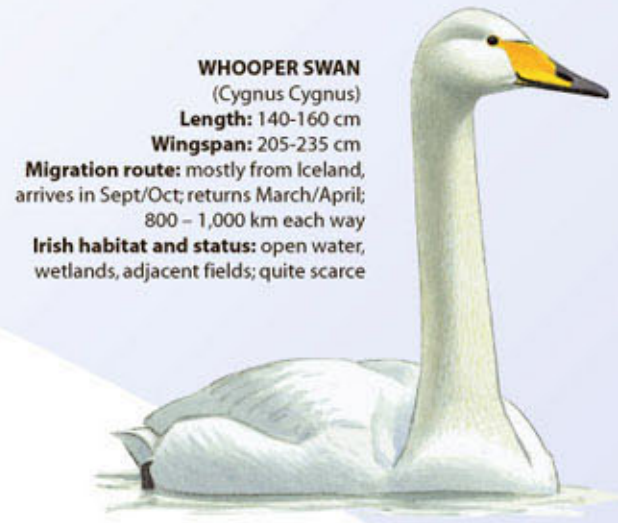


Winter visitors



WHOOPER SWAN
(*Cygnus Cygnus*)
Length: 140-160 cm
Wingspan: 205-235 cm
Migration route: mostly from Iceland, arrives in Sept/Oct; returns March/April; 800 - 1,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: open water, wetlands, adjacent fields; quite scarce

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE
(*Anser albifrons flavirostris*)
Length: 64-78 cm
Wingspan: 130-160 cm
Migration route: Greenland to Ireland via Iceland, arrives in Oct, returns April; 1,500 - 2,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: wetlands, stubble fields; scarce



SNOWY OWL
(*Nyctea scandiaca*)
Length: 53-65 cm
Wingspan: 125-150 cm
Migration route: 'irrupts' (sporadic migration outside normal territory) very irregularly in winter from the Arctic, 1,000 - 5,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: mountainous bog; very rare, but may stay year-round



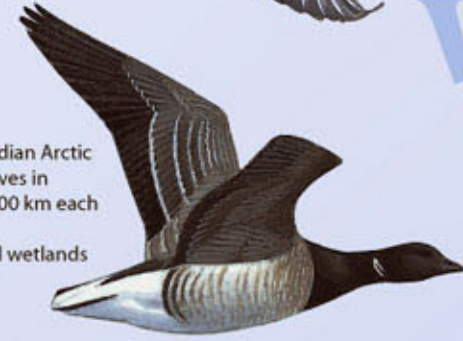
WAXWING
(*Bombicilla garrulus*)
Length: 18-21 cm
Migration route: 'irrupts' in winter in very variable numbers from Fennoscandia (Norway, Sweden, Finland), 1,000 - 1,500 km each way
Irish habitat and status: ornamental fruiting shrubs, often urban; very scarce in most winters



BELTED KINGFISHER
(*Ceryle alcyon*)
Length: 31-34 cm
Migration route: vagrant from North America, 6,000 - 7,000 km each way (unlikely to make return journey)
Irish habitat and status: rivers, lakes and coasts; extremely rare



BRENT GOOSE
(*Branta bernicla hrota*)
Length: 52-62 cm
Wing Span: 105-117 cm
Migration: Greenland and Canadian Arctic islands to Ireland via Iceland, arrives in Sept/Oct; returns Feb/March; 2,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: coastal wetlands and grassland; common



FIELDFARE
(*Turdus pilaris*)
Length: 22-27 cm
Migration route: from Fennoscandia and Russia, arrives in Oct/Nov, returns March/April; 1,000 - 2,500 km each way
Irish habitat and status: open fields, quite common



BAR-TAILED GODWIT
(*Limosa lapponica*)
Length: 33-41 cm
Wingspan: 62-72 cm
Migration route: from Arctic Norway/Russia, arrives in Sept/Oct, returns April, 2,000 - 2,500 km each way
Irish habitat and status: estuaries and coastal wetlands, common

A rare visitor from North America

Northern Canada, Greenland & Iceland

Northern Russia, Scandinavia & Siberia

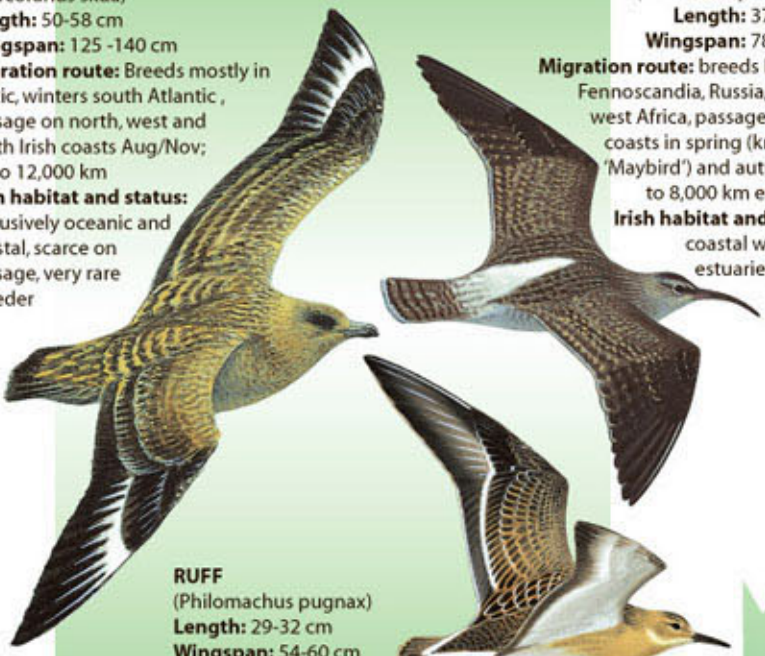
A rare visitor from Asia

PALLAS'S WARBLER
(*Phylloscopus proregulus*)
Length: 9cm
Migration route: vagrant from Siberia, arrives Oct/Nov; 5,000 - 6,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: hedgerows and gardens, usually on the coast; extremely rare

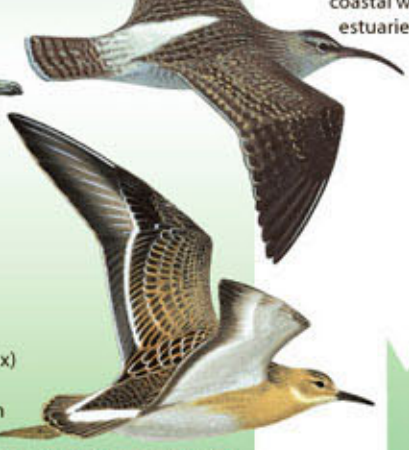


Passage migrants

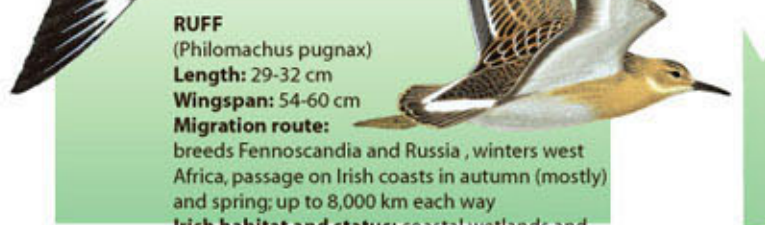
GREAT SKUA
(*Stercorarius skua*)
Length: 50-58 cm
Wingspan: 125-140 cm
Migration route: Breeds mostly in Arctic, winters south Atlantic, passage on north, west and south Irish coasts Aug/Nov; up to 12,000 km
Irish habitat and status: exclusively oceanic and coastal, scarce on passage, very rare breeder



WHIMBREL
(*Numenius phaeopus*)
Length: 37-45 cm
Wingspan: 78-88 cm
Migration route: breeds Iceland, Fennoscandia, Russia, winters west Africa, passage on Irish coasts in spring (known as 'Maybird') and autumn; up to 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: coastal wetlands, estuaries; scarce



RUFF
(*Philomachus pugnax*)
Length: 29-32 cm
Wingspan: 54-60 cm
Migration route: breeds Fennoscandia and Russia, winters west Africa, passage on Irish coasts in autumn (mostly) and spring; up to 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: coastal wetlands and estuaries; scarce



ROSEATE TERN
(*Sterna dougallii*)
Length: 33-36 cm
Wingspan: 67-76 cm
Migration route: From west Africa, arrives in May, returns Aug; 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: east coast and islands, very scarce



STORM PETREL
(*Hydrobates pelagicus*)
Length: 15-16 cm
Wingspan: 37-41 cm
Migration route: from south and west Africa, arrives in April, returns Aug/Oct, many passage migrants also; up to 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: oceanic, nocturnal on land, breeds on western islands in large colonies



KITTIWAKE
(*Rissa tridactyla*)
Length: 37-42 cm
Wingspan: 93-105 cm
Migration route: from Atlantic, arrives in April, returns Sept/Oct (many overwinter offshore); 1,000 - 5,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: sea cliffs and harbours, oceanic; quite common



Summer visitors

CUCKOO
(*Cuculus canorus*)
Length: 32-36 cm
Wingspan: 54-60 cm
Migration route: from tropical Africa via eastern Mediterranean, Italy, France, Britain, arrives in April/May, adults return July, juveniles Aug/Sept; 6,000 - 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: woodlands, reedbeds, bog; widespread but rather scarce



HOBBY
(*Falco subbuteo*)
Length: 29-35 cm
Wingspan: 70-84 cm
Migration route: from tropical Africa, a few recorded Apr/May, also Sept, 6,000 - 8,000 km each way
Irish habitat and status: usually coastal, often near reedbeds, occasionally inland; very rare

WILLOW WARBLER
(*Phylloscopus trochilus*)
Length: 11-12 cm
Migration route: from Ivory Coast, Ghana, arrives in April, returns Aug/Oct; 5,500 - 6,500 km each way
Irish habitat and status: woodlands, very common



WHEATEAR
(*Oenanthe oenanthe*)
Length: 14-16 cm
Migration route: from sub-Saharan Africa via Spain, Britain, arrives in Mar/May (but many continue to Greenland and Canada), leaves Ireland Sept/Oct; up to 6,000 km each way for Irish breeders, up to 11,000 km each way for N American breeders
Irish habitat and status: mostly mountains, but often seen on coast; quite common

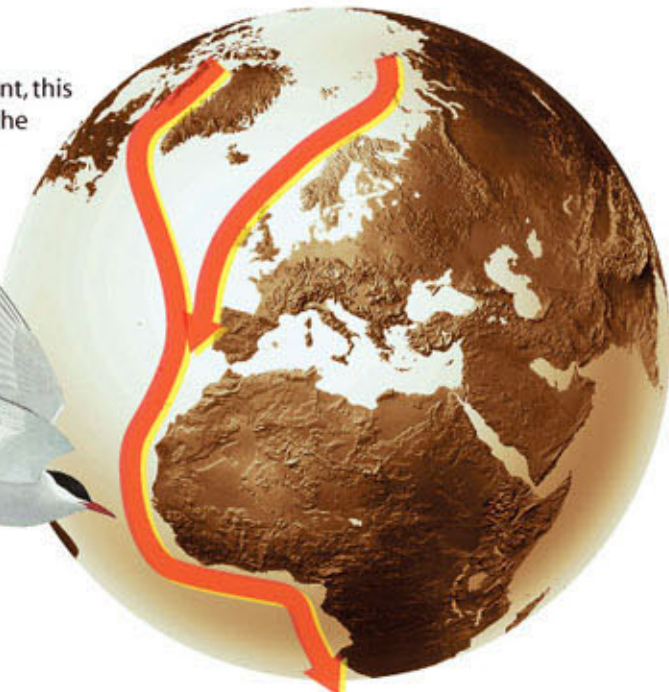


SWALLOW
(*Hirundo rustica*)
Length: 17-21 cm
Migration route: From southern Africa, arrives in Mar/April, returns Oct/Nov; 9,500 km each way
Irish habitat and status: ubiquitous, very common

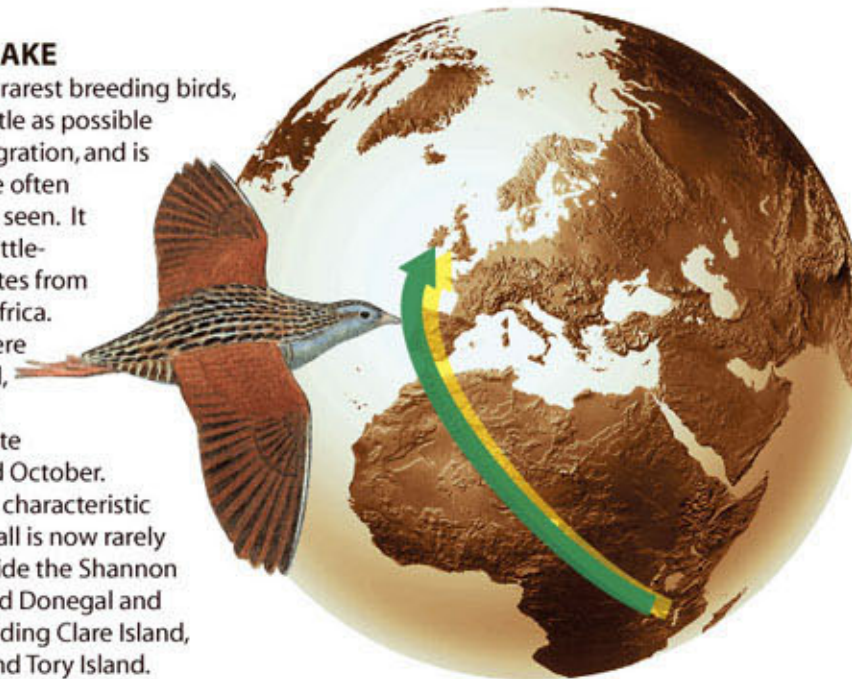


ARCTIC TERN
The world champion migrant, this elegant seabird winters in the Antarctic, and breeds well into the Arctic Circle. We are at the southern limit of its summer range - so its minimum annual round trip is 40,000 km. Some may fly from as far as Australia, via western

Africa, and nest in northern Scandinavia. The first birds arrive here in May and the last have gone by the end of October.



CORNCRAKE
One of our rarest breeding birds, it flies as little as possible outside migration, and is much more often heard than seen. It comes by little-known routes from southern Africa. It arrives here in late April, and leaves between late August and October. The male's characteristic breeding call is now rarely heard outside the Shannon Callows, and Donegal and Mayo, including Clare Island, Inisbofin and Tory Island.



BEWICK'S SWAN
The smallest and rarest of our swans, the Bewick's is also unusual in that it comes to us from far to the east. Its vast breeding grounds are in the Russian high Arctic, in the Chukchi Sea north of the Bering Straits to the Kanin Peninsula north of Archangel. It arrives here in October/November, via the White Sea, south Baltic, and the Low Countries, and leaves in February/March.



BIRDFILE

There are 446 species recorded in Ireland, of which 112 are all-year-round residents, 33 summer visitors, 39 winter visitors, and 27 'passage migrants', passing through on their way elsewhere. 233 species are recorded as 'vagrants', birds that have turned up accidentally. One species, the great auk, once found in Ireland, is now extinct globally, while capercaillie, once indigenous, is nationally extinct.

Four distinctly 'Irish' subspecies, significantly differ from foreign cousins - coal tit, dipper, jay, and red grouse. Ireland's largest and heaviest bird is the mute swan (up to 155cm). Smallest: goldcrest (9cm). Fastest: peregrine falcon (up to 200 mph).

Greatest traveller: arctic tern - some migrate between Arctic and Antarctica, 40,000 kms each year (over 25 year life - 1 million kms). Most threatened: the corncrake, little tern and grey partridge. Many birds in steep decline as breeding birds - yellowhammer, nightjar, grey partridge, twite, red grouse, merlin and hen harrier.

Ten most commonly reported birds in Irish countryside: wren, blackbird, robin, chaffinch, song thrush, swallow, magpie, woodpigeon, hooded crow and rook. BVI Countryside Survey (covering 1998 to 2002) shows stable populations of robin, blackbird, swallow, willow warbler, chiffchaff, greenfinch, hooded crow, long-tailed tit and goldcrest, as well as some for which

there has been recent concern - song thrush, skylark, cuckoo, starling, house sparrow, blue tit and great tit. Increasing numbers: sand martin (up 24%), linnet (up 16%), blackcap (up 15%), goldfinch and sedge warbler (both up 14%), stonechat (up 13%), bullfinch (up 12%) and coal tit and wren (up 5% and 4% respectively).

Significant declines: mistle thrush (down 5%), grasshopper warbler and the stock dove (down 11% and 12%). Most common seabird in Ireland: common gull (236,654, doubled in 30 years). Birds illustrated (from left to right): Blackbird (female); Wren; Manx Shearwater; Black Gull (male)

Ireland has the largest breeding numbers of storm petrels in the world and good breeding tern colonies. Most common seabird in Ireland: common gull (236,654, doubled in 30 years). Birds illustrated (from left to right): Blackbird (female); Wren; Manx Shearwater; Black Gull (male)



In association with the EU Commission