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The Systematic List of Birds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Common Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anatidae</td>
<td>Swans, Geese and Ducks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phasianidae</td>
<td>Pheasants, Partridges and Quail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Divers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Cormorant and Shag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardeidae</td>
<td>Herons and Egrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Pigeons and Doves</td>
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<td>Strigidae</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apodidae</td>
<td>Swifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picidae</td>
<td>Wryneck</td>
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In January 2014 Skokholm was officially reaccredited by the Bird Observatories Council; this season was thus our first since 1976 as a recognised Bird Observatory. Several exciting research projects were begun, with staff and volunteers working with Gloucestershire and Cardiff Universities, the British Trust for Ornithology and BSG Ecology on a range of studies; research included the use of novel survey techniques for Storm Petrels along with a reassessment of our current monitoring protocols, the use of state-of-the-art GPS trackers on Lesser Black-backed Gulls, the monitoring of Great Black-backed Gull dispersal, longevity and breeding site fidelity and a full season of bat surveying. The long-term monitoring projects continued, historical research into Manx Shearwater predation was revisited and revived and the systematic ringing of migrant passerines continued for a second full year. It is with great excitement that we bring to you our second Annual Report detailing these events and more.

This report follows the same format as last year. It provides a full account of the 2014 season, documenting the fortunes of Skokholm’s breeding birds along with a record of migrant birds and the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
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<td>The Non-avian Report</td>
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<td>Invertebrates</td>
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<td>Plants</td>
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**Wardens’ Report**

**Introduction to the Skokholm Island Annual Report 2014**

In January 2014 Skokholm was officially reaccredited by the Bird Observatories Council; this season was thus our first since 1976 as a recognised Bird Observatory. Several exciting research projects were begun, with staff and volunteers working with Gloucestershire and Cardiff Universities, the British Trust for Ornithology and BSG Ecology on a range of studies; research included the use of novel survey techniques for Storm Petrels along with a reassessment of our current monitoring protocols, the use of state-of-the-art GPS trackers on Lesser Black-backed Gulls, the monitoring of Great Black-backed Gull dispersal, longevity and breeding site fidelity and a full season of bat surveying. The long-term monitoring projects continued, historical research into Manx Shearwater predation was revisited and revived and the systematic ringing of migrant passerines continued for a second full year. It is with great excitement that we bring to you our second Annual Report detailing these events and more.

This report follows the same format as last year. It provides a full account of the 2014 season, documenting the fortunes of Skokholm’s breeding birds along with a record of migrant birds and the
non-avian wildlife recorded this year. Each avian species logged on Skokholm in 2014 is addressed separately and every piece of information we have gathered during the season can be found under that species title; thus details of movements, breeding, ringing totals, ringing recoveries, specific projects and all other relevant information can be found in the one place. Following the success of last year’s online report, the Skokholm Annual Report 2014 has again been produced in a free to download PDF format.

Winter Storms 2014

Severe and prolonged storms hit the UK during January and February 2014 which resulted in a minimum of 50,000 dead seabirds washing up along the coast of Europe, from Spain to Northern Scotland (BT0, 2014). Dubbed Europe’s worst ever seabird wreck, the majority of the birds affected were Puffin, Guillemot, Razorbill and Shag. This was reflected along the Pembrokeshire coast, with corpses found to be severely emaciated. It is too early to know the full impact that this event has had on Skokholm’s breeding seabirds, but details of how this season’s numbers compare to previous years, along with potential impacts on productivity, can be found in the Systematic List.

The 2014 Season and Weather Summary

The season ran from 4th March to 24th November and we welcomed visitors from mid-April to the end of September. It was on average wetter than in 2013, with more numerous heavy showers and periods of prolonged rain. Spring was very much milder than last season and the summer months were again glorious, with extended periods of hot, dry and calm weather. Autumn began with exceptionally mild weather but ended with strong winds and torrential downpours.

The mixed weather experienced in March and April was very different to the bitter conditions prevalent in 2013. Mild days were interspersed with cooler weather when the winds shifted to the north and towards the end of March stronger winds from the northwest brought heavy showers. The wet weather did not continue into April which proved a pleasant month with calm conditions dominating for the most part. Gentle winds from the south brought some scattered showers and occasional heavy rain which generally fell at night. Daytime conditions were sunny, mild and enjoyable, a huge contrast to 2013 when sub-zero diurnal temperatures resulted in frozen ponds on several occasions.
May brought some untimely bad weather to the Island, with winds picking up sharply from the west and gusting to 50mph on the 10th and 11th which resulted in a mass exodus of Auks from the cliffs and potentially led to the failure of the breeding Peregrines. The weather soon improved and the remainder of the month was generally calm and mild but with heavy, prolonged rain on several occasions. June too was calm and warm but with occasional heavy showers, mostly overnight, in the early part of the month; this heavy rain led to several Razorbill eggs around the Bluffs becoming caked in thick mud. Temperatures increased in July and for the most part the weather remained very calm during what was a spectacular month; there were only a handful of days when the wind was noticeable. As in June, there were some showers and drizzle overnight but the Island had become very dry by this point; the only standing water was in Well Stream, at Orchid Bog and in a tiny pool at North Pond.

August saw many hot and sunny days but it also brought some heavy showers which mostly fell overnight. Heavy rainfall over consecutive nights resulted in localised flooding in several parts of the Island. Manx Shearwater burrows were inundated, especially on the northern side of Skokholm, evicting their young occupants which became easy pickings for the gulls. The ponds partially refilled. September was dominated by high pressure systems which resulted in an exceptionally warm and dry month with drizzle and rain only occurring in the last four days. Winds were gentle and during the middle of the month were predominately from the east. October saw a change from the glorious months of summer; there were very heavy, thundery downpours and persistent rain with moderate to strong winds coupled with moderate to rough sea states and only a brief respite during the middle of the month. This weather continued into November with heavy, thundery and sometimes prolonged showers dominating the first half of the month. A dry day on the 16th was a relief as much of the Island was waterlogged and several ephemeral pools had appeared outside of the buildings, inside the Garage and along North Pond Wall. The winds calmed and the last four days leading to the Wardens’ departure on the 26th were, as is typically the case, glorious.

Spring Work Parties

This season’s spring work parties ran from 26th March to 18th April. As is always the case, a phenomenal amount of hard work undertaken by a great bunch of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers meant that a huge number of jobs were completed. Leaking and rotting windows were rebuilt and replaced in the Library, Crow’s Nest and Ringing Room and the rotting Wheelhouse door lintel was also replaced. The big post-renovation tidy up continued and the old rusting dumper truck was dismantled and removed from the Island. The water system electrics were perfected so that water automatically fills the drinking water tank when it empties; all of the water tanks now automatically respond to their changing levels. An outdoor urinal area was installed to the west of
the Courtyard and a rainwater flush system was fitted. A drying shed was also constructed which works like a well ventilated greenhouse and is an ideal place for soggy boots and jackets to dry. The first major works also started in the Lighthouse. The sagging bathroom ceiling was replaced and the metal work was stripped and undercoated on the inside of the lantern. The walls in the Laboratory (the old engine room) were scraped and repainted and two work benches were built and installed along the south facing wall. There are also a significant number of tasks which have to be completed every spring at the Farm; a stunning job was made of decorating the interiors of the bedrooms, toilets and Wheelhouse and every exterior wall and roof was lime-washed to a blinding finish.

**Spring Long-Term Volunteers**

On 31st March we welcomed Long-term Volunteers Renate Thome and Molly Heal to the Island. Renate is the Chair of the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer and has, for many years, been involved with the Islands, playing a big part in the renovation project. Molly had previously volunteered on Skokholm and wanted to experience a longer volunteering period on the Island. Renate and Molly were a great team, working incredibly hard to prepare the buildings for the coming season, helping with much of the research work and contributing hugely to the daily log. They were the A-team on changeover days, making sure the accommodation was spotless and ready for the new guests. We were also joined this year by Will Whittington who took on the role of Storm Petrel Volunteer for the season, working in collaboration with Cardiff and Gloucestershire Universities. Will took on all of the Storm Petrel census work, experimented with thermal imagery as a method of censusing (managed by Dr. Matt Wood from the University of Gloucestershire) and built and installed several concrete nest boxes which, if occupied, will increase the accuracy of our productivity monitoring.

**Spring Migration Highlights**

A Little Owl present between the 4th and 13th March was the first for 18 years. A pair of Pintail on North Pond on 7th March were the first for 17 years. A subadult Spoonbill on 14th March was the earliest to be logged on Skokholm and the 14th Island record. Two Rook on the last day of March was only the second record of the last decade. A Collared Pratincole which crossed the Island on 1st May was a first for Skokholm and Pembrokeshire and took the number of species logged on the Island to 287. A Blue-headed Wagtail was near the Lighthouse two days later. On 15th May a first-summer female Eastern Subalpine Warbler was found at the Well; this was the 13th for Skokholm and the first eastern bird to be identified. The first spring Turtle Dove since 2006 was also found on this date. A Quail singing the following day was the first for over a decade. Two Turtle Dove together on the 17th and 18th May was the first record of multiple birds for over ten years. The latter day saw a flyover White-fronted Goose logged; this was only the fourth spring record for the Island along with
being the latest on record. A Greenshank on the same day was the first spring bird since 2005. North Pond proved productive on 22nd May with the unusual sighting of a lingering Common Tern and a Wood Sandpiper, only the sixth May record for Skokholm and the first for over a decade. A Little Egret on 30th May was only the 14th Island record and a black ruffed Ruff the following day was the first spring bird for over ten years. A flyover Purple Heron on 8th June was the first for Skokholm and if accepted by the Welsh Records Panel will take the total number of species recorded on the Island to 288.

The Breeding Season

An at-a-glance guide to the Skokholm breeding birds in 2014. Productivity is the average number of fledglings produced by each breeding pair (a ‘-‘ denotes insufficient data).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>2014 breeding population (2013 in parenthesis)</th>
<th>Productivity if known (2013 in parenthesis)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada Goose</td>
<td>11 pairs (18)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelduck</td>
<td>3 pairs produced ducklings (1)</td>
<td>0 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallard</td>
<td>1 pair produced ducklings (2)</td>
<td>0 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulmar</td>
<td>179 apparent nests (170)</td>
<td>0.53 (0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manx Shearwater</td>
<td>477 responses in 8000m² (521)</td>
<td>0.63 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storm Petrel</td>
<td>121 responses in transects (129)</td>
<td>0.69 (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shag</td>
<td>0 (1 nest)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buzzard</td>
<td>1 nest (1)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peregrine</td>
<td>1 nest (1)</td>
<td>0 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Rail</td>
<td>0 (1 territory)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorhen</td>
<td>3 pairs (2)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oystercatcher</td>
<td>51 pairs (40)</td>
<td>1.55 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puffin</td>
<td>5070 adults (4834)</td>
<td>0.50 (0.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Razorbill</td>
<td>2052 adults on ledges (2294)</td>
<td>0.39 (0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guillemot</td>
<td>3512 adults on ledges (3466)</td>
<td>- (0.55-0.61)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>1565 apparent nests (1476)</td>
<td>0.30 (0.16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser Black-backed x Hybrid Gull</td>
<td>2 nests (2)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herring Gull</td>
<td>300 nests (263)</td>
<td>0.70 (0.72)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Great Black-backed Gull</td>
<td>84 nests (74)</td>
<td>0.93 (1.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chough</td>
<td>2 pairs (3)</td>
<td>1.5 (0.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackdaw</td>
<td>19 pairs (16)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crow</td>
<td>8 nests (8)</td>
<td>1.25 (0.38+)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raven</td>
<td>2 nests (3)</td>
<td>4 (3.33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skylark</td>
<td>11 territorial males (10)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallow</td>
<td>4 nests (5)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sedge Warbler</td>
<td>9 pairs (8)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wren</td>
<td>57 territorial males (55)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackbird</td>
<td>6 pairs (5)</td>
<td>2.17+ (2.8+)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wheatear</td>
<td>13 pairs (12)</td>
<td>3.38 (2.67+)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pied Wagtail</td>
<td>3 pairs (3)</td>
<td>3.67 (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meadow Pipit</td>
<td>28 territorial males (28)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
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<td>Rock Pipit</td>
<td>34 territorial males (32)</td>
<td>- (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed Bunting</td>
<td>5 pairs (5)</td>
<td>1.8+ (2.4+)</td>
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</table>

Autumn Migration Highlights

A Cory’s Shearwater off the Lighthouse on 1st August was the seventh Skokholm record. An Osprey on 20th August was the 12th record for the Island and the first August record. A Garganey three days
later was only the second autumn record for Skokholm. In September a juvenile *Icterine Warbler* on the 2nd was the 27th Island record and the first for a decade. An *Ortolan Bunting* two days later was only the second to be recorded in the same period. A juvenile *Common Rosefinch* present for six days from the 5th was the 24th for Skokholm, the 13th autumn record and the fourth record in four years. A *Wryneck* was present between the 6th and 16th September. An *Osprey* on the 10th was the eighth September record for the Island and made 2014 one of only three years where more than one bird has been logged. A *Richard’s Pipit* on the 15th was the first record since 2004 and a *Firecrest* was logged two days later. A wagtail closely resembling a *Grey-headed Wagtail* was at North Pond on the 19th. A flyover *Dotterel* on the 24th was the 13th for Skokholm and the eighth to be logged in September. A juvenile *Little Stint* on the same date, along with further birds on 23rd September and between the 17th and 19th October, took the number or records this decade to four. Single *Red-breasted Flycatcher* on the 23rd, 25th and 29th September were the 26th, 27th and 28th Skokholm records. Eight *Little Egret* on the 25th was a record flock count. A *Mute Swan* on the 28th was only the fourth Island record.

There were six *Siberian Chiffchaff* logged during October and November with birds ringed on 2nd October and 2nd November providing feathers for confirmatory DNA analysis. A *Siberian Lesser Whitethroat* present between the 3rd and 5th October also provided a feather for analysis, although a second good candidate on the 30th was not trapped. It proved a record October for *Mediterranean Gull* records with 564 birds logged over 17 dates from the 11th, considerably more than all the previous records combined. There were also three records totalling five *Balearic Shearwater* during the month. A *Snow Bunting* on the 6th was only the third in ten years; there were then further birds between the 19th and 22nd, on the 24th and on 3rd November. Two *Arctic Tern* on 11th October was only the second record this decade. A *Mute Swan* the following day was a fifth record for Skokholm and there were four on the 13th. A *Wryneck* located on the latter date remained until 12th November, becoming the latest Island record by 24 days. A juvenile *Long-tailed Skua* on 21st October was only a second for Skokholm. A *Firecrest* lingered between the 22nd and 27th and a *Yellow-browed Warbler* the following day was the 22nd and latest Skokholm bird. A *Red-breasted Flycatcher* on 13th November was a record fourth for the year and also the latest ever. A *Little Egret* three days later was also the latest on record, the 16th for Skokholm and a record third for the year. The 20th saw an Island record 90 *Mediterranean Gull* feeding in Broad Sound. There were also nine November *Shelduck* records; in the history of recording on Skokholm there had only been nine previous post-July counts.

**Autumn Long-Term Volunteers**

On 30th June we welcomed Long-term Volunteers Billy Dykes and Dean Jones to the Island. Billy had just finished his first year studying Conservation Ecology at Worcester University and, having spent the previous summer on Fair Isle, had caught the ‘Island Bug’. Billy’s passion is moth recording and he wasted no time in getting the traps set up. He would sit out for much of the night with a hand net, monitoring the moths that were attracted to the trap before carrying out a full day of census and research work on the Island. Billy’s commitment to moths resulted in several new species being added to the Skokholm list, including a very rare immigrant which was only the second record for Pembrokeshire. Dean had just graduated from Heriot-Watt University with a degree in Applied Marine Biology and is passionate about the marine environment. He was keen to develop and add to the list of seaweeds and intertidal species which are found around the Island. Unfortunately for both Dean and the Island, illness resulted in him leaving just one month into his stay. Together Billy and Dean made a committed and cheerful team who enjoyed engaging guests in conversations about the Island and about their specialist subjects. Laura Robertson, long-term volunteer in the autumn of 2013, returned to Skokholm following a seasonal post on Handa Island and helped with the Long-term Volunteer duties during Dean’s absence.
Autumn Work Party

We were joined by a great team of volunteers on 8th September for the Autumn Work Party. As ever, it was an excellent week and a huge amount of work was completed. There were two main tasks, the first of which was to replace the old and crumbling North Pond hide. It was demolished and rebuilt on the northeast shore of the pond; repositioning the hide has allowed for a more concealed approach which reduces the risk of flushing birds from the pond. Further areas of the pond were dug out, creating new scrapes of deeper water which remain wetter for longer and provide more edge habitat for passing birds whilst also benefitting aquatic species. The second main task was to continue with work at the Lighthouse; the lower floor window frames were stripped back and repainted and the exterior metal work at the top of the tower was painstakingly scraped back and repainted. Work continued in the tower and paint was scraped from the floor to reveal beautiful slate slabs. Although the work party left on the 16th, Howard Driver and Tegan Newman remained for another week to continue painting the doors of the lighthouse outbuildings. We were also joined by Emyr Roberts who helped us to reconstruct the old brass and glass prism lantern in the Laboratory. He then cleaned years of mechanical grime off the floor and built a compost bin in the Lighthouse compound. They say an army marches on its stomach; the Skokholm army is no exception. Throughout the spring and autumn work parties, volunteer cooks worked tirelessly in the Wheelhouse kitchen to bring delicious, hearty meals to the workforce each day. It goes without saying that the Skokholm work parties could not function without these very generous people.

Skokholm Bird Observatory
The Launch of Skokholm Bird Observatory

Following the reaccreditation of Skokholm Bird Observatory in January this year, an official opening ceremony was held on 27th April. Unfortunately the swell in South Haven was rather lively on the day, so the 150 people on the guest list celebrated at the contingency venue of Dale Coronation Hall, without the wardens! Television celebrity and dedicated environmental campaigner Iolo Williams performed the official opening and the guest list included many past wardens, Ronald Lockley’s son Martin, representatives from WTSWW and many of the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer including those who had volunteered much of their time to get Skokholm up and running again. The day
began with a passionate and enthusiastic talk by David Saunders about the pioneering early days of Skokholm. Martin Lockley then spoke about his work on his father’s diaries and his on-going work, with his half-sister Anne, to document the Lockley legacy. Steve Sutcliffe recounted the events surrounding the phenomenal, volunteer-driven, renovation project. Sarah Kessell, Chief Executive of WTSWW, gave thanks for what has been achieved and gave particular mention to the dedicated Friends who persuaded her to back their ambitious scheme to restore the buildings. Local artist Linda Norris talked about the process of making, and the inspiration behind, the commemorative stained glass window which was created in collaboration with another local artist, Rachel Phillips, and is now in situ in the bird loo. It is a fantastic piece of art which portrays the Island and different elements of its history. Linda presented Steve Sutcliffe with a print of the window as recognition of his role in spearheading the renovation project. To top it all off, great food was provided by Gina Smithies of Trehill Farm. We were disappointed to have missed what was a brilliant Bird Observatory launch.

Digitisation of Paper Logs

Bird Log, the daily roll-call of birds, has been a traditional and important part of Bird Observatory work since their birth in 1933. Today Bird Log on Skokholm is at 9pm every evening, with participants gathered in front of the roaring fire in Lockley’s Cottage; numbers are entered directly into a digital spreadsheet for future use. The old logs, however, are all in pen and paper; between all of the 19 Bird Observatories in the United Kingdom, there are over 800 years of census data still in this difficult-to-use format. There is now a big push to get Bird Observatories to digitise their old logs and, as part of the Skokholm Archives Project funded by Environment Wales, a huge effort is being made with the Skokholm logs which date back to the 1940s. During the 2013 season a scoping study took place on the Island to determine the feasibility of such work; during this visit records from the years 2006, 2005 and 2003 were digitised. This season volunteers Phil and Dorothy Blatcher have spearheaded the process, recruiting and co-ordinating volunteers from across the country. A total of 14 people spent 17 weeks digitising records on the Island, beginning with 2002 in May and ending with 1974 in September. We have thus compiled a digital database for the years 1974-2014 with the sad exception of 2004 where the data is missing. If further funding is gained, this effort will continue in 2015; the hope is to complete the digitisation of the data and concurrently check what has already been inputted.

New Ringing Projects in 2014

In May a small team of ecologists from the British Trust for Ornithology, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, joined us to carry out work on Lesser Black-backed Gulls. Their goal
was to gain a better understanding of how this species uses its environment, particularly areas which have been earmarked for the development of offshore renewables. There were 25 birds fitted with state-of-the-art, solar-powered GPS tags and yellow darvic rings with individual codes, whilst a further 25 birds were fitted with darvic rings only. Interesting results were observed during the breeding season and we have received many resightings of 20 different adults in their wintering grounds (such as 9V:W photographed here in Portimao Harbour, Portugal). Further details can be found in the Systematic List.

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the Great Black-backed Gulls that breed on Skokholm, a darvic colour ringing scheme was implemented this season. Breeding adults and fledgling birds were fitted with red darvic rings with individual codes. It is hoped that being able to recognise individuals easily in the field will help us understand the dynamics of the Skokholm population: where they overwinter, recruitment to the breeding population and adult survivorship. Full details, including resightings, can be found in the Systematic List.

Visiting Ringers in 2014

Following the success of last year, we again invited visiting ringers to stay on Skokholm and assist with our monitoring work. A total of 48 (41 in 2013) came to the Island and provided 18 weeks of ringing and extra census coverage from 11th April to the end of September. Much attention focussed on the Manx Shearwater Transect, resulting in a total of 3388 birds being handled during the season, 2104 of which were new. Storm Petrel ringing in South Haven also proved popular with 688 adult birds trapped, 640 of which were new. Visiting ringers also assisted with specific projects on the Island; they participated in the catching and colour ringing of adult Puffins as part of our on-going study into overwinter survival, the darvic ringing of adult Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls and the monitoring of Manx Shearwater and Storm Petrel productivity.

Birds Ringed in 2014

A total of 8439 birds of 59 species were caught and processed on Skokholm this season. This is a substantial increase on the 4446 birds processed last year and comes largely as a result of the
enthusiasm with which ringers have worked the Manx Shearwater transect, but also due to the prevalence of good ringing conditions on days with good numbers of migrants. Seabirds accounted for 54% of new birds ringed and Manx Shearwater made up 33% of the total. Seabirds also made up the majority of the re-trap total (birds caught which had previously been ringed on Skokholm) with Manx Shearwater accounting for 59%. The number of pullus ringed, and the proportion made up of seabird chicks, was very similar to 2013, reflecting the location of young in fragile and often inaccessible areas, the desire to cause minimal disturbance to the colonies and limitations in staff time. The number of controls (birds caught that were ringed elsewhere) was up on 2013, as might be expected given an increase in the number of birds handled. Details of each control and of the more interesting retraps are given within the Systematic List of Birds, as is the total number of each species ringed between 1933 and 1976 and between 2011 and 2014.

The total number of New Birds, Retraps and Controls processed in 2014 and 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Birds Processed</th>
<th>New Birds (full grown)</th>
<th>New Birds (pullus)</th>
<th>Retraps</th>
<th>Controls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>8439</td>
<td>5785</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>2303</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4446</td>
<td>3436</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 when conditions were suitable. During the season Well 9 was extended with a six metre net to create a longer, dog-legged catching area. Two additional permanent nets were erected at the Farm; one opposite the Library and one through the scrubby vegetation at the old Pigsty. The latter was erected late in the season and has been included within ‘other’ in the charts below. Four Potter Traps were new for this season and were used alongside four Spring Traps.

Seabirds were caught using a variety of methods, although the majority were trapped by hand in the colony. Adult Great Black-backed Gulls were trapped on the nest using a remote-controlled leg-noose which Nigel and Jacquie Clark of the British Trust for Ornithology kindly trained the staff in the use of. Adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls were caught on the nest using cage traps. All three breeding gull species were caught in small numbers using a baited Gull Trap. Adult Puffins trapped as part of our survivorship studies were mist netted in the colony at Crab Bay. Adult Storm Petrels were mist netted in South Haven using a tape lure to attract the birds towards the net.
The Heligoland Traps produced 1426 new birds (818 in 2013), 500 retraps (242 in 2013) and five controls (two in 2013). As was the case last season, the Well proved the most productive of the three Heligolands with 48% of new birds coming from this trap, although only 97 fewer individuals were extracted from the Wheelhouse Trap. As in 2013, the Cottage Trap was the least productive, contributing 11% of Heligoland-trapped new birds (13% in 2013). The combination of more extensive and diverse vegetation, regular standing water and a natural corridor of vegetation and water funnelling migrants along Well Stream are likely to explain the relative abundance of birds in the area of the Well. Highlights from the Heligoland traps included two Sparrowhawk, three Water Rail, a Collared Dove, two Firecrest, a Yellow-browed Warbler, a Siberian Lesser Whitethroat, a Red-breasted Flycatcher, a Snow Bunting and a Yellowhammer.

The number of new birds, retraps and controls trapped during 2014 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>226</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well Heligoland</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Heligoland</td>
<td>3264</td>
<td>1257</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The permanent mist nets produced 1182 new birds (556 in 2013), 351 retraps (155 in 2013) and two controls (four in 2013). The majority of birds again came from the Well with the six metre net outcatching the Courtyard Mist Net, despite the fact that the latter is more sheltered and could be opened on more occasions. Ringing highlights from the mist nets included two adult Oystercatcher, a Wryneck, a Siberian Chiffchaff, an Icterine Warbler, two Red-breasted Flycatcher, a Black Redstart, three House Sparrow and a Common Rosefinch.

Arrival and Departure Dates

The 2014 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. Six species occurred outside of the period of previous occurrence, namely a White-fronted Goose on 18th May (previous latest on 1st May 1990), a Spoonbill on 14th March (previous earliest in May), a Wryneck on 12th November (previous latest on 19th October 2003), a Yellow-browed Warbler on 28th October (previous latest on 27th October), a Red-breasted Flycatcher on 13th November (previous latest on 3rd November 1993) and a Whinchat on 2nd November (previous latest on 26th October 1968). An Arctic Skua on 22nd October equalled the latest record logged in 1968. The following species were recorded close to their Skokholm limits: a Great Skua on 13th April (earliest on 12th April 1977), a House Martin on 24th October (latest on
29th October 1975), a Willow Warbler on 27th March (earliest on 23rd March 1972 and 1997), a Lesser Whitethroat on 30th October (latest on 3rd November 1927), a Reed Warbler on 23rd April (earliest on 19th April 1996) and a Wheatear on 9th March (earliest on 2nd March 2003). A Redwing on 28th May was the third latest on record, although some way off birds recorded on 13th June 1929 and 18th June 1979.

2013 Rarity Decisions

A Booted Warbler logged on 25th September (a second for Skokholm and sixth for Wales) and a Blyth’s Reed Warbler on 27th September (a first for Skokholm and second for Wales) were both accepted as such by the British Birds Rarities Committee. A Pectoral Sandpiper on 15th May (the 18th for Skokholm), a Red-backed Shrike on 10th September (the 29th for Skokholm), a Greenish Warbler on 18th June (the sixth for Skokholm), a Barred Warbler on 8th September (the 19th for Skokholm), a Western Subalpine Warbler on 16th May (the 12th for Skokholm and the first to be attributed to this (sub)species), a Red-breasted Flycatcher on 26th September (the 25th for Skokholm) and a Common Rosefinch on 8th June (the 23rd for Skokholm) were all accepted by the Welsh Records Panel.

BTO Young Bird Observatory Volunteer Fund

The British Trust for Ornithology, in conjunction with the Bird Observatories Council, began a scheme in 2013 offering financial assistance, in the form of small grants, to young people wishing to experience life at a Bird Observatory and particularly to those wishing to pursue a career in the field. We were delighted to support this scheme for a second year and this season welcomed Katherine Westerberg for a week in August. Katherine is a trainee ringer and participated in many of the core Bird Observatory tasks; she took part in the daily census of migrant birds, completed cetacean surveys, helped to ring Puffins, Storm Petrels and Manx Shearwaters and assisted with many of our on-going seabird research projects.

Bird Observatory Fundraising

The Big Swim

On 22nd August, local birder Dave Astins swam from Marloes Sands on the Pembrokeshire mainland, across Gateholm Bay and Broad Sound, to Skokholm. It took Dave just one hour and 24 minutes in seas that could hardly be described as calm. He was provided with advice and safety support by the Marine Nature Reserve team who, in their boat ‘Skalmey’, accompanied the crossing. As far as we are aware, Dave is the first and only person to have ever achieved this feat. Dave’s efforts received a fantastic amount of publicity and raised a phenomenal £1943.00 via the online fundraising site ‘Just Giving’. But Dave went further still; after drying off and a quick cup of tea, he joined his good friend Mark Edgeller in repairing and repainting the coastal hides.
Ticks Jar

As is the tradition at many Bird Observatories, a ‘Ticks Jar’ was again implemented this season and raised a massive £305.96. Thank you to everyone who saw or ringed new birds and subsequently donated to this fund. The money collected in 2013’s tick jar financed a new loud-speaker system to aid in the catching of Storm Petrels (the benefits of which are reflected in this year’s ringing totals).

The Marsh Award

In October, on behalf of the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer, Steve Sutcliffe received the prestigious British Trust for Ornithology Marsh Award which recognises contributions to ornithology. The award, which included £1000 for a future Skokholm-related project, was presented by the Duke of Edinburgh at a ceremony held in London. This is a fantastic honour for the Friends of Skokholm and Skomer and commemorates all that they have achieved on Skokholm.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

We were again extremely fortunate this season to receive support from a fantastic bunch of enthusiastic, generous and caring people who show an endless devotion to Skokholm and the people who visit it.

Firstly, thank you to our Long-term Volunteers Molly Heal, Renate Thome, Billy Dykes and Dean Jones; their hard work and cheerful presence on the Island not only contributed to a brilliant visitor experience, but allowed for a greater amount of research to take place. We must also thank Laura Robertson and Tegan Newman who stepped in to bolster our ranks at the end of the season. Our gratitude also goes to the shorter-term volunteers who have helped lead courses, monitor wildlife or who have contributed to the more hands-on management of the Island. A huge thank you goes to the work party volunteers, the mainland support and the delivery volunteers who participated in four weeks of work parties this year. They are a skilled and hardy bunch working all hours in all weathers; their only demand is a hearty meal at the end of the day. Thanks must also therefore go to the amazing team of chefs who keep the Skokholm workforce so content.

A special mention must go to Dale Sailing for again taking and storing Skokholm supplies over the winter months, for delivering all of the materials and volunteers to the Island and for getting our guests to and from the Island in such a smooth and efficient manner.
Our appreciation goes to the inexhaustible Friends of Skokholm and Skomer; it is hard to imagine the Island without them. A special thank you must be said to those who have opened up their homes to us, to those who have ferried groceries and other essential items to the Island and to those who have tirelessly stocked the Skokholm Store. The Friends of Skokholm and Skomer are spearheading the Archives Project, which includes the digitisation of the historic paper logs, and thanks must go to those individuals who have contributed to this. We are hugely grateful to Environment Wales for funding the project.

Thank you to the staff at the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales who have again supported us throughout the season; their logistical expertise make it possible for everyone to visit and enjoy Skokholm. The many different experts sitting on the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee continue to support and guide all of the research work which occurs on the Island. We must also thank the Bird Observatories Council for their encouragement and advice regarding reaccreditation, everyone who was involved in the launch of Skokholm Bird Observatory in April and to Milford Haven Port Authority who partly financed the event. Thank you to the hard working ringers who have contributed so much to the work of the Bird Observatory this year.

We are indebted to the Pembrokeshire Bat Group for their very kind donation of an SM2 Bat Detector. This has already hugely increased our knowledge of the bats that visit Skokholm. BSG Ecology deployed an AnaBat on the Island this season and thanks must go to Rachel Taylor for the endless support in the use of the equipment, analysis of the calls and the excellent report produced.

A sincere thank you goes to Rachel Phillips and Linda Norris who created and installed a fabulous stained-glass window in the Bird Loo. Artists Julia Manning and Celia Smith designed and painted a brilliant new sign on the South Haven Jetty; thank you to you both. The North Pond Swallows would like to thank Celia for using her wire bending skills to support their fragile nest.

A sincere thank you must be said to everyone who has made kind donations to the Island this year; from sink plugs to pegs and from books to maps, every donation makes the Island feel even more welcoming. We have been overwhelmed by your generosity. Last but not least, we would like to say a big thank you to all of the guests who have made 2014 another extremely enjoyable season. We very much appreciate your support and we hope to see you again back on the Island.

That so many people give so much to the Island is part of what makes Skokholm such a special place to be. We are excitedly looking forward to the 2015 season.

Richard and Giselle
Definitions and Terminology

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

<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>11-50 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

**Mute Swan Cygnus olor**  
Alarch Dof

**Vagrant** three previous records

A first-winter bird which headed west over North Haven and then the Farm on 28th September was the first record since a party of five headed north on 4th May 1993 (RDB, MG, LR). The fifth Skokholm record came on 12th October when an adult headed south, low over the Lighthouse Track (RDB). Remarkably the following day saw four birds track north over the Farm, across Broad Sound and through Jack Sound (RDB, GE). An immature on 18th May 1966 and an adult on 14th October 1981 are the only other records.

**White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons**  
Gwydd Dalcenwyn

**Rare Winter Visitor** 16 previous records of between one and 40 birds

Earliest 12th October 1971 Latest 1st May 1990 (18th May 2014)

One in flight on 18th May was the fourth and latest spring record for Skokholm (EW, CB, et al.). Although subspecific identification was not possible, a White-fronted Goose of the European breeding race A. a. albifrons was located on Marloes Mere the following day; given the late date and close proximity of this lone bird, it would seem likely that both records refer to the same individual. Where subspecific identification has occurred, this nominate race has proven rarer than Greenland breeding A. a. flavirostris on Skokholm.

**Canada Goose Branta canadensis**  
Gwydd Canada

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

Whereas the 2013 season saw the majority of pairs already on territory during March, birds were less settled during 2014 with a maximum day count of only 15 on the 17th, lows of two on four dates, a complete absence on the 6th and only five birds on the 24th. Birds took up territory during April with a whole Island census on the 20th revealing 11 pairs, although four of these seemingly did not lay or lost clutches early during the incubation period; a territorial bird in the Frank’s Bay Lesser
Black-backed Gull colony began to show severe lameness at this time. A post-breeding flock of 17 birds contributed to a May high of 23, but peaks were otherwise of 15 on the 12th and 14 on six dates. Only five adults remained by 7th June including a pair with four goslings in South Haven; only one gosling was present the following day and there were no sightings thereafter. Canada Goose productivity thus remains very poor, with a single fledgling in 2012 and none in 2013 or 2014 (by contrast there were 38 fledglings in 2006 and a minimum of 40 in 2007). The remaining adults departed by 21st June with the exception of a lone bird which lingered until 16th July.

The lone bird was joined by eight adults on 17th July and the group increased to 11 birds on the 25th and to 14 on 2nd August. All of these birds had departed by 13th August, but a pair returned intermittently from the 22nd. Although generally absent during the day, numbers increased in September with peaks of 16 departing a North Pond roost early on the 9th, 25 on the 11th, 46 on the 13th and 31 on the 16th. There were only single figure counts from the 22nd and up to four birds were logged on seven dates in October. Skokholm was again used as a nocturnal roost site in November with peak evening arrival counts of 66 on the 4th, 68 on the 7th, 83 on the 8th, 101 on the 18th, 102 on the 20th and 110 on the 24th.

Shelduck Tadorna tadorna

Scarce Breeder first seen with young in 2006 and only nine previous post-July records

There were daily records in March with peaks of ten on the 7th and 21st and a low of two on six dates. Daily sightings continued in April with highs of 13 on the 15th and 12 on the 17th and lows of two on the 5th and four on eight dates. Up to nine birds were logged each day in May with a low of four on 12 dates. A pair accompanied four chicks at North Pond on 27th May, three of which survived until the following morning but all of which had been taken by gulls before the end of the 28th. Two chicks appeared on Winter Pond on 4th June with what was assumed to be one of the two last seen on South Pond the following day. At least three of the five chicks seen on the South Coast Path on 21st June were predated on that date, with a Great Black-backed Gull the culprit on at least one occasion; there were no subsequent sightings. Three separate Shelduck broods is the most recorded on Skokholm, with two logged in 2008 and one in six of the years since chicks were first seen in 2006; only a pair in 2011 have managed to raise any young to fledging size. Shelduck were first logged as absent on 26th June but up to two birds were logged on 13 dates until 16th July. A fully-fledged juvenile accompanied an adult bird on North Pond from 17th July, both birds presumably from the mainland or a nearby Island; the adult had departed by the 22nd and the juvenile was last seen on the 25th. It proved a record year for post-July records with two birds on the 4th and 5th November, three on the 6th, a single from the 7th until the 9th, two on the 15th, three on the 18th and a last single on the 22nd.

Wigeon Anas penelope

Uncommon Winter Visitor

1936-1976: 1 trapped

There were no spring records in what proved to be a poor year for this species. A drake was on North Pond on 11th September, seven birds headed north over the Well on 9th November, a drake was on North Pond on 17th November and a drake was there two days later.
**Teal Anas crecca**  
**Fairly Common Visitor** recorded in all months but more regular in winter  
1 trapped  
1936-1976: 16 trapped

Although peak March counts were higher than in 2013, Teal were only logged until 17th March this season, a contrast to nearly daily records throughout March and April last year; a flock of 45, the highest count of 2014, was on South Pond on 5th March, 35 were there on the 6th, 18 were on North Pond on the 7th, 27 on the 8th, 22 on the 9th, 12 on the 10th, a pair remained until the 13th and a lone male lingered until the 17th. Two at North Pond on 29th June were unseasonal. Autumn saw an increase on the number of 2013 records, possibly due to higher water levels this year; 84 birds were logged over 13 dates in September with peaks of 19 on the 15th and 20 on the 16th, there were two records in October including eight over on the 13th and 159 birds were logged over 12 dates in November including highs of 42 on the 2nd, 37 on the 4th and 26 on the 17th.

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

Numbers were similar to 2013 with daily records in March of up to eight birds including five drakes, in April of up to seven including five drakes and in May of up to five including four drakes although with an arrival of 11 birds on 23rd May. A female was found dead at the Knoll on 26th May. There were almost daily sightings until mid-June with a minimum of three males still present. A duck escorting four tiny ducklings was at the Well on 27th June but a dead female was in the same area the following day and young were not seen again. This was the only brood seen in 2014, one fewer than observed in 2013. Up to five birds were logged on 13 dates in July and the third dead female of the year was found near North Pond. There were only two flyover August records, with six on the 10th and three on the 14th, and a lone bird was at Orchid Bog on 18th September. Up to four birds were logged on nine dates in October and 14 were present on the 11th. In November there were almost daily records from the 2nd, with highs of 36 on the 2nd, 22 on the 4th and 68 on the 7th.

**Pintail Anas acuta**  
**Hwyaden Lostfain**  
**Scarce** suspected of breeding in 1993 and 1995 but not recorded every year and not since May 1996

Following an absence of nearly 18 years, a male and female were at North Pond on 7th March (RDB, GE). In November a duck was on North Pond on the 9th and 16th (GE, RDB).
Garganey *Anas querquedula*  
**Vagrant** eight previous records, all but one in spring  
**Earliest** 5th March 1969 **Latest** 26th September 1972 (23rd August 2014)

A bird at North Pond on 23rd August proved difficult to age given inconclusive views of the greater covert and secondary patterns (RDB, GE *et al*.). This is only the second autumn record for Skokholm following a duck on 26th September 1972 and is the first record since a drake on 6th May 2000. The seven spring records all fall in the period between 5th March and 1st June.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*  

It was a disappointing spring for this species with a female at North Pond on 30th March the only record of the period. A male and female were together on North Pond on 29th June and three birds were briefly present on 9th July. In September a lone bird was logged on the 5th and six birds headed west through Broad Sound on the 18th. A male flew north over the Well with seven Wigeon on 9th November. There have only been autumn records in four of the last ten years.

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

The first record of the year came on 27th March when two flocks comprising 11 birds headed southeast. There were 68 seen over four dates in June with highs of 20 on the 4th and 40 on the 6th. Numbers peaked in July with 621 birds logged over 15 dates including counts of 140 in two hours on the 18th, 157 on the 26th and 154 on the 29th. July was also the peak month for passage in 2013, although only 349 birds were logged over ten dates; in both years the vast majority of birds were travelling in a southeasterly direction, presumably towards wintering grounds in Carmarthen Bay. There were 70 Common Scoter logged over seven dates in August including a high of 22 on the 11th. In September 83 were logged over seven dates including 28 on the 20th and 21 on the 28th. There were 56 recorded over nine dates in October including 36 heading west on the 28th and five west on the 31st which was the last record of the season. Records inevitably reflect seawatching effort.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*  
**Rare** 45 previous records including only two in autumn  
**Earliest** 23rd April 1949 (16th May 2014) **Latest** 27th October 1977

One heard singing along the Lighthouse Track at just before midnight on 16th May was the first Skokholm record for over a decade (CB, EW). Checks on subsequent nights proved unsuccessful.
Great Northern Diver *Gavia stellata*  
**Scarce** passing at sea from September to May but not recorded every year

A bird moulting into summer plumage headed west off the Lighthouse on 8th April and was the first Skokholm record for ten years (MH). In autumn lone summer plumaged birds headed west off the Lighthouse on 22nd October and east on 26th October (RDB).

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

Colony attendance fluctuated in March with peak counts of 95 birds on the 7th, 70 on the 25th and 82 on the 31st and lows of nine on the 6th, 14 on the 11th and 18 on the 23rd. Although the peaks were considerably below the highs of 181 and 140 logged in 2013, the monthly total was up which reflects the more regular presence of birds on the cliffs this spring (1245 bird days compared with 919). April attendance was also less sporadic than in 2013, with 11 days of three figure counts, peaks of 138 on the 12th and 171 on the 27th and only two days with fewer than 50 birds logged (40 on the 2nd and 43 on the 22nd). May saw the regular departure of different colonies as noted in 2013; for example there were no birds at Twinlet on the 7th and no birds around the Neck on the 10th, there were eight days with fewer than 50 birds logged and lows of 29 on the 7th and 33 on the 10th. Numbers increased significantly towards the end of May with peaks of 160 on the 21st and 128 on the 28th when the first egg was recorded.

The three study plots counted since 2006 were visited on ten dates between the 1st and 15th June. Ten visits revealed the difficulties with assessing which adults were actually incubating; the ranges for the past seven years show that the mean plot count is always three or four pairs above the lowest single visit count (see table below). This year there were only 23 apparently incubating adults recorded on one date and 26 on two dates, however the average was 27. Despite this source of error, the mean number of apparently incubating adults was the highest recorded since the plots were initiated in 2006, 8% up on 2013 and the lowest single visit count was 4.5% up on 2013. The
2014 plot total was the result of an average three pair increase across the two Twinlet plots whilst there was one fewer pair at Little Bay Point.

The whole Island count again mirrored the study plot counts with a 5.3% increase in the number of apparently incubating adults. The total of 179 pairs is the highest recorded on Skokholm, exceeding the previous peaks of 170 in 1997, 176 in 2002 and 170 in 2013. The 2014 whole Island count again includes approximately 40 pairs which would be difficult or impossible to see from the Island itself (birds north of North Gully, near Wreck Cove, on Little Neck and particularly in the hidden coves of Near Bay and Far Bay). The recent dip in numbers may perhaps be linked to a lack of boat access.

The whole Island totals (apparently incubating adults), mean plot totals, range of totals over the ten study plot visits and the percentage of the Island total made up of study plot birds since 2006.

<table>
<thead>
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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 28th May 53 (35 in 2013) incubating adults were selected for productivity monitoring (eight at Twinlet, six at North Gully, 24 around Little Bay Point and 15 at Peter’s Bay). Of these 20 failed at the egg/small chick stage (four failed by 8th June, ten by 1st July, 17 by 11th July, 19 by 18th July and 20 by 1st August). A further five failed having produced a chick (two failed by 8th July, three by 21st July and five by 25th July). Although the cause of a failure was generally not apparent, an adult which lost its egg on 6th July was seen with an injured leg. Thus 28 (52.83%) of the monitored attempts produced a fledgling; a productivity estimate of 0.53 fledglings per pair is a 55.9% increase on the 0.34 logged in 2013 and is 23.3% up on the post 1972 average of 0.43. It was believed that the 2013 productivity figure was heavily influenced by poor productivity at Peter’s Bay; only 5.56% of attempts produced a fledgling at Peter’s Bay in 2013. Interestingly only 33.33% of Peter’s Bay pairs produced a fledgling in 2012 (in a year when 58.93% of pairs fledged a chick) and this year again saw productivity lower than the average with 40% of pairs fledging a chick.

The first three fledglings departed on 23rd August (25th August in 2013), a further 17 fledged before the end of August, six more birds had departed by 4th September and the last two productivity sample fledglings had departed by 7th September (from when there were no birds on the cliffs in the study plots). A raft of 32 birds in Broad Sound contributed to a 9th September count of 46, there were low double figure counts for the following five days and then daily single figure counts until a single on 27th September. In October there were 28 birds logged over 11 days including singles on six dates and a peak of 11 on the 25th; this contrasts with the higher counts logged in late October 2013.
when numbers peaked at 155 on the 30th. In November there was a single on the 3rd, two on the 6th and 15 on the 8th, but the return of moulted birds to the cliffs observed on 6th November 2013 was not seen until the 9th when 151 birds were recorded including 48 on the breeding ledges. Subsequently there were daily records and highs of 116 on the 11th and 133 on the 22nd.

Fulmar productivity (total number of fledged chicks per monitored pair) for each year that it has been calculated between 1972 and 2014.

Cory’s Shearwater *Calonectris borealis*  
Vagrant six previous records

One heading west off the Lighthouse on 1st August will be the seventh Skokholm record if accepted by the Welsh Records Panel (RDB). Previous records are of singles on 17th August 1979, the 6th and 15th August 1989, the 17th and 25th September 1995 and 10th July 2001.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*  
Very Abundant Breeder a 2012-2013 census estimated approximately 38000 pairs (46184 in 1998)  
2199 trapped (including 95 pulli), 1310 retrapped, 3 controls  

Two seen on the ground near the Lighthouse on 24th March were the first of the year, ten days later than the first of 2013. A further 27 birds were seen nocturnally before the end of the month and the first bird was seen at sea on the 31st. Numbers then increased quickly, both ashore at night and at sea during the day, with 5040 heading west off the Lighthouse on 6th April the highest count of the month. Some of the highest at sea counts during May unusually came around the full moon of the 14th, with 9750 logged on the 11th, 11000 on the 16th and 9550 two days later; however the earlier count coincided with a period of gale force winds and the latter counts with a late rising moon and the dark conditions prevalent when more birds typically visit the colony. The highest May count came four days before the new moon, on the 24th, when 14510 birds were recorded off the Lighthouse in one hour. There were 150,376 birds logged at sea during June with peak counts of 20600 on the 6th, 18400 on the 7th and 23100 on the 15th; the former two counts coincided with an early setting half-moon and heavy overnight rain whilst the latter was surprisingly during a period of calm and only two days after a full moon which was in the sky all night. July was quieter at sea with only 41738 birds logged and a peak of 5100 on the 19th when a minimum of 4200 were rafting in the south of Broad Sound (see photograph below). Seawatch counts typically peak in August and this proved to be the case this year with highs of 19546 on the 9th, 28679 on the 11th, 32400 on the 24th and 15800 on the 29th; despite being either side of the full moon, the former two counts coincided
with strong winds and overnight rain whilst the latter two counts either side of the new moon coincided with moderate winds and showers.

A Manx Shearwater study transect was established in 2013. It was defined as the track between the Observatory and the Lighthouse and the length of a landing net to either side; ringers were not to deviate from the track. The aim was to see whether, by ringing birds on the surface in this defined area, the retrap data could be interpreted to provide large sample size estimates of adult survival and the recruitment of juveniles to the breeding population. Adult birds ringed along the transect are not necessarily breeding; Manx Shearwaters typically return to the colony for at least three years prior to first nesting and these younger birds (inseparable from breeding birds on plumage) spend longer on the surface and are more likely to be picked up (Brooke, 1990). Of the 875 adult birds ringed along the transect in 2013, 182 (20.8%) were retrapped this year and a further nine were found predated. The number of known age birds along the transect is increasing; there were 331 fledglings ringed in 2013 and 374 this year. This is very much a project in its infancy; it will be interesting to see what percentage of birds retrapped in 2015 were missed this year and the first of the 2013 fledglings may also be seen.

Three areas of study burrows, that is to say natural burrows where a paving slab covers a manmade access point to the nest chamber, were established in 2012 and 2013 with all birds encountered within the burrows ringed. Of 141 breeding adults bearing rings in 2013, 118 (83.7%) were found in the same burrow this year. This figure is not an accurate estimate of adult survival as there was no searching for marked birds in neighbouring, non-study burrows. It does however give a good indication of burrow fidelity and shows an interesting correlation with the stability of the colony; in the fragile Lighthouse colony 66 (80.5%) of marked birds returned to the same burrow whereas in the more stable Crab Bay colony 35 (85.4%) returned and in the very stable Quarry Track colony 17 (94.4%) returned. The fragile nature of the Lighthouse colony sees the structure of the breeding tunnels change annually and clearly some were no longer suitable as nest sites. Interestingly 43.8% of the missing birds at the Lighthouse colony had failed with their breeding attempt in the previous season (the overall 2013 failure rate was 25.4%).

The study burrows also facilitate an accurate assessment of breeding success on Skokholm. Of 155 study burrows at the Lighthouse, 118 were occupied by a pair which produced an egg. Of 12 study burrows along the track to the Quarry, nine pairs produced an egg (the same nine burrows used in 2013). Of 26 study burrows inland of Crab Bay, 20 pairs produced an egg (20 of the 21 burrows used in 2013). There were thus 147 burrows this year from which productivity could be assessed. Of these
43 definitely failed at egg stage early in the season or abandoned eggs were found. A further egg was found with the dead chick half emerged. Ten pairs definitely failed with a small chick and only one pair failed with a sizable chick, a youngster with a deformed head and legs which had attained a wing length of 159mm before disappearing.

For a chick to be assumed to be of fledging size it was required to reach a wing length in excess of 200mm (although not necessarily ready to fledge, we have shown that chicks larger than this size may swap to a different burrow and thus go undetected). There were 92 chicks which reached this size in 2014. Productivity was thus 0.63 fledging sized chicks per breeding pair (or 62.59% of pairs produced a fledging sized chick). This is a 16% drop on the 2013 figure of 0.75 (74.65% of pairs); the reason for such a decline is unclear with higher levels of failure at both egg and small chick stage compared with 2013. 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 (see below).

Wing chord measurements of 11 Manx Shearwater chicks from 2-9 days after hatching to fledging.
The weights of the same 11 Manx Shearwater chicks from 2-9 days after hatching to fledging.

In addition to productivity monitoring, 11 study burrows were accessed more regularly in order to monitor chick growth. As was documented by Brooke (1990), wing chord growth was very linear regardless of weight gain. Interestingly weight gain in the majority of chicks was slowed significantly around the 18th of July, the 28th of July and the 2nd of August, all dates with exceptionally heavy overnight rain during what was a very dry season. Chicks measured following these periods were found in wet burrows and several had matted feathering to the underparts. However all 11 chicks went on to reach fledging size and departed their natal burrows at between 60 and 68 days of age.

Another advantage to having the study burrows is that it allows the correction factor, used when predicting 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 four visits were made to study burrows known to be active (see table below). Between 30.6% and 47.4% of incubating birds responded to the call this year. The response rate was higher if non-breeding birds are also included, presumably reflecting the propensity for vocal non-breeding males to hold burrows in an attempt to attract a mate. The average correction factor which would correctly predict the number of breeding pairs from the number of playback responses was 1.73 in 2013 and 2.14 this
year (thus an average of 1.94 over two years). There is clearly considerable variance around the 1.98
used in the whole Island census, but this does seem to broadly predict the correct number of pairs.

The number of incubating birds and occupied burrows which responded to a recording of a 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>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>29th May</th>
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<th>12th June</th>
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<td>Responses from incubators</td>
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<td>Responses from occupied burrows</td>
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<td>Total response rate</td>
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<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td><strong>2.14</strong></td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (1.98) 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 metres 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 total number of burrows, responses, and the calculated population estimate for the 1000 square metre plot sampled annually since 2006.

This year saw numbers remarkably similar to 2013 within the seven original study areas, indeed they were also close to the previous six years and any change could easily be attributable to the chance presence of fewer males and more silent females at the time of sampling (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 2014 saw an 8.4% decrease in the estimated number of pairs and the lowest estimate since the study began (see table below). It should be noted that the number of burrows counted, the number of responses elicited and thus the estimated population varied considerably between two different censuses a week apart; the number of burrows counted in the seven plots ranged from 1112 to 1340, the number of responses from 180 to 253 and thus the estimate from 356 to 501 whilst the number of burrows counted in the new plot ranged from 271 to 304, the number of responses from 19 to 29 and the estimate from 38 to 57 (the figures on the above two graphs are thus averages). Given the amount of variance between surveys, along with the variance in the response rate to the playback call, it is difficult to deduce whether the Skokholm population is still stable. These figures clearly highlight the importance of continued study.

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

<table>
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In the period between 1957 and 1997 the number of dead Manx Shearwaters located on Skokholm was recorded in the daily census log. The corpses were either stored or thrown in to the sea to ensure that the same birds were not counted more than once. The practice was stopped in 1997 as it was felt that the removal of the corpses would be impacting the specialist community of creatures evolved to exploit this food source. However, with a Great Black-backed Gull population more than twice the size it was when the study was stopped, it was felt that the number of corpses should again be counted. To limit the impact on the scavenging community, the birds were left in situ but were painted with stock marker so that they were not double counted. As might be expected with a larger Great Black-backed Gull breeding population, the number of corpses located in 2014 was the most ever, although the average number of corpses per pair was lower than in all years except 1959,
1970 and 1971. A likely explanation is that the breeding gulls were disturbed between 1949 and 1985 which, although reducing the number of breeding pairs, probably inflated the non-breeding flock which would still be taking shearwaters.

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

<table>
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The number of Manx Shearwater corpses found during each week from 25th March until 27th October 2014. The September peak matches that observed between 1957 and 1991.

Of the 4272 corpses located this year, 2931 were adult birds. Ringing recoveries during the first incarnation of Skokholm Bird Observatory suggested that the vast majority of these corpses are likely to be younger birds yet to reach breeding age (Brooke, 1990); however, with increased predation pressure from more Great Black-backed Gulls, it may prove that a higher percentage of
breeding adults are being taken. There were 269 large chicks predated, at least 15 of which were forced to the surface during torrential rain which flooded their burrows near Twinlet on 10th August. A total of 1072 fledglings were logged, 53 of which were not predated but showed the external signs of Puffinosis. If we assume the Skokholm population to be 38000 pairs and that whole Island productivity was 0.63 fledged chicks per pair, then 23940 fledglings were on the surface this year; the 1072 corpses is thus 4.48% of the estimated number of fledglings. However these figures do not take into account inaccessible corpses; although experience has shown that on the plateau of Skokholm the majority of shearwaters are taken to open areas for consumption (around ponds, along tracks and on cliffs), where they are likely to be found, there are also large areas of open shore at the bases of cliffs where corpses will undoubtedly be taken. Indeed 13 of the 84 Great Black-backed Gull territories mapped this year were inaccessible, as are loafs at Wildgoose Bay and Oystercatcher Rock. Additionally birds are eaten on the sea around the Island; morning seawatches from the Lighthouse in August and September witnessed 21 birds being eaten. The Skokholm Rabbit population was exceedingly low in 2014 and there may well have been a greater predation pressure on the shearwaters as the gulls turned to alternative sources of food. There is clearly still a lot to be learnt about the impact of Great Black-backed Gulls on Manx Shearwaters.

The first fledglings were seen on the surface on 25th August, two days later than the first of 2013. The number of birds littering the track to the Lighthouse was soon in three figures. The first fledgling affected by puffinosis was seen on 4th September (one day later than in 2013). 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. A further 29 infected fledglings were seen alive during the day in September. September seawatch counts peaked at 9523 individuals on the 10th, with highs of 3600 on the 1st, 750 on the 4th and 1600 on the 12th. However there were only five birds seen at sea on 14th September and a single the following day. The 16th was the first autumn day with no Manx Shearwater logged. There were three further double figure counts, with 56 on the 23rd, 60 on the 25th and 42 on the 26th, the majority of which were apparently fledglings appearing very black, flappy and less adept at sea. There were single figure counts on 11 dates in the first half of October and 83 were seen in 90 minutes on the 5th. A three hour Seawatch on 19th October logged seven birds. A single fledgling along the Lighthouse Track on 20th October was, despite the track being walked every night, the last record until a very late fledgling on the night of 14th November. This young bird, still with a downy vent but seemingly healthy, was 18 days later than the last of 2013.
Ringing recovery EY41766  
**Originally ringed** as an adult, CRAB BAY, SKOKHOLM 2nd June 2013  
**Recovered** WOOLACOMBE SAND, DEVON 17th June 2014  
**Finding condition** Dead on the tideline, not fresh  
**Distance travelled** 96km at 130 degrees (SE)  
**Days since ringed** 380  
Ringed in Crab Bay study burrow 24. It was present in the burrow with another bird, but neither were part of the pair which went on to raise a chick there. It was not seen again in 2013.

Ringing recovery FB16784  
**Originally ringed** as an adult, BARDSEY ISLAND, GWYNEDD 6th August 2003  
**Recovered** LIGHTHOUSE TRACK, SKOKHOLM 28th May 2014  
**Finding condition** At colony, not necessarily breeding  
**Distance travelled** 122km at 196 degrees (SSW)  
**Days since ringed** 3948  
This bird was one of 87 Manx Shearwaters trapped at a nocturnal attraction to Bardsey Lighthouse on 28th June 2012. It is the second 2012 Bardsey Lighthouse attractee to be found here in two years.

Ringing recovery FC66390 (reringed EY86503)  
**Originally ringed** as a juvenile, FRESHWATER WEST, PEMBROKESHIRE 13th September 1994  
**Previously recovered** as an adult, LIGHTHOUSE STUDY BURROWS, SKOKHOLM 19th May 2013  
**Recovered** LIGHTHOUSE STUDY BURROWS, SKOKHOLM 31st May 2014  
**Finding condition** Breeding  
**Distance travelled** 16km at 291 degrees (WNW)  
**Days since ringed** 7214  
A fantastic example of how juvenile birds which inadvertently fledge towards the mainland can go on to breed. This bird bred with the same partner and in the same Lighthouse study burrow as in 2013 but, having successfully fledged a chick in 2013, failed at egg stage this season.

Ringing recovery FC88196  
**Originally ringed** as an adult, BARDSEY ISLAND, GWYNEDD 19th August 1996  
**Recovered** LIGHTHOUSE TRACK, SKOKHOLM 21st September 2014  
**Finding condition** Predated  
**Distance travelled** 122km at 196 degrees (SSW)  
**Days since ringed** 6607  

Ringing recovery FR95967  
**Originally ringed** as a chick, SKOMER, PEMBROKESHIRE 4th September 1989  
**Recovered** LIGHTHOUSE TRACK, SKOKHOLM 17th April 2014  
**Finding condition** Predated  
**Distance travelled** 5km at 149 degrees (SSE)  
**Days since ringed** 8991  
Two reminders that it is not just the inexperienced non-breeders which fall prey to the Great Black-backed Gulls.
Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*
Scarc to Uncommon first recorded in 1960

Two singles headed west off the Lighthouse on 4th October, two went southwest on 19th October and there was a single west on 23rd October. The only record of 2013 was of one on 4th August.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*
**Abundant to Very Abundant Breeder**
651 trapped (including 11 pulli), 22 retrapped, 26 controls

As in 2013, there were no daytime records of Storm Petrel during the 2014 season; all observations came at night with the exception of a small number of incubating adults visible in shallow crevices and diurnal visits to nest boxes made to monitor chick development. The first record this year was a bird singing from the artificial wall above the Quarry in the early morning of 24th April. The first sighting was of ten birds in flight at the Quarry on 27th April. Nights in May saw small numbers observed at various locations around the Island including near the Red Hut, above the more intact sections of herringbone wall across the plateau, around the Cottage Garden and in the Quarry. Additionally birds were heard calling and singing from North Pond and Little Bay walls and around the Garden. A visit to the Quarry on 30th May estimated 150 birds by using a white torch beam for short periods. As thermal imaging camera footage from both last year and this year has shown, this was likely a substantial underestimate of the number of birds present, indeed counting individuals at night gives a very poor representation of colony size. 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). This tape playback census was also extended to several other wall and rock fall areas for the first time since a full Island census was attempted in 2003; this work was made possible by the attendance of a long term field assistant present from late April to early September supported by Cardiff University and with assistance from Gloucestershire University (a full account of which is given in Whittington, 2014).

Fifteen visits were made to the Quarry transects, twelve visits to North Pond and Little Bay walls (including one nocturnal visit) and ten visits to North Haven. The majority of the visits took place in the last week of June and first two weeks of July in accordance with previous surveys and the monitoring protocol. The exception was North Haven where visits ended on 1st July due to safety concerns regarding the instability of overhead rocks brought about by the severe winter storms. The
increase in manpower this season also allowed for the concerns raised in 2013 regarding deviance from the study transects to be addressed; the table below includes both the number of responses elicited within the confines of the 2010 marked crevices but also the number of crevices located one metre or less around the transect. The 2010 survey included 36.4% of burrows off transect, the 2011 42.4%, the 2012 50.8%, the 2013 45.9% and the 2014 43.7%. However the overall trend remains the same regardless of which survey area is used.

The total number of occupied crevices (located over multiple visits) responding to a recording of male song at each of the seven study sites. Numbers in parenthesis are the totals from 1m either side of the Quarry transects (as stipulated in the project guidelines) as opposed to the more wayward crevices included since the project’s inception.

<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 (5)</td>
<td>15 (12)</td>
<td>11 (8)</td>
<td>32 (17)</td>
<td>66 (42)</td>
<td>97 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11 (5)</td>
<td>13 (8)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>25 (14)</td>
<td>59 (34)</td>
<td>91 (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12 (5)</td>
<td>8 (4)</td>
<td>10 (5)</td>
<td>33 (17)</td>
<td>63 (31)</td>
<td>98 (66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14 (4)</td>
<td>15 (8)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>46 (27)</td>
<td>85 (46)</td>
<td>129 (90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14 (6)</td>
<td>18 (9)</td>
<td>18 (12)</td>
<td>37 (22)</td>
<td>87 (49)</td>
<td>121 (83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of active crevices was down on 2013, however this resulted from the loss of the lower half of the North Haven colony to the winter storm surges and severe weather. A total of 21 previously used crevices were lost, 16 of which had been occupied in 2013. How the displaced birds responded to the loss of traditional nest sites is unclear but, perhaps due to a shortage of suitable habitat, there were only seven new crevices located within the same area this year. This is not the first time that a significant scouring event has reduced suitable habitat at this site with a similar loss of the lower substrate recorded in 2004 (Thompson, 2007). If the North Haven figures are excluded, due to the significant loss of habitat and the issues with safe access limiting the number of playback visits, the 2014 total was up on 2013 and the highest recorded during this study. Although the total number of responses within an area was relatively consistent with 2013, there was a notable change in the distribution of active sites; for example there was a 19.6% loss of nine active crevices on Quarry transect 4 but an 80% increase of eight crevices along Quarry transect 3. Even on Quarry transect 1 where the number of active crevices remained constant, this was actually the result of losing three crevices to winter rock slides but gaining three new crevices elsewhere.

The number of crevices which have at some point been occupied over the five year study (a total of 203), subdivided to show how many years the crevices have been apparently occupied for and the percentage of crevices occupied for a particular number of years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quarry Transsects</th>
<th>The Walls</th>
<th>North Haven Gully</th>
<th>% of total crevices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 year of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years of apparent occupancy</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly there is an inevitable transience to the availability of Storm Petrel nest crevices, but there also seems to be evidence here that the birds can react to the changing landscape and maintain a stable population. This of course assumes that further nest sites open up as others are lost. Stable sites are also in existence; over a third of the active crevices located during this five year study have
shown signs of occupancy in four or five of the years. It should be noted that the higher proportion of short term crevice occupancy highlighted in the above table will in part be explained by the discovery of a greater number of active crevices in recent years.

The proportion of known active crevices which responded to the recording of male song was 11.1% down on 2013 (see table below) but very close to the five year mean of 32.48%. As more visits were made this year, extending sampling away from the normal study window, the below figures are based on eight visits from the same period used in previous years. Although there is some variance between sites and between sampling seasons, it is possible to calculate a correction factor capable of predicting the number of active crevices within an area based on a single visit (as has become a standard monitoring tool for Manx Shearwater). If the five year mean response rate of 32.48% is used, then a correction factor of 3.08 would be most suitable for predicting the number of active crevices within an area based on a single visit. This may be of some use at sites where access arrangements or time constraints limit the number of visits during the study period.

This project is still at an early stage and it is difficult to currently draw many conclusions, however it seems likely that the Skokholm population within the seven study areas is stable unless exposed to a considerable change in habitat as was observed at North Haven. This is positive news following the significant decline recorded between 1996 and 2010 (Sutcliffe and Vaughan, 2011).

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>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>30.36</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>35.42</td>
<td>32.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional sites surveyed in 2003 and resurveyed in 2014. Experience has shown that between eight and ten visits are required to locate the majority of active crevices in an area, as required by the current monitoring protocol. Manpower would not allow for this in these additional areas, however the limited 2014 survey was similar in extent to that of 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of First visit</th>
<th>Date of final visit</th>
<th>Number of visits</th>
<th>Number of AOS in 2014</th>
<th>Date of 2013 survey</th>
<th>Number of AOS in 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dumbbell Bay</td>
<td>3rd Aug</td>
<td>5th Aug</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9th Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog Bay</td>
<td>25th Jul</td>
<td>30th Jul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4th Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab Bay</td>
<td>22nd Jul</td>
<td>29th Jul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11th Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank’s Bay East</td>
<td>25th Jul</td>
<td>4th Aug</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5 visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank’s Point</td>
<td>28th Jul</td>
<td>30th Jul</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank’s Rocks</td>
<td>28th Jul</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3rd Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank’s Rocks East</td>
<td>28th Jul</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3rd Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend Bay</td>
<td>7th June</td>
<td>17th July</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18th Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Garden Wall</td>
<td>12th May</td>
<td>5th Aug</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27th Aug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knoll Wall</td>
<td>7th June</td>
<td>10th July</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18th Jul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gantry Wall</td>
<td>7th June</td>
<td>10th July</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15th July</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional manpower also allowed tape playback at sites last surveyed in 2003. Eight rock fall areas and 11 walls of varying length and area were investigated using the same playback methodology used for the long-term study, although fewer visits were made and the rock fall areas were not accessed until late July due to the presence of nesting auks. The above table details the areas.
sampled both this year and in 2003 and the number of playback responses elicited each year. Storm Petrels were still present in broadly similar numbers in the areas listed for the 2003 census, although fewer responses were recorded at Crab Bay and Frank’s Rocks. Although this may reflect a genuine drop in numbers, there are difficulties in providing a direct comparison due to uncertainty over the exact areas covered in 2003 and the fact that the timing of the visits was different. The Cottage Garden Wall was surveyed seven times and ten apparently active crevices were found, three fewer than were located by Cardiff University students in 2013. Contrary to anecdotal records, there were no apparently occupied sites (AOS) discovered in the Lime Kiln, although Storm Petrels were observed travelling inland from South Haven at this location on multiple occasions; this supports the findings of work done in 2013.

The thermal imaging camera used in 2013 was again brought to Skokholm, principally for a pilot study supervised by Dr Matt Wood of the University of Gloucestershire investigating the possibility of a correlation between the number of birds observed at night using the camera and the number of apparently occupied sites found using tape playback. The hope is that it could in future provide an alternative census tool particularly suited to hazardous and fragile sites. This project is only in its earliest phase, with preliminary analysis of the data currently being undertaken. Even without the development of this idea, the use of the thermal imaging camera provided additional information about the distribution of Storm Petrels on Skokholm; several nights of filming in the last week of May showed Storm Petrels to be present in the majority of bays and inlets around the coast, including a few small sites not included in the 2003 census. Having the opportunity to observe birds without causing disturbance also allowed a light trial experiment to be undertaken in the Quarry over two nights. The thermal imaging camera recorded the reaction of flying birds to white light torch beams of two different intensities and also to red light. Analysis of these experiments is not yet complete, but it would appear that the birds actively avoid bright white light as described in the 2013 report. This confirms the need to restrict torch use in the Quarry. With this in mind an infrared viewing device was taken on loan from Nite Site to allow guests to experience the Quarry without
causing disturbance; this revolutionised the traditional Quarry walk as birds could be seen for longer periods and exhibiting more natural behaviour.

In 2013 the thermal imaging camera recorded a Short-eared Owl hunting Storm Petrel in the Quarry. Additionally lone Short-eared Owl were observed in the Quarry on four nights and the remains of six Storm Petrel were located, one of which was in a Short-eared Owl pellet and one of which had a Short-eared Owl feather next to it. In 2014 there were 16 Storm Petrel corpses discovered around the Island, however it proved difficult to identify the predator with the exception of remains found in Great Black-backed Gull nests at the Quarry and in Crab Bay. There were fewer sightings of Short-eared Owls in 2014 and no birds were seen in the Quarry. A Little Owl first heard calling on the night of 4th March was heard on two further nights and seen on the 5th and 13th March. It is well documented that this species can impact Storm Petrels, for example the Skokholm Bird Observatory Report of 1936 records a nest containing the corpses of nearly 200 Storm Petrels. Although this 2014 Little Owl record, the first since 1995, is a potential cause for concern, the bird was not recorded after 13th March. This introduced owl still breeds on Skomer to our north.

There were 13 sites discovered this season where an incubating bird was evident early enough in the nesting period to allow a productivity estimate to be made; although some early egg stage failures may have been missed, the study is biased towards birds in shallow crevices or boxes and the sample size is far from great, these visible birds provided the first opportunity to estimate productivity on Skokholm for many years. Of these one in a natural site and one in a nest box failed at egg stage, two in boxes failed at very small chick stage and five from natural sites and four from boxes fledged. Productivity was thus estimated at 0.69 fledglings per pair. The two failures at small chick stage both came during a period of heavy rain, with sodden corpses suggesting exposure was the cause.

**Monitoring the development of four Storm Petrel chicks. Site A is the artificial wall above the Quarry, site B a line of boxes to the north of the Quarry and site LB is Little Bay Wall (LB32 is the same site monitored in 2013).**

The growth of the four successful nest box chicks was monitored from when they were known to be unattended during the day (see graph above). Interestingly in two of the four boxes the chick was left alone for a day and then accompanied again by an adult on a subsequent day; this was also
noted for the single monitored chick of 2013. Chicks were first heard on 22nd July in the boxes above the Quarry, although at this stage they were still accompanied by adults and not accessed. The chick to the north of the Quarry was heard on 30th July and the chick in Little Bay Wall was first heard on 5th August. The Little Bay Wall chick was also comparatively late in 2013, indeed the wing chord measurement reached 19mm seven days later than observed this year. Chicks in the more complex nesting areas, typically in rock fall rather than walls, were found to wander away from the natal cavity when wing length exceeded 105mm; although ten days or more from fledging the chicks were located in adjacent boxes or crevices where the returning adults presumably found them by call (as the chicks exhibited weight gain). All four chicks attained a weight of at least 40g, more than 25% heavier than most adults, with the heaviest in Little Bay Wall reaching 46.5g. The chicks were last encountered at approximately 60 days of age, although this is necessarily inaccurate to avoid disturbing the incubating adults.

The benefits to having accessible nest crevices are significant; if a greater number can be located then productivity could be calculated more accurately, something which is very difficult to achieve for this species. With this in mind a further 31 artificial nest boxes, made of cement rather than plastic to more closely mirror natural sites and avoid issues with condensation, were installed this season (12 in North Haven and 19 in the Quarry additional to the 11 installed there in 2013). Across Skokholm there are currently 90 plastic boxes installed in 1999, of which six were used in 2014, and 42 new concrete boxes, of which one was used in 2014.

Adult Storm Petrels were mist netted on fewer nights this year than in the previous season (ten rather than 15) although more birds were trapped, primarily as a result of louder sound equipment. The largest catch was the 207 trapped on the night of 19th July. Of all the birds handled this year 7.5% (or nearly one in 13) was already wearing a ring, there were four retraps from 2013 and 4.4% had been ringed elsewhere. Three of the 28 controls had French rings. Along with generating some fantastic data, these nights also proved very popular with guests to the Island.

Ringing recovery 2455206
Originally ringed as an adult, FLAMBOROUGH HEAD, EAST YORKSHIRE 12th July 1997
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 22nd July 2014
Distance travelled 439km at 233 degrees (SW)
Days since ringed 6219

Ringing recovery 2526457
Originally ringed as an adult, PORTLAND BILL, DORSET 15th June 2014
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 22nd July 2014
Distance travelled 238km at 304 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 37

Ringing recovery 2526483
Originally ringed as an adult, PORTLAND BILL, DORSET 30th June 2014
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 24th July 2014
Distance travelled 238km at 304 degrees (NW)
Days since ringed 24

Ringing recovery 2532906
Originally ringed as an adult, PORTH YSGADEN, near TUDWEILIOG, GWYNEDD 17th July 2014
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 6th August 2014
Distance travelled 140km at 198 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 20

Storm Petrel ringing recoveries received in 2013 and 2014.

Ringing recovery 2554938
Originally ringed as an adult, GREAT SALTEE ISLAND, WEXFORD, IRELAND 3rd September 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 19th July 2014
Distance travelled 103km at 117 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 319

Ringing recovery 2566625
Originally ringed as an adult, GWENNAP HEAD, CORNWALL 13th July 2002
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 19th July 2014
Distance travelled 188km at 9 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 4389

Ringing recovery 2582865
Originally ringed as an adult, RUMPS POINT, near POLZEATH, CORNWALL 19th July 2004
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 23rd July 2014
Distance travelled 127km at 349 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 3656

Ringing recovery 2655075
Originally ringed as an adult, GRASSHOLM, PEMBROKESHIRE 6th August 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 22nd July 2014
Distance travelled 15km at 106 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 350

Ringing recovery 2655080
Originally ringed as an adult, GRASSHOLM, PEMBROKESHIRE 6th August 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 16th August 2013
Distance travelled 15km at 106 degrees (ESE)
Days since ringed 10

Ringing recovery 2655524
Originally ringed as an adult, HARTLAND POINT, DEVON 8th July 2014
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 30th July 2014
Distance travelled 95km at 326 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 22

Ringing recovery 2661468
Originally ringed as an adult, STRUMBLE HEAD, PEMBROKESHIRE 19th July 2012
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 24th August 2014
Distance travelled 40km at 202 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 766

Ringing recovery 2683119
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 11th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 30th July 2014
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 384

Ringing recovery 2683178
Originally ringed as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 11th July 2013
Recovered SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 24th July 2014
Distance travelled 193km at 359 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 378

This and the preceding control were ringed during the same session on 11th July 2013. Additionally birds 2683127 and 2683162, controlled on Skokholm last year, were ringed at this time. In total there were 78 birds ringed on this date by the West Cornwall Ringing Group and four have been recorded on Skokholm. Perhaps unsurprisingly we have controlled 13 birds from Cornwall, including nine from the Lizard, in the past two years. However, considering the effort put in to trapping birds
in Scotland, it is surprising that neither Skokholm Bird Observatory nor the West Cornwall Ringing Group currently receives controls from that far north (cornishringing.blogspot.co.uk).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ringing recovery</th>
<th>2683245</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originally ringed</td>
<td>as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 30th June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 20th July 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>193km at 359 degrees (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days since ringed</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 26th July 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>193km at 359 degrees (N)</td>
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<td>Days since ringed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Originally ringed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 7th August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>193km at 359 degrees (N)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days since ringed</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
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<th>2685032</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originally ringed</td>
<td>as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 17th July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>PORTH IAGO, LLYN PENINSULA, GWYNEDD 27th July 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>134km at 17 degrees (NNE)</td>
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<td>Days since ringed</td>
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<th>2685729</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originally ringed</td>
<td>as an adult, SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 24th July 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 25th July 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>193km at 179 degrees (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Days since ringed</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Originally ringed</td>
<td>as an adult, INNISMURRY, SLIGO, IRELAND 29th June 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 23rd August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>377km at 144 degrees (SE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Days since ringed</td>
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<tr>
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<td>as an adult, INNER FARNE, FARNE ISLANDS, NORTHUMBERLAND 1st August 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recovered</td>
<td>SOUTH HAVEN, SKOKHOLM 21st August 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance travelled</td>
<td>495km at 209 degrees (SSW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days since ringed</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gannet Morus bassanus**

*Hugan Very Abundant* but uncommon between November and March

Whereas the five highest counts of 2013 all came during periods of strong onshore winds in August (960 on the 5th, 892 on the 10th, 1800 on the 15th, 2144 on the 16th and 1500 on the 17th), the five highest counts this season came during periods of calm or moderate winds which perhaps explains
the lower totals; the five highest counts of 2014 were 735 on 16th September and in August 612 on the 1st, 592 on the 9th, 586 on the 10th and 488 on the 20th. Despite these lower maximum totals compared with 2013, the number of birds recorded was higher in every month except August and the monthly maxima were higher in every month except May and August. Considering the presence of roughly 39,292 breeding pairs on nearby Grassholm (Murray, 2009), the third largest Atlantic gannetry, 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 gannetry before returning by a similar route (Morgan, 2013). A dead juvenile was found entangled in floating fishing net in South Haven on 18th September.

The total number of Gannets logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>(87)</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>(124)</td>
<td>(811)</td>
<td>(1635)</td>
<td>5640</td>
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<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>(103)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>(25)</td>
<td>(95)</td>
<td>(449)</td>
<td>612</td>
<td>735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>23rd</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>27th</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>16th</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*  
Common Visitor particularly in late August and September

Although not logged every day, Cormorants were regular around Skokholm throughout the recording period. Unlike Shag, which were severely affected by the winter storms, there was no indication that this species had been impacted, perhaps due to their readiness to move inland during the winter; indeed the total number of birds logged in each month of 2014 was up on 2013 with the exception of March, September and November. The majority of records were of loafing birds on the Stack, although birds were also frequent around North Haven, Crab Bay and the Lighthouse. An adult was seen regurgitating for a juvenile on the Stack on 17th August; the closest breeding colony is on Skomer. There was some evidence of spring movements, for example eight headed southeast on 15th April, and an autumn passage was again very much apparent; following a group of 24 which alighted on the South Coast before heading east on 28th August, there were 14 autumn dates when birds headed in an approximately southeasterly direction, typically in single figure groups but with notable movements of 27 on 7th September, 18 on 13th September, 48 on 21st September and 19 on 29th October. This autumn movement was also noted by both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007).
The total number of Cormorants logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(54)</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>(211)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird days</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>9</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>
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<tr>
<td>Bird days</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date(s)</td>
<td>24th</td>
<td>31st</td>
<td>15th</td>
<td>54th</td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>41st</td>
<td>56th</td>
<td>21st</td>
<td>28th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*  
**Mulfran Werdd**  
**Common Resident and Irregular Scarce Breeder** last attempted to breed in 2013

There is little doubt that Shag numbers were heavily impacted by severe storms in the preceding winter, although the only dead bird noted was one floating off the Devil’s Teeth on 15th March. Birds were logged on most days throughout the season and the majority of zero counts probably refer to days when viewing was hampered by weather or tide; however both the number of bird days and the maximum monthly count were significantly down on those logged for each month of 2013.

Comparing the number of Shag seen during the 2014 and 2013 seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird days</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird days</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the 2013 Report it was tentatively suggested that maximum autumn counts were increasing, with peak day counts of 24 in 2013, 18 in 2012 and 22 in 2011 compared with a total of 20 listed by both Thompson (2007) and Betts (1992) as the highest ever recorded; disappointingly no more than five birds were logged on any single day of 2014. Perhaps unsurprisingly there was no indication of a breeding attempt this season, with the site used unsuccessfully in 2013 at Smith’s Bay showing no signs of occupation. Shag last bred successfully on Skokholm in 1987 when a pair fledged two young.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*  
**Crëyr Bach**  
**Rare Visitor** 13 previous records

One was watched as it arrived to the Neck on 30th May (MOH). On 25th September a Skokholm record flock of eight birds flew west across the Island, looped around the Quarry and departed back
to the east (MG et al.); three at the Dip on 10\textsuperscript{th} October 1993 was the previous highest count. The third record of the year was a lone bird walking the Anticline on 16\textsuperscript{th} November (RDB, GE). Three sightings in a year is a new Skokholm record. This was the first season that Little Egrets have been recorded in September and November meaning that there has now been a single record in every month between March and November inclusive, with four in May and three in July and August.

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

The first of the year was a somewhat unseasonal visitor to North Pond on 10\textsuperscript{th} March. More typical were records of singles on six dates between the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 29\textsuperscript{th} June and a group of three juveniles which toured the Island on 16\textsuperscript{th} June. There were no July records. In August a single was on North Pond on the 20\textsuperscript{th} and three circled the Island on the 31\textsuperscript{st}. There were regular sightings in September with singles logged on eight dates along with three together on the 6\textsuperscript{th} and 29\textsuperscript{th} and two together on the 30\textsuperscript{th}. Lone birds on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 13\textsuperscript{th} October were the last records of the season. A 2014 total of 23 records was ten more than logged in 2013 and the maximum day total of three matched that observed last season. Almost all visiting herons receive attention from the resident gulls.
**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea*  
*Vagrant* an addition to the Skokholm list

An adult or near-adult watched in flight on 8th June approached from the north, opted not to land on North Pond and departed high to the east (WJ, RD et al.). This will be the first record for Skokholm if accepted by the Welsh Records Panel.

**Spoonbill** *Platalea leucorodia*  
**Rare Summer Visitor** 13 previous records

A subadult on North Pond on 14th March was the earliest record for Skokholm and perhaps the same bird that was seen on the Gann Estuary the previous day (RDB, GE). Although this is only the 14th record for Skokholm, there have now been seven records in the last six years. Of the 14 Island records, one was in March, two in May, five in June, two in August, one in September and three in October.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*  
**Scarce Winter Visitor** and no records between 2005 and 2011 inclusive

This was the first year since 2011 without a spring record. The first bird of the autumn was a juvenile hunting near Crab Bay on 7th November (GE, RDB). There were then unaged ringtails logged on the 10th and 18th November. Hen Harriers were also recorded on three autumn dates in 2013.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*  
**Uncommon Visitor** occurring in all months but more frequent outside of the breeding season

2 trapped  
1936-1976: 10 trapped, 2013: 2 trapped

A first-winter female present from the 4th until 8th March was the first Sparrowhawk to be trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland. A female was seen on 25th March, an unsexed bird was logged on 22nd April, a male and a female were seen the following day and a single on 1st May was the last of the spring. A juvenile female present from the 17th until 23rd August and trapped on the 19th was the first of the autumn. Further females were logged on 31st August and on 17 dates in September, with two females logged on the 22nd and 23rd, a male logged on the 9th, 12th, 15th and 21st and unsexed birds on five dates. In October there were lone females logged on the 3rd, 5th, 12th, 22nd and 25th, an unsexed single on the 11th and two unsexed birds on the 14th. A bird eating a Redwing outside the Cottage on 1st November was the last of the year. A higher proportion of female birds was also noted in the autumn of 2013.
**Buzzard Buteo buteo**  
**Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor**

1 pullus trapped  
1936-1976: 11 trapped, 2013: 2 pulli trapped

Although logged on most dates, the majority of Buzzard records probably refer to the Wreck Cove pair which were holding territory from March. Additionally there were three birds logged on the 5th, 7th and 27th March, the 10th, 19th, 20th and 21st April and the 15th, 21st and 31st May along with four on 18th April and 7th June which showed that other individuals were visiting Skokholm, albeit rather sporadically. Birds were occasionally watched over Broad Sound as they crossed to the mainland or Skomer. The Wreck Cove nest was situated on the same rocky shelf used in 2013 but on 12th June only contained a single chick. Nevertheless the chick was seemingly well provisioned with the fleshy remains of a Puffin present in the nest. The chick had fledged by 14th July, approximately 20 days earlier than the chick which fledged in 2013.
There were then regular sightings of the juvenile, often in the company of an adult, and a juvenile was watched as it flew alone to the mainland on 20th August. However this was not necessarily the Skokholm youngster as two juveniles were seen on September 10th, one of which was chased across the sea by an adult bird. Although three birds were logged on seven further dates in September, on four dates in October and on 5th November, the only definite indication of a visit by a non-Skokholm bird was when four individuals were logged on 28th September and on the 13th and 14th October. The number of visiting birds was thus down on 2013 when between five and eight were logged on seven dates.

Osprey Pandion haliaetus Gwalch y Pysgod
Rare single records in September 1966, 1988 and nine records from 1992 including four in spring
Earliest 2nd April 2012 Latest 21st September 1996 (10th September 2014)

One heading east on 20th August was the 12th Skokholm record and the first August record for the Island (GE). One drifting along the coast from Crab Bay towards the Lighthouse on 10th September was the eighth September record for Skokholm, all of which have occurred between the 7th and 21st of the month (GE). This is only the third year that there have been two records in a season.

Kestrel Falco tinnunculus Cudyll Coch
Uncommon recorded in all months but more regular post-breeding
1936-1976: 8 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

It was a disappointing spring for Kestrel records with singles on 31st March and 28th April the only birds logged. The first post-breeding record was a two-day bird from 30th July and there were further singles on the 4th and 20th August. Numbers increased significantly in September with records on 24 dates including two birds on 12 days, three on four days and a minimum of five individuals on the 16th and 18th. Five birds equals the Skokholm record listed in Thompson (2007). In October there were records on all dates bar two, all singles except for two on six dates. There were records on 17 days until 20th November including two birds on the 10th, 17th and 18th and three on the 9th.

Merlin Falco columbarius Cudyll Bach
Uncommon recorded in every month but only one June and four July records
1936-1976: 9 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

As with the preceding species, it proved a poor spring with birds logged on only five dates compared with 35 in 2013. The first record of the year was a female on 18th March and there were further singles on the 27th, 28th and 29th. A first-winter female on 20th April was the last of the spring and proved unpopular with the resident Peregrines. The first of autumn, a single on 25th September, was one day earlier than the first of 2013. There were further singles on 27th September and in October on the 15th, 16th, 20th, 26th, 28th and 30th. In November there were singles on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 16th, 17th and a first-winter male on the 22nd and 24th was the last of the year.

Peregrine Falco peregrinus Hebog Tramor
Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor resumed breeding in 1988 following a 56 year absence
2013: 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 five years. Additional birds were noted on the 25th and 28th March and on 16th April, with the resident male seeing off a visiting female on the latter two dates. A second male was seen on the 20th and 25th April. The resident pair displayed over the nest site in late March and were watched as they ate a Puffin together on 18th April. The nest scrape was visited, under a Schedule One Licence, on 30th
April when three eggs were found. The pair were sat together near the nest site on 12th May but a visit to the scrape six days later revealed that the attempt had failed; the nest contained the neatly removed top of an egg, indicative of at least one successful hatching, but there were no young or other eggs present. Although the reason for the failure was not evident, the weather during the period around hatching included westerly gales and very heavy rain.

**Breeding pairs, location and fledging success since 2004. BL=The Bluffs, NH=North Haven, SC=South Coast, ?=breeding unproven.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pairs</th>
<th>Fledglings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1 NH</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1 SC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1 SC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1 BL</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following their failed breeding attempt the resident pair hunted widely across the Island making it difficult to detect additional adults. However in June subadult birds were seen on five dates from the 2nd and there were two subadults logged on the 5th and 8th. The first juvenile of the year, a male presumably from the nearby mainland, was recorded on 12 dates from 14th July until 2nd August with what was possibly the same bird logged on 22nd August and on the 4th and 20th September. Three Peregrines were logged on 14th October and on four dates between the 16th and 22nd November. A pair were again displaying above the Bluffs nest site from 31st October.

**Water Rail Rallus aquaticus**  
*Rhegen y Dŵr*  
*Uncommon Winter Visitor and Irregular Scarce Breeder* confirmed in 1929, 1931 and 2012  
4 trapped  
1936-1976: 19 trapped, 2013: 3 trapped

Given the presence of Water Rails throughout the 2012 and 2013 breeding seasons and with confirmed breeding in 2012, it was disappointing to find that very few, if any, birds were present upon the return of staff to Skokholm, perhaps as a result of the particularly harsh winter period. Indeed the only spring records were singles at South Pond on 7th March and at the Well on 2nd April, this compared with last season’s totals of 18 in March, 31 in April, 24 in May and 27 in June.
The first of autumn was a juvenile bird at the Well on 15th August. There were a further eight singles at the Well during the month including a juvenile male trapped there on the 29th. Numbers increased markedly during September with daily records from the 1st until the end of the season and maximum site counts of two at Orchid Bog, one on the Neck, one north of South Haven, five at the Well including an emaciated corpse on the 5th and two ringed there on the 27th, three at East Bog, one at Crab Bay, one near the Hills, two at South Pond, one at North Pond, one at the Top Tank and one at the Cottage. In total there were 137 bird-days during the month, 103 more than were logged in 2013. October proved the most prolific month for this species ever, with 222 bird-days logged (105 more than in 2013) and with an additional four birds in the vicinity of the Farm, three at the Top Tank, one at Bread Rock, two on the Neck and four around South Pond. An adult bird was trapped at the Well on the 1st (above photograph) and there were record day counts of 13 on the 12th and 15 on the 14th. Although numbers dropped slightly in November, there were peaks of nine on the 2nd and 5th and 112 bird-days were logged up to the 24th suggesting that some birds may again attempt to overwinter.

**Moorhen Gallinula chloropus**

Iâr Ddŵr

**Scarce Breeder**

3 trapped, 1 retrapped

1936-1976: 10 trapped, 2013: 2 trapped

The only March records came on the 29th and 31st with a pair watched at North Pond on both occasions. Birds became more conspicuous in April with records on all but eight dates and adults additional to the North Pond pair recorded intermittently at the Well and South Pond, although a bird was killed by a Great Black-backed Gull at the Well on the 20th. There were records on all but one day in May including the pair at North Pond, an adult at South Pond and, somewhat surprisingly given the loss of an adult, a pair appeared at the Well from the 7th. Five tiny chicks were at North Pond on 12th May and the presence of a sixth chick was confirmed the following day; the first chicks of an exceptionally dry 2013 were not seen until 2nd July.

Young were vocal at the Well from 8th June and there were a minimum of three chicks logged on the 12th. At least two of these were alive on 2nd July and a lone chick was seen on three further dates until a fledging-sized bird was logged on 25th July. On 29th June the North Pond pair accompanied four new chicks along with their two first-brood youngsters, but only three chicks were seen on 1st July, there were two between the 2nd and the 8th and a lone chick was last seen on 10th July. There was no indication of a breeding attempt at South Pond. There was thus one more breeding season territory than recorded in 2013 and, although only two pairs were known to breed, a minimum of three fledglings was one more than observed in 2013.

Birds were less conspicuous during August and September and there were signs of dispersal from the breeding areas with records from East Bog, the Knoll, the Top Tank and west of North Haven. A bird calling in flight over the Cottage at 0130 on 1st September was unusual. Moorhen were only logged on 17 days in October, with all records coming from the three breeding season territories. The nine November records came from the Well, with up to two birds present and a juvenile trapped there on the 18th.

**Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus**

Pioden y Môr

**Uncommon Breeder and Common Visitor**

15 trapped (including 13 pulli)

1936-1976: 1882 trapped

Numbers again fluctuated widely during March with peak counts of 103 on the 8th, 117 on the 19th,
109 on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} and 114 on the 23\textsuperscript{rd} when larger high tide roosts formed on the Anticline, but with lows of 24 on the 5\textsuperscript{th}, 20 on the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 23 on the 13\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th}. Although peak roost counts were very similar to those of 2013, some birds had returned to breeding territories on the plateau by 11\textsuperscript{th} March and mating was observed from the 12\textsuperscript{th}, over a month earlier than the first observed copulations of 2013. April saw a gradual increase in the number of birds on breeding territories and a reduction in the size of the Anticline roost where there were highs of 54 on the 6\textsuperscript{th}, 74 on the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 73 on the 16\textsuperscript{th}. The first full clutch was seen on 3\textsuperscript{rd} May, seven days earlier than the first of 2013. A whole Island census begun on 12\textsuperscript{th} May revealed 51 territorial pairs, 11 more than were logged in 2013, 56.6% more than the 2002-2014 mean (35.75 ±sd 7.92), but 7.3% down on the highest Skokholm count of 55 observed in 1981 and 1983. As in 2013, 11 nests were selected for productivity monitoring from 4\textsuperscript{th} May; two contained two eggs, eight contained three eggs and one contained four eggs. Four pairs failed, two at egg stage and two with small chicks, a fifth pair lost their clutch of three eggs but went on to re-lay and unusually a pair near North Pond which failed with small chicks in early June also went on to re-lay two eggs. The five remaining pairs fledged 12 young, the pair which lost their first clutch fledged three and amazingly the pair which lost chicks managed to fledge two, although not until 12\textsuperscript{th} August (a full four to six weeks after most other pairs had fledged young and when the majority of birds had left the Island). The 11 monitored pairs thus fledged 17 young, which equates to 1.55 fledglings per pair and is 55% up on that observed in 2013.

The number of Oystercatchers logged declined during late July and August and, despite a small roost developing on the Anticline which peaked in August at 26 on the 26\textsuperscript{th}, 24 on the 28\textsuperscript{th} and 29 on the 29\textsuperscript{th}, the majority of birds had departed the Island entirely by the end of the month. The only notable movements observed during the period were flocks of nine birds on 1\textsuperscript{st} August and of 32 birds on 18\textsuperscript{th} August heading west at sea. In September there were highs of 33 on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, including 20 on the Anticline, and of 35 on the 10\textsuperscript{th}, including 15 on Oystercatcher Rock, but with ten or fewer birds logged on 12 dates. A small Anticline roost was occasional in October and peaked at 23 birds on the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 25\textsuperscript{th}, but there were no birds logged at all on six dates. The same roost site was used more regularly in November with highs of 28 on the 9\textsuperscript{th}, 27 on the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 31 on the 14\textsuperscript{th}.

**Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria**

Uncommon however only 35 birds since 2006 and not recorded in 2008, 2009 or 2011

1936-1976: 1 trapped

In May a summer plumaged bird was on North Plain on the 11\textsuperscript{th}, summer plumaged birds went over on the 14\textsuperscript{th}, 20\textsuperscript{th} and 21\textsuperscript{st}, a bird passed at sea on the 28\textsuperscript{th} and there were two on the 29\textsuperscript{th}. These were the first spring records since a single on 19\textsuperscript{th} May 2010.

It also proved, by recent standards, an exceptional autumn for Golden Plover records. A summer plumaged bird was logged on 18\textsuperscript{th} July and the first juvenile of the year was seen on the 22\textsuperscript{nd}. There were singles over on the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} August and a juvenile was logged the following day. In
September there were flyover singles on the 4th, 6th and 13th, there were three groups totalling eight birds on the 18th, a single on the 19th, three groups totalling 15 birds on the 21st, two on the 22nd and further singles over on the 23rd, 25th and 26th. The 15 birds logged on 21st September is the second highest day total for over a decade, equalling that logged on 5th September 2004 and only one less than logged on 29th September last year. There were three birds recorded on 22nd October and two on the 28th and the 29th. A lone bird spent much of 6th November on North Plain and a flyover on the 20th was the last record of the year.

**Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola**  
Cwtiad Llwyd

Scarce however only eight singles since 2004

A bird over the Lighthouse at 0630 on 16th May was the only spring record, 15 days later than the second of the two spring 2013 birds. A bird in almost full breeding plumage called repeatedly as it went over on 1st September. In November there were vocal flyover singles on the 16th, 18th and 20th. A lone bird on 26th September was the only autumn record of 2013.

**Lapwing Vanellus vanellus**  
Cornchwiglen

Scarce previously common and an uncommon breeder, but last bred in 2000  
1936-1976: 694 trapped

One at North Pond on 31st May was the first spring bird since 16th March 2012. Two birds flew up from the bottom of Crab Bay on 19th June and the first juvenile of the season was logged on 18th July. In October a single headed east at altitude on the 12th. November saw a single linger around North Plain between the 4th and 6th, three over on the 17th, four together around North Pond on the 18th and a single at the same site the following day was the last of the season. Prior to this year there had only been 11 post-2004 records. Winter visits would probably see more birds logged; historically numbers peaked in the winter months and a visit in late November 2011 found eight birds.

**Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula**  
Cwtiad Torchog

Uncommon but Scarce in seven of the last eight years  
1936-1976: 3 trapped

A single at North Pond on 3rd April was the first of the year, two days later than the first of 2013. Lone birds lingered at North Pond between the 5th and 7th and the 19th and 20th and two were there on the 16th. As in 2013, May proved the peak month for Ringed Plover passage with 52 birds logged over 20 dates including highs of five on the 16th and 30th and of 14 on the 22nd. The latter count is a Skokholm record, exceeding the May and September maxima of 13 listed by Thompson (2007). One of the 14 birds was distinctly smaller and darker than its nominate counterparts and looked likely to be of the northern race *C. h. tundrae*. There were two flyover singles in June, a further two singles in July and seven singles in August including a bird over the Lighthouse at 0130 on the 9th. Whereas peak spring passage was up on 2013, autumn passage was quieter with up to two birds logged on 11 dates in September and a peak of three on the 14th. A flyover on 2nd October was the last of the year.

The total number of Ringed Plover logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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<thead>
<tr>
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**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*

**Rare** 12 previous records and only one in spring

**Earliest** 7<sup>th</sup> May 1960 **Latest** 16<sup>th</sup> October 1981 (21<sup>st</sup> September 2014)

A vocal flyover at 0930 on 21<sup>st</sup> September approached from the west and seemingly continued in an easterly direction (RDB, GE), although what may have been the same individual was again seen in flight that afternoon (BD). This was the first since a single on North Plain on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and is the eighth September record for Skokholm.

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**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*

**Common Visitor** has overwintered in at least ten years since 1968

1936-1976: 30 trapped

A single on the anticline on 6<sup>th</sup> March and on six further dates during the month was probably an overwintering individual. There were two on 27<sup>th</sup> March and on two dates in April before the first flyover migrants were logged on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Spring totals were very much comparable with 2013 although peak counts were fractionally down with 19 on 14<sup>th</sup> May the high (23 on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2013).

**The number of Whimbrel logged on each day of 2014.**

[Graph showing daily counts]

**The total number of Whimbrel logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>March</th>
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<td>29&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>26&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13 dates</td>
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Although the May total was very similar to last season, peak passage was slightly later this year; in 2013 the five highest spring totals came on the 29th and 30th April and the 1st, 5th and 16th May whereas in 2014 they came on the 9th, 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd May. As in 2013, passage dropped off quickly in early June with up to three birds logged each day until the 8th, singles on the 15th and 29th and a last single on 1st July. Birds were again seen from 17th July, with records on all but two dates until the end of August and a peak of 19 on 29th August; the autumn peak in 2013 was of 20 on 15th August. Up to four birds were logged on all but nine dates in September and there were records on 21 days in October including two birds at the Anticline on 13 occasions. Although it was believed that these birds would attempt to overwinter, two were last seen together there on 4th November. A lone bird was still present at the Anticline on six further dates until 17th November.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*  
Gylinir

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

A singing bird on 5th March made for a pleasant first morning back on Skokholm. However Curlew were only logged on 18 dates during the month and 15 of the records referred to single birds; this was a significant drop on March 2013 when birds were logged on 21 dates and there were peaks of between 15 and 32 on eight days. The total number of birds recorded in April and May was also slightly down on 2013, although the maximum day count for each month was the same. Only 21 were logged in June, with five on the 21st marking the start of the autumn influx. Curlew were logged on all but two dates in July, with peaks of 18 on the 18th and 19th and 12 on the 29th; both the number of birds and the monthly maximum were thus fractionally up on 2013.

### The number of Curlew logged on each day of 2014.

![Graph showing the number of Curlew logged on each day of 2014.](image-url)
The total number of Curlew logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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Curlew were noted on every day of August and September, with August highs of 23 on the 2nd, 21 on the 4th and 30 on the 5th which included a flock of 20 heading south; while the total number of birds seen was slightly down on 2013 for both months, the peak monthly counts were both higher in 2014. Although birds were logged on all but four days in October, the monthly total was only a third of that recorded in 2013; nevertheless the peak of 12 birds on the 15th was slightly up. Numbers increased fractionally in November and the high of 22 on the 11th was very close to the 23 recorded on 1st November 2013. Predated Curlew were logged on 16th September, 29th October and on the 14th and 22nd November; Peregrines were responsible for at least two of the corpses.

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

Given that there were 11 records totalling 54 birds in 2013, including a Skokholm record flock of 21, 2014 proved very disappointing by comparison. A fine summer plumaged bird on 16th July exhibited the stunning deep rufous plumage and shorter legs and bill of an Icelandic breeding L. l. islandica. This was the second year running that this subspecies has been logged following a bird on 27th June 2013. This year’s bird lingered on North Pond until 18th July when it was joined by a second, summer plumaged bird. These were the only two individuals of the season.

**Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica**
Rhostog Gynffonfrith
Uncommon Visitor
1936-1976: 8 trapped

As with the preceding species, there was a significant reduction in the number of birds logged this season; following seven records totalling 14 birds in 2013, there were only two birds noted this year and there were no autumn records. A single at North Pond on 20th April remained until the 22nd and
a second bird was seen on 28th April. Traditionally this is the commoner godwit but this is the fourth year running where this has not been the case.

**Turnstone Arenaria interpres**  
*Cwtiad y Traeth*

_Fairly Common Visitor_ has been recorded in all months  
1936-1976: 12 trapped

Although logged in every month of the season, Turnstone are no doubt under recorded due to their predilection for spending the majority of time below cliffs and their sporadic use of the high tide roosts. The majority of counts this season were down on those of 2013, with lower monthly totals and lower peak counts throughout the spring and autumn periods. There were only 23 birds logged over ten dates between 7th March and 20th June, with peak counts of five at Twinlet on 19th April and of nine summer plumaged birds which headed north on 12th May; 56 birds were recorded during the same period in 2013. There were 115 birds logged over 38 dates between 24th July and 10th November, this compared with 217 during the autumn of 2013. All autumn records in 2014 were of five or fewer birds with the exception of six at the Stack on 29th August, six on 3rd September, eight on 4th September including two below the Lighthouse, seven on the Anticline on 7th October and six on 12th October. The majority of 2014 records came from the Anticline and the Devil’s Teeth roost sites, although occasionally birds were seen elsewhere and in flight.

**The total number of Turnstone logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.**

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<th>Month</th>
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<td>7 (12)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
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**Knot Calidris canutus**  
_Pibydd yr Aber_

_Scarce_ usually singles, although occasionally more with 67 on 29th September 1958 the maximum  
1936-1976: 8 trapped

A single over the Farm on 17th September was the first since six were logged on 2nd September 2011 (GE, RDB _et al._). The only other record in the last decade was of a bird at Winter Pond on the 20th and 21st August 2007.
**Ruff Calidris pugnax**

*Scarce* but only two records in the last nine years

1936-1976: 7 trapped

A stunning black-ruffed male on South Pond for three days from 31st May was the first spring record for over a decade (RDB et al.). In September there were single juveniles on the 1st (BD et al.) and on the 18th (JP, JM et al.); both birds favoured North Pond.

**Dunlin Calidris alpina**

*Fairly Common Visitor* recorded in all months

1 trapped

1936-1976: 181 trapped

One at North Pond on 5th March was the first of the year but, as in 2013, there was only one March record. In April there were 30 birds logged over 11 dates with highs of six on the 19th and five the following day; in 2013 there were 12 birds over seven dates. Peak passage was again in May with 71 birds logged over 24 dates and highs of 16 on the 22nd and ten on the 24th; in 2013 there were 111 birds over 22 days including a peak of 30 on the 15th. Nine birds in June was one fewer than last year.
There were 12 birds logged in July including a monthly high of three on the 1st and the first definite juvenile of the autumn on the 26th, 15 days later than the first juvenile logged in 2013. All autumn monthly totals were up on 2013, probably as a result of the higher water levels prevalent this year. In August there were 22 birds logged over 14 dates with a maximum of five juveniles on the 27th. Peak autumn passage was in early September with 45 Dunlin logged over ten dates between the 1st and 14th and highs of eight on the 4th and 6th and of 14 on the 5th. Singles on the 11th and 31st October and on the 5th and 18th November were the last of the year.

**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 again 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 genuine decline in Island records, which reflects the situation nationally and their amber listing as a species of UK conservation concern. Nevertheless there was a marked increase in the number of records this year with the highest totals for a decade. The first of the year were two on 26th August and five were logged on three dates between the 27th and 30th with three on the 29th. There were two birds logged on 17th September and a single on the 26th. In October there was a single on the 8th, three on the 19th and two on the 21st. Singles on the 2nd, 3rd and 11th November were the last of the year. All records came from the area on and around the Devil’s Teeth.

**Little Stint Calidris minuta**  
Pibydd Bach  
Scarce on passage August to October, with a lone spring record on 27th May 1990  
1936-1976: 9 trapped

A juvenile on North Pond on 21st September was the first since the 20th and 21st September 2012 (JM, SWO, et al.). What was seemingly a different juvenile was at the same site two days later (LR et al.) Finally a juvenile moulting into first-winter plumage was at North Pond from the 17th to 19th October (RDB et al.). The only other record this decade is of a bird on 12th October 2010 which was joined by a second individual the following day.

**Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos**  
Pibydd y Dorlan  
Uncommon more regular in autumn  
1936-1976: 23 trapped
The first two birds of the year at North Pond on 16th April were 15 days earlier than the first of 2013. Two birds were also seen in Crab Bay on the 20th and in South Haven on the 22nd and there was a single on the 30th. In May there were daily singles between the 3rd and 6th, perhaps referring to different individuals given their widely spaced locations, and the last of spring was on North Pond on the 25th. There were only three singles logged in the spring of 2013. In July there were 23 birds logged over ten dates from the 3rd including highs of six together near the Devil’s Teeth on the 5th and four together in Crab Bay on the 24th; in July 2013 there were 13 birds logged over seven dates. August 2013 proved a record year for this species on Skokholm with 41 birds logged over 18 dates, however this year saw only five birds logged with two on the 4th and 15th and a single on the 18th. In September there were two on the 6th, one on the 9th, three on the 17th and further singles on the 19th and 26th; there were thus twice as many September birds as last season and the last of the year was 21 days later.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*  
**Pibydd Gwyrdd**  
*Scarce* not recorded every year, only seven records since 2004 and only 17 spring records  
**Earliest** 2nd April 1997 (2nd May 2014) **Latest** 21st October 1967 (1st September 2014)

A flyover on 2nd May was the only spring record, seven days later than the only spring record of last year; this was the sixth May record for Skokholm. It proved the best autumn for over a decade with singles on North Pond on the 19th and 29th July, a flyover on 22nd August, two over on 26th August and a single at North Pond on the 27th and 28th August. A bird at North Pond on 1st September was the last of the year and 19 days later than the last of 2013.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*  
**Pibydd y Graean**  
*Scarce* not recorded every year and only seven spring records  
**Earliest** 2nd May 1994 (22nd May 2014) **Latest** 22nd September 1966  
1936-1976: 2 trapped

A bird which spent the day on North Pond on 22nd May was only the sixth May record for Skokholm and was the first to be logged for over ten years (RDB et al.). There have now been eight spring and 52 autumn records on the Island.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*  
**Pibydd Coeswerdd**  
*Scarce* not recorded every year and only 14 records since 2004 including seven in 2013
A bird over the Lighthouse on 18th May was the first spring record since 2005. A second spring bird commuted between North Pond, South Pond and Crab Bay on the 20th and 21st June. A flyover at 0345 on 21st July was the first of the autumn and another went over on the 23rd. A single was on North Pond on 20th August and there were flyovers on the 7th and 19th September, the latter bird ten days earlier than the last of 2013. There were thus seven records for a second year running.

**Redshank Tringa totanus**

*Pibydd Coesgoch*

Uncommon more regular in autumn

1936-1976: 4 trapped

In March there were singles along the North Coast on the 12th and 28th. Although there were no April records, May saw a single on the 14th, two on the Neck on the 18th, a flyover on the 19th, two at North Pond on the 22nd and a single at South Pond on six dates between the 23rd and 31st. In June there was an adult on the 21st, an early juvenile on the 22nd and 23rd, a single on the 25th, three at North Pond on the 29th and one at the Quarry on the 30th. There were daily singles between the 1st and 5th July, with two on the 3rd and further July singles on the 23rd and 31st. August saw peak passage with singles logged on seven dates and with three on the 18th and 20th. In September there was a single on the 5th and 6th, two on the 7th and a lone bird on the 22nd. There were no October records but singles on the 9th and 16th November. There were thus 40 birds logged over 50 dates compared with 23 birds logged over 28 dates in 2013.

**Jack Snipe Lymnocryptes minimus**

*Gîach Bach*

Scarce Winter Visitor although not recorded every year

Earliest 18th August 1938 (23rd October 2014) Latest 22nd May 1995 (7th March 2014)

1936-1976: 8 trapped

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 last year there had only been two post-2004 records, although 2013 saw three singles between the 12th and 17th March and ten records of up to two birds between 27th September and 15th November. This season saw a return to the recent norm with lone singles flushed at South Pond on 7th March and 23rd October.

**Woodcock Scolopax rusticola**

*Cyffylog*

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

Earliest 18th September 2001 (1st November 2014) Latest 8th April 1965

1936-1976: 3 trapped

A bird flushed from the Well on 1st November was the only record of the year and the first autumn bird for ten years (GE). There are only two other records from the past nine years, singles on the Neck on 12th March 2012 and at the Lighthouse on 6th April 2013.

**Snipe Gallinago gallinago**

*Gîach Cyffredin*

Common Winter Visitor and Passage Migrant breeding most recently suspected in 1927 and 1965

1936-1976: 54 trapped

As in 2013, the highest day count of the year came in early March, although the ten birds logged at South Pond on the 7th was well down on the 38 logged on 3rd March 2013. Perhaps the same harsh winter weather thought to be responsible for the lack of spring Water Rail records also affected this
species, with only 22 birds logged in March compared with 145 in the March of last year. In April there were singles on five dates and four together at South Pond on the 7th were presumably fresh in. A single at North Pond on 3rd May was eight days later than the last spring bird of 2013. In July a bird flushed from Little Bay Point on the 18th was 33 days earlier than the first autumn bird of last year. Autumn totals were very much comparable with 2013; there were two further July records including two along the North Coast on the 26th, there were 11 birds logged over six dates in August including six at North Pond on the 27th, September saw 46 birds over 23 dates including four on the 3rd and five at North Pond on the 20th, there were 23 over 11 dates in October with four on the 30th and three on three dates and in November there were 32 over 16 dates including one at South Pond on the 17th and a bird chased around the Lighthouse by a Peregrine on the 18th. The 116 birds recorded this autumn was thus only 14 fewer than logged in 2013.

The total number of Snipe logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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<thead>
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<th></th>
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<td>7th</td>
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<td>3rd</td>
<td>26th</td>
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<td>17th</td>
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Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola*

Vagrant an addition to the Skokholm list

A vocal flyover on 1st May approached from the east, crossed North Plain, quickly reached the Lighthouse and circled briefly before departing high and north (NM et al.). Despite its fleeting appearance, good views of both the chestnut underwing and white trailing edge to the secondaries were secured. It would be tempting to assume that this was the same bird located at Northam Burrows, Devon on 21st April and last seen on 30th April, the day prior to the Skokholm record. This will be the first record for both Skokholm and Pembrokeshire if accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee. There are three previous accepted records of this species in Wales and two records of an unidentified Pratincole in Pembrokeshire with one at Bosherston Pools on 13th April 1981, which was thought likely to be this species, and one at Llanstinan some time prior to 1894. Interestingly this year’s bird occurred on a day when the mainland was shrouded in cloud whilst Skokholm and St George’s Channel basked under the sun.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Scarc to Uncommon but only recorded in four seasons since 2004

Earliest 6th April 1959 (9th September 2014) Latest 22nd October 1968 (22nd October 2014)

A dark morph bird on 9th September was the first of the year and 19 days earlier than the only record of 2013. It was also a dark morph bird which headed northwest on 15th September. In October there was a pale bird on the 5th, a single in Broad Sound on the 15th and a dark bird west off the Lighthouse on the 22nd equalled the latest Skokholm record (RDB).

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Vagrant only one previous record

A juvenile heading southwest off the Lighthouse on 21st October was surprisingly only the second record for Skokholm (RDB). The first chased Kittiwakes off the Head on 4th October 1995.
Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*

**Uncommon** sometimes scarce

**Earliest** 12\(^{th}\) April 1977 (13\(^{th}\) April 2014) **Latest** 27\(^{th}\) October 2013 (19\(^{th}\) October 2014)

One off South Haven on 13\(^{th}\) April was only one day later than the earliest Skokholm record. The only other spring record was of a bird heading east off the Lighthouse at 0700 on 15\(^{th}\) April. The first of autumn headed west on 10\(^{th}\) August and two did likewise on the 29\(^{th}\). In September there was a single on the 5\(^{th}\) and two headed west on the 7\(^{th}\). October saw a single on the 4\(^{th}\) and two on the morning of the 19\(^{th}\) were the last of the season, eight days earlier than the latest Island record which was logged last year. There were thus eight records of 11 birds this year, slightly fewer than the ten records of 18 birds logged in 2013.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*

**Pål**

**Very Abundant Breeder**

105 trapped (including 6 pulli), 9 retrapped

1936-1976: 5411 trapped, 2011-2013: 272 trapped, 2 retrapped, 1 control

The winter seabird wreck of early 2014 was considered to be the worst in living memory, with more than 30000 corpses found along the coasts of Western Europe and a record number of ringing recoveries (BTO, 2014). Internationally Puffins were the species worst affected (BTO, 2014); thus it was with some trepidation that the first spring arrivals were awaited. The first record of the season was a lone bird in South Haven on 26\(^{th}\) March, nine days later than the first of 2013. The only other March records were a single on the 30\(^{th}\) and three rafts comprising 159 birds the following day (2013 numbers peaked at 2120 on the 28\(^{th}\)). A lone bird made landfall in South Haven on 31\(^{st}\) March, six days before the first to do so in 2013. Daily counts were made around the Neck each evening from 31\(^{st}\) March until 19\(^{th}\) May to record the pattern of colony attendance (see graph below). April counts varied dramatically with whole Island totals of 3491 on the 4\(^{th}\), 5070 on the 10\(^{th}\), 2385 on the 16\(^{th}\) and 2173 on the 29\(^{th}\) but lows of zero on the 2\(^{nd}\), 13 on the 20\(^{th}\) and four on the 21\(^{st}\).

![Graph showing daily counts of Puffins from 31st March to 19th May 2014](image)

The whole Island count of 10\(^{th}\) April coincided with the highest count achieved from the Neck. The 5070 birds logged was a 4.9% increase on the 4834 individuals logged on 1\(^{st}\) May 2013 and a 9.3% increase on the 4637 counted on 21\(^{st}\) April 2012. That the 2014 total should be an increase on that of 2013 is somewhat surprising given the events of the preceding winter, however the evening raft
counts are clearly influenced by many factors and give no indication as to the age or provenance of the participating birds. The analysis of colour ringing data is likely to give a more accurate assessment of any change in survival (see below). Although the whole Island counts provide a reliable long-term method for comparing Puffin attendance from year to year, how the totals reflect the Skokholm breeding population is difficult to ascertain. Interestingly the Crab Bay raft counts were typically in the region of 1200 birds, however more focused monitoring at this site revealed a study population of 76 burrows in an area which comprises approximately 10% of the colony and where less than half of the active burrows were study burrows; thus we might predict a very rough minimum of 1520 pairs for Crab Bay (as active burrow distribution is apparently quite even) and expect more than twice the number of birds to be using this area of sea than are actually logged.

The maximum number of Puffins recorded each year for the period 1989-2014.

A productivity plot was established at Crab Bay in 2013 and the same area was studied during the 2014 season; the same 100 burrows individually numbered in 2013 were again used this year. Of these, 76 were occupied and visible throughout the season (77 in 2013); thus productivity estimates are based on observations of these burrows. Five active burrows (6.58%) were not seen to be provisioned with fish and it is thus assumed that these failed at egg stage (7.79% in 2013). The first fish provisioning on Skokholm was witnessed on 3rd June (30th May 2013), but it was not until 9th June when fish were seen to be delivered to the study plot (as in 2013, however ten study burrows were provisioned on this date in 2013 and only a single burrow in 2014). Indeed first fish deliveries were approximately a week later than in 2013 this year (see graph below). The following table shows the number of days between first and last observed chick feeding.

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>46-52</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>No. of burrows</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
The number of study burrows which had been provisioned with fish by a particular date.

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 many burrows are only provisioned once during a 24 hour period and occasionally not at all (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 into account that some deliveries may have been missed, the same assumption made in 2013 is used, namely that a chick which was seen to be provisioned for 31 days or more was of fledging size. Thus, of the 76 monitored breeding attempts, 38 (50%) were potentially successful (49.35% in 2013).

The number of fish deliveries to known active burrows during five 24 hour watches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of deliveries</th>
<th>0</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
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<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of burrows 28 Jun</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of burrows 8 Jul</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of burrows 24 Jul</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of burrows 3 Aug</td>
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While this productivity estimate represents birds which have reached fledging size, fledging success is very difficult to ascertain reliably. Puffin chicks are at their most vulnerable when exercising their
flight muscles at the burrow entrance prior to fledging and when making the journey to the sea. Great Black-backed Gulls were observed patrolling within the colonies during the chick provisioning period and were observed taking many fledging sized young.

Five 24 hour watches were made, on 21st June, 28th June, 8th July, 24th July and 3rd August, to monitor kleptoparasitism by gulls. The study plot was confined to the area of the 100 numbered burrow stakes at Crab Bay. On 21st June 262 Puffins arrived to the study area with fish and of these 28 (10.69%) were successfully robbed. On 28th June 513 birds arrived and of these 37 (7.21%) were robbed. On 8th July 643 birds arrived and 29 (4.51%) were robbed. On 24th July 670 birds arrived and three (0.45%) were robbed. On 3rd August 179 birds arrived and one (0.56%) was 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 peak in monitored kleptoparasitism in 2013 was 18.4% recorded on 16th June with between 5.25% and 10.28% of deliveries lost to the gulls on three further dates.

The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on 21st June, 28th June and 8th July along with the number of times that gulls successfully robbed the fish.
The number of chick provisioning attempts during daylight on 24th July and 3rd August along with 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, 58 in 2012 and a further 51 in 2013. Of the 2011 birds, there were 72 seen in 2012, 98 seen in 2013 and 83 were recorded this year. By comparing the resighting records of the past three years, it is evident that 106 (82.81%) of the 128 ringed were actually still alive in 2012 and 103 (80.47%) were alive in 2013, although not necessarily at the colony in those years. 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 therefore come from looking for birds previously seen in the field; thus of 106 birds alive in 2012, 103 (97.17%) were alive in 2013. Only 83 (78.30% of the 2012 total and 80.58% of the 2013 total) were recorded this year; the winter storms are the obvious reason for such a dramatic decline, although whether the missing birds will reappear in subsequent years remains to be seen. Of the 58 birds ringed in 2012, there were 52 (89.66%) known to be alive in 2013, however only 36 (62.07% of the 2012 total and 69.23% of the 2013 total) were recorded this year. Only 83 (78.30% of the 2012 total and 80.58% of the 2013 total) were recorded this year; the winter storms are the obvious reason for such a dramatic decline, although whether the missing birds will reappear in subsequent years remains to be seen. Of the 58 birds ringed in 2012, there were 52 (89.66%) known to be alive in 2013, however only 36 (62.07% of the 2012 total and 69.23% of the 2013 total) were recorded this year. Of the 51 birds ringed in 2013, 37 (72.55%) were observed in 2014, however the issues mentioned above with hidden birds may apply to this figure. As this project continues it is likely that the survivorship estimates for recent years will continue to rise as evidently not all birds will be seen each year. A further 57 Puffins were colour ringed this season, bringing the number of individually marked birds to 294.

There were 1227 Puffin logged on 1st August, 633 on the 2nd, 598 on the 5th, 234 on the 6th and 64 on the 7th. There were then low double figure counts until the 13th and single figure counts until the 18th, predominantly of adults still feeding chicks. Three were on the sea on 20th August and a bird arrived with fish to the slopes near Alice on the 22nd and 23rd, nine days later than the last seen to do so in 2013. A lone bird was seen in Broad Sound on 22nd September.

**Razorbill Alca torda**

**Abundant Breeder**

31 trapped (including 28 pulli), 1 retrapped, 1 control
1936-1976: 9220 trapped, 2013: 25 trapped, 1 control

Although internationally the collection of corpses suggested that Puffins were the species hardest hit by the prolonged winter storms, tideline carcasses in Pembrokeshire were predominantly Razorbills (pembsbirds.blogspot.co.uk). Perhaps as a consequence of the storms, birds were slow to return to the cliffs this spring and March totals were well down on 2013; there were 5489 bird days logged in March (13318 in 2013) and peak counts of 1145 on the 27th and 1079 on the 28th (1104 on the 3rd and 14th, 1329 on the 18th, 2069 on the 20th and 1818 on the 27th in 2013). Although distant auks were seen at sea on the 7th and 8th March, it was not until the 10th when the first 92 Razorbill were logged this year. The 175 recorded on 13th March were the first to be seen on the cliffs and there were counts of 236 on the 15th and 424 on the 17th. However only two birds were logged on the 20th, there were no records between the 21st and 23rd inclusive and, following 146 on the 24th and 12 on the 25th, there were again no birds on the 26th. April attendance, although still very much sporadic.
with fewer than 100 birds logged on 15 dates, was slightly up on that recorded in the bitter April of 2013. Although there were still large scale departures for the sea during early May, these were typically only for a portion of the day and numbers became far more constant from midmonth. The first egg was noted at Twinlet on 13th May, two days later than the first of 2013.

Six study plots, established in 2002, were visited on ten dates between the 1st and 15th June and every adult in suitable breeding habitat was counted. There was a 21.1% drop in numbers compared with 2013, although the mean total of 273 adults on ledges is still the third highest recorded since the plots were established in 2002. A 43% decline was noted at Little Bay Point with a drop from a mean 113 adults on ledges in 2013 to 79 this season. Smaller drops of between 17.1% and 24.7% were noted at the North Gully and Twinlet plots. The plot counts are significantly affected by the weather; in the unsettled June of 2012 the total fluctuated between 164 and 338 birds whereas the range during a calm 2013 was considerably smaller, with a low of 301 and a peak of 397. This year again saw a study period dominated by high pressure and ten counts with a relatively tight spread from 254 on the 1st and 14th to 315 on the 5th. It thus seems very likely that the 2014 counts reflect a genuine large drop in the number of birds attending the colonies, almost certainly as a result of the seabird wreck of spring 2014.

The total number of adult birds in all six study plots 2002-2014 (as an average from ten visits).
Whole Island counts were made during early June and counts were made from a boat on 31st May. This is the second year running that access to a boat has been available, inevitably leading to higher but more accurate whole Island counts; in 2012 rough seas meant that there was no opportunity for a boat based count and it was concluded that ‘there remains a section of North Coast that was missed, while other parts of the North Coast and Bluffs were counted less accurately at a distance’ (Gillham and Yates, 2012). A whole Island total of 2052 adults on suitable breeding ledges this season was 10.5% down on the 2294 logged in 2013. The drop in the whole Island total was thus not as substantial as that observed in the plots and the proportion of the whole Island total made up of study plot birds was the lowest recorded since the plots were established, although still very similar to that observed in 2013. It was noted in 2013 how the weather has a significant bearing on the number of birds logged; 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 weather in 2014 was very similar to the calm and warm study period of 2013; it thus seems likely that the observed drop in numbers reflects a genuine decline, probably as a result of the winter storms. Whether the absent birds have perished, or failed to return to the breeding colonies this year due to reduced fitness, remains to be seen. Ultimately the response of a population to a significant mortality event such as witnessed this winter may be quite complex and counts of adults in suitable habitat will not necessarily reflect the state of the population; for example a loss of breeding adults from the ledges may make room for younger birds to enter the colonies at an earlier stage of life or many of the birds counted in the colonies may not have bred this year. Nevertheless the 2014 Razorbill total was still the second highest on record and, assuming such winter wrecks do not become more regular, it seems likely that the population will again increase.

The whole Island totals, plot totals and the percentage of the Island totals made up of study plot birds (*includes a boat based count).

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<td>20.1</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
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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 monitoring was undertaken for a second year running and the same two study sites were used, one a cliff below the Neck Razorbill Hide where 31 incubating pairs were located by 27th May and one a site among the Bluffs boulder slope where 25 egg sites were marked on 25th May. Among the Bluffs boulders ten pairs failed at egg stage, at least three eggs of which were almost encased in thick mud following periods of exceptionally heavy rain. A further four pairs failed with chicks, three of which were found dead at the nest site presumably due to exposure during further
heavy rain or a lack of food, but not predation. There were 11 pairs (44%) which produced a jumping sized chick (0.44 young per pair), which is 20% down on the 0.55 recorded at the Bluffs in 2013. On the Neck there were 14 failures at egg stage and six failures at chick stage; although the reason for failure was typically unclear, two chicks were seen predated by Herring Gulls. There were thus 11 jumping sized chicks at the Neck site (0.36 per pair), a figure 53.2% down on the 0.77 per pair recorded at this plot in 2013. These results suggest a reverse in fortunes at the two study sites, with productivity considerably higher at the cliff site than within the boulders in 2013 but lower this season. However both sites are significantly down with a combined productivity figure of 0.39 fledging sized chicks per monitored pair (0.67 in 2013); it is unclear whether this again reflects the impact of the winter storms on adult fitness (or factors such as reduced predator defence following changes in colony density), the impacts of unfortunately timed severe weather during the breeding season, a change in predation pressure, or a combination of factors. All monitored attempts had concluded by 9th July at the Bluffs but it was not until 25th July that all cliff attempts had come to an end; this perhaps reflects a tendency for large chicks among the boulders to move away from the egg site whilst cliff chicks have little room for movement. Interestingly a cliff site in the Neck plot used successfully in 2013 contained a pool of water for all of the 2014 season and was not used.
For the first time counts at three of the study plots were continued beyond the normal study period to ascertain the pattern of colony attendance during the remainder of the breeding season (see graph above). There were fluctuating numbers in all three colonies and notable peaks where the totals were presumably supplemented by the presence of more non-breeding birds; interestingly these peaks frequently coincided between colonies, perhaps suggesting that the younger birds respond to the same environmental cues. The first fledgeling had departed by 29th June and within the study plots 27.3% of the fledglings had departed by 2nd July, 36.4% had gone by the 3rd, 59.1% by the 7th, 86.4% by the 9th and all had jumped by the 13th. There was a similar departure of adult birds, with numbers dropping rapidly from 7th July. There were only double figure counts from 17th July (14th July in 2013) and these had dropped to single figure counts by the 27th (24th in 2013). Adults were last seen on the cliffs on 31st July, four days later than in 2013. There were only five adults on the sea on 1st August and singles were logged close inshore on the 9th and 19th. There were eight birds logged at sea from 24th September and 689 over 22 dates in October including peaks of 87 on the 19th and 247 on the 24th. Further large auks were present at sea during the autumn but their distance from land saw them logged as ‘auk sp.’; there were 50 in September, 1289 in October (including 839 on the 19th) and 166 between the 1st and 20th November.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*

*Gwylog*

Abundant Breeder

1 pullus trapped, 5 controls
1936-1976: 1023 trapped, 2013: 2 controls

Guillemot corpses, although significantly outnumbered by Razorbills, were seemingly more abundant than Puffins in Pembrokeshire during the winter seabird wrecks and internationally the BTO received a record number of ring recoveries (pembsbirds.blogspot.co.uk, BTO, 2014). However the 7553 birds logged in March was actually up on the 5535 logged in 2013 and the 14 days of absence or single figure counts was the same as recorded in 2013. The 13th saw the first 883 birds return to the cliffs and birds took to the ledges on a further seven dates during the month (four dates in March 2013) including a peak count of 1678 on the 31st (895 on the 28th in 2013). The 11142 birds logged in April was also well up on the 7212 logged in the cold April of 2013, although very low counts on 19 dates was the same as noted in the previous season. Numbers continued to fluctuate in early May with only 100 logged on the 2nd, 625 on the 3rd, 192 on the 11th and 400 on the 13th but with a high of 2827 on the 12th and consistent totals from midmonth. The first egg was seen at the Dents on 15th May, two days later than the first of 2013.

The total number of adult birds in all six study plots 2002-2014 (as an average from ten visits).

The six study plots were counted on ten dates between the 1st and 15th June. The mean total from all plots was 4.1% down on that recorded in 2013; the Middlerock plot mean was identical to 2013, the Guillemot Cliff plot was down 0.6%, the Little Bay Point plot was down 2.4%, the Steep Bay Point
plots 3.8% and 9.1% down and the North Gully plot was down 8.1%. As with the preceding species, these counts are significantly affected by the weather; in the wet and unsettled June of 2012 the total fluctuated between 530 and 746 birds, whereas the range in a calm 2013 was from a low of 824 to a high of 949. The 2014 study period was again dominated by high pressure and saw a low of 797 on the 14th and a high of 947 on the 5th. Despite the winter seabird wreck, the number of adults in suitable breeding habitat was the second highest yet recorded within the plots, although no assessment was made as to how many of the counted birds actually bred.

Whole Island counts were made during early June and calm weather, along with access to a boat, allowed for counts to be made from the sea on 31st May. Boat-based surveys allow some areas to be monitored which cannot be viewed from on the Island and enable closer access to some areas which can normally only be viewed at a distance. A total of 3512 adults in suitable breeding habitat was a 1.3% increase on the 2013 count and the highest total yet recorded on Skokholm. Although this small increase is perhaps surprising given the wrecks of the previous winter and the 4.1% drop observed within the study plots, it actually represents a considerable slowing of population growth given the rate at which Guillemot numbers have recently been increasing. Additionally the fine weather during the 2014 survey period will undoubtedly have led to high counts; there is a correlation between the weather and the number of birds present, with calm weather perhaps attracting more non-breeding birds, allowing 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. Boat based counts are made on the calmest of days and thus typically coincide with periods of higher colony attendance. It is not known what proportion of the counted adults bred this year or how the winter wrecks impacted the age structure of the population; the storms may have removed birds previously occupying the breeding ledges and allowed younger birds to enter the colonies or returning birds may not have been sufficiently fit to make a breeding attempt.

The whole Island totals, plot totals and the percentage of the Island totals made up of study plot birds (*includes a boat based count).

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<tbody>
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<td>1202</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1348</td>
<td>1455</td>
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<td>1697</td>
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<td>3512</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plots</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>447</td>
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<td>333</td>
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<td>557</td>
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<td>625</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>859</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>22.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>32.8</td>
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<td>27.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Productivity, calculated at between 0.55 and 0.61 chicks per pair in 2013 and 0.6 in 2007, was not assessed in 2014 in accordance with recommendations from the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee.
The first chick was seen at North Gully on 13\textsuperscript{th} June, one day before the first of 2013. Chicks were observed jumping from the first week of July and the number of adults recorded on the cliffs dropped rapidly from 1342 on 7\textsuperscript{th} July, to 974 on the 10\textsuperscript{th}, to 723 on the 13\textsuperscript{th}, to 461 on the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 110 on the 19\textsuperscript{th} from when there were only double figure counts until the last three birds were seen on the cliffs on 24\textsuperscript{th} July (28\textsuperscript{th} July in 2013). There were only five Guillemots recorded in August including an adult and youngster off the Lighthouse on the 17\textsuperscript{th}. In September there were 72 birds recorded over 17 dates until the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 362 counted rafting off the Lighthouse on the 24\textsuperscript{th} (four days after ‘several hundred’ were seen from a boat two miles to our southwest), and 127 were logged over the following three days. In October there were 57 birds recorded over eight days and eight were seen on 8\textsuperscript{th} November. Further large auks were present at sea during the autumn but their distance from land saw them logged as ‘auk sp.’; there were 50 in September, 1289 in October (including 839 on the 19\textsuperscript{th}) and 166 between the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 20\textsuperscript{th} November.
Ringing recovery Left leg yellow darvic (faded) with black 73X
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 1998
Previously recovered as an adult (bridled), SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 2005
Previously recovered as an adult (bridled), MIDDLEROCK, SKOKHOLM 19th June 2013
Recovered as an adult (bridled), MIDDIEROCK, SKOKHOLM 30th April 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed approximately 5796

Ringing recovery Left leg green darvic with white 69K, Right leg N00620
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 2005
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE four times in 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 11 times in 2010
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE seven times in 2011
Recovered as an adult, NORTH GULLY, SKOKHOLM 5th May 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed approximately 3231

Ringing recovery Left leg blue darvic with white 11K, Right leg N00712
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 2004
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 21st May and 10th June 2009
Recovered as an adult, NORTH GULLY, SKOKHOLM 4th May 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed approximately 3595

Ringing recovery Left leg N03107, Right leg white darvic with black 10X
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 2006
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 3rd June 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 12th May and 11th June 2010
Previously recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 19th April and 21st June 2011
Recovered as an adult, NORTH GULLY, SKOKHOLM 4th May 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed approximately 2865

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*

Uncommon although Scarce in most years this decade

Two on 6th April were eight days later than the earliest Skokholm record. There were three further April records with a single on the 9th, three on the 13th and a further single on the 14th. A vocal bird flew over Spy Rock at 0320 on 20th July. Also in July were a single on the 21st, three on the 27th and a single on the 31st. In September there were two on the 15th and one the following day was the last record of the season, 18 days earlier than the last of 2013.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

Scarce although unidentified ‘commic’ terns Uncommon. Bred at the Stack in 1894 but gone by 1916
1936-1976: 1 trapped

One at North Pond on 22nd May was the only record of the year. Although terns have been recorded as occasional visitors to the ponds in the past, it is Arctic Terns which are more prone to doing so. Additionally two distant ‘commic’ terns headed north on 31st July.

**Arctic Tern** *Sternula paradisaea*

**Scarce** although unidentified ‘commic’ terns Uncommon

1936-1976: 3 trapped

Two feeding among the Broad Sound gull flock on 11th October was the only record of the year. The only other record this decade is of six birds on 29th August 2012.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*

**Very Abundant** a single pair attempted to breed in 1959

Although present offshore in all months, Kittiwake were logged in smaller numbers than might be expected given the presence of 1488 breeding pairs on nearby Skomer. The pattern of records broadly matched that observed in 2013 with a quiet pre-breeding period, a summer peak, a quiet September and an increase in numbers as the autumn progressed. The 336 birds recorded in March was very similar to the total logged last season, although much of this was due to the 207 birds seen in Broad Sound on the 15th. Although the April drop in numbers was not as marked as in 2013, it still proved the quietest month of the year bar September and produced the lowest monthly maximum. These low counts may in part reflect seawatching effort, however there seems little doubt that the birds are elsewhere during the pre-breeding period. The corpses of five birds predated by Peregrines were found during March and April.

**The total number of Kittiwake logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date on which the 2014 peak was recorded.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
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<th>August</th>
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<td>606</td>
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<tr>
<td>(327)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(327)</td>
<td>(839)</td>
<td>(1381)</td>
<td>(1064)</td>
<td>(432)</td>
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<td>207</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>164</td>
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<td>250</td>
<td>163</td>
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<td>1245</td>
<td>248</td>
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<tr>
<td>(160)</td>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>(51)</td>
<td>(260)</td>
<td>(174)</td>
<td>(150)</td>
<td>(116)</td>
<td>(130)</td>
<td>(390)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15th</td>
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<td>5th</td>
<td>11th</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>20th</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Numbers increased in May and peaked in June when there were day counts of 313 on the 7th, 199 on the 8th and 392 on the 9th. Birds were logged on almost all dates in July and August with highs of 250 on 5th July, 184 on 9th July, 103 on the 9th and 10th August and 163 on 11th August. As in 2013 there was a noticeable drop in numbers during September, a decline which cannot be linked to a drop in seawatching effort. The October of 2013 also saw low totals, however October this year saw a peak in numbers, partly due to the 1245 birds which were logged in three hours during a southwesterly gale on the morning of the 19th, but also due to counts of 158 on the 6th, 243 on the 20th and 229 on the 22nd along with lower three figure counts on three further dates. Whereas the majority of the October total was made up of birds passing the Lighthouse, the majority of the 606 birds logged in November were in the Broad Sound gull flock including a peak of 248 on the 20th.

**Black-headed Gull Chroicocephalus ridibundus**

*Gwylan Benddu*

Abundant offshore during the winter. Two pairs defended North Pond territories in 1968.

Given the size of the Broad Sound gull flocks which gather each winter, it was again surprising that there were very few spring records, perhaps suggesting that Black-headed Gulls have already dispersed towards their breeding grounds at this time. There were no March records and in April there were two on the 6th and two flew over the middle of the Island on the 25th. In May there was a single on the 3rd and two adults were on North Pond on the morning of the 22nd. In June there were singles on the 19th, 20th and 23rd and an adult was again at North Pond on the 24th. An adult accompanied the first two juveniles of the season on the 26th, 14 days earlier than the first juvenile recorded in 2013. There were 13 birds logged over six dates in July, including four adults and a juvenile on North Plain on the 18th, and in August there was a single on the 9th; there were 51 birds over ten dates in August 2013. In September there were 50 birds logged over nine dates including a peak of 21 off the Lighthouse on the 10th; in 2013 there were 269 birds over ten dates. Numbers increased massively in October with 2445 birds logged over 19 dates; following an initial Broad Sound flock of 89 birds on the 12th, there were counts of 248 on the 13th, 629 on the 14th, 317 on the 15th and 462 on the 29th. There were almost half this number of birds logged last season, with 1249 recorded over 16 dates. Numbers continued to rise in November with 3865 birds recorded over 11 dates until the 24th including peaks of 841 on the 5th, 510 on the 16th, 1178 on the 20th and 490 on the 22nd. As noted in 2013, the formation of feeding groups in Broad Sound coincided with periods of calm or moderate winds; there were far fewer birds present during periods of rough weather.

**Mediterranean Gull Larus melanocephalus**

*Gwylan Môr y Canoldir*

Uncommon offshore during the winter but recorded as Rare by both Betts and Thompson.

Considering 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 in 2013 was exceptional. However this season saw a remarkable increase in the number of birds using the waters off Skokholm. Nevertheless the year started quietly with no spring records and a group of three adults lingering off
South Haven on 21st July was the only record before September. There were also fewer September birds than the 27 logged in 2013, with 11 birds over five dates including four on the 16th and three on the 24th when the first first-winter of 2014 was logged. October numbers were unprecedented; following singles on three dates there were 564 birds logged over 17 days from the 11th, more than all the birds previously recorded from Skokholm added together. Following 21 birds on the 11th, which equalled the Skokholm record set on 9th November 2013, there were peaks of 34 on the 12th, 60 on the 13th, 76 on the 14th, 42 on the 15th, 78 on the 21st, 70 on the 22nd and 52 on the 29th. November saw a further 353 logged over ten dates including peaks of 82 on the 5th, 75 on the 16th and a new Skokholm record of 90 on the 20th comprising 82 adults and eight first-winters. The latter count is seemingly the highest yet recorded in Pembrokeshire.

**Common Gull Larus canus**  
*Gwylan y Gweunydd*

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

Although there were only five records totalling seven birds between 2005 and 2012 inclusive, 2013 saw a return to counts similar to those summarised by Thompson and Betts with 64 birds logged including eight in spring. Although there were no spring records this season, there was an increase in the number of autumn birds. Common Gulls arrived with a bang; the 26 logged on 14th October, comprising 17 adults and nine first-winters, was the highest count of the year and equalled the highest count of 2013 which came on 28th September. There were then four on the 15th, singles on the 16th and 19th, three on the 22nd, two on the 26th, eight on the 29th and two on the 31st. In November there were 18 on the 5th, three on the 16th, a single on the 17th and 18 on the 20th. As was noted in 2013, there were several autumn dates when a large feeding flock of gulls assembled in Broad Sound but this species was, rather surprisingly, not present.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus**  
*Gwylan Gefnddu Leiaf*

Abundant Breeder previously very abundant breeder  
185 trapped (including 91 pulli), 5 retrapped, 5 controls  
1936-1976: 12,085 trapped, 2013: 84 trapped, 3 controls

March day totals were more consistent than in the cold and unsettled March of 2013, with peaks of 82 adults and eight first-winters.
2091 on the 25th, 1554 on the 26th and 1521 on the 29th; despite the regular departure of many birds, there was typically a return to the Island at some point during each day (although sometimes to large communal roost sites rather than to the traditional colonies). Numbers in April were also relatively consistent, although there were obvious departures and low counts of 478 on the 2nd, 280 on a foggy 5th, 759 on the 14th and 502 on the 22nd. The first egg was found on 24th April, ten days before the first of 2013.

Walk through counts were undertaken at six subcolonies on the 17th and 18th May. Vantage point counts of all the breeding colonies and a full census of the coast nesting pairs were made on the 21st and 22nd May; 1407 apparently incubating adults (aia) and 2040 individual birds were counted. A comparison of the number of apparently incubating adults and the number of nests containing eggs suggested that there was a discrepancy (see table below). In the area of shorter vegetation north of the Wheelhouse there were 34.38% fewer nests with eggs than the number of apparently incubating adults, presumably due to sitting guard birds, non-breeders appearing as if they were incubating or due to birds sitting on empty nests. Conversely, the majority of subcolonies contained more nests with eggs than the number of apparently incubating adults, presumably due to incubating birds being hidden in vegetation. The cold spring of 2013 saw slow vegetation growth and very similar totals from the vantage point and walk-through counts. However this year an average of 12.89% more nests with eggs were present than the number of incubating birds seen. A correction factor was thus applied to the inland colonies with similar dense vegetation (but not to the cliff counts and areas of very short sward). The corrected total was 1565 pairs. The 1407 apparently incubating adults counted during the vantage point survey is 4.7% down on the 1476 recorded in 2013, however the corrected total is 6.0% up on 2013. The 2013 total was the lowest for over 40 years and there was seemingly little change in 2014.

Over the period 1991-2002 the count of empty nests varied from 11 to 44% of the total number of nests, with a mean of 22.7% (Thompson, 2007). With the exception of Frank’s Point where less than 10% of nests were found to be empty, the number of empty nests located in 2014 was within the range of previous visits, although all but one of the sites contained fewer empty nests than the historical average. 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. The breeding season was certainly a protracted one with the first chicks seen below the Top Tank on 23rd May (30th May in 2013), eggs still being incubated when the first fledglings were logged and two
chicks along the Lighthouse Track which did not fledge until 16th September when the majority of birds had departed the Island. It could not be ascertained whether later attempts were additional pairs or birds which had re-laid after losing a clutch.

A comparison of vantage point counts of apparently incubating adults and walk-through nest counts, along with a summary of nest contents. *how many more/less active nests were present than the number of incubating birds seen (%).

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vantage point count</th>
<th>Walk-through count</th>
<th>Empty nests</th>
<th>Percentage of empty nests</th>
<th>Difference between counts (%)</th>
<th>Egg count</th>
<th>Eggs per nest with eggs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wheelhouse</td>
<td>32 aia</td>
<td>30 nests</td>
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<td>30.00%</td>
<td>-34.38</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>Top Tank</td>
<td>86 aia</td>
<td>110 nests</td>
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<td>15.45%</td>
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<td>95 nests</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.58%</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>211</td>
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<td>Frank’s Point</td>
<td>117 aia</td>
<td>142 nests</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.86%</td>
<td>+9.40</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>2.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Plain</td>
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<td>326 nests</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>18.40%</td>
<td>+29.76</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of breeding pairs 1970-2014. Control of numbers started in 1984 (destruction of nests) and stopped in 1998.

The breeding success of the Skokholm Lesser Black-backed Gull population has been low for many years and is probably a major factor contributing to the observed population decline. The poor success has been linked to a reduction in food availability during the chick rearing period, primarily due to changes in the fishing industry. As part of the Lesser Black-backed Gull tracking project undertaken by the British Trust for Ornithology this year, 53 nests were monitored by Island staff during the incubation period. Although the sample is somewhat biased, with all the selected nests containing three eggs, the 53 pairs managed to hatch an average of 2.02 chicks per pair suggesting that egg loss is not the primary reason for poor productivity and that it is indeed still the chick rearing period when productivity is being heavily impacted. Nest monitoring was stopped as soon as the chicks became mobile as further visits would undoubtedly have led to excessive disturbance. Productivity was thus calculated using a mark and resighting technique.

Although 91 fledging sized young were ringed this season, only the colony at Frank’s Point (where 35 were ringed) proved suitable for resighting the young due to fledglings in other subcolonies predominantly remaining in areas which could not be observed. The Frank’s Point plot was 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 135.99 fledglings were predicted at Frank’s Point over eight visits (81.67-186.67) which equates to a productivity figure of 1.06 fledged young per pair (0.64-1.46). This productivity estimate is not representative of the Island as a whole, as 1658 fledglings were definitely not present, presumably due to the calculation being based on small sample sizes. However even an estimate based on the maximum number of fledglings seen at Frank’s Point (39 fledglings in an area containing 128 nests), gives a figure of 0.30 chicks per pair which is likely an underestimate and is 87.5% up on 2013. Observations from elsewhere on the Island suggested that it had been the most productive breeding season for over a decade. For example at North Pond there were 96 fledglings on 20th July, 127 on 28th July and 110 still remained on 3rd August; although the origins of these young could not be known, many were almost flightless and still seemingly dependent on adults which remained with them, all suggesting that they had not come far.

| Lesser Black-backed Gull productivity estimates. |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 0.07 | 0.27 | 0.27 | 0.03 | 0.16 | 0.16 | 0.30 |

A small team of ecologists from the British Trust for Ornithology visited Skokholm in May to fit 25 breeding Lesser Black-backed Gulls with state-of-the-art GPS devices. Dr Viola Ross-Smith comments: ‘These solar powered tags, manufactured by scientists at the University of Amsterdam, make a series of measurements, including 3D position, acceleration and temperature, at fixed time intervals. The data downloads remotely, provided individuals are within range of a mast stationed on the Island. The data can then be analysed to give a detailed picture of movements and behaviour. This work, funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, is designed to assess how Lesser Black-backed Gulls use their environment, and in particular areas of sea earmarked for the development of offshore renewables. Tagging on Skokholm represents an extension to an existing project which began at the Lesser Black-backed Gull colony at Orford Ness, Suffolk in 2010. Lesser Black-backed Gulls were also tagged in 2014 at South Walney, Cumbria, allowing cross-colony comparisons to be made. Our tagged birds, along with an additional 25 non-tagged controls, were all fitted with yellow darvic rings with a black alpha-numeric code (number/letter:W e.g. 5A:W). The colour ring is on the left leg and a BTO metal ring on the right.’

‘Initial results from Skokholm have already provided insights into the habitats that these birds use, information which could help to improve conservation and management of the island’s declining breeding population. Birds were tagged while they were incubating eggs; at this time almost all
individuals made daily visits inland to feed, visiting reservoirs and agricultural areas throughout Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire, as well as towns like Milford Haven and Pembroke. However, once their chicks started hatching towards the end of May, birds began to fly out to sea, making longer trips as the season progressed. By the time tagged birds departed for migration, some individuals had visited destinations as far afield as the Isles of Scilly and County Wexford in the Republic of Ireland, before returning to Skokholm. The tagged Lesser Black-backed Gulls have left the Island for the winter, so we will have to wait until they return next spring before we know where they go on migration. During the breeding season, you can watch our tagged birds’ movements in near-real time at:
http://www.uva-bits.nl/project/seabirds-windfarm-interactions-skokholm/

These initial results are very interesting given published suggestions as to the poor reproductive success observed on Skokholm (for example Thompson, 2007). Studies on Skomer in the 1970s and 1980s suggested that earthworms were an important adult food item during the egg incubation period but that adults switched to taking fish during the chick provisioning period. The subsequent decline in reproductive success was attributed to a failure to make this switch in food, with
regurgitate studies suggesting that chicks were being fed on earthworms. Circumstantial evidence suggested that hot, dry summers resulted in reduced productivity, perhaps due to earthworms being less available in dry conditions (Thompson, 2007). That the 2014 tracking data suggests that the majority of adult birds did indeed make a switch to maritime feeding during the chick rearing period is thus very interesting. Whether this can be linked to the increased productivity observed in 2014 will only become clear in subsequent years.

North Plain and the area around North Pond again proved to be the usual site for the largest post breeding roost, with smaller numbers congregating around the coast and at South Pond. Numbers using the site gradually increased during June from 94 on the 17th to 177 on the 21st, 224 on the 23rd and 277 on the 26th. As might be expected, the number of birds roosting increased during July to peaks of 590 on the 24th and 586 on the 27th. As in 2013, August saw the largest roosts recorded this season with 943 on the 21st, 800 on the 22nd, 740 on the 23rd and 737 on the 24th, all counts well up on the peak of 680 logged on 11th August 2013 and perhaps a reflection of a better breeding season, with approximately 20% of the birds being fledglings. Counts dropped off ten days later than in 2013 with 321 on 14th September the last sizable total. A small number of birds remained in October with records on all but five dates and highs of 24 on the 9th and 21 on the 10th. There were single figure counts on most days in November and a group of 19 arrived in South Haven on the 16th.

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

![Graph showing the number of Lesser Black-backed Gulls roosting on North Plain and in the vicinity of North Pond.](image-url)
Ringing recovery Left leg orange darvic with black T015, Right leg 6101133 MADRID
Originally ringed as a first winter, CTRU GOMECELLO, SALAMANCA, SPAIN 21st February 2010
Previously recovered as a second winter, COLMENAR VIEJO LANDFILL, SPAIN 18th December 2011
Previously recovered as a third winter, VRSU ALCAZAR DE SAN JUAN, SPAIN 21st January 2012
Previously recovered as an adult, COLMENAR VIEJO LANDFILL, SPAIN 10th March 2013
Previously recovered as an adult, COLMENAR VIEJO LANDFILL, SPAIN 9th February 2014
Previously recovered as an adult, COLMENAR VIEJO LANDFILL, SPAIN 2nd March 2014
Previously recovered as an adult, THE LIZARD, CORNWALL 17th March 2014
Recovered as an adult, HOME MEADOW, SKOKHOLM 3rd and 19th July 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 1233km (N)
Days since ringed 1593

Ringing recovery Left leg white darvic with black NOAX, Right leg 6214811 MADRID
Originally ringed as an adult, PUERTO DE LA CALETA, MALAGA, SPAIN 16th February 2013
Previously recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 20th July 2013
Recovered as an adult, NORTH POND 16th and 25th May 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 1666km at 357 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 463

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 23rd November 2010
Previously recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 29th July and 13th August 2013
Recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 29th March, 28th May, 2nd September 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 220km at 266 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 2095
Interestingly this bird appears to be in a perpetual state of winter plumage.

Ringing recovery Left leg blue darvic with orange 388, Right leg FB86325
Originally ringed as an adult, GLOUCESTER LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 26th November 2005
Previously recovered as an adult, GLOUCESTER LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 12th August 2006
Previously recovered as an adult, GRUNDONS LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 14th November 2007
Previously recovered as an adult, GRUNDONS LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 14th November 2008
Previously recovered as an adult, GRUNDONS LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 17th November 2009
Recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 10th June 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 206km at 266 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 3118

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, GRUNDONS LANDFILL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 26th January 2009
Previously recovered as an adult, STOKE ORCHARD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE 11th March 2011
Previously recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 8th July 2013
Recovered as an adult, NORTH PLAIN, SKOKHOLM 27th May 2014
Finding condition Ring read in field
Distance travelled 207km at 266 degrees (W)
Days since ringed 2754

Ringing recovery GA00721 reregistered Left leg yellow darvic with black 7P:W, Right Leg GR98242 and fitted with GPS device
Originally ringed as a chick, BARDSEY ISLAND, GWYNEDD 24th June 1996
Recovered as an adult, TOP TANK, SKOKHOLM 16th May 2014
Finding condition Intentionally trapped on nest
Distance travelled 122km at 196 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 6535

Ringing recovery GK92096 reregistered GR98266
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 4th July 1997
Recovered as an adult, THE KNOLL, SKOKHOLM 27th May 2014
Finding condition Intentionally trapped on nest
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 6171

Additionally the darvic rings fitted as part of the BTO tracking project have yielded a fantastic number of resightings. Of 73 birds ringed, 19 had been resighted by 12th December with single birds reaching the Channel Islands and France, two seen in Cornwall, five reaching Spain and ten reaching Portugal. Six of the resighted birds (one in France, two in Portugal and three in Spain) are carrying GPS devices which should download tracking data upon their return to Skokholm. The following table summarises resightings of the birds ringed on Skokholm between the 13th and 31st May 2014.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Darvic</th>
<th>Ring</th>
<th>GPS</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5X</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98213</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Reserve de Chanteloup, Vendee</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>6N</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98223</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Odiel Marshes, Huelva</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6U</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98226</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Figueira da Foz</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6V</td>
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<td>GR98227</td>
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<td>Colmenar Viejo Landfill, Madrid</td>
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<tr>
<td>7J</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98235</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Parchal, Lagoa</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98244</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Colmenar Viejo Landfill, Madrid</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98246</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Eirol Landfill, Aveiro</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>8H</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98250</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Harbor Caleta de Vélez, Malaga</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>8J</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98251</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Barra, Aveiro</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8P</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98256</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Eirol Landfill, Aveiro</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8T</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98257</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Mira Beach, Coimbra</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9C</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98262</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Colmenar Viejo Landfill, Madrid</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9J</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98265</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Hayle Estuary, Cornwall</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9K</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98267</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Crabby Beach, Alderney</td>
<td>CI</td>
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<tr>
<td>9T</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98272</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Sesimbra, Lisbon</td>
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<td>9V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98274</td>
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<tr>
<td>9X</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98275</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>9Y</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>GR98276</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Portimao Harbour, Faro</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lesser Black-backed Gull x Larus hybrid** *Larus fuscus x (Larus fuscus x Larus argentatus (?)) Scarce Breeder*

Apparent hybrids were paired with Lesser Black-backed Gulls above South Haven and above the Red Hut. The South Haven hybrid was holding territory at the same site as occupied in 2013. 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 these attempts are not known, although the pair above South Haven (below), regularly observed together during the course of the breeding season, were not seen with eggs or young.
Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

**Common Breeder** abundant breeder in the 1970s

13 trapped, 2 retrapped

1936-1976: 13,164 trapped, 2013: 21 trapped, 3 retrapped

Numbers fluctuated in March, with birds typically feeding away from Skokholm but returning to roost on the Neck. Peak counts were down on the 418 maximum logged on 8th March 2013, with 275 on the 27th, 290 on the 28th and 364 on the 29th the highest counts of the month. The number of birds logged was more consistent during April with over 200 on 15 dates and a high of 280 on the 30th. The first egg was recorded on 14th April, four days before the first of 2013. The whole Island count took place on 12th May when 300 active nests were located and 410 adults counted. This is a 14.1% increase on the number of nests found in 2013, is 4% up on the 2005-2014 mean (288.60 ±sd 32.26), and is the highest count since 2010. The number of breeding pairs has apparently stabilised close to that seen in the 1930s, prior to the huge peak in numbers recorded in the 1970s (with a 1984-2014 mean of 317.06 pairs ±sd 50.01 compared with a 1928-1937 mean of 269.70 ±sd 17.47). Peak May counts were bolstered by offshore feeding flocks with the 421 logged on the 17th including a minimum of 250 birds in Broad Sound, the 300 on the 24th including 150 off the Lighthouse and the 349 recorded on the 25th including 80 birds feeding well offshore.

The number of breeding pairs 1928-2014 (where data exists). The 1970s peak was attributed to the exploitation of local fish waste and the decline to botulism (Thompson, 2007).

The first fledglings were seen on the Neck on 2nd July (7th July in 2013) and July checks of the Neck productivity plot, where 146 pairs had established nests, located 102 fledglings (along with eight smaller chicks which may have gone on to fledge). The minimum productivity estimate of 0.70 fledged young per pair is just 2.8% down on 2013 and 1.4% down on the 2005-2014 mean (0.71 ±se 0.06). 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 differing feeding habits, with Herring Gulls frequently seen feeding in the littoral zone. 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 (average number of fledglings per sample pair) 2004-2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fledglings</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Numbers fluctuated significantly in August with the mass departure of both adults and fledglings but nine days when over 100 birds returned, a peak of 296 on the 26th including 207 adults and 77 fledglings on the Neck and a low of ten three days later when only two adults and four juveniles were on the Neck. As in 2013, very few Herring Gulls visited Skokholm in September with a high of 176 on the 2nd when birds were feeding on ant swarms but otherwise with low double figure counts and only single figure counts from the 23rd. October totals were also typically in single figures but with highs of 51 on the 24th, 42 on the 29th and 49 on the 31st. Counts increased in November with more birds joining the large feeding flock of smaller gulls which forms in Broad Sound on calmer days; there were highs of 137 on the 5th, 114 on the 15th, 121 on the 16th and 267 on the 20th.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*  
Fairly Common Breeder and Common Visitor  
79 trapped (including 54 puli), 6 retrapped  
1936-1976: 219 trapped, 2013: 54 trapped, 2 controls

The sizable roost which formed at the Bog during the early part of the 2013 season and which peaked at 213 individuals on 3rd April was much reduced in 2014, with a March high of 34 individuals on the 30th and an April high of 54 on the 20th. However the number of birds on territory was similar and the first single egg was found on 10th April; although 15 days before the first egg of 2013, the 2013 record was of a full clutch. Whole Island counts on the 4th and 5th May located 82 active nests and there were a further two attempts located two weeks later. A total of 84 pairs is a 13.5% increase on 2013 and equals the maximum Skokholm count from 2011. The 2011 peak was previously attributed to low levels of disturbance during a period of few Skokholm visitors, however it seems likely that the population is still steadily increasing and, with productivity remaining high, it is likely that it will continue to do so. The Great Black-backed Gulls are spectacular apex predators and an important component of the Skokholm seabird assemblage, however it is vital that the impact of this increasing population on the other seabirds is monitored. With this in mind dead Manx Shearwaters were counted this year, the vast majority of which had been predated by Great Black-backed Gulls; a total of 4272 corpses, comprising 2931 adults, 269 chicks and 1072 fledglings were marked. Although a relatively small percentage of the Skokholm population, recent calculations by Perrins (2014) have suggested that the number of fledgling Manx Shearwaters which return to Skokholm could be as low as 28-37% and that the number which survive to recruit to the breeding population will be fewer still. It may prove that Great Black-backed Gull predation coupled with mortality away from Skokholm is sufficient to limit the Manx Shearwater population.
The number of breeding pairs 1928-2014 (where data exists). Control of numbers started in 1949 (destruction of both nests and adults) and stopped in 1985.

Productivity estimates were based on a sample of 27 pairs this year (20 in 2013). A total of 73 eggs were produced (an average of 2.70 eggs per nest). Five pairs (18.52%), including the three pairs that produced only a single egg, failed at the egg incubation stage. Six pairs (22.22%) failed at small chick stage. The remaining 16 pairs all fledged young, 25 fledglings in total; the resulting productivity figure of 0.93 fledged young per pair is 48.3% down on the record 2013 season but only 14.7% down on the 1989-2004 average of 1.09 and 9.7% down on the 2005-2014 mean (1.03 ±se 0.11). Interestingly the majority of the successful pairs had produced three eggs, with a mean of 2.81 eggs per nest.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1.80</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an effort to further understand observed population growth, a Great Black-backed Gull colour ringing project was begun this season. Over the coming years it will hopefully shed new light on adult survival and juvenile recruitment. In total 68 red darvic rings with white lettering were fitted,
23 to adult birds of at least four years of age, 44 to fledging sized chicks and one to a fledged first-winter bird. Two of the fledglings were subsequently found dead on the Island, one of which had seemingly been predated, the second of which probably starved. A further eight birds have been observed away from Skokholm with five in Pembrokeshire and three in Cornwall (see table below). The Creswell Quay bird was found emaciated at the roadside and taken into care by the finder; it flew away one evening having spent six days in a chicken pen being fed scad, mackerel and sardines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Darvic</th>
<th>Ring</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>W:032</td>
<td>HT94877</td>
<td>Camel Estuary</td>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>08/12/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>W:034</td>
<td>HT94895</td>
<td>Marazion</td>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>26/11/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>W:051</td>
<td>HT94912</td>
<td>The Gann Estuary</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>02/08/14</td>
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<tr>
<td>W:055</td>
<td>HT94917</td>
<td>The Nevern Estuary, Newport</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>19/10/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W:058</td>
<td>HT94919</td>
<td>Creswell Quay</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>06/08/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W:069</td>
<td>HT94929</td>
<td>Porthpean, St Austell Bay</td>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>17/12/14</td>
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<td>W:073</td>
<td>HT94930</td>
<td>The Nevern Estuary, Newport</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
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<td>23/11/14</td>
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<td>W:078</td>
<td>HT94935</td>
<td>Ramsey Island</td>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>First Winter</td>
<td>23/09/14</td>
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</table>

A roost of approximately 30 birds was occasional around the Bog during the breeding season, with peak counts of 39 on the 4th, 64 on the 7th and 63 on 8th June. The first fledglings were recorded away from their natal area on 5th July from when communal roosts became more regular and slowly
increased in size with peaks of 38 on 13th July, 45 on 9th August, 48 on the 11th, 13th and 29th August and 74 on 27th August. Roost sites switched between the Bog, North Plain, Wildgoose Point and near the Sugarloaf during the autumn but were far smaller than those logged in 2013; last season there were September peaks of 355 on the 16th, 225 on the 26th and 204 on the 28th, October highs of 149 on the 10th and 28th and peak November counts of 270 on the 3rd and 243 on the 5th. This year saw a September peak of just 52 on the 9th, October highs of 95 on the 6th, 107 on the 9th and 94 on the 21st and a November peak of 44 on the 13th. It is unclear why the roost counts were down this year.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*  
**Ysguthan**

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

Singles in Crab Bay on the 14th and on the Neck on the 28th were the only birds logged in March; in the March of 2013 there were 13 birds recorded over five dates. April proved similarly quiet with singles on the 16th and the 20th, six fewer birds on four fewer dates than last season. In May there was a lone bird on the 18th and three on the 28th was the highest count of the year; in May 2013 there were six birds over five dates. There were six singles during June 2013, however this year saw just one lone bird on the 9th. The latest Woodpigeon of last season was logged on 22nd June, however this season saw further singles on 24th July, 20th September and 29th October.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*  
**Turtur Dorchog**

*Uncommon Visitor* the majority of records coming in the spring  
1 trapped  
1936-1976: 36 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

A bird at the Farm on 27th March was 11 days earlier than the first of 2013. In April a single moved from the Quarry to the Farm on the 20th, one was at the Lighthouse on the 27th and a single was on the Sugarloaf on the 30th; four birds were logged over three dates in April last year. In May what was presumed to be the same singing male commuted between the Quarry and the Farm between the 13th and 16th and further singles were at the Farm on the 27th and 31st; the eight singles in May 2013 were thought to relate to four individuals.

Numbers were down on June 2013 when there were 16 birds over nine dates until the 22nd; this year there were June singles on the 5th, 9th, 17th and a first-summer bird was trapped on the 22nd. As with
the preceding species, records continued beyond June this year with two at the Farm on 12th July, one the following day and singles at the Lighthouse on the 13th and 16th September.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*

*Scarce Migrant* previously uncommon

**Earliest** 1st April 1949 (15th May 2014) **Latest** 17th October 1974 (22nd May 2014)

1936-1976: 36 trapped

One at the Farm on 15th May was the first spring record since a bird which lingered between the 14th and 17th May 2006 and was only the fifth record this decade following further singles on the 2nd and 4th September 2005 (at the same site and presumed at the time to be the same bird), 4th September 2013 and 25th September 2013. Two birds together near Crab Bay on the 17th and 18th May was the first record of multiple birds for over ten years. A lone bird was at the Well the following day and there were further records of singles at Orchid Bog on the 21st and at the Lighthouse on the 22nd; it is perhaps best to assume that the latter three singles refer to one of the pair, although more individuals may have been involved.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*

*Scarce Migrant* has bred, most recently suspected of having done so in 2006

**Earliest** 6th April 1960 (5th May 2014) **Latest** 8th September 1956 (21st May 2014)

1936-1976: 82 trapped

One chased across the Neck by a Peregrine on 5th May was 13 days earlier than the first spring record of last year. The only other record this season was a singing male among the rocks to the east of the Lighthouse on 21st May. Recent spring records are of three singles in 2013, two in 2012 and lone birds in 2011, 2007 and 2006. There were no autumn records this year; in 2013 there were two autumn juveniles logged over eight days, there was a single record in 2008 and in 2006 a juvenile, suspected to have hatched on Skokholm, was logged on three dates.

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua*

*Scarce* has bred, most recently in 1954, but no records since 1996

1936-1976: 9 trapped

One heard on the evening of 4th March was the first Island record for 18 years. What was presumably the same bird was sat on the roof of the Cottage Heligoland Trap the following afternoon. It was not heard again until the 10th and a pellet containing beetle remains was found on the same day. The calling came from near the Lighthouse on the night of the 11th and a bird was
again seen at the Farm on 13th March, although not thereafter. Little Owls are scarce in Pembrokeshire with records coming from only 15 locations in 2013 (Berry et al., 2014), most locally on Skomer where there is a small breeding population. Little Owls have a chequered history on Skokholm, with several recorded colonisation events which have been discouraged due to the impact that the species has on Storm Petrels; for example a Little Owl nest on 14th July 1936 contained two fledglings, an addled egg and the corpses of nearly 200 Storm Petrels, which led to the destruction of the adult birds. On other occasions Little Owls were removed from the Island and sent to new locations such as Bath in Somerset. There is little doubt that Little Owls would again impact Skokholm’s Storm Petrels were they to establish themselves on the Island. It should thus be hoped that a lack of further records this season suggests that the bird perished or left the Island having failed to find a mate.

**Short-eared Owl Asio flammeus**

Tylluan Glustiog

Scarce but Uncommon in 2013

1936-1976: 5 trapped

Last year saw a significant increase in the number of Short-eared Owls logged on Skokholm, with records coming from every month of the season bar September and with regular evidence that they were targeting Skokholm’s Storm Petrels. This season saw another increase in the number of records, however there were fewer during the spring and summer periods and, despite the presence of a dedicated Storm Petrel researcher, there was no evidence found to suggest that the owls were targeting seabirds. Indeed the only records prior to the autumn influx were singles at the Well on 15th April, around the Farm on the 2nd and 5th June and at Winter Pond on 1st August. Whereas autumn 2013 saw ten birds logged from 7th October, this season saw 34 birds logged over 21 dates from 9th September. In September there were singles on the 9th, 10th and 18th, three but possibly four birds were logged on the 20th and there were further singles on the 21st, 25th and 26th; the majority of records came from North Pond, the Bog and the Lighthouse Track. October also saw a peak of three, all around North Pond on the 4th. There were further singles on the 8th, 15th, 24th and 29th. November saw a peak of four on the 7th, the highest day count for over ten years but some way off the Island record of nine birds. There were also three together around the Wheelhouse on the 17th, two together on the 1st, 16th, 22nd and 23nd and singles on the 8th, 9th and 20th.

**Swift Apus apus**

Gwennol Ddu

Fairly Common Migrant Common in some years and more regular in spring

Earliest 26th March 1953 (7th May 2014) Latest 28th October 1976 (28th August 2014)

1936-1976: 12 trapped

A group of 13 heading northwest on 7th May were one day earlier than the first of 2013. There were a further 12 birds logged over four dates during the month with a high of five on the 15th; numbers were thus down on the 67 logged in May 2013 and the 34 in May 2012. June numbers were similar to recent years with 25 birds over ten dates including five on the 25th and 30th; there were 34 June birds in 2013 and 18 in 2012. Following a single on 1st July, there were 16 logged over five dates between the 18th and 24th with a high of five on the 18th; there were 58 birds in July 2013 and 22 in July 2012. Six on 26th August and four two days later were the last of the year, 21 days later than the last birds of 2013. Such low numbers are far from unusual on Skokholm, although day counts of up to 150 birds have occasionally been recorded (Thompson, 2007). A search through previous Pembrokeshire Bird Reports suggests that these low counts are typical for the county as a whole.

**Wryneck Jynx torquilla**

Pengam

Scarce Migrant regular in autumn, rare in spring with only nine records

A Wryneck at Crab Bay on 6th September was one day earlier than the first of 2013 (GE et al.). It remained in the same area until the 16th and was seen on all dates except the 8th. The second of the year was at the Well on 13th October (RDB, GE), with what was potentially the same bird trapped in the Wheelhouse Courtyard two days later. One on the wall between Peter’s Bay and North Haven on 22nd October may well have been the ringed bird as it was retrapped at the Well two days later. In the nine days between ringing and being retrapped the bird’s weight rose from 33.7g to 40.3g, an increase of 19.6%. There were no further records until a ringed bird was seen in the Lime Kiln Elder on 2nd November. A bird skulking in dense Bracken near the Top Tank on 12th November was photographed and amazingly a ring was again evident. Although the possibility cannot be ruled out that a different ringed Wryneck arrived from elsewhere, it seems most likely that a single bird remained on the Island for 31 days during which time it was only seen on six occasions. The last of the four birds logged in 2013 came on 8th October and the latest Island record prior to this season was of a bird on 19th October 2003; the long-staying individual of 2014 thus extends the latest Skokholm record by 24 days.
breeding pairs observed this season. Nevertheless there were still six birds recorded on three dates during March, with all six together on the 18th and 19th, and five were logged on a further four dates. Only the pair at the traditional Steep Bay nest site exhibited signs of breeding during this period, with the collection of nest material observed on the 26th when the male was also seen feeding the female. In April there were peaks of five birds logged on three dates, including five together on the 3rd. The Dip pair were regularly seen alone during the month and the female was begging for food from the 23rd. May and June saw the Dip and Steep Bay pairs recorded on most dates although the presence of up to two additional non-breeding birds, which frequently joined the breeding Chough in their territories, made it difficult to know which individuals were being observed; in May there were five birds logged on two dates and six on the 25th and in June there were five birds logged on seven dates and six on the 4th and 25th. There were thus no detected visits from mainland birds; in 2013 there were ten counts of between eight and 11 birds logged in May and June.

The Steep Bay pair had fledged three young by 5th July, one day later than in 2013 when two fledged from this site. The three juveniles were seen on seven dates until the 14th and a group of four seen occasionally in flight until the end of the month may have included some young. A lone juvenile on 1st August was the last definite youngster logged this season. Peak counts for the remainder of the year were of six adults on 6th July, seven birds together on 23rd August, seven on 2nd September, six on 7th October including three birds watched as they flew over from Marloes Sands, 11 on 12th October, eight on 22nd October and 12 on 16th November, the latter the highest count of the year.

The number of Chough pairs, the total number of fledged young and productivity 2004-2014.

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Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*  
Uncommon Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor  

Jac-y-Do
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 and at 16 pairs in 2013. This year saw an estimated 19 pairs with the majority nesting colonially in the crevices and burrows of South Haven, but with a further three pairs in Peter’s Bay and lone pairs at the Quarry, in Crab Bay, in Hog Bay, in Dumbbell Bay, near the Devil’s Teeth and in Little Bay. The number of birds logged this spring reflected this increase in the number of breeding pairs and perhaps suggested that there were more birds breeding than were located.

March saw peak counts similar to 2013 with 72 on the 14th, 86 on the 21st and 104 on the 31st along with the first signs of nest building in South Haven. Numbers dropped in April with 74 on the 2nd, 79 on the 11th and then daily counts of between 16 and 45 from the 14th. The majority of day counts in May and June were attributable to the breeding birds, although a flock of seven heading over high on 16th May were perhaps not from Skokholm. There were also occasional noisy gatherings, with 41 on 12th May collecting around a fight which left one Jackdaw with a broken wing. The first fledgling of the year was seen on 29th May, 18 days earlier than the first of 2013. It proved impossible to calculate the number of fledglings present in the mobile and nervous post-breeding flocks, although minimum counts of 19 between South Haven and the Well, six at Peter’s Bay, nine between the Quarry, Crab Bay and east Bog were logged. Autumn numbers were down on those recorded in 2013, highlighting how birds left earlier for the mainland this year and returned less frequently following their departure. There were still notable peaks however, particularly the 179 logged on 14th October which was the highest count for over a decade.

Rook Corvus frugilegus
Ydfran

Scarce not recorded every year, but up to 35 in spring with the majority of records in April

Two south over the Lighthouse Track on 31st March was the only record of the year (GE). The only other post-2004 record is of a single on the Wheelhouse chimney on 15th April 2012.

Carrion Crow Corvus corone
Brân Dyddyn

Uncommon Breeder and Uncommon Visitor
1936-1976: 152 trapped, 2013: 1 pullus trapped

For a second season running there were eight nesting pairs mapped, the 16 adults and their offspring accounting for nearly all of the 2014 records. Nests were located at the Dip, along the South Coast, Frank’s Point, the Hills, the Devil’s Teeth, near North Haven, Little Bay Point and near Twinlet. The eight pairs logged in 2014 and 2013 represents a considerable increase on recent numbers; there were between only two and five pairs counted each season between 1996 and 2012.
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 much improved this year, with the eight pairs fledging ten young; a productivity figure of 1.25 fledged young per pair was three times the 0.38 observed in 2013. Spring counts indicative of the arrival of birds not breeding on Skokholm were 21 on 4th April when at least one bird was watched arriving from the sea, 17 on 10th April including five birds in off the sea, 14 birds together on 30th April, 18 birds on 6th May including six together and 17 on 14th May including 13 together. Following the departure of the majority of adults and fledglings during July, there were frequent autumn arrivals and peaks in September of 31 on the 7th, 26 on the 21st and 20 on the 27th, in October of 27 on the 1st and 7th and 29 on the 29th and in November of 48 on the 9th and 27 on the 11th. The 48 logged on 9th November is perhaps the highest count yet recorded on Skokholm; Thompson (2007) records that ‘flocks of up to 30 were not unusual in the past...but more recent counts only occasionally reach double figures’.

**Raven *Corvus corax***

_Cigfran_ Scarce Breeder and Uncommon Visitor

1936-1976: 67 trapped

Only two active nests were located when staff returned on 4th March, with pairs incubating in Peter’s Bay and Twinlet. Although the lowest count since 2008, there was only ever a single pair of Raven on Skokholm, bar two in 1966, until two pairs bred from 2007. The only evidence of further adults was two birds heading high to the mainland on 9th March, a fifth adult chased high by the four breeding birds on 25th March, a third pair which lingered north of the Quarry on 30th March, a single at the Quarry on 3rd April and a bird in secondary moult which arrived from the mainland on 11th April.

The number of breeding pairs (green) and the number of fledged young between 2005 and 2014.
Young were first seen in the Twinlet nest on 5th April and the full brood of four were first seen on the 19th. The adults were giving gentle, coaxing calls on 29th April and two young were seen briefly out of the nest the following day. All four young were first seen out of the nest on 4th May although they again returned that day, a pattern which continued during rough weather until 16th May. One of the fledglings was missing on 17th May and four were not seen together again; however they were certainly mobile by this time and at least two had reached the Quarry by the 19th. Due to the location of the Peter’s Bay nest, young were not seen until 27th April and the presence of four chicks was not confirmed until they were nearly fledgling-sized on 12th May. Three of the young had left the nest on 17th May and all four were seen on the plateau the following day. At least seven fledglings were still present on the Island on 7th June, but a weak bird found at the Gap on the 27th was dead the next day. Up to nine birds were seen together in July but there were fewer thereafter, with daily records of up to seven birds in August and September. Adult birds were back on territory from 22nd October and there was a third pair in the Crab Bay area on four dates.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*  
**Dryw Eurben**  
Common but only Fairly Common in some years  
54 trapped, 17 retrapped  

Goldcrest were present from when staff returned this year, with 27 birds logged over 14 dates in March and a high of five on the 19th. Although there were only ten birds logged in March 2013, there were subsequently 49 birds in April, two in May and one in June. This year saw only four birds logged over three dates in April and a single on 14th May was the last of spring. The first of autumn on 19th August was 14 days earlier than the first of 2013 and there were a further 16 birds over ten dates during the month. The 119 birds logged in September, with peaks of 21 on the 9th and 14 on the 21st, was fractionally up on the 106 logged in September 2013, however only 50 birds were logged over 11 dates in October, 205 fewer than in October 2013 when there were nearly daily records. As is typically the case, November was quiet with just nine birds recorded including the last three of the year on the 5th. Whereas in spring birds moved through quickly, with no ringed birds seen on subsequent days, of 45 birds ringed in autumn six were definitely present the following day, one was present for three days, one for four, two for five and one remained for a minimum of seven days.

Firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*  
**Dryw Fflamben**  
Scarce Migrant absent in some years and more frequent in autumn  
2 trapped, 1 retrapped  
1936-1976: 23 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

A first-year male trapped at the Well on 17th September was the first autumn bird since 2012. A bird around the Farm on the 22nd and 23rd October was probably the same individual located at the Well on the 25th, trapped at the Well on the 26th and retrapped at the Farm the following day.
Two Firecrests in a season is unusual, indeed the only other records this decade are singles on 10\textsuperscript{th} April 2013, between the 10\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} September 2012, between the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} October 2010 and on 4\textsuperscript{th} October 2007.

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

The 11 territorial males mapped during April and May this year was one more than recorded in 2013; additionally a twelfth male sang on the Neck from 11\textsuperscript{th} June. No nests were found and young were only recorded in six territories with food provisioning first noted on 13\textsuperscript{th} May and the first fledgling seen at Winter Pond on 14\textsuperscript{th} June. Historically Skylark 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 seven pairs in each year since except for 11 in 2007, 12 in 2009 and ten in 2013. Birds from the 11 territories probably accounted for nearly all records between March and August with peak counts of 19 on 3\textsuperscript{rd} April, 17 on 4\textsuperscript{th} May and the 29\textsuperscript{th} and 31\textsuperscript{st} June and 20 on 4\textsuperscript{th} August. 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.

![The number of Skylark logged on each day of autumn with counts above 30 labelled.](image)

Autumn passage was first noted on 17\textsuperscript{th} September when 30 birds were recorded including 12 over the Lighthouse Track. There were 425 birds logged in September, just over twice the number noted in 2013, with a flock of 26 together on the 28\textsuperscript{th} contributing to a maximum monthly count of 37, 19 fewer than the highest count of September 2013. Peak autumn passage was again in October with 755 birds logged during the month (576 in 2013), eight days when more than 25 birds were logged (six days in 2013) and with maximum monthly counts of 115 on the 22\textsuperscript{nd} and 162 on the 29\textsuperscript{th}, the latter including a single flock of 102. Although day totals of up to 1200 birds were logged historically on Skokholm, the 162 counted on 29\textsuperscript{th} October was well up on the highest count of the last decade which was the 76 recorded on 17\textsuperscript{th} October 2013. There were fewer days of passage noted in November with 373 birds logged up until the departure of staff on the 24\textsuperscript{th}, including the fourth highest count of the season on the 18\textsuperscript{th}.

**Sand Martin* *Riparia riparia***  
**Gwennol y Glennydd**  
**Fairly Common and Common some years with day counts of up to 400 in spring and 500 in autumn**  
**Earliest** 8\textsuperscript{th} March 2000 (17\textsuperscript{th} March 2014)  
**Latest** 25\textsuperscript{th} October 1971 (1\textsuperscript{st} October 2014)  
1936-1976: 8 trapped

One south over North Pond on 17\textsuperscript{th} March was 25 days earlier than the first of 2013, but still nine days later than the earliest on record. The only other March record was of three on the 30\textsuperscript{th}. There were 41 birds logged over 13 dates in April with nine on the 9\textsuperscript{th}, which was the highest spring count,
and six on the 11th. May was quieter with just 28 birds logged over ten dates and there were no June
records, both perhaps a reflection of the earlier season this year compared with 2013. The first four
autumn birds on 2nd July were 17 days earlier than last season and a further 22 birds were logged
during the month including 16 south past the Lighthouse on the 26th. In August there were 53 birds
over eight dates from the 19th including peaks of ten on the 22nd and seven totalling 24 birds on the 31st. It proved the best September since 2007 with 158 birds logged over 22 dates to the 24th
including highs of 16 on the 1st, 24 on the 2nd, 31 on the 4th and 12 on the 10th. The only October
record, a single on the 1st, was four days earlier than the last of 2013.

The total number of Sand Martin logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly
maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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Swallow Hirundo rustica
Scarc Breeder and Very Abundant Migrant
27 trapped (including 8 pulli), 2 retrapped, 1 control

Two on 1st April were ten days earlier than the first of 2013 but three weeks later than the earliest
on record. There were 946 birds logged in April with 935 occurring from the 9th onwards and with
peaks of 198 on the 13th, 92 on the 18th and 80 on the 21st. Birds were prospecting at last year’s nest
sites from 25th April, with pairs taking up residence at the Red Hut and North Pond Hide on 1st May,
in the Lighthouse coal-store on 19th May and in the Garage of the Farm on 21st May. Four pairs was
one fewer than in 2013, equalled that observed in 2011 and 2012, and was down on the recent
peaks of six in 2008 and seven in 2007. Peak spring passage was also in May with 1220 birds logged
during the month and highs of 120 on the 13th and 176 on the 15th. In contrast to the last few years,
the Red Hut pair constructed a nest on the outside of the building this year; it was fully lined by 11th
June and still active on 26th June, however it was abandoned in early July. The Lighthouse pair had
produced an unlined nest by 17th June but there was no sign of the pair after the 26th, although a lone
bird frequented the nest site until 3rd July. The garage pair had three eggs by 17th June, three
chicks were ringed on 13th July and all three went on to fledge. One of the three was mist netted on
the nearby mainland on 7th August. The North Pond pair produced three chicks which were ringed on
25th June and fledged on 8th July. Four more eggs had been laid by 26th July, although only three
chicks were present on 12th August and, after the loss of a chick on 15th August, two went on to
fledge by 30th August. Four pairs producing eight fledglings equates to two chicks per pair, half that
observed in 2013 when an average of four chicks were produced by the five pairs.

The total number of Swallow logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly
maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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There were a small number of birds in July not attributable to the Skokholm breeding pairs and a steady trickle of juveniles included six birds trapped during the month. August was similarly quiet with highs of 43 on the 22nd and 45 on the 31st. Peak passage was in September and eclipsed that observed in recent years; there were 30,693 birds logged during a month of light winds including between 100 and 500 on 16 dates, 510 on the 2nd, a minimum of 12,000 on the 16th, 821 on the 17th, 720 on the 18th, 840 on the 19th, 9488 on the 21st and 2329 on the 24th. The minimum of 12,000 birds logged on 16th September, with rates of up to 80 a minute during the middle of the day, is perhaps a Skokholm record; Thompson (2007) states that up to 5000 have been recorded per day in autumn. That fewer birds were logged in October than in the preceding year perhaps reflects the number of birds that went through during the calm September period, indeed there were only 30 birds logged over three October dates after the 13th. A total of 23 on 24th October was the last record of the year, 11 days earlier than the last of 2013 and three weeks earlier than the latest Skokholm record.

Ringing recovery D038867
Originally ringed as a chick, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 28th June 2014
Recovered as a juvenile, WHEELHOUSE NET, SKOKHOLM 8th August 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 41

Ringing recovery D295987
Originally ringed as a chick, THE GARAGE, SKOKHOLM 13th July 2014
Previously recovered as a juvenile, THE WHEELHOUSE NET, SKOKHOLM 23rd July 2014
Recovered as a juvenile, WINTERTON, NEAR MARLOES, PEMBROKESHIRE 7th August 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 8km at 62 degrees (ENE)
Days since retrapped 15

Ringing recovery D296021
Originally ringed as a juvenile, WHEELHOUSE NET, SKOKHOLM 21st July 2014
Recovered as a juvenile, WINTERTON, NEAR MARLOES, PEMBROKESHIRE 7th August 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 8km at 62 degrees (ENE)
Days since ringed 17

House Martin Delichon urbicum

Common Migrant with record day counts of 300 in May and 710 in September
1936-1976: 17 trapped

A single on 13th April was four days earlier than in 2013 but some 24 days later than the earliest Skokholm record. Spring passage was very similar to 2013; there were 26 birds logged over 12 dates in April including a peak of six on the 30th, 87 birds over 19 dates in May including 14 on the 15th and 16 on the 16th, 14 birds over five dates in June with five on the 6th and 12 birds over six days in July including a peak of five on the 30th. There were ten birds in August including seven on the 20th which were the first of the month. As in 2013, peak passage was in September with 675 logged over 20 dates including highs of 288 on the 16th, 117 on the 17th and 81 on the 19th. Although down on last season’s total of 782 birds, the vast majority of this was made up of the record day-count of 710 logged on the 28th. There were 16 birds over four dates in October with a peak of nine on the 11th. A single on 24th October was nine days later than the last of 2013 and only five days earlier than the latest Island record. Four artificial nest boxes were erected at the Lighthouse during the autumn.
Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*

**Rare Autumn Migrant** 21 previous records including the first for Wales on 2\(^{nd}\) October 1959

**Earliest** 30\(^{th}\) September  **Latest** 27\(^{th}\) October (28\(^{th}\) October 2014)

1 trapped

1936-1976: 2 trapped, 2013: 3 trapped

One trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 28\(^{th}\) October was the only record of the year, was 13 days later than the last of the four 2013 birds and was also the latest record for Skokholm. Biometrics suggested that the bird was a male. This brings the number of Skokholm records to 22, all singles except for two birds recorded on 8\(^{th}\) October 1994 and 5\(^{th}\) October 2013.

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Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*

**Abundant Migrant** although only Common in some years

**Earliest** 19\(^{th}\) February 1998 (9\(^{th}\) March 2014)  **Latest** 14\(^{th}\) December 2000 (23\(^{rd}\) November 2014)

440 trapped, 209 retrapped, 1 control


Although, when compared with 2013, more birds were recorded in every month of the year this season bar April, the number of birds logged and peak monthly counts were actually surprisingly similar. In March there were 73 birds recorded over 22 dates from the 9\(^{th}\) with highs of 11 on the 29\(^{th}\), when birds were first heard singing, and 12 the following day. A bird trapped on 1\(^{st}\) April had been ringed in the Basque region of Spain. There were records on every day of April and May except two, with highs of 19 on 18\(^{th}\) April and 15\(^{th}\) May. The majority of birds passed through quickly, although some lingered with five remaining for between eight and 15 days and another bird for at least 21 days. Additionally two birds first encountered during May, a male ringed on the 23\(^{rd}\) and a second bird, probably a female, ringed on the 27\(^{th}\), remained on Skokholm until October.

The total number of Chiffchaff logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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<tr>
<td>73 (68)</td>
<td>201 (211)</td>
<td>171 (96)</td>
<td>64 (32)</td>
<td>28 (15)</td>
<td>31 (3)</td>
<td>482 (404)</td>
<td>307 (198)</td>
<td>109 (25)</td>
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<td>12 (7)</td>
<td>19 (20)</td>
<td>19 (14)</td>
<td>4 (6)</td>
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<td>4 (1)</td>
<td>133 (128)</td>
<td>24 (55)</td>
<td>11 (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30(^{th})</td>
<td>18(^{th})</td>
<td>15(^{th})</td>
<td>4 dates</td>
<td>5 dates</td>
<td>30(^{th}) 31(^{st})</td>
<td>21(^{st})</td>
<td>11(^{th})</td>
<td>4(^{th})</td>
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This was the first time that birds have spent the breeding season on Skokholm, although there was no evidence of a breeding attempt and the smaller bird was not seen to develop a brood patch. A female trapped on 13th June exhibited an extensive brood patch, but she was only encountered for two days and was perhaps a failed breeder from the mainland. Return passage peaked in September with 482 birds logged and highs of 37 on the 16th, 27 on the 17th, 30 on the 20th, 133 on the 21st and 38 on the 22nd. There were daily records in October with 307 birds logged and peaks of 17 on the 8th, 24 on the 11th and 19 on the 28th. The first bird exhibiting plumage and bare part colouration typical of Siberian breeding *P. c. tristis* was encountered on 2nd October. There were further Siberian Chiffchaff-type birds on 11th October, between the 27th and 30th October with two on the 28th and finally on 2nd November. The identification of *P. c. tristis* is still somewhat contentious and the Welsh Records Panel, who adjudicate on records of this subspecies, prefer that birds are heard to call. Although this was not the case with birds on Skokholm this autumn, individuals on 2nd October and 2nd November (photograph below) were trapped and in both cases a feather was saved for DNA analysis which will hopefully identify the birds to subspecific level. Although totals dropped in November, birds were present until staff departed on the 24th and there were peaks of 11 on the 4th and nine on the 2nd and 5th. An absence of staff during the winter months and an increase in the number of birds overwintering in Wales have inevitably reduced the relevance of the early and late dates recorded for this species; birds may well be going unrecorded.

Ringing recovery EXV847
Originally ringed as a first-year, COTTAGE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 20th April 2014
Recovered as an adult, SOAR MILL FARM, DEVON 14th October 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 195km at 149 degrees (SSE)
Days since ringed 177

Ringing recovery EXX134
Originally ringed as a first-year, COURTYARD NET, SKOKHOLM 15th May 2014
Recovered as an adult, CALF OF MAN, ISLE OF MAN 16th May 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 263km at 7 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 1
In ten minutes short of 24 hours bird EXX134 dropped from 7.7g to 7.1g in weight, however it also travelled at a minimum of 10.96km an hour for 263km and crossed the Irish Sea.

Ringing recovery EXX834
Originally ringed as a juvenile, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 15th September 2014
Recovered as an adult, LUNDY, DEVON 14th October 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 74km at 145 degrees (SE)
Days since ringed 14

Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus
Abundant Migrant although only Common in some years
1036 trapped, 135 retrapped, 2 controls

A single on 27th March was 13 days earlier than the first of 2013 and only four days later than the earliest Skokholm arrivals recorded in 1972 and 1997. There were six birds on 30th March including the first singing male of the year and 15 were present the following day. Peak spring passage was in April with 677 birds logged during the month including peaks of 46 on the 10th, 72 on the 20th, a minimum of 150 on the 22nd and 62 on the 23rd. Numbers dropped off in May with 133 logged until the 25th and with highs of 16 on the 12th and 19 the following day. There were nine singles in June including a bird which had taken 27 days to arrive from the Isle of May and a late bird on the 30th. As noted in 2013, spring birds moved through very quickly; of 418 birds ringed during the spring, only two were retrapped and both of these were on the day following ringing.

The total number of Willow Warbler logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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<td>15</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>31st</td>
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<td>13th</td>
<td>9 dates</td>
<td>25th</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>6th</td>
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Following a single on 14th July, there were a further 456 birds logged during the month including 65 on the 24th, 101 on the 25th, 62 on the 27th and 51 the following day. Although there were still daily records, numbers dropped slightly in August with peaks of 38 on the 1st, 26 on the 24th and 31 on the 28th. Peak autumn passage was in September with 550 birds logged until the 24th and highs of 49 on the 3rd, 134 on the 6th and 53 on the 14th. A single on 2nd October was the last of the year, seven days earlier than the last of 2013. As was noted in 2013, juvenile birds frequently lingered for longer periods; of 618 birds ringed during the autumn, 17 were retrapped the following day, a further 18 remained for between two and five days, 13 for between six and ten, six for between 11 and 15 and further singles lingered for 17, 21, 22, 24 and 53 days.

Ringing recovery DXX806
Originally ringed as an adult, ISLE OF MAY, FIFE 19th May 2014
Recovered as an adult, WHEELHOUSE HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 15th June 2014
Finding condition Trapped in heligoland trap
Distance travelled 529km at 200 degrees (SSW)
Days since ringed 27
Ringing recovery EXV820
Originally ringed as an adult, WELL HELIGOLAND, SKOKHOLM 20th April 2014
Recovered as an adult, COPELAND BIRD OBSERVATORY, DOWN 27th April 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 332km at 358 degrees (N)
Days since ringed 7

Blackcap Sylvia atricapilla

Telor Penddu
Common but recorded by both Thompson and Betts as Uncommon and Scarce prior to the 1950s
151 trapped, 47 retrapped

A male on 29th March was the first of the year, six days later than the first of 2013. There were two more males the following day. In April there was a male on the 4th, two males on the 5th and then 111 birds logged from the 9th including highs of 20 on the 20th, 18 on the 22nd and nine on the 23rd with the first female of the year on the 9th. There were 14 birds over eight dates in May including three on the 3rd and four males on the 20th. As noted for other species, birds moved through quickly during spring passage; of 72 birds ringed during the spring, three lingered for a day, two for two days and a female remained for four days. In June there was a female with a brood patch on the 17th and the first juvenile of the year arrived three days later, both birds presumably from the nearby mainland. There was a lone bird on 25th July and in August there were two on the 23rd and 31st. There were 80 birds logged over 23 dates in September with highs of nine on the 21st and ten on the 26th. In October there were 90 birds over 26 dates with highs of nine on the 27th and seven the following day. There were 14 birds logged in November until the 5th, including four on two dates, then lone males on the 11th and 16th, a female on the 18th and a male on the 19th was the last of the year, eight days later than the last of 2013. Autumn birds were more prone to lingering on Skokholm; of 79 birds ringed in autumn, six were present the following day, a further eight for two to three days, two for five days and different singles remained for seven, eight and nine days. Prior to this season there had only been 18 day counts in excess of ten individuals, all bar one coming in the record years of 2012 and 2013 with the other in 1989.

The total number of Blackcap logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date(s) on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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<td>17th</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>25th</td>
<td>31st</td>
<td>26th</td>
<td>27th</td>
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Garden Warbler Sylvia borin

Telor yr Ardd
Uncommon Migrant although Scarce of late
8 trapped, 3 retrapped
1936-1976: 172 trapped, 2013: 3 trapped

A bird at the Well on 23rd April was 15 days earlier than the first of 2013. The only other spring record came from the Well on 10th May; two spring birds equals that observed last season. There was a single in the Wheelhouse Courtyard on 26th July and in August there were birds at the Well on the 15th and at the Farm on the 31st. September proved an excellent month by recent standards;
there was a single trapped on the 1st, two seen on the 2nd, a bird trapped on the 6th, singles on the 9th and 11th and further birds were trapped on the 16th, 22nd, 23rd and 24th. The bird trapped on the 23rd lingered until the 29th during which time its weight rose from 15.3g to 21.0g, a 37.25% increase. What may have been this bird, seen at the Well on 30th September, was the last record of the season and was 31 days earlier than the last of 2013. Nevertheless there were seven individuals logged during the autumn of 2013 whereas this year’s records probably refer to 11 different birds.

**Lesser Whitethroat Sylvia curruca**

**Scarce Migrant** not recorded every year

**Earliest** 23rd April 1984 (16th May 2014)  **Latest** 3rd November 1927 (30th October 2014)

3 trapped, 2 retrapped

1936-1976: 31 trapped, 2011-2013: 5 trapped, 5 retrapped

A first-year bird trapped at the Farm on 16th May was the only spring record. It takes the number of spring birds this decade to four following singles on 8th June 2013, 4th May 2007 and 4th May 2006. In September a bird around the South Haven Winch on the 6th may have been the same bird trapped in the Wheelhouse Courtyard the following day. In October a bird looking a close match for a Siberian Lesser Whitethroat *S. c. blythi* was found at the Farm on the 3rd (RDB). It appeared to have a shorter than average primary projection, the browner crown and nape typical of the race and when later trapped the wing was found to be rounded, with a second primary roughly equal in length to the seventh, and the tail exhibited a white tip to the penultimate feather and a brighter white outer feather. A feather has been sent for DNA analysis which will hopefully confirm this as the first Siberian Lesser Whitethroat for Skokholm. The bird was present until the 5th. The final record of the year on 30th October also looked like a good candidate for *S. c. blythi*, however it soon entered the Bracken and was not trapped to allow for a close inspection of wing formula and tail pattern (GE).

**Whitethroat Sylvia communis**

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

**Earliest** 5th April 1966 (18th April 2014)  **Latest** 30th October 1968 (27th September 2014)

73 trapped, 18 retrapped


A single on 18th April was two days earlier than the first of 2013. There were a further 28 birds logged during the month including highs of nine on the 20th and six on the 30th. Peak passage was in May with 44 birds logged over 16 dates including highs of seven on the 13th and 15th and six on the 25th. The majority of the 21 birds logged over 19 dates in June refer to the same ringed male which appeared near East Bog on the 9th and frequently sang and displayed in that area from the 15th with
occasional flights over to the Farm and the Well. It was seen with a female on 25th June but was apparently alone thereafter. When retrapped on 28th June the male was found to be D295236, a bird ringed as a juvenile on 16th July 2013 and last retrapped three days later. He was seen carrying a feather, perhaps for nest lining, on 28th June but there was no further indication of a nest attempt and chick provisioning was not observed. The picture was somewhat complicated with the arrival of juveniles from 2nd July, although these were almost certainly from the nearby mainland; there were 30 birds logged over 20 dates during the month including six juveniles trapped and ringed. In August there were 25 birds over 20 dates including an adult and seven juveniles ringed and a peak of three on the last day of the month. As in July and August, September numbers were slightly down on 2013 with 43 birds logged over 18 dates and with a high of just five on the 3rd and 5th. A single on 27th September was the last of the year, seven days earlier than the last of 2013.

**Subalpine Warbler Sylvia cantillans**

**Rare Migrant** 12 previous records, all but two in spring  
**Earliest** 2nd April 2001 (15th May 2014) **Latest** 3rd November 2001  
1936-1976: 3 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

A first-summer female at the Well on 15th May was one day earlier than a first-summer female trapped at the Well the previous year (GE, RDB et al.); whereas the 2013 bird was accepted by the Welsh Records Panel as Skokholm’s first Western Subalpine Warbler S. (c.) inornata, this year’s bird looked a good fit for one of the eastern taxa S. (c.) cantillans. The plumage tones were very much subdued, with cold, sandy blue-grey upperparts and pale underparts with pinkish tones restricted to the lower throat. Most importantly the tail exhibited the white wedge on the penultimate tail feather thought to be diagnostic of eastern birds. The record is currently being assessed by the British Birds Rarities Committee and, if accepted, will be the first Eastern Subalpine Warbler for Skokholm. It seems likely that the Subalpine Warbler complex will in future be split into three species following proposals by authors such as Svensson (2013). None of the pre-2013 records 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. Of the 11 Skokholm records prior to 2013, 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.

**Grasshopper Warbler Locustella naevia**

**Uncommon Migrant** occasionally absent in autumn  
**Earliest** 7th April 1961 (19th April 2013) **Latest** 7th November 1968 (25th September 2014)  
14 trapped  
1936-1976: 298 trapped, 2011-2013: 10 trapped

Two birds trapped on 19th April were the first of the year and two days earlier than the first of 2013.
The eight logged on 22\textsuperscript{nd} April, including six birds trapped, was the highest count since 11 were noted on 21\textsuperscript{st} April 2011, but was some way off the totals of up to 40 recorded historically. Five on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, including three birds trapped, and a single trapped on the 29\textsuperscript{th} took the April total to 16, three times the 2013 spring total. In May there were singles logged on the 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd}. It was a disappointing autumn with only a single bird recorded, a juvenile trapped at the Well on 25\textsuperscript{th} September. There were five birds logged in autumn 2013, although only a single in 2012.

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*  
**Telor Aur**  
**Rare** 26 previous records, 21 in autumn including the first for Wales on 31\textsuperscript{st} August 1955  
**Earliest** 14\textsuperscript{th} May 1982 **Latest** 1\textsuperscript{st} November 1995 (2\textsuperscript{nd} September 2014)  
1936-1976: 7 trapped

A juvenile found at the Well and later trapped on 2\textsuperscript{nd} September was the first Skokholm record for over a decade (BD *et al*.). All 26 previous records have been of singles with the exception of two on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1996. In spring records have fallen between 14\textsuperscript{th} May and 28\textsuperscript{th} June and in autumn, with the exception of one on 20\textsuperscript{th} July, between 21\textsuperscript{st} August and 1\textsuperscript{st} November.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*  
**Telor yr Hesg**  
**Common Migrant and Uncommon Breeder** previously a Scarce Breeder  
**Earliest** 6\textsuperscript{th} April 1961 (20\textsuperscript{th} April 2014) **Latest** 17\textsuperscript{th} October 1957 (21\textsuperscript{st} September 2014)  
151 trapped, 86 retrapped, 3 controls  

A single on 20\textsuperscript{th} April was four days later than the first of 2013. There were a further 45 birds logged during the month with highs of 14 on the 23\textsuperscript{rd}, including a bird ringed in France, and ten on the 29\textsuperscript{th}. There were 321 birds logged in May, a figure almost identical to the 316 birds logged in May 2013, however peak passage in 2013 reached 40 birds on the 17\textsuperscript{th} whereas the highs this year were 20 on the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} and 18 on the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th}. May saw the return of ten birds previously ringed on Skokholm, namely six birds ringed as juveniles in 2013, a female ringed as an adult in 2013, a male ringed as a juvenile in 2012, a male ringed as a juvenile in 2011 and a male ringed as an adult in 2011 which was thus a minimum of four years old.

### The number of confirmed breeding pairs 2004-2014.

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An accurate census of breeding pairs again proved challenging due to the number of birds which sing on passage, many of which may hold territories without pairing; thus, as in 2013, further evidence of a breeding attempt was required. Birds were first seen with nest material on 17\textsuperscript{th} May at both South Pond and East Bog and chick provisioning was first seen at the Well on 25\textsuperscript{th} June. Confirmed pairs
were to the west of South Pond, near the Gap, at East Bog, near the Red Hut, Well Stream, the Well, near North Haven, Orchid Bog and near the Top Tank. Ringing showed that at least six different males, two different females and two further individuals which were not sexed were regularly visiting the trapping area between May and July. A minimum of nine breeding pairs was one more than in 2013 and the second highest total on record. Chick provisioning was seen at seven sites and it is likely that there were second broods at East Bog, where there was a dependent chick on 2nd September, and at the Well, where there was a dependent chick on 14th September.

Although the dispersal of Skokholm juveniles made it harder to detect autumn passage, July totals of 24 on the 19th, including 20 new birds trapped, and 18 on the 22nd, including ten new birds trapped, probably included non-Skokholm birds. Indeed a bird ringed on Skomer arrived during the period and a Skokholm ringed juvenile went in the opposite direction. There were 216 birds logged in August including peaks of 14 on the 2nd, 5th and 7th, numbers only fractionally down on 2013. In September there were daily records totalling 69 birds until the 19th and three on the 21st were the last of the year, 13 days earlier than the last of 2013.

**Ringing recovery D038696**
*Originally ringed* as a juvenile, *SKOMER ISLAND*, Pembrokeshire 3rd September 2014
*Recovered* as a juvenile, *THE WELL*, SKOKHOLM 4th September 2014
*Finding condition* Trapped in mist net
*Distance travelled* 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
*Days since ringed* 1

**Ringing recovery D038894**
*Originally ringed* as a juvenile, *SKOMER ISLAND*, Pembrokeshire 10th July 2014
*Recovered* as a juvenile, *WELL HELIGOLAND*, SKOKHOLM 29th July 2014
*Finding condition* Trapped in heligoland trap
*Distance travelled* 4km at 163 degrees (SSE)
*Days since ringed* 19

**Ringing recovery D295926**
*Originally ringed* as an adult, *WHEELHOUSE HELIGOLAND*, SKOKHOLM 19th May 2014
Recoverd as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 31st May 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 4km at 343 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 12

Ringing recovery D296043
Originally ringed as a juvenile, THE WELL, SKOKHOLM 24th July 2014
Recovered as an adult, SKOMER ISLAND, PEMBROKESHIRE 31st May 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 4km at 343 degrees (NNW)
Days since ringed 1

Ringing recovery D296099
Originally ringed as a juvenile, THE WELL, SKOKHOLM 5th August 2014
Previously recovered as a juvenile, THE WHEELHOUSE NET, SKOKHOLM 8th August 2014
Recovered as a juvenile, ABBOTSBURY SWANNERY, DORSET 23rd August 2014
Finding condition Trapped in mist net
Distance travelled 221km at 122 degrees (ESE)
Days since retrapped 15

Reed Warbler Acrocephalus scirpaceus
Telor y Cyrs
Uncommon Migrant previously Scarce
6 trapped, 2 retrapped
1936-1976: 15 trapped, 2011-2013: 9 trapped, 2 retrapped, 1 control

A bird trapped at the Well on 23rd April was only four days later than the earliest Skokholm record. There were further spring singles at North Pond on 29th April, along the Lighthouse Track on 20th May and a heavily worn bird trapped at the Well on 12th June was also at the same site the following day. The first of autumn were two birds trapped at the Well on 14th September, one of which was retrapped the following day. A new bird was trapped at the same site on the 16th and the bird ringed on the 14th but not seen on the 15th was retrapped on the 17th when it was found to have increased in weight from 13.1g to 16.0g, a 22.14% rise. There was also a bird without a ring on the 17th. A bird trapped in the Wheelhouse Courtyard on 27th September and seen the following day was the last record of the year, 22 days later than the last of 2013. There were thus five bird-days in spring and eight in autumn, fractionally fewer than the seven in spring and 13 in autumn observed in 2013.

Wren Troglodytes troglodytes
Dryw
Fairly Common Breeder only noted as a Common Winter Visitor prior to first breeding in 1988
91 trapped, 73 retrapped

The 57 singing males mapped this spring was a new Skokholm record, although only fractionally up on the 55 territories mapped in 2013, the 52 in 2012 and the 51 in 2011. The last four 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 territorial males 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. There were five birds retrapped which were ringed during pilot
ringing sessions undertaken in the renovation period, with three adults ringed as juveniles in 2012 still present around the Farm and two ringed as juveniles in 2011 still present at the Well.

The total number of Wren logged each month (2013 in parenthesis). Note that November recording was between the 1st and 23rd in 2014 and the 1st and 16th in 2013.

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**Starling Sturnus vulgaris**

**Drudwy**

**Very Abundant** bred from 1946, peaking at 53 pairs in the 1960s but last confirmed breeding in 2006


March numbers were down compared with the 699 logged in 2013; there were daily records totalling 260 birds until the 28th including highs of 32 on the 7th and 36 on the 9th. There were singles on four dates in April, seven on 7th April and three singles between the 7th and 9th May. The first two juveniles arrived on 12th June and there were a further 55 birds logged until the 26th including peaks of 17 on the 17th and ten on the 19th. There was a single on 23rd July, no records in August and in September there were three on the 8th and a single on the 28th. In October there were 182 birds logged over 13 dates from the 12th including 30 on the 25th, 63 on the 28th and 31 on the 29th. As is typically the case, numbers rose considerably in November with 4946 logged including 920 on the 5th, 896 on the 16th, 753 on the 17th and 370 on the 24th but with five days of single figure counts and seven days of double figure counts. The largest day count was thus some way off the 1950 logged on 15th November last year and the Skokholm record 10,000 logged on 6th November 1970.

**Ring Ouzel Turdus torquatus**

**Mwyalchen y Mynydd**

**Scarce** although sometimes Uncommon and more regular in spring


1936-1976: 51 trapped

Two on 20th April, one at Crab Bay and one at the Well, were the only spring birds. One outside of the Cottage on the morning of 14th October was the first autumn record since 25th September 2012. There was only one spring bird in 2013 and in 2012 there were four in spring and one in autumn.

Blackbird Turdus merula

**Mwyalchen**

**Common Visitor and Scarce Breeder** peaking at nine pairs in 1990 but recently five pairs or fewer

71 trapped (including 1 pullus), 60 retrapped

1936-1976: 1718 trapped, 2011-2013: 61 trapped (including 5 pulli), 66 retrapped
There were fewer birds logged in March this year, just 129 compared with 264 in 2013, perhaps as a consequence of the extreme conditions of the preceding winter deterring visiting birds from overwintering. However ringing showed that the residents within the trapping area fared well; during the 2014 breeding season there were three males and a female which were a minimum of four years old, two females which were two years old and two males hatched in 2013 were present during the spring and autumn but not during the breeding season, presumably due to exclusion by territorial breeders. There were six breeding territories mapped in 2014, one more than in 2013, two more than in 2012 and three more than in 2011. Additionally a bird sang at the Lighthouse on 16th May but not thereafter. Pairs bred at South Pond, East Bog, the Well, near North Haven, the Cottage Garden and by the Wheelhouse. Productivity proved difficult to calculate due to overlapping territories and second broods, however the Well pair was known to fail at egg stage by 21st April, the Wheelhouse pair failed with a single chick on 10th May and two dead chicks were carried from the Cottage nest by the adults on the 24th and 26th June. Nevertheless there were fledglings seen in five territories and 12 juveniles were trapped before 1st September (14 in 2013). As was noted by Betts, Thompson and in the 2013 report, the number of records dropped noticeably in August and September during the period of adult post-breeding moult. Two birds on the cliffs at Purple Cove on 27th September were the first obvious migrants of the autumn. There were 179 birds logged in October, including peaks of 18 on the 11th, 22 on the 29th and 21 the following day, and in September 400 birds were logged including 31 on the 5th, 41 on the 17th, 49 on the 18th and 33 on the 19th.

Fieldfare Turdus pilaris
Uncommon Winter Visitor listed as Fairly Common by both Betts and Thompson
Earliest 14th September 1977 (11th October 2014) Latest 13th June 1980
1936-1976: 7 trapped

There were no spring birds this season; the only post-2004 spring records are thus four singles in 2013, three singles in 2012 and one in 2011. In autumn one over on 11th October was on the same date as the first of 2013. In November there were three on the 4th, two on the 5th, 10th and 16th and a single on the 17th. The only other autumn Fieldfare in the last decade were the 14 recorded in 2013.

Song Thrush Turdus philomelos
Common Visitor but breeding has not been observed
38 trapped, 1 retrapped

There were fewer Song Thrush logged this spring, perhaps, as noted for Blackbird, due to the severe winter period deterring overwintering birds. In March there were two on the 5th and 10th and singles on the 6th and 11th; there were 36 birds logged in March 2013. A bird at the Lighthouse on 28th May was the only other spring record. In August there was a single at the Farm on the 24th and in September singles on the 19th and 28th. Following a bird trapped on 2nd October, there were a further 128 logged from the 11th including peaks of 15 on the 12th and 24th, 41 on the 29th and 14 on the 30th, numbers very similar to 2013 when 108 were logged. Of the 38 birds ringed during the autumn only one was retrapped, a juvenile ringed on 14th October which was still present on 7th November. In November there were daily records totalling 575 birds until the 24th with highs of 37 on the 5th, 47 on the 11th, 36 on the 14th, 62 on the 18th and 36 on the 22nd. The highest day count of 2013, logged on 9th November, was also 62.

Redwing Turdus iliacus
Common Winter Visitor
Earliest 20th September 2001 (9th October 2014) Latest 18th June 1979 (28th May 2014)
27 trapped  
1936-1976: 157 trapped, 2013: 12 trapped, 2 retrapped

As noted for the other thrush species, spring 2014 proved a quiet one for Redwing; following a bumper spring in 2013 when 91 birds were logged including 52 on 12 April, this season saw a total similar to the two logged in spring 2012 and the four in 2011. There were two birds logged in March, different singles trapped on the 10th and 11th, and in May a bird was trapped at the Well on the 28th. The latter is of note as the third latest spring record for Skokholm following singles on 13th June 1929 and 18th June 1979. A single on 9th October was one day earlier than the first of autumn 2013. There were a further 92 birds logged from the 14th including eight on the 14th, 15th and 28th, ten on the 29th and 17 on the 30th and 31st. Although the majority of Redwing were not identified to race, one trapped on the 28th was an obvious dark and large bird of the Icelandic breeding race T. i. coburni. There were 244 logged in November with highs of 17 on the 4th, 36 on the 16th, 58 on the 17th, 21 on the 18th and 24 on the 20th but with no birds logged between the 22nd and 24th.

**Mistle Thrush Turdus viscivorus**

**Scarc**e but not recorded every year  
1936-1976: 3 trapped

The first record of the year was of two vocal birds at the Knoll on 29th October. In November a lone bird spent most of the 11th in the vicinity of the Farm. Prior to 2014 there had only been seven post-1996 records including the most recent, a single on 10th October 2013.

**Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata**

**Fairly Common Passage Migrant**

**Earliest** 19th April 1966 (8th May 2014) **Latest** 23rd October 1968 and 2001 (5th October 2014)  
28 trapped  

Two on 8th May were the first of the year and occurred on the same date as the first of 2013. There were a further 31 birds logged during the month including highs of four on the 12th and 14th. In June there were singles on the 1st, 5th, 6th and 17th. Spring numbers were thus somewhat down on 2013 when there were 36 logged in May and 19 in June. A single on 20th August was the first of autumn, four days later than the first of last season. Four on the 23rd was the only other record during the month. In September there were 53 birds logged between the 2nd and the 21st including highs of five on the 9th, seven on the 17th, ten on the 18th and six on the 19th. The same juvenile logged on the 3rd,
4th and 5th October was the last of the year, five days later than the last of 2013. Autumn numbers were therefore also down on 2013 when there were four recorded in August but 91 in September.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

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

183 trapped, 97 retrapped


As was noted for the overwintering thrushes, the number of Robin present on Skokholm during the spring months was well down on that observed in 2013, most probably as a result of the extreme winter weather. In March there were almost daily records until the 30th totalling 64 birds and with highs of six on the 5th and seven on the 9th. The only April record was a single on the 9th. By contrast there were 146 birds logged in March 2013 and 54 in April. Nevertheless three ringed birds trapped in autumn 2013 were still present this spring. There were no records in May, June or July with the exception of a female with a well-defined and engorged brood patch trapped on 5th June, presumably a recently failed breeder from the mainland. She was not seen again.

The first of autumn arrived on 3rd August, 17 days earlier than the first of 2013. There were then almost daily records totalling 113 birds from the 6th, with highs of nine on the 24th, ten on the 28th and 30th and 22 on the 31st. Numbers steadily increased in September with 39 on the 3rd, 43 on the
7th, 71 on the 16th, 89 on the 23rd, 99 on the 27th and 128 on the 28th; the 128 on the latter date eclipsed the 78 logged on 13th October 2013 which was the highest count of the last decade. There were further autumn highs of 112 on 29th September and in October of 118 on the 2nd, 83 on the 12th, 82 on the 14th and 81 on the 30th. The monthly totals of 1609 in September and 1638 in October were by far the highest recorded in recent years, well above the 694 logged in September and the 952 logged in October last year which were the highest totals of the last decade. As the autumn progressed periods of poor weather impacted the recording of Robins, both reducing the ease by which birds could be heard calling and by resulting in more skulking behaviour. However there were still November peaks during calmer weather of 54 on the 2nd, 63 on the 5th, 51 on the 16th and 54 on the 22nd. Ringing showed that at least ten birds returned for the winter period, seven of which were present for a second winter, two which were present for a third winter and one which was spending its fourth winter on Skokholm.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher Ficedula parva**

*Gwybedog Brongoch*

Rare Migrant primarily in autumn with a minimum of 22 previous records, only three in spring

**Earliest** 18th May 2001 (23rd September 2014) **Latest** 3rd November 1993 (13th November 2014)

3 trapped

1936-1976: 9 trapped

A first-winter trapped at the Well on 23rd September was the first of the year and came three days before the only record of 2013 (MG et al.). An unringed first-winter found at the Farm two days later was subsequently trapped in the Wheelhouse Heligoland (PB et al.). A ringed bird at the Top Tank and the Well the following day was presumably the latter of the two. In the absence of ringing a first-winter trapped at the Farm on 29th September would no doubt have been presumed to be one of the previous birds (MG et al.). The fourth of the year was a surprise find at the Well on the evening of 13th November (GE, RDB, et al.); it quickly departed for the cliffs of South Haven and was not seen again. This was the latest Skokholm record by ten days and takes the total number of individuals logged in the past three years to six. The three birds logged in the autumn of 2001 were the most recorded in a year prior to this season.

**Pied Flycatcher Ficedula hypoleuca**

*Gwybedog Brith*

Uncommon Migrant more frequent in autumn and sometimes absent in spring
Earliest 10<sup>th</sup> April 1993 (10<sup>th</sup> August 2014) Latest 17<sup>th</sup> October 1982 and 1988 (28<sup>th</sup> September 2014)
3 trapped
1936-1976: 393 trapped, 2011-2013: 16 trapped, 3 retrapped

There were no spring records for a second successive year. The first of the autumn, a bird in Crab Bay on 10<sup>th</sup> August, was 11 days earlier than the first of 2013 and one at Spy Rock on 20<sup>th</sup> August was one day earlier. In September there was one on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, three on the 4<sup>th</sup>, two on the 6<sup>th</sup> and further singles on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Numbers were thus very similar to the previous season and the last of the year was just two days later than the last of 2013.

**Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros**

*Uncommon Migrant* has probably overwintered on occasion
1 trapped, 1 retrapped
1936-1976: 100 trapped, 2013: 2 trapped

In March a female was at the Farm on the 10<sup>th</sup> and a male was at the Lighthouse on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. There were no April records but in May a female trapped at the Wheelhouse on the 2<sup>nd</sup> was at the Well the following day and there were singles at the Lighthouse on the 15<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. A bird at the Farm on 3<sup>rd</sup> July was unseasonable. In October there were singles at the Lighthouse on the 26<sup>th</sup> and in South Haven on the 28<sup>th</sup>, there were three on the 29<sup>th</sup> and one remained at the Farm the following day. November saw birds at the Lighthouse on the 1<sup>st</sup>, in South Haven on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, in Crab Bay on the 17<sup>th</sup>, at Little Bay Point and the Farm on the 20<sup>th</sup> and an adult male lingered at the Lighthouse from the 22<sup>nd</sup> until the departure of staff on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus**

*Uncommon Migrant* usually more regular in autumn
Earliest 1<sup>st</sup> April 1991 (17<sup>th</sup> April 2014) Latest 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1968 (21<sup>st</sup> September 2014)
8 trapped, 1 retrapped

A male in Crab Bay and later trapped at the Farm on 17<sup>th</sup> April was two days later than the first of 2013. There were two males on 22<sup>nd</sup> April including the second of the year to be ringed. The following day saw four birds logged, two males and two females. A further female trapped on the 25<sup>th</sup> was the last of a good spring by recent standards; there were only two singles in spring 2013. A first-winter on 2<sup>nd</sup> September was the first of the autumn, 11 days later than the first of last season. There were daily records of up to two birds between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September, involving at least
four different individuals and including the last record of the year which was 14 days earlier than the last of 2013. Autumn numbers were thus very similar to last season.

**Whinchat Saxicola rubetra**  
*Crec yr Eithin*

**Uncommon** previously *Fairly Common*

**Earliest** 9th April 1966 (3rd May 2014)  
**Latest** 26th October 1968 (2nd November 2014)

4 trapped

1936-1976: 326 trapped, 2013: 2 trapped

Two birds on 3rd May were six days earlier than the first of 2013 and included a first-year female trapped and ringed. A Male at North Pond on 15th May was the only other spring record. Whereas the spring had proven rather typical compared with Whinchat totals of late, the autumn was exceptional. Following a single on the 4th and two birds on 5th September, there were 45 birds logged between the 8th and 28th including three on six dates, four (but possibly as many as seven) on the 15th and eight on the 21st. By comparison there were 19 birds logged in total during the autumn of 2013 and that was the best year for over a decade. A bird on North Plain on 6th October was probably the first-winter seen wearing a ring at the same site the following day. The last bird to be ringed on Skokholm prior to this date was on 26th September. What was presumably the same individual was seen in the vicinity of Home Meadow and North Plain on 13 further dates between 10th October and 2nd November with a ring evident on the majority of occasions. This was the latest Skokholm record, 27 days later than the last of 2013 and seven days later than a bird in 1968.

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

**Fairly Common** bred in 1928 and 1932

6 trapped

1936-1976: 336 trapped, 2013: 5 trapped

Perhaps due to the severe winter period, it proved a quiet spring for Stonechat records with a female at South Pond and a male at the Well on 7th March the only birds logged. As was noted in 2013, there were a small number of July records but no birds in August; in July there were single juveniles logged on the 2nd, each day between the 21st and 25th and on the 28th. The first of September were a juvenile trapped at the Well on the 3rd and singles logged on the following two dates including an unringed bird on the 5th. There were then 47 birds logged from the 21st, with daily records and highs of nine on the 22nd, six on the 27th and eight on the 28th. It proved an exceptional October for this species with records on all but one date totalling 163 birds and with peaks of eight on the 5th, nine on the 7th and 10th, 12 on the 14th and 29th and nine on the 30th. There were only 44 birds logged in October 2013 and the highest day count of the last decade had been the six birds logged on 4th November 2013. Numbers remained high in November with 83 birds recorded until the 24th including peaks of eight on the 5th, nine on the 9th and seven on the 14th and 20th.
Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

**Abundant Migrant and Uncommon Breeder**

**Earliest** 2\(^{nd}\) March 2003 (9\(^{th}\) March 2014)  
**Latest** 13\(^{th}\) November 1999 (2\(^{nd}\) November 2014)

40 trapped, 12 retrapped  

A male near the Sugarloaf on 9\(^{th}\) March was the first of the year, four days later than in 2013 and seven days later than the earliest on record. There were further lone males on the 11\(^{th}\), 12\(^{th}\) and 13\(^{th}\) then 101 birds logged from the 15\(^{th}\) to the end of the month including the first singing bird on the 17\(^{th}\), 14 birds on the 21\(^{st}\) and 15 on the 27\(^{th}\) when one was nest building at the Dip. There were 595 birds logged during April, 223 more than were logged in April 2013, with highs of 30 on the 3\(^{rd}\), 46 on the 15\(^{th}\), 41 on the 19\(^{th}\), 57 on the 20\(^{th}\), 41 on the 21\(^{st}\) and 31 on the 25\(^{th}\). The majority of migrants were nominate birds, with the first good candidate for a Greenland breeding *O. o. leucorhoa* coming on 6\(^{th}\) April and with further Greenland birds on the 9\(^{th}\) and daily between the 19\(^{th}\) and 22\(^{nd}\) when several individuals were recorded. The Skokholm breeders accounted for the majority of the 392 birds logged during May, with 25 on the 14\(^{th}\) the highest count, but obvious migrants were occasionally encountered and Greenland birds were logged on the 2\(^{nd}\) and 15\(^{th}\). Survey work during the month revealed 13 breeding pairs, one more than in 2013 but 27.2% fewer than the 1928-2014 mean (17.86 ±sd 8.30).

The number of Wheatear breeding territories located each year 1928-2014 (where data exists).

The first fledgling of the year was in Crab Bay on 23\(^{rd}\) May, 13 days before the first of 2013. The 13 pairs produced a minimum of 27 first brood fledglings, an average of 2.08 fledglings per pair which was 10.7% down on the 2.33 per pair noted in 2013. Second broods were again harder to monitor due to the dispersal of first brood youngsters, however there were a minimum of 1.31 second brood fledglings per pair. Of the 13 pairs, 12 produced first brood fledglings and eight produced second brood fledglings whilst the Twinlet pair were watched building a third nest on 21\(^{st}\) July although no young were subsequently seen. Overall productivity in 2014 was thus 3.38 fledglings per pair, 26.6% more than logged in 2013. Given the number of breeding birds and their mobile offspring it proved difficult to detect early autumn migrants, although clearly birds were on the move with numbers gradually dropping to just seven on 16\(^{th}\) August and with Greenland race birds trapped on the 20\(^{th}\), 23\(^{rd}\), 25\(^{th}\) and 30\(^{th}\) August. Autumn numbers peaked in September with 519 logged during the month including highs of 123 on the 6\(^{th}\), 39 on the 17\(^{th}\), 31 on the 18\(^{th}\) and 30 on the 21\(^{st}\); coincidentally the highest count of 2013 was the 121 also logged on 6\(^{th}\) September. There were only 44 birds logged over 17 dates in October, a total well down on the 290 logged in October 2013, with highs of just 13 on the 2\(^{nd}\) and six on the 13\(^{th}\). A single on Home Meadow on 2\(^{nd}\) November was the last of the year, seven days later than the last of 2013 but 11 days short of the latest record.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*  

**Llwyd y Gwrych**  

**Fairly Common Winter Visitor** previously a Scarce or Uncommon Breeder with up to 12 pairs
8 trapped, 10 retrapped

One retrapped at the Farm on 5th March had been ringed on 12th October and retrapped on 9th November the preceding autumn. There were further singles logged on the 6th, 9th and 11th, a new bird was trapped on the 16th and a bird was singing on the 26th. The only April records were a single at the Well on the 11th and a new bird trapped on the 28th. Spring numbers were thus a fraction of the 69 birds logged during March and April 2013, presumably a result of extreme weather during the winter period which also negatively impacted the numbers of other overwintering passerines on the Island. Singles logged on the 23rd and singing on 25th July were unseasonable in a year with no breeding population. The first autumn arrival was a bird retrapped at the Farm on 30th September which had been ringed on 6th October 2013 and last encountered on 14th November. In October there were singles on the 1st and 2nd then 95 birds logged over 19 dates from the 11th including highs of nine on the 24th, eight on the 27th and 11 on the 28th; there were 36 birds logged in October 2013 with a maximum count of four on the 12th. There were daily counts in November with 71 birds logged until the departure of staff on the 24th and highs of five on the 2nd, 5th and 18th and seven on the 11th.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*  
**Aderyn y To**  
Scarce although not recorded every year  
3 trapped  
1936-1976: 20 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

A vocal pair at the Farm on 12th October and a lone female at the same site on 5th November were all trapped and ringed. Interestingly the pair arrived on a date when the Pembrokeshire Islands of Ramsey and Skomer also logged the arrival of House Sparrows. There were only seven Skokholm records prior to 1957, then annual records until 1978, birds in fewer than half of the following 25 years and then nine records between 2004 and 2013.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*  
**Siglen Felen**  
Uncommon more regular in autumn  
Earliest 10th March 1956 (10th April 2014)  
Latest 18th November 1967 (23rd September 2014)  

A flyover on 10th April was the first of the year and 15 days earlier than the first of 2013 (MYP). In May there was a flyover on the 3rd along with the first grounded bird of the year, a fine male Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava* which spent much of the day in the vicinity of the Lighthouse; although
there have been over 35 previous Skokholm records, this was the first for ten years. The only other spring record was a further flyover on 31st May. There was thus fewer than half the number of spring records than logged in 2013. The first of autumn on 20th August was five days before the first of last season and again did not stop. Also in August were two mobile birds in the Crab Bay area on the 26th and a single on the 28th. In September there were 17 birds logged over 11 dates between the 5th and 23rd including three on the 10th and 19th and two on the 13th and 14th. Of the seven birds seen on the ground, only one appeared to be anything other than a British M. f. flavissima. On 19th September a very pale wagtail flying around North Pond set alarm bells ringing, although it regularly uttered a call typical of more westerly flava (RDB, DA, JP et al.). Although the subspecific identification of autumn wagtails is somewhat problematic, views of the bird on the ground revealed plumage tones similar to those seen in Grey-headed Wagtail M. f. thunbergi (photograph below). A vocal bird over the Red Hut on 23rd September was the last of the year, 15 days earlier than the last of 2013.

Grey Wagtail Motacilla cinerea  
**Siglen Lwyd**

*Uncommon Visitor* only 11 birds between 2005 and 2012 but 62 in 2013  
1936-1976: 8 trapped, 2013: 1 control

As is typically the case, it proved a quiet spring period with a single over the Lighthouse Track on 15th March and two over the North Coast on 24th April the only birds logged. However September numbers were unprecedented; there were 110 birds logged over 28 days from the 2nd including six on the 3rd, 12 on the 9th, 11 on the 11th, nine on the 13th, eight on the 14th and nine on the 28th. In October there were 12 birds logged until the 12th including four on the 7th and in November there was a single over the Lighthouse on the 18th. There were thus twice as many birds logged than in 2013 which was itself an excellent year for a species described in 1939 as a ‘curiously rare visitor’.

Pied Wagtail Motacilla alba  
**Siglen Fraith**

*M. a. yarrellii* Scarce Breeder and Fairly Common Visitor  
*M. a. alba* Common Migrant flyovers unassigned to race are also Common  
*M. a. alba* Earliest 18th March 1990 (30th March 2014) **Latest** 29th October 1988 (29th September 2014)

24 trapped (including 3 pulli), 6 retrapped  
1936-1976: 349 trapped, 2011-2013: 51 trapped (including 5 pulli), 13 retrapped, 1 control

A pair were at the Lighthouse and a male at the Farm on 6th March, although this was the last record
from the Lighthouse, bar singles on the 10th, 25th and 27th, until a pair returned on the 29th. By
contrast up to five birds were at the Farm on all subsequent March dates bar one. Additionally a pair
was prospecting in the vicinity of the Red Hut on 22nd March and two were at North Pond on the
29th. The first White Wagtail M. a. alba of the year, a fine male, arrived on 30th March, nine days
later than the first of 2013 and 12 days later than the earliest on record. In April pairs took up
territories at the Farm and the Lighthouse with additional records of a mobile pair seen at the Red
Hut on the 6th and 16th, in the Crab Bay and East Bog area on eight dates from the 8th and at the Well
on the 20th. White Wagtail numbers were considerably down on 2013 with singles on 9th April, the
3rd, 15th, 20th and 24th May and on 1st June the only birds logged. The Lighthouse pair were incubating
five eggs by 14th May, young were being fed at the Farm from the 17th and both pairs had fledged
three young by the 30th. The Farm pair had six second brood eggs on 15th June and four chicks on the
25th whilst the Lighthouse pair had three eggs on the 30th. The third wagtail pair had two fledglings
in the vicinity of the Cottage from 25th June. In July the Farm pair fledged three on the 4th, with a fourth
large chick found dead under the nest, and the Lighthouse pair had failed at egg stage by the end of
the month. The three pairs thus fledged 11 offspring which equates to a productivity of 3.67 young
per pair, a figure 26.6% down on the average of five fledglings produced by the three 2013 pairs.

The number of Pied Wagtail M. a. yarrellii (maroon), White Wagtail M. a. alba (green) and
unraced M. alba wagtail (blue) seen during the 2014 season.

Pied Wagtail counts increased in August with totals of 23 on the 20th and 18 on the 23rd highlighting
the arrival of birds from the mainland. The number of flyover birds also increased from midmonth
with highs of eight on the 19th, 16 on the 24th, 33 on the 26th and 23 on the 27th. The first autumn
White Wagtails were the six logged on 22nd August, three days before the first of 2013, but there
were only a further 23 logged during the month, considerably fewer than the 120 recorded in August
last year. Pied Wagtail numbers dropped in September from peaks of 27 on the 5th and 19 on the
10th, as did the number of flyovers from peaks of 28 on the 2nd, 35 on the 3rd and 66 on the 7th. There
were 77 White Wagtail logged, two more than in September 2013 and with highs of nine on the 1st,
seven on the 7th, eight on the 16th and seven on the 18th. The last White Wagtail of the year, a single
on 29th September, was eight days earlier than the last of 2013. Totals were lower in October with 68
Pied Wagtail logged over 24 dates and 44 flyovers over ten dates but with a peak midmonth when
there were 19 flyovers on the 11th and 13 Pied Wagtail on the 12th. There were ten Pied Wagtail
logged over seven dates in November with only three records between the 6th and 24th.

Richard’s Pipit Anthus richardi

Rare recorded in 14 previous years

A vocal bird which flew low and east over the Gap on 15th September was the first Skokholm record
since 2004 (RDB, GE). It was only the second of the autumn to be reported to www.birdguides.com

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following a probable heard at Rainham Marshes, Greater London, on the 14th. All Skokholm records sit within the period 12th September to 10th November and are typically of single birds, although there were four logged on 26th October 1968 and 29th September 1970.

**Tree Pipit Anthus trivialis**

**Corhedydd y Coed**

*Uncommon* although Scarce in recent years and more regular in autumn

**Earliest** 16th March 1966 (20th April 2014) **Latest** 23rd October 1994 (22nd September 2014)

1 trapped

1936-1976: 122 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

A vocal bird heading east over North Pond on 20th April was four days later than the first of 2013 and the only spring record (RDB). The first of autumn was also over North Pond on 23rd August and occurred on the same date as the first autumn birds of 2013. In September there were four on the 5th including a bird trapped and ringed on North Plain, a single on the 17th, a minimum of three on the 19th and two on the 20th and 21st. A single on 22nd September was the last of the year and came on the same date as the last of 2013. One spring and 14 autumn birds is down on the three spring and 25 autumn birds logged last season, although there were only 19 logged between 2005 and 2012.

**Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis**

**Corhedydd y Waun**

*Very Abundant Visitor and Uncommon Breeder*

163 trapped, 54 retrapped


There were 821 birds logged in March, 595 of which came in the second half of the month, and peaks of 87 on the 26th and 76 on the 31st when 34 birds were together on North Plain. Of the 989 birds logged in April, 583 came in the first half of the month when there were nine counts of between 40 and 47 birds including small feeding flocks on the plains. May counts were very similar to those recorded in 2013 and survey work during the period revealed 28 breeding territories, the same number as mapped in 2013. Ringing showed that there were six birds resident in the trapping area which had been ringed during the previous season, four of which were at least two years old. The first young were noted on 15th May, 14 days earlier than the first to be seen last season. Higher counts in June and July this year perhaps reflected a more productive breeding season, although birds were already flocking by late July and totals peaking at 73 on the last day of the month probably included visitors from elsewhere.
The total number of Meadow Pipit logged each month (2013 in parenthesis), along with the monthly maximum (2013 in parenthesis) and the date on which the 2014 peak was recorded.

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Numbers continued to rise in August with 1548 logged during the month and highs of 72 on the 20th, 91 on the 23rd, 92 on the 30th and 100 on the 31st. Although the number of birds logged in September was fractionally down on the total logged in 2013, there were 18 counts in excess of 100 individuals whereas there were just seven such counts last season. September peaks included 297 on the 11th, 324 on the 16th, 220 on the 18th and 634 on the 21st, all well down on the 1353 logged on 27th September 2013 which was the highest Skokholm day total on record. Numbers dropped in October with peaks of 113 on the 2nd, 82 on the 11th and 93 on the 12th but, with the exception of 51 on the 24th, only between eight and 35 each day from the 17th. There were daily records in November but with no more than 22 on any date and lows of three on the 6th and 17th and two on the 15th and 21st; this is a typical winter exodus recorded by Betts, Thompson and in the 2013 report.

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)

80 trapped, 62 retrapped


Although the vast majority of 2014 records referred to Skokholm residents, a bird at East Bog on 22nd March exhibiting a distinct supercilium and relatively clean underparts was reminiscent of a Nordic breeding *A. p. littoralis* (RDB, GE); it was not seen again. Birds of this subspecies have been noted in seven previous years including two pink-flushed birds in March 2013. Birds were singing back on territory from 30th March and the number logged increased during April with 848 noted during the month. The breeding bird census revealed 34 territories, two more than logged in 2013 but one fewer than in 2012. The first two fledglings were recorded at the Bluffs on 14th May, 28 days earlier than the first of last season. There were further May fledglings noted at Twinlet on the 17th and in several territories from the 26th.
The number of birds logged increased as the summer progressed, totals augmented by this season’s fledglings. There were peaks in June of 69 on the 24th, in July of 71 on the 1st, 81 on the 6th and 80 on the 31st and in August of 83 on the 14th, 105 on the 20th, 101 on the 21st and 95 on the 26th and 31st; the majority of these birds were still resident around the coast. Counts increased significantly in September as birds worked their way up from the cliffs and began to feed regularly on the plains; there were 3028 birds logged during the month, 12 counts of more than 100 and highs of 145 on the 5th, 138 on the 16th, 151 on the 20th and 165 on the 21st. The highest count of 2013 was the 96 logged on 7th October which may suggest that the 2014 breeding season was a more productive one. Numbers dropped slightly in October with five counts in excess of 100 and highs of 131 on the 7th and 134 on the 9th. In November there were highs of 96 on the 5th, 95 on the 11th and 110 on the 14th.

**Chaffinch Fringilla coelebs**

*Ji-binc*

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

8 trapped

1936-1976: 255 trapped, 2013: 10 trapped, 2 retrapped

There were 16 birds logged over nine dates in March including three on the 13th and 26th. Daily singles between the 1st and 4th April were the last of the spring. Numbers were thus down on the 39 birds logged between 3rd March and 18th May 2013. A lone female on 9th September was the first of autumn and the only record until two on 29th September. There were 23 birds logged between the 11th and 17th October including 14 on the 14th and 150 birds logged from the 22nd including 53 on the 28th, 21 on the 29th and 65 on the 30th. In November there were 73 birds logged over 18 dates including nine on the 5th and 15 on the 18th. Although numbers were thus well down on historical totals, for example the 3200 logged on 22nd October 1966 or the minimum of 2000 logged on 26th October 1988, they were actually up on the 123 logged in autumn 2013 and were the highest counts for over ten years.

**Brambling Fringilla montifringilla**

*Pinc y Mynydd*

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

**Earliest** 3rd October 1964 (13th October 2014) **Latest** 17th April 1997

1936-1976: 5 trapped, 2013: 1 trapped

Two vocal birds in flight over the Farm on 13th October was the only record of the season. They came one day later than the first of three birds logged in 2013 and six days earlier than the only 2012 record. Records in the last three years are the only birds logged since 2004.

**Greenfinch Chloris chloris**

*Llinos Werdd*

**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 again a surprisingly scarce species with a female on 29th October and a mobile bird on 9th November the only individuals logged. Both Betts (1992) and Thompson (2007) noted Greenfinch as Fairly Common or Common, but in the eight years prior to 2013 there were just 14 spring records totalling 18 birds and 14 autumn records totalling 43 birds. In 2013 there were only two singles, both in spring.

**Goldfinch Carduelis carduelis**

*Nico*

**Common** but recorded by both Betts and Thomson as Fairly Common

13 trapped

1936-1976: 65 trapped, 2011-2013: 26 trapped, 1 retrapped
This season saw a return to more typical numbers following a record year in 2013 which included the two highest day counts ever logged on Skokholm. The only bird in March was a single on the 12th. June saw a single on the 9th which took the total number of spring birds to 56, 103 fewer than were logged last season. Following a single on 27th July, there were no August records in a month entirely devoid of any finch passage whatsoever. In September there were 13 birds logged over six dates including seven on the 29th and in October there were 101 recorded over 12 dates including highs of 27 on the 14th and 19 on the 29th. There were 54 birds over 15 dates in November including seven on the 2nd and six on the 20th. The 169 birds logged this autumn were well down on the 785 recorded in 2013 but up on the 114 noted in 2012.

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

Three on 16th March were the first of the year. There were a further 24 March birds from the 26th including five on both the 29th and 30th and 12 on the 31st. There were 90 birds logged over 21 dates in April including peaks of eight on the 9th and 16th and 11 on the 10th and 22nd. There were five logged between the 1st and 4th May before singles on the 16th and 19th. Two over the Farm on 5th June were the last of the spring and took the total for the period to 126 birds, very similar to the total of 115 logged in spring 2013. Autumn numbers were also similar to last season and, as in 2013, included a lone July record, which this year was of five together on the 21st, and no August records. In September there were 127 birds logged over seven dates from the 21st including highs of 31 on the 21st and 58 on the 29th. October again proved the best month of the year with 224 birds logged over 15 dates including peaks of 45 on the 12th, 33 on the 22nd and 60 on the 29th. In November there were three on the 2nd, 12 on the 5th and three on the 11th was the last record of the year.

Lesser Redpoll *Carduelis cabaret*  
Uncommon recorded by both Betts and Thompson as Scarce and only six records 2005-2012  

Three Lesser Redpoll around the Farm on 3rd May were the only Redpoll of the 2014 season to be identified to species level. In the spring there were unidentified flyover singles on 28th April and on 16th May. The autumn saw single calling flyovers on the 17th and 29th July, on 30th September, on 29th October and on the 5th and 18th November. It was thus a disappointing year for Redpoll records compared with 2013 when 31 birds were logged during the spring. However the six singles logged this autumn are unusual; 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. These were thus the first autumn records for at least a decade.

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*  
Rare 23 previous records including 11 in spring and all singles except for three on 11th October 2001  
Earliest 3rd May 1970 Latest 12th October 1995 (10th September 2014)  
1 trapped, 1 retrapped  
1936-1976: 4 trapped, 2011-2013: 3 trapped

A juvenile trapped at the Well on 5th September was the first autumn record since 2012 (IG et al.). It remained in the vicinity of the Farm until the 8th when it was retrapped and found to have increased in weight from 18.0g to 19.7g. It was seen feeding at the Well and Orchid Bog on the 9th and 10th but
also visited the Farm and North Pond. This is the fourth successive year that this species has been logged following singles between the 2nd and 11th September 2011, between the 27th and 29th August 2012 and on 8th June 2013; all three were trapped and ringed. Prior to these the most recent record was on 25th May 2003.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*
*Bras yr Eira*

**Scarce** but with only six spring records

**Earliest** 22nd September 1981 (6th October 2014) **Latest** 25th April 1959
1 trapped
1936-1976: 6 trapped

One along the South Coast path on 6th October was the first since a single on 22nd October 2012 and, along with a spring bird on 17th March 2006, one of only three records in ten years (RDB). A bird near North Pond on 19th October was later feeding around the Farm where it was trapped and ringed; in the hand it was found to be a first-year male of the widespread nominate race. It remained around the Farm until the 21st and may have been the same bird seen at the Helipad and on the Neck the following day. A vocal bird was over the Farm on 24th October and a further calling flyover was logged on 3rd November.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*
*Bras y Gogledd*

**Scarce** but only six records between 1996 and 2013
A vocal bird over South Pond on 25th September was two days earlier than the first of 2013 and, along with records on 22nd October 2013 and 15th November 2010, was only the fourth record this decade (GE). The second of the year commuted between North Pond and Twinlet on 15th October and there was a further mobile bird on 5th November.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*  
**Bras Melyn**  
**Scarce** more than annual until 1971 but only recorded in nine years between 1972 and 2013  
1 trapped  
A bird calling as it flew high over North Plain on 26th October was probably the mobile first-year male trapped at the Farm the following day. Surprisingly, given the rarity of this species over the past 40 years, this is the fourth year in succession that it has been recorded with singles on 17th April and 14th September 2011, 15th March 2012, and on 20th May and 26th June 2013.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*  
**Bras y Gerddi**  
**Scarce** approximately 50 records but only five in spring  
**Earliest** 29th April 1987 **Latest** 15th November 2010 (4th September 2014)  
1936-1976: 6 trapped
A bird found on Home Meadow on 4th September visited North Plain before spending the afternoon in South Haven (GE et al.). This is one of only two birds recorded in the last ten years with the other a late bird logged on 15th November 2010.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*  
Bras y Cyrs

**Scarc Breeeder and Scarce Visitor** first bred in 1960, then in most years 1967-1980 and since 2005
11 trapped, 42 retrapped

It seems likely that the majority, if not all, of the Skokholm breeding population depart for at least some of the winter months; the first bird of the year was not logged until 7th March, the second was logged on the 10th and two were first seen on the 14th. March highs were of five logged on the 21st and four on the 31st. Ringing showed that seven birds returned to the trapping area this spring with two males and two females ringed as juveniles in 2013, a two year old male, a three year old male and a female of at least three years. Other birds regular in the trapping area last year, a male which was two years old and a female which was at least three years old, were not retrapped in 2014. There were five breeding territories mapped this season with pairs at South Pond, North Pond, East Bog, The Well and near North Haven. An additional male sang on five dates in early June between Orchid Bog and Little Bay Point but was not known to pair; the location of this bird in one of the largest Lesser Black-backed Gull colonies may well have impacted observations. Five pairs equals that recorded in 2013 (the highest total since the Island was recolonised in 2005), is three more than recorded in 2012 and equals the peak recorded in 1977. A female was seen with nest material at North Pond on 3rd June, chick provisioning was first witnessed at East Bog on 22nd June and birds were delivering food at the Well three days later. July saw fledglings in four territories and eight young were ringed during the month. The South Pond pair, which were not seen with fledglings this year, were however seen taking food to a nest on 13th August. 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, however up to three birds around the area of Horse Bottom in September may have been visitors. There were daily records of no more than nine birds in October and counts dropped off in November with a high of five on the 5th, only two on the 16th and three singles thereafter.
The Non-avian Report
The study of non-avian species remains an integral part of our understanding of the ecology of Skokholm. Records were collected throughout the season, either during targeted surveying or on a more ad-hoc basis during the daily census. Records are listed systematically below and, where appropriate, compared to observations made in 2013.

Invertebrates
Dragonflies and Damselflies
The removal of silt from North Pond at the end of last summer, together with repairs made to the existing small ponds around the farm, meant that water bodies were present for more of the year than in 2013, this despite it having been another exceptionally dry summer. It is perhaps no surprise therefore that a greater number and diversity of dragonfly and damselfly were recorded.

Common Blue Damselfly *Enallagma cyathigerum* (Charpentier, 1840)
Thompson described this as a species rarely encountered on Skokholm, although he also noted that there was breeding on the Island in 1994 when numerous adults and nymphs were recorded at North Pond (Thompson, 2007). This season saw 15 males at North Pond on the 17th and 18th June, along with a further lone male at East Bog on the 22nd. There were no records in 2013.

Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* (Vander Linden, 1820)
One near The Hills on 14th August was the only record of the year. There were two singles in 2013.

Migrant Hawker *Aeshna mixta* (Latreille, 1805)
There were six records during August, with two on the 4th the first of the season. A further eight were observed in September, with one at the Bluffs on the 17th the last to be logged. A total of 14 records makes Migrant Hawker the most abundant dragonfly of the 2014 season. The records were widespread, with individuals observed at the Lighthouse, on the South Coast Path, on the track at Crab Bay, at the Bluffs, at North Haven, on the Neck and at South Haven. Although this species was not recorded last year, it is thought to be becoming more regular on Skokholm as a result of range expansions on the mainland (Thompson, 2007).

Emperor Dragonfly *Anax imperator* (Leach, 1815)
Two on 17th June, one on the South Coast and one at North Pond, were the first of the year. There were two further singles later in the month. A male and female observed in copula north of the
Wheelhouse on 24th July represents the first breeding record for Skokholm. Two mid-August dragonflies were seen too briefly to allow for a confident identification, but were thought to be of this species. There were no 2013 records.

**Four-Spotted Chaser** *Libellula quadrimaculata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One at Crab Bay on 18th June was only the second record for Skokholm.

**Red-veined Darter** *Sympetrum fonscolombii* (Selys, 1840)
A female at North Pond on 17th June was only the second record of this species on Skokholm, following a male at the Bluffs in the July of last year. Two darters observed in copula over North Pond later on the same date were thought to be this species, although this could not be confirmed.

**Common Darter** *Sympetrum striolatum* (Charpentier, 1840)
A female at the Lighthouse on 29th June was the first of the season. There followed a male at South Pond on 3rd August and on 30th August a male was at the Well with a female at the Farm. Two further records of males, one at South Pond on 1st September and one logged on 10th September, were the last of the season. A further five darters were recorded during the year, although in each case views were not adequate enough to allow for specific identification. Although Thompson (2007) reported this to be the second most frequently sighted species of *Odonata* on the Island, there were only six singles this season and a lone male in 2013.

**Beetles**

**Minotaur Beetle** *Typhaeus typhoeus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Although not systematically surveyed, Minotaur Beetles were recorded throughout the year with higher numbers noted in spring and autumn. Emergent adults were particularly abundant on Home Meadow from September onwards and the days following damp weather in October saw hundreds of breeding tunnel spoil heaps appear there.

**Moths**

A combination of both active trapping and ad-hoc recording in the field led to a fine variety of species being logged this year, including several which were new for the Island. Most trapping was carried out using a battery powered Heath Trap which was set-up at various locations, although a
A 125w Mercury Vapour (MV) trap was also used when conditions looked particularly promising. Additionally vegetation was regularly swept both diurnally and nocturnally at various sites on the Island. Long-term Volunteer Billy Dykes collected the majority of the data and also produced the following report. Within the following text, ‘Nationally Rare’ refers to a species which occurs in 15 or fewer hectads (10x10km squares) in Great Britain, whilst a ‘Nationally Scarce’ species occurs in between 16 and 100 hectads.

15 **Orange Swift** *Hepialus sylvina* (Linnaeus, 1761)
The first record of the year was on 17th August when 20 were noted at dusk along the Lighthouse Track. A further 36 were logged at dusk over four subsequent dates during the month. This is likely to be an overlooked species on Skokholm, with just 16 documented records prior to 2013.

17 **Common Swift** *Hepialus lupulinus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of seven were recorded between the 16th and 26th May. First noted on the Island in 1910, this is traditionally the most commonly logged of the four *Hepialus* species which occur on Skokholm.

18 **Map-winged Swift** *Hepialus fusconebulosa* (De Geer, 1778)
An individual netted at dusk on 30th June was the first record of the year. A total of 27 were noted during the season, with a peak of four on 9th July. A late specimen was caught in the Ringing Hut on 5th August. Given the abundance of bracken on Skokholm, the larval food-plant, it is no surprise that this species regularly turns up around the Farm, although double-figure counts are surprisingly rare.

118 **Pygmy Sorrel Moth** *Enteucha acetosae* (Stainton, 1854)
The distinctive leaf-mines of this Nationally Rare Nepticulid were found on Common Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* in several areas of the Island during late July, with a particularly large concentration found around North Pond. Further visits to North Pond on several dates during August revealed a number of recently-emerged adult Nepticulinae moths amongst the grass which possibly belonged to this species. These are the first records for Skokholm.

170 **Five-spot Burnet** *Zygaena trifolii* (Esper, 1783)
One of the Island's most conspicuous day-flying moths, this species is often found abundantly on hot, mid-summer afternoons in the grassland surrounding North Pond. The first adult of the season
was recorded on 30th June and daily counts made during July produced a monthly total of 1567 and a peak of 213 on the 15th. Numbers declined sharply from late July and only 11 adults were logged in August. The last record of the year was of six on 7th August.

186 **Common Sweep** *Psyche casta* (Pallas, 1767)  
A single larval case found at The Bluffs on 19th July was the only record of the year and follows the first documented record for the Island in 2013. The larvae are known to feed on a variety of lichens and decaying plant matter. It would seem likely that this species is more abundant than records suggest.

230 **Pale-backed Clothes Moth** *Monopis crocicapitella* (Clemens, 1859)  
A single attracted to the Ringing Hut light on 21st July was the first record for Skokholm. The sprinkling of yellow scales on the forewing helps distinguish this species from the cleaner looking *M. obviella*, a species which is also less likely to be found in coastal habitats.

251 **Feathered Stem-moth** *Ochsenheimeria taurella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)  
Individuals disturbed by day from short grass at North Pond on the 26th and 28th August were the first to be recorded on Skokholm.

264 **Bindweed Bent-wing** *Bedellia somnulentella* (Zeller, 1847)  
An individual in the Ringing Hut on the night of 18th July was the first Skokholm record of this coastal species, the larvae of which feed on Bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis*.

383 **Thrift Clearwing** *Synansphecia muscaeformis* (Esper, 1783)  
Eight adults active along the North Coast on 5th June were the first of the year. A further 15 individuals were recorded during June and July, with two at Twinlet on 11th July being the last record. As in 2013, the Twinlet Bay area proved to be the most reliable site on the Island for this species. Given sufficient patience on suitably warm and calm days, moths could be observed perching on grass tufts around the flowering heads of the larval food-plant, Thrift *Armeria maritima*.

385 **Common Nettle-tap** *Anthophila fabriciana* (Linnaeus, 1767)  
Individuals were recorded around the Farm on the 6th, 7th and 11th July. Following a blank month in August, 15 were noted over five dates in September with a peak of ten on the 17th. A total of 16 logged on 2nd October were the last of the year.

386 **Vagrant Twitcher** *Tebenna micalis* (Mann, 1857)  
Two examples of this stunning moth were observed near the Well Hide on 9th August, flying around the larval food-plant, Common Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*. In Britain this species is considered a
A rare immigrant from southern Europe and these records occurred during a period of strong southwesterly winds. These were the first for Skokholm.

397 Speckled Fanner *Glyphipterix thrasonella* (Scopoli, 1763)
A total of 13 found flying around rushes near the East Bog Hide on 5th July represents the first record of this species for Skokholm. Two were observed in similar habitat at the Well on 7th July and the final record of the season was of an individual at the same location two days later.

464 Diamond-back Moth *Plutella xylostella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
It was a good season for this species with two influxes noted. The first record was of a minimum of 70 on 25th May and was followed by a much larger influx of over 1150 moths during the 19th and 20th July. Singles were then recorded on an irregular basis until the end of September.

472 Fleabane Smudge *Digitivalva pulicariae* (Klimesch, 1956)
A singleton disturbed from bracken at the Well on 20th July was apparently the first documented record for Skokholm and the only individual to be logged this season.

647 Brown House Moth *Hofmannophila pseudospretella* (Stainton, 1849)
This species was recorded in low numbers on an almost daily basis around the Farm during July, with a peak of three on the 3rd. An individual in the Well Hide on 12th August was the last record of the year. Surprisingly, this familiar species was not documented as being present until this season.

648 White-shouldered House Moth *Endrosis sarcitrella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A singleton on 21st July was the only individual logged during the season and the first confirmed record of this familiar indoor species on Skokholm.

672 Parsnip Moth *Depressaria heraclei* (Goeze, 1783)
Two individuals found at the Farm on 26th March were the first examples of this species on Skokholm. A further 23 were caught between 20th July and 8th August suggesting that this is a Skokholm breeder, possibly using Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* as the larval food-plant.

688 Common Flat-body *Agonopterix heracliana* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One in the Ringing Hut on 20th July was the first record for the Island. A minimum of 59 were subsequently observed around the Farm during the year, with a peak of 25 noted in the Ringing Hut.
on 30th July. The last record of the season was of four logged on 13th September. This species overwinters as an adult and can be found at this stage at almost any time of year.

695 Brown-spot Flat-body *Agonopterix alstromeriana* (Clerck, 1759)
A total of 16 were recorded irregularly around the Farm throughout the summer months. The peak count of seven occurred on 19th September. Considering the close proximity of each sighting to the larval food-plant, *Hemlock Conium maculatum*, it seems likely that this is a Skokholm breeder, albeit in lower numbers than recorded for *A. heracliana*.

714 Coastal Flat-body *Agonopterix yeatiana* (Fabricius, 1781)
The first ever Skokholm record came on 12th September when an individual was found attracted to the light of the Ringing Hut. This is an umbellifer-eating species, which may well be commoner on the Island than records suggest.

728 Bracken Neb *Monochroa cytisella* (Curtis, 1837)
This unassuming and easily overlooked Gelechid was recorded as new to the Island this season. A total of nine individuals were swept from bracken over seven dates during July.

776 Large Groundling *Teleiopsis diffinis* (Haworth, 1828)
Three taken at a light trap in Peter’s Bay on 19th July and a further three in a light trap at South Haven on 12th August were the first recorded occurrences of this species on Skokholm. Some authors recommend genitalia examination as the best means of eliminating similar confusion species, so it is worth noting that these specimens were identified on appearance alone and not dissected.

787 Cinereous Groundling *Bryotropha terrella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first ever Skokholm record was of 25 day flyers present along the west cliffs on 7th July. This species was subsequently found on numerous dates throughout July and August, with a peak of 48 recorded within a small area of turf at Little Bay on 8th August.

826 Coast Groundling *Caryocolum vicinella* (Douglas, 1851)
An individual found at rest in the Crab Bay Hide on 4th July was the first record for the Island. Another two individuals were found in the same hide later that week. During the season it became apparent that this species was more widespread than previously assumed, with single specimens turning up at Twinlet and North Gully on the 10th and 24th July respectively. A faded specimen was
found in the Quarry over a month later on 26th August. This Nationally Rare Gelechid utilises Sea Campion *Silene uniflora* as a food-plant.
This was yet another new species for the Skokholm list. A total of 318 were recorded during July with a peak of 75 attracted to the MV trap at the Well on the 21st. This species is easily disturbed from vegetation during the day.

1067 **Thyme Marble** *Celypha cespitana* (Hübner, 1817)
A fresh-looking individual disturbed from bracken near the Red Hut on 5th July is the only record of this tortrix on Skokholm.

1076 **Common Marble** *Celypha lacunana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
This species was recorded across the Island on various dates during July, August and September. Most records referred to daytime observations amongst bracken or grass, with notable counts of 15 on 20th July and 35 on 3rd August. Extreme dates for the season were 2nd July and 13th September.

1087 **Woodland Marble** *Orthotaenia undulana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A total of 12 individuals were swept at North Pond on 8th August; this constitutes the first record for Skokholm. Another individual was attracted to the MV trap in South Haven on 12th August. Due to its similarity to *C. lacunana*, only the most obvious moths with well-defined markings and a pale ground colour to the forewing were included in the above total. *O. undulana* does not appear to be anywhere near as abundant as *O. lacunana* on Skokholm.

1104 **Blotched Marble** *Endothenia quadrimaculana* (Haworth, 1811)
A singleton caught in the Ringing Hut on 1st August was retained until the following day when it was identified as a Blotched Marble; this is the first record of this species for Skokholm.

1109 **Shore Marble** *Lobesia littoralis* (Humphreys & Westwood, 1845)
The first record of the season was of a singleton amongst Thrift, the larval food-plant, on 30th June. From then on moths were frequently observed during daylight, until a record of three at the Neck on 18th September which was the last of the season. Monthly totals for July, August and September were 21, 26 and 28 respectively. Moths in September were noticeably smaller and more subtly marked, features characteristic of a second generation.

1184 **Thistle Bell** *Epiblema scutulana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Five attracted to the MV light at the Well on the night of 23rd August were the first to be recorded on the Island.

1197 **Marbled Bell** *Eucosma campoliliana* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Five individuals were discovered at lights around the Farm over four dates in July, with a peak of two on the 24th. This is the first time that this species has been recorded on Skokholm.
Hoary Bell *Eucosma cana* (Haworth, 1811)
A total of 12 individuals were found attracted to the Ringing Hut lights over six dates in July, with a peak of six on the 9th. These were the first records of this species on Skokholm.

Marbled Piercer *Cydia splendana* (Hübner, 1799)
A singleton attracted to the MV trap at the Well on 25th July was the first record for Skokholm. Given the lack of a suitable food-plant, and the species’ known tendency to disperse, it seems likely that this was a wanderer from the mainland.

Garden Grass-veneer *Chrysoteuchia culmella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Following a single observed last season, 2014 saw an increase in the number of records of this common grass-moth. Five flushed during daylight on 30th June were the first of the year. A total of 69 moths were subsequently observed over 17 dates during July, including a peak of 25 on the 7th. As is typical of this species, numbers declined sharply towards the end of the month and there were no August records.

Yellow Satin Veneer *Crambus perlella* (Scopoli, 1763)
A single attracted to the Ringing Hut lights on 24th July was the only record of the season and the first for Skokholm. This species is often overlooked as one of several common grass-moths, including *C. culmella* and *A. straminella*; as a result, it may well be more common than records suggest.

Pale-streak Grass-veneer *Agriphila selasella* (Hübner, 1813)
Singles swept from grassland at Little Bay on 20th July and at North Pond on 8th August were the first to be recorded on Skokholm. This species is less common than the superficially similar *A. tristella* and as such may be overlooked on the Island.

Pearl Veneer *Agriphila straminella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Following records in 1998 and 2000, the 2014 season saw a total of 24 moths recorded between 18th July and 26th August. There were peaks of five on 23rd July and 23rd August.
Common Grass-veneer *Agriphila tristella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first record of the season was of an individual found in the Ringing Hut on 5th August. A further 12 were recorded during August, with a peak of five caught at the Well on the 15th. The only other observation of this species on Skokholm was made on 8th August 2000.

Elbow-stripe Grass-veneer *Agriphila geniculea* (Haworth, 1811)
This was the most abundant *Agriphila* on Skokholm in 2014, with a total of 75 recorded between 7th August and 20th September along with a peak of 25 taken in the trap at North Haven on 4th September. Historically this is one of the better recorded micro-moths on Skokholm, with 14 records from the late 1990s documenting a total of 62 moths.

Meadow Grey *Scoparia pyralella* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first of the year was trapped on 4th June, with another on the 5th and a peak of 20 recorded on the 11th of the month. An individual found resting on the Cottage wall on 3rd July was the only other record of the year.

White-line Grey *Eudonia lineola* (Curtis, 1827)
This is a species with an extended flight season encompassing much of the summer and autumn. The first of the year was in the Ringing Hut on 2nd July. Small numbers were occasionally caught thereafter, until the last of the season on 12th September. An impressive peak of 13 was recorded at the Well on 21st July. Two documented in the July of 1997 are the only other recorded occurrences of this species on Skokholm.

Narrow-winged Grey *Eudonia angustea* (Curtis, 1827)
Singletons were attracted to light on five dates during September. These were the first Skokholm records since 13th August 1998.

Small Grey *Eudonia mercurella* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the season was caught on 10th July. Small numbers were then recorded regularly until the end of the month, including peaks of three on the 16th and 19th. The last of the season was found in the Ringing Hut on 8th August. These are the first records since one was logged on 17th May 1997.

Small Magpie *Eurhypara hortulata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the season was found on 23rd May, exactly a month earlier than the first record of 2013. There were then monthly totals of 26 in June, 50 in July and two in August. Despite this species' unmistakable appearance and conspicuous nature, daily counts only exceeded single figures on 9th July when a total of 14 were noted.

Ochreous Pearl *Anania crocealis* (Hübner, 1796)
An individual swept at night near the Cottage Heligoland on 7th July was the first record of this species for Skokholm.

Dusky Pearl *Udea prunalis* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An individual caught at the Well on 25th July was the only one to be logged this season. The first Skokholm record, logged on 27th July 2013, was also caught at the Well.

Rusty Dot Pearl *Udea ferrugalis* (Hübner, 1796)
A single on 30th July was the first of the year and marked the start of an impressive arrival which peaked in early August. A total of 23 were found along the North Coast on the morning of 4th August and 57 were logged three days later. At least 150 flushed from a single bush in North Gully on 8th August were part of an uncountable influx of moths to the Island that day. Lower numbers were
observed on most dates during September, with a peak of 45 on the 5th. There was one record in October, six at the Lighthouse during the night of 19th November and the last of an exceptional season was logged on 21st November.

1398  **Rush Veneer Nomophila noctuella** ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An individual at North Haven on 4th September was the first of the year and was followed by records on the 15th, 16th and 21st. A peak count of three was observed around the Neck on 23rd September.

1399  **Long-legged China-mark Dolicharthria punctalis** ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first of the year was logged on the Knoll on the evening of 18th July, with others at Little Bay the following day and at Peter's Bay on the 29th. An individual in South Haven on 3rd August was the last of the season. Four records from the northern half of the Island is a good showing for this low-density breeding species which utilises various low-growing herbaceous plants.

1405  **Mother of Pearl Pleuroptya rurals** (Scopoli, 1763)
Two found in Heligoland traps at dusk on 18th July were the first of the year. A third and final moth was caught at the Well on 25th July. This large and distinctive micro has proven to be scarce on Skokholm with singles logged on 20th July 1996, 20th July 1997, 23rd July 1999 and more recently on 10th August 2013.

1424  **Rosy Tabby Endotricha flammealis** ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Following a single netted at the Farm on 9th July, there followed a succession of almost daily records until the end of the month, with a peak of 26 caught at the Well on the 25th. An individual caught at the Well on 15th August was the only record of that month and the last of the year. This is a commonly encountered species on Skokholm, frequently attracted to lights after dark or flushed underfoot from the bracken surrounding paths.

1462  **Powdered Knot-horn Pempeliella dilutella** ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A well-worn specimen caught at Peter’s Bay on 29th July is the first Island record of this fairly widespread coastal pyralid which utilises Thyme *Thymus vulgaris* as its larval food-plant.
Chalk Knot-horn *Phycitodes maritima* (Tengström, 1848)
Two on 9th August were the first to be recorded on the Island and were followed by further singles on the 14th and 23rd. This small pyralid, distinguished from members of the same genus by somewhat subtle external differences, is likely to be breeding on the Island’s abundant stands of Ragwort.

Scarce Light Plume *Crombrugghia laetus* (Zeller, 1847)
On 22nd July a small plume moth was swept from vegetation near the Well Stream. The specimen was dissected by the county moth recorder Robin Taylor and identified as a female Scarce Light Plume; this was confirmed by Colin Hart, a leading authority on Plume moths. This species breeds in southern Europe and North Africa and is a rare migrant to UK shores. A first for the Island, this record also represents the second for Pembrokeshire following one in the north of the county in June 2011. There had only been 20 recorded occurrences in the United Kingdom prior to 2009.

Beautiful Plume *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* (Hübner, 1813)
This colourful and fairly distinctive plume moth was recorded as new for Skokholm when two were caught in Peter’s Bay on 29th July. A late individual was taken on 13th October.

Common Plume *Emmelina monodactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758)
One caught in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 24th August represented the first record of this species for Skokholm.

Mullein Wave *Scopula marginepunctata* (Goeze, 1781)
One trapped on 4th June was the first of the year and occurred almost a full month earlier than the first of 2013. Five further individuals were caught at light during the season: two in July, two in August and the last of the year on 4th September.

Small Fan-footed Wave *Idaea biselata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
One trapped at Peter’s Bay on 29th July was the only record of the season and the first since 1990.

Single-dotted Wave *Idaea dimidiata* (Hufnagel, 1767)
Two found in the Wheelhouse on 9th July were the third and fourth records for Skokholm following individuals in 1937 and 1960. Four more individuals attracted to light during July suggested that a local population was present.

1713  **Riband Wave** *Idaea aversata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first record of the year was of two found in the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 7th July, the same date as the only record of 2013. Individuals were trapped on three further dates in July.

1719  **Oblique Carpet** *Orthonama vittata* (Borkhausen, 1794)
One trapped in South Haven on 15th September proved to be only the third Skokholm record following individuals logged in 1937 and 1960.

1725  **Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet** *Xanthorhoe ferrugata* (Clerck, 1759)
An individual attracted to the Wheelhouse lights on 11th July was the first of the year. There followed irregular occurrences at light around the Farm until the last of the season logged on 4th September. A peak of nine were trapped at the Well on 25th July. There were no records of Red Twin-spot Carpet *X. spadicearia* this year, a species which remains very much rarer than *X. ferrugata* on Skokholm.

1732  **Shaded Broad-bar** *Scotop Terryx chenopodiata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A fresh specimen found in the Ringing Hut on the morning of 27th July was the first record for the Island. This is a common grassland species throughout much of Britain, but has rather impressively managed to remain undetected on Skokholm until 2014.

1742  **Yellow Shell** *Campctogramma bilineata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
This species is possibly the most widespread diurnal resident on Skokholm, easily flushed from bracken during the summer. The first three of the year were logged on 2nd June. There were daily sightings from 10th June until the end of the month and a monthly total of 186. Moths were noted on a daily basis throughout July, with a peak of 167 on the 10th and a monthly total of 611; this was significantly higher than the total of 202 logged in July 2013. Daily sightings continued, albeit in lower numbers, until 17th August, after which numbers dropped significantly. A late record of one on 6th September was the last of the season.

1808  **Sandy Carpet** *Perizoma flavofasciata* (Thunberg, 1792)
One found in the Cottage on 30th June was followed by a second at the Well on 5th July. Prior to these records the only documented occurrences of this species were in 1910, 1912 and 1937.

1811  **Slender Pug** *Eupithecia tenuiata* (Hübner, 1813)
A well-marked specimen found in the Drying Room on 30th July was the first documented record for Skokholm.

**1823** **Netted Pug** *Eupithecia venosata* (Fabricius, 1787)
An individual taken at the Lighthouse on 25th May was the sole record of the year. This stunning, Nationally Scarce species uses Sea Campion as a larval food-plant and is probably resident on Skokholm, albeit at low densities.

**1825** **Lime-speck Pug** *Eupithecia centaureata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The first of the year was attracted to light on 4th June. This was followed by regular sightings around the Farm complex until mid-September, with a peak of six noted on 15th August. Following only a single record last year, 2014 proved a good year for this species.

**1830** **Wormwood Pug** *Eupithecia absinthiata* (Clerck, 1759)
Two on 4th July were the first records of the year. There were then daily sightings until the end of the month and a peak of 14 on the 25th. Records in August and September were few, with a late moth on 15th September the last of the year. A total of 50 were recorded during the year, a fine showing for this species on Skokholm.

**1837** **Grey Pug** *Eupithecia subfuscata* (Haworth, 1809)
An individual found in the Library on 12th July was the first record for Skokholm. A further five were attracted to light around the Farm during the second half of the month, perhaps suggesting that a breeding population of this indistinctly marked Pug exists on the Island.

**1862** **Double-striped Pug** *Gymnoscelis rufifasciata* (Haworth, 1809)
An individual found in the Ringing Hut on 7th August was the first of three records made in 2014. This species is rarely noted on Skokholm, with a second-brood individual on 3rd August 2013 being the only record since September 2000.

**1884** **Magpie Moth** *Abraxas grossulariata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Following a blank year in 2013, this stunning moth was logged on two occasions; a single flew along the cliffs at Little Bay on 18th July and one was caught at the Well on the night of the 25th. This species is traditionally regarded as a fairly common Skokholm resident, with historical records dating back to 1910.

**1902** **Brown Silver-line** *Petrophora chlorosata* (Scopoli, 1763)
The first record of the year was of two on 15th May. Numbers peaked at 20 on 11th June but dwindled in July when there were 13 on the 1st, five on the 2nd and two on the 15th. This is a common moth on Skokholm and is readily flushed from bracken in early summer.
1917  **Early Thorn** *Selenia dentaria* (Fabricius, 1775)
One caught at the Well on 21st July was the only record of the year and appears to be the first since 1968.

1921  **Scalloped Oak** *Crocallis elinguaria* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An individual caught at the Well on 25th July proved to be only the third record for Skokholm following singles in 1937 and 1960.

1931  **Peppered Moth** *Biston betularia* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An extremely worn adult was on an outside wall of the Lighthouse on 30th July; this represents only the second Island record following one in 1992. Given the lack of a suitable food-plant on Skokholm, and the moth's exhaustive state, vagrancy from mainland Pembrokeshire would seem probable.

1937  **Willow Beauty** *Peribatodes rhomboidaria* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A fresh looking individual found in the Ringing Hut on 8th August was the only record of the year and only the second documented occurrence of this species on Skokholm. A moth caught on 29th July 1996 is the only other record.

1964  **Annulet** *Charissa obscurata* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One found at the Lighthouse on 28th July was followed by two caught in a moth trap at Peter's Bay the following night. There are seven previous Skokholm records of this coastal species, with an individual on 30th July 1996 being the most recent.

1972  **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** *Agrius convolvuli* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A heavily worn individual was a surprise find in the Well Heligoland on 9th August and occurred during a period of unsettled, stormy weather. Convolvulus Hawk-moths are regular immigrants to the UK coast during autumn, but this represents only the second Island record after a single in 1940.
1984  **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An individual at the Lighthouse on 24th May was the first in what was to become another excellent year for this immigrant species on Skokholm. Singles were recorded on eight dates during June, one date in July and two dates in August. Up to three individuals were then noted on an almost daily basis until 17th September, with the higher counts coinciding with arrivals of Red Admiral. One at the Lime Kiln on 2nd November was a late record for Skokholm.

1994  **Buff-tip** *Phalera bucephala* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Up to 15 caterpillars were found feeding on the willows in the Well Heligoland on 9th September. This is only the third documented Island record following caterpillars photographed in the same area in September 2011 and an adult moth seen in 1992.

2026  **Vapourer** *Orgyia antiqua* (Linnaeus, 1758)
An adult male taken in a trap on 21st July was the only record of the year and the first since 1996.

2035  **Round-winged Muslin** *Thumatha senex* (Hübner, 1808)
A fresh adult caught at the Well on 25th July was the first record for Skokholm. This is a species typical of wetlands and marshes.

2037  **Rosy Footman** *Miltochrista miniata* (Forster, 1771)
A smart adult caught at the Well on 25th July was the first record for Skokholm. Interestingly, Bardsey Island also trapped their first Rosy Footman a week later.

2044  **Dingy Footman** *Eilema griseola* (Hübner, 1803)
Given the abundance and diversity of lichens, Skokholm would seem like ideal habitat for the footman family. However a Dingy Footman caught at the Well on 25th July was, rather surprisingly, the first record of this species on the Island.

2045  **Hoary Footman** *Eilema caniola* (Hübner, 1808)
The first of the year was caught at Peter’s Bay on 29th July and another was attracted to light during a Storm Petrel ringing session on 6th August; these are the first documented records since 1968. Away from the home counties of England, this Nationally Scarce species is found chiefly in maritime habitats where it utilises cliff-top lichens as larval food.
2050 Common Footman *Eilema lurideola* (Zincken, 1817)
One caught at the Well on 25th July was the only record of the year and only the third record for the Island following singles in 1998 and 1999.

2057 Garden Tiger *Arctia caja* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of nine moths caught at the Well over two nights in late July were the only individuals to be logged this season. There are 16 historical records dating from between 1910 and 2000.

2060 White Ermine *Spilosoma lubricipeda* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was along the Lighthouse Track on 18th May. There were then regular sightings throughout the summer, with a peak of 14 logged on 1st July. A rather late second generation individual was in the Ringing Hut on 19th September.

2061 Buff Ermine *Spilosoma luteum* (Hufnagel, 1766)
Six trapped between the 3rd and 4th June were the first of the year and, as with White Ermine, there were fairly regular sightings around the Farm throughout the summer. A very late second generation individual was noted on 5th October.

2064 Ruby Tiger *Phragmatobia fuliginosa* (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were a total of 11 records during the season, all during July, with a peak of six at Peter’s Bay on the 29th. There were four recorded during 2013.

2069 Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first adults were noted on 14th May, over a month earlier than in 2013, and there followed daily sightings until the end of the month. June saw almost daily double-figure counts, with a peak of 26 on the 5th and the first caterpillar of the year was recorded on the 30th. The final adult of the year was noted on 7th July. Caterpillar numbers increased to an impressive peak of 350 at Winter Pond on 3rd July and over 100 were logged on several dates during the month. A total of 13 caterpillars noted in the first week of August were the last of the year. Given the extent of the ragwort in 2013, this species proved surprisingly scarce last season. However this year, when ragwort was much scarcer, there were significantly more caterpillars logged; perhaps as a result, larvae were found to be feeding on a range of food-plants, including trefoils and clovers. On several occasions larvae were seen to congregate around Manx Shearwater carcasses.

2080 Square-spot Dart *Euxoa obelisca grisea* (Tutt, 1902)
The first of the season was netted from the Cottage Buddleia on 4th August. Two were trapped in South Haven on the 12th and an impressive 68 were caught at the Well on the 23rd. The last three of the year were trapped in South Haven on 15th September. This Nationally Scarce coastal Noctuid is abundant on Skokholm and is usually the most commonly encountered species during early autumn trapping sessions.

2087 Turnip Moth *Agrotis segetum* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Adults were trapped on five occasions; two logged in July, two in September and one in October represents a good year for this surprisingly scarce Skokholm resident. There are just six records of this species in the historical database, the larvae of which feed on a variety of herbaceous plants.

2089 Heart & Dart *Agrotis exclamationis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was found on 15th July and six more were caught during trapping sessions until the end of the month. Historically this species has proven a common Skokholm resident, although there was only one record last year.
Crescent Dart *Agrotis trux lunigera* (Stephens, 1829)
A dark form individual in the Ringing Hut on 16th July was the first of the year. There were 12 trapped on 21st July, 11 on the 25th and two at the Well on 15th August were the last of the year. This is a fairly common, late-summer moth along the Welsh coast. Skokholm records date back to 1910.

The Flame *Axylia putris* (Linnaeus, 1761)
Two near the Red Hut at dusk on 3rd July were the first of the year and the only record of the summer. A small second generation emergence was evident in September, with two trapped on the 4th and one on the 15th.

Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura plecta* (Linnaeus, 1761)
The first of the year was flying at dusk on 12th July. There followed a further 48 over seven dates in August and September, with a last individual on 15th September. Numbers peaked in mid-August, with 15 trapped at the Well on the 15th part of an impressive second generation emergence.

Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Although historically this is one of the most frequently recorded Noctuids on Skokholm, it proved another mediocre year for the species. One on the Wheelhouse Heligoland on 18th July was the first of the season and there were infrequent records during August and September. Nine trapped on 23rd August was the highest count of 2014.

Lesser Yellow Underwing *Noctua comes* (Hübner, 1813)
There were four records during the year; one was in the Ringing Hut on 3rd July, singles were trapped on 26th July and 12th August and the last of the year was caught at North Haven on 4th September.

Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthe* (Borkhausen, 1792)
Three trapped at the Well on 23rd August was the only record of the year. There are six historical records of this species on Skokholm, the most recent of which was logged on 9th August 2000.

Autumnal Rustic *Eugnorisma glareosa* (Esper, 1788)
Two trapped on 15th September were the only records of the year and the first since 2000. This species was only discovered on the Island in 1990 and was recorded on five occasions during the decade. It has subsequently proven a rare find on Skokholm.

True Lover's Knot *Lycophotia porphyrea* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
The only record of the year was of an individual trapped at the Well on 25th July. This species, which utilises heather as a food-plant, has been recorded on 13 previous occasions on Skokholm, most recently in July 2000.

Pearly Underwing *Peridroma saucia* (Hübner, 1808)
This fairly regular immigrant from mainland Europe was recorded only once this season, with an individual trapped in South Haven on 15th September. This was the first to be logged since one on 6th October 2000.

Small Square-spot *Diarsia rubi* (Vieweg, 1790)
One on 4th August was the first of the year. Moths were subsequently trapped on a regular basis until late-September and there was a peak of 19 on 23rd August.

Setaceous Hebrew Character *Xestia c-nigrum* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Four trapped at the Well on 15th August were the first of the year. Four more were taken at light on 23rd August and two singles were logged on the 3rd and 15th September. This rounded off what was another mediocre year for this nettle eating species. There was just one record in 2013.
Double Square-spot *Xestia triangulum* (Hufnagel, 1766)
One trapped at the Well on 25th July was a new species for Skokholm. It is perhaps surprising that this species has not been recorded on the Island before given that the larvae are generalist feeders and that it is common on mainland Pembrokeshire.

Square-spot Rustic *Xestia xanthographa* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An individual trapped in South Haven on 15th September was the only record of the year and the first since two were logged in September 2000.

Bright-line Brown-eye *Lacanobia oleracea* (Linnaeus, 1758)
A total of 58 were caught during the season, with the first noted on 12th June. This is a common Skokholm resident with peaks of 12 and ten noted on 27th June and 23rd August respectively.

Broom Moth *Melanchra pisi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first adult of the year was trapped on 3rd June and seven were taken the following night. The first caterpillar was noted in Crab Bay on 1st July and further developing larvae were recorded eating bracken on a number of occasions. The last caterpillars logged were two at the Well on 4th August. An extremely late and freshly emerged adult was a surprise find in the Ringing Hut on 19th September; this was well outside of the normal spring flight period and coincided with a number of other unseasonal lepidoptera records logged around Britain.

The Campion *Hadena rivularis* (Fabricius, 1775)
Two at the Lighthouse on 18th May were the first of the year. There were regular sightings during July including impressive trapping totals of 86 on the 21st, 240 on the 25th and 42 on the 29th. The stunning golden aberrant pictured below was found on 26th July.
Pod Lover Hadena perplexa capsophila ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A subspecies of Tawny Shears H. perplexa, the Pod Lover was first recorded at the Lighthouse on 19th May. A further 32 were caught at the Well on 21st July, there were occasional sightings in August and two records came in late-September.

Marbled Coronet Hadena confusa (Hufnagel, 1766)
There were five moths caught in 2014; two were at the Well on 21st July and three were at the same site on 25th July. With the exception of 1993, this campion eating species was recorded annually between 1990 and 2000.

The Lychnis Hadena bicruris (Hufnagel, 1766)
Two trapped on 4th June was the only record of this species in 2014. With only five historical records prior to 2013, it would seem as if this is a genuinely scarce Skokholm resident, although it may well be overlooked during July amongst large catches of The Campion.

Antler Moth Cerapteryx graminis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Two trapped at the Well on 25th July was the only record of the year. Logged in only six years since 1990, this remains a scarce resident on Skokholm.

The Clay Mythimna ferrago (Fabricius, 1787)
One trapped at the Well on 15th July was the first of the year and was followed by singles on the 21st and 25th. This represents a good year for this species as there are only six previous Island records.

The Delicate Mythimna vitellina (Hübner, 1808)
An individual found outside the Cottage on 24th October was the only record this year. There are four previous records of this autumnal immigrant on Skokholm with moths taken in 1937, 1960, 1992 and most recently an individual was at the Wheelhouse lights on 4th October 2013.

Smoky Wainscot Mythimna impura (Hübner, 1808)
In July there were singles at the Well on the 15th and 21st and three were trapped there on the 25th.

Common Wainscot Mythimna pallens (Linnaeus, 1758)
One trapped in North Haven on 4th September was the first of the year. A further two were trapped at South Haven later in the month. Records suggest that Common Wainscot is less common on Skokholm than its close relative, Smoky Wainscot.

Star-wort Cucullia asteris ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One netted near the Farm at dusk on 30th June was the first of the year. Five more were caught during July, with a peak of two trapped at the Well on the 21st. This scarce coastal speciality is being recorded on Skokholm with increasing regularity and presumably benefits from the plentiful supply of Goldenrod Solidago virgaurea.

Large Ranunculus Polymixis flavicincta ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
An impressive total of 16 caught at South Haven on 15th September were the first of the year. Four were attracted to the Ringing Hut lights on 19th September and the last of the year was trapped on 5th October. There are only seven previous Skokholm records, although this species’ late flight period may lead to under-recording.

Black-banded Polymixis xanthomista (Gregson, 1869)
This Nationally Rare, Thrift-eating moth is restricted to cliff-tops and beaches along the southwest coasts of England and Wales; it is locally common on Skokholm. A total of 16 were recorded over
seven dates in September with a peak of eight at South Haven on the 15th. The photograph below includes a Large Ranunculus (right) for comparison.

2255  **Feathered Ranunculus Polymixis lichenea** (Hübner, 1813)
An individual caught on 5th October was the only record of the year and the first since several were logged in September 2000.

2270  **Lunar Underwing Omphaloscelis lunosa** (Haworth, 1809)
An individual found in the Ringing Hut on 15th September was surprisingly the only record this year of what has previously proven to be a regular autumn resident on Skokholm.

2289  **Knot Grass Acronicta rumicis** (Linnaeus, 1758)
An adult at the Farm on 8th June was the first of the year and three logged on 21st July was the peak. There were several sightings in autumn, with the last caught on 15th September. Also of note was a caterpillar found feeding on sorrel along the North Pond wall on 10th July; this is the first confirmed record of breeding on the Island.

2295  **Marbled Green Cryphia muralis** (Forster, 1771)
An individual on 20th July was the first of the year and further singletons were recorded on the 25th and 29th July and 5th August. This is a common maritime moth whose larvae feed on lichens.

2305  **Small Angle Shades Euxyleia lucipara** (Linnaeus, 1758)
There were five records during the 2014 season. The first was caught on 2nd July and an individual trapped on 25th July was the only other summer record. Three were caught in the Ringing Hut in September.

2306  **Angle Shades Phlogophora meticulosa** (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was caught at the Well on 23rd August. Individuals on the 3rd and 4th September were the only others to be noted during the season. This was a disappointing turnout for this typically common Skokholm resident.
2321  **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha* (Hufnagel, 1766)
A total of 84 were recorded over 13 dates during the season, with the first caught in the Ringing Hut on 1st July and a peak of 26 caught at the Well on 21st July.

2322  **Light Arches** *Apamea lithoxylaea* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
Four moths were trapped during July; a single on the 3rd, two on the 15th and a single on the 19th were the first Skokholm records since three were taken on 27th June 1996.

2341  **Cloaked Minor** *Mesoligia furuncula* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One caught at the Well on 25th July was the only record of the year and the fourth record for Skokholm following moths in 1937, 1960 and 1996.

2342  **Rosy Minor** *Mesoligia literosa* (Haworth, 1809)
An individual recorded on the same night as the Cloaked Minor was the only record of 2014 and the first since one was caught on 13th August 1998.

2350  **Small Wainscot** *Chortodes pygmina* (Haworth, 1809)
One in the Ringing Hut on 26th July was the first of the year. Six were subsequently trapped at the Well on 23rd August. This species, which prefers damp habitats where sedges grow, was recorded abundantly at the end of the last century, although it has rarely been recorded since.

2352  **Dusky Sallow** *Eremobia ochroleuca* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
A relatively fresh adult caught at the Well on 21st July was the first record for Skokholm. It was also the first Pembrokeshire record for 139 years, following one near Tenby in 1875.

2353  **Flounced Rustic** *Luperina testacea* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775)
One at the Well on 15th August was the first of the year. Two were caught at the same location on 23rd August and the last of the year was in South Haven on 15th September.
2361  **Rosy Rustic** *Hydraea micacea* (Esper, 1789)
A stunning adult trapped in North Haven on 4\(^{th}\) September was the sole 2014 record of this species which feeds in the roots of low-growing plants. Although Rosy Rustic were recorded regularly between 1996 and 2000, this is the first record since.

2368  **The Crescent** *Celaena leucostigma* (Hübner, 1808)
An individual trapped at the Well on 25\(^{th}\) July was only the fourth record for Skokholm. There is no reason why the damp and boggy conditions of the Well should not provide ample breeding habitat for this localised wetland species.

2373  **Webb’s Wainscot** *Archanara sparganii* (Esper, 1790)
This scarce autumnal Wainscot is typically associated with large reed-beds and marshland; a dark form individual trapped on Home Meadow on 27\(^{th}\) August was thus a surprise first for Skokholm. It was followed five days later by a second individual attracted to the Ringing Hut lights. Interestingly, records of this species on Skomer are believed to relate to moths accidently imported with sedges and irises; this may well be the case on Skokholm.
2379  **Small Rufous** *Coenobia rufa* (Haworth, 1809)
   A new species for Skokholm, one was trapped in suitable breeding habitat at the Well on 25th July.

2387  **Mottled Rustic** *Caradrina morpheus* (Hufnagel, 1766)
   One trapped on 4th June was the only record of 2014. Trapping in some years has revealed a healthy population of this species on Skokholm, for example 52 were caught on 29th July 1996.

2434  **Burnished Brass** *Diachrysia chrysitis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
   One at the Well on 18th July was the first of the year and another was caught there on the 25th. There were no August records, but 11 trapped in North Haven on 4th September and two in the Ringing Hut later in the month were suggestive of a second generation emergence.

2441  **Silver Y** *Autographa gamma* (Linnaeus, 1758)
   A very common immigrant to Skokholm, one on 25th May was the first of the year. Six were recorded in June (14 in 2013), 13 in July (37 in 2013), 39 in August (377 in 2013), 80 in September (94 in 2013) and three in October (15 in 2013). Despite the good numbers of other immigrants recorded during this season, it was a fairly poor year for Silver Y compared with 2013.

2450  **The Spectacle** *Abrostola tripartita* (Hufnagel, 1766)
   A total of 11 moths recorded over seven dates during July and August was an improvement on the single record of 2013 and more in line with the large number of records generated on Skokholm between 1996 and 2000 (probably owing to increased recorder effort). Nettles are the food-plant.

2462  **Mother Shipton** *Callistege mi* (Clerck, 1759)
   A caterpillar photographed on the Lighthouse track on 17th August was the sole record of the year and the first since 1992. The larvae feed on various low-growing herbaceous plants, but the adult moths are surprisingly scarce on Skokholm.

2477  **The Snout** *Hypena proboscidalis* (Linnaeus, 1758)
   An individual on 3rd July was the only record of what is a seldom encountered species on Skokholm. Prior to last year’s sighting, only three historical records existed (in 1910, 1912 and 1937). This is perhaps surprising given the abundance of nettles on the Island.

**Aggregates and species groups**

185x  **Luffia agg.**
   The distinctive larval case of a member of the genus *Luffia* was found on the scree slope at Crab Bay during a Storm Petrel monitoring visit on 30th July. Known distributions and overall likelihood would very much favour *L. ferchaultella* as being the species concerned, however there remains the possibility of confusion with the rare and poorly known *L. lapidella*.

489x  **Coleophora sp.**
   Unidentified moths of the tricky genus *Coleophora* were regularly swept from Goldenrod throughout August and September. Species-level identification was not achieved.

1016x **Cnephasia agg.**
   A total of 65 were found around the Farm complex during July, with peaks of 15 logged on the 2nd and 21st. The genus *Cnephasia* is another troublesome group which exhibits a great degree of overlap in external markings between species; dissection is often necessary to reach species-level identification. No specimens were taken for further examination in 2014 and so the records must remain labelled as 'Cnephasia agg.'.
A tortrix belonging to the genus *Bactra* was swept from long grass at the Well on 3rd August. Due to the variable nature of this genus, and the fact that the specimen was not retained, it must remain unidentified.

**Common Rustic agg. Mesapamea secalis agg.** (Esper, 1788)
A total of 33 moths were noted over seven dates between 7th July and 4th September, with a peak of 21 caught at the Well on 15th August. None were retained for dissection and so all must remain labelled as aggregates.

**The Uncertain/Rustic Hoplodrina agg.** (Brahm, 1791)
The large numbers of *Hoplodrina* that are trapped in July and August makes separating the extremely similar Rustic *H. blanda* from The Uncertain *H. alsines* a tricky and time-consuming process; they are thus treated as an aggregate to save time. One in the Ringing Hut on 10th July was the first of the year. There were peaks of 285 at the Well on 25th July and 55 in Peter’s Bay on 29th July. Six at the Well on 15th August were the last of the year. As in 2013, the majority of individuals seemed to be Rustics, but The Uncertain was almost certainly again present.

**Butterflies**

It again proved a good year for butterflies on Skokholm. The spring weather was calmer and milder than in 2013 and all bar two species were noted much earlier in the season this year. Autumn was also comparatively mild and saw numbers peak later than in 2013. There were again notable influxes of migrants, although species composition differed to that seen last season and fewer species were logged. Nationally 2014 was a mixed year for butterflies with several declines observed in our common breeding species, although this may in part reflect the bumper year of 2013 which saw significant increases (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a).

Skokholm butterfly records were again included in the daily Log and an account of each species recorded is listed systematically below. The Maximum Daily Count refers to the highest number of individuals seen on any day of that month and butterfly-days are the cumulative number of butterflies seen in a defined period of time. Within each table, totals for 2013 are listed in parenthesis for comparison.

**Clouded Yellow Colias croceus** (Geoffroy, 1785)
One on Home Meadow on 19th August was the first of the year and arrived six days earlier than the first of 2013. There were three further butterfly-days in August including a high of two on the 28th when one was at the Lighthouse and one at the Well. Six butterfly-days were logged in September, all within the first five days of the month. Three individuals were recorded during October, with one
on the Neck on the 19th the last of the season. A grand total of 13 butterfly-days equals that observed in 1998, the best year on record (Thompson, 2007). This is a migratory species which arrives in varying numbers from the Continent each year, the totals logged being heavily influenced by the prevailing weather patterns. The Skokholm records suggest that this species is becoming more regular.

**Large White** *Pieris brassicae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was logged on 2nd June, 26 days later than in 2013, although this then proved to be the most abundant white butterfly of the season. The peak monthly count occurred during September when 105 second generation butterfly-days were logged. The maximum daily count also peaked during this month, with 34 butterflies logged on the 17th. Overall there was a 35% decline in numbers compared with 2013, a slightly better showing than in the rest of the UK where surveys suggested that this species had undergone a 65% decline (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a).

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**Small White** *Pieris rapae* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year was logged on 21st July, three days later than in 2013. A peak of 14 individuals on 19th September was 65% down on the peak of 2013 which occurred in the same month. Overall there was a 71% decline in the total number of butterfly days logged compared with last season. A similar 60% decline was observed nationally (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a).

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**Green-veined White** *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758)
The first of the year at the Well on 20th April was 29 days earlier than that of 2013. As noted last year, the peak day count and highest butterfly-days total were logged in July. There followed a late second peak in September which may have been attributable in part to the mild weather; there was just a single September record in 2013. A total of 158 butterfly-days during the season was exactly twice that observed last year and a contrast to the national trend which showed a 47% decline (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a). Green-veined White was thus the only white butterfly on Skokholm to have shown an increase this year.

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**Small Copper** *Lycaena phlaeas* (Linnaeus, 1761)
It was a disappointing year for this species considering the fantastic season witnessed in 2013. As with the majority of other common species, the first record occurred much earlier in the year; one on 3rd May was 15 days earlier than last year. However maximum daily counts were significantly
lower throughout the season, with the exception of September when numbers were slightly up. Overall a 72% reduction in numbers was observed, although a total of 1601 butterfly-days still made Small Copper the third most abundant species of butterfly on Skokholm.

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**Common Blue Polyommatus icarus** (Rottemburg, 1775)
Following just one record of Common Blue in 2013, this season saw a welcome increase in the number logged. A single at the Red Hut on 9th June was the first of four logged during the month. A further three were recorded in August, with one on Home Meadow on the 5th noted as being exceedingly fresh. A single on 7th September was the last of the season and brought the year total to eight. The larval food-plant of the Common Blue, Bird’s-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, is common on the Island, although there was no evidence of breeding and this species remains surprisingly scarce.

**Painted Lady Vanessa cardui** (Linnaeus, 1758)
This year saw numbers similar overall to those recorded last season, however the first individual logged, at the Lighthouse on 24th May, was 25 days earlier than the first of 2013. There were records in seven months of the season this year, with 34% of butterflies occurring in August; in 2013 there were records in only five months, with over half occurring in August. Considering the very mild spring and warm autumn experienced in 2014, this protracted season came as little surprise; however four on 22nd November were very unusual on Skokholm.

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**Small Tortoiseshell Aglais urticae** (Linnaeus, 1758)
This was the first butterfly to be logged on the Island in 2014; almost certainly as a result of the milder spring experienced this year, the first two butterflies were noted on 9th March, 14 days
before the first of 2013. By the end of the season 515 butterfly-days had been logged, a 48% increase on the 2013 total which mirrored the trend observed nationally. A maximum day count of 68 on 13th August (60 of which were in South Haven) exceeded the highest count of 2013 by 224%.

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Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Four individuals on 10th March and two on the 11th were the first of the season; the first record came 24 days earlier than the first of 2013. September saw a huge influx of Red Admirals to the Island when obvious passage was noted and late evenings would see westerly-facing rock faces covered in butterflies. The peak count of 409 on 16th September included 146 on the Neck, 83 at Crab Bay, 30 at the Farm and over 150 at the Lighthouse, although the total number present on the Island was certainly much higher. This was more than eight times the 2013 peak and, with well over 100 individuals recorded on nine dates during September, it was no surprise that the 3598 butterfly-days logged during the season was 303% higher than the 2013 total and that Red Admiral was the most abundant butterfly on Skokholm in 2014. Jackdaws in the East Bog area were observed hunting this plentiful insect and several incomplete wings were seen scattered along the track in September.

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Peacock *Inachis io* (Linnaeus, 1758)

One on 29th March was the first of the season and was 48 days earlier than the first of 2013. Although there were only single-figure daily counts recorded during the year, 49 butterfly-days in July was more than 16 times that logged in the same month of 2013 and exceeded the number of butterfly-days logged in the whole 2013 season. Following a poor breeding season in 2012, this species increased by 870% on Skokholm last year and there was a further 129% rise this season. Nationally a 30% decline was recorded (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a).

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<td>18</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>(29)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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Speckled Wood *Pararge aegeria* (Linnaeus, 1758)

One on 9th September was the only record of the season. This remains a scarce species on Skokholm, only occurring every few years and with a recent high of four logged in 2013.

Meadow Brown *Maniola jurtina* (Linnaeus, 1758)

One in the Courtyard on 16th June was the first of 281 June butterfly-days; this species was not logged until July in 2013. Daily counts peaked on 30th July when 181 were documented. A total of 3811 butterfly-days were logged during the season, 72% more than in 2013. For a second year
running the Skokholm data went against the national trend which showed a further 38% decline following a 33% decline in 2013 (Butterfly Conservation, 2014a).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>(171)</td>
<td>(40)</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(1753)</td>
<td>(455)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Additional Invertebrates**

The following species were discovered during an Invertebrate Course led by John Harper during late April and early May. They are thought to be previously undocumented on Skokholm.

**Hedgehog Slug Arion intermedius**
One was found in the Courtyard on 9th May.

**Spotted Snake Millipede Blaniulus gluttulatus**
One at the Farm on 8th May was the first to be documented on Skokholm.

**Banded Centipede Lithobius variegatus**
This common centipede was found at several sites on the Island during May, however there appears to be no mention of its presence in the relevant records.

**Polydesmus sp.**
Another first for the Island, one of the Polydesmus or flat-backed millipedes was found on 26th April but was not identified to species level.
Herpetofauna

Amphibians

Common Frog *Rana temporaria*

Four patches of spawn and many newly hatched tadpoles were recorded in South Pond on 7th March. Three clumps were located in a different area of South Pond on the 9th. An adult frog observed along the Lighthouse Track was the only one to be logged during the season. Such a paucity of adult records is perhaps due to the particularly severe winter of 2012/2013; Thompson (2007) regularly logged small numbers of adult frogs whereas there have only been two sightings in the last two years. Given the milder weather and that the ponds remained wetter for longer this season, it is hoped that numbers will again increase.

Reptiles

Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*

The majority of the refugia installed by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust were unfortunately lost to the extremely windy weather which hit Pembrokeshire over the winter. Ad-hoc observations under the tin sheets at the Red Hut continued throughout the season, with a maximum count of over 50 individuals logged on 29th July.

Mammals

European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Rabbits within a 7ha plot 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. Following the massive decline in numbers noted last year, due at least in part to an outbreak of a new strain of RVHD (Westcott and Choudhury, 2015), a decision was made to census the plots on a more regular basis in order to gain more information on how numbers were changing during the year.

As with last year, numerous sick rabbits were logged during the season, although far fewer seemingly unharmed corpses were encountered. The symptoms exhibited by infected rabbits appeared similar to those observed in 2013, with very approachable animals showing a lack of coordination and dull or matted coats. Many had swollen faces and watery eyes, two symptoms more commonly associated with Myxomatosis. Although the Skokholm population is thought to lack the European Rabbit Flea *Spilopsyllus cuniculi*, rendering them less susceptible to the spread of Myxomatosis (Thompson, 2007), many other arthropod vectors exist on the Island, including mosquitoes. No animals were tested in the laboratory for Myxomatosis this year.

Rabbits were censused approximately every 14 days, with the count commencing 90 minutes before sunset when rabbits are typically more active (as stipulated by Thompson, 2007). The same limitations to the 2013 survey work were again encountered with bracken encroachment to the east of Zone B obscuring the view and reducing count accuracy. Zone A, adjacent to North Pond, allowed for high count accuracy throughout the season as the vegetation remained low. As the counts from both Zones followed the same fluctuations, they will be discussed as a whole rather than two individual areas.

Following the drop in numbers observed during the second half of last season, and probably due in part to a particularly harsh winter, total rabbit numbers in March 2014 had decreased by a further 51% to just 50 individuals across both zones. There were thus 82% fewer animals at the start of the season than at the start of 2013. A new low of just 34 on 17th April was followed by a brief increase in the population, with 49 animals present on 15th May including six juveniles; this occurred during the same month as the peak of 2013, although there were 89% fewer animals and a 93% drop in the number of young recorded. The latter half of May saw a huge drop in numbers with a record low of just 17 individuals across both zones, none of which were juveniles.

During June and July the population seemingly began to recover and on 6th July the highest count of the year was made; 71 animals was just eight fewer than logged in July 2013. However numbers again declined rapidly and by 30th August the count had more than halved to just 31 individuals. The last visit of the season on 28th September saw 75 rabbits logged, 25 more rabbits than were counted...
in March but 27% fewer than were present at the end of monitoring in 2013. Overall there were 70% fewer juvenile rabbits observed within the study area this season, with just 57 across the whole season compared with 191 in 2013.

**Bats**

For the first time ever on Skokholm, bats were surveyed throughout their entire active period this year. A generous donation from the Pembrokeshire Bat Group allowed us to purchase an SM2, an automated bat detector which is left *in situ* to record echo-locating bats which pass within its range. The device was set up on top of the Courtyard Ringing Hut in April and remained there until early November. BSG Ecology also deployed an automated bat detector, an AnaBat, along with further devices on neighbouring Skomer and Ramsey Islands. Their aim was to increase our knowledge of the bat fauna using the Pembrokeshire Islands and to seek evidence of bat migration. The AnaBat was positioned on top of the Well Water Tank and remained there until early November. As a result of running two permanent automated detectors, a total of six species were identified, four of which were new to the Island, and a seventh species was identified to genus.

The following report provides a summary of the findings made by Rachel Taylor of BSG Ecology. To download the full PDF visit:


Sonograms of diagnostic calls have been included. Peak frequency is shown on the right.

**Nathusius’ Pipistrelle** *Pipistrellus nathusii*

A single animal recorded over the Well on 18th September was a first for Skokholm. Nathusius’ Pipistrelle is considered a rare migratory bat in the UK, although the number of records has increased considerably in recent years (BCT, 2010).
Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
This species was recorded on two occasions this season. An animal on 14th September, along with one the following evening, were the first since the pipistrelles were split into two species in 1999 and thus the first and second confirmed passes for Skokholm.

Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
There were two records of Soprano Pipistrelle this season, with singles on 15th August and on 3rd September. These represent only the second and third records of this species on Skokholm following one logged in September 2013.

The low number of both Common and Soprano Pipistrelle recorded, along with their appearance between mid-August and mid-September, suggests that these bats are not resident on the Island. The records are likely to refer to autumn dispersal from colonies on the mainland.

*Myotis* sp.
One of the *Myotis* species was recorded on 16th October. Although it was not possible to identify the recording to species level, this is the first of this genus to be recorded on Skokholm. There were a further two bats recorded during the season which could have been either a *Myotis* or a Long-eared bat species *Plecotus* sp.

Leisler’s Bat *Nyctalus leisleri*
There were three records of this species during the season; two on 20th September and one on 27th September were the first, second and third passes to be logged on Skokholm.
Serotine/Leisler’s Bat
Two recordings made during the season could have been of either a Serotine or a Leisler’s Bat. Serotine bats have not yet been recorded on the Island.

Noctule/Leisler’s Bat
There were a total of 397 recordings where it could not be determined if the call had been made by a Noctule or a Leisler’s Bat.

Noctule Nyctalus noctula
Following the first on 7th July, Noctule calls were recorded regularly during the late summer and autumn, especially on calmer nights. This species was by far the most frequently recorded bat on the Island; a total of 621 Noctule passes were logged at the Well and a similar level of activity was observed in the Courtyard. A single logged in 1968 is the only other Skokholm record.

Nyctalus bats accounted for approximately 98% of passes recorded on Skokholm. This high proportion may be related to the fact that both British species are strong fliers capable of commuting from the Pembrokeshire mainland to the Island. They have also proven to be long-distance migrants on the European continent. The highest levels of Noctule and Leisler’s Bat activity were recorded in September when the number of passes logged was more than double that of any other month. This September peak in Noctule activity was in contrast to the other islands which logged relatively consistent activity from July to September. The peak in activity on Skokholm may relate to the dispersal of juvenile and adult bats, or could potentially be evidence of migration; September is within the autumn migration period for this species on the continent.

Greater Horseshoe Rhinolophus ferrumequinum
The first and second Greater Horseshoe passes for the Island came in the early hours of 2nd September, with one over the Well at 04:19 followed by another pass at 05:12. A third pass was logged at the Well on 23rd September at 05:42. This is the first confirmation that this species is visiting the Island, although bat droppings found in a sea cave at Purple Cove in 1993 were thought to be from this species. This historical record of cave occupation, coupled with the timing of recorded bat passes this year, raises the intriguing possibility that these bats are flying over to the Island in autumn and hibernating in suitable sea caves during the winter.

**Seals**

**Atlantic Grey Seal *Halichoerus grypus***

This species is 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.

**The total number of Grey Seals logged during each month of 2014 and the maximum day count recorded during each month (2013 in parenthesis).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
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<th>Nov</th>
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<td>Monthly Total</td>
<td>10 (22)</td>
<td>63 (51)</td>
<td>284 (278)</td>
<td>486 (382)</td>
<td>1023 (454)</td>
<td>458 (511)</td>
<td>357 (422)</td>
<td>132 (252)</td>
<td>31 (9)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The first report of a 2014 youngster was on 5th September when one was observed on the northeast side of the Stack by observers on the Dale Princess. Due to the impossibility of viewing this site from the Island, along with a lack of further reports, the fate of this pup was unclear. A freshly moulted pup present in North Haven on 8th October was the first youngster to be seen from the Island this year and came on the same date, and in the same bay, as the first three live young of 2013. Although it is possible that this individual may have arrived from the caves around Skokholm, it is perhaps just as likely that this was an independent youngster from the mainland or Skomer.
The first new born pup of the year appeared in North Haven on 11\textsuperscript{th} October, two days later than the first of 2013. A second fresh pup was observed in an adjacent cove on the 13\textsuperscript{th}. The weather was subsequently kind to the pups located in these rocky, north-facing bays and both were observed regularly during the latter half of the month. By 3\textsuperscript{rd} November both animals were weaned, moulted and independent.

A total of just two Skokholm pups was two less than the typically low total recorded in 2013 and three fewer than logged in 2012 and 2011. However, with 100\% of known pups surviving this year, the number reaching independence matched that observed in 2013 when at least one pup was lost to stormy weather and another died very soon after birth.

**Cetaceans**

**Harbour Porpoise** *Phocoena phocoena*

Compared with 2013 it proved a good year for sightings of Harbour Porpoise in the waters around Skokholm, with more animals logged during every month bar May. Numbers peaked in September with 91 animals logged over 20 days during the month and with a maximum day count of 15 viewed from the Lighthouse on the 9\textsuperscript{th}; numbers peaked in May during 2013, with fewer than half the number of animals logged during the month. In total there were 391 animals logged over 112 dates between March and the end of October this season; although there were thus 141\% more animals logged than in 2013, this was partly due to records being logged on 50 more days this season. The first calf was noted near Crab Bay on 7\textsuperscript{th} April. Calves were subsequently recorded on the 29\textsuperscript{th} and 30\textsuperscript{th} June, the 14\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} July, the 6\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} August and 3\textsuperscript{rd} September.

<table>
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<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly Total</td>
<td>16 (13)</td>
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<td>35 (42)</td>
<td>46 (30)</td>
<td>86 (17)</td>
<td>66 (23)</td>
<td>91 (29)</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
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<td>9 (3)</td>
<td>8 (6)</td>
<td>7 (9)</td>
<td>10 (5)</td>
<td>10 (13)</td>
<td>15 (7)</td>
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<td>0 (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of Days Recorded</td>
<td>7 (5)</td>
<td>12 (2)</td>
<td>12 (15)</td>
<td>15 (13)</td>
<td>21 (8)</td>
<td>17 (6)</td>
<td>20 (10)</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>0 (1)</td>
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**Risso’s Dolphin** *Grampus griseus*

Following an exceptional year for Risso’s Dolphin records in 2013 in which 34 dolphin-days were documented, there was only a single record this year; four animals off the Lighthouse on 29\textsuperscript{th} July, including one very large bull, was the only record of the season. Although this appears poor by comparison, there were no records in 2012 and only one sighting of two animals during the period 1996 to 2004 (Thompson, 2007).

**Short-beaked Common Dolphin** *Delphinus delphis*

It was a good season for sightings of this species in the waters around Skokholm. Two on 15\textsuperscript{th} June were the first of the year, 12 days earlier than the first of 2013. Numbers increased from early July and the monthly total was 381\% higher than that of 2013, with records on nine more days. One calf among a pod of 15 adults on 5\textsuperscript{th} July was the first of the season and there were a further 14 calves recorded during the year. On 26\textsuperscript{th} July several groups of dolphins totalling a minimum of 85 animals were observed approximately two miles offshore; although they were too distant to positively identify, they were thought to belong to this species. Numbers peaked in September for a second year, with a minimum of 50 animals noted on the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 7\textsuperscript{th} contributing to a monthly total of 359
logged over 13 days. Six off the Lighthouse on 2nd October was the only record of the month and the last of the season. A grand total of 603 animals over 45 days between June and October was 88% more animals over 45% more days than logged in 2013.

The total number of Short-beaked Common Dolphin logged during each month of 2014, the maximum day count recorded and the number of days during each month when there was a record (2013 in parenthesis).

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<td>(10)</td>
<td>(21)</td>
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<td>(161)</td>
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<td>(10)</td>
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<td>(26)</td>
<td>(50+)</td>
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<td>(0)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(12)</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
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Fish

**European Eel Anguilla anguilla**

One in Well Stream on 10th April was the only record of this elusive species this year. This record came as something of a surprise as all of the Island’s water bodies were completely dry during the summer of 2013, with the exception of a small boggy area at Orchid Bog. During this period a desiccated eel was found at the Well. The fact that the 2014 individual was of a relatively large size suggests that it had survived from last year and shows the resilience of this species to withstand periods of drought.

Fungi

A mycology research team from Aberystwyth University visited Skokholm in April to trial a new method for identifying fungi. The technique involves taking soil and air samples which are then analysed for fungal spores. This method will mean that the surveying of fungi is no longer restricted to their short fruiting season. The laboratory analysis of collected samples, which is based on high-throughput sequencing of DNA barcodes, allows for accurate identification of the fungi present and even provides the relative abundance of the different species (Griffith, 2013). Soil cores were collected from 12 sites across the Island and additional samples were taken from the entrances of seabird and rabbit burrows. A full analysis of the 2014 samples is currently in progress.

Whilst collecting the spore samples, the researchers found the fruiting bodies of *Cheilymenia fibrillosa*, a species not previously recorded on Skokholm. There are currently only 80 entries for this
species in the British Mycological Society Fungus Records Database, of which 79 are from England and one is from Northern Ireland. This find therefore represents a first for Wales.

Plants

Three-lobed Crowfoot *Ranunculus tripartitus*

This is the only nationally rare plant on Skokholm, a Red Data Book Species which is restricted entirely to the Dip, a seasonal shallow pool adjacent to the Lighthouse Track. It is thought that the population on Skokholm is particularly significant as elsewhere this species regularly hybridises with Round-leaved Crowfoot *R. omiophyllus* which is not present on the Island. Three visits were made during the 2014 season to assess Three-lobed Crowfoot distribution and abundance.

The total number of patches, flowers and the total area covered by Three-lobed Crowfoot on 29th April, 16th May and 3rd June (2013 totals in parenthesis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Patches, Lower Section</td>
<td>19 (23)</td>
<td>12 (-)</td>
<td>5 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Flowers, Lower Section</td>
<td>20 (31)</td>
<td>19 (13)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area Covered, Lower Section</td>
<td>122cm² (257cm²)</td>
<td>19.5cm² (-)</td>
<td>7.5cm² (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Patches, Upper Section</td>
<td>30 (19)</td>
<td>40 (-)</td>
<td>18 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Flowers, Upper Section</td>
<td>554 (20)</td>
<td>174 (47)</td>
<td>184 (395)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Area Covered, Upper Section</td>
<td>35,455cm² (1465cm²)</td>
<td>3158cm² (-)</td>
<td>11,450cm² (-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first visit was made on 29th April and, as was the case last season, two areas of growth were identified, an upper section and a lower section. During the first visit, the lower section was fairly sparse, containing 19 small plants which covered a total area of approximately 122cm² and with 20 flowers. The Upper section contained much larger and denser areas; 30 patches were recorded, covering an area of over 3.5m² and containing 554 flowers. The second count took place on 16th May and showed a reduction in both coverage and in the number of flowers. The final visit of the season was made on 3rd June. As in 2013, the lower section had completely dried and contained just five
plants, none of which were flowering. Although there was a reduction in the number of clumps logged in the upper section, a very similar number of flowers were present and the clumps covered over three times the area covered in May.

Whilst the distribution of Three-lobed Crowfoot in the lower section was very much similar to that observed in 2013, the total area covered in the upper section was considerably greater in April 2014 than in the April of the preceding year, although this may reflect the earlier season observed in 2014; by June 2013 there were more clumps and more flowers than noted during the same period this year. The upper section exhibited a more protracted flowering season in 2014, with peak flowering occurring two months earlier than in 2013 and with good numbers of flowers logged throughout the study period. Although there is seemingly considerable variability in the timing of growth and flowering, the Dip area still appears to be suitable for this denizen of seasonal pools.

Goldenrod Solidago virgaurea
Although native to the UK, it is unclear when Goldenrod first arrived to Skokholm. The extent of cover appears to have fluctuated over the decades, most likely as a response to grazing type and pressure. In the 1937 Annual Report Goldenrod was described as having ‘gained further ground, and in the absence of large numbers of sheep, by which it was in 1934 nearly exterminated, has spread over the whole of the coast facing due east and where it is sheltered by bracken’. By 2004 it was reported as ‘abundant among the sheltered eastern bracken of South Bay and North Haven, eastward to Gull Field, with an outlying patch to the west of North Haven, in recent years forming almost single species stands on the south side of Home Meadow (where it is currently spreading westwards at a rapid rate) and above the gantry’ (Thompson, 2007).

The distribution of Goldenrod was mapped on 7th September 2014 during which time it was in full flower and therefore easy to observe amongst bracken and other vegetation. Although this species has not been surveyed annually, maps from 1989, 2002 and 2007 were located and digitised to allow for a comparison to be made.
Between 1989 and 2002 Goldenrod increased its range in a predominantly westerly direction, expanding from areas where it was already abundant. Dense stands present on the easterly edge of East Bog in 1989 had almost entirely surrounded the wetter area of the bog by 2002, crossing the
main track and progressing into the field north of The Hills. Similar growth was evident on Home Meadow. A new area of growth was mapped on the Knoll behind the Cottage.

Between 2002 and 2007 there was again further expansion evident at East Bog, although areas to the east of the bog appeared to show a significant retraction. An eastward expansion onto the land adjacent to Peter’s Bay was mapped, along with new stands of plants at Orchid Bog, North Plain and in the fields to the west of the Farm. Home Meadow was covered entirety.

This season there appears to have been no retraction in range and further expansion was noted in several areas. There are now extensive tracts of Goldenrod between the westerly slopes of Peter’s Bay, right across to Orchid Bog and around the cliff tops of North Haven to the wall which separates The Neck. The area to the east of East Bog, where a range contraction was mapped in 2007, now matches that observed in 2002 and with further advances to the slopes of Wreck Cove and to the slopes on all sides of Spy Rock. There has been southeast spread along the cliffs above South Haven. An isolated stand has appeared above Blacksmith’s Landing.

The current impact of these stands of Goldenrod on the ecology of Skokholm is unknown. Whilst mapping its range this season, it was noted that the stands of Goldenrod were relatively open and that several other plant species were growing amongst the Goldenrod rosettes which presumably afforded some degree of shelter from the wind and salt spray. It is also well known that Goldenrod is an important food-plant for a wide range of invertebrates including 40 species of moth, nine of which rely solely on this plant for food (Butterfly Conservation, 2014b). There are some areas where Goldenrod has crossed wall boundaries and in some instances it has become established in crevices within the walls; this may have the potential to impact the availability of breeding sites for Storm Petrels.

This species propagates both vegetatively and through the dissemination of seeds in the wind, and is thus likely to continue its spread across the Island. Goldenrod has yet to reach areas of coastal heath and maritime grassland and the impact it may have in such areas is currently unknown; it may prove that the extreme conditions which favour the coastal specialists will not be suitable for Goldenrod which is currently confined to inland areas or those with a sheltering cover of bracken. It is important that the distribution of Goldenrod is regularly mapped over the coming years.

Southern Marsh Orchid *Dactylorhiza praetermissa*
A single spike believed to be of this species appeared in the easterly wet flush of Home Meadow, adjacent to the Well. Southern Marsh Orchid was last recorded on the Island in 1999. It is tempting
to conclude that the appearance of this plant after a 15 year absence was at least in part due to reduced grazing pressure following the decline in the Rabbit population.

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 2014 season.

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https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4wBRJMoMzVdORybVZoRTF6UHc


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