

Rare Birds in Belgium in 2021

Report of the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC)

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Oriental Turtle Dove Streptopelia orientalis meena. Second calendar year. 30/03/2021. Knokke-Heist (W) (Picture: Filip De Ruwe)

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Abstract – Rare Birds in Belgium in 2021

This report by the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC) concerns a total of 109 records (126 birds) of 56 (sub)species and species pairs which have been reported in Belgium in 2021. Some additional records from previous years have also been included. 77 records have been accepted into category A, 16 into category E and 16 records have been rejected. In 2021, two new taxa were added to the Belgian list (category A) with the first records of Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* and of Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*. Also worth mentioning: second record of Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*, Little Swift *Apus affinis* and Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*; third record of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*; fourth record of Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* and fifth record of Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*. With these additions, the Belgian list stands at 463 species following the IOC World Bird List taxonomy.

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 2021. It also contains records of earlier years that have not yet been published before. Some records from 2021 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

Taxonomic reference. From January 1st 2018, the BRBC follows the taxonomic rules of the IOC World Bird List (Gill, Donsker & Rasmussen, 2022). This decision has impacted the Belgian bird list; In July 2021 IOC decided to split Seeborn's Wheatear *Oenanthe seebohmi* from Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, raising the Belgian birdlist by one species. Details can be found on our website <http://www.belgianrbc.be>.

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; or (2) 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 as well 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 recordings and any other sources 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 2021 and earlier are not (yet) submitted. The BRBC is always prepared to assist. Observers can send a draft of their report by e-mail to Frédéric Vanhove (crazytwitcher@gmail.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

Published statutes. The statutes of the BRBC are 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 want to document a sighting. We aim to update the content of this document on a regular basis.

Composition of the BRBC. The team is composed by the same people as last year, with five Dutch-speaking members and five French-speaking members.

The following members have assessed all records in this report, in alphabetical order: Jan Baert, Stijn Baeten, Alain De Broyer, Miguel Demeulemeester, Robin Gailly, Kenny Hessel, Raphaël Lebrun, Joost Mertens, 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.

Recent news and decisions

2021 in a nutshell

Highlights of 2021 can be summarized as:

- 1st record of Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*
- 1st and 2nd record of Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea*
- 2nd record of Little Swift *Apus affinis* and Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis*
- 3rd record of American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*
- 4th record of Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*
- 5th record of Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*
- 7th record of Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, and Red-spotted Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica svecica*
- 8th record of White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* and Sardinian Warbler *Curruca melanocephala*
- 9th record of Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops*
- The best year ever for Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* (24 different 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 2021.
- 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 if 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 (observer or discoverer) who submitted the record directly to the BRBC. For every ringed bird, the ringing number and the name of the ringer are indicated when this information has been available before publication. 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 this case, no observer is mentioned for the record.

Signs and abbreviations

Belgium has 10 provinces. The Brussels Capital Region is treated as a distinct 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.	adult
juv.	juvenile
imm.	immature
br.	breeding 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 1950-2020;
3. Number of accepted individuals from 2021.

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 not on the homologation list during one or several years; ' - ' means that the species was recorded during that period but that the exact number is still under consideration at the time of writing. The latter happens for species that have a considerable number of older records, mainly before 1950.

Systematic list

1. Category A records

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (0,299,1)

15 January - 13 February, Knokke-Heist (W), 11 (considered as returning individuals)

6 October, Noordzee, Noordzeekust (W), 1 cy+

The observation on 6 October related to a bird migrating along the coast in a group of Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*



Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (on the right). With *Dark-bellied Brent Geese* *B. b. bernicla* and a *Northern Gannet* *Morus bassanus*. 06/10/2021. Noordzee (W) (Picture: Stijn Baeten)

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (1,170,1)

8 March, Woumen, De Blankaart (W), 1 ad.

ADDENDUM

16 February 2005, Ophoven (L), 1 ad. (J. Jansen)

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (2,42,1)

1 May, Mechelen, GGG Zennegat (O), 1

Spring is the best season to connect with this species, with 28 records involving 31 birds. Observations are spread throughout March (3 records), April (13 records, 15 birds) and May (12 records, 13 birds).

Little Swift *Apus affinis* (0,1,1)

15 May, Blokkersdijk, Linkeroever (A), 1 juv. (J. Pintens)

A remarkable discovery, given the fresh juvenile plumage, suggesting a more tropical origin. The second record ever, with the first one dating back from only October 2020. Both records are described more in detail in Baeten *et al.* 2021.



Little Swift Apus affinis. Juvenile. 15/05/2021. Blokkersdijk (A) (Picture: Joachim Pintens)

Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* (0,1,1)

4- 31 March, Heist (W), 1 2cy subspecies *meena*

The second Oriental Turtle Dove was warmly welcomed by the birding society after Belgium's first only being identified a year after its initial discovery. The bird was seen in the area for 27 days and was initially and tentatively identified based on a few low quality mobile phone pictures. Based on the tail pattern, this bird belonged to the *meena* subspecies. *Meena* seems to be by far the most common subspecies in Western Europe, e.g. in the Netherlands all birds that could be identified up to subspecies level, were identified as *meena* (Gelling *et al.* 2020). Both in the Netherlands as in Great-Britain Oriental Turtle Dove numbers are rising fast (de Vries & Ebels 2020; Hudson *et al.* 2013), presumably at least partly related to the rise of the digital photography.

Western Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* (0,0,1)

31 October - 23 November, Zoutleeuw, Het Vinne (VB), 1 1cy

An unexpected addition to the Belgian list to most people, but given the sharp population growth in France not entirely out of the blue. A paper about the discovery, the population development in Europe and a summary of all observations of Swamphens *Porphyrio* in Belgium is written by Collaerts *et al.* 2022.

Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla* (4,41,3)

1 - 3 June, Gentbrugge, Meersen (O), 1 2cy+

4 June - 8 July, Gent, Bourgoyen (O), 2cy+
5 - 12 June, Etalle, Etang de l'illé (Lx), 1 m. 2cy+

Little Crane *Zapornia parva* (4,45,1)

4 - 11 April, Harchies, Marais - Digue A-B (H), 1 f. (X. Lebrun)

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva* (0,9,1)

12 - 16 July, Zeebrugge/Knokke-Heist, Voorhaven - Oostdam / Het Zwin (W), 1 2cy+

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica* (0,2,1)

22 May, Knokke-Heist, Het Zwin - Zwinuitbreiding (W), 1 2cy+

The third record for Belgium and the second for this tidal area. With the first record dating back to only 2009, it seems that Belgium is finally getting its share of this Nearctic wader.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* (0,7,1)

13 May, Maaseik/Dilsen-Stokkem (L), 1 2cy+

The first record since 2005 from this Nearctic wader and only the eight for Belgium. Moreover, it constitutes the first record for the province of Limburg and the first to be in spring. All other observations occurred between 1991 and 2005 and seen in July (1), August (3), September (1) and October (2).

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus* (0,6,1)

22 April, Geetbets, Aronst Hoek - zuid (VB), 1 2cy+

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (0,23,1)

16 - 17 May, Rupelmonde, Polder (O), 1 2cy

Red-necked Phalarope - *Phalaropus lobatus* (0,139,1)

25 July, Knokke-Heist, Het Zwin - Zwinuitbreiding (W), 1 2cy+

ADDENDUM

24 November 2020, Uitkerke, Uitkerke Weiden (W), 1

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* (2,1,1)

31 January - 11 February, Cerfontaine, Lac de l'Eau d'Heure (N), 1 2cy (H. Dufourny)

The fourth for Belgium, but only the second post 1950. Resided at the largest lake complex of Belgium, the bird remained at spot for about 12 days after which it could not be relocated.



Spotted Sandpiper Actitis macularius. Second calendar year . 06/02/2021. Lac de l'Eau d'Heure (N) (Picture: Kris De Rouck)

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (0,11,1)

15 - 18 July, Doel, Paardenschor (O), 1 2cy+

CORRIGENDA

10 - 13 July 2020, Gent, Bourgoyen - De afgraving (O), 1 2cy+ should be

10 – 13 July 2019, Gent, Bourgoyen - De afgraving (O), 1 2cy+ (contra Baeten *et al.* 2021)

23 October 2020, Kieldrecht, Drijdyck (O), 1 1cy should be

23 October 2019, Kieldrecht, Drijdyck (O), 1 1cy (contra Baeten *et al.* 2021)

Collared Pratincole *Glareola pratincola* (0,9,1)

6 June, Handzame, Handzamebroeken (W), 1

The ninth record for Belgium, with the last record dating back to 2012. All records are divided over May (7 records, 8 birds) and June (2 records).

Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus* (0,7,1)

24 August, Oostende, Denzil Diaskaai (W), 1 2cy (P. Adriaens)



Baltic Gull *Larus fuscus fuscus*. *Second calendar year*. 24/08/2021. Voorhaven Oostende (W) (Picture: Peter Adriaens)

Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* (0,0,2)

1 December - 8 February 2022, Nieuwpoort, IJzermonding (W), 1 1cy

2 - 18 December, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Oostdam (W), 1 1cy

A long awaited addition to the Belgian list and to everybody's surprise not one but two birds were discovered by only one day apart. A paper about these records is published by Raes *et al.* 2022.



Ross' Gull Rhodostethia rosea. First calendar year. 21/12/2021. Nieuwpoort (W) (Picture: Filip De Ruwe)

Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan* (0,4,1)

4 - 25 April, Beveren, IJzervallei - Vallei Beveren-Stavele (W), 1 2cy+

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* (0,26,1)

10 - 22 March, Broechem, AWW-bekken (A), 1 ad. br.

27 December - 13 March 2022, Rumst (A), 1 f. ad. (returning individual)

A female Ring-billed Gull, named Kajzerka, wintered in the surrounding of lower Nete valley. The bird, first seen at a dump near Szczecin-Klucz (Poland) in 2005, was trapped and banded there with a red colour-ring. Kajzerka mostly lingered around in Poland, but also paid a visit to the Dutch-Belgian Maas-valley in February-March 2012 (Faveyts *et al.* 2014; Ovaa *et al.* 2013). The following winters the bird remained in Poland and by the beginning of December 2021 the bird was suited with a GPS-tracker. On 27 December 2021, GPS coordinates indicated that the bird resided near Rumst (A), after which eye-sightings soon followed. Here she had a good time feasting on earthworms and remained stationary until 13 March after which she started spring migration. Her GPS-tracker revealed that she spend the summer in a Common Gull *Larus canus* colony near the city of Nizhny Novgorod, about 400 km east of Moskou (webreference 1)



Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. Adult female. 11/01/2022. Rumst (A) (Picture: Gerald Driessens)

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (19,156,7)

24 April, Hoeke, Zwarte Sluispolder (W), 2 3cy+

5 August, Etalle, Etang de l'Illé (Lx), 5

The five birds seen at Etalle, constitute a new species for the Province of Luxembourg leaving Brabant Wallon and the Brussels Capital Region behind without a single record. It was the second biggest group ever to be seen in Belgium, topped by six birds at Knokke-Zwin in April 1950. In the Netherlands, breeding took place at the Markerwadden in 2020 for the first time since 1958 (van der Winden *et al* 2021).

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (4,62,3)

11 - 13 May, Virelles, Lac (H), 1 2cy+

29 May, Bazel, Bazelse polder - zuid (O), 1 ad. br.

18 - 20 June, Merkem, IJzervallei (W), 1 2cy+

Greater Spotted Eagle *Clanga clanga* (3,8,1)

25 November - 3 December 2021, Wachtebeke (O), 1 2cy



Greater Spotted Eagle Aquila clanga. Second calendar year. 29/11/2021. Moerbeke (O) (Picture: Ronny De Malssche)

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* (0,5,0)

ADDENDUM

19 May 2018, Brecht, Groot Schietveld (A), 1 2cy (P. Symens)

In retrospect the fourth record for Belgium and the second one in May. So far, only one bird was seen for more than one day, the others were flyby's or were re-identified afterwards.

Eurasian Scops Owl *Otus scops* (2,6,1)

29 May - 4 June, Eprave (N), 1 m. 2cy+

The first observation since 2003 and only the ninth ever of this insect-eating owl species. European Scops Owl breeds in southern and eastern Europe all the way up to eastern Kazakhstan and northern Mongolia and in the Maghreb. The population trend in Europe is uncertain, but a northward expansion of the breeding range is noted. In France and Spain there seems to be a negative population trend however (Keller *et al* 2020).



Eurasian Scops Owl Otus scops. 29/05/2021. Male. Eprave (N) (Picture: Lander Kestemont)

European Roller *Coracias garrulus* (0,28,0)

ADDENDUM

29 June - 2 July 2020, Vlimmeren, Hoge Bergen-Ekstergoor (A), 1 2cy+

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (0,173,5)

11 May, Pervijze (W), 1 m. 2cy+

12 May, Attenhoven (VB), 1 f. 2cy

13 - 15 May, Kalmthout, Kalmthoutse Heide - Biezenkuilen (A), 1 m. 2cy+

24 - 28 May, Folx-Les-Caves (BW), 1 m. 2cy+

10 - 11 July, Hérinnes (H), 1 m. 2cy

ADDENDUM

12 May 2016, Kalmthout, Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide (A), 1 2cy+

One of the best years ever of this nearly annual visitor, with the number of records equalling those in 1977 and in 2004. So far, 1981 was the best year with 6 records.

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* (/ ,2011-2020: 23,6)

24 January, Elversele, Klein Broek (O), 1 2cy+

15 - 16 May, Clavier (Lg), 1 2cy+

26 - 27 May, Kalmthout (A), 1 2cy+

28 September, Gedinne (N), 1

13 October, Zeebrugge, Strand (W), 1

16 October - 7 January 2022, Knokke-Heist, Het Zwin (W), 1

With 6 accepted records of Hooded Crow, 2021 was the best year since the species was added to the national rarity list back in 2011.

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* (8,37,1)

21 July, Brecht, Groot Schietveld (A), 1

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (0,50,2)

20 - 23 April, Torgny (Lx), 1 m. 2cy+
15 - 16 May, Nassogne (Lx), 1 m. 2cy+

Radde's Warbler *Phylloscopus schwarzi* (0,33,1)

10 October, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* (0,22,2)

29 April - 26 May, Péronnes-lez-Antoing, Grand large (H), 1 ad. (V. Dufour)
12 May - 2 July, Nassogne (Lx), 1 m. (returning individual)
2 June, Maasmechelen, Maesbempder Greend (L), 1 m.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* (0,44,1)

16 September, Tongeren (L), 1 1cy trapped (E. Colson)

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata* (0,16,1)

2 September, Tienen, Bezinkingsputten Tienen (VB), 1 1cy trapped

Sardinian Warbler *Curruca melanocephala* (0,7,1)

7 July, Schoten (A), 1 m. ad.

Subalpine Warbler complex *Curruca iberiae/subalpina/cantillans*

The BRBC is still reviewing all records of Subalpine Warblers and warmly welcomes pictures and sound-recordings that are not published yet.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* (2,13,0)

8 November, Dinant (N), 1 ad

Treated as a returning individual, first seen in December 2019.

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* (17,54,24)

2 June, Ellezelles (H), 1 m. 2cy+
2 June, Oostende, Zeebrugge, Knokke (W), 5 2cy+
3 - 5 June, Viersel, Kleine Netevallei (A), 1 2cy+
3 June, Terafene (VB), 1 f. 2cy
3 - 5 June, Doel, Doelpolder Noord (O), 2 2cy+
3 June, Oostakker (O), 1 2cy+
3 - 4 June, Harelbeke, De Gavers (W), 3 m. 2cy+
3 June, Knokke-Heist, Strand Zwinbosjes (W), 1 2cy+
3 June, Kallo, Steenlandpolder (O), 7
8 June, Knokke-Heist, Zwinbosjes (W), 1 2cy+
15 - 16 2021, Ploegsteert (H), 1 1cy

An absolute record year for this highly attractive species, beating 2020 when 6 records got accepted. On the evening of 3 June no less than 7 birds joined an European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* roost in a reedbed near Kallo (O). In 2020, following last year's invasion, Rosy Starling bred for the first time in France, in the department of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. They bred in an old building where at least 15 nests were counted (webreference 2).



Rosy Starling Pastor roseus. Adult. 05/06/2021. Doel (O) (Picture: Kris De Rouck)

Red-spotted Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica svecica* (0,6,1)

25 May, Heist, Oostdam (W), 1 m. 2cy+



Red-spotted Bluethroat Luscinia svecica svecica. Adult male. 25/05/2021. Knokke-Heist (W) (Picture: Johan Buckens)

Red-flanked Bluetail *Tarsiger cyanurus* (0,10,1)

4 November, Kommer (O), 1 f. 1cy trapped

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (0,114,1)

23 October, Zeebrugge, Industriezone Filipsdok - Bosje Station Dorp (W), 1 1cy

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* (x,x,0)

The split of Siberian Stonechat into Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola maurus* and Stejneger's Stonechat *Saxicola stejnegeri* by IOC in 2018 made life a bit more complicated. The BRBC is currently discussing how to treat all records and welcomes additional pictures. This discussion does not take place in Belgium alone. In Great-Britain for example, the BBRC decided for field observations to solely accept males Siberian Stonechat of the subspecies *hemprichii* (Stoddart & Hudson 2021). The Swedish rarity committee on the other hand wrote guidelines for acceptance of typical individuals without DNA (Hellström & Waern 2021).

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* (0,18,1)

29 April, Uitkerke, Velduilweiden (W), 1 f. 2cy

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (0,23,3)

23 October, Honnay, Poste de suivi migratoire (N), 1 (D. Sevrin)

25 October, Zandvliet (A), 1 1cy+

28 October, Bredene, Spanjaardduin (W), 1 1cy+

All three records involved flyby birds documented by sound-recordings

Citril Finch *Carduelis citrinella* (2,15,0)

ADDENDUM

17 April 2020, Verviers (Lg), 1 m. 2cy+ trapped

Yet another April record, making one wonder how many Citril Finches go unnoticed in the vast forests of the Ardennes. This constituted the fourth record during the last five years, raising hopes to connect with a twitchable bird in the nearby future. With 8 records, the province of Liège seems to be the best province to look for one.

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalos* (1,25,1)

17 - 22 February, Outgaarden, Plateau Bosdelkouter (VB), 1 m. 2cy+

A nice male videoed by a camera trap on a feeding site for Yellowhammers *Emberiza citrinella* and Corn Buntings *Emberiza calandra*

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* (-,52,1)

11 July, Roly, Vivi des Bois (N), 1 m. 2cy

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (3,15,2)

7 April, Scherpenheuvel-Zichem (VB), 1 (L. Geeraerts)

9 - 10 October, Zeebrugge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1 f. 2cy+

Remarkably, five Rustic Buntings were accepted since 2019, given the previous one dated back to already 2008. The bird seen at the Fonteintjes was however the first bird to be twitchable since 2008.



Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*. Adult female. 10/10/2021. Blankenberge (W) (Picture: Victor Claes)

2. Category E records

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

9 March, Woumen, De Blankaart (W), 1 ad.

21 - 22 May, Schulensbroek (L), 1

23 May, Zoutleeuw, Het Vinne (VB), 1

1 November, Wuustwezel, De Maatjes / Wezelse Heide (A), 2 ad + 1 1cy.

ADDENDA

1 January 2020 - 1 November 2021, Becht, Groot Schietveld (A), 1

18 August 2020 - 24 October 2021, Sint-Lenaarts, De Hees (A), 2

One of the three birds of Wuustwezel was a colour-ringed female and was released into the wild in Sweden. In 2021 she was apparently coupled and reproduced, resulting in one fledged offspring. Since both female and young are not acceptable conform the guidelines, and given the fact that there is a reasonable chance that the accompanying male also has a history of captive-breeding, the BRBC decided to put this record into category E. The bird from Woumen on the other hand seemed to be a good candidate for being of truly wild origin, but unfortunately no description of the legs was given. All the other birds were seen in suspicious months and/or at suspicious locations.

Baikal Teal *Sibirionetta formosa*

5 March - 26 May, Lille, Visbeekvallei (A), 1 f. 2cy

A tough nut to crack but the location was deemed too suspicious, with few other wildfowl visiting the small pond.

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis*

ADDENDUM

22 April 2004, Temse (O), 1 m.

No mention of absence of rings.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

1 -2 February, Herselt, Langdonken (A), 1

12 February - 28 April, Kalkense Meersen, Wijmeers ontpoldering (O), 2

21 - 25 February, Haaltert (O), 1

23 April - 4 July, Berlare (O), 1

ADDENDUM

29 November 2020, Paardeweide Oost, Berlare (O), 2

Given the very small European population and the popularity in captivity, the BRBC decided that Marbled Ducks can only be accepted into category A if the bird(s) wear a scientific mark like a leg-ring, a collar or a transmitter which proves that the bird(s) originates from the native distribution area.

White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*

24 February - 5 March, Brugelette, Décanteurs (H), 1

Ringed with a small, red, non-scientific ring

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*

1 April, Geel, Zammelsbroek (A), 1

Ringed with a small, red, non-scientific ring

Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus*

9 November - 6 December, Eupen (Lg), 1

Escaped from a zoo

Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus*

29 - 30 April, Sint-Gillis-Waas (O) and 8 - 9 October, Brecht - Mechelen (A), 1 f. 2cy

This female, named Eglazine, originated from a French reintroduction project in the Grand Causses and was seen both in spring and in autumn, while spending the summer in the Netherlands. Since Eglazine was released into the wild and the population is not yet considered self-sustaining, the bird was put into category E, conform the guidelines.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

19 June, Scherpenheuvel (VB), 1

The bird accompanied a group of 12 Griffon Vultures *Gyps fulvus*. No marks were visible at first sight, but a French origin is not unlikely. For France, only birds originating from the Grandes Causses are acceptable into category C, birds originating from elsewhere are still considered category E.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

18 October - 18 November, Villers-le-Temple (Lg), 1

Bird wore falconry gear

Siberian Thrush *Geokichla sibirica*

6 May, Rijkhoven (L), 1 m.

A beautiful male, unfortunately wearing a non-scientific ring.

3. Rejected records

Taiga Bean Goose *Anser fabalis*

1 December 2021, Meerdonk (O), 1

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

23 April 2021, Sint-Michiels (W), 1

Bonaparte's Gull *Chroicocephalus philadelphia*

19 May 2021, Zeebrugge (W), 1 2cy

Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan*

17 December, Nieuwpoort IJzermonding (W), 1

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

9 July, Heist, Oostdam - Sterneneiland (W), 1

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*

ADDENDUM

30 April 2000, Sint-Agatha-Rode (VB), 1 imm.

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

13 August, Meise (VB), 1

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

ADDENDUM

12 April 2020, Kalmthout, Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide (A), 1 2cy

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

16 September, uitkijktoren De Klot, Wuustwezel (A), 1 ad.

ADDENDUM

25 June 2020, Hermalle-sous-Argenteau (Lg), 1

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli*

25 April 2021, Amel (Lg), 1

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

10 April - 2 June, Rekem, Vallei van de Zijpbeek (L), 1

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis*

5 August, Gullegem, Bankbeekgebied (W), 1

Icelandic Redwing *Turdus iliacus coburni*

13 February, Heist, Bosje (W), 1

13 November, Watermael-Boitsfort (Br), 1

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*

5 May, Asper (O), 1 f.

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*

10 October, Heist, De Sashul (W), 1

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus*

17 January 2021, Fontaine-Valmont (H), 1 m.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

26 October, Wezelse Heide, Wuustwezel (A), 1

Contact BRBC

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

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