



Field Guides Tour Report

Irish Spring: Birds, Traditional Music and Pubs 2017

May 4, 2017 to May 14, 2017
Terry McEneaney & Karen McEneaney



The White-throated Dipper was one of the birds of the trip! We had wonderful looks like this on three days of the tour. Photo by participant George Nixon.

In the 40 years we have been traveling Ireland, this was the greatest contiguous weather event we have ever encountered. It is hard to believe, but it was sunny 8 of the 10 days in the field. Sunny weather and catching unfavorable tides usually means not the best birding. If you wait for the weather or the tides in Ireland you might have a long wait. The birding usually gets harder with the sun glaring or with wind, because some of the forested and open habitat birds go into hiding. But we surprisingly ended up with 101 species of birds (seen and heard) and 8 species of mammals.

Bird highlights of this tour included: a first winter Iceland Gull; an Eurasian Kestrel feeding on a rare Common Lizard; two possibly three displaying Red Grouse (Willow Ptarmigan) showing off their bright flashy red eye combs in the sun; sensational looks at White-throated Dippers; a cacophony of cliff nesting seabirds; fleeting glimpses of the skulky Grasshopper Warbler; possibly as many as eight Red Kites with their pterodactyl-flapping and somewhat stationary slow-moving kite soaring; summersaulting flights of the Red-billed Chough; quick looks at a Carrion Crow; and the loud characteristic sound of the Common Cuckoo near an ancient rock dolmen or passage grave.

Mammal highlights of this tour included: wonderful views of the larger Eurasian morph of the Red Fox; a Red Fox robbing a Mute Swan nest and removing three eggs (one at a time) from the nest; a male European River Otter swimming the length of large mountain lake; and fabulous views of stationary and fast-running antics of rusty-colored Irish Hares.

Thank you for joining Karen and myself on this Field Guides tour of Ireland-its birds, traditional Irish music, and pubs. The craic (fun) was mighty.

Slan abhaile! Safe Home!

Terry and Karen

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

- GRAYLAG GOOSE** (*Anser anser*) – Found on day 2, Lady's Island Lake.
MUTE SWAN (*Cygnus olor*) – Found nearly every day and quite numerous.
COMMON SHELDUCK (*Tadorna tadorna*) – Found on 5 of the 9 days in the field.
GADWALL (*Anas strepera*) – Found on days 2 and 3.
MALLARD (*Anas platyrhynchos*) – Found every day.
NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Observed on day 2.
TUFTED DUCK (*Aythya fuligula*) – Observed on days 4-6.
COMMON MERGANSER (EURASIAN) (*Mergus merganser merganser*) – Found flying up stream near Powerscourt.

Phasianidae (Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies)

- RING-NECKED PHEASANT** (*Phasianus colchicus*) – Seen and heard nearly every day. [I]
WILLOW PTARMIGAN (RED GROUSE) (*Lagopus lagopus scotica*) – Found 2 possibly 3 individuals all displaying with bright red combs above eye glowing in the rusty heather. [E]

Gaviidae (Loons)

- COMMON LOON** (*Gavia immer*) – Found on day 6 on Inch Strand on Dingle Peninsula.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

- LITTLE GREBE** (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) – Found on day 2.
GREAT CRESTED GREBE (*Podiceps cristatus*) – Found on days 4 and 8.

Procellariidae (Shearwaters and Petrels)

- NORTHERN FULMAR** (*Fulmarus glacialis*) – Found on days 5-7 and 9. Magnificent views of this gorgeous bird.

Sulidae (Boobies and Gannets)

- NORTHERN GANNET** (*Morus bassanus*) – Found on days 3,5,7,9. Observed gannets plunge-diving as well.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

- GREAT CORMORANT (NORTH ATLANTIC)** (*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*) – Observed every day-quite regularly.
EUROPEAN SHAG (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) – Found on days 7 and 9-Dingle Peninsula and Cliffs of Moher come to mind.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

- GRAY HERON** (*Ardea cinerea*) – Found every day.
LITTLE EGRET (*Egretta garzetta*) – Found every day-quite numerous in south and southeast.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

- EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK** (*Accipiter nisus*) – Found on days 1, 2, and 5. Slieve Bloom, Wicklow Mtns., and Killarney Lake Hotel come to mind.
RED KITE (*Milvus milvus*) – Found several individuals, possibly as many as eight Red Kites in total. Sometimes they were seen soaring a ridge, other times suspended like a kite, and even times they wing-flapped resembling that reminiscent of a pterodactyl.
COMMON BUZZARD (*Buteo buteo*) – Found mainly days 1 and 2-Slieve Blooms and Wicklow Mtns.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

- WATER RAIL** (*Rallus aquaticus*) – Heard at Killarney Lake Hotel on the reed shoreline of Lough Leane. [*]
EURASIAN MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*) – Found half the time in the field.
EURASIAN COOT (*Fulica atra*) – Found on days 2 and 4.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

- EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) – Found nearly every day. Quite numerous.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

- COMMON RINGED PLOVER** (*Charadrius hiaticula*) – Found on days 1,2, and 9.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

- WHIMBREL (EUROPEAN)** (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) – Found on half of the days in the field. The largest group (22) found in a pasture near the Ballyvergan reedbed. Most were found along the coast.
BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*) – Found on three of the full nine days in the field.
BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*) – Found a few individuals on day 2-Wexford.
RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – Found on day 9--just north of Lahinch.
DUNLIN (*Calidris alpina*) – Found on days 2, 8, and 9.
COMMON SANDPIPER (*Actitis hypoleucos*) – Found on days 2 and 4.

Alcidae (Auks, Murres, and Puffins)

- COMMON MURRE** (*Uria aalge*) – In Europe this same bird is called the Common Guillemot, yet in North America this bird is called the Common Murre. Observed thousands at the Cliffs of Moher.
RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*) – Found on days 7 and 9-Valentia Island and the Cliffs of Moher. Hundreds.
BLACK GUILLEMOT (*Cepphus grylle*) – Found on days 7 and 9--Valentia Island and the Cliffs of Moher. A few.
ATLANTIC PUFFIN (*Fratercula arctica*) – Found on day 9-Cliffs of Moher. Thousands.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

- BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** (*Rissa tridactyla*) – Hundreds on day 9-Cliffs of Moher.

BLACK-HEADED GULL (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) – Found every day and numerous.

RING-BILLED GULL (*Larus delawarensis*) – Found one individual on day 9.

HERRING GULL (EUROPEAN) (*Larus argentatus argenteus*) – Found every day and numerous.

ICELAND GULL (*Larus glaucooides*) – Found a real obvious pure white first winter Iceland Gull in the middle of Ennis (day 9 and 10). Seen by some in group.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL (GRAELLSII) (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) – Seen every day. More numerous and easier to find in the south.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*) – Found every day.

COMMON TERN (HIRUNDO) (*Sterna hirundo hirundo*) – Found on day 1,2, and 5. Mainly Lady's Island Lake.

ARCTIC TERN (*Sterna paradisaea*) – Lady's Island Lake.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Found both feral (most places) and wild form on the Dingle Peninsula.

STOCK DOVE (*Columba oenas*) – Found days 1 and 2.

COMMON WOOD-PIGEON (*Columba palumbus*) – Found every day.

EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE (*Streptopelia decaocto*) – Found every day.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

COMMON CUCKOO (*Cuculus canorus*) – Heard the classic calls of the "cuckoo" penetrating the passage tomb of the Poul nabrone Dolmen area. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts)

COMMON SWIFT (*Apus apus*) – Found every day but one.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

EURASIAN KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) – Found on days 1 and 5. At Valentia Island watched one eating a somewhat rare Common Lizard on a cliff.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – In Ennis as we were leaving the hotel a Merlin flew over the garden.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – On day 9 at the Cliffs of Moher.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

EURASIAN MAGPIE (*Pica pica*) – Found every day.

RED-BILLED CHOUGH (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) – On days 5, 7, and 9-Valentia Island, Slea Head and Cliffs of Moher.

EURASIAN JACKDAW (*Corvus monedula*) – Found every day and numerous.

ROOK (*Corvus frugilegus*) – Found every day and numerous.

CARRION CROW (*Corvus corone*) – Found near Dublin on day 1-Bull Island.

HOODED CROW (*Corvus cornix*) – Found every day and numerous.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Found 6 of the 9 days in the field.

Alaudidae (Larks)

EURASIAN SKYLARK (*Alauda arvensis*) – Found or heard 4 of the 9 days in the field.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*) – Found on 4 of the 9 full days in the field.

BARN SWALLOW (WHITE-BELLIED) (*Hirundo rustica rustica*) – Found every day.

COMMON HOUSE-MARTIN (*Delichon urbicum*) – Found every day.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

COAL TIT (BRITISH) (*Parus ater hibernicus*) – Found on 4 of the 9 full days in the field. [E]

EURASIAN BLUE TIT (*Cyanistes caeruleus*) – Found every day.

GREAT TIT (*Parus major*) – Found nearly every day.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

LONG-TAILED TIT (*Aegithalos caudatus*) – Found on day 2.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

EURASIAN TREECREEPER (*Certhia familiaris*) – Found on 3 of the 9 full days in the field.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

EURASIAN WREN (BRITISH) (*Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus*) – Found every day.

Cinclidae (Dippers)

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER (*Cinclus cinclus hibernicus*) – Incredible views of this beautiful bird. Found on 3 of the 9 full days in the field. [E]

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDCREST (*Regulus regulus*) – Found on 3 of the 9 full days in the field.

Phylloscopidae (Leaf Warblers)

WILLOW WARBLER (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) – Good looks at this bird at times, but heard mostly every day.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF (*Phylloscopus collybita*) – Great looks at times, more vocal than visual.

Acrocephalidae (Reed-Warblers and Allies)

SEDGE WARBLER (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) – Seen and heard 6 out of the 9 full days in the field.

Locustellidae (Grassbirds and Allies)

COMMON GRASSHOPPER-WARBLER (*Locustella naevia*) – Only a few people were lucky enough to see this skulky Old World warbler on day 3 near Ballymacoda.

Sylviidae (Sylviid Warblers)

EURASIAN BLACKCAP (*Sylvia atricapilla*) – Finally, everyone got lucky to see this bird out in the open singing its heart out. Found and heard 6 out of the 9 full days in the field.

GREATER WHITETHROAT (*Sylvia communis*) – Found on day 9 near Poul nabrone Dolmen.

Muscicapidae (Old World Flycatchers)

EUROPEAN ROBIN (*Erithacus rubecula*) – This is the most darling bird in all of Ireland, found often and every day.

EUROPEAN STONECHAT (*Saxicola rubicola rubicola*) – Found every day.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) – Found on days 5 and 7- Valentia Island and Dingle Peninsula.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

EURASIAN BLACKBIRD (*Turdus merula*) – Found every day.

SONG THRUSH (*Turdus philomelos*) – Found every day.

MISTLE THRUSH (*Turdus viscivorus*) – Observed 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – Found every day and numerous.

Prunellidae (Accentors)

DUNNOCK (*Prunella modularis*) – Found nearly every day.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

GRAY WAGTAIL (*Motacilla cinerea*) – Should be called the Gray and Yellow Wagtail. Found 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

WHITE WAGTAIL (BRITISH) (*Motacilla alba yarrellii*) – Also called Pied Wagtail in Ireland, of the yarrellii race. Found every day.

MEADOW PIPIT (*Anthus pratensis*) – Found every day.

ROCK PIPIT (*Anthus petrosus*) – Found on 3 out of the 9 days in the field.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

YELLOWHAMMER (*Emberiza citrinella*) – Found on days 1 and 2.

REED BUNTING (*Emberiza schoeniclus*) – Found on 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

COMMON CHAFFINCH (*Fringilla coelebs*) – Found every day.

EURASIAN BULLFINCH (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*) – Found on 3 out of the 9 days in the field.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH (*Chloris chloris*) – Found on 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

EURASIAN SISKIN (*Spinus spinus*) – Found on day 5 in Killarney National Park.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH (*Carduelis carduelis*) – Found every day.

EURASIAN LINNET (*Carduelis cannabina*) – Found on 7 out of the 9 full days in the field.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Observed every day.

MAMMALS

OLD WORLD RABBIT (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Observed on 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

NORTHERN (BLUE) HARE (*Lepus timidus*) – Also called the "Irish Hare", a beautiful lagomorph the rusty color of heather. It was a delight watching the speed of these hares.

RED FOX (*Vulpes vulpes*) – Sensational views of this large version of a Red Fox. Two people got to see a Red Fox carrying Mute Swan eggs on three occasions. Found on 3 out of the 9 full days in the field.

EUROPEAN RIVER OTTER (*Lutra lutra*) – Found on 2 different days, one including a river otter swimming the entire length of Lough Leane in Killarney National Park.

HARBOR SEAL (*Phoca vitulina*) – Found on day 3 in Dungarvan.

GRAY SEAL (*Halichoerus grypus*) – Found on days 2 and 3.

SIKA DEER (*Cervus nippon*) – Found on days 5 and 6 in Killarney National Park.

RED DEER (*Cervus elaphus*) – Found on days 5 and 6 in Killarney National Park.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 101 bird taxa and 8 mammal taxa