316	4654	5101	5065	5515	4992	4989
Plots	864	943	1004	987	1044	1142	1102	1206	1089	961
Range	756-939	887-1003	939-1144	937-1060	982-1140	1069-1213	1012-1209	1144-1318	1035-1150	904-1011
±SD	58.30	40.25	57.45	37.38	54.40	50.57	68.55	55.19	39.88	36.29
Plot %	24.0	23.9	24.9	22.9	22.4	22.4	21.8	21.9	21.8	19.3

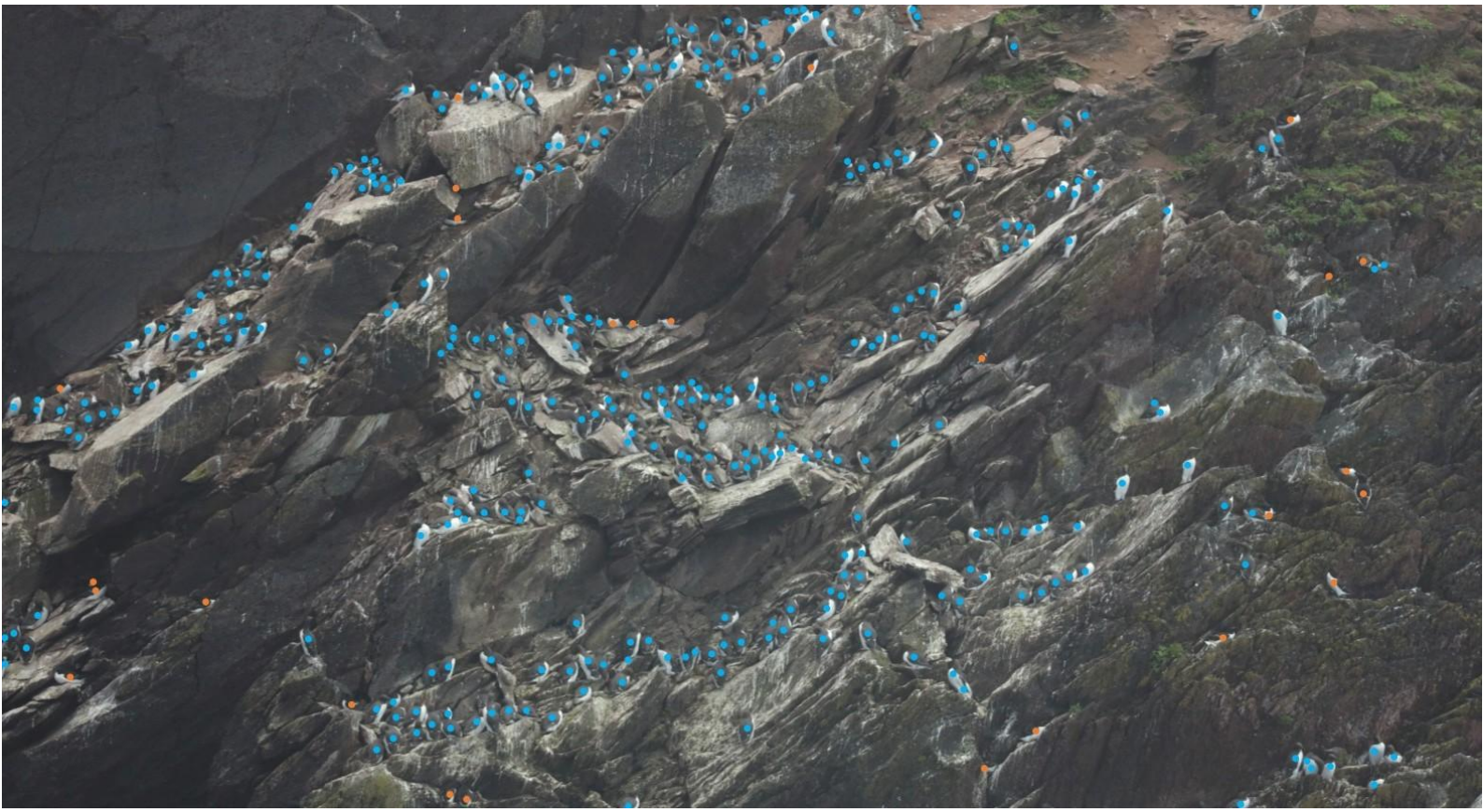
The total number of adult Guillemot in all six study plots 2002-2024 (an average from ten visits) and the totals from the four largest plots since 2006 (an average from ten visits).



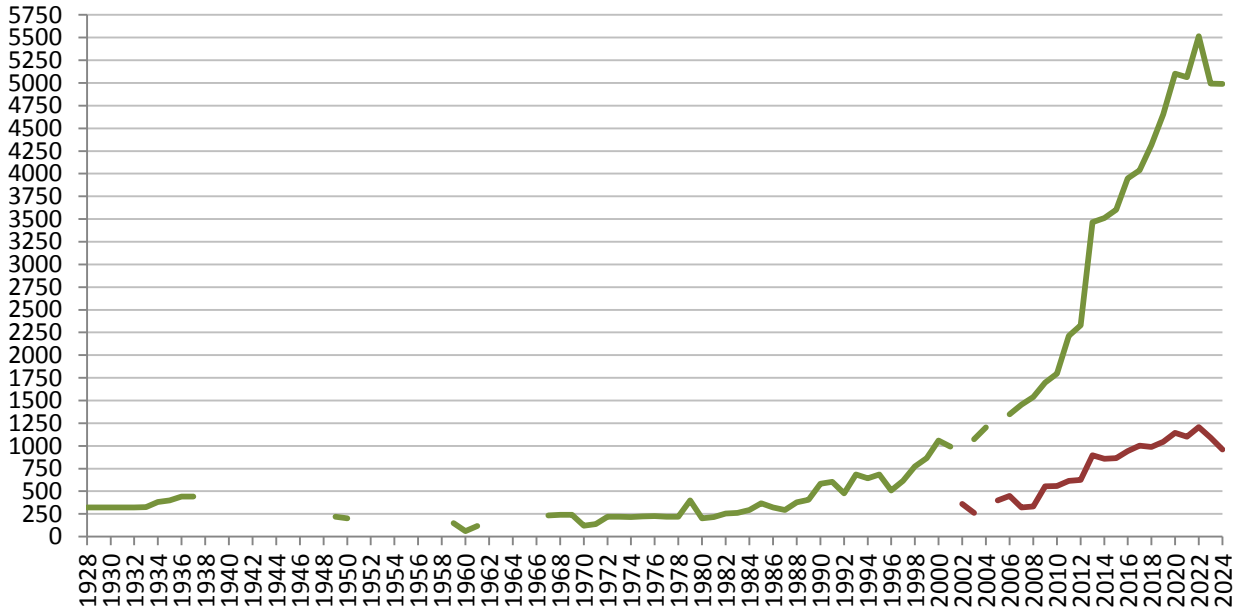
The six study plots were counted on ten dates between 29th May and 12th June. The mean total from all plots was 961 adults on ledges; this was 11.8% down on that logged last year and 5.1% down on the 2013-2023 mean (1012.3 ±sd 115.6), albeit the eighth highest total yet recorded. This substantial decline was driven by a mean loss of 157 adults at North Gully (a drop of 37.8%); these birds were almost wholly missing from the two central ledges of the plot (see photographs below), this the area on which a dead adult was present from 3rd July last year (although the dead bird was not accessible for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) testing, it would seem likely that bird flu spread through

this area last July). There were 1060 dead Guillemot collected from beaches by the Pembrokeshire local authorities during three weeks from 8th July 2023, with 500 reported in Carmarthenshire during the same period and the H5N1 strain of HPAI found in tested birds (PCC, 2023). However these significant losses were seemingly very localised; the Middlerock, Guillemot Cliff and Steep Bay plots were very similar to last year, with a mean loss of two or three birds at each site, whilst a mean of eight additional birds was recorded on the slope to Purple Cove (this despite regular Great Black-backed Gull attacks which certainly flushed birds prior to counts) and a mean of 29 additional birds at Little Bay led to the highest total yet recorded at this plot.

The North Gully auk colony in 2022 (upper photograph) and 2024 (lower photograph), with each Guillemot marked with a blue dot. The mean plot count fell from 445 in 2022 to 258 in 2024.



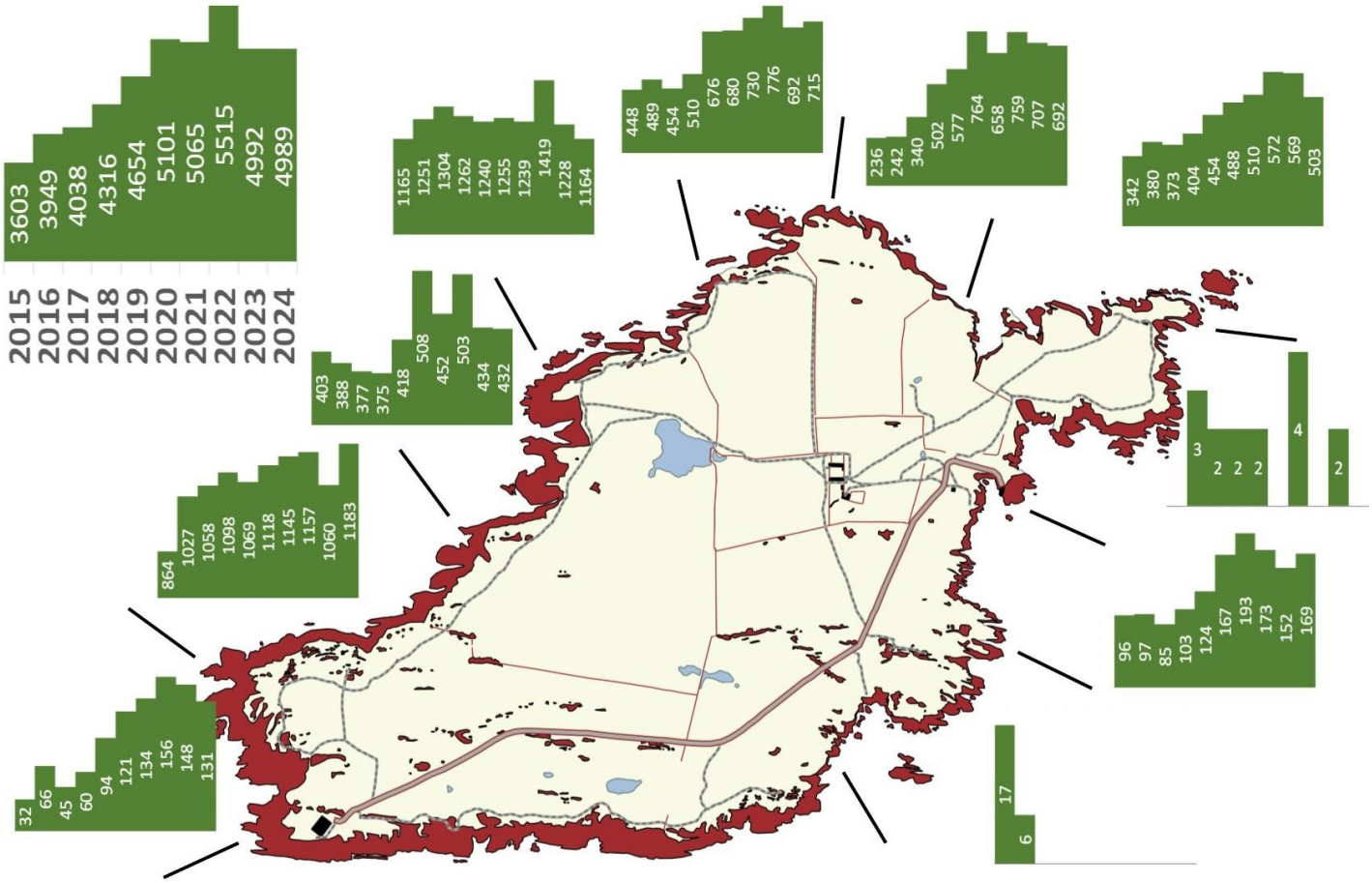
The total number of Guillemots (adults on ledges suitable for breeding) recorded on Skokholm since 1928 and the number of birds within the study plots since 2002.



Whole Island counts were made from the land between the 1st and 11th June and calm seas allowed for a boat-based survey on 7th June. Boat-based surveys allow some areas to be monitored which cannot be viewed from on the Island and enable closer access to some areas which can normally only be viewed at a distance; they have not always been available, with 2012 the last year in which there was not at least one boat survey. A mean total of 4989 adults in suitable breeding habitat was 0.06% down on a 2023 count of 4992, but the fifth highest tally yet recorded on Skokholm (also down on the 5101 of 2020, the 5065 of 2021 and the 5515 of 2022). This was only the third time

since 2001 in which the mean whole Island total has declined, with the only large drop during this period being the 9.5% decline observed between 2022 and 2023 (a loss of 523 birds); the only other three-figure declines witnessed since 1928 are the 120 birds lost between 1969 and 1970 (a 50% decline), the 200 lost between 1979 and 1980 (a 50% decline), the 124 lost between 1991 and 1992 (a 20.6% decline) and the 175 lost between 1995 and 1996 (a 25.6% decline). The proportion of the whole Island total made up of study plot birds dropped to 19.3%, this down on a 2006-2023 mean of 25.1%, the lowest proportion on record and no doubt due to the big loss of birds at North Gully. The plots at Twinlet and North Gully were again counted on nearly every day of the season (see chart below), with the mean May total for 2024 (427.57 adults on ledges) being 16.2% down on a 2023 mean of 510.23 (this less than the 26.7% decline seen during the plot count period).

The distribution of Guillemots on suitable breeding ledges 2015-2024.

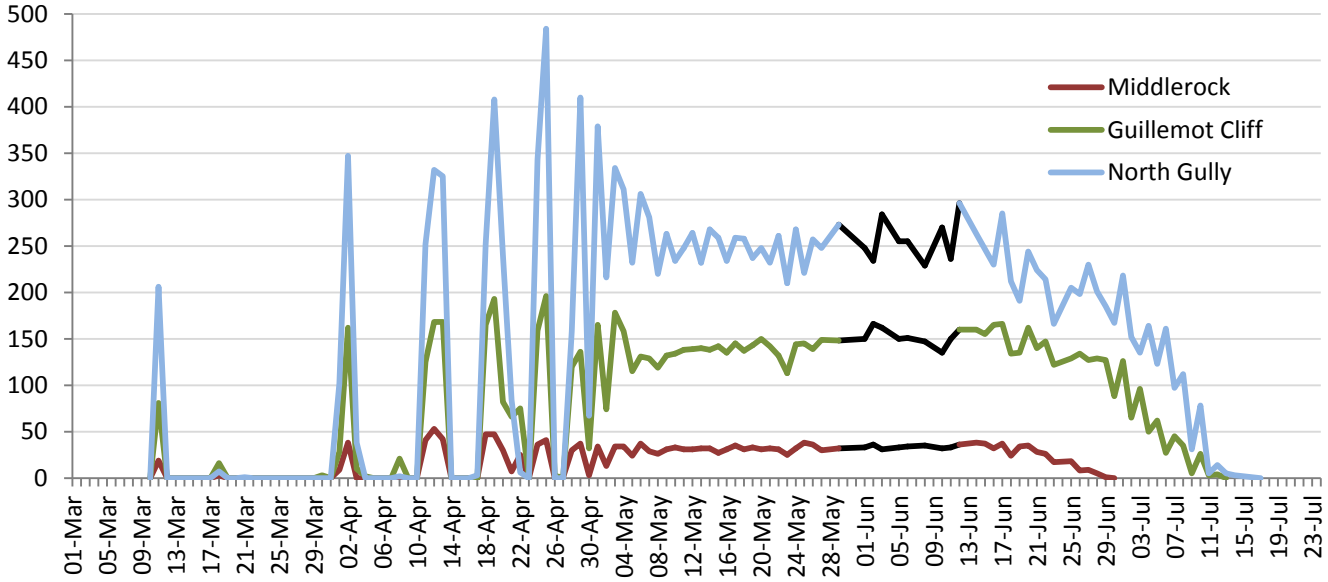


As can be seen from the map above, there were numerical declines in six areas. The largest declines were seen along the north coast of the Neck and on the Stack, where there were 66 fewer individuals on average (an 11.6% decline), and in the area between the Jogs and the Dents where there were 64 fewer (a 5.2% decline); the latter area includes North Gully where there was a mean loss of 157 individuals, this implying a gain of 93 birds elsewhere. There were further losses of 17 birds around the Quarry (an 11.5% decline), two birds between Twinlet and Purple Cove (a 0.5% decline), 15 birds between Smith's and Far Bays (a 2.1% decline) and two birds in Peter's Bay (a 100% decline, with birds absent from this area for a fifth time in 11 years). A mean increase of 123 individuals was recorded between Wardens' Rest and Fossil Bay (an 11.6% increase to a new high for this area), whilst there were 23 more birds around Little Bay (a 3.3% increase) and 17 more birds in Hog Bay (an 11.2% increase). The area around Crab Bay was again free of Guillemots (they last occupied ledges in 2016). It would thus seem clear that the effects of avian influenza were rather localised, with some areas seemingly not impacted (or with any small scale losses more than

compensated for by the arrival of others). These counts of individuals on ledges potentially include incubating adults, some of their partners, failed breeders, non-breeding adults and younger birds yet to pair; a correction factor is thus sometimes adopted to convert the count to an estimate of breeding pairs (Harris *et al*., 2015). A 2015 survey on Skokholm found the correction factor to be 0.64, a figure close to the 0.67 widely adopted in previous studies (see the Skokholm Seabird Report 2015); the latter correction predicts the Skokholm breeding population to be in the region of 3343 pairs, this two fewer than last year.

The first chick to be seen this year was at North Gully on 3rd June; this was later than the first chick recorded in five of the last seven years, but one day earlier than the first to be seen last year and on the same date as the 2013-2023 mean (the earliest chick during this period was logged on 23rd May in 2019, whilst the first chick of 2014, the year following the severe winter auk wrecks, was on 13th June). Productivity, calculated at between 0.55 and 0.61 jumplings per pair in 2013 and at 0.6 in 2007, was again not assessed in 2024 following recommendations from the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee. Chicks were watched jumping from the fourth week of June and the number of adults recorded in the three regularly monitored plots dropped from 366 on the 27th to 313 on the 29th, 217 on 2nd July and 185 on the 5th (see chart below). There were an additional 38 birds at Guillemot Cliff and 51 birds at North Gully on 1st July, whilst on the 10th there were an additional 21 at Guillemot Cliff and 47 at North Gully; previous seabird reports document similar late and synchronised spikes in numbers in the majority of years.

The number of adults on ledges within three of the plots (standard survey period in black).



Between the 29th and 30th June, the number of adults in the Middlerock plot dropped from one to zero, this the earliest departure from this plot in 11 years of monitoring and probably a reflection of poor productivity; between 2014 and 2023, the last day with birds in the Middlerock plot averaged 10th July, with the latest still present on the 17th in 2021 and the earliest on the 1st in 2022. The four birds present at Guillemot Cliff on 12th July were the last to be seen in this plot, this three days later than the 2014-2023 mean. Counts at North Gully dropped from 14 on the 12th to five on the 13th and to two on the 15th, with the last on the 16th matching the 2014-2023 last bird mean (the latest bird in this plot was still present on the 22nd in 2014, the earliest last seen on the 13th in 2022). Whole Island counts mirrored those made at the plots, with 37 ashore on the 18th, 22 on the 19th, 12 on the 21st, five on the 23rd, three on the 24th and two at the same Little Bay site on the 25th; the latter were present on the same date as the last of 2023 and were three days later than the 2013-2023 last bird mean (the earliest last was seen on 16th July in 2019 and the latest on the 27th in 2013 and 2021). Singles at sea on the 26th and 29th were the only other July records. There were sightings on just

eight August dates (five fewer than last year), with a bird-days total of 17 being massively down on a 2013-2023 mean of 666.8 and the lowest since 2014 (this a period which included all-time highs of 3841 in 2018, 1129 in 2019 and 1138 in 2020). There were no August records of birds ashore for the first time in three years.

Sightings on 14 September dates were all of nine or less bar 18 on the 16th, 21 on the 18th and 17 on the 26th, a bird-days total of 82 being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 269.3 but up on five of the years during that period (there were all-time highs of 287 in 2012, 563 in 2014 and 1419 in 2018). An additional 1219 distant, unidentified auks were logged during September, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 894.9 (there were all-time highs of 2613 in 2018, 1261 in 2021 and 2814 in 2022). Sightings of up to 40 Guillemot on eight October dates totalled 84 bird-days, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 107.0 (there was a high of 519 in 2021 when, as was the case this year, there was an early return to the cliffs). An additional 2231 unidentified auks were logged during October, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 1622.1 and on all but one year during that period (there was an all-time high of 7951 in 2021). There was again a staff presence throughout November, with sightings on 14 dates and highs of 202 on the 1st, 302 on the 16th and 207 on the 26th taking the bird-days total to 1283; the peak November daycount was just up on a 2013-2023 mean of 284.5 (there was a high of 790 in 2015), the total up on a mean of 1129.0 logged during the same period (a high of 3441 was tallied in 2019). An additional 3983 distant auks were noted during the month, with highs of 590 on the 10th and 560 on the 30th which were the fifth and sixth highest November daycounts to date (there was a peak of 1520 on the 24th in 2023). Although no doubt in part a reflection of the usual staff absence, December Guillemot daycounts of 213 on the 1st and 365 on the 2nd were new highs, whilst there were additional distant auk counts of 840 on the 1st and 130 on the 2nd (the former also a new high).

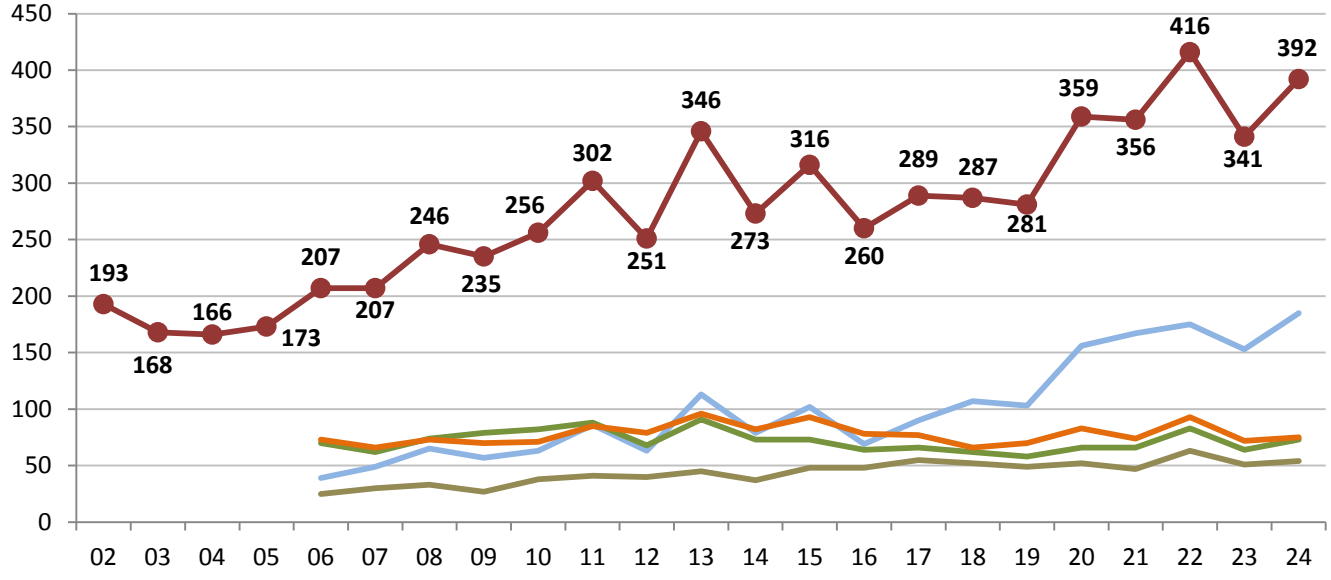
Although a return of Guillemots to the breeding ledges in late autumn is to be expected, there was no record of this behaviour on Skokholm between 2000 and 2014, despite the fact that staff did not depart until 16th November in 2013 and 24th November in 2014. However birds were seen ashore in eight of nine subsequent Novembers, with 2017 the only year without a record (when staff departed on the 9th); the 2013-2023 mean first winter return date is 6th November (this not including the three years without a record), with the earliest ashore on 23rd October 2021 and 1st November 2019, the latest on 11th November 2015 and 26th November 2023 (a landfall on 27th October 1999 is the only other to be documented prior to 3rd November). This year saw three birds ashore at the Jogs on 24th October (with droppings at North Gully and the Dents suggesting that others had been present

earlier in the day), this the second earliest autumn landfall to date. Birds were ashore on 12 further dates until 2nd December, with November highs of 195 on the 1st, 177 on the 16th and 200 on the 26th and a December high of 350 on the 2nd. Such a return to the colony outside of the breeding season, with the risk of being attacked, must have a substantial benefit; it has been suggested that the return may be to secure the best ledge and thus attract the best mate (Harris *et al*., 2006), but birds ashore may also use less energy than those at sea (Humphreys *et al*., 2007). The vast majority of late autumn returnees take to the ledges above the Jogs; this site holds the largest breeding season aggregation, perhaps suggesting that the need to come to land is greater in birds which occupy areas with more neighbours, however birds were at Twinlet on five dates and at Purple Cove on two dates, this despite the much larger numbers breeding at the latter site. There were no returns to the central North Gully ledges decimated by HPAI, this area already well vegetated by September.

Razorbill *Alca torda* **Llurs**
Very Abundant Breeder Common or Abundant until 2007, numbers then increasing rapidly
43 trapped (including 41 pulli), 2 retrapped/resighted, 1 control
1931-1976: 9705 trapped, 2013-2023: 387 trapped, 13 retrapped/resighted, 5 controls

There were sightings on 18 March dates from the 10th (16 from the 1st last year), with highs of 1608 on the 11th, 1103 on the 18th and 1249 on the 30th, the peak down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 2246.1 and the second lowest high to be logged during this period. The majority of March birds were again at sea, with 648 on the 11th, 604 on the 18th and 542 on the 21st the highest counts of birds ashore. The only Razorbills to come ashore on 28th March were those occupying crevices in the Anticline, the Oystercatcher roost perhaps again offering sufficient safety in numbers to allow for a landfall (see previous Seabird Reports). Daycounts continued to fluctuate during April, with highs of 1691 on the 18th and 1600 on the 25th and 28th, but lows of between three and 31 on seven dates to the 16th; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 1843.2 and the fifth lowest to be logged during this period. Despite the low numbers seen in March and April, it would go on to be a record year. The first egg to be seen was at North Gully on 26th April, this one day earlier than the 2013-2023 first egg mean; the earliest egg yet recorded on Skokholm was found on 15th April 2022, whilst the latest on 13th May 2014 was no doubt a consequence of the prolonged winter storms preceding that breeding season. A Raven was carrying a different Razorbill egg the following day. The majority of eggs were produced during early May, with 50% of North Gully plot pairs having eggs by the 8th and 65% of Neck plot pairs having eggs by the 9th.

The total number of adult Razorbill in all six study plots 2002-2024 (an average from ten visits) and the totals from the four largest plots since 2006 (an average from ten visits).



The six study plots, established in 2002, were visited on ten dates between 29th May and 12th June when every adult in suitable breeding habitat was counted. The mean single visit total of 392 adults on ledges was 51 (14.9%) up on that logged last year, 22.4% up on the 2013-2023 mean (320.3 ±sd 47.6) and the second highest yet recorded (only down on the 416 of 2022). There were numerical gains in all plots, with the largest at Little Bay where the mean increased by 32 birds (20.6%) to a new high. Nine additional birds at Middlerock (a 13.4% increase) took the total to 73, this matching those of 2014 and 2015 and only down on 2013 and 2022. The other Twinlet plot at Guillemot Cliff increased by a mean of three birds (3.9%), although the total was down on that logged in seven of the last 11 years. Recent years have seen a decline in the number of Razorbill occupying the two Twinlet plots, drops tentatively linked to an increasing Fulmar population (which has no doubt led to competition for space within the confines of the plot boundaries), whilst the activities of a pair of egg stealing Crow have impacted the plots in the last two years. A mean increase of three birds (5.7%) at North Gully occurred despite the huge losses seen in the Guillemot population at this plot (see photographs in the Guillemot section above, the Razorbills marked with orange dots); there have only been more birds present in 2017 and 2022. There were two birds on the slope to Purple Cove, this matching the all-time high logged in 2020 and 2022, whilst a mean of five birds in the Steep Bay plot was a new high, up on the two recorded in 2014 and 2021.

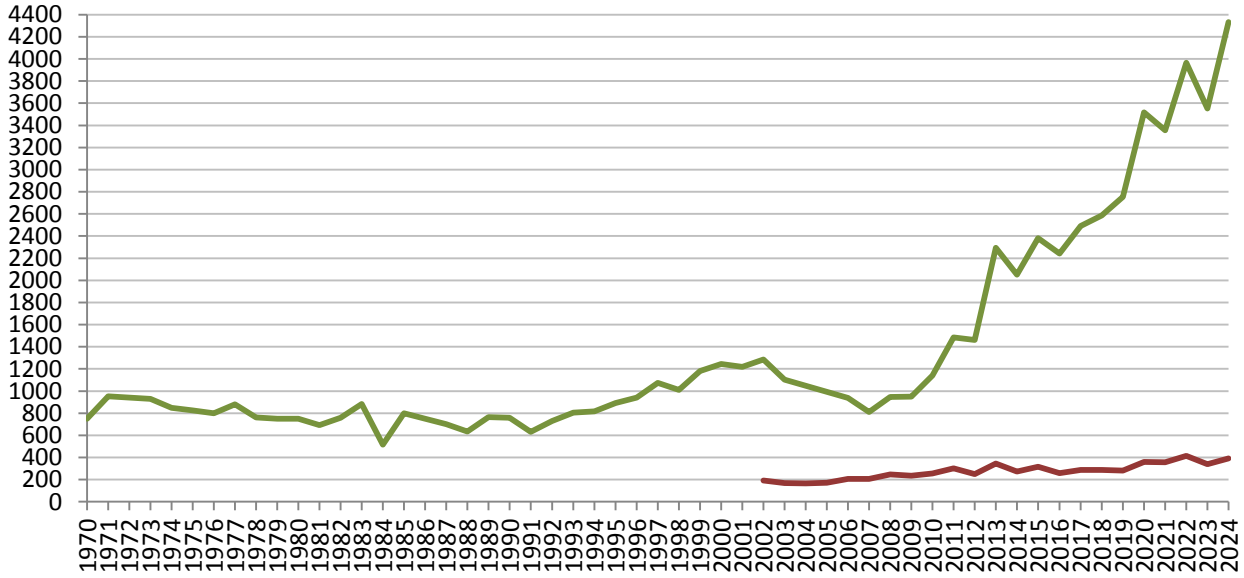
The whole Island totals (adults on ledges suitable for breeding), mean plot totals, the range of totals over ten study plot visits, the standard deviation observed over the ten visits and the percentage of the Island total made up of study plot birds 2015-2024.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Island	2382	2242	2491	2585	2755	3517	3356	3965	3552	4333
Plots	316	260	289	287	281	359	356	416	341	392
Range	291-346	236-324	253-334	263-309	230-351	312-395	312-411	376-446	299-409	369-434
±SD	15.78	26.58	25.61	13.25	40.82	30.72	34.06	23.15	31.74	20.53
Plot %	13.3	11.6	11.6	11.1	10.2	10.2	10.6	10.5	9.6	9.0

Both 2020 and 2021 saw severe May weather impact the Razorbills nesting in the productivity plots (and no doubt elsewhere); a 2020 storm, with multiple waves of at least 11 metres, resulted in 60% of Neck pairs losing their eggs (but just one or two of the North Gully eggs being lost), whilst a 2021 storm, with winds gusting at up to 69mph and several waves of at least 16 metres, led to 59% of Neck pairs and 7% of North Gully pairs losing their eggs. May seas peaked at eight metres in 2022 (as measured by the Mid Channel Rock Lighthouse Beacon off St Ann's Head), conditions probably

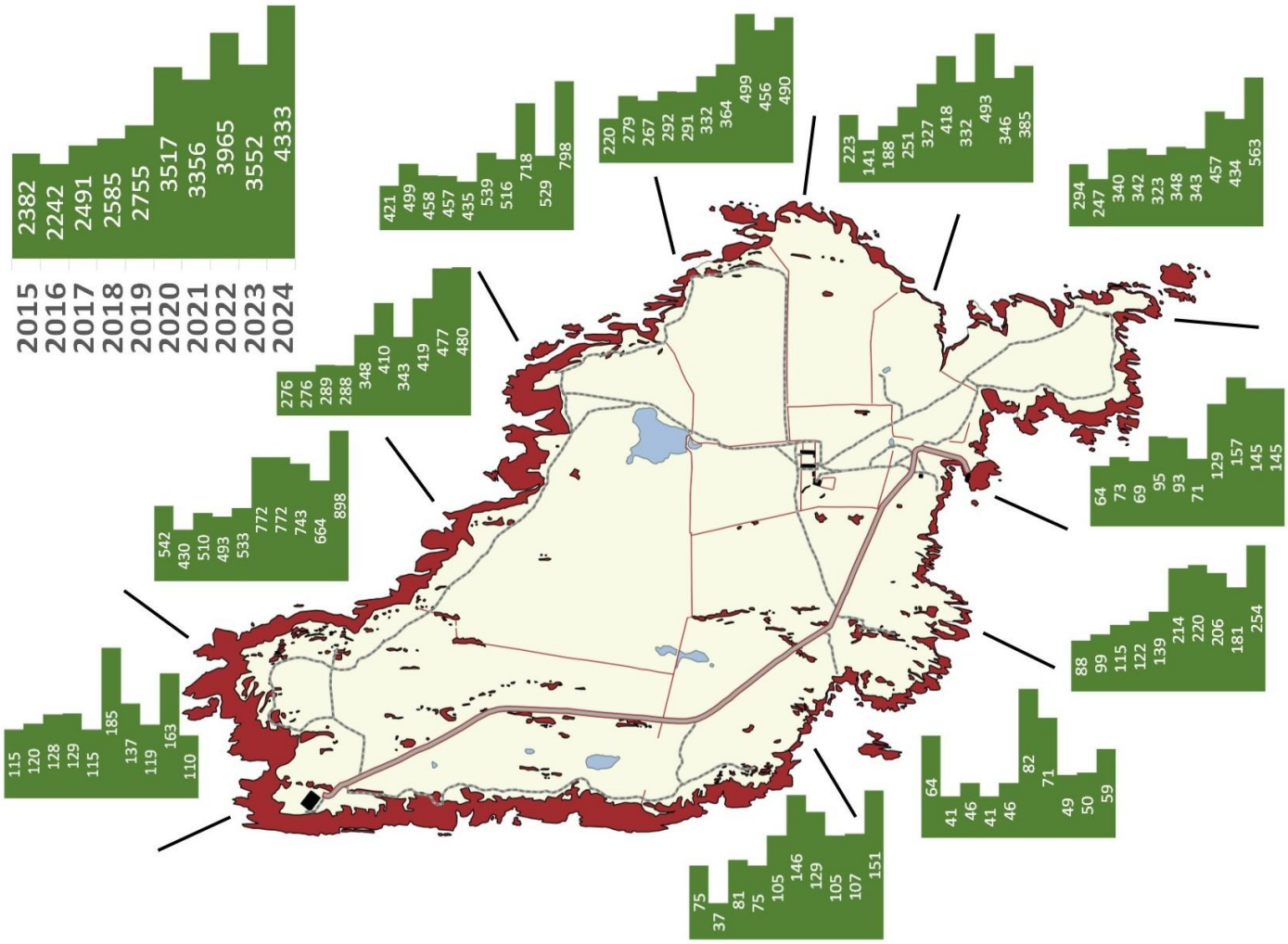
responsible for an egg loss at the Neck (elsewhere there was a loss of Herring Gull eggs and chicks and some low nesting North Coast Razorbills lost eggs), whilst four May Neck plot egg losses were perhaps due to heavy showers. The 2023 and 2024 breeding seasons were by comparison clement, with no productivity plot losses directly attributable to weather events, however this year did see the wettest April since 1999, with heavy rain on the 30th adding to a North Gully stream already in spate, this impacting the expanding Razorbill population on the cliffs below (above photographs). Extreme May weather influences the number of adults on ledges during the usual whole Island and study plot count period; in the unsettled June of 2012, plot counts fluctuated between 164 and 338, whereas the 2018 counts, made during a prolonged period of high pressure, fluctuated between 263 and 309 (with the lowest standard deviation of the last 12 years). The generally pleasant 2024 survey season weather coincided with a range of just 65 birds over the ten visits and a standard deviation of 20.5, both these values the lowest since 2018 (see table above).

The total number of Razorbills (adults on ledges suitable for breeding) recorded on Skokholm since 1970 and the number of birds within the study plots since 2002.



Whole Island counts were made from the land between 30th May and 13th June, whilst a boat-based count was possible on 7th June. This was the 12th year running in which access to a boat had been available, inevitably leading to higher but more accurate whole Island counts; in 2012 rough seas meant that there was no opportunity for a boat-based count and it was concluded that 'there remains a section of North Coast that was missed, while other parts of the North Coast and Bluffs were counted less accurately at a distance' (Gillham and Yates, 2012). A 2024 whole Island mean of 4333 adults in suitable breeding habitat was 22.0% up on the 3552 logged in 2023 and a new high, 49.9% up on the 2014-2023 mean of 2889.7 ±sd 654.5. Although the whole Island total is based on fewer visits, the tight range in study plot counts suggests that the 2024 estimate is relatively accurate. As can be seen from the map below, the number of adults present did not increase everywhere, indeed there was a mean loss of 53 birds in the vicinity of the Quarry and the mean for the southerly portion of the Neck remained the same. The largest gains occurred between Wardens' Rest and Fossil Bay, with a mean increase of 234 birds, between the Jogs and the Dents, with an increase of 269, and to the north of the Neck, with an increase of 129, these all leading to totals which were new highs for these areas. An additional 34 birds in the vicinity of Little Bay and Little Bay Point led to the second highest tally for this area and 39 more birds between Far and Smith's Bays led to the third highest tally, whilst 73 more between South Haven and Hog Bay and 44 more along the South Coast resulted in new highs. A mean increase of just three between Purple Cove and Twinlet nevertheless produced a new high for this area, whilst nine more birds between Wreck Cove and Crab Bay led to a total down on three previous years.

The distribution of Razorbills on suitable breeding ledges 2015-2024.



Productivity monitoring was undertaken for a 12th consecutive year. There were previously concerns among ICAC members that some Pembrokeshire productivity estimates have been quite low (on Skokholm ranging between 0.23 in 2015 and 0.69 in 2018), perhaps lower than what actually occurred given the continued growth of the population and certainly too low to maintain the expansion; one explanation for continued population growth despite low productivity estimates could be that the plots do not represent the Island as a whole. This is potentially the case at the exposed Neck plot where predation levels are often quite high and where, in recent years, extreme weather events have had a greater impact. Although Razorbills nest in similarly exposed places elsewhere on Skokholm, an additional plot looking at cliff nesting pairs was established at North Gully in 2017 in an attempt to study birds in a somewhat more sheltered setting. There were thus three survey areas this year, one a cliff below the Neck Razorbill Hide where 34 incubating pairs were mapped between 29th April and 29th May, one the ledges around North Gully where 40 pairs were mapped between the 1st and 16th May and one an area among the Bluffs boulders where 53 egg sites were marked between the 12th and 25th May.

The first three chicks to be encountered anywhere on Skokholm were at the Neck on 31st May (the oldest of which was seemingly two days old); this was one day later than the first of last year and on the same date as the 2013-2023 mean (the earliest was found on 18th May 2019 and the latest on 15th June 2013). At the Neck there were 12 egg stage failures, five failures at either egg or small chick stage (ledges were found empty, with no indication as to what had happened), three chick losses and 14 pairs produced jumping age chicks at the first attempt; of the pairs which failed with their

first egg, two re-laid, one of which lost a chick between the 17th and 19th July and one of which produced a jumpling. The resulting productivity figure of 0.44 almost matched a 2013-2023 mean of 0.43 ±se 0.09 (productivity at this site is very variable, with highs of 0.77 in 2013 and 0.86 in 2018, but lows of 0.03 in 2016 and 0.14 in 2017). The North Gully plot saw 23 pairs successful at the first attempt, five egg stage failures (one pair re-laid, again failing with an egg) and four chick stage failures. The resulting North Gully productivity value of 0.58 jumplings per pair matched the lowest of the last eight years, this down a 2017-2023 mean of 0.68 ±se 0.02 (there was a high of 0.76 in 2020, another low of 0.58 in 2017). The combined productivity estimate for cliff nesting pairs was 0.51; this was down on a 2017-2023 mean of 0.58 ±se 0.06 and the lowest of the last three years (there were lows of 0.36 in 2017 and 0.44 in 2021, when Neck productivity was particularly poor, and highs of 0.74 in 2018 and 0.71 last year).

Among the Bluffs boulders, four pairs failed at egg stage, 13 pairs failed with eggs or small chicks (crevices were found empty, with no indication as to what had happened) and 11 pairs failed with chicks (one of which was found dead as opposed to going missing). A productivity figure of 0.47 was up on the 0.23 of last year (when an unprecedented 23 pairs failed with chicks (44.2%), one of two located bodies proving HPAI negative) but down on a 2013-2023 mean of 0.52 ±se 0.05 (there were further lows of 0.44 in 2014 and 0.29 in 2015, highs of 0.74 in 2016, 0.60 in 2018 and 0.71 in 2020). Combining the productivity figures for the cliff plots and the boulder plot to give an indication of overall productivity on Skokholm can be achieved in two ways, either by averaging the final values obtained for the three sites, as recommended in the Seabird Monitoring Handbook (Walsh *et al*., 1995), or by combining all of the data from the three plots (that is to say by dividing the total number of jumplings at all sites by the total number of monitored sites). The former, preferred, technique produces a productivity estimate of 0.50 jumplings per pair, as does the latter. The 2024 estimate is up on that recorded in five of the last 11 years and close to a 2013-2023 mean of 0.51 ±se 0.04, albeit well down on highs of 0.66 in 2013, 0.69 in 2018 and 0.64 in 2022 (the lows during this period were of 0.23 in 2015 and 0.39 in 2016, both calculated prior to the establishment of the less variable and more sheltered North Gully plot).

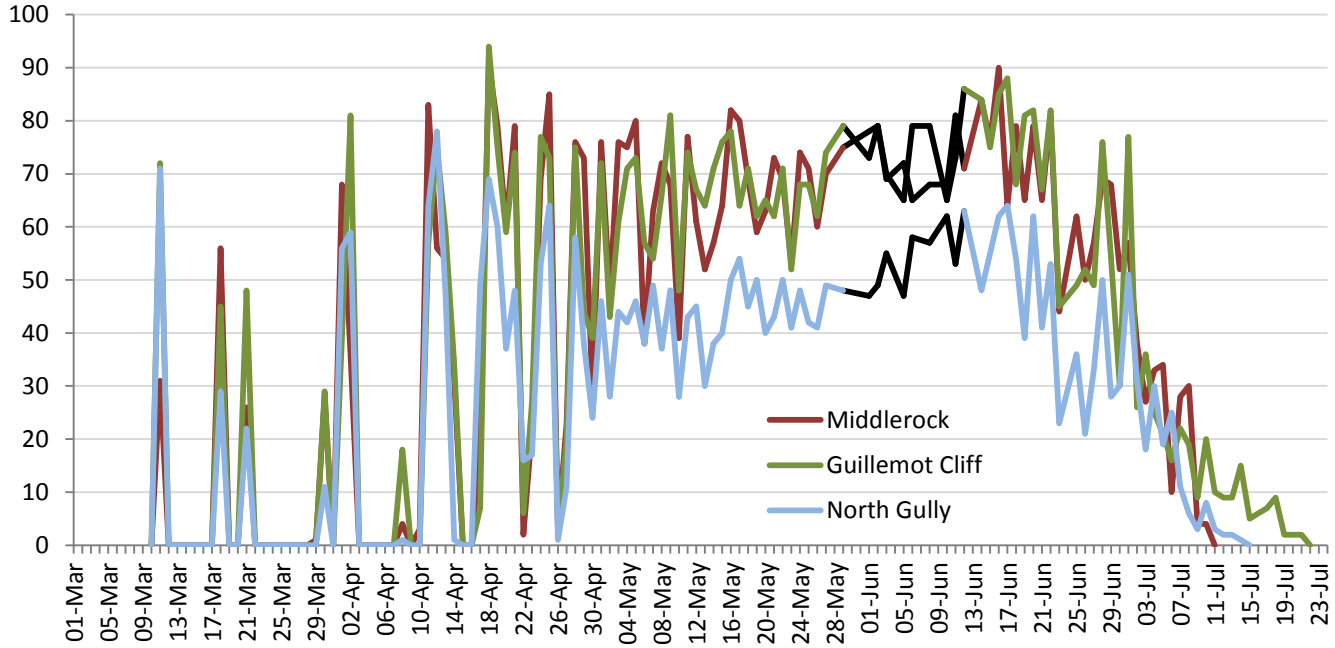
In an effort to ascertain the pattern of colony attendance, near daily counts were made at three of the plots throughout the breeding season (see chart below). There were again fluctuating numbers in all three subcolonies following the usual count period and regular peaks when the totals were augmented by the return of partners, failed adults, successful females or non-breeding birds;

interestingly these peaks were again broadly consistent between subcolonies, suggesting that returning auks respond to the same environmental cues (as is often the case, the peaks also coincided with increases in Guillemot numbers). The first jumpling had departed the productivity plots by 17th June, this one day earlier than the first of last year, but one day later than the 2015-2023 mean (during this period the first productivity plot chick jumped between the 8th and 26th June). The number of adults within the three plots declined during late June, with only double-figure totals logged from 2nd July (the 2014-2023 mean is 4th July, ranging between 30th June in 2019 and 10th July in 2018) and single-figure counts from 15th July (the 2014-2023 mean is 14th July, ranging between 9th July in 2019 and 2022 and 18th July in 2014, 2018 and 2023). For a 12th year running, the last of the breeding attempts within the boulders were concluded before the last of the attempts on the cliffs; all of the study chicks at the Bluffs had departed by 2nd July, whilst five of 34 attempts were still active at the Neck plot on 4th July and five of 40 attempts were still active at North Gully on the 5th. The last seemingly successful North Gully chick jumped between the 9th and 10th July and the last at the Neck jumped by the 21st. Across the Island there were 15 adults ashore on 21st July and single-figure counts from the 23rd until the 26th, with three in Little Bay on the latter date the last to be seen on land; the 2013-2023 mean last adult ashore date is 27th July, with the earliest lasts logged on 24th July in 2015, 2016 and 2017 and the latest on 2nd August in 2018.

There were sightings of Razorbill at sea on seven August dates, with all counts being of six or less bar the 52 logged on the 20th; although an August bird-days total of 73 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 138.9, the peak daycount was only down on that logged in two previous years (a record August daycount of 159 took the 2020 tally to a record 575). Counts on 12 September dates, with highs of 26 on the 12th, 185 on the 19th and 32 on the 26th, led to a bird-days total of 305, this the sixth highest September tally to date; six of the seven highest September bird-day totals have been recorded in the last eight years, with a peak of 1708 logged in 2017. October counts were low for a third straight year, with birds noted on 11 dates and highs of only 20 on the 17th and 77 on the 23rd taking the bird-days total to 143; the peak October daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 139.1, the bird-days total down on a mean of 342.6 recorded during the same period (there was an all-time high of 1224 in 2019). November counts were well below average, with sightings on seven dates including a high of just six on the 28th which took the total to 17; the 2013-2023 peak November daycount mean is 39.2, the mean bird-days total for the same period being 96.2. There

were no Razorbill seen ashore for a 12th successive November, this seemingly an auk behaviour confined to Guillemot during the early winter period. Further large auks were present at sea during the autumn, but they remained unidentified due to their distance from the Island; there were 1219 in September (36.2% up on a 2013-2023 mean of 894.9), 2231 in October (37.5% up on a 2013-2023 mean of 1622.1), 3983 in November (this only down on the 3985 of 2019 and the 4674 of 2022) and 970 in the first two days of December (with an all-time December daycount high of 840 on the 1st).

The number of adults on ledges within three of the plots (standard survey period in black).



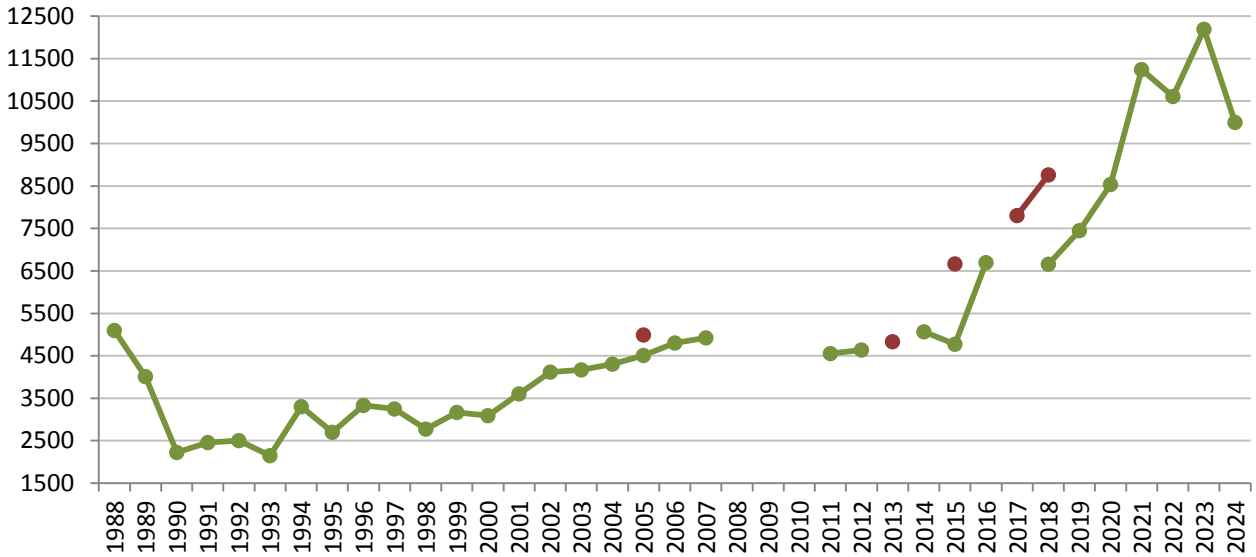
Ringing recovery M93635
Originally ringed as a pullus, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 24th June 1999
Previously Recovered as an adult, THE DENTS, SKOKHOLM 27th April 2018
Previously Recovered as an adult, THE DENTS, SKOKHOLM 19th May 2023
Recovered as an adult, THE DENTS, SKOKHOLM 22nd April 2024
Finding condition Metal ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 9069
The only other Razorbills to be retrapped or resighted this year were K30857, ringed as an adult on 20th June 2015 and not retrapped until 11th June this year, and K41909, ringed as a pullus on 3rd June 2019 and not resighted until 11th June this year.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica* **Pâl**
Very Abundant Breeder
160 trapped (including 43 pulli), 4 retrapped, 207 resighted
1936-1976: 5412 trapped, 2011-2023: 840 trapped, 37 retrapped, 2286 resighted, 2 controls

A late return of staff meant that the 316 logged on 11th March was the first count of the year; there have nevertheless only been 474 earlier March bird-days, with 204 on the 9th in 2021 the highest daycount during this period (the 2013-2023 first three-figure daycount mean date is 16th March, with the earliest on the 3rd last year, the latest on the 31st in 2014). There were sightings on all but three subsequent March days, with 2322 on the 16th matching the third earliest four-figure daycount (the 2013-2023 first four-figure daycount mean date is 21st March, with a count of 1730 on the 12th last year the earliest, a count of 3491 on 4th April 2014 the latest). The first small landfall also occurred on 16th March, with four seen leaving South Haven burrows; this was the second earliest

landfall to date, one day later than the first of 2022 and eight days earlier than the 2013-2023 first landfall mean (the latest during this period landed on 6th April 2013). A March bird-days total of 35,964 was only down on the 43,349 of 2022; the six highest March bird-day totals have occurred in the last six years, with further highs of 29,098 in 2021 and 29,915 in 2023. Daily counts were made from the Neck during each spring evening between 2013 and 2019, this to record the pattern of colony attendance and to help select suitable times for whole Island surveys (see the 2013-2019 Seabird Reports for charts showing attendance around the Neck), whilst the impetus for subsequent whole Island surveys has been an assessment of the number rafting in and around South Haven.

The maximum Puffin daycount recorded each spring during the period 1988-2024. Green points represent counts made during March and April, maroon points counts made in May.



Although whole Island counts would certainly have been in five figures on both occasions, surveys on the 25th and 30th March were abandoned due to rough seas and rain rendering counts inaccurate; a minimum of 2463 were around the Neck on the latter date, this the lowest total of the last five years, with 2270 in 2019 the most recent lower tally for this area. An unfortunate combination of

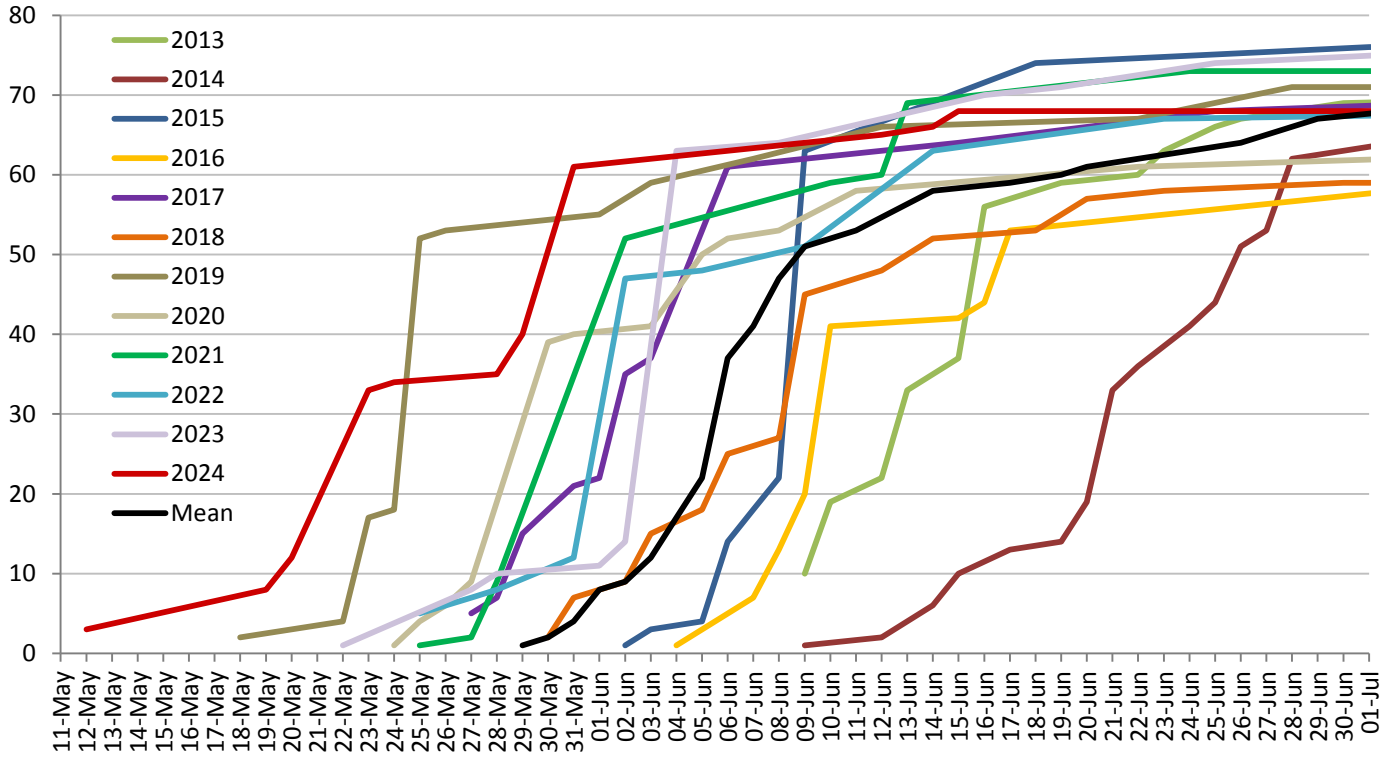
rough seas, inclement weather and the sporadic attendance of birds meant that subsequent evenings were also unsuitable. Apparent range expansions this year included three amongst coastal rocks to the south of Winter Pond on 8th June and a minimum of three fish provisioned burrows on the slope above the southeast corner of the Quarry in early July, whilst one east over South Pond on 29th June was a very rare over Island sighting. Puffins again nested in the new Crab Bay Hide; for the first time an egg was visible in one of the one-way glass boxes, with laying witnessed on 7th April and hatching on 16th May, the youngster departing by 25th June. Every group of guests had the opportunity to join staff in the dark room and witness events at the nest (photograph below). Nine active Puffin sites and a successful Manx Shearwater nest were recorded in the fabric of the new building, this including a burrow excavated by Puffins in the roof last year; two burrows were destroyed during the construction process (see the introduction to the 2022 Annual Report for information on the construction and the 2023 Seabird Report for notes on the initial occupation).

A productivity plot established at Crab Bay in 2013 was used for a 12th season. Of 90 marked non-bifurcating burrows, 76 were seen to be occupied and were visible throughout the season (71 in 2023); productivity estimates are based on observations of these burrows. Chick provisioning was first witnessed on 11th May, these the earliest fish deliveries ever recorded on Skokholm; the 2013-2023 mean first delivery date is 24th May, with the earliest during this period logged on the 14th in 2019, the latest on 3rd June in a post-wreck 2014. There were 25 Crab Bay deliveries recorded on the 12th, these including three to different plot burrows; the date of the 2013-2023 mean first Crab Bay plot fish delivery is 29th May, this five days after the whole Island mean (in 2020 the first plot delivery was on the same date as the first delivery anywhere, whereas in 2013 it was ten days later, the graph below giving the first plot delivery dates logged in previous years). The first daylight hours watch showed that 49% of study burrows had been provisioned by 23rd May, the 2024 chick feeding period approximately four weeks earlier than in 2014 (the breeding season which followed the most severe winter storms recorded during this study). The breeding season is seemingly getting earlier; six of the seven earliest chick provisioning periods between 2013 and 2023 have occurred in the last seven years. There were 11 active burrows (14.47%) not seen to be provisioned with fish and it is assumed that these failed at egg stage (the 2013-2023 mean is 6.54%, with a low of 2.82% in 2021 and a high of 14.71% in 2022).

Although the study plot was visited regularly following the first recorded fish delivery, it certainly cannot be assumed that the first and last fish provisioning was seen for each burrow. Indeed the daylight hours Puffin watches highlight how some burrows are provisioned infrequently (see table

below). Additionally it proves difficult to standardise ad hoc recording effort between years. It was thus decided in 2016 that a three visit method would be used to calculate productivity on Skokholm, but that five visits and ad hoc records would still be amassed to allow further comparisons to be made in the future (see the 2016 Seabird Report for more details). This is more in line with the Seabird Monitoring Handbook (Walsh *et al.*, 1995) which states that, when monitoring Puffin productivity in colonies where the nest is inaccessible and the colony is shared with Manx Shearwaters, the most appropriate technique is 'When birds are feeding large chicks, make a few watches to determine which burrows/crevices have fish taken down them'. Establishing when burrows contain large chicks is inevitably the main issue with this technique, necessitating earlier watches to detect chick hatching dates (which since 2013 have varied by nearly a month). Whereas five daylight hours watches were performed in each year between 2014 and 2019 and between 2021 and 2023, a COVID-19 dictated staffing shortage meant that the five 2020 watches each lasted from 0430-1700hrs only; this year the watches again lasted all of the hours of daylight.

The number of study burrows which had been provisioned with fish by a particular date each year, along with the 2013-2023 mean.



The number of fish deliveries to known active burrows seen during five daylight watches.

No. of deliveries	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
No. of burrows 23 May		5	3		5	4	8	4	1	1	1					
No. of burrows 31 May		8	2	8	8	9	7	6	3	4	3	2				
No. of burrows 15 June		3	2	6	6	2	4	8	12	10	4	3	2	1	2	
No. of burrows 28 June		6	5	7	7	8	4	6	2	4	3	1	3		1	1
No. of burrows 10 July		10	9	2	2	2	1	1					1			

Puffins can fledge having spent 34 days as a burrow-bound chick, although this is more typically 38 days and can be anything up to 60 days (Ferguson-Lees *et al.*, 2011). A flaw with the three visit technique is that some chicks were counted as fledged when they had reached as little as 24 days old (see table below). However it would be incorrect to assume that only those provisioned on all three watches went on to fledge; early hatchers could potentially have departed by the third watch, whilst others may have hatched after the first watch. Although this three visit technique is more

standardised than ad hoc recording, the 2013 to 2023 productivity estimates of between 0.72 and 0.80 fledglings per pair include birds which did not fledge; there have been examples most years of chicks already counted as having fledged which were either eaten or found dead, although this was not the case this year. This technique also misses fledglings in some years, with apparently successful chicks known to hatch after the second watch (which were thus recorded on only one of three watches and assumed to have failed). Nevertheless this more standardised monitoring suggests that a 2024 productivity figure of 0.75 was similar to that seen in recent years (the 2013-2023 mean is 0.76 ±se 0.01). If the ad hoc records are included and it is assumed that a chick seen to be provisioned for 31 days or more was of fledging size, then the 2024 data suggests that, of the 76 monitored attempts, perhaps only 50 were successful (0.66 fledglings per pair); the 2013-2023 mean ad hoc productivity figure is 0.56 ±se 0.02, with a previous high of 0.64 in 2016 and 2020 and a low of 0.49 in 2013. At least 57 attempts saw a chick reach a minimum of 26 days (75.0% or 0.75 chicks per pair, see second table below), this up on the 0.62 of last year.

Calculating productivity using three daylight watches. The first watch was between 23rd May and 28th June (dependent on the date of first fish delivery that year), the second between 11th June and 8th July and the third between 28th June and 24th July. Chicks are assumed to have fledged if fed on a minimum of two watches. Ad hoc productivity is based on a chick reaching 31 days and the mean is that from 2013-2023.

	First fish in plot	Last fish in plot	Fed watch 1 & 2	Min. chick age	Fed watch 2 & 3	Min. chick age	Fed all 3 watches	Min. chick age	Prod. based on 3 watches	Ad hoc prod.
2024	12 May	19 Jul	29	24 (23/5 - 15/6)	25	26 (15/6 - 10/7)	3	49 (23/5 - 10/7)	**0.75** (57 of 76)	0.66
2023	22 May	26 Jul	39	22 (4/6 - 25/6)	5	22 (25/6 - 16/7)	12	43 (4/6 - 16/7)	**0.79** (56 of 71)	0.52
2022	25 May	25 Jul	31	22 (2/6 - 23/6)	7	21 (23/6 - 13/7)	11	42 (2/6 - 13/7)	**0.72** (49 of 68)	0.53
2021	25 May	24 Jul	38	23 (2/6 - 24/6)	11	20 (24/6 - 13/7)	8	42 (2/6 - 13/7)	**0.80** (57 of 71)	0.62
2020	24 May	14 Jul	3	13 (30/5 - 11/6)	16	22 (11/6 - 2/7)	33	34 (30/5 - 2/7)	**0.78** (52 of 67)	0.64
2019	18 May	24 Jul	19	19 (25/5 - 12/6)	9	17 (12/6 - 28/6)	29	35 (25/5 - 28/6)	**0.76** (57 of 75)	0.55
2018	30 May	30 Jul	20	22 (9/6 - 30/6)	11	18 (30/6 - 17/7)	15	39 (9/6 - 17/7)	**0.75** (46 of 61)	0.56
2017	27 May	30 Jul	33	20 (6/6 - 25/6)	6	18 (25/6 - 12/7)	16	37 (6/6 - 12/7)	**0.80** (55 of 69)	0.57
2016	04 Jun	13 Aug	7	16 (17/6 - 2/7)	3	13 (2/7 - 14/7)	38	28 (17/6 -14/7)	**0.73** (48 of 66)	0.64
2015	02 Jun	05 Aug	16	14 (18/6 - 1/7)	2	12 (1/7 - 12/7)	42	25 (18/6 -12/7)	**0.75** (60 of 80)	0.55
Mean	**29 May**	**30 Jul**							**0.76**	**0.56**

The number of days between the first and last observed chick feeding based on ad hoc recording and five daylight watches.

Days	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-52
No. of burrows	3		1	2	2	7	1	20	22	7

The five daylight watches were also used to monitor kleptoparasitism. The study plot was confined to the area of the 90 numbered burrow stakes at Crab Bay. On 23rd May 471 Puffins arrived to the study area with fish and of these just two (0.42%) were successfully robbed. On 31st May 958 arrived

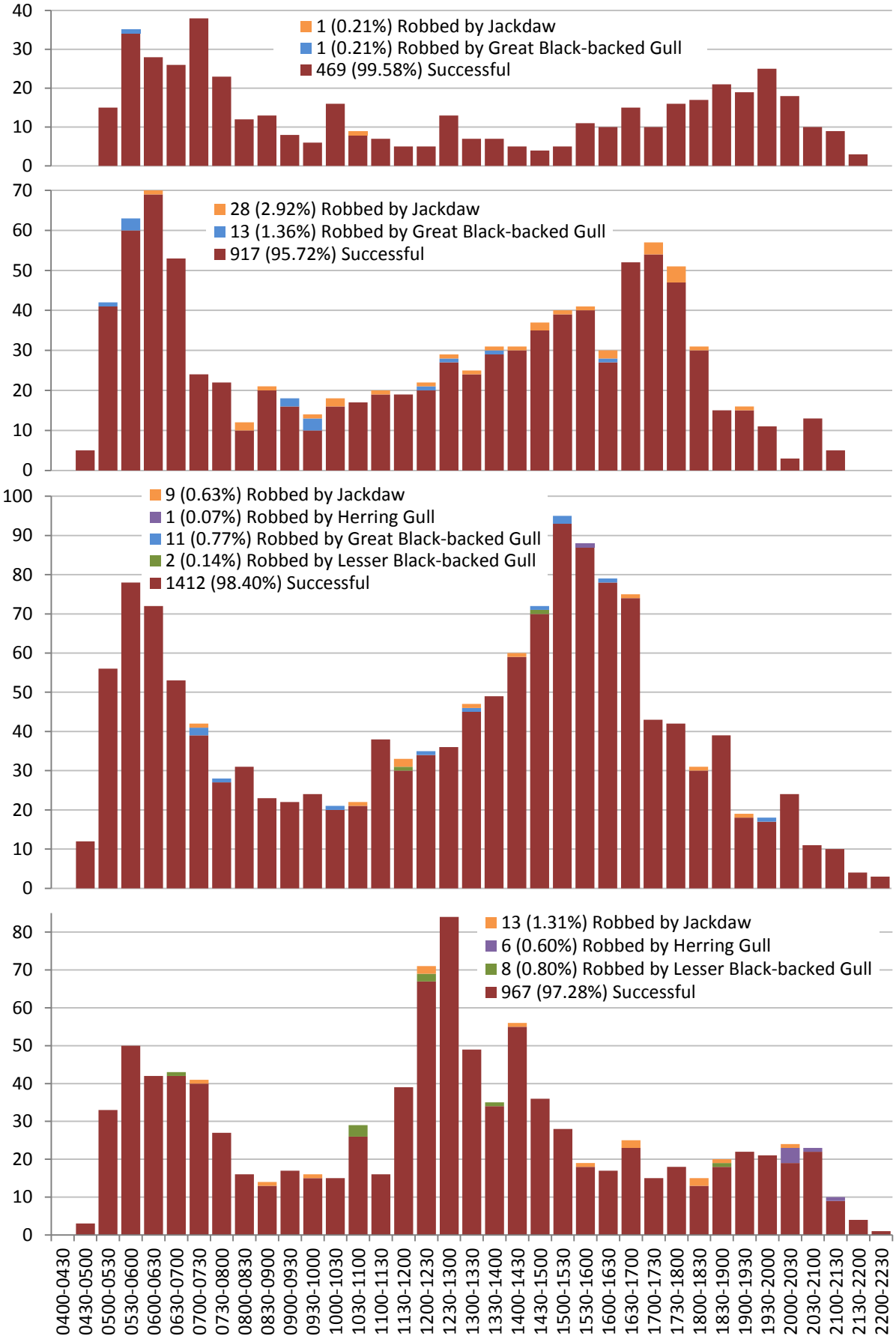
and 41 (4.28%) were robbed. On 15th June 1435 arrived and 23 (1.60%) were robbed. On 28th June 994 arrived and 27 (2.72%) were robbed. On 10th July 181 arrived and 11 (6.08%) were robbed. These figures do not take into account the number of fish lost to gulls at sea or on the approach to the colony. The total number of deliveries witnessed over the five watches was 4039, this down on the 4499 of last year but the second highest tally to date. In terms of the percentage of deliveries lost over the study plot, a five visit mean of 2.57% was the fourth lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.50%. Over the five 2024 watches, 0.35% of deliveries were taken by Lesser Black-backed Gull (the lowest proportion of the last 11 years), 0.62% were taken by Great Black-backed Gull (the fifth lowest) and 0.17% were taken by Herring Gull (the second highest, only down on the 0.91% of last year). Jackdaw were not seen to take fish during plot watches between 2013 and 2017 and only took between 0.03% and 0.09% of deliveries between 2018 and 2021, however they have since taken more, with a high of 1.44% recorded this year.

The total number of fish deliveries recorded over five watches of the Crab Bay Puffin Plot 2014-2024 and the total number stolen by gulls and corvids (the latter also given as the proportion of the total taken by each species). The mean is that for 2014-2023.

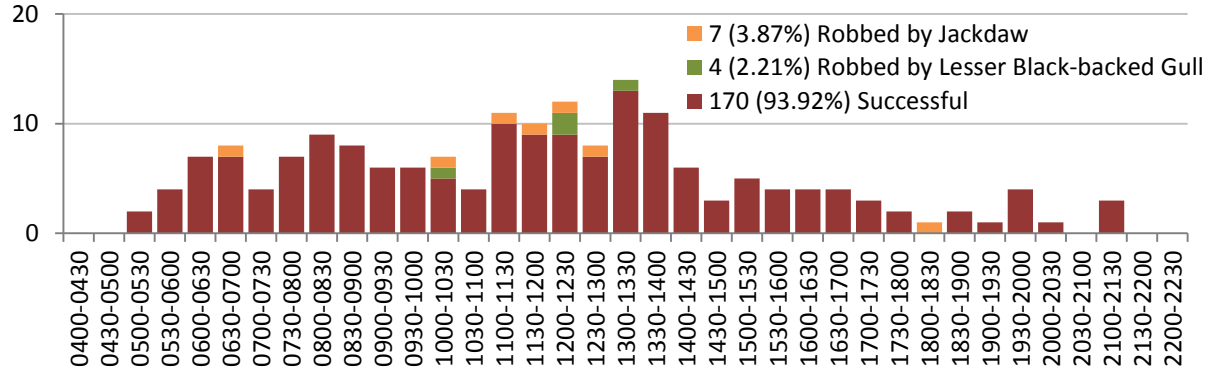
	Total Deliveries	Number Parasitised	Parasitised (%)	By LBBGU	By GBBGU	By HERGU	By JACKD	By CROW	By RAVEN
2024	4039	104	2.57	0.35	0.62	0.17	1.44		
2023	4499	169	3.76	0.93	1.44	0.91	0.42	0.04	
2022	3292	57	1.73	1.03	0.39		0.30		
2021	3824	49	1.28	0.78	0.42	0.03	0.05		
2020*	2339	77	3.29	2.09	1.11		0.09		
2019	2669	80	3.00	2.25	0.67		0.04		0.04
2018	2950	80	2.71	2.17	0.51		0.03		
2017	3639	56	1.54	1.13	0.38			0.03	
2016	3057	138	4.51	3.63	0.82	0.07			
2015	3186	114	3.58	2.57	0.91	0.09			
2014	2267	98	4.32	2.60	1.72				
Mean	**3172.2**	**91.8**	**2.97**	**1.92**	**0.84**	**0.11**	**0.09**	**0.01**	**0.00**

*watches stopped at 1700hrs.

The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on the 23rd and 31st May and on the 15th and 28th June 2024, along with the number of times that gulls and corvids successfully robbed the fish.



The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on 10th July 2024, along with the number of times that gulls and corvids successfully robbed the fish.



A colour ringing project was begun at Crab Bay in 2011 to allow an estimate of adult survival to be made each year. There were 128 ringed in the first year, 166 between 2012 and 2014, 106 between 2016 and 2019 and 91 between 2021 and 2023; a further 27 adults were marked this year. The table below summarises the resighting data collected so far. What is apparent is that some birds are not seen every year, perhaps because they have not returned to the plot or probably because their rings have been missed. Indeed 26 were not seen for two years (including three which went missing for two years twice), 14 were not seen for three years, two were not seen for four years and two were not confirmed for five years. Additionally two were missing for nine years, with one due to ring loss (making it look like another bird) and one surprisingly photographed in 2023. We now know that when 220 were seen last year, at least 234 were alive; between 2013 and 2023 a mean of 90.47% of known live birds were seen each year. A 2023-2024 survival figure of 78.82% is thus likely to increase in the future. With 13 years of resighting data now available, we can start to look at fluctuations in survival over time. The percentage of birds surviving the winter during the period 2011 to 2023 has varied between 80.18% (2013-2014) and 96.51% (2012-2013), with only the 2014 and 2023 return rates being below 89% and a 2012-2023 mean of 91.60% ±sd 5.50. A flaw with this survival estimate is that colour marks were added to Puffins caught in flight, birds potentially resident in areas not visible to researchers; a better estimation of survival may therefore come from looking for birds previously seen in the field (thus discounting individuals in the year after ringing). The resulting survival estimates range from 80.12% (2013-2014) to 97.37% (2012-2013), with a 2013-2023 mean of 92.11% ±sd 5.78. One of the most striking features of these estimates is the substantial drop in survival noted after the severe 2013 to 2014 winter wrecks, however similarly poor survival has been observed in the last two years; it is tempting to suggest that HPAI may have impacted survival of late, although another year of resighting data will provide more confidence in recent estimates.

Survival in adult Puffins. An average survival figure for each year is based on the number of birds ringed in the preceding year plus the number of previously ringed birds known to be still alive, for example 217 birds (93.94%) are now known to have been alive in 2015, of a 2014 total of 231 (57 ringed in 2014 plus 174 (93+40+41) ringed previously and known to be alive). Survival after a one year establishment period means that birds have been seen within the study area before (and are therefore assumed to be located in visible positions); birds ringed in the preceding year are therefore excluded from the calculations as they may be occupying hidden areas of the colony.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	Total	Survival after a year
Ringed	128	58	51	57	23	24	31	28	40	30	21	491	
Seen 2012	72											72	
Alive 2012	114											114	
% survival	89.06											89.06	-
Seen 2013	102	52										154	
Alive 2013	111	55										166	
% survival	97.37	94.83										96.51	**97.37**
Seen 2014	86	36	37									159	
Alive 2014	93	40	41									174	
% survival	83.78	72.73	80.39									80.18	**80.12**
Seen 2015	78	37	35	50								200	
Alive 2015	86	39	38	54								217	
% survival	92.47	97.50	92.68	94.74								93.94	**93.68**
Seen 2016	67	34	32	43								176	
Alive 2016	79	38	36	48								201	
% survival	91.86	97.44	94.74	88.89								92.63	**92.63**
Seen 2017	71	35	31	44	19							200	
Alive 2017	79	38	33	45	20							215	
% survival	100.00	100.00	91.67	93.75	86.96							95.98	**97.01**
Seen 2018	69	34	28	40	19	20						210	
Alive 2018	75	37	31	41	20	23						227	
% survival	94.94	97.37	93.94	91.11	100.00	95.83						94.98	**94.88**
Seen 2019	65	33	27	36	17	20	21					219	
Alive 2019	68	36	29	39	19	23	30					244	
% survival	90.67	97.30	93.55	95.12	95.00	100.00	96.77					94.57	**94.27**
Seen 2020	60	31	23	33	15	18	22	17				219	
Alive 2020	63	34	26	38	17	22	29	26				255	
% survival	92.65	94.44	89.66	97.44	89.47	95.65	96.67	92.86				93.75	**93.85**
Seen 2021	57	30	23	28	16	16	25	22				217	
Alive 2021	59	32	25	34	17	20	28	26				241	
% survival	93.65	94.12	96.15	89.47	100.00	90.91	96.55	100.00				94.51	**94.51**
Seen 2022	47	29	21	29	13	19	21	18	26			223	
Alive 2022	53	29	24	32	16	19	26	26	34			259	
% survival	89.83	90.63	96.00	94.12	94.12	95.00	92.86	100.00	85.00			92.17	**93.36**
Seen 2023	38	21	20	27	11	14	22	20	28	19		220	
Alive 2023	40	21	20	28	12	14	23	23	30	23		234	
% survival	75.47	72.41	83.33	87.50	75.00	73.68	88.46	88.46	88.24	76.67		80.97	**81.47**
Seen 2024	35	16	12	25	10	12	20	19	21	16	15	201	
% survival	87.50	76.19	60.00	89.29	83.33	85.71	86.96	82.61	70.00	69.57	71.43	78.82	**79.49**

Puffins were again taken regularly by Great Black-backed Gulls during the breeding season and checks of the Buzzard nest revealed fresh carcasses. Adult losses became rarer during the Puffling feeding period, dropped fish seemingly a sufficient deterrent. An adult Puffin shook a Puffling to death at Crab Bay on 26th May, the youngster then eaten by a Lesser Black-backed Gull. Exceptional numbers were ashore on the 8th and 9th July, with a minimum of 10,000 logged on the latter date, whilst the 16th was the first notably quiet day, with an almost empty Crab Bay. The last four-figure

daycount was logged on 24th July, two days later than the last of 2023, and raft counts remained in the hundreds until 29th July (between 2013 and 2023 the last three-figure daycount averaged 2nd August, with the earliest on 29th July 2020 and the latest on 6th August 2014). Daily August sightings to the 10th peaked at 39 on the 2nd and daycounts were in single figures from the 4th. The last fish delivery to be seen this year was made to a burrow above Dumbell Bay on 10th August, this two days later than the last of 2023, but one day earlier than the 2013-2023 mean; the latest last delivery recorded during this period was on 23rd August 2014, whilst one on 4th August 2019 was the earliest. One heading west off South Haven at 1230hrs on 10th October was the only autumn sighting, this becoming just the 14th year with a record in this month.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata* **Trochydd Gyddfgoch**
Scarce passing at sea from September to May, not recorded every year but occasionally Uncommon

There were no spring records for the second time in four years; there have been 58 bird-days logged in March, April or May, with highs of eight in 1967 and ten in 2016. Indeed the only record this year was of two just a few metres apart, heading south off the Quarry on 1st December. An annual bird-days total of two was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.2 and well down on highs of 12 in 1967 and 2021, 14 in 2016, 15 in 1992 and 19 in 1990. The number of bird-days logged is inevitably impacted by how long staff remain on the Island towards the end of the year; although there have been birds in every month bar July, 90 of 196 all-time bird-days have now been noted during the last three months of the year and a further 18 have been in January or February.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* **Trochydd Mawr**
Scarce passing at sea from August to May, not recorded every year but occasionally Uncommon
Earliest 3rd August 2019 (12th September 2024) **Latest** 30th May 1983 (28th April 2024)

One north over Spy Rock and the Farm on the 28th made this the seventh April since 2014, and the 13th April ever, with a record. There have been March, April or May sightings in 18 previous years tallying 27 bird-days, now with 11 since 2014 and highs of three in 1980 and 1994. An all-time August bird-days total of four was not added to, whilst one heading east off the Lighthouse on the morning of the 12th took the all-time September total to 20, with six since 2016 and a high of four in 1930. Although distant divers logged on the 9th and 13th October were probably this species, there were no definite October sightings, the all-time total remaining at 17 (including five since 2014). Morning seawatches during November produced singles on the 11th, 26th and 27th, these taking the all-time November total to 33, 23 of which have been since 2015. A 2024 bird-days total of five was

close to a 2013-2023 mean of 5.6, this a period which saw all-time highs of 24 in 2019 and nine in 2020 (the former tally including a remarkable daycount of 18 on 2nd December).

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* **Pedryn Drycin**
Abundant Breeder a 2016 whole Island survey predicted 2383 occupied sites
637 trapped (including 43 pulli), 55 retrapped, 34 controls
1933-1976: 18,473 trapped, 2011-2023: 7162 trapped, 674 retrapped, 299 controls

Despite the sizable Skokholm breeding population and the significant amount of time dedicated to seawatching, Storm Petrels typically prove a rare sight at sea. Indeed the only 2024 at sea sighting was of one heading west off the Lighthouse, this during a moderate southerly at 0720hrs on 25th August. With the exception of a small number of incubating adults visible in shallow crevices or in nest boxes, all other sightings came at night, although birds occasionally called from holes during the day and vocal responses were elicited for monitoring purposes. The first record of the year was of one in Petrel Station box 11 at just after midnight on 20th April (recorded on camera), whilst the first field observation was of seven in flight at the Quarry on the night of the 24th. The Petrel Station cameras revealed that birds were absent during the day, with the first diurnal observation being of one in Quarry box B4 on 29th April; this was four days later than the first of last year, but five days earlier than the 2013-2023 mean (the earliest during this period was heard on 23rd April 2017 and the latest on 25th May 2013). One singing in flight over Migration Rocks on 25th May mirrored the 2023 observations; there were no records included for this area during the 2016 whole Island survey. The infrared viewing equipment again proved popular, producing peak nocturnal counts from the Quarry of at least 150 on 2nd June and 120 on 19th June and 3rd July.

The total number of apparently occupied crevices (located over ten visits) responding to a recording of male song at each of the seven study sites. Numbers in parentheses are the totals from the 2m wide Quarry transects (as stipulated in the project guidelines) as opposed to the more wayward crevices monitored since the project's inception. There was no 2020 survey, the mean that for the period 2010-2019 and 2021-2023.

Year	North Pond Wall	Little Bay Wall	North Haven Gully	Quarry Transect 1		Quarry Transect 2		Quarry Transect 3		Quarry Transect 4		Quarry total		Total	
2024	7	19	17	14	(6)	16†	(9)†	11¥	(6) ¥	47	(30)	88	(51)	131	(94)
2023	9	13	17	15	(6)	15†	(8)†	12	(7)	61	(32)	103	(53)	142	(92)
2022	9	18	19	16	(5)	18†	(9)†	17	(10)	57	(32)	108	(56)	154	(102)
2021	9	17	16	17	(5)	15†	(7)†	14	(10)	43	(22)	89	(44)	131	(86)
2019	10	23	12	18	(7)	18†	(9)†	13	(8)	44	(20)	93	(44)	138	(89)
2018	6	13	11‡	15	(5)	15†	(10)†	12	(8)	49	(30)	91	(53)	121	(83)
2017	7	20	15‡	15	(5)	13†	(7)†	10	(9)	47	(27)	85	(48)	127	(90)
2016	6	15	17	9*	(4)*	**	**	11	(8)	41	(26)	61	(38)	99	(76)
2015	7	17	17	14	(5)	21	(9)	12	(7)	42	(25)	89	(46)	130	(87)
2014	9	12	13‡	14	(5)	18	(9)	18	(12)	37	(22)	87	(48)	121	(82)
2013	8	15	22	14	(4)	15	(8)	10	(7)	46	(27)	85	(46)	130	(91)
2012	5	9	21	12	(5)	8	(4)	10	(5)	33	(17)	63	(31)	98	(66)
2011	7	5	19	11	(5)	13	(8)	10	(7)	25	(14)	59	(34)	90	(65)
2010	4	9	18	8	(5)	15	(12)	11	(8)	30	(17)	64	(42)	95	(73)
Mean	**7.4**	**14.3**	**16.7**	**13.7**	**5.1**	**15.3**	**8.3**	**12.3**	**8.2**	**42.7**	**23.9**	**82.8**	**44.8**	**121.2**	**83.2**

* Transect 1 was only visited on four occasions in 2016 due to safety concerns.
** Transect 2 was not visited in 2016 due to a rock fall.
† Transect 2 was shortened in 2017 due to the 2016 rock fall.
‡ There was substantial scouring in the winters of 2013-14 and 2016-17 and in October 2017.
¥ A small area of Transect 3, which held one site in 2023, was missed due to safety concerns.

Four playback transects established at the Quarry in 2010, along with plots in North Haven Gully and along two of the walls which radiate from the Farm, potentially provide a sound method for monitoring changes in the Skokholm population (see the 2013-2019 and 2021-2023 Seabird Reports for full details). Unfortunately the COVID-19 dictated Island closure meant that there were insufficient staff to safely survey the boulder areas in 2020, however a check of the accessible crevices used for productivity monitoring found incubating adults at the vast majority of traditional sites. We were joined by two Long-term Volunteers for the full survey period this year, this allowing work to be completed in the usual period; ten visits were made to the study areas between 12th June and 16th July. An MP3 recording of male song was played into every crevice encountered along the transects, both numbered (and therefore used previously) and unmarked, with each active crevice being recorded and marked if new. It was first noted in 2013 how some marked crevices no longer fell within the two metre wide transects, an observation which prompted regular checks to assess the drift caused by (typically) small scale rock movements (and almost certainly in a small number of cases by erroneous measurements early in the project); it should be noted in future surveys that some marked crevices which were once within the two metre transects now lie outside of the survey area. The playback census this year again focused on the area delineated by marked burrows, although the results were then divided into those which fell within the two metre transects and those which fell just outside (see table above).

Between 31 and 56 responses were elicited along the Quarry transects using MP3 playback in each of the years between 2010 and 2019 and between 2021 and 2023, although a substantial rock slide in 2016 significantly reduced the area which could be surveyed that year; Quarry Transect Two, which held between four and 12 responding birds, was almost entirely destroyed in 2016 and Quarry Transect One was undercut on its southern edge, rendering both transects too dangerous to survey (see the 2016 Seabird Report for photographs and further details). It would seem from the records that the 2016 Quarry rock fall was by far the largest such event for over 35 years. Visits to the Quarry in 2017 established that there had been no further significant slides on any of the transects; the decision was made to reinstate Transect One entirely and to use the upper section of Transect Two, a situation which has remained the same since. It was decided in 2017 that all of the data previously collected for Transects One and Two would be compared directly with future years; no adjustments have thus been made for the fact that Transect Two was shorter from 2017 onwards and that Transects One and Two were missed in 2016. It was again apparent that there had been some very

small winter rock slides, mainly along Transect Four, whilst a small overhanging area of Transect Three, which held one apparently occupied site in both 2022 and 2023, was avoided this year.

There is a general consensus that the number of pairs utilising the 18th century herringbone walls on Skokholm has declined (Vaughan and Gibbons, 1996; Vaughan, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Sutcliffe, 2010), perhaps due to a loss of suitable nest sites as vegetation and soil fills gaps in the collapsing walls. However standardised survey work over 14 of the last 15 years suggests that there have been no further declines, although clearly there is some variation in the number of responses elicited each year (perhaps in part due to fluctuations in the number of transient, non-breeding birds, rather than significant changes in the number of breeding pairs (Brown and Eagle, 2017)). This year saw four more wall responses than in 2023, with a combined North Pond Wall and Little Bay Wall total of 26 being up on the 2010-2023 mean (21.7 ±sd 6.1); there were highs of 33 in 2019 and 27 in 2017 and 2022, lows of 13 in 2010 and 12 in 2011. Sadly a response was not elicited at North Pond Wall 9, this a crevice found to be active in each of the previous 13 years. Nevertheless it would seem that the Walls population can still be cautiously regarded as stable. The six holes excavated by hand in 2021 and 2022 were again not used.

The number of crevices which have at some point been occupied over the 14 study years (a total of 412), subdivided to show how many years the crevices have been apparently occupied for and the percentage of crevices occupied for a particular number of years. Crevices in the lower half of Transect Two, not visited after the 2016 rock fall, are not included in this table.

	Quarry Transects	The Walls	North Haven Gully	Total	% of total
1 year of apparent occupancy	51	44	27	**122**	29.61
2 years of apparent occupancy	37	9	21	**67**	16.26
3 years of apparent occupancy	24	7	6	**37**	8.98
4 years of apparent occupancy	22	6	14	**42**	10.19
5 years of apparent occupancy	22	6	4	**32**	7.77
6 years of apparent occupancy	18	7	4	**29**	7.04
7 years of apparent occupancy	10	4	2	**16**	3.88
8 years of apparent occupancy	14	3	1	**18**	4.37
9 years of apparent occupancy	14	1		**15**	3.64
10 years of apparent occupancy	7	2	1	**10**	2.43
11 years of apparent occupancy	6	1		**7**	1.70
12 years of apparent occupancy	8	2		**10**	2.43
13 years of apparent occupancy	2	1		**3**	0.73
14 years of apparent occupancy	3		1	**4**	0.97
Total	**238**	**93**	**81**	**412**	

The huge swell generated by Storm Ophelia in October 2017, the remnants of the easternmost major Atlantic hurricane on record, caused yet another scouring event in North Haven Gully. Nest boxes installed in 2014, the access ladder to the lower portion of the slope and the central section of boulder scree which traditionally held many active crevices were all destroyed, whilst the painted marker stones were again moved from their original locations. This was the third major change to the North Haven landscape in five years, a series of events which almost certainly contributed to a 38.9% decline in the number of occupied crevices located between 2010 and 2018. No further significant changes to the North Haven landscape have been observed since, although a small rock fall above the upper east portion of the gully has created additional sites. Nevertheless, recent weather events releasing soil from further up the gully have seemingly reduced the overall number of open fissures suitable for nesting. How such a loss of available nest sites impacts the Skokholm population as a whole is unclear; it would seem likely that nest sites are available away from North Haven and that the birds were not impacted directly (as they were predominantly absent during the

scouring events), however the impact of looking for new nest sites on adult survival and productivity is something of an unknown. There were 17 active sites discovered in North Haven Gully this year, this matching a 2010-2023 mean of 16.7 ±sd 3.3 and the 2015, 2016 and 2023 totals (the 19 of 2022 is the only higher tally since the 22 of 2013 (the first big scouring event during this study was in the winter of 2013-2014)).

The ephemeral nature of Storm Petrel nest sites was also evident at the Quarry where there were further small scale movements, particularly along Transect Four. A Transect One total of six matched that of last year as the second highest to date, only down on the seven of 2019. A Transect Two total of nine was one up on that of 2023 and close to a 2010-2023 mean of 8.3 ±sd 1.9, this despite the fact that the transect was shortened in 2017. A Transect Three total of six was one down on that of last year and the lowest since the five of 2012 (the 2010-2023 mean is 8.2 ±sd 1.8); an expanding Jackdaw population may be in part responsible for a drop from the ten active sites recorded in 2021 and 2022, whilst a small area was missed this year (see above). The 30 occupied crevices found along Transect Four over ten visits was two down on the high recorded in 2022 and 2023, albeit well up on a 2010-2023 mean of 23.9 ±sd 5.8. The overall Quarry total of 51 was two down on that of last year, but the fourth highest to date and 13.8% up on the 2010-2023 mean (44.8 ±sd 7.3).

Overall there were 94 responses elicited this year, this the second highest tally to date, two more than last year and well up on a 2010-2023 mean of 83.2 ±sd 10.7; the total was eight down on a record 2022 (when there were two more active sites in North Haven, one more in the Walls and five more in the Quarry). It still seems likely that, over the last decade at least, the Skokholm study population has been stable at worst, a conclusion which is probably applicable to the Island population as a whole. This is positive news following what may have been a significant population decline between 1996 and 2010 (Sutcliffe and Vaughan, 2011; Wood *et al*., 2017). One of the most important variables highlighted in recent years is nest site availability within the study areas; birds can only react to the changing landscape and maintain a stable population if further nest sites open up as others are lost. It is clear that some Storm Petrel nest crevices are short lived (as shown in the table above, nearly a third of those found over the course of this study have only been occupied during a single year), however stable sites are also in existence; over 20% of the active crevices located during 14 years of study have shown signs of occupancy in seven or more years and 8.26% of crevices have contained a calling bird in ten or more years. Although changes in the positioning of rocks will mean that some crevices were only available for a single year, it is tempting to suggest that some of the crevices occupied only once are perhaps unsuitable nest sites (although they contained a calling bird, such sites may have never actually supported a breeding attempt).

The percentage of known active crevices which responded to male song during any single visit, averaged across all ten visits, and the 2014-2024 mean (the resulting correction factors are given in parentheses). The extremes are in bold.

Year	The Walls	North Haven	Quarry	Rock fall	Average
2024	35.0 (2.86)	32.4 (3.09)	25.6 (3.91)	26.7 (3.75)	28.3 (3.53)
2023	31.4 (3.19)	37.1 (2.70)	34.5 (2.90)	34.8 (2.87)	34.3 (2.92)
2022	29.6 (3.38)	**40.0 (2.50)**	**37.9 (2.64)**	**38.2 (2.62)**	**36.7 (2.73)**
2021	34.2 (2.92)	36.9 (2.71)	32.1 (3.11)	32.9 (3.04)	33.1 (3.02)
2019	31.2 (3.20)	35.8 (2.79)	30.1 (3.23)	30.8 (3.24)	30.9 (3.24)
2018	22.6 (4.42)	31.8 (3.14)	32.6 (3.06)	32.5 (3.07)	31.0 (3.23)
2017	**21.9 (4.58)**	30.9 (3.23)	28.1 (3.55)	28.5 (3.51)	**27.1 (3.69)**
2016	**40.0 (2.50)**	**25.9 (3.86)**	**23.3 (4.30)**	**23.9 (4.18)**	27.7 (3.61)
2015	28.7 (3.48)	37.4 (2.68)	28.9 (3.46)	30.4 (3.29)	30.1 (3.33)
2014	36.2 (2.76)	**40.0 (2.50)**	26.2 (3.82)	26.4 (3.79)	28.1 (3.56)
Mean	**31.1 (3.22)**	**34.8 (2.87)**	**29.9 (3.34)**	**30.5 (3.28)**	**30.7 (3.25)**

The proportion of known active crevices which respond to a recording of male song during any single visit unsurprisingly fluctuates; there are several reasons for this, including the chance presence of birds of different sexes, individual variation in response rate, nest site positioning (which will influence how occupants hear the stimulus) and breeding status (non-breeders are perhaps more likely to leave a crevice unattended, to occupy multiple crevices during the study period or to respond at a different rate to breeding birds, whilst breeding status could also change during the survey period). The Walls saw an average of 9.1 (35.0%) of the 26 active sites respond per visit, although between five and 15 responded on a single visit. At North Haven a mean of 5.5 (32.4%) of 17 active sites responded, although between three and eight responded on a single visit. At the Quarry a mean of 22.5 (25.6%) of 88 active sites responded, but this was between 15 and 28 on any particular date. Despite this significant variation between dates, the mean response rates at the Walls, North Haven and the Quarry fell within the ranges observed between 2014 and 2023 (see table above). An average response rate for all sites of 28.3% was the fourth lowest to be observed in ten years and halted a recent increase; although it is unclear why, the three highest average response rates occurred between 2021 and 2023, the five highest between 2018 and 2023. The use of these response rates to produce a correction factor remains the best way to predict the number of birds present in a large area when ten visits are not logistically feasible (for example during the whole Island census). Based on data collected over ten years, the number of active sites present in an area is likely to be in the region of 3.25 times more than the number encountered on a single visit. However the variation seen in this year's figures is a reminder of how difficult it is to assess the population of a species which usually cannot be seen.

There is a clear need to discover what the birds which respond to playback during the annual monitoring are actually doing; due to the fact that the majority of responding birds are hidden, it is unclear how many of these (and indeed how many of the 2383 occupied sites predicted during the 2016 whole Island census (Wood *et al*., 2022)) are actually breeding (as opposed to non-breeders moving around potential nest sites or diurnal refuges unsuitable for nesting). Previous attempts to use an endoscope in natural sites have failed to locate a sufficiently large sample size for monitoring purposes. One way to improve our knowledge is to encourage petrels to occupy accessible artificial sites. With this in mind a study wall containing 119 nest holes was created in 2016 (with the final inspection hatches and endoscope holes added in April 2017). Ten visits were made to this 'Petrel Station' between 26th June and 11th July 2020 when an MP3 playback census was conducted (this within the standard period used for the transect survey). The ten visits elicited calls from three boxes, with a mean of 1.1 responses per visit and a mean apparent response rate of 36.67%. Confirmatory checks during the chick provisioning period revealed discrepancies between the playback results and the box contents; two of the boxes found to be active during the survey contained chicks, but one only contained a nest scrape, whilst a further three boxes from which responses were not elicited contained scrapes and six additional boxes contained egg stage failures by silent pairs. This has obvious implications for the whole Island census as evidently some active sites were not detected over ten visits (which would perhaps suggest that the Skokholm population is larger than estimated in 2016). It should be remembered that the Petrel Station was probably not then representative of the Island as a whole, primarily as the majority of occupants were likely to be younger, inexperienced birds. This theory is supported by the 2018-2020 productivity estimates (see table below), these figures well down on those seen elsewhere on the Island.

A summary of Petrel Station contents 2018-2024.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Number of pairs that produced eggs	4	9	8	5	6	7	12
Number of pairs that fledged young	0	2	2	3	4	5	7
Productivity	0.00	0.22	0.25	0.60	0.67	0.71	0.58
Boxes with signs of occupancy	8	13	12	19	57	64	44

Visits to the Petrel Station during the 2024 chick provisioning period revealed that at least 44 boxes had contained a Storm Petrel at some point this year. Only nest scrapes were present in 32 of these

boxes, with 12 pairs having produced eggs (a new high). Eggs were abandoned in boxes 7, 69, 74 and 105, these all sites containing an egg for the first time. A chick in box 64 died during or close to hatching, a well formed skull and some feathers later visible through the cracked egg; a pair using this site had fledged a chick in each year between 2019 and 2023 and failed at egg stage in 2018. Chicks fledged from box 11 for a sixth straight year, box 12 for a fourth straight year and boxes 63 and 112 for a second consecutive year, whilst a fledgling from box 21 followed an egg stage failure last year. A pair fledged a chick from box 87 at the first attempt, this a site home to an empty scrape in 2022 and 2023, whilst a fledgling in box 115 was at a site seemingly not occupied in any previous year. Assuming that no eggs had been removed from the Petrel Station by the petrels or scavengers (a difficult task as there is a lip between the nest chamber and the access tunnel to each box), then productivity was 0.58 fledglings per pair, this down on that observed in the last three years and on that observed elsewhere (perhaps owing to the large increase in pairs producing eggs, some of which were no doubt less experienced). Sound recording equipment and eight cameras were again installed in the Petrel Station this year, these in boxes 11, 12, 21, 63, 64 (which quickly broke), 84, 106 and 112; courtship and mating, egg laying, incubation and chick feeding were again captured, as was some fascinating pebble tossing behaviour (the latter seen in both adults and chicks). The camera in box 112 recorded an intruder on three occasions between 0135hrs and 0247hrs on 8th July, a skirmish seeing the egg pushed to one side of the chamber and subsequently unincubated for over a week; amazingly the egg was eventually retrieved, hatched and the chick went on to fledge, albeit very late in the season (a near-fledgling was still present on 11th November).

An increasing number of Petrel Station fledglings was sufficient inspiration for a Petrel Station II which was built near the Farm in autumn 2023, this containing 148 accessible nest chambers (see the introduction to the Skokholm Annual Report 2023 and the Skokholm Seabird Report 2023 for more details); the recycled plastic rear frame and access doors were added this April (photographs above). An MP3 recording of a singing bird was regularly played from boxes 35 and 71, this no doubt in part responsible for sightings of up to five flying birds in the vicinity of the wall and records of birds calling from within the wall during 13 nights between 16th May and 26th June (from when the MP3 was abandoned). A 28th August check of Petrel Station II revealed ten nest scrapes in empty boxes and an abandoned egg in box 80; the latter had been destroyed by 14th September, with a sloughed Slow-worm skin lying next to the fragments.

There were 28 sites discovered this season where an incubating bird was evident early enough in the nesting period to allow for a productivity estimate, these including five Petrel Station boxes (the

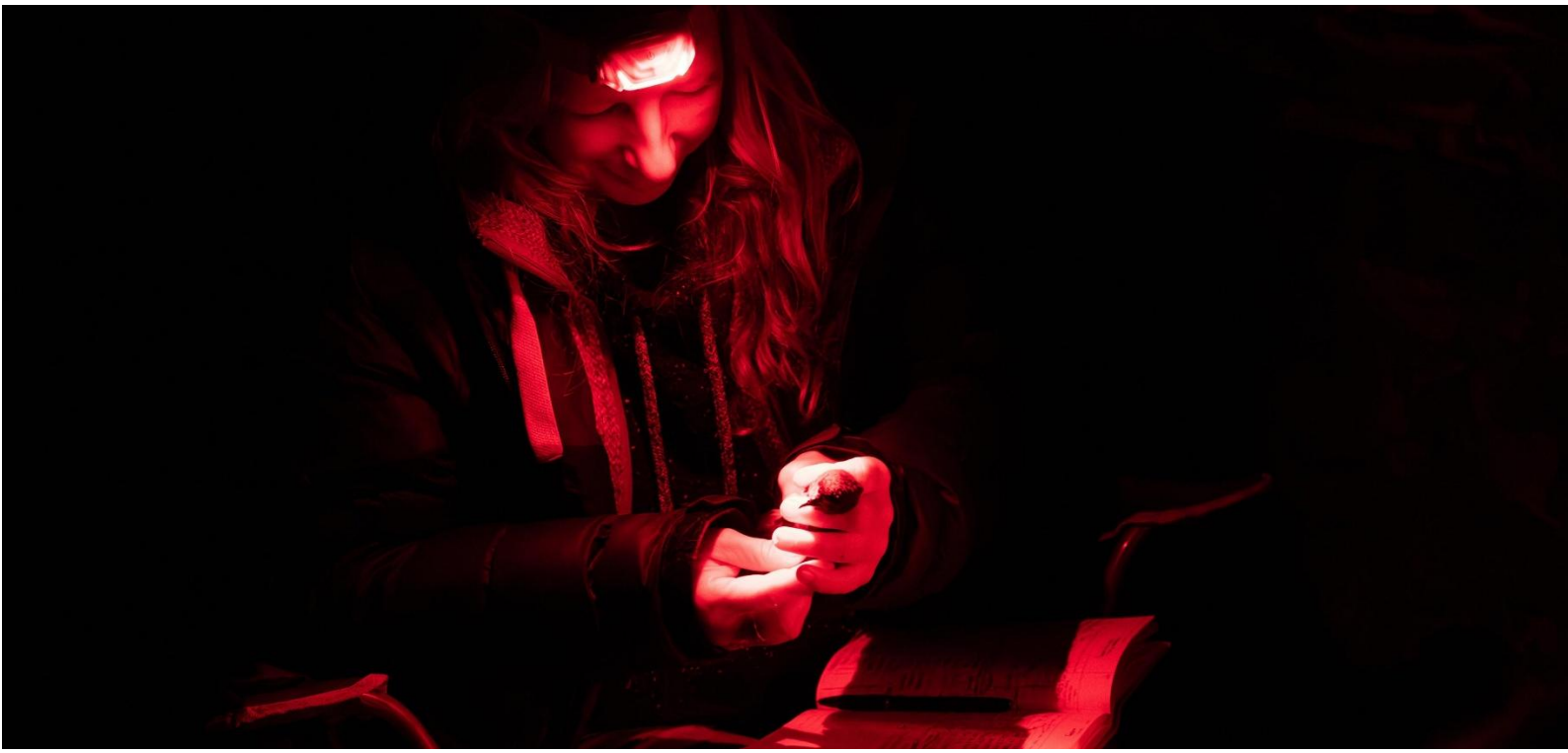
largest sample this decade was 25, with a 2014-2023 mean of 18.3). Although some very early egg stage failures may have been missed, the study is biased towards birds in shallow crevices or boxes and the sample size is far from great, these visible birds provide a rare opportunity to estimate productivity on Skokholm. The first eggshell fragments indicative of a hatched chick were discovered along Quarry Transect Four on 3rd July, this four days earlier than the 2015-2023 mean (the earliest chick during this period was discovered on 29th June 2019 and the latest on 26th July 2021). Seven of the monitored nest attempts failed; attempts in the Cottage Wall, in two old Quarry boxes and on Quarry Transect Three failed at egg stage, a chick died during hatching in Quarry box A8 and attempts in the Knoll Wall and the Well Wall failed at either egg or very small chick stage (the nest contents were not found, whilst a Manx Shearwater chick appeared in the latter site). The remaining 21 attempts were successful, the 2024 productivity estimate thus being 0.75 fledglings per pair; although down on that recorded between 2021 and 2023, this was up on a 2014-2023 mean of 0.65 ±se 0.04 (there was a low of 0.45 in 2020, a high of 0.85 in 2022). Recent years have seen predominantly dry conditions which have no doubt benefitted small chicks left alone in relatively exposed sites. A late July visit by RSPB researchers discovered two new sites suitable for productivity monitoring in the future, but failed to find sufficient accessible nests to make a future tracking project viable.

The ringed Storm Petrel chicks subsequently reencountered as adults.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of chicks ringed	**4**	**11**	**17**	**6**	**6**	**15**	**24**	**15**	**41**	**33**
First reencountered after 2 years	1	1	2		1		4	1	5	4
First reencountered after 3 years		2	2	1		2		2	2	
First reencountered after 4 years							1			
First reencountered after 5 years							1			
Total reencountered	**1**	**3**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**7**	**4**
% of ringed chicks reencountered	**25.0**	**27.3**	**23.5**	**16.7**	**16.7**	**13.3**	**25.0**	**20.0**	**17.1**	**12.1**

Although only small numbers of accessible chicks are ringed each year on Skokholm, the tape luring of adult birds in South Haven is giving some indication as to their post-fledging survival (this coupled

with a small number of controls from elsewhere). Of four birds ringed as chicks in 2013, one has been found subsequently, whilst three of 11 2014 chicks remains the highest return rate to date (see table above). Youngsters controlled elsewhere are a 2015 chick retrapped in Cornwall in 2018 and again in France in 2021, a 2016 chick retrapped on the nearby mainland in 2019, a 2018 chick retrapped in Cornwall and then Wexford in 2021, a 2021 chick retrapped in Gwynedd in 2023 and a 2021 chick retrapped in Donegal in 2023. Of the 139 Storm Petrel ringed as chicks between 2013 and 2021, 20.1% have been seen again. Of the 32 youngsters now encountered subsequently, 19 were first found two summers after fledging (including one also seen three summers after), 11 were first found three summers after fledging (including one also seen six summers after and one also seen four, seven and ten summers after) and singles were first found in their fourth and fifth summers. Of the 11 ringed in the Petrel Station between 2019 and 2022, four have been seen again, this including the chicks ringed in box 11 in 2019, 2020 and 2021, all potentially siblings and all encountered in 2023. A further 68 youngsters were ringed in 2023, birds which we would not expect to encounter in their first summer, and 46 were ringed this year (43 as pulli, three as Skokholm fledglings).



In 2013 a thermal imaging camera recorded a Short-eared Owl hunting Storm Petrels in the Quarry, an event which has subsequently been shown to be quite regular. The remains of six petrels were found that year, with 16 in 2014, 18 in 2015, 51 in 2016, 98 in 2017 (the only year on record in which Short-eared Owls have been proven to breed), 31 in 2018, five in 2019, three in 2020, 39 in 2021, five in 2022 and eight last year; the majority of these were thought to be the victims of Short-eared Owls, usually due to the presence of feathers or pellets. There were 18 Short-eared Owl bird-days logged this season, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 32.5 (there was a high of 76 in 2017 and a low of 16 in 2020). The remains of three adult Storm Petrel were located this year, with one below a Quarry Jackdaw nest on 12th June, a wing near the Table on 15th September and a fresh pellet containing 2722741, also on 15th September (a bird ringed here as an adult on 11th August 2017); between 2013 and 2023 there was an annual mean of 25.5 ±sd 28.8 dead birds logged (see above). There were again no Little Owl records (the last was seen on 17th March 2018); this introduced species is a well-documented Storm Petrel predator, for example the 1936 Skokholm Bird Observatory Report includes details of a Little Owl nest containing the remains of nearly 200 petrels. In 2019 a House Mouse was watched via a live infrared camera feed as it entered Petrel Station

burrow 64; it was seen to walk to the end of the entrance tunnel but did not drop down into the chamber or interact with the resident Storm Petrel chick, indeed neither seemingly reacted to the other's presence. There is as yet no evidence that the Skokholm mice take eggs or chicks, even those abandoned following failed nest attempts.

Adult Storm Petrels were lured to the traditional South Haven netting site on 11 nights between 10th July and 19th August, whilst there was a single night of ringing in Crab Bay on 4th August; this was four fewer ringing nights than conducted last year (the 2013-2023 mean is 11.1 nights, with a high of 16 last year and a low of seven in 2020 and 2022 (these impacted by COVID-19 and Avian Influenza)). The largest catch was of 128 birds in Crab Bay, with 22 trapped in South Haven on the same night, whilst the largest South Haven catch was of 125 birds on the night of 10th July; this was the third lowest peak South Haven catch of the last 12 years, down on a 2021 high of 267 and on a mean of 179.6 ±sd 64.7. Subsequent catches peaked at 87 on the night of 12th July, 69 on the nights of the 13th and 23rd and 98 on the night of the 27th. There were 680 adults handled across the Island this year, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 715.5 and on six of the years during this period (there were highs of 937 in 2015, 1065 in 2018 and 1286 in 2021). Of those handled, 13.1% were already wearing a ring (the mean during the period 2013-2023 was 11.2%, with a high of 21.5% in 2021 and a low of 6.7% in 2014); these included two ringed as adults in 2017, 2018 and 2020, singles ringed as adults in 2021 and 2022, eight ringed as adults in 2023, 31 ringed as adults this year and eight ringed as chicks (one in 2014, one in 2019, two in 2021 and four in 2022), whilst 34 (5.00%) had been ringed elsewhere (the 2013-2023 mean is 3.94%, with a high of 5.54% last year and a low of 2.58% in 2022). Since ringing fully recommenced in 2013 we have now received news of 597 Storm Petrels either ringed on Skokholm and found elsewhere or ringed elsewhere and controlled on Skokholm; of these 399 have been exchanged with sites more than 10km away from the Island (see map below).

Long-term Volunteer Judith Kay compared a list of every Skokholm ringed seabird encountered elsewhere (as given in the Seabird Reports between 2013 and 2023), with a list of those seen on Skokholm (excluding colour ring resightings); the only bird to have been ringed on Skokholm, encountered elsewhere and then retrapped back on Skokholm was Storm Petrel 2740951, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 23rd July 2019, controlled on Bardsey Island, Gwynedd on 24th July 2020 and retrapped in South Haven on 22nd July 2021. Unless stated otherwise, all of the following recoveries were of birds deliberately mist netted.

Ringing recovery 2547860
Originally ringed as an adult, GREAT SALTEE ISLAND, WEXFORD, IRELAND 14th June 2023
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 13th July 2024
Distance travelled 102km at 119 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 395
2547890, ringed as an adult on 16th June 2023, made the same journey, reaching Skokholm on 11th July after 391 days. There have now been four Great Saltee ringed birds found in two years (along with another in 2014).

Ringing recovery 2637378
Originally ringed as an adult, WOOLTACK POINT, MARLOES, PEMBROKESHIRE 5th July 2017
Recovered as an adult, NORTH POND WALL, SKOKHOLM 1st August 2024
Distance travelled 6km at 203 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 2584

Ringing recovery 2685475
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 20th July 2014
Previously recovered as an adult, LUNDY ISLAND, DEVON 19th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, LUNDY ISLAND, DEVON 13th July 2024

Distance travelled 69km at 142 degrees (SE)
Days since ringed 3646
Additionally 2705568, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 31st July 2015, was controlled at Lundy on 13th July after 3270 days. 2740097, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 15th July 2018, was controlled at Lundy on 31st July after 2208 days. 2785351, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 13th July, was controlled at Lundy on 19th July after six days. 2775462 and 2775469, ringed as adults on Lundy on the 7th and 8th July 2024, made the reverse journey, reaching Crab Bay on 4th August and South Haven on 12th August after 28 and 35 days respectively.

Ringing recovery 2685691
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 23rd July 2014
Recovered as an adult, ILLAUNTANNIG, OILEÁNT SEANAIGH, KERRY, IRELAND 14th August 2024
Distance travelled 331km at 283 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 3675
This was the oldest Skokholm Storm Petrel to be confirmed elsewhere this season. Additionally 2774732 and 2785471, ringed as adults in South Haven on 7th August 2023 and 23rd July 2024, were retrapped on Illauntannig on 5th July and 11th August after 333 and 19 days respectively. There were no Storm Petrel exchanges with County Kerry between 2013 and 2023, but four this year (see below for one found in a Great Skellig gull pellet).

Ringing recovery 2699257
Originally ringed as an adult, PORTLAND BILL, DORSET 24th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, CRAB BAY, SKOKHOLM 4th August 2024
Distance travelled 237km at 304 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 377
Additionally 2699290, 2699291 and 2699293, all ringed at Portland as adults on 3rd July 2024, made the same journey, the former reaching South Haven on 28th July after 25 days and the latter two reaching South Haven on 13th July after ten days (2699291 and 2699293 were both processed at 0130hrs at Portland, whilst the former was processed on Skokholm at 0130hrs and the latter at 0150hrs; it is tempting to imagine them travelling around the coast of Britain together).

Ringing recovery 2706064
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 23rd July 2016

Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 22nd July 2021
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 17th July 2022
Recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 18th July 2023 (sic)
Distance travelled 4km at 343 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 2551
Additionally 2722885, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 22nd July 2018, was retrapped on Skomer on 17th July 2023 (sic) after 1821 days. 2746166, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 17th July 2019, was retrapped on Skomer on 20th July 2023 (sic) after 1464 days. 2758584, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 17th July 2021, was retrapped on Skomer on 18th July 2023 (sic) after 731 days. 2774240, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 23rd July 2022, was retrapped on Skomer on 22nd July 2023 (sic) after 364 days. 2774451, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 17th July 2022, was retrapped on Skomer on the 18th, 20th and 26th July 2023 (sic) after 366, 368 and 374 days. The 2023 Seabird Report stated that there was only one exchange with Skomer that year; it is now apparent that this was not the case, rather the records were not submitted to the BTO (the lack of any 2024 records may also reflect unsubmitted data). Between 2013 and 2023 there were 26 encounters with Skomer ringed birds on Skokholm and 63 encounters with Skokholm ringed birds on Skomer.

Ringing recovery 2720285
Originally ringed as an adult, GALLEY HEAD, CORK, IRELAND 12th July 2024
Recovered as an adult, CRAB BAY, SKOKHOLM 4th August 2024
Distance travelled 252km at 87 degrees (E)
Days since ringed 23
Additionally 2754100 and 2754202, ringed as adults at Galley Head on the 13th and 18th July 2024, were retrapped in South Haven and Crab Bay on 30th July and 4th August respectively (both after 17 days).

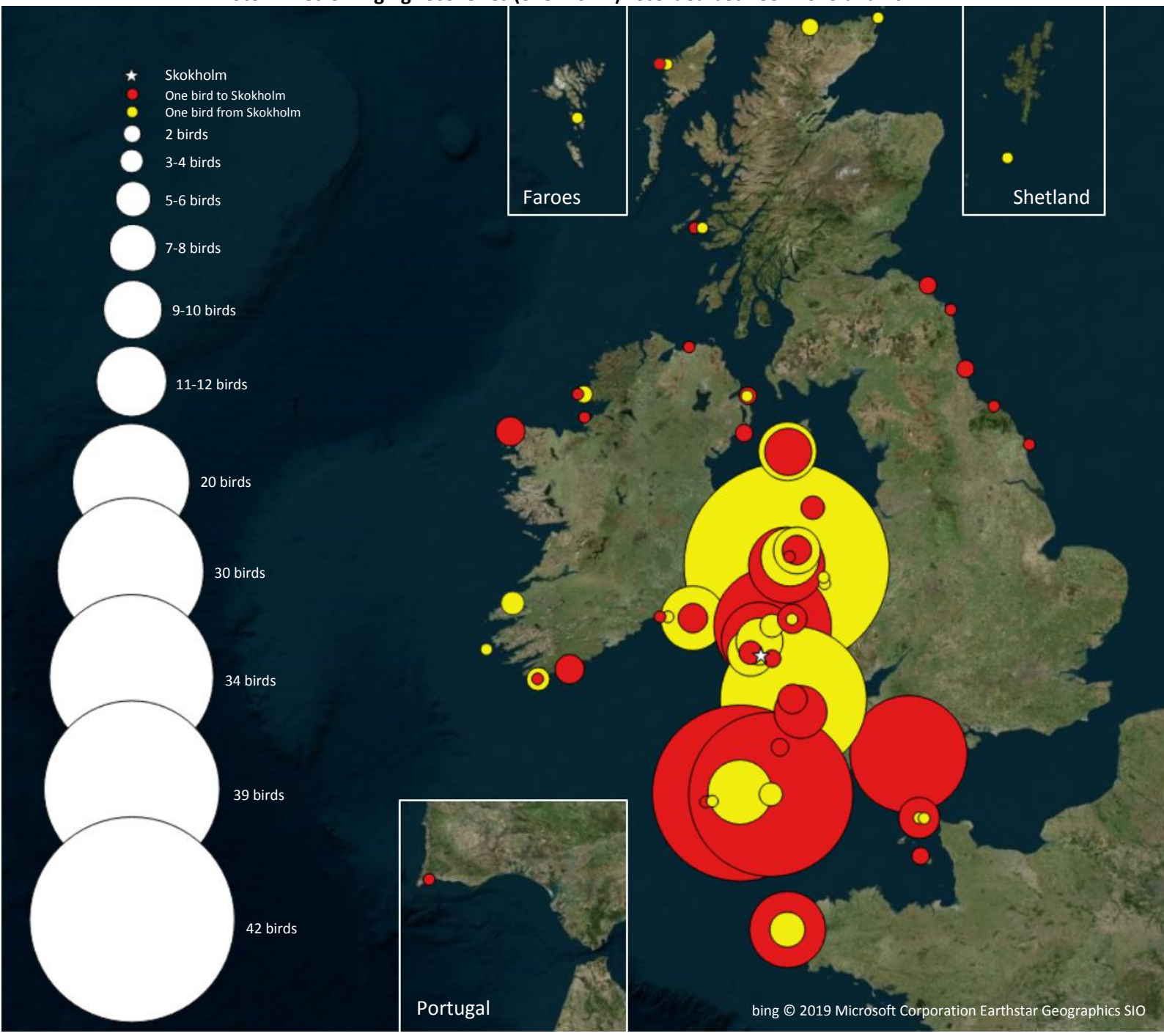
Ringing recovery 2739421
Originally ringed as an adult, STRUMBLE HEAD, PEMBROKESHIRE 18th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 10th and 13th July 2024
Distance travelled 40km at 202 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 358 and 361
Additionally 2739449 and 2787212, ringed as adults at Strumble Head on 26th July 2023 and 13th June, were retrapped in South Haven on the 14th and 28th July after 354 and 45 days respectively. 2787231, ringed as an adult at Strumble on 1st July, was retrapped in South Haven on the 11th and 28th July after ten and 27 days. 2787240, ringed as an adult at Strumble on 10th July, was retrapped in Crab Bay on 4th August after 25 days. 2787249 and 2787257, ringed as adults at Strumble on 11th July, were retrapped in South Haven on 12th July and in Crab Bay on 4th August after 46 hours and 24 days respectively. 2787270 and 2787275, ringed as adults at Strumble on 13th July, were retrapped in Crab Bay on 4th August and in South Haven on 28th July after 22 days and 15 days. 2787300 and 2787322, ringed as adults at Strumble on the 15th and 29th July, were both retrapped in Crab Bay on 4th August after 20 days and six days respectively. 2788714, ringed as an adult at Strumble on 8th July, was retrapped in South Haven on 28th July after 20 days. 2774902, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 20th July 2023, made the reverse journey, reaching Strumble on 13th July after 359 days.

Ringing recovery 2758940
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 27th July 2021
Recovered as an adult, COPELAND ISLAND, DOWN, NORTHERN IRELAND 18th June 2023 (sic)
Distance travelled 334km at 358 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 691

Ringing recovery 2758989
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 28th July 2021

Recovered as an adult, GREAT SKELLIG, KERRY, IRELAND 9th July 2024
Finding condition Ring found in a fresh gull pellet
Distance travelled 361km at 272 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 1077

Storm Petrel ringing recoveries (over 10km) recorded between 2013 and 2024.



Ringing recovery 2774971
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 26th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, BARDSEY ISLAND, GWYNEDD 27th July 2024
Distance travelled 125km at 16 degrees (NNE)
Days since ringed 367
Additionally 2785341, ringed as an adult in South Haven on 13th July, was controlled at Bardsey on

27th July after 14 days. 2788611 made the reverse journey; having been ringed as an adult at Bardsey on 15th August 2023, it was controlled in South Haven on 28th July after 348 days. Whilst the majority of Storm Petrels controlled on Skokholm have been ringed to our south, primarily in Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, the majority of birds ringed on Skokholm are controlled to our north. Skokholm ringed birds have now been controlled at Bardsey Island on 42 occasions since 2013, with the next highest tallies being of 30 at Lundy, ten at both Little Saltee and Gwennap Head and nine at both Porth Iago and the Calf of Man.

Ringing recovery 2780599
Originally ringed as an adult, GWENNAP HEAD, PORTHGWARRA, CORNWALL 4th July 2022
Previously recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 7th August 2023
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 28th July 2024
Distance travelled 185km at 9 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 755
Additionally 2780743, ringed as an adult at Gwennap Head on 16th June 2023, was in South Haven on 23rd July after 403 days. 2780817, ringed as an adult at Gwennap Head on 18th July 2023, was in South Haven on 28th July and in Crab Bay on 4th August after 376 and 383 days respectively.

Ringing recovery 2784106
Originally ringed as an adult, MANGARSTADH, LEWIS, WESTERN ISLES 16th July 2024
Recovered as an adult, CRAB BAY, SKOKHOLM 4th August 2024
Distance travelled 731km at 171 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 19
This is the first to be ringed at this spectacular Scottish site and controlled on Skokholm, however a Skokholm ringed bird made the reverse journey between 2018 and 2021.

Ringing recovery 2785073
Originally ringed as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 22nd August 2023
Recovered as an adult, MALIN BEG, GLEANN CHOLM CILLE, DONEGAL, IRELAND 7th July 2024

Distance travelled 404km at 325 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 320
This is the second Skokholm ringed bird to reach Malin Beg following one ringed as a 2021 chick and controlled in Ireland on 5th August 2023. An Irish ringed bird made the reverse journey in 13 days in 2019.

Ringing recovery CIJ P13082
Originally ringed as an adult, BURHOU ISLAND, ALDERNEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS 15th June 2008
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 30th July 2024
Distance travelled 305km at 316 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 5889
This was the oldest Storm Petrel ring found this season; the oldest ring encountered last year was applied to an adult at Gwennap Head, Cornwall in July 2002 and the oldest of 2022 applied to an adult at Sheepland Harbour, Down in August 2009.

Ringing recovery FRP SE44734
Originally ringed as an adult, ILE DE BANNEG, LE CONQUET, FINISTÈRE, FRANCE 6th July 2022
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 24th July 2024
Distance travelled 363km at 358 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 749
The commune of Le Conquet is home to Banneg, the largest Storm Petrel colony in France, an island believed to support just under 1000 pairs which primarily nest in abandoned Rabbit burrows. Interestingly this nesting habitat was not found to be in use on Skokholm during the 2016 whole Island census (although in 2019 birds were found calling from a small area of burrows to the west of Dip Gully). There have now been 12 Banneg ringed individuals found on Skokholm since 2013, whilst five Skokholm ringed birds have been found there.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* **Aderyn-drycin y Graig**
Fairly Common Breeder first bred in 1967
1 pullus trapped
1968-1976: 19 trapped, 2017-2023: 9 pulli trapped

Birds were ashore on every March date from the return of staff on the 10th; Fulmar were absent from the cliffs on an average of 2.5 March dates between 2016 and 2023, with some ashore on every date in 2021 but absent on six dates in 2022 and on two dates last year (staff were present for the whole month in these years). A 16th to 31st March daycount mean of 74.7 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 61.2 (indeed it was only down on the 85.0 of 2018 and the 78.7 of 2021), however a peak March daycount of 125 on the 15th was the lowest since the 111 of 2020. There were 16 April daycounts of 70 or less (eight last year), including lows of 22 on the 1st, 30 on the 9th (when only ten were ashore) and 36 on the 30th, whilst seven three-figure daycounts (eight last year) took the bird-days total to 2112 (this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 2525.5 and the lowest since 2013). Counts remained low in early May, with no more than 42 logged each day between the 1st and 12th, this pre-laying exodus mirroring that seen in recent years (there were lows of 12 on the 6th and 8th and 14 on the 10th, with daycounts increasing to 58 on the 14th, 76 on the 15th and 102 on the 17th). The first egg to be seen was on Little Bay Point on 11th May, this seven days earlier than the 2013-2023 first egg mean and the earliest on record (the latest first egg during this period, found on 28th May 2014, followed prolonged and severe storms during the preceding winter, whilst the last six years have been the six earliest of the last 12 years, with an egg on 14th May 2022 the earliest prior to 2024).

The six study plots counted annually since 2006 were visited on ten dates between 29th May and 12th June, this a relatively dry period during which predominantly light winds blew almost entirely from the northwesterly quarter; some survey periods are far less clement, for example the 2020 and 2021

seasons saw May storms and huge seas which inevitably influenced Fulmar ledge attendance (the standard deviation recorded across ten visits usually being higher in rougher years (see below)). A 2024 average of 22 apparently occupied sites was one up on last year, albeit seven down on the 2017 record and down on both a 2014-2023 mean of 25.20 ±sd 2.35 and a 2006-2023 mean of 23.56 ±sd 3.11. The mean total at Little Bay dropped to 11, this a new low; the number of occupied ledges has declined from a high of 19 in 2013 to 18 in 2014 and 2017, 17 in 2015, 16 in 2016, 14 between 2018 and 2020, 13 in 2021 and 12 in 2022 and 2023; although 2019 saw one of the lowest plot averages, it was the year in which the area which contains this plot saw the highest number of apparently occupied sites (see map below), whilst this year the count for this area mirrored the plot (with the lowest total of the last decade). The Middlerock mean remained at five, this matching the 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2023 totals as the lowest since the four of 2014. The Guillemot Cliff mean increased to six, this a new high up on the five logged in nine of the last ten years. Up until the 2017 season, only these three plots had contained birds, however a hollow in the top third of the North Gully auk colony was occasionally occupied in three of the years between 2017 and 2020 (the overall mean was only changed in 2017); a Fulmar was again in the North Gully plot on 5th June this year.

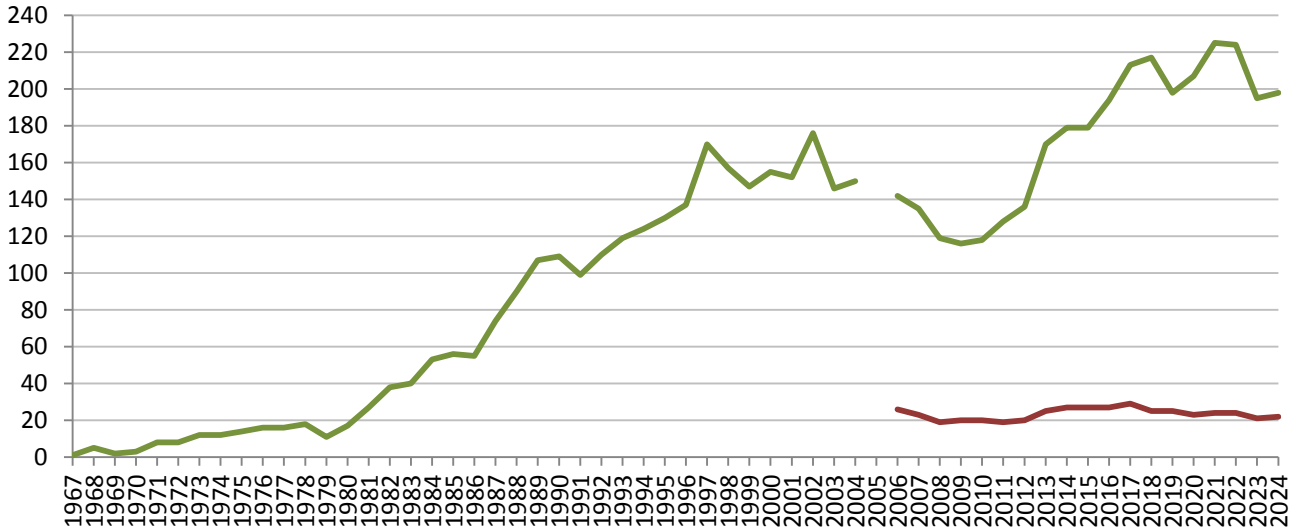
The whole Island totals (apparently occupied sites), mean plot totals, the range of totals over ten study plot visits, the standard deviation observed over the ten visits and the percentage of the Island total made up of study plot birds 2013-2024.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Island	170	179	179	194	213	217	198	207	225	224	195	198
Plots	25	27	27	27	29	25	25	23	24	24	21	22
Range	22-28	23-29	26-29	25-29	26-31	23-27	23-27	19-27	21-27	20-27	20-24	20-25
±SD	2.07	1.79	1.14	1.26	2.00	1.26	1.35	2.27	1.90	2.10	1.26	1.69
Plot %	14.7	15.1	15.1	13.9	13.6	11.5	12.6	11.1	10.7	10.7	10.8	11.1

The whole Island counts undertaken between 30th May and 13th June yielded an average of 198 apparently occupied sites, this three up on last year's mean and matching that of 2019 as the sixth highest total to date. Nevertheless, the 2024 total was 2.5% down on a 2014-2023 mean of 203.10 ±sd 16.86, this only the tenth time on record in which the total has been down on the mean of the preceding decade, with the same occurring in 2003, annually between 2006 and 2012 and last year. There was a decline in numbers in two of the occupied coastal sections, with the means for both the

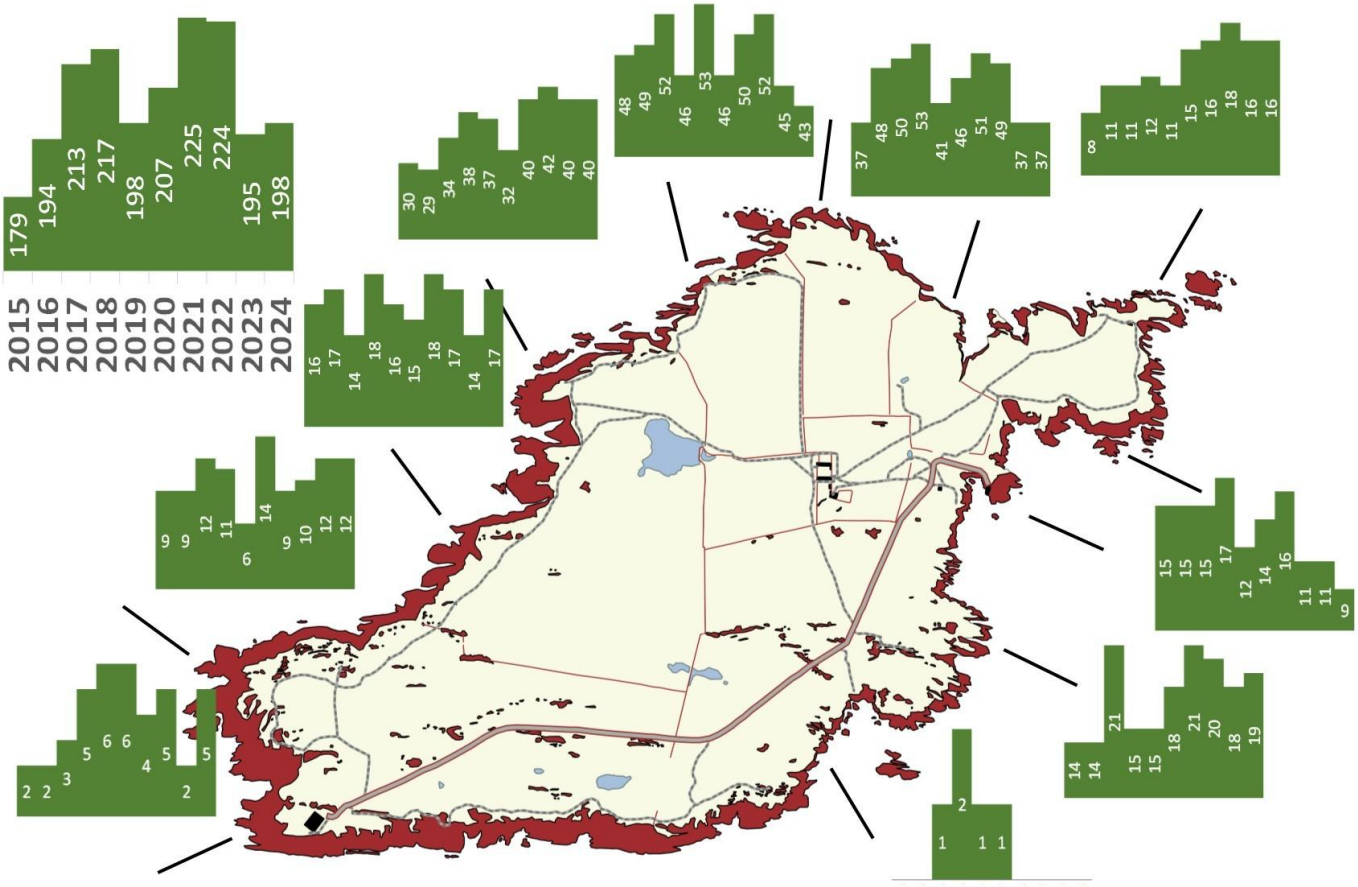
area between Little Bay and Little Bay Point and Peter's Bay dropping by two to new lows (the latter perhaps in some way connected to the poor productivity commonly recorded in this area (see below)). The mean in four areas was the same as that recorded last year, whilst there were increases of three in both the vicinity of the Quarry and between Purple Cove and Twinlet (where the totals both matched the third highest to date) and of one in Hog Bay (where the total was the fourth highest to date). The 2024 whole Island count includes approximately 30 pairs which would be difficult or impossible to see from the Island itself (birds seen from a boat to the west of North Gully, in Little Bay, on the Little Neck and in hidden crevices between Smith's Bay and Little Bay Point); the drop in numbers observed between 2006 and 2012 may perhaps thus be linked to a lack of boat access, although the study plots broadly mirrored the dip in the Island total. The proportion of the Island total made up of study plot pairs was 11.1% this year; although up on that recorded in each of the last three years, this was still 21.8% down on the 2006-2023 mean (14.2% ±sd 2.5), matched the fourth lowest proportion to date and was probably an indication that the plots are not representative of the Island as a whole (perhaps due to a lack of space for expansion, although up to eight more pairs have been resident in the Little Bay plot previously). The plots are nevertheless useful as they give an indication as to how the number of occupied ledges varies during the whole Island count period; they thus serve as a reminder that the population could be somewhat different to that deduced during a comparatively low number of visits.

The total number of apparently occupied Fulmar sites recorded on Skokholm since breeding began in 1967 and the number within the study plots since 2006.



From 11th May, 64 incubating pairs were selected for productivity monitoring (ten at Twinlet, 13 at North Gully and the Dents, 15 in Little Bay, 11 on Little Bay Point, seven at Rat Bay, one in Hump Bay and seven in Peter's Bay); birds seen with eggs or those apparently incubating for ten consecutive days were included in the sample (thus more birds were initially monitored but were soon discovered not to be incubating). There were six early egg stage failures (an adult with a bloody face and closed eye was present at one of these sites on 27th May and 4th June), seven failed over two weeks before the first eggs hatched, five failed within a week of the first eggs hatching and one egg was abandoned after the majority of neighbouring pairs had chicks; there were thus 19 definite egg stage failures. An additional 17 failures became apparent at the time when the eggs of neighbouring pairs were hatching, however the nest sites were found to be empty; none of these sites were seen to contain abandoned eggs, hatched eggshell or dead chicks (the contents were thus removed by either the parents, by other Fulmars visiting abandoned ledges, by predators or by scavengers). A chick on Middlerock went missing within 12 days of it first being seen and the earliest known 2024 chick, first seen at Little Bay Point on 27th June, was missing by 9th July. No large chicks died in the productivity plots this year.

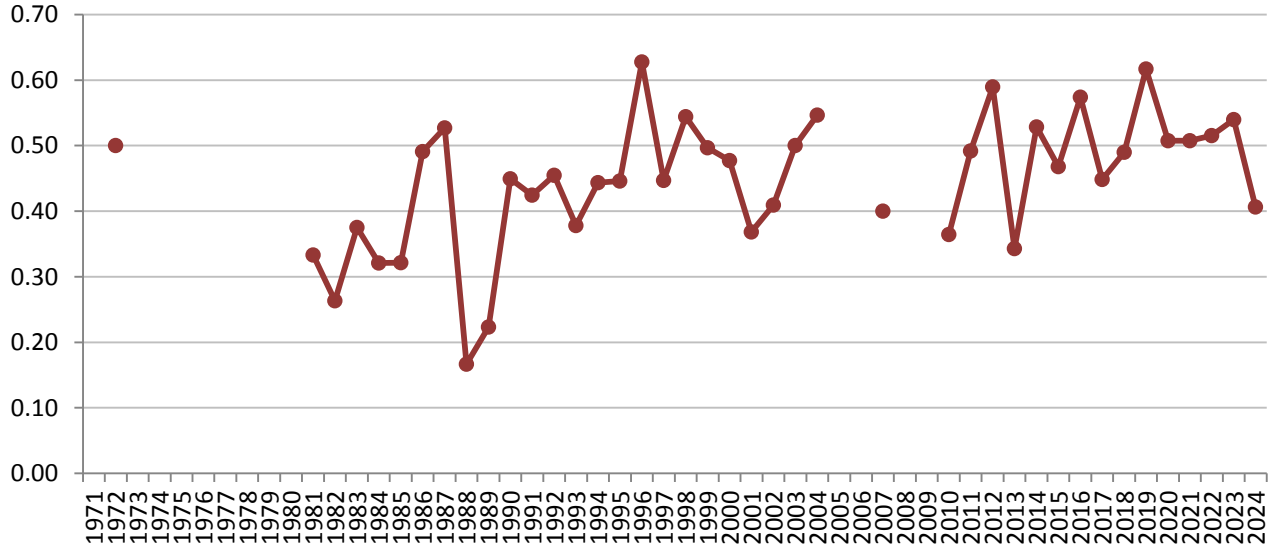
The distribution of apparently occupied Fulmar sites 2015-2024.



Of the 64 monitored breeding attempts, just 26 (40.63%) were successful; a productivity estimate of 0.41 fledglings per pair is 8.9% down on the post-1972 average of 0.45 ±se 0.02, 21.2% down on a 2014-2023 average of 0.52 ±se 0.02 and the lowest since the 0.34 of 2013. Although the whole Island total of apparently occupied sites matched the sixth highest to date, this below average productivity leads to a predicted 80 Skokholm fledglings in 2024; this is the lowest predicted total since the 58 of 2013, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 101.1 and highs of 122 in 2019 (when there were also 198 apparently occupied sites but monitored productivity was 0.62) and 115 in 2022 (when there were 224 apparently occupied sites and productivity was 0.52). Poor productivity at

Peter's Bay in nine of the years between 2013 and 2023 influenced the overall estimates; Peter's Bay productivity in 2013 was 0.06 (compared with 0.34 overall), in 2014 it was 0.40 (0.53 overall), in 2015 it was 0.18 (0.47 overall), in 2017 it was 0.31 (0.45 overall), in 2018 it was 0.36 (0.49 overall), in 2020 it was 0.33 (0.51 overall), in 2021 it was 0.30 (0.51 overall), in 2022 it was 0.44 (0.52 overall) and in 2023 it was 0.25 (0.54 overall). The 2016 season saw 0.54 fledglings per pair, a total virtually identical to the overall value of 0.57, and 2019 saw 0.60 fledglings per pair, a total virtually identical to the overall value of 0.62. The reason for this near annual discrepancy is unclear, as is what linked the more successful 2016 and 2019 seasons; neither environmental factors, predation pressure nor the behaviour of the birds themselves have been obviously different at this site. Five of the seven pairs monitored at Peter's Bay failed this year, all at or after the time that neighbouring eggs were hatching; a productivity value of 0.29 fledglings per pair was up on the 0.23 recorded at North Gully and the 0.27 recorded at Little Bay Point, but was down on 0.40 at Twinlet, 0.57 at Rat Bay, 0.60 at Little Bay and 1.00 at Hump Bay (where there was just one attempt). Poor North Gully productivity was at least in part due to Great Black-backed Gull W:401 which was eating a chick on 13th July.

Fulmar productivity (total number of fledged young per monitored pair) in each year that it has been calculated between 1972 and 2024. The 1972-2024 mean is 0.45 ±se 0.02 fledglings per pair.



It is likely that the larger Fulmar population of recent years will have affected other species; observations during the last few years have included both adult and young Herring Gulls oiled by

nesting Fulmars, adult Fulmars sat on Herring Gull nests, Razorbill adults and chicks evicted from ledges by prospecting birds, an oiled juvenile Peregrine and a Raven oiled so extensively that it probably led to the failure of a nest attempt. Intraspecific interactions have also been witnessed; heavily oiled adults are noted on occasion, whilst two chick stage failures and at least two egg stage failures have been attributed to aggressive neighbours (the eggs were lost prior to the whole Island census). There were no similar observations this year. One was feeding alongside an adult Great Black-backed Gull on 27th April, an eviscerated Manx Shearwater the meal (below photograph). A dead adult was off Little Bay Point on 8th June; an accessible carcase was not found for HPAI testing.

The first fledgling of the year had departed its natal ledge at Hump Bay by 24th August, this three days later than the 2013-2023 first fledgling mean (the earliest during this period had departed on the 18th in 2019 and the latest on the 25th in 2013). All of the remaining 25 productivity plot fledglings departed over the following ten days; the first 25% had fledged by 28th August (two days later than the 2014-2023 mean), 50% had departed by 29th August (one day later than the 2014-2023 mean) and 75% had departed by 1st September (matching the 2014-2023 mean). The last had left its Little Bay nest by 3rd September, this four days earlier than the 2014-2023 mean; the earliest last plot fledgling during this period had also departed by the 3rd (in 2017), whilst the latest had gone by the 22nd in 2021 (interestingly the late 2021 fledgling was not wholly the result of a late hatching, indeed it had first been seen as a hatchling on 20th July meaning that it was on its natal ledge for 64 days, this a period typically closer to 51 days). The last two chicks to be seen ashore were above the Jogs on 4th September, with at least three fledglings returning to the cliffs on the same date; the former were the earliest last chicks ashore of the last 11 years (the latest chick to be seen ashore between 2014 and 2023 was present on 21st September 2021, the earliest were present on the 6th in 2017 and 2022, whilst the 2014-2023 mean is 11th September). There were daily September sightings of birds at sea until a blank on the 17th, with highs of 45 on the 3rd, 60 on the 4th and 46 on the 10th, whilst one was low on the Peter's Bay cliffs on the 13th and further singles were seen at sea on the 19th, 23rd and 25th.

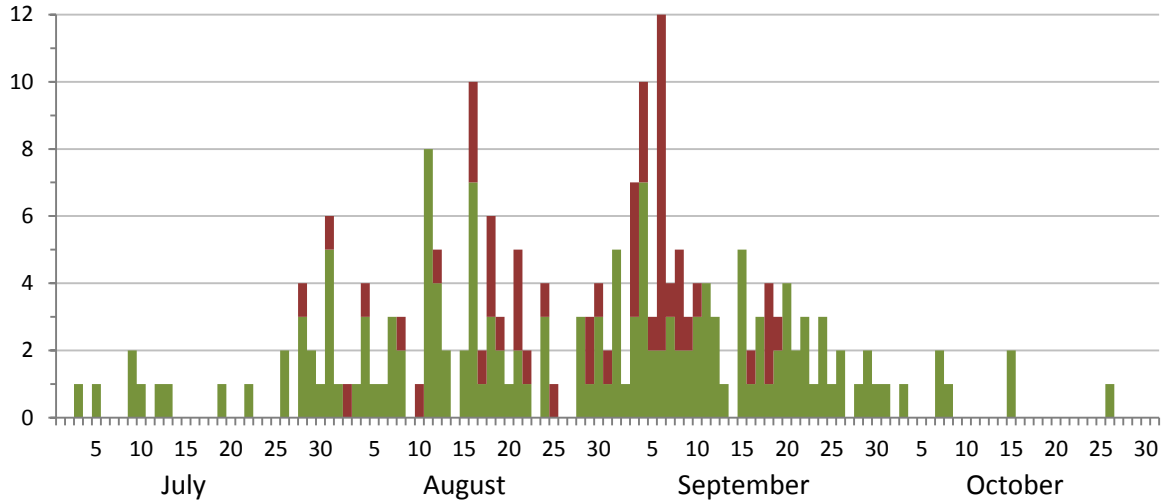
There were no October records for the first time in 12 years; the 2013-2023 October bird-days mean is 39.8, the all-time highs 185 in 2013 and 79 in 2020. November was also surprisingly quiet, with one off the Lighthouse on the 6th, four on the 10th, three on the 11th and then sightings on 14 dates from the 15th, with highs of 61 on the 16th, 33 on the 25th and 99 on the 26th which took the bird-days total to 371; the peak November daycount was the lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 176.5 and on all-time highs of 227 in 2016, 283 in 2019 and 226 in 2021 (the low during this period was of 116 in 2017), whilst the bird-days total was massively down on recent highs of 2006 in 2019, 2222 in 2020 and 2683 in 2021 (when staff were also present throughout the month). Singles were ashore at North Gully and above the Jogs on 15th November, this the latest return to the cliffs of the last 12 years; the 2013-2023 mean first return date is 6th November, with the earliest during this period present on 27th October last year and the latest on 11th November

2015. Nevertheless, birds were ashore on each of the next four days, with 20 having been ashore by the 17th; this was one day earlier than the first 20 of last year (despite the very early first landfall), albeit seven days later than the 2013-2023 mean (20 had been ashore by the 6th in 2017, but not until the 20th in 2015). In total there were birds ashore on nine November dates (two fewer than last year), including highs of just 27 on the 18th, 70 on the 26th and 13 on the 30th; although up on last year's November peak of 69, the number of birds ashore was well down on all-time highs of 189 on the 28th in 2019 and 180 on the 19th in 2021. Daily sightings during the first three days of December peaked at 66 on the 1st (including 32 ashore) and 26 on the 2nd (including 17 ashore).

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* **Aderyn Drycin Du**
Scarce recorded most autumns from July onwards and occasionally Uncommon
Earliest 3rd July 1968 (10th September 2024) **Latest** 26th October 1994

One photographed from the Lighthouse as it flew into moderate northwesterlies at 1550hrs on 10th September was the only record this year. The bird-days total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.7, this a period which saw highs of five in 2016, 2018 and 2020 and of seven in 2019 (the all-time bird-day highs are the 19 of 1987, the 16 of 1989 and the 22 of 2011). This southern hemisphere breeder remains a surprisingly scarce Skokholm species, now with records in 45 years, including each of the last ten, and with 24 bird-days logged in July, 79 in August, 99 in September (including a record daycount of ten on the 6th in 2011) and eight in October.

The total number of Sooty Shearwater bird-days to have been logged on each autumn date. Records shaded maroon have been made since 2010.



Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* **Aderyn Drycin Manaw**
Very Abundant Breeder a 2018 census estimated 88,945 pairs (95% CI: 21,892). 2012-13 est. 63,980
2800 trapped (including 121 pulli), 1534 retrapped, 1 control
1928-1976: 171,509 trapped, 2012-2023: 17,522 trapped, 8273 retrapped, 35 controls

There were already streaks of faeces extending from burrows near Petrel Station II when staff returned to Skokholm on 10th March; one calling after dark on 9th March was the first of last year, this three days later than the first two of 2022. Faecal streaks were in several places the following day, the first eaten bird was found on the 17th (five days later than the first two of last year) and a single on the 25th was the first to be seen at sea. Hundreds of burrows were flooded on 29th March and at least four adults flew from flooding burrows during daylight on 30th April, whilst a remarkable number of birds were on the surface on the night of 26th April when the area between Spy Rock and the South Pond Lower Drain was seemingly at its busiest for at least 12 years. Adults were seen to be ousted diurnally by Crab Bay Puffins on two dates during April, whilst seawatching produced peak

daycounts of 12,000 in one hour during the evening of the 12th and 11,000 on the 29th (the former up on a 2013-2023 mean April high of 8044.8). One exited a flooded burrow during daylight on 2nd May, whilst daycounts during the month were down on most recent years; a peak May count of 3980 on the 26th was down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 13,291.5 (a high of 28,200 was counted during a southwesterly gale in 2018). June daycounts peaked at 10,080 on the 15th and 15,640 on the 27th; the 2013-2023 mean maximum is 16,840.1, with highs of 24,750 in 2020 and 72,000 during heavy rain and a near gale in 2019. Seawatching effort intensifies in July, however a calm month failed to produce the large counts seen in some years; there were highs of 26,000 on the 18th and 18,000 on the 30th, the former up on a 2013-2023 mean of 24,564.2, but well down on the 50,400 recorded last year. A somewhat rougher August saw highs of 27,400 on the 2nd and 34,212 on the 7th, both down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 42,908.2 (there were all-time August daycount highs of 87,520 in 2020 and 72,550 last year).

The number of Manx Shearwaters breeding in the study plots encountered the following year and the number to have been found by 2024 (which were actually alive the following year).

	Birds found the next year		Birds found by 2024	
Birds breeding in 2023			265 of 318	83.33%
Birds breeding in 2022	279 of 345	80.87%	295 of 345	85.51%
Birds breeding in 2021	283 of 316	89.56%	289 of 316	91.46%
Birds breeding in 2020	253 of 328	77.13%	277 of 328	84.45%
Birds breeding in 2019	245 of 308	79.55%	260 of 308	84.42%
Birds breeding in 2018	247 of 296	83.45%	276 of 296	93.24%
Birds breeding in 2017	236 of 309	76.38%	256 of 309	82.85%
Birds breeding in 2016	238 of 287	82.93%	268 of 287	93.38%
Birds breeding in 2015	230 of 283	81.27%	250 of 283	88.34%
Birds breeding in 2014	215 of 278	77.34%	241 of 278	86.69%
Birds breeding in 2013	116 of 141	82.27%	127 of 141	90.07%
2014-2023 mean		81.07%		88.04%

Three areas of study burrows, that is to say natural burrows where a paving slab covers a manmade access point to the nest chamber, were established in 2012 and 2013 (see map below); all birds encountered within the burrows are ringed. Of 318 breeding adults bearing rings in 2023, 265 were found this year (83.33%); this was up on a 2014-2023 next-year return mean of 81.07% (only 76.38% of 2017 birds were found in 2018, this following the ravages of Storm Ophelia which destroyed several study burrows, whilst a high of 89.56% of 2021 breeders were found in 2022). The next-year return rate is not an accurate estimate of survival as there is no searching for marked birds in neighbouring, non-study burrows; the number of birds known to be alive will thus be revised upwards as they are discovered in future years. For example 82.27% of 2013 adults were encountered in 2014, but we now know that at least 90.07% of birds were alive, these including one not seen again until this year (see table above). Additionally this year saw 16 2022 breeders which were not found last year, two not seen since 2021, four not seen since 2020, four not seen since 2018, two not seen since 2017 and two not seen since 2015. Given that we are still encountering birds not logged for up to ten years, it is likely that many of the figures given above will again be revised upwards in the future, the current 2014-2023 corrected annual survival rate mean of 88.04% undoubtedly an underestimate.

There is typically a discrepancy in return rates dependent on the breeding success of the previous year; of 225 birds successful with their 2023 breeding attempt, 198 were found in 2024 (88.0%), whereas only 67 of 93 unsuccessful birds returned (72.0%). Of 53 2023 breeders which went missing in 2024, 26 (49.1%) had failed with their attempt. Assuming that not all of the failures were due to the death of a bird, it could be concluded that some of the missing birds have rather opted for more suitable nesting sites. It was noted in 2017 that Storm Ophelia had caused considerable damage to

the Lighthouse Study Plot, a destruction of burrows which no doubt led, at least in part, to the reduced number of recaptures in 2018; although 20 of the missing birds have been found subsequently, the return rate of 2017 breeders remains the lowest to date (82.85%). Ultimately the study burrows give a better insight into burrow fidelity and show an interesting correlation with the stability of the colony; in the fragile Lighthouse colony nine of 82 marked birds were in the same burrow this year as that in which they bred in 2013 (11.0%), whereas in the more stable Quarry Track and Crab Bay colonies four of 18 birds (22.2%) and 14 of 41 birds (34.1%) were still in their 2013 burrows respectively. The fragile nature of the Lighthouse colony, along with the high density of burrowing birds and occasional storm events, sees the structure of many breeding tunnels change annually; clearly some lose their suitability as nest sites. Of the 14 birds known to breed in all 12 years between 2013 and 2024, two fledged a chick on 91.7% of occasions, eight on 83.3% of occasions and four on 75.0% of occasions; that these birds are exhibiting above average productivity is no doubt reflected in their continued use of the same stable burrows.

There were 14 adults in the Lighthouse Plot which had been ringed as chicks, along with another which had been ringed as a juvenile on the surface, this taking the total number of known age birds encountered in the plots to 28. There were seven additions to this list, three of which certainly bred (all successfully). Of the 28 returning birds ringed as chicks, 17 have been found to be breeding at some point, with one first found breeding after nine years, seven after seven years, five after six years and three after five years, whist FB46145 bred successfully in 2021 at just four years of age (two metres from its natal burrow). Eight of the 13 birds found prior to 2024 were missing in the year following their first breeding attempt, only one of which has been found since. Of the six encountered breeding more than once, overall productivity values of 0.75 (two individuals both over four years), 0.67 (over three years), 0.60 (over five years) and 0.00 (two individuals both over two years) have been observed.

The study burrows facilitate an accurate assessment of breeding success on Skokholm. There were 138 burrows at the Lighthouse occupied by a pair which produced an egg, seven burrows contained an egg along the Quarry Track and 22 pairs produced an egg inland of Crab Bay. There were thus 167 burrows this year from which productivity could be assessed (this up on a 2014-2023 mean of 160.3 and only down on the 168 of 2020 and the 185 of 2022). At the Lighthouse 11 definitely failed at egg stage, whilst 23 pairs failed at egg or very small chick stage (but no eggs, down or dead chicks were found); one of these burrows had been dug into. There were three small chick stage failures and a chick with a wing chord in excess of 137mm was taken from the burrow entrance. There were four

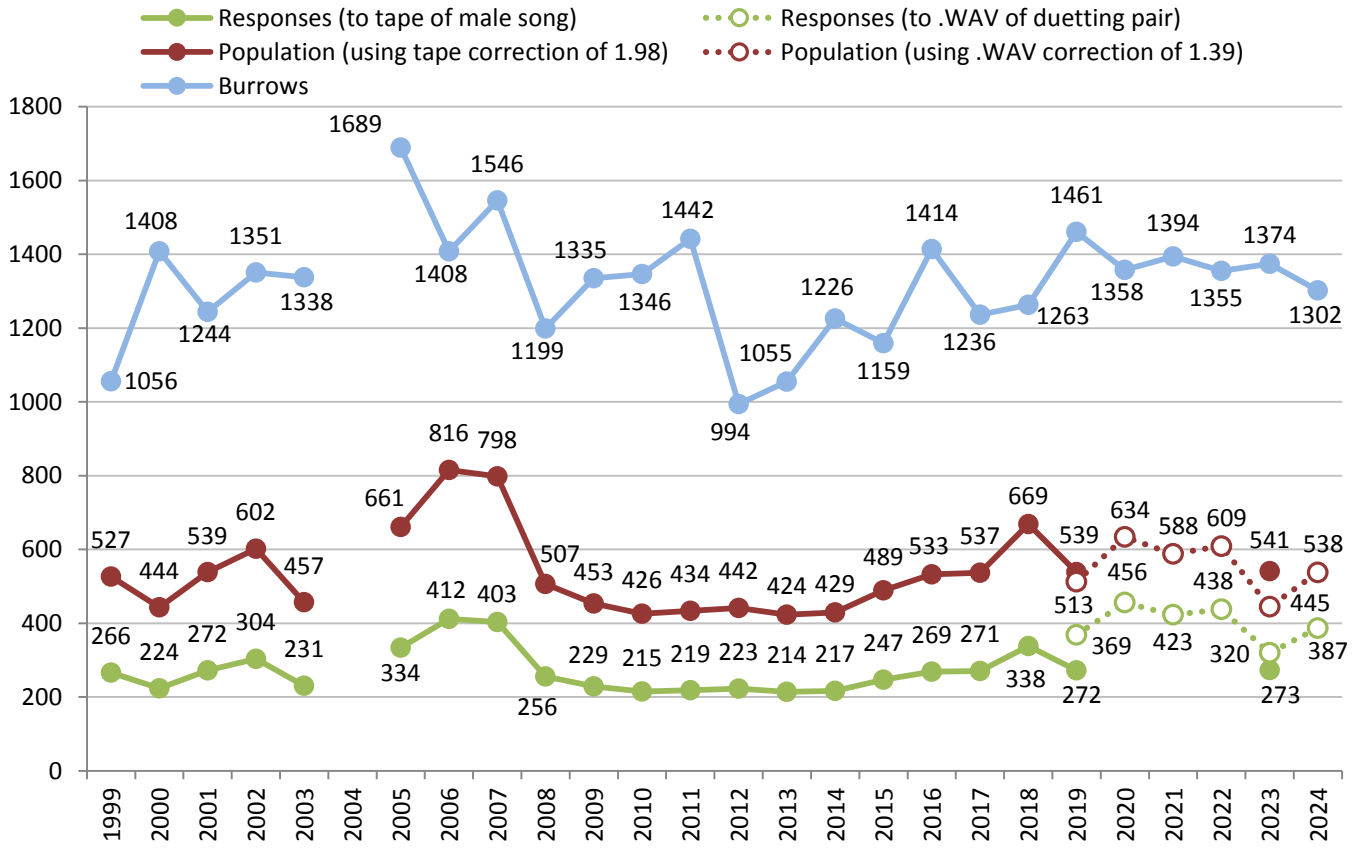
failures along the Quarry Track, two at egg stage, one at egg or small chick stage and one with a small chick. Near Crab Bay there were three failures at egg stage and two failed at egg or very small chick stage. A chick is typically assumed to be of fledging size when its wing length is in excess of 200mm; although not ready to fledge, we have previously shown that chicks larger than this may swap to a different burrow and therefore go undetected (see the 2023 Seabird Report for an example of a returning adult which departed its natal burrow when even smaller than this). In total 120 were believed to have attained fledging size this year.

Productivity was thus 0.72 near-fledging-sized chicks per breeding pair (71.86% of pairs produced a near-fledging-sized chick); productivity at the Lighthouse was 0.72, along the Quarry Track it was 0.43 and near Crab Bay it was 0.77. Poor Quarry Track productivity was at least in part due to Great Black-backed Gull predation; four breeding adults were known to be taken at this plot, including both birds of a well-established pair, with one of these kills directly responsible for the failure of a breeding attempt. The combined 2024 productivity estimate was fractionally up on a 2013-2023 mean of 0.71 ±se 0.02, indeed it matched that of 2019 as the fourth highest of the last 12 years (there were lows of 0.63 in 2014 and 0.68 in 2015, 2016, 2020 and 2023, highs of 0.80 in 2017 and 0.79 in 2021). It should be noted that this is the number of chicks which attained near-fledging size and does not reflect the number of fledglings which are lost to Great Black-backed Gulls (and to a lesser extent corvids) as they exercise their flight muscles and make their first flights. Having said this, only one of the 120 chicks ringed in the study plots was found eaten after it fledged this year; one of 113 was found in 2023, none of 127 were found in either 2022 or 2021, one of 115 was found in both 2020 and 2019, none of 114 were found in 2018 and two of 135 were found eaten in 2017.

A Manx Shearwater ringing transect was established in 2013. It was defined as the track between the Observatory and the Lighthouse and the length of a landing net to either side; ringers were not to deviate from the track. The aim was to see whether, by ringing birds on the surface in this defined area, the retrap data could be interpreted to provide large sample size estimates of adult survival and the recruitment of juveniles to the breeding population. This project is producing a substantial amount of data, data which is currently difficult to examine in any detail as the British Trust for

Ornithology changes its recording system from IPMR to DemOn (the latter of which still lacks the reporting capabilities of the former). Of the 12,078 birds ringed along the transect between 2013 and 2023 (4727 of which were ringed as fledglings), 3096 have been retrapped or found dead on the transect subsequently (with these recaptured individuals accounting for 5300 separate handlings).

The total number of burrows, responses (to tape 1999-2019 and in 2023 and to .WAV 2019-2024) and the corrected population estimates for the 7000m² sampled annually since 1999.



In 1999 nine study areas, each a circle of 1000 square metres, were established to allow a reasonable subset of the Skokholm Manx Shearwater population to be monitored from year to year. Two of these plots were discontinued, one in 2006 and one in 2007, as the survey work was disturbing the Lesser Black-backed Gull colonies. New plots were established in 2006 and 2015 to maintain a good sample size, however only seven plots have been studied for a full 25 years. On each annual visit the number of burrows within each area is counted, as is the number of burrows from which a response is elicited when a recording is played down them. Between 1999 and 2019 the recording was of a singing male made on a cassette tape, the standard correction factor of 1.98 then being used to estimate the population within an area (see the 2013 and 2014 Seabird Reports for checking of the correction factor). The latest whole Island census utilised a .WAV recording of a duetting pair (as opposed to the male only cassette) as it has been shown that a dual-sex recording achieves a higher and less variable response rate, the correction factor thus dropping to 1.39 (Brown and Eagle, 2018; Perkins *et al*., 2017). Bearing this in mind, along with the fact that the cassettes and playback devices are becoming harder to maintain and replace, it was decided in 2019 that it was time to begin the process of changing the annual plot methodology from the use of cassettes to the use of .WAV playback. This changeover will occur over the course of several years to ensure that the data collected over the previous 20 years remains comparable with that collected in the future.

Each of the nine plots were visited once between the 1st and 9th June, with only the .WAV recording of a duetting pair being used this year. The seven plots visited since 1999 contained 1302 burrows,

this 72 fewer than last year and 1.3% down on the 1999-2023 mean (1318.79 ±sd 157.59), albeit the seventh highest count of the last 13 years. There was another substantial decline in the plot started in 2006, the burrow count dropping from 315 in 2023 to 261 this year; this is a relatively stable plot inland from Purple Cove, the decline in apparent burrows perhaps in part due to a thick carpet of Sea Campion covering unused holes. There were 18 fewer burrows in the plot on The Head started in 2015, a total of 122 being the lowest to date; this is an exposed area of very short sward with no Sea Campion, the decline in burrows likely a genuine one. It is not only digging by Manx Shearwaters which alters the number of burrows present; the weather may both close burrows and cause additional entrance holes to open (with both very dry and very wet periods shaping the landscape), whilst digging by Rabbits, Great Black-backed Gulls and in some areas by Puffins will also influence burrow numbers.

The estimated number of pairs in the 8000 square metres sampled 2006-2024, based on responses to a cassette of male song 2006-2019 and on responses to a .WAV of a duetting pair since 2020.

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
869	954	620	525	499	495	501	521	476	533
2016	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	
588	584	739	655	730	670	710	521	639	

There were 387 responses elicited in the original 7000m^2 using the .WAV recording, this 67 more than last year but the third lowest total recorded during the six years of using this method, 3.5% down on the 2019-2023 mean (401.20 ±sd 55.82). The number of responses rose in five plots, with the largest increases being of 47 along the Quarry Track and of 24 above the Dip, whilst there were four fewer at Peter's Bay and 11 fewer near Spy Rock. The two of the last six years with the lowest number of responses to the .WAV recording are the two in which both cassette tapes and .WAV were used, a second visit perhaps influencing response rate (both visits were made on the same day). Using the .WAV correction of 1.39 predicts that there were 538 occupied burrows across the seven plots in 2024 (see chart above), this down on a 2019-2023 mean of 557.80 ±sd 77.57. Any comparison between the population predicted using the .WAV recording of the duetting pair and the male only cassette recording should clearly be a cautious one, although given that both the 2019 and 2023 .WAV estimates are below the cassette estimates, it is likely that we are not overestimating the population when using the .WAV correction any more than when using the tape correction. The combined data for the 7000m^2 surveyed since 1999 shows a 2024 population up on 15 previous

years and almost matching a 1999-2023 mean of 540.67 ±sd 112.43. There was a 2023-2024 population increase of 25 sites in the 1000m^2 plot visited since 2006; adding this data to that from the other 7000m^2 suggests that the combined population is up on that seen between 2008 and 2017, albeit down on five of the last six years (see table above). There were 20 more responses than elicited last year at the 1000m^2 plot visited since 2015, the total the highest since 2019. Although it must be remembered that the proportion of birds which respond to the playback on any given date varies considerably (leading to a high degree of error in these numbers (see Brown and Eagle, 2013, 2014 and 2019)), these figures again seem to suggest that the population in the plots is stable. That the number of pairs producing eggs in the accessible study burrows is stable supports this conclusion, this good news following the dip in responses observed last year.

In the period between 1957 and 1997 the number of dead Manx Shearwaters located on Skokholm was recorded in the daily census log. The corpses were either stored or thrown into the sea to ensure that birds were not counted more than once. The practice was stopped in 1997 as it was felt that the removal of carcases would be impacting the species reliant on this food source. However, with a Great Black-backed Gull population more than twice the size it was when the counting was stopped, the study was begun again in 2014. The corpses are left in situ but marked by neatly slicing the flight feathers of both wings with a pair of scissors (using scissors has the added advantage that it makes it easier to check for rings in tightly inverted bodies). Although the vast majority of Manx Shearwater kills are made by Great Black-backed Gulls, a small number are also taken by Peregrines and Ravens, whilst a Sparrowhawk eating the head of a puffinosised youngster in 2019 had perhaps also made the kill and three Crow were seen tackling a live bird on 19th May 2022.

The number of Manx Shearwater corpses found between 1957 and 1983 from Gynn (1984) plus data from 1984 to 1991 and 2014 to 2024. The number of Great Black-backed Gull breeding pairs is also included for each year.

	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
Corpses	2465	1886	924	1354	1089	640	688	1059	857	946	816	841
GBBGU	27	30	30	10	12	5	7	12	8	10	10	3
	1969	**1970**	**1971**	**1972**	**1973**	**1974**	**1975**	**1976**	**1977**	**1978**	**1979**	**1980**
Corpses	829	304	606	1350	1082	869	1051	1266	1913	1820	1153	1024
GBBGU	14	11	16	12	12	7	7	7	6	10	10	10
	1981	**1982**	**1983**	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**2014**
Corpses	1080	1479	1373	1316	1571	1068	1759	1760	1694	1915	2703	4271
GBBGU	11	16	11	14	11	10	11	12	15	16	20	84
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**		
Corpses	4123	3782	3449	3270	2707	4091	3237	2902	2724	2744		
GBBGU	83	93	93	93	86	83	80	78	66	64		

The number of adult and juvenile Manx Shearwater corpses found each year since 2014, along with the number of untouched puffinosised bodies.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Adults	2931	2702	2299	2071	2228	1618	3008	2132	2104	1859	2060
Juveniles	1287	1324	1398	1289	971	1043	970	967	728	756	629
Puffinosis	53	97	85	89	71	46	113	138	70	109	55
Total	**4271**	**4123**	**3782**	**3449**	**3270**	**2707**	**4091**	**3237**	**2902**	**2724**	**2744**

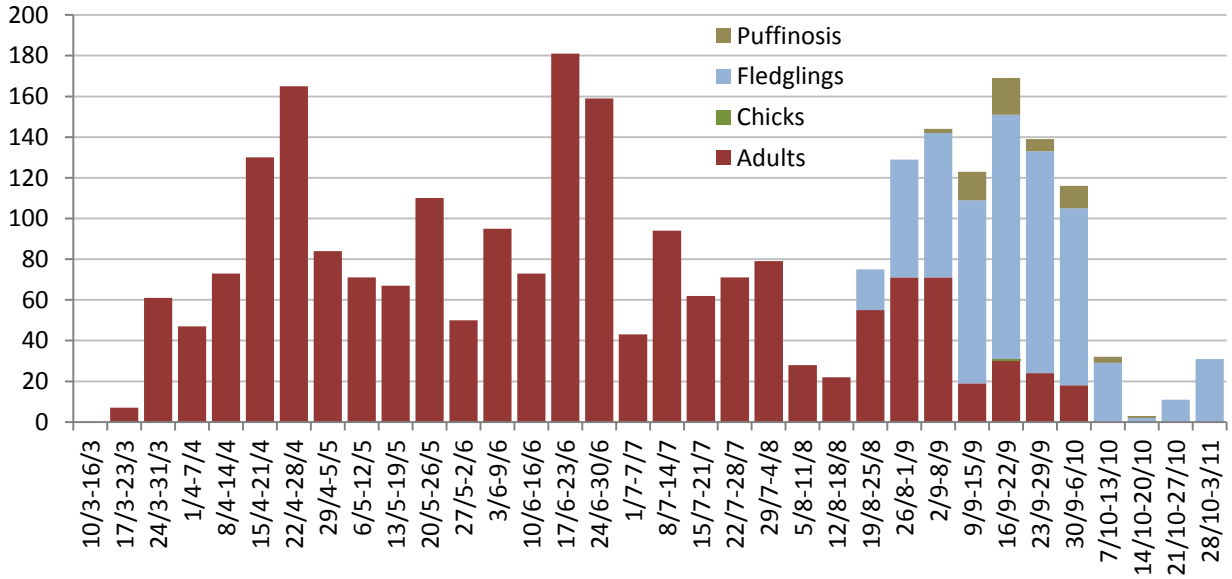
As might be expected with a larger Great Black-backed Gull breeding population, the number of corpses marked over the last 11 years has been the most ever. However the average number of corpses per Great Black-backed Gull pair was only 42.9 in 2024; this has only been lower in ten previous years (including seven of the last eight), with all-time lows of 30.8 in 1959 and 27.6 in 1970 (there were highs of 280.3 in 1968, 318.8 in 1977 and 182.0 in 1978). One possible explanation for

this reduction in kills per pair is that the gulls were routinely disturbed between 1949 and 1985 which, whilst reducing the number of breeding pairs, probably inflated the non-breeding flock (which would still be taking shearwaters). The number of adults found dead was the third lowest of the last 11 years, with a total of 2060 10.2% down on the 2014-2023 mean (2295.20 ±sd 452.73) and only up on the 1618 of 2019 and the 1859 of last year. Factors which may impact predation rates are the number of Great Black-backed Gulls present (and the number specialising in shearwaters (Westerberg *et al*., 2018)), vegetation heights, the complexities of the weather and moon cycle influencing hunting, the availability of food away from the Island and perhaps the size of the Rabbit population (Rabbits being the other main prey item on the Island). The prevalence of puffinosis may well be influencing juvenile losses (see recent Skokholm Seabird Reports). It is often suggested that the majority of eaten shearwaters are younger, less experienced non-breeders, those which spend longer on the surface as they prospect for burrows and mates. However the 122 ringed birds found predated in 2024 again do little to support this theory (see below table and the 2018-2023 Seabird Reports); although several more years of ringing data would be helpful and there is usually no information on the breeding status of those eaten (so they could perhaps still have been unpaired or burrowless birds spending longer on the surface), at least 60 of 109 eaten adults were at least eight years old (55.0%). Indeed four of the eaten adults had previously bred in the Quarry Track plot, two of which were paired together (two were eaten in March, one was eaten in June following the loss of its partner in March and one was eaten in June leading to an inevitable egg stage failure).

When the 122 ringed shearwaters found eaten in 2024 were marked. Note that intensive ringing recommenced in 2013 and that there were no dead controls from elsewhere this year.

Adult 2013	Adult 2014	Fledgling 2014	Adult 2015	Adult 2016	Fledgling 2016	Adult 2017	Fledgling 2017	Adult 2018
18	17	1	8	5	1	5	1	5
Fledgling 2018	**Adult 2019**	**Fledgling 2019**	**Adult 2020**	**Adult 2021**	**Adult 2022**	**Adult 2023**	**Adult 2024**	**Fledgling 2024**
5	5	5	2	4	9	16	2	13

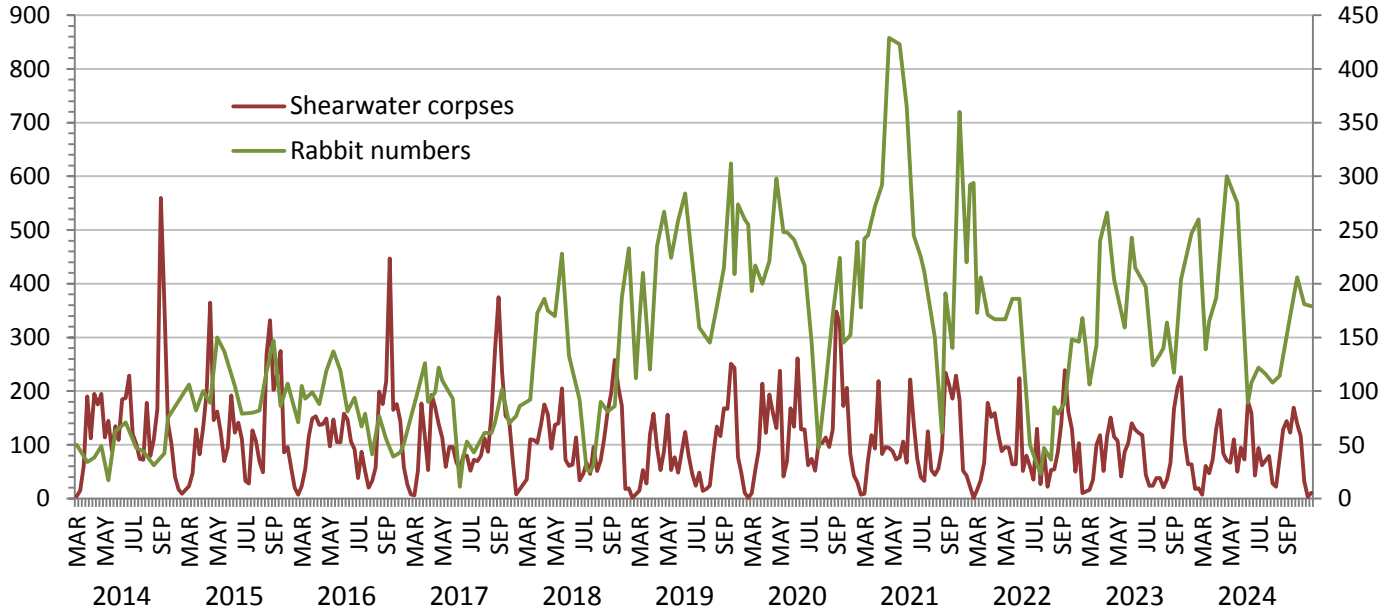
The number of corpses found during each week from 10th March until 3rd November 2024.



The data from the last 11 years lends some support to the theory that Rabbit numbers influence Manx Shearwater predation (by providing an alternative food source for the gulls). The North Plain Rabbit count was lowest in 2014, when shearwater mortality and the number of corpses per Great Black-backed Gull pair were at their highest. The Rabbit counts were at their highest in 2019 and 2021, the former the year with the fewest shearwater corpses and the lowest number of corpses per

pair, the latter the year with the fifth fewest corpses found. The 2020 data did not fit this pattern, with the highest number of adult Manx Shearwater corpses being found in a year with a high Rabbit population (although a COVID-19 dictated reduction in disturbance may have given the gulls longer to hunt). This year saw the fifth highest mean Rabbit count and the fourth highest number of corpses per Great Black-backed Gull pair (albeit the third lowest corpse total of the last 11 years). One potential issue with this comparison is that North Plain Rabbit counts are probably not representative of the whole Island, with the effects of Viral Haemorrhagic Disease seemingly differing in different parts of the Island at the same time. Nevertheless it will be interesting to see if the next crash in Rabbit numbers coincides with an increase in Manx Shearwater carcasses.

The total number of Manx Shearwater carcasses found each week 2014-2024 and the number of Rabbits counted in the North Plain census plot during the same period (secondary axis).



The first fledgling to be encountered was along the Lighthouse Track at 2330hrs on 23rd August, this three days later than the 2013-2023 mean (birds departed on the 17th in 2021 and 2023, whilst two on the 27th in 2018 are the latest first known fledglings during this period). The first fledgling showing signs of puffinosis was above Crab Bay during the night of the 25th, this three days earlier

than the 2013-2023 first bird mean (the earliest first puffinosised bird during this period was logged on 24th August 2017, the latest on 4th September 2014). Puffinosis is a mysterious affliction which had been linked to the actions of a coronavirus, this leading to the development of conjunctivitis and blistered feet, further bacterial infection and problems with limb control (Nuttall and Harrap, 1982); it is typically fatal. A December 2022 paper concluded that, rather than being the result of a virus, the bacterial infection may actually occur following prolonged exposure to caustic faecal ammonia which causes foot dermatitis, this similar to the Foot Pad Dermatitis seen in chickens (Esmonde *et al*., 2022). Foot Pad Dermatitis occurs in chickens kept in poorly ventilated conditions, where respiration and excretion lead to high moisture levels which exacerbate the impact of faecal ammonia burns (Esmonde *et al*., 2022). Puffinosis has long been associated with the damper areas of Skokholm, conditions which may lead to a similar build-up of moist ammonia. In an attempt to achieve a better understanding of how puffinosised birds are distributed across the Island during the course of the autumn and of how the number of infected individuals changes from year to year, a transect walked by Island staff over eight September nights was established in 2015 (the 2015 Seabird Report gives details of the route). The position of each fledgling is recorded using a GPS unit before they are inspected for signs of puffinosis.

The number of fledgling Manx Shearwaters encountered along the transect between 2018 and 2024, along with the number which showed signs of puffinosis (also given as a proportion of the total). Restrictions put in place to limit the spread of any potential HPAI outbreak meant that birds could not be adequately inspected in 2022, the puffinosis survey being suspended for that year.

2024	1st-2nd	4th-5th	7th-8th	9th-10th	12th-13th	14th-15th	17th-18th	19th-20th	Total
Birds	110	165	222	160	73	66	31	42	**869**
Puffinosised	4	8	11	15	3	6	4	8	**59**
% Puffinosised	3.6	4.8	5.0	9.4	4.1	9.1	12.9	19.0	**6.8**
2023	**1st-2nd**	**4th-5th**	**7th-8th**	**12th-13th**	**13th-14th**	**14th-15th**	**18th-19th**	**20th-21st**	**Total**
Birds	56	127	174	196	140	126	76	48	**943**
Puffinosised	1	5	11	29	17	11	7	2	**83**
% Puffinosised	1.8	3.9	6.3	14.8	12.1	8.7	9.2	4.2	**8.8**
2021	**1st-2nd**	**4th-5th**	**7th-8th**	**11th-12th**	**13th-14th**	**16th-17th**	**18th-19th**	**20th-21st**	**Total**
Birds	147	143	228	152	111	75	29	16	**901**
Puffinosised	9	10	16	14	11	9	10	4	**83**
% Puffinosised	6.1	7.0	7.0	9.2	9.9	12.0	34.5	25.0	**9.2**
2020	**1st-2nd**	**4th-5th**	**7th-8th**	**11th-12th**	**13th-14th**	**16th-17th**	**18th-19th**	**20th-21st**	**Total**
Birds	52	101	201	235	118	111	68	55	**941**
Puffinosised	1	5	2	23	14	14	15	10	**84**
% Puffinosised	1.9	5.0	1.0	9.8	11.9	12.6	22.1	18.2	**8.9**
2019	**1st-2nd**	**4th-5th**	**7th-8th**	**11th-12th**	**13th-14th**	**16th-17th**	**18th-19th**	**20th-21st**	**Total**
Birds	120	182	100	70	55	81	34	49	**691**
Puffinosised	6	2	11	16	9	9	6	6	**65**
% Puffinosised	5.0	1.1	11.0	22.9	16.4	11.1	17.6	12.2	**9.4**
2018	**1st-2nd**	**4th-5th**	**7th-8th**	**9th-10th**	**12th-13th**	**15th-16th**	**18th-19th**	**21st-22nd**	**Total**
Birds	72	142	139	197	155	167	88	48	**1008**
Puffinosised	2	3	11	16	23	21	10	2	**88**
% Puffinosised	2.8	2.1	7.9	8.1	14.8	12.6	11.4	4.2	**8.7**

The number of shearwater fledglings located along the transect is likely to be different between years, not just because of fluctuations in productivity, but more critically due to differences in the weather and moon cycle which influence their surface behaviour. Over the eight visits there were 74 fewer fledglings encountered this year than in 2023, although the total of 869 was 4.3% up on the 2015-2023 mean (833.25 ±sd 174.11). An eight visit total of 59 apparently infected birds was the lowest yet recorded, down on a previous low of 65 logged in 2019 and a mean of 107.00 ±sd 69.68

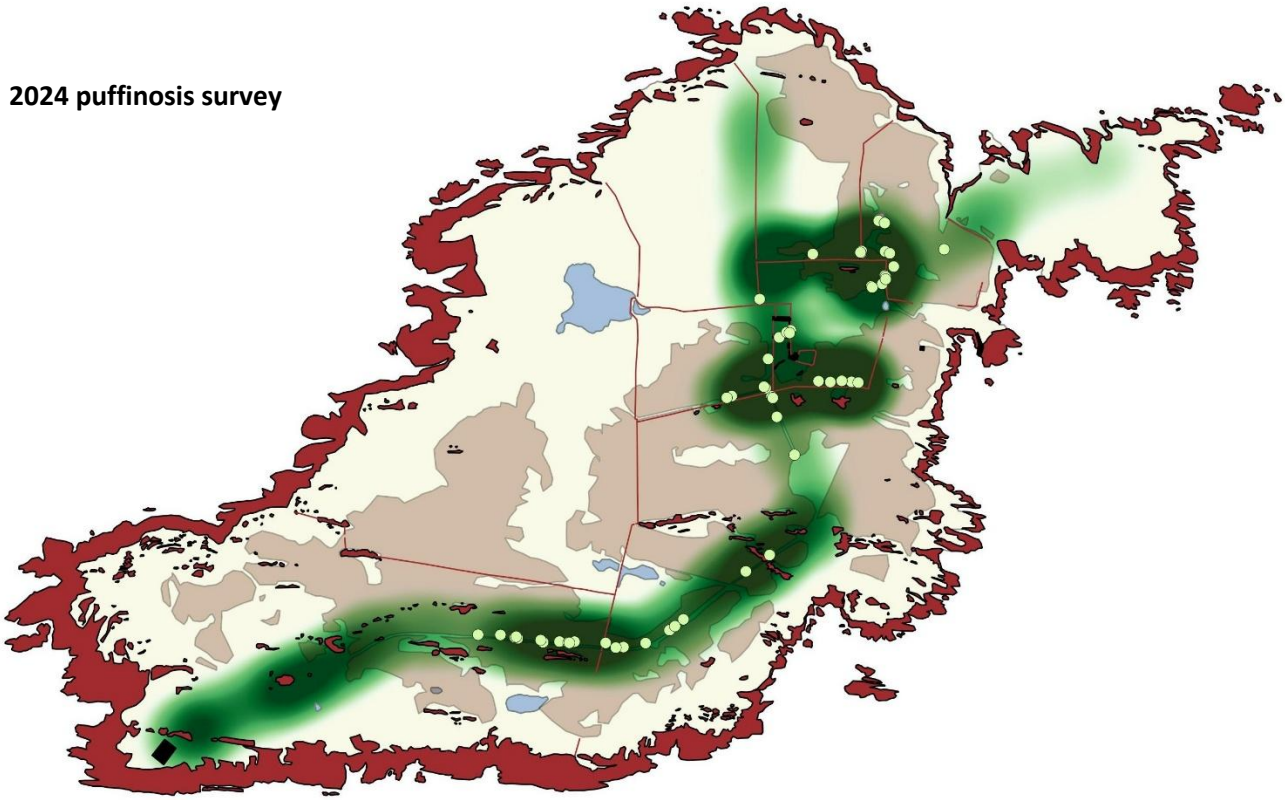
(the highest total to date is the 278 of 2015). The proportion of birds showing signs was also the lowest to date (there was a high of 29.1% in 2015 and a previous low of 8.7% in 2018, the 2015-2023 mean being 12.9%). As in previous years, puffinosised birds were primarily distributed in the wetter areas of Skokholm, away from more exposed aspects which also typically lack Bracken. Indeed a drier northerly route, which held 270 fledglings over eight 2020 nights, only produced one bird showing signs of puffinosis (0.4%); the infected bird was along North Pond Wall, close to the Farm where a small number of similar birds have been seen previously (see lower map below).

Given that there is seemingly a link between wetter, poorly drained areas and diseased birds, we might expect that the low number of puffinosised birds found this year means that it was dry, however this was not the case; the January rainfall total was the highest since 2017, the February total the highest since 2020, the March total the highest since 2010, the April total the highest since 1999, the May total the highest since 2021 and the July total the second highest this decade (although the June total was the second lowest this decade and the August total the fourth lowest (Natural Resources Wales' Wooltack Point weather station data)). Many burrows were entirely flooded when the adults returned, perhaps rendering them unsuitable to pairs which would have gone on to produce a puffinosised youngster. Although a declining Great Black-backed Gull population clouds the picture, it is intriguing that the proportion of puffinosised birds is generally lower in years with lower totals of predated juveniles (see above); it is quite probable that puffinosised birds are easier for Great Black-backed Gulls to catch, potentially leading to higher mortality in high puffinosis years (it would often be difficult to tell if an eaten bird had been diseased). However the number of juvenile corpses located in 2015, the worst puffinosis year of this nine year study, was not significantly higher than in 2016 and 2017 when the proportion of puffinosised birds was lower.

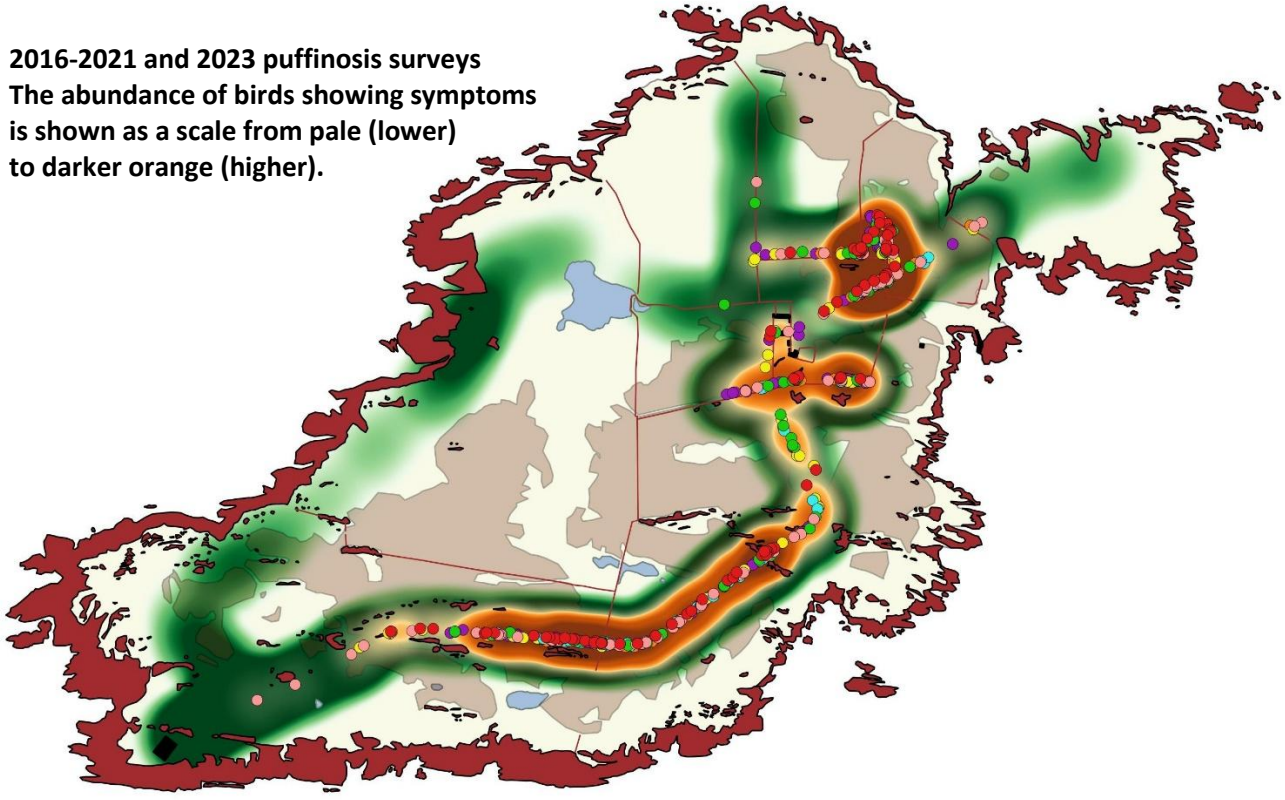
One off the Lighthouse on 2nd August had a white patch in at least one wing, whilst the above fledgling was encountered on the night of 19th September. A minimum of 16,000 off the Lighthouse on the 1st matched the 2023 peak as the second highest September daycount, only down on the 20,115 logged on the 8th in 2018, however no more than 562 were noted on any date after the 3rd and 335 on the 21st was the high during the last ten days of the month.

The 2024 and 2016-2023 puffinosis surveys (there was no 2022 survey). Manx Shearwater fledgling density is shown in green, with the darker areas holding more birds (the northern footpath between Middle Heath and the Table was only surveyed in 2020). Each puffinosised bird encountered over the eight visits is marked by a circle, mint in 2024, red in 2023, pink in 2021, lime in 2020, blue in 2019, yellow in 2018, orange in 2017 and purple in 2016. The 2018 Bracken distribution is also shown.

2024 puffinosis survey



2016-2021 and 2023 puffinosis surveys
The abundance of birds showing symptoms is shown as a scale from pale (lower) to darker orange (higher).



The last grounded adult to be encountered along the transect was recorded on 23rd September (a bird ringed in April 2022 and retrapped in May 2023); this was six days later than the 2014-2023 last ringed adult mean. Up to six were seen at sea on three October dates to the 13th, whilst 28 west in 50 minutes on the evening of the 20th was the highest daycount to be recorded this late in the year (the 83 logged on 5th October 2014 is the latest higher count). Juveniles were either seen after dark or found freshly eaten on 14 October dates, with the high of five unsurprisingly logged on the 1st, whilst presumed adults were calling overhead on the nights of the 3rd, 28th (two), 29th and 31st. There were November records for a tenth time in 11 years and for the 15th time to date, with presumed adults calling on the nights of the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 29th, the latter of which was the latest on record. A fledgling at its Dip burrow entrance on the night of 3rd November was ten days later than the last of 2023, albeit earlier than youngsters found on the 14th in 2014 and on the 22nd in 2021 (the latter of which was eaten by a Raven). Four were close in at the Lighthouse on the morning of 18th November, two of which were diving, whilst there were late singles in Broad Sound on the 24th, off the Lighthouse on the 25th and again in Broad Sound on the 30th; the only later record is of one west through Broad Sound on 1st December 2021. One of the 1448 ringed birds to fledge Skokholm this year was found on the mainland (0.07%), this down on a 2014-2023 mean of 0.11% (see below for details).

Ringing recovery EA33990
Originally ringed as a juvenile, MANX SHEARWATER TRANSECT, SKOKHOLM 28th August 2019
Recovered as an adult, COPELAND ISLAND, DOWN, NORTHERN IRELAND 15th May 2024
Finding condition Fresh dead
Distance travelled 334km at 358 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 1722

Ringing recovery EM26263
Originally ringed as an adult, LUNDY ISLAND, DEVON 9th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, MANX SHEARWATER TRANSECT, SKOKHOLM 28th May 2024
Finding condition On surface
Distance travelled 69km at 322 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 324

Ringing recovery EM28434
Originally ringed as a juvenile, MANX SHEARWATER TRANSECT, SKOKHOLM 23rd September 2024
Recovered as a juvenile, FRESHWATER WEST, PEMBROKESHIRE 25th September 2024
Finding condition Released from this site having been collected in Pembrokeshire
Distance travelled 17km at 110 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 2
As documented in the recoveries sections of previous reports, shearwaters released back to sea have subsequently been found breeding on Skokholm.

Ringing recovery EM54390
Originally ringed as a juvenile, MANX SHEARWATER TRANSECT, SKOKHOLM 15th September 2023
Recovered as an adult, PRAIA ARROIO DO SAL, RIO GRANDE DO SUL, BRAZIL 8th January 2025
Finding condition Fresh dead
Distance travelled 10,027km at 206 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 481

Ringing recovery EM82816
Originally ringed as a chick, CRAB BAY STUDY PLOT BURROW 26, SKOKHOLM 3rd August 2024
Previously recovered as a chick, CRAB BAY STUDY PLOT BURROW 26, SKOKHOLM 26th August 2024
Recovered as a juvenile, SACO DO SOMBRIO, ILHABELA, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL 8th October 2024

Finding condition Found thin, weak and floating, fate unknown
Distance travelled 9274km at 206 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 66
When last encountered in the study burrow this youngster had a wing chord of 231mm, this roughly 10mm shorter than typical fledglings; it is thus likely that it crossed the Atlantic in under 50 days.

Ringing recovery EM83272
Originally ringed as a juvenile, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 3rd September 2024
Recovered as a juvenile, PERUÍBE, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL 21st October 2024
Finding condition Unknown species fresh dead on beach
Distance travelled 9382km at 206 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 48
In addition to the three Brazilian recoveries listed above, there have been 18 further Skokholm ringed Manx Shearwater found dead or moribund in South America since 2013; there was one in September 2014, two in November 2015, two in September and one in October 2016, singles in September and October 2017, one in November 2018, singles in March and November 2019, two in September 2020, one in September 2021, singles in February, August and September 2022 and one in April last year. Assuming that birds ringed as adults have already survived at least two winters, six have now been found in their first winter, four in their second winter, two in at least their third winter, four in at least their fourth winter, one in at least its fifth winter, one in at least its sixth winter, one in at least its seventh winter, one in its tenth winter and one in at least its tenth winter. They have all been found in Brazil, bar the November 2018 casualty found in Uruguay and birds in February 2022 and April 2023 found in Argentina; as of October 2024, there have been 293 British Manx Shearwater found in Brazil, with 38 in Argentina and 27 in Uruguay (Robinson *et al*., 2024).

Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus* **Aderyn Drycin y Baleares**
Scarce or Uncommon first recorded in 1960
Earliest 15th May 1997 (7th August 2024) **Latest** 14th November 2019

One heading west off the Lighthouse at 1944hrs on 7th August was six days later than the first of last year, six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean and the only sighting in a poor year. The only May record is of a single in 1997, whilst there have been 18 July bird-days and 94 August bird-days, 12 of which were earlier than that of this year. An all-time September bird-days total of 120 (including a record daycount of ten on the 14th in 2011), an October total of 40 and a lone November record were not added to. A single bird-day matched the 2013 total as the lowest of the last 14 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 6.6 and on all-time highs of 15 in 1994 and 2016, 21 in 1990 and 29 in 2011.

Gannet *Morus bassanus* **Hugan**
Very Abundant but Uncommon between November and March

Along with sightings of approximately 12 sick birds, there were 51 dead Gannet seen from Skokholm between 16th May and 26th October 2022, whilst an additional long dead bird was found near the Bluffs on 5th December; the 2022 deaths were primarily the result of a devastating outbreak of the H5N1 subtype of avian influenza which saw aerial counts of the Grassholm colony go from 34,491 pairs in summer 2022 to 16,482 pairs in July 2023 (BirdGuides, 2023). The last time the Grassholm count was so low was in 1969 when 16,128 pairs were counted. A repeat census this year revealed 19,199 apparently occupied sites (Morgan and Stephens, 2024). Although there were no dead Gannet seen around Skokholm in 2023, a very small number are encountered most years, with an adult in Crab Bay on 8th April this year being a typical pre-2022 total and mirroring an absence of HPAI records from Grassholm. Despite the catastrophic decline, Skokholm counts during March and April were comparable with pre-2022 tallies, however a peak daycount of just 68 on the 22nd was the

lowest May peak of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 162.2 and a high during the period of 435 in 2016. A June bird-days total of 691 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 993.1.

The total number of Gannet bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2020 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	136	458	770	691	1425	2151	3934	1201	303
2023	83	473	931	607	3272	4107	1763	356	109
2022	137	378	649	637	22,219	5611	4081	701	253
2021	208	451	685	639	1452	3340	2684	1780	211
2020	99	416	445	665	1387	3584	2662	670	182
2024	21	55	68	90	180	452	778	227	33
2023	26	68	94	44	478	1394	248	61	22
2022	12	45	122	62	5838	940	458	204	35
2021	36	46	161	198	468	549	662	236	36
2020	27	92	83	195	177	456	330	128	49

July 2022 saw a huge spike in numbers, this perhaps linked to the breeding season collapse of Gannetries around the UK, whilst the 1425 bird-days logged this July was the second poorest tally of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2021 pre-crash mean of 2189.8. Similarly a peak August daycount of 452 on the 15th was down on a 2013-2021 mean of 718.9, whilst a bird-days total of 2151 was the poorest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5276.2. A daycount high of 778 on the 24th was the highest in September since 2017, although a bird-days total of 3934 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 4340.8. It was striking how few juveniles were seen from Skokholm this year, this mirroring exceptionally poor Grassholm productivity; the gaps in the colony left by lost birds allowed gulls easier access to nest contents (Morgan and Stephens, 2024), whilst an increase in the number of inexperienced youngsters attempting to breed no doubt also impacted productivity. It is thus surprising that an October bird-days total of 1201, including highs of 197 on the 5th and 227 on the 12th, was only down on that logged in two previous years. Similarly a November bird-days total of 303 was the highest to date, albeit with a daycount high of 33 on the 8th which was down on that logged in seven Novembers since 2015. A December daycount of 59 on the 1st was a new high.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* **Mulfran Werdd**
Common Resident and Irregular Rare Breeder last attempted to breed in 2013
2018: 1 control

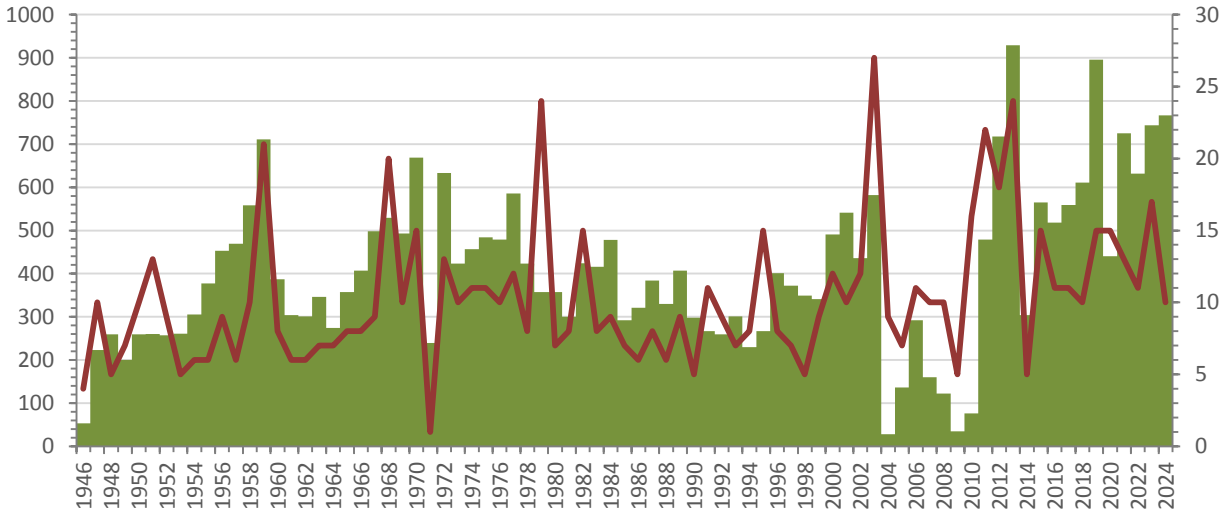
Severe winter weather resulted in a 2014 bird-days total which was 67.3% down on that of 2013, since when the number of Shag using the waters around Skokholm has been gradually recovering. Although the March total was impacted by a later return of staff, a daycount high of four was typical, whilst an April bird-days total of 81 was only down on that logged in five previous years. A May daycount peak of eight on the 11th and 26th was down on that seen in four of the last 11 years (including an all-time high of 12 in 2013), a May bird-days total of 105 only down on the 112 of 2012 and 150 of 2019. There was no indication of a breeding attempt, with the Smith's Bay site last used unsuccessfully in 2013 showing no signs of occupation; Shag last bred successfully in 1987 when a pair fledged two. Although a June high of seven on the 8th matched that of last year, a consistent presence around the Stack led to a record June bird-days total of 83. July highs of six on the 21st and 24th matched the lowest of the last nine years, this two down on the 2013-2023 mean and well down on all-time July highs of 18 in both 2011 and 2012. As is typically the case, numbers increased in August, with a bird-days total of 120 equalling a 2013-2023 mean of 120.4, however a daycount high of ten on the 31st matched that of last year as the second lowest of the last nine years (there were all-time August highs of 27 in 2003, 22 in 2011 and 17 in 2013, the former the record Skokholm daycount). Numbers remained similar during September, with a total of 144 bird-days being the

second highest of the last 11 years (there were all-time highs of 193 in 1959 and 189 in 2013), but daycount highs of nine on the 2nd, 19th and 27th being well down on the 17 of last year and all-time highs of 21 in 1959 and 24 in 1979 and 2013. Numbers again dropped as the autumn progressed, with an October high of seven on the 8th close to a 2013-2023 mean of 7.6, but well down on a record 17 logged in 2013. No more than six were seen on any date between 9th October and 3rd December. A 2024 March to November bird-days total of 763 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 625.5 and was the second highest since 2014, however the peak daycount matched that of 2018 as the lowest since the five of a post-crash 2014. Not all birds seen around Skokholm are associated with the Middleholm colony; a juvenile found in the Lime Kiln in November 2018 had been ringed on Ynys Gwylan-Fawr, Gwynedd and a green ringed bird in May 2019 had not been ringed in Pembrokeshire.

The total number of Shag bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2020 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	22	81	105	83	69	120	144	87	52
2023	30	79	83	59	94	132	130	81	55
2022	26	60	69	24	90	108	133	57	55
2021	56	39	62	26	57	140	143	105	76
2020	18	30	22	19	45	75	74	96	56
2024	4	8	8	7	6	10	9	7	6
2023	4	10	7	7	8	10	17	7	7
2022	4	7	8	6	9	11	10	4	6
2021	6	4	6	4	10	13	12	9	8
2020	4	5	4	6	7	15	11	9	5

The total number of Shag bird-days logged in each year since 1946 (green), along with the peak daycount recorded in each of those years (secondary axis).



Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* **Mulfran**
Common Visitor particularly in late August and September, but has never bred

An annual bird-days total of 924 was a new high, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 615.3 and previous highs of 867 in 2019 and 800 in 2022; as was the case with Shag numbers (see above), the high total was not due to large daycounts, but rather the consistent presence of a smaller number of birds, particularly in the vicinity of the Stack. As is typically the case, a spring passage was not obvious, indeed this year saw no records of more than two flying together, whilst there were also significantly fewer autumn passage birds. The March bird-days total was the lowest since 2014 and the April total the second lowest since 2013, however numbers increased in May, a bird-days total of 89 being up

on a 2013-2023 mean of 62.0 and only down on that logged in seven previous years. There were 13 on the Stack on 25th June, a daycount only topped in three previous Junes, whilst a bird-days total of 150 was only down on the 153 of last June. Similarly up to ten took to the Stack in July, a record bird-days total of 196 eclipsing a 2013-2023 mean of 86.9 and a previous July high of 170 in 2023. There were just three autumn dates when three or more seemingly passage birds were noted, this the lowest total of the last 12 years (the 2013-2023 mean is 12.4, with a high of 17 dates in 2019); as previously noted by both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007), the majority of passage birds were heading in a southeasterly direction. The peak counts of autumn passage birds were of just five on 28th July, seven on 11th August and four on 30th September; the high was the lowest of the last 12 years, down on peaks of 97 in 2013, 48 in 2014 and 51 in 2016 and a 2013-2023 mean high of 35.7 (the only daycount up on that of 28th September 2013 is the 107 of 12th September 2003). Despite this lack of passage birds, autumn totals were high; an August bird-days total of 244 matched that of 2022 as the highest to date and a September bird-days total of 154 was only down on ten previous years. It is unclear why the last two years have seen an increase in the number of Cormorant lingering around the Neck. Most birds seemingly head inland for the winter, indeed there were sightings of up to just two birds on just seven dates between 14th October and 3rd December.

The total number of Cormorant bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2020 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	7	33	89	150	196	244	154	45	6
2023	19	62	96	153	170	117	107	21	6
2022	27	51	76	74	169	244	124	15	15
2021	50	47	33	41	74	143	117	68	14
2020	21	18	20	26	22	69	146	33	7
2024	3	4	7	13	14	14	10	7	2
2023	4	7	7	12	14	8	18	9	2
2022	4	5	6	7	12	27	17	3	12
2021	8	7	4	7	8	17	11	22	3
2020	7	4	3	3	4	15	35	7	2

Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* **Llwybig**
Rare Summer Visitor 16 previous records in 12 years, all singles bar two together in 1988 and 2009

A near-adult which departed North Pond at 0730hrs on 18th June had returned by 1100hrs and again left at 1230hrs (ND *et al*.). What was probably the same individual returned to North Pond on the

26th, taking the all-time June bird-days total to 11; the majority of Skokholm sightings have been in June, with singles in 1994 and 2001, one on two dates and two on the 9th in 2009 and further singles in 2011, 2017 and 2023. The second of the year departed North Pond for the mainland at 0800hrs on 6th September (WJ *et al*.); a single in 1996 is the only other record in this month. A subadult on 14th March 2014 is the earliest Island record, there were May singles in 1996 and 2013, August singles in 1993 and 2013, two on 12th October 1988 (which overwintered on the Cleddau and included a bird ringed in the Netherlands) and further October singles on the 20th in 1957 and the 27th in 2011.

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* **Crëyr Melyn**
Vagrant no previous records

Thanks to recent repair works at the dam, the Well reedbed held standing water in April, this sufficient to keep out the majority of Rabbits and allow the *Phragmites* to rapidly grow. It was from this patch of burgeoning cover that the first Squacco Heron for Skokholm was flushed at 1740hrs on the 14th (EJ, RD *et al*.); it relocated to South Pond from where observers left at 1830hrs. The 13th and 14th had seen ever gentler southwest then westerly winds, however 50 knot gusts the following day saw the Squacco hunkered under the Elder to the west of Crab Bay (inset photograph).

Despite occasional lashing hail showers, it was later seen in flight over the Well and lastly heading west along the South Coast Cliffs. Separating Squacco Heron from the eastern species of pond heron can be impossible in non-breeding plumage, however this bird had attained diagnostic white plumes with black fringing. The majority of Welsh records have occurred in June, indeed this was the first to be found in the first four months of the year (Pritchard *et al*., 2021). Although Squacco Heron are yet to breed in Britain, climatic changes mean that this will probably occur in the future; an average of approximately three British records per year is perhaps increasing, this mirroring the encroaching European population. Nevertheless numbers in Britain fluctuate from year to year, with annual totals over the ten years from 2013 ranging from one to ten (Bacon *et al*., 2024). Of the 15 Welsh individuals recorded prior to 2024, singles at Angle Bay between 3rd October and 15th November 2010, around Neyland, Narberth and Saundersfoot between 9th October and 12th November 2016 and at Llangwm on 3rd July 2018 were the only Pembrokeshire records (Pritchard *et al*. 2021).

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* **Crëyr Glas**
Uncommon but in some years Scarce

There were no sightings between March and May for the sixth time in 12 years; the all-time March bird-days total remains at 11, the April total at 26 and the May total at 30. It became the 12th consecutive June with a record, with singles on the 5th and 17th taking the all-time bird-days total for this month to 195. July saw a single on the 12th and four together over the Farm on the 29th, these taking the all-time total to 337, 79 of which have been this century. Similarly three on the 1st, at least one on the 30th and at least three on the 31st took the all-time August tally to 370, 98 of which have been this century. September saw three on the 3rd, one during the night of the 4th, four heading west together on the 6th and singles on the 7th and 17th, a bird-days total of ten matching a 2013-2023 mean of 10.4 and taking the all-time tally to 323, 124 of which have been since 2013. One at North Pond on 1st October also alighted on the Hills, two were at North Pond on the 3rd, further singles went over on the 9th and 14th and one visited Little Bay Wall and North Pond on the 24th; an October bird-days total of six was a new high, up on the five of 2017, 2019 and 2023. Singles on the 12th and 21st took the all-time November total to 15, seven of which have been since 2013. A 2024 bird-days total of 32 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 28.6, albeit down on highs of 42 in 1981, 41 in 1988, 39 in 1990 and 37 in 2017 and 2023. A daycount high of four was down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 4.9 and on seven years during this period; daycounts of eight in June 2017 and September 2023 were only down on the ten of August 1981, nine of August 1990 and 11 of September 2000.

Great White Egret *Ardea alba* **Crëyr Mawr Gwyn**
Vagrant four previous records

One flying south at 1130hrs on the 10th was the third to be seen in October following singles on the 15th in 2020 and on the 11th in 2021 (HL *et al*.). What was perhaps the same individual dropped into Orchid Bog late in the morning of the 14th before heading south (RDB). The only other records are of singles on 5th July 2019 and 4th April 2023. The first for Pembrokeshire was not logged until 12th April 1988, this a bird found near St. Davids (Donovan and Rees, 1994). The next was at Newport in August 2003 and the third at Strumble Head in September 2006, the latter arriving in the year after this species was dropped from the list assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee. Following a further single in 2008, there have been annual Pembrokeshire records since 2011, including 13 sightings of up to two in 2023 and approximately 36 records of up to four this year; this increase has been mirrored elsewhere in Wales, meaning that Great White Egret no longer fits the assessment criteria of either the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee or the Pembrokeshire Rarities Committee.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* **Crëyr Bach**
Rare 40 records, usually singles but with eight on 25th September 2014 and seven on 1st June 2021

The only record this year was of a single heading east over the Farm at 1530hrs on 26th November, this the fourth in this month following singles in 2014, 2020 and 2022. An annual bird-days total of one was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.2 and on that logged in eight years during this period (there were all-time highs of ten in 2014 and 2021 and eight last year). The first for Skokholm joined the Bread Rock Lesser Black-backed Gulls on 18th May 1983, this followed by three in the Dip on 10th October 1993, two on 1st May 1997 and records in 18 subsequent years. Little Egrets have been seen in every month between March and December inclusive, now with one record in March, three in April, eight in May, four in June, nine in July, five in August, two in September, four in October, four in November and one in December (all now tallying 63 bird-days, 47 of which have been since 2013).

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* **Gwalch y Pysgod**
Rare singles in the Septembers of 1966 and 1988 and 18 records from 1992 including seven in spring
Earliest 2nd April 2012 **Latest** 21st September 1996 (7th September 2024)

One flew east along the north side of the Neck and out towards the mainland at 1530hrs on 7th September, with a second seen 25 minutes later from a boat positioned 1.5km to the westsouthwest of the Lighthouse, this heading in a similar direction to the first (GE *et al*.). One had been sat on the Smalls Lighthouse earlier in the day. There have now been four birds in April, three in May, three in

August and 12 in September, with ten of these 21 records occurring in the last 11 years and with 1997, 2002, 2014, 2020 and 2024 the years with two individuals.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* **Gwalch Glas**
Uncommon Visitor occurring in all months, but more frequent outside of the breeding season
1 trapped
1936-1974: 7 trapped, 2013-2023: 15 trapped, 1 retrapped

A female on 21st April was the only record in a disappointing spring, a lone spring bird-day being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 8.0 and matching the 2018 and 2019 totals as the lowest of the last 12 years (the 37 of 1993, 20 of 1996 and 26 of 2000 are the only totals up on the 19 of 1982, 1997, 2006 and 2021). A single on 16th August was one day later than the first of last autumn and four days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period arrived on 27th July 2021, the latest on 24th August 2013). Singles on three further dates led to the lowest August bird-days total since 2012 (the 2013-2023 August mean is 9.6, with all-time highs of 23 in 2015 and 13 in 2019 and 2020). A female on four dates to the 9th similarly led to the poorest September total since 2012, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 17.5 (there were all-time highs of 30 in 2000, 28 in 2014, 26 in 2015 and 23 in 2019). October saw singles on five dates from the 23rd, with a female and a first-winter male both present, the latter ringed on the last day of the month; an October bird-days total of five matched the second lowest tally of the last 12 years and was well down on highs of 21 in 1956, 19 in 1981, 17 in 1989 and 15 in 2015. A male on the 6th, 7th and 11th November was the last in a poor year, although there have only been higher November totals in four years (including a high of eight in 2016). An autumn bird-days total of 16 was the lowest since 2012, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 37.5; this was a period which saw the five highest autumn totals to date, with 44 in 2014, 66 in 2015, 41 in 2016, 44 in 2019 and 53 in 2022. Given the mobile and often secretive nature of this species, daycounts of multiple birds are often due to differences in age or sex; rarely is it possible to prove the presence of two birds of the same age and sex, an uncertainty which no doubt leads to undercounting.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* **Boda'r Gwerni**
Scarce recorded in every month from March to November
Earliest 10th March 2015 (9th May 2024) **Latest** 4th November 2018 (**13th November 2024**)
2013: 1 control

A cream-crown heading southeast during the morning of 9th May and a male heading northwest over the Wildgoose Race at 0930hrs on 2nd June made this the 18th spring with a record; there have now been 30 bird-days in the first half of the year, with three in March, nine in April, 16 in May, two in June and 17 this century. A juvenile lingered on 29th July and two were together over the Bog on the 31st, this just the fifth date with a sighting of more than one bird and taking the all-time July total to nine. August sightings on 11 dates from the 14th were of a lone juvenile on nine dates, with an adult male and a different cream-crown both present on the 30th; an October bird-days total of 12 was

only down on the 16 of 2022 and took the all-time total for this month to 54. Sightings on eight September dates to the 26th were of definite juveniles on four dates, with two cream-crowns together over the Bog on the 1st and a second-summer male there on the 17th; records in eight previous Septembers total 16 bird-days. Up to two juveniles on four dates between the 3rd and 8th and again each day between the 22nd and 28th made this the fourth October with a record, with 17 previous bird-days all occurring since 2018. Lone cream-crowns on the 10th and 13th November were the latest to be seen here and took the bird-days total for the year to 42; unsurprisingly this was a new high, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 6.2 and on all-time highs of seven in 1998, 13 in 2018 and 34 in 2022. There have now been Marsh Harriers in 27 years, including 13 of the last 15, with at least 55 individuals accounting for 152 bird-days, however probable repeat visits by cream-crowns lingering on the mainland have made an accurate count of individuals difficult.

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* **Boda Tinwyn**
Scarce Winter Visitor more regular in October and November than in March and April
Earliest 5th August 2022 (27th October 2024) **Latest** 17th May 2022 (24th March 2024)
1993: 1 control

A ringtail over South Pond and the Hills on 24th March took the number of bird-days logged between March and May to 27, 22 of which have occurred since 2012. A ringtail on 27th October matched the latest autumn arrival of the last ten years, this 20 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; a lone August record and a September bird-days total of 23, 15 of which were in 2017, were not added to. November saw a ringtail on the 13th, three over the centre of the Island at the same time on the 14th and lone ringtails on five dates between the 19th and 26th; only on 23rd October 1993 have three been seen on the same date, that count including a juvenile wing-tagged as a chick in north Wales, whilst there have been six November totals up on that of this year, including highs of 17 in 1990, 20 in 2003, 17 in 2016 and 24 in 2018. A ringtail on 2nd December was the last prior to the staff departure and took the all-time tally for this month to 14. A 2024 bird-days total of 12 was only down on that logged in ten previous years, albeit also down on a 2013-2023 mean of 18.5 and well down on all-time highs of 38 in 2003, 33 in 2016 and 46 in 2018.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* **Boda Llwydwyn**
Vagrant two previous records

A bright rufous and narrow-winged harrier which swept south over Home Meadow and the Knoll on 1st April could not be relocated; it was certainly one of the scarcer harriers, with Pallid perhaps the most likely option (the last Skokholm Montagu's Harrier lingered on the 27th and 28th August 1998).

The third Pallid Harrier for Skokholm (the seventh for Wales) was a splendid juvenile male which arrived on 19th September (GE *et al*.); having flown north over the Top Tank at 1700hrs, it toured the vicinity of South Pond and the South Coast Cut until dusk, this the area which it favoured on the 20th when it was foraging on Manx Shearwater carcasses. It was seen over Winter Pond on the morning of the 21st, with the last views as it headed south at 0840hrs. Although numbers in Britain have been on the increase since the turn of this century, with an all-time high of 29 individuals in 2011, it was not until 2013 that the first for Wales and Pembrokeshire was identified, whilst the second was in Flintshire in 2017 (Bacon *et al*., 2024, Pritchard *et al*., 2021). The first for Skokholm and third for Wales was a juvenile in the afternoon of 12th September 2022; it arrived from the east and circled Gull Field before heading back past Spy Rock and out towards Dale Airfield. The following year saw the fourth for Wales, this a first-winter female on 23rd November which went west towards the Lighthouse at 0915hrs and then quickly east along the South Coast Cliffs; it reappeared over North Plain 25 minutes later, heading west and then again quickly east. This was thought to be the same individual seen at Crofty and Llanrhidian Marsh, Gower between 30th November 2023 and early 2024 (and again on 21st September 2024) and at Penclacwydd, Carmarthenshire between 10th December 2023 and 14th April 2024. A young male on Castlemartin Corse, Pembrokeshire between 5th January and 29th February 2024 (which returned to the Dowrog in its silver finery from 9th October 2024) and a female on the Skerries, Anglesey on 3rd May 2024 were the fifth and sixth for Wales. Given that the breeding range of this species is expanding out of southeast Europe, with pure pairs having now bred in the Netherlands, France and Spain, it would seem inevitable that there will be more records.

Red Kite *Milvus milvus* **Barcud Coch**
Rare approximately 39 previous records of up to three birds, but becoming Scarce or Uncommon

A record year began with three drifting west together on 24th March, one of which was later seen with a Rabbit; this matched a count on 27th April 2022 as the highest to be recorded here. One in the morning of the 26th took the all-time March bird-days total to 14, with a high of four in 2020 matching that of this year. A minimum of two on the 18th, along with a single on the 21st, made this the sixth April with a sighting, the all-time total now 18, seven of which arrived in 2022. Singles on the 10th and 11th took the all-time May tally to five, whilst one in 2000 remains the only June record and there is yet to be a Red Kite in July. One thermalling with three Buzzard and a Kestrel on the 30th was just a third August bird-day following singles on the 27th and 28th in 2022. An all-time September total of six was not added to, however it proved a record October, with singles on the 12th and 19th and two on the 27th taking the all-time tally to 12. Two on the 4th and singles on the 9th, 12th, 15th and 27th made this the third year with a November sighting, the total now standing at 11. An annual bird-days total of 20 was a new high, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.3 and previous highs of nine in 2020 and 2021 and ten in 2022; there have been annual records since 2015, these accounting for 67 bird-days, with two in 2012 and one on 6th June 2000 being the only other sightings. An increase in the Pembrokeshire breeding population is inevitably going to lead to an increase in the number of Skokholm records, although an open sea crossing is seemingly not appealing to a species which is still much more regular on the mainland and islands just offshore.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo* **Bwncath**
Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor
1936-1957: 6 trapped, 2013-2018: 8 pulli trapped

Although a pair yet again held territory in Wreck Cove from March and toured widely, this proved an unobtrusive species which was not recorded every day. Although plumage differences suggested that three individuals were present in March, the only spring daycounts to confirm the presence of birds other than the breeders were of three on 14th April, 4th May and 13th May and four on 17th May and 14th June; a total of five spring dates with more than two Buzzard was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 7.9 dates and highs of 15 in 2013 and 14 in 2021. The peak spring daycount matched a 2013-2023 mean of 4.2 but was down on a high during this period of six on 16th April 2015 (the latter matched that of 6th April 1988 as the highest in spring since nine on 24th May 1955, whilst 12 on 10th April 1940 and ten on 20th May 1955 are the highest spring daycounts). For a sixth year, the rocky shelf which held the nest in each year between 2013 and 2018 was eschewed in favour of a narrower ledge on a taller section of near-vertical cliff. Three eggs were present on 11th May, two had hatched by 8th June and both youngsters had fledged by 13th July. It was suggested in the 2019

Annual Report that the switch in nest site was perhaps brought about by a different adult being part of the pair and that the change had been a successful one; bar the two of 2015, only a singleton fledged in each year between 2013 and 2018, however three fledged in both 2019 and 2022 and two fledged in the other four post-2019 years (amazingly a Wreck Cove pair have thus fledged young in every year since 2013, with a 2013-2023 productivity figure of 1.73). There were five daycounts of four between 7th August and 12th October, with six together on 24th September the only count to confirm the presence of birds other than the family; the all-time autumn highs are of eight in 1937, 1947, 1952, 1989 and 2013, ten in 1931, 11 in 1947 and 16 in 1951. The last count of more than two was of three on 14th November.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* **Tylluan Glustiog**
Uncommon described in 1936 as a 'rare visitor', listed by Thompson as Scarce but has now bred once
1 trapped
1957-1969: 5 trapped, 2017-2023: 4 trapped (including 3 pulli)

Although there were no March records for a fifth time in 12 years, April saw sightings of up to two on five dates between the 24th and 29th, a bird-days total of six matching that of 1961 and only down on the 12 of 2017 and the nine of 2019. One along the Lighthouse Track on the night of the 4th took the all-time May bird-days total to 76, with 41 since 2013 and highs of 14 in 2016 and 12 in 2017.

There were no June records, the all-time bird-days total remaining at 105, with 47 since 2013 and a high of 21 in 2017 when the only Skokholm breeding attempt occurred. A primary near the Garage Heligoland on the 31st confirmed a July presence for the first time in three years, whilst feathers between Little Bay Wall and Twinlet on three dates between the 26th and 31st confirmed an August presence for the first time in two years. A second-calendar-year female netted on 3rd September was perhaps that seen on the 7th, a pellet containing a Storm Petrel ring was found on the 15th and singles were seen after dark on the 17th and 23rd; a September bird-days total of four was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 4.5, albeit well down on highs of 14 in 1957 and 1960 and 21 in 1975. October saw a diurnal sighting of one over the Bog on the 6th, along with nocturnal singles at South Pond on the 28th and near the Sugarloaf on the 29th; there have been more records in October than in any other month, with a 2024 bird-days total of three being down on that logged in 25 previous years and on highs of 22 in 1971, 25 in 1957 and 2015 and 30 in 1989. One around the Farm during the afternoon of the 11th, a nocturnal single along the Lighthouse Track on the 12th and further singles around the Farm on the evenings of the 14th and 19th took the November total to four, this down on all-time highs of 13 in 2003, 18 in 2014 and 27 in 1989 and 1998. A 2024 bird-days total of 18 was down on nine of the last 11 years, a 2013-2023 mean of 32.5 and highs of 72 in 1989, 59 in 2015 and 76 in 2017 (the all-time daycount highs are of six on 22nd September 1948, 9th October 1957, 3rd October 1989 and 7th November 2016 and of nine on 14th November 1989). A total of three eaten Storm Petrel were found between 12th June and 15th September, two certainly taken by Short-eared Owls; this matched the 2020 total as the lowest of the last 12 years, well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 25.5 and on a high of 98 recorded during the year in which Short-eared Owls bred.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* **Glas y Dorlan**

Rare 18 previous records, all of singles and only one of which has lingered for more than a day
1948: 1 trapped

Having circled South Haven before briefly landing at 0930hrs on 29th July, the first of the year disappeared up Well Stream (RDB *et al.*); this was the fifth in July following singles in 1948, 1962, 1963 and 1971. A female in South Haven at 1130hrs on 12th September soon headed for Hog Bay and then Peter's Bay, however it had returned to South Haven by 1730hrs (IS *et al.*); the only other September sightings have been of singles on the 29th in 1975 (the latest to date), on the 19th and 20th in 2022 (the only record over two dates) and on the 22nd last year. This becomes the third year with two records, the others being 2022 and 2023, whilst nine of 21 all-time bird-days have occurred since 2015 (in addition to those listed above, there has been one in May, one in June and nine in August). This increase in records mirrors Welsh WeBS counts, with numbers currently at their highest ever (78% up on 1995-1996), and a BirdTrack reporting rate which is 30% up on 2013.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* **Cudyll Coch**
Uncommon recorded in all months but more regular during the post-breeding period
2 trapped
1936-1973: 8 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

The only spring records were of singles on 15th March and 11th May; although never common in the first half of the year, the 2013-2023 spring bird-days mean is 8.0, with a high during this period of 29 in 2013. A juvenile on the 29th made this the 63rd July with a record, an all-time bird-days total of 329 including highs of 17 in 1989, 22 in 2002 and 19 in 2018. August saw singles on the 26th and 28th, two on the 30th and four watched from the same point on the 31st, a bird-days total of eight almost matching a 2013-2023 mean of 8.6 (there were all-time highs of 52 in 1989, 47 in 1995 and 27 in 2015). It proved a record September, with daily encounters and highs of four on seven dates to the 18th and a minimum of five on the 8th; a bird-days total of 88 was the highest to be logged in any month, up on a 2013-2023 September mean of 27.0 and a previous high of 73 in September 1975, whilst the peak daycount matched the record set on 13th September 1975, 28th August 1989 and the 16th and 18th September 2014. Numbers remained high in October, with daily sightings and a high of three on nine dates; a bird-days total of 66 more than doubled a 2013-2023 mean of 30.2 and was only down on the 70 of 1975. November sightings on all bar one date peaked at three on four dates, a bird-days total of 53 being well up on previous all-time highs of 27 in 1997, 33 in 2020 and 29 in 2021. Sightings on each of the first three days of December included three on the 2nd, this a record daycount in this month. A total of 225 bird-days were recorded in 2024, this eclipsing a 2013-2023 mean of 94.0 and topping previous highs of 211 in 1973, 152 in 1974, 180 in 1975 and 199 in 1989. Juveniles in the Well 9 Net on 6th September and the Wheelhouse Net on 14th October were the first to be ringed since 2013.

Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus* **Cudyll Troedgoch**
Vagrant only one previous record

The second for Skokholm was a brief visitor on 3rd October, this a juvenile first seen hovering near the Sugarloaf and then near the Bluffs before it passed the Lighthouse and shot east along the South Coast Cliffs (GE, RDB). There have only been two further autumn records in Wales, with a female near Solva, Pembrokeshire between the 6th and 16th October 1972 and a juvenile at Sker Point, East Glamorgan on the 16th and 17th October of the same year (Pritchard *et al*., 2021); all other Welsh birds have arrived in May or June. The number of Red-footed Falcon which reach Britain each year is highly variable, for example the 'invasion' year of 1992, which saw over 120 accepted records, was

followed by a year with fewer than ten birds (White & Kehoe, 2025). Although Wales accounts for 9% of Britain's land area, the nation has seen fewer than 2% of post-1957 sightings, with 22 individuals recorded to the end of this year. Nearly half of these have been in Pembrokeshire, with one a fine adult male which 'landed all too briefly on the Neck' on 27th May 1975 (Brooke, 1976).

Merlin *Falco columbarius* **Cudyll Bach**
Uncommon recorded in every month but with only four June and 11 July bird-days
1 trapped
1949-1976: 9 trapped, 2013-2021: 5 trapped

Sightings on 12 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th included definite females on seven dates, males on three dates and a high of two on the 23rd; although there were also 13 bird-days in three previous years, the 14 of 2018, 15 of 1991 and 2021, 16 of 2017 and 25 of 1959 are the only higher March totals. There were 19 April bird-days logged over 17 dates, with a female confirmed on 11 dates and a male on the 2nd and 9th when the daycount reached two; a bird-days total of 19 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 18.0, but down on all-time April highs of 30 in 2018 and 2019 and 28 in 2021. A first-summer male in the Well 9 Mist Net on the 4th was the only May record; sightings in 30 previous Mays, including nine of the last 13, total 143 bird-days, with highs of 29 in 1968, 14 in 1972 and 17 in 2021. The last June bird was in 2002 and the last of July in 1982, whilst it proved the seventh straight year without an August record, the bird-days total for this month remaining at 42.

One at the Dip on 22nd September was the first of the autumn, this four days earlier than the first of last autumn but four days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was logged on 15th August in 2017). A female on the 28th and 30th was the only other September record, a bird-days total of three matching the 2013-2023 mean. Encounters on 19 October dates included a definite female on five dates, males on four dates from the 17th and two on the 17th and 25th; an October bird-days total of 21 matched a 2013-2023 mean of 20.9 (the all-time highs are of 30 in 1967, 28 in 2017, 38 in 2019 and 28 in 2020). A staff presence throughout November allowed for sightings on 19 dates, with definite females on three dates and daycounts of two on the 20th and 27th; a November bird-days total of 21 was only down on the 22 of 2021 and 2023. One on 2nd December was the last prior to the staff departure. A 2024 bird-days tally of 79 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 71.5 and only down on all-time highs of 118 in 1968, 105 in 2017, 84 in 2018, 104 in 2019 and 112 in 2021. Daycounts of three have been noted on 14 previous occasions (once in September 1977, once in April and four times in November 2017, five times in October 2019, once in October 2020, once in October 2021 and once in November 2023), whilst a record four were seen on both 7th October 1968 and 23rd October 2018.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* **Hebog Tramor**

Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor resumed breeding in 1988 following a 56 year absence
2013-2020: 4 pulli trapped, 1 control

Although perhaps due in part to a later than average return of staff, two on the 20th was the only March daycount of more than one and no females were confirmed, a bird-days total of eight being the lowest of the last 14 Marches and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 31.9. Similarly an adult male and a first-summer male led to sightings of singles on just nine April dates, the bird-days total down on a 2013-2023 mean of 46.7 and a low during this period of 29 in 2020. It was thus no surprise that Peregrine was lost as a Skokholm breeding species this year, although the reason was unclear. The last decade has seen the regular presence of birds in addition to a breeding pair, this particularly the case between 2015 and 2017 when a second pair prospected and later attempted to breed; such a presence has perhaps impacted productivity by increasing the time that breeding birds spend away from the nest, although whether this would lead to the subsequent desertion of a territory with such plentiful food seems unlikely. Numbers in Pembrokeshire have seemingly fallen over the last 20 years, with only 12 confirmed breeding pairs in 2024 being down on counts of 20 in 2023 and 25 in 2022; successive rough winters, wet springs and the potential impacts of avian influenza have all been highlighted as potential causes, although there is little evidence, leaving the possibility that other more insidious issues could also be at play (Haycock, 2025).

The number of breeding pairs, their location and fledging success since 2006.
TB = The Bluffs, SC = South Coast, NB = Near Bay, CB = Crab Bay

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Pairs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Site	TB	SC	SC	TB	TB	TB	TB	TB	TB	TB	TB SC	NB SC	TB	TB	NB	TB	CB	TB	
Fledglings	2	1	2	1	0	4	2	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	

The same adult male and first-summer male were potentially responsible for 11 May bird-days, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 50.3; a Puffin taken on the 18th no doubt reflected the reason for their continued presence. The only June sightings were of singles on four dates, whilst at least two adults and a first-summer led to a July bird-days total of ten (there were all-time July highs of 111 in 2011 and 92 in 2013). The first definite female of the year was at the Quarry on 3rd August and the first juvenile of the year was in the same place on the 10th, however an August bird-days total of six was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 32.5. A female and an adult male were seen in September, with

six bird-days down on a 2013-2023 mean of 39.0 (there were all-time highs of 55 in 2014, 56 in 2015 and 60 in 2016). At least two different non-adults led to sightings of singles on four October dates, the total down on a 2013-2023 mean of 27.8 (there was an all-time high of 56 in 2015, a low during this period of ten in 2022). Three males in pursuit of one another across North Plain on 7th November was an impressive sight and the highest autumn daycount since 2019, however singles on two further dates led to a bird-days total 72.4% down on the 2013-2023 mean.

Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio* **Cigydd Cefngoch**
Rare ten spring and 16 autumn records, along with a juvenile ringed on 30th June 1957
Earliest 17th May 1988 (27th August 2024) **Latest** 12th October 1981 (31st August 2024)
1936-1976: 10 trapped, 2016-2023: 3 trapped

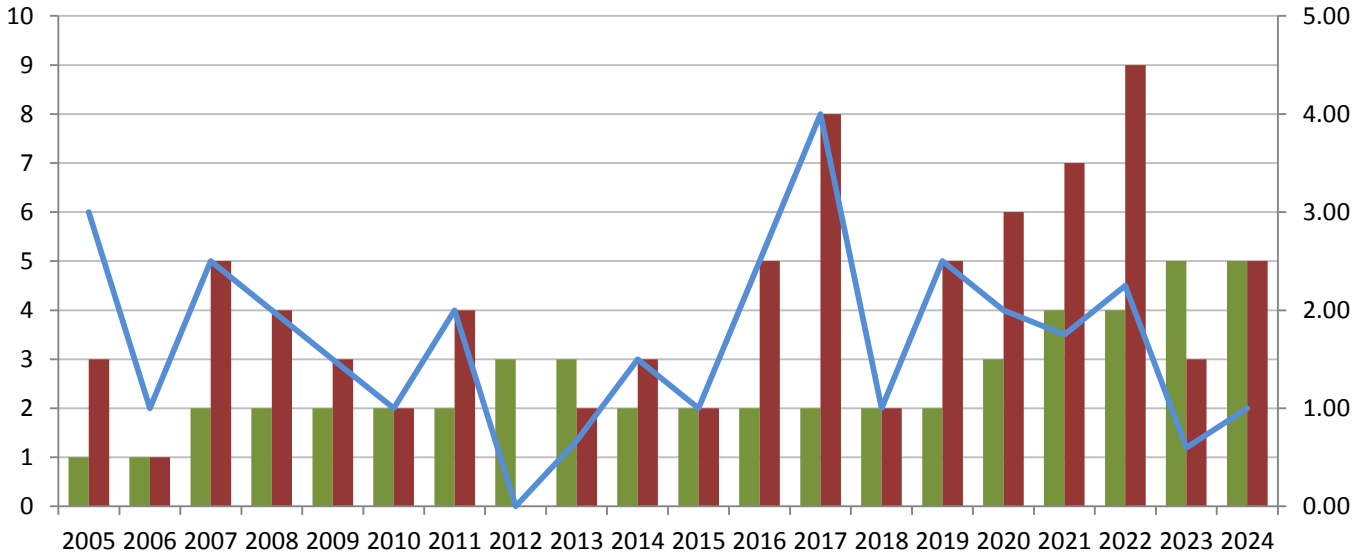
A female or juvenile seen briefly at East Bog, late in the afternoon of a wet 27th August, could not be found the following day despite much more pleasant conditions, however it was almost certainly the same juvenile present near Orchid Bog on the 29th, 30th and 31st (RDB *et al*.). Of 16 previous autumn singles, all logged between 5th August (1949) and 12th October (1981), only six have lingered for more than a day; two day stays were recorded in September 1960, August 2016 and September 2019, whilst one was present for six days in September 1966, one for eight days in October 1981 and one for nine days in September 1955. There have been ten spring records, all in a relatively narrow window between 17th May (1988) and 6th June (a female in 1987 which had lingered from the 5th and a female in 1996), along with the early juvenile noted above. There have now been 47 Skokholm bird-days recorded over 27 years, with 11 bird-days over five years since 2013.

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* **Brân Goesgoch**
Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor bred in 1928 and then annually since 1992
1964: 1 trapped, 2003: 1 control, 2020-2023: 2 trapped

Observations during the pre-breeding period revealed the presence of ten residents which would regularly flock together before returning to their territories. An additional two were present on at least four dates between 20th March and 12th April, whilst larger arrivals saw daycounts reach 16 on 18th April, 15 on 21st April, 25 on 16th May and 14 on 21st May; the peak, which included a group of 16 arriving together from the north, was the highest spring daycount ever, up on highs of 20 on the 15th and 16th February 1929, 24 on 5th May 2017 and 18 on 5th May 2022. Spring survey work located the five breeding pairs, this matching last year as the highest total to date, up on the four of both

2021 and 2022. The Dip pair were nest building from 21st March (unusually one with a beak full of grasses was sat on a first floor Lighthouse windowsill on the 26th) and seemingly feeding young from late May (also unusually, a foraging adult was flipped onto its back by an Oystercatcher on 25th May). A Peter's Bay pair, again including a regularly limping adult with a heavily swollen foot, were also nest building from 21st March and had audible chicks from 27th May. A Steep Bay pair, which included the adult trapped in the Garage Heligoland last September, were nest building from 31st March and were feeding chicks from late May. The Little Bay pair were also nest building from 31st March, with the first faecal sac seen on 14th May and audible chicks recorded from the 17th. A fifth pair again nested to the east of Wallsend Bay, with mating witnessed on 10th April and audible young from 12th June. The first three fledglings were encountered on 21st June, this three days earlier than the 2013-2023 first fledgling mean (the earliest were found on 9th June 2022). The Wallsend pair were only seen with one fledgling, whilst the Little Bay pair were seen with two until 21st June but with only one from the 23rd. The Dip pair were accompanied by two fledglings from 5th July. Although the Steep Bay pair were alarming on 5th June, very regular encounters thereafter saw the adults alone, whilst the noisy Peter's Bay chicks were last heard on 2nd June; pairs at both these sites also failed in 2023, although 2022 saw four fledge from Steep Bay and three fledge from Peter's Bay.

The number of Chough breeding pairs (green) and the number of fledged young between 2005 and 2024, along with productivity (blue and secondary axis).



A total of five 2024 fledglings equalled a 2013-2023 mean of 4.7 and matched the fifth highest tally to date. Owing in part to a record equalling number of breeding pairs, a productivity figure of 1.00 fledgling per pair was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 1.80 ±se 0.30 and matched the third poorest observed during this period; 2012 saw three pairs fail to fledge young, whilst there were subsequent lows of 0.67 in 2013 and 0.60 last year, highs of 2.50 in 2016 and 2019 and of 4.00 in 2017 (the highs in years with only two breeding pairs). There were no July daycounts in excess of the ten breeders and their four extant fledglings, whilst the only such count in August was of 15 on the 26th. Up to ten were seen regularly in September, with 12 together on the 19th watched from the Lighthouse as they went nearly a kilometre to sea before returning. Daily October sightings, including regular encounters with both the swollen footed Peter's Bay bird and the ringed Steep Bay bird, were of ten or less bar daycounts of 11 on the 10th, 35 on the 11th and 14 on the 27th; the peak count, which included 27 together at the Lighthouse, matched the Skokholm record of 9th October 2021, these up on the 32 of 28th September 1965, 30 of 29th August 2017, 31 of 8th October 2022 and 33 of 8th October last year. Daily sightings between 28th October and 3rd December were of no more than ten.

Jackdaw *Coloeus monedula* **Jac-y-Do**
Uncommon Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor
16 trapped, 14 retrapped
1936-1976: 89 trapped, 2011-2023: 234 trapped, 129 retrapped

It has always proven difficult to assess the number of breeding Jackdaw due to semi-colonial nesting, their secretive habits and hidden nests. Following their colonisation in 1965, counts rose to between 50 and 60 pairs between 1974 and 1976, dropped to 16 to 20 pairs between 1982 and 1988, dropped again to between six and 14 pairs from 1989 to 1996 and were estimated at between 15 and 27 pairs during the period 2011 to 2023. This year again saw at least 26 pairs, with the majority nesting colonially in the crevices and burrows of South Haven (8) and the Quarry (8), but with further pairs again at Little Bay Point (2), around Middlerock (2), east of Frank's Point (2), in Hog Bay (2) and in Dumbell Bay (at least 2). A nest was not found in Smith's Bay, Calf Bay, Peter's Bay or to the south of Wreck Cove. Daycounts again suggested that there were more present during the breeding season than were found nesting, whilst birds were seen arriving from the mainland on occasion. There were 13 Jackdaw retrapped during 2024 which had been ringed in previous years; two were in their second summer, two in at least their second, three were in at least their third, one in at least its fourth, one in at least its fifth, one in at least its sixth, one in at least its seventh and one in at least its eighth summer. Additionally EY41961 was reringed EM54532 on 13th April, this now having worn a ring for ten years, nine months and nine days (well off the current British longevity record of 19 years, five months and eight days).

The total number of Jackdaw bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2020 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	901	1270	1501	1460	1459	470	845	2514	1096
2023	1371	1184	1385	1345	1355	1116	776	1482	793
2022	2250	1272	1366	1177	1489	1163	486	1077	431
2021	2620	1933	1335	1728	1479	1867	497	829	952
2020	838	1663	1272	2037	1156	1177	271	1031	397
2024	75	74	80	72	98	90	105	518	158
2023	84	90	90	79	115	125	74	121	106
2022	134	90	62	60	95	96	106	132	86
2021	149	155	102	93	83	120	73	80	134
2020	89	103	66	116	70	141	44	162	74

Two pairs were first seen flying from Crab Bay with nest material on 23rd March, this 19 days earlier

than in a 2023 season probably delayed by wet weather. However the first three fledglings of the year were not seen until 17th June, these five days later than the first of last year, ten days later than the 2013-2023 first fledgling mean and the latest first fledglings of the last 12 years (the earliest two appeared on 3rd June 2018). Fish dropped by Puffins were again an important food source for some birds; although the majority were found following gull attacks, a small number of Jackdaw again attempted to steal directly from the Puffins (usually unsuccessfully, but with more successful steals than in any year to date (see the Puffin section)). It proved impossible to confirm the number of fledglings present in the mobile and nervous post-breeding flocks, although productivity again seemed poor, with minimum counts of 12 between South Haven and the Well, two on the Neck, two at the Quarry, two near Crab Bay and one at Twinlet; a total of 19 fledglings was the lowest of the last 11 years and down on a 2014-2023 mean of 28.3 ±sd 5.4 (there was a high of 37 in 2014).

Despite poor productivity, a July daycount high of 98 on the 29th was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 106.8, however August peaks of 55 on the 1st and 90 on the 3rd were the lowest of the last 14 years. Indeed an earlier exodus for the mainland, which saw no more than 31 logged on any August date from the 4th, single-figure daycounts on 14 dates from the 8th and no birds at all on two dates, led to an August bird-days total of only 470 (the 2013-2023 August bird-days mean is 1506.6, with a high of 2271 in 2015, a low of 1116 last year). Given the terrible August, it was perhaps surprising that sightings on all but two September dates, including highs of 105 on the 13th and 88 on the 22nd, led to a bird-days total of 845, this the third highest tally in this month (up on a 2013-2023 mean of 677.0). There was a near constant October presence, with sightings on all but two dates and highs of 116 on the 11th, 104 on the 13th, 518 on the 27th and 420 on the 31st which took the bird-days total to a record 2514 (the previous high was the 1902 of 2018, whilst the 2013-2023 mean is 1170.5); the peak daycount, comprising a huge flock of 486 over a Quarry flock of 32, was also a record, up on a 2013-2023 mean autumn high of 180.5 and all-time peaks of 200 on 5th November 1990, 300 on 23rd October 1993, 500 on 24th October 1993 and 381 on 20th October 2019. November was also record breaking, with sightings on 22 dates and highs of 106 on the 11th, 158 on the 12th and 136 on the 15th which took the bird-days total to 1096 (there was a previous high of 952 in 2021, with 189 on the 2nd in 2017 and the above from 1990 the only higher November daycounts).

Rook *Corvus frugilegus* **Ydfran**
Scarce daycounts of up to 25 in 71 previous springs and of up to 21 in 38 previous autumns

An early afternoon flyover on the 22nd was the first March record since 2016 and took the all-time bird-days total for this month to 85, 21 of which were in 1929 (the latter including a daycount of 20 on the 15th which is only down on the 25 of 10th April 1953 and 21 of 6th October 2002, with 17 on

15th October 2023 the next highest). It became the ninth consecutive April with a Rook, with two on the 12th and singles over on the 20th and 21st taking the bird-days total to four, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.9 and on all-time highs of 32 in 1930, 30 in 1951 and 1952 and 47 in 1953. There were May singles in the mornings of the 11th and 12th, an all-time total of 73 now including 29 since 2016 (with a high of 17 in 2017). There have now been 126 spring bird-days logged over 16 years this century, with a high of 45 in 2017 (a single seen on 41 dates between 4th April and 16th May was eventually eaten by a Great Black-backed Gull). A June bird-days total of 15, a July total of eight and an August total of 36 were not added to, whilst two over on the 28th took the all-time September tally to 52, ten of which have been this century. Vocal flyovers on the 2nd, 29th and 30th October were the last of the year, the total for this month now at 140 and including highs of 15 in 1975 and 21 in both 2002 and 2023. A 2024 bird-days total of 12 was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 13.1, albeit well down on all-time highs of 36 in 1930, 42 in 1951, 50 in 1953, 45 in 2017 and 36 in 2023.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone* **Brân Dyddyn**
Uncommon Breeder and Uncommon Visitor
5 trapped (including 4 pulli), 1 retrapped
1936-1975: 148 trapped, 2013-2023: 29 trapped (including 22 pulli), 1 retrapped, 1 control

Although dead adults were found near North Haven on 11th March and at Winter Pond on 4th April, there were 11 nesting pairs mapped in 2024, this one fewer than in 2023 but up on a 2013-2023 mean of 9.5 and matching the second highest total to date. Up to 12 pairs nested on Skokholm prior to 1963, however this had declined to just two by 1982, there was no breeding at all in 1984, 1985 and between 1991 and 1995 and there were only between two and five pairs from 1996 to 2012. Nests were near Wardens' Rest, in Steep Bay and Little Bay, on Rat Island and the Little Neck, in Peter's Bay, Winter Pond Gully and Dip Gully, on the Hills, in an Elder at the Pig Sty and in an Elder at Orchid Bog (a pair at the latter site in 2023 were the first tree nesters for at least 11 years, with the Pig Sty pair becoming the second this year). Between one and 20 birds additional to the Skokholm breeders were present on nine days in March and on 11 days in April, with daycount highs in March of 42 on the 26th and 27 on the 31st and in April of 32 on the 21st and 34 on the 23rd; the peak was a spring daycount record, up on the 34 of 23rd March 2019, 35 of 1st March 2021 and 10th March 2022, 36 of 12th March 2022 and 40 of 6th April last year. Rarely do we witness hunting Crows, so it was interesting to watch one take young Rabbits from North Plain on the 4th, 7th and 8th May.

The first fledgling of the year left the Peter's Bay nest on 11th May, this 13 days earlier than the first of 2023 but two days later than the first of 2022. The Hills pair fledged four, the Rat Rock pair fledged three, the Orchid Bog pair fledged two (with a third near-fledgling killed by gulls), the Peter's Bay and Wardens' Rest pairs both also fledged two and the Dip Gully, Winter Pond Gully and Pig Sty pairs fledged one, whilst there was no sign of fledged young in three territories. The resulting productivity value of 1.45 was up on seven of the last 11 years and on a 2013-2023 mean of 1.28 ±se 0.18 (there were highs during this period of 1.88 in 2015 and 2.27 in 2021, lows of 0.38 in 2013 and 0.60 in 2018). Both Wardens' Rest fledglings were dead within two weeks of fledging, probably owing to nearby Great Black-backed Gulls, whilst the Dip Gully fledgling was found dead at the Sugarloaf on 26th June. Despite the high number of breeders and their fledglings, most again proved unobtrusive during the post-fledging period, with 28 on 27th July the only daycount between 22nd May and 6th September of more than 25. Similarly the only September daycounts of more than 27 were of 48 on the 22nd and 33 on the 26th, the former the only autumn daycount to exceed the total number of Skokholm birds; the peak autumn daycount matched that logged on three occasions since 2014 and was only down on the 49 of 22nd October 2020 and 22nd August 2023, 50 of 9th October 2023 and 72 of 15th October 2023. Although a daycount high of 38 on the 1st was close to a 2013-2023 mean October high of 36.1, eight daycounts of 30 or more helped take the October bird-days total to 714, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 507.3 and only down on the 874 of last year (a total which included the record daycounts listed above). There were fewer present in November, although a daycount high of 30 on the 9th was only down on that logged in six previous Novembers.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* **Brân Lwyd**
Rare records in 16 years totalling 29 bird-days, with one in October 2018 the only autumn sighting

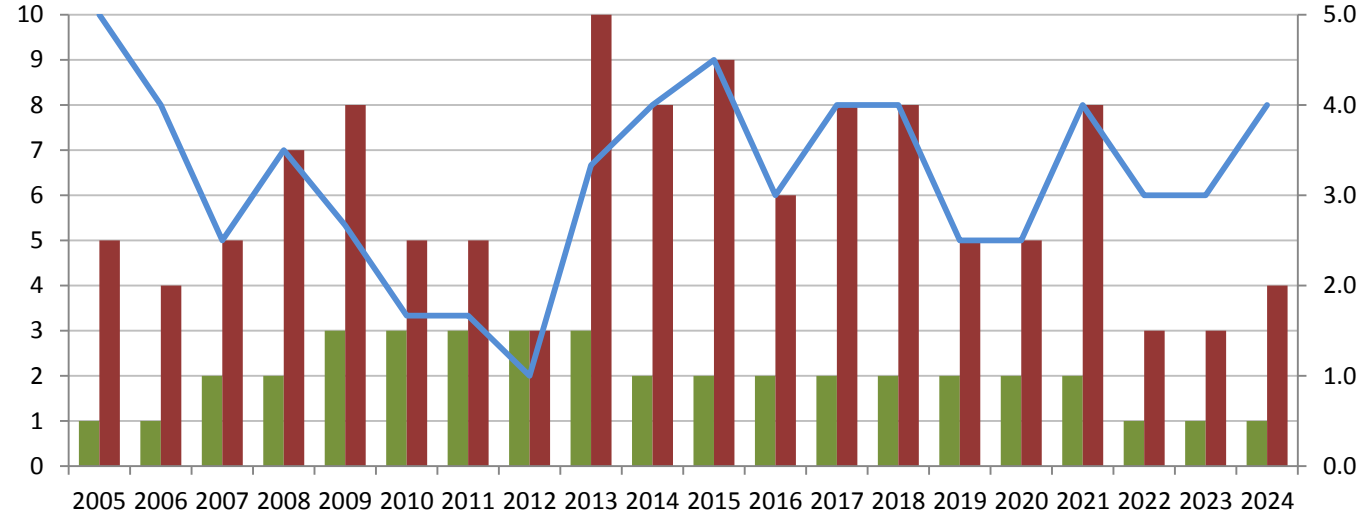
One on 19th June, chased by a Great Black-backed Gull over South Haven and the Knoll, was the only sighting and the latest spring record for Skokholm (RDB *et al*.). Of 28 previous spring bird-days, five have been in March, 16 in April (including the first for Skokholm in 1939 and two together in 1982 which remains the only record of multiple birds), five in May and two in June, whilst 15 have been since 2015. It is likely that Hooded Crow will again be lumped with Carrion Crow in future years, this following the BOU adoption of AviList in an attempt to unify the most widely used world checklists.

Raven *Corvus corax* **Cigfran**
Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor
1936-1965: 67 trapped, 2022-2023: 2 trapped

An additional two adults on 19th March and 3rd May were not tolerated by a lone breeding pair which included the female ringed in November 2022; there were three pairs between 2009 and 2013 and

two pairs nested in 1966 and in ten years between 2007 and 2021, whilst a single pair has been present in every other year since 1928. The nest ledge hidden by a buttress of rock on the eastern side of North Haven, used since 2017, was abandoned in favour of a new site in Smith's Bay, this the first nest at this site for at least 12 years. At least three fledglings were out of the nest on 4th May, these the earliest to be seen since 2017; the 2013-2023 mean first fledgling date is 7th May, with the earliest during this period on 30th April in 2014 and 2015, the latest on 17th May 2020. The fledglings returned to the nest that day, indeed they stayed either in or adjacent to the nest for a further week. A fourth youngster was confirmed on 8th May; although there have been more Skokholm fledglings in 15 of the last 19 years, primarily due to more pairs being present, productivity was only higher in 2005 and 2015. Between 2009 and 2013, when three pairs bred, mean productivity was 2.07, with 1.67 or fewer fledglings per pair in three of those years, this compared with a 2014-2023 mean of 3.45; it is tempting to conclude that a higher density of breeding birds impacts productivity.

The number of Raven breeding pairs (green) and the number of fledged young between 2005 and 2024, along with productivity (blue and secondary axis).



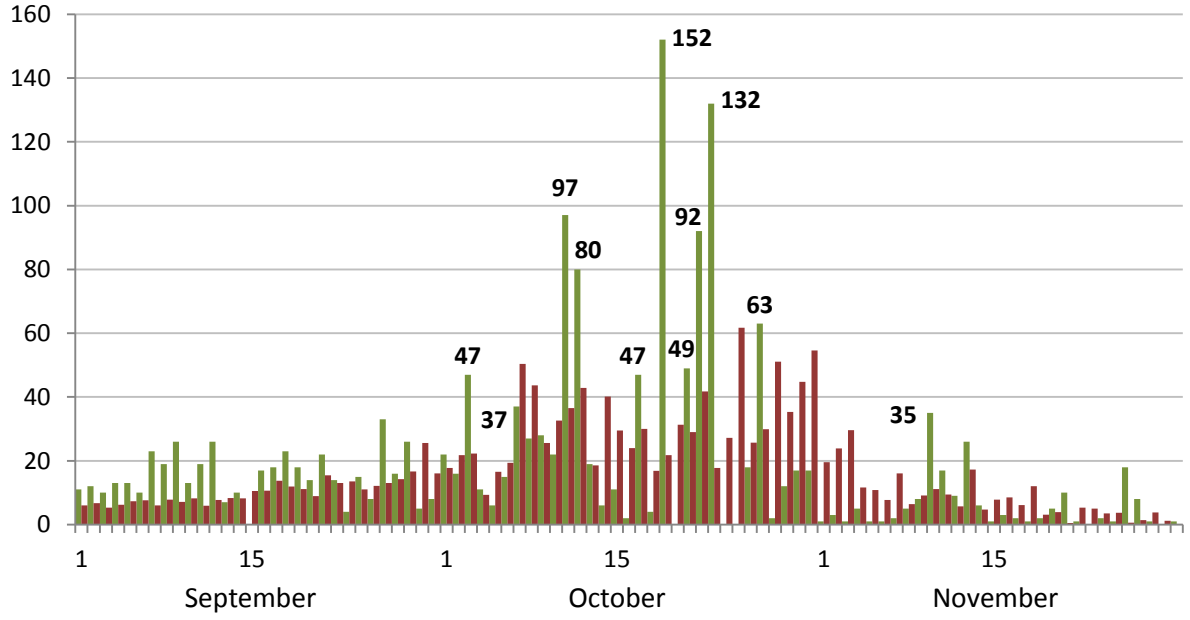
Good views of the family on 26th May suggested that at least three of the youngsters and possibly one of the adults had feathers in a poor condition, perhaps owing to feather lice. No more than five

were seen from 20th June, although five were logged on 11 dates in July, on 14 dates in August and on four September dates to the 11th. No more than three were seen from 21st September, a juvenile was persistently chased by both adults on 26th September and 1st October and no more than two were seen on any date from 4th October. Unusually there were no daycounts or observations which suggested the presence of any autumn birds other than the Skokholm breeders and their offspring; between 2013 and 2023 the peak autumn daycount averaged 13.8 (with a high of 25 in September 2016, a low of six in 2022), whilst the all-time daycount highs, all logged in September, are of 35 on the 22nd in 1983, 33 on the 19th in 2005 and 50 on the 14th in 2008. One of the adults carried a twig into North Haven on 22nd November.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis* **Ehedydd**
Uncommon Breeder and Common Visitor
3 trapped
1936-1976: 299 trapped, 2015-2023: 18 trapped (including 4 pulli), 3 retrapped

There was again little evidence of a spring passage, with maximum daycounts of 20 in March, 24 in April and 25 in May being attributable to the Skokholm breeders; the May peak matched the highest spring daycount since 2017, but was well down on a 21st century spring high of 40 in March 2017 and counts of up to 70 in the 1960s. A total of 16 territories were registered regularly during April and May, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 14.45 ±sd 3.33 and matching the 2021 total as the highest since 2018 (there were highs during this period of 21 in 2017 and 19 in 2018); the number of territories mapped between 2002 and 2015 was lower, ranging between three and 12, however numbers were previously higher, with between 16 and 29 mapped between 1978 and 1996, 35 mapped in 1974 and between 38 and 48 mapped between 1965 and 1971 (with the high in 1966). An additional singing male was recorded during one survey. Adults were seen collecting food from 31st May, this three days earlier than the first of last year and on the same date as the first of 2022, however the first fledglings were not seen until 29th June, this 12 days later than the first of last year.

The number of Skylark logged on each autumn day (green) and the 2013-2023 average. 2024 daycounts of 35 and above are labelled.



Given the number of overlapping territories and the secretive nesting habits of this species, it again proved impossible to accurately assess productivity, however fledglings were noted at nine sites (four more than last year). A flightless chick on Home Meadow on 12th June was not in one of the mapped territories, but perhaps belonged to a pair typically seen to the west of the Farm. No more

than 23 were seen on any date between 10th July and 8th September, whilst a September high of 33 on the 26th was down on a 2013-2023 September mean of 38.8 (the all-time September daycount highs are of 59 in 1959, 58 in 2018 and 68 in 2020). There were ten or fewer Skylark noted on eight October dates (this was between eight and 18 dates between 2017 and 2023), however ten daycounts in excess of 30 took the bird-days total to 1051, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 969.8 (there were highs of 3256 in 1956, 2100 in 1959 and 1993 in 1964). Despite the above average bird-days total, October daycount highs of 97 on the 11th, 152 on the 19th and 132 on the 23rd were down on a 2013-2023 mean October high of 215.0 and on all but three years during this period (the all-time daycount highs, all logged in October, are of 1200 on the 21st in 1956, 601 on the 15th in 1959, 500 on the 13th and 27th in 1964 and on the 17th in 1968, 700 on the 20th in 1988 and 491 on the 31st last year). There were sightings on all but two November dates, albeit with just five two-figure daycounts and highs of 35 on the 10th, 26 on the 13th and 18 on the 26th; the November high was the third lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 73.9, highs during that period of 94 in 2018 and 221 in 2022 and on all-time highs of 450 on the 8th and 400 on the 12th in 1967 (200 on the 1st in 1970 is the next highest November count). The only December counts were of six on the 1st and two on the 2nd.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* **Gwennol y Glennydd**
Fairly Common and Common in some years with daycounts of up to 400 in spring and 500 in autumn
Earliest 8th March 2000 (21st March 2024) **Latest** 25th October 1971 and 1997 (3rd October 2024)
1960-1967: 8 trapped, 2018-2020: 12 trapped

A group of 11 heading northeast took the 21st March daycount to 13, these one day earlier than the 2013-2023 first of spring mean; there have been 50 earlier birds, with 13 on the 18th in 1957 and ten on the 18th in 2023 the only earlier two-figure daycounts. Two on the 31st took the March total to 15, this down on that logged in 12 previous years, including highs of 41 in 1965 and 40 in 2019. Counts on 11 April dates were all of nine or less, this the lowest April high of the last ten years and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 21.0 (there was a peak during this period of 73 in 2017 and all-time highs of 250 in 1954 and 200 in 1990). Encounters on 13 May dates included highs of 18 on the 1st, 12 on the 5th and 17 on the 8th, a bird-days total of 77 being up on a 2013-2023 mean of 44.5 and only down on that logged in 13 previous years (albeit massively down on highs of 792 in 1948 and 570 in 1989). Counts of up to three on eight dates led to a June bird-days total of 11, this only down on that recorded in seven previous years (there were highs of 27 in 1964 and 67 in 1969). Despite the good

May and June totals, a poor April led to a spring bird-days total of 157, this a little up on a 2013-2023 mean of 140.5 but down on that logged in five years during this period (highs of 240 in 2017 and 212 in 2018 were well down on spring totals of 997 in 1948, 625 in 1959, 638 in 1967 and 674 in 1989).

The total number of Sand Martin bird-days logged each month (2023 to 2021 in parentheses), along with the maximum monthly daycount (2023 to 2021 in parentheses).

March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
15	54	77	11	32	40	21	9
(11, 2, 17)	(126, 61, 100)	(15, 34, 12)	(14, 1, 1)	(12, 11, 5)	(0, 162, 48)	(74, 298, 257)	(0, 5, 8)
13	9	18	3	15	16	8	5
(10, 1, 6)	(26, 11, 18)	(3, 10, 3)	(7, 1, 1)	(10, 4, 4)	(0, 64, 8)	(25, 144, 77)	(0, 2, 7)

July saw ten counts of up to 15 birds from the 10th, a bird-days total of 32 down on that recorded in eight previous Julys (with all-time highs of 94 in 2016 and 211 in 2017). Although an improvement on last August which saw no records at all, sightings on just six dates peaked at 13 on the 11th and 16 on the 30th, taking the total to 40 (the 2013-2023 August bird-days mean is 82.7, with a high of 309 in 2018, whilst the other all-time highs are of 261 in 1953 and 472 in 1969). A September bird-days total of just 21 was massively down on a 2013-2023 mean of 132.5, with encounters on eight dates with no more than eight birds (there have been September daycount highs of 500 in 1967 and 300 in both 1997 and 2007, bird-day highs of 1455 in 1967, 492 in 1997 and 554 in 2002). There were October counts of two on the 1st, five on the 2nd and two on the 3rd, with one of the latter having seemingly spent the previous night in the Quarry; there have been 186 later bird-days, including 23 this century, 70 in 1939, 28 in 1961 and 18 in 1968. A total of 102 bird-days in the second half of the year was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 252.6 and on highs during this period of 445 in 2017 and 476 in 2022 (the only tallies up on that of 2022 are of 564 in 1966, 1575 in 1967, 766 in 1969, 510 in 1997 and 574 in 2002).

Swallow *Hirundo rustica* **Gwennol**
Scarce Breeder and Very Abundant Migrant
Earliest 11th March 2000 (2nd April 2024) **Latest** 1st December 2022 (27th October 2024)
75 trapped (including 16 pulli), 17 retrapped, 1 control
1936-1976: 234 trapped, 2010-2023: 1195 trapped (including 185 pulli), 152 retrapped, 13 controls

One north over Crab Bay during the morning of 2nd April was four days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean and the latest first arrival for six years; there have been 219 earlier bird-days, including 164 in March and 120 since 2013. Sightings on 22 further April dates included highs of 75 on the 20th, 89 on the 21st and 232 on the 24th which took the bird-days total to 836; although well down on April daycount highs of 520 on the 23rd last year and 1000 on both the 20th in 1953 and the 29th in 1990, this year's peak was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 176.6, whilst the total was close to a mean of 862.0 recorded during the same period. Daily May sightings peaked at 92 on the 1st, 142 on the 8th and 91 on the 9th, but were of no more than 38 after the 11th bar the 76 of the 24th; the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 232.2 (the maximum during this period was 861 on the 1st in 2019, the highest May daycounts the 2000 of 1953, 3000 of 1989 and 1500 of 1997), whilst the May total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 1287.5. Typical June counts took the spring bird-days total to 2247, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 2473.2 and on seven years during this period (there was a high of 3586 in 2016). Birds regularly lingered from 20th April, one sang from the Courtyard from the 25th and birds were collecting mud from 19th May, the latter four days earlier than the first of last year. Although prospecting birds were recorded at North Pond, Orchid Bog and around the Central Block, only three pairs attempted to breed this year, this the lowest total since 2004, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.8 and on all-time highs of seven in 2007 and six in 2008, 2015 and 2022. The only returning Swallow to be encountered this year was ARR7777, this ringed as a breeding male on 11th July 2022 and retrapped on 13th May 2023 and 7th July this year.

The total number of Swallow bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2023 to 2020 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	0	836	1126	285	377	706	4773	17,074	0
2023	5	1595	835	340	283	570	2483	912	0
2022	2	747	957	358	528	1100	10,996	2612	1
2021	10	918	1385	281	332	986	5371	1124	5
2020	0	433	658	280	311	862	6797	2180	1
2024	0	232	142	23	37	186	1487	10,773	0
2023	2	520	67	22	15	79	454	368	0
2022	2	201	91	17	36	158	4752	1939	1
2021	10	142	226	20	20	83	1463	727	2
2020	0	78	47	19	32	113	1127	736	1

The pair to the north of the Wheelhouse were seemingly feeding young from 20th June, although the chicks were not heard until the 27th; three fledged on 7th July. The Red Hut pair had three eggs on 11th June and at least five chicks by 4th July, with five fledging on the 11th. The attempt in the Smoke Room was seemingly impacted by the presence of more than two adults; five cold eggs had been produced by 15th June, this dropping to two by the 21st and the nest being empty on the 29th, with four eggs there on 13th July, chicks from the 23rd and five fledglings by 24th August. The Wheelhouse pair had four eggs by 3rd August and fledged three second brood youngsters on 28th August, whilst the Red Hut pair had five eggs by 3rd August and fledged three on 2nd September; one of the latter youngsters was a striking leucistic individual seen between the Ram and the Farm until 13th September (above photographs). Despite the disappointing number of breeding pairs, a total of 19 fledglings matched that of last year and was a little up on a 2013-2023 mean of 17.2 (there were peaks during this period of 20 in 2013 and 2021, 23 in 2016 and 27 in 2022, but lows of just eight in 2014 and 12 in 2020). A productivity figure of 6.33 fledglings per pair was the highest this century, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.58 ±se 0.32 (there were highs during this period of 4.00 in 2013, 2018 and 2021, 4.50 in 2022 and 5.75 in 2016, lows of 2.00 in 2014, 2.40 in 2020 and 2.50 in 2015).

There were 12 July daycounts in excess of the breeding birds and their fledglings, with up to two extra birds on ten dates to the 20th, five extra on the 26th and 23 extra on the 31st. August highs of 46

on the 1st, 41 on the 14th and 186 on the 30th took the bird-days total to a below average 706, this no doubt due in part to the smaller breeding population; the peak August daycount was however only down on the 350 of 1959, 300 of 1989, 210 of 2016 and 478 of 2018. There were 25 or fewer noted on 12 September dates (12 dates last year), but ten daycounts of at least three-figures (seven last year) including highs of 330 on the 8th, 1487 on the 18th, 1231 on the 19th and 305 on the 20th; the peak September daycount was down on that logged in seven of the last 12 years and a 2013-2023 mean of 4459.7 (the all-time highs are the 10,000 of 1992 and 1993, 12,000 of 2014 and 12,979 of 2017). Similarly a September bird-days total of 4773 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 10,501.5 (the highs are of 18,664 in 1993, 30,693 in 2014 and 18,018 in 2017). But it was a late year, with October daycount highs of 10,773 on the 1st, 5700 on the 2nd and 173 on the 11th, the peak being a new October record, eclipsing the 2500 of 1952. A bird-days total of 17,074 more than quadrupled a previous October high of 4047 recorded in 1998. A total of 22,930 bird-days were thus recorded in the second half of the year, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 12,939.0 and only down on a high during this period of 32,316 in 2014. A minimum of 22 on 27th October were the last of the year; there have been 115 later bird-days, including 24 in November, one in December and 42 since 2013.

Ringing recovery J587258
Originally ringed as a juvenile, WINTERTON FARM, MULLOCK, PEMBROKESHIRE 30th July 2024
Recovered as a juvenile, GARDEN NET, SKOKHOLM 3rd September 2024
Distance travelled 9km at 232 degrees (SW)
Days since ringed 35
Our seventh Swallow exchange with this important mainland reedbed roost site.

House Martin *Delichon urbicum* **Gwennol y Bondo**
Common Migrant with a spring daycount high of 330 in 1948 and an autumn high of 710 in 2013
Earliest 20th March 1988 (2nd April 2024) **Latest** 29th October 1975 (11th October 2024)
1938-1969: 23 trapped, 2015-2022: 16 trapped

One over North Plain on the morning of 2nd April was four days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 21 earlier bird-days, including 15 in March and six since 2019. Sightings on 13 further April dates from the 12th included highs of 18 on the 24th and eight on the 27th which took the bird-days total for the month to 62; although massively down on a spring record of 330 logged on the 18th in 1948, there have surprisingly only been higher daycounts in seven Aprils (with 52 in 2016 and 37 in 2017 the next highest counts), whilst the total was down on six previous Aprils (with highs of 357 in 1948, 118 in 2016 and 81 in 2017). Although House Martin were seen on 25 May dates, the 15 of the 18th was the only daycount of more than eight, a bird-days total of 107 being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 198.0 and on that logged in 28 previous years (there were all-time highs of 315 in 1948, 361 in 2016 and 313 in 2018). June proved typically quiet, with daily counts of up to seven for the first six days, along with singles on the 12th and 24th which took the total to 27; there have been higher June totals in 23 years, with peaks of 52 in 1951, 101 in 1955 and 170 in 1969 (the 21st century high is of 44 in 2018).

The only July records were of one on the 22nd and six together on the 29th; there have now been 269 bird-days in this month, 93 of which have been since 2012. The only records in another poor August were of one on the 24th and five on the 30th, the total down on a 2013-2023 mean of 27.5 and on 31 previous Augusts. September counts were more disappointing, with sightings on only 13 dates and highs of 19 on the 8th, 12 on the 19th and 27 together on the 21st taking the bird-days total to 83; the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 156.8, whilst the September total was down on a mean of 290.6 logged during the same period and on that logged in 38 previous years (there were September bird-day highs of 561 in 1959, 782 in 2013 and 675 in 2014). However, as was noted for Swallow records above, it was a late year, with October seeing impressive daycounts of 209 on the 1st and 139 on the 2nd; the peak was up on a 2013-2023 mean October high of 38.5 and only down

on a count of 250 on the 3rd in 1952. A further 20 on the 3rd, along with three counts of up to three between the 8th and 11th, led to a record October tally of 374 (there were 207 in 1939, 276 in 1952 and 179 in 2020). Owing to the impressive October, a total of 470 bird-days in the second half of the year was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 384.3, albeit down on highs of 851 in 2013, 713 in 2014 and 557 in 2022. There have been 425 later bird-days, including 103 since 2010.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* **Telor y Coed**
Rare Migrant recorded in 25 previous years
Earliest 7th April 1977 (17th May 2024) **Latest** 20th September 1991 (19th May 2024)
1 trapped, 2 retrapped
1951-1976: 6 trapped, 2020-2021: 2 trapped

One trapped in the Wheelhouse Net on 17th May was the third in five years, but just a seventh 21st century record following annual singles between 2000 and 2003. It was retrapped the following morning when it was found to have increased from 8.5g to 9.2g, the latter matched on the morning of the 19th; it was still present during the afternoon of the 19th, but not seen thereafter, a three day stay matching that made by one in September 1982 as perhaps the longest seen on Skokholm (it is possible that singles lingered for five days in May 1989, for four days in May 1991, for six days in September 1991 and for five days in September 2021, although in these cases two individuals may account for the sightings). Of the 45 bird-days now recorded on Skokholm, three have been across two Aprils, 12 across six Mays, 18 across 17 Augusts and 12 across six Septembers.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* **Telor Aelfelyn**
Scarce Autumn Migrant the first for Wales was found on 2nd October 1959. Rare until 2013
Earliest 18th September 2020 (3rd October 2024) **Latest** 8th May 1990 (14th November 2024)
3 trapped
1959-1968: 2 trapped, 2013-2022: 22 trapped, 3 retrapped

One in the Isthmian Heath Bracken on 3rd October was seven days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean (HL *et al.*); there have been eight earlier autumn bird-days, including five in September and five since 2015. One found at the Farm on the 9th eventually made its way into the Wheelhouse Heligoland, whilst a third was mist netted at the Well on the 29th, these taking the all-time October bird-days total to 49 (logged over 23 years). November saw one in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on

the 8th and one in the Bracken to the south of Home Meadow during the afternoon of the 14th; the only previous November bird was present on the 3rd in 2017, whilst one on 3rd December 2022 is the only record in that month. A total of five 2024 individuals was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.55 and matched that of 2016 as the second highest tally to date, only down on the six of 2020. There have still only been approximately 51 Skokholm individuals (59 bird-days), including the first for Wales present for two days in 1959, although post-2012 ringing has shown that sightings on consecutive dates, assumed in the past to be the same lingering individual, may actually refer to more than one bird. The recent increase in numbers is probably due to continued breeding range expansion to the west of the Urals, this mirroring an increase in the number wintering in western Europe.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* **Telor yr Helyg**
Abundant Migrant although only Common in some years
Earliest 19th March 2023 (22nd March 2024) **Latest** 10th November 2020 (11th October 2024)
593 trapped, 32 retrapped, 1 control
1933-1976: 11,698 trapped, 2010-2023: 7915 trapped, 946 retrapped, 17 controls

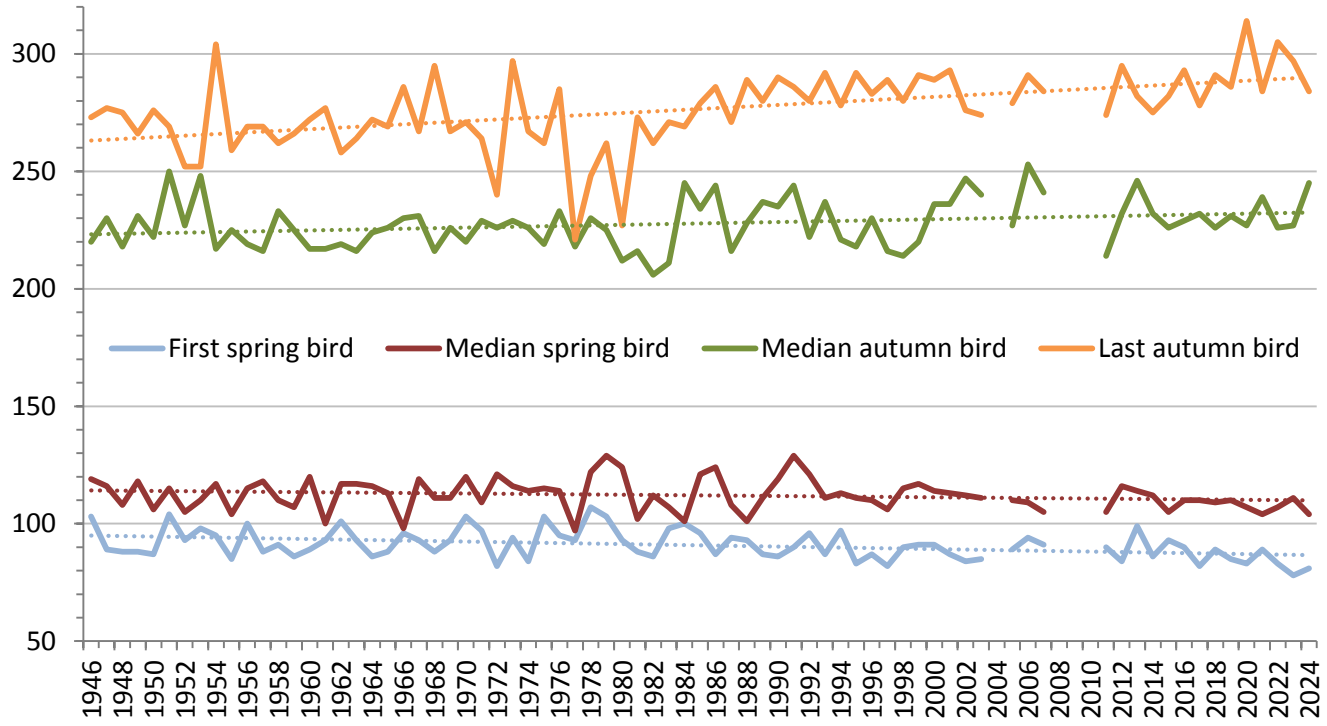
Two males trapped on 22nd March were six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean, with males on the 19th and 21st last year the only earlier records; an analysis of the digitised Birdlog data reveals that the first individual of spring is arriving significantly earlier than it did only six decades ago (see chart below). A minimum of 11 on the 26th was the earliest two-figure daycount to date, although a bird-days total of 38 was down on that logged in four previous Marches (there were highs of 221 in 1989, 46 in 1997 and 60 in 2005). Records on all but one April date included 22 counts of fewer than ten (14 last year), but highs of 32 on the 12th, 91 on the 13th and 35 on the 19th which took the total to just 335; both the peak daycount and the bird-days total were down on respective 2013-2023 means of 107.5 and 534.7, the latter the second lowest April tally during this period (the all-time bird-day highs are of 1033 in 1953, 1089 in 2012 and 954 in 2017). Half of the birds counted in spring had gone through by 14th April, this seven days earlier than last year and matching the earliest date this century; an analysis of the Birdlog data suggests that the median spring bird is passing through earlier than it did in the early post-War years. Sightings on 13 May dates to the 18th were all of five or less and tallied 31 bird-days, this the lowest May total since 2011 and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 97.3 (the all-time May highs are of 372 in 1953, 507 in 1991 and 306 in 1992). Six individuals probably accounted for the six bird-days logged over five June dates (the all-time June

bird-days high is of just 26 in 2013). As noted previously, nearly all spring birds moved through quickly, indeed only four of the 197 ringed during the period were encountered again; three were still present two days after ringing and one was still present three days after ringing.

The total number of Willow Warbler bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2023 to 2020 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	38	335	31	6	147	216	400	3	0
2023	7	398	80	12	94	300	107	11	0
2022	19	367	50	2	284	667	369	0	1
2021	44	410	72	10	318	575	647	13	0
2020	4	411	65	4	168	614	118	27	7
2024	11	91	5	2	42	40	150	1	0
2023	1	103	17	2	16	71	22	3	0
2022	6	62	13	1	55	100	227	0	1
2021	30	110	13	2	110	103	134	3	0
2020	2	54	11	2	24	113	10	2	1

The number of days into the year that the first and last Willow Warblers were logged 1946-2024 and the number of days after which the median spring and autumn birds went through.



A juvenile ringed on 10th July was three days earlier than the 2013-2023 first definite juvenile mean (the earliest during this period arrived on 4th July 2017, the latest on 18th July 2015). Counts on 17 subsequent July dates included highs of 31 on the 28th and 42 on the 31st, the peak close to a 2013-2023 mean of 38.8; there were highs during this period of 101 in 2014 and 110 in 2021, with a remarkable 3000 in 1948 the only higher July daycount. A July bird-days total of 147 was a little down on a 2013-2023 mean of 166.6, albeit only down on four years during this period (there were highs of 457 in 2014 and 318 in 2021). Sightings on all but one August date included 24 daycounts of fewer than ten (there were 19 such counts last year), along with highs of just 18 on the 1st, 23 on the 3rd and 40 on the 11th which led to a bird-days total of 216; the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 76.6 (there were highs of 700 in 1939, 3000 in 1948 and 1000 in 1958, whilst the 21st century high is the 159 of 2018), the bird-days total the lowest since 2013 and down on a 2013-2023

mean of 486.5 (there was a high during this period of 785 in 2018, whilst the all-time highs are of 3938 in 1948, 1162 in 1958 and 2121 in 1975). It was however a late autumn, with September sightings on 19 dates to the 21st and highs of 84 on the 3rd, 150 on the 7th and 77 on the 8th taking the bird-days total to 400; there have only been higher daycounts in three Septembers, with 300 in 1951, 250 in 1953 and 227 in 2022, whilst the total was down on just four years (with highs of 828 in 1951, 475 in 1953, 550 in 2014 and 647 in 2021). The median autumn passage bird went through on 2nd September, this 18 days later than last year. The Birdlog data reveals that the median autumn bird is passing significantly later, a trend which mirrors the shift in the date on which the last bird is logged; documented changes in phenology linked to climate change frequently cite earlier spring arrival dates, however this Willow Warbler data suggests that departure dates are changing more rapidly (see chart above). Singles on the 3rd, 6th and 11th October were the last of the year; there have been 299 previous October bird-days, including 112 since 2012, whilst two birds account for eight November bird-days. As was noted in previous reports, autumn birds frequently lingered for longer periods; of 396 ringed during the autumn, 15 were reencountered, with three present for a further day, three present between two and four days later, three present between six and nine days later and further singles present for 13, 15, 17, 17, 19 and 26 days after ringing.

Ringing recovery FRP 3P4165
Originally ringed as an adult, NOYANT, SOULAIRE-ET-BOURG, MAINE-ET-LOIRE, FRANCE 16th August 2022
Recovered as an adult, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 14th August 2024
Distance travelled 573km at 324 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 729

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* **Siff-saff**
Abundant Migrant although only Common in some years. Bred successfully for the first time in 2015
Earliest 19th February 1998 (10th March 2024) **Latest** 14th December 2000 (3rd December 2024)
297 trapped, 104 retrapped, 1 control
1934-1976: 2573 trapped, 2010-2023: 3137 trapped, 1296 retrapped, 20 controls

One was at the Well when staff returned on 10th March, this two days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there is of course a possibility that early birds may come and go prior to the arrival of staff. Sightings on each subsequent March date included highs of 14 on the 20th, 15 on the 22nd and 16 on the 26th which took the bird-days total to 174; there have been higher daycounts in eight Marches, with highs of 60 in 1989, 29 in 2019 and 36 in 2021, however the total was well up on a 2013-2023 mean of 82.2 and only down on the 207 of 1989 and the 195 of 2019. April sightings on 25 dates were of eight or less bar counts of 17 on the 12th and 75 on the 13th; although the 94 logged on the 13th in 2018 is the only higher April daycount, a total of 174 bird-days was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 234.5 and on seven years during this period (there were all-time highs of 285 in 1991, 369 in 2015 and 575 in 2018). Daily May sightings to the 18th peaked at ten on the 5th and 21 on the 6th, the high only down on the 25 of 1992 and the 24 of 2018, whilst a further single on the 31st took the bird-days total to 91, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 144.4 and on 11 previous years (the five highest May tallies have occurred since 2014, with a record 307 in 2018). There were no 'Siberian' *P. c. tristis* found in spring; records of this subspecies are increasing but remain scarce in the first half of the year (a record three were ringed in April 2022), whilst birds present between the 28th and 31st May 2017 and on 11th April 2020 are the only spring birds confirmed via mitochondrial DNA analysis.

One in the Well Heligoland on the 5th was the only June sighting until two arrived on the 18th, with singles on seven further dates from the 20th including the same juvenile on each date from the 27th; a June bird-days total of ten was the lowest since 2012, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 64.4 (there were highs of 97 in 2015 (when a pair bred successfully), 225 in 2018 and 75 in 2021). Of 154 ringed during the first half of the year, 16 were retrapped, with five retrapped the day following ringing, six retrapped after two or three days, two retrapped after six days and two after nine days, whilst

PRH189 lingered between 20th April and 16th May but showed no signs of breeding. A recent increase in spring numbers, coupled with maturing Well vegetation, has led to breeding; in 2014 a pair lingered between May and October but were not successful with any nest attempt, in 2015 a pair successfully fledged at least one, in 2017 a bird observed nest building was not known to progress beyond that stage, in May 2018 birds were building in two locations (again with no indication that either attempt progressed), lone males remained throughout the summer in 2020 and 2021, a lone bird did likewise in 2022 (probably a female) and two males lingered last year. There was no indication of a 2024 breeding attempt. The only July sightings were of singles on the 6th, 7th and 14th, the total the lowest since 2012 and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 26.3 (there was an all-time high of 102 in 2018). August was similarly quiet, with two on the 28th and singles on each subsequent date; an August bird-days total of five was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 28.9 and well down on highs of 56 in 1999, 71 in 2017 and 93 in 2018.

The total number of Chiffchaff bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2023 to 2020 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	174	174	91	10	3	5	200	122	35
2023	57	151	94	52	15	38	68	114	21
2022	53	76	65	25	19	13	76	149	85
2021	123	134	110	75	15	5	182	278	26
2020	73	138	100	44	19	28	140	66	47
2024	16	75	21	2	1	2	24	12	5
2023	17	18	7	6	1	5	7	14	3
2022	8	8	7	2	2	2	14	12	9
2021	36	15	10	8	2	1	49	22	5
2020	22	14	8	4	2	6	20	9	4

Chiffchaff were noted on 26 September dates, with highs of 24 on the 7th, 23 on the 8th, 21 on the 9th and 20 on the 24th taking the bird-days total to 200; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 48.8 and on that logged in 17 previous Septembers (there were all-time highs of 128 in 2013 and 133 in 2014), whilst the total was close to a mean of 209.9 recorded during the same period (eight of the ten highest September tallies have now occurred since 2013, with all-time highs of 404 in 2013 and 482 in 2014). October sightings on each date bar the 29th peaked at 12 on the 1st and 11 on the 8th, with no more than two on any date from the 18th; there have been higher October daycounts in 17 years, with peaks of 80 in 1989, 55 in 2013 and 57 in 2015, whilst a bird-days total of 122 was down on a 2013-2023 October mean of 188.1 and on that recorded in nine previous years (there were highs of 307 in 2014, 292 in 2018 and 278 in 2021). Daycounts of up to five on 12 November dates to the 15th led to a bird-days total of 35; owing in part to a staff presence throughout the month, the total was the sixth highest to date, albeit well down on the 109 of 2014, 112 of 2015 and 85 of 2022. A *P. c. tristis* on 3rd December was the last of the year and made this the fifth year with a record in this month; although birds no doubt arrive after the departure of staff, there have only been eight later bird-days. Of 143 ringed during the autumn, 33 were retrapped on a later date; there were ten retrapped after a day, eight retrapped two or three days later, six retrapped four or five days later and further singles still present after six, eight, nine, 11, 11, 11, 12, 13 and 22 days.

A probable 'Siberian' *P. c. tristis*, with a convincing call but a somewhat green mantle, was at Sugar's Delight on 25th September. The first definite was in Crab Bay on 10th October, this 16 days later than the first two of 2023. There followed two in the Courtyard on 5th November and singles at Migration Rocks on 6th November and to the north of the Wheelhouse on 3rd December. This subspecies is now expected in autumn, indeed a total of five individuals in the second half of 2024 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.3 and matched the 2014 record (there were four in 2021). The only autumn birds to have been confirmed via the mitochondrial DNA analysis of dropped feathers remain singles present

on 2nd November 2014, between the 22nd and 24th October and on 1st November 2015 and between the 15th and 20th November 2016 (see above for the confirmed spring records).

Ringing recovery POL X69437
Originally ringed as a first-winter, VILAMOURA, FARO, PORTUGAL 4th October 2022
Recovered as an adult, COTTAGE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 13th April 2024
Distance travelled 1639km at 8 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 557

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* **Telor yr Hesg**
Common Migrant and Uncommon Breeder previously a Scarce Breeder
Earliest 31st March 2021 (15th April 2024) **Latest** 2nd November 2019 (28th September 2024)
105 trapped, 36 retrapped, 2 controls
1934-1976: 1984 trapped, 2010-2023: 1716 trapped, 953 retrapped, 23 controls

One at South Pond on 15th April was two days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 16 earlier bird-days, including seven since 2013 and one in March. Sightings on eight further April dates included highs of just three on the 26th and 28th, an April bird-days total of 17 being the lowest since 2016 and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 30.8 (the five highest totals have occurred in the last 14 years, with a peak of 46 in 2011 and 2014). Birds were seen on each May date bar the 2nd, with daycount highs of 12 on the 4th, 13 on the 6th and 17 on the 8th taking the total to 262; the peak daycount and bird-days total were down on respective 2013-2023 May means of 20.2 and 300.8 (100 in 1952 and three counts of between 90 and 250 in 1953 are the only May daycounts of more than 55, whilst the all-time bird-day highs are of 575 in 1953, 376 in 1967 and 365 in 2019). Two ringed as adults in 2022, one ringed as a juvenile in 2022, one ringed as an adult last year and three ringed as juveniles last year were all in the trapping area in 2024; a total of seven returning birds was one more than in 2023, but down on a 2014-2023 mean of 11.3 and highs of 18 in 2019 and 15 in 2017 and 2018. Of 31 new birds ringed in April or May, two still present in July were likely breeders.

The number of Sedge Warbler territories 2006-2024 (where data exists).

'06	'07	'08-'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24
3	4	-	4	13	4	8	9	7	11	13	15	15	15	14	15	14	14

There were a minimum of 14 breeding territories, this matching the 2021 and 2023 tallies and one down on the record number mapped between 2018 and 2020 and in 2022. Birds were nest building at Orchid Bog from 16th May and chicks were being fed both at the Old Well and along Well Stream on 15th June, the latter 13 days earlier than the first 2023 observation. The first fledgling was present at Orchid Bog on 22nd June, this 11 days earlier than the first of last year and eight days earlier than the 2017-2023 first fledgling mean. Productivity again proved impossible to calculate, primarily due to youngsters frequenting dense cover, closely positioned territories and the early arrival of fledglings from elsewhere. There were only 17 juveniles ringed during July, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 37.5 (there were highs of 52 in 2017 and 68 in 2018, lows of 20 in 2013 and just five in 2020, the latter no doubt due in part to a COVID-19 dictated reduction in trapping effort). An adult trapped at the Well on 18th July was in Devon six days later (see below). Skokholm breeders were still feeding fledglings around the Knoll on 24th August, this 13 days later than the last observed food delivery of 2023. Although the appearance of birds in unusual locations and a steady turnover of unringed individuals were again indicative of an autumn passage, peak August daycounts of 15 on the 3rd and 14 on the 28th were down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 19.6 (there were all-time August highs of 100 in 1948, 50 in 1951, 45 in 1966 and 43 in 2018). An August bird-days total of 147 was the lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 250.5 (there were all-time highs of 335 in 2016, 409 in 2018 and 302 in 2022). However, as noted for several other species, it was seemingly a late autumn, with counts on 16 September dates peaking at 22 on the 3rd and 12 on the

7th, the former a new high, up on the 20 of 1970. A September bird-days total of 64 was only down on all-time highs of 75 in 2013, 72 in 2014 and 130 in 2021. One at Orchid Bog on 28th September was the last; there have been 48 later bird-days, including 13 since 2013, 35 in October and one on the 1st and 2nd November 2019. There were 66 juveniles ringed during the autumn, this the second lowest total of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 92.9 (the high was of 199 in 2018).

Ringing recovery CIJ AE67087
Originally ringed as a juvenile, ST OUEN'S POND, JERSEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS 9th August 2023
Recovered as an adult, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 21st July 2024
Distance travelled 351km at 322 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 347
This is our second Sedge Warbler exchange with St Ouen's Pond following a Skokholm ringed juvenile which made the reverse journey between the 1st and 22nd August 2021.

Ringing recovery BAC6849
Originally ringed as an adult female, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 18th July 2024
Recovered as an adult, SOUTH MILTON LEY NATURE RESERVE, DEVON 24th July 2024
Finding condition Intentionally taken by ringer
Distance travelled 189km at 148 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 6

Ringing recovery X598068
Originally ringed as a juvenile, SHANNON AIRPORT LAGOON, CLARE, IRELAND 16th July 2023
Recovered as an adult, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 28th April 2024
Distance travelled 271km at 115 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 287
It is always a pleasure to exchange a bird with our good friend Phil Brennan who works the reedbeds and pub gardens of County Clare, although it is hard to match the excitement generated by the October 2015 Red-breasted Flycatcher.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris* **Telor y Gwerni**
Vagrant one previous record
1 trapped
2017: 1 trapped

A vocal juvenile trapped in the Stream Net at 0930hrs on 13th September was just the second for Skokholm following one ringed on 2nd June 2017 (RD *et al.*); although voice, structure and wing

formula all pointed to Marsh Warbler, the mitochondrial DNA present in a dropped feather was used to confirm the identification. The only other Pembrokeshire record was found on Skomer Island by Dave Boyle on the late date of 2nd November 2009.

Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* **Telor y Cyrs**
Uncommon Migrant previously Scarce. Bred for the first time in 2016, fledging at least three
Earliest 17th April 2015 (21st April 2024) **Latest** 30th October 1997 (6th October 2024)
11 trapped
1947-1976: 15 trapped, 2011-2023: 133 trapped (including 4 pulli), 58 retrapped, 2 controls

One netted at the Well on 21st April was six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been four earlier bird-days. Another ringed on the 27th took the all-time April total to 27, 24 of which have been since 2014. May saw singles on the 11th and 16th, three on the 20th (one of which lingered to the 21st) and two on the 25th, a bird-days total of eight only down on highs of 42 in 2017 (when a male which had bred successfully in 2016 lingered throughout), ten in 2018, 13 in 2019 and ten in 2021. Similarly two ringed on the 2nd, two on the 4th, one on the 6th and one singing in the Courtyard on the 29th led to a June total of six, this only down on the 30 of 2016 (when Reed Warbler bred for the first time), 25 of 2017 (again primarily the 2016 male) and eight of 2019. One at the Well on 9th July was possibly the juvenile trapped on the 13th, this becoming the tenth year with a sighting in this month. Perhaps surprisingly, there were no August records for the first time since 2014; an all-time August bird-days total of 137 includes 99 since 2013. Juveniles ringed on the 3rd, 7th and 13th were the only September birds, a bird-days total of three being the second lowest of the last 14 years and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 11.2; the September bird-day highs are of 16 in 2016, 2018 and 2019 and 28 last year, the latter including a record daycount of seven on the 6th (five on 2nd September 2018 is the next highest). A juvenile ringed on 6th October was the last and the 24th bird-day to be logged in this month (all recorded over 16 years); there have been 16 later bird-days.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* **Troellwr Bach**
Uncommon Migrant not always recorded in autumn
Earliest 7th April 1961 and 1966 (12th April 2024) **Latest** 7th November 1968 (24th September 2024)
6 trapped
1936-1976: 360 trapped, 2011-2023: 76 trapped

One singing near the Wheelhouse on 12th April was perhaps that later trapped in the Cottage

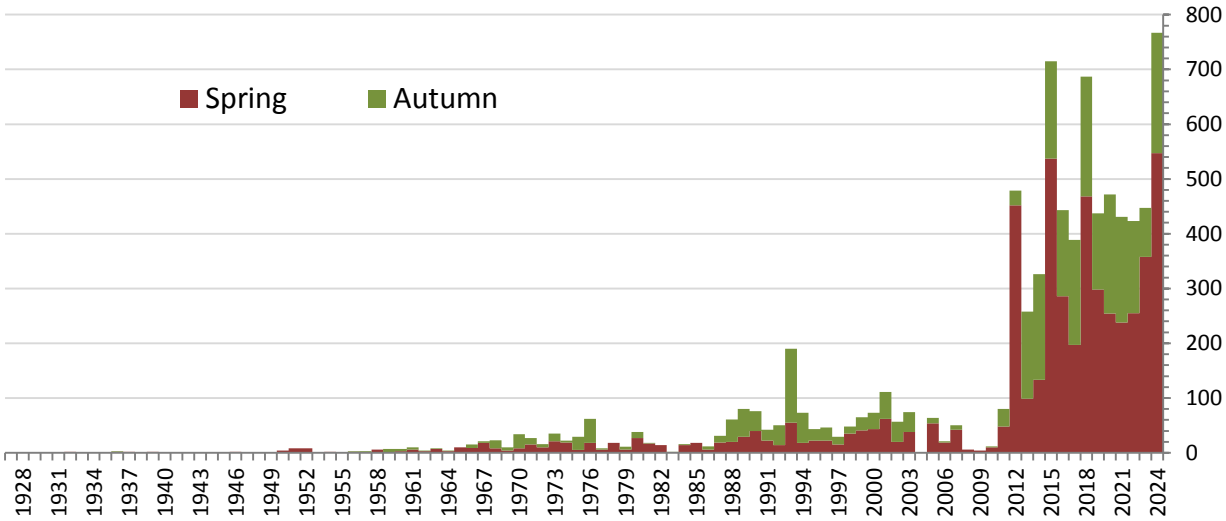
Heligoland, this six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have only been 17 earlier bird-days, including four in 1961 and 11 in 1966. There were two on the 17th, what was probably a different bird on the 18th, two on the 20th and singles on the 26th and 28th, an April bird-days total of eight being close to a 2013-2023 mean of 7.2; higher April totals in 30 years include peaks of 68 in 1966, 80 in 1967, 60 in 1971 and 34 in 1990, whilst the post-1990 high is of 25 in 2017. There were no May sightings for the third time since 2013; there were record May totals of 73 in 1960, 38 in 1967 and 54 in 1970, whilst the post-1991 high is of ten in 2001 and the 2013-2023 May mean is 1.8. An all-time June bird-days total of five was not added to, as was also the case for a July total of six and an August total of 105 (the latter including 66 between 1966 and 1970 and only 13 over nine years this century). One at Windmill Gully and two juveniles netted at the Well on 7th September led to the highest autumn daycount since 1971, this nevertheless down on autumn highs of seven in August 1966, ten in September 1969 and an incredible 40 on 19th September 1970 (the spring daycount highs are of 25 in May 1949, 30 in May 1960, 40 on 28th April 1967 and 30 in May 1970, with a 21st century record of 15 of 20th April 2017). One in the Well Heligoland on 24th September took the all-time bird-days total for this month to 198 (there were 137 between 1966 and 1971, but only 23 this century and 20 since 2013). Four autumn bird-days was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.6; between five and 39 bird-days have been logged in nine autumns (all between 1960 and 1972, bar five in 2013 and seven in 2016), whilst a remarkable 99 were recorded in the autumn of 1970.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* **Telor Penddu**
Common but recorded by both Thompson and Betts as Uncommon and Scarce prior to the 1960s
Earliest 9th March 1997 (20th March 2024) **Latest** 2nd December 1996 (**2nd December 2024**)
431 trapped, 42 retrapped, 3 controls
1936-1976: 211 trapped, 2011-2023: 2444 trapped, 335 retrapped, 8 controls

A second-winter female with a Dorset ring was in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 20th March, this six days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; males on the 9th in 1997, the 15th in 2012 and the 19th in 2020, along with two on the 18th last year, are the only earlier records. Daily sightings from the 26th peaked at eight on the 27th and took the March bird-days total to 23, this topping previous highs of 14 in 2019 and ten in 2021. Following two on the 2nd, daily April encounters from the 6th were all with 13 or fewer bar highs of 339 on the 13th, 21 on the 17th and 15 on the 21st; a clear night on the 12th evidently saw a substantial passage, with the arrival of a thick fret on the 13th grounding remarkable numbers, every small bush bedecked with birds and the Heligolands taking 191 through the day (including two controls listed below). The 13th April daycount was the highest to date,

topping previous highs of 129 on 15th April 2015 and 164 on 13th April 2018, indeed there were more birds than found in the first 49 years of recording on Skokholm. One ringed on the 13th had reached the Calf of Man seven days later, whilst another died in County Clare 45 days later (see below). An April bird-days total of 488 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 221.3, albeit only a little up on the 469 of 2015 and the 413 of 2018. Bar the 11 logged on the 6th, sightings on 11 May dates to the 19th were of no more than five, a bird-days total of 34 only down on ten previous years, but well below a 2013-2023 mean of 50.4 and highs of 170 in 2012, 63 in 2015 and 122 in 2016. A female present on the 19th and 20th was the only June record, an all-time June bird-days total of 111 now including 88 since 2013. As noted for other species, most Blackcap moved through quickly during spring; of 301 ringed during the period, 11 were retrapped, with four still present the next day, singles present two, three and five days later, two ten days later and further singles present 13 and 16 days later.

The total number of Blackcap bird-days logged in each spring and autumn since 1927.



A record spring was followed by a record autumn, albeit with a bird-days total less than half that logged in spring. There were however no July sightings for just a third time since 2011, the all-time July total remaining at 55. The only August records were of males on the 29th and 30st and a definite juvenile on the 30th, the latter the second latest of the last 12 years; the 2013-2023 mean first juvenile arrival date is 14th July, with the latest not encountered until 14th September in 2016, the earliest ringed on 16th June 2020 (the only other June juveniles being logged on the 20th in 2014 and on the 27th in 2019). An August bird-days total of three matched the 2013-2023 mean and took the all-time total to 47 (there were highs of six in 2011 and eight last year).

The total number of Blackcap bird-days logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2023 to 2021 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	23	488	34	2	0	3	157	36	23
2023	3	285	62	8	0	8	21	53	7
2022	6	186	59	4	2	3	73	65	25
2021	10	192	34	2	2	3	70	100	18
2024	8	339	11	1	0	2	31	10	5
2023	2	52	8	2	0	2	5	10	2
2022	4	40	16	1	1	1	17	8	5
2021	6	33	8	1	1	1	23	23	4

Blackcap were logged on all bar three September dates, with highs of 22 on the 3rd, 31 on the 7th and 12 on both the 9th and 28th which took the bird-days total to 157; the daycount high was only down on the 34 logged on the 25th in 2020 and more than doubled the 2013-2023 mean September high, whilst the total was a September record, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 66.6 and previous highs of 80 in 2014, 84 in 2019 and 115 in 2020. October was disappointing by comparison, with ten on the 1st, counts of up to four on eight further dates to the 14th and counts of up to three on six dates from the 26th; the October daycount high was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 13.8 and on that logged in nine previous years, whilst a bird-days total of 36 was the lowest since 2012, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 87.1 and on all-time highs of 104 in 1993, 107 in 2017 and 127 in 2018. Owing in part to a staff presence throughout the month, counts of up to five on nine November dates to the 10th, along with a first-winter male on the 21st, led to a bird-days total of 23, this matching that of 2020 and only down on the 24 of 1993 and the 25 of 2022. A female around the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 2nd December was the last of the year; although no doubt due to the usual absence of staff, this was just the second individual to be seen in December following a male logged each day between 20th November and 2nd December 1996. Of 130 ringed during the autumn, nine were retrapped subsequently, with two present the following day, two two days later, two three days later, singles four and six days later and one nine days later (during which time it increased from 16.4g to 19.0g).

Ringing recovery (FRP) 9415155
Originally ringed as a first-winter female, MARAIS DE LYARNE, MOUTIERS-EN-RETZ, FRANCE 4th October 2023
Recovered as a first-summer female, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 13th April 2024
Distance travelled 571km at 336 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 192

Ringing recovery ABX4594
Originally ringed as a first-winter female, DURLSTON COUNTRY PARK, DORSET 19th September 2022
Recovered as an adult female, WHEELHOUSE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 20th March 2024
Distance travelled 263km at 298 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 548

Ringing recovery BAC6608
Originally ringed as a first-summer female, WHEELHOUSE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 13th April 2024
Recovered as an unaged female, CALF OF MAN, ISLE OF MAN 20th April 2024
Finding condition Intentionally taken by ringer
Distance travelled 265km at 8 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 7

Ringing recovery BAC6643
Originally ringed as a first-summer male, WHEELHOUSE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 13th April 2024
Recovered as a first-summer male, TULLYGLASS HILL, SHANNON, CLARE, IRELAND 28th May 2024

Finding condition Found alive but died, possibly after hitting a window
Distance travelled 269km at 295 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 45

Ringing recovery BNA6020
Originally ringed as a first-winter female, STEYNING, WEST SUSSEX 23rd September 2023
Recovered as a first-summer female, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 13th April 2024
Distance travelled 356km at 285 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 203

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* **Telor yr Ardd**
Uncommon Migrant although Scarce between 2005 and 2012, in 2017 and in 2018
Earliest 6th April 1966 (6th May 2024) **Latest** 2nd November 1968 (7th September 2024)
4 trapped
1934-1976: 174 trapped, 2013-2023: 41 trapped, 7 retrapped

Two together at the Well on 6th May were four days later than the 2013-2023 first spring bird mean; there have been 124 earlier bird-days, albeit with only 27 this century. Three on 7th May included two taken in Heligolands; although three have been logged on six previous spring dates, the only higher spring daycounts are of four on 23rd May 1968, five on 7th May 1972 and 12th May 1993, seven on 6th May 1985, ten on 3rd May 1988, 15 on 11th May 1993 and a remarkable 30 grounded by a thick fog on 10th May 1993 (there have been 13 autumn daycounts of three, four of four and two of five, the latter both in September 1969). One at Migration Rocks on the 13th and another Heligoland bird on the 16th took the May bird-days total to seven, this up on a 2013-2023 May mean of 2.9 and matching the 2002 tally as the highest since 2001; there have been 13 May totals of eight or more, with highs of 14 in 1985, 17 in 1988 and 62 in 1993. The last of 13 June bird-days was in 2013, one on the 26th in 2014 remains the only July record and an August bird-days total of 65, including 18 this century, was not added to. September saw singles at the Well on the 4th, at the Bluffs on the 6th and in the Stream Net on the 7th; although peak autumn passage occurs in September, the record totals are of only 21 in 1969, 18 in 1971 and 15 in 1988, whilst the 2013-2023 mean is 4.3 (with a high of 14 in 2014). There were no October records, the all-time total remaining at 127 (only ten of which have been this century), whilst two on the 2nd in 1968 remain the only November birds. An autumn bird-days total of three was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.8, recent peaks of 17 in 2014 and 13 in 2015 and all-time highs of 22 in 1968, 26 in 1969 and 31 in 1971.

Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* **Telor Rhesog**
Rare Autumn Migrant 18 previous records of 19 birds, including the second for Wales in 1956
Earliest 1st September 2001 (6th September 2024) **Latest** 26th October 1990
1 trapped
1936-1976: 3 trapped, 2013-2017: 2 trapped, 1 retrapped

A first-winter found in the Steam Net on 6th September was the first since 2017 (AR *et al*.); there have been 13 previous September records, all of singles bar the two present on the 30th in 1992. Of the 18 previous Skokholm records, one was on 12th September 1956, six were in the 1960s, one was in the 1970s, one was in the 1980s, five were in the 1990s, one was in the first decade of this century and most recently there were singles on 8th September 2013, 24th September 2015 and on the 24th and 25th September 2017. The latter is one of only six individuals to linger, with birds in 1971 and 2001 also present for a second day, one in 1993 present for four October days and further singles present between 30th September and 4th October 1992 and between the 2nd and 6th October 1995. One recorded on 27th August 2004, included in previous reports as the earliest Island record, was not submitted at the time and was thus rejected by the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee during a review for 'The Birds of Wales' (Pritchard *et al*., 2021).

Lesser Whitethroat *Curruca curruca* **Llwydfron Fach**
Scarce Migrant not recorded every year
Earliest 20th April 2016 (4th May 2024) **Latest** 3rd November 1927 (16th September 2024)
2 trapped, 1 retrapped
1937-1976: 31 trapped, 2011-2023: 31 trapped, 18 retrapped

The first of the year was at the Bluffs on 4th May; there have been 28 earlier spring bird-days, including seven since 2016. One netted at the Well the following day was almost certainly the ringed bird present on the 6th, with a second unringed bird perhaps that in the Well Heligoland on the 7th and retrapped on the 8th (during which time it increased from 11.6g to 12.1g). A May bird-days total of six matched that of 1990 as the highest to date and took the all-time spring bird-days total to 97, 26 of which have been since 2013. One around Billy's Dyke and the Lime Kiln on the 15th and 16th took the all-time September bird-days total to 43 and was the only autumn record. There have now been 136 autumn bird-days, with 83 in October, two in November and highs of eight in 1990, 23 in

2013 (at least four different individuals logged over 16 October dates) and 28 in 2023 (at least five individuals over 16 dates). Although the majority of late records probably concern Siberian *C. c. blythi*, the only DNA confirmed birds remain singles present between the 3rd and 5th October 2014 and between the 23rd and 25th October 2022.

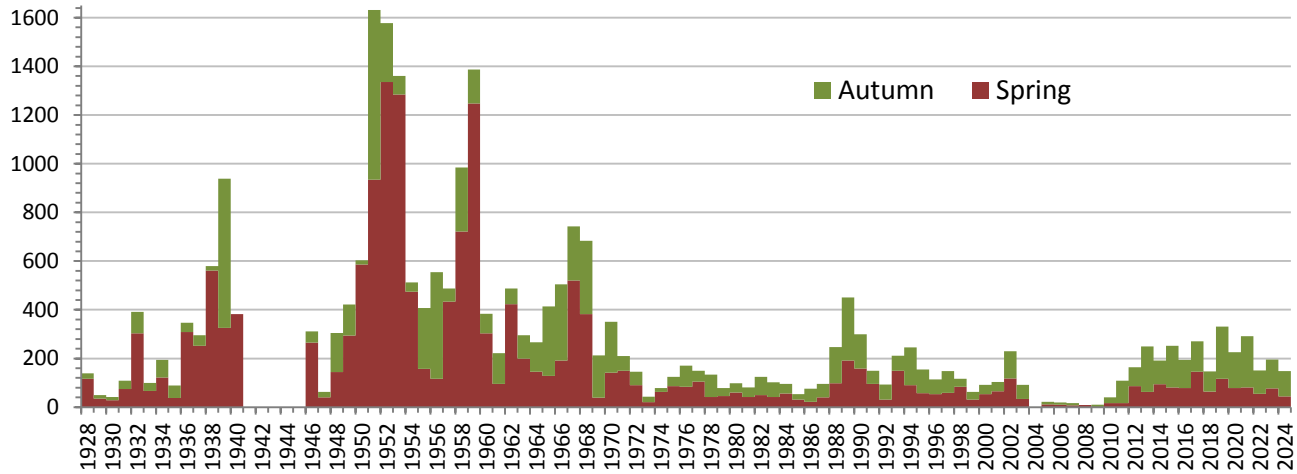
Whitethroat *Curruca communis* **Llwydfron**
Fairly Common Migrant previously Common and has bred in nine years (most recently in 2019)
Earliest 5th April 1966 (20th April 2024) **Latest** 30th October 1968 (**6th November 2024**)
36 trapped, 7 retrapped
1934-1976: 5924 trapped, 2010-2023: 674 trapped, 184 retrapped, 8 controls

One at the Well on 20th April was two days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; the first has arrived between the 16th and 21st April in each of the last 12 years, whilst there have been 190 bird-days earlier than the first of this year (only 39 of which were this century). Further singles on the 24th and 28th took the April total to just three, this the lowest tally in this month since 2010 and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 24.3; although the post-1957 peak has not exceeded highs of 20 in 1961 and 26 last year, there were all-time April daycount highs of 200 in 1946 and 1951, whilst the total reached 288 in 1951. Whitethroat were noted on 13 May dates, with highs of just eight on the 6th, four on the 12th and five on the 17th taking the total to 34, this down on nine of the last 12 Mays and a 2013-2023 mean of 49.7; there were recent totals of 78 in 2012 and 100 in 2017, whilst historically May has proven the most productive month of the year, with daycount highs of 500 in 1952 and 1959 leading to record monthly totals of 1215 and 1223 respectively. June saw different first-summers on the 2nd and 3rd, one around Home Meadow on the 22nd and daily sightings from the 27th of what was likely the same juvenile ringed on the 28th and retrapped on the 30th; a June bird-days total of seven was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 10.9, a high during this period of 30 in 2021 and all-time highs of 40 in 1988, 60 in 1989 and 55 in 1990. The first juvenile of the year was 13 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first mainland juvenile mean. There was no indication of a 2024 breeding attempt; territorial males built cock-nests in 2014, 2015 and 2017 and one sang throughout June 2021, whilst the first confirmed breeding since 1998 saw a pair fledge two in 2019.

The same juvenile lingered until at least 14th July, with a male on the 9th the first clearly different individual, whilst sightings on 11 dates from the 12th were all of two or less bar the three of the 13th; a July bird-days total of 24 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 36.0, this period including an all-time high of 90 in 2019. Sightings on only 20 August dates were of no more than five, a bird-days total of 32 being less than half a 2013-2023 mean of 72.7 (there were highs during the period of 117 in 2019 and 106 in 2021, whilst the all-time August highs are of 595 in 1939, 223 in 1955 and 228 in 1966). Daycounts of seven on the 1st and 7th and nine on the 3rd were the September highs, with counts on

a further 13 dates to the 26th taking the total for the month to 46; the September peak, alarmingly the highest daycount of the year, was the highest in this month since the 15 of 2021, whilst the total was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 32.5 (it is disheartening to imagine Whitethroat numbers comparable to those now seen for Blackcap, for example September daycount highs of 250 in 1951, 120 in 1956 and 70 in 1965 and September totals of 682 in 1951, 405 in 1956 and 159 in 1969). A juvenile in the Well Heligoland on the 8th was a 92nd October bird-day (logged over 31 years), whilst a bedraggled juvenile on 6th November became the latest Skokholm record; the latter, which had feathers missing from around the bill base, a badly ruffled neck and which was limping, was seven days later than a straggler in 1968.

The total number of Whitethroat bird-days logged in each spring and autumn since 1928.



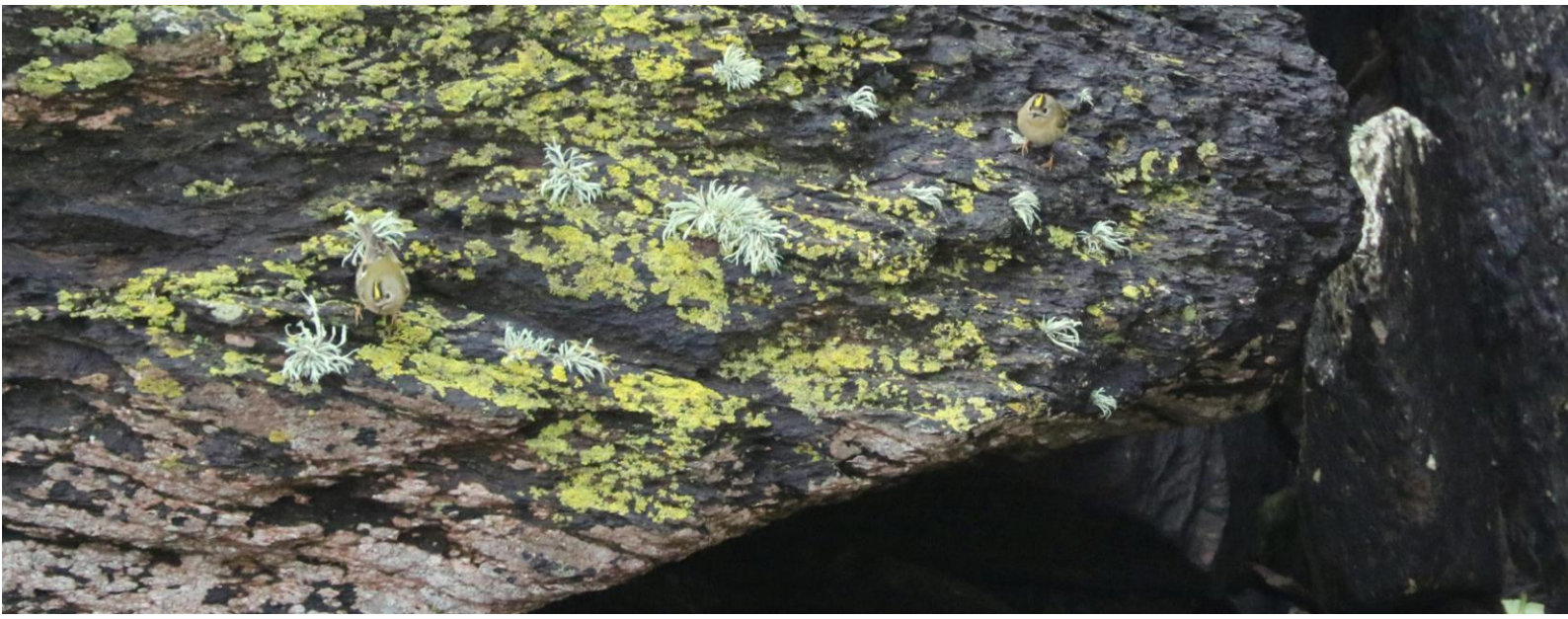
Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla* **Dryw Fflamben**
Scarce Migrant recorded in 45 years since 1949, including 28 since 1988. More regular in autumn
4 trapped, 4 retrapped
1936-1976: 23 trapped, 2013-2023: 27 trapped, 17 retrapped

One around Migration Rocks on 14th March was one day earlier than the first of last year and made this the tenth year with a record in this month. One was in the Courtyard on the 16th and what was seemingly a different individual was in Crab Bay on the 18th, these taking the all-time March bird-days total to 19. There were no further spring records; perhaps surprisingly there have only now been 40 bird-days logged between 11th March and 13th June inclusive, with 13 since 2013.

There is yet to be a Skokholm sighting in July or August, with one on 8th September 2015 the earliest autumn record and two on 17th September the first of this autumn; the latter, a female netted at the Well and a male netted in the Courtyard, were three days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the latest during this period was logged on 7th October 2016, whilst there were no autumn records in 2013 or 2021). The male was probably that seen at the Well on the 18th before being retrapped on the 19th and 20th, this taking the September bird-days total to five; there have been higher totals in seven years, peaking at nine in 2019. October saw one at the Well on the 3rd, a female netted at the Well on the 8th which lingered on the 9th and 10th and another female in the Well Heligoland on the 30th; there have been six October tallies up on the five of this year, with highs of 18 in 1967, 1968 and 2017 and 33 in 2015. A male at Howard's End on the 8th took the all-time November total to 20, ten of which were in 1967. A total of six autumn individuals was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.6 (there were highs during the period of 11 in 2015, ten in 2017 and six in 2022). Similarly a total of 11 autumn bird-days was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 9.5, albeit down on all-time autumn highs of 28 in 1967, 27 in 1968, 39 in 2015, 20 in 2017 and 13 in 2022. There have been more birds ringed in three previous years, with six in both 1967 and 1968 and eight in 2015.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* **Dryw Eurben**
Common but only Fairly Common in some years
61 trapped, 15 retrapped
1938-1976: 431 trapped, 2010-2023: 1016 trapped, 261 retrapped

One at the Well as staff returned on 10th March was two days earlier than the 2013-2023 first spring bird mean; although it is possible that birds may come and go prior to the staff arrival, the earliest records are of singles on both the 2nd and 5th March 2021 and of two on both the 5th and 7th in 2014. Sightings on all but three subsequent March dates peaked at seven on the 11th and 22nd, nine on the 18th and 16 on the 21st; the March daycount high was only down on counts of up to 20 in 1974 and 1989 and 24 in 2017, whilst a bird-days total of 79 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 25.6 and only down on the 124 of 1974 and 94 of 1989. April sightings on 11 dates to the 22nd reached four on the 1st and six on the 2nd, but were of no more than two thereafter; although up on a 2013-2023 mean of 18.8, a bird-days total of 23 was down on 18 previous Aprils including all-time highs of 112 in 1972, 101 in 1975 and 84 in 2018. A female ringed on 4th May had seemingly already attempted to breed; the all-time May bird-days total is now 67, 25 of which have been this century. An all-time June bird-days total of four and a July total of five were not added to. A male present for four days from 12th March was the only one of the 21 Goldcrest ringed during the spring to be retrapped.



One at Crab Bay on 25th August arrived on the same date as the first of last autumn, whilst daily sightings to the 30th, including four on the 26th, took the August bird-days total to ten; there have been higher August tallies in five years, with peaks of 17 in 2014 and 2023, 19 in 2015 and 31 in 2017. September was again disappointing, with Goldcrest on all bar three dates, but highs of just nine on the 7th and 11 on the 28th; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 29.4, whilst a bird-days total of 98 was the third lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 216.3 and all-time highs of 458 in 1988, 494 in 1989, 728 in 2017 and 355 in 2019. October was poorer still, with encounters on 16 dates including highs of just four on the 11th and eight on the 13th which took the bird-days total to 32; both the peak daycount and the total were the lowest of the last 13 years, down on respective 2013-2023 means of 30.3 and 206.5 (the October daycount highs are of at least 250 in 1959 and 70 in 1990, the bird-day highs the 346 of 1975, 452 of 1988 and 344 of 2017). Two on the 3rd and one at the Well each day between the 4th and 7th were the only November sightings; although there were no November birds seen in 2018 or 2020, the 2013-2023 bird-days mean is 17.3, with all-time highs of 56 in 2015, 31 in 2019 and 57 in 2022. Of 40 Goldcrest ringed during the autumn, ten were retrapped, with two present the following day, one two days after ringing, three three days after and further singles four, five, six and seven days after.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* **Dryw**
Fairly Common Breeder only recorded as a Common Winter Visitor prior to first breeding in 1988
77 trapped, 67 retrapped
1934-1976: 928 trapped, 2010-2023: 993 trapped, 762 retrapped

The 56 territorial males mapped this year included 54 registered on multiple visits and two singing in discrete areas on only one date which could not be linked to an adjacent territory. The total was ten down on that of last year, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 62.8 and the lowest since the 52 of 2015; there were highs of 69 in 2019, 72 in 2020 and 71 in 2021, whilst the 55 of 2013 is the only other post-2012 tally down on that of this year. The last 14 years, all with over 50 territories, are remarkable for the fact that the previous peak in numbers was the 19 mapped in 1994 (six years after breeding was first recorded in Crab Bay); the most recent survey prior to the renovation period located ten territories in 2007. The reason for this substantial increase in territorial males is unclear. Nest building was first noted along the South Coast Cut on an early 2nd April, young were being fed near Eclipse on 12th May and the first three fledglings to be encountered were around the Pissoir on 20th May; the latter were the earliest fledglings of the last 12 years, ten days earlier than the first of 2018 and 19 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first fledgling mean (the latest were on 27th June 2021).

Prior to their establishment as a Skokholm breeding species, Wren were considered a common winter visitor (with a substantial October arrival which saw daycounts peak at up to 200 in 1974); it is arguable that an autumn arrival is still evident in some years (see table below), although it is possible that increasingly active residents are more likely to be encountered during this post-moult period. Of nine Wren ringed in previous years and retrapped in 2024, three ringed as juveniles in 2023 had survived their first winter, four ringed as juveniles in 2022 had survived a second and two ringed as juveniles in 2021 had survived a third; the oldest known British Wren wore a ring for seven years, nine months and 20 days, whilst the oldest Skokholm bird reached five years and three days.

The number of Wren bird-days logged each month 2020-2024. Note that March recording began on the 16th in 2020 and on the 10th in 2024.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	585	992	1180	865	698	667	865	1026	724
2023	552	889	1085	740	570	504	658	861	454
2022	849	717	808	638	587	530	417	712	590
2021	1253	1381	1173	1041	732	567	734	652	583
2020	575	1558	1238	1064	544	662	824	820	659

Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus* **Drudwen Wridog**
Vagrant seven previous records

A fine adult, probably a male, was first seen from the Observatory Kitchen on 4th June (KL *et al.*); it made several more visits to the Farm during the day, often with a singing Starling. It did not require Welsh Birds Rarities Committee acceptance, Rose-coloured Starling having been removed from the list of description species on 1st January 2023 (ironically so given that only 39 were recorded across Britain that year). Nevertheless further records are no doubt coming, with a westwards expansion slowly progressing (there was breeding in France following the 2020 eruption), indeed a climate change driven increase in locust numbers may hasten their appearance (Pritchard *et al.*, 2021).

The first for Skokholm, 'a splendid adult' and 'presumed to be a female given the shortness of its head plume', was found at Twinlet on 8th June 2000; it narrowly avoided a female Peregrine on the 9th and was last seen on the morning of the 10th. The British Birds Rarities Committee rejected an

account of a flyover juvenile on 29th August 2001, this one of the last records they would assess; this species was dropped from the list requiring evaluation by the Committee on 1st January 2002. That year saw three records accepted by the County Recorders and Welsh Records Panel; a dull bird frequented rocks near the Lighthouse on the 3rd and 4th June, a bright adult on the 7th, 9th and 17th June (presumed to be one individual) and a juvenile on the 19th and 20th September and between 30th September and 3rd October (again all thought to be one individual). A juvenile present on the 6th and 9th September 2004 was not submitted at the time, however this record was accepted by the Welsh Birds Rarities Committee when photographs emerged in 2021. An adult with a short crest, again presumed to be a female, was found at Wheatear Rock on the morning of 21st June 2020; having flown east, it spent the rest of the day at the Bluffs, occasionally giving glimpses of its blue gape as it swallowed amphipods. There was an all-time high of 240 birds nationally in 2020, although this record was to be short-lived; a remarkable 313 were logged the following year (White & Kehoe, 2025). Unsurprisingly one of these was on Skokholm, this an adult, probably a male, visiting North Pond, Western Plain and North Plain with Starlings on 5th August, the same bird also seen on the 6th and 7th when it reached Sugar's Delight and Winter Pond; this remains the only adult to be encountered outside of June, June the month which sees the majority of Welsh sightings as birds overshoot southeast Europe (Pritchard *et al*., 2021).

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* **Drudwy**
Very Abundant bred from 1946, peaking at 53 pairs in the 1960s, with the last known pair in 2006
4 trapped
1937-1976: 1082 trapped, 2013-2023: 120 trapped

Sightings on eight March dates from the return of staff on the 10th were of no more than eight, this down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 62.5, a peak during this period of 192 in 2018 and all-time highs of 1500 in 1947 and 1000 in 1960. A March bird-days total of just 30 was similarly down on a 2013-2023 mean of 553.6 and well down on all-time highs of 2360 in 1947, 4131 in 1958 and 2283 in 1964. Three on the 2nd and singles on the 3rd and 13th were the only April birds, a bird-days total of five being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 22.7 and a high during this period of 113 in 2018; the breeding years saw April daycount highs of 200 in 1958 and 1967 and 500 in 1960, with the total reaching 1587 in 1958 and 1475 in 1965. May records are now scarce, indeed there were no Starling at all this May for a fifth time since 2009. Sightings on 13 June dates from the 3rd were of no more than four and totalled 25 bird-days; the June total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 111.4 and massively down on peaks of 1263 in 1964, 1202 in 1966 and 1461 in 1989 (the latter including 12 dates when Starling were only listed as 'present'). The first juvenile of the year arrived on 26th June, this four days later than the 2017-2023 first juvenile mean; only three juvenile plumaged birds were noted during the first three years of this period, this a sad reflection of a Pembrokeshire breeding population which declined by 90% between 1988 and 2007 (Rees, 2012).

Sightings on all but two July dates peaked at 46 on the 15th and 36 on the 26th and 30th, a bird-days total of 508 being the fourth highest since 2006; daycount highs of 120 in 2020 and 93 in 2021 took the July totals to 1977 and 1825 respectively (intriguingly these the two years in which COVID-19 restrictions changed human behaviour across the County), whilst the July bird-day high is the 4516 of 1989 (this again including six dates without a numerical Birdlog entry). Similarly daily August sightings peaked at 47 on the 12th, 46 on the 13th and 47 on the 24th, taking the bird-days total to 918; this was the third highest tally since 2006 (there was a recent bird-day high of 1948 in 2021, the all-time highs being 4833 in 1987, 3942 in 1989 and 4095 in 1991). September counts were up on those seen in recent years, with daily sightings to the 20th peaking at 29 on the 1st, 27 on the 4th and 29 on the 14th, whilst a single on the 22nd took the total for the month to 385; although the total was the highest since 2006, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 38.3, daycounts were in three-figures as recently as 2000 and bird-day totals were in four-figures in most years to 1998. Sightings on 23 October dates from the 3rd reached 45 on the 27th, 34 on the 30th and 50 on the 31st; the peak October daycount

was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 173.9 (there was a high of 540 in 2019), whilst a bird-days total of 268 was down on a mean of 703.6 logged during the same period (daycounts of up to 1500 took the 1990 total to a record 6936, this despite birds not being counted on six dates). Numbers increased in November, with encounters on all bar one date and highs of 123 on the 2nd, 144 on the 14th and 121 on the 21st which took the total to 1985; the latter was the lowest of the last seven Novembers and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 6953.8, whilst daycounts reached 5000 in 1968, 10,000 in 1970 and 5204 in 2021. The first two days of December saw counts of no more than 53.

Blackbird *Turdus merula* **Mwyalchen**
Common Visitor and Uncommon Breeder peaking at nine pairs in 1990, 2021, 2022 and 2023
126 trapped (including 3 pulli), 100 retrapped
1934-1976: 1750 trapped, 2010-2023: 814 trapped (including 16 pulli), 577 retrapped, 2 controls

Although spring daycounts again failed to exceed the total number of breeding birds, there was evidence that migrants were passing through; given that the majority of the Skokholm breeders and first-winters were already ringed, it would seem likely that seven females ringed between 12th March and 24th April (but not encountered thereafter) were passage birds. Of eight known to have survived from previous years, a male and a female survived their first winter, a male and a female survived a second winter, a male survived a third, two females survived a fourth and male LN53917, ringed as an adult in September 2021, survived at least a fourth; the oldest Skokholm Blackbird was last seen in April 2021 (this had a ring for eight years and 24 days and survived nine winters), whilst the British longevity record stands at 15 years, two months and five days. There were nine breeding territories mapped, this matching the 1990, 2021, 2022 and 2023 tallies as the highest to date; pairs bred near the Wheelhouse, the Cottage, the Well, North Haven, East Bog, the Cutting, South Pond, the Tabernacle and the West Knoll. A faecal sac was removed from a site near South Pond on 12th April, however the first three fledglings to be seen were near the Cottage on 1st May; the latter were 12 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first fledgling mean (the earliest during this period were logged on 24th April 2021, the latest appearing on 27th May in 2013 and on the 23rd in 2019). A male repeatedly used Palmate Newts as chick food between the 14th and 16th May (below photograph).

Productivity again proved difficult to calculate due to overlapping territories, second broods and potentially the arrival of youngsters from elsewhere; however fledglings were recorded in all nine territories, with 19 first brood, 15 second brood and four third brood youngsters confirmed (there

were successful second broods in four territories, whilst only the early Cottage pair seemingly had a third). Productivity was thus estimated at a minimum of 4.22 fledglings per pair, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 2.73 ±se 0.21 and on every year during this period (there were highs of 3.67 in 2019 and 3.57 in 2020, lows of 2.17 in 2014 and 1.29 in 2015). The number of sightings again declined as the breeding season progressed and during the period of post-breeding moult; there were monthly totals of 175 in July, 187 in August and 312 in September (144, 152 and 243 respectively last year). October daycount highs of 40 on the 3rd, 37 on the 6th and 36 on the 14th and 27th took the total for the month to 700; the peak daycount was only down on a 21st century October high of 72 in 2017, whilst the bird-days total was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 276.7 and was the highest in this month since 1993 (the all-time October peaks are of 2314 in 1964 (which included what was described in the 1964 Annual Report as an 'avalanche' of 1000 on the 18th), 1136 in 1975 and 1075 in 1993). The first larger bird was trapped on 27th October (a bird with a wing chord of 135mm or more), this 11 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; however this adult male, with a wing chord of 140mm, was only three days later than the first 138.5mm plus mean and matched the first 140mm plus mean (there were no birds of 138.5mm or more in one of 11 years and no birds of 140mm or more in four of 11 years). A further five adult males with wings of between 136mm and 140mm, two first-winter males with wings of 137mm and 140mm, two adult females with wings of 136mm and 137.5mm and a first-winter female with a wing of 137.5mm were trapped during November. November daycounts peaked at 46 on the 9th, 53 on the 11th and 44 on the 14th, the high down on that logged in 11 previous years; the 2013-2023 mean November high is 49.1, whilst there were all-time peaks of 300 in 1939, 150 in 1967 and 121 in 2015.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* **Socan Eira**
Uncommon or Fairly Common Winter Visitor
Earliest 14th September 1977 (30th October 2024) **Latest** 13th June 1980 (20th March 2024)
1940-1976: 8 trapped, 2016-2023: 23 trapped

It became the 54th March with a record, with sightings on seven dates between the 10th and 20th all of singles bar the four of the 12th; there have been 585 later spring bird-days, including 254 in April, 19 in May and two in June. Two together at North Plain on 30th October were 12 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (three on 11th October 2013 and one on the same date in 2014 are the earliest during this period, three on 5th November 2021 are the latest, whilst there have been 3047 autumn bird-days earlier than those of this year, including four in September). An October bird-days total of just two was the third lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 88.8 and all-time highs of 282 in 1966, 330 in 1971, 154 in 1993 and 815 in 2022 (the latter including six daycounts of between 55 and 289). There were encounters on 21 November dates, with highs of just four on the 5th and five on the 17th which took the bird-days total to 45; owing in part to a staff presence throughout the month, the total was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 32.0 (the all-time highs are of 332 in 1967, 143 in 1968 and 146 in 2015), however there have been higher November daycounts in 19 years (with peaks of 90 in 1967, 100 in 1968, 40 in 1994 and 95 in 2015).

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus* **Brych y Coed**
Scarce but not recorded every year
1936-1976: 3 trapped, 2022: 1 trapped

One at Medicine Rock on the morning of 9th October was presumed to be one of the two seen together at Crab Bay late that afternoon; although there have been daycounts of more than one in 24 previous years, this was the first since October 2014, whilst the only daycounts of more than two are of three in 1928, 1929, 1956, 1967, 1970, 1971, 1975, 1976 and 1981 and four on 14th October 1981. One between North Gully and Medicine Rock on 9th November took the 2024 bird-days total to three, this doubling a 2013-2023 mean of 1.5 and the highest total since the five of 2016. There have now been records in 58 years, accounting for 220 bird-days, with sightings in every month bar

January but the majority noted in March (40 bird-days in 12 years), April (23 bird-days in 14 years), October (96 bird-days in 30 years) and November (30 bird-days in 16 years).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* **Coch Dan-aden**
Common Winter Visitor
Earliest 20th September 2001 (3rd October 2024) **Latest** 18th June 1979 (19th April 2024)
60 trapped, 8 retrapped
1936-1976: 156 trapped, 2013-2023: 227 trapped, 12 retrapped

Sightings on eight March dates from the 12th peaked at seven on the 12th, 25 on the 30th and 20 on the 31st; the high, the majority of which were seemingly Icelandic *T. i. coburni*, was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 19.8, but down on that logged in 15 previous years and all-time highs of 200 in 1955, 300 in 1962 and 400 in 1965 (the post-1969 high is the 122 of 2018). A March bird-days total of 61 was similarly up on a 2013-2023 mean of 42.0 and on all but two years during this period, but was down on that recorded in 13 years, including highs of 474 in 1955, 401 in 1962 and 852 in 1965 (the post-1969, 'Beast from the East' generated high is the 258 of 2018). A passage of Icelandic *T. i. coburni* led to more April bird-days than in any previous year, with sightings on all but two dates to the 19th and highs of 12 on the 1st, nine on the 12th and 29 on the 13th; the only higher April daycount is the 52 logged on the 12th in 2013, whilst a bird-days total of 90 was up on previous peaks of 30 in 1984, 78 in 2013 and 22 in 2022. Seven ringed individuals were known to linger between 28th March and 16th April, with one present the day after ringing, one present two days later, two three days later, two nine days later and one ten days later; all gained mass, with the largest increases being of 56.9g to 66.6g in two days, 61.6g to 69.2g in three days, 64.8g to 86.2g in nine days and 62.1g to 84.0g in ten days. Six of the seven heaviest Redwing encountered since 2013 were handled this April, with the heaviest at 96.8g. There have been 46 spring bird-days later than the last of this year, including 11 in May and singles in the Junes of 1929 and 1979.

One at Boundary Hill on 3rd October was five days earlier than the 2013-2023 first autumn bird mean; there have been 381 earlier bird-days, including 350 in 1973 and 16 in September. Sightings on a further 18 October dates peaked at 14 on the 10th and 16th and 11 on the 23rd, 27th and 31st; the October peak was the second lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 158.0 and all-time highs of 400 in 1958, 350 in 1973 and 1124 grounded by thick fog on the 26th in 2017. An October bird-days total of 108 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 308.3 and on all but three years during this period; there were all-time highs of 1077 in 1958, 1781 in 1973 and 1214 in 2017. Daily November sightings were in double-figures on all but three dates, were of 30 or more on 16 dates and reached 61 on the 7th, 78 on the 9th and 60 on the 11th; there have been higher daycounts in only four Novembers, with peaks of 150 in 1968, 200 in 1994 and 233 in 2021, whilst a bird-days

total of 933 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 240.2 and only down on the 1016 of 2021 (staff were present throughout the month in 2021, whilst staff left on the 18th in 1968 when 915 were logged and on the 20th in 1994 when 379 were logged).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* **Bronfraith**
Common Visitor breeding has not been recorded but some return in successive winters
48 trapped, 3 retrapped
1934-1976: 447 trapped, 2013-2023: 412 trapped, 39 retrapped

Although impacted by the late return of staff, singles on four March dates between the 10th and 14th led to a bird-days total which matched that of 2021 as the lowest of the last 12 years, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 30.8 (there were all-time highs of 249 in 1940, 212 in 1962 and 961 in 1965, peak March daycounts of 100 in both 1931 and 1962 and 350 following a cold weather movement in 1965). Singles on the 1st, 8th and 14th took the all-time April bird-days total to 306, these logged over 62 years and with highs of 27 in 1987, 29 in 2000 and 34 in 2015 (the 2013-2023 April bird-days mean is 6.7). A female ringed on 5th May had already bred, whilst one at the Lighthouse the following day took the all-time May total to 50 (with two in 2000 the only daycount of more than one). The all-time June bird-days total remains at 46, nine of which have been since 2018.

There was no July sighting for a seventh time in 12 years, the bird-days total remaining at 102, 27 of which have been since 2013. Similarly there was no August record for a fifth time in 12 years, the all-time total remaining at 103, 28 of which were since 2013. One at Boundary Hill on 7th September was the first of the autumn, with further singles on the 21st and 22nd taking the all-time total to 154, 20 of which were in 1972 and 18 of which have been since 2013. Sightings on 24 October dates were of no more than six to the 22nd, but then peaked at 44 on the 23rd, 23 on the 26th, 29 on the 27th and 23 on the 30th; although close to a 2013-2023 mean of 37.2, there have only been higher daycounts in 17 Octobers, whilst a bird-days total of 215 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 153.8 and down on 16 previous tallies (there were October daycounts of 100 in 1939, 1964 and 1966 and of 142 grounded by thick fog in 2017, whilst the total peaked at 698 in 1966, 577 in 1975 and 962 in 1993). Daily November encounters reached 44 on the 5th, 35 on the 12th and 39 on the 26th and totalled 631 bird-days; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 49.2 and on all-time highs of 100 in 1939, 110 in 1967 and 80 in 1993, however the total was up on a mean of 444.5 logged during the same period (the latter owing in part to a staff presence throughout the month, but only down on the 788 of 2019 and 663 of 2021). Daily December sightings to the departure of staff on the 3rd peaked at 24 on the 1st; the December daycount record is the 400 noted by Lockley in 1927. Ringing has shown that a small number return to Skokholm in successive winters, although their breeding grounds remain unknown (but see below); this was again the case this year, with RY16596 ringed as an adult on 1st

December 2022 and retrapped on 25th November and RY16597 ringed as a juvenile on 2nd December 2022 and retrapped on 22nd November (the latter was also retrapped on 24th October 2023).

Ringing recovery RY16618
Originally ringed as a first-winter, COTTAGE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 23rd October 2023
Recovered as a first-summer, DEERLANDS, KEESTON, PEMBROKESHIRE 11th May 2024
Finding condition Intentionally taken by ringer
Distance travelled 24km at 46 degrees (NE)
Days since ringed 201

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* **Gwybedog Mannog**
Fairly Common Passage Migrant
Earliest 19th April 1966 (28th April 2024) **Latest** 23rd October 1968, 2001 & 2021 (22nd September 2024)
59 trapped
1934-1976: 1619 trapped, 2010-2023: 388 trapped, 18 retrapped

One in the Well Heligoland on 28th April was seven days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean and the earliest since one on the 21st in 2012; there have been 16 bird-days earlier than the first of 2024, these logged over ten years. May sightings over 16 dates from the 7th tallied 49 bird-days and included peaks of four on the 15th, five on the 27th and 16 on the 28th; there have been higher May daycounts in just nine years, with peaks of 40 in 1958, 30 in 1959 and 35 in 1982, however the total only matched both a 2013-2023 May mean of 48.6 and the 22nd highest to date (there was a 21st century peak of 72 in 2016 and all-time highs of 133 in 1962, 145 in 1967 and 104 in 1991 and 1994). Daily counts of up to two to the 4th and three on the 19th took the June total to eight, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 11.7 and on that recorded in 37 previous years (there were June peaks of 29 in 1971, 1977 and 1991, 35 in 2015 and 23 in 2019).

An all-time July bird-days total of 81, only 11 of which have been this century, was not added to. Two on 14th August were eight days earlier than the first of last autumn. There followed one on the 16th, seven on the 28th and further singles on the 29th and 30th; although the peak matched a 2013-2023 mean of 6.8, a bird-days total of 12 was down on a mean of 21.0 recorded during the same period

and August bird-day highs of 87 in 1964, 85 in 1971 and 80 in 1976. It proved an exceptional September, with sightings on 12 dates and highs of six on the 1st, 47 on the 7th and 15 on the 8th; although calm, regular thick drizzle during the night of the 6th produced fall conditions and the highest ever Skokholm daycount, this up on previous counts of 40 on 10th May 1958, 30 on 22nd May 1959, 40 on 14th August 1964, 30 on 8th September 1969 and 35 on 26th May 1982 (the 21 of both 10th September 2004 and 10th September 2021 are the post-1982 daycount highs). A September bird-days total of 86 was unsurprisingly up on a 2013-2023 mean of 37.2, albeit down on highs of 166 in 1969 and 91 in 2013. A single on 22nd September was the last of the year; there have been 364 later bird-days, including 103 in October and 109 this century.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula* **Robin Goch**
Abundant Winter Visitor and Passage Migrant bred in 1939, 1940 and 1980
75 trapped, 105 retrapped
1934-1976: 956 trapped, 2010-2023: 1073 trapped, 935 retrapped, 3 controls

Daily sightings between the 10th and 17th March peaked at just four on the 11th and 12th and included four individuals encountered previously; there were two ringed as juveniles in 2023 along with ACY7574, ringed as a juvenile in September 2022 and not handled last year, and AKL5126, ringed as a juvenile in October 2020 and retrapped in March 2021 and March 2023 (the latter having now survived four winters). A March bird-days total of 21 was the lowest of the last 14 years and down on a 2013-2023 mean of 101.5 (there were all-time March highs of 153 in 2003, 198 in 2016 and 154 last year). Similarly singles on the 18th and 27th led to the poorest April tally since 2014, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 26.9 and all-time highs of 54 in 2013 and 132 in 2015 (the daycount record is the 17 of 2015). It became the 49th May with a record, with one in the Well Heligoland on the 16th perhaps that seen at the Well two days later; there have been sightings in ten of the last 13 Mays, the 2013-2023 bird-days mean being 3.5 and the all-time highs 40 in 1939, 22 in 1940 and 36 in 1980 (these unsurprisingly the years in which Robin bred). There were no June records, the all-time bird-days total remaining at 50, with 23 of these in the breeding years and 12 since 2012. The all-time July total remains at 93, these logged over 16 years and with the last in 2020.

A juvenile netted on 17th August was the latest autumn arrival since one on the 20th in 2013, this 12 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean. Sightings on 11 further dates, including highs of seven on the 29th and 12 on the 30th, took the August total to 44; although the peak was only a little down on a 2013-2023 mean of 17.9, the total was the third lowest of the last 13 years and well down on a 2013-2023 mean of 128.4 (there were all-time August bird-day highs of 198 in 1992, 197 in 1993 and 229 last year). September was also comparatively quiet, with daily sightings tallying 828 bird-days and highs of 54 on the 17th, 57 on the 22nd and 55 on the 26th; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 73.3 and on all-time highs of 100 in 1993 and 1995, 150 in 1994 and 128 in 2014, whilst the total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 935.9 (although there have only been seven September tallies up on that of this year, all logged since 2014 and peaking at 1649 in that year, Robin were routinely under-recorded in the past, just being logged as present following quiet or average days (the peak daycount is thus more informative)). Numbers again peaked in October, with highs of 56 on the 2nd, 58 on the 3rd and 60 on the 11th which took the bird-days total to 1151; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 76.9 and highs of 150 in 1994, 118 in 2014 and 109 in 2019, whilst the total was close to a mean of 1196.9 logged during the same period (the highs being 1638 in 2014 and 1485 in 2015). Daily November sightings totalled 538 bird-days, this down on tallies of 813 in 2019, 846 in 2021 and 837 in 2022 (all Novembers in which staff were present throughout). Peak November daycounts of 44 on the 4th, 35 on the 12th and 32 on the 13th were down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 50.1 and well down on all-time highs of 70 in 1995, 91 in 2015 and 82 in 2019. Daily December counts to the 3rd peaked at 13 on the 1st. Only two handled during the autumn had been encountered on Skokholm previously; ACY7574, already retrapped in March, was back for a third winter, as was ACY7743, ringed as a juvenile in October 2022 and last handled in October 2023.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* **Eos**
Rare Migrant with eight spring and 13 autumn birds accounting for 38 bird-days
Earliest 16th April 1995 (16th May 2024) **Latest** 18th September 1955 and 1974
1 trapped
1951-1970: 5 trapped, 2015-2021: 2 trapped

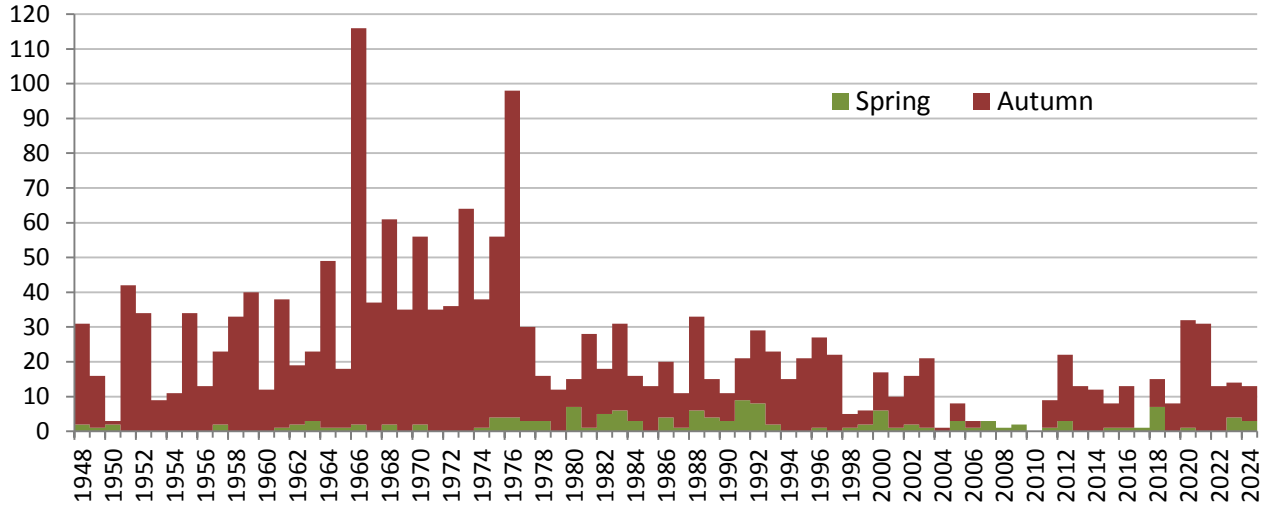
One found in the Courtyard on 16th May was taken from the Cottage Heligoland late that afternoon when it was found to have a subtle bill deformity (RDB, GB, JK *et al*.). A review of Nightingale records for 'The Birds of Wales' considered one day singles in April 1982, April and September 1987 and May 2012 to be no longer acceptable (Pritchard *et al*., 2021), whilst a May 1993 record included in the book is not in the Skokholm Log or the report for that year and should also be removed. There have thus now been 22 Skokholm birds, with singles present for one day between 16th April and 2nd June in nine years since 1951, 12 (eight of which lingered for up to 11 days) present between 14th August and 18th September in eight years between 1955 and 1991 and one found dead on 30th September 1976 considered different to that present on 26th August 1976.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca* **Gwybedog Brith**
Uncommon Migrant more frequent in autumn and sometimes absent in spring
Earliest 10th April 1993 (**6th April 2024**) **Latest** 17th October 1988 (8th September 2024)
9 trapped
1934-1976: 385 trapped, 2011-2023: 66 trapped, 12 retrapped, 1 control

A female which spent 6th April in the Courtyard became the earliest Skokholm record. A first-year male in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on the 12th became the third earliest record and was different to the unringed male present around Boundary Hill the following day which became the fourth earliest. This species is nearly always scarce in spring, with 42 of 148 all-time bird-days logged this century, a 2013-2023 spring bird-days mean of 1.4 and highs of seven in 1980 and 2018, eight in 1992 and nine in 1991. Discounting a 2017 autumn with no records, a juvenile male netted on 28th August was the latest autumn arrival of the last 12 years, 14 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was logged on 22nd July 2021, with one on the 24th in 1994 the only other in July). September saw two on the 2nd (one a juvenile trapped in the Cottage Heligoland), juveniles ringed on both the 5th and 6th, four more juveniles ringed on the 7th and one at the Pig Sty

on the 8th (the legs of the latter could not be seen); although matching daycounts in both 1992 and 2022 as the highest in September since 1988, the peak was well down on seven double-figure counts which reached 20 in 1948. A September bird-days total of nine was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 6.2 but well down on all-time highs of 41 in 1951, 33 in 1959 and 34 in 1961. There have been 554 bird-days later than the last of this year, including 40 in October. A total of ten autumn bird-days was down on the 31 of both 2020 and 2021, but matched that of last year and almost matched a 2013-2023 mean of 13.2; there have been 56 higher autumn totals (ten this century), with peaks of 114 in 1966, 64 in 1973 and 94 in 1976 (but no more than 31 thereafter).

The total number of spring and autumn Pied Flycatcher bird-days logged between 1948 and 2024.



Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* **Tingoch Ddu**
Uncommon Migrant has probably overwintered on occasion
1 trapped
1934-1976: 105 trapped, 2013-2022: 29 trapped, 5 retrapped

One around the Farm on 18th March matched the 2013-2023 mean first arrival date. What was perhaps the same individual was seen each day to the 22nd, a March bird-days total of five being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 8.5 (the all-time March highs are of 241 in 1948 (when daycounts

peaked at 50), 101 in 1949, 39 in 1983, 56 in 1995 and 28 in 2021). The only April record was of one at North Gully on the 12th and 14th; an April bird-days total of two was half a 2013-2023 mean of 4.3 and well down on highs of 32 in 1949, 24 in 1958 and 21 in 1991. A male at the Lighthouse on the 16th and in the Quarry on the 17th took the all-time May bird-days total to 74, 23 of which have been since 2013 (2016 and 2023 are the only years during the latter period without a record). A June bird-days total of 17, which includes seven over four years since 2013, was not added to. There have been singles in six Julys (with four since 2011), up to two bird-days in the Augusts of 1973 and 2003 and ten September bird-days across six years between 1964 and 2001. One around the Farm on 15th October was eight days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; the earliest during this period arrived on the 8th in 2021, the latest on 11th November last year. What was likely the same individual was still present on the 16th, two were at the Quarry on the 26th, one was at the Lighthouse on the 29th and 30th and at least two were there on the last day of the month; an October bird-days total of eight was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.8 and matched the 16th highest tally in this month, albeit being well down on peaks of 243 in 1968, 61 in 1970, 92 in 1975 and 86 in 1988. Two were still at the Lighthouse on 1st November, one was there the following day and one at Steep Bay on the 10th was the last of the year; a November bird-days total of four was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 8.2 and on all-time highs of 38 in both 1968 and 1992, 19 in 1980 and 24 in 2022.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* **Tingoch**
Uncommon Migrant
Earliest 1st April 1991 **Latest** 3rd November 2022 (6th September 2024)
1 trapped
1935-1976: 393 trapped, 2013-2023: 61 trapped, 6 retrapped

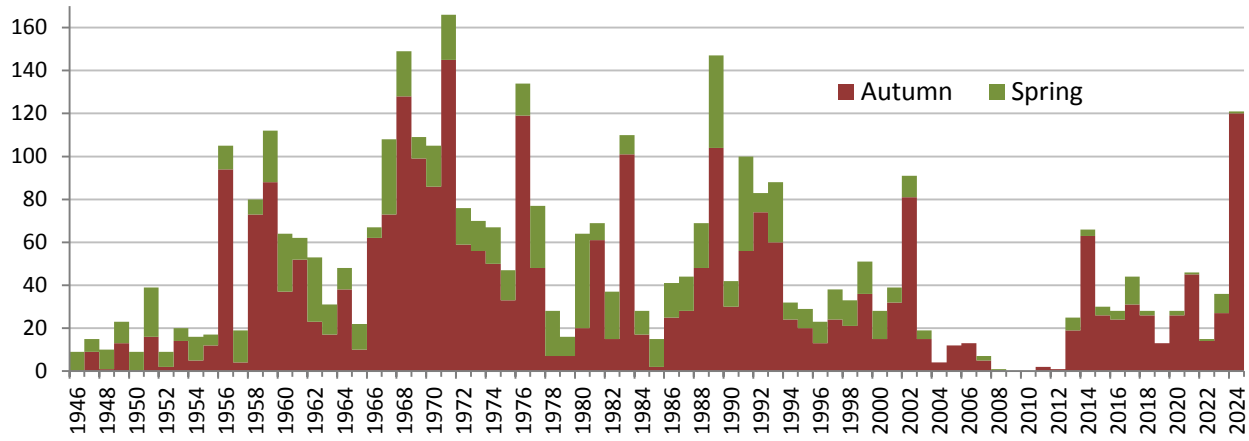
Alarmingly there were no spring records; although two periods of Island closure and missing 2004 records leave gaps in the database, the lowest spring bird-day totals are probably the one of 1936 and the two logged in 1937, 1940, 1947, 1948, 1955, 1961, 1973, 1999, 2005, 2007 and 2013, whilst the 2013-2023 mean is 7.3 and the all-time highs 26 in 1964, 1967 and 1988, 36 in 1991 and 55 in 1966. Autumn was little better, with a juvenile in the Well Heligoland on 6th September the only record, this four days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; an autumn total of one was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.5 and matched that of 2016 and 2021 as the lowest since 2012 (there were highs of ten in 2020 and nine in 2022). Although never common, this species was, as noted for that other denizen of Welsh woodland the Pied Flycatcher, more regular in the past, with

autumn bird-day highs of 55 in 1966, 43 in 1968 and 39 in 1988 (the latter including 20 on 21st September which is one of only two double-figure daycounts, the other the 11 of 10th May 1993).

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* **Crec yr Eithin**
Uncommon Migrant previously Fairly Common
Earliest 8th April 1997 (26th May 2024) **Latest** 2nd November 2014 (7th October 2024)
5 trapped
1936-1976: 326 trapped, 2013-2023: 24 trapped, 4 retrapped

Discounting a 2019 with no spring records, a female netted on 26th May was the latest arrival of the last 12 years, this 26 days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean. There were no further spring birds, a bird-days total of one being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.1 and on eight springs during this period; double-figure spring totals were previously the norm, with 41 such tallies between 1949 and 2002, eight of which were of 25 or more including highs of 35 in 1967, 44 in 1980 and 1991 and 43 in 1989 (there were maximum spring daycounts of seven logged in the Mays of 1960 and 1989).

The total number of Whinchat bird-days logged in each spring and autumn since 1946.



Three together at South Pond on 2nd September were ten days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was on 12th August 2017, the latest on 5th September

2023); there have been 537 earlier autumn bird-days, with 29 recorded over 18 Julys last century and 474 in August, including 31 since 2013. Sightings on all bar two subsequent September dates to the 28th peaked at ten on the 7th and 11th, nine on the 12th and eight on the 16th; although matching daycounts in the Septembers of 1956, 1969 and 1992, the only higher counts, all recorded in September, are of 17 on the 10th in 1958, 11 on the 19th in 1961, 40 on the 10th and 20 on the 11th in 1968 and 20 on the 29th in 1992. A September bird-days total of 116 was a new high, up on the 88 of 1956, 114 of 1968 and 91 of 1969 and 1971. Singles between South Pond and Western Plain on the 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th October were the last, these taking the all-time October bird-days total to 372, 63 of which have been since 2013; there have been 170 later autumn bird-days, including one in November and 29 since 2013. An autumn bird-days total of 120 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 28.5 and only down on highs of 128 in 1968 and 145 in 1971.

Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* **Clochdar y Cerrig**
Fairly Common lone pairs bred in 1928, 1932, 2021 and 2022
20 trapped, 3 retrapped, 1 resighted
1934-1976: 340 trapped, 2013-2023: 159 trapped, 18 retrapped, 2 resighted

Sightings on 18 March dates from the return of staff on the 10th peaked at six on the 11th and seven on the 12th; although there have been higher daycounts in six Marches, a bird-days total of 61 was only down on the 105 of 1958. Two pairs established territories, this becoming just the fifth year with a breeding attempt and the first year with more than one pair. An unringed male and a female ringed on 4th April nested in Bracken near the South Coast Cut; they were feeding young from 21st April, had young out of the nest on 3rd May, two fledglings on 9th May and the female was again nest lining on 11th May. A juvenile at the Well on 23rd May was likely one of the two ringed there the following day, these probably the South Coast Cut youngsters (one was back at South Pond on 1st June). An unringed pair between East Bog and the Well fledged three by 31st May, with the adults seemingly relocating to an area between Gull Field and South Bog during June. The South Coast Cut pair had just a single second brood fledgling by 22nd June, this following rough weather, and the South Bog pair fledged two by 17th July. There was no indication between April and August of any birds other than the breeders and their offspring, although the dispersal of early brood juveniles would make such an arrival difficult to detect; between 2013 and 2023 the mean first mainland juvenile arrived on 26th June, with the earliest on 9th June 2020 and the latest on 26th July 2018.

The South Coast Cut pair had fledged a third brood youngster by 30th July, with a second confirmed on 7th August, whilst the South Bog pair had fledged young by 26th August, with three confirmed on 3rd September. The two pairs thus fledged 13 young, a 2024 productivity figure of 6.5 down on the 9.0 of 2021 but up on the 5.0 of 2022. An August daycount high of 12 on the 28th was unsurprisingly the highest to be recorded in this month, whilst a daycount of 18 on 24th September was the first to definitely include birds from elsewhere. A September bird-days total of 257 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 62.2 and a new high, up on the 110 of 2020 and the 137 of 2021. Although clearly still augmented by Skokholm birds, October daycount highs of 22 on the 11th, 15 on the 19th and 18 on the 23rd were actually down on highs of 25 in 1961 and 24 last year, although a bird-days total of 216 was another record. It was also a record November, raising hopes that Stonechat may establish as a regular Skokholm breeding species; there were daycount highs of eight on the 8th and 12th and ten on the 13th, the peak matching that of 2001 as the highest to date, whilst a bird-days total of 144 was well up on a previous high of 113 logged last year. Up to five were present into December.

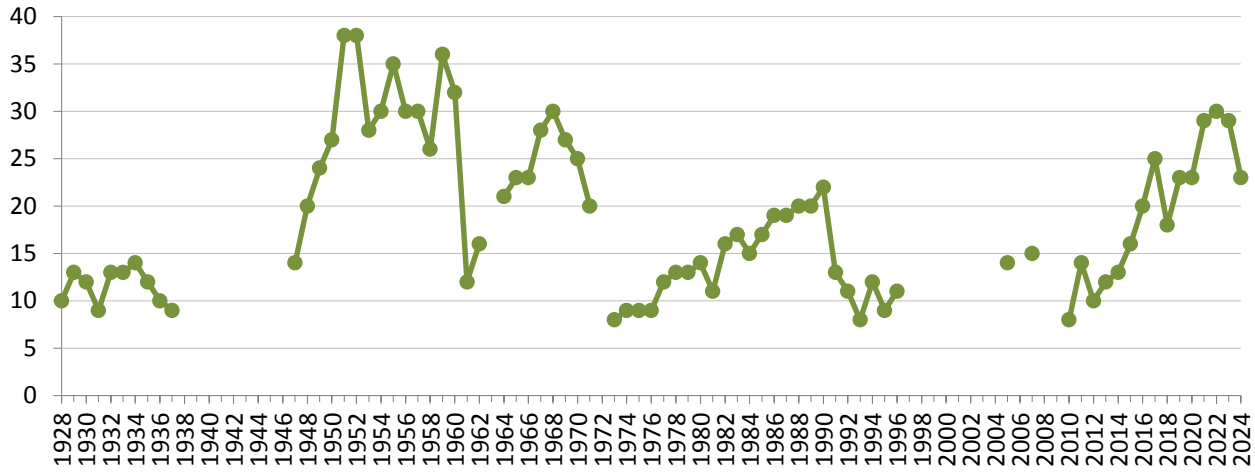
Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* **Tinwen y Garn**
Abundant Migrant and Uncommon Breeder
Earliest 2nd March 2003 (10th March 2024) **Latest** 13th November 1999 (19th October 2024)
61 trapped, 84 retrapped/resighted
1934-1976: 3636 trapped, 2011-2023: 828 trapped (inc 71 pulli), 532 retrapped/resighted, 7 controls

Male F22 was already on Home Meadow when staff returned on 10th March, this two days earlier than the 2013-2023 first bird mean (the earliest during this period was present on 4th March 2021, the latest on 18th March 2019); there have been 34 bird-days earlier than the first of 2024, including five since 2013. Only F22 was logged until the 18th when a further five arrived, these followed by daily March counts peaking at 22 on the 30th and taking the bird-days total to 162; the peak March daycount was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 23.6 (albeit well down on highs of 200 in 1930, 110 in 1949 and 150 in 1958), whilst the bird-days total was up on a mean of 152.6 logged during the same period (the highs are of 303 in 1949, 320 in 1950 and 263 in 1958). All April daycounts were of 41 or less bar 60 on the 21st, 47 on the 22nd and 24th and 46 on the 23rd and 28th which took the total to 790; the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 98.0 and well down on all-time highs of 1200 in 1938 (two counts), 250 in 1954, 165 in 1999 and 156 in 2022, whilst the total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 865.9 and on seven years during this period. The majority of early migrants were nominate birds, with the first three Greenland-types noted on 18th April, the same date as the first five of last year. There followed at least 80 *O. o. leucorhoa* bird-days logged over 21 dates to 11th May, with highs of 14 on 21st April, seven on the 22nd and 23rd April and six on 4th May; there were 128 *O. o. leucorhoa* bird-days in spring 2023, with a high of 48 on 20th April. A female with a 105mm wing trapped on 4th May weighed 43.5g; the only heavier birds in the last 12 years were females at 44.0g on both 1st June 2014 and 3rd May 2016 and a male at 44.8g on 19th May 2020. Of the 20 breeding birds fitted with geologgers in 2023 (these the first British songbirds to carry accelerometers), eight were seen this year and five were successfully retrapped to allow the removal of the tags; the exciting results will be published in due course.

Survey work during the spring revealed 23 breeding pairs, this six fewer than mapped last year and matching the 2019 and 2020 totals as the lowest since the 18 of 2018; there were highs of 36 pairs in 1959 and 38 in 1951 and 1952, whilst the 1928-2023 mean is 18.57 ±sd 8.18. Chick provisioning was first seen at Wallsend and North Plain on 18th May, this two days later than the 2013-2023 mean; the latest first food delivery during this period was noted on the 22nd in 2013, the earliest on the 10th in 2022. However early deliveries had been missed, with the first fledgling found at Wallsend on 26th May, this two days earlier than the 2013-2023 mean; the latest during this period were logged on 5th June 2013, the earliest on 23rd May in 2014 and 2022. A chick or recent fledgling was eaten by a Herring Gull on 6th June (see photograph above). The high number of breeding pairs, coupled with a protracted breeding season and mobile young, made an accurate assessment of productivity

impossible. There were 14 recent fledglings ringed before 21st July, a further 17 moulting juveniles ringed in August and 21 fledglings recorded in territories away from the trapping areas, this giving an approximate productivity figure of 2.26 fledglings per pair (this was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.04 ±se 0.20, with a high during this period of 4.00 in 2015, a low of 1.96 in 2020). Ian Beggs' study into the survival, movements and behaviour of the Skokholm Wheatears remains the subject of a Masters project with the University of South Wales; as part of this work cameras were again installed over nests during the chick provisioning period, these in purpose built boxes (see the 2019 Annual Report for further details and a map showing box positions). This April saw the construction of 30 recycled plastic boxes ready to replace the wooden originals as they degrade. Neither male A31, which had survived eight winters and was approaching the British longevity record, nor female C29, which had survived at least seven winters, were seen this year; thus, of the known age breeding birds, male A33 was the oldest (ringed as a juvenile on 25th June 2018), whilst C29 was the oldest female (ringed as a juvenile on 18th July 2019). Six Skokholm colour ringed birds were on Skomer Island this summer (two 2023 fledglings, three 2022 fledglings and one 2021 fledgling).

The number of Wheatear breeding territories located each year 1928-2024 (where data exists).



There were August highs of 57 on the 3rd, 50 on the 7th and 49 on the 9th, with no more than 27 seen each day from the 15th taking the total for the month to 757; although up on a 2013-2023 mean of 732.3, the total was down on six of the last seven years, this reflecting below average productivity. Counts on all but one September date were as low as eight on the 1st and 16 on the 6th, however there followed highs of 65 on the 7th and 54 on the 8th which took the bird-days total to 440; there have only been higher daycounts in six Septembers, with all-time highs of 150 in 1929 and 1933, 207 in 1951, 121 in 2013 and 123 in 2014, however the total was only a little up on a 2013-2023 mean of 400.8 (there was a low during this period of 208 in 2017, whilst the all-time highs are of 1078 in 1951, 728 in 1958 and 782 in 2021). The last two Skokholm ringed birds were seen on 6th September, these two days earlier than the 2018-2023 mean. Sightings on 14 October dates to the 19th peaked at ten on the 2nd and 4th and nine on the 9th, the high close to a 2013-2023 mean of 11.2, whilst a bird-days total of 76 matched that of 2016 as the highest since the 290 of 2013 (the latter the all-time high, up on the 239 of 1961 and 262 of 1976). The last of the year on 19th October was six days earlier than the 2013-2023 last bird mean; the earliest last bird during this period was on 16th October 2016, the latest on 6th November 2015, whilst there have been 246 later birds, including 11 in November and 40 since 2013. Two apparent *O. o. leucorhoa* arrived on 7th August, whilst sightings on a further 21 dates between 4th September and 8th October included highs of 12 on 8th September and six on 6th October; an autumn total of 69 was up on the 50 of 2022 and the 42 of last year.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* **Aderyn y To**
Scarce although not recorded every year; most recently absent in 2010 and 2016
1 trapped
1955-1976: 20 trapped, 2013-2022: 9 trapped

A male in the Wheelhouse Net on the 22nd took the all-time April bird-days total to 43 and made this the 41st spring with a record. There were no further sightings, a lone bird-day being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.9 (the all-time highs are of eight in 1967, 1975 and 2021, nine in 1976, 11 in 1966 and 1977, 13 in 1972 and 17 last year). There were just nine House Sparrow bird-days prior to 1957, then records in all but two years until 1978 (totalling 109 bird-days), birds in ten of the years between 1979 and 2004 (totalling 24 bird-days) and birds in all but three years since 2005 (now totalling 57 bird-days). May is still the most productive month, with 58 bird-days (but just two since 1991), whilst October is the busiest autumn month with 54 bird-days (including 33 since 2011). There is yet to be an August sighting.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis* **Llwyd y Gwrych**
Uncommon Winter Visitor and Irregular Scarce Breeder formerly Uncommon with up to 12 pairs
2 trapped
1934-1976: 396 trapped, 2012-2023: 89 trapped, 140 retrapped, 1 control

Although it was not retrapped, a ringed bird present between the Cottage and Petrel Station II on three dates between the 27th and 30th March had probably overwintered. There were no further spring sightings, a bird-days total of three being up on the two of 2022 but down on a 2013-2019 mean of 58.1 (this a period in which Dunnock did not breed); unsurprisingly there were higher breeding year totals of 114 in 2020, 199 in 2021 and 126 last year. Up to seven pairs bred annually between 1928 and 1939, there were up to 12 pairs between 1964 and 1981 and up to two pairs in eight years between 1987 and 1993, while more recently there were three pairs in 2012, a pair fledged at least three in 2020, two females fledged at least four in 2021 and a pair failed last year. A juvenile in the Courtyard on 6th October was five days earlier than the first autumn arrival of 2022, but 30 days later than the 2013-2023 mean (the latter excluding the three years during this period in which Dunnock bred). Two were seen on the 11th, whilst singles between the Farm and East Bog on four further dates to the 17th took the October bird-days total to seven, this by far the lowest of the last 13 years; there were lows during this period of 25 in 2012 and 36 in 2013, whilst the 2013-2023

mean is 99.6 (with highs of 168 in 2015 and 152 in 2020, the former a non-breeding year) and the all-time highs 189 in 1988 and 480 in 1994 (this despite no numerical Birdlog entry on 16 dates in 1988 and 13 dates in 1994). November counts were also alarming, with one to the south of Home Meadow on the 11th and one at Crab Bay on the 12th being the only records; the 2013-2023 November bird-days mean is 60.1, with a low of 29 in 2013 (when staff left on the 16th) and highs of 86 in 2015 and 77 in 2018 (staff left on the 26th in both years). Bar September counts of 30 and 40 in 1931, there have been record daycounts, all logged in October, of 30 in 1930 and 1931 and 50 in 1994, whilst the 21st century highs, again in October, are of 14 in 2015 and 13 in 2020.

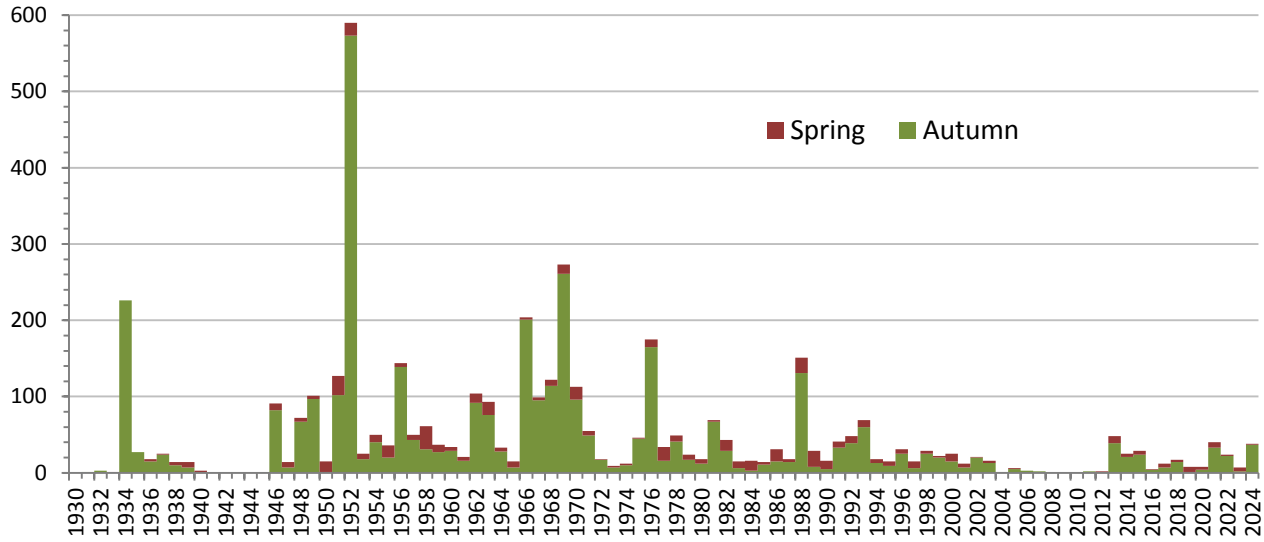
Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* **Siglen Felen**
Uncommon previously Fairly Common, or Common on occasion, and more regular in autumn
Earliest 10th March 1966 (26th April 2024) **Latest** 18th November 1967 (7th October 2024)
1 trapped
1934-1976: 81 trapped, 2013-2022: 3 trapped

One over the Farm during the morning of 26th April was two days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 103 earlier bird-days, including two in March and ten since 2013. There were no further records in the first half of the year, a lone spring bird-day being down on a 2013-2023 mean of 4.7 (there were lows during this period of one in 2016 and two in 2022, highs of seven in 2019 and 2021 and nine in 2013, the latter the highest post-2000 spring tally); the 1950-1990 mean spring total was 10.0, this period including all-time highs of 25 in 1951, 30 in 1958 and 21 in 1989.

There were 12 in the vicinity of North Plain on 6th September, these one day later than the first of last autumn and 15 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; there have been 58 bird-days in July, only five of which have been since 1990, and records in 68 Augusts (including seven of the last 12) totalling 2124 bird-days and with daycount highs of 50 in 1949, 1952 and 1969 and of between 75 and 150 on four dates in 1952 (September daycounts of 50 in 1951 and 31 in 1966 are the highest to be recorded outside of August). Nevertheless a daycount of 12 was the highest in any month since counts of 16, 20 and 30 in August 1988. September sightings on 12 further dates were of singles bar five on the 7th, seven on the 8th and two on the 9th, these taking the bird-days total to 35, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 9.2 and the highest tally in this month since the 48 of 1993 (the all-time highs are of 136 in 1934, 84 in 1951 and 94 in 1956). The individual in the above photograph was one of those logged on the 7th, with a similar bird present on the 27th; although such seemingly continental birds are regular in autumn, subspecific identification is problematic, indeed a 2020 review of *M. f. flava* records found 23 to be acceptable, with 17 males in spring (31 bird-days) and

only six in autumn (six bird-days), whilst the only accepted Skokholm records of Grey-headed *M. f. thunbergi* are of males in the Mays of 1978, 1987, 1989 and 1990. Another greyer bird, with a typically western flight call, was present on the 6th and 7th October and was the last of the year; there have been 40 later bird-days, including eight since 2013. A total of 37 autumn bird-days more than doubled a 2013-2023 mean of 15.5 and was only down on a peak during this period of 39 in 2013, however it was well down on now almost unimaginable highs of 226 in 1934, 573 in 1952 and 261 in 1969. Although numbers fluctuate markedly between years and historical highs were probably in part due to the presence of livestock tempting passage birds down to feed, there are clearly far fewer Yellow Wagtail passing Skokholm than there were 60 years ago.

The total number of Yellow Wagtail bird-days logged in each spring and autumn since 1930.



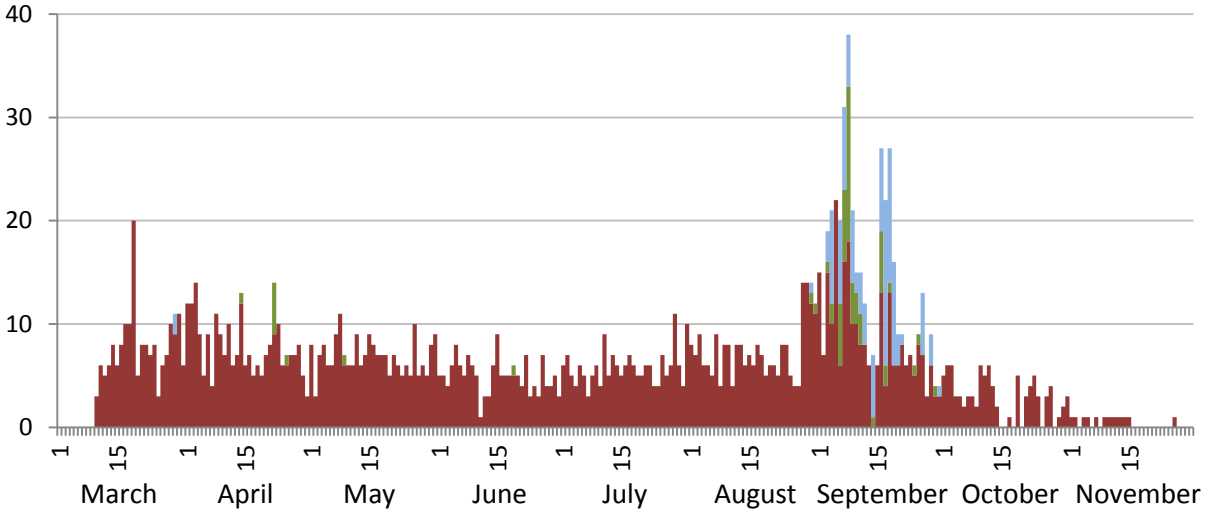
Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* **Siglen Lwyd**
Uncommon Visitor Scarce in spring but occasional double-figure daycounts in autumn
1938-1976: 8 trapped, 2013-2021: 4 trapped, 1 control

There were no spring sightings for the sixth time in 12 years and a fifth time in six years; six of 34 March bird-days have been logged since 2013, whilst 11 of the 43 bird-days recorded between 1st April and 28th June have been in the same period. A flyover during the morning of the 31st was just an 18th July bird-day, 12 of which have been this century, indeed it was 11 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean. Four heading west on the 29th, three of which were together, and one in Crab Bay on the 31st took the August bird-days total to five, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.0; there have now been 160 August bird-days, with 38 since 2014 and highs of 30 in 1952, 11 in 1960, 24 in 1981 and nine in 2020. Sightings on 13 September dates were of two or less bar daycounts of three on the 13th, four on the 17th and five on the 18th; the peak September daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 7.9 and on eight years during this period (there were all-time highs of 25 in 1960 and 12 in 2014), whilst a bird-days total of 27 was the second lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 46.0 and on all-time September highs of 63 in 1960, 110 in 2014, 58 in 2020 and 57 in 2022. October again proved more typical, with encounters on 13 dates to the 31st, a high of three on the 8th and a bird-days total of 19; the 2013-2023 mean October high is 4.1, the mean total for the same period being 19.5 (the highs are of 28 in 1975, 32 in 2015, 39 in 2016 and 24 in 2018 and 2021). A November bird-days total of 28, 16 of which have been over seven post-2013 years, was not added to. An annual bird-days total of 52 was the second lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 71.9 and on all-time highs of 90 in 1960, 126 in 2014, 76 in 2016, 83 in 2020 and 75 in 2022, recent years proving productive for a species described in 1939 as a 'curiously rare visitor' and by Thompson (2007) as usually providing only 'a handful of autumn records each year'.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* **Siglen Fraith**
***M. a. yarrellii* Scarce Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor**
White Wagtail *M. a. alba* Common Migrant flyovers unassigned to race are also Common
***M. a. alba* Earliest** 11th March 1997 (14th April 2024) **Latest** 29th October 1988 (3rd October 2024)
20 trapped, 10 retrapped
1934-1976: 286 trapped, 2011-2023: 347 trapped (including 68 pulli), 178 retrapped, 3 controls

A later return of staff meant that early season absences were missed, with daily March records from the 10th reaching 20 on the 19th and 11 on the 30th; the peak, which included groups of eight at South Pond and four on Home Meadow, was the only indication that *M. a. yarrellii* other than the Skokholm breeders were present, this up on a 2013-2023 mean high of 8.5 and only down on an all-time March high of 22 in 1988. The first White Wagtail, found on Home Meadow on 14th April, was 16 days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 213 earlier bird-days, including 57 in March and 40 since 2013. It was again a poor spring for records of the nominate subspecies, with five on 22nd April and singles on 25th April, 9th May and 19th June the only other records; a spring bird-days total of nine was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 22.9 and on all but three years during this period (there were lows of six in 2019 and three last year, highs of 75 in 2013 and 49 in 2016, whilst the only spring tallies higher than that of 2013 are the 80 of 1988 and the 122 of 1989).

The number of Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii* (maroon), White Wagtail *M. a. alba* (green) and unraced *M. alba* wagtail (blue) logged each day during the 2024 season.



Pied Wagtail were nest building in the wall near North Pond Hide on 8th April, this earlier than in any of the last nine years (the 2015-2023 first nest material mean is 20th April, with the earliest on the 15th in 2023 and the latest on 4th May 2022). Seven breeding pairs were subsequently mapped, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.0 and matching the record set in 2020, 2021 and 2023 (there were five pairs in each year between 2017 and 2019 and six pairs in 2006, 2007 and 2022). Four retrapped adults had been ringed in previous years; female ACY8323 and male ACY8522 were ringed in 2023 and had survived at least two winters, male ACY8220 was ringed as a first-summer in 2023 and had survived two winters and female ARR7359 was ringed as a first-summer in 2022 and had survived three winters. Food taken from the Lighthouse to the Quarry on 16th May was the first evidence of a chick, this seven days later than the first indication last year. However the Quarry pair, along with pairs in Crab Bay, the Courtyard, Peter's Bay and at North Pond, all seemingly failed at the first attempt, with a single at the Cottage the only definite first brood fledgling (two in South Haven from 3rd July were possibly from a late first attempt, although an early failure could not be ruled out). Four pairs certainly had second attempts, with the Courtyard pair having two fledglings from 1st July, the Quarry pair two fledglings from 2nd July, the Cottage pair three more fledglings from 3rd July and the North Pond pair two fledglings from 9th July. A total of 12 fledglings was down on a 2013-2023 mean

of 17.9 and matched the 2020 total as the lowest since the 11 of 2014. A productivity figure of 1.71 fledglings per pair matched that of 2020 as the lowest of the last 12 years, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3.81 ±se 0.34 and highs during this period of 5.00 in 2013, 5.25 in 2016 and 5.20 in 2019.

There were no autumn daycounts in excess of the 26 breeding *M. a. yarrellii* and their fledglings, with September peaks of just 22 on the 5th and 18 on the 8th being down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 26.8 and peaks during this period of 37 in 2016 and 2018 and 48 in 2021 (the only autumn daycounts of more than 60 are the 120 of 19th September 1997 and the 70 of 1st September 2011). Following 13 on the 16th and 18th September, no more than eight *M. a. yarrellii* were logged on any autumn date. A White Wagtail on 30th August was 12 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean. There were a further 56 *M. a. alba* logged during the autumn, including September highs of just six on the 6th and 16th, seven on the 7th and 15 on the 8th; the peak autumn daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 22.9, on highs during this period of 34 in 2013 and 2015 and 73 last year and on all-time highs of 150 in 1931, 200 in 1988 and 120 in 1991. The *M. a. alba* autumn bird-days total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 121.5 and on all but two years during this period; although there was a low of 25 in 2022, there were six three-figure totals in the last 11 years, including a 21st century high of 266 in 2015, whilst the all-time highs are of 795 in 1987, 1712 in 1988 and 1134 in 1991. There were an additional 133 unraced flyovers noted between 30th August and 13th October, with September highs of nine on the 4th, 16 on the 17th, 13 on the 18th and ten on the 19th; although up on the last two years, the total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 277.7 and on seven years during this period, including highs of 557 in 2013 and 466 in 2014. The last White Wagtail of the year was seen on 3rd October, this five days earlier than the last of 2023; there have been 191 later bird-days, including just nine this century. The only November Pied Wagtail sightings were of singles on 12 dates to the 15th and a male around the Farm on the 26th which was the last of the year; a bird-days total of 13 was only down on the 20 of 2013, 19 of 2016 and 23 of 2021.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi* **Corhedydd Richard**
Rare logged in 20 previous autumns, with approximately 32 individuals accounting for 65 bird-days

A vocal flyover crossing the Head at 0840hrs on 12th November attracted the attention of a Merlin which chased it down the South Coast Cliffs (GE, RDB); it was not encountered again. The only later record is of one on the 15th and 29th November 2022, this possibly a lingering bird, whilst November records in four further years between 1968 and 2017 take the bird-days total for this month to 11. Whereas there is seemingly no trend in the number of British records (White and Kehoe, 2021), this species was more regular on Skokholm between 1967 and 1994 when approximately 25 birds led to 55 bird-days; there have only been 11 bird-days this century, albeit with eight since 2014. One on 12th September 1971 is the earliest Skokholm record, this one of 15 bird-days in this month, whilst there have been 40 in October. There have been daycount highs of four on 26th October 1968 and on 29th September 1970 and daycounts of two in October 1968, September 1970 and October 1971.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* **Corhedydd y Waun**

Very Abundant Visitor and Uncommon Breeder

134 trapped, 90 retrapped, 1 resighted

1934-1976: 4456 trapped, 2010-2023: 2056 trapped (including 8 pulli), 618 retrapped

Daily March sightings from the return of staff on the 10th reached 65 on the 16th, 71 on the 24th (including 35 together on Home Meadow) and 69 on the 31st; the peak March daycount was the lowest of the last 14 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 108.0 (there was a recent high of 183 in 2019 and all-time highs of 250 in 1950, 1955 and 1988 and 350 in 1990). Similarly April peaks of 58 on the 14th and 21st and 67 on the 23rd were the lowest since 2014, down on a 2013-2023 mean April maximum of 86.4 (there were highs during this period of 109 in 2016 and 138 last year, all-time highs of 200 in 1949, 1951 and 1990 and 700 on the 4th in 1988). Survey work during April and May revealed 35 breeding territories and an additional two singing males encountered on only one visit; the total number of territorial males was the lowest since the 33 of 2019, albeit close to a 2013-2023 mean of 37.9 (there were highs of 50 in 2016 and 45 last year, lows of 28 in both 2013 and 2014). Adults were first seen carrying food on 5th May, this nine days earlier than the 2015-2023 mean, however the first fledgling was encountered on 4th June, this one day later than the 2013-2023 mean (the earliest during this period were found on 15th May 2014 and 27th May last year, the latest on 28th June 2013); this may reflect poor first brood productivity, as was seen with Pied Wagtails. There were 31 retrapped which had been ringed in previous seasons, this compared with 19 in 2019, 14 in 2020, 15 in both 2021 and 2022 and 18 last year; 14 had survived their first winter, one at least a first, four a second winter, five at least two winters, four a third winter, one at least a fourth winter and one had survived a fifth winter. Additionally female S147977, ringed as a first-summer on 23rd April 2018, was retrapped on 3rd April having survived seven winters (she had worn a ring for five years, 11 months and 12 days, this short of the British record of seven years, nine months and ten days and the Skokholm record of seven years and 17 days (the latter ringed in 1968)).

The total number of Meadow Pipit bird-days logged each month, along with the monthly maximum. Counts from 2021 to 2023 are included for comparison.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024	935	1228	1156	1172	1309	1230	2421	1358	42
2023	966	1559	1085	1008	1201	1606	1770	1816	115
2022	1319	1076	814	689	1168	1300	1810	1419	119
2021	1477	1646	1240	1014	1243	1761	2614	1607	121
2024	71	67	58	54	77	90	155	111	5
2023	94	138	60	60	71	114	152	200	14
2022	111	74	46	36	65	80	187	220	17
2021	138	83	69	54	70	92	175	177	23

August daycounts of 64 on the 1st, 66 on the 28th and 90 on the 31st were down on a 2013-2023 mean high of 124.2 and on all but two years during this period (including all-time highs of 179 in 2017 and 205 in 2018). Chicks were still being fed at North Pond on 7th August, this three days earlier than the last delivery witnessed in 2023. There were seven three-figure September daycounts, five more than last year, with highs of 118 on the 3rd and 7th, 153 on the 20th, 127 on the 21st and 155 on the 28th taking the bird-days total to 2421; the total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 3200.3 and on all but two years during this period (there was a high of 4474 in 2019), whilst the peak was down on a mean of 421.5 and on all but one year (the all-time highs are of 1000 in 1988, 1080 in 1990 and 1353 in 2013). October counts were also poor, with highs of 103 on the 1st, 111 on the 2nd and 110 on the 12th, the peak the lowest of the last 14 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 185.7 and highs during this period of 281 in 2013 and 220 in 2022 (there were all-time highs of 2000 in 1972 and 600 in 1981); an October bird-days total of 1358 was however closer to a 2013-2023 mean of 1444.4 and was up on five years during this period. Counts on 22 November dates were of no more than five,

the peak the lowest of the last 12 years, down on a 2013-2023 mean of 22.5 and a record 70 in 1989. A single on the 1st was the only sighting between 29th November and 3rd December.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* **Corhedydd y Coed**
Uncommon although Scarce between 2004 and 2012 and more regular in autumn
Earliest 16th March 1966 (6th May 2024) **Latest** 13th October 1959 (17th September 2024)
5 trapped
1936-1976: 123 trapped, 2013-2021: 12 trapped, 2 retrapped

A flyover on 6th May was 17 days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean and the latest first of the last eight years; there have been 154 earlier bird-days, including 42 since 2013, 104 in April and three very early singles in March 1966. One flushed from the Knoll on 8th May and one in the Well Heligoland on 30th May took the spring bird-days total to just three, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 5.5 and on five years during that period (the all-time highs are of 17 in 1960 and 2015, 18 in 1990 and 21 in 1987, the record spring daycount the four logged in 1938, 1970 and 1987). The latest autumn arrival of the last 12 years saw two on 31st August, these 13 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was present on 6th August 2018, the latest on the 25th last year). An August bird-days total of two matched that of last year as the lowest of the last ten years (the all-time August highs are of 45 in 1959, 30 in 1966, 33 in 1976 and 29 in 2018). There were September daycounts of two on the 1st and 4th, a minimum of ten arrived on the 6th and 20 the following day included four juveniles in the mist nets; the latter was a Skokholm daycount record, up on the 12 of 7th September 1966, 25th August 1973 and 2nd September 2021. Six were present on 8th September, there were two the following day and singles on the 13th and 17th took the bird-days total for the month to 44, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 11.0 and only down on the 45 of 2021. The last of the year was present on the same date as the last of 2023; there have been 137 later bird-days, including 21 in October and 26 since 2013.

Rock Pipit *Anthus petrosus* **Corhedydd y Graig**
Uncommon Breeder and Scarce Visitor with a high of 67 pairs (1959) and a low of 17 pairs (1983)
126 trapped, 66 retrapped, 46 resighted
1934-1976: 2667 trapped, 2010-2023: 547 trapped (including 2 pulli), 217 retrapped, 17 resighted

There were no spring birds resembling Nordic breeding *A. p. littoralis* for a tenth consecutive year, indeed there was again no indication that the birds logged this season were anything other than the Skokholm breeders and their offspring; there are records of *A. p. littoralis* logged in seven previous years, most recently with one on 22nd March 2014. Spring survey work revealed 49 territories, this seven fewer than mapped last year but up on a 2013-2023 mean of 46.8 (there were highs during this period of 61 in 2017 and 56 last year, lows of 32 in 2013 and 34 in 2014). Two inland territories were mapped this year. There were eight retrapped which had been ringed as juveniles in previous years, six of which had survived a first winter and two of which had survived a second. Additionally ten of the 34 birds colour ringed in 2023 were resighted this year, one of these on Skomer Island (at least 29.4% survived the winter); nine of the colour ringed birds had survived one winter and one had survived at least two winters.

Birds were first seen provisioning chicks in the Dip on 8th May, this four days earlier than the 2016-2023 mean (the earliest during this period were feeding chicks on 3rd May 2017, the latest on 19th May 2018). The first fledgling of the year was at North Gully on 26th May, this four days earlier than the first of last year and two days earlier than the 2013-2023 mean (the earliest during this period were logged on 14th May 2014, the latest on 10th June 2022 (the earliest Meadow Pipit fledglings were also in 2014)). The last adult to be seen carrying food was at the Gantry on 2nd August, this four days before the last of 2023. Daycounts increased during the autumn as birds made their customary move up onto the plateau, with nine three-figure daycounts between 17th September and 12th

October including highs of 113 on the 23rd, 110 on the 2nd and 109 on the 12th; the peak autumn daycount was close to a 2013-2023 mean high of 116.2, but down on that logged in six years during this period (there were lows of 78 in 2018 and 76 in 2022, highs of 165 in 2014 and 145 in 2015, whilst the all-time highs are of 250 in September and October 1949 and October 1951, 300 in August 1934 and 400 in September 1934).

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* **Ji-binc**
Fairly Common to Abundant listed by both Betts and Thompson as Common to Very Abundant
9 trapped
1934-1976: 288 trapped, 2013-2023: 91 trapped, 15 retrapped

There were no March sightings for the first time in 14 years; although Chaffinch have been logged in the majority of Marches, including annually between 1955 and 1977, 1979 and 2003 and 2011 and 2023, they are becoming less common, the mean March totals for these three periods being 59.9, 15.2 and 10.4 respectively (with 195 in 1932, 374 in 1960, 137 in 1969 and 436 in 1976 the only totals of more than 70). Similarly there were no April records; there have been April sightings in 76 years, with a post-War bird-days mean of 5.7, a 2013-2023 mean of 3.7 and all-time highs of 91 in 1934 and 43 in 1981. A lone bird on the 4th was the first in May since 2019, taking the all-time total to 94 (with highs of 16 in 1994 and 13 in 2019 when birds lingered). A flyover on 8th September was 21 days earlier than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean and the earliest since five on 5th September 2015 (this ignoring the unprecedented stay of a female between 19th May and 14th October 2019). A female on the 30th took the all-time September total to 134, these logged over 31 years and with highs of 22 in 1957 and 28 in 2019. Counts on 28 October dates peaked at 30 on the 11th and 20 on the 23rd and 27th, the high down on that recorded in nine of the last 11 Octobers, a 2013-2023 mean high of 104.8, a 21st century record of 492 in 2018 and all-time highs of 3200 in 1966 and 2000 in 1988. An October bird-days total of 143 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 261.6 and a recent high of 1100 in 2018; the latter was the highest total in any month since the 1627 of October 1993 and the 11th highest monthly total to date (there were a record 5054 bird-days in October 1966). November sightings on 23 dates to the 30th were of no more than four from the 16th and peaked at 19 on the 1st, 17 on the 7th and 34 on the 8th, the peak down on a 2013-2023 mean November high of 99.2 and on six years during this period (the highest November daycounts are of 1200 in 1967, 2700 in 1968 and 622 in 2017). There were no Chaffinch during the first three days of December.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* **Pinc y Mynydd**
Uncommon although Scarce on occasion and with records in only 17 springs
Earliest 3rd October 1964 (1st November 2024) **Latest** 23rd May 2022
1954-1967: 6 trapped, 2013-2022: 5 trapped

An all-time spring bird-days total of 38, which includes six since 2018, was not added to; there have been singles in the Februarys of 1956 and 1963, 19 bird-days over nine Marches (with a high of four in 1960), 14 bird-days over nine Aprils (with a high of five in 1949) and one present on three May dates in 2022. One calling over the Well during the morning of 1st November departed for the east, this 15 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean (the earliest during this period was found on 10th October 2017, whilst one on the 4th in 2020 was the only first not logged until November); there have been 2271 autumn bird-days earlier than the first of 2024, all in October, with highs of 1382 in 1966, 128 in 1971, 223 in 1973 and 121 in 1975, but no more than 27 thereafter (the 2013-2023 October bird-days mean is 6.4, with a post-1993 high of 24 in 2018). Further eastbound flyovers on the 13th and 14th November were the last of the year, taking the autumn bird-days total to three; although up on the two of last year, the tally was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 14.3 and on seven years during this period (there were highs of 42 in 2017 and 41 in 2021); there have been six autumn totals up on that of 2017, all recorded between 1966 and 1975 and of 107 or more, these including highs of 1382 in 1966, 160 in 1967 and 223 in 1973 (the former includes an extraordinary minimum of 800 on 22nd October, with 90 on 24th October 1971 the highest post-1966 daycount).

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* **Llinos Goch**
Rare at least 33 individuals logged over 24 years, accounting for 76 bird-days
Earliest 3rd May 1970 (15th June 2024) **Latest** 12th October 1995 (1st October 2024)
1 trapped
1949-1974: 4 trapped, 2011-2023: 11 trapped, 1 retrapped

A brown bird at the Well on 15th June was the 12th to be seen during the first half of the year (below photograph, RDB *et al*.); spring birds in ten previous years account for 18 bird-days, with three since 2013 including a red male ringed on 29th May 2021 which was killed in Ireland on 5th June 2022.

A first-winter which dropped into the Well at 1000hrs on 22nd September was soon taken from the Heligoland (GE *et al*.); it was not seen the following day but was almost certainly the ringed bird present between the Farm, the Well and East Bog on each day between the 24th and 27th and again at East Bog on the 30th and 1st October. A ten day stay matched that made by a bird between the 2nd and 11th September 2011 (which was also seen on seven dates), with the only longer stay made by one present for 12 days between the 16th and 27th September 2018 (seen on only five dates). Singles in 1949 (the second for Wales), 1969, 1970 and 1974 were the only Rosefinch logged prior to 1989, however there have now been at least 35 individuals and 84 bird-days, including 15 individuals and 46 bird-days since 1st September 2011. There have been three records of multiple birds on the same date, with two on 16th June 1992, three on 11th October 2001 and two on 1st October last year. Two 2024 individuals is one down on the record annual totals of 1991, 2001 and 2023.

Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* **Llinos Werdd**
Uncommon or even Scarce, but recorded by both Betts and Thomson as Fairly Common or Common
2 trapped
1934-1976: 98 trapped, 2011-2021: 6 trapped, 1 retrapped

A first-summer female taken from the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 12th May made this just the seventh of the last 12 years with a spring record; there have been 652 bird-days noted during the first half of the year, with 74 this century and only 14 since 2013. A vocal flyover with Siskins on 19th October was three days earlier than the first of last autumn, but two days later than the 2014-2023 first of autumn mean (there were no autumn birds in 2020, with the firsts during this period otherwise arriving between the 6th and 29th October). The only other autumn record was of a first-winter female netted to the north of the Wheelhouse during the morning of 30th October, this taking the autumn bird-days total to just two. Although historical counts have fluctuated, a 2013-2023 autumn bird-days mean of 5.1 is well down on totals which have exceeded 200 on 12 previous occasions (most recently in 2003) and on highs of 582 in 1939, 334 in 1957, 525 in 1966 and 422 in 1976 (the former including a record daycount of 300 east on 18th October). Since the nine bird-days noted in 2005, there have now been records in 16 years totalling only 125 bird-days. This significant decline is likely linked in part to the spread of trichomonosis, a disease caused by the protozoan parasite *Trichomonas gallinae* and which led to a 59% drop in the British population in just ten years (Massimino *et al*., 2017).

Linnet *Linaria cannabina* **Llinos**
Common bred in 1929, 1997 and 1998
11 trapped, 1 retrapped
1936-1975: 63 trapped, 2011-2023: 61 trapped

Following a single on the 11th, sightings on 11 further March dates from the 18th included a high of just three on the 26th; a bird-days total of 15 was down on each of the last five years and a 2013-2023 mean of 22.2 (the maximum during this period was 51 in 2021, this down on five previous years). As is typically the case, spring counts peaked in April, with sightings on all but four dates, eight daycounts in double-figures and highs of 28 on the 1st and 17 on the 12th and 18th which took the bird-days total to 173; the peak daycount was down on a 2013-2023 mean April high of 36.9 and on that logged in five years during this period (including an all-time high of 121 last year), whilst the total was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 189.9 and on seven of these years (there were all-time highs of 333 in 1960, 326 in 2021 and 298 last year). Sightings on nine May dates to the 12th included five on the 9th and a male singing each day from the 9th, whilst birds on eight further dates from the 23rd included a pair seen each day from the 26th; a female carrying Rabbit fur on the 26th did not seemingly visit a nest site, however what was presumed to be the same female had a well-developed brood patch when netted at the Well on the 29th (the male was ringed at the same time). Encounters on 24 June dates were with two birds on 16 dates and three on the 14th when two males

near Migration Rocks accompanied a female with nest material; surprisingly a pair taken from the Garage Heligoland on the 17th were different, this female also with a well-developed brood patch. The 29th May female was in the Garage Heligoland on 7th July when it looked as though she had bred, this probably the bird seen with a ringed male and up to three fledglings from 17th July (in an area between Migration Rocks, Sugar's Delight and South Pond); this becomes just the fourth year with a Skokholm breeding attempt, although a second pair was not confirmed.

August sightings on 26 dates were all of five or less bar the ten of the 24th and six of the 25th and 28th, with what were presumed to be the same three juveniles still together until at least the 14th; the only two higher August daycounts peaked at 13 in 1977, whilst a bird-days total of 107 was a new high, up on the 75 of 1985. Daily September encounters were with five or fewer on 16 dates, but highs of 21 on the 1st and 22nd, 41 on the 24th and 133 on the 28th took the total to 376; the peak September daycount was only down on the 137 of 2015, whilst the total was another new high, up on a 2013-2023 mean of 138.5 and previous highs of 259 in 1994, 270 in 2015 and 242 in 2018. A ringed pair were still together on 3rd October, however a ringed female the following day had an injured left eye; she was not seen again. October sightings on 24 dates included highs of 63 on the 1st, 168 on the 3rd, 63 on the 9th and 97 on the 10th; the peak was down on that logged in five previous Octobers (there were highs of 250 in 1967, 239 in 2016 and 452 in 2021, the latter the highest in any month), whilst a bird-days total of 605 was up on a 2013-2023 mean of 529.6, albeit down on ten previous tallies including highs of 911 in 1959, 939 in 1975 and 906 in 2021. Counts on ten November dates reached 34 on the 11th and 12 on the 12th, the high close to a 2013-2023 mean of 29.1 and down on that logged in seven years (there was an all-time high of 113 in 2016). A male singing in the Courtyard on 26th November was perhaps that over the South Coast on 2nd December.

Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret* **Llinos Bengoch Leiaf**
Uncommon recorded by both Betts and Thompson as Scarce
2 trapped
1950-1976: 16 trapped, 2013-2023: 24 trapped, 1 retrapped

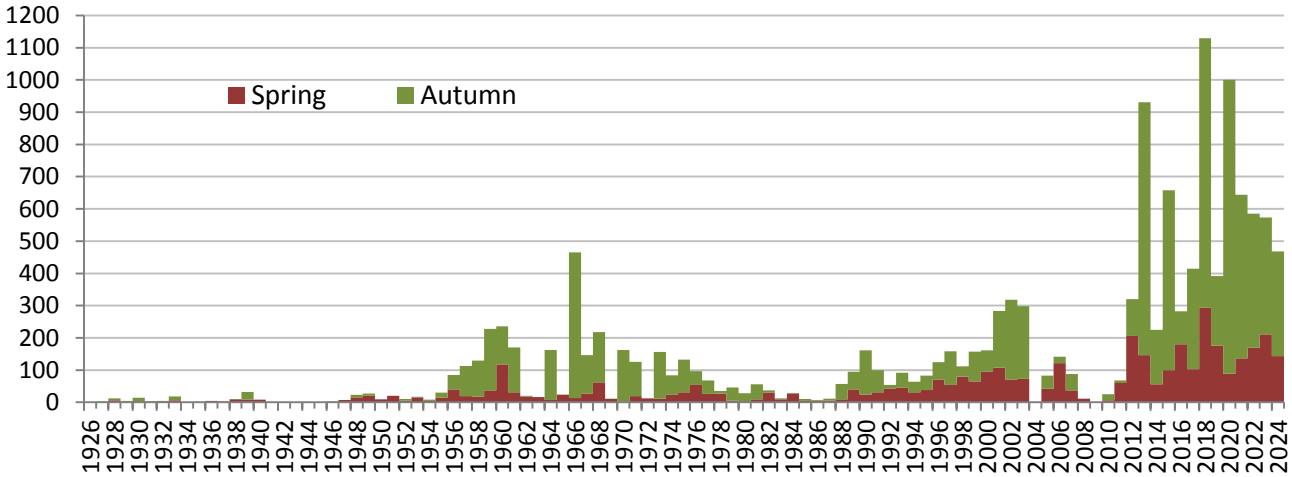
One at the Lighthouse on 20th April was four days later than the 2013-2023 first bird mean; there have been 16 earlier bird-days, including March singles in 2002, 2003 and 2022. Flyover singles on the 21st, 24th and 27th took the all-time April bird-days tally to 62, 36 of which have been since 2014. May again proved the busiest month of the year, with birds on 11 dates between the 6th and 19th.

May highs of four on the 11th and 18th took the bird-days total for the month to 21, this up on a 2013-2023 mean of 11.9 and only down on the 29 of 2002, 24 of 2013 and 54 of 2016. Two around the Farm on the 26th took the all-time June total to 53, 25 of which have been since 2013. A flyover on the 31st took the all-time July total to 25, six of which have been since 2014, whilst a single in 1991 remains the only August record. There was no September sighting for a sixth time in 12 years, the all-time total remaining at 80, with a high of 24 in 1972 and 41 since 2014. The only October record was of three on the 22nd, the all-time bird-days total now at 212, including 43 in 1959 and 70 since 2013. A flyover on the 13th took the all-time November tally to 31, 22 of which have been since 2014. Of the 722 bird-days now recorded since the first four in 1950, 373 have occurred in spring (including 214 since 2013) and 349 have occurred in autumn (including 139 since 2013). The highest daycounts are of 17 in October 1959 and September 1972, 21 in May 2016 and 16 in October 2017.

Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* **Nico**
Common but recorded by both Betts and Thomson as Fairly Common
27 trapped, 1 retrapped
1947-1976: 68 trapped, 2011-2023: 249 trapped, 5 retrapped, 3 controls

One around the Cottage on 21st March arrived on the same date as the 2013-2023 first bird mean. Further singles on the 22nd and 26th led to the second lowest March tally of the last six years, although there have only been 11 higher totals (with a maximum of 21 in 2000). Following singles on six dates to the 13th, sightings on 13 further April dates peaked at 17 on the 17th and 12 on both the 18th and 20th; the peak was only down on that logged in four previous years, including a high of 37 in 2023, whilst a bird-days total of 79 was down on six Aprils including highs of 116 in 2018 and 134 last year. Bar the 12 of the 5th, counts on 18 May dates were of no more than six; the peak was close to a 2013-2023 mean May high of 10.0, whilst a bird-days total of 52 was a little down on a mean of 60.1 logged during the same period (the highs are of 91 in 2013, 113 in 2016 and 136 in 2018). Up to two on seven dates took the all-time June total to 284, 172 of which have been since 2012. A spring bird-days total of 143 was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 150.8, but the eighth highest to date.

The total number of Goldfinch bird-days logged in each spring and autumn since 1926.



One on the 17th took the all-time July bird-days total to 58, 47 of which have been since 2011, however an August total of 49, which includes 41 since 2015, was not added to. September again proved disappointing, with two on both the 18th and 28th the only birds logged; a September bird-days total of four was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 99.3 and on every year during this period (there was a low of six in 2019 and all-time highs of 237 in 2018, 328 in 2020 and 251 in 2022). October saw two on the 2nd and 3rd followed by sightings on 16 dates from the 9th and highs of 24 on the 10th, 21 on the 11th and 19 on the 31st; the peak was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 119.0 and on all but two years during this period, whilst a bird-days total of 117 was down on a 2013-2023 mean

October tally of 324.1 (the all-time daycount highs, both recorded in October, are of 285 on the 14th in 2013 and 279 on the 10th in 2021, whilst the record October tallies are of 746 in 2013, 582 in 2018 and 523 in 2020). An unprecedented November saw Goldfinch on 16 dates to the 25th and highs of 12 on the 1st, 142 on the 11th and 13 on the 12th which took the total to 202; the previous November daycount highs were of just 30 on the 2nd in 1968 and 26 on the 22nd in 2015, the highest totals the 82 of 1990, 111 of 2001 and 138 of 2015 (the 2013-2023 mean is 37.8). One on 2nd December took the autumn bird-days total to 325, this down on a 2013-2023 mean of 470.5 and on seven years during this period (there were all-time highs of 785 in 2013, 836 in 2018 and 911 in 2020).

Siskin *Spinus spinus* **Pila Gwyrdd**
Uncommon sometimes Scarce and with records in just 14 springs
1959-1975: 37 trapped, 2017-2023: 11 trapped

Two in Crab Bay on the 1st made this the fifth May with a sighting, with nine of 11 all-time bird-days occurring in the last 13 years; the first half of the year has also seen a single on 24th January 1998, eight March bird-days (seven of which were in 2022), 31 April bird-days (including 26 since 2012 and 13 in 2021) and four June bird-days. Singles in 1977, 1986 and 2015 remain the only July records and there is yet to be an August Siskin. A minimum of two on 11th October were the first of the autumn, these 16 days later than the 2013-2023 first of autumn mean; there have been 550 earlier autumn bird-days, including 332 in 15 Septembers (with 63 in 1997, 111 in 2015 and 74 in 2020). Records on eight further October dates peaked at just six on the 26th and 30th and five on the 31st; the daycount high was down on a 2013-2023 mean of 31.5 and on each of the last eight years, whilst an October bird-days total of 33 was down on a mean of 86.5 recorded during the same period (the October daycount highs are of 100 in 1959, 1200 on the 26th and 800 on the 27th in 1988 (all grounded by fog), 180 in 1993 and 98 in 2022, whilst the maximum totals are of 2156 in 1988, 405 in 1993, 270 in 2022 and 262 in 2023). Sightings on five November dates to the 13th peaked at four on both the 4th and 11th and tallied 12 bird-days; there have now been 221 November bird-days, including 138 since 2015. A December total of seven was not added to. Siskin have now been noted in 45 years, including 1949 when the first 11 were logged; the most recent year without a record is 2014.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* **Bras yr Eira**
Scarce but only eight records in the first half of the year
Earliest 17th September 1999 (22nd October 2024) **Latest** 9th June 2022
1967-1968: 6 trapped, 2014: 1 trapped

One above Little Bay on 22nd October was nine days earlier than two found in the same location last year; there have been 218 earlier autumn bird-days, including 34 in September. The 2024 bird was seemingly of the subspecies *P. n. insulae*, as are the majority of Skokholm records. Views of one over the Farm, on the Neck and over Spy Rock on the 27th were not good enough to confirm if it was the same individual, as was the case with singles at the Hills on the 28th and over North Plain on the 31st.

An autumn bird-days total of four was close to a 2013-2023 mean of 3.1, but was down on four post-2013 years and on highs during this period of seven in both 2014 and 2021 and eight in 2019; there are seven autumn totals higher than that of 2019, with peaks of 44 in 1961, 63 in 1967, 128 in 1968 and 26 in 1975, whilst the record daycounts are of 17 in 1961 and 15 in 1967 (but with no more than four after 1968 and no more than two after 1985). The only records during the first half of the year are of a young male on 28th March 1932, a male on the 10th and 11th March 1958, a male each day between the 22nd and 25th April 1959 and further singles on 22nd March 1969, 29th March 1981, 31st January and 2nd February 1998, 17th March 2006 and 9th June 2022.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* **Bras Melyn**
Scarce more than annual until 1971, but only recorded in 11 years between 1972 and 2023
1934-1976: 29 trapped, 2011-2022: 3 trapped

One, probably a female, briefly present to the north of the Wheelhouse at 1030hrs on 12th May was soon seen in flight over the north coast (OG, GE); this was 15 days earlier than one ringed in 2022 and otherwise the first since one present on the 26th and 27th October 2014. There were 24 bird-days prior to Lockley's Wartime departure, with all but two in spring, a daycount high of three in April 1936 and peak totals of four in 1931 and 1940. The situation remained similar in the years after the War, with 114 bird-days between 1946 and 1971 (with records in all but three years and 91 bird-days in spring), a daycount high of three in September 1947 and peak annual totals of eight in 1957 and 1966, nine in 1959, 11 in 1950, 12 in 1964 and 14 in 1960. Following a four year absence, there were singles on six days in April (four sightings of a male and two of a female over well-spaced dates) and on 24th October in 1976, these followed by another four year absence prior to one which remained for five days in April 1981. Singles on 17th March and 10th April 1984, 17th March and 20th May 1986 and on 13th June 1990 were the last prior to 1996 when there was a record bird-days total; a male, singing from the Wheelhouse roof on 13th April, lingered for a further 13 days and was joined by a second bird on the 20th, this perhaps the male seen on the 5th and 6th May and followed by a single on 25th September. There were no further sightings until a male was trapped on 17th April 2011, this followed by singles on the 9th and 14th September of that year, on 15th March 2012 and on 20th May and 26th June 2013. There has now been one bird-day in February, 21 in March, 86 in April, 38 in May, five in June, one in July, two in August, ten in September, 17 in October and one in November.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* **Bras y Cyrs**
Scarce Visitor and Regular Scarce Breeder bred in 1960, in most years 1967-1980 & annually 2005-2022
1949-1976: 163 trapped, 2010-2022: 104 trapped, 173 retrapped, 6 controls

What was presumed to be the same unringed female was in the Courtyard and near the South Coast Cut on 26th March, to the west of Migration Rocks and near the Red Hut on the 27th and around Home Meadow on the 28th. She was perhaps the bird calling near North Pond on 1st April, whilst a male at North Pond and Orchid Bog on 29th April was the only other spring record. There was no breeding attempt for a second straight year and for the second time in 20 years, an extinction which was mirrored on Skomer Island for a second year; a mean of 4.9 pairs bred annually between 2013 and 2022, with peaks of seven in 2015, 2016 and 2017, however numbers dropped to four pairs in 2021 and two pairs in 2022. Prior to the most recent Skokholm colonisation, Reed Bunting were recorded in small numbers each spring, with six bird-days in 2003, nine in 2002, five in 2001, six in 2000 and a single in 1999. Similarly this was considered a scarce autumn visitor in the non-breeding years, with low counts most Octobers; such small scale arrivals often proved difficult to detect when a breeding population had established, however they were again obvious this year. It could not be determined how many individuals accounted for sightings of September singles on the 17th and 28th, October singles on nine dates from the 8th and November singles on the 4th, 11th and 13th; there were three occasions during this period with sightings in different areas of the Island on the same

date, these assumed to relate to the same mobile individual. An autumn bird-days total of 14 was unsurprisingly down on a 2013-2022 mean of 314.9, but was similar to a 1994-2003 mean of 6.2 and the nine of last year (these all years without breeding).

The Non-avian Report

The 2024 sightings are documented systematically below and, where appropriate, compared with the digitised historical records, Thompson (2007) and observations made since 2012.

Invertebrates

Dragonflies

Skokholm's three largest water bodies are relatively exposed and, in most years, dry up during the warm summer months; Winter and South Ponds are the first to do so, whilst in some years a small wet scrape may remain at North Pond throughout the year. North Pond was empty between 24th August and 30th September this year, whilst Orchid Bog and the small Wheelhouse and Courtyard Ponds again held water throughout the season.

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator* (Leach, 1815)
A total of 15 dragonfly-days were logged, with a female at Wardens' Rest on 19th May the first of the year and one at South Pond on 19th September the last. Three on 31st July was the highest daycount, whilst the majority arrived in August, with six dragonfly-days logged; the latter included a female ovipositing at Orchid Bog on the 30th and one at sea, observed from North Gully on the 31st.

Hawker Spp. *Aeshna* Spp.
No Migrant Hawker were positively identified this year. Five hawkers were logged, with the first above Crab Bay on 31st August and the last at the same site on 2nd October.

Darter Sp. *Sympetrum* Sp.
A male darter, seen too briefly for an identification, was at Orchid Bog on 16th September. Red-veined Darter was not recorded this year, 2024 joining 2020 as one of only two seasons without a confirmed sighting since this species was first recorded in 2013.

Moths

Whilst some Skokholm moth records date back to 1910, there are several gaps in the historical database which can make contextualising recent findings a challenge. Nevertheless, moths have now been studied relatively consistently since 2013, the last 12 years becoming the longest period of regular moth monitoring in the Island's history. **Common Daisy Moth**, **Red-tipped Clearwing** and **Anomalous** were the only additions to the Island list. There were 35 Island scarcities (moths occurring in no more than five previous years); these included just the second ever records of **Orange-tipped Nest-moth**, **Silver-ground Carpet** and **Cream-bordered Green Pea**.

It was another mixed year for migrant species. There was an outstanding series of **Radford's Flame Shoulder** records; following the first for Wales in 2022 and another in 2023, an impressive 25 moth-days were logged this year. A record nine **Olive-tree Pearl** moth-days were recorded, this a species which normally only scrapes it onto the year list. **White-point** was encountered for just the second ever year, whilst it was the second best year for **Silver Y**, with numbers 37% up on 2023. Owing in part to good counts last year, some migrants were seen less frequently; **Vestal** numbers were down 88%, **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** were down 87%, **Pearly Underwing** were down 83%, **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** were down 82%, **Rush Veneer** were down 31% (although this was still the second best showing to date), **Dark Sword-grass** were down 19% and **Rusty-dot Pearl** were down 14%.

The 2024 records listed here are the result of both nocturnal trapping and ad hoc field observations. Trapping was carried out using a solar mains powered Skinner Trap situated at various sheltered sites around the Farm (sites reachable using a 50 metre extension cable) and two LED bucket traps (one deployed at sites around the Farm and one at the Lighthouse). Chris and Mary Perrins ran the moth trap during their June visit and additional light trapping was carried out by visiting moth enthusiasts Graham Farmer, Steve Roberts, Ian Sherriffs, Jan Schubert and Mike Creighton. Within the following text 'Nationally Scarce' refers to a species which occurs in between 16 and 100 hectads (10x10km squares) in Great Britain. The following codes have been used where appropriate: **I** Immigrant, **S** Nationally Scarce and **N** New to Skokholm.

3.002 **Common Swift** *Korscheltellus lupulina* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 37 were logged between 11th May and 9th June. Ten taken from the light trap above North Haven on 7th June was the high.

3.003 **Map-winged Swift** *Korscheltellus fusconebulosa* (De Geer, 1778)
One taken at the Well on 6th June was the first of the year. A further eight were logged, with three on 7th June the peak count and one on 19th July the last. A male of the plainer form *gallicus* was trapped on 19th July.

4.001 **Sorrel Pigmy** *Enteucha acetosae* (Stainton, 1854) **S**
A 2nd October inspection of an area of exposed Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* adjacent to Little Bay Wall produced a count of 115 larval mines across 40 separate leaves. This Nationally Scarce Nepticulid is the smallest moth in the world and was first recorded on Skokholm in 2014.

11.012 **Common Bagworm** *Psyche casta* (Pallas, 1767)
Three males were on the wing in the Quarry on 19th June, these the only sightings. No larval cases were encountered this year.

12.032 **Orange-tipped Nest-moth** *Tinea semifulvella* (Haworth, 1828)
A singleton was taken from the light trap at the Farm on 3rd June, this just the second Skokholm record following a flighty individual attracted to the Lighthouse moth trap on 9th September last year. The larvae of this species feed on woollen materials and bird nests.

12.039 **Pale-backed Detritus Moth** *Monopis crocicapitella* (Clemens, 1859)
The two recorded this year comprised an individual taken from the moth trap in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 2nd July and one found inside the Wheelhouse on 17th October. This remains a scarcely encountered species, with two also logged last year and 2014, 2016, 2019 and 2022 being the only other years with a record.

18.001 **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella* (Linnaeus, 1758) I
One at North Gully on 12th May was the first of the year. There were a further four diurnal sightings, all of singles, whilst one on 13th July was the only individual to be trapped. A very dark moth found at the Farm on 17th October was the last. This represents a poor year for records of this immigrant species; for example there were 53 moth-days logged last year.

28.010 **Brown House Moth** *Hofmannophila pseudospretella* (Stainton, 1849)
Singles came to light on four occasions between 19th May and 2nd September.

32.031 **Hemlock Moth** *Agonopterix alstromeriana* (Clerck, 1759)
A lone insect was trapped at the Farm on 7th September. Two found hibernating inside Officer's Mess on 26th October was the only other record.

32.035 **Coastal Buff** *Agonopterix yeatiana* (Fabricius, 1781)
Three singles taken from the moth trap at the Farm between 2nd September and 30th October were just the fifth, sixth and seventh records for Skokholm following three last year and one found in the Ringing Hut in September 2014.

32.036 **Parsnip Moth** *Depressaria radiella* (Goeze, 1783)
A total of five adults were logged between 30th July and 17th September. Moths, usually found hibernating behind mirrors and pictures during late autumn, were again notable by their absence.

35.146 **Common Groundling** *Teleiopsis diffinis* (Haworth, 1828)
A total of 16 were trapped between 8th June and 23rd September. Bar the four taken at the Farm on 17th September, all records were of singles.

37.080 **Golden-rod Case-bearer** *Coleophora virgaureae* (Stainton, 1857) **S**
One trapped in the Cottage Garden on 13th August was retained for examination under a microscope. Hertfordshire County Moth Recorder (HCMR) Peter Hall dissected and identified the individual as a male of this species. Given the abundance of Golden-rod *Solidago virgaureae*, this the larval foodplant, it is likely that this Nationally Scarce species is under-recorded on Skokholm; records only exist for 2015 and 2016 and only the former was confirmed via dissection.

41.002 **Common Masoner** *Blastobasis adustella* (Walsingham, 1894)
The light traps produced a total of 55 between 26th July and 8th September. The seven trapped at the Well on 15th August and at the Farm on 30th August was this year's high. A single retained for dissection on 13th August was confirmed as a male of this species by HCMR Peter Hall.

44.001 **Many-plumed Moth** *Alucita hexadactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One found in the Wheelhouse Kitchen on 28th April was just a fifth for Skokholm. Another, found inside the Cottage on 11th September, was the sixth, this becoming the first year with multiple sightings. These records follow singles in the Lighthouse Tower on 14th July 2013, in the Lighthouse Kitchen on 21st November 2016, in the Lighthouse Living Room on 1st September 2018 and feeding on rotting apples at the Farm on 9th October 2023.

45.037 **Dusky Plume** *Oidaematophorus lithodactyla* (Treitschke, 1833)
One trapped at the Farm on 2nd September was the only record this year.

45.044 **Common Plume** *Emmelina monodactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Two were recorded this year, with the first found on the Lighthouse Track during the night of 16th September, the last disturbed by day, from vegetation near the Library Net Ride on 2nd October.

48.001 **Nettle-tap** *Anthophila fabriciana* (Linnaeus, 1767)
Five were recorded, with the first at the Well on 25th May. There were two further diurnal field sightings from the Well area, whilst two lone insects taken from the moth trap included one on 26th September which was the last of the year.

49.025 **Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix** *Pandemis cerasana* (Hübner, 1786)
A total of 52 were logged, this just short of the record of 58 recorded in 2023. All but one of the 2024 tally came from the moth trap, with the first on 17th June, the last on 1st September and 19 taken near the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 2nd July the peak catch.

49.045 **Dotted Cloak** *Eana osseana* (Scopoli, 1763)
A total of 11 were taken from the light trap between the 6th and 26th July. Catches were small, with three on the 14th the peak count.

49.077 **Garden Rose Tortrix** *Acleris variegana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Singles trapped at the Farm on the 19th and 26th July and on 1st August matched the record annual total of 2021. A single in 2015, two in 2020 and another in 2022 are the only other sightings.

49.109 **Garden Straw** *Agapeta hamana* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Two on 23rd June was the peak catch, with a total of four taken between 21st May and 25th June. All records originated from the Wheelhouse Heligoland.

49.127 **Thistle Straw** *Aethes cnicana* (Westwood, 1894)
The only record was of a single attracted to light at the Well Heligoland on 8th June. This species is rarely encountered on the Island, indeed this was just a seventh for Skokholm and 2024 becomes only the fifth year with a record, all of which have occurred since 2016.

49.139 **Black-fronted Straw** *Cochylichroa atricapitana* (Stephens, 1852)
There were 49 recorded between 9th May and 25th September, this including a peak catch of seven from Home Meadow on 30th August and four which were observed by day.

49.161 **Barred Marble** *Celypha striana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One caught outside the Cottage on 13th July and another the following day were just the fourth and fifth Skokholm records. There were singles in 2015, 2017 and 2022.

49.166 **Common Marble** *Celypha lacunana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One found by day on 30th May was the first. A further 38 were logged, this including a peak catch of 11 above North Haven on 11th June. One trapped at the Farm on 16th November was a very late record and the last of the year. One taken for dissection by HCMR Peter Hall on 13th August was confirmed as a male of this species.

49.185 **Shore Marble** *Lobesia littoralis* (Humphreys & Westwood, 1845)
One trapped at the Farm on 23rd September was the sole record this year and the first since September 2020 when three were taken.

49.194 **Common Lance** *Bactra lancealana* (Hübner, 1799)
Three trapped at East Bog on 11th June becomes just the fifth Skokholm record following two singles logged in June 2016 and catches of two in both July 2017 and August 2023.

49.265 **Hoary Tortrix** *Eucosma cana* (Haworth, 1811)
A total of 97 taken from the light trap between 3rd June and 27th July included a catch of 24 from

within the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 23rd June; this was the highest moth-days total to date, almost doubling a previous high of 49 logged in 2023.

49.285 **Thistle Root-borer** *Epiblema scutulana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 11 were logged this year, with the first a field record from 26th May. The rest were taken from the light trap, with one at the Farm on 8th September the last. Three taken for dissection by HCMR Peter Hall on 13th August were all confirmed as males of this species.

49.313 **Common Daisy Moth** *Dichrorampha acuminatana* (Lienig & Zeller, 1846) **N**
Singles taken from light traps at the Lime Kiln and outside the Workshop on 22nd September were the first and second records for Skokholm.

52.003 **Lunar Hornet Moth** *Sesia bembeciformis* (Hübner, 1796)
This species was first discovered on Skokholm in 2020 when a vacated exuvia was found protruding from a mature Grey Willow *Salix cinerea* at the Well. Larval frass was found in 2021, adults were seen in 2022 and frass was again logged in 2023, the emergence of imagoes thus expected this year. Two fresh adults at the Well on 14th June were the first. The vacated exuviae were left in situ, protruding from the exit-holes, this to observe how long they would remain following an emergence; one had fallen out the following day and by the 17th both were in the vegetation below. A new exuvia was found at the Well on the 20th, whilst two fresh exuviae were found on trunks in the Wheelhouse Heligoland, the latter a new site for this species. Closer inspection of the Wheelhouse tree revealed four empty exit-holes, although the age of these could not be determined.

Another fresh exuvia was in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on the 22nd, whilst an adult female was found suspended in a spider web at the entrance of this trap on the 24th. The rescued moth was

released onto a willow trunk where it immediately began egg-laying; two exuviae were noted, one of which was larger than the other and presumed to be that of the rescued female. An adult female and two exuviae were found at the Well on the 27th. Five exuviae and one adult were logged at the Wheelhouse on 4th July, the latter watched emerging by staff and guests; the moth and exuvia fell from the tree during emergence, but the imago was able to successfully exit its pupal case. The 2024 total was thus five adults and 16 exuviae; there were eight adults and 12 pupal cases found in 2020 and five adults and ten pupal cases found in 2022.

52.008 **Red-tipped Clearwing** *Synanthedon formicaeformis* (Esper, 1783) **N**
A small vacated clearwing exuvia was found protruding from a willow trunk at the Well during a search for Lunar Hornet Moths on 7th June. A Red-tipped Clearwing pheromone lure was purchased and deployed, however it failed to attract an adult. Pembrokeshire County Moth Recorder Paul Warren also suspected the exuvia to be that of Red-tipped Clearwing; this was confirmed by Breconshire County Moth Recorder Norman Lowe who concluded that Sallow Clearwing is confined to South East England, that the larval case fit within the 12-14mm size range of Red-tipped and, most importantly, the dark, spiny frontal process protrudes beyond the vertex, which is not the case for Sallow Clearwing.

52.016 **Thrift Clearwing** *Pyropteron muscaeformis* (Esper, 1783) **S**
One above Steep Bay on 2nd June was the first 2024 record of this Nationally Scarce clearwing. The use of a pheromone lure at Steep Bay on 16th June and at Twinlet on 13th July produced disappointing totals, with three and one recorded respectively, the latter the last of the year.

54.010 **Five-spot Burnet** *Zygaena trifolii* (Esper, 1783)
A total of 20 caterpillars were found in the North Pond Manx Shearwater playback plot on 6th June and the first adult was observed at North Pond on 7th July. A further 318 July moth-days were logged, with a peak daycount of 51 at North Pond on the 16th. A total of five were noted in August, with one at the Farm on the 2nd the last, taking the 2024 moth-days tally to 324.

62.042 **Thistle Ermine** *Myelois circumvoluta* (Fourcroy, 1785)
A total of 27, trapped between 4th June and 6th July, was the highest on record, with 14 in 2022 the previous peak. An impressive ten, taken from a trap at the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 7th June, was the biggest single catch (an additional two were taken above North Haven on the same date).

62.058 **Spotted Knot-horn** *Phycitodes binaevella* (Hübner, 1814)
Singles trapped on 3rd June and 27th July make 2024 just the fourth year with a record of this coastal species, with all sightings occurring in the last five years.

62.059 **Lesser Clouded Knot-horn** *Phycitodes saxicola* (Vaughan, 1870)
Given that this is one of a complex of three superficially similar species in the UK, one trapped on

13th August was taken for dissection by HCMR Peter Hall; it was identified as a female of this species. There has only been one other confirmed Skokholm record, this a catch of five on 22nd July 2017 taken by former Pembrokeshire County Moth Recorder Robin Taylor.

62.072 **Meal Moth** *Pyralis farinalis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One found in the Lighthouse compost heap on 2nd August was the sole record and makes 2024 only the second year with a sighting. This species was first logged on Skokholm in 2021, when two were inside the Lighthouse on 19th July and a third individual was found at the same site the following day.

62.077 **Rosy Tabby** *Endotricha flammealis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 102 moth-days were logged between 19th July and 21st September, these comprised of 60 from the light traps and 42 field sightings. The peak field daycount was of 12 on 12th August, whilst the biggest trap catch was of 13 from two traps on 16th August.

63.005 **Straw-barred Pearl** *Pyrausta despicata* (Scopoli, 1763)
One trapped on Home Meadow on 2nd September was just a sixth for Skokholm following four singles in August 2020 and one in September 2023.

63.018 **Elder Pearl** *Anania coronata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
One found resting inside the Drying Room at the Farm on 10th June was the first. Three lone insects were taken from the moth trap during July, with one at the Farm on the 30th the last. A year tally of four is the highest on record, 2024 becoming just the fifth year with a sighting.

63.025 **Small Magpie** *Anania hortulata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 31 moth-days were recorded this year, beginning with two found in the Ringing Hut on 3rd June. The light trap contributed 17 to this tally, including a peak catch of five on 26th July and three on the 30th which were the last of the year.

63.031 **Rusty-dot Pearl** *Udea ferrugalis* (Hübner, 1796) I
It was a fairly good year for records of this regular immigrant. The first was found by day at the Farm on 3rd June, five attracted to light on 22nd September were the first of 42 to be trapped and a peak catch of 14 occurred on 30th September. A further 40 field sightings included both diurnal and nocturnal records, the latter a combination of insects attracted to the lit windows of the Lighthouse and of insects feeding on rotting apples. A single in the Courtyard on the evening of 26th November was the last, bringing the 2024 moth-days total to 83.

63.048 **Olive-tree Pearl** *Palpita vitrealis* (Rossi, 1794) I
It was a record year, with a total of nine moth-days logged; previous highs of just two occurred in both 2018 and 2023. One found by day in the Quarry on 31st August was the first, whilst two further diurnal records came from the Farm and Medicine Wall in September. Nocturnal records comprised four September and one October moth-days, the former insects nectaring on Goldenrod and Buddleia flowers, the latter feeding on rotting apples in the Wheelhouse Heligoland. A single forewing found outside Howard's End Hide on 7th November was the last record of the year.

63.050 **Long-legged Pearl** *Dolicharthria punctalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) S
This Nationally Scarce species is distributed along the southern coasts of Britain. A total of nine were taken from the trap between 20th July and 14th August; catch sizes were low, with numbers not exceeding two. Field observations during July and August contributed a further seven moth-days, with three on 27th July the peak, these taking the 2024 moth-days total to 16.

63.052 **Rush Veneer** *Nomophila noctuella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) I
Field observations totalled 237 moth-days, with a high of 32 on 17th August. The light traps produced 89 moths, including the first of the year on 19th July and a peak of 14 at the Farm on 29th August. One found near the Cottage on 10th November was the last and took the 2024 moth-days total to 326, this the second highest Skokholm tally; a record 474 moth-days were recorded in 2022.

63.066 **Brown-spot Grey** *Scoparia pyralella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 52 came to light, including the first three on 18th May and the last nine on 25th June.

63.067 **Tawny Grey** *Eudonia lacustrata* (Panzer, 1804)
One trapped at the Farm on 5th July was just a fourth for Skokholm following singles in 2016 and 2018 and two on 22nd June last year.

63.069 **Narrow-winged Grey** *Eudonia angustea* (Curtis, 1827)
The first of the year was outside the Ringing Hut on 11th March. Following a further field sighting, a total of 46 were taken from the moth trap. Seven caught in two traps on 25th September was the highest catch, whilst one taken at the Farm on 31st October was the last. An annual total of 48 moth-days is the second highest on record, only down on the 52 of last year.

63.071 **Coast Grey** *Eudonia lineola* (Curtis, 1827) S
This lichen feeding, coastal specialist is Nationally Scarce and typically encountered only infrequently on Skokholm. A total of 18 were taken from the trap between 5th July and 10th August, with a peak catch of six on 14th July.

63.075 **Pallid Grey** *Eudonia pallida* (Curtis, 1827)
Singles were trapped in Billy's Dyke on 5th June and at the Farm on 24th September. Prior to the 18 moth-days logged last year, a lone insect in 2019 was the only Island record.

63.080 **Garden Grass-moth** *Chrysoteuchia culmella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 20 were taken between 22nd June and 19th July, with five on 6th July the biggest catch.

63.081 **White-banded Grass-moth** *Crambus pascuella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One taken from the trap at the Farm on 4th September was just a third record for Skokholm. Previous encounters were with two on 29th August 2011 and a single on 8th July 2021.

63.095 **Chevron Grass-moth** *Agriphila geniculea* (Haworth, 1811)
One trapped at East Bog on 14th August was the first. A further 18 came to light, with four from two traps on 8th September the peak catch. One taken at the Well on 12th October was the last.

66.003 **Lackey** *Malacosoma neustria* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A male trapped at the Farm on 30th July and a worn male taken at the same site on 1st August were probably the same individual. This is the first encounter since a lone insect on 30th June 2018, whilst the only other years with a Lackey record are 1937, 1960, 1968 and 1992.

69.004 **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** *Agrius convolvuli* (Linnaeus, 1758) ▌
Given that 2023 was a record breaking year with an impressive 22 moth-days, a 2024 total of four was slightly disappointing. The first was trapped in the Cottage Garden on 13th August, two shared the trap at the Farm on 8th September and the last was sadly only found after it had succumbed to footfall outside of the Workshop on 15th September. The first for Skokholm was logged in 1940, however there were no further encounters until one was in the Well Heligoland in 2014; there have been annual sightings thereafter.

69.010 **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* (Linnaeus, 1758) ▌
One at Little Bay Wall on 13th June was the first of the year. There were only a further four moth-days, with the last an individual watched arriving over the sea at Twinlet on 8th October. An annual total of five is well down on both the 39 of last year and an all-time high of 62 logged in 2022.

70.011 **Single-dotted Wave** *Idaea dimidiata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
Six came to light over three dates between 26th July and 16th August, with four at the Farm on 10th August the peak.

70.013 **Small Fan-footed Wave** *Idaea biselata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
One trapped in the Cottage Garden on 16th August was the only record and the first since 2022.

70.016 **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Four singles were attracted to light between the 6th and 27th July.

70.023 **Mullein Wave** *Scopula marginepunctata* (Goeze, 1781)
Only two were trapped this year, the first in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 25th June and the last at the Farm on 7th September.

70.029 **Blood-vein** *Timandra comae* (Schmidt, 1931)
A rather worn individual found outside the light trap on Home Meadow on 2nd September was the first since July 2013 and just a third for Skokholm following one in 1991. What was certainly the same moth, with a distinctive notch in the right upperwing, was trapped again on 4th September.

70.038 **Vestal** *Rhodometra sacraria* (Linnaeus, 1767)
It was a quiet year for sightings of this immigrant species, with the first along the Lighthouse Track during the night of 20th September. A second was trapped at the Farm on 27th October.

70.047 **Gem** *Nycterosea obstipata* (Fabricius, 1794)
A female, attracted to the UTV headlights, landed on the windscreen as staff drove back to the Lighthouse during the night of 30th October (left photograph); this was the first Skokholm sighting since 2017. Somewhat surprisingly, a male was attracted to the lit Lighthouse Common Room windows during the evening of the 31st (right photograph). The only other records are from 1910, 1912 and 1937, whilst 2024 becomes the first year with multiple sightings of this scarce immigrant.

70.049 **Garden Carpet** *Xanthorhoe fluctuata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Ten came to light between 9th June and 23rd September, with three outside the Workshop on 22nd September the peak. This was the highest annual total to date, with eight moth-days in 1996 the previous high.

70.051 **Red Twin-spot Carpet** *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
There was just one record, this of a singleton taken at the Well on 4th June.

70.052 **Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet** *Xanthorhoe ferrugata* (Clerck, 1759)
A total of 47 moth-days were logged this year, with the first at the Well on 18th May and the last at the Farm on 30th September. Four of these were field sightings, whilst eight taken from two traps on 16th August was the peak catch.

70.054 **Silver-ground Carpet** *Xanthorhoe montanata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A rather worn individual trapped at the Well on 4th June was just a second for Skokholm following one on 1st July 2015.

70.059 **Yellow Shell** *Camptogramma bilineata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of four were attracted to light between 19th July and 24th September. Field sightings totalled 140 moth-days, with July the busiest month, but ten on 26th June the maximum daycount.

70.061 **Common Carpet** *Epirrhoe alternata* (Müller, 1764)
Singles trapped at the Farm on the 1st and 26th September were the only records.

70.097 **Common Marbled Carpet** *Dysstroma truncata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
Three were logged, this matching the Skokholm record set in 2015. The first was at Little Bay on 25th September, one was at the Farm on the 30th and one at the same site on 7th October was the last.

70.100 **Green Carpet** *Colostygia pectinataria* (Conch, 1781)
It was a record year for this attractive carpet, with six moth-days logged between the 2nd and 23rd September. Five of these were trapped, whilst one was along the Lighthouse Track during the night of 7th September.

70.141 **Double-striped Pug** *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (Haworth, 1809)
One attracted to a lit window at the Lighthouse on 29th October was the sole 2024 record.

70.151 **Foxglove Pug** *Eupithecia pulchellata* (Stephens, 1831)
Singles trapped above North Haven on 7th June and at the Farm on 8th June were the first since 13th July 2021. The only other years with a record are 1910, 1912 and 1937.

70.155 **Netted Pug** *Eupithecia venosata* (Fabricius, 1787)
One light trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 22nd May was the first, whilst a second individual was found resting on the Neck Hide later that day. One at the Bluffs on 25th May was the last.

70.173 **Lime-speck Pug** *Eupithecia centaureata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 31 moth-days were logged between 3rd June and 20th September. Catches peaked at three individuals on the 13th, 19th and 27th July.

70.179 **Wormwood Pug** *Eupithecia absinthiata* (Clerck, 1759)
One trapped in the Courtyard on 15th August was the only record. Additionally there were two in July and one in August which could not be separated from the superficially similar Currant Pug.

70.222 **Brown Silver-line** *Petrophora chlorosata* (Scopoli, 1763)
A total of 194 were trapped between 23rd April and 3rd September, whilst an additional 634 moth-days were logged in the field between 23rd April and 31st July, these taking the 2024 tally to 828. A peak daycount of 61 on 16th June included a minimum of 50 found after dark. This year's total is the second highest on record, only down on the 927 logged last year.

70.226 **Brimstone Moth** *Opisthograptis luteolata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were two singles this year; the first was taken from the trap at the Farm on 18th September, whilst one two days later was observed on the roof of the Wheelhouse Heligoland after dark. A moth-days total of two matches the record logged in 2018, 2019 and 2023.

70.283 **Light Emerald** *Campaea margaritaria* (Linnaeus, 1767)
One trapped at the Farm on 7th September was the first since September 2020 when the first two Skokholm records were logged. A second was taken from the Lime Kiln light trap on 22nd September, whilst a third found at the Workshop during the night of 23rd September was not as worn as the individual trapped the previous day; the latter moth was extracted from the moth trap on the 24th.

70.294 **Yellow Belle** *Aspitates ochrearia* (Rossi, 1794)
One trapped at the Well on 4th June was the first Skokholm record since April 2022. This becomes only the seventh year with a sighting following observations in 1910, 1912, 1960, 1968 and 2016.

71.025 **Buff-tip** *Phalera bucephala* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 21 adults were trapped between 18th May and 30th July, with a peak catch of four on 23rd June. An additional four were observed by day, with two in copula on 26th June and the female later observed egg-laying. Caterpillars were again abundant on the willows around the Well and the Farm; 138 were counted across the two sites on 28th July, whilst there were 281 caterpillar-days logged in August and 36 in September.

72.002 **Straw Dot** *Rivula sericealis* (Scopoli, 1763)
Singles trapped on 16th August and 25th September were the first since 2022, whilst one in 2017 is the only other record this century.

72.017 **Vapourer** *Orgyia antiqua* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A male at Orchid Bog on 29th July was the first to be seen on the wing. A further nine were logged, with one on 26th October the last. Five egg-laden cocoons were noted between the Well and Isthmian Health in May, September and October, whilst a total of five caterpillars were encountered between July and September.

72.019 **Buff Ermine** *Spilosoma lutea* (Hufnagel, 1766)
A total of 402 were trapped between 11th May and 5th October, with the 31 taken from a trap above North Haven on 7th June the peak catch. An impressive 107 caterpillars were found abroad on the grassy dam of Orchid Bog on 21st October.

72.020 **White Ermine** *Spilosoma lubricipeda* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One trapped at the Farm on 17th May was the first of 66 to be logged this year. Catch sizes were small, with the six taken on the 22nd, 23rd and 26th June being the high.

72.022 **Muslin Moth** *Diaphora mendica* (Clerck, 1759)
A total of 30 males were attracted to light traps between 23rd April and 22nd May, with nine on 21st May the highest count. A single diurnal female was found near the South Haven Hide on 16th May.

72.024 **Ruby Tiger** *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A headless adult found on the 10th was the first of three diurnal August records. Nine were trapped between the 15th and 26th August, with four taken from two traps on 15th August being the peak. A caterpillar was along the Lighthouse Track on 10th July.

72.026 **Garden Tiger** *Arctia caja* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A record total of 21 were trapped this year, with the first on 20th July, the last on 18th August and the four taken from two traps on 13th August the peak catch. The previous high is the nine moth-days logged in 2014.

72.031 **Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first adult to be observed was on Isthmian Heath on 1st June. A further 19 adults were logged in June, there were seven in July and five were taken from moth traps between the 4th and 18th June. The first 60 caterpillars were on the Neck on 25th July, whilst the 342 counted at the same site on 2nd August was the 2024 peak.

72.042 **Four-spotted Footman** *Lithosia quadra* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One trapped at the Farm on 2nd September was the first since two taken above North Haven on 19th July 2021. With further records in 1910, 1912 and 1937, this becomes the fifth year with a sighting.

72.046 **Scarce Footman** *Eilema complana* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A single trapped in the Cottage Garden on 16th August and two in Billy's Dyke on 18th August were the only 2024 records.

72.047 **Hoary Footman** *Eilema caniola* (Hübner, 1808) S
Nine were trapped between 17th August and 10th September, whilst two at a lit Lighthouse window on the evening of 7th September took the 2024 moth-days total to 11. This Nationally Scarce species is largely restricted to maritime habitats along the south and west coasts of England and Wales.

73.001 **Spectacle** *Abrostola tripartita* (Hufnagel, 1766)
There were 31 moth-days this year, with the first on 19th May, the last on 26th August and seven taken from two traps at the Farm on 9th June the largest catch.

73.012 **Burnished Brass** *Diachrysia chrysitis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One trapped at the Farm on 23rd September was the only individual to be seen this season and surprisingly the first record for two years.

73.015 **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* (Linnaeus, 1758) I
Two at the Farm on 8th May were the first of 37 to come to light, with four taken from two traps on 23rd September the high and the last trapped on 11th November. Field observations contributed a further 799 moth-days between 9th May and 31st October; these included 69 nectaring on Bluebells on 12th May and 553 August moth-days, including a peak daycount of 367 on the 19th. A 2024 moth-days total of 836 is the second highest on record, down on the 1474 of 2018.

73.045 **Knot Grass** *Acronicta rumicis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 65 came to light, including the first three on 17th May and a peak catch of 14 taken from two traps around the Cottage Garden on 16th August. One on 7th September was the last to be trapped, whilst a single diurnal encounter took the 2024 imago tally to a record 66, this up on the 53 of last year. A total of nine caterpillars were noted between 4th July and 30th August.

73.053 **Chamomile Shark** *Cucullia chamomillae* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A single trapped on 25th April was the only encounter with this less than annual species.

73.055 **Star-wort** *Cucullia asteris* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) **S**
A disappointingly low total of seven came to light between 8th June and 5th July; there were 34 last year, this the highest moth-days tally on record for this Nationally Scarce coastal specialist.

73.061 **Anomalous** *Stilbia anomala* (Haworth, 1812) **N**
A worn individual taken from the light trap on 7th September was an addition to the Island list. What was believed to be the same moth, based on the pattern of wear, was also caught the following day.

73.076 **Scarce Bordered Straw** *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hübner, 1808) **I**
Singles were taken from the light trap on six occasions between 4th September and 16th October. This tally, whilst poor compared with last year's record of 12, becomes the second highest to date.

73.085 **Marbled Green** *Nyctobrya muralis* (Forster, 1771)
Singles were logged on four occasions between 30th July and 2nd September, these all occurring in the area around the Farm.

73.099 **Vine's Rustic** *Hoplodrina ambigua* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One taken from the moth trap on 12th June was the sole record. The only other years with an encounter are 2019 and 2021, with two in the former year the biggest count.

73.113 **Angle Shades** *Phlogophora meticulosa* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Field records included both diurnal and nocturnal observations and totalled 489 moth-days; these included the first record of the year, a freshly emerged wing-pumping imago at the Ram on 1st May, and two in copula at East Bog on 13th November which were the last. The rotting apples left out for

autumn migrants at the Farm again proved popular; a 2024 daycount high of 114 on 22nd September included 68 on the apples. An additional 83 were taken from the moth trap between 25th June and 6th November, these including a peak catch of 11 from two traps on 21st September. The 2024 moth-days total of 572 is the highest on record; the previous peak is the 297 of 2021.

73.114 **Small Angle Shades** *Euplexia lucipara* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 21 were trapped between 18th May and 10th September. Two field records from the Farm comprised an adult found indoors on 2nd June and one feeding on an apple after dark on 18th September, the latter the last of the year.

73.123 **Rosy Rustic** *Hydraecia micacea* (Esper, 1789)
The first four were trapped at the Well on 17th August, this the biggest catch of the year. A further 14 came to light, with the last at the Farm on 26th September. A 2024 tally of 18 more than doubles a previous high of eight set in 2021 and equalled in 2023.

73.131 **Flounced Rustic** *Luperina testacea* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
It was a record year for encounters with this late-summer moth, with 37 attracted to light between 31st July and 30th September, including a peak of nine taken from three traps on 18th August. The 30 recorded last year is the second highest annual total.

73.141 **Brown-veined Wainscot** *Archanara dissoluta* (Treitschke, 1825)
Singles trapped at the Well on the 13th and 17th August made this the fifth year with a record; field sightings produced eight moth-days in 2019 and a single in 2020, whilst lone insects were trapped in 2022 and 2023.

73.144 **Small Wainscot** *Denticucullus pygmina* (Haworth, 1809)
There were eight trapped this year, these all singles taken between 14th August and 17th September.

73.151 **Webb's Wainscot** *Globia sparganii* (Esper, 1790) **S**
Ten came to light between 13th August and 7th September, with four taken from two traps on 17th August the peak. This was a record annual total, up on the three moth-days of 2023.

73.156 **Clouded-bordered Brindle** *Apamea crenata* (Hufnagel, 1766)
One trapped at the Farm on 12th June was just a third for Skokholm following singles on 18th June 2016 and 26th June 2019. The caterpillars feed on various grasses.

73.162 **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha* (Hufnagel, 1766)
There were 66 moth-days, with the first two trapped on 13th July, eight taken on the 1st, 15th and 17th August the high and a single on 8th September the last.

73.163 **Light Arches** *Apamea lithoxylaea* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Nine were trapped for a second consecutive year, with the first at the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 23rd June and the last at the Farm on 23rd July. There was a high of two on the 5th and 20th July.

73.189 **Red-line Quaker** *Leptologia lota* (Clerck, 1759)
Lone insects were observed feeding on apples at the Farm during the nights of 26th September and 4th October. One trapped on 5th November was the last. The only other years with a record are 2017, 2019 and 2023.

73.193 **Lunar Underwing** *Omphaloscelis lunosa* (Haworth, 1809)
Six came to light over four dates between the 7th and 11th October. The largest catch was of two.

73.233 **Black Rustic** *Aporophyla nigra* (Haworth, 1809)
There was just one record this year, this of a single taken from the light trap on 8th October.

73.235 **Feathered Ranunculus** *Polymixis lichenea* (Hübner, 1813)
A total of 88 came to light between 1st September and 7th November, with a peak of 11 from two traps on 12th October; this was a new high, up on the 81 logged in 2022.

73.236 **Black-banded** *Polymixis xanthomista* (Hübner, 1819) **S**
This Nationally Scarce species is restricted to clifftops and beaches along the southwest coasts of England and Wales. Seven trapped between the 2nd and 25th September is the second highest tally on record, with 16 in 2014 being the all-time high.

73.237 **Large Ranunculus** *Polymixis flavicincta* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An all-time high of 40 were logged this year, with the first on 16th September and the last on 11th October. The only field records were of singles feeding nocturnally on apples at the Farm on 21st September and 8th October, whilst a peak catch of three came from three traps on 25th September.

73.255 **Nutmeg** *Anarta trifolii* (Hufnagel, 1766)
Two attracted to light in the Courtyard on 19th May was the first record since 1992. This becomes just the fourth year with a sighting following further individuals in 1937 and 1960.

73.267 **Bright-line Brown-eye** *Lacanobia oleracea* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 392 were attracted to light, including the first on 17th May, the last on 8th September and highs of 32 from two traps on 7th June and 47 from two traps on 9th June. The only field sighting, of one feeding on apples after dark on 21st September, was also the last of the year, taking the 2024 moth-days tally to 393. Caterpillars were logged on three August dates.

73.271 **Broom Moth** *Ceramica pisi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 144 were trapped this year, with the first on 8th May, a high of 21 taken at the Well on 18th May and the last three on 30th September. Caterpillars were noted on 27th June and 28th August.

73.273 **Shears** *Hada plebeja* (Hufnagel, 1766)
One trapped at the Well on 4th June was the first since 7th June 2018. The only other 21st century record occurred in 2016.

73.276 **Campion** *Sideridis rivularis* (Fabricius, 1775)
A total of 365 moth-days were logged, with the first on 23rd April and the last on 25th September. There were peak catches of 37 at the Well on 18th May and 51 in Billy's Dyke on 18th August.

73.278 **Barrett's Marbled Coronet** *Conisania andalusica* (Staudinger, 1859) S
This is a Nationally Scarce species, which in the British Isles is very much restricted to the coasts of south Wales, southern Ireland and southwest England. A total of seven came to light between the 3rd and 9th June, this matching that of 2016 as the second highest total to date. Three caught across two traps on the 9th was the peak daycount.

73.281 **Lychnis** *Hadena bicruris* (Hufnagel, 1766)
A record total of 39 were identified this year, with the first on 4th June. A peak of 11 was logged on 7th June and a single in the Cottage Garden on 18th August was the last. The previous high of 14 moth-days was recorded in 2020.

73.283 **Marbled Coronet** *Hadena confusa* (Hufnagel, 1766)
There were 49 taken between 23rd April and 8th September, with six on 3rd June the high. This is the lowest annual total since 2018 when 47 were logged.

73.286 **Pod Lover** *Hadena perplexa capsophila* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Although this coastal subspecies is typically found in Ireland and the Isle of Man, Skokholm moths appear a better match for this than any other form of Tawny Shears. A total of 106 were trapped between 23rd April and 4th September, with a catch of ten on 7th June the peak.

73.291 **Common Wainscot** *Mythimna pallens* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Four singles were logged between 25th June and 18th September.

73.293 **Smoky Wainscot** *Mythimna impura* (Hübner, 1808)
Catches of up to two between 26th July and 21st September took the moth-days total to seven.

73.295 **Delicate** *Mythimna vitellina* (Hübner, 1808) I
One trapped at the Lime Kiln on 23rd September was the only record of this smart immigrant. There have now been sightings in seven of the last 12 years, with five in 2017 the high.

73.296 **White-speck** *Mythimna unipuncta* (Haworth, 1809) I
One feeding nocturnally on apples on 3rd October was the first this year. Singles were on the apples

on a further four October nights, this including one on the 8th which was the last. One at the Farm on 4th October was the first of two to be trapped, taking the 2024 total to seven.

73.297 **White-point** *Mythimna albipuncta* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) I
One trapped at the Lime Kiln on 23rd September was just a second for Skokholm. The first record of this immigrant species was found on apples at the Farm on 3rd October 2022.

73.300 **L-album Wainscot** *Mythimna l-album* (Linnaeus, 1767) S
It was a record year for encounters with this species, with one light trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 25th June the first. A further 15 moth-days occurred in September, all but one of which were observed after dark, feeding on rotting apples at the Farm; there were peak counts of five on the 21st and four on the 22nd, with one on the 24th the last of the year.

73.307 **Pearly Underwing** *Peridroma saucia* (Hübner, 1808) I
A moth-days total of 13 was logged this year. Eight came to light between 10th August and 15th October, whilst five were observed after dark, on the apples between 20th September and 3rd October. Three taken at the Farm on 30th September was the peak, these sharing the trap with 14 Rusty-dot Pearl, a Scarce Bordered Straw and four Radford's Flame Shoulder.

73.317 **Heart & Dart** *Agrotis exclamationis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were 86 this year, all taken from the moth trap between 3rd June and 31st July. A catch of 19 at the Farm on 23rd June was the peak. This year's total is the second highest to date, with the 117 logged last year being the record.

73.319 **Turnip Moth** *Agrotis segetum* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Seven were trapped between 1st September and 6th November, with catches peaking at two individuals. Six nocturnal field sightings included five on the apples at the Farm in September.

73.324 **Crescent Dart** *Agrotis trux* (Stephens, 1829)
This moth of cliffs and rocky shores is found locally along the southwest coasts of Britain. A total of 161 were taken between 13th July and 30th August, with highs of 20 on 30th July and 23 on 3rd August.

73.325 **Shuttle-shaped Dart** *Agrotis puta* (Hübner, 1803)
A female light trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 28th May was just a fourth for Skokholm following singles taken at Billy's Dyke on 6th August 2016 and at the Farm on 4th June 2021 and on 5th June last year.

73.327 **Dark Sword-grass** *Agrotis ipsilon* (Hufnagel, 1766)
A total of 65 were trapped between 20th April and 7th November, with seven from two traps on 26th August the maximum. Field observations contributed a further seven moth-days, of which five were observed feeding on apples after dark between 13th September and 29th October.

73.328 **Flame** *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761)
There was just one record this year, this of a singleton trapped at the Farm on 8th September.

73.329 **Flame Shoulder** *Ochropleura plecta* (Linnaeus, 1761)
A moth-days total of 42 included the first trapped on 16th May and the last taken on 22nd September. Catches were small, with three on both 22nd May and 17th August the maximum.

73.330 **Radford's Flame Shoulder** *Ochropleura leucogaster* (Freyer, 1831)
Four trapped on 30th September marked the start of a remarkable year for records of this rare immigrant. A further 18 were attracted to light over nine October dates, with a catch of six across two traps on the 9th the peak and one on the 30th the last. The rotting apples at the Farm produced singles on the 8th, 10th and 30th October and took the moth-days total to 25, this eclipsing previous years. The first Welsh record, trapped on Skokholm on 2nd June 2022, was followed by a second in Mark Burton's Marloes Garden on 31st October. A lone insect attracted to a trap deployed outside the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 27th September 2023 was a third for Wales. There were two further Pembrokeshire records in 2024, whilst the Welsh counties of Gwent, Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Montgomeryshire, Merioneth, Caernarvonshire and Anglesey all recorded their first examples. It is highly likely that the number of autumn sightings will continue to increase, this species now being much more abundant in the southern counties of England where it can probably overwinter.

73.334 **Small Square-spot** *Diarsia rubi* (Vieweg, 1790)
It was a record year for this species, with a total of 133 moth-days logged. The first was on 4th June, there was a high of 19 on 19th September, a single was observed feeding on apples after dark on 21st September and the last was on 25th September. The 66 logged in 1998 is the previous high.

73.336 **Red Chestnut** *Cerastis rubricosa* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The only 2024 record was of one in the Ringing Hut on 4th April.

73.342 **Large Yellow Underwing** *Noctua pronuba* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were 151 taken from the moth trap between 19th May and 25th October, with a catch of 18 across two traps on 22nd September the peak. Nocturnal field records contributed a further ten moth-days, taking the 2024 total to 161.

73.345 **Lesser Yellow Underwing** *Noctua comes* (Hübner, 1813)
The only records were of one trapped at the Farm on 3rd September and two taken the following day.

73.346 **Least Yellow Underwing** *Noctua interjecta* (Schawerda, 1919)
The third for Skokholm was trapped at the Farm on 30th September, with singles logged on 14th August 1998 and 8th August 2023 being the only other records.

73.348 **Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing** *Noctua janthe* (Borkhausen, 1792)
Two taken on 15th August and a single trapped six days later were the first since 2016. There are only four other records this century.

73.357 **Square-spot Rustic** *Xestia xanthographa* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Catches of no more than two between 26th August and 25th September tallied 11 moth-days. Additionally one was feeding on rotting apples at the Farm during the night of 21st September.

73.359 **Setaceous Hebrew Character** *Xestia c-nigrum* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An impressive 298 were attracted to light between 19th May and 30th September, with a haul of 43 taken from two traps on 21st September being this year's high. An additional three, observed on the Farm apples over two September nights, took the 2024 moth-days tally to 301, this 157% up on a previous high of 117 logged in 2022.

73.365 **Autumnal Rustic** *Eugnorisma glareosa* (Esper, 1788)
Singles trapped on the 21st, 23rd and 30th September were the first since 2022. Perhaps surprisingly, the moth-days total matched that of 2017 as the second highest to date, down on the four of 2019.

74.011 **Cream-bordered Green Pea** *Earias clorana* (Linnaeus, 1761) **S**
The moth trap produced singles on the 23rd and 25th June. This species was an addition to the Island list on 21st June last year.

Aggregates and species groups

16.002-4 **Orchard/Apple/Spindle Ermine** *Yponomeuta padella/malinellus/cagnagella* (Linnaeus, 1758 /Zeller, 1838/Hübner, 1813)
One individual from this species complex was trapped at the Farm on 17th June but not retained.

49.0491 **Grey Tortrix Agg**. *Cnephasia* Agg.
A total of 20 taken between 25th June and 2nd September included a peak of six on the latter date.

70.161/90 **Golden-rod/Grey Pug** *Eupithecia virgaureata/subfuscata* (Doubleday, 1861/Haworth, 1809)
It was decided in 2022 that Grey Pug and Golden-rod Pug would be treated as an aggregate. One trapped on 23rd June was the only record this year.

73.096/97 **Uncertain/Rustic** *Hoplodrina octogenaria/blanda* (Goeze, 1781/[Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 641 were trapped between 6th July and 23rd September, with peak catches of 61 on 30th July, 82 on 31st July, 96 on 1st August and 70 on 3rd August.

73.169/70 **Common/Lesser Common Rustic** *Mesapamea secalis/didyma* (Linnaeus, 1758/Esper, 1788)
There were 118 taken from the light trap between 18th July and 9th September. Catches of 34 from two traps on 15th August and of 35 from two traps on 17th August were this year's highs.

73.173-5 **Marbled/Tawny Marbled/Rufous Minor Agg.** *Oligia strigilis/latruncula/versicolor* (Linnaeus, 1758/[Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775/Borkhausen, 1792)
One trapped at the Well on 21st September was not retained for dissection.

73.312/13 **Square-spot S/White-line Dart** *Euxoa obelisca/tritici* (Tutt, 1902/Linnaeus, 1761)
These species have been lumped since 2020. A total of 228 were logged between 15th August and 21st September, this the highest number yet recorded, up on the 153 of 2023. A catch of 43 at the Farm was this year's peak. One trapped on 13th August was retained for dissection by HCMR Peter Hall and identified as a Square-spot Dart, as has been the case for all dissected individuals thus far.

Butterflies

All butterfly sightings were again documented during Birdlog. An account of each species is listed systematically below, with the totals for the period 2019 to 2024 included in tables to allow for comparisons to be made. The 'Maximum Daycount' refers to the highest number of individuals seen on any one day in a particular month and 'Butterfly-days' are the cumulative number of butterflies seen in a defined period of time (thus the same individual may be included for multiple dates). For each of the regularly occurring species, the earliest and latest records from the last 12 years, the highest and lowest annual totals from the same period and the 2013-2023 annual butterfly-days mean are listed below the species title.

Large White *Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 487 in 2020 **Low** 73 in 2015 **2013-2023 mean** 219.3 ±sd 120.8
Earliest 13th April 2022 **Latest** 11th October 2024

The first was at Howard's End on 1st May. The 14 noted on 29th July was the highest daycount since 37 were logged on 29th August 2022. September was the peak month, with sightings on 13 dates tallying 68 butterfly-days, whilst two October butterfly-days were the first in this month since 2007. One at Isthmian Heath on 11th October was the last; one on 21st October 1979 is the only later record. A butterfly-days total of 143 was 12% up on that of 2023, but 35% below the 11 year mean.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	1	4	14	13	13	1	0
2023	0	0	3	1	11	2	11	0	0
2022	0	2	3	0	3	37	18	0	0
2021	0	1	2	0	14	14	24	0	0
2020	0	0	4	2	2	15	105	0	0
2019	0	0	1	1	18	14	4	0	0

2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	1	10	24	38	68	2	0
2023	0	0	7	1	35	15	70	0	0
2022	0	4	9	0	17	106	68	0	0
2021	0	2	3	0	51	47	107	0	0
2020	0	0	6	5	9	17	450	0	0
2019	0	0	1	1	63	63	18	0	0

Small White *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 507 in 2022 **Low** 11 in 2017 **2013-2023 mean** 161.3 ±sd 150.4
Earliest 13th April 2022 **Latest** 13th October 2016

A fresh insect at the Farm on 21st April was the first. An increase in numbers in May resulted in 26 butterfly-days, including one eaten by a Spotted Flycatcher on the 19th; this was the highest May tally of the last 13 years, indeed it was the highest since 45 were logged in 1990. Numbers peaked in September, with 77 butterfly-days being 18% up on the 2013-2023 mean (65.1 ±sd 73.1). The 22 logged on 19th September was the highest 2024 daycount, although it was a rather mediocre one and the lowest maximum since 2021. Two on 1st October were the last, this becoming just the fifth of the last 13 years with a record in this month. A 2024 butterfly-days total of 149 was 44% down on last season and 8% down on the 2013-2023 mean. An additional 148 'White spp.' butterfly-days were recorded when the identity of distant or brief insects could not be determined.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	1	7	6	3	8	22	2	0
2023	0	0	4	2	65	2	16	0	0
2022	0	2	2	0	6	115	118	1	0
2021	0	2	1	0	6	2	7	0	0
2020	0	2	5	1	6	4	24	0	0
2019	0	2	1	0	7	77	3	0	0
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	5	26	19	8	12	77	2	0
2023	0	0	18	5	162	12	71	0	0
2022	0	9	8	0	22	250	217	1	0
2021	0	3	1	0	6	10	17	0	0
2020	0	4	5	1	7	16	53	0	0
2019	0	2	1	0	25	154	15	0	0

Green-veined White *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 187 in 2018 **Low** 0 in 2022 **2013-2023 mean** 57.2 ±sd 61.5
Earliest 21st April 2014 **Latest** 1st October 2015

One on 25th July was the first in what was another poor year for this species. The 13 butterfly-days recorded in August made this the peak month, with six on the 10th the high. One on 16th September was the last, taking the 2024 butterfly-days total to 24; although 58% down on the 11 year mean, this was the highest annual tally since 2019 and a welcome improvement on counts of zero and two recorded in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	0	0	3	6	1	0	0
2023	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	1	4	2	1	0	0
2020	0	1	0	0	1	10	2	0	0
2019	0	1	1	0	13	2	2	0	0

2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	0	0	8	13	3	0	0
2023	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	1	8	7	2	0	0
2020	0	1	0	0	1	15	4	0	0
2019	0	1	3	0	27	5	3	0	0

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 15,288 in 2018 **Low** 999 in 2024 **2013-2023 mean** 4370.5 ±sd 3835.3
Earliest 9th June 2016 and 2020 **Latest** 18th September 2015

It was an appalling year for Meadow Brown on Skokholm, this a species which has been the most abundant butterfly for seven of the last 13 years. A total of 999 butterfly-days were logged, this 51% short of the 2023 figure and 77% down on the 2013-2023 mean. One at the Red Hut on 21st June was the first, whilst numbers again peaked in July with 680 butterfly-days; the July total was 50% down on that of 2023 and 81% down on the 2013-2023 mean (3654.7 ±sd 3620.5). The 58 logged on 26th July was the best showing, although this was the lowest high of the last 13 years. As is typical, numbers dropped sharply in August, with one along the Lighthouse Track on the 28th being the last.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	0	13	58	30	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	80	105	41	1	0	0
2022	0	0	0	29	140	50	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	10	160	160	0	0	0
2020	0	0	0	39	95	67	1	0	0
2019	0	0	0	36	383	85	1	0	0
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	0	63	680	256	0	0	0
2023	0	0	0	459	1350	210	1	0	0
2022	0	0	0	96	2043	252	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0	23	1737	558	0	0	0
2020	0	0	0	186	1206	480	1	0	0
2019	0	0	0	130	3058	278	2	0	0

Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 3598 in 2014 **Low** 890 in 2015 **2013-2023 mean** 1516.1 ±sd 762.6
Earliest 10th March 2014 **Latest** 21st November 2023

One on 10th May was the first. Caterpillars, close to pupation, were at the Farm on 8th July and the number of adults began to increase during August. Counts peaked in September, with 798 butterfly-days logged, this including a high of 190 on the 6th (117 of which were along the South Coast and indicative of an arrival). Skokholm-bred insects were emerging on 6th August, 1st September, 9th October and 9th November, the latter of which struggled to pump haemolymph into its wings during a cold southeasterly. Owing to calm conditions, a run of November records led to 11 butterfly-days, this the highest ever tally, with one at the Farm on the 14th being the last. Although the most abundant butterfly this year, a total of 1235 was 19% down on both that of last year and the mean.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	11	15	11	48	190	6	4
2023	0	2	26	61	26	30	85	23	1
2022	0	4	3	15	22	272	65	24	1
2021	1	5	2	9	24	24	57	13	1
2020	0	2	16	70	15	87	227	28	2
2019	0	1	7	37	48	38	35	7	3

2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	41	35	89	236	798	25	11
2023	0	2	65	298	193	348	484	129	1
2022	0	10	24	132	224	936	302	76	2
2021	2	25	6	54	182	323	535	84	1
2020	0	9	48	308	125	722	624	58	4
2019	0	3	49	209	229	352	304	51	3

Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 5894 in 2019 **Low** 140 in 2020 **2013-2023 mean** 1056.8 ±sd 1666.8
Earliest 13th April 2015 **Latest** 27th November 2024

Two around the Farm on 14th April were the first of the year, these just one day later than the early 2015 record. An arrival of insects in May resulted in 65 butterfly-days being logged, this the highest May tally since 2006 when 122 were recorded. The 24 counted on 12th May was the maximum daycount, but September was the peak month with 114 butterfly-days logged. There were two November butterfly-days, making 2024 the fourth of the last 13 years, and fifth season ever, with a record in this month; a sluggish individual found basking on a pair of M&S underpants at the Farm on the 27th was the last of the year and the latest ever sighting (photograph below). A butterfly-days total of 282 was 17% up on 2023, but 73% below the 2013-2023 mean.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	2	24	1	5	14	13	1	1
2023	0	0	4	5	13	4	10	3	0
2022	0	0	6	19	16	309	88	2	1
2021	0	1	2	8	3	27	8	2	0
2020	0	0	1	3	1	8	9	0	0
2019	0	0	2	208	72	614	218	5	3
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	2	65	2	21	73	114	3	2
2023	0	0	16	25	86	30	70	15	0
2022	0	0	40	101	78	885	469	8	1
2021	0	1	2	57	15	192	56	3	0
2020	0	0	2	11	1	55	71	0	0
2019	0	0	2	943	639	2870	1414	22	4

Peacock *Inachis io* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 387 in 2015 **Low** 34 in 2021 **2013-2023 mean** 131.6 ±sd 102.6
Earliest 10th March 2015 **Latest** 3rd December 2019

It was another poor year for sightings, with just 66 butterfly-days logged between 22nd April and 3rd September. This low total was 42% down on that of 2023 and 50% below the 11 year mean, making 2024 the fourth poorest year of the last 13. Numbers peaked in July, with the eight logged on both the 28th and 29th being this year's high.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	1	2	0	8	3	1	0	0	0
2023	0	3	1	0	10	3	1	1	0	0
2022	0	3	2	1	10	8	2	0	0	0
2021	1	2	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	0
2020	2	5	3	3	11	4	2	0	1	0
2019	0	4	3	0	11	12	2	2	1	1
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	1	4	0	33	27	1	0	0	0
2023	0	10	1	0	80	20	1	2	0	0
2022	0	9	5	4	66	51	3	0	0	0
2021	1	7	0	0	18	7	1	0	0	0
2020	4	31	8	6	71	20	6	0	1	0
2019	0	13	4	0	44	27	7	4	3	1

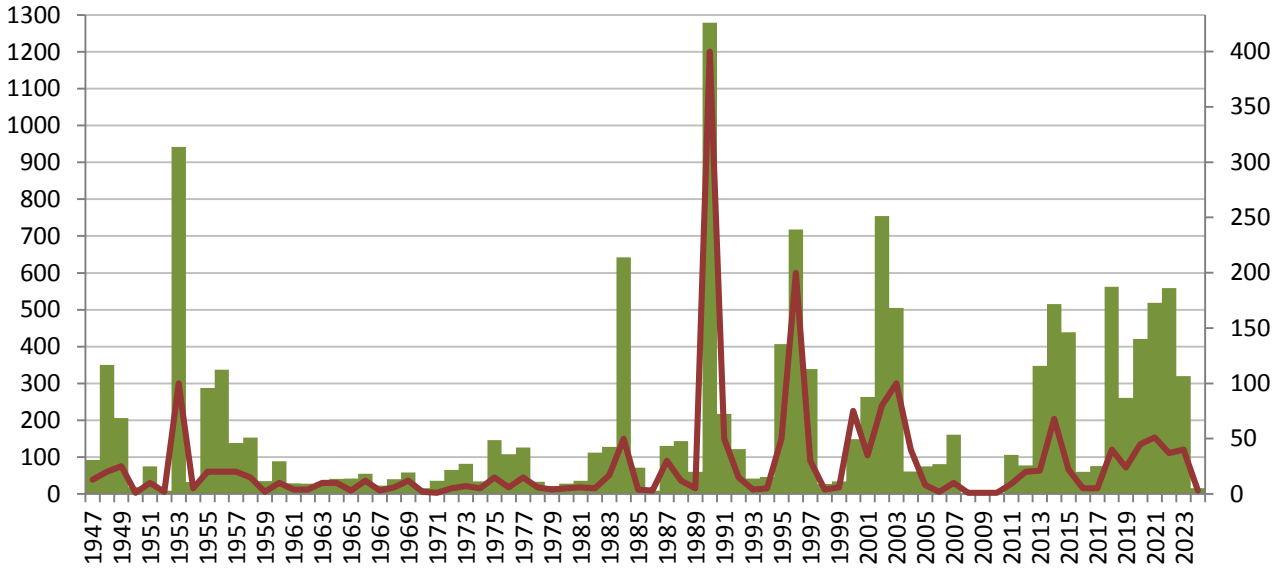
Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
High 562 in 2018 **Low** 16 in 2024 **2013-2023 mean** 370.9 ±sd 179.0
Earliest 9th March 2014 **Latest** 14th November 2018

It was the worst year in recent history for Small Tortoiseshell on Skokholm. The first record, not logged until 2nd August, was unprecedentedly late. Numbers thereafter were scant, with September the peak month and three individuals on the 12th the high. Alarmingly only two months saw a record this year, whereas the mean number of months with a sighting between 2013 and 2023 was 7.3 ±sd 1.9. A single on 21st September was the last, taking the 2024 butterfly-days tally to only 16, this 95% down on that of 2023 and 96% below the 11 year mean. This shocking statistic mirrored the national trend, with Wales as a whole seeing a 78% drop on 2023 counts (Butterfly Conservation, 2024).

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0
2023	0	4	0	8	6	23	40	0	0

2022	1	1	1	13	24	37	14	3	0
2021	1	3	1	8	8	51	43	1	0
2020	0	2	2	14	12	45	35	0	0
2019	1	1	1	3	4	24	22	1	0
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	0	0	0	6	10	0	0
2023	0	7	0	48	30	131	104	0	0
2022	1	3	1	48	97	373	33	3	0
2021	1	10	1	23	53	312	118	1	0
2020	0	8	5	62	44	202	100	0	0
2019	4	2	1	5	40	124	84	1	0

The total number of Small Tortoiseshell butterfly-days (green) and the maximum daycount (secondary axis) logged in each year since 1947.



Comma *Polygonia c-album* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The only sightings this year were of what was probably the same singleton, present at Spy Rock on the 8th and 9th September. An all-time high of 25 butterfly-days was recorded last year, whilst the previous high of six was logged in 1950.

Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas* (Linnaeus, 1761)
High 5775 in 2013 **Low** 509 in 2024 **2013-2023 mean** 2206.7 ±sd 1293.8
Earliest 19th April 2015 and 2020 **Latest** 30th October 2018

Two on 1st May were the first. A May butterfly-days total which was 57% down on the 11 year mean (180.2 ±sd 136.8) suggested poor survival of over-wintering larvae. Following a second brood emergence, numbers peaked in August with 221 butterfly-days logged, this including a 2024 high of 35 on the 14th; both maximums were disappointing, with the former 80% below the 2013-2023 peak monthly butterfly-days total (1102.1 ±sd 816.7) and the latter 78% below the peak maximum daycount mean (155.3 ±sd 80.3). One at the Well on 22nd October was the last, taking the 2024 butterfly-days total to 509, this 63% down on that of 2023, 77% lower than the 11 year mean and the lowest in recent history. In Wales, this species declined by 65% between 2023 and 2024.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	0	9	9	18	35	10	8	0
2023	0	0	21	8	38	36	58	7	0
2022	0	0	4	2	40	38	128	9	0
2021	0	13	26	13	158	65	61	44	0
2020	0	3	16	4	32	22	199	26	0
2019	0	1	21	8	40	30	241	22	0
2024 Butterfly-days Total	0	0	78	44	98	221	44	24	0
2023	0	0	186	69	317	170	615	27	0
2022	0	0	41	5	315	339	606	30	0
2021	0	28	265	79	1081	507	486	88	0
2020	0	9	152	12	237	165	1537	69	0
2019	0	2	237	57	345	260	1285	84	0

Hippoboscidae

For a fourth year, we participated in the National Flat Fly Mapping Project run by UK Hippoboscidae Recorder Denise Wawman since 2021. Hippoboscidae studies on Skokholm date back to 1937, the results of which are summarised in the 2021 Annual Report, whilst the results of more recent dissections are included in each subsequent Skokholm Annual Report. This year saw a total of 13 Flat Flies taken from six host species between 27th May and 24th September, these including six free-flying insects (the hosts of which were thus unknown). The following results were kindly provided by Denise.

The different Flat Fly species encountered on Skokholm in 2024.

Host Species	Species of Flat Fly	Number of Flat Flies taken	Number of birds from which they were taken
Jackdaw	*Ornithomya avicularia*	1	1
Swallow	*Ornithomya chloropus*	1	1
Blackbird	*Ornithomya avicularia*	1	1
Wheatear	*Ornithomya chloropus*	1	1
Meadow Pipit	*Ornithomya chloropus*	2	1
Rock Pipit	*Ornithomya fringillina*	1	1
Unknown	*Ornithomya avicularia*	5	N/A
Unknown	*Ornithomya chloropus*	1	N/A

Amphibians

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*
Spawn has been encountered only irregularly for more than a decade; although this perhaps reflects low numbers, Skokholm's mild maritime climate may allow Frogs to reproduce as early as January. Although no spawn was found in 2024, it was a good year for observations of adults and subadults (all but one of which were after dark). One to the north of East Bog on 20th May was the first, with the next a 2024 hatched juvenile found in wet vegetation to the south of South Pond during daylight on 26th June. One to the east of Migration Rocks on the 1st was the first of four July frog-days (these including a dead adult at the South Coast Cut on the 27th). Singles were seen on three August dates, whilst September saw a high of 13 frog-days over 11 dates. Ten October frog-days logged over four dates included this year's maximum daycount of four, these found along the Lighthouse Track on the 7th; this was seemingly the highest daycount this century. Six were seen over four November dates, with one along the Lighthouse Track on the 18th the last. A 2024 frog-days total of 38 comprised 29 full-sized adults, eight juvenile-sized individuals and one frog of the year; this was up on the 11 of last year and was the highest tally in recent history. The three recorded in 2017 is the next highest count, whilst two were seen in 2019 and 2021 and just one was found in each year between 2013 and 2016 (the 2015 record being of a dead Frog) and in 2018, 2020 and 2022.

Mammals

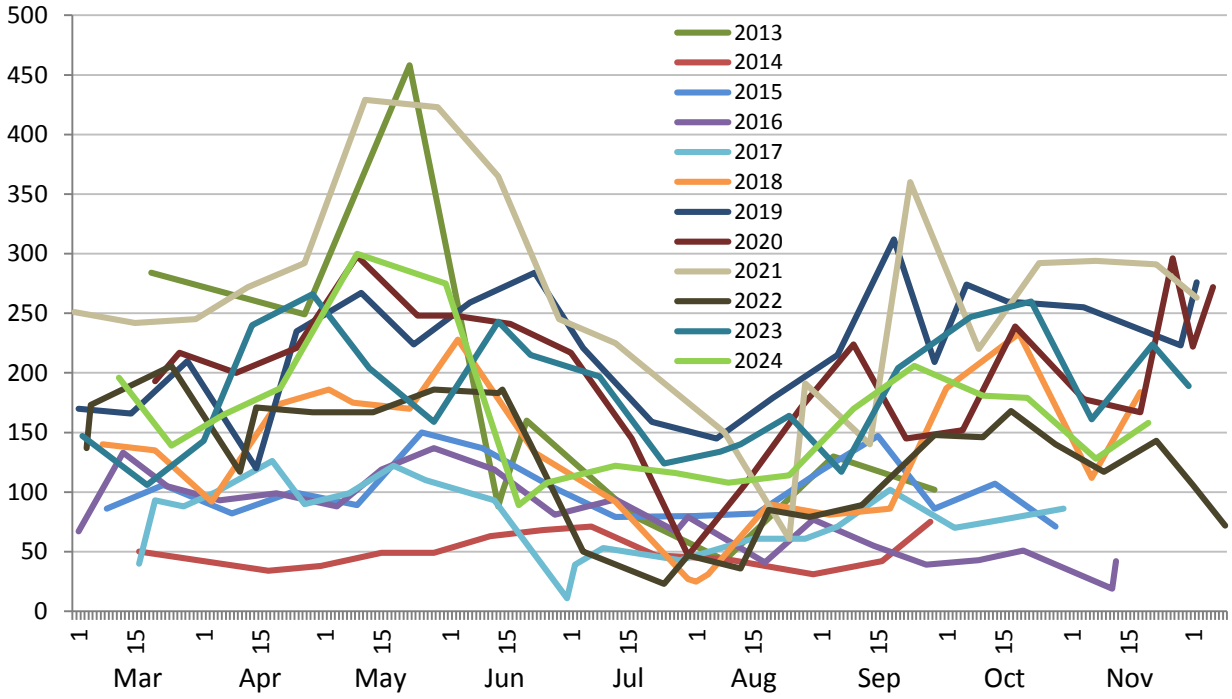
European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*
Adults and juveniles, either showing symptoms of Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (see the Annual Report 2022 for details) or intact but dead, were found at various locations during the 2024 season.

The first of two sick April animals was at the Farm on the 16th. As in 2023, disease seemingly peaked in June, with five sick and 17 dead Rabbits found, two of which were subadults and one of which was found dead inside a Puffin burrow on the Neck. There were two sick and four dead animals in July, the latter including three juveniles. One was found dead in August and two found dead at the Farm on 29th October were the last. A total of 33 sick or dead Rabbits matched that of 2023.

Rabbits were first monitored from a fixed point on the Knoll in the mid-1990s when an outbreak of RVHD caused a significant drop in the population (see the Annual Report 2022 for details). Since a population crash in 2013, Rabbits have been counted from the same point every two weeks. The two adjacent North Plain plots were surveyed on 18 evenings between 11th March and 20th November this year. The counts discussed below are the total number of animals recorded across both plots (this an area of approximately seven hectares).

A total of 196 Rabbits were present during the first survey on 11th March, this 43% up on the 2013-2023 post-winter mean count (137.2 ±sd 77.7). The 300 animals logged on 9th May was the 2024 peak, this figure 13% up on a 2023 high of 266 counted on 28th April and 23% up on the 11 year mean maxima (244.6 ±sd 123.4). The 89 counted on 18th June was the lowest 2024 total, this 81% up on the 2013-2023 mean low (49.2 ±sd 36.9) but 16% down on last year's minimum. A difference between the highest and lowest 2024 counts of 211 Rabbits was 8% up on the 11 year mean range (195.2 ±sd 112.9). A total of 158 animals were in the plots on 20th November, this the last count of the year and 16% down on the last survey of 2023 (the 189 of 30th November).

The total number of Rabbits logged during evening counts of the North Plain study area between 2013 and 2024.



Bats

Bats have been surveyed using a Wildlife Acoustics SM2 since 2014 and with an additional Wildlife Acoustics SM4 since 2019; these automated detectors are left in situ to record echo-locating animals which pass within their range. Unfortunately the SM2 was out of service this year, the SM4 thus relocated to the Well to maintain some consistency with the previous 11 years (it was housed in the Well Hide, with the microphone again facing due east). In the following text a 'pass' refers to each occasion that the detector was triggered into recording. Passes are allocated to a particular species when certain parameters are met within the call.

Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
A total of 13 passes were recorded, with the first at 2242hrs on 10th May. There were a further nine May passes, one in June and two in July, including the last at 0420hrs on the 31st. An additional five recordings were made (two in June and three in July) where it could not be determined if the calls were from a Common or Nathusius' Pipistrelle, these attributed to '40kHz Pipistrelle'.

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
Six recordings were made between 2234hrs on 16th September and 2138hrs on 18th September. An additional 11 passes were logged (two in May and nine in September) where it could not be determined if the calls were from a Soprano or Common Pipistrelle, these attributed to '50kHz Pipistrelle'.

***Myotis* sp.**
A bat was flying between the Well Hide and the Well 6 Willows at 1000hrs on 18th April; although views were brief, it was seemingly slightly larger than a Pipistrelle. During the late morning of the 21st, what was assumed to be the same bat was caught in a Well 9 mist net set for migrant birds. It was extracted and photographed, the identification being confirmed by Northumberland bat expert Tina Wiffen as one of the *Myotis* species. This becomes just the third individual of this genus to be logged following recordings made in 2014 and 2023. Intriguingly a bat (which could not be identified) was again observed flying by day, this in Purple Cove at 1230hrs on 1st May.

Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
One at 2205hrs on the 1st was the first of 141 May passes. There were 83 in July, four in August, 1020 in September and 124 in October including one at 0130hrs on the 23rd which was the last. A total of 1372 passes is the most ever recorded in one season (621 in 2014 is the previous high); whilst many factors may have contributed to this increase, a more reliable bat detector will have played a major part. That activity peaked in autumn, with 83% of passes occurring in September or October, could perhaps indicate migration, with these months being within the migration period for

this species on the continent. A further 63 recordings were made where it could not be determined if the call was made by a Noctule or a Leisler's Bat.

Seals

Atlantic Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus*
High 4026 in 2024 **Low** 2381 in 2013 **2013-2023 mean** 3101.2 ±sd 479.4

Grey Seals are present in the waters around Skokholm throughout the year. The rocks in South Haven and Crab Bay are the two main low tide haul-outs and it is here where the majority of non-breeding adults congregate. Daycounts are regularly supplemented by small numbers seen elsewhere around the Island, primarily from the Neck.

The first two to be logged were in South Haven upon the return of staff on 10th March, whilst one in South Haven on 27th November was the last. Numbers peaked in June for the first time in 12 years, with a total of 797 being 50% up on the June mean (531.5 ±sd 100.9) and 7% higher than a 2023 peak of 745 recorded in May. The highest daycount again fell in July, the 58 animals recorded on the 12th being the second highest daycount in recent history, 11.5% up on last year's maximum and 18% higher than the 2013-2023 mean (49.2 ±sd 6.5). With the exception of August, every monthly total between April and October was up on the mean, the 2024 seal-days tally of 4026 unsurprisingly thus the highest in recent history, 16% up on that of last year and 30% up on the 11 year mean.

The total number of Grey Seal logged each month, along with the maximum monthly daycount. Counts from 2019 to 2023 are included for comparison.

Month		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Monthly	2024		24	248	741	797	725	513	678	248	52	0
Total	2023		39	216	745	591	662	647	419	123	28	1
	2022		44	300	524	633	937	746	470	82	8	7
	2021	1	69	182	293	412	555	585	466	263	109	4
	2020		14	186	271	410	456	465	428	246	40	3
	2019		48	199	518	616	735	548	487	262	50	3
Maximum	2024		8	37	37	54	58	43	47	27	7	0
Daycount	2023		13	30	44	43	52	40	31	25	7	1
	2022		6	29	53	53	54	43	27	12	1	3
	2021	1	10	29	26	43	49	45	51	25	10	2
	2020		4	38	25	45	39	39	27	26	9	1
	2019		9	24	37	37	47	42	35	25	11	1

A pup present on the Devil's Teeth on 30th August was the first. A second was swimming with a cow in Crab Bay on 1st September; this was seen until 8th September but was floating dead on the 10th. A third was in Peter's Bay on 3rd September and a fourth was in East Bay on the 4th. A fifth pup was in North Haven on the 15th, this joined by two moulting pups of unknown origin on the 24th and by a sixth Skokholm-born pup on 5th October. A seventh pup was in Peter's Bay on the 10th, whilst the final record was of a pup less than a week old, found with a cow in Crab Bay on 2nd November. A total of eight pups matched that of last year and was 35% up on the 2013-2023 mean (5.9 ±sd 3.5).

Cetaceans

An account of each species encountered is listed systematically below, with the totals for the period 2019 to 2024 included in tables to allow for comparisons to be made. The Maximum Daycount refers to the highest number of individuals seen on any one day in a particular month and cetacean-days are the cumulative number of animals seen in a defined period of time (thus the same individual may be included for multiple dates). Additionally the number of days with a sighting is recorded for each month.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*
High 391 in 2014 **Low** 27 in 2024 **2013-2023 mean** 172.5 ±sd 103.0

One off the South Coast on 19th April was the first in a worryingly poor year for sightings. Indeed a 2024 porpoise-days total of 27 was the lowest of the last 12 years, this 45% down on that of 2023 and 84% below the 2013-2023 mean. Despite a comparable seawatching effort, Harbour Porpoise were seen on 48% fewer days than in 2023 and on 76% fewer days than the 11 year mean (58.1 ±sd 25.1). Sightings occurred in only five months this year and it was the first time in recent history with no July records; the 2013-2023 mean number of months with a sighting is 8.3 ±sd 0.8. May was the peak month, with eight porpoise-days logged over four dates and five on the 8th which was this year's high; the latter matched the 2023 high as the lowest on record, this 60% below the 11 year mean (12.6 ±sd 5.0). A lone adult on 27th September was the last of 2024. No calves were observed for a second straight year. These observations support findings made by the ObSERVE Programme which has shown an on-going and long-term decline in both the abundance and distribution of Harbour Porpoise in the Celtic and Irish Seas, a trend first reported in 2005 (IWDG, 2024). This has been linked primarily to bycatch in commercial fishing nets, with OSPAR (the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) reporting that an annual estimated bycatch of this species in the Celtic and Irish Sea of 751 animals far exceeds the accepted threshold of 82 (OSPAR, 2024).

The total number of Harbour Porpoise logged during each recording month between 2019 and 2024, along with the maximum daycount made each month and the number of days during each month on which there was a sighting.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024 Monthly Total	0	7	8	6	0	1	5	0	0	0
2023	7	8	6	0	13	7	5	0	3	0
2022	2	6	9	2	24	35	35	0	2	0
2021	7	12	3	8	8	12	6	1	6	0
2020	0	6	14	2	13	18	6	6	6	0
2019	16	13	19	0	49	9	12	5	1	1
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	3	5	4	0	1	2	0	0	0
2023	5	3	2	0	5	5	2	0	1	0
2022	2	3	3	2	8	7	12	0	2	0
2021	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	6	0
2020	0	4	9	1	4	3	2	4	6	0
2019	11	5	5	0	12	2	4	3	1	1
2024 No. of Days Recorded	0	4	4	2	0	1	3	0	0	0
2023	3	4	5	0	7	2	3	0	3	0
2022	1	4	4	1	9	11	16	0	1	0
2021	3	7	2	4	6	6	3	1	1	0
2020	0	2	3	2	7	10	3	3	1	0
2019	3	5	8	0	12	5	6	2	1	1

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*
High 1268 in 2022 **Low** 320 in 2013 **2013-2023 mean** 565.4 ±sd 282.2

A pod of five seen from the Lighthouse and a single off the South Coast on 24th April were the first. As is typical, numbers peaked in late summer, with the 197 dolphin-days of September being this year's monthly high. A minimum of 62 logged on 20th September was the maximum daycount, this the fourth highest of the last 12 years and 195% up on the 2023 high (albeit fractionally down on an 11 year mean of 62.8 ±sd 32.6). A pod of at least eight in Broad Sound on 14th October was the last 2024 sighting, these contributing to the highest October dolphin-days total on record, a figure 164%

higher than the October mean (14.0 ±sd 14.0). A 2024 dolphin-days total of 392, whilst 11% up on last year's tally, was 31% down on the 2013-2023 mean.

The first calf of the year was with a pod of ten adults off Crab Bay Rocks on 20th July. A total of two were logged in both July and August and a minimum of 12 were observed in September (this including minimums of four among a pod of 36 adults on the 19th and five among a pod of 25 adults on the 24th). A total of 16 calf-days is an improvement on the four of last year, but well below a record count of 30 logged in 2023.

The total number of Short-beaked Common Dolphin logged during each recording month between 2019 and 2024, along with the maximum daycount made each month and the number of days during each month on which there was a sighting.

Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2024 Monthly Total	0	6	3	6	47	96	197	37	0	0
2023	20	16	7	22	82	111	83	0	13	0
2022	0	0	6	16	274	268	654	36	3	11
2021	39	16	0	45	87	87	90	35	39	0
2020	4	0	0	15	90	148	165	26	0	9
2019	0	6	0	5	57	95	77	20	7	68
2024 Maximum Daycount	0	6	2	6	11	38	62	16	0	0
2023	20	12	5	15	12	21	20	0	9	0
2022	0	0	6	10	95	62	120	14	3	11
2021	31	9	0	25	19	46	30	15	10	0
2020	4	0	0	12	23	27	43	6	0	9
2019	0	6	0	3	10	16	28	10	7	68
2024 Days Recorded	0	1	3	1	10	11	16	7	0	0
2023	1	3	2	3	15	13	8	0	2	0
2022	0	0	1	2	14	17	16	3	1	1
2021	2	3	0	3	11	11	6	3	5	0
2020	1	0	0	2	10	12	14	6	0	1
2019	0	1	0	2	11	14	7	2	1	1

Fish

European Eel *Anguilla anguilla*

One seen in Well Stream on 23rd April was the first of 34 eel-days. Five adults at Orchid Bog during the night of 22nd July was the maximum daycount, whilst regular checks of this area in September resulted in 18 eel-days. Although the majority of encounters were with mature individuals at Orchid Bog, six eel-days recorded between the Well and the South Haven cliff included a fish in the Ram Pool measuring approximately 20cm on 4th October and a fully grown individual in the Well Reedbed on 2nd November which was the last of the year.

Additional Species

The following is a list of species rarely, if ever, encountered or not reported with any regularity in the Annual Reports. As such, a historical context is often difficult to determine.

Magpie Inkcap *Coprinopsis picacea*
Two fruiting bodies found in the vehicle track above the Old Well on 4th November were seemingly a first for Pembrokeshire (left photograph below); no records for the county are held by either the West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre or Aderyn, the Biodiversity Information and Reporting Database of Local Environmental Records Centres Wales (David Harries, *pers*. *comm*.).

Lady's Smock *Cardamine pratensis*
This infrequently encountered species is typically found in very small numbers. Unusually a total of 23 individual plants were present at East Bog on 2nd June.

By-the-wind Sailor *Velella velella*
Presumed to be the remnants of a gull pellet, a ball of 41 were found near North Pond on 17th April (upper right photograph above).

Common Cockchafer *Melolontha melolontha*
One attracted to a moth trap at the Farm on 20th May was the first in at least 12 years.

Anchomenus dorsalis
An example of this ground beetle was taken from the moth trap on 3rd November.

Hairy Shieldbug *Dolycoris baccarum*
One was found on the wall of the Lighthouse on 5th October (lower right photograph above).

Hornet Sp. *Vespa* Sp.
One steamed north over the Bluffs on 16th May and continued towards Broad Sound until lost from view. It could not be identified to species level.

Observers, Photographers and Literature Cited in the Text

Observers cited in the text. Many other people provided records at the evening log, far more than can be listed here. We are hugely grateful to everybody who contributed during the 2024 season.

AR	Alex Rosenfeld	IS	Ian Sherriffs	RDB	Richard Brown
CH	Catherine Holt	JK	Judith Kay	RL	Rhodri Llewellyn
EJ	Emmanuel Jatta	KL	Karen Lord	RN	Robert North
FL	Frankie Lamprecht	ND	Nick Dalton	TC	Tom Codd
GB	Gwennan Butler	NM	Nick Marriner	WJ	Wendy James
GE	Giselle Eagle	OG	Owain Gabb		
HL	Hayley Land	RD	Richard Dobbins		

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