

# Conservation Status of Jersey's Birds

Jersey's bird populations in the 21st Century



States  
of Jersey



**2011**

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The most southerly of the Channel Islands, Jersey lies approximately 14 miles from the coast of Normandy (France) and 100 miles from the southern coast of the UK. Despite its small size of 46 square miles, the Island has an amazing diversity of habitats from coastal cliffs, heathlands and dunes, to marshes and wooded inland valleys. To date, 321 bird species have been recorded (of 365 recorded in the Channel Islands) and of these, 71 species will breed in a typical year. While most resident species populations are augmented each year by visitors from overseas, 87 species can be considered significant annual non-breeding visitors.

It is quite obvious to Islanders that bird populations on Jersey are not static and that over even short periods the composition of the bird fauna changes. The arrival of a new species, particularly one that establishes a breeding population, is typically regarded as a positive thing whereas the loss of one is seen as a very negative event. Unfortunately the true situation, particularly as a consequence of environmental changes such as development and new farming practices, may go mostly un-noticed. In order to better understand what is happening to Jersey's bird populations and the wider environment, and, hopefully, to influence conservation planning, a widescale programme of monitoring has been initiated.

Bird monitoring provides one of the most robust and globally recognised methods for measuring changes in the state of biodiversity and the broader environment. This is partly due to the biology of birds as they are high in food chains and respond rapidly to change, but is also because birds are visible, inexpensive to survey and are therefore very popular with amateur naturalists.

This is the first such assessment of Jersey bird populations and the criteria used are intended to ensure that Conservation Status of Jersey's Birds listings reflect each species' global and European status as well as that within Jersey.



The cirl bunting was until recently a well known songbird in Jersey. However, the population declined in the early part of this century and no breeding has been recorded since 1999



The Dartford warbler, a distinctive bird of Jersey's coastal heaths, the habitat requires significant year-round management to ensure populations remain healthy. Climate change may benefit this resident species if sufficient habitat remains available.

# Data sources

In order to determine trends, birds must be monitored in systematic and easily repeated ways using the same criteria such as location, time of the year, recording methodology etc. over a period of several years. Those surveys used to establish the population trends used in this report were:

**Société Jersiaise Ornithology Section** has recorded all bird sightings on the Island since 1949 and has published the annual Jersey Bird Report since 1991.

**BTO<sup>1</sup>/JNCC<sup>2</sup>/RSPB<sup>3</sup> Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)** is undertaken during the breeding season in randomly selected tetrad squares in Jersey and all birds seen or heard are recorded.

**The BTO/JNCC/RSPB in association with WWT<sup>4</sup> Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS)** monitors non-breeding waterbirds during the winter months (Oct-Mar) throughout the British Isles at selected inland wetlands.

**BTO targeted surveys** collect data on a variety of different species and BTO Bird Atlas studies have covered both winter and summer.

**Durrell/States of Jersey/Société Jersiaise Farmland Bird Survey (FBS)** has recorded all birds except gulls and seabirds throughout the year at 11 sites since 2005.

**Action for Wildlife Garden Bird Survey** collects data on birds in gardens on one late winter day each year since 2002. Up to 650 gardens have supplied data in any year.

**Société Jersiaise Brent Goose Survey and Wading Bird Surveys** count all wading birds and brent goose (both subspecies) along the entire suitable coastline in Jersey.

**Barn Owl Conservation Network Jersey** monitor a large number of barn owl and kestrel nest-boxes across the Island for occupancy and productivity.

**French bird surveys** at national and regional level are undertaken as appropriate.

## The Redlist Committee

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<sup>1</sup> British Trust for Ornithology

<sup>2</sup> Joint Nature Conservation Committee (UK)

<sup>3</sup> The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

<sup>4</sup> Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust



# Jersey's bird habitats

Jersey offers a remarkable variety of habitats for birds from well tended gardens to sea cliffs and offshore reefs.



# Conservation criteria

The criteria used to determine each species' conservation status are based on those used by UK conservation organisations in the production of Birds of Conservation Concern 3 (2009). Three traffic-light colours are used to indicate the level of threat to each bird in Jersey.

## The red list criteria

Species that meet any of the following criteria are red listed:

**IUCN** Global Conservation Status. Species listed as being Globally Threatened using IUCN criteria (VU or above).

**BDp** Severe breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the Jersey breeding population size, of more than 50% over 20 years. A former breeding species will be listed for ten years after local extinction.

**WDp** Severe Non-breeding Population Decline. Severe decline in the Jersey non-breeding population size, of more than 50%, over 20 years.

**BR and WR** Rarity. Jersey typical breeding population of less than 20 pairs (BR), (except naturally uncommon birds or prey) or non-breeding population of less than 50 individuals (WR). A new breeding species must have been breeding for a minimum of three years.

## The amber list criteria

Species that meet any of the following criteria, but none of the red list criteria, are amber listed:

**SPEC** European Conservation status:

categorised as a Species of European Conservation Concern as reviewed by European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

**BDMp** Moderate Breeding Population Decline. As for red list criteria BDp but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%).

**WDMp** Moderate Non-breeding Population Decline. As for red list criteria WDp but with moderate decline (by more than 25% but less than 50%).

**BL and WL** Localisation. At least 50% of the Jersey population found in five or fewer locations.

**DD** (Committee decision) - A species may be well known locally but appropriate data are missing. The Redlist Committee has used collective experience of the species in Jersey to allocate status. Listing in this category indicates that more information on population numbers and trends is required and acknowledges that future analysis may see a change of status.

## The green list criteria

All regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are green listed. The green list may include those species recovering from historical decline that have continued to recover and do not qualify under any of the other criteria. All other bird species recorded in Jersey are considered grey listed.

# The red list

	IUCN Globally Threatened	SPEC Species of European Conservation Concern	BDp Severe breeding decline 25 year	WDp Severe non-breeding decline 25 year	BR Rarity	WR Rarity
Mute swan					■	
Light-bellied brent goose						■
Northern shoveler					■	
Common pochard					■	
Great northern diver		■		■		■
Balearic shearwater	■	■				
Great cormorant			■		■	■
European shag		■	■			
Great bittern		■				■
Ringed plover			■	■	■	■
Eurasian dotterel		■				■
Northern lapwing			■		■	
Eurasian curlew	■			■		■
Common tern					■	
Razorbill			■		■	
Atlantic puffin			■		■	
Turtle dove			■		■	
Common cuckoo			■		■	
Bearded tit					■	■
Skylark			■	■	■	■
Willow warbler			■		■	
Garden warbler			■		■	
Aquatic warbler	■			■		■
Sedge warbler					■	
Common starling			■	■	■	
Mistle thrush			■	■	■	■
Spotted flycatcher			■		■	
Common stonechat			■	■	■	■
Northern wheatear					■	
European serin			■	■	■	
Bullfinch			■	■	■	■
Yellowhammer			■	■	■	
Cirl bunting			■	■	■	■

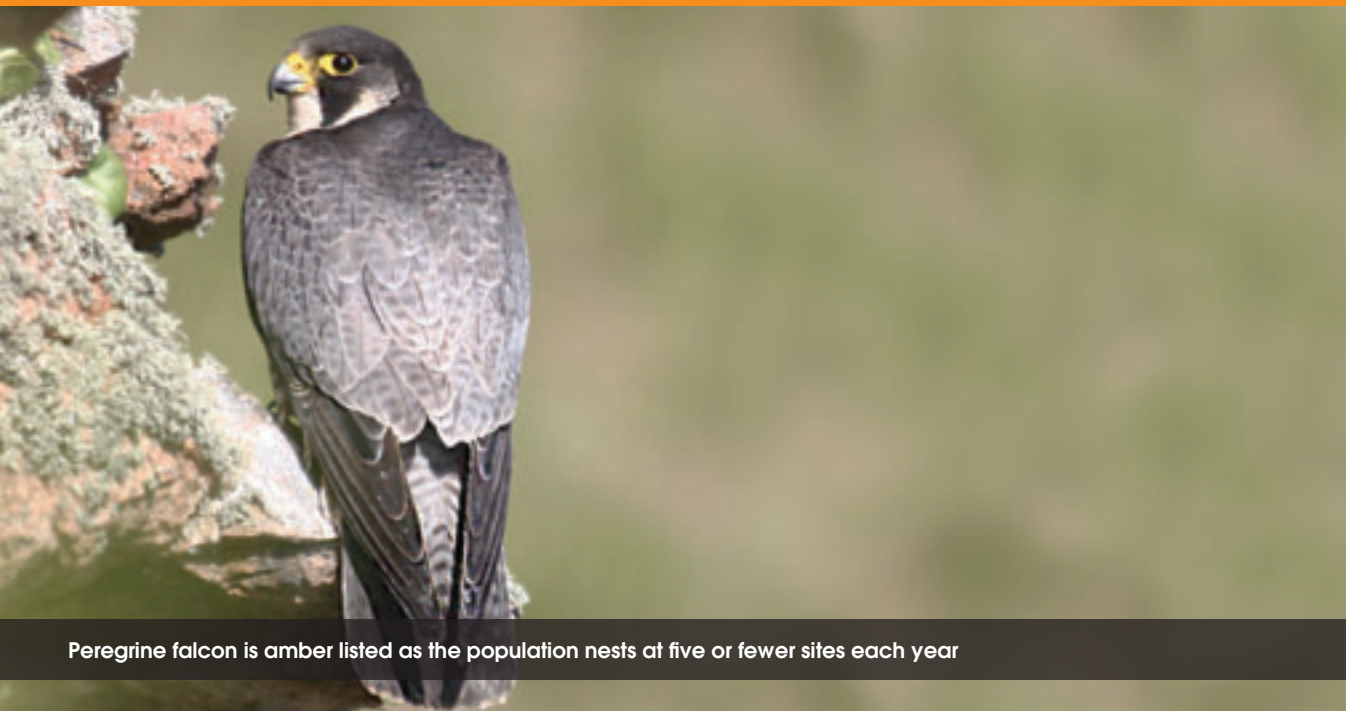
# The amber list

Species	SPEC Species of European Conservation Concern	BDMp Moderate breeding decline	WDMp Moderate non-breeding decline	BL and WL Localisation	Data Deficient (Redlist Committee)
Eurasian wigeon				■	
Gadwall				■	
Eurasian teal				■	
Tufted duck		■	■	■	
Common scoter			■		
Red-breasted merganser				■	
Goosander				■	
European storm-petrel	■			■	
Little egret	■			■	
Little grebe				■	
Slavonian grebe				■	
Black-necked grebe				■	
Eurasian marsh harrier	■			■	
Common buzzard				■	
Common kestrel		■	■		
Merlin	■				
Peregrine falcon				■	
Water rail				■	
European golden plover	■			■	
Grey plover			■	■	
Sanderling				■	
Purple sandpiper				■	
Dunlin			■	■	
Jack snipe					■
Common snipe					■
Eurasian woodcock					■
Bar-tailed godwit	■		■	■	
Green sandpiper				■	
Common redshank			■	■	
Turnstone			■	■	
Herring gull		■		■	
Sandwich tern	■			■	
Common guillemot				■	
Long-eared owl				■	
Common swift				■	
Common kingfisher	■			■	
Eurasian wryneck				■	
Common raven				■	
Goldcrest		■	■		



## The amber list cont...

	SPEC Species of European Conservation Concern	BDMp Moderate breeding decline	WDMp Moderate non-breeding decline	BL and WL Localisation	Data Deficient (Redlist Committee)
Sand martin				■	
House martin		■			
Cetti's warbler				■	
Short-toed treecreeper		■	■		
Ring ouzel				■	
Song thrush		■	■		
House sparrow		■	■		
White wagtail				■	
Meadow pipit		■	■	■	
Water pipit				■	
Linnet		■	■	■	



Peregrine falcon is amber listed as the population nests at five or fewer sites each year

# The green list

Dark-bellied brent goose	Great black-backed gull	Dartford warbler
Northern mallard	Rock dove	Eurasian reed warbler
Common pheasant	Stock dove	Wren
Fulmar	Wood pigeon	Common blackbird
Grey heron	Collared dove	Redwing
Great crested grebe	Barn owl	European robin
European sparrowhawk	Great spotted woodpecker	Black redstart
Moorhen	Magpie	Dunnock
Common coot	Eurasian jay	Grey wagtail
Oystercatcher	Western jackdaw	Pied wagtail
Whimbrel	Carrion crow	Rock pipit
Common sandpiper	Blue tit	Common chaffinch
Common greenshank	Great tit	Brambling
Kittiwake	Barn swallow	Greenfinch
Black-headed gull	Long-tailed tit	Goldfinch
Mediterranean gull	Common chiffchaff	Siskin
Lesser black-backed gull	Blackcap	
Common gull	Common whitethroat	



The Chaffinch remains a common breeding, wintering and migrant species

Herring gulls are a typical feature of Island life but are sadly in marked decline. The increase of urban nesting birds appears to create an impression that the species is widespread; however, coastal nesting has declined significantly



# Jersey's breeding birds at the start of the new century

	No breeding species	Red	Amber	% threatened	Green	Grey
Seabirds	9	5	1	66	3	5
Waterbirds	14	6	4	71	4	3
Coastal and shorebirds	6		2	33	4	16
Farm, garden and woodland birds	40	8	9	42	23	15
Birds of prey and owls	7	-	5	71	2	5

It is possible that declines in birds that migrate through or past Jersey, or those that chose to come here outside of their breeding seasons, are because of issues outside of Jersey's control. However, it is the status of our breeding species that most highlights the condition of our environment.

## Seabirds

Jersey, as an island, offers typical habitat for many species of seabird and nine regularly breed here. Seabirds are amongst the most noticeable of all our wildlife and part of that which makes the Island special. Sadly, however, many seabirds are in serious decline including both the hugely popular Atlantic puffin and, that symbol of coastal life, the herring gull.

## Waterbirds

The Island has many small wetlands and a good variety of waterbirds from reed warblers to little egrets that choose to breed there.

## Coastal and shorebirds

With such extensive beaches it is no surprise that Jersey is a popular destination for many shorebird species. While many of those seen in winter will breed further north, high recreational use of the beaches in summer means that only one shorebird breeds here.

## Farm, garden and woodland birds

Farms, gardens and wooded valleys make up the majority of available habitat for the Island's birds. It is the declines of birds from this habitat that is most indicative of concerns about our wider environment. Ten regularly nesting species including the cuckoo and the yellowhammer have died out in the last few years. Others like the turtle dove, skylark and stonechat may soon follow.

## Birds of prey and owls

These predatory birds are amongst the Island's visible success stories. Four species have begun to breed here in the last 20 years (two after lengthy absences). All except the heavily supported barn owl and the Eurasian sparrowhawk are still very vulnerable.

# Protected areas

Many sites across the Island are managed specifically to protect birds and other wildlife. Ownership of this land is in many different hands but all work to secure a future for our bird species. The National Trust for Jersey is the Island's largest private land owner caring for over 130 sites of over 1,000 verges (164 hectares) of land.

## SSIs

Thirteen of the sites are listed as ecological Sites of Special Interest (SSIs) and are considered to be of 'public importance' by reason of their special zoological, ecological or botanical interest. These sites are important as they support plants and animals that find it more difficult to survive in the wider countryside. Protecting and managing natural SSIs is a shared responsibility and an investment for the benefit of future generations.

## Ramsar

The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. Jersey has designated four Ramsar sites:

- South East Coast of Jersey
- Les Écréhous & Les Dirouilles
- Les Minquiers
- Les Pierres de Lecq (the Paternosters).



Ringed plover are red listed as, through disturbance, they no longer breed annually in Jersey and their wintering population is in decline



# Migration hotspot

It is not just as a home to breed in that Jersey is important to birds. Many species come to the Island outside of their breeding season in the UK or in continental Europe. Yet more pass through the Island or around its coast on their way between breeding and wintering sites. Records in spring or autumn from Noirmont (landbirds) or La Coupe and Grosnez (seabirds) show just how many birds may be seen in or from Jersey in any year.

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Red-throated diver	49	270	528	627
Manx shearwater	326	64	565	265
Sandwich tern	655	585	1,282	647
Razorbill	150	1,012	1,457	585
Wood pigeon	24,690	8,415	22,554	60,460
Barn swallow	22,500	68,000	165,802	31,363
Meadow pipit	5,138	4,780	23,728	1,715
Chaffinch	7,250	12,980	28,057	12,553

## Ringling

Jersey's ornithologists have been at the forefront of ringing studies in the Channel Islands since 1945 with the initiation of the Channel Island Ringing Scheme. Over 210 species have been ringed but the most important are the annual migrants.

	No. ringed in Channel Islands	No. recovered*
Sand martin	5,892	65
Barn swallow	45,696	303
Eurasian reed warbler	24,551	617
Greenfinch	34,705	763

\* 'Recovered' = ringed birds seen or found again.



Barn swallow breeds in Jersey each year but many thousands more pass through Jersey to and from their breeding and wintering areas



Dunlin and Sanderling visit Jersey on migration every year and the Island's beaches are essential to their survival



The oystercatcher is Jersey's only nesting shorebird. Numbers are boosted every winter by migrants from the UK and continental Europe.



[www.durrell.org](http://www.durrell.org)



[www.nationaltrust.je](http://www.nationaltrust.je)



[www.gov.je](http://www.gov.je)



[www.societe-jersiaise.org](http://www.societe-jersiaise.org)



[www.jerseybirds.co.uk](http://www.jerseybirds.co.uk)



[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)



<http://actionforwildlifejersey.wordpress.com>



[www.wwf.org.uk](http://www.wwf.org.uk)



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[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)



<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk>

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