

Rare Birds in Belgium in 2018

Report of the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC)

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1CY Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, 19 October 2018, Zeebrugge, West Vlaanderen (Johan Buckens).

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Abstract – rare birds in Belgium in 2018

This report of the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC), dealing with 2018, concerns a total of 175 records of rare birds in Belgium, of 75 (sub)species and species pairs. The vast majority refers to 2018; a minority to previous years. 115 records have been accepted into category A, 0 into category D, 14 in category E and 46 records have been rejected. In 2018, 3 new species were added to the Belgian list (category A): Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*, and Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*. In 2016, an Iberian Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae* constitutes as well the first record of this taxon in Belgium. Also notable in 2018 were the third record of Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*, the fourth Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* and the fifth record of Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus*. It was a record year for Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* and Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica*, as well as the second best year for Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus*.

Introduction

This is the report of the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (hereafter: BRBC), dealing with records of rare bird species and subspecies that were recorded in Belgium in 2018. It also contains records of earlier years that have not yet been published before. Some records from 2018 are still pending and are not dealt with in this report.

This report will be published in English on our website. Dutch and French versions will be available in the magazines *Natuur.oriolus* and *Aves* respectively.

Recent decisions and developments

New taxonomic reference. For many years the BRBC has been following the taxonomic rules of the AERC TAC (the taxonomic committee of the Association of European Records and Rarities Committees – <http://www.aerc.eu/tac.html>). From January 1st 2018, the BRBC follows the taxonomic rules of the IOC World Bird List (Gill & Donsker 2019). This decision will impact the Belgian bird list (eg.: changes of English and/or scientific names; some taxa treated before as subspecies gain now full species status; more rarely, the reverse can be true).

Removal of five species from the list of homologation species as from January 1st 2019.

The BRBC analyses the list of homologation species every year during its winter meeting. The most recorded national rarities are scrutinized to see whether or not they still meet the threshold to be considered as a national rarity. See next chapter for an explanation of these rules. For our latest analysis in March 2019, the period 2009-2018 was considered. Records of the following five species will not be considered anymore by the BRBC from January 1st 2019 onwards, but data of these species prior to this date are still strongly welcomed.

1. **Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis*: A total of 30 accepted records of wild birds in the period 2009-2018, mirrors the rising numbers in many other European countries.
2. **Black-winged Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*: Few species have undergone such a dramatic change in status since the turn of the century as this species! As mentioned in our previous report, this species is no longer considered a major rarity in our country.
3. **Red-rumped Swallow** *Cecropis daurica*: With a total of 31 accepted records in the period 2009-2018, this species is now observed mainly as a spring overshooter.
4. **Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*: Still a major rarity in the field, the rising number of ringed birds reflects the westwards expansion of its European breeding range in North-East Europe.
5. **White-headed Long-tailed Tit** *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*: Due to an incomplete overview of older records and to the fact that there is evidence, also from other northwest European countries, that this subspecies is scarce but of annual occurrence, this taxon will no longer be considered by the BRBC.

What makes a rare bird species?

A species is considered to be a national rarity: (1) if there has been an average of maximum three accepted records per year over the previous 10-year period, so a maximum of 30 accepted records in total for that period ; (2) or if a species has not been recorded in at least 3 out of these 10 years. The latter should prevent species reaching Belgium in high numbers only during exceptional influxes (for example Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*) to be treated as candidates for removal from the list. The fairly long period of 10 years should guarantee a stable trend of the rarity status of a species. The same rule applies to rare subspecies. The BRBC will annually review the list of homologation species to check if species still meet the current threshold.

The updated list of homologation species can be checked on our website: <http://www.belgianrbc.be>.

How to submit a rare bird report to the BRBC

Observers of rare birds in Belgium are advised to report their observations either directly to the BRBC through the online tool available on <http://www.belgianrbc.be>, or through the database www.waarnemingen.be / www.observations.be. It is kindly requested to provide as much information as possible for each record, such as a description and photographs when available, sketches, sound recording and any other source of information that can allow the members of the committee to assess the record with optimal and objective information. A written description is always of great value even if it accompanies a set of pictures or a sound recording.

Although many observers responded positively to our targeted questions to document and submit cases, a proportion of the rare species observed in 2018 and earlier are not (yet) submitted. In some cases this is because the observer has insufficient experience or is unfamiliar with bird topography or terminology.

Perhaps therefore looks against it prepare a report?! The BRBC is always prepared to assist. Observers can send a draft of their report by e-mail to Miguel Demeulemeester (wheatear32@hotmail.com). Your draft will be reviewed and provided with the necessary comments after which the observer can submit a modified version.

BRBC statutes and members

Newly published statutes. The statutes of the BRBC have recently been published on our website www.belgianrbc.be. For reasons of transparency, we believe that it is important that this document is publicly available. The foremost objective of these statutes is to be a guideline for the BRBC-members during their work in the committee. Apart from that, it is also an important document for anyone interested in the working procedures of the BRBC and for birdwatchers who are interested in rare birds and who want to document a sighting. We aim to update the content of this document on a regular basis.

Changes in membership. Joost Mertens will be the new Dutch-speaking member joining our team from 2019 onwards and replacing Tom Goossens. We thank Tom for his hard work in the past years!

The following persons have assessed all records in this report, in alphabetical order: Stijn Baeten, Alain De Broyer, Miguel Demeulemeester, Joris Elst, Robin Gailly, Tom Goossens, Kenny Hessel, Raphaël Lebrun, Laurent Raty and Frédéric Vanhove.

Acknowledgements

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More acknowledgments go to the photographers who provided us with pictures of rare birds for this report.

Last but definitely not least: we wish to thank all the observers for submitting their records of rare birds in one way or another.

2018 in a nutshell

Highlights of 2018 can be summarized as:

- No less than 3 new species were added to the Belgian list in 2018: Dark-eyed Junco, Western Orphee Warbler and Cinereous Vulture
- Third record of Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Fourth record of Pied Wheatear
- Fifth record for Pygmy Cormorant
- A record year for Black-winged Kite (8 records) and Red-rumped Swallow (7 records, 9 birds)

Record information

Every record in this systematic list contains the following information:

- 1) The date(s) of the record. Unless mentioned otherwise, the year is 2018.
- 2) The name of the area of the record, if such an area name is specifically known.
- 3) The name of the municipality of the record if known. The smallest municipal unit is used: officially named parts of municipalities will be used where possible. Names of municipalities must be indexed on the most recent municipality map. Names of locations are provided in Dutch when situated in the Flemish Region, in French when situated in the Walloon Region and in Dutch and French when situated in the Brussels Capital Region. Although, this hardly ever occurs anymore in modern times, a record is also acceptable when it is only known to be from a particular Belgian province, without reference of its exact municipal location. In this case, the name of the province is given.
- 4) The number of birds of the record.
- 5) Information about sex, age and/or plumage of bird(s) of the record, when available.
- 6) The name of the person (ringer, observer or discoverer) who submitted the record directly to the BRBC. In case of a record that has been retrieved from the www.waarnemingen.be / www.observations.be database, without any extra information provided by the discoverer and/or observer(s), the BRBC is considered to be the reporter. In that case, no observer is mentioned at the end of the record.

Signs and abbreviations

Belgium has 10 provinces. The Brussels Capital Region is treated as a separate 11th unit.

(A)	Antwerpen	(Lx)	Luxembourg
(Br)	Brussels Capital Region	(N)	Namur
(BW)	Brabant Wallon	(O)	Oost-Vlaanderen
(H)	Hainaut	(VB)	Vlaams-Brabant
(L)	Limburg	(W)	West-Vlaanderen
(Lg)	Liège		

Sex, Age & Plumage

m.	male.
f.	female
1cy, 2cy, ...	first calendar year, second calendar year, ...

1cy+, 2cy+, ...	first calendar year or older, second calendar year or older, ...
ad.	ad.
juv.	juvenile
imm.	immature
br.	br. plumage
wi.	winter plumage
ec.	eclipse plumage

Cardinal points are marked as N=North, S= South, E= East and W=West

Count

For most species, the bird name is followed by three figures in brackets:

1. Number of accepted individuals from 1800-1949;
2. Number of accepted individuals from 1950-2017;
3. Number of accepted individuals from 2018.

These figures are to be considered correct once published in a report. However, due to the ongoing work of the BRBC, older records may be accepted after our publication. Therefore, it is advisable to use the database on the BRBC website as the prime source of information about the exact account of accepted records for a particular species. In a few cases, a different character is given: '/' means that the species was no longer on the homologation list in that year; '-' means that the species was recorded during that period but that the exact number is still under scrutiny at the time of writing. The latter happens for species that have a considerable number of older records (before 1950).

Systematic list

1. Category A - Accepted records

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (7,259,0)

23 December 2017, Zee te Zwinbosjes, Knokke (W), 5

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* (1,93,3)

1 January - 24 March, Sint-Jan-In-Eremo, Meikeshoek (O), 1 2cy+

14 - 30 March, Kieldrecht, Putten West (O), 1 ad.

15 - 19 December, Diksmuide, IJzervallei (W), 1 1cy+

CORRIGENDA

23 November - 10 December, Uitkerke (W), 1 ex. 1cy should be:

23 November 2017- 21 January 2018, Uitkerke (W), 1 1cy

27 December - 14 January, Wouwen, De Blankaart, (W), 1 ex. 1cy should be:

27 December 2017 - 28 February 2018, Wouwen, De Blankaart (W), 1 1cy

As of January 1st 2019, this species is no longer considered by the BRBC.

Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (0,11,5)

17 January, Kieldrecht, Nieuwe Arenbergpolder (O), 5 (3 ad. + 2 2cy)

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* (0,19,2)

20 - 29 May, Gent, Bourgoyen-Ossemeersen (O), 1 m. 3cy+

6 - 24 August, Kallo, Steenlandpolder (O), 1 m.

Although a Ringed Teal *Callonetta leucophrys* often was in the vicinity of the Bourgoyen Blue-winged Teal, the BRBC doesn't see any reasons not to accept this as a wild bird.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis* (0,29,1)

24 March - 13 April, Meilegem, Kaaimerssen & Oude Scheldearm (O), 1 m. 2cy+

March (7), Februari (6) and April (5) are the best months to look for Green-winged Teal in Belgium.



Male Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* with (from left to right) Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* and Gadwall *Mareca strepera*, 6 August 2018, Kallo, Oost Vlaanderen (Joachim Pintens).

Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* (0,9,1)

19 January - 18 February, Oostduinkerke, Schipgatduinen (W), 1 m. 2cy+

Only the 8th record (10th bird) for our country and the first one since 2006, when a male migrated along the coastal migration station 'de Fonteintjes' at Blankenberge. All other records, including the 2018 record, originate from the same spot, were large numbers of Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra* are stationary during winter and which can be checked fairly well from land when the weather conditions are right.

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* (5,100,2)

1 October, Oostende/Nieuwpoort/De Panne (W), 1 1cy+

30 October, De Panne (W), 1 1cy+

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (4,53,3)

6 June, Geel, De Zegge (A), 1

8 June, Kallo, Groot Rietveld (O), 1 ad. br.

9 June, Harchies, Marais (H), 1

Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus* (0,4,1)

12 January 2018 - 14 April 2019, Auderghem, Val Duchesse (Br), 1 2cy (L. Degraer)

Shortly after the fourth Pygmy Cormorant, the fifth was found at a pond inside the royal park. Luckily, views could be obtained from the bordering street. During its prolonged stay, the bird developed nicely into summer plumage. During the summer of 2018, the bird was not seen, probably related to a decrease in visibility of the pond and a decrease in checking off the pond. In autumn, the bird was refound on the same location.

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus* (0,28,8)

26 May, Tienen, Bezinkingsputten (VB), 1 ad.

1 - 2 August, Montenaken (L), 1 2cy+

9 September, Kalmthout, Grenspark - Zwarte Heuvelen (A), 1 1cy+

29 September, Kalken, Hussevelde (O), 1 1cy+

6 October, Aalter, Aalterbrug - Oostmolen-noord (O), 1 1cy+

13 October, Kester (VB), 1 1cy+

3 - 4 November, Elsenborn, Plateau des Hautes Fagnes (Lg), 1 1cy+

6 December, Wange (VB), 1 1cy+

Another record year, with 8 accepted records in 2018, beating 2017 and 2016 (both 5). As of January 1st 2019, this species is no longer considered by the BRBC.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* (0,0,1)

9 June, Macon (H), 1 2cy

A new species for Belgium! The bird was initially discovered in France, just a stone's throw from the border in a group of 39 Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus*. One of the Griffon Vultures was ringed as a 1cy near Barcelona, Spain in December 2016. The group of vultures headed east the 9th of June, crossing the border with Belgium. Since the Cinereous Vulture was reported to be unmarked and not ringed, and in company of a wild Spanish Griffon Vulture, the BRCB decided to accept this record as being the first for Belgium in category A.

Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* (0,23,1)

19 June, Hompré, between Assenois and Clochîmont (Lx), 1 1cy+ (F. Binard)

Spotted Eagle spec *Clanga clanga* / *pomarina* (0,1,1)

8 September 2016, Honnay, Rue du Chenet (N), 1 ad. (D. Grégoire)

Little Crane *Porzana parva* (4,41,1)

15 - 17 August, Lier, Beneden Netevallei - Anderstad (A), 1 1cy

Baillon's Crane *Porzana pusilla* (4,30,1)

19 - 24 May, Woumen, IJzervallei - De Blankaart (W), 1 m. 2cy+

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oediconemus* (9,82,6)

7 April, Leefdaal, Plateau (VB), 1

8 April, Boechout (A), 1

15 April, Bredene, Polders Blauwe Sluis (W), 1

30 April - 1 May, Grosage (H), 1

1 May, Stalhille, Akkers (W), 1 1cy+

18 June, Landegem (O), 1 (K. Hessel)

The second best year, equaling 2007. 2006 was the best year with 7 accepted records. April and May are the best months to connect with this species, combined they hold more than half of all accepted records (respectively 25 and 26 records). The number of accepted records shows an increasing trend the last five years.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (0,9,0)

13 October - 19 November, Doel/Kieldrecht (O), 1 ad.

The returning individual that has been observed in this area since 2013. It thus returned for its sixth consecutive year.



Ad. winter plumage Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, 13 October 2018, Doel, Oost Vlaanderen (Stijn Baeten).

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* (0,87,-)

5 - 16 September 2003, Knokke, Kleiputten Oude Vrede (W), 1 juv. (K. Hessel)

This species is no longer assessed by the BRBC since January 1st 2015.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (0,8,1)

5 May, Zoutleeuw, Het Vinne (VB), 1 ad. (E. Hoebrechts)

Considering the three records from last year, this bird constitutes the fourth record in two years, and a remarkable second bird for this location.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (0,125,2)

21 - 24 September, Zeebrugge, Smienteweiden (W), 1 1cy

29 September - 6 October, Sint-Agatha-Rode, Groot Broek (VB), 1 1cy

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (-,140,2)

14 August 2010, Noordschote (W), 2 ad.

19 July, Wintam, Noordelijk Eiland (A), 2 3cy+

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* (1,1,1)

22 October, Antwerpen, Harbour (A), 1 (L. Wilms)

The third record for Belgium, following records in 1874 and more recently 2008. The 2018 bird was picked up exhausted in the port of Antwerp and was brought to an animal rescue clinic, where it died one of the following days. Cuckoos of the genus *Coccyzus* are known to die soon after their transatlantic crossing, being totally exhausted and not being able to feed on their usual caterpillars diet anymore.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (1,36,2)

9 May, Wijgmaal (VB), 1 1cy+

4 November, Lubbeek (VB), 1 1cy+

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus* (0,10,1)

11 - 12 November, Blankenberge/De Haan (W), 1 1cy

Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (0,1,0)

27 September 2013, Leefdaal, Plateau (VB), 1 f. ad.

This record was already accepted as an Isabelline Shrike of the subspecies *isabellinus* (Faveyts *et al.* 2016). Following the IOC taxonomic guidelines, the 'isabelline shrikes' complex is now split in two species: Isabelline Shrike and Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides*. The 2013 record becomes the first and so far only record of Isabelline Shrike for Belgium. Five other records, all of first calendar year birds, which can be very difficult to identify, are now accepted as belonging to the 'isabelline shrikes' complex *sensu lato*. Red-tailed Shrike is not on the Belgian list yet.

'Isabelline Shrike' complex *Lanius isabellinus/phoenicuroides* (0,5,0)

ADDENDUM

11 November 2013, Zeebrugge, Visserskruis (W), 1 1cy

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (0,166,2)

12 May, Beernem - Beverhoutsveld (W), 1 f. (J. De Vlaemynck)

14 - 15 May, Kieldrecht, Arenbergpolder - De Putten (O), 1 f.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* (-,2011-2017: 15,2)

5 November 2018 - 03 February 2019, Maasmechelen, Maaswinkel (L), 1 1cy

15 December, De Haan, Lindenhof (W), 1 1cy+

CORRIGENDUM

9 December 2017 - 8 March 2018, La Louvière (H), 1 1cy+ should be:

9 December 2017 - 25 March 2018, La Louvière (H), 1 1cy+

Eurasian Crag Martin *Ptyonoprogne rupestris* (0,4,0)

19 April 2017, Nimy, Grand Large (H), 1 2cy+

Only the fourth record for our country and the second to be discovered in April. The other records were in May and November. With the last accepted record dating back to 2005, Eurasian Crag Martin remains a major rarity in Belgium. Unfortunately the Nimy bird remained in the area for only a short time.

Red-rumped Swallow *Cecropis daurica* (0,60,9)

20 - 20 September 2016, Forest, Parc de Forest (Br), 1 1cy+ (V. Daems)
27 April 2017, Warnant, Etang (N), 1
27 April, Zeebrugge, Achterhaven (W), 1
30 April, Latour, Etang de Latour (Lx), 1 (M. Ameels)
30 April, Kieldrecht, Verrebroekse Plassen (O), 1
30 April, Gentbrugge, Meersen (O), 1
1 May, Hermalle-sous-Argenteau, Gravière (Lg), 1
2 May, Stokkem, Negenoord (L), 3 2cy+ (G. Beckers)
7 May, Zeebrugge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1

With 7 records (9 birds) in 2018, it was a record year for this species in Belgium! The first Belgian record dates back from only 1982, after which the species gradually became commoner. Between 2009 and 2018 31 records were accepted, resulting in the deletion of Red-rumped Swallow from the list of species that need to be assessed by January 1st 2019. April (25) and May (23) are the best months to connect with this species, although there are also a handful of observations between August and November. The Belgian coastline offers the best chances to connect with the species, even so it has been recorded in almost all provinces.

White-headed Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus* (0,85,38)

7 January 2010, Merksem, Fort (A), 3
17 October 2010, Herselt (A), 11 trapped
17 March - 7 April, Petit-Thier (Lx), 1
3 October, Kallo, Kallosluis (O), 1
26 October - 18 November, Vielsalm (Lx), 10
1 November, Berendrecht, Opstalvallei (A), 4
4 November 2018 - 19 January 2019, Minderhout (A), 1 1cy+
9 - 11 November, Antwerpen, De Kuifeend (A), 14 1cy+ trapped
11 November 2018 - 01 January 2019, Wenduine, Duinbossen (W), 1 1cy+
27 November, Turnhout (A), 2 1cy+
5 December, Lint (A), 4 1cy+

A small influx occurred during the fall of 2018, which resulted in some nicely documented records. The biggest group was ringed at the Kuifeend, just north of Antwerp (A). As of January 1st 2019, this subspecies is no longer considered by the BRBC.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (0,47,1)

5 May, Frasnes, Carrière du Nord (N), 1 (T. Coppée)

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* (0,29,2)

11 October, Wetteren, Industriezone (O), 1 1cy trapped
14 October, Kommer, Zonnebos (O), 1 1cy trapped

The last five years the species is being trapped annually with 8 records between 2013 and 2018. However, the last field sighting dates back from 2009, with a two days visit of a bird in the harbour of Zeebrugge (W).

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (0,52,7)

14 January, Koksijde (W), 1
7 May, Zeebrugge, Strand Westdam (W), 1 2cy+
9 - 10 October, Zeebrugge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1 1cy+
13 - 14 October, Heist, Strand Oostdam (W), 1 1cy+
4 - 17 November, Heist, De Sashul (W), 1 1cy+
5 - 8 November, Zeebrugge, Vandammesluis (W), 1 1cy+
16 - 17 November, Zeebrugge, Centrum (W), 1 1cy+

A record year, beating 2001 that accounted for 6 records. October (31) and November (19) are the best months to encounter a Dusky Warbler. Other discoveries were made in September (3), December (2), January (1), March (1) May (1) and August (1).

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* (0,16,3)

21 April 2010, Schulen, Schulensbroek (L), 1 m.

1 - 21 May 2017, Oudenaarde, Bos t'Ename - Volkegembos (O), 1 m.

9 April, Sint-Niklaas (O), 1 m. 2cy+

2 - 26 May, Péronnes-lez-Antoing (H), 1 m. 2cy+

21 - 22 May, Stekene, Stropersbos West (O), 1 m. 2cy+

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (0,19,1)

29 August 2002, Zeebrugge, Marinebasis (W), 1 1cy (K. Hessel)

5 - 6 September, Heist, Strand Oostdam (W), 1 1cy+

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* (0,41,1)

19 - 28 October, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 1cy

A popular bird that stayed ten days in the dunes along the concrete wall of Zeebrugge harbour (W). Only the 5th field observation in Belgium.



1CY Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*, 19 October 2018, Zeebrugge, West Vlaanderen (Johan Buckens).

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* (0,37,4)

7 September 2016, Tienen, Bezinkingsputten (VB), 1 1cy trapped

10 September, Antwerpen, De Kuifeend (A), 1 1cy trapped

14 September, Herne (VB), 1 1cy trapped

15 September, Lebbeke (O), 1 1cy trapped

11 October, Lebbeke (O), 1 1cy trapped

The Tienen record brings the total for 2016 to a record 9 accepted records. 2018 was a bit quieter for this species compared to the previous years, although these four accepted records lift the total amount of records over the threshold value of 30 accepted records per ten years. As of January 1st 2019, this species is no longer

considered by the BRBC. Considering the identification challenge this species poses, the BRBC urges observers and ringers to document new sightings sufficiently and adequately.

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata* (0,13,1)

4 August, Bolland (Lg), 1 1cy trapped (J. Defourny)

Dartford Warbler *Sylvia undata* (0,11,1)

10 April, Longfaye, Fagnes de l'Eau Rouge (Lg), 1 2cy+

Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* (0,0,1)

6 - 7 May, Hour (N), 1 m. 3cy+

The second new species for Belgium in 2018 was a nice singing male Western Orphean Warbler in a beautiful spot in the heart of the Famenne region. There is one older record of an Orphean Warbler sp *Sylvia hortensis/crassirostris* in Liège from 1912 which could not be assigned to either one of the two species.



Ad. male Western Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis*, 7 May 2018, Hour, Namur (Alain De Broyer).

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala* (0,6,1)

17 October 2017, Mariembourg (N), 1 m. 1cy+

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* (17,45,2)

3 June, Antwerpen, Landschap Scheldeland (A), 1 2cy+

6 June, Maasmechelen (L), 1 ad.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia* (0,39,2)

23 August, Bierbeek (VB), 1 1cy trapped

13 September, Antwerpen, De Kuifeend (A), 1 1cy trapped

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* (0,8,1)

5 January - 7 February, Montzen, Bois de Hees (Lg), 1 m. 2cy (B. Portier)

This well visited bird is the first to be found in winter and represents only the 8th record (9th bird) for our country. It stayed for more than one month in a forest, being elusive from time to time, but also offering incredible views sometimes.



2CY male Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus*, 7 February 2018, Montzen, Liège (Gert Vandezande).

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (0,107,1)
9 September, Zeebrugge, Centrum (W), 1 1cy

Pied Wheatear *Oenanthe pleschanka* (0,3,1)
5 May, Eupen, Fagne de Brackvenn (Lg), 1 m. 2cy+
Belgium had to wait a long time before its first Pied Wheatear made appearance, which eventually happened in 2011, but this first spring record makes it already the fourth for our country.

Alpine Accentor *Prunella collaris* (3,5,1)
15 February, Baileux (H), 1 (T. Coppée)

Iberian Western Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava iberiae* (0,1,0)
24 - 26 May 2016, Malmédy, Fagne des Deux-Séries (Lg), 1 (A. De Broyer)
This constitutes the first accepted record of this subspecies in Belgium.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii* (0,7,1)
26 September, Kalken, Hussevelde (O), 1 1cy+ (W. De Moor)
The eight Blyth's Pipit passed an inland migration station and was luckily recorded well enough. It's by far the earliest autumn record for this species in Belgium.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (0,18,1)
18 October, Kooigem, Geitenberg (W), 1 1cy+
Confirmed by sound recording. In the Netherlands, this species was removed from the rarity list by 2014 albeit it is still a scarce autumn migrant. (Haas et al, 2015)

Citril Finch *Carduelis citrinella* (2,12,1)
16 April, Wibrin (Lx), 1 m. 2cy (H. Bihain)

Half a year after the previous one, the 15th Citril Finch for our country made appearance and constitutes the second one in April. October (8) and November (3) are the best months to find this species. Seven records come from the province of Liège. Who will find the first ever twitchable?

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni* (0,32,2)

8 November 2016, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 1cy+

18 - 21 November, Brecht, Groot Schietveld (A), 1 f. 1cy+ trapped

24 December, Oosthoven (A), 1 trapped (J. Leppens)

Out of 34 accepted records, only seven were field observations. A record of a bird from Heist is still in circulation.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus* (0,248,15)

22 October 2017, Lembeke (O), 2

6 January - 11 March, Rekem, Vallei van de Zijpbeek (L), 11

10 May, Kalmthout, Grenspark De Zoom (A), 4 juv.

CORRIGENDA

1 November 2017 - 5 January 2018, Klein Schietveld, Brasschaat/Kalmthout (A), 18 should be:

1 November 2017 - 18 March 2018, Brasschaat/Kalmthout, Klein Schietveld (A), 18

3 November 2017 - 14 January 2018, Kalmthout Grenspark De Zoom (A), 17 should be:

3 November 2017 - 14 May 2018, Kalmthout, Grenspark De Zoom (A), 28

5 - 24 November, Oostmalle/Zoersel, Vliegveld, (A), 6 should be:

5 November 2017 - 13 March 2018, Oostmalle/Zoersel, Vliegveld (A), 7

Following the invasion of the winter 2017-2018, the species bred successfully in Kalmthout with at least one pair raising 4 young birds.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos* (1,24,1)

1 November, Oud Turnhout (A), 1 m. (J. Leppens)

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* (-,-,1)

15 May - 2 June, Rienne (N), 1 m. 2cy (R. Gailly)

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis* (0,0,1)

15 - 20 March, Doornzele (O), 1 m. 2cy

A new species for Belgium. This bird frequented different bird feeders in some gardens, making it hard to connect with from time to time.



2CY male Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*, 19 March 2018. Doornzele, Oost Vlaanderen (Joachim Pintens).

2. Category E records

Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*

19 July 2017 - 25 June 2018, Westkapelle, Nachtegaalpolder (W), 1
23 February - 18 March, Uitkerke (W), 1
14 - 30 March, Kieldrecht, Putten West (O), 1 ad.
26 August 2018 - 17 March 2019, Scholen, Schulensbroek - Pijpenkop (L), 1
28 August - 15 November, Doel, Doelpolder Noord (O), 1
5 - 19 December, Bentille, Oostpolder (O), 1

Ross's Goose *Anser rossii*

3 May 2017, Geistingen, Houbenhof (L), 1
10 - 11 September 2017, Wortel (A), 1
21 October 2017 - 1 May 2018, Turnhout (A), 1

Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*

10 - 26 March, Kessenich, Dal van de Grensmaas (L), 1 2cy

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

4 February - 4 March, Assebroek, Meersen (W), 1

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

13 - 21 April, Verrebroek, Verrebroekse Plassen (O), 1 f.

Hooded Merganser *Lophodytes cucullatus*

30 September - 7 October, Evergem, Spaarbekken Kluizen (O), 1

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

19 - 25 December, Latour, Etang (Lx), 1

Dalmatian Pelecan *Pelecanus crispus*

ADDENDUM

23 September 2017, Het Zwin, Knokke-Heist (W), 1

The same bird has been observed in Zandvoorde the next day. This bird has been seen in The Netherlands previously and showed a blue ring on its right leg with the letters "TA" in white, a sign of the bird not being of wild origin. It has also been considered as an escape in The Netherlands (Gelling et al, 2018).

Snowy Owl *Bubo scandiacus*

3 October, Geel (A), 1

Azure Tit *Cyanistes cyanus*

CORRIGENDUM

November 2017, De Moeren (W) and 24 November - 17 February 2018, Nieuwpoort, IJzermonding, (W), should be:

November 2017, Veurne, Decantatiebekkens (W) and 24 November - 17 February 2018, Nieuwpoort, IJzermonding, (W).

3. Rejected records

Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

7 March, Uitkerke (W), 6

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

10 March, Zonhoven, Wijvenheide - Zuid (L), 1
25 March, Sint-Agatha-Rode, Groot Broek (VB), 1
22 June - 18 July, Hollogne-Sur-Geer, Décanteurs (Lg), 1

25 August - 2 September, Eghezée - Longchamps, Décanteurs (N), 1

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

30 October, Blankenberge (W), 1 1cy+

Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus*

2 September, Oostduinkerke (W), 1

Black-winged Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

15 August, Averbode (VB), 1

15 November, Houthalen (L), 1

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina*

30 June, Wijgmaal (VB), 1

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus*

1 May 2009, Sint-Michiels, Centrum (W), 1

8 October 2009, Wilsele, Putkapel (VB), 1

18 September 2011, Maasmechelen (L), 1

22 - 22 May, Westbroek, Reninge (W), 1 ad.

1 September, Fraiture (Lg), 1

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*

3 June, Arquennes, Chaussée de Bornival 2 (H), 1

11 September, Rutten (L), 1

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*

8 November 1996, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 1cy

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*

25 December 1999, Denderleeuw, Wellemeersen (O), 1 2cy wi.

17 February, Mechelen, GGG Zennegat (A), 1 2cy wi.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*

21 September, De Panne (W), 1

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

19 May, Kieldrecht, Drijdyck (O), 1

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

3 November, De Panne, Vissersdorp (W), 1

11 November, Nieuwpoort, Strand bij Oosterstaketsel (W), 3

16 November, De Panne, De Westhoek (W), 1

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*

17 March, Sleidinge, Putten (O), 1

Calandra Lark *Melanocorypha calandra*

25 - 26 April, Outgaarden, Plateau (VB), 1

White-headed Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus caudatus*

10 January 2009, Hoboken, Fort 8 (A), 1

6 March 2009, Lede, Solegem (O), 2

13 February, Marche-en-Famenne (Lx), 3

11 March, Kessenich, Dal van de Grensmaas (L), 1

21 August, Hoepertingen (L), 1

31 October, Lanaye (Lg), 3
25 December, Sart, Pont-Le-Page (Lg), 1

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*
17 October, Zeebrugge, Visserskruis (W), 1

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*
8 April 2017, Lierneux (Lg), 1

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
8 November, Zeebrugge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*
27 July, Lebbeke (O), 1 ad.

Thrush Nightingale *Luscinia luscinia*
27 July, Zeebrugge, Oostdam (W), 1

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus*
27 May 2013, Kalkense Meersen, Vliegerkesweide (O), 1 m.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*
9 October 2017, Genk, De Maten (L), 10
17 October 2017, Zoersel, Vliegenveld (A), 3
23 October 2017, Genk, De Maten (L), 5
31 October 2017, Antwerpen, Zandvliet (A), 1
5 January, Rochefort (N), 1

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala*
6 November 2002, Bredene, Spanjaardduinen (W), 1 m. ad.

Contact BRBC

Website, for forms and all information: <http://www.belgianrbc.be/>

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