

2007

* Subject to acceptance by rarities committee.

December

22 Dec: Two **White Wagtails** flying around West View Promenade during heavy rain.

20-21 Dec: Around 20 **Northern Gannets** from juveniles to adults, seen fishing within the Port and around the North Mole, up to the area of the Western tip of the airport runway, no doubt sheltering from the easterly gale in the Strait. **Sandwich Terns** and a **Great Cormorant** also observed.

11 Dec: **Firecrest** seem to be numerous on the Rock with up to six individuals seen in small areas of the Upper Rock.

09 Dec: A flock of 27 **White Storks** arrived across the Strait in the early morning and headed north, the first signs of northward passage.

02 Dec: A single **Griffon Vulture** was seen over town in the morning.

November

29 Nov: A flock of 28 **Griffon Vultures** came in over the Bay and flew over the Rock at mid-day, but then headed back into Spain.

28 Nov: Cormorant flying North off the Detached Mole. **Sandwich Terns** feeding within the harbour.

25 Nov: At least three **Firecrests** were seen in the Governor's Lookout area, and another two were present in the Alameda Botanic gardens. A pair of **Thekla Larks** were again wintering in the area of Europa Point.

18 Nov: Six **Cormorants** were sitting on the mussel rafts off Eastern Beach, and four **Turnstones** were present on the rocks at Europa foreshore.

15 Nov: Two **Common Buzzards** were seen over the Rock. At least ten **Common Starlings** were present with **Spotless Starlings** in the Gibraltar Botanic Gardens. A sub-adult **Kittiwake** was observed below Europa Point.

14 Nov: Two **Booted Eagles**, one light and one dark phase were seen over the Rock.

13 Nov: A **Booted Eagle** and a **Griffon Vulture** were recorded over Gibraltar.

12 Nov: Eight **Short-toed Eagles** and a light phase **Booted Eagle** flew in over the Rock when the strong easterly wind abated.

08 Nov: A **Common Buzzard** seen over Town heading towards the Upper Rock. Also, 20 **Griffon Vultures** circling over Town and then heading south.

06 Nov: Two Pallid Swifts seen entering gap under eaves at sunset in Gibraltar Town.

03 Nov: A dead **Woodcock** was found in the South District. A **Little Swift** was seen feeding with **Crag Martins** over the Valderrama golf course in San Roque, Spain, during the Volvo Masters golf tournament.

October

27 Oct: A large concentration of several thousand **Cory's Shearwaters** was seen sheltering in the bay south of Ceuta on the African side of the Strait. There was evidence of movement northwards along the Mediterranean Moroccan coast, with some venturing round the Ceuta headland to head westwards through the Strait.

21 Oct: The Upper Rock was teeming with wintering birds with good numbers of **Song Thrushes**, **Blackcaps**, and **Robins** with smaller numbers of **Chiffchaffs** and **Black Redstarts**. Also present were finch flocks including several flocks of **Siskins** and **Chaffinches**. Overhead, two **Booted Eagles** flew over the Rock in the evening.

20 Oct: Again a good arrival of **Robins** and **Black Redstarts** everywhere. A single **Dartford Warbler** was present at North Front Cemetery.

18 Oct: A **Zitting Cisticola** was present on Windmill Hill together with an early **Siskin**.

and 17 Oct: Two **Short-toed Eagles** flew over town in the morning and probably returned north, since the easterly winds were unfavourable for a crossing of the Strait. A **Firecrest** was heard around the observatory at Jews Gate and there were a small passage of finches with several flocks of **Goldfinches**, **Chaffinches** and **Greenfinches** settling to shelter in the maquis above the Observatory. With them were several flocks of **House Sparrows** that are occasionally observed at this time of the year on migration.

15 Oct: Large arrival of **Robins** on the Rock with many singing individuals setting up wintering territories on the Upper Rock and in the Alameda Gardens. Also small numbers of **Blackcaps** and **Black Redstarts** on the Upper Rock. Single **Ring Ouzel** and **Dartford Warbler**, **Woodlarks** and two **Skylarks**, three **Meadow Pipits** and five **Black Redstarts** on Windmill Hill in the evening.

11 Oct: Small numbers of **Booted Eagles** over the Rock with the easterly levanter conditions.

10 Oct: A **Whimbrel** and a **Black Redstart** at Europort.

09 Oct: Arrival of **Crag Martins** with some flocks feeding over the Alameda Gardens in the evening.

08 Oct: A **Northern Wheatear** at West View Promenade.

07 Oct: A **Whimbrel** at West View Promenade.

06 Oct: A steady movement west of several seabirds off Europa Point, mainly **Gannets** and **Sandwich Terns**. A **Northern Wheatear** was on the foreshore.

04 Oct: Four **Turnstones** were feeding at Europa foreshore in the evening, and several **Sandwich Terns** were patrolling along the coastline and were joined by a **Lesser-crested Tern**.

03 Oct: Single **Redstart**, **Orphean Warbler**, **Subalpine Warbler** and **Wryneck** have been trapped and ringed over the last few days at the Gibraltar Bird Observatory ringing site at Jews' Gate. This has also included an increasing number of **Blackcaps**, and the first **Robins** arriving from northern Europe.

September

27 Sep: A juvenile **Lanner*** was observed by members of the Raptor Rehabilitation Unit and chased the hybrid falcon they were flying over Windmill Hill.

25 Sep: Over the last few days small number of **Gannets**, including the first juvenile birds of the year, have been observed. Some flocks of **Sandwich Terns** have been seen flying west out of the Mediterranean and some have lingered to fish in the harbour. Two **Oystercatchers** were down on the Europa foreshore, feeding on the rocks at low tide, and a Grey Heron was seen flying low over town and sitting on the rocks at the North Mole the following day.

21 Sep: The overnight rain produced a fall of migrants and Orphean, Garden and Reed Warblers were caught and ringed. North Front cemetery had several **Turtle Doves**, a **Quail**, four **Spectacled Warbler**, and single **Nightingale**, **Tree Pipit**, **Whitethroat**, **Olivaceous** and **Garden Warblers** and **Iberian Chiffchaff** and **Corn Bunting**. Many **Nightingales** were heard all over the Rock and on Windmill Hill, and overhead **Tree** and **Tawny Pipits** and **Yellow Wagtails** were calling. Two immature **Rock Thrushes** and several **Blue Rock Thrushes** were feeding on flying ants recently emerged after the rains in the company of two **Common Wheatears** on Levant Battery, whilst down on Windmill Hill a further ten **Common Wheatears**, two **Black-eared Wheatears**, nine **Whinchats**, eight **Tawny Pipits** and single **Hoopoe**, **Spectacled Warbler**, **Zitting Cisticola** and a pair of **Whitethroats** were busily feeding, with **Nightingales** calling from the bushes.

19-20 Sep: Unsettled weather with levanter cloud brought down a single **Red-necked Nightjar**, and a drive around the Upper Rock the following night, just before a spectacular thunder storm, produced a **Long-eared Owl**, two **Scops Owls** and two **Red-necked Nightjars**; one of which was trapped and ringed.

18 Sep: **Tree Pipits** could be heard flying over the Rock in the morning, and a single **Oortolan Bunting** was observed around Jews Gate.

16 Sep: After a long spell of easterly winds westerly winds finally brought some raptors over the Rock with 175 **Booted Eagles**, 84 **Sparrowhawks**, 94 **Honey Buzzards** and 13 **Short-toed Eagles** amongst the more numerous raptors, but also included two **Egyptian Vultures** and single **Red Kite** and **Osprey**.

9-16 Sep: Small numbers of grounded migrants have been seen in different around Gibraltar in the past week and include **Bee-eaters**, **Yellow Wagtails** and **Tawny Pipits** calling overhead, **Nightingales** uttering their alarm call in the scrub, and several **Melodious**, **Subalpine** and **Willow Warblers** with **Whitethroats** and **Pied Flycatchers** feeding in the area. A **Zitting Cisticola** was present on Windmill on the 13th and a **Scops Owl** was seen at Middle Hill on the night of the 15th.

5 Sep: Some migrants were grounded around the Rock and a dead **Cuckoo** was found along the Northern Defences in the morning. Other species included **Subalpine Warbler**, **Pied Flycatcher**, **Melodious**, **Willow** and **Garden Warblers** and **Nightingales**.

1 Sep: A **Kingfisher** was at the pond in the Open Air Theatre in the Botanic Gardens. **Greenfinches** were feeding young nearby. **Booted Eagles** and **Egyptian Vultures** were circling above the Town but did not cross the Strait in the prevailing easterly wind conditions.

August

31 Aug: A good raptor passage over the Rock produced 2229 **Honey Buzzards** and 2309 **Black Kites** together with small numbers of **Egyptian Vultures**, **Montagu's Harriers**, **Sparrowhawks** and **Booted Eagles** and included four **Black Storks**. A **Common Buzzard** has been seen regularly hunting on the Great Sand Slopes on the east side of the Rock since 24 August.

30 Aug: A variety of waders seen from Europa Point Marine Observatory included **Redshank***, **Oystercatcher** and 4 **Whimbrel**. 5 **Grey Herons** were also seen. Seabirds included **Audouin's Gulls**, **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, **Sandwich Terns**, **Cory's Shearwaters** and **Northern Gannets**. Southward passage during the day included **Egyptian Vultures**, **Honey Buzzards**, **Black Kites**, **Montagu's Harriers** and **Black Storks**. A **Grey Wagtail** was at the Botanic Gardens.

27 Aug: The levanter conditions produced an influx of raptors over the Rock which included seventy-nine **Black Kites**, forty **Booted Eagles** and one hundred and seventy **Short-toed Eagles**, most of which were seen to return north by mid afternoon.

25 Aug: Several migrant passerines were seen at North Front Cemetery and included **Woodchat Shrike**, **Melodious** and **Olivaceous Warblers**, **Iberian Chiffchaffs** and **Nightingale**. Two **Olivaceous Warblers** and a **Spotted Flycatcher** were also present in the Botanic Gardens and **Hoopoe** and **Reed Warblers** were observed at Windmill Hill.

14 Aug: Passage of raptors was poor with only 228 **Black Kites**, mainly in the early morning, but the persistence of one observer paid off when he saw a **White-rumped Swift*** in a mixed flock of **Common**, **Pallid** and **Alpine Swifts**; third record.

13 Aug: After a good evening of **Black Kites** the previous day, passage resumed early, at 07:40 and continued well into the afternoon with a few breaks. The total for the day stood at 6373 **Black Kites**, one **Egyptian Vulture**, five **Montagu's Harriers**, three **Honey Buzzards** and a single **Booted Eagle** and a **Long-legged Buzzard*** that came in from the south and flew over the Rock for a few minutes before returning south. There was also a large passage of **Common Swifts** with some **Pallid Swifts** and a few flocks of **Bee-eaters** moving south. .

12 Aug: In the late afternoon and evening a steady stream of 2638 **Black Kites** flew low over town and headed south-west across the Bay. With them was a lone **Red Kite**, the first of the season.

8 Aug: An **Iberian Chiffchaff** and a **Grey Wagtail** were heard during the morning in the Alameda Botanic Gardens.

7 Aug: A large passage of **Common Swifts** heading south over the Rock and in the late evening a rush of 248 **Black Kites** attempting to get across the Straits.

6 Aug: A visit to Windmill Hill in the morning produced a further six **Zitting Cisticolas**, that eventually flew south. A flock of thirty **Black Kites** also flew overhead with some approaching from the east, and the first juvenile **Audouin's Gulls** of the season were migrating out of the Mediterranean past Europa Point.

2 Aug: A **Hoopoe** was seen at British Lines Road, and **Zitting Cisticolas** were back, with four at the Aerial Farm (passage birds) after an absence of two years when Gibraltar suffered an exceptional cold spell in February 2006, that severely affected populations of this species in the region.

July

31 Jul: A **Sparrowhawk** and a **Black Kite** flying south over Gibraltar. Passage of **Black Kites** is well on its way in the area, but due to easterly winds, very little has been seen over Gibraltar.

28 Jul: A **Robin** was seen once again in the Botanic Gardens.

26 Jul: A **Robin** at the Botanic Gardens. An unseasonal record could possibly indicate nesting considering there was also one present on 7 June.

23 Jul: The feeding movement of **Cory's Shearwaters** was still very evident at Europa Point. Two **Mediterranean Gulls** spent the afternoon below the Point. Two **Oystercatchers** flew west and a **Common Sandpiper** was also seen. Passage west of **Audouin's Gulls** (still mainly adults) continued.



One of two adult Slender-billed Gulls at Europa Point. *A. Fortuna*

22 Jul: A total of 56 **Audouin's Gulls** (mostly adults and a few sub-adults - no juveniles yet) were seen flying west past Europa Point during the afternoon. An additional 33 were resting on Europa Sports Ground. Other birds seen were numbers of **Cory's Shearwaters** flying west, 3 **Mediterranean Gulls** and 2 **Slender-billed Gulls***.

21 Jul: A steady feeding movement west of **Cory's Shearwaters** was seen in the afternoon from Europa Point. A moderate passage west of **Audouin's Gulls** and some **Mediterranean Gulls**, **Sandwich Terns** and **Balearic Shearwaters** was also noted. Also recorded was a **Whimbrel**.

20 Jul: The first **Black Kite** of the season was seen flying south over Gibraltar Town, while a late **Short-toed Eagle** flew north.

19 Jul: A very late **Honey Buzzard** was seen from Europa Point coming in from Morocco over the Strait and then continuing north along the east side of the Rock.

18 Jul: Three **Oystercatchers**, the first of the summer, were seen heading West past the Europa Point Marine Observatory. Other species recorded that day were **Balearic Shearwater**, **Cory's Shearwater**, **Northern Gannet**, **Audouin's Gull**, **Black-headed Gull**, **Mediterranean Gull** and **Western Mediterranean Shag**.

June

27 Jun: Two **Roseate Terns*** were observed flying west at Europa Point, fourth record for Gibraltar.



Composite picture of the Roseate Terns at Europa Point. *C. Perez*

21 Jun: Another juvenile **Lanner***, maybe a different bird, was seen arriving at 13:00hrs with three **Black Kites** from Jews' Gate.

18 Jun: A juvenile **Lanner*** was once again seen over the Rock. A young **Peregrine** which had been bred in captivity at the GONHS Raptor Rehabilitation Unit and was being trained for release escaped on 8 June and was found a week later in Murcia, about 450km northwest of the Rock.

16 Jun: A young **Lanner*** was seen over the Rock. Juveniles are regular at this time of year and probably derive from the apparently large population of north Morocco.

14 Jun: Three **Griffon Vultures** were rescued from the sea in the Strait by the Gibraltar Diving team. The birds were exhausted and forced into the sea by **Yellow-legged Gulls** which had constantly been mobbing them. The birds were taken into care by GONHS' Raptor Rehabilitation Unit. When fully recovered they will be released back into the wild. Other Griffons were more successful and managed to fly through into Spain, and in the last few days over 20 birds have arrived from Africa, together with small numbers of **Black Kites**, **Honey Buzzards**, **Booted Eagles**, and single **Egyptian Vulture** and **Hobby**; all very late migrants.

11 Jun: A **Nightingale** with brood patch was trapped and ringed at Jews' Gate. This is not the first time that nesting by this species has been suspected at this site on the Upper Rock.

07 Jun: A **Robin** calling in the Botanic Gardens. Unusually late, but has bred at this site in the past.

May

07 May: A **Bonelli's Warbler** was singing in the Botanic Gardens.

05 May: A flock of four **Redshanks*** flew west past Europa Point; 14th record.

02 May: A male **Golden Oriole** was seen in various gardens in the South District.

April

26 Apr: A **Black Vulture** and 7 **Ravens** were among the birds seen from the Jews' Gate Observatory. **Honey Buzzards** have already made an appearance.

17 Apr: An **Alpine Accentor** was seen by the road at Queen's Gate in the morning. This is the latest record of this sporadic wintering species for Gibraltar.

14 Apr: A **Night Heron** arrived from the Strait and landed in a garden at Europa Point. It was tired and thin and was handed in and looked after by the bird rehabilitation unit. It was released three days later and flew away well.



The Night Heron at Europa Point

Photo: Nick Chapman

12 Apr: A visit to the North Front cemetery site after thunder storms the previous night resulted in a good fall of migrants with over 25 **Whitethroat**, 15 **Woodchat Shrikes**, 13 **Garden Warblers**, 10 **Orphean Warblers**, 10 **Nightingales**, 9 **Subalpine Warblers**, 4 **Redstarts**, 2 **Corn Buntings**, 2 **Hoopoes**, 2 **Northern Wheatears**, 2 **Chiffchaffs** and single **Willow**, **Bonelli's** and **Spectacled Warbler**. Windmill Hill had a further 4 **Black-eared Wheatears**, 4 **Northern Wheatears**, and a number of other migrants as well, and as the weather improved during the day migrant warblers were seen flitting among the vegetation in the gardens and green areas in town.

9-11 Apr: Adverse weather conditions during this period resulted in daily falls of migrants that produced good ringing totals for some species and included over 45 **Bonelli's Warblers**, 24 **Nightingales**, 34 **Willow Warblers**, 10 **Subalpine Warblers**, 6 **Whitethroats** and 6 **Garden Warblers** among the main species. Also caught and ringed were **Pied Flycatchers**, **Redstarts**, **Tree Pipit**, **Whinchat**, **Orphean Warbler**, **Chiffchaff**, **Iberian Chiffchaff**, **Woodchat Shrikes**, **Spectacled Warbler** a female **Bullfinch** and a **Red-rumped Swallow**. A very entertaining three days. Grounded migrants were also recorded from the North Front Cemetery site with other species there including **Corn Buntings**, **Northern and Black-eared Wheatears**, and **Dartford Warbler**. A good find was a male **Rock Bunting** on the 11th after the rains at Europa Point; a species not recorded for some time now.

8 Apr: The first **Bonelli's Warblers** were late this year with three caught and ringed at Jews' Gate together with three **Willow Warblers** a **Subalpine Warbler** and other migrants.

4 Apr: Spring passerine passage seems to have got off to a slow start with very few migrants encountered and many not yet recorded. Nevertheless the first **Nightingale** of the season was trapped and ringed at the Jews' Gate Observatory.

2 Apr: An immature **Lanner*** flew north over the Rock in the early afternoon with other raptors.

March

31 Mar: Although the weather was cloudy and windy with few raptors crossing the Straits, several **Griffon Vultures** and a **Black Vulture**, eighteenth record for Gibraltar, managed to cross, together with other raptors.

30 Mar: A female **Bullfinch** was trapped and ringed at Jews' Gate; the 16th recent record for Gibraltar.

20 Mar: An **Iberian Chiffchaff** was heard around the Observatory at Jews Gate in the morning.

19 Mar: Small passage of finches crossing the Strait of Gibraltar, including some flocks of **House Sparrows** and four **Yellow Wagtails**. The first **Scops Owl** of the season was trapped and ringed at Jews Gate.

18 Mar: Two **Willow Warblers** and one male **Common Redstart** were trapped and ringed at Jews Gate ringing station and were the first for the season.

13 Mar: A short visit to Europa Point produced over 40 **Cory's Shearwaters** and 12 **Balearic Shearwaters** returning to the Mediterranean, together with 5 **Audouin's Gulls** and a flock of 11 **Oystercatchers**.

8 Mar: A good day for soaring birds, including 1990 **Black Kites**, 10 **Egyptian Vultures**, 4 **Ospreys**, 38 **Black Storks** and 12 **White Storks**. Other birds included 4 **Red-rumped Swallows**, 20 **Meadow Pipits** and 3 **Tree Pipits**. Also 4 **Greylag Geese** flying east.

6 Mar: 692 **Black Kites** and 124 **Short-toed Eagles** among the raptors seen flying north.

5 Mar: 5 **Black-winged Stilts** were seen on Gibraltar airport runway.

3 Mar: A total of 71 **Short-toed Eagles** among the raptors counted over the Rock today.

2 Mar: A very good passage of raptors over the Rock included 1506 **Black Kites**, 551 **Short-toed Eagles** and 14 **Egyptian Vultures** and 10 **Lesser Kestrels**.

February

28 Feb: **Egyptian Vultures** have been crossing the Strait in good numbers over the past few days including 22 birds today, bringing the total so far to 53 birds.

26 Feb: Two **Pallid Swifts**, the first of the year, were observed looking for a place to roost in the evening over the Town.

25 Feb: Steady passage of raptors in light north-westerly winds including a flock of 400 **White Storks** up the centre of the bay. Five **Lesser Kestrels** were flying around the colony on the North Face, and a **Hoopoe** was seen in the Botanic Gardens.

24 Feb: Over the past few days there has been a trickle of **Black Kites**, **Short-toed Eagles** and **Egyptian Vultures**, and some **Swallows** and **House Martins** but most have crossed in the middle of the Strait due to northerly winds. Highlights of the day were a flock of 6 **Cranes**, and a **Woodlark** and 2 **Red-rumped Swallows**.

18 Feb: Favourable winds provided a good day for raptors with the first **Egyptian Vultures** and plenty of **Black Kites** crossing the Strait including a flock of 87 **White Storks**.

17 Feb: Small passage of raptors continued today including the first **Short-toed Eagle** of the season.

09 Feb: Northbound migration continued with 111 **Black Kites**, 1 **Marsh Harrier**, 2 **Black Stork**, 55 **House Martins** and 17 **Swallows** counted over the Rock.

07 Feb: The first migrant **Hoopoe** came through Gibraltar and was seen on Queen's Road in the Nature Reserve.

08 Feb: The first northbound raptors of the season, two **Black Kites**, flew in from the Straits and headed into Spain today. Also during the afternoon 8 **House Martins** and 2 **Swallows** flew north over Jews' Gate.

06 Feb: A **Great Spotted Cuckoo** was seen flying out of a Stone Pine near the Dell in the Botanic Gardens this morning.

04 Feb: The first **Swallow** of the season flew north over Jews' Gate after arriving from the Straits.

January

30 Jan: Following a severe storm with easterly gale force winds reaching 113km/hr, a **Great Spotted Cuckoo** was picked up at the North Mole. The bird was tired and wet but recovered and was ringed and released in the Botanic Gardens. The **Booted Eagle** also survived the storm and was seen flying over the Rock this morning.

26 Jan: The wintering **Sparrowhawk** was seen several times throughout the week from Jews' Gate and Windmill Hill, and the **Booted Eagle** is still around as well.

21 Jan: A pair of **Lesser Kestrels** was on the North Face. The **Booted Eagle** was once again hunting over the area of Jews' Gate, and an **Alpine Accentor** was seen at the top of Mediterranean Steps. These observations were made during the annual Winter Bird Count.

19 Jan: A **Sparrowhawk** was seen over the Upper Rock.

16 Jan: A dark phase **Booted Eagle** flew south over the town chased by Yellow-legged Gulls. The light phase wintering **Booted Eagle** was hunting over the Rock in the afternoon.

11 Jan: An early **Lesser Kestrel** was back at the North Face this morning, the first arrival of the year.

9 Jan: A **Sparrowhawk** flew north over Europort at 09:05 this morning.

8 Jan: A **Blackbird** nest with 3 eggs was discovered in the Christmas Tree, located at the western end of West View Park, that was about to be taken down. The decorations have been removed but the tree was allowed to remain until the Blackbirds have fledged.

4 Jan: A **Griffon Vulture** was foraging over the Upper Rock, and could have been the same individual that was present on several occasions during December.

1 Jan: In the quiet early morning of the first day of the year the wintering **Booted Eagle** was sunning itself perched on a tv aerial on the roof of the Eurotowers block of flats in the middle of the town, despite the attentions of the Yellow-legged Gulls in the area.