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| Skokholm Annual Report 2013 |  
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Welcome to our first Annual Report. We intend it to provide a full summary of the 2013 season, documenting the fortunes of Skokholm’s breeding birds along with giving a thorough account of the migrant birds and non-avian wildlife recorded this year.

A lot of thought has been put into how we should make this report available. The decision was made to produce it as an online PDF, that is to say an easily accessible file that can be viewed electronically, or printed out. There are many advantages to doing so. First and foremost is that it is available for free to everyone who chooses to download it. Without the financial constraints associated with printing, we have had the freedom to illustrate it with as many colour photos, charts and tables as necessary to create an informative and enjoyable read. Additionally key words can be searched for using your PDF reader’s search tool, making this a very usable document.

The format of this report differs from that found in most other bird reports. Each avian species recorded on Skokholm in 2013 is addressed separately and every piece of information we have gathered during the season can be found under that species title. Thus the reader does not have to flick between sections in order to find details of abundance, breeding productivity, phenology, ringing recoveries, etc., for any given species.
The 2013 Season and Weather Summary

The season ran from 1st March until 16th November and there were two pre-season visits, on the 15th and 23rd February.

Overall it was an incredibly dry year. The three largest ponds had dried up by mid-June and did not hold water again until 19th October. This was mirrored at the smaller water bodies, although there was some standing water at Orchid Bog by the end of September and the Well marsh remained damp all year.

A bitterly cold March saw gale force easterly winds, and driving rain led to temporary flooding of areas adjacent to North Pond. Sub-zero diurnal temperatures resulted in frozen ponds on several occasions and there were two days of light snow showers. The long run of cold, easterly winds came to an end on 12th April and gave way to moderate winds and typical April showers. This was to be the last good rainfall until late autumn. May was dominated by dry and calm spells but interspersed with moderate winds and very occasional showers. June too was a month of high pressure and baking temperatures, with infrequent strong winds and a few short, heavy showers. Early July saw negligible rainfall but some misty days before a long period of high pressure and very high temperatures again dominated. The end of the month saw winds increasing from the south, bringing some heavy showers to Skokholm. Despite this the Island remained very dry with cracked soils and tinder dry Sea Campion.
August was generally calm, warm and dry but with some heavy thunder showers early in the month and strong winds mid-month. The first regular rain of the season did not occur until mid-September and easterly winds dominated during the last week of the month. October was wet and windy, with moderate to strong winds from the South bringing squally, sometimes prolonged, heavy showers to the Island which finally began to fill the ponds. November saw severe gales hit Skokholm, with gusts on the 2nd of 54mph recorded by the weather station donated by Milford Haven Port Authority. Overnight showers and moderate northerly winds then dominated with gusts regularly exceeding 30mph. A calm 16th November allowed the Wardens to leave Skokholm for the winter.

Spring Work Parties

The first day of March saw both the Dale Princess and Lady Helen loaded at Neyland with tonnes of materials, the first volunteers and the Wardens. This was the start of an impressive six weeks of spring work parties with further volunteers arriving on the 14th, 17th, 26th and 30th March and on 6th April. The buildings had overwintered well which allowed the work parties to concentrate on the planned improvements. The new header tank, which stores water pumped up from the Well by a water ram, was connected to the Wheelhouse, Central Block and Farmhouse. This was linked into two solar hot water systems and saw hot and cold running water provided to the kitchen and every bedroom for the first time in the Island’s history. The solar electric system was finished in the Farmhouse and Central Block which allowed for the provisioning of lights in every room. Contractors were brought in to continue the improvements at the South Haven jetty. This involved boat deliveries of over six tonnes of cement, scaffolding and shuttering along with many hours of volunteer time. One of the aims of the jetty work was to remove the old winch base, but it soon became apparent that this was firmly embedded deep into the jetty and was thus incorporated into the new structure. Two of the three Heligoland traps, which were started in 2012, were finished. Work then began on the recently purchased Lighthouse. It was decided that the old generator room would be converted into a large versatile space, suitable for lab-work, talks, lectures, interpretation and exhibitions. Consequently the three cumbersome generator bases had to be removed to the Lighthouse compound to await transferral to the mainland. The solar electric system was modified and connected to all of the rooms and a solar hot water system identical to the two at the farm was installed. Further work at the Lighthouse involved converting two of the bedrooms into the Wardens’ Accommodation. The remaining two bedrooms were decorated and the old workshop on the ground floor was converted into a bunk room, all intended for use by researchers and visiting ringers. While all of this was underway, the usual preparations for the season were also advancing; there was painting of walls and floors, carpentry jobs in the bedrooms, machinery was serviced and
there was a tremendous amount of cleaning. The weather throughout March was rather inclement; sub-zero midday temperatures seldom recorded on Skokholm, multiple hard ground frosts and snow flurries, coupled with gale force northeasterly winds, made for difficult working conditions. That so much was achieved in such circumstances is testament to the amazing group of people working on the restoration project. April saw the last of the spring work parties, with work focussing on lime washing the exterior walls and roofs of the Wheelhouse, Central Block and Farmhouse. The old Red Hut, a handy dumping ground for decades, was cleared out and organised ready for the storage of dry timbers and other building material. Works concluded with the completion of the Well Heligoland, built on the same footprint as R.M Lockley’s favourite trap.

The amount of work completed in just six weeks was overwhelming and could not have been achieved without the enthusiasm, skills and energy of all of the volunteers and contractors involved.

Spring Long-Term Volunteers

We were joined from 1st April until 30th June by Long-term Volunteers Josef Hrastelj and Margaret Phillips-Jones. Joe, after graduating from Swansea University with a biology degree, had volunteered for various organisations before joining us. He wasted no time in finding a personal project, something that we encourage all of our long-term volunteers to do. He monitored how the number of Puffins visiting the Neck colonies fluctuated during the pre-laying period and was also an instrumental part in the establishment of the Crab Bay study plot. He spent many hours studying Puffins from the Crab Bay hide, recording burrow occupancy, colour-ringed Puffins, productivity and kleptoparasitism. Margaret, who has volunteered for many years with WTSWW both on mainland reserves and on Skomer, took responsibility for monitoring the Guillemot productivity plot at Twinlet Bay. She ensured that the fire was always lit and that the visitors felt at home. Having different strengths made Joe and Margaret a great team, who not only contributed to the research, but were also happy tending to the more mundane tasks associated with running the Island.

Spring Migration Highlights

A Wheatear on 5th March was on the first day that these migrants were reported in Britain and a Ring Ouzel on the 22nd was the eighth to be reported in Britain. Other March highlights included the 13th Skokholm record of Little Egret on the 4th and the 13th record of Greylag Goose on the 30th. In April a Firecrest on the 10th was only the third April record. A Yellow-legged Gull on the 19th was an addition to the Skokholm list, taking the total to 285 species. A Little Ringed Plover on the same date was only the seventh for Skokholm. A Greenish Warbler on 18th June was only the sixth Skokholm record and a Gadwall on the last day of the month was the 21st record.

The Breeding Season

An at-a-glance guide to the Skokholm breeding birds in 2013. Productivity is the average number of fledglings produced by each breeding pair (a ‘-’ denotes insufficient data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013 breeding population (2012 in parenthesis)</th>
<th>Productivity if known (2012 in parenthesis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada Goose</td>
<td>18 pairs (16)</td>
<td>0 (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelduck</td>
<td>1 pair produced ducklings (1)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mallard
- 2 pairs produced ducklings
  - 0 ducklings

### Fulmar
- 170 apparent nests
  - 0.34 (0.59)

### Manx Shearwater
- 521 responses in 8000m²
  - 0.75 (-)

### Storm Petrel
- 129 responses in transects
  - (-)

### Shag
- 1 nest
  - 0 (0)

### Buzzard
- 1 nest
  - 1 (2)

### Peregrine
- 1 nest
  - 3 (2)

### Water Rail
- 1 territory
  - 0 (4)

### Moorhen
- 2 pairs
  - 1 (1)

### Oystercatcher
- 40 pairs
  - 1 (-)

### Puffin
- 4834 adults
  - 0.49 (-)

### Razorbill
- 2294 adults
  - 0.67 (-)

### Guillemot
- 3466 adults
  - 0.55-0.61 (-)

### Lesser Black-backed Gull
- 1476 apparent nests
  - 0.16 (0.16)

### Lesser Black-backed x Hybrid Gull
- 2 nests
  - (-)

### Herring Gull
- 263 nests
  - 0.72 (1.15)

### Great Black-backed Gull
- 74 nests
  - 1.8 (-)

### Chough
- 3 pairs
  - 0.67 (0)

### Jackdaw
- 16 pairs
  - (-)

### Crow
- 8 nests
  - 0.38+ (-)

### Raven
- 3 nests
  - 3.33 (1)

### Skylark
- 10 territorial males
  - (-)

### Swallow
- 5 nests
  - 4 (-)

### Sedge Warbler
- 8 pairs
  - (-)

### Wren
- 55 territorial males
  - (-)

### Blackbird
- 5 pairs
  - 2.8+ (-)

### Wheatear
- 12 pairs
  - 2.67+ (-)

### Pied Wagtail
- 3 pairs
  - 5 (-)

### Meadow Pipit
- 28 territorial males
  - (-)

### Rock Pipit
- 32 territorial males
  - (-)

### Reed Bunting
- 5 pairs
  - 2.4+ (-)

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### Autumn Migration Highlights

A **Sooty Shearwater** and a **Balearic Shearwater** joined over 60,140 **Manx Shearwater** on 4th August. There was an all-time record count of 14 **Common Sandpiper** on the 6th and a **Spoonbill** the following day was the 13th Skokholm record. The 21 **Black-tailed Godwit** logged on the 28th was an Island record. September saw the second highest ever day count of **Cormorant** and the highest ever counts of **Shag**, **House Martin** and **Meadow Pipit**. Two **Turtle Dove** were the first since 2006 and four, but probably five, **Wryneck** was a record autumn count. A **Barred Warbler** on 8th September was the 19th for Skokholm and a **Red-backed Shrike** on the 10th was the 29th. A Wing-tagged **Marsh Harrier** lingered on the 15th. A **Booted Warbler** on 25th September was the second for Skokholm and the sixth for Wales and a **Red-breasted Flycatcher** the following day was the 22nd autumn record. A **Blyth’s Reed Warbler** on the 27th was a first for Skokholm, a second for Wales and took the Skokholm total to 286 species. A pair of **Ruff** on the same day were the first for six years. Four **Greylag Goose** on the 28th was the 15th Skokholm record. October was the best month ever for **Mediterranean Gull** records, there were day counts of **Goldcrest** and **Skylark** exceeding anything logged in the past decade and record **Goldfinch** day totals contributed to a record year total. Four **Yellow-browed Warbler** took the number of Skokholm records to 22. October was also excellent for migrant lepidoptera with record numbers of **Clouded Yellow** and **Vestal**, the second **Cosmopolitan** for Skokholm and the first **Olive-tree Pearl** for the Island. A total of 21 **Mediterranean Gull** on 9th...
November was a record day total. A **White-fronted Goose** on the 10th was the 16th Skokholm record and a **Shelduck** the following day was only the ninth autumn record. Up to three **Whimbrel** looked set to overwinter on the Island.

Inevitably during the course of a season a few birds avoid identification and sadly this year was no exception. A Harrier seen by guests near the Lighthouse on 20th April was assumed to be a late **Hen Harrier**, although their description of a pointy-winged bird sounded suspiciously similar to the **Pallid Harrier** which arrived on Skomer later that day. A flyover wader on 4th September had a white rump and uttered a distinctive *tew tew*, rather similar to what would have been exhibited by the **Lesser Yellowlegs** which arrived on the nearby Gann estuary a few hours later. What was almost certainly a **Short-toed Lark**, owing to its call and a lack of white along the trailing edge of the secondaries, was along the Lighthouse track on 19th September, although extremely inclement weather hampered viewing and the bird was soon lost. On the same day a **Honey Buzzard** was reported by a mainland observer as having left the Marloes Peninsula and passed to the east of Skokholm. A **Wood Lark** was heard to call twice but could not be located on 25th October. Additionally there were several records of **Feral Pigeon**, although it was thought that all pertained to Racing Pigeons; it is unclear when the last genuinely wild **Feral Pigeon** occurred on Skokholm.

Despite these ones-that-got-away, 2013 proved a memorable year on Skokholm with 139 species logged including two additions to the Skokholm list. This is probably the highest year total for twenty years but is some way off the record of 157 achieved in 1968 and 1988.

**Autumn Long-Term Volunteers**

We were joined on 1st July by Long-term Volunteer Beckie Langton who had just completed a PhD at Aberdeen University studying the impact of marine renewables on Guillemots. Laura Robertson, a recent zoology graduate from Cardiff University, took up the second post on 7th July. Beckie and Laura made a great team and worked together on the Guillemot Study Plot and Puffin Productivity Plot as well as assisting visiting ringers with Manx Shearwater, Storm Petrel and gull ringing. They took on the responsibility of monitoring the Fulmar study plots, as well as running a moth trap whenever conditions allowed. They assisted with practical management on the reserve, such as the North Pond scrape digging and re-marking the path network, as well as ensuring that guests had a pleasant and informative stay. Beckie and Laura were instrumental in the fabrication of the concrete Storm Petrel nest boxes which are now in situ in the Quarry. Beckie left the Island as planned on 30th September but Laura agreed to stay on for an extra fortnight to help close up the farm for winter. Weather conditions extended this to a month.

**Autumn Work Party**

The final Work Party of the season arrived on 9th September. The first task was to bury the blue water pipes that supply water from the well to the farm, a task which had been long delayed as we secured the appropriate paperwork and the attendance of an onsite archaeologist for the digging. New windows, doors and door-frames replaced tired and rotting ones in the Cottage, Wheelhouse and Workshop. Excavations at North Pond continued, a process which over several seasons will see the development of an impressive series of scrapes ideal for passage waders. Efforts were made to cut up the old metal water tanks and dumper truck for removal from the Island. Work also began at the Lighthouse, with doors scraped down and repainted as well as the arduous task of removing decades of paint from the interior metalwork of the lantern. Work will continue on the Lighthouse in spring 2014.
Skokholm formally applied for reaccreditation as a Bird Observatory in December 2013 following two seasons of operating in the manner of a Bird Observatory. During a meeting at Portland on 11th January 2014, the Bird Observatories Council voted unanimously to reaccredit Skokholm as a Bird Observatory. This recognises the huge amounts of work done on Skokholm during the restoration period, the reestablishment of intensive bird monitoring on the Island and our desire for this to continue into the future. Skokholm thus becomes the 19th Bird Observatory in Britain, Ireland and the Isle of Man and joins an illustrious list of sites at the forefront of ornithological research.

Visiting Ringers in 2013

Visiting ringers were invited to stay on Skokholm and assist with our monitoring work for the first time since 1976. Two reduced-rate bed spaces were allocated for ringers to reflect their contribution to the work of the Observatory and this opportunity was widely advertised using social media and at the BTO conference. As a result 41 ringers visited the Island during the season, a total of 257 ringer-days of additional coverage. This, coupled with the fact that both Island Wardens are also ringers, led to an admirable 4446 birds of 64 species being processed on Skokholm in 2013.

Birds Ringed in 2013

Of the 4446 birds caught and processed on Skokholm in 2013, there were 3436 full grown birds of 59 species and 297 pulli of 14 species ringed. Additionally 680 birds were retraps (birds previously ringed on Skokholm) and 33 were controls (birds previously ringed elsewhere). Details of each control and of the more interesting retraps are given within the Systematic List of Birds. Owing to this being the first full season of ringing since its cessation in 1976 and that the early ringing data is yet to be digitised, comparisons cannot easily be made with previous years. However the number of birds of each species ringed between 1933 and 1976 are documented at the beginning of each species section in the Systematic List of Birds. Perhaps not surprisingly, seabirds formed 60% of the ringing total in 2013 and almost three-quarters of these were Manx Shearwater.

Catching Methods

There are three Heligoland Traps on Skokholm (at the Well, in the Cottage Garden and beside the Wheelhouse), constructed on the footprints of those originally erected by Ronald Lockley. These provide an invaluable method of trapping birds when inclement weather prohibits the use of mist nets. The Heligoland traps were driven regularly on every day of the season. Four permanent mist
nets (two at the Well, one in the Courtyard and one adjacent to the Wheelhouse), were opened on most occasions that conditions allowed. Additional mist nets were set up by visiting ringers on Home Meadow to target passage wagtails and pipits. Four Spring Traps donated by the Tees Ringing Group were used on an ad hoc basis for targeting chats, wagtails and pipits.

The majority of seabirds were caught by hand but with three exceptions: adult gulls were caught in a baited Gull Trap (apart from one Herring Gull captured in the Cottage Heligoland Trap), adult Puffins targeted for survivorship research were mist netted in the Crab Bay colony and all adult Storm Petrels were also mist netted.

The number of new birds, retraps and controls trapped during 2013 and the proportion of birds trapped at each Heligoland and Permanent Mist Netting site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Birds</th>
<th>Retraps</th>
<th>Controls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheelhouse Heligoland</td>
<td>101 249</td>
<td>5 76</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well Heligoland</td>
<td>467 240</td>
<td>102 132</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Heligoland</td>
<td>120 105</td>
<td>19 34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2258 38</td>
<td>38 50</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Heligoland traps produced 818 new birds, 242 retraps and two controls. Of the three Heligolands, the Well was the most productive with 57% of Heligoland-caught new birds coming from this trap. The Cottage Trap produced the fewest new birds, comprising just 13% of the total. The combination of thicker vegetation and a sheltered reed bed with standing water at the Well no doubt explains its relative attraction to migrant birds. Vegetation within the Cottage and Wheelhouse traps was later to leaf and the subsequent growth of bracken around the traps sometimes led birds away from the catching area. Never-the-less the Cottage Trap produced a
Blyth’s Reed Warbler in September as well as other ringing highlights such as Black Redstart and Common Rosefinch. The Wheelhouse Trap produced a Firecrest, Greenish Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler and two Lesser Whitethroat. In addition to the largest proportion of birds, the Well Trap caught some good ringing scarcities including all of the non-breeding raptors ringed in 2013 (two Sparrowhawk, a Kestrel and a Merlin), as well as a Wryneck and a Subalpine Warbler. Retrap numbers closely mirrored the pattern of new birds with 55% extracted from the Well Trap.

The permanent mist nets produced 556 new birds, 155 retraps and four controls. As might be expected, 65% of new birds came from the two Well nets whilst 19% came from the Courtyard Net and 16% from the Wheelhouse Net. Ringing highlights caught by mist nets included a Booted Warbler in the Wheelhouse Net, a Barred Warbler in the Courtyard Net and two Yellow-browed Warbler, one in the Wheelhouse Net and one in the Well 9m Net.

Arrival and Departure Dates

The 2013 arrival and departure dates of migrants, together with the extreme earliest and latest dates that they have been recorded since 1933, are documented at the beginning of each species report in the Systematic List of Birds. Great Skua was the only species to extend its observed period of occurrence, with one on 27th October being one day later than in 1967. The following species were recorded close to their Skokholm limits: a Pectoral Sandpiper on 15th May (earliest 13th May 2012), a Woodcock on 6th April (latest 8th April 1965), a Cuckoo on 1st September (latest 8th September 1956), a Garden Warbler on 31st October (latest 2nd November 1968), a Ring Ouzel on 22nd March (earliest 15th March 1955) and a Wheatear on 5th March (earliest 2nd March 2003).

BTO Young Bird Observatory Volunteer Fund

In 2013 the British Trust for Ornithology began a scheme offering financial assistance, in the form of small grants, to young people wishing to experience life at a Bird Observatory, particularly to those wishing to pursue a career in the field. We were delighted to participate in this worthwhile cause and welcomed two volunteers under the scheme during the summer; Justin Gillings and Christopher Anstee. They both participated in Observatory work, helping with bird ringing, practical management on the reserve, seabird monitoring and daily censusing. The BTO Young Bird Observatory Volunteer Fund is funded by a private donor and match funded by the BTO and will continue in 2014. We are looking forward to welcoming more young adults with a desire to experience Observatory life to Skokholm.

Bird Observatory Fundraising

As is the tradition at many Bird Observatories, a ‘tick jar’ was implemented at the beginning of the season. Birders and ringers were encouraged to make a small donation if they recorded a British ‘tick’, a bird they had not observed in the UK before, during their stay. Similarly ringers who had ringed a new species were also encouraged to donate. The jar made £248.61 and the proceeds will be used to fund extra equipment for the Observatory.

It is part of our daily routine on the Island to check the fantastic Pembrokeshire Birds Blog (pembsbirds.blogspot.co.uk) to see what has been recorded in the local area. The process of doing so is not supposed to cause palpitations, but when RDB looked on the evening of 14th November he became rather panicked and dinner started to burn. Photos of what had originally been identified as a Lesser Whitethroat actually showed an Orphean Warbler. Luckily a Pembrokeshire birder based on the mainland (MYP) was also having the same palpitations (and also burning dinner). The Orphean Warbler was feeding on a good crop of apples in the garden of Peter and Rosemary Royle, who have
long been associated with Skokholm. As this was only the sixth Orphean Warbler for Britain, and potentially the third Western Orphean Warbler, Peter and Rosemary very generously made the necessary logistical arrangements and opened up their garden to visiting twitchers. They also set up a donations bucket to raise funds for Skokholm. The bird remained among their apple trees for over 14 days and over 500 birders visited their property at Orlandon Kilns to view it. Following the last organised access on 24th November, the grand sum of £1185.00 had been raised for the Island! We would like to thank Peter and Rosemary for growing such fruitful apple trees and for picking Skokholm as the beneficiary of the donations. Thanks must also go to everyone who organised and marshalled the twitch and to all the birders that donated so generously.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Perhaps the best acknowledgment of what was achieved on Skokholm in 2013 came from the Bird Observatories Council when they reaccredited us with Bird Observatory status. This is testament to the hard work and vision of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer and the many volunteers who have contributed so much.

The inexhaustible staff of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales make it possible for us all to enjoy Skokholm, as do the many different experts sitting on the Islands Advisory Committee; without them none of us would be able to visit the Island.

Thank you to everyone who helped during the seven weeks of work parties; the skilled volunteers, the cooks (two of whom also volunteered their time for two catered weeks during the season), the mainland support and the delivery volunteers. Also to those who brought Alice back to her home above South Haven. We have been overwhelmed by the number of people who have given their time to support the Island.

Huge thanks must go to our four Long-term Volunteers: Josef Hrastelj, Margaret Phillips-Jones, Beckie Langton and Laura Robertson. Their hard work and dedication throughout the season has allowed a great amount of research to be carried out and they contributed massively to the overall experience enjoyed by our guests. Our gratitude also goes to the shorter-term volunteers who have helped lead courses, monitor wildlife or who have helped with more physical management.
A special mention must go to Dale Sailing for taking and storing deliveries over the winter months, for getting all of the materials and volunteers to the Island and for getting our paying guests to and from the Island throughout the season.

Thank you to everyone who has made a private donation to Skokholm, small or big; you all know who you are! Also thank you to Milford Haven Port Authority, South Hook LNG and Valero who have donated significantly towards the infrastructure of Skokholm in 2013.

We must not forget to give a huge thanks to the volunteers who kept the Skokholm Store well stocked throughout the season (as well as the Wardens’ fridge and freezer)! We cannot emphasize enough how much your efforts and kindness have meant to us and the guests.

Thanks go to those who have offered us their homes as places to stay on the mainland, who have helped steer us in the right direction, who have always been at the end of a phone or email to offer advice and expertise and those who have taken us on jollies to the pub, the Smalls and Grassholm.

Finally, a big thank you to all of our guests and visiting ringers who have made 2013 an immensely enjoyable season. We hope to see you again back on the Island.

Giselle and Richard

Definitions and Terminology

The status summaries used in this report follow those established by Betts (1992) and used by Thompson (2007). 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vagrant</td>
<td>1-10 records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>11-40 records or breeding records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarce</td>
<td>1-5 birds, records or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncommon</td>
<td>6-50 birds or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Common</td>
<td>51-250 birds or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td>251-1000 birds or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundant</td>
<td>1001-2500 birds or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Abundant</td>
<td>More than 2500 birds or breeding pairs per year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The systematic order used in this report is that of the British Ornithologists’ Union (Harrop et al., 2013).
The Systematic List of Birds

**White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons**

**Gwydd Dalcenwyn**

**Rare Winter Visitor** 15 previous records of between one and 40 birds

**Earliest** 12th October 1971 (10th November 2013)  **Latest** 1st May 1990

A vocal White-fronted Goose which headed west over the Farm on 10th November was the first record since 16 on 14th March and 12th April 2010 (RDB). Distant views of a departing goose would not usually lead to subspecific identification, but close inspection of a distant photograph revealed an orange neck collar and white darvic ring. Although the inscriptions which would have identified the individual were illegible at such a range, the combination of collar and ring show this to be one of over 2600 birds ringed in Greenland (T. Fox pers. comm.). The two subspecies of White-fronted Goose to occur in Wales have both been recorded on Skokholm, although where subspecific identification has been possible it is Greenland White-fronted Goose *A. a. flavirostris* which has proven commonest.

**Greylag Goose Anser anser**

**Gwydd Wylit**

**Rare Visitor** just 12 previous records of 18 birds

A single on 30th March was the first since 11th May 2010 (CS). There was then a single on North Pond on 27th April (RDB) and four circled before landing on North Plain on 28th September (RDB, LR et al.). This increase in Skokholm records reflects an increase in the number of Pembrokeshire birds.

**Canada Goose Branta canadensis**

**Gwydd Canada**

**Uncommon Breeder and Common Visitor** first bred in 1996

The majority of pairs were already on territory upon the return of staff to Skokholm on 1st March. There were spring peaks of 31 birds on 8th March, 32 on the 10th, 30 on the 31st, 33 on 2nd April and a whole Island census revealed 36 (18 pairs) on 18th April. Three goslings were on North Pond on 4th May but these had become two by 7th May and were last seen on the 8th, presumably due to predation by gulls. A flock of 18 adults together on North Pond on 27th May was the first sign of post-breeding dispersal and numbers then dropped sharply with only 16 birds logged on 2nd June, 11 on the 4th, two pairs from the 8th and only a single pair from the 17th. The remaining pair had two goslings by 29th June but these had gone the next day and the pair departed by 3rd July. Canada Goose productivity thus remains very poor, with a single fledgling in 2012 and none in 2013 (there were 38 fledglings in 2006 and a minimum of 40 in 2007).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There were 16 adults on 19th July and a pair visited intermittently for the rest of month. Birds were absent for most days in August but a pair occasionally visited and there were roosts of 19 on the evening of the 7th and 12 on the 11th and 27th. There were occasional single figure counts early in September but 22 roosted on the 6th and then roost size increased from midmonth with 32 on the 20th, 26 on the 23rd, and 33 on the 24th. An evening arrival of 42 on the 27th were joined by more birds during the night and 128 left at dawn the following day. There were 78 on 29th September and a minimum of 50 on the night of 2nd October. During the rest of October over 100 birds could be seen on distant Middleholm but an absence of nocturnal calling suggested that they were not roosting on Skokholm. Calling was again heard after dusk from 8th November but it was generally too dark for counts, although at least 30 could be seen on North Pond on the bright night of the 14th.

Shelduck Tadorna tadorna

Scarcely Breeder broods only seen in six previous years and only eight previous post-July records

A minimum of two birds were present on all but six days in March, with three to six birds recorded on 14 dates and peaks of nine on the 10th, eight on the 22nd and 12 on the 23rd. Between three and ten birds were recorded on every day in April except for peaks of 11 on the 5th, 14 on the 9th, 18 on the 10th, 12 on the 19th and 20th and 14 on the 23rd. Up to four pairs were recorded on each day in May with additional birds only recorded on three dates; there were ten on the 1st, 20 on the 16th and 12 on the 28th. Fewer birds were recorded in June with a peak count of 10 on the 28th, but generally six or fewer adults were present. Two adults escorted six small ducklings out to sea from the Neck on 27th June; they were not seen again. There were only three adults on 29th June and a single the following day. In July there were two on the 1st, a single on the 2nd and two at North Pond on the 7th. One on North Pond on 11th November was only the ninth post-July record for Skokholm.

Wigeon Anas penelope

Uncommon Winter Visitor
(1936-1976: 1 trapped)

A pre-season visit on 15th February found five on North Pond. A pair on 1st March were still present the next day. The only other spring record was of 15 on North Pond on 9th March. In September 18 passed south through Broad Sound on the 27th and seven did likewise three days later. There were three on North Pond on 25th October and two on 11th November were the last of the season.

Gadwall Anas strepera

Rare only 20 previous records

A drake which circled briefly to the north of the Well on the morning of 30th June was the first since the 29th and 30th May 2012 and only the second June record for Skokholm (RDB).

Teal Anas crecca

Fairly Common Visitor recorded in all months but more regular in winter
(1936-1976: 16 trapped)
There were a minimum of 40 flushed from the ponds on a 15th February visit but fewer than ten were present on a similar visit eight days later. Teal were recorded on every day of March bar one, with most counts being of between two and 14 individuals but with peaks of 20 on the 3rd and of 19 on the 8th and 22nd. Fewer birds were recorded in April with between one and five logged on 20 dates and a peak of seven on the 14th. A pair on 1st May was the last spring record. An absence of standing water perhaps contributed to the lack of early autumn arrivals, with the first records being of seven past the Lighthouse on 10th September, 21 heading east on 13th September and one heading through Broad Sound with Wigeon on 27th September. North Pond contained standing water from mid-October and a minimum of 80 Teal departing on the morning of the 21st had presumably roosted there. Two were present on the 23rd. Wildfowl were under recorded during November as they arrived to roost after dark and departed before dawn, however a single lingered on 1st November, three were present the following day, there was a single again on the 3rd and a freshly killed female was at South Pond on the 13th.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*  
Hwyaden Wyllt  
Scarce Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor  
(1936-1976: 10 trapped)

There were ten on a 23rd February pre-season visit and then between one and seven birds on every day of March bar four, except for peaks of 13 on the 9th and nine on the 12th. Mallards were logged on every day of April, typically up to three separate pairs but with eight birds on the 11th and seven the following day. Most records during the latter half of April and May were of up to four drakes, presumably indicative of hidden incubating females. A female was on the Neck with eight ducklings on 15th May and what were thought to be four different ducklings were seemingly unaccompanied in South Haven on 21st May. There were no further records of young and they presumably all perished. Adult numbers declined from late May into June with three males on 4th June but generally only a single pair logged. A lone female was noted on five dates from 22nd June and again on the 1st and 20th July. The lack of any August or September records perhaps reflected the lack of standing water and the first two autumn sightings were of 16 on the 3rd and five on 4th October, all in flight over a dry North Pond. Two were on Orchid Bog on the 10th and 13th October before a quickly filling North Pond began to attract birds from the 21st. Calling birds made it clear that visits were being made under the cover of darkness, as recorded by Thompson (2007), but counts were thus frequently impossible. Birds lingering into the day were logged on five dates in late October, including maxima of 12 on the 21st and 49 on the 28th. Small groups of up to seven were also seen in November.

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*  
Hwyaden Lydanbig  

A pre-season visit on 23rd February found a minimum of 15 on the ponds. Three were present on 1st March, six were logged on the 2nd, there were four on the 8th and 18 on North Pond on 9th March comprised ten drakes and eight ducks. A lone drake was seen on the 17th and 19th May. There were no autumn records, as has been the case in six of the last nine years.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*  
Môr-hwyaden Ddu  
Common recorded offshore in all months, but particularly June to November  
(1936-1976: 11 trapped)

A flock of 25 headed southeast past the Lighthouse on 12th March and eight did the same two days later. Seven, including six drakes, passed on 3rd April. A minimum of 55 headed southeast on 26th June and 16 did the same the following day. There were then 349 birds over ten days in July, 95 over six days in August, 74 over nine days in September and ten over three days in October with two on
the 23rd the last record of the year. Almost all records were of birds heading southeast, presumably towards the Carmarthen Bay wintering grounds. Records inevitably reflect seawatching effort.

The number of Common Scoter logged each day and the monthly maxima.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*  
Scarce passing at sea from August to May and not recorded every year

Winter plumaged birds passed west through Broad Sound on the 1st and 19th March. In autumn winter plumaged birds headed east past the Lighthouse on 17th September and south through Broad Sound on 28th September. These are the first records since one on 29th September 2005.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*  
Fairly Common Breeder first bred in 1967  
(1936-1976: 34 trapped)

There were typical fluctuations in the number of birds occupying the nesting ledges throughout March with peaks of 65 on the 8th, 140 on the 16th and 181 on the 17th but with no records on the 11th and 22nd and only single figure counts logged on a further nine dates. Colony attendance was similarly sporadic during April with peaks of 96 on the 8th, 83 on the 13th and 83 on the 23rd but with three days of single figure counts and the regular departure of different colonies keeping each daily census count close to the monthly average of 45 birds a day. May continued the fluctuating pattern with peaks of 87 on the 2nd, 106 on the 22nd and with 13 days of low double figure counts when the majority of birds were away at sea. Numbers increased significantly towards the end of May when the first adults were apparently incubating.

The whole Island totals, plot totals (and range) and the percentage of the Island totals made up of study plot birds since 2006.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
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<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<td>116</td>
<td>118</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot %</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three study plots counted since 2006 were visited on ten dates between the 1st and 12th June. Ten visits revealed the difficulties with assessing which adults were actually incubating; the ranges for the past six years show that the average plot count is always three or four pairs above the lowest single visit count (see table above). This year there were 22 apparently incubating adults recorded on three dates, however the average was 25. Despite this source of error, the average number of apparently incubating adults in the plots was the highest recorded since 2006, 25% up on 2012 and the lowest single visit count was 37.5% up on 2012. All of the increase came from ledges at Little Bay.
Point with the plots at Twinlet and North Gully remaining the same (although this may be due to the plot boundaries missing the areas suitable for expansion).

The whole Island count mirrored the study plot counts with a 25% increase in the number of apparently incubating adults. The total of 170 pairs is the highest since peaks of 170 in 1997 and 176 in 2002. However it should be noted that the 2013 whole Island count includes approximately 45 pairs which would be difficult or impossible to see from the Island itself (birds near the Bluffs, north of North Gully, near Wreck Cove, on Little Neck and particularly in the hidden coves of Near Bay and Far Bay which were all seen from a boat). With rough weather halting boat access in 2012 it is likely that many pairs could have been missed.

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

On 5th June 35 incubating adults were selected for productivity monitoring (seven at North Gully, eight at Little Bay Point and 18 at Peter’s Bay). Of these 18 failed at the egg/small chick stage (eight failed by 9th July, ten by 17th July, 14 by 20th July, 17 by 24th July and 18 by 6th August). A further five failed having produced a chick (two failed by 6th August, three by 9th August, four by 13th August and five by 25th August). The cause of chick mortality was witnessed on two occasions; on one a chick appearing very weak was predated by Jackdaws and a second fell to its death. Only 12 (34.29%) of the monitored attempts produced a fledgling, the lowest recorded productivity since 1989 (see
graph below). It should be noted that this may not be representative of productivity across the whole Island as the majority of study nests were at Peter’s Bay and this area witnessed particularly poor productivity; only 5.56% of attempts produced a chick at Peter’s Bay in 2013 compared with 57.14% at North Gully and 62.50% at Little Bay. Interestingly 2012 also saw particularly poor productivity at Peter’s Bay (33.33% compared to 83.33% at North Gully and 66.67% at Little Bay).

**Fulmar productivity (total number of fledged chicks per monitored pair) for each year that it has been calculated between 1972 and 2013.**

The first fledgling had departed by 25th August and daily census counts dropped rapidly from 3rd September, with single figures around the cliffs from 12th September and up to 19 at sea until the first blank day on 20th September. A ‘blue morph’ bird was reported past the Lighthouse on 8th September. With the exception of singles along the North Coast on the 5th and 24th October, there was a total absence between 20th September and 26th October inclusive. Nine were off the Lighthouse on 27th October and there were 155 on the 30th comprising a raft of 42 and a steady westerly passage. The total dropped to 17 on 31st October and only 52 birds were logged over the next five days. There were then 45 on 6th November, including the first nine birds to return to the cliffs. Numbers steadily increased, peaking at 162 on 9th November when 42 were on the ledges. Numbers subsequently fluctuated and there was a total exodus on 14th November, although 26 returned the following day and birds were present as the Wardens departed on the 16th.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*

*Aderyn Drycin Du*

Scarce to Uncommon recorded most autumns from mid-July onwards

One east past the Lighthouse on 4th August, a day which saw over 60,000 Manx Shearwaters pass in moderate southerly winds, was the only record of the year (RDB). This perhaps reflects the unseasonably calm or predominantly easterly autumn period and a corresponding absence of observers at the seawatching hide. However it should also be noted that two days of strong southwesterlies followed by northerlies in mid-September, which saw good numbers to our north, failed to produce any Skokholm records.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*

*Aderyn Drycin Manaw*

Very Abundant Breeder

1665 trapped (including 121 pulli), 222 retrapped, 4 controls (1936-1976: 169,895 trapped, 2011-2012: 15 trapped)

One seen on the ground near the Red Hut on 14th March was the first of the year. There were only two nocturnal records in the following two bitter weeks. Two were at sea on 28th March and this had increased to a minimum of 90 by the end of the month when the first male was heard calling from a
burrow. Numbers increased quickly and, as the nights began to resound to Manx Shearwater calls, more birds were seen at sea with 611 off Crab Bay on 7th April and 10,800 logged three days later. Separating passage birds at sea from the massive breeding population is impossible; the peak counts from the sea coincide with the dark period around the new moon when more birds come ashore but also during periods of stormy weather when the birds pushed inshore probably include passage birds. The peak counts in June were around the new moon, with 12,000 on the 11th and a minimum of 6000 on the 12th but with 4000 on the 23rd which, although the day of the full moon, was also a day of rough seas and squally showers. The highest count of the year came two days before the 4th August new moon, when birds passed the Lighthouse at a rate of up to 25 a second for 90 minutes and a minimum of 60,140 were counted for the day. There were at least 8000 the next day and more than 4000 were logged for each of the following four days. A count of 30,000 on 17th August, four days before a full moon, coincided with a day of strong winds and heavy rain but the 20,500 logged at sea on the 21st, the night of the full moon, occurred in calm and sunny conditions; it would seem there is an exception to every rule.

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. Having such burrows meant that this year we could accurately assess breeding success on Skokholm for the first time since the early 1970s. Of 54 study burrows at the Lighthouse, 41 were occupied by a pair which produced an egg; of 12 study burrows along the track to the Quarry, nine pairs produced an egg; of 26 study burrows inland of Crab Bay, 21 pairs produced an egg. There were thus 71 burrows this year from which productivity could be assessed. Of these eight definitely failed at egg stage as abandoned eggs were found. A further seven failed at either egg or small chick stage but neither was found to confirm the stage of failing. Two pairs definitely failed with a small chick and only one pair failed with a sizable chick, a youngsters which reached over 30 days of age before it was found dead. For a chick to be assumed to be of fledging size it was required to reach a wing length in excess of 210mm. There were 53 chicks which reached this size. Productivity for 2013 was thus 0.75 fledging sized chicks per breeding pair (or 74.65% of pairs produced a fledging sized chick). It should be noted that this is the number of chicks which attained fledging size and does not reflect the substantial number of fledglings which are lost to Great Black-backed Gull predation as they exercise their flight muscles and make their first flights. The majority of chicks had departed the study burrows by 14th September, indeed only three of the 11 remaining chicks were not of fledging size. However it was not until 16th October that one particularly late chick, which on 20th August only had a 27mm wing when many other chicks were of fledging size, had reached an adult wing length.
Another advantage to having the study burrows is that it allows the correction factor, used when monitoring the number of occupied burrows within an area, to be checked. The standard assumption we currently make is that the number of responses to a tape playback of male call can be multiplied by 1.98 (a figure which takes into account that it is typically only the male which responds to the call) to give the number of breeding pairs in an area. To check that this assumption is valid six visits were made to study burrows known to be active (see table below). It was found that there was a large variation in the number of responses, primarily due to the chance presence of higher proportions of male or female birds on particular dates. The correction factor thus varied between 1.61 and 2.45, although remarkably the average (average number of occupied burrows/average number of responses) is the 1.98 we currently use. It should be noted that this predicts the number of occupied burrows and not the number of breeding birds.

The number of incubating birds and occupied burrows which responded to a recording of male call. There are more occupied burrows than incubators as non-breeding birds were present in the study burrows. Response rate is the percentage of birds which responded. The correction factor (birds/responses) is the figure which should be used to calculate population size from an observed number of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>2nd June</th>
<th>4th June</th>
<th>7th June</th>
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<td>Responses from incubators</td>
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<td>66.67</td>
<td>48.39</td>
<td>42.86</td>
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<td>Total response rate</td>
<td>54.29</td>
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<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.98</td>
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</table>

The study burrows proved so useful this year that a further 101 were established in the area to the west of the Lighthouse. This will improve sample sizes in future years.
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. A new plot was established in 2006 to maintain a good sample area, however only seven plots have been sampled for a full 15 years. On each annual visit the number of burrows within the area is counted, along with the number of burrows from which a response is elicited when the call of a male bird is played down them. The standard correction factor is then used to calculate the population within the area.

The total number of burrows, responses, and the calculated population estimate for the 7000 square meters sampled annually since 1999.

The crash from 2007 numbers was previously attributed to the collapse of many burrows in the more fragile areas of Skokholm, particularly near the Lighthouse which was at one time the densest area of Manx Shearwaters on the Planet (Smith et al., 2001). Although this may certainly have played a role, it seems unlikely that this would be a major factor as there are considerably more burrows than pairs and the number of burrows appears to fluctuate independently of the number of tape playback responses (see graph above). The eighth sample plot, begun in 2006, shows nicely the apparent lack of connectivity between the number of burrows and the apparent number of breeding pairs (see graph below). This may be attributable to the number of burrows frequently being altered by rabbits, in some areas by Puffins and perhaps most markedly in some places, the diggings of non-breeding birds, particularly later in the season.

The estimated number of pairs in the 8000 square metres sampled since 2006.

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This year saw numbers reach a new low within the seven study areas, although they were also remarkably close to the previous five years and any change could easily be attributable to the chance presence of fewer males and more silent females at the time of sampling (indeed the checking of the 1.98 correction factor detailed above showed that this can be the case). If the new plot is included in the figures, then 2013 saw a 4% increase in the estimated number of pairs and the highest estimate since 2009 (see table above). It seems likely that the Skokholm population is currently stable. To check this assumption, 2013 saw the end of a two year whole Island census.
The total number of burrows, responses, and the calculated population estimate for the new 1000 square meter plot sampled annually since 2006.

The Skokholm Manx Shearwater population was estimated as 10,000 pairs in 1928, as 35,000 pairs in 1964 and at 35-37,000 pairs in 1967 (Betts, 1992). More recently a 1998 whole Island estimate put the population at 46,184 pairs (Smith et al., 2001). A similar methodology was employed over the last two years and the resulting estimate is 41,197 pairs (C.M. Perrins pers. comm.). It should be noted that the confidence intervals are very large.

The first fledglings were seen on the surface on 23rd August and the number of birds littering the track to the Lighthouse was soon in three figures. The first fledgling affected by puffinosis was seen on 3rd September. This is a mysterious affliction which, possibly due to the actions of a virus which leads to bacterial infection, sees the development of blistered feet, conjunctivitis and problems with limb control; it is often fatal. It has been suggested that puffinosis is prevalent in wet areas but many birds were recorded, despite 2013 being such a dry year. It has been suggested that puffinosis is contracted by fledglings when they first leave their burrows (Brooke, 1990); it was thus interesting to note that a chick in a Crab Bay study burrow, which when measured on 20th August was of fledgling size, was still in its burrow on 5th September (when many chicks of a similar size had departed) and was still present on 14th September when it showed the obvious signs of puffinosis. This was the only study chick observed with puffinosis this year.

Only single figure counts were noted in September and October. The late study bird was last seen on 15th October, a Great Black-backed Gull held a fresh kill on the 17th, the last fledgling was seen on the 21st and two were seen at sea from the Lighthouse on the 19th and 27th October.

**Ringing recovery FB35994**
- Originally ringed as an adult, BARDSEY ISLAND, GWYNEDD 22nd June 2012
- Recovered LIGHTHOUSE TRACK, SKOKHOLM 18th July 2013
- Finding condition At colony but not necessarily breeding
- Distance travelled 122km at 196 degrees (SSW)
- Days since ringed 391

This bird was trapped at a nocturnal attraction to Bardsey Lighthouse and may thus have been a bird just passing the north Wales island. Interestingly, it was ringed by Skokholm Warden Richard Brown.

**Ringing recovery FC66390**
- Originally ringed as a juvenile, FRESHWATER WEST, PEMBROKESHIRE 13th September 1994
- Recovered LIGHTHOUSE STUDY BURROWS, SKOKHOLM 19th May, 30th May and 2nd June 2013
- Finding condition Breeding
- Distance travelled 16km at 291 degrees (WNW)
Days since ringed 6837

A fantastic example of how juvenile birds which inadvertently fledge towards the mainland can go on to breed if they make it back out to sea. This bird breeds in Lighthouse study burrow 23 and had fledged a chick by 5th September.

**Balearic Shearwater** *Puffinus mauretanicus*  
**Scarce to Uncommon** first recorded in 1960

One east past the Lighthouse on 4th August, a day which saw over 60,000 Manx Shearwaters and a Sooty Shearwater pass in moderate southerly winds, was the only record of the year (RDB). The same conclusions as noted for Sooty Shearwater probably apply.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*  
**Abundant to Very Abundant Breeder**


Amazingly, considering the number of birds which breed on Skokholm, Storm Petrels were not seen on seawatches; all records, as in most years, were nocturnal. The first record of 2013 was of a minimum of five individuals seen during a visit to the Quarry on 1st May. Song was not heard until 12th May when an individual was purring in North Pond Wall. Guided walks to the Quarry throughout June and July enjoyed good views of Storm Petrels, with double figure counts seen on each visit and 100 estimated on 1st June. However the use of a thermal imaging camera on this date revealed 100 individuals to be a substantial undercount, with many more birds present in the air than could be seen using a torch. The thermal imaging camera also showed how the birds dramatically alter their flight patterns when a torch is used making a count using artificial light impossible and highlighting how important it is that we restrict torch use within the Quarry. The conclusion was that thermal imaging may help in the future with estimating colony size but counting individuals at night currently gives a very poor representation of numbers. With this in mind four study transects were established at the Quarry in 2010 with further plots in North Haven Gully and two of the walls which radiate from the Farm (Sutcliffe and Vaughan, 2011).

**The total number of occupied crevices (located over multiple visits) responding to a recording of male song at each of the seven study sites.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Pond Wall</th>
<th>Little Bay Wall</th>
<th>North Haven Gully</th>
<th>Quarry transect 1</th>
<th>Quarry transect 2</th>
<th>Quarry transect 3</th>
<th>Quarry transect 4</th>
<th>Quarry total</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten visits were made to the North Haven Gully colony between 25th June and 18th July, eight visits were made to the Quarry between 3rd July and 18th July and five visits were made to the study walls between 18th June and 7th July. Seven or eight visits proved the minimum required to locate the majority of active crevices along a transect (see graph below). The number of active crevices at all seven study sites was up on 2012, with the exception of Quarry transect 3 which saw the same number of responses as in the previous two years (see table above). The 129 active crevices located across the seven sites were 31 (31.6%) more than recorded in 2012. However the totals from North Pond Wall, North Haven Gully and Quarry transects 1, 2 and 3 were very similar to recent years. Little Bay Wall and Quarry transect 4 are the longest survey sections and both saw significant
increases on the last few years. However the total of 15 responses along Little Bay Wall is two fewer than was recorded in 2006. The proportion of known active crevices which responded to the recording of male song was 21.4% up on 2012 (see table below).

The percentage of known active crevices which responded to male song on any single visit, averaged across all visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>North Haven Gully</th>
<th>Quarry transect 1</th>
<th>Quarry transect 2</th>
<th>Quarry transect 3</th>
<th>Quarry transect 4</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>37.50</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>37.80</td>
<td>35.50</td>
<td>33.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>35.56</td>
<td>33.64</td>
<td>17.69</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>33.20</td>
<td>28.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>36.67</td>
<td>38.75</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>26.36</td>
<td>30.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>39.55</td>
<td>36.61</td>
<td>38.33</td>
<td>33.75</td>
<td>36.69</td>
<td>36.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cumulative and per visit totals of active crevices at the Quarry based on responses to an mp3 playback of the male’s song.

The number of crevices which have at some point been occupied over the four year study, broken down to show how many years the crevices have been apparently occupied for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarry Transects</th>
<th>The Walls</th>
<th>North Haven Gully</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This project is still at an early stage and it is very difficult to currently draw any conclusions, however it seems likely that the Skokholm population is stable at present. This is positive news following the significant decline recorded between 1996 and 2010 (Sutcliffe and Vaughan, 2011). One possible impact on the population is predation. The remains of two predated birds were found on the South Coast path on 12th May and further corpses were found on the 20th and 30th. A Short-eared Owl was observed hunting at the Quarry on 31st May and was caught by the thermal imaging camera doing the same thing the following day. A Short-eared Owl flushed from near the Quarry on 18th June was watched as it flew to Skomer and a bird was again in the Quarry on the night of 27th June. A pellet found in the Quarry on 4th July contained Storm Petrel remains and an owl feather was alongside the remains of a Storm Petrel on 12th July. The closest breeding Short-eared Owls are on Skomer and it would seem that at least one of these birds is aware of a source of food on Skokholm.
Students from Cardiff University carried out a tape playback census at the wall around the Cottage garden and found 13 apparently occupied crevices. This is more than were thought to use this small section of wall so close to the accommodation.

Four Storm Petrel chicks were found to be accessible this year, three of which occupied artificial nest boxes (box number 32 in Little Bay Wall and two boxes above the Quarry). The fourth chick was in a natural crevice in North Haven Gully. Box 32 forms part of the study plot and was thus found to be active during the egg incubation period. Storm Petrels are prone to disturbance during an incubation which lasts approximately 40 days, thus the box was left until 18th August when a tiny chick was found alone. The following day an adult was present but from the 23rd onwards the chick was always alone during the day. Regular visits were made to monitor development (see graph below). It is interesting to note how wing growth is rather linear and the weight from a young age is more than that of an average adult. On 9th October the chick had fledged (at approximately 60 days old). When last weighed it was 41.3g, more than 25% heavier than most adults. The benefits to having accessible nest sites are significant; if a reasonable number can be located then productivity could be calculated, something which is very difficult to achieve for this species. With this in mind further artificial nest boxes, made of cement rather than plastic to more closely mirror natural sites, were installed at the Quarry this season.
Adult Storm Petrels were mist netted on 15 nights during the year, with 101 trapped on the night of 16th/17th August the largest catch of the year. These nights proved very popular with guests and generated some interesting recoveries. We received news this year that the oldest known Storm Petrel was ringed here in 1974 before being recaptured on Alderney in 2011.

**Ringing recovery 2147350**  
*Originally ringed* as an adult, SKOKHOLM 4th August 1974  
*Recovered* ALDERNEY, CHANNEL ISLANDS 15th August 2011  
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist net  
*Distance travelled* 306km (SE)  
*Days since ringed* 13,525 (a British longevity record for this species)

**Ringing recovery 2367212**  
*Originally ringed* as an adult, PORTLAND BILL, DORSET 2nd August 1991  
*Recovered* SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 19th and 20th August 2013  
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist net  
*Distance travelled* 238km at 304 degrees (NW)  
*Days since ringed* 8053

**Ringing recovery 2513358**  
*Originally ringed* as an adult, STRUMBLE HEAD, PEMROKESHIRE 30th July 2010  
*Recovered* SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 21st July 2013  
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist net  
*Distance travelled* 40km at 202 degrees (SSW)  
*Days since ringed* 1087

**Ringing recovery 2527328**  
*Originally ringed* as an adult, GWENNAP HEAD, CORNWALL 5th August 2000  
*Recovered* SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 19th July 2013  
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist net  
*Distance travelled* 188km at 9 degrees (N)  
*Days since ringed* 4731
Ringing recovery 2582697
Originally ringed as an adult, POINT LYNAS, ANGLESEY 13th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 30th August 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 203km at 200 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 48

Ringing recovery 2673330
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 21st July 2012
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 17th August 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 392

Ringing recovery 2673673
Originally ringed as an adult, DEEP POINT, SCILLY 30th July 2012
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 17th July 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 211km at 20 degrees (NNE)
Days since ringed 352

Ringing recovery 2683029
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 7th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 19th July 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 12

Ringing recovery 2683127
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 11th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 27th August 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 47

Ringing recovery 2683162
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 11th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 16th August 2013
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 36
There were four controls from the Lizard, Cornwall in 2013, three of which had been ringed this year and two of which had been ringed on the same date (although they were controlled 11 days apart).

Gannet *Morus bassanus*  
**Hugan**

**Very Abundant** but uncommon between November and March

Considering the presence of roughly 39,292 breeding pairs on nearby Grassholm (Murray, 2009), the third largest Atlantic Gannery, it is perhaps surprising that the number seen from Skokholm is so small. However recent studies using GPS tracking devices on Grassholm birds have shown that the majority head west and south from the Gannery before returning by a similar route (G. Morgan pers. comm.; Morgan, 2013). Although peak Gannet counts and seawatching effort coincide with strong onshore winds, thus biasing the Skokholm data, it seems likely that Gannets do genuinely come closer to Skokholm in rougher conditions. The five highest counts of the year, namely 960 on the 5th, 892 on the 10th, 1800 on the 15th, 2144 on the 16th and 1500 on the 17th, all came in August and all coincided with strong south or westerly winds. However 700 on the 9th, including 550 in 30 minutes, came in calm conditions and suggests that some feeding trips pass close to Skokholm. Although birds were seen feeding on many dates, the vast majority of records involved birds passing by determinedly. There are few, if any, documented records of a seemingly healthy adult spending time ashore on Skokholm, so one on the slope at Peter’s Bay on 30th July was notable (SM et al.).

The total number of Gannets logged each month, along with the monthly maximum and the date on which it was recorded. November recording was from the 1st until the 16th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>1635</td>
<td>12,705</td>
<td>3031</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>2144</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>16th</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>10th</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
**Mulfran**

**Common Visitor** particularly in late August and September

Although not logged every day, Cormorants were regular around Skokholm throughout the recording period. The majority of records were of roosting birds on the Stack, although birds were also frequent around Crab Bay and the Lighthouse. Birds travelling at height in a southeasterly direction were first noted on 28th August when 18 headed over together. There were then eight days in September when birds also headed in a southeasterly direction, typically in single figure groups but with the largest flock totalling 34 birds and with maximum day counts of 15 on the 5th and 97 on the 28th. The latter count eclipses the two highest counts of the past eight years, namely 30 on 15th September 2006 and 30 on 22nd September 2012, and is probably the second highest day count of all time following 107 which headed south on 12th September 2003. A further 16 birds likewise headed southeast on 9th November. This autumnal passage was noted by both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007).

The total number of Cormorants logged each month (and on how many days they were logged), along with the monthly maximum and the date on which it was recorded. November recording was from the 1st until the 16th.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 (11)</td>
<td>13 (11)</td>
<td>54 (26)</td>
<td>22 (18)</td>
<td>41 (23)</td>
<td>56 (19)</td>
<td>211 (25)</td>
<td>29 (12)</td>
<td>22 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>31st</td>
<td>4 dates</td>
<td>4 dates</td>
<td>28th</td>
<td>28th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Shag Phalacrocorax aristotelis**
**Common Resident and Irregular Scarce Breeder**

Shag were recorded on most days throughout the season and the majority of zero counts probably refer to days when viewing was hampered by the weather or constraints on staff time. A pair established a nest high up on the cliff at Smith’s Bay (just to the west of Blacksmith’s Landing) and both adults were in attendance during the boat-based cliff count on 31st May. Although the nest could only be viewed from land using a telescope at considerable distance, adults were confirmed on the nest on the 6th and 7th June. No young were observed and a Fulmar had taken up periodic residence of the nest platform from the end of June. Prior to 2013 a single pair bred between 1932 and 1935, there were two pairs in 1936 and 1937, a single pair in 1987 was the last successful attempt (two fledged from the Bluffs) and a pair failed with three chicks during wet weather in 2012. Numbers peaked during the autumn, presumably bolstered by post-breeding and juvenile dispersal. Peak counts came from the Stack and surrounding rocks with 24 on 24th September the highest count of the year. Thompson (2007) follows Betts (1992) in stating that the maximum count recorded from Skokholm is 20; peak counts of 16 on 21st August 2010, 22 in August 2011, 18 on 31st July 2012 and now 24 this year (along with 21 on 27th September) perhaps suggest that autumn numbers are increasing slightly.

The number of Shag seen on each day of the 2013 season and the monthly maxima.

**Little Egret Egretta garzetta**
**Rare Visitor** 12 previous records

One seen in flight past the Quarry on 4th March was tracked as it worked its way eastwards and around to the Stack (RT, CS, GE et al.). Given that this species is now a fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant in Pembrokeshire, it is perhaps surprising that this was only the 13th Skokholm record and the first since 23rd July 2007. The first Skokholm record was of a plumed adult which roosted in the Bread Rock Lesser Black-backed Gull colony on 18th May 1983. The other records are of three at the Dip on 10th October 1993, two on 1st May 1997, singles on 2nd and 18th August 1998, 4th August 1999, 8th June 2000, 3rd July 2000, 6th May 2002, two on 25th April 2003 and a single on 13th July 2006.

**Grey Heron Ardea cinerea**
**Uncommon** but in some years scarce

As is typically the case, the first record did not come until June when one headed west on the 25th. Lone birds headed west on 17th July and 6th August and further singles were logged on the 16th, 25th and 27th August. Two were together on 6th September and three birds headed west at altitude four days later. There were then singles on 28th September and the 4th, 9th and 13th October, the latter...
rather predictably heading west. One at South Pond on 16\textsuperscript{th} November was the last record of 2013. A total of 13 records in a year is the most for nearly a decade, but the peak day count of three is well down on the seven recorded in 2007 and 2011.

*Spoonbill* *Platalea leucorodia*

**Llwybig**

**Rare Summer Visitor** 11 previous records, but now six in five years

A first-summer bird circled Skokholm on 19\textsuperscript{th} May before heading out towards Skomer (EW *et al.*); what was presumably the same bird had previously been seen in flight over Marloes Mere that morning. Another subadult bird circled on 7\textsuperscript{th} August before heading out to sea in the direction of Marloes (GE *et al.*); this bird was not relocated locally. These were the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} records for Skokholm. Previous records were of a first-winter on 20\textsuperscript{th} October 1957, two first-winters together flew west on 12\textsuperscript{th} October 1988, lone adults were present on 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1993, 24\textsuperscript{th} June 1994 and 1\textsuperscript{st} May 1996, an immature spent the day on 21\textsuperscript{st} September 1996, an adult alighted above the Crab Bay cliffs on 21\textsuperscript{st} June 2001, an adult arrived 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2009 and departed the following day and two birds drifted over Broad Sound and back on 9\textsuperscript{th} June of the same year. Most recently an adult briefly visited North Pond on 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 2011 and a juvenile was present on 27\textsuperscript{th} October 2011.

*Marsh Harrier* *Circus aeruginosus*

**Bod y Gwerni**

**Rare becoming Scarce** recorded in every month from April to September but only one adult male

A wing-tagged juvenile on 15\textsuperscript{th} September was the first since 18\textsuperscript{th} August 2012 and maintains the annual status of this species. The bird was tagged yellow left wing, pink with a yellow N right wing, showing it to be a bird ringed in the Tay Reedbeds, Perthshire on 3\textsuperscript{rd} July 2013 and one of 15 to be tagged as chicks there this year.

*Hen Harrier* *Circus cyaneus*

**Bod Tinwen**

**Scarce** and no records between 2005 and 2011 inclusive
A ring-tail over the Bog on 9th April was only the fifth April record for Skokholm (RDB, JW). A harrier observed by guests coming in off the sea at the Lighthouse on 20th April was probably not of this species (see the Warden’s Report). The first autumn Hen Harrier was a bright juvenile near North Pond on 5th November (RDB, GE). Although this bird was seen to depart for the mainland, what may have been the same juvenile was watched on the 14th and 15th November. This was a rather similar season to 2012 which saw single spring and autumn ring-tails on 18th March and 5th September.

**Sparrowhawk Accipiter nisus**  
**Gwalch Glas**  
**Uncommon Visitor** occurring in all months but more frequent outside of the breeding season  
2 trapped (1936-1976: 10 trapped)

A female at the Lighthouse on 21st April was the first of the year. There was then a single on 24th April, a female on 30th April and one on 6th May was the last of the spring. A female on 24th August was the first of the autumn. A female was also recorded on the 26th, 28th and 29th and she was joined by a first-winter male on the 28th. Single females were recorded on 14 dates in September, at various locations and one was seen to depart for the mainland on the 5th. A male was present on the 14th and 15th September. There were unsexed singles on 30th September and 3rd October. A first-winter male, trapped in the Well Heligoland on 9th October, was still present the following day when a first-winter female was also trapped there. A single the following day was the last record of the season.

**Buzzard Buteo buteo**  
**Bwncath**  
**Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor**  
2 pulli trapped (1936-1976: 11 trapped)

What was presumably the breeding pair were present from 1st March although counts of four on the 27th and three on the 28th showed that other birds were crossing Broad Sound. Adults additional to the breeding pair were seen on six days in April, with peaks of four birds on the 3rd and five birds on the 5th, and on six days in May, with a peak of four on the 1st. An adult was watched as it flew to Skomer on three separate dates in May. A bird was seen with nest material on 20th March and the nest was located in Wreck Cove on 14th April, but it was not until June that the adults were seen incubating. An adult was seen carrying a Rabbit to the nest on 16th July and two chicks were ringed there the following day. The nest was empty on 3rd August and a ringed juvenile was seen near the nest on the 5th. The second chick was not seen again. Buzzards are amazingly unobtrusive as a
Skokholm breeding bird, particularly during the egg incubation and small chick period, as reflected by the 52 days in spring when the species was not logged. Such secretiveness may have led to an under-recording of breeding attempts, but a pair was definitely present in most years between 1927 and 1951, there were two pairs in 1948 and a single pair bred in 1954. Following a 26 year absence, they nested in all but one year between 1980 and 1989, then following another absence they nested in all but two years from 1997 until 2009. No nest was found in 2010 or 2011, despite the regular presence of adults during the season, but two young fledged last year.

The breeding birds remained as a family group and were seen together on four days in August and September and a ringed juvenile was seen 4th October. The breeding birds were joined by birds from elsewhere on four dates in September, with a peak of eight on the 20th (the highest documented count for over a decade), on five dates in October, with peaks of five on the 12th and 15th, and on seven dates in November, with peaks of six on the 4th and 13th and seven on the 14th. Birds were seen departing for both Skomer and the mainland during this period.

**Kestrel Falco tinnunculus**

*Uncommon* recorded in all months but more regular post breeding
1 trapped (1936-1976: 8 trapped)

**Cudyll Coch**

A female logged daily between the 1st and 20th March, usually in the vicinity of Home Meadow, was joined by a male on the 14th. There were then singles logged on the 23rd and 24th March and the 2nd, 19th and 21st April. There were no Kestrels in May but in June a male was recorded on the 13th, 14th and 20th and unsexed singles were logged on the 19th and 30th July and 2nd August. A male was
present on the 25th, 26th and 29th August. A typical increase in records was then observed with single female or juvenile type birds logged on 13 September dates from the 5th, there were two similar individuals between the 25th and 27th and a first-winter male hunted on 29th September. There were records on every day of October bar the 15th with two birds logged on the 1st, the 2nd and the 12th. What may have been the same first-winter female was seen on 12 of the 16 recording days in November and was trapped on the 4th; this was only the ninth Kestrel to be ringed on Skokholm.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*  
**Uncommon** recorded in every month but only one June and four July records  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 9 trapped)

A bird near South Pond on 11th March was the first of the year. A first-winter female was trapped on 17th March, in the same Well Heligoland Trap which was to later catch two Sparrowhawk and a Kestrel. What was probably the same female was seen harassing Skylark for the next two days. There were daily records between 25th March and 3rd April including two, a first-winter male and a first-winter female, on the 27th and 29th. A male was logged on the 6th and 9th April and there were daily records between the 12th and 28th April bar the 17th and 27th. A single was recorded on the 14th and 15th May and a late bird was logged on 29th May. There were then no records until 26th September when one was hunting over Home Meadow. A female was chasing migrants at the Quarry on the 29th and 30th September. There were 16 singles logged in October with no more than two days between records. What were probably three separate individuals on 3rd November would have equalled the record Skokholm day count if it could have been confirmed, but the extremely mobile and stealthy nature of Merlin makes multiple birds difficult to count. A single on 6th November was the last record of the year.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*  
**Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor** resumed breeding in 1988 following a 56 year absence  
3 pulli trapped (the first to be ringed on Skokholm)

A pair was resident throughout the season and bred in a similar location to the previous four years. The pair displayed over the nest site in late March and incubation changeovers were seen in early
May. The nest scrape was visited, under a Schedule One Licence, on 10th May when three eggs were found. The site was littered with prey items including eight Puffin heads, ten Manx Shearwater heads, the wing of a juvenile Kittiwake and the rings from two racing pigeons. The adults were more evident in the second half of May, being particularly aggressive towards local gulls on 23rd May and extremely vocal around the nest on the 27th. Three eyases were ringed on 2nd June with all three seemingly healthy and well fed; the recently consumed bodies of two Puffins were at the nest. Other food items noted included an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull and a Guillemot chick, along with further Kittiwakes and Puffins.

A chick was seen out of the scrape on 16th June, with two on the 18th and all three were visible on 21st June by which time it was apparent that there were two females and a smaller male. On 26th June one of the females was seen to leave the nesting ledge and all three were watched energetically exercising their wings. There was drama on 28th June when the male chick was seen in the bills of two Great Black-backed Gulls, all three birds tumbling down the Bluffs and out of sight. Surprisingly the male reappeared in the company of the two flying females on 2nd July but it was lying flat and breathing heavily, a position it maintained for three days. Remarkably all three juveniles were seen chasing Oystercatchers on 7th July and all three were seen hunting independently, albeit rather unsuccessfully, from the 13th onwards. Juvenile birds were seen sporadically for the next month but their distribution across the Island made it difficult to track their number. It is interesting to note what appears to be generally higher productivity by Bluffs nesting birds (see table below).
Breeding pairs, location and fledging success for the last ten years. BL=The Bluffs, NH=North Haven, SC=South Coast, ?=breeding unproven.

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The resident pair hunted widely across the Island making it difficult to detect other adults. However additional birds were noted on four days in March, including a second pair on the 23rd. A second pair was also noted on 7th May, a male intruder was chased from the nesting territory on 11th May, a female was escorted from the territory by the breeding male on the 13th and a female was seen on five later dates in May, once in June and once in July. The surprising lack of aggression towards an intruding female led to the assumption that the birds may have been related.

**Water Rail Rallus aquaticus Rhegen y Dŵr**

Uncommon Winter Visitor and Irregular Scarce Breeder confirmed in 1929, 1931 and 2012

3 trapped (1936-1976: 19 trapped)

Birds presumably overwintered and 18 were recorded over 14 days in March with two at South Pond and singles at the Well and the Farm including one trapped behind the Wheelhouse on the 16th. There were records on all but four dates in April, with the majority coming from the Well where there were at least two individuals and one was trapped on the 11th. There were then records on all but seven dates in May with all sightings coming from the Well and a third bird trapped there on the 15th. There were singles at the Well on all but six dates in June, with two on the 13th, 14th and 15th. Birds were unobtrusive in July with singles recorded on six well-spaced dates. All records again came from the Well in August with singles on 15 dates. Birds were thus present throughout the breeding season and birds were seen carrying food, but there was no firm evidence of a breeding attempt.

A bird at the Farm on 1st September was probably the first indication of an autumn arrival and there were three further records from here during the month. Birds were logged at the Well on every day of September bar three and a ringed bird was seen on the 4th. Records increased at the end of September with four birds logged on the 29th and daily records of one to six birds throughout October with peaks of seven on the 15th and 31st. It is likely that there were double figures on the Island during this period with peak counts of three at North Pond, two at Orchid Bog, two at the Well, one near the Red Hut, three near East Bog, two at the Top Tank, two around the Cottage, two at South Pond and two at Winter Pond. A bird which had seemingly starved was found dead in Well
Stream on 19th October. There were also daily records in November with eight on the 10th the highest count of the year and of the past decade.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*  
**Scarce Breeder**  
2 trapped (1936-1976: 10 trapped)

This is a remarkably unobtrusive bird on Skokholm, perhaps more so in 2013 due to the general lack of water during the breeding season. There were nine singles logged in March, all at North Pond except for one at Orchid Bog. Ten of the 13 records in April were also at North Pond with a further three coming from the Well where both adults of a pair were trapped on the 12th and 29th. There were records on most days in May, predominantly from North Pond where a pair looked set to nest in a stand of iris but were presumably deterred by the drying out of the Pond. Three records came from the Well and a further two from the Cottage Garden on the last two days of the month, although these may have been a relocation of the North Pond pair which were not seen again. There were eight records of singles at East Bog during June, the first records of the year at this site; coupled with the absence of records from anywhere other than the Well it was assumed that these were the relocated North Pond birds. The two Well adults were seen with a tiny chick on 2nd July and four chicks were there the following day. The young were vocal throughout July. A single chick feeding with an adult at East Bog on 14th July was the first indication of successful breeding at this site. There were only six records in August although these included a juvenile at East Bog on the 13th and only nine September records included a juvenile at the Well on two dates. Of the 11 October sightings, observations from the Neck, to the south of North Pond and at South Pond were suggestive of either dispersal or a very small arrival, especially as there were still single juveniles at the Well and East Bog during this period. The only November record came from behind the Wheelhouse on the 13th. Two breeding pairs, both fledging at least one, matches that recorded in 2012 although is down on the four pairs of 2007 and the record four or five pairs mapped in 2011.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*  
**Uncommon Breeder and Common Visitor**  
(1936-1976: 1882 trapped)

Numbers fluctuated widely during March with peak counts of 122 on the 10th, 83 on the 15th and 96 on the 30th coming from the high tide roost on the Anticline. Fewer birds were logged during April with maximum Anticline counts of 64 on the 7th, 61 on the 9th, 51 on the 16th and only 38 on the 28th and 29th by which time adults were back on breeding territories. Birds were first seen copulating on 18th April and the first full clutches were seen on 10th May. A total of 40 pairs were mapped during mid-May, five more than were recorded in 2012, 22.9% more than the 2004-2013 mean (32.56 ±sd 5.17), but down on the 48 mapped in 2003 and the maximum of 55 pairs recorded in 1981 and 1983. Productivity monitoring focused on 11 nests located on 11th May, seven of which contained three eggs, three containing two eggs and one four eggs (average 2.82 eggs per nest). Different nests were decorated with different items, from small red sandstone pebbles to pieces of thrift root, but one pair near Wall's End picked a more unusual decoration (see photograph below). One pair had failed and a second was down to one egg from three by 21st May. Two pairs, including the one that had lost eggs, had failed by 28th May when the first tiny chicks were in one nest and the eggs were hatching in a second. Of the eight pairs that reached chick stage, two had failed by 21st June but the remaining six went on to fledge a minimum of one. Two pairs did particularly well, one fledging their full clutch of three and one fledging the two eggs of theirs which hatched. In total 11 fledglings were produced by the 11 monitored pairs. Where chicks were seen to be predated, Great Black-backed Gulls were responsible.
Small roosts of up to 28, perhaps non-breeding, adults were on the Anticline during May before the roost switched to North Pond in June, presumably bolstered by failed breeders; there were North Pond June peaks of 31 on the 16th, 39 on the 22nd and 35 on the 30th along with 38 on 3rd July. The roost site switched to Little Bay Point in July with peaks of 52 on the 24th and 48 on the 28th before birds began to disperse in August. There were then occasional small coastal roosts along with one-off peaks of 34 at Little Bay Point on the 7th and 41 on the Anticline on the 9th. Roosts were small in September with peaks of 20 at Little Bay Point on the 6th and 16 on the Anticline on the 9th. Numbers were similarly low in October with no birds logged at all between the 10th and 13th inclusive and a peak of 29 on the Anticline on the 24th. In November there were eight counts of between 18 and 27 birds roosting on the Anticline.

**Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria**

*Cwtiad Aur*

Uncommon however only 14 birds since 2006 and not recorded in 2008, 2009 or 2011 (1936-1976: 1 trapped)

There were no spring records, the last of which was a single on 19th May 2010. A summer plumaged bird which toured the South Coast on 6th July was the first of 2013. A flyover was heard only on 18th August and a further calling single went over four days later. The 16 logged on 29th September was the most recorded in a day for over a decade, the highest count of late being 15 on 5th September 2004. There were further flyover singles on 30th September and 5th October.

**Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola**

*Cwtiad Llwyd*

Scarce however only five singles since 2004

One calling over the Well on 3rd April was the first of the year (GE, RDB). The only other spring record was a bird which commuted between South Pond and Winter Pond on 1st May. A vocal bird heading over in mist on 26th September was the only autumn record.

**Lapwing Vanellus vanellus**

*Corncrige*

Scarce previously common and an uncommon breeder, but last bred in 2000 (1936-1976: 694 trapped)
A juvenile on the Neck on 18th July was sadly the only record of the year (RL et al.). There have only been 11 records since 2004 but winter visits would perhaps see more logged; historically numbers peaked in the winter months and a visit in late November 2011 found eight birds.

**Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius**

**Vagrant** six previous spring records of seven birds

**Earliest** 27th March 2012 (19th April 2013) **Latest** 19th May 2001 (5th May 2013)

An unprecedented three records in one spring all came from North Pond. The first of the year was on 19th April (RDB, GE), with further birds on 2nd May (GE, RDB) and 5th May (RDB). There have now been birds in three consecutive years, although still fewer than ten records.

**Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula**

**Uncommon Migrant** but Scarce in seven of last eight years (1936-1976: 3 trapped)

Following two singles on North Pond in April, the majority of spring birds passed in May with 39 logged during the month and a peak of five on the 22nd, the highest spring day count for over a decade. There were four further singles in June. The first autumn bird was a flyover single on 8th August and a further nine were logged during the month, including six on the 23rd. Autumn passage peaked in September with two flyovers on the 10th, three on the 11th and ten on the 12th including seven together. Ten birds in one day is the highest count for over 20 years, although prior to 1990 there had been counts of 13 in both May and September. Records of a juvenile logged daily between 24th September and 2nd October probably all referred to the same mobile bird.

**Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus**

**Common Migrant** has overwintered in at least ten years since 1968 (1936-1976: 30 trapped)
Day visits on the 15th and 23rd February failed to locate any wintering individuals but one or two birds were logged on nine dates in March. Passage began in April with 106 birds logged from the 20th. The 23 seen on the last day of the month was the highest day count of the year. There were 223 logged in May, with the majority coming in the first half of the month and peaks of 21 on the 5th and 16 on the 16th. There were 14 birds logged in the first nine days of June and then, with the exception of singles on 16th June and the 9th and 12th July, there were no records until seven together on 19th July. There were 14 more July records and 64 were logged in August including 20 on North Plain on the 15th which was the highest day count of the autumn. There were 42 birds logged in September, although the highest day count was only four on the 11th. A large majority of the 41 October and 14 November records were attributable to the same three individuals which perhaps looked set to overwinter.

**The number of Whimbrel logged on each day of 2013.**

**Curlew Numenius arquata**

*Abundant Visitor* usually present throughout the year but has never bred (1936-1976: 141 trapped)

Although there were only single figure counts on 21 days in March, reasonable numbers of Curlew were visiting Skokholm with over 15 logged on eight dates and a peak of 32 on the 8th. Up to seven birds were recorded on 23 days in April and up to three were present on 17 dates in May. June was the quietest month of the year with only 18 birds logged, although four on the 30th preceded the autumn influx. There were 113 birds in July with peaks of 17 on the 18th and 14 on the 25th. In August
there were 211 birds logged and peaks of 21 on the 14th, a group of 26 together on the 24th and 18 on the 29th. There were two dates in August with no birds logged, but Curlew were then recorded on every date from 20th August until 12th November. Despite their daily presence, there were only 94 birds in September, with peaks of eight on the 6th and 25th, and 169 in October with a peak of nine on the 21st. A flock of 19 on 1st November contributed to a day total of 23 birds, although only 41 birds were recorded in the remainder of the season. In terms of numbers logged, 2013 was thus the best Curlew year for over a decade, although the days of large roosts, numbering up to 200 and exceptionally 600 birds, seem to have gone.

The number of Curlew logged on each day of 2013.

![Graph showing the number of Curlew logged on each day of 2013.]

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*  
**Scarce Visitor** but uncommon in 2013  
(1936-1976: 1 trapped)

One on North Pond on 23rd March was the first of the year (RT). In June there were two moulting into summer plumage near North Pond on the 6th, a calling bird circled on the 9th, one headed east along the North Coast on the 10th and four were on North Plain on the 19th. A fine summer plumaged bird on 27th June exhibited the stunning deep rufous plumage and shorter legs of an Icelandic breeding *L. i. islandica*. An impressive flock of 21 heading southeast on 28th August was the highest ever Skokholm count, eclipsing the 15 recorded on 13th August 1990. Seven headed east two days later and ten went in the same direction on 6th September. One was in with Curlews and a Bar-tailed Godwit on 12th October. Five north on 4th November was the last record of the year.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*  
**Uncommon Visitor**  
(1936-1976: 8 trapped)

Two by Winter Pond on the afternoon of 6th May and one calling as it flew over the Neck on 26th May were the only spring records. In August one went over calling on the 6th and there was a single on
the 23rd. Four on 4th September were possibly the same four seen two days later. One in a mixed species flock of waders on 12th October was the last of the season. Traditionally this is the commoner godwit but this is the third year running where this has not been the case.

**Turnstone Arenaria interpres**

*Fairly Common Visitor* has been recorded in all months (1936-1976: 12 trapped)

Although logged in every month of the season except July, Turnstone are no doubt under recorded due to their predilection for spending the majority of their time below the cliffs and their sporadic use of the high tide roosts. The majority of records come from the Anticline and Devil’s Teeth roost sites although occasional birds are seen elsewhere and in flight. In March there were 26 birds over nine dates with a peak of six on the 10th and in April 14 birds over five dates with a peak of five on the 15th. Birds were only logged on three dates in May but these included 12 on the 15th. A single flew over the centre of the Island on 15th June. The first autumn record was a single on 16th August and there were a further 18 birds noted during the month. All of the 64 birds logged in September were recorded after the 10th with nine on the 27th, eight recorded on two dates, seven on two dates and five on three dates. October saw 103 birds logged over 17 dates and peaks of 12 on the 19th and 11 on the 23rd. Numbers dropped in November with 31 birds logged in the first half of the month and peaks of only six on the 2nd and 6th.

**Ruff Calidris pugnax**

*Scarc Migrant* but only one record in the last eight years (1936-1976: 7 trapped)

A ruff and a reeve which flew over on 27th September were seen by multiple observers as they headed eastwards. This was the first record since one on 2nd September 2007.

**Sanderling Calidris alba**

*Rare Migrant* but has been recorded in every month from March to October (1936-1976: 2 trapped)

One on North Pond on 18th May was the first for over eight years (MC et al.). There were then three on 31st May; two summer plumaged birds were with Dunlin on North Pond (RDB et al.) and a single on the Stack was seen from a boat conducting seabird counts (ST et al.). This is only the fifth time that multiple birds have been recorded on Skokholm. One bird was still present on North Pond on 1st June.
Dunlin *Calidris alpina*  
**Pibydd y Mawn**  
*Fairly Common Visitor* recorded in all months  
(1936-1976: 181 trapped)

A single on North Pond on 12th March was the first of the season. There were 12 birds over seven dates in April with peaks of three on two dates. Peak passage was in May with 111 recorded over 22 dates and highs of 30 on the 15th including a group of 28 watched in flight towards the mainland, 16 the following day including 14 together on North Pond and 13 on the 18th. Ten between the 1st and 7th June were the last of the spring. In July a juvenile was on the North Coast on the 11th and eight birds flew southeast past the Lighthouse on the 26th. There were few autumn records, no doubt due in part to the absence of any standing water on the Island; in August there were nine flyovers over five dates and in September there were four singles, again all flyovers. In October there were two individuals on the 11th and a single on the refilled North Pond on 8th November was the last of the season.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*  
**Pibydd Du**  
*Scarce Visitor* but recorded by Thompson and Betts as *Uncommon* and previously *Fairly Common*  
(1936-1976: 8 trapped)

As noted for Turnstone, a species with which Purple Sandpiper were seen to associate this season, it is likely that birds go under recorded as they inhabit the spray zone at cliff bases. However there seems to have been a marked decline in records which reflects the situation nationally and their amber listing as a species of UK conservation concern. Two on the Devil’s Teeth on 28th August were the first since a single on 23rd August 2010 and, bar this and two on 14th May 2010, were the first since September 2005. Five were on the Devil’s Teeth on 11th September and six there the following day were the only others logged in 2013.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*  
**Pibydd Cain**  
*Rare* 17 previous records including the first for Wales in 1958  
**Earliest** 13th May 2012 (15th May 2013) **Latest** 12th October 1958  
(1936-1976: 5 trapped)

A bird seen to the north of North Pond for just ten minutes on the evening of 15th May sees this species make the systematic list for a third year running (JM); there were two birds on North Pond on the 13th and 14th May 2011 with one remaining a further day, a single on the 7th and 8th September 2012 and two were on North Pond between the 16th and 18th September 2012 with one remaining a further three days. Including this year’s bird, there have only been two May records and three June records with the remainder between August and October.
**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*

**Pibydd y Dorlan**

**Uncommon Migrant** more regular in autumn

**Earliest** 21\textsuperscript{st} March 1948 (1\textsuperscript{st} May 2013)  **Latest** 29\textsuperscript{th} October 1975 (5\textsuperscript{th} September 2013)

(1936-1976: 23 trapped)

One in North Haven on 1\textsuperscript{st} May was the first of the year. The only other spring records were singles at North Pond on 5\textsuperscript{th} May and at the Lighthouse on 19\textsuperscript{th} May. In July a bird was calling at 0300hrs on the 8\textsuperscript{th}, two were around the Quarry on the 9\textsuperscript{th} and 10\textsuperscript{th} and singles were again heard in the small hours of the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th}. There were five in Crab Bay and a single in South Haven on the 31\textsuperscript{st}.

August was a record breaking month for this species. It began with a single on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, a bird which walked among the Crab Bay Puffins on the 4\textsuperscript{th} and two on the 5\textsuperscript{th}. The 14 birds recorded on the 6\textsuperscript{th}, 13 of which were around the Neck, was the highest ever Skokholm day count; ten were previously logged on 2\textsuperscript{nd} August 1955, 5\textsuperscript{th} August 1974 and 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 2000. There were only two birds the following day. A further 21 birds were recorded over 13 dates in the remainder of the month, with peaks of three on the 10\textsuperscript{th} and four on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}. In September there was a single in South Haven on the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} and a single in Peter’s Bay on the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} was the last of the year.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*

**Pibydd Gwyrdd**

**Scarce Migrant** not recorded every year and only three records since 2004

**Earliest** 2\textsuperscript{nd} April 1997 (25\textsuperscript{th} April 2013)  **Latest** 21\textsuperscript{st} October 1967 (13\textsuperscript{th} August 2013)

One on North Pond on 25\textsuperscript{th} April was the only spring bird and the twelfth April record for Skokholm (RDB, GE). One calling as it flew over the Farm in thick fog on 27\textsuperscript{th} July was the first of autumn (RDB). Two, but possibly three, on 13\textsuperscript{th} August were the last in what was a good year for this species.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*

**Pibydd Coeswerdd**

**Scarce Migrant** not recorded every year and only seven records since 2004

**Earliest** 6\textsuperscript{th} April 1978 (7\textsuperscript{th} July 2013)  **Latest** 9\textsuperscript{th} November 1958 (29\textsuperscript{th} September 2013)

One calling as it passed Manx Shearwater ringers at 0230hrs on 7\textsuperscript{th} July was the first of the year. There were further flyby singles over the Farm on 19\textsuperscript{th} July, 22\textsuperscript{nd} August and 23\textsuperscript{rd} August, along the North Coast on 11\textsuperscript{th} September and again over the Farm on 20\textsuperscript{th} September. A single on 29\textsuperscript{th} September was the last in what was a good year by recent standards.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*

**Pibydd Coesgoch**

**Uncommon Visitor** more regular in autumn

(1936-1976: 4 trapped)
What was presumably the same bird commuted between Winter Pond, the Dip and South Pond between the 23rd and 25th March. In April there was a single on North Pond on the evening of the 12th. In May two dropped in to North Pond for just two minutes on the 16th and there were further singles on the 19th, 23rd and 25th. With no birds in June, the next record was of two which passed the Neck on 14th July and a single was on the Neck three days later. Peak autumn passage was in August with up to two birds recorded over 11 dates between the 7th and the 30th. The only September records were singles on the 1st and the last of the season on the 6th.

**Jack Snipe Lymnocryptes minimus**

**Scarce Winter Visitor** although not recorded every year


(1936-1976: 8 trapped)

A bird flushed from Half Way Wall on 12th March was the first of the year (SS). There was then a bird at the Well on 15th March and the last of the spring was at Winter Pond on 17th March. The first bird of the autumn was at the Well on 27th September and a particularly showy individual fed in a newly cleared ride in front of the Well Hide on the 11th, 12th and 14th October. Singles were recorded near South Pond on the 29th and 31st October, there were two there on 9th November and singles were again recorded there on the 11th, 12th and 15th November. Although Lockley described Jack Snipe as ‘common from 7th October to 24th March’, by 2004 they had become ‘far less common, but recorded in most years’ (Thompson, 2007). Up until this year there had only been two records since 2004; there were two on 15th November 2010 and one on 26th September 2012.

**Woodcock Scolopax rusticola**

**Scarce Winter Visitor** not recorded every year but over 200 corpses found in February 1963

*Earliest* 18th September 2001 *Latest* 8th April 1965 (6th April 2013)

(1936-1976: 3 trapped)
One outside the Lighthouse compound on 6th April was only two days before the latest spring record (RDB, GE). There is only one record from the previous eight years, a single on the Neck on 12th March 2012.

**Snipe Gallinago gallinago**  
*Giach Cyffredin*  
**Common Winter Visitor and Passage Migrant** breeding most recently suspected in 1927 and 1965 (1936-1976: 54 trapped)

Five were seen on a preseason visit on 15th February. The peak 2013 counts came in the first few days of the season with 94 of the 145 birds logged in March coming in the first five days, a peak of 38 on the 3rd and impressive counts at South Pond of 31 on the 1st and 36 on the 3rd. There were 13 birds logged over 11 days in April with two at South Pond on the 25th the last of the spring. Two heading west over a dry North Pond on 20th August were the first of the autumn. The majority of the other ten August and 36 September birds were also calling flyovers, including the peak of eight logged on 25th September. October saw 55 birds recorded over 19 days including peaks of 11 on the 11th and seven on the 8th. There were 27 birds over 11 days in the first half of November, although the peak was only four on the 1st and there were three on five dates. There were thus 293 birds logged in 2013, compared to 71 in 2012.

**The number of Snipe seen on each day of 2013. There were no records in May, June or July.**

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**Arctic Skua Stercorarius parasiticus**  
*Sgiwen y Gogledd*  
**Scarce to Uncommon** prior to 2013 only recorded in three seasons since 2004  
**Earliest** 6th April 1959 (28th September 2013) **Latest** 22nd October 1968

A juvenile in Broad Sound on 28th September was the only record of the year and the first since September 2011 (SW).

**Great Skua Stercorarius skua**  
*Sgiwen Fawr*  
**Uncommon** sometimes scarce  
**Earliest** 12th April 1977 (10th August 2013) **Latest** 26th October 1987 (27th October 2013)

A good year by recent standards began with a single off the Lighthouse on 10th August. Viewing from the Lighthouse produced the other August records, namely two on the 15th, two on the 21st and singles on the 26th and 30th. There were nine birds logged between the 15th and 18th September with five on the 17th the highest count of the year. Two past the Lighthouse on 27th October were the last of the season and represent the latest ever occurrence of this species on Skokholm.
Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

Very Abundant Breeder

86 trapped (including 13 pulli), 2 retrapped, 1 control (1936-1976: 5411 trapped, 2011-2012: 186 trapped)

Five Puffins together off Crab Bay on 15\textsuperscript{th} March were the first of the year. Numbers remained low in March with the exception of 2120 rafting offshore on the 28\textsuperscript{th}. The evening of 6\textsuperscript{th} April saw 2700 including eight birds which were the first to make landfall in 2013. The following day a whole Island total of 3961 was the second highest count of the year. From 10\textsuperscript{th} April the birds visiting the Neck subcolonies were counted every evening to assess patterns of attendance (see below graph). Birds were first seen mating and with nest material on 21\textsuperscript{st} April.

The number of Puffins seen from the Neck between 10\textsuperscript{th} April and 10\textsuperscript{th} May. The transect began from a line due north of North Haven and finished at Peter’s Bay.

A whole Island count on 1\textsuperscript{st} May coincided with the second highest count of the year on the Neck and recorded 4834 individuals, the highest Skokholm count of 2013. This is 197 more than the highest count of 2012 (4637 on 21\textsuperscript{st} April) and continues the recent run of totals just below 5000 individuals (see below graph). Numbers fluctuated markedly during this period, for instance only 285 were present on 9\textsuperscript{th} May. A partially leucistic bird with a white collar was in the colony at Crab Bay on the 29\textsuperscript{th} and 30\textsuperscript{th} June.

The maximum number of Puffins recorded each year for the period 1989-2013.
A productivity plot was instigated at the start of this season at Crab Bay. A total of 100 suitable burrows, that is to say visible and seemingly unbranching, were marked and individually numbered. Of these, 77 were occupied and visible throughout the season; thus productivity estimates are based on observations of these burrows. Six active burrows (7.79%) were not seen to be provisioned with fish and it is thus assumed that these failed at egg stage. The first fish provisioning on Skokholm was witnessed at five sites on 30th May, but it was not until 9th June when fish were seen to be delivered to the study plot (11 of the 77 study burrows were first provisioned on this date). The following table shows the number of days between first and last fish provisioning for each of the 77 study burrows.

The number of days between first and last observed chick feeding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21-25</th>
<th>26-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>46-50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of burrows</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the study plot was monitored every day, it cannot be assumed that the first and last fish provisioning was seen for each burrow. Indeed the 24 hour Puffin watches highlighted how some burrows are only provisioned once during a 24 hour period and six burrows, known to contain chicks, were not seen to be provisioned at all during the watch on 30th June (see table below). Puffins can fledge having spent a minimum of 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). However, taking in to account that some deliveries may have been missed, it is assumed here that a chick which was provisioned for 31 days or more was of fledging size. Thus, of the 77 monitored breeding attempts, 38 (49.35%) were potentially successful.

The number of fish deliveries to known active burrows during the 30th June 24 hour watch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of deliveries</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of burrows</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While this productivity estimate represents birds that have reached fledging size, fledging success cannot be reliably ascertained. Puffin chicks are at their most vulnerable when exercising their flight muscles at the burrow entrance and when making their journey to the sea. Great Black-backed Gulls were observed within the colonies during the later stages of the season when they took multiple chicks of fledging age.

Four 24 hour watches were made, on 16th June, 30th June, 13th July and 21st July, to monitor kleptoparasitism by gulls. The study area was within the area marked by the 100 numbered burrow stakes at Crab Bay. On 16th June 413 birds arrived to the study area with fish and of these 76 (18.40%) were successfully robbed. On 30th June 684 birds arrived and of these 40 (5.85%) were robbed (see graph below). On 13th July 610 birds arrived and 32 (5.25%) were robbed (see graph below). On 21st July 107 birds arrived and 11 (10.28%) were robbed. It should be noted that these figures do not take into account the number of fish lost to gulls at sea or on the approach to the colony.

The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on 30th June and the number of times that gulls successfully robbed the fish.

The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on 13th July and the number of times that gulls 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 birds ringed in the first year and a further 58 in 2012. Of the 2011 birds, there were 72 seen in 2012 and 98 seen this year. A combined total of 104 individuals were seen over the two years, thus 104 (81.25%) of the 128 ringed were still alive, although not necessarily at the colony, in 2012. A possible flaw with this survivorship estimation is that colour
marks were added to Puffins caught in flight, individuals potentially resident in areas not visible to researchers. A better estimation of survivorship may thus come from looking for birds seen at burrows the previous year; of 72 birds seen in 2012, 66 (91.67%) were seen in 2013. Of the 58 birds ringed in 2012, there were 51 (87.93%) seen this year. However the same issues with hidden birds may apply to this. As this project continues it is likely that our survivorship estimate will continue to rise, as not all birds will be seen each year.

A further 51 Puffins were colour ringed this year, of which 49 were seen later in the season. This brings the number of individually marked birds to 237, of which 198 (83.54%) were seen in the colony this year.

Ringing recovery Left leg green darvic with white EE, Right leg BTO
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER, PEMBROKESHIRE 15th July 1992
Recovered as an adult, CRAB BAY, SKOKHOLM 23rd May 2013
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 7618

Puffin numbers were still in four figures at the start of August, for example 1650 were counted on the 3rd, however numbers dropped to 650 on the 4th and there were only 20 on the 6th. Low numbers were seen until the 12th, predominantly birds still feeding chicks, two adults were seen 13th August, there was a single on the 14th and a chick was predated by a Great Black-backed Gull on the 16th. A single adult at sea the following day was the last record of the year.

Razorbill Alca torda
Abundant Breeder
25 trapped (including 23 pulli), 1 control (1936-1976: 9220 trapped)

Although present from when Skokholm was occupied on 1st March, numbers fluctuated considerably; there were nine days in March with no birds logged, two days with single figure counts, six days of double figure counts, but impressive peaks of 1104 on the 3rd, 807 on the 13th, 1104 on the 14th, 1329 on the 18th, 2069 on the 20th, 1818 on the 27th and 1182 on the 28th. A similar pattern of attendance was noted during a bitterly cold April with near total absences noted on the 1st, 5th, 8th and 9th, from the 14th until the 19th, 24th and 27th. Early May saw similar returns to the sea with only 38 logged on the 4th, 70 on the 8th and 17 on the 9th. Additionally morning counts of 330 on
the 1st and 400 on the 2nd both preceded total evening departures. The first egg was noted on the 11th and numbers were far more constant from midmonth.

Six study plots, established in 2002, were visited on ten dates between the 1st and 12th June and every adult in suitable breeding habitat was counted. Record numbers were recorded in the four plots which contain Razorbills. There were 38.4% more birds than recorded in 2012 and 14.6% more than were recorded in the record year of 2011. It should be noted that these counts are significantly affected by the weather; in the wet June of 2012 the total fluctuated between 164 birds on the wet 7th and 338 on the dry 8th whereas the 2013 range was considerably smaller, with a low of 301 on the 3rd and a peak of 397 on the 9th. Despite the significant impact of this variable, there is no doubt that the number of adults attending the colonies is increasing significantly.

Whole Island counts were made during early June and counts were made from a boat on 31st May and 8th June. A 100-400mm camera was used during the boat counts to take photographs of areas not visible from the Island, photographs which could then be accurately counted on a computer. Access to a boat will have inevitably led to an increase on the 2012 total when rough seas made such visits impossible; in 2012 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). It is thus not surprising that the 2294 adults in suitable nesting habitat recorded this year was a significant 56.8% up on the 2012 total; however it was also 54.4% up on the record 2011 boat assisted total. It is without doubt that the number of Razorbills attending the breeding colonies is increasing, but there may be several reasons for the significant 2013 increase, reasons additional to the boat access. A change in personnel and their optical equipment may be one reason. A curious phenomenon of recent years has been that the numbers within the study plots have increased at a faster rate than the Whole Island counts, despite new colonies appearing on the Island. It is thus of note that this year the proportion of the overall count made up of study plot birds dropped back to approximately 15%, as it was at the start of the study plot project. Additionally the fine 2013 weather will undoubtedly have led to high counts; there seems to be a definite correlation between the weather and the number of birds present. Fine weather perhaps attracts more non-breeding birds, allows adults to hunt more effectively and thus spend more time at the colony, or perhaps birds prefer to spend periods of poor weather at sea.

The whole Island totals, plot totals and the percentage of the Island totals made up of study plot birds.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>1486</td>
<td>1463</td>
<td>2294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot %</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total number of Razorbills (adults on ledges) recorded on Skokholm since 1970 and the number of birds within the study plots since 2002.

Productivity estimates have been unattainable in recent years due to constraints on staff time; however the significant increases apparent in the number of adult birds demanded an understanding of productivity. Two plots were thus established in 2013, one cliff site below the Neck Razorbill hide where 26 incubating pairs were found on 26th May and one site among the Bluffs boulder slope where 20 egg sites were marked on 19th May. Among the Bluffs boulders there were seven failures at the egg incubation stage, two failures at chick stage and 11 (55%) produced a fledging sized chick. On the Neck cliff there were four failures at egg stage, two failures at chick stage and 20 (76.92%) produced a fledging sized chick. The considerably poorer productivity in the boulders may be genuinely representative of the site as the seven checks on nest status did not apparently lead to any predation. However it should be noted that issues with small sample sizes may be affecting the results. Interestingly all monitored attempts had concluded by 8th July at the Bluffs but it was not until 17th July that all cliff attempts had come to an end; this perhaps reflects a tendency for chicks among boulders to move away from the egg site whilst cliff chicks have little room for movement. The combined productivity figure is 0.67 fledging sized young per pair. The estimate achieved in 2007 was 0.2 per pair and in 2002 it was 0.8 per pair.

The first fledgling had departed by 28th June and within the study plots 25.8% of the fledglings had departed by 1st July, 32.3% had gone by the 4th, 51.6% by the 6th and 80.6% had fledged by the 8th. There was a similar departure of adult birds, with numbers dropping rapidly towards the middle of July. There were only double figure counts from 14th July and these had dropped to single figure
counts by the 24th. There were no adults recorded on the cliffs from 28th July. There were only 17 Razorbills recorded in August, 65 between 15th September and the end of the month and 78 over six dates in October. Further large auk s were present at sea during the autumn but their distance from land saw them logged as ‘auk sp.;’ there were 60 in September, 715 in October and 219 between the 1st and 15th November.

**Ringing recovery** K24881  
*Originally ringed* as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 18th June 2012  
*Recovered* as a chick, SOUTH COAST PATH, SKOKHOLM 29th May 2013  
*Finding condition* Small leg and ring only  
*Distance travelled* 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)  
*Days since ringed* 345  
Although nearly a year passed before the leg was found, its small size showed that this was a chick brought back to Skokholm by a predator, either from Skomer or as a fledgling brought back from the sea.

**Guillemot Uria aalge**  
*Abundant Breeder* 
2 controls (1936-1976: 1023 trapped)

Colony attendance closely matched that of the Razorbills during March, however the percentage of the breeding population which returned was much smaller; for example on 2nd March there were 131 Guillemots (579 Razorbill), on the 14th there were 880 Guillemot (1351 Razorbill) and on the 28th there were 895 Guillemot (1182 Razorbill). Birds were almost entirely absent for 14 days in March and two further days saw an exodus during the day. The 14th saw the first 331 birds recorded on the cliffs and birds took to the ledges on a further four dates during the month. It was not until the 7th of a cold April that the number of Guillemots attending the colonies began to exceed that of Razorbills and there was still an almost total absence on 19 dates. Numbers increased noticeably on the 29th when a partial Island count logged 1854 birds and there was a minimum of 1750 the following day. Numbers continued to fluctuate in early May with afternoon departures, only five birds logged on the 4th and a total absence on the 8th. A lone Guillemot was on the cliffs at Twinlet on the 9th and it appeared to be incubating (although this was not confirmed). Numbers increased sharply from the 10th onwards and the first definite egg was on the 13th.

![The total number of adult birds in all six study plots (as an average from ten visits).](image)

The six study plots were counted on ten dates between the 1st and 12th June. Record average totals were observed in all six plots and the combined total of 896 adults in suitable breeding habitat was a substantial 43.4% up on the record 2012 total. As with the preceding species, it should be noted that
these counts are significantly affected by the weather; in the wet June of 2012 the total fluctuated between 530 and 746 birds whereas the 2013 range was considerably smaller, with a low of 824 and a high of 949. Despite the significant impact of this variable, there is no doubt that the number of adults attending the colonies is increasing significantly.

Whole Island counts were made during early June and counts were made from a boat on 31st May and 8th June. A 100-400mm camera was used during the boat counts to take photographs of areas not visible from the Island, photographs which could then be accurately counted on a computer. Access to a boat will have inevitably led to an increase on the 2012 total when rough seas made such visits impossible; in 2012 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). It is thus not surprising that the 3466 adults in suitable nesting habitat recorded this year was a significant 48.8% up on the record 2012 total. Reasons for such a large increase, additional to boat access, probably include the 2013 change in personnel and their optical equipment. Although not as marked as with Razorbill, a curious phenomenon of recent years has been that the numbers within the study plots have increased at a faster rate than the whole Island counts. It is thus of note that this year the proportion of the overall count made up of study plot birds dropped back to a level similar to that observed at the start of the study plot project. The fine 2013 weather will undoubtedly have led to high counts; there seems to be a definite correlation between the weather and the number of birds present. Fine weather perhaps attracts more non-breeding birds, allows adults to hunt more effectively and thus spend more time at the colony, or perhaps birds prefer to spend periods of poor weather at sea.

The whole Island totals, plot totals and the percentage of the Island totals made up of study plot birds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Island</th>
<th>Plots</th>
<th>Plot %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1202</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>26.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>26.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1538</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>27.7</td>
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<td>1697</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>31.0</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>1795</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>32.8</td>
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<td>2212</td>
<td>557</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>613</td>
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<td>2330</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>25.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Productivity was last assessed in 2007 when it was estimated as 0.6 at a Twinlet study plot. In 2013 Twinlet was again used as the study area and 44 eggs were mapped in mid-May. Of these nine failed at the egg incubation or small chick stage and eight chicks were seen which did not go on to reach fledging size. Guillemot chicks typically leave the ledges at between 18 and 25 days (Ferguson-Lees et al., 2011), however it was unlikely that our study chicks would be observed for this full period owing to constraints on staff time and the difficulties of seeing newly hatched chicks. An assessment of chick development was thus made in addition to calculating the length of time that chicks were on the ledges. There were 14 chicks which were seen on the ledges for a minimum of 18 days, a further
six chicks were seen on the ledges for a minimum of 16 days and four chicks were seen for less time but seen to be of jumping size. Thus 24 chicks were definitely thought to have attained the size at which they would depart for the sea. Three further chicks reached a minimum of 15 days although it was unclear if they reached jumping size. Minimum productivity was thus calculated as 0.55 chicks per pair but this may have been as high as 0.61 if the three younger chicks went on to jump.

The first fledgling had departed by 1st July and within the study plots 37.0% of the fledglings had departed by 5th July, 66.7% had gone by the 10th and 88.9% had fledged by the 15th. The last study plot fledgling was seen on 20th July but the North Gully colony was seemingly a few days behind the Twinlet colony; there were 11 chicks at North Gully on 22nd July, eight on the 24th and three remained on the 25th. Adult departures mirrored chick fledging, with numbers dropping throughout July and down to double figures from the 21st. There were no adults recorded on the cliffs from 28th July, the same day as recorded for Razorbills. There were only 43 Guillemots recorded in August, 46 over ten dates in September and 28 over 11 dates in October. Four in flight past the Lighthouse on 6th November comprised two summer plumaged birds and two smaller, winter plumaged birds which were assumed to be this year’s young. Further large auks were present at sea during the autumn but their distance from land saw them logged as ‘auk sp.’; there were 60 in September, 715 in October and 219 between the 1st and 15th November.
Ringing recovery  Left leg yellow darvic (faded) with black 73X  
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 1998  
Recovered as an adult (bridled), SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 2005  
Recovered as an adult (bridled), MIDDLEROCK, SKOKHOLM 19th June 2013  
Finding condition  Ring read in field  
Distance travelled  4km at 163 degrees (SSE)  
Days since ringed  approximately 5480  

**Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis**  
**Scarce** although recorded as Uncommon by both Betts and Thompson  
**Earliest** 29th March 1984 (25th July 2013)  
**Latest** 25th October 1967 (4th October 2013)  

There were only three records in 2013; a single headed west past the Lighthouse on 25th July, two did likewise on 31st August and three vocal birds lingered off the Neck on 4th October. There were also only three records in 2012 and four in 2011, although one of these was a record group of 50 on 14th September 2011. There was only a single record in the period between 2004 and 2010.

**Common Tern Sterna hirundo**  
**Scarce** although unidentified ‘commic’ terns Uncommon. Bred at the Stack in 1894 but gone by 1916 (1936-1976: 1 trapped)  

Two on 28th September were the only ‘commics’ to be positively identified this year and the first to be so since a single on 29th August 2011.

‘Commic’ Tern Sterna sp.  
**Uncommon** although recorded as Fairly Common by both Betts and Thompson  
**Earliest** 27th March 1967 (2nd August 2013)  
**Latest** 8th November 1967 (28th September 2013)  

Terns seen too distantly to distinguish between the above species and Arctic Tern S. paradisaea were logged as ‘commic’ terns. There were singles on the 2nd and 18th August, a minimum of 25 headed past the Lighthouse on 26th August and there were two on the 28th and 31st August. A group of 17 on 28th September were further out than the two Common Tern which passed on that date.

**Kittiwake Rissa tridactyla**  
**Very Abundant** a single pair attempted to breed in 1959  

Although present offshore in all months, Kittiwake were logged less frequently and in smaller numbers than might be expected given the presence of over 1000 breeding pairs on nearby Skomer. The 327 birds logged in March were recorded over just eight days and included groups in Broad Sound of 160 on the 18th and 116 on the 19th. Surprisingly only 29 birds were logged during a bitter April and, although this no doubt partly reflects seawatching effort, there seems little doubt that the birds were elsewhere in the pre-breeding period. Although birds were recorded on 23 dates in May, numbers were low with peak counts of 51 on the 21st and 45 on the 24th. Numbers increased in June with 839 birds logged and a peak count of 260 which passed to the south on the 2nd. There were eight records of a feeding group in excess of 80 individuals during July, each coming from the waters to the south of Skokholm and including peak counts of 174 birds on both the 3rd and 5th. The 1064 birds logged in August was down on the 1381 of the previous month and included only four counts in excess of 80 birds. Although the weather conditions in September saw seawatching receive less attention than it might in years where strong westerlies prevail, the 432 birds logged during the month was surprisingly low, as were the peaks of 116 on the 17th and 58 on the 18th. October was similarly quiet with 393 birds logged and peaks of 130 in Broad Sound on the 23rd and 96 off the

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Lighthouse on the 27th. Some autumns can see feeding flocks numbering in the thousands whereas this year it was not until November that feeding birds began to congregate off the Island and even then the peak counts were just 390 on the 4th and a minimum of 380 on the 9th. These birds were feeding in Broad Sound in association with other gulls, particularly Black-headed Gulls, and their presence was very much weather related with strong winds seeing the birds disperse. As in previous years, small numbers of Kittiwake were occasionally seen loafing on the rocks off Crab Bay during the autumn.

The number of Kittiwake logged on each day of the 2013 season.

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*  
*Gwylan Bènddu*  
**Abundant** offshore during the winter. Two pairs defended North Pond territories in 1968

A minimum of 450, feeding between St Ann’s Head and Skokholm, were counted by staff crossing for the start of the season on 1st March. There were then four logged on the 19th and a single the following day, a lack of records which suggests that the birds were keeping inshore. In April a single was logged on the 23rd, in May a single was on North Pond on the 6th and in June there were singles on the 1st and 18th. Following a single on 9th July, there were three on the 10th including the first juvenile of the year and a further single on the 18th. There were 51 birds over ten dates in August including six which headed north over North Pond on the 7th and 25 which spent time roosting on the Neck on the 28th. Numbers began to build during September with 269 logged during the month and peaks of 93 on the 28th and 128 the following day. Regular feeding groups were in Broad Sound during October, with peak counts of 220 on the 5th, 172 on the 6th, 334 on the 14th and 240 on the 15th contributing to the monthly total of 1249 birds. The formation of feeding groups in Broad Sound coincided with calmer periods of weather, with stronger winds presumably pushing the birds back inshore. This pattern continued in November with over 300 on a calm 9th the peak count.

Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus*  
*Gwylan Môr y Canoldir*  
**Uncommon** offshore during the winter but recorded as Rare by both Thompson and Betts

Given that there had only been a total of 49 records up until 2004 (Thompson, 2007), that there were no birds logged at all between 2005 and 2011 inclusive and that there were only four records in 2012, the 21 records totalling 130 birds logged this year was exceptional. The first of the year was a second-winter bird feeding off the Lighthouse on 20th March. The next records were of adult birds on the 15th and 16th August. There were then 27 birds logged in September with 13 adults on the 28th and 12 birds on the 29th comprising 11 adults and a first-winter. October was the best month ever for Mediterranean Gull records on Skokholm with 63 birds logged including peak counts of 13 on the 5th (11 adults, a second-winter and a first-winter), 11 on the 6th (eight adults, two second-winters and a first-winter) and 12 on the 23rd (all adults). There were 37 logged in November including 14 on
the 13th (13 adults and a first-winter) and a record 21 on the 9th (19 adults and two first-winters). The 21 birds logged on 9th November (and the six other double-figure 2013 counts) eclipse the previous record of eight seen on 10th October 2012. An adult bird, one of three adults and a first-winter which came close to Skokholm on 15th October to feed on flying ants being blown into the sea, was wearing a darvic ring. Sadly the bird was too distant to make out the inscription (see photograph below).

**Common Gull Larus canus**

Uncommon offshore during the winter with very few records between April and August (1936-1976: 12 trapped)

This year saw a considerable increase in Common Gull records and a return to counts similar to those summarised by Thompson and Betts. Six birds feeding with Black-headed Gull between Skokholm and St Ann’s Head on 1st March were the first of the year. The only other spring records were of a single in Broad Sound on 19th March and an unseasonal first-summer bathing in North Pond on 29th April. Two roosting on the Neck with Black-headed Gull on 28th August were the first of the autumn. In September there were singles on the 4th and 27th before 26 headed southeast through the course of the 28th and five did likewise the following day. First-winters on the 4th, 6th and 10th October, along with eight birds on the 11th and two on the 19th, fed with other gulls in Broad Sound. Eight adults on 4th November was the last record of the year. This species was conspicuous by its absence on 9th November when a mixed gull flock, containing over 300 Black-headed Gull and 21 Mediterranean Gull, contained no Common Gull. There were only five records of seven birds between 2005 and 2012 inclusive.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus**

Abundant Breeder previously a Very Abundant Breeder

84 trapped (including 43 pulli), 3 controls (1936-1976: 12,085 trapped)

Totals in March fluctuated widely, with 198 on the 2nd increasing to 701 on the 4th and 861 the following day. Birds frequently departed Skokholm, with the warm and calm 13th March seeing only 92 birds logged (this was a day which also saw a large reduction in the number of Great Black-backed Gulls on the Island) and 90 on the 26th (although 620 came in to roost that evening). More birds were remaining on Skokholm at the end of the month with 1282 on the 28th the peak March count. A cold but generally dry April saw an average 804 birds logged each day (ranging from 238 on a misty 24th to 1266 on the 18th). The first eggs were found on 3rd May from which point the number of birds in the colonies increased. Vantage point counts of all the breeding colonies and a full census of the cliff nesting pairs was made on 22nd and 23rd May; 1476 apparently incubating adults (aia) and 2361 individual birds were counted. The number of sitting adults was 32.9% down on the 2200 recorded in 2012 and was the lowest count for over 45 years. Three walk-through counts were made on 25th May to provide a correction factor for the vantage point counts (see table below).
A comparison of vantage point and walk-through nest counts and a summary of nest contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vantage point count</th>
<th>Nest count on walk-through</th>
<th>Egg count</th>
<th>Eggs per nest with eggs</th>
<th>Empty nests</th>
<th>Percentage of empty nests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheelhouse</td>
<td>38 aia</td>
<td>37 nests</td>
<td>57 eggs</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Tank</td>
<td>70 aia</td>
<td>74 nests</td>
<td>169 eggs</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West of Gap</td>
<td>137 aia</td>
<td>136 nests</td>
<td>290 eggs</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

It was quickly apparent that there was almost no difference between the vantage point counts and the walk-through counts; the very low vegetation (as a result of the bitter spring weather) allowed virtually every nest to be seen from vantage points. It was thus decided to eschew the remaining walk-through counts for 2013 to reduce disturbance to the colonies. Over the period 1991-2002 the count of empty nests varied from 11-44% with a mean of 22.7% (Thompson, 2007). The figures obtained this year are close to this mean. However it was unclear whether the empty nests were second nests made by the pairs present, nests which had been robbed of their eggs or nests where the adults had yet to lay. Circumstantial evidence suggested that the 2013 breeding season was a protracted one; the first chicks were seen on 30th May when other birds were still mating and eggs were being incubated when the first young were fledging. It could not be ascertained whether the late incubators were additional pairs or birds which had re-laid after losing a clutch.

The number of breeding pairs 1970-2013. Control of numbers started in 1984 (destruction of nests) and stopped in 1998.

Productivity was calculated using a mark and resighting technique. Five discreet subcolonies containing exactly 600 apparent nests were visited in late July by a team of ringers who ringed 42 fledging-sized young. The colonies were revisited on several occasions over the following two weeks and the number of fledglings was counted along with the proportion of ringed and unringed birds. A simple calculation, (number of fledglings ringed x number checked for rings on second visit)/number of birds seen to have rings on second visit, predicts the number of fledglings within an area. An average 94.71 fledglings were predicted for the study areas which equates to a productivity figure of 0.16 fledged young per pair. These calculations assume that the newly fledged young remain in their natal colonies, which seemed to be the case. The 2013 productivity estimate is the same as that calculated in 2012 and continues the worrying trend observed in recent years.
Lesser Black-backed Gull productivity estimates.

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<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
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</table>

On 25th June a roost containing 42 non-breeding or failed adults formed on North Plain. This had increased to 69 the following day, there were 140 on the 28th and a minimum of 200 on the last day of the month. North Plain roost numbers fluctuated during July with peaks of 410 on the 14th, 375 on the 19th, 420 on the 20th and 461 on the 29th (see graph below). Three colour ringed birds were found on North Plain during this period (see below); although it is unclear whether these were Skokholm breeders it was the first time that all three birds had been encountered during the breeding season. August saw the peak 2013 roost counts with 522 on the 10th, 680 on the 11th, 527 on the 23rd and 535 on the 25th. Numbers dropped off quickly during September with only 270 by the 5th and peaks thereafter of 171 on the 8th, 144 on the 9th, 140 on the 15th and 177 on the 24th. As is now typical for this migratory species, a small number of birds remained in October with peak counts of 83 on the 3rd, 24 on the 8th, 35 on the 16th, 27 on the 20th, 37 on the 22nd and 42 on the 24th. Peak November counts were 36 on the 5th and 24 on the 14th but most days saw only single figure counts.

The number of Lesser Black-backed Gulls roosting on North Plain (including birds bathing and loafing in the vicinity of North Pond) during July, August and September.

Ringing recovery Left leg blue darvic with orange AAU, Right leg FP86427
Originally ringed as an adult, near HEMPSTED, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 11th November 2006
Previously recovered as an adult, STOKE ORCHARD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 8th February 2008
Previously recovered as an adult, GRUNDON'S LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 26th January 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, STOKE ORCHARD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 11th March 2011
Recovered NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 8th July 2013
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 207km at 266 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 2431

Ringing recovery Left leg blue darvic with orange DTV, Right leg FH21424
Originally ringed as an adult, STOKE ORCHARD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 22nd November 2008
Previously recovered as an adult, PINTO, MADRID, SPAIN 7th January 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, near HEMPSTED, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 30th October 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, near HEMPSTED, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 23rd November 2010
Recovered NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 29th July 2013 and 13th August 2013

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Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 220km at 266 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 1710

Ringing recovery Left leg white darvic with black NOAX, Right leg 6214811 MADRID
Originally ringed as an adult, PUERTO DE LA CALETA, MALAGA, SPAIN 16\textsuperscript{th} February 2013
Recovered NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 20\textsuperscript{th} July 2013
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 1666km at 357 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 154

Ringing recovery GR77078
Originally ringed as an adult, HOME MEADOW, SKOKHOLM 20\textsuperscript{th} July 2013
Recovered QUARTEIRA, FARO, PORTUGAL 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 2013
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 1641km at 188 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 136

Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull *Larus fuscus* x *Larus argentatus*

Scarce Breeder

Apparent hybrids were paired with Lesser Black-backed Gulls above South Haven and near Little Bay Point. Whether the hybrid birds are remnants of cross-fostering experiments (500 Herring Gull and 400 Lesser Black-backed Gull chicks were raised by adults of the ‘wrong’ species between 1963 and 1966 with the result that they frequently paired with the species of the adopting parents), or whether they are the result of natural interbreeding, is unclear. The outcomes of both attempts are not known.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*

**Common Breeder** abundant breeder in the 1970s
21 trapped (including 7 pulli), 3 retrapped (1936-1976: 13,164 trapped)

Numbers fluctuated widely in March with birds foraging away from Skokholm and returning to roost on the Neck; peak roost counts were 418 on the 8th, 310 on the 17th and 231 on the 27th, although fewer than 100 were noted on 16 dates. The number of birds logged declined during April as birds took up territory around the coast and communal roost counts dropped dramatically. The first egg was recorded on 18th April. The whole Island count took place on 16th May when 263 nests were located and 483 adults counted. Although 4% down on the 2012 count and 8.5% down on the 2004-2013 mean (287.30 ±sd 32.01), the number of breeding pairs has apparently stabilised close to that seen in the 1930s, prior to the 1970s peak (see graph below). The first chicks were seen in South Haven on 20th May.

The number of breeding pairs 1928-2013 (where data exists). The 1970s peak was attributed to the exploitation of local fish waste and the decline to botulism (Thompson, 2007).

![Graph showing trend of Herring Gull population from 1928 to 2012](image)

The first fledglings were seen in South Haven on 7th July and July checks of the Neck productivity plot, where 129 pairs had established nests, located 93 fledglings (along with two small chicks which went on to fail). The resulting productivity figure of 0.72 fledged young per pair is 37.4% down on 2012 but 12.5% up on the 2004-2013 mean (0.64 ±se 0.09). That Herring Gull productivity has been consistently higher than that of the closely related Lesser Black-backed Gull is of note. Circumstantial evidence suggests that this may be due to slightly differing feeding habits, with Herring Gulls frequently seen feeding in the littoral zone. However an adult regurgitating fish-and-chip-shop chips for its fledglings on 6th August suggests that they are also foraging around mainland habitation. Additionally it would seem that Great Black-backed Gulls target the coastal nesting Herring Gulls less frequently than they do the inland gull colonies.
The number of breeding pairs and productivity estimates 2004-2013 (average number of fledglings per sample pair).

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<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.61</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.67</td>
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</table>

Numbers quickly dropped during August with both adults and juveniles departing the Island; peak Neck counts were 165 on the 9th, 102 on the 10th, 82 on the 17th, 67 roosted on the Stack on the 30th and 93 on the 31st. Very few Herring Gulls utilised Skokholm during September with peak day counts of 47 on the 10th and 45 on the 2nd and an average of 26 birds per day. Several hundred birds could occasionally be seen roosting at the base of the Marloes Peninsular cliffs. Skokholm counts were lower still in October, with the majority of records being of birds foraging in Broad Sound, although there were 75 roosting on the 23rd and 74 the following day. An adult which bred on the Wall behind the Wheelhouse and occasionally interacted with guests in the Courtyard, ‘Harold’, returned for three days from the 25th. Numbers increased somewhat in November with 220 at sea on the 4th, 85 on the 13th and 107 at roost by North Pond on the 14th.

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis*

**Vagrant** an addition to the Skokholm list

The first for Skokholm, a fine adult, was on the north coast of the Little Neck on 19th April (RDB, GE). The classic wing pattern, with a broad black band on the fifth primary, extensive black on the outer primaries and small white primary tips, along with a relatively narrow white tertial crescent, were evident. This, coupled with the heavy, bright yellow bill, large deep red gonys spot extending onto the upper mandible, the deep red orbital ring, the mid-grey mantle and the bright yellow legs all point to this species rather than a hybrid *Larus*. This is a scarce winter visitor to Pembrokeshire.

**2012 Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides*

**Vagrant** six previous records, probably of only four birds

An unseasonal bird on 7th July 2012, dismissed as a leucistic *Larus*, was fortunately photographed and shared with the Wardens this year (II). The finder should be congratulated for persisting with a bird he knew to be different. This well-worn first-summer, in the process of moulting its inner primaries, followed a winter influx of Iceland Gulls both nationally and in Pembrokeshire. Interestingly a first-summer was photographed in Fishguard Harbour on 10th August 2012 (Berry et al., 2013). The first Skokholm record was a first-winter on 19th March 1983, a third-summer visited on 23rd August and 9th September 1988 and second-year birds were present on 27th April and 16th May 1993 and on 26th March 1996.
Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*  
Gwylan Gefnddu Fwyaf

**Fairly Common Breeder and Common Visitor**  
54 pulli trapped, 2 controls (1936-1976: 219 trapped)

Although present from the beginning of the 2013 season, numbers remained relatively low in early March with 71 on the 8th and 69 on the 16th the peak counts. Numbers increased towards the end of the month with 101 on the 28th and the Bog roost on 3rd April contained 213 individuals with 198 the following day. Birds were seen copulating from 14th April and two nests at Orchid Bog each contained three eggs on 25th April. Whole Island counts during late April and early May located 74 active nests, although these did not all contain eggs. Great Black-backed Gull numbers reached a peak of 84 pairs during 2011 following a rise attributed to low disturbance during the closed Skokholm renovation period. A subsequent drop to 73 pairs last year was linked to increased use of the path network. However the number of breeding pairs stabilised this year, even increasing by a pair to the third highest total yet recorded.

**The number of breeding pairs 1928-2013 (where data exists). Control of numbers started in 1949 (destruction of both nests and adults) and stopped in 1985.**

![Graph showing number of breeding pairs 1928-2013](image)

Twenty breeding pairs were selected for productivity monitoring and the nest sites visited every few days. A total of 57 eggs were produced (an average of 2.85 eggs per nest). Only one pair failed at the egg incubation stage, losing two eggs by 13th May. A single pair, which had two chicks on 28th May but only one by 22nd June, eventually failed. The remaining 18 pairs all fledged young, 36 fledglings in total; the resulting productivity figure of 1.8 fledged young per pair is considerably higher than anything recorded since 2005 (see table below) and 65.1% above the 1989-2004 average of 1.09. A brief assessment of prey remains was made on each nest visit; Manx Shearwaters seemingly formed the bulk of the diet for most pairs although five coastal pairs took a high percentage of Puffin and Rabbits were taken by most pairs on occasion. Auk chicks were present at two nests late on and more unusual items were a Lesser Black-backed Gull, a Jackdaw and a sizable mammal rib. A recently
fledged bird was seen with a broken wing and a second fledgling was found dead, killed by a severe injury to the back of the head.

Productivity estimates 2005-2013 (average number of fledglings per sample pair).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<th>2011</th>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>1.80</td>
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</table>

A roost of over 30 birds was regular around the Bog during the breeding season, with peak counts of 42 on 30th May, 42 on 4th June and 42 on 11th June. Lower roost numbers were recorded during July and early August and they were frequently absent from the Bog. The roost site switched to either near the Tabernacle or North Plain during August and numbers began to build with 57 on the 21st and 51 on the 27th, although the majority of adults remained on territory with their fledglings. Roost counts rose in September as adults and young parted company, with counts of 88 on the 4th, 92 on the 10th, 125 on the 14th, 355 on the 16th, 177 on the 18th, 225 on the 26th and 204 on the 28th. Peak roost counts generally coincided with rougher weather, conditions which perhaps saw birds return from foraging at sea. Peak October counts were similarly correlated with rougher weather and saw peaks of 98 on the 8th, 105 on the 9th, 149 on the 10th, 146 on the 16th, 142 on the 20th and 149 on the 28th. There was no roost at all on 14th October, a period of calm between two weeks of strong winds and rough seas. Although November counts were generally only in double figures, there were impressive roosts of 270 on the 3rd, 243 on the 5th and 192 on the 11th.

Ringing recovery Left leg MA28789, Right leg white darvic with red L:AU8
Originally ringed as a chick, ST. GEORGE’S ISLAND, LOOE, CORNWALL 10th July 2011
Previously recovered as a juvenile, HAYLE ESTUARY, CORNWALL 5th October 2011
Recovered as a second-summer, THE QUARRY, SKOKHOLM 24th September 2013
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 162km at 339 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 807
This bird was then seen 16 days later at Copperhouse Creek, Hayle, Cornwall
**Ringing recovery** Left leg yellow darvic with black D:AR, Right leg MA30862

**Originally ringed** as a chick, DENNY ISLAND, MONMOUTHSHIRE 16th June 2013

**Recovered** as a juvenile, NORTH GULLY, SKOKHOLM 1st October 2013

**Finding condition** Ring read in field

**Distance travelled** 182km at 275 degrees (W)

**Days since ringed** 108
Ringing recovery MA02078
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOKHOLM 19th June 2012
Recovered ILE MOLENE, BRITTANY, FRANCE 8th December 2012
Finding condition Found freshly dead
Distance travelled 374km at 177 degrees (S)
Days since ringed 172

Ile Molene is a 75 hectare island, one of the Ponant Islands, located off the northwest coast of France and home to approximately 214 residents. As of 2012, there had only been 76 records of British ringed Great Black-backed Gulls found in France (Robinson and Clark, 2013).

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*  
Uncommon Visitor has bred, most recently in a South Haven sea cave in 2007  
(1936-1976: 3 trapped)

First recorded at the Lighthouse on 10th March. There was then a single at the Farm on the 21st, six flew east on the 24th, four were around the coast on the 28th and a single was at the Lighthouse on the 31st. There were eight birds seen over six dates in April, six birds over five dates in May and six singles in June including one on the 22nd which was the last record of the year.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*  
Uncommon Visitor the majority of records coming in the spring  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 36 trapped)

A single at Wall’s End on 7th April was the first of the season. There were then two at the Well on the 20th, including one trapped in the Heligoland, and a single was at the Lighthouse on the 22nd. There were eight singles in May, probably referring to four individuals and including a singing male on the 18th. Present on nine dates in June, with two together on the 3rd and 4th, three on the 7th (one of which was taken by a Peregrine) and three again on the 8th (two of which were taken by Peregrines). There were two on 9th June, a single on the 20th and a final single on the 22nd was the last of the year.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*  
Scarce Migrant previously uncommon  
(1936-1976: 36 trapped)

A first-winter on Northern Plain on 4th September was the first of 2013 and the first since 17th May 2006 (GE, TN et al.). One at the Well on the morning of 25th September flew over the Farm later in the day (SW et al.). This is the first time in more than a decade that two birds have been recorded in a single season.
Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*

**Scarce Migrant** has bred

**Earliest** 6th April 1960 (18th May 2013) **Latest** 8th September 1956 (1st September 2013)  
(1936-1976: 82 trapped)

One on 18th May was the first of the year. A different individual was seen on 24th May and a bird was chased by a Peregrine along the North Coast on 26th May. A juvenile at the Well on 11th July was the first bird of the autumn. Records of a juvenile seen daily near the Bluffs between 26th August and 1st September were thought to be of the same bird. This was a good showing by recent standards and the autumn records were the first since a juvenile in July 2006.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

**Scarce** but this year Uncommon  
(1936-1976: 5 trapped)

One flushed from near North Pond on 11th March was the first of the year (RDB, GE). There was also a single in April, with one at the Farm on the 28th. One was watched hunting a Storm Petrel at the Quarry on the night of 31st May and was caught on thermal imaging camera doing the same thing the following night. A bedraggled bird was by North Pond on 11th June and one flushed from near the Quarry on the 18th was watched as it flew to Skomer. A bird was perched at the entrance to the Quarry on the night of the 27th. Owl feather alongside the fresh remains of a Storm Petrel on 12th July were thought to be belonging to this species. A bird was seen in flight along the Lighthouse Track at 0245hrs on 17th August. Two sparring together above Home Meadow at dusk on 7th October were probably the same two flushed from near North Pond the following day. A bird arrived in off the sea to the Neck on the morning of 11th October and one was in the Bog the following day. A bird was hunting in heavy rain at 1300hrs on 1st November and one flushed from the Well on 4th November. Two together at the Well on 15th November was the last record of the year. This number of records in a season is rare and may be linked to the regular use of the Quarry Storm Petrel colony as a food source, potentially by birds breeding on neighbouring Skomer.

Swift *Apus apus*

**Fairly Common Migrant** Common in some years and more regular in spring  
**Earliest** 26th March 1953 (8th May 2013) **Latest** 28th October 1976 (7th August 2013)  
(1936-1976: 12 trapped)

Following a single on 8th May, there were daily records totalling 56 birds in the period up to the 20th, with peaks of 16 on the 14th and 13 on the 18th. A further ten birds were recorded between the 27th and the 30th. In June there were peaks of five on the 6th and seven on the 18th and 19th with a further 15 birds seen over seven dates. Between the 6th and 20th July there were 58 birds logged including
peaks of 10 on the 7\textsuperscript{th} and 19 on the 8\textsuperscript{th}. The only August record, two on the 7\textsuperscript{th}, was the last of the year.

\textbf{Wryneck} \textit{Jynx torquilla}  
\textbf{Scarce Migrant} regular in autumn, rare in spring with only nine records  
\textbf{Earliest} 3\textsuperscript{rd} April 1995 (7\textsuperscript{th} September 2013) \textbf{Latest} 19\textsuperscript{th} October 2003 (8\textsuperscript{th} October 2013)  
1 trapped, 1 retrapped (1936-1976: 11 trapped)

One feeding on North Plain on 7\textsuperscript{th} September remained until the 9\textsuperscript{th} (MO \textit{et al.}). A bird found to the west of North Plain on 13\textsuperscript{th} September was thought to be different and showed well in the same place the following day (MYP \textit{et al.}). Two birds together at the Well on 24\textsuperscript{th} September included one trapped in the Heligoland there; this bird was clearly fresh in and showed no obvious fat reserves, weighing only 25.5g. There were then daily sightings until 5\textsuperscript{th} October, with a ring observed on the 26\textsuperscript{th} and 28\textsuperscript{th} September and on the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} October. The ringed bird was retrapped four days after being ringed and was then found to weigh 28.2g (a 10.59\% increase). A bird at Crab Bay on 5\textsuperscript{th} October was additional to the bird at the Farm. The last record of the year was one at the Farm on 8\textsuperscript{th} October; although a ring could not be seen it may well have been the ringed bird. Four but probably five birds in a season is exceptional.

\textbf{Hoopoe} \textit{Upupa epops}  
\textbf{Rare Migrant} more regular in spring, only seven autumn records  
\textbf{Earliest} 12\textsuperscript{th} March 1940 (8\textsuperscript{th} June 2013) \textbf{Latest} 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1980 (1936-1976: 1 trapped)
One on 8th June flew across South Haven and landed on the Lime Kiln before relocating to Home Meadow (ST, RDB, GE, LT et al.). This is the first record since one from the 26th to 29th August 2011.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*

**Rare Migrant** ten spring records and 18 autumn records prior to 2013

**Earliest** 9th April 1966 (10th September 2013) **Latest** 20th October 2004 (1936-1976: 10 trapped)

A first-winter on 10th September was the first since 20th October 2004 (LR et al.). There was some debate regarding the age of this bird, however dark subterminal marks to the scapulars and median coverts along with white tips to the tertials and seemingly fresh flight feathers all pointed to an advanced first-winter.

**Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*

**Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor** bred in 1928 and then annually since 1992 (1936-1976: 1 trapped)

Three territorial pairs were the only resident Chough on Skokholm this year, thus any counts exceeding six individuals were indicative of birds visiting from the mainland (although visits from mainland Chough could go undetected if the resident birds were not seen). In March birds were collecting nest material near Steep Bay on the 7th and near the Lighthouse on the 25th. Seven birds were logged on three dates. In April birds were again collecting nest material near Steep Bay on the
2nd, a pair was copulating at Crab Bay on the 5th and apparent incubation changeovers were seen near Crab Bay on the 28th and at Steep Bay on the 29th. Seven birds were seen on three dates and there were eight on the 6th. In May birds were again seen collecting nest material at the Dip on the 30th. There were 11 birds including eight together on the 19th, nine including five together on the 23rd and 25th, seven including five together on the 29th and 11 including seven together on the 31st. There was one count of seven birds in June along with one count of eight birds, three counts of nine birds, ten on the 10th and 11 birds were together on the 8th. A single fledgling was seen near the Steep Bay nest site on 4th July and the two adults fed with two fledglings there on the 11th; these were the only young to fledge on Skokholm this year and they were not seen again after this date. Counts in August and September only exceeded six on one occasion but four to six birds were often seen together during this period. The birds were seemingly more faithful to their nesting territories in October and the Steep Bay pair in particular would sometimes alarm at any human using the path above their cove. The 16 birds logged on 9th October, including 12 together, was the highest count of the year but some way off the record of 32 birds logged in September 1965. Nine including seven together and seven including five together were the only signs of November movements.

| The number of Chough pairs and the total number of fledged young 2004-2013. |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1    | 1     | 1     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 2     | 3     | 3     |
| 2    | 3     | 1     | 5     | 4     | 3     | 2     | 4     | 0     | 2     |

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*

Uncommon Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor

18 trapped, 1 retrapped (1936-1976: 83 trapped, 2011-2012: 1 trapped)

The number of breeding Jackdaw on Skokholm has always been difficult to assess due to semi-colonial nesting and their secretive habits. Following their establishment as a breeding species in 1965, numbers were estimated at 50-60 pairs between 1974 and 1976, dropping to 16-20 pairs between 1982 and 1988, again dropping to 6-14 pairs between 1989 and 1996 and most recently estimated at 15 pairs in 2011. This year saw an estimated 16 pairs with the majority nesting colonially in the crevices and burrows of South Haven, but with further pairs around the Neck and towards Little Bay Point.

March saw peak counts of 94 on the 5th, 96 on the 26th and 92 on the 30th along with the first signs of nest building on the Neck. Numbers dropped in April with 61 on the 2nd, 56 on the 4th and then daily counts of between 12 and 36 birds. There were no noticeable arrivals in May and June with all day counts attributable to the breeding birds. The first two young were noted skulking in the entrance to
a complex system of South Haven crevices on 15th June and the first three fledglings were seen at the Well the following day. The number of fledglings at the Well increased during the month with six on the 18th, nine on the 20th and a maximum count of 14 on the 30th. Although numbers in July peaked at 50 on the 30th this may well have been the Skokholm breeders and their offspring. August however saw larger numbers with 93 together on the 10th, 130 on the 13th, 138 together on the 22nd and 178 on the 28th, the latter count being considerably higher than anything recorded in the last decade but well below the peak Skokholm count of 500. Numbers dropped slightly in September with daily counts of 30 to 60 birds and peaks of 108 on the 3rd and 115 on the 8th. Day counts in October were of between 16 and 47 birds except for peaks of 102 on the 3rd and 133 on the 14th which included 49 very high birds. Only between one and 24 birds were logged in November, a winter drop in numbers observed every year.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*  
Uncommon Breeder and Uncommon Visitor  
1 pullus trapped (1936-1976: 152 trapped)

There were eight nesting pairs mapped this season, the 16 adults and their offspring accounting for nearly all of the 2013 records. Nests were located at the Quarry, Twinlet, North Gully, Little Bay, the Devil’s Teeth, to the east of Crab Bay, the Hills and the South Coast. Eight pairs represents a considerable increase on recent numbers with between two and five counted between 1996 and 2009 and five in each of the last three years. Prior to the early 1960s there were up to 12 pairs using Skokholm, although this had declined to just two pairs by 1982 and there was no breeding in 1984, 1985 and between 1991 and 1995. Productivity was surprisingly poor this year with the only known fledglings being singletons from North Gully, Little Bay and the Hills. The single chick in the Hills nest was ringed and was seen later as a fledgling at South Pond on 18th June. The only indications of birds visiting from elsewhere were counts of 25 on 17th March, 18 on 20th March and a bird watched arriving from the north on 26th September. Six departed together for the mainland on 27th September and there were peak autumn counts of 19 on 13th October and 16 on 8th November.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*  
Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor  
(1936-1976: 67 trapped)

Three pairs bred for a fifth consecutive year, with nests in Steep Bay, North Haven and Crab Bay. Although Raven have nested in every year of study on Skokholm, there was only ever a single pair, bar two in 1966, until two pairs bred in 2007.

The number of breeding pairs (green) and the number of fledged young between 2005 and 2013.

Eggs were present in all three nests on 1st March and chicks were first seen on 3rd April. Two of the Crab Bay chicks had left the nest by 29th April and all four had fledged by 4th May. Four had fledged
from Steep Bay by 7\textsuperscript{th} May and two had flown from the North Haven nest by 16\textsuperscript{th} May. The ten fledged young in 2013 is a new Skokholm record. The birds remained in loose family groups until September from when there were only single figure counts except for ten on 24\textsuperscript{th} September, ten together on 6\textsuperscript{th} October and ten on 5\textsuperscript{th} November. The Steep Bay pair was back on territory and alarming at passers-by on 5\textsuperscript{th} October and all three pairs were back on territory from 30\textsuperscript{th} October. The only indication of visits by non-Skokholm birds was two lost to sight as they headed for Grassholm on 11\textsuperscript{th} March and a seventh adult at the Quarry on 11\textsuperscript{th} April.

**Goldcrest Regulus regulus**

\textbf{Common} but only Fairly Common in some years


Two on 9\textsuperscript{th} March were the first in a quiet year for this species. There were a further eight birds over five days in March with a peak of just three on the 29\textsuperscript{th}, two of which were on the North Coast cliffs. There were 49 birds logged over 11 dates in April with peaks of 18 on the 12\textsuperscript{th}, eight on the 13\textsuperscript{th} and six on the 26\textsuperscript{th}. Singles on the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 31\textsuperscript{st} May and on 1\textsuperscript{st} June were the only other spring records. There were no birds recorded in July or August. Birds were logged on every day of September except for the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 17\textsuperscript{th}, with 106 logged during the month and peaks of 12 on the 12\textsuperscript{th} and nine on the 22\textsuperscript{nd}. In October birds were logged on 27 days but 17 of these saw only single figure counts, seven days saw between ten and 15 birds and there were peaks of 22 on the 4\textsuperscript{th}, 52 on the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 33 on the 9\textsuperscript{th}. Ringing recoveries suggested that there was a high turnover of individuals in September and October with only three retraps in each month and four of these birds having only lingered for a day (although of the others one bird stayed for at least nine days and a second stayed for at least seven days). There were 13 birds logged over nine days in November with no more than two on any date. Despite the paucity of 2013 records, the 52 logged on 5\textsuperscript{th} October was the highest day count for over a decade. A bird found dead on 8\textsuperscript{th} October had become attached to a Greater Burdock *Arctium lappa* where it presumably starved (see photograph below).
Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*  
**Scarce Migrant** absent in some years and more frequent in autumn  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 23 trapped)

A first-year female trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 10th April was surprisingly the only record of the year and only the third April record for Skokholm (GE et al.). There have now been 16 spring individuals. The most recent records are of singles between the 10th and 16th September 2012, between the 12th and 15th October 2010 and on 4th October 2007.

**Skylark* Alauda arvensis**  
**Uncommon Breeder and Common Visitor**  
(1936-1976: 299 trapped)

The ten territorial males mapped this year was three more than recorded in 2012. No nests were found and very few recent fledglings were noted. Historically numbers peaked in 1965 when 48 pairs took up residence on Skokholm, however numbers gradually declined to just three pairs in 2002. There have been four to six pairs in each year since except for 11 in 2007 and 12 in 2009. Birds from the ten territories may have accounted for nearly all records between March and August although 22 birds on 17th March, 19 birds on 16th April including ten heading north and 16 birds on 27th April were almost certainly small scale spring movements. There were fewer birds recorded each day in August and early September, no doubt due to the post-breeding moult which sees birds less vocal and less mobile. Autumn passage was first noted on 14th September when two calling birds went over high. There were then 202 birds logged in the remainder of September, with three days of obvious passage when more than 25 birds were logged (see graph below). There were 576 Skylark recorded in October with six days when more than 25 birds were logged. The 76 birds recorded on 17th October represent the highest day count for more than a decade. There were fewer days of passage noted in November although 154 birds were logged in the first half of the month.

The number of Skylark logged on each day of autumn with counts above 25 labelled.

![Graph showing Skylark counts](image)

**Sand Martin* Riparia riparia**  
**Fairly Common** and Common some years with day counts of up to 400 in spring and 500 in autumn  
**Earliest** 8th March 2000 (11th April 2013)  
**Latest** 25th October 1971 (5th October 2013)  
(1936-1976: 8 trapped)

The first of the year, a single on 11th April, was 15 days later than the first of 2012, no doubt a reflection of the very cold early spring period. There were only 11 other birds logged in April with five on the 19th and three on the 24th the only counts of more than one. The 30 birds logged over eight dates in May was amazingly the best month of passage this year and included a peak of 12 on the 7th which was the highest day count of the year. In June there was a single on the 4th, in July...
there were three on the 19th and in August there were singles on the 25th and 27th. Autumn passage was almost non-existent with 23 birds logged over ten dates in September and with peaks of just four on the 6th, 10th and 28th. Singles on the 4th and 5th October were the last of the year.

**Swallow Hirundo rustica**  
Scarc Breeder and Very Abundant Migrant  

38 trapped (including 13 pulli), 8 retrapped (1936-1976: 238 trapped, 2011-2012: 17 trapped (including 2 pulli), 3 retrapped)

Following the first three of the year on 11th April, 347 birds were logged during the month including peaks of 47 on the 15th and 50 on the 26th. Birds were in the Red Hut on 19th April and two pairs went on to nest there this year. Further pairs took up sites at the Wheelhouse, in North Pond Hide and in the Lighthouse coal-store. Five pairs is one more than recorded for the past two years, the same as noted in 2005, 2006 and 2009 but below the high of seven pairs in 2007 and six pairs in 2008. There were 829 birds logged in May with peaks of 69 on the 6th and 16 and 164 on the morning of the 16th. The majority of the 365 birds logged in June, the 259 in July and the 480 in August were Skokholm birds which had full clutches by 15th June. Both Red Hut pairs failed with their first broods and only one went on to have a second clutch, four of which had fledged by 20th August. The Wheelhouse pair fledged broods of three and four, an effort which was exactly matched by the North Pond pair. The Lighthouse pair failed at egg stage on their first attempt but fledged two on their second. Five pairs fledging 20 young equates to a productivity of four fledged young per pair.

There were 8581 birds logged in September with 451 on the 6th, over 400 of which passed in one hour, the first notable autumn passage. There were then movements of 483 on the 10th, 188 on the 14th, 220 on the 22nd and 700 on the 24th including 435 in two hours. There were 991 in one hour on 27th September contributing to a minimum day total of 1500 and 3023 in one hour the following day took the day total to 3709. There were 1391 birds logged in the first 17 days of October with peaks of 280 on the 4th and 559 on the 5th including 130 in one minute. Five birds headed west then east on 28th October and nine together on 4th November were the last of the year.

**House Martin Delichon urbicum**  
Common Migrant with record day counts prior to 2013 of 300 in May and 250 in September  

(1936-1976: 17 trapped)
Following two on 17th April, there were a further six birds recorded over four dates during the month. May saw 78 birds logged with 75 occurring after the 16th and peaks of ten on the 16th and eight on two dates. There were 33 birds logged over 12 days until 22nd June with nine on the 1st the peak. The only July record was of five on the 18th and there were no August records until the 26th after which 19 birds were logged with a peak of 15 on the 28th. An impressive 782 birds were seen in September, all but two of which were after the 12th. There were 32 recorded on the 27th before an all-time record 710 went through on the 28th including an amazing 224 in ten minutes east past Spy Rock. There were 45 birds over four days in October with highs of 17 on the 5th and 26 on the 15th, the latter movement being the last birds of the season.

**Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*  
*Vagrant* five previous records  
**Earliest** 4th June 2003 (18th June 2013) **Latest** 31st August 1960, 1961 and 1976  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 3 trapped)

One trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 18th June was the first since 5th June 2003 and the sixth Skokholm record (GE, RDB *et al*.). Upon release it showed well as it fed in the Courtyard but it was not seen the following day. The previous Skokholm records were on 31st August 1960, the 30th and 31st August 1961, 31st August 1976, 23rd June 1997 and the 4th and 5th June 2003.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*  
*Rare Autumn Migrant* 18 previous records including the first for Wales on 2nd October 1959  
**Earliest** 30th September (6th October 2013) **Latest** 27th October (15th October 2013)
3 trapped (1936-1976: 2 trapped)

A bird trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 5th October was the first Skokholm record since one on 6th October 2005 (RDB). The second came from a mist net at the Well two hours later (GE). With both birds around the Farm what was probably a third bird was found at the Well but the absence of a ring could not be confirmed. A very obliging unringed bird fed among the Well Irises on 10th October (GE, RDB) and what was definitely the fourth bird of the year was trapped at the Farm on the 15th (GE). Four birds is an unprecedented Skokholm year total and was no doubt the result of prolonged easterly winds. This brings the number of Skokholm records to 21, all singles except for two birds recorded on 8th October 1994 and 5th October 2013.

**Chiffchaff Phylloscopus collybita**

*Abundant Migrant* although only Common in some years

**Earliest** 19th February 1998 (5th March 2013) **Latest** 14th December 2000 (12th November 2013)

205 trapped, 35 retrapped (1936-1976: 2565 trapped, 2011-2012: 87 trapped, 6 retrapped)

Following a single on 5th March (SS) there were 68 birds logged during the month, with the high of seven coming on the 23rd. April saw peak spring passage with 211 birds logged during the month including the first singing bird on the 10th. There were 96 birds seen in May although daily counts were all in single figures bar 14 on the 18th. The 32 birds in June were the last of spring and all before the 20th. Ringing recoveries showed that some birds were lingering; one bird was retrapped after three days, two after four, one after six, one after ten and one was present for 22 days.

The number of Chiffchaff recorded on each day of the 2013 season and the monthly maxima.
The first bird of the autumn was a juvenile on 5th July. There were then 14 more during the month but no more than two on any date. August was unseasonably quiet with singles on the 6th, 21st and 31st being the only birds logged; however birds were then recorded daily from 3rd September with highs of 20 on the 7th, 45 on the 12th, 30 on the 13th, 21 on the 25th, 128 on the 28th and 24 on the 30th contributing to 404 birds logged for the month. There were 198 recorded in October, but only 29 of these occurred in the second half of the month. October peaks were 31 on the 3rd and 55 the following day. Records continued into November with 25 logged prior to the departure of staff on the 16th, the last being a single on the 12th. Ringing recoveries suggested that birds passed through quicker in the autumn than in the spring with seven birds lingering for just a day, one for three days but also one for 16 days, the latter dropping from 7.1g to 6.3g in weight (although it was back up to 6.9g when last trapped).

**Ringing recovery** EXV087  
*Originally ringed* as a first-summer, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 17th April 2013  
*Recovered* as a first-summer, NANJIZAL, LAND’S END, CORNWALL 20th, 21st, 22nd and 23rd April, 2nd and 6th May, 16th June, 11th July and 12th September 2013  
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist nets  
*Distance travelled* 186km at 190 degrees (S)  
*Days since ringed* 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 19, 62, 85 and 148

An interesting recovery of a bird which arrived to Skokholm in cold winds and heavy showers, before heading south to the tip of Cornwall where it remained for the breeding season.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*  
*Telor yr Helyg*  
*Abundant Migrant* although only Common in some years  
*Earliest* 23rd March 1972 and 1997 (9th April 2013)  
*Latest* 31st October 1954 (9th October 2013)  
270 trapped, 18 retrapped, 1 control (1936-1976: 11,665 trapped, 2011-2012: 521 trapped, 12 retrapped, 2 controls)

Three on 9th April were the first of the year and 30 the following day included the first singing birds. There were a further 433 birds logged during the month including the three highest counts of the year; there were 82 on the 15th, 80 on the 21st and 63 on the 25th. It was clear that birds were not lingering with low counts following each peak; there were only 11 logged on the 16th, nine on the 22nd and 14 on the 27th. Interestingly, of 117 birds trapped during April, only one was retrapped and that had lingered for less than 24 hours. A bird was seen carrying a feather on the last day of the month but there was no further indication of a nest attempt. Spring passage had already slowed by May and, although birds were recorded on every date bar one, only 126 were logged during the month with peaks of 12 on the 1st and 15 on the 15th. Only 22 birds were logged between the 1st and 9th June. Three on 18th June and a single on the 22nd were the last of spring.

The number of Willow Warbler recorded on each day of the 2013 season and the monthly maxima

![Graph of Willow Warbler counts by month](chart.png)
A single on 15th July was the first of autumn. There were a further 24 birds over ten dates, with seven on the last day of the month the July peak. There were 158 birds logged in August with records on every day except two and peaks of 15 on the 6th, 12 on the 10th, 20 on the 16th and 13 on the 31st. The bulk of autumn passage occurred in the first half of September with 183 birds logged between the 1st and the 14th and with highs of 34 on the 6th and 32 on the 8th. Only 26 birds were recorded in the second half of the month and only six in October including a single on the 9th which was the last of the year. Of 125 birds handled during the autumn, seven birds were retrapped; two had remained for a day, one for two days, two for five days, one for ten days and one for 12 days.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* Telor Penddu
Common but recorded by both Thompson and Betts as Uncommon and Scarce prior to the 1950s
97 trapped, 9 retrapped (1936-1976: 211 trapped, 2011-2012: 80 trapped, 2 retrapped)

A male on 23rd March was eight days later than the first of 2012 and the only March record. There were 35 over 11 dates in April, with peaks of six on the 26th and 11 on the 30th when the first singing bird was heard. May saw 52 birds logged over 19 dates with 12 on the 17th and eight the following day. In June there were four birds on the 5th and seven singles during the month with one on the 30th the last of spring. Single juveniles were seen on 9th July and trapped on the 19th. There were no further records until 1st August when the ringed juvenile was remarkably retrapped; where this bird had been as it put on 1.8g (9.73% of its bodyweight) was unclear. Different juveniles were then seen on the 5th and 28th August prior to 56 birds being logged over 19 dates in September including peaks of eight on the 12th and nine on the 30th. There were 94 birds logged over 25 dates in October with highs of 11 logged on the 4th, 5th and 10th. Ringing showed that the four singles logged in November, on the 4th, 8th, 9th and 11th, were all different. Prior to this season there had only been 13 day counts in excess of ten individuals, all bar one coming in the record year of 2012 (the other in 1989).

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* Telor yr Ardd
Uncommon Migrant although Scarce of late
3 trapped (1936-1976: 172 trapped)

One at the Well on 8th May was the first of the year (RDB, GE). One on 9th June was the only other record of the spring. In autumn there was one at the Well on 25th August, different singles were trapped on the 1st, 4th and 22nd September and one was at the Farm on 29th September. In October there was a bird at the Farm on the 22nd and what was probably the same bird was there two days later. The last of the year was on 31st October, two days prior to the latest ever recorded.
Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*

**Rare Autumn Migrant** 18 previous records

**Earliest** 27th August 2004 (8th September 2013) **Latest** 26th October 1990

1 trapped (1936-1976: 3 trapped)

A juvenile mist netted in the Wheelhouse Garden on 8th September was the 19th Skokholm record and the first since 27th August 2004 (RDB et al.). Of the 18 previous individuals one was in the 1950s (the second for Wales on 12th September 1956), five were in the 1960s, one was in the 1970s, one was in the 1980s, eight were in the 1990s and two were in the 2000s. All Barred Warblers recorded on Skokholm have been juveniles.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

**Scarce Migrant** not recorded every year

**Earliest** 23rd April 1984 (8th June 2013) **Latest** 3rd November 1927 (24th October 2013)


A first-summer male singing at the Well was trapped in the Well Heligoland on 8th June (GE). This was the first record since 15th September 2011 and the first spring bird since 4th May 2007. Two birds on 4th October, one in the Courtyard and a juvenile mist netted at the Well, were the first of the autumn. The ringed bird was seen on the 6th and retrapped on the 8th when there were a minimum of two other birds present and probably six in total. The following day two new birds were ringed and a probable third bird was present at the Well. Up to two birds were seen daily for the following six days, the majority of good views revealing rings. Of the two birds ringed on the 9th, one was retrapped on the 13th and found to have increased in weight from 9.2g to 11.5g (a 25% increase in under four days) and the other was retrapped on the 14th and was found to have increased from 10.7g to 12.7g (an 18.7% increase). There were nearly daily records until 24th October, probably
mainly referring to the latter of the ringed birds which was retrapped on the 23rd and found to weigh 12.9g. A ringed bird at the Farm on 24th October was the last in a very good year for this species.

**Whitethroat Sylvia communis**

**Llwydfron**

*Fairly Common Migrant* previously Common, has bred in eight years (most recently in 1998)

**Earliest** 5th April 1966 (20th April 2013) **Latest** 30th October 1968 (4th October 2013)


Two birds on 20th April, one in the Cottage Garden and one in the Courtyard, were the first of the year. There were six more birds during April, including two trapped and four on the last day of the month. In May there were 48 birds recorded over 14 dates including the first two singing males on the 1st and a peak of 13 birds on the 17th with eight the following day. An adult retrapped on 17th May had been ringed on 23rd August 2012; with no Skokholm breeding in 2012, it is interesting to see such site fidelity in a trans-Saharan migrant. There were seven singles noted in June including a bird which sang for a day at the Well. July saw the first juveniles dispersing from the mainland with two on the 7th the first of the autumn. There were 63 birds recorded during July with at least one noted each day from the 7th and peaks of four on the 17th, six on the 19th, five on the 22nd and five on the 31st. Of 12 birds ringed during the month, seven were retrapped; three had stayed for two days, two had stayed for three days, one had stayed for five days and another for six. There were 53 birds recorded during August, with birds noted on every day bar six and a peak of four on three dates. The majority of the 60 birds recorded in September came in the first half of the month, with peaks of seven on the 4th and the 8th, but with ten birds in the last four days of the month including five on the 30th. There were six on 3rd October and three the following day were the last of the year. Of 47 birds handled during the autumn, only one was an adult.

The number of Whitethroat recorded each day in 2013.

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**Subalpine Warbler Sylvia cantillans**

**Telor Brongoch**

*Rare Migrant* 11 previous records, all but two in spring

**Earliest** 2nd April 2001 (16th May 2013) **Latest** 3rd November 2001

1 trapped (1936-1976: 3 trapped)

A first-summer female trapped in the Well Heligoland on 16th May was the first since a two-day bird last seen on 5th May 2003 (EW, CB et al.). The Subalpine Warbler complex is currently the focus of much interest, with Svensson (2013) proposing that Western Subalpine Warbler be split as *S. inornata*. The warm tones of this year’s bird, coupled with a lack of white extending along the inner web of the second most outer tail feather, suggest that it is of the Western form (species). Of the 11 previous Skokholm individuals one was in the 1950s (the first for Wales on 1st October 1953), two
were in the 1970s, five were in the 1990s and three were in the 2000s. None of these individuals were documented to (sub)species although three have been males and three have been trapped which may allow the records to be reassessed in the future.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*

**Uncommon Migrant** occasionally absent in autumn


Two on 21st April, a singing male at the Farm and a bird trapped at the Well, were the first of the year. There were then singles at South Pond on 25th April, at the Farm on 1st May and behind the Wheelhouse on 17th May. One trapped on 30th August was the first of the autumn. There were then singles along the Lighthouse Track on 14th September, at the Farm on 28th September and finally two, one at East Bog and one on the Neck, on 4th October. It is very unusual for the number of autumn records to match that observed in spring.

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata*

**Vagrant** one previous record (the first for Wales)

1 trapped (the first for Skokholm)

One mist netted behind the Wheelhouse on 25th September was the second for Skokholm (SW, TW, RDB et al.). The ringed bird was released into the Courtyard but soon relocated to behind the Wheelhouse where it was watched feeding amongst ragwort. As the afternoon progressed the bird began to venture further from the Farm and was surprisingly relocated in bracken near Crab Bay by
observers heading to the Lighthouse. The bird flew north and was not seen again. This bird followed one on Ramsey Island, 18km to the north, on 23rd September; both birds exhibited distinctive pale growth-bars in the tail, the pattern of which showed the two birds to be different. A small body feather from the Skokholm bird was sent for mitochondrial DNA analysis and was found to have a cytochrome b sequence only one base pair different to Booted Warbler reference material but 63 base pairs different to Sykes’s Warbler *I. rama* (M. Collinson pers. comm.). The only other Skokholm record was the first for Wales in 1993 which also arrived on 25th September but which remained until the 28th. There had been three further Welsh records prior to 2013.

*Sedge Warbler* *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*  
**Telor yr Hesg**

**Common Migrant and Uncommon Breeder** previously a Scarce Breeder

**Earliest** 6th April 1961 (16th April 2013)  
**Latest** 17th October 1957 (4th October 2013)


One at the Well on 16th April was the first of the year (RDB, GE), and there were three further singles at the Well during the month. A minimum of eight birds arrived on 1st May, from when birds were seen daily until 15th September. There were 316 birds recorded during May with a peak of 40 on the 17th and 19 logged the day before and the day after. The first known Skokholm breeder was back on 2nd May; a bird ringed as an adult male on 25th June 2012 again bred at the Well this year. Two days later a bird returned which was ringed on Skokholm as a juvenile on 7th August 2011; this bird was not trapped again so it is not known whether it remained to breed or passed through. On 19th May a male was retrapped which had been ringed as a juvenile on 23rd August 2012; this bird went on to breed in the vicinity of the Well. A male trapped on 26th May which was wearing a French ring bred behind the Wheelhouse. In total there were 52 new birds trapped in May.
With so many passage birds, including birds singing from suitable breeding habitat, further evidence of a breeding attempt was required for the breeding bird count. The first nest building was at the Well on 31st May with further pairs seen nest building at East Bog on 5th June, behind the Wheelhouse on 8th June and two pairs built along Well Stream with another towards Orchid Bog on 13th June. The first faecal sac, indicative of chicks, was seen at the Well on 22nd June and a pair was feeding young at South Pond on the 23rd. A final pair was with young between the Red Hut and the Well. Thus eight pairs definitely bred, the second highest total on record.

The first two fledglings were seen at the Well on 9th July, 11 were trapped in this area during the month and further juveniles were seen around the Farm and at East Bog. The likely arrival of juveniles dispersing from the mainland made it difficult to calculate productivity, but clearly there were many young raised on Skokholm. There were 243 birds logged in August and 40 birds ringed; although the peak count was only 14 on the 2nd, the very low retrap rate suggests that there was a steady passage. In September birds were seen daily until the 15th, with a peak of nine on the 11th, then 16 birds were logged over eight dates with four on the 25th the highest count. There was a
single on 3rd October and then three on the 4th were the last of the year. All 59 birds trapped in August and September were juveniles.

**Ringing recovery D295194**
- Originally ringed as an adult, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 21st May 2013
- Recovered as an adult, TEIFi MARSH, CEREDIGION 22nd May 2013
- Finding condition: Trapped in mist net
- Distance travelled: 60km at 47 degrees (NE)
- Days since ringed: 1

There were 21 hours and 20 minutes between this bird being ringed at one WTSWW reserve and it being controlled at another. The bird weighed 10.8g when it was ringed and 10.0g when it had reached the Teifi Marshes.

**Ringing recovery D295240**
- Originally ringed as a juvenile, WELL MIST NET, SKOKHOLM 17th July 2013
- Retrapped as a juvenile, WELL MIST NET, SKOKHOLM 18th July 2013
- Recovered as a juvenile, TITCHFIELD HAVEN, HAMPSHIRE 6th August 2013
- Finding condition: Trapped in mist net
- Distance travelled: 298km at 110 degrees (ESE)
- Days since ringed: 19

**Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus**
- Uncommon Migrant
- Previously Scarce
- 5 trapped, 2 retrapped (1936-1976: 15 trapped, 2011-2012: 4 trapped, 1 control)

A bird trapped in the Well Heligoland on 17th May was the first of 2013. An unringed bird was at the Well three days later and a bird with a ring was seen there 26th May. A bird trapped at the Well the following day did not have a ring. Singles were then seen for the next two days, the latter of which was wearing a ring. A singing male mist netted at the Well on 5th June was the last of spring. A juvenile trapped at the Well on 24th August was the first of the autumn. A bird amongst boulders at the Bluffs the following day was unusual and the juvenile remained at the Well. A bird logged at the Well on four of the next six days probably referred to the ringed bird; it was retrapped on 31st August and found to have increased from 12.3g on its arrival to 16.9g (a 37.4% increase). In September there was a single on the 2nd, two on the 4th including a new bird trapped at the Well and a single on the 5th. Two on 6th September, including the ringed bird at the Well which in two days had increased in weight from 9.3g to 10.6g (13.98%), were the final records of the year.

**Blyth’s Reed Warbler Acrocephalus dumetorum**
- Vagrant
- An addition to the Skokholm list
- 1 trapped (the first for Skokholm)

One trapped in the Cottage Heligoland on 27th September was the first for Skokholm and the second for Wales (TW, SW, RDB et al.). It was released in the Courtyard but was not seen again. A small body feather was sent for mitochondrial DNA analysis and was found to have a cytochrome b sequence between one and three base pairs different to Blyth’s Reed Warbler reference material but 57 base pairs different to any other species (M. Collinson pers. comm.). Although there were fewer records nationally in 2013 than in the preceding record year, there have now been low double figure counts for four consecutive years (although there were only seven accepted records in 2008 and 2009, four in 2006 and two in 2005).
**Wren Troglodytes troglodytes**  
*Fairly Common Breeder* only noted as a Common Winter Visitor prior to first breeding in 1988  
50 trapped, 41 retrapped (1936-1976: 876 trapped, 2011-2012: 60 trapped, 20 retrapped)

There were 55 singing males mapped this spring, a new Skokholm record, although only fractionally up on the 52 territories mapped in 2012 and the 51 in 2011. The last three years are remarkable for the fact that the previous peak in breeding numbers was the 19 territories located in 1994 and the most recent survey prior to the renovation period located only ten territories in 2007. The reason for the substantial increase in the number of breeding pairs is unclear, particularly given recent harsh winters. Prior to the establishment of Wren as a Skokholm breeding bird, the species was considered a common winter visitor with a substantial arrival noted each October. Such an arrival was not evident this year (see table below), although it may have been somewhat masked by the presence of resident birds.

**The total number of Wren recorded in each month of 2013. Note that November recording was limited to between the 1st and 16th of the month.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
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<td>481</td>
<td>492</td>
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<td>505</td>
<td>210</td>
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**Starling Sturnus vulgaris**  
*Very Abundant* bred from 1946, peaking at 53 pairs in the 1960s but last confirmed breeding in 2006  
21 trapped (1936-1976: 1082 trapped)
Of the 699 Starling logged in March, 616 came in the first half of the month, with peaks of 80 on the 2nd and 70 on the 3rd and 4th. There were 68 birds logged in the first eight days of April, with a peak of 45 on the 4th, but only two further singles were recorded in the remainder of the month. Two together on the 7th was the only May record and ten singles between 24th June and 6th July probably all referred to the same lingering individual. There was a further single on 15th July. There were 142 birds logged between 6th August and 13th September with records on every date bar four and peaks of seven on 10th August and six on three dates. There were three further singles in September, one on 3rd October and daily singles between the 10th and 14th October. A group of 16 arrived on 18th October and a further 62 birds were logged up until the end of the month. There were 900 birds noted in the first four days of November, with a high of 47 on the 1st, there were 38 on the 8th and then numbers increased with 233 on the 9th, 243 on the 10th, 540 on the 12th, a minimum of 1400 on the 13th, 842 on the 14th and 1950 on the 15th (the last day of whole Island coverage). Both adult Peregrine were frequently seen harassing the large flocks.

Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*  
*Mwyalcon y Mynydd*
Scarce Migrant although sometimes Uncommon and more regular in spring
(1936-1976: 51 trapped)

One on the cliffs at Twinlet Bay on 22nd March was only the eighth British record to be reported to www.birdguides.com this year (GE, RDB). Surprisingly it proved the only 2013 Skokholm record.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*  
*Mwyalcon*
Common Visitor and Scarce Breeder peaking at nine pairs in 1990 but recently four pairs or fewer
50 trapped (including 5 pulli), 59 retrapped (1936-1976: 1718 trapped, 2011-2012: 11 trapped, 7 retrapped)

There were daily records through March with 264 birds during the month and peaks of 15 on the 12th, 14 on the 5th and 13 on six dates. There were 12 different birds trapped during the month, five males and seven females, three of which had been trapped as adults in April 2012, one of which had been trapped as a first-winter in April 2011 and one of which had been trapped as a juvenile in August 2010. There were 209 birds recorded during April with peaks of 12 on the 12th and 11 on two dates but no more than eight in the second half of the month. There were three new females and two new males trapped during the month, taking the spring total to seven males and ten females, although only five pairs remained for the breeding season. Five breeding pairs was one more than
logged in 2012 and two more than recorded in 2011. The Well pair had four eggs by 4th May, these had hatched by 15th May and the first fledglings were recorded on 27th May. Productivity proved difficult to calculate due to overlapping territories and second broods, but 14 juveniles were trapped before 1st September. As was noted by both Betts and Thompson, the number of records dropped noticeably in August and September with just 87 and 82 birds respectively, this the period of adult post-breeding moul. The nine birds logged on 28th September marked the beginning of the autumn increase in records and 182 birds were logged the following month including peaks of 12 on the 12th, 14th and 24th and 11 on a further three dates. There were 141 birds in the first 15 days of November including the highest counts of the year; there were 17 birds around the Farm on the 8th and 15 on the 12th. There were 23 new birds ringed from 6th October until the end of the season, with five first-winter males, six first-winter females, seven adult males and five adult females trapped.

**Fieldfare Turdus pilaris**

Socan Eira

**Uncommon Winter Visitor** listed as Fairly Common by both Betts and Thompson

**Earliest** 14th September 1977 (11th October 2013) **Latest** 13th June 1980 (12th April 2013)
(1936-1976: 7 trapped)

Four singles between the 8th and 12th March probably referred to the same individual which lingered around the Neck. Three together on 12th April was the only other spring record. There were a total of nine birds logged in October with three on the 11th, a single on the 13th and five on the 16th. In November there was a single on the 4th, two on the 10th and singles on the 12th and 14th. The annual number of records inevitably reflects staff arrival and departure dates, with a single record in 2011 and three in 2012 the only birds logged since 2004.

**Song Thrush Turdus philomelos**

Bronfraith

**Common Visitor** but breeding has not been observed

47 trapped, 7 retrapped (1936-1976: 465 trapped)

Of the 36 birds logged in March, 33 were in the first half of the month and there were peaks of 11 on the 2nd, six on the 5th and four on the 8th. There were six birds logged in April including three on the 3rd and a single on the 7th which was the last spring record. The first juvenile to arrive from the mainland was seen at the Well on 10th July and a further six singles, possibly the same bird, were noted at this site during the month. There were 17 birds logged during August and five during September, all singles bar three on 10th August and two on four dates. Two juveniles ringed during this period, one on 16th July and one on 20th August, were still present on Skokholm on 1st September and 3rd November respectively. The autumn influx began on 11th October with 108 birds logged during the remainder of the month and peaks of nine on the 12th, 26 on the 16th, nine on the 24th and ten on the 25th. Numbers increased in November with 483 birds logged in the first half of the month. There were peaks of 23 on the 3rd, 35 on the 4th, 24 on the 6th and 7th and 34 on the 8th from when the daily counts were all in excess of 30 individuals and there were highs of 62 on the 9th, 49 on the 11th and 52 on the 12th.

**Redwing Turdus iliacus**

Coch Dan-aden

**Common Winter Visitor**

**Earliest** 20th September 2001 (10th October 2013) **Latest** 18th June 1979 (13th April 2013)
12 trapped, 2 retrapped (1936-1976: 157 trapped)

The first of the year was on the Neck for three days from 21st March and was joined by a tailless bird on the latter date. The tailless bird was seen daily until 9th April by which time the new tail feathers were partially grown. Additionally in April there was a single on the 2nd, two on the 4th, three on the 5th and nine on the 6th. Following a two day absence, 52 birds on 12th April was the largest April
arrival observed on Skokholm for over a decade. Two birds the following day were the last in what was a good spring by recent standards; there was only a single record of two birds during March 2012 and four singles in the March of 2011 with no April records in either year. In October birds were first heard going over on the night of the 10th and 43 birds were on the Island the following morning. In total there were 242 birds logged during the month with further peaks of 30 on the 12th, 31 on the 17th and 41 on the 25th, but with four days when no Redwing were logged. There were 138 birds noted in the first half of November, with records on every date and highs of 12 on the 1st, 22 on the 6th, 13 on the 9th, 17 on the 10th and 18 on the 11th.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*

*Scarce* but not recorded every year

(1936-1976: 3 trapped)

A single which commuted between the Farm and North Pond on 10th October arrived in strong north-northeasterly winds and heavy morning rain. It was the only record of the season and only the eighth Mistle Thrush logged since 1996.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*

*Fairly Common Passage Migrant*


Three on 8th May were the first of the year. There were no more records until a single on the 17th after which there were 32 more birds recorded over eight dates including the spring maxima of 11 on the 30th. In June there were 13 birds recorded between the 1st and the 6th and two birds at the Well between the 13th and 15th were the last of spring. Of 17 birds trapped in spring, only one was retrapped and this had only lingered for a day. There were four singles in August including a juvenile on the 16th which was the first of autumn. There were 91 bird days in September, the majority of which came in the first half of the month. There were peaks of ten on the 3rd, 11 on the 6th and ten on the 28th. There were six on the last day of September but no October records. Of the 18 birds trapped in autumn, only singles on 25th August and 6th September were adults.
The number of Spotted Flycatcher recorded each day in 2013. All records came in these four months.

There were daily records of between three and eight birds in March with a total of 146 logged during the month. There were then 54 birds logged up until 13th April with between two and six birds noted each day. A single at the Well on 16th May was the last spring record. The first of the autumn was a single on 20th August with between one and four birds logged each day from the 23rd until the end of the month. Numbers increased during September with 694 birds logged during the month with the peak counts increasing from 11 on the 3rd to 18 on the 7th and 11th, 28 on the 12th, a minimum of 40 on the 20th and 22nd, 45 on the 24th, 52 on the 25th and finally 59 on the 28th. Numbers peaked in October with 952 birds logged, but with 611 of the records coming in the first half of the month. A minimum of 78 birds were noted on the 13th, the highest day count for more than a decade. Peak numbers then dropped from this date with 64 on the 14th, 52 on the 17th and 36 on the 24th.

The number of Robin recorded each day in 2013. All records came in these seven months.

**Robin Erithacus rubecula**

*Abundant Winter Visitor and Passage Migrant* bred in 1939, 1940 and 1980

60 trapped, 68 retrapped (1936-1976: 717 trapped, 2011-2012: 45 trapped, 17 retrapped)

There were daily records of between three and eight birds in March with a total of 146 logged during the month. There were then 54 birds logged up until 13th April with between two and six birds noted each day. A single at the Well on 16th May was the last spring record. The first of the autumn was a single on 20th August with between one and four birds logged each day from the 23rd until the end of the month. Numbers increased during September with 694 birds logged during the month with the peak counts increasing from 11 on the 3rd to 18 on the 7th and 11th, 28 on the 12th, a minimum of 40 on the 20th and 22nd, 45 on the 24th, 52 on the 25th and finally 59 on the 28th. Numbers peaked in October with 952 birds logged, but with 611 of the records coming in the first half of the month. A minimum of 78 birds were noted on the 13th, the highest day count for more than a decade. Peak numbers then dropped from this date with 64 on the 14th, 52 on the 17th and 36 on the 24th.
There were 322 birds logged in the first half of November with peaks of 28 on the 6th and 37 on the 8th. Ringing recoveries during the autumn period showed that birds which had been ringed on Skokholm, but that had summered elsewhere, returned to Skokholm again for the winter; Robin L052996 which was ringed as a juvenile on 30th August 2011 was back on Skokholm between the 5th and 13th October at least; D295001 which was ringed as a first-winter on 4th March 2013 was still present on 13th March and was recorded three times between 13th October and 4th November; D295002 was also ringed as a first-winter on 8th March and had also returned by 13th October. The latter two Robin had returned to exactly the same bushes in which they were trapped the previous winter. Such wintering site fidelity has been noted on Skokholm before (Betts, 1992).

**Red-breasted Flycatcher Ficedula parva**

**Gwybedog Brongoch**

*Rare Migrant* primarily in autumn with a minimum of 21 records, only three in spring

**Earliest** 18th May 2001 (26th September 2013) **Latest** 3rd November 1993

(1936-1976: 9 trapped)

A fine first-year bird was found in the Cottage garden on 26th September (GE, RDB et al.). It spent most of the day in the Courtyard of the Farm where it made frequent sallies for insects from the Elders and a furled mist net. This was a one day bird and the first since a one day bird on 12th October 2012.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*

**Gwybedog Brith**

*Uncommon Migrant* more frequent in autumn and sometimes absent in spring

**Earliest** 10th April 1993 (21st August 2013) **Latest** 17th October 1982 and 1988 (26th September 2013)


There were no spring records. A juvenile male trapped on 21st August was the first of the year and was still present the following day. Two different birds were trapped on 23rd August and another different bird was trapped on the 24th. These records very much highlighted the value of ringing as field observations would have assumed that it was the same bird frequenting the Farm for four consecutive days. The fifth bird of the year was trapped on 2nd September and was still present the following day when a bird was also at the Lighthouse. What was presumably another bird was feeding from the cliff face at Twinlet on 4th September and a bird was at the Well on the 6th. Single birds were recorded on 24th, 25th and 26th September, the latter of which was certainly another individual owing to slightly different wing covert patterning.
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*  
*Tingocho Ddu*

**Uncommon Migrant** has probably overwintered on occasion  
2 trapped (1936-1976: 100 trapped)

A female on the Little Neck on 9th March was possibly the same bird seen there on the 14th. There were then daily records of a male at the Lighthouse between the 23rd and 30th March with a female also there on the latter date. In April there was a female at Spy Rock on the 2nd, possibly the same bird in Crab Bay on the 4th, a female at the Well on the 6th was probably the same bird trapped the following day, a female without a ring was in Crab Bay on the 9th and finally a female was at the Lighthouse on the 10th. In May a male was at the Lighthouse on the 16th with what may have been the same male on the North Coast later in the day. A male was still present the following day, when an adult female was trapped, and a male was again present on the 19th. It is not clear whether records of a female on North Plain on 11th June, the Neck on the 12th and in Crab Bay on the 13th refer to one very mobile individual, but these were the first June sightings for over a decade. Given the excellent spring for Black Redstart records, and that there are usually more birds seen in autumn than spring, it was surprising that a single at the Farm on 1st November was the only other record.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*  
*Tingocho*

**Uncommon Migrant** usually more regular in autumn  
**Earliest** 1st April 1991 (15th April 2013)  
**Latest** 2nd November 1968 (5th October 2013)  
4 trapped (1936-1976: 394 trapped)

A smart male in North Haven on 15th April was the first of the year. A female trapped at the Well on 17th May was the only other spring record. In autumn a bird was at the Lighthouse on 22nd August and possibly the same bird was in the Quarry two days later. Juveniles were trapped at the Well on the 25th and 27th September and a bird was in the Quarry on the last day of the month. Two on 3rd October included a juvenile male trapped at the Well, where a single on the 5th was the last of the year.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*  
*Crec yr Eithin*

**Uncommon** previously Fairly Common  
**Earliest** 9th April 1966 (9th May 2013)  
**Latest** 26th October 1968 (6th October 2013)  
2 trapped (1936-1976: 326 trapped)

A male at North Pond on 9th May was the first of the year, was still present the following day and may have been the same male seen on the 12th. A female was trapped at the Well on 17th May and a ringed female was seen for the following two days. In August singles were at South Pond on the 26th, on the Neck on the 28th and 29th and at the Lighthouse on the 31st. A bird was at the Gap on 7th September, two were seen on the 25th, 26th and 27th including a bird trapped at the Well on the 25th, there were a minimum of four on the 28th and then a single at the Bluffs from 30th September to 2nd October. A single at Orchid Bog on 6th October was the last of the year.
Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*  
**Fairly Common** bred in 1928 and 1932  
5 trapped (1936-1976: 336 trapped)

A single was present upon the arrival of staff on 1st March and a single male was logged on the 3rd and 8th. There were two females on 10th March and single females, at widely dispersed locations, on the 12th, 13th and 14th. Two were at Crab Bay on the 23rd and a single female on 25th March was the last of spring. A juvenile logged on the 7th, 8th and 9th July and a juvenile at the Well on 20th July were the only records until 19th September when a bird was at South Pond. There were three, possibly four birds on 22nd September with four birds confirmed on the 24th, a single on the 25th and two on the 28th. In October birds were recorded on all but seven days from the 5th, with 44 logged during the month and peaks of three on the 8th, 17th, 24th, 25th, 28th and 29th and four on the 11th and 12th. There were 32 birds logged in the first half of November with records on all but four dates and peaks of four on the 9th and 12th and six, the highest count of the year, on the 4th. This year thus saw a pleasing return to form for this species which for the past decade has been recorded as Uncommon, if not Scarce. With the exception of five on 18th March 2006 and three on two dates in autumn 2005, there has not, until 2013, been more than two birds logged on any single date for over ten years.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*  
**Abundant Migrant and Uncommon Breeder**

**Earliest** 2nd March 2003 (5th March 2013)  
**Latest** 13th November 1999 (26th October 2013)  

A male in Horse Bottom on 5th March was ten days earlier than the first of 2012, eight days earlier than in 2011 and came on the first day that Wheatear were reported to www.birdguides.com this year; there were further singles in Devon, East Sussex and on neighbouring Skomer along with two in Ceredigion. There were further single males on the 14th, 16th and 18th March before numbers increased, with 130 logged between the 19th and the end of the month. There were 372 birds recorded during April with peaks of 26 on the 2nd, 30 on the 21st and 29th and 34 on the 30th. The first singing male was noted on 11th April and there were eight territorial males singing by the 16th. Although the majority of migrants were nominate birds, there were several good candidates for Greenland *O. o. leucorhoa* in the last four days of the month. Of the 441 birds logged in May, 258 came in the first half of the month, including peaks of 28 on the 1st, 31 on the 2nd, 25 on the 6th and 24 on the 15th when there were obviously passage birds, including several *O. o. leucorhoa*, additional to the Skokholm breeders. There were 335 birds logged in June and 516 in July, almost all seemingly Skokholm birds with the increase attributable to a productive breeding season.

The number of Wheatear recorded on each day of the 2013 season and the monthly maxima.

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Stonechat *Saxicola rubicola*  
**Clochdar y Cerrig**

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Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*  
**Tinwen y Garn**

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There were 12 breeding territories mapped this year, two more than in 2012 but 32.8% fewer than the 1928-2013 mean (17.85 ±sd 8.31). The first provisioning of chicks was noted at Horse Bottom on 22nd May and the first fledglings were around the Sugarloaf on 5th June. The 12 pairs produced a minimum of 28 first brood fledglings, an average of 2.33 fledglings per pair, with young noted in every territory bar one. Second broods were harder to assess due to the presence of first brood fledglings, but a pair near the Lighthouse produced a second brood of three fledglings and a pair near Twinlet fledged at least one second brood chick. Whole Island productivity was thus in the region of 2.67 fledged young per breeding pair.

The number of Wheatear breeding territories located each year 1928-2013 (where data exists).

There were 281 birds logged in August but no obvious autumn arrivals until the 28th when 23 birds were counted. There were 592 logged in September, with birds seen on every date but with 13 days of only single figure counts. Following 28 on the 3rd, there was a notable influx on the 6th with 121 recorded and subsequent counts of 61 on the 7th, 50 on the 8th and 53 on the 9th. The next notable influx was of 30 birds on the afternoon of 13th September when the first larger Greenland birds were noted. There were then peaks of 19 on the 25th, 27 on the 28th and 37 on the 30th, a high percentage of which were again seemingly *O. a. leucorhoa*. There were 290 birds logged in October with highs of 31 on the 2nd, 38 on the 5th and 33 on the 7th. There were daily records until 20th October, the first day when no birds were seen, and then either one or two birds were noted each day from the 21st until the 26th with a single at Twinlet on the latter date the final record of the year.

**Dunnock Prunella modularis**

Fairly Common Winter Visitor previously a Scarce or Uncommon Breeder with up to 12 pairs

4 trapped, 8 retrapped (1936-1976: 304 trapped, 2011-2012: 5 trapped, 3 retrapped)
There were 52 birds recorded during March with records on all dates bar one and a peak of three birds on six dates between the 8th and 18th. In April there were daily records until the 15th, all of singles with the exception of two on the 6th and with a singing male on the 11th. A single on 20th April was the last of the spring. Dunnock bred annually between 1928 and 1939, annually between 1964 and 1981, in ten years between 1987 and 1998 and three pairs nested in 2012. It is perhaps thus surprising that no Dunnock bred this season given the 2012 recolonisation. Two on the 11th, 12th and 28th September were the first of the autumn. There were 19 dates from 6th October including highs of four on the 12th and three on the 14th and 15th. There were 29 birds recorded in the first half of November with three on three dates and five on the 9th. Ringing recoveries suggested that the majority of autumn records were attributable to the same lingering individuals; birds ringed on the 6th, 12th and 14th October were still present on the 14th, 9th and 15th November respectively.

**House Sparrow Passer domesticus**  
**Scarce although not recorded every year**  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 20 trapped)

A female which dropped in to the Well Willows on 4th November soon found its way into an open mist net (GE). There were only seven records prior to 1957, annual records from then until 1978, records in fewer than half of the next 25 years and eight records between 2004 and 2012.

**Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava**  
**Uncommon Passage Migrant more regular in autumn**  
**Earliest** 10th March 1956 (25th April 2013) **Latest** 18th November 1967 (8th October 2013)  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 79 trapped)

All spring records related to British breeding *M. f. flavissima* or flyover birds unassigned to race. One on 25th April was the first of 2013 and one near the Lighthouse on the 28th was the only other logged during the month. In May there was a male on the 2nd, singles on the 9th and 10th, a female was on North Pond on the 11th and 13th and a bird headed west over the Farm on the 16th. A single on the 5th was the only June record and there were no birds logged in July. A flyover on 25th August was the first of autumn. There were then daily records until the 30th including at least three, probably five, on the 26th and three on the 27th and 28th. Four on 1st September preceded singles on the 2nd, 10th, 15th, 17th, 23rd and 26th. There were two at the Farm on the 29th and 30th, one of which remained...
until 6th October. There were five on 7th October and a single at the Farm the following day, the last of the season, was probably the long-staying individual.

**Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea**
*Siglen Lwyd*

**Uncommon Visitor** only nine records totalling 11 birds between 2005 and 2012 inclusive
1 control (1936-1976: 8 trapped)

A bird in South Haven on 30th March was the first of the year (SHM). A single along the Lighthouse Track on 27th April, two on 9th May and another bird in South Haven on 24th May were the only other spring records of a species described in 1938 as ‘a curiously rare visitor’. A flyover on 19th July was the only record until two on 6th September. There were a further 42 birds logged in September with records on 13 dates and peaks of three on the 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th and 18th, four on the 24th, five on the 20th, six on the 27th and eight on the 22nd. In October there were two on the 5th, three on the 6th, a single on the 13th, three on the 14th including a colour ringed bird, two on the 15th and finally a single on the 29th which was the last record of the year. This was one of the best seasons on record for this species with nearly three times as many records as in the past ten years combined.

**Ringing recovery** Left leg red over D657190, right leg yellow over green

**Originally ringed** as a juvenile, HEYSHAM, LANCASHIRE 4th October 2013

**Recovered** as a juvenile, THE FARM, SKOKHOLM 14th October 2013

**Finding condition** Colour rings read in field

**Distance travelled** 306km at 210 degrees (SW)

**Days since ringed** 10

**Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba**
*Siglen Fraith*

**M. a. yarrellii Scarce Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor**

**M. a. alba Common Migrant** many migrants are flyover birds making an accurate assessment of subspecies impossible

**M. a. alba Earliest** 18th March 1990 (21st March 2013) **Latest** 29th October 1988 (6th October 2013)
40 trapped (including 5 pulli), 12 retrapped, 1 control (1936-1976: 349 trapped, 2011-2012: 11 trapped, 1 retrapped)

A male Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii* arrived at the Farm on 4th March where it was nest prospecting with a female by the 15th. Unraced flyover wagtails during the first half of the month probably included the breeding Pied Wagtails as numbers increased from midmonth with counts of between five and eight birds on most days. The first White Wagtail *M. a. alba* of the year, a fine male, arrived on 21st March, only three days after the earliest ever record. In April three pairs of Pied Wagtail (one at the Lighthouse, one at the Farm and one near North Pond), had established territories and the Farm male was taking food to the nest by 25th April. Ringing showed that the female breeding at the
Farm was a bird which had also bred in 2012. The only noticeable passage in April was of White Wagtail with a single on the 15th, 13 on the 19th, eight on the 20th, singles on the 21st and 23rd, five on the 26th, nine on the 27th and a single on the 29th. Again there was no obvious movement of Pied Wagtail in May with the three breeding pairs remaining on territory. Five chicks were ringed in the Farm nest on 19th May and the first fledglings were noted on the last day of the month. White Wagtail continued to pass through in small numbers during the month with five on the 1st, three on the 9th and one or two on a further 16 dates. There were three single White Wagtail logged in the first eight days of June and a White Wagtail near the Lighthouse on 7th July was unseasonal, one of only a handful of July records. The breeding Pied Wagtail did well; the Farm pair had fledged four by 4th June and three second brood birds by 17th July, the North Pond pair had fledged two by 8th June and a single second brood bird by 28th July, and the Lighthouse pair had fledged three by 7th July and a second brood of two by 10th August. Thus three pairs fledged a minimum of 15 young.

The number of Pied Wagtail *M. a. yarrellii* (maroon), White Wagtail *M. a. alba* (green) and unraced *M. alba* wagtail (blue) seen during the 2013 season.

Pied Wagtail counts increased in August, partly due to the fledged young becoming more active and ranging more widely (the ringed chicks from the Farm had reached the Lighthouse by 5th July). However peaks of 31 on the 25th and 25 on 27th August perhaps included mainland birds. Wagtails were certainly on the move; following the first two autumn White Wagtail logged on 25th August, a further 118 were logged in the last six days of the month including highs of 25 on the 26th, 33 on the 27th and 34 on the 28th. Additionally a further 123 unraced wagtail were logged in the last six days of August. In September there were daily records of Pied Wagtail with peaks of 18 on the 9th, 15 on the 17th and 18th and 16 on the 22nd. There were 75 White Wagtail logged over 17 dates with peaks of eight on the 1st, 4th and 27th and 12 on the 2nd. Additionally there were 416 unraced wagtails during September, either flyover birds or unassigned juveniles, with peaks of 27 on the 1st, 30 on the 4th, 29 on the 6th and 28 on the 29th. In October there were daily records of up to 17 Pied Wagtail until the 17th when five birds were logged. There were no records for the next four days, although birds returned for the last ten days of the month with one or two logged on each date and six on the 24th. There were only two White Wagtail logged in October, singles on the 4th and 6th, and 174 unraced birds were noted, although only 13 of these were in the second half of the month. Only Pied Wagtail were logged in November, with between one and three noted on 12 of the first 15 days.

**Tree pipit Anthus trivialis**

*Uncommon* although Scarce in recent years and more regular in autumn  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 122 trapped)
One heading west over the Farm on 16\textsuperscript{th} April was the first of the year (RDB). A bird was trapped at the Well on 9\textsuperscript{th} May and one there the following day was the last of spring. Two on 23\textsuperscript{rd} August were the first of the autumn. There were then two the following day, including one which flew off the sea and dropped in to the Neck. There were a minimum of four over the Lighthouse Track on 25\textsuperscript{th} August and three there the next day. One was also along the Lighthouse Track on 28\textsuperscript{th} August. In September there were two on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, two flyovers on the 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} probably all referred to different birds and there was a single at the Farm on the 6\textsuperscript{th}. There was a minimum of three mobile birds on the 12\textsuperscript{th} but up to five may have been involved. A single over on 22\textsuperscript{nd} September was the last of the year. Only 19 birds were recorded between 2005 and 2012.

\textbf{Meadow Pipit \textit{Anthus pratensis}}

\textit{Corhedydd y Waun}

Very Abundant Visitor and Uncommon Breeder


There were 958 birds logged in March, 691 of which were in the second half of the month, with peaks of 62 on the 19\textsuperscript{th}, 77 on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 107 on the 25\textsuperscript{th}, 68 on the 27\textsuperscript{th} and 60 on the 28\textsuperscript{th} indicative of spring passage. In April there were 1011 birds logged but with smaller highs of 58 on the 10\textsuperscript{th}, 57 on the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 50 on the 21\textsuperscript{st} and 28\textsuperscript{th}. Birds were first seen with nest material on 18\textsuperscript{th} April. There were 692 birds logged in May, with daily counts of between 14 and 33 individuals bar 46 on the 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Several pairs were feeding young by the 29\textsuperscript{th} and census work during the month revealed 28 breeding pairs, 33.3\% fewer than the 42 logged in 2012. There were daily counts of between ten and 31 birds in June, totalling 543 for the month and with the first fledglings noted on the 28\textsuperscript{th}.

The number of Meadow Pipit recorded on each day of the 2013 season. Note that the count of 1353 on 27\textsuperscript{th} September exceeds the values given on the y axis.
There were 555 birds logged in July and 860 in August with peaks of 50 on the 27th and 28th August, all records which could be attributable to the breeding population and their fledglings. Autumn passage was however evident in September with 4065 birds logged during the month. There were 642 birds recorded in the first half of the month with peaks of 55 on the 9th, 70 on the 12th, 90 on the 13th and 77 on the 14th before peak passage figures of 110 on the 22nd, 186 on the 23rd, 415 on the 24th, 1353 on the 27th, 579 on the 28th and then a drop to 112 on the 29th. The 27th September count of at least 1353 birds is the highest day count on record, with both Betts and Thompson stating that autumn maxima have only been up to 1000 birds. Passage continued in October with 1788 birds logged, 1506 of which were in the first half of the month, and with peaks of 95 on the 5th, 96 on the 7th and 93 on the 8th. Only 138 birds were logged prior to the mid-November staff departure, with only two on the 14th and three the following day. This is a typical winter exodus, as noted by both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007). Two adult Meadow Pipits trapped in April 2013 had been ringed in April 2012, however it is unclear whether these birds returned for the breeding season or were part of the very small overwintering population.

**Rock Pipit Anthus petrosus**
**Corhedydd y Graig**

*Uncommon Visitor and Uncommon Breeder* with a high of 67 pairs (1959) and a low of 17 (1983)
10 trapped (including 2 pulli) (1936-1976: 2593 trapped, 2011-2012: 12 trapped)

It is likely that the vast majority of 2013 records are attributable to the resident breeders and their offspring, although distinguishing between migrants and the movements of local birds is difficult without seeing migrants actually arrive or a substantial spike in numbers. The exception to this was two birds apparently of the Nordic form *A. p. littoralis* which were around the Lighthouse on the 27th and 28th March (MYP, MH, *et al.*). Birds of this subspecies have only been noted in six previous years.

There were 665 Rock Pipit logged in March with peaks of 34 on the 16th, 44 on the 18th and 39 on the 29th. There were 472 logged in April, a drop in numbers attributable to birds moving from their wintering feeding areas on Skokholm’s plateau to their less accessible coastal breeding areas, indeed birds were seen nest building from the 17th. Numbers were similar in May, with 453 logged during the month. The breeding bird census revealed 32 breeding territories, three fewer than were mapped in 2012. Adults were first noted provisioning young on 1st June and the first fledglings were seen at North Gully on 11th June. The number of birds logged rose to 927 in July as more young fledged, although many adults were quietly incubating second clutches during the month. There
were 1144 birds logged in August, with a high of 55 on the 15th and 29th, and 1677 in September with highs of 78 on the 10th, 88 on the 21st, 87 on the 24th and 80 on the 29th. Peak counts continued to increase into October as more birds began to feed on the plateau, with large groups forming around North Pond and the Farm; there were October highs of 95 on the 5th, 96 on the 7th and 93 on the 8th. Peak counts dropped slightly in November with highs of 77 on the 9th and 83 on the 12th.

**Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs**

*Ji-binc*

*Fairly Common* listed by both Betts and Thompson as Common to Very Abundant

10 trapped, 2 retrapped (1936-1976: 255 trapped)

There were only 16 Chaffinch logged in March, with singles on 13 dates (nine of which were males) and three females on the 23rd. There were 22 birds over 14 dates between the 3rd and 23rd April with a high of three on the 8th and 12th. A single on 18th May was the last of spring. There were then no records until seven on 5th October. There were two the following day and 58 were logged between the 11th and 30th, with records on all but one date and a high of eight on the 15th and 24th. There were records on all but three dates in the first half of November with highs of 12 on the 7th and 11 on the 9th. It was thus a very poor year for Chaffinch records, although Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007) recorded Chaffinch as Common to Very Abundant based on some very large late October and November movements which do not seemingly occur over Skokholm every year.

**Brambling Fringilla montifringilla**

*Pinc y Mynydd*

*Scarce* listed by both Betts and Thompson as Uncommon, but with just around 20 spring records


1 trapped (1936-1976: 5 trapped)

The first of the year was a vocal bird over the Red Hut on 12th October (RDB). A female at the Well on 14th November was trapped and became only the sixth to be ringed on Skokholm. The ringed bird was joined by a second individual the following day and a bird was seen briefly as the Wardens departed the Island on 16th November. With the exception of a single which lingered between the 19th and 22nd October 2012, these are the first records since 2004, although this no doubt reflects an absence of staff during the winter period.
**Greenfinch Chloris chloris**  
**Uncommon** but recorded by both Betts and Thomson as Fairly Common or Common  
(1936-1976: 93 trapped, 2011-2012: 4 trapped, 1 retrapped)

This was a surprisingly scarce species in 2013 with singles on 8th March and 12th April the only records of the year. Both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007) noted Greenfinch as Fairly Common or Common, but in the eight years prior to 2013 there had been just 14 spring records totalling 18 birds and 14 autumn records totalling 43 birds. The presence of recorders during the winter months would probably result in an increase in the number of birds logged.

**Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis**  
**Common** but recorded by both Betts and Thomson as Fairly Common  

In an interesting reverse of the trend seen in the preceding species, 2013 was the best year ever for Goldfinch records on Skokholm. In April there were singles on the 2nd and 5th, two on the 10th and a total of 37 logged over all but two days between the 14th and 30th, with a peak of six on the last day of the month. There were 91 recorded over 24 dates in May with peaks of 16 on the 10th and seven on the 2nd and 11th. In June there was a total of 14 birds over eight well spread dates including two on the 26th which were the last of the spring. Four on 6th September were the first of autumn, there was a single on the 9th and then one or two on each date between the 26th and 30th. October was unprecedented on Skokholm; there were 746 birds logged with between one and 19 birds noted on 22 dates and peaks of 138 on the 10th, 36 on the 13th, a record 285 on the 14th, 113 on the 15th and 37 on the 17th. There were only 38 birds logged in the whole of October 2012 and 130 on 24th October 1966 was the only Skokholm three-figure count prior to the three logged this year. November was quieter with records on all but two dates in the first half of the month, a total of 26 birds logged and peaks of four on the 12th and 15th.

**Siskin Carduelis spinus**  
**Scarce** listed by both Betts and Thompson as Uncommon, but with just nine spring records  
(1936-1976: 37 trapped)

Two over the Red Hut on 14th October was surprisingly the only record of the year (RDB). This species is fairly common in some years, with over 100 noted on several dates and over 1200 grounded by fog on 26th October 1988. However, with the exception of four records in 2012 (including two rare spring records), there had been no birds logged since 2004.

**Linnet Carduelis cannabina**  
**Common** bred in 1929, 1997 and 1998  

Following singles on the 3rd and 15th April, there were a further 62 birds logged between the 19th and the 30th with peaks of eight on the 23rd, 12 on the 29th and 19 on the 30th. There were 47 logged over 14 dates in May with seven on the 1st, six on the 10th and 12 on the 23rd. In June there were two on the 16th, singles on the 24th and 28th and in July there was a lone bird on the 25th. The first autumn record was 11 on 15th September and there were a total of 77 birds during the month including highs of 26 on the 27th and 16 on the 28th. There were 245 birds logged over 12 dates in October, including 48 on the 4th, 64 on the 14th and 79 on the 15th which were the highest counts of the year, but also including seven days of single-figure counts. There were 48 Linnet logged in the first half of November with 35 on the 1st, five birds over six dates and then seven on the 15th which were the last to be recorded before staff left the following day.
Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*  
**Uncommon** recorded by both Betts and Thompson as Scarce and only six records 2005-2012  
1 trapped (1936-1976: 16 trapped)

Three birds on 7th May comprised two definite Lesser Redpoll and a single unidentified flyover Redpoll (all unidentified Redpoll are listed here under Lesser Redpoll but noted as flyovers). A Lesser Redpoll was trapped 15th May and nine were logged the following day, five of which were flyovers. Three Lesser Redpoll were at the Farm on 19th May, two flew over the Lighthouse on 20th May and there were further flyover singles on the 22nd, 26th, and 28th. A male Lesser Redpoll was at the Well on 29th May and two birds flew over on the 30th. In June two went over on the 3rd, as did a single on the 8th and two on the 18th. Two Lesser Redpoll on 26th June were surprisingly the last of the season. Both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007) noted that Redpolls were more regular in spring and all six records between 2005 and 2012 came in April or May.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
**Rare** 22 previous records, only ten in spring and all singles except for three on 11th October 2001  
**Earliest** 3rd May 1970 (8th June 2013) **Latest** 12th October 1995  

A singing male on 8th June was tracked down to the Cottage Garden where it eventually revealed itself to be a brown bird and was later trapped (GE, RDB et al.). This was the third successive year that this species had been logged following singles between the 2nd and 11th September 2011 and the 27th and 29th August 2012, both of which were also trapped. Prior to these the most recent record was on 25th May 2003.
Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*  
**Scarcely** but only four records between 1996 and 2012  
**Earliest** 31st July 1957 (27th September 2013)  
**Latest** 8th June 1963  
(1936-1976: 1 trapped)

A vocal bird east over South Haven on 27th September was the first since 15th November 2010 and only the second record in ten years. A bird feeding on the Little Neck on 22nd October was the only other 2013 record.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*  
**Scarcely** more than annual until 1971 but only recorded in eight years between 1972 and 2012  

A bird seen briefly on the wall of the Lighthouse compound and around the seawatching hide on 20th May headed towards the Quarry and was not seen again (JH, RDB, et al.). One photographed at the Well by a guest on 26th June was the only other record of the year. Surprisingly, given the rarity of this species over the past 40 years, this is the third year in succession that it has been recorded with singles on 17th April and 14th September 2011 and on 15th March 2012.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
**Scarcely** Breeder and **Scarce** Visitor  
first bred in 1960, then in most years 1967-1980 and since 2005  
15 trapped, 23 retrapped  

There were almost daily records in March, with 50 logged during the month and three males noted on six dates with the first singing birds on the 20th. The first female was not seen until 26th March suggesting that some birds may overwinter away from Skokholm. There were four territorial males by 10th April, but it was not until the 27th that multiple females were recorded. There were 133 birds logged during May and five breeding territories were mapped during the month with pairs at South Pond, East Bog, North Pond, the Well and towards Orchid Bog. Five pairs is three more than recorded in 2012, the most since the Island was recolonised in 2005 and equals the peak recorded in 1977. Trapping showed that one of the breeding males was ringed on Skokholm as a juvenile in August 2011 and another as a juvenile in August 2012, whilst one of the females was ringed as an adult in April 2012 and another as an adult in April 2011. Birds were first noted provisioning young on 17th July and the first two fledglings were seen at the Well on 25th July. There were 130 birds logged in August with up to four juveniles noted at the Well. Ringing revealed that the number of juveniles using the area around the Well was actually much higher, with eight ringed before 23rd August, a further four ringed before 14th September and a further single ringed on 15th October. The number logged was consistent through September and the first half of October, but only 30 were recorded in the second half of October and 45 in the first half of November, perhaps suggesting that some of the Skokholm birds had departed to winter on the mainland. In the years that Reed Bunting did not breed on Skokholm they were recorded as a Scarce Visitor with a small number of records each year, typically in early spring and October. Such small scale arrivals would be very difficult to detect now that a small breeding population has again established.
The Non-avian Report
Surveying of non-avian species is intrinsic to our understanding of island ecology. Records were collected throughout the season, either through targeted surveying or on an ad-hoc basis.

Invertebrates
Dragonflies and Damselflies
There were very few dragonfly and damselfly records during what was an exceptionally dry year on Skokholm.

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* (Vander Linden, 1820)
One at the Farm on 17th June and one on the South Coast Path on 23rd July were the only records of the year.

Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* (Charpentier, 1840)
A male perched on *Salix* next to North Pond on 19th October was the only record of the year.

Red-veined Darter *Sympetrum fonscolombii* (Selys, 1840)
A male observed briefly at the Bluffs on 20th July was a first for Skokholm and the 17th species of Odonata to be recorded on the Island (RDB). A frequent migrant from the continent, Red-veined Darter also breed sporadically in southern Britain (British Dragonfly Society). Although distant, this individual was photographed and its identity was confirmed by North Wales Odonata recorder Allan Brandon.

Hoverflies (by John Harper)
Hoverfly recording has been fairly well covered over the years on Skokholm. Efforts in 2013 were spent in confirming the species listed previously by Thompson (2007) and Davies (2007) and were during the period from 29th July until 18th August. Specimens of difficult taxa which had been previously grouped were collected in order to aid identification.

One question that always arises on islands is whether species are resident or migrants; sometimes they are involuntarily the latter, caught up in unpredictable winds. One species that appeared suddenly in 2013 was the large, strikingly patterned *Helophilus trivittatus*. The few that appeared on Skokholm on 6th August were greatly outnumbered by the hundred or more recorded on Skomer the day before (D. Boyle pers. comm.); in both cases they had moved on within a day or two so it is likely that this species is a migrant. This species, and its relatives the drone flies, have larvae of the rat-tailed maggot type that live in stagnant pools and mud.

Of the different hoverfly genera, two are particularly large. *Cheilosia* has 37 species and consists mostly of small to medium sized black flies, many of whose larvae feed by eating into the base of plants like thistles causing them to wilt. Strangely none have been recorded on Skokholm although a few are present on the nearby mainland. The other large genus is *Platycheirus* containing 25 species, five of which were noted in 2013. They are a specialist group of aphid eaters and require microscopical study for identification.

A first for the Island, *Scaeva selenitica* was recorded this season. It has characteristic markings on the abdomen and is similar to the common migrant *Scaeva pyrastris* which is sometimes recorded in great numbers all over the UK. *Neoascia tenur* and *Neoascia geniculate* were both firsts for the Island. They belong to a specialist group that requires examination under the microscope. Members of *Neoascia* are tiny black flies that conduct slow flying patrols low down amongst marsh vegetation. *Platycheirus tarsalis* was a fourth addition to the Skokholm list in 2013.
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**Total Species** | **30** | **17** | **23**

*List produced by Thompson (2007) from previous publications and his own records.

**List produced by Davies (2007) from his own records.


# Several Platycheirus and Eupeodes taxa have been split during the last three decades, with additional species added. Thus for these the list regards the taxon as *sensu lato* (*sens.lat.*). If specific identification with an up-to-date and detailed text has been made, the suffix *sensu stricto* (*sens.str.*) has been used. It is important to note that sometimes even then, only the males are identifiable with present knowledge.

**Beetles**

**Black Oil Beetle** *Meloe proscarabaeus* (Linnaeus, 1758)

A female Black Oil Beetle was found on the track next to the farm on 1st May and one which was observed in the same place a day later was not sexed.
Minotaur Beetle *Typhaeus typhoeus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Spoil from breeding tunnels was evident in spring and autumn, being particularly abundant around the farm and on Home Meadow. Several adults were observed.

Moths

Records in 2013 were collected using both active trapping and ad-hoc recording of moths in the field. Most trapping was carried out using a battery powered Heath Trap which was set-up at various locations, particularly in the sheltered areas around the Farm and at East Bog. Difficulties with keeping the battery charged, in finding a suitably sheltered location and unwanted interest from the Skokholm rodent population meant that the trap often proved unreliable on good moth nights. However a second generator powered Mercury Vapour (MV) Trap was also used, although this was limited by fuel availability. A MV trap brought on and run by a visiting ringer was also used for a limited period. Ad-hoc records of day flying moths or night flying species attracted to flowers or lights in buildings were noted in Log each evening.

It is difficult to compare the 2013 observations with previous trapping as records of moths on Skokholm prior to 2013 frequently note presence or absence rather than providing count data. A database exists which lists some records up until 2000, although again this mostly details presence or absence with the period between 1990 and 2000 including counts. A more standardised trapping effort over the coming seasons will provide us with a better understanding of moths on Skokholm. Several exciting firsts for the Island were recorded during the 2013 season, no doubt due in part to both the predominantly easterly airflow during the autumn and improvements in identification literature (the ‘Field guide to micro-moths of Britain and Ireland’ by Sterling and Parsons (2012) was purchased for the Island library).

Some of the more interesting records of 2013 are detailed systematically below. A Nationally scarce B is a moth recorded from just 31-100 10km squares in Great Britain since 1st January 1980.

5 Marsh Marigold Moth *Micropterix calthella* (Linnaeus, 1761)
Many were found feeding on the pollen of Stinging Nettle *Urtica dioica* flowers on 25th June. There appears to be no previous records of this diminutive but attractive micro moth.

15 Orange Swift *Hepialus sylvina* (Linnaeus, 1761)
One on 23rd August was the only individual logged in 2013. There are just 14 previous records.

17 Common Swift *Hepialus lupulinus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the season was recorded on 6th June and there was a peak of four individuals on the 9th. This is almost certainly a breeding species with regular records since the 1990s and with the first Skokholm record dating back to 1910.

18 Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa* (De Geer, 1778)
The first record of the year was on 24th June and there was a peak of eight on 23rd July. There are regular, but not annual, records of single figure counts dating back to 1910.

170 Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena trifolii* (Esper, 1783)
The first four imagoes of this common Skokholm breeder were recorded at North Pond on 9th July. Double figure counts were then logged daily throughout the month, contributing to a monthly total of 311 and with a peak of 70 on the 19th. Mating individuals were frequently recorded. Numbers dropped sharply in August, although single figure counts were recorded on most days. Five at North Pond on 21st August were the last of the year.
Thrift Clearwing *Synansphecia muscaeformis* (Esper, 1783)
The first two adults of the season were at Twinlet on 5th July. There were only 12 further records in July, although this Nationally Scarce B could usually be found when actively looked for near Twinlet Bay. First recorded in 1910, there have been relatively few and irregular records of this Skokholm breeder.

Nettle-tap *Anthophila fabriciana* (Linnaeus, 1767)
One on 21st September was the first to be documented on Skokholm and the only one of the season.

Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An abundant immigrant and probable breeder on Skokholm, the first record of the season occurred on 20th June outside the Lighthouse compound. Singles were then observed regularly with a minimum of 30 individuals recorded at Crab Bay on 23rd July and over 50 counted along the Lighthouse track on 25th July.

*Agonopterix alstromeriana* (Clerck, 1759)
One on 10th October was, on paper, a first for the Island. A second appeared in the Cottage a day later and a third was in the Ringing Hut on the 22nd. On all occasions the moth was disturbed from resting within buildings.

*Agapeta homana* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first record of the season came on 7th July and there were two recorded on 3rd August, attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut. Prior to 2013 this species had only been recorded in 1997 and 1998.

*Twenty-plume Moth Alucita hexadactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One attracted to the internal lights of the Lighthouse during a Storm Petrel ringing session on 14th August was a first for Skokholm.

*Chrysoteuchia culmella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This species was trapped on 27th July using an MV trap at the Well. Prior to 2013 there were just three records, all in July 1998. Although the Skokholm status of this widespread grass moth is unknown, it may have been under recorded in the past owing to a lack of reference material for the casual recorder.

*Scoparia pyralella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first record of the season appeared on 6th June. They were occasionally caught thereafter with a peak of five on 30th June. The first ever record of this species was on 4th June 1997, with subsequent singles in 1998 and 2000.
Small Magpie *Eurhypara hortulata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the season was on 23rd June and the peak count was of only two individuals, recorded on 8th July. Given that this is an easily recognisable micro moth, it is surprising that there have been very few historical records; the first was documented in July 1996 and there are two subsequent July records, in 1999 and 2000.

*Udea prunalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first ever Skokholm record came from the Well MV trap on 27th July. It was the only record of 2013. This species is commonly associated with Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, of which there are a small number on Skokholm.

*Rusty Dot Pearl* *Udea ferrugalis* (Hübner, 1796)
Two trapped on 4th August were the first of the season. One was disturbed from long grass at the Farm on 7th October and a rather tired looking specimen disturbed from short grass on Home Meadow on 21st October was the last of the season. This is a fairly common immigrant on Skokholm, with multiple previous records including a peak of 14 logged in 2000.

*Rush Veneer* *Nomophila noctuella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
This cosmopolitan migrant was recorded regularly from 5th September to 8th October with a notable influx on 4th October when 14 were logged. Prior to 2013 this species was recorded on 30 dates between 1996 and 2000, with a peak count of 44 on 30th August 2000.

*Dolicharthria punctalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One was caught between the 22nd and 23rd July, making 2013 only the second year that this moth has been documented on Skokholm (following four that were logged between July and August 1998). This is a rather scarce species restricted to the southwest coasts of England and Wales.

*Mother of Pearl* *Pleuroptya ruralis* (Scopoli, 1763)
One near the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 10th August was only the fourth record for Skokholm following singles in 1996, 1997 and 1999.

*Olive-tree Pearl* *Palpita vitrealis* (Rossi, 1794)
A new species for the Island, this stunning immigrant was disturbed from long grass in the Wheelhouse Heligoland Trap on 25th October during a period of strong winds from the southeast.
1424  **Endotricha flammealis** ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One trapped at the Farm on 23rd July was the first of the season. Multiples were subsequently noted amongst ragwort and bracken along the Lighthouse Track on several occasions during July and August with a peak of over 200 estimated on 25th July. This species was previously documented in just three years prior to 2013 (1997, 1998 and 2000).

1637  **Oak Eggar** *Lasiocampa quercus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A female attracted to a lit window on the night of 3rd August was the only record of the season. There have been relatively few historical observations of this species with the most recently documented occurring in 2000 when there were records on four dates between July and August.

1652  **Peach Blossom** *Thyatira batis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Although common on the mainland, one attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on the night of 27th July was the first ever record for Skokholm.

1669  **Common Emerald** *Hemithea aestivaria* (Hübner, 1799)
A smart individual attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on 19th July was the first and only record of the season and the first to be logged since 1960. There is only one other documented record, dating from 1937. However it is perhaps not surprising that a moth of woodland and hedgerows is irregular on Skokholm. The 2013 individual was caught on the same evening as a Barred Rivulet and a Barred Straw, both also rare immigrants to Skokholm.

1682  **Blood-vein** *Timandra comae* (Schmidt, 1931)
One on 9th July was the first since 1991 and only the second documented record of this species in the Island’s history.

1689  **Mullein Wave** *Scopula marginepunctata* (Goeze, 1781)
One on 7th July was only the 12th of this predominantly coastal species to be recorded. There were irregular Skokholm records between 1912 and 2000.

1713  **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Although common on the mainland, one trapped alongside the Mullein Wave on 7th July was only the 7th record for Skokholm. This species was last documented in 1998.

1716  **The Vestal** *Rhodometra sacraria* (Linnaeus, 1767)
British records of this immigrant from southern Europe and northern Africa predominantly occur in the south. However this year they were recorded as far north as Scotland in what was thought to be one of the best UK Vestal years on record. On Skokholm, one at the Farm on 25th September was the first of the year and was followed by one on Home Meadow on 4th October and one at Twinlet Bay
the following day. Prior to these the most recent record was in September 2000 and before this there were just four documented, with two in 1968, one in 1960 and one in 1937.

1724 Red Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe spadicearia* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
With just six records between 1960 and 1968, one trapped at the Well on 4th August was the first to be documented for 45 years. Given the date on which it appeared, it is possible that this was a second generation individual blown from the mainland.

1725 Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe ferrugata* (Clerck, 1759)
First recorded on 9th June. Six on 4th August was the maximum 2013 count of this common Skokholm species, a probable breeder on the Island.

1742 Yellow Shell *Camptogramma bilineata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This species is common and a likely breeder on Skokholm. The first record of 2013 occurred on 25th June and daily single figure counts followed into July, with double figure counts from mid-July contributing to a monthly total of 202. With the exception of 11 on the 9th, August saw daily single figure counts totalling 102 for the month. Not surprisingly, records in September were infrequent, with the last of the season on the 27th taking the monthly total to five.

1758 Barred Straw *Eulithis pyraliata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An individual attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on the night of 19th July was only the fifth for the Island and the first to be logged since 1960.

1776 Green Carpet *Colostygia pectinataria* (Knoch, 1781)
One on 19th June was the only record of 2013 and surprisingly the first first-generation individual to be recorded on Skokholm. Additionally it was only the second Island record following a second-generation individual on September 2000.

1804 Barred Rivulet *Perizoma bifaciata* (Haworth, 1809)
The first record for Skokholm was attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on the night of 19th July. It proved a good night for rare Skokholm visitors with a Barred Straw also being attracted.

1825 Lime-speck Pug *Eupithecia centaureata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One on 29th July was the only record of 2013. This species has been recorded regularly since 1910, with a maximum of 19, logged on 2nd September 1996. It may well prove to be a scarce breeder.

1830 Wormwood Pug *Eupithecia absinhtiata* (Clerck, 1759)
The only record of 2013 was on 23rd July. With just eight previous records, the first coming from 1992, this remains a rarely encountered species on Skokholm.
1862 **Double-striped Pug** *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (Haworth, 1809)
A second brood individual attracted to the Ringing Hut lights on 3rd August was the only record of the year. This species remains rare on Skokholm with only four previously documented records.

1902 **Brown Silver-line** *Petrophora chlorosata* (Scopoli, 1763)
The first record of the year occurred on 1st June and a peak of 14 was logged on 9th June. With bracken as the larval food-plant, it is no surprise that this species is regularly encountered.

1984 **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One at Spy Rock on 19th June was the first in a good year for this immigrant on Skokholm. There was a further single in July, five in August and one in September. Prior to 2000 this species was only logged in 12 years, with 1996 being the last year listed in the digital record.

2060 **White Ermine** *Spilosoma lubricipeda* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the season occurred on 6th June, with a peak of 14 noted just three days later. This is a commonly encountered species on Skokholm.

2061 **Buff Ermine** *Spilosoma luteum* (Hufnagel, 1766)
The first record of the year came on 9th June, three days after the first White Ermine. A total of 13 caught at the Well on 27th July was the largest catch of the season. This species is common on Skokholm, no doubt due to the generalist larval diet which can include ragworts and nettles.

2064 **Ruby Tiger** *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were just four records in 2013, all in August and therefore probably all second generation individuals. The first was attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on the 3rd and singles were trapped on the 14th, 18th and 28th. This species occurred almost annually between 1990 and 2000.

2069 **The Cinnabar** *Tyria jacobaeae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Despite an abundance of ragwort, the larval food-plant, there was a noticeable paucity of records this season. The first two imagoes of the year were noted on 18th June and just five were seen during the month with a further nine in July. The first caterpillars were noted on 12th July, a minimum of 50 were logged on 30th July and the highest count of the year came on 1st August when 180 caterpillars were noted. The low number of adults during what was a good year for many species of lepidoptera may reflect breeding and over-wintering success during the exceptionally wet 2012. Although it is also worth noting that this species has undergone a dramatic decline in parts of the UK, with up to 83% fewer adults than 35 years ago.

2089 **Heart & Dart** *Agrotis exclamationis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There was just one record of this species in 2013, a single on 27th July. Heart & Dart have been recorded almost annually since 1990.

2090 **Crescent Dart** *Agrotis trux lunigera* (Stephens, 1829)
The MV trap at the Well caught 20 on 27th August, this being the only date that this coastal species was recorded in 2013. However this paucity of records may reflect trapping effort as it was documented regularly throughout July and August during the 1990s.

2091 **Dark Sword-grass** *Agrotis ipsilon* (Hufnagel, 1766)
This common migrant was first recorded on 24th July. A total of six were noted feeding on ragwort flowers near Crab Bay on the night of 2nd August and smaller numbers were observed doing likewise during the remainder of the month.
Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first record of the season was of one on 24th July. There was surprisingly only one further record, a single on 29th September.

Lesser Yellow Underwing *Noctua comes* (Hübner, 1813)
The first and only record of the season was of one on 24th July.

Setaceous Hebrew Character *Xestia c-nigrum* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A single attracted to the lights of the Wheelhouse on 16th October was a late record for this species and the only one logged in 2013. It is perhaps surprising that this nettle eating species is recorded less than annually.

Bright-line Brown-eye *Lacanobia oleracea* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first record of 2013 occurred on 15th July and a peak of eight was subsequently logged on the 27th. This is a very common species on Skokholm and probable breeder.

Broom Moth *Melanchra pisi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One on 6th June was the first of the season. Given that this species has proven to be common in the past and that the larvae will readily use bracken as a food-plant, it was surprising that the highest count of the year was of only three on 10th June.

The Campion *Hadena rivularis* (Fabricius, 1775)
The first record of the season on 18th July preceded a peak count of 54 on the 27th. Trapping around the coast would probably reveal even more adults owing to the carpets of larval food-plant.

Pod-lover *Hadena perplexa capsophila* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One on 27th July was the only record of the year. This subspecies of the Tawny Shears has been recorded almost annually since the first was noted in 1990. Additionally there are four records of Tawny Shears from between 1937 and 1960 which were not assigned to subspecies and a further eight records from between 1990 and 1997 which were assigned to the nominate form.

Marbled Coronet *Hadena confusa* (Hufnagel, 1766)
With the exception of 1993, Marbled Coronet were recorded annually between 1990 and 2000, with single figure counts occurring over multiple May, June and July dates. One on 30th June was disappointingly the only record of 2013.

The Lychnis *Hadena bicruris* (Hufnagel, 1766)
One on 9th June and two on 27th July constitute the best year ever for this species. The first record for Skokholm was in 1970 and, prior to 2013, there had only been four subsequently with two on 9th August 1999 the last. The larvae feed on the seed capsules of campions, particularly Red Campion *Silene dioica*.

Antler Moth *Cerapteryx graminis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One on 23rd July was the only record of the year for this grassland species which is recorded irregularly on Skokholm.

The Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* (Hübner, 1808)
One attracted to the lights of the Wheelhouse on 4th October was only the fourth Skokholm record following moths noted in 1937, 1960 and 1992.
The Cosmopolitan Mythimna loreyi (Duponchel, 1827)
One attracted to the lights of the Wheelhouse on 6th October was only the second ever Skokholm record (following one in 1992) and possibly the first UK record of 2013. There had been fewer than 30 British records prior to 1975 but this species of Southern Europe and North Africa has since become a more regular visitor with up to 400 recorded in some years (Waring and Townsend, 2004).

Star-wort Cucullia asteris ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Two stunning individuals were caught in the MV trap at the Well on 2nd July. This is a Nationally Scarce B moth and predominantly an east and south coast species with only a scattering of Welsh records. This was only the second Skokholm record following one on 18th July 1999. Given that the larval food-plant is Goldenrod Solidago virgaurea, a plentiful species on Skokholm, there is no reason to suggest that this moth could not be a Skokholm breeder.

Marbled Green Cryphia muralis (Forster, 1771)
One found resting on a ragwort stem in Crab Bay on 22nd July was the only record of the season. Despite the database revealing only 15 previous records, all between 1990 and 2000, the Island is likely to provide suitable breeding habitat for this coastally distributed lichen eating species.

Small Angle Shades Euplexia lucipara (Linnaeus, 1758)
An irregular Skokholm species, the first of the year was recorded on 15th July and three were subsequently attracted to the MV trap at the Well on the night of the 26th. Four moths in a season supersedes the previous highest count of three in July 1997.

Angle Shades Phlogophora meticulosa (Linnaeus, 1758)
A regular Skokholm migrant and probable breeder, the first record of the season was at Spy Rock on 19th May. None were then logged until August when there was one on the 24th. There were two September records, on the 22nd and the 26th, and the last of the season was logged on 20th October.

Dark Arches Apamea monoglypha (Hufnagel, 1776)
The first of the year was noted on 18th July and a peak of 22 were trapped at the Well on the night of 26th July. This probable breeder has been recorded regularly and in good numbers since 1996, with the highest count of 208 coming in September 1999.
2364  **Frosted Orange** *Gortyna flavago* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One attracted to the lights of the Wheelhouse on 29\textsuperscript{th} September was the only record of the year, only the third to be documented on Skokholm and the first since 1912.

2399  **Bordered Sallow** *Pyrrhia umbra* (Hufnagel, 1766)
A new species for Skokholm, one was trapped at the Well on the night of 26\textsuperscript{th} July. Bordered Sallow are a coastal moth in Wales and widespread but local in Southern England. It is perhaps surprising that there are no previous records of this species on the Island.

2434  **Burnished Brass** *Diachrysia chrysitis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One caught at the Well between the 26\textsuperscript{th} and 27\textsuperscript{th} July was the only record of the season. This species was recorded annually on Skokholm between 1996 and 2000 with single figure counts of both first and second brood imagoes logged on multiple dates between June and September.

2441  **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This is a common immigrant on Skokholm with the first of the season logged on 28\textsuperscript{th} May. A further 14 were recorded in June, 37 in July, 377 in August, 94 in September, 15 in October and one at the Farm on 4\textsuperscript{th} November was the last record of the season.

2450  **The Spectacle** *Abrostola tripartita* (Hufnagel, 1766)
One on 6\textsuperscript{th} June was surprisingly the only record of the year. This regular Skokholm species was documented annually in high single figure or low double figure counts between 1996 and 2000.

2477  **The Snout** *Hypena proboscidalis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
With just three previous records, in 1910, 1912 and 1937, one attracted to the lights of the Ringing Hut on 19\textsuperscript{th} July was the first to be documented for 76 years.
Aggregates

(186  *Psyche casta* (Pallas, 1767))
The larval cases of a bagworm, probably *P. casta*, were found at the Quarry on 10th August. Despite only being a probable, this is the first documented record of any *Psychidae* on Skokholm.

2343x  **Common Rustic agg.**, *Mesapamea secalis agg.*
One caught at the Well on the night of 26th July was the first of the year and there were further singles in August. Despite many records of this group, there have to date been no dissections to confirm the presence of Common Rustic *M. secalis* or Lesser Common Rustic *M. didyma*.

2357x  **Ear Moth agg.**, *Amphipoea sp.*
One attracted to the MV trap at the Well between the 26th and 27th July was not dissected for identification. Of the four species of *Amphipoea* there are only two Skokholm records, one from 1937 and one from 1960, and both are listed as Crinan Ear *A. crinanensis*.

2381x  **The Uncertain agg.**, *Hoplodrina alsines agg.*
The first record of the year was on 23rd July and an impressive 261 were attracted to the MV trap at the Well on the night of 26th July. A minimum of 80 were recorded along the lighthouse track on 2nd August, nocturnally feeding on ragwort flowers. The majority of individuals seemed to be of The Rustic *H. blanda*, although The Uncertain *H. alsines* was almost certainly also present; a similar pattern of abundance has been suggested in the past. There were no dissections this season.

Butterflies

The 2013 season saw good numbers of butterflies recorded on the Island. There were notable influxes of migrants, successful second and third generations of Skokholm’s breeding species and scarce species that were last documented in the 1990s were again logged. Nationally 2013 was an extremely good year for butterflies, with perfect summer conditions ideal for the emergence, feeding and subsequent breeding success of a majority of species (Butterfly Conservation). The numbers of each species of butterfly recorded in the daily log are listed systematically below. The Maximum Daily Count refers to the highest number of individuals seen on any day that month and ‘butterfly days’ are the cumulative number of butterflies seen per a defined period of time.

**Clouded Yellow** *Colias croceus* (Geoffroy, 1785)
Two on the South Coast path on 25th August were the first of the year. A further eight, a record monthly count, were logged during October; there was a peak day count of five on 4th October followed by singles on the 5th, 6th and 8th. A total of ten for the season represents the third best year
on record following the 13 recorded in 1998 and the 11 logged in 1999 (Thompson, 2007). The last record prior to 2013 was of one on 1st September 2011. A migratory species from the continent, Clouded Yellow are recorded in the UK in small numbers every year. However 2013 proved to be an invasion year, fuelled by a good breeding season in Europe and North Africa which resulted in high competition for food. This competition probably forced these butterflies to head north in search of sustenance (Butterfly Conservation).

**Large White** *Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first record of the year was logged on 7th May but numbers did not peak until July when 145 butterfly days were recorded, including a peak of 25 on the 30th. A total of 96.8% of 2013 butterfly days occurred during July and August. Interestingly there were thus only three Skokholm records during the first brood flight season with the remaining 274 butterfly days being attributable to later broods. This is perhaps a reflection of the unusually cold and wet winter period, which would have affected overwintering survival, followed by conditions excellent for butterflies. Nationally, Large White numbers were up 335% on 2012 totals (Butterfly Conservation), an increase mirrored on Skokholm. The last of the season was logged on 21st September.

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**Small White** *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This species was the most abundant white butterfly of the 2013 season on Skokholm, with a total of 309 butterfly days logged (compared to 277 Large White days and 79 Green-veined White days). The first of the season was on 18th July and was thus probably a second brood adult. The second brood is typically stronger (UK Butterflies), as might be expected given that they do not have to overwinter; it was thus little surprise that 62.8% of records were of later brood individuals flying in September.

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**Green-veined White** *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was in South Haven on 19th May. As was seen with the other whites, there were very few first brood individuals with 87.3% of records being logged from July onwards and thus presumably being of second generation adults. The last record of the season was on 25th September.

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**Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas* (Linnaeus, 1761)
2013 proved a fantastic season for Small Copper on Skokholm with a total of 5775 butterfly days logged between 18th May and 28th October. Over half of the records occurred in August with three-figure counts on 12 dates and daily counts of more than 300 on the 5th, 6th and 13th. Heavily worn individuals were noted in late August and early September and bright individuals were again logged from 14th September onwards, indicative of a fresh brood and what was probably a third generation of adults. Large swathes of the larval food-plant, Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, along with the abundance of an adult nectar-plant, Common Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, no doubt contribute to the prevalence of this species on Skokholm.

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<td>814</td>
<td>3302</td>
<td>969</td>
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**Common Blue** *Polyommatus icarus* (Rottemburg, 1775)

Although Thompson (2007) reported this species to be on the increase, in 2013 there was just one record of a probable second generation adult at the Well on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Despite the presence of a larval food-plant, Bird’s-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, it seems very likely that the Common Blue did not breed on Skokholm this season.

**Painted Lady** *Vanessa cardui* (Linnaeus, 1758)

The excellent summer weather saw an increase in the number of Painted Lady reaching the UK in 2013 (Butterfly Conservation), an increase which was also observed on Skokholm. A total of 184 butterfly days were logged this year, 51% of which occurred in August. The first two individuals of the season were recorded on 18<sup>th</sup> June and these, along with the other 15 butterflies recorded during the month, were no doubt migrants arriving from the continent. The 136 butterfly days recorded between August and October were possibly of individuals from closer to Skokholm.

**Small Tortoiseshell** *Aglais urticae* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Despite the freezing conditions prevalent in March and April 2013, there were four butterflies during the period including the first of the year on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. There were just seven further butterfly days recorded in May and June. However the Small Tortoiseshell was still the fourth most abundant Skokholm species this season with 348 butterfly days logged, 49.1% of which were on the wing in July. The last record of the season was of one on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

**Red Admiral** *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

The first Red Admiral of the season was logged on 3<sup>rd</sup> April when an individual was observed flying in off the sea at South Haven. Numbers peaked in August and September with a total of 29 butterfly days logged and a maximum day count of four individuals. This compares with just three August records in 2012 and corresponds with national trends; numbers of this resplendent species increased nationally by 3537% (Butterfly Conservation) and there was an 870% rise on Skokholm. Such a huge increase reflects the appalling 2012 season but shows the resilience of butterflies and their ability to bounce back following poor breeding seasons.

**Peacock** *Inachis io* (Linnaeus, 1758)

There were only 35 butterfly days logged in 2013 with the first record occurring on 16<sup>th</sup> May at the Farm. Numbers peaked in August with a total of 29 butterfly days logged and a maximum day count of four individuals. This compares with just three August records in 2012 and corresponds with national trends; numbers of this resplendent species increased nationally by 3537% (Butterfly Conservation) and there was an 870% rise on Skokholm. Such a huge increase reflects the appalling 2012 season but shows the resilience of butterflies and their ability to bounce back following poor breeding seasons.
Comma *Polygonia c-album* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A rare Skokholm species, Comma have been documented on very few previous occasions, with the most recent record coming from 1994. One on 15th July and one on 28th September thus constitutes what may have been the best year on record for this species on the Island.

Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This species was once a fairly common breeder, but up until 2013 it had only been recorded in six years since 1986. There were two singles logged this year, one on 8th June and one on 20th July. Such a paucity of records and the apparent absence of this fritillary as a breeding species on Skokholm is perhaps a surprise given the presence of a larval food-plant, Common Dog-violet *Viola riviniana*, and its occurrence as a breeding species on neighbouring Skomer Island.

Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One near the Knoll on 7th June was the first of the 2013 season. There were then singles at the Well on 28th August, at the Well on 28th September and near Twinlet Bay on 29th September. This is a scarce species on Skokholm, usually only occurring every few years.

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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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Wall *Lasionmata megera* (Linnaeus, 1767)
One at the Lighthouse on 28th August was the only record of the year and the first to be documented for 18 years. Wall butterflies are only listed in the database for the years 1968, 1990, 1991 and 1995.

Gatekeeper *Pyronia tithonus* (Linnaeus, 1771)
The first record of 2013 was of two on 12th July and an Island record of six butterfly days were then logged up until the 29th of the month. The sporadic nature of these records suggests individuals straying from the mainland during the calm, hot days experienced throughout July, this during a year when national totals were up 15% from 2012 (Butterfly Conservation). The only record in the database for this species is of one in 1992.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Contrary to the positive trends noted for many other British species, nationally Meadow Brown suffered a 33% decline in 2013 (Butterfly Conservation). However the 2212 butterfly days logged on
Skokholm makes Meadow Brown our second commonest species. Almost 80% of butterfly days occurred in July, with a maximum daily count of 171 on the 28th and triple-figure counts recorded on seven dates. A total of 1753 July butterfly days is a 366% increase on the 2012 total (when only 376 butterfly days were logged and the maximum daily count was 50 individuals). There is only one generation of this species each season and, as they over-winter as larvae, it is thought that national declines may be attributable to the cold, harsh spring (Butterfly Conservation). Skokholm evaded the late March snow-storms which impacted the UK mainland but there were still several days of sub-zero temperatures.

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<td>1753</td>
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**Ringlet Aphantopus hyperantus** (Linnaeus, 1758)
The Ringlet is a scarce Skokholm species documented less than annually. One on 16th July and one on 21st July were the only two records of the season. As with the Wall, this species is likely to have drifted over from the mainland during the warm, calm, high pressure period experienced in July.

**Herpetofauna**

**Amphibians**

**Palmate Newt Lissotriton helveticus**
Palmate Newts are the only species of newt on Skokholm and were recorded sporadically throughout the season, often appearing under rain-buts or at wall bottoms after heavy rain. There was a notable count of 58 efts on 17th March which were found hibernating under a piece of carpet near the Central Block and approximately ten were observed under the French drains of the Cottage in the same month. Adults were not recorded on land until late July and then sporadically during August and September when they were presumably hunting for food in preparation for hibernation.

**Common Frog Rana temporaria**
Despite Thompson (2007) regularly recording this species in small numbers, the only evidence of its presence on the Island in 2013 were two clumps of desiccated spawn near North Pond on 7th March and one adult frog at East Bog on the night of 12th July. There are several possible explanations for the paucity of records this season, but the exceptionally cold spring, which resulted in the rare sight of frozen ponds on Skokholm, must have contributed towards adult and spawn mortality.
Additionally, spawning in areas which had flooded during the winter but which subsequently dried out during what was an extremely dry year will not have helped this rarely seen Skokholm species.

Reptiles

**Slow Worm** *Anguis fragilis*

In 2013 a Slow Worm monitoring project was set up on Skokholm in conjunction with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust. Artificial refugia designed to serve as preferred sites under which Slow Worms will thermoregulate were distributed around the Island; Onduline roof sheets and carpet tiles were both deployed at the end of July. It is hoped that this was the beginning a long-term study investigating the density and distribution of Skokholm’s only reptile. The first recording visits were made on the 3rd and 19th August and on the 8th and 29th September. Additionally Slow Worms were encountered very regularly under the traditional metal sheeting.

Onduline roof sheeting was distributed in clusters of four at the following four sites:

- **R1-4** (SM 741 052) *Wall between Peter’s Bay and North Haven*
  
  This cluster was not occupied until 29th September when one female and one juvenile were recorded under R4.

- **R5-8** (SM 736 051) *North Pond Wall*
  
  No occupation was recorded during the four visits.

- **R9-12** (SM 732 048) *Walls End*
  
  No occupation was recorded during the four visits.

- **R13-16** (SM 738 049) *The Hills*
  
  A total of 58 individuals were recorded over the four visits, with R15 and R16 containing Slow Worms from the first visit. By the second visit all refugia had been occupied at least once and on the fourth visit all four sites were being used synchronously.

- **R17-20** (SM 729 046) *Lighthouse and Helipad*
  
  No occupation was recorded during the four visits.

Carpet tiles were distributed in clusters of five at the following two damp sites:

- **C1-5** (SM 739 049) *East Bog*
  
  A total of 16 individuals were recorded over the four visits. C1, 2, 3 and 5 had all been occupied at some point by the third visit and on the final visit C4 sheltered a juvenile Slow Worm.

- **C6-10** (SM740 051) *The Well*
  
  Only two tiles were found to be in use during the four visits; C6 and C9 contained a total of four individuals.

**Turtle sp.**

A small sea turtle was observed swimming in waters adjacent to the Lighthouse by a long-term volunteer on 28th April (MPJ). The turtle, which was swimming close inshore, followed the coastline west and was lost to view as it passed the southwestern tip of the Island. Unfortunately it was not relocated, but the description suggested one of the smaller sea turtle species. Prior to 2013 there were five records of turtles in the waters around Skokholm; single Loggerhead and Leatherback Turtles were recorded in 1992 and a Leatherback and two unidentified turtles were logged in 2001 (Thompson, 2007).

**Mammals**

**Rabbit** *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Rabbits within a 7ha plot divided into two zones were first monitored from a fixed point on the Knoll in the mid-1990s when an outbreak of Rabbit Viral Haemorrhagic Disease (RVHD) caused a
significant decrease in the Skokholm population. Monitoring has occurred within the same area ever since, although with varying degrees of regularity. In 2013 rabbits were censused each month with the count commencing 90 minutes before sunset when rabbits are typically active (as stipulated by Thompson, 2007).

Zone A, adjacent to North Pond, allowed for high count accuracy throughout the season as the vegetation remained low. However it is likely that counts from Zone B, a field east of North Plain, were less accurate owing to bracken encroachment from June onwards. Despite this, rabbit numbers in Zone B mirrored the trends observed in Zone A.

The first juvenile rabbit was noted on 4th April and numbers peaked during the 22nd May census when 458 rabbits were recorded, comprising 374 adults and 84 juveniles across both zones. Lethargic, approachable animals were first noted on 3rd April and the number showing illness increased rapidly throughout May. A count on 13th June revealed just 55 animals in Zone A and 33 in Zone B, a decline of 76% at a time when numbers would normally be expected to rise. An almost identical count was made the following day. Two freshly dead carcasses were collected and sent off the Island for post-mortem. The results showed that the two animals had died from RVHD. Interestingly the liver of the mature rabbit contained the eggs of *Capillaria hepatica*, a nematode which primarily infects rodents but is capable of infecting a wide range of species (V. Simpson pers. comm.). The life cycle of this nematode is dependent on the death of the host and the subsequent digestion of its liver. A new host becomes infected by the parasite by ingesting eggs that have been
excreted in the faeces of the predator or scavenger that digested the originally infected liver. *C. hepatica* is regularly found in Brown Rats *Rattus norvegicus*, of which there are none on Skokholm, and has a low prevalence in House Mice *Mus musculus*, which are present on the Island. Cases in rabbits are very uncommon and it is yet to be ascertained how this parasite is surviving on the Island (V. Simpson pers. comm.).

Numbers had begun to slowly rise by 20th June when both zones totalled 160 rabbits (comprising 125 adults and 35 juveniles). Incidences of sick animals decreased during this period but were again on the increase by mid-July when a second crash in the population was recorded; there were just 70 animals logged in both zones on 17th July. The lowest count of the season came on 8th August when only 43 animals were observed across both zones. However an increase of 202% in September saw 130 recorded on the 4th and there were 102 on the 28th, the last count of the season.

**Bats**

Owing largely to their infrequency, bats on Skokholm have no doubt been under-recorded. Even when encountered, it is exceptionally unlikely that the observer will be carrying the necessary equipment to allow for identification. There were two records in 2013 but, considering that high pressure dominated during the summer months, this would almost certainly seem a significant undercount. Prior to 2013 only one bat had been positively identified to species level, although many had been attributed to a particular species based on jiz alone. A Noctule *Nyctalus noctula* that was caught in a mist net in September 1968 was, until this season, the sole species on the Skokholm list. Additionally the droppings of a horseshoe bat, probably the Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, were found in a sea cave at Purple Cove in 1993.

**Soprano Pipistrelle* Pipistrellus pygmaeus**

An SM2 recorder, which was set up on the roof of the Ringing Hut during the week of 23rd September to passively monitor bats, recorded one Soprano Pipistrelle on the 25th. This is the first documented record of this species on Skokholm following its separation from Common Pipistrelle *P. pipistrellus* in 1999. Thompson (2007) lists two previous records of *Pipistrellus sp.*, singles in April 1949 and 1988, along with noting ‘many other single bats thought to be this species’; it seems likely that all of these records have been based on jiz and should only be noted as ‘possibles’.

**Pipistrellus sp.**

One small bat flying figure-of-eights around the courtyard on 5th September was probably a *pipistrellus sp.* but was not identified to species level (see comments above).

**Seals**

**Atlantic Grey Seal* Halichoerus grypus**

Grey Seals are present in the waters around Skokholm throughout the year and pups are recorded annually in small numbers. The larger low tide haul outs are regularly on the rocks near South Haven and in Crab Bay, whilst individuals can be seen anywhere around the coast.

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<td>454</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>422</td>
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Four pups were observed during 2013, a typically low total attributable to the lack of suitable pupping beaches on Skokholm. The first pup of the year was found dead in South Haven on 24th
September. There were three freshly moulted pups in North Haven on 8th October and these were joined by a fourth the following day; although they may have arrived from the caves of Skokholm, it is perhaps more likely that these independent youngsters were from the mainland or Skomer. The first alive Skokholm pup was noted in North Haven on 9th October after a female was observed apparently in labour on the 6th. A new born pup in Peter’s Bay on 16th October was the second of the year. Both pups were logged daily during the remainder of what was a relatively calm month and both went on to depart after mouling. A new pup appeared on an exposed rocky beach in North Haven on 2nd November but, following extreme winds exceeding 50mph and very rough seas over the following 24 hours, the pup was not seen again. Four pups by 16th November was one fewer than logged in 2012 and 2011. Of the 2013 youngsters, 50% failed to survive the pup period whereas there was only one casualty in 2012 (20% failed to survive).

Cetaceans

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

Three animals on 18th March were the first of the season. The monthly totals peaked in May when 42 animals were logged, but there were also sightings on more dates than in any other month with 15 days of records. The first two calves were noted on 26th June. The highest day count came on 27th August when 13 animals were recorded. In total 162 animals were logged over 62 dates from March to October, with the majority of sightings coming from the waters south of the Lighthouse.

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<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
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Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

A pod of 20 Bottlenose Dolphin recorded from the Lighthouse on 20th August and a single amongst a pod of eight unidentified dolphins on 31st August were the only two records of a typical season.

Risso’s Dolphin *Grampus griseus*

The first record of the year was on 3rd June when 13 animals, including one calf, swam west past the Lighthouse (RDB, GE). There were then 12 on the 4th of which two were calves. A comparison of scar patterns on the animals from photographs taken on both dates confirmed that at least one of the adult animals was the same. Photographs from both dates were sent to WDC for inclusion in their catalogue of west coast animals. A further three Risso’s on the 19th took the June total to 28 animals. Six dolphins on 8th July was the only other record in 2013. A total of 34 animals marks 2013 as an exceptional year for this species compared to recent standards; there were no records in 2012 and there was only one sighting of two animals during the period 1996-2004 (Thompson, 2007).
**Short-beaked Common Dolphin** *Delphinus delphis*

A pod of ten recorded off the Lighthouse on 27th June was the first of the year. A total of 21 animals were logged over two dates in July before numbers increased in August, with peaks of 26 on the 15th and 23 on the 16th which contributed to a monthly total of 113 dolphins. The first two calves were noted on 4th September and a peak of at least 50 animals on the 20th contributed to a September total of 161, the highest monthly total of 2013. Single figure counts were logged on three dates in October with a pod of six on the 11th being the last record of the season. This is the most frequently recorded dolphin species in the waters around Skokholm (Thompson, 2007).

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**Fish**

**European Eel** *Anguilla anguilla*

There were three records in 2013 of what was possibly the same individual; one in Well Stream on 23rd June may well have been the same individual observed on 14th August and again on 24th August. On the latter date it was struggling to find water below Well Hide and it was subsequently found dead the following day. Lockley reported that he observed elvers wriggling up the cliffs at freshwater outfalls around the Island and mature eels have been recorded in several ponds historically (Thompson, 2007). However it seems unlikely that any adults could have survived the prolonged desiccation observed in 2013 when all of the Island’s water bodies were dried to a crisp.

**Plants**

**Three-lobed Crowfoot** *Ranunculus tripartitus*

A Red Data Book species, Three-lobed Crowfoot is the only nationally rare plant on Skokholm and is restricted to The Dip, a seasonal shallow pool adjacent to the Lighthouse Track. It is possible that the Skokholm population is particularly important as this species hybridises with Round-leaved Crowfoot *R. omiophyllus* where the two co-exist and the latter has not been recorded on Skokholm. Four visits were made during the 2013 season to assess the abundance and distribution of the Three-lobed Crowfoot.

A first visit to The Dip on 10th April recorded 16 patches of growth with the number of flowers totalling just two. During a second visit on 26th April, 22 patches containing 31 flowers were counted and an additional area of growth was noticed further upstream which contained 19 patches and 18 flowers. By 10th May the lower section contained just 13 flowers but the number of flowers in the
upper section had increased to 47. Unexpectedly, a final visit on 24th June, outside of the usual flowering season for this species, recorded 395 flowers across 44 patches (an increase in flower numbers of over 550% compared with May). The flowering plants were all in the upper section of The Dip and many more small plants were noted emerging through the cracked mud. Late flowering has been recorded occasionally since the late 1990s, although this was suggested to be as a result of wet summer months following dry spring periods, a weather pattern which was definitely not observed in 2013. On the last visit Three-lobed Crowfoot was seemingly absent from the lower section, perhaps due to the presence of a dense cover of commoner species; this crowfoot is a poor competitor with other plants and thus prefers pools which dry out for a period each year, a process which excludes a lot of potential competitors.

Observers 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 2013 season.

<table>
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<th>CB</th>
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<td>Richard Brown</td>
<td>TW</td>
<td>Tina Wiffen</td>
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<td>JW</td>
<td>John Walmsley</td>
<td>RL</td>
<td>Rebecca Langton</td>
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<td>LR</td>
<td>Laura Robertson</td>
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<td>Renate Thome</td>
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