



First WP Records - 1820 to 1960

Joe Hobbs

Version 1.2

First Records for the
Western Palearctic
1820 to 1960

by

Joe Hobbs

Version 1.2

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Cover: Schrenck's Little Bittern, Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali di Torino.

Photo: Giovanni Boano.

Introduction

Beginning with the oldest this note gives details of the first published account of bird species in the Western Palearctic (BWP borders) from 1820 to 1960. It is hoped that records in subsequent years will be added at a later date. The vast majority of early occurrences were either shot, obtained, caught or trapped; regardless of the terminology used that meant they ended up as a prize in someone's trophy case. Thankfully a practice no longer regarded as the norm.

Many records in this note lack a precise date, location or the events leading to its discovery. The author would be grateful to learn any missing details, including specimen or in the field photographs to:

firstWPrecords@gmail.com

Species included in a full Western Palearctic national list **are printed in this colour**, well marked subspecies **are printed in this colour**. Records where the bird's provenance is questioned for some reason **are printed in this colour** and first records for Europe rather than the Western Palearctic **are printed in this colour**. Finally, quotes taken directly from notes, papers or personal comments **are printed in this colour**. References begin on page 43 where a list of abbreviations used may also be found.

Suggested reading

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Joe Hobbs,

November 2021

First Western Palearctic Records 1820 to 1960

American Robin *Turdus migratorius*

1820 Austria: Adult, Aspang, Bucklige Welt, December (Alexander & Fitter 1955), collected.

The specimen is housed in the Natural History Museum, Vienna (Pics. 001-002).



Pics. 001-002.

American Robin, Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Photos: © Alice Schumacher.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*

1825 Ireland: Near Youghal, Cork, during Autumn (Thompson vol. I, p. 365), shot.

Mentioned by Robert Ball (of Youghal, County Cork) in a note to the *Field Naturalists' Magazine* (October 1832). Ball stated that while he was in Youghal a neighbour's butler brought him the bird to examine not long after it was shot and while it was still warm.

Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*

1825 Germany: Male, near Kleinzerbst, Köthen, Saxony-Anhalt, 22nd December (*Isis von Oken* 1826, pp. 520-521), caught.

Taken near the home of Johann Friedrich Naumann who added the specimen to his collection. Naumann is acknowledged as one of the founders of scientific ornithology in Europe and author of *The Natural History of German Birds* (1820-1844) and *The Eggs of German Birds* (1818-1828). The specimen is currently housed in the Naumann Museum, Köthen (Pic. 003).



Pic. 003.
Hermit Thrush,
Naumann Museum, Köthen.
Photo: © Stefan Fischer.

Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius*

1825 Scotland: Westhall, Monyméal, Fife, 31st December (Fleming 1828), shot. Extinct species.

Shot while perched on a wall near a pigeon house. The feathers were reported to be quite fresh and entire, like those of a wild bird. The specimen was presented to Dr. John Fleming by the Rev. A. Esplin, the schoolmaster at Monyméal.

This is the only one of four British records listed by Alexander & Fitter (1955) that occurred before 1830, after which they state that it was notorious [...] many Passenger Pigeons were brought over and turned loose in Britain and further remarked this would not invalidate the 1825 record. Indeed it was accepted by the BOU in 1883 but later rejected in 1915 by Howard Saunders (Secretary of the BOU from 1901 to 1907 and the first secretary and treasurer of the British Ornithologists' Club). The species is not on any Western Palearctic list.

Yellow-browed Bunting *Emberiza chrysophrys*

1827 France: First-winter male, Lille Castle, Nord, during Autumn (Jiquet 2007), trapped.

Captured in a mist-net behind the castle at Lille in northeastern France near the Belgian Border. The specimen (Pic. 004) is housed at the Natural History Museum, Lille (Musée d'histoire naturelle de Lille).

Some doubts about this record were expressed by Johann Friedrich Naumann who suggested the location could have been in Germany rather than France. However, a thorough examination of the museum's catalogues have shown this to be erroneous and with no validity whatsoever. Consequently it was accepted by the French Rarities Committee (CHN) in 2007, predating the previously accepted first WP record at Tongeren, Belgium in October 1966 by 139 years.



Pic. 004.
Yellow-browed Bunting,
Natural History Museum, Lille.
Photo: © Christophe Hildebrand.

Baikal Teal *Sibirionetta formosa*

1836 France: Five, Épervans, Saône-et-Loire, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, November (Mayoud 1936), obtained.

These would appear to be have been part of an invasion of this Far Eastern dabbling duck to Europe prior to any known introductions to European wildfowl collections (BWP I).

American Wigeon *Mareca americana*

1837/38 England: Male, location not known, Winter 1837/38 (Palmer 2000), shot.

The carcass was discovered in Leadenhall Market, London where it was purchased by Mr. Bartlett, who thought it was a **variety** of Eurasian Wigeon. A female of the species was said to accompany it but this can not be confirmed. American Wigeon is the New World counterpart to Wigeon.

The specimen later came in to the collection of John Henry Gurney Sr. (amateur ornithologist and one time Member of Parliament for King's Lynn).

Grey Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*

1840 Germany: Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 28th October (Gätke 1895), shot.

Shot by the bird collector Oelrich Aeuckens, better known as Oelk. Using an intermediate and a certain amount of subterfuge, a rival collector at Helgoland named Reymers acquired it (Pic. 005). Six years later and **after much trouble and pressure** Heinrich Gätke (German ornithologist and artist who lived on Helgoland from 1841) obtained the specimen from Reymers.

When Oelk saw it he remarked that he had shot one like it some years ago and sold it to a stranger, at which point Gätke told him it was the same bird and related the whole story. The specimen is now housed in the Landesmuseum, Hannover.

Pic. 005.
Grey Catbird,
Institut für Vogelforschung, Wilhelmshaven.
Photo: © Jochen Dierschke.



Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*

1843 Italy: Near Genoa, Liguria, during Autumn (Arrigoni Degli Oddi 1929), collected. The specimen is held at La Specola Museum, Florence.

Eastern Crowned Warbler *Phylloscopus coronatus*

1843 Germany: Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 4th October (Gätke 1895), collected. Taken by the bird collector Reymers, who offered it to Gätke but as he had yet to become a serious collector declined to pay the high asking price, something he later regretted. Instead it passed into the hands of Brandt at Hamburg, and its fate thereafter was unknown to Gätke as Brandt was very careful not to announce where he got his specimens from or where they went to.

Pallas's Warbler *Phylloscopus proregulus*

1845 Germany: Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 6th October (Portofée & Dierschke 1999), taken.

Before he could be entrusted with powder and shot, the fowler Claus Aeuckens became an expert shot with rounded pebbles he carried around in a hunting-bag. On Monday, 6th October 1845 he brought down a small bird in this manner as it flew along a cliff-face on Helgoland. Even though the blow completely crushed the bird against a rock, realising it was unusual, Aeuckens brought Gätke an undamaged wing for his inspection. Gätke had no idea what species it was but suggested it might be from something like a Goldcrest, but Aeuckens was adamant it was a warbler. Gätke preserved the wing and made an accurate drawing of it and a few years later thought he had solved the riddle when he first examined a Yellow-browed Warbler but upon closer inspection found the measurements differed.

It would be over 30 years before the puzzle was finally solved when in Summer 1879 Eugen von Homeyer (founder member of the German Ornithological Society and who served as its president from 1876 to 1883) came on a visit. He brought a skin that was collected by Dybowsky in Siberia labelled *Reguloides* (syn. *Phylloscopus*) *proregulus* that Gätke immediately recognised as his mystery bird and upon seeing it Aeuckens agreed.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

1846 England: Great Horkesley, near Colchester, Essex, 6th to 8th July (Newman 1846), shot.

Shot by Peter Coveney from Great Horkesley at about 21:00 on Monday, 8th July 1846. He first noticed it on the evening of the 6th when it was hawking insects at a great height over a small wood and neighbouring trees. Coveney heard it crying out as it fell and when he found it lying prone discovered it was only wounded and clinging so tightly to clover that when to tried to pick it up it pulled clover stalks from the ground.

The specimen was set up by Mr. Hall of City Road, Colchester for Mr. Catchpool who then sent it to Edward Newton on 17th July. Newton later returned it to Catchpool after it had been critically examined and identified by the eminent ornithologists, Messrs Yarrell, Doubleday and Fisher. This Far Eastern swift is sometimes known as Needle-tailed or Spine-tailed Swift.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

1847 Finland: Helsinki, Uusimaa, Finland, 5th June (Palmgren 1935), shot.

While auditing the bird collection at the Finnish Museum of Natural History, Helsinki, Pontus Palmgren found a specimen labelled *Tringa Minuta*, Helsinki 18 5/6 47 (i.e. indicating it was a Little Stint), but which Palmgren recognised was in fact a Least Sandpiper.

Palmgren noted the label was glued to the base, a practise used by the museum between 1837 and 1851 and therefore consistent with the year collected. He discounted the possibility it had been mounted on a no longer in use Little Stint base and further established that all stint specimens in the museum's collection were collected in Finland, greatly reducing the possibility of some mix up when first labelled. Furthermore he found two Turnstone specimens with labels identical to the Least Sandpiper that were shot on the same date at Isosaari, an island off Helsinki. Palmgren concluded the label was a genuine misidentification and the bird had been collected in Finland.



Pic. 006.
Bonaparte's Gull,
Ulster Museum, Belfast.
Photo: © Stuart McKee.

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

1848 Northern Ireland: Adult winter male, River Lagan near Belfast, 1st February (Thompson vol. III, p. 317), shot.

Details were published in the *Annals of Natural History* 1848 (vol. I, p. 192). It was shot on a tidal part of the River Lagan in Belfast somewhere between Ormeau Bridge and the Botanic Gardens. William Thompson (author of the *Natural History of Ireland* in four volumes) saw the bird prior to it being skinned and took a detailed description and measurements (vol. III, pp. 318-319). The specimen is currently housed in the Ulster Museum, Belfast (Pic. 006).

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

1848 England: Adult, near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, September (Gurney 1849, Seebohm 1893), shot.

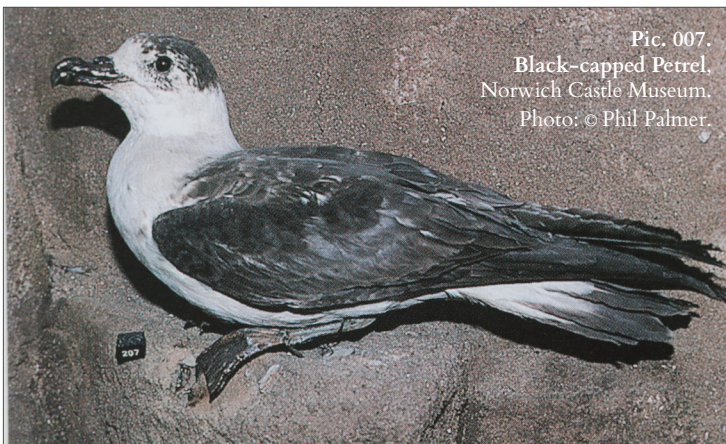
John Henry Gurney Sr. purchased what he believed to be a Pectoral Sandpiper that was shot by a man named Wilmot during the last week of September 1848 near Great Yarmouth on a beach area known as the Denes.

Some time later Gurney presented the specimen to the Norfolk and Norwich Museum. In about 1893 the specimen was examined by Henry Seebohm who realised it was actually a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. After a time Gurney had come to doubt the authenticity of the bird suspecting it had been imported and not shot locally but Seebohm was happy to accept Wilmot's account.

Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata*

1850 England: Female, Southacre, near Swaffham, Norfolk, March or April (Palmer 2000), killed.

First noticed by a boy as it flapped from one furze-bush to another, eventually becoming entangled, whereupon the young lad grabbed it. Despite its obvious fatigue it bit his captor who promptly killed it! By a coincidence Mr. Newcome of Hockwold, near Brandon was hawking in the general area at the same time and his falconer, John Madden, happened to see the boy with the dead bird and bought it for Newcome, who arranged for a specimen to be set up (Pic. 007).



About a year later Newcome was persuaded to send it to William Yarrell (author of *A History of British Birds*) who was unable to identify it with any described species but nevertheless realised it was new to Britain. The eminent ornithologist John Gould also saw it while with Yarrell and he recognised it as a species he had encountered during a crossing the Atlantic but had no idea if it had been formally described*. In July 1852 Edward Newton saw a specimen in the Museum of the Zoological Society, which he considered was the same as the Southacre bird and that was confirmed following correspondence with Mr. Bartlett at the Museum who further added that the species had been figured in No. 416 of the *Planches Coloriées*†, under the name *Procellaria hæsitata*. Newton suggested Capped Petrel as the vernacular name which, apart from the addition of the qualifier 'Black', persists to the present day. For a full account of this fascinating story see Newton (1852).

* This statement was somewhat puzzling as Bartlett informed Newton that Mr. Gould himself had described the identical specimen, in a paper read before the Society, as *Procellaria rubritarsi*. However, despite Bartlett's assertion no reference to this could be found in the Society's Proceedings.

† Volume V of *Nouveau Recueil de Planches Coloriées D'Oiseaux*.

Pallas's Rosefinch *Carpodacus roseus*

1850 Hungary: Male, Buda, 1st December (Haas *et al.* 2013), captured.

Caught alive somewhere in the hills outside of Buda (that part of the Hungarian capital situated on the west bank of the River Danube), taken into captivity but died soon after. Identification was provided by the Hungarian ornithologist Salamon Janos Petényi. The specimen was housed in the Hungarian Natural History Museum in Budapest but during the 1956 Uprising the Museum's building was destroyed by fire and the specimen lost.

The record predates the earliest confirmed imports of this species to western Europe (to Germany) in 1878 and has been accepted by the Hungarian Rarities Committee as a genuine vagrant.

Buff-bellied Pipit *Anthus rubescens rubescens*

1851 Germany: Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 6th November (Gätke 1895), shot.

It was the bird's call that attracted the attention of a native gunner, who realising the species was unknown to him, promptly shot it. The specimen is housed in the Landesmuseum, Hannover (Pic. 008).



Pic. 008.
Buff-bellied Pipit,
 Institut für Vogelforschung, Wilhelmshaven.
 Photo: © Jochen Dierschke.

Eskimo Curlew *Numenius borealis*

1855 Scotland: Probably a female, Cairn-mon-earn, Durris Forrest, Grampian, 6th September (Melling 2010, Pellow 2014), shot.

The bird was standing on a stone cairn above Durris Forest when it was shot by W.R. Cusack of Durris House. Appearing reluctant to fly it made an easy target for Cusack who got as close as 20 yards. It was first noticed by his gamekeeper who mistakenly called out there was a Golden Plover close-by. The carcass was sent for preservation to the Aberdeen taxidermist Mitchell and was examined there a few days later by J. Longmuir and it was he who identified it as an **Eskuimaux Curlew** (Longmuir 1855). An earlier record of two at Woodbridge, Suffolk in 1852 was rejected following a review by the BOU. This curlew is probably extinct, last recorded in the 1960s.

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes* certhiola*

1856 Germany: Juvenile, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 12th or 13th August (Gätke 1895), caught.

Caught at the **glasses of the** [Helgoland] lighthouse during the night of 12th/13th August. Sometime later Gätke acquired it for his collection. When the Zoologist Johann Heinrich Blasius visited in 1858 he admitted there were two in Gätke's collection he could not put a name to. One was Arctic Warbler (then known as Eversmann's Warbler) and Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler the other. Gätke replied **more in the form of a question that [it] might be *S. certhiola*** and during the course of their conversation they agreed on that. Blasius described it as the **jewel of [Gätke's] collection**.

*Along with five other warblers, including Gray's Grasshopper, Pallas's Grasshopper has been moved from the *Locustella* to *Helopsaltes* following IOC version 8.2.

Black-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*

1858 Italy: Lucca, Tuscany, date not known (Salvadori 1872), collected.

The specimen was preserved in the Regio Museo (Royal Museum) of Pisa.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens*

1858 Germany: First-winter male, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 19th October (Gätke 1895), shot.

Taken by a boy using a blow-pipe. The specimen is now housed in the Landesmuseum, Hannover (Pic. 009).



Pic. 010.
Parakeet Auklet,
Naturhistoriska Museet, Stockholm.
Photo: © Hans Bister.



Parakeet Auklet *Aethia psittacula*

1860 Sweden: Adult, Lake Vättern, near Jönköping, Småland, December (Sealy & Carter 2012), taken.

Captured alive on Lake Vättern, a freshwater lake in southern Sweden. J.J. Dalglish in his list of North American birds (1880) referred to it as a Crested Auklet. However a painting of the bird published in the *Journal of the Swedish Sportsmen's Association* left no doubt it was a Parakeet Auklet. The mounted specimen is housed in the Naturhistoriska Museet, Stockholm (Pic. 010).

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*

1863 Israel: Nahal Keziv (Wadi Quarn), Galilee, 8th December (Ebels 2002), collected. Collected by the parson-naturalist the Rev. Henry Baker Tristram (who has about 20 species named in his honour and was a founder and original member of the British Ornithologists' Union). It was reported that he also saw three others at the same time (Shirihai 1996). In 1879 another was collected at Wadi Hamam, near the Sea of Galilee by Father P. Tepper. The specimen is part of the Tristram collection at the World Museum, William Brown Street, part of National Museums Liverpool.

Sora *Porzana carolina*

1864 England: River Kennet, near Newbury, Berkshire, October (Eyre 1865), shot. H.S. Eyre (of Newington, near Sittingbourne, Kent) shot a **Carolina Crane** (an alternative name) on the banks of the Kennet.

The specimen was exhibited by Prof. A. Newton of Magdalene College, Cambridge at a meeting of the Zoological Society on Tuesday, 14th February 1865.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

Before 1867 France: Near Abbeville, Somme, date not known (Dubois & Yésou 1986), collected.

Killed by a hunter. The whereabouts of the specimen is not known.

Striped Crane *Aenigmatolimnas marginalis*

1867 Algeria: Juvenile, near Biskra, northeastern Algeria, January (Heim de Balsac & Mayaud 1962), collected.

The whereabouts of the specimen is not known.

Kumlien's Gull *Larus glaucoides kumlieni*

1869 Scotland: Third-winter female, Breck Ness, near Stromness, Orkney, 24th November (BOU 1998), killed.

The specimen was discovered in the Natural History Museum, Tring. It had been incorrectly labelled as an Iceland Gull but on closer inspection it could be seen that the tips of the outer primaries (10-8) had brown immature markings on the outer webs and pale adult Kumlien's type 1-2 markings on the inner webs. Following a review by the BOU in 1997 it was accepted as Kumlien's Gull and the subspecies was added to the British List.

The specimen's label and museum's registry entry state it was taken at Breckness, but it would seem this was somehow misread as Brackness (a location in Scalloy, Shetland) and that error persisted. In fact Breckness (or Breck Ness) is about two miles from Stromness on the neighbouring island group of Orkney. Further evidence it was collected there is that it was obtained from the well known 19th century Orkney collector Edward Hargitt (Prys-Jones 2000). Kumlien's Gull is treated as a subspecies of Iceland Gull by the IOC, however Weir *et al.* (2000) concluded it is better treated as a stable hybrid population of Iceland x Thayer's Gulls.

Abyssinian Roller *Coracias abyssinicus*

1874 Egypt: Location or date not known (Haas & Ławicki 2018), collected.

The skin is housed in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, USA.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

1876 Germany: Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 24th October (Gätke 1895).

Heinrich Gätke's garden on Helgoland was separated from his neighbour by a high wooden paling. He enjoyed peering through chinks in the fencing in order to observe birds undisturbed by his presence just a few feet away. On one such occasion he noticed a small warbler he described as a very vividly coloured Reed Warbler in autumn plumage. It reminded him of Siberian Chiffchaff, which he has seen at least six times, but the call was different and on hearing it Gätke at once recognised it as the eastern *Sylvia fuscata*.

A long thorn-hedge in his neighbour's garden with houses behind obscured his view of the bird and to his annoyance prevented him from getting a shot off, instead he had to be satisfied with watching it for ten minutes through the fence at distances from two to twenty paces after which it disappeared in to the thorn-hedge and was never seen again. Thus, as far as can be told, it became a first record for the Western Palearctic that survived the experience!

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

1877 France: Adult, Le Crotoy, Saint-Valery-sur-Somme, Baie de la Somme, 29th June (Mayoud 1936), killed.

The specimen is part of the Marmottan collection at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*

1878 Ireland: Pair, East Ferry, Cobh Harbour, Cork, December (Ussher & Warren 1900), shot.

Both were shot by Sir Ralph William Frankland Payne-Gallwey (author, engineer, historian, ballistics expert and artist) in Cork Harbour just off East Ferry during a severe frost. He had previously observed them in the company of Red-breasted Mergansers but had no success approaching them on that occasion. Earlier records in Britain were rejected following a review by the BOU (2001).

Yellow-eyed Stock Dove *Columba eversmanni*

1881 Russia: Adult, near Orenburg, 12th May (BWP IV), shot.

Shot from a party of Stock Doves by N.A. Zarudy. On three or four subsequent occasions that spring he noticed more Yellow-eyed Doves with Stock Doves, easily picking them out on account of their white rump.

Orenburg is very close to the Eastern Palearctic border and the museum label does not clearly indicate the precise location where the specimen was taken, however Arkhipov *et al.* (2010) make a very convincing case that it was in Europe. The specimen is housed in the Zoological Museum, St. Petersburg.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

1882 England: Brighton, East Sussex, 23rd October (Williamson 1977), caught.

While preparing a paper on the identification of larger pipits for publication in the monthly journal *British Birds* (Williamson 1963), Kenneth Williamson visited the Natural History Museum at Tring. Among the specimens he found one labelled *Anthus campestris* (i.e. a Tawny Pipit), which on closer inspection he realised was a Blyth's Pipit. He informed the museum's staff of his discovery and the specimen was placed with the Blyth's Pipits. Sometime later it was examined by Dr. David Snow and P. Coulston who were in complete agreement with Williamson's identification.

Daurian Jackdaw *Coloeus dauuricus*

1883 Finland: Adult, Uusikaarlepyy, Ostrobothnia, May (Stjernberg 1999), shot.

Shot early in the month by the student teacher Mr. Weckman. The specimen was acquired by the Finnish Museum of Natural History, Helsinki soon after and is still housed there.

American Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica*

1883 Norway: Mosby, Kristiansand, Agder, during Autumn (Collett 1894), shot.

The specimen was kept in the local school's collection from where Robert Collett received it for inspection. During the intervening years doubts have been expressed about the validity of this record not helped by the final sentence in Collett's account, which translates as, the specimen was [øiensynlig] escaped from captivity.

The word 'øiensynlig' is old Norwegian and hardly used anymore and therefore not easy to translate to modern Norwegian! It may reasonably be translated to English by any of the following; 'apparently', 'seemingly' or even 'obviously'. This is further complicated by Collett not providing a reason for his conclusion. There may have been some damage, but he would have only seen the bird after it was shot and mounted or it may just be that he considered it impossible for it to cross the Atlantic, a not uncommon point of view in the 19th Century. The specimen is lost so further study is not possible.

Regardless of any doubts expressed the species has been assigned to Category B of the full Norwegian List on the strength of this record and therefore rightfully holds the distinction of the first for the WP. The author is particularly indebted to Tor Olsen (Secretary of the NSKF) for his help with this account.

Stejneger's Scoter *Melanitta stejnegeri*

1886 France: Adult male, Le Crotoy, Baie de Somme, 4th December (Jiguet & la CAF 2007), taken.

The mounted specimen was discovered by Frédéric Jiguet during a visit he made, along with Jean-Marc Pons, to the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris to examine specimens in the Marmottan collection mainly taken in the Baie de Somme at the end of the 19th century.

Included in the collection were 11 Velvet and 13 Surf Scoters all killed between 1869 and 1888 that Marmottan had acquired from local hunters. It was while studying these that Frédéric noticed one showing a prominent bulb at the base of the bill, i.e. a male Velvet Scoter of the subspecies *stejnegeri* (since raised to full species status as Stejneger's Scoter). The label stated the bird was caught alive on Saturday, 4th December 1886 at Le Crotoy. It has been accepted by the French Rarities Committee and assigned to Category B of the French List (Pics. 011-012).



Pic. 011.
Stejneger's Scoter,
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.
Photo: © Frédéric Jiguet.



Pic. 012.
Stejneger's Scoter,
Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle,
Paris.
Photo: © Frédéric Jiguet.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

1889 England: Adult, Hay Bottom, near Penrice, St. Austell, Cornwall, 27th October (Mathew 1890), shot.

Late in 1889 Murray Mathew noticed a small heron in Mr. Foot's taxidermist shop in Bath, Somerset that he did not recognise. Upon enquiring he learned it was shot the previous Autumn in Cornwall. Some time later Mathew visited the South Kensington Museum of Natural History to examine the museum's collection of heron skins, which convinced him it was a **Common Green Heron of the United States**.

More details were provided by James Edmund Harting (Editor of *The Zoologist* from 1877 to 1896) who was brought the specimen for his inspection by Sir Charles Graves-Sawle (one time Member of Parliament for Bodmin). Sir Charles told Harting it had been shot by his keeper William Abbott while he was trying for the **proverbial early Woodcock on some low-lying ground at Hay Bottom**. Realising it was unusual Abbott brought it to Sir Charles who promptly sent it to Foot for setting up. It was exhibited at a meeting of the Linnean Society on Thursday, 17th April 1890 (Harting 1890a). On the basis of this record Green Heron was initially added to the British List, later removed, then finally added once and for all in 1971.

Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula*

1890 Scotland: First-winter male, Balta Sound, Unst, Shetland, 23rd September (BOU 2003), caught.

Andrew Anderson caught the bird at Balta Sound while it was clearly in a state of exhaustion, so much so it died on 28th September. The carcass was forwarded by H. Dykes Lloyd to James Harting who identified it as a Baltimore Oriole. Harting expressed some concerns regarding its provenance as he was aware the species is **so frequently imported to England from New York as a cage bird** (Harting 1890b).

Although it was well documented it was initially dismissed as an escape or an import, possibly as a consequence of Harting's comments. It would be over 100 years before finally recognised as a genuine vagrant by the BOU.

In 2001 Ireland recorded its first Baltimore Oriole, the 27th for the WP, and very appropriately it was found in the west Cork fishing village of Baltimore.

White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*

1893 England: Adult male, Holderness House, Hull, East Yorkshire, January to 13th February (BOU 2011), shot.

Observed early in 1893 in G.W. Jalland's garden feeding in the company of other birds. Jalland shot it on Monday, 13th February, sending the carcass to the taxidermist Philip Loten at Easington to be set up.

It was subsequently seen by John Cordeaux of Eaton Hall, Retford and Mr. Hewetson of Leeds. Cordeaux published a description in the *The Naturalist* (1893a) and *The Zoologist* (1893b) naming it a **White-throated Bunting**, on the basis that the bird is a true Bunting, and in no way deserving the trivial name of 'Sparrow', which the Americans apply to so many of their finches and buntings. Cordeaux had no doubt it was a wild bird, however the species was not admitted to the British List at the time and the record not accepted until 2010.

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*

1894 Ireland: Keem Bay, Achill Island, Mayo, September (*IBR* 22: 23, *Irish Birds* 10(2): 259), shot.

Shot by J.R. Sheridan of Dugort, Achill Island, who realised he had a similar one in his collection that he had shot while in America in 1873. Sheridan sent it to A.G. More (English ornithologist who was one time Keeper of the Natural History Division at the Dublin Museum) who confirmed the identification as American Goldfinch (Sheridan 1894).

In an addendum to Sheridan's note, James Edmund Harting (in his role as editor of *The Zoologist*) stated upon examining the bird ... and from the much worn appearance of the wing and tail-feathers - the latter especially being much abraded - we are decidedly of opinion that it had been not long previously in captivity. The specimen is lost so a re-examination of its condition is not possible.

Doubts regarding the provenance of this bird has meant it has not been treated as a genuine vagrant and was assigned to Category D1 of the Irish List. The species is not on any Western Palearctic list.

Lesser Moorhen *Paragallinula angulata*

1895 Madeira: Male, Santo Amaro, near Funchal, 29th January (Matias 2009), obtained.

On Friday, 1st June 2007 Rafael Matias visited the Museu do Jardim Botânico do Funchal. His attention was drawn to the mounted specimen of a small rallid, recalling a tiny Common Moorhen [...], but clearly an adult Lesser Moorhen. On this occasion he could only peer in the display cabinet where the specimen's red plastic label stated, *Corvo do charco, 29-01-1895*, (i.e. indicating Black Crane). On a return visit in September he was able to examine it out of the case and could see that the original museum tag read *Limnocorax niger* (Gm.) male, S. Amaro 26.1.95!

Matias therefore concluded he was holding what was presumed to be the **first and only Black Crane for the Western Palearctic**, whose whereabouts at the time was unknown but assumed to be lost. Matias had no doubt it was a Lesser Moorhen and set about putting the record straight.

The specimen was originally part of an ornithological collection housed in a seminary in Funchal (Museu do Seminário do Funchal) and was set up by the Padre Ernesto João Schmitz. On receipt of the bird Schmitz considered it might be a Spotted Crake but a few years later he added Black Crake (*Zapornia flavirostra* per IOC v.11.2) to his list of the birds of Madeira, stating, the first and only time this bird was collected was on the 26.1.1895. It was a male and was caught in S. Amaro (Schmitz 1899), there is no doubt this refers to the same bird.

Broad-billed Roller *Eurystomus glaucurus*

1897 Cape Verde: Juvenile male, Ilha do Maio, Sotavento Islands, 22nd November (Alexander 1898), collected.

Lieutenant Boyd Alexander (British Army officer, explorer and ornithologist) was on his second visit to the Cape Verde Islands when he (or perhaps one of his party) killed the bird near some ruined huts that were close to the shore on Ilha do Maio, the most easterly of the Sotavento islands. The specimen is housed at the Natural History Museum, Tring.

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi*

1898 England: North Cotes, Lincolnshire, 1st October (Saunders 1899), shot.

The specimen was exhibited at a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club on Wednesday, 19th October 1898. It had been shot by G.H. Caton Haigh near North Cotes on the 1st of the month (this not long after a period of persistent easterly gales). Caton Haigh was in the habit of diligently 'working' the hedge-rows which border the long sea-banks on the Lincolnshire side of the [River] Humber for migrants in the autumn and this practise had paid dividends in the past, especially when he found and shot the first Greenish Warbler for Britain in the same place in September 1896.

On this occasion what attracted his attention was a strange and particularly powerful note, which prompted Caton Haigh to thoroughly beat out the hedge, which had the effect of flushing the owner of the loud voice that was a bird about the size of a Wood-Wren that ultimately proved to be an immature Radde's Warbler.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*

1899 Azores: Female, Flores, March (Matias *et al.* 2018), collected.

The specimen is held at the Museu Carlos Machado, Ponta Delgada, São Miguel. According to Bannerman & Bannerman (1966), it was initially preserved in alcohol, which would be expected to adversely affected the red colour on the breast.

There are two earlier records in Ireland that haven't passed the wild bird test so far, however that might just reflect the general consensus of the time that trans-Atlantic vagrancy was unlikely, although some were of the opinion they had both escaped from the same cage. One was shot at Annsbrook, Meath, in October 1845 and the other shot (probably) on the River Cloghoge, Wicklow in November 1845.

Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*

Before 1900 Azores: Ponta Delgada, São Miguel, sometime before 1900, collected (Bannerman & Bannerman 1966).

The specimen is held at Museu Carlos Machado, Ponta Delgada, São Miguel.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*

1900 Azores: Santa Maria, date not known (Le Grand 1983), collected.

The whereabouts of the specimen is unknown, although it has possibly found its way in to private collection.

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*

1901 Italy: Isola d'Elba, Tuscany, 2nd November (Alexander & Fitter 1955), collected.

At the time the specimen was housed in the Portoferraio Museum and is possibly still housed in one of the many museums there. The date has sometimes been incorrectly reported as 2nd December.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

1901 Denmark: Birkendegaard, Kalundborg, during Autumn (Lerche 1901), shot.

Henning Scheel illustrated the bird while the skin was still at Lerchenborg Manor House (two miles south of Kalundborg) and this work is reproduced in Schiøler (1931). Subsequently it was housed at Esbjerg Seminariums and is referenced in that institute's catalogue but when searched for could not be found there (Christensen & Rasmussen 2015).

Gabar Goshawk *Micronisus gabar*

1905 Egypt: Two pairs, River Nile south of Aswan at El Shallal, January to February (Snow & Perrins 1998).

Both pairs were observed flying along the course of the River Nile during January and February.



Pic. 013.
Dark-eyed Junco,
Natural History Museum,
Dublin.
Photo: © Brian McCloskey.

Dark-eyed (Slate-coloured) Junco *Junco hyemalis*

1905 Ireland: Loop Head, Clare, 30th May (IBR 8: 3), shot.

First noticed by J. Watson as it perched on an out-house at Loop Head at 09:00. About one hour later it had moved closer to the lighthouse which is when Watson shot it. Although he did not recognise the species he instinctively realised it was rare and sent it to Richard Barrington of Fassaroe, Bray, Wicklow (author of the *Migration of Birds as Observed at Irish Lighthouses and Lightships*) who was away when it arrived. In his absence his wife Lena took up the identification challenge and compared it with every description of European finch and bunting she could find but to no avail. It puzzled Edward Williams also (of Williams & Son, Taxidermists of 2 Dame Street, Dublin) who suggested it was a melanistic Chaffinch but Barrington demurred.

In June 1905 Barrington took the specimen with him to the fourth International Ornithological Congress that was taking place in London where it was identified by David Seth-Smith (one time editor of the *Avicultural Magazine* and the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*) as the North American Snowbird (an alternative name) and North American representatives present agreed (Barrington 1906). The mounted specimen is on display in the Natural History Museum, Dublin (Pic. 013).

Barrington could not rule out the possibility of assisted passage but was of the opinion that it was probably a genuine vagrant (Barrington 1906). However, in the Natural History Museum's *List of Irish Birds* (1924) A.R. Nicholls placed the record in square brackets indicating there was some doubt it had arrived naturally. This was finally put to bed by Major Robert Ruttledge (first editor of the *Irish Bird Report*) in the 1960 report stating there is irrefutable evidence for acceptance of the bird as a genuine vagrant and the chance of such [assisted] passage is no longer regarded as a valid reason for exclusion. We now place the species on the Irish List without reserve.



Pic. 014.
Asian Red-rumped Swallow,
Zoological Museum Oslo.
Photo: © Bjørn Olav Tveit.

Asian Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica japonica*

1905 Norway: Male, Pasvik River, Sør-Varanger, Troms og Finnmark, 31st May (Collett 1906), collected.

The bird was first observed in flight over Vaggetem but the strong winds ensured its capture was not successful. Two hours later it was seen 15km further north on the Pasvik River by Hans Thomas Lange Schaanning who was also on a journey along the river. It was finally captured by Schaanning after it had taken refuge in a small hut at Svanvik, on Lake Salmijävri, this 40km north of Vaggetem where first seen.

The specimen was acquired by the Christiania Museum (now renamed the Zoological Museum, Oslo) and measurements taken determined it was an example of the far-eastern form of Red-rumped Swallow (Pic. 014).

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis*

1905 Ireland: Near Castlefreke, Galley Head, Cork, 11th to 14th September (*IBR* 18: 51), shot.

Shot while feeding near the shore at Galley Head having spent a few days previous on some nearby marshy ground and was mounted by F.R. Rohu who stated it was in a **very spent condition** and presumed this was the result of a **very long flight**.

Furthermore it was established that it did not come from Woburn Park, Bedfordshire where all the Sandhill Cranes were pinioned. Nichols (1907) opined that it is difficult to imagine such a bird crossing the Atlantic Ocean unaided but despite this reservation he noted the specimen's feathers were clean showing no signs of abrasion from captivity.



Pic. 015.
Sandhill Crane,
Natural History Museum, Dublin.
Photo: © Brian McCloskey.

In 1970 and by permission of the Natural History Museum, Dublin and thanks to arrangements made by Dr. Colm E. O'Riordan (Keeper of the Museum's Natural History Division) the specimen was examined by Derek Goodwin and Dr. David W. Snow at the British Museum who confirmed there was no evidence of captive origin and found the specimen to be of the nominate form (Ruttledge 1971) and later Ruttledge (1980) stated that **all the facts point to its having been a genuine wild bird**. The mounted specimen is on display in the Natural History Museum, Dublin (Pic. 015).

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*

1906 England: Near the Abbey, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, 16th September (Saunders 1907), shot.

Shot by Capt. (later Major) Arthur Dorrien-Smith (Lord Proprietor of the Isles of Scilly from 1918 to 1920) at the Little Pool near the Abbey. The specimen was exhibited by A.F. Griffith on behalf of Capt. Dorrien-Smith at a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club. The specimen is housed in the Isles of Scilly Museum on St Mary's.



Black-faced Bunting *Emberiza spodocephala*

1910 Germany: First-winter Female, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 5th November (Hough 1994, Weigold 1911), shot.

Shot in a small garden between houses by Hugo Weigold who described it as **small and inconspicuous and called a thrush-like zi** (Pic. 016).

Although unable to identify the bird Weigold realised it was a bunting and the short wing length caused him to suspect Black-faced. The carcass was sent to Prof. Georg Anton Reichenow in Berlin who confirmed Weigold's suspicions identifying it as a young female of the species.

Crested Auklet *Aethia cristatella*

1912 Iceland: Adult (probably a female), in position 66°48'N, 012°55'W (45 nautical miles east-northeast of Langanestá), August (Hørring 1933, Sealy & Carter 2012), collected.

Shot by Capt. Ole Andreas Christiansen, the Faroese owner-master of the fishing schooner *Otaria*, while she was on the banks northeast of Iceland sometime between 12th and 20th August. He first noticed the bird flying low in the schooner's wake when he initially thought it was a Puffin but soon realised it was a species unknown to him.



It settled on the sea eventually making its way closer to the *Otaria* causing Capt. Christiansen to think it would like to come on board. The carcass was sent to P.F. Petersen on Nólsoy, Faroe Islands to set it up (Pic. 017) and the mounted specimen is currently housed in the Universitetets Zoologiske Museum, Copenhagen where the identification was most likely made.

Audubon's Shearwater *Puffinus Iherminieri*

1912 Denmark: Adult female, The Skagerrak, 18th September (Flood *et al.* 2020), shot.

During research for a paper on the identification of Barolo and Boyd's Shearwaters (Flood & van der Vliet 2019) museums housing specimens of each were either visited or sent a request for photographs of the relevant specimens in their collection by the authors. The Natural History Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen housed an adult female specimen labelled Barolo Shearwater that was collected on Wednesday, 18th September 1912 in the Skagerrak (the body of water between Jutland, the southeast coast of Norway and the west coast of Sweden that connects the North and Baltic Seas). Jan Bolding Kristensen (of the museum staff) sent Robert Flood photographs of the specimen (that was originally labelled as a Manx Shearwater when first acquired, changed sometime later to Barolo). Examining the photographs Robert was not convinced it was a Barolo and arranged to examine it first hand with the help of the Natural History Museum, Tring where it was loaned.

Pic. 018.

Shearwater Specimens (left to right): Barolo, Boyd's, Audubon's & Manx Shearwaters (all Natural History Museum, Tring, England, apart from Audubon's housed at Natural History Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen).

Photo: © Robert Flood.



Pic. 019.
Audubon's Shearwater,
Natural History Museum of
Denmark.
Photo: © Robert Flood.

Measurements taken were outside the range of Barolo (too large) and Manx (too small) while the plumage suggested either Boyd's or Audubon's Shearwaters. The tail appeared relatively long, although damaged tail-feathers made accurate measurements difficult and it proved impossible to examine the underwing without damaging the specimen as the wings were clasped tight to the body (Pic. 018).

J. Martin Collinson (Professor of Genetics at the Institute of Medical Sciences, University of Aberdeen) undertook DNA analysis of a toe-pad sample and determined the specimen to be an Audubon's Shearwater, a species that breeds throughout the Caribbean. Furthermore, both measurements taken and those parts of the plumage that could be examined were consistent with the identification (Pic. 019).



Pic. 020.
Brown Noddy,
Nordfriesisches Museum, Husum.
Photo: © Klaus Günther.



Pic. 021.
Schrenck's Little Bittern,
Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali
di Torino.
Photo: © Giovanni Boano.

Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*

1912 Germany: Wadden Sea at Simonsberg, near Husum, Schleswig-Holstein, 5th October (Paulsen 1925, Radomski 2009), killed.

The mounted specimen is on display in the Nordfriesisches Museum, Ludwig-Nissen-Haus, Husum, Schleswig-Holstein (Pic. 020).

Schrenck's Little Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*

1912 Italy: Adult female, near Bra, Province of Cuneo, Piemonte, 12th November (Salvadori 1912-13), collected.

Taken by a hunter near Bra in northwest Italy who sent the freshly dead specimen to Carlo Bainotti for setting up. However, before he began with that Bainotti forwarded the bird to Tommaso Salvadori to be identified. Salvadori (one time Vice-Director of the Royal Museum of Natural History in Turin) was initially stumped but eventually recalled he had seen one illustrated in Leopold von Schrenck's (the Russian zoologist and ethnographer after whom the bird is named) *Reisen und Forschungen im Amur-Lande* (Band I (1858), Taf. XIII), his initial confusion possibly caused by the illustration incorrectly annotated as *Ardetta cinnamomea* (possibly indicating Cinnamon Bittern?).

The original museum labelling stated it was a first-winter bird, however upon dissection it was discovered to be a female and very probably an adult. The mounted specimen is currently housed in the Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali di Torino (Pic. 021 & cover).

There is an earlier claim of one at either Brandenburg or Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany in the 1890s but it has not been accepted by the DAK.

Gray's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes fasciolata*

1913 France: First-winter female, Creac'h Lighthouse, Ile d'Ouessant, Finistere, 26th September (Lowe & Ingram 1930).

During the night of the 25th/26th September a number of birds met their end in collision with the Creac'h Lighthouse on the island of Ouessant (Ushant) situated 16 nautical miles west-northwest of Pointe de Corsen on the Finistère Peninsula. In the morning when the lightkeeper, M. Duchène, picked up one of the casualties he recognised it as [an infrequent visitor to the light](#).

This statement led Collingwood 'Cherry' Ingram (who saw action with the British Army in France during WWI and was a member of the British Ornithologists' Union for 81 years!) to assume the bird was a an immature Great Reed Warbler and he labelled it as such.

Fortunately Dr. Claude Ticehurst (surgeon and naturalist whose collection of 10,000 skins was bequeathed to the Natural History Museum) spotted the error and the specimen was correctly labelled as Gray's Grasshopper Warbler. When compared to other skins of that Far Eastern grass warbler in the British Museum (some collected in the Celebes by Dr. Hose and some in the Malay Archipelago by Alfred Russel Wallace) the measurements and plumage details were an exact match. This specimen is now held at the Natural History Museum, Tring. For a photograph of the specimen see Kennerley & Prÿs-Jones (2006).

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

1913 Iceland: Vík í Mýrdal, V-Skaft, 25th October (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), found dead.

Found dead by Jón Ólafsson. The skin is housed in the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik, however it was in such a bad state when received it could not be set up.

The first live and second WP record was also in Iceland, a female collected at Bessastaðir á Álftanesi, Gullbringusýsla on 21st October 1948.

Bufflehead *Bucephala albeola*

1920 England: Female or immature, Great Pool, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, 7th January (BOU 2001), shot.

In 2000 the BOU undertook a review of all 17 records of Bufflehead that occurred prior to 1958. This was prompted following the receipt of new information concerning the previously accepted first British and WP record, an adult male shot near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk in 1830. The review rejected all but one, making the bird on Tresco the first for Britain and the Western Palearctic. Its worth noting that Bufflehead was not imported to European collections until 1936, a full 16 years later. The specimen is on display in the Isles of Scilly Museum.

An earlier record near Trstené na Oravě (now in modern day Slovakia) on 15th March 1885 is assigned to Category D by the Slovenské Faunistická Komisia (the Slovak Rarity Committee).

Indian House Crow *Corvus splendens*

1922? Egypt: Suez, date not known (BWP VIII).

House Crow became established at the port of Suez in or before 1922 where it had presumably arrived by ships transiting the Suez Canal from the Indian sub-Continent where it is native. Thereafter spreading to other parts of the Canal and along the Red Sea coast.

Black Scoter *Melanitta americana*

1926 Finland: Adult male, Kökar, Åland islands, Gulf of Bothnia, 16th May (Reunanen 2012), shot.

Kari Kaunisto (then a doctoral student at Turku University) and Ari Karhilahti (a Conservator at Turku Zoological Museum) were undertaking an inventory of specimens at the University of Turku Zoological Museum prior to adding them to a database. While checking the mounted specimens they noticed one labelled 'Common Scoter' that was not quite right for that sea duck. Indeed when the specimen was presented at the Turku Zoological and Botanical Society in 1927 it was described in a memo as 'odd-looking'.

Features noted included the yellow patch on the bill extending squarely to the forehead, a powerful upper mandible with a hook-like claw, a firmer neck and yellowish eye-ring all suggesting Black Scoter (previously treated as a subspecies of Common Scoter, since raised to full species status). It was submitted to the Finnish National Rarities Committee who accepted the record and published it in their 2012 report (Lehikoinen *et al.* 2013).

This recently confirmed identification predates the previously accepted first WP record on the fresh water canal at Brielle, Netherlands from 26th to 28th December 1954 (Kist & Swaab 1955), on which date it was found dead by the young birder Jan Ochtman. On the 29th Jan cycled all the way from Rotterdam to Leiden (a distance of about 20 miles) to present the bird to the museum, where it continues to reside. Indeed, in the absence of a photograph it's very likely this second WP record would have been lost to ornithology without the heroic actions of Jan Ochtman.

Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*

1927 England: Female, Tresco Abbey, Tresco, Isles of Scilly, 17th September (Witherby 1929).

Shot by Major Arthur Dorrien-Smith, who also took the first Greater Yellowlegs at the same location on Tresco. It was examined by the BOU List Committee, who determined it was an example of the nominate form.

On behalf of Major Dorrien-Smith, Dr. Percy R. Lowe (one time Chairman of the BOC) exhibited the specimen at a meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club, held at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, London on Wednesday, 9th November 1927. The specimen is housed in the Isles of Scilly Museum. The date is sometimes quoted as 11th September.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

1927 Azores: First-year female, Terceira, 24th October (Bannerman & Bannerman 1966), collected.

The whereabouts of the specimen is not known.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*

1930 France: Lampaul-Ploudalmézeau, Finistère, 15th September (Mayaud 1936), killed.

The whereabouts of the specimen is not known.



Pied Crow *Corvus albus*

1931 Libya: Jalo Oasis, Al Wahat, 21st to 24th April (Batty 2010), collected.

The specimen is housed in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale Giacomo Doria, Genoa (Pic. 022).

Tickell's Thrush *Turdus unicolor*

1932 Germany: Adult male, Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, 15th October (Drost 1933), collected.

The carcass was examined by Rudolf Drost, but despite his best efforts was unable to identify the species. Instead it was sent to Prof. Erwin Stresemann (one time editor of the *Journal für Ornithologie*) in Berlin and he determined it was a Tickell's Thrush from the Himalayas (Pic. 023). A thorough examination of the plumage ruled out any possibility of an escape.



Pic. 023.
Tickell's Thrush,
Institut für Vogelforschung, Wilhelmshaven.
Photo: © Jochen Dierschke.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

1933 Azerbaijan: Three, near Lenkoran, on the Caspian Sea coast, June (Snow & Perrins 1998), collected.

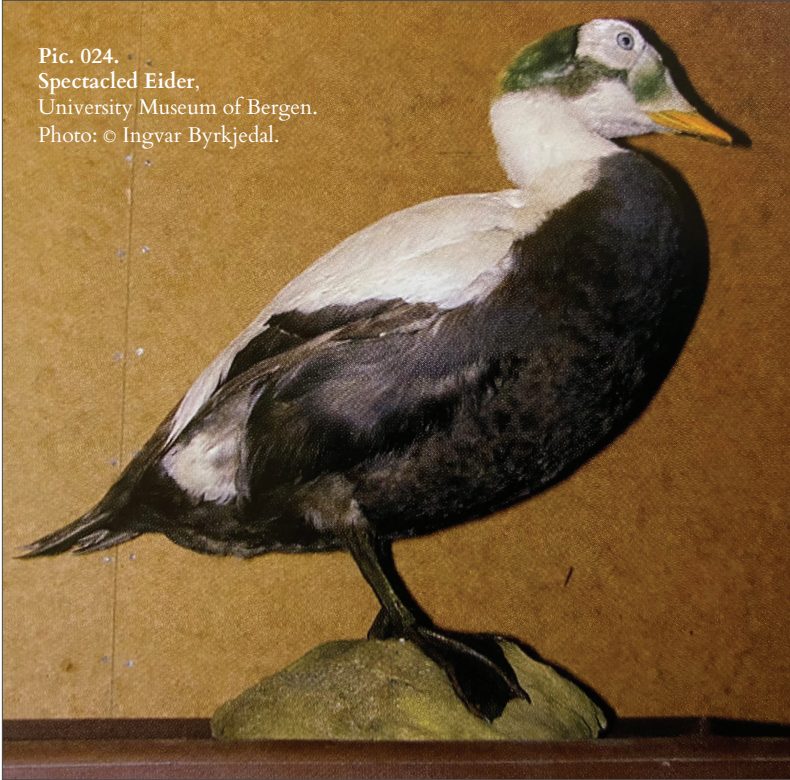
Breeding was confirmed as one was found in its nest.

Spectacled Eider *Somateria fischeri*

1933 Norway: Second-winter male, Vardø, Finnmark, 12th December (Johnsen 1937), shot.

The bird was reported to be **alone and not at all shy** when it was shot in the harbour at Vardø (in the extreme northeastern part of Norway). The carcass came in to the hands of Hans Nilsen who set it up but was unable to identify it to species. Nilsen sent it to Bergen in August 1935 where it was bought by the Museum. With reference to several published descriptions it was identified and aged as a **male in incomplete breeding plumage**.

Pic. 024.
Spectacled Eider,
University Museum of Bergen.
Photo: © Ingvar Byrkjedal.



Assuming it bred near the western limit of the species range (possibly near the mouth of the River Lena in Siberia?) and the age to be 1½ years old would mean it departed the breeding grounds by about mid-September 1932 at the latest. Its likely the bird was tempted west seeking open and ice-free waters where it could feed, eventually reaching Vardø. The specimen is housed at the University Museum of Bergen (Pic. 024).

African Skimmer *Rynchops flavirostris*

1934 Israel: Two, Yarqon River, near Tel Aviv, Summer (Shirihai 1996), collected.

Although both were collected just one skin is housed in the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv (previously known as Tel Aviv University Zoological Museum).

Black-and-White Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

1936 Scotland: Juvenile male, Vaster, near Tingwall, Shetland, October 1936 (Forrester & Andrews 2007).

Found dead about the middle of the month in Hendrey Anderson's garden, this after a period of stormy weather. The location is often erroneously quoted as Scalloway, which is about six miles further north. The skin is housed at National Museums Scotland's Collection Centre, West Granton Road, Edinburgh (Pic. 025).

Pics. 025–026.

Black-and-White Warbler (below), National Museums Scotland, Edinburgh,
Photo: © NMS.

Scarlet Tanager remains (bottom), Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik,
Photo: © Ingvar A. Sigurdsson.



Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea*

1936 Iceland: Leifstaðir, Kaupangssveit, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, November or December (Ólafsson 1993), found dead.

Found by Aðalsteinn Helgason either at the end of November or early in December. Has been mistakenly referred to as a Greenfinch in some sources. The remains are housed in the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik (Pic. 026).

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

1937 Norway: Utsira, 8th October (Schaanning 1939), shot.

Shot by Hans Schaanning on the island of Utsira (about 11 nautical miles off the southwest coast of Norway). It was discovered in the island's only conifer plantation where it was foraging alone on the ground. It reminded Schaanning of a Tree Pipit when he first noticed it, however that impression was soon dispelled once he examined it in the hand.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus*

1937 At sea: Second-winter, in position 46°30'N, 014°00'W (approximately 345 nautical miles west-northwest of Cape Finisterre, Spain), November (Gross 1940), captured.

Came aboard a ship in the Atlantic Ocean and was captured. The signature on its leg-ring was reported to the Gull Banding Project sponsored by the Linnaean Society of New York. It transpired the bird was ringed as a chick on Kent Island, Bay of Fundy, New Brunswick, Canada in August 1936, a distance of approximately 2,600 nautical miles from where it was caught.

The first on land was an immature bird at Cobh, Cork, Ireland from 16th November to 16th December 1986 found by Jim Wilson. While on holiday in New York in September 1988 Jim had the opportunity to study large numbers of American Herring Gulls. It was only then he realised he had seen a similar gull in Cobh a couple of years previous. Comparing his notes taken on both sides of the Atlantic convinced Jim the Cobh bird was in fact an American Herring Gull and it was accepted by the IRBC as the first Irish and second for the WP.

Chestnut Bunting *Emberiza rutila*

1937 Netherlands: First-winter female, Meyendel, Wassenaar, Zuid-Holland, 5th November (Junge & Koch 1938), trapped and collected.

On Friday, 5th November 1937 a fairly nondescript bird was trapped at the Wassenaar Ringing Station. Although clearly a bunting it could not be identified to species, but its overall condition ruled out previous captivity. Reference was made to the available literature using what few clues its appearance provided such as the yellow wash to the lower breast and belly as well as the reddish-brown rump and upper tail feathers etc.

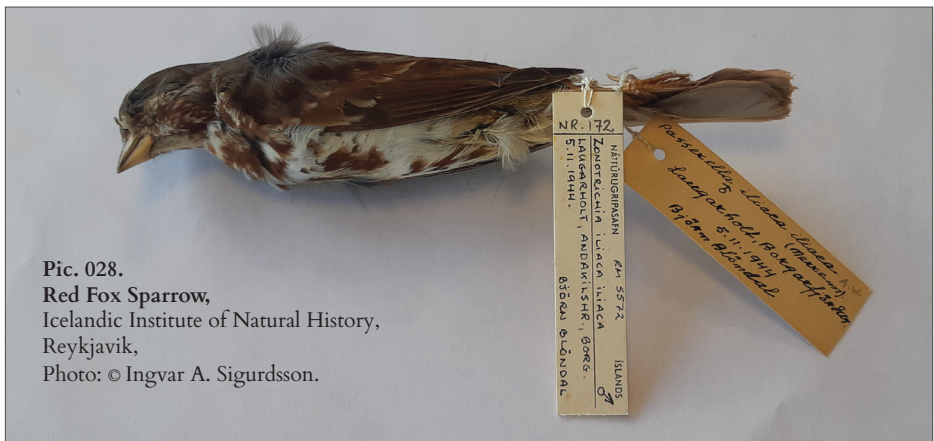


A comparison of features eliminated most European species but Yellow-breasted Bunting (*E. aureola*) remained a possibility but a more detailed description would be needed to determine that possibility. At this point the bird was donated to the National Museum of Natural History in Leiden where it was compared to several *aureola* skins and although there was some similarities it was clearly not that species. Attention next turned to a description of a Chestnut Bunting that was caught in Belgium in October 1928 and published in Dupond (1935). This and a 19th century French record have been assigned to Category D by the respective national rarity committees. Comparing the bird with the written description conclusively proved it was a Chestnut Bunting (Pic. 027).

Red Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca iliaca*

1944 Iceland: Male, Laugarholt í Bæjarsveit, 5th November (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), collected.

The bird was shot (or possibly found dead) by Björn J. Blöndal. It had spent time in a garden on a farm feeding on rowan berries and was also seen to visit one of Iceland's famous geothermal warm water streams. The specimen is housed in the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik and was identified to the eastern form *iliaca* (Pic. 028). An earlier record at Liguria, Italy in 1936 was judged to be ship assisted.



Pic. 028.
Red Fox Sparrow,
Icelandic Institute of Natural History,
Reykjavik,
Photo: © Ingvar A. Sigurdsson.

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

1945 Azores: First-winter, Horta, Faial, 4th November (Cooke 1947), killed.

This bird had been ringed as an immature at Gull Island, five miles west of Penetang, Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, Ontario, Canada on the 10th June 1945.

African Fish Eagle *Haliaeetus vocifer*

1947 Egypt: Adult, Abu Handel, south of Aswan, 1st November (Snow & Perrins 1998), shot.

The specimen is housed in the Giza Zoological Museum (Goodman & Meininger 1989).

Marabou Stork *Leptoptilos crumenifer*

1951 Israel: Hula Valley, May (Shirihai 1996), collected.

The location of the specimen is not known.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

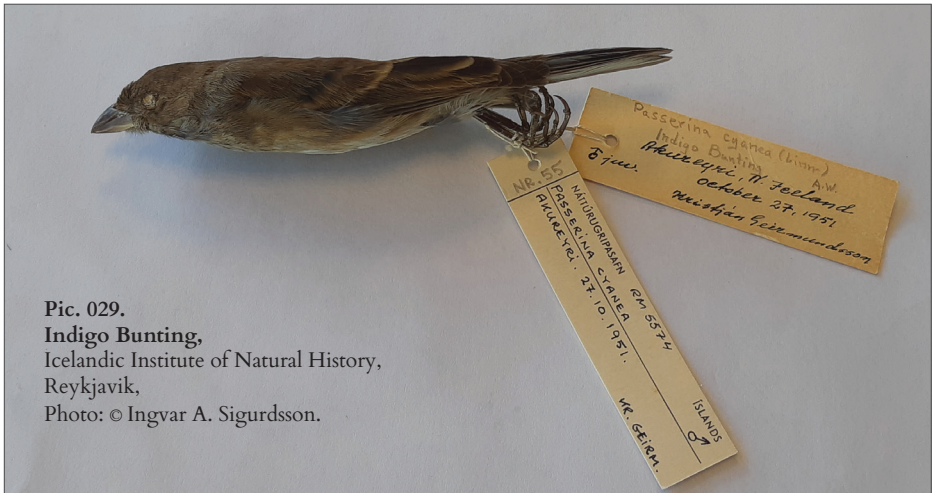
1951 Iceland: Heimaey, Vestmannaeyjar, 16th September (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999).

Red-eyed Vireo is by far the most numerous Nearctic passerine recorded in the Western Palearctic with 387 records to the end of 2020.

Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

1951 Iceland: Juvenile male, Akureyri, Eyjafjarðarsýsla, 27th October (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), found dead.

Found dead by Kristján Geirmundsson. The specimen is housed at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik (Pic. 029).



Pic. 029.
Indigo Bunting,
Icelandic Institute of Natural History,
Reykjavik,
Photo: © Ingvar A. Sigurdsson.

African Silverbill *Euodice cantans*

1952 Algeria: Tamanrasset, 6th May (BWP VIII), collected.

Ascension Frigatebird *Fregata aquila*

1953 Scotland: Female, Loch a' Phuill, Tiree, Inner Hebrides, 10th July (Walbridge *et al.* 2003), captured.

At 10:30 John Graham captured an exhausted bird in a fish landing net at Loch a' Phuill in the southwest of Tiree. Sadly the bird died later the same day about 20:00. Graham described it as a big bird with an all-white head and an albatross beak. At the time it was identified as a Magnificent Frigatebird, which remained unchallenged for 50 years. The carcass was donated to Edinburgh Museum (now part of National Museums Scotland) to be set up as a study-skin and is housed at National Museums Scotland's Collection Centre, West Granton Road, Edinburgh (Pic. 030).



The British Birds Rarity Committee was established in 1958 and as this bird was found before then it became part of their ongoing review of records prior to that year. The reassessment took place in 2002 (principally conducted by Grahame Walbridge with Robert (Bob) McGowan undertaking a close examination of the skin housed at NMS, Edinburgh) revealed that its features and measurements were incompatible with Magnificent Frigatebird! There followed a thorough investigation of the characteristics of all five frigatebird species for the purpose of establishing the identity of the Tiree bird and the outcome determined its features were compatible with one species only, Ascension Frigatebird that breeds in the tropical South Atlantic on the tiny Boatswainbird Islet that lies off the northeast coast of Ascension Island and as far as anyone knew never wandered further than the west coast of Africa.

Remarkably a second Ascension Frigatebird has been recorded in the Inner Hebrides at Bowmore on Islay in 2013.

American Black Duck *Anas rubripes*

1954 Ireland: Adult female, Listolín, Kilkenny, February (Kennedy 1955), shot.

On a visit to Flanagan's Poultry Shop, Broad Street, Waterford, Frank Hudson noticed the rather unusual plumage of a duck labelled 'Mallard'. Following some negotiations with another customer he bought it. On 12th February Hudson forwarded it to the Natural History Museum, Dublin where the Rev. P.G. Kennedy S.J. and P.E. Dunn identified it as a Black Duck. The skin was sent to Sir Peter Scott (founder of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust at Slimbridge and son of Antarctic explorer Robert Falcon Scott) who confirmed their identification and determined it was an adult female. Sir Peter painted a reconstruction of the bird alongside a male of the species for *British Birds* magazine (Pic. 031).

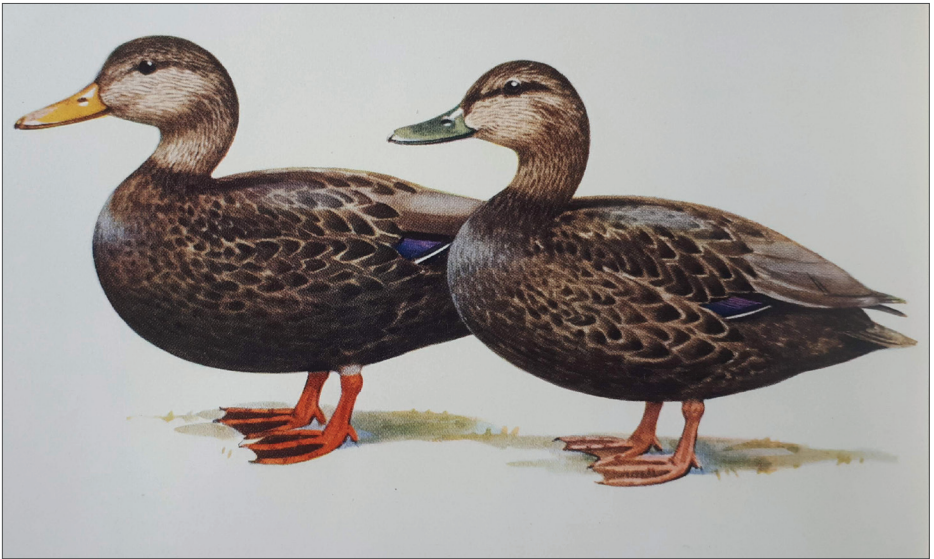
The bird was shot by a farmer named Croke from Listolín, near Mullinavat early in the month. Hudson paid a visit to Croke who showed him the marsh where he took it. Croke said there were two similar ducks that rose together and he brought both down, however one escaped and the other was the bird he sent to Flanagan's where it was received on 5th February.

Pic. 031.

Male and female **American Black Duck** with the Listrolin bird depicted on the right, *British Birds* vol. 49(2), plate 1.

Painted by Sir Peter Scott for *British Birds* magazine

Scan courtesy of © British Birds, with their permission.



Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

1954 England: Adult, near Kilnsea, East Yorkshire, 31st August to 4th September (Chislett 1955).

Peter Waterton and Edward E. Jackson were staying at Spurn Bird Observatory when they noticed an unusual wader on marshy ground just north of Kilnsea. The appearance did not match the description of any wader previously seen there. About an hour-and-a-half later Waterton and Jackson returned along with Ralph Chislett, G.H. Ainsworth and R.F. Dickens but the bird could not be found. However, over the following four days it was seen on and off by a number of birders at ranges down to 12 yards.

Its flight was described as rather like Redshank's and while landing and taking off its legs were trailed behind. On one occasion when taking flight it was heard to call, tchoowk, tchoowk, tchoowk-tchoowk, likened to a Knot by R.F. Dickens. It preferred to feed in deep water often up to its belly and would swim frequently. One feature that was particularly remarked on by most was the strongly barred underparts, which suggested either Wandering Tattler or Stilt Sandpiper. Ralph Chislett collated notes taken and drawings made these favoured Stilt Sandpiper as the more likely. Chislett then consulted Roger Tory Peterson's (credited by many to have been the inventor of the modern field guide) *A Field Guide to the Birds*, A.C. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Shorebirds* and P.A. Taverner's *Birds of Canada* after which Stilt Sandpiper became the clear favourite and subsequent examination of skins in the British Museum and elsewhere clinched it.

Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*

1954 Iraq: Adult, west of Baghdad, 8th October (BWP II).

Dr. Jeffery G. Harrison (one time editor of the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club from 1952 to 1961) was driving along the Baghdad road between Habbaniya and Feluja in his Land Rover when he saw a Bateleur fly across his path about 15 yards ahead of him.

He immediately recognised the species stating it was quite unmistakable as it sailed serenely over, without any sign of fear or trace of a wing beat as it crossed our path. Harrison described it as a predominantly a black-bodied eagle, with long, rounded wings and a short paler tail, while the red at the base of the bill and the red feet were plainly visible, as was the white under the wing (Harrison 1955).

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas*

1954 England: First-winter male, Lundy Island, Devon, 4th November (Whitaker 1955), trapped.

What at first appeared to be a Chiffchaff was observed entering the Helgoland Trap on Lundy Island (in the Bristol Channel), but that impression was soon dispelled once extracted revealing something quite unfamiliar to those present. Its most striking feature was a brilliant canary-yellow chin contrasting sharply in the malar region with the ear-coverts and lores, which were black, mottled with grey. It was taken to the island's laboratory, where it was measured and a full description taken, held overnight and released the following day. There were some suggestions it had been around for a few days previous to capture.

The general impression was that of a small round-winged *Phylloscopus*, although when released some of its movements while just above the ground in thick bramble and grass cover were reminiscent of Wren. Unable to name it the description was sent to Wilfrid B. Alexander (among a great many other distinctions, a founder member of the BOU), who identified it as a Common Yellowthroat.

Myrtle Warbler *Setophaga coronata*

1955 England: Old School House, Newton St. Cryes, Devon, 4th January to 10th February (Smith 1955), when found dead.

Early in January 1955 severe weather conditions brought three inches of snow to Exeter and the surrounding area. On Tuesday, 4th January Mrs. D. Cook put food on her bird table at the School House, Newton St. Cryes (four miles from Exeter) and remembers hearing an unusual bird-note on the afternoon of this date. On the following day her son David noticed a strange bird which he was unable to identify but heard it make the same unusual bird-note. As the mystery bird was still present on the 8th, Dr. D. Cook contacted F. Raymond Smith in the hope he might be able to identify it. Smith visited the Cooks on the 11th and got excellent views of it at distances down to three feet.

Along with his son, Smith visited the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter. Suspecting it was an American warbler they browsed the pages of Audubon's *Birds of America* and examined the museum's collection of North American wood warbler skins where they discovered an almost identical male specimen in winter plumage! There could be no doubt the School House bird was a Myrtle Warbler.

During its stay the warbler established a territory based around the Smith's bird table and would chase away most other birds coming near it, especially Blue Tits. As time moved on it further extended its territory to about 50 yards. Its preferred roost was in a small Holly tree about 80 yards from the bird table where it would chase off any Blue Tits encountered before retiring. On 10th February David Cook noticed that it appeared to be **off colour** and later on that day he found it **lying dead underneath a tree only a few yards from the bird-table**. A very natural end for a first Western Palearctic record.

A bird that was possibly a Myrtle Warbler came aboard the eastbound RMS *Empress of France* on 10th September 1954 in the North Atlantic, when she was approximately 345 nautical miles east of the Straits of Belle Isle. It remained on board until (at least) 13th September when the ship came within sight of the Irish coast. As the bird was not definitively identified to species it must be recorded as 'Nearctic wood warbler species'!

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

1955 England: Adult male, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, 12th to 14th March (Scott 1955).

During the afternoon of Saturday, 12th March, Philippa Scott saw a male Ring-necked Duck settle on a pond about 15 yards in front of her house at the WWF Reserve at Slimbridge (the reserve was established in 1946 and covered about 2,000 acres of reed, salt marsh and wetland lagoons). It reappeared the following afternoon when it was watched by her husband Sir Peter Scott and Hugh Boyd. Finally on the 14th it was observed for the last time in flight over the Orchard Pen. It later transpired that Bernard King also saw it on the 12th.



Pic. 032.

Male and female **Ring-necked Duck** with the Slimbridge bird depicted on the right, *British Birds* vol. 49(2), plate 1.

Painted by Sir Peter Scott for *British Birds* magazine
Scan courtesy of © British Birds, with their permission.

The possibility it was an escape from captivity was considered very remote as it is so rare in captivity that no one keeping them would allow their specimens to fly and as far as anyone knew had never been successfully reared in any European collection and therefore in all likelihood was a genuine vagrant from North America (Pic. 032). A male that was discovered for sale in Leadenhall Market, London in 1801 was supposedly taken on the Lincolnshire fens but has never been accepted as a vagrant.

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*

1955 Scotland: Fair Isle, Shetland, 27th to 31st May (Williamson & Thom 1955).

Kenneth Williamson and Valerie Thom along with some others who were staying at the Fair Isle Observatory disturbed six Whimbrels that were in an area of close-cropped grassland at the southern end of the island. As they flew off Thom remarked that one of the birds was **without a white rump** and was very obviously smaller. During that day and the next they kept a close eye on this group of Whimbrels, often at very close quarters, eventually concluding the odd bird out was an example of the Nearctic form *hudsonicus*.

It remained on the island until the 31st but after the nominate birds departed the island on the 29th proved very difficult to approach and if disturbed would take long flights that usually ended with it landing on close-cropped pasture, although on rare occasions it headed to some weed-covered tidal rocks.

At various times Hudsonian Whimbrel has been treated as a form of Whimbrel or as a full species, which is its current status according to the IOC. The provenance of some earlier possible records in Iceland (1854) and in Spain (1872) is not altogether clear but these are not included by Bosanquet (2000) in his list of Western Palearctic Hudsonian Whimbrel records.

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*

1955 Western Sahara: Two, Sbayera, 7th June (Valverde 1957).

Jacobin Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus*

1955 Chad: Tibesti, 9th September (BWP IV), collected.

The location of the specimen is not known.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis*

1955 France: Female, Ile d'Ouessant, Finistere, 17th September (Etchécopar 1995), captured.

The specimen is housed at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris.

Thick-billed Warbler *Arundinax aedon*

1955 Scotland: Leogh, Fair Isle, Shetland, 6th October (Williamson *et al.* 1956), trapped.

Fleeting glimpses of this bird revealed, among other features, a long rounded tail and rufous rump, giving the impression of a Great Reed Warbler. When flushed it would quickly dive back in to cover never revealing much of its appearance so a decision to try trap and identify it was taken. A net with a portable catching-box was assembled and the bird was gently chivvied from a turnip rig to a ditch where it entered the net and was caught.

Once examined in the hand it became obvious that any resemblance to Great Reed Warbler was purely superficial and with reference to Dresser's *Manual of Palearctic Birds* and Hartert's *Die Vögel der Paläarktischen Fauna* it was confidently identified as Thick-billed Warbler. Once released it skulked in the garden in front of the Helgoland Trap for a short while before flying off towards the hillside above the Obsevatory and was never seen again.

American Black Tern *Chlidonias niger surinamensis*

1956 Iceland: Adult male, Hafurbjarnarstaðir, Miðnes, 10th June (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), collected.

Collected by Hákon Vilhjálmsson. The specimen is housed at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik (Pic. 033).



Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis peregrina*

1956 Iceland: First-winter, Hallbjarnareyri, Snæfellsnes, 14th October (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), found dead.

Found dead by Svava Guðmundsdóttir. The specimen is housed at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik (Pic. 034).

The first live and second Western Palearctic record was an immature bird trapped on Fair Isle, Shetland in September 1975.

Black Brant *Branta bernicla nigricans*

1957 England: Foulness, Essex, 9th February (Burton 1960).

What is presumed to be the same individual returned to Foulness in February 1958. Black Brant is the northwestern Canadian Arctic, Alaskan and northeastern Siberian form of Brent Goose.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

1957 Wales: First-winter male, Bardsey Island, Gwynedd, 11th to 25th September (Arthur 1963), trapped.

Early on Wednesday, 11th September 1957 at Bardsey Island, R. Moss and R. Stjernstedt had brief views of a bird that resembled a **large, bright male Greenfinch**. Typically it dived in to dense cover becoming lost to view but by good fortune it was caught by J.D. Gray later the same day in the island's 'Lane' Helgoland Trap and was provisionally identified as a Summer Tanager, which was confirmed when it was compared (in the hand) to a male specimen of the species that was kindly sent to Bardsey on loan by R. Wagstaffe of the City of Liverpool Public Museum.

During its 15 day residence on Bardsey it spent most of the time in an area of bramble, gorse, small willows and plum trees. Left to its own devices it would sit out in the open in an **upright shrike-like manner**, but if disturbed would dive back in to cover pronto. It mostly fed on Blackberries but one time it was seen to take a small fly **shrike like** in the air. The bird was trapped again on the 15th and 20th September and was found to have put on weight during those dates going from an initial 24.6 to 36.7 grams.

Tristan Albatross *Diomedea dabbenena*

1957 Italy: Immature male, between Palermo and Termini Imerese, Sicily, 4th October (Haas 2009), killed.

While driving the coastal road between Palermo and Termini Imerese, Guagliardo Gaetano noticed a very large bird that was brought down by a gust of wind. Stopping his car he caught the bird and killed it, then took the body to his local hunters club. Once there it was measured, photographed and at some point set up as a mount labelled 'Wandering Albatross'.

On hearing about this record many years later, Marcel Haas (author of *Extremely rare birds in the Western Palearctic*) made contact with several people in Italy in an attempt to learn more about it. He discovered the specimen was housed in the Museo di Storia Naturale, Terrasini (Sicily) and arranged for a photograph to be taken, which clearly revealed it to be one of the wandering albatross superspecies now recognised as five full species in their own right.

Size alone ruled out Wandering Albatross but not Antipodean Albatross, however the latter was ruled out on account of its Pacific Ocean distribution making it a most unlikely candidate. Clues to the identification of the specimen were found in Orlando (1958) who quoted the size of the bill as; length 150mm and width c.39mm, both consistent with Tristan Albatross (that breeds on Gough Island and the Tristan da Cunha group of islands in the South Atlantic), which is assumed to be the specimen's identity.

However, see also Corso (2009) who has expressed some reservations about how this bird might have reached Mediterranean waters.

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis*

1958 Israel: North Beach, Eilat, 13th January (Shirihai 1996), found dead.

The specimen is housed in the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv. This little gem breeds on islands in the Sea of Japan and Yellow Sea and since the early 1980s has been turning up in northwest Europe.

Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhyncha*

1958 Israel: The Fish Ponds at Ma'agan Mikhael, south of Haifa, 20th June to 12th July (Shirihai 1996).

A sub-Saharan duck that is also known as Red-billed Pintail.

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*

1959 Scotland: Male, Ward Hill, Fair Isle, Shetland, 27th April to 10th May (Davis & Dennis 1959), trapped.

On the evening of Monday, 27th April 1959 Roy Dennis found a small bird that resembled a cross between a Hedge Sparrow and a bunting that was skulking in a tangle of rusty barbed-wire near the derelict radar-station on Ward Hill. Roy hurried back to the Observatory to alert Peter Davis and to their great relief it was still present on their return an hour later. Decent views were hard to come by as it was very shy and kept close to cover but they both saw enough to realise it was one of the North American sparrows.

A single-panel mist net was erected and within half an hour the sparrow was trapped and taken back to the Observatory laboratory where it was identified as a Song Sparrow with the help of reference to Roger Tory Peterson's *A Field Guide to the Birds* and *A Natural History of American Birds* by E.H. Forbush and J.B. May. Apart from a brief excursion to the Gully trap on the 6th, it remained near the Observatory building to 8th May, then on 9th and 10th May it was by the stream at Vatstrass, after which it was not subsequently seen.

During its fortnight stay it was usually shy and difficult to locate. Its usual haunt was along a cliff in South Haven where it was sometimes seen feeding in the short turf near the cliff edge. It was noted that when moving slowly it hopped along but if disturbed while out in the open would break in to a rapid run, and when flushed it would it flew rapidly back under cover.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*

1959 Denmark: Blåvands Huk, West Jutland, 24th to 25th September (Christensen 1960).

In the autumn of 1959 Niels Christensen and his wife were bird watching in West Jutland. On Thursday, 24th September they spent the morning on the headland at Blåvandshuk, after which they set off east stopping from time to time along the road checking for migrants. In a low Poplar and Birch thicket they found two flycatchers, at first assuming both were Spotted Flycatchers. Indeed one of them was but they soon realised the second bird was **something unusual**. Particularly puzzling was the bird's trilling call repeatedly made (described as not dissimilar to some Blue Tit notes or a Robin's alarm call) that was unlike any other flycatcher call they knew. In fine conditions they spent the next hour taking a detailed description as well as grabbing some photos. They returned later the same day and the next to find the bird still present but there was no sign after the 25th.

Niels noticed the bird's pale eye-ring and was aware that this feature was indicative of the Far Eastern Asian Brown Flycatcher and he began to suspect the mystery flycatcher was that species. However, finding a detailed description in the literature proved difficult but an examination of museum skins turned up a match to clinch the identity and at the same time ruled out other grey or brown Asian flycatcher species.

There are a number of earlier claims that had some credentials but were ultimately judged inconclusive.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

1959 Iceland: Male, Heimaey, Vestmannaeyjar, 22nd October (Pétursson & Þráinsson 1999), collected.

Taken by Sigurður V. Jónatansson. The specimen is housed at the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik (Pic. 035).

Siberian (Water) Pipit *Anthus rubescens japonicus*

1960 Italy: Female, Noventa Padovana, Veneto, 26th October (Bonfio 1962).

The Siberian Pipit *japonicus* is the Eastern Palearctic form of Buff-bellied Pipit. This is the first European record, elsewhere in the Western Palearctic it is a scarce but regular passage migrant and winter visitor to the Middle East.



Abbreviations

BBRC: British Birds Rarity Committee.

BOC: British Ornithologists' Club.

BOU: British Ornithologists' Union.

BWP: Birds of the Western Palearctic (full title Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa: The Birds of the Western Palearctic), nine volumes published by Oxford University Press between 1977 and 1996.

Capt: Captain, i.e. the person in command of a ship or boat.

CHN: Comité d'Homologation National (French Rare Birds Committee).

DAK: Deutsche Avifaunistische Kommission (German Rare Bird Committee).

Dr. Doctor.

IBR: Irish Bird Report (Published annually from 1953 to 2003, the precursor to the Irish Rare Bird Report).

IOC: IOC: International Ornithological Community (see *British Birds* 114(6): 315 for an explanation of the name).

IRBC: Irish Rare Birds Committee.

NSKF: Norsk Sjeldenhetskomite for Fugl (Norwegian Rare Bird Committee).

Prof: Professor.

Rev: Reverend.

RMS: Royal Mail Ship.

Sr: Senior (Used to distinguish a man from his son when they both have the same name).

syn: Synonym (A taxonomic name which has the same application as another).

WWF: Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

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