

Rare Birds in Belgium in 2019

Report of the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC)

Frédéric Vanhove, Stijn Baeten, Raphaël Lebrun, Miguel Demeulemeester and the members of the BRBC



Second calendar year male Seebohm's Wheatear Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi. 7 May 2019. Templeuve (H). (Picture: Vincent Legrand)

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Abstract – Rare Birds in Belgium in 2019

This report by the Belgian Rare Birds Committee (BRBC) concerns a total of 102 records (112 birds) of 54 (sub)species and species pairs which have been reported in Belgium in 2019. Some additional records from previous years have also been included. 74 records have been accepted into category A, 1 into category C, 1 into category D, 7 into category E and 19 records have been rejected. In 2019, 3 new taxa were added to the Belgian list (category A): Philippine Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis*, Seeborn's Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmii* and Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope*. With these changes, the Belgian list stands at 455 species following the IOC World Bird List taxonomy. Also remarkable in 2019 were the two records of a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola*, one of which being the first field record ever of this species, the second record of a Red-Eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*, the third record since 1950 of a White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea* and of a Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus*, the fourth record of an Icelandic Redwing *Turdus iliacus coburni*, the fifth record of Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* and the sixth record of Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus* and of Red-tailed / Isabelline Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides / isabellinus*. A pair of Baillon's Crake *Zapornia pusilla* has been breeding for the first time in Wallonia. 2019 was the second best year for Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*. Moreover, European Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* is removed from the homologation list from 2020 onwards.

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 2019. It also contains records of earlier years that have not yet been published before. Some records from 2019 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, 2020). This decision has impacted the Belgian bird list whose 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 2019 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 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

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 who want to document a sighting. We aim to update the content of this document on a regular basis.

Changes in membership. Jan Baert will join the Dutch-speaking members from 2020 onwards. The team is now composed of 5 Dutch-speaking members and of 5 French-speaking members.

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

Acknowledgements

The BRBC wishes to thank Natuurpunt Studie, Aves-Natagora and the Zwin Natuur Park for various support.

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

Eurasian Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium passerinum*: seemingly restricted to Eastern Belgium when first found in 2012 (Sorbi 2013), this species seems to be colonizing the Ardenne region in Wallonia at a quick rate and has now been found in all parts, including the western part. In 2019, at least 10-15 singing males and several breeding pairs were found in early spring (February - March), with an additional 10 new singers in autumn (end of August - October). From a European perspective, Eurasian pygmy owl is also quickly expanding in several other central and eastern European countries (Kopij 2011), including Germany (Gedeon et al 2014) and France (Muller 2015). Given the dramatic increase as a breeding species in Wallonia, Eurasian Pygmy Owl will therefore not be considered by the BRBC anymore.

Black-throated Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*: The DNA sequence of the presumed Black-throated Thrush observed in Loppem (W) from 5 December 2010 to 17 January 2011, has finally been available. As some pictures of the bird already suggested, DNA analysis showed that the bird was a hybrid Naumann's Thrush *Turdus naumanni* X Black-throated Thrush. In consequence, the bird remains accepted as a Black-throated/Red-throated/Dusky/Naumann's Thrush *Turdus atrogularis*/*T. ruficollis*/*T. eunomus*/*T. naumanni*.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus*: With 30 accepted records between 2010 and 2019, Eurasian Stone-curlew is removed from the homologation list from 1 January 2020 onwards.

2019 in a nutshell

Highlights of 2019 can be summarized as:

- No less than three new taxa were added to the Belgian list: Philippine Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis*, Seebom's Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi* and Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope*

- Sixth and seventh records of Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola*, including the first field observation
- Second record of Red-Eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*
- Third record since 1950 of White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea* and of Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus*
- Fourth submitted record of Icelandic Redwing *Turdus iliacus coburni*
- Fifth record of Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*
- Sixth record of Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus* and of Red-tailed / Isabelline Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides / isabellinus*.
- First breeding record of Baillon's Crane *Porzana pusilla* in Wallonia
- Second best year for Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides*, with five accepted records in 2019

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 2019.
- 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 (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 for 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.	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 1950-2018;
3. Number of accepted individuals from 2019.

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 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 (before 1950).

Systematic list

1. Category A records

Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris* (0,16,1)

6 - 12 March, Doel, Prosperpolder Zuid (O), 1 2cy+

Pale-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* (0,254,1)

17 November - 24 March 2020 Zeebrugge, Voorhaven – Oostdam (W), 1 ex.

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* (1,166,2)

12 - 19 December, Meerdonk / Kieldrecht - Putten West (O), 1 ex.

28 December, Oudenburg, Weiden Pompje (W), 1 2cy+

This species, although nearly annual in Belgium, is considered as the rarest breeding waterbird in Europe. Once breeding from the lower arctic that ranged from northern Scandinavia all the way to eastern Siberia, its breeding range is now fragmented in separate populations (Jones *et al.* 2008). The Fennoscandian population made of original wild birds is now ranked as Critically Endangered within the EU, numbering only 30-35 breeding pairs (Aarvak *et al.* 2017a). This represents a huge decline compared with the early part of the 20th century when the population was considered to number an estimated 10 000 individuals (Aarvak *et al.* 2016). In addition to this Fennoscandian population, there is a reintroduced Swedish population originating from captive bred and released birds. Birds from this population use Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* as foster parents which lead them to their new wintering area in the Netherlands. Based on winter counts conducted in their new wintering zone, it is estimated that this population is around 55-60 individuals (Lawicki L. and van den Berg A. 2020).

Green-winged Teal *Anas carolinensis* (0,27,0)

CORRIGENDUM

The correct number of birds has been amended in the database, based on the fact that the Destelbergen (O) male seen from 18 December 2003 until 1 February 2004, from 15 January 2005 until 7 March 2005 and from 14 January 2006 until 1 March 2006 is now treated as the same returning individual.

Extension of dates: the bird from Meilegem in 2018 has been seen from 24 March - 14 April (contra 13 April).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* (0,24,1)

1 - 2 January, Cerfontaine, Barrages de l'Eau d'Heure (H), 1 m. br.

This bird was discovered wintering right over the border in France, where the absence of rings could clearly be assessed. After a short, two-day, visit to Belgium, the drake returned to France, where it has been seen at least up to February.

CORRIGENDUM

The correct number of birds has been amended in the database, based on the fact that the Basse-Sambre (N) male seen from 7 March 2010 until 18 April 2010, from 5 December 2010 until 6 February 2011 and from 25 February 2011 until 29 March 2011 in Genappe (BW) is now treated as the same individual.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba* (2,38,1)

19 April, Middelkerke/Blankenberge (W), 1 ex.

Little Crane *Zapornia parva* (4,42,2)

26 August - 22 September, Berlare, Scheldebroeken (O), 2 1cy

Baillon's Crane *Zapornia pusilla* (4,31,9)

29 May, Hollogne, Décanteurs d'Hollogne-Sur-Geer (Lg), 1 2cy+

24 - 25 June, Drongen, De Keuzemeersen (O), 2 m.

25 June - 13 August, Hensie, Marais d'Harchies (H), 4 ad. (2 pairs) + 2 juv.

This concerns the fourth documented case of a breeding pair in Belgium and the first for Wallonia. One of the two pairs raised at least 2 chicks, while breeding success for the other pair was not clearly established. The previous breeding record concerned a pair breeding in De Maatjes Kalmthout (A) in 1965 but the nest, containing 6 eggs was overflowed. In July 1999, a pair with 6 or 7 young birds was discovered at Brecht (A) and the (same ?) pair failed to raise chicks the next year as its nest containing 5 eggs was found predated by rats on 23 June 2000 (Raty *et al.* 2004).



Pullus Baillon's Crane Zapornia pusilla. 19 July 2019. Harchies (H) (Picture: Robin Gailly)

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedicnemus* (9,88,3)

31 March, Zeebrugge, Achterhaven - Hoge Noen (W), 1 3cy+

1 May, Korbeek-Dijle, Korbeekveld (VB), 1 ad. (Johan Nysten)

2 July, Beauvechain (BW), 1 1cy

With 30 accepted records from the last 10 years, this species will not be assessed anymore by the 1st of January 2020.

Great Snipe *Gallinago media* (0,45,1)

1 - 2 May, Mechelen, GGG Zennegat (A), 1 2cy+

A displaying male which was easy to connect with and thus visited by a lot of birders.

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (0,22,1)

19 May, Oostende (W), 1 2cy+

With 15 out of 23 records, May is clearly the best month to connect with this nice wader.

Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* (0,127,4)

6 June, Kieldrecht, Putten Weiden (O), 1 2cy+

14 - 20 August, Kallo, Rietmoerassen (O), 1 1cy

28 August, Longchamps, Grand Vivier (Lx), 1 1cy

29 September - 4 October, De Haan, Put van Vlissegem (W), 1 1cy

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* (0,9,2)

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

23 October, Kieldrecht, Drijdyck (O), 1 1cy

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

30 March, Ieper, Verdrongen weiden (W), 1 4cy

The last accepted Ring-Billed Gull dates from 2015. With 10 discoveries made in March and 8 in April, early spring is the best time of the year to find one yourself. The provinces of West-Vlaanderen and Oost-Vlaanderen both hold 11 records.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (19,151,1)

10 - 13 August, Kieldrecht, Putten West (O), 1 1 ex.

For this species, the number of birds observed in Belgium has not always been clearly established, due to the large number of data and the lack of precision of some old data. The BRBC database is now up to date.



Gull-billed Tern Gelochelidon nilotica. 11 August 2019. Kieldrecht (OV) (Picture: Ward De Moor)

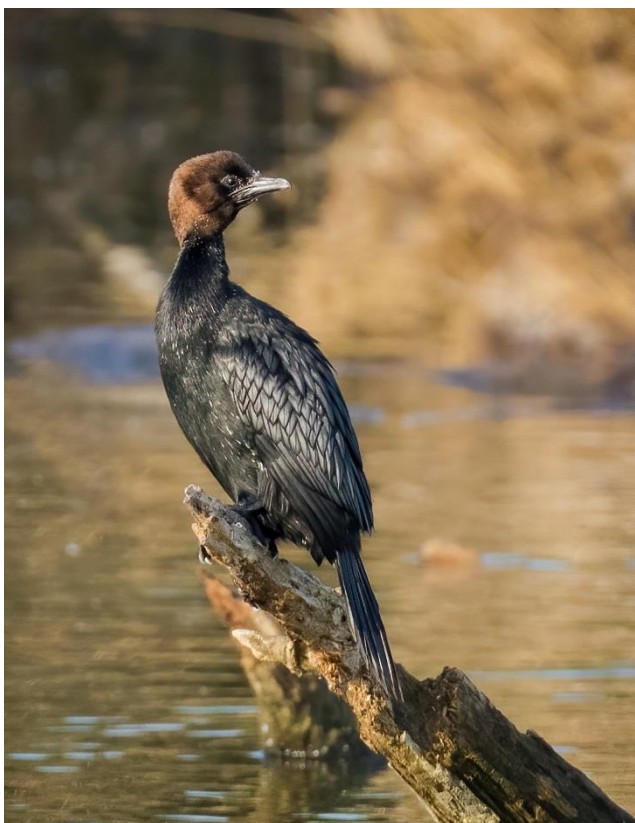
Pygmy Cormorant *Microcarbo pygmaeus* (0,5,1)

27 - 28 April, Zedelgem, Vloethemveld (W), 1 3cy+

2019, Auderghem Val Duchesse (Br), seen throughout the year + Rangeerstation Antwerpen-Noord, Binnenweilanden (A) on 1 June + Zemst (VB) on 10 June, 1 3cy

Due to a lost central tail feather it was possible to cluster the observations of the bird that had settled down in Val Duchesse area since 12 January 2018 with the observations of a Pygmy Cormorant in Rangeerstation Antwerpen-Noord, Binnenweilanden (A), in Zemst (VB), and even in Keent (Noord-Brabant, The Netherlands) on 5 - 6 June. Moreover, the bird had a puncture hole in the middle web of the right foot. Pictures of the bird in Antwerp could however not confirm this hole, since the middle web was not adequately photographed and the best available pictures only showed a complete inner web. The total number of new Pygmy Cormorant for 2019 has arisen by one with the Zedelgem bird.

A bird seen at Zwijndrecht (A) on 1 May has yet to be assessed by the BRBC.



Third calendar year Pygmy Cormorant Microcarbo pygmaeus. 1 June 2019. Antwerpen (AN) (Picture: Marc Tielemans)

Squacco Heron *Ardeola ralloides* (4,57,5)

18 - 19 May, Zwiindrecht, Broedvlakte (A), 1 2cy+

1 June, Zoutleeuw, Het Vinne (VB), 1 2cy+

15 June, Hoboken, Hobokense Polder (A), 1 ex.

21 June, Bornem, Noordelijk Eiland (A), 1 ad. br.

21 June, Oudenaarde, Vestingen (O), 1 ad. (Davy De Groote)

ADDENDUM

14 June 2017, Kalmthout, Hanneke Wiewau (A), 1 3cy+

The second best year ever, only beaten by 2016 with 7 accepted records. With the accepted record from Kalmthout, 2017 now holds 4 accepted records. Records of Squacco Heron are increasing rapidly in Belgium, with 20 accepted records for the period 2015-2019. This species will probably go off the list in nearby future.

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Clanga pomarina* (3,7,1)

13 October, Hermalle-sous-Argenteau (Lg), 1 1 cy

Approximately 85 % of the world population have crossed Bulgaria during the autumn 2019, with an estimated 52 000 individuals recorded (Iankov *et al.* 2019).



First calendar year Lesser Spotted Eagle Clanga pomarina. 13 October 2019. Hermalle-sous-Argenteau (Lg) (Picture: Alain Lucassen)

Booted Eagle *Hieraetus pennatus* (0,24,2)

4 May, Tienen, Bezinkingsputten (VB), 1 2cy+

4 June, Doel, Doelpolder Noord (O), 1 ex.

The Tienen bird was in an abraded condition which made identification at the beginning and still at a large distance, challenging. Luckily the bird eventually came closer, after which identification could be confirmed. The same bird was observed in Yerseke (NL) and Hulst (NL) on 14 - 15 May and is accepted by the CDNA (Internet reference 1)

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata* (1,7,0)

ADDENDUM

31 March 2018, Merelbeke, Makegemse Bossen (O), 1 2cy (Frans Dhondt)

Discovered two years later in an old e-mail while sorting out pictures of Common Buzzard and European Honey-Buzzard.

Philippine Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis* (0,0,1)

25 - 29 October, Zeebrugge / Heist, Voorhaven / De Sashul (W), 1 m. ad.

Brown Shrike is composed of either four subspecies: *L. c. cristatus*, *L. c. lucionensis*, *L. c. superciliosus* and *L. c. confusus* (Svensson 1992) or the 'Brown Shrike' complex is sometimes treated as three distinct species under the phylogenetic species concept : Northern Brown Shrike *L. cristatus* (including *confusus*), Philippine Brown Shrike *L. lucionensis* and Japanese Brown Shrike *L. superciliosus* (Chikara 2019). This adult male presents the field marks typical of *lucionensis* (greyish crown, brownish back lacking any red tone and poorly marked supercilium). This taxon, breeding from N and E China, Korea, S Japan (Kyushu) and E Mongolia, mainly winters in coastal SE China, Taiwan, Philippines, N Borneo and N Sulawesi (internet reference 2). This record constitutes the first in an European context where vagrants have been assigned to the *cristatus* group, if not left unidentified. More details about this record can be found in Hessel & Driessens 2020.



Adult male Philippine Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis*. 25 October 2019. Zeebrugge (WV) (Picture: Filip De Ruwe)

Red-tailed Shrike / Isabelline Shrike *Lanius phoenicuroides / isabellinus* (0,5,1)

14 October, Heist, Strand (W), 1 1cy

This is the sixth record of a first calendar year bird. This plumage can be very difficult to assign to one or the other species, so it is best considered as belonging to the 'isabelline shrikes' complex *sensu lato*.



First calendar year Daurian Shrike or Red-tailed Shrike *Lanius isabellinus / Lanius phoenicuroides*. 14 October 2019. Heist (WV) (Picture: Victor Claes)

Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (0,168,2)

14 May, Kalken, Kalkense Meersen - Gruttoweide (O), 1 m. 3cy+

28 - 29 May, Spa, Fagne de Malchamps (Lg), 1 m. 2cy

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* (0,1,1)

12 - 14 October, Heist, Haagje Heist (W), 1 1cy

The only time that this species had been observed before in Belgium dates back to 13 October 1995 in the Fonteintjes, Blankenberge (W). The bird from Heist arrived after a succession of low weather systems which swept the North Atlantic during last autumn, bringing a significant number of North American passerines on the European coasts.



Red-eyed Vireo Vireo olivaceus. 13 October 2019. Heist (WV) (Picture: Herman Blockx)

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* (-,2011-2018: 17,2)

20 April, Zeebrugge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1 ex.

19 October - 9 November, Knokke-Heist, Zwinbosjes (W), 1 ex.

Western Bonelli's Warbler *Phylloscopus bonelli* (0,48,1)

21 August, Zeebrugge, Strand Westdam (W), 1 1cy

Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* (0,13,1)

7 - 17 December, Zeebrugge, Industriezone Filipsdok (W), 1 1cy+

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (0,60,5)

23 October, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 ex.

3 November, Zeebrugge, Achterhaven (W), 1 1cy+

5 November, Blankenberge (W), 1 1cy+

10 November, Raversijde, Provinciedomein (W), 1 ex.

14 - 16 November, Heist, Haagje Heist (W), 1 ex.

ADDENDUM

After re-evaluation, the accepted record of a bird seen in Heist (W) between 4 - 17 November 2018 is now treated as two separate records:

4 - 8 November 2018, Heist, De Sashul (W), 1 ex.

14 - 17 November 2018, Heist - De Sashul (W), 1 ex.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus* (0,19,2)

27 - 30 May, Matagne-la-Grande, Champ de tir (N), 1 m. 2cy+

9 June - 1 July, Rochefort, Tienne d'al Golette Magritte (N), 1 m. 2cy+

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* (0,20,1)

9 - 10 September, Zeebrugge, Strand Westdam (W), 1 1cy

Booted Warbler *Iduna caligata* (0,14,2)

15 September, Zomergem (O), 1 1cy trapped and ringed (Jan Colpaert)

13 - 17 October, Antwerpen, De Kuifeend (A), 1 1cy+ trapped and ringed (Bram Vogels)



Booted Warbler Iduna caligata. 13 October 2019. Antwerpen (AN) (Picture: Bram Vogels)

Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler *Helopsaltes certhiola* (0,5,2)

22 September, Knokke-Heist, Het Zwin (W), 1 1cy trapped and ringed (Miguel Demeulemeester)

11 - 16 October, Heist, Strand Oostdam (W), 1 1cy

The bird found on 11 October constitutes the first accepted field record for Belgium. It gave extraordinarily views for a bird which is known to behave like a mouse, quickly vanishing in the vegetation. This bird could be well observed by numerous birders who came to see it on the day of its discovery and on the following day. Amazingly four days later, a Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler was found about 500 m away of its initial discovery place. Due to the extreme rarity of the species and to the fact that the second location was nearby, it has been assumed that it concerned the same individual.



First calendar year Pallas Grasshopper Warbler Helopsaltes certhiola. 11 October 2019. Heist (WV) (Picture: Joachim Pintens)

River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* (0,33,2)

18 - 27 June, Zichem, Kloosterbeemden (VB), 1 2cy+

23 June - 3 July, Jalhay, Plateau des Hautes-Fagnes (Lg), 1 2cy+

ADDENDUM

3 June 2017, Gent, Bourgoyen-Ossemeersen (O), 1 1cy+

Subalpine Warbler *Curruca cantillans* (0,22,1)

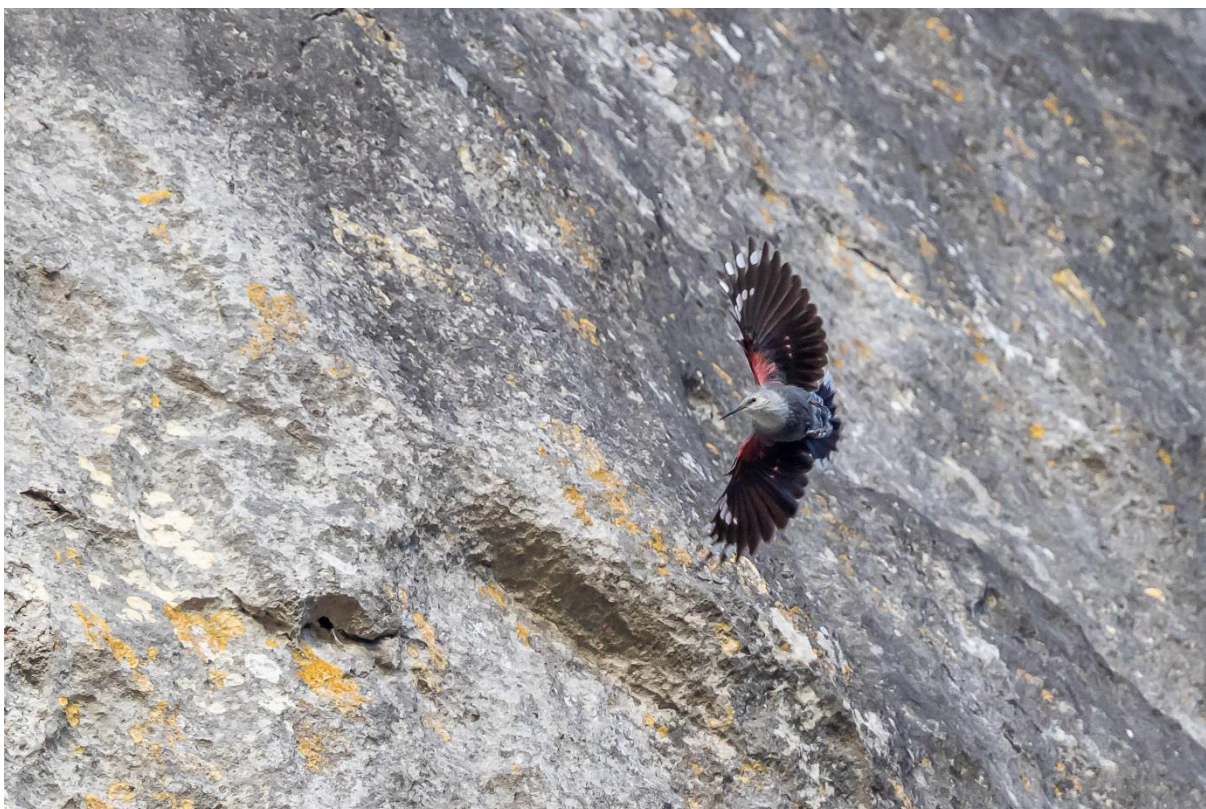
26 April, Knokke-Heist, Zwinbosjes (W), 1 m. br.

The rather large white malar strip and the colour of the underparts indicate that this bird belongs to the eastern group 'cantillans/albistriata'. To date, only Moltoni's Warbler *Curruca subalpina* living on the Balearic Islands, Corsica, Sardinia and north-west Italy is recognized as a species in its own right, disjunct from the polytypical group *Curruca cantillans/albistriata/iberiae/inornata*.

Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria* (2,11,2)

31 October, De Panne, De Westhoek (W), 1 ex.

14 December - 6 January 2020, Dinant (N), 1 ex.



Wallcreeper *Tichodroma muraria*. 18 December 2019. Dinant (N) (Picture: Victor Claes)

Rosy Starling *Pastor roseus* (17,47,1)

30 September - 3 October, Kieldrecht, Havenvlakte (O), 1 1cy

Icelandic Redwing *Turdus iliacus coburni* (0,4,0)

ADDENDUM

4 November 2018, Lommel, Kristallijn-Maatheide (L), 1 2cy+ trapped

White's Thrush *Zoothera aurea* (15,2,1)

15 April, Desteldonk, Mendonk (O), 1 2cy+

This concerns a window-victim.

Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus* (3,2,1)

9 November, Heist, Strand Oostdam (W), 1 1cy.

Seeborn's Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe seebohmi* (0,0,1)

7 May, Templeuve (H), 1 m. 2cy

This bird represents the second record for northwestern Europe, after a record on 22 May 2017 in The Hague, (The Netherlands). It was initially found on the French side of the border before settling down on the Belgian side for the rest of day, together with two Northern Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe*. It is a remarkable record as this taxon has a breeding distribution limited to NW Africa: N Morocco (Rif S to Middle and High Atlas, C Anti-Atlas) and NE Algeria (Aurès and Djurdjura Mts); non-breeding W Africa (mainly SW Mauritania and Senegal to W Mali, occasionally in S Morocco) (internet reference 3).

Siberian Rubythroat *Calliope calliope* (0,0,1)

4 December, Haillot (N), 1 m. 1cy

This constitutes a terrific record of this extreme Siberian vagrant firstly since it is a first for Belgium but secondly also for the circumstances of its discovery as it was brought in dead by a cat. The bird was identified as a 1cy male based on the red throat patch, the suspended moult of the greater coverts and the small buffish spots at

the tip of some greater coverts and of the tertials. The damage visible on some pictures of the tail were superficial and did not reveal severe wear which may indicate a captive origin. Furthermore, the feet and the toes did not show any abnormalities. Because of the aforementioned points, this bird is considered as a wild bird which was probably starting to overwinter.



First calendar year male Siberian Rubythroat Calliope calliope. 4 December 2019. Haillot (N) (Picture: Stijn Baeten)

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* (0,108,2)

9 - 10 September, Zeebrugge, Bosje Marinebasis (W), 1 1cy

13 October, Zeebrugge, Visserskruis (W), 1 1cy

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* (0,4,1)

7 - 13 October, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 1cy+

The fifth for Belgium, all but one discovered in October and the third within a radius of 5 kilometer!

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* (0,17,3)

7 October, Kooigem, Geitenberg (W), 1 1cy+

28 October, De Panne, Vissersdorp (W), 1 1cy+

29 October, Blankenberge, De Fonteintjes (W), 1 1cy+

CORRIGENDUM

The number of Olive-backed Pipit seen in Belgium and mentioned in our previous report should be (0,16,1) and not (0,18,1).

Arctic Redpoll *Acanthis hornemanni* (0,35,0)

1 November 2018, Heist, Strand (W), 1 f. 1cy (Joachim Pintens)



First calendar year female Arctic Redpoll Acanthis hornemanni. 1 November 2018. Heist (WV) (Picture: Joachim Pintens)

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia* (25,34,1)

30 October, Ethe (Lx), 1 1cy trapped and ringed (Michiels Gerard)

For this species, the number of birds observed in Belgium has not always been clearly established, due to the fair number of data and the lack of precision of some old data. The BRBC database is now up to date.

Cirl Bunting *Emberiza cirlus* (-,49,2)

30 March, Frasnes, Carrière du Nord (N), 1 m. ad.

11 June, Bohan (N), 1 m. 2cy+

For this species, the number of birds observed in Belgium has not always been clearly established, due to the large number of data and the lack of precision of some old data. The number of Cirl Bunting seen in Belgium since 1950 has been updated.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* (3,12,2)

19 October, Herselt (A), 1 m. 1cy

24 October, Herentals (A), 1 1cy+

2. Category C records

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

20 - 22 May, Hees (L), 1 ex.

This bird was present in the company of a Griffon Vulture *Gyps fulvus* and it wore a white ring on its right leg with a black inscription "FUH". This vulture was born in the wild in 2017 in the Grands Causses NP (Aveyron, France). Since the reintroduction scheme in this national park has been ceased in 2004 and taking into account that the population is considered self-sustaining, these birds are now placed within category C by the French Committee (CHN). Hence, the BRBC decided to place this record within category C. Cinereous Vulture is currently being reintroduced in two other mountain areas in France, in particular the Alps and the Vercors (pers. Com. Pierre-André Crochet). As long as the reintroduction program continues in these places, birds from these areas are treated as category E birds.

3. Category D records

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

11 June, Doel, Prosperpolder Zuid (O), 1 ex.

The same bird had first been photographed in Croatia (Pag Island on 14 May) and later on 31 May in Buch, Bayern, Germany before it turned up for a single day in Belgium. On 19 June, it was rediscovered at Texel, the Netherlands. Close analysis of pictures of all these records brought to light that all records relate to the same individual. Although the track record of this individual is at least very curious and interesting, the BRBC decided, based on the total absence of any observation pattern throughout Europe, to place this record in category D for the moment.

4. Category E records

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

19 January, Zoutleeuw, Het Vinne (VB), 1 ex.

9 May, Kalmthout, De Maatjes (A), 1 ex.

Baikal Teal *Sibirionetta formosa*

19 January - 19 April, Schilde (A), 1 ex.

Falcated Duck *Mareca falcata*

6 September - 15 November, Diksmuide, Viconia-Kleiputten (W), 2 ex.

Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris*

9 November - 23 February 2020, Bornem, Graafschap (A), 2 ex.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*

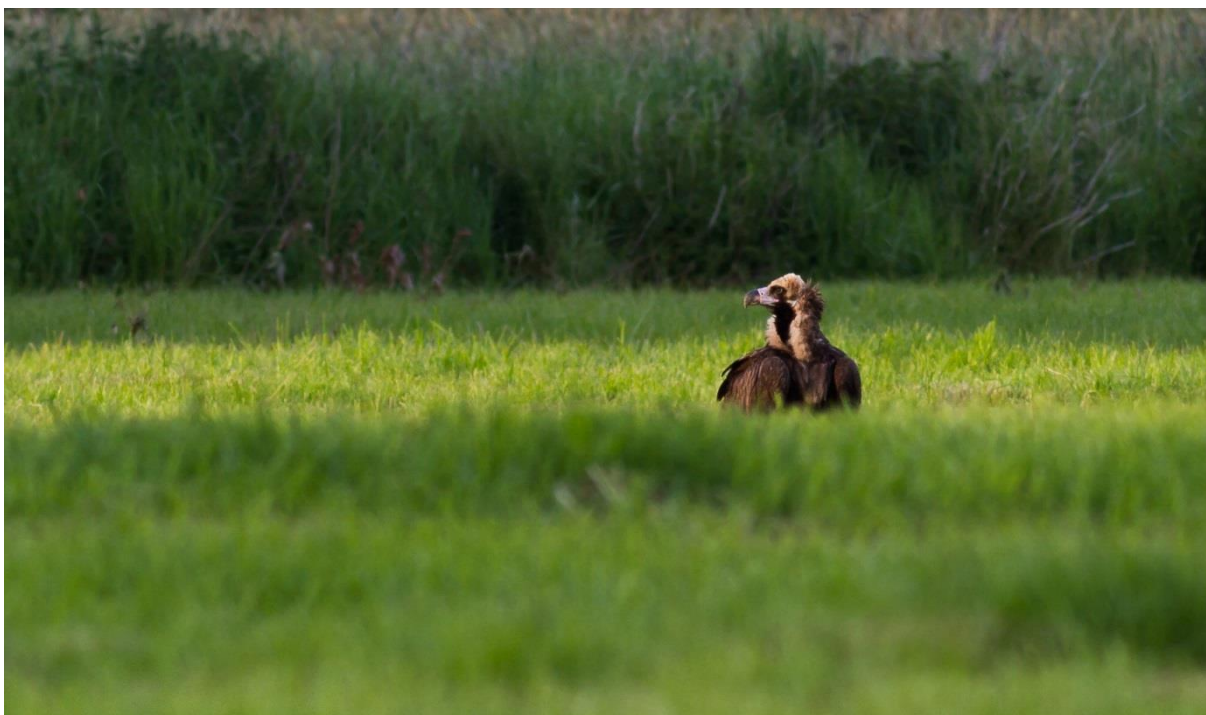
28 May, Antwerpen, Blokkersdijk (A), 1 m. 3cy+

Absence of rings was not adequately described.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

8 - 9 May, Schriek (A), 1 f. 3cy

This bird was put in a rehabilitation center in Valladolid after it was found malnourished as a fledging in Palencia (Palencia province). After its recovery at CRAS (Centro de Recuperación de Animales Silvestres) in Valladolid, it has been transferred to GREFA (Grupo de Rehabilitación de la Fauna Autóctona y su Hábitat) for the Monachus Project in Burgos. There it was kept in captivity for a duration of 9 months before being released on 7 October 2018 in the Sierra de la Demanda, Iberian Cordillera (Burgos province) along with 16 other Cinereous Vultures. It was labelled Brinzola 16/5520 (internet reference 4). After its release, Brinzola formed a pair with a male, named Batman, which also stayed at the center at the same time. After a short visit to Belgium, Brinzola wandered further off north and was recorded in The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway where it wintered and where it was eventually found with a broken wing nearby some wind turbines. Due to its long period of captivity and its unusual movements, this bird has been unanimously classified in category E by all the committees concerned.



Fourth calendar year female Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus. 8 May 2019. Heist-op-den-Berg (AN) (Picture: Joachim Pintens)

5. Rejected records

Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*

19 January, Schulen – Schulensbroek - Buitenbekken West (L), 1 ex.

Alpine Swift *Tachymarptis melba*

25 April, Oud-Heverlee (VB), 1 ex.

27 April, Oostende (W), 1 ex.

Pallid Swift *Apus pallidus*

2 November, Kalken, Kalkense Meersen - Broekmeers (O), 1 ex.

Eurasian Stone-curlew *Burhinus oedichnemus*

29 May, Nederokkerzeel (VB), 1 ex.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

14 July, Hollogne-Sur-Geer, Décanteurs (Lg), 1 ad. wi.

Practincole sp. *Glareola sp.*

10 September, Honnay (Beauraing) (N), 2ex.

European Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

28 September, Blankenberge, Strand (W), 1 ex.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*

25 May, Oud-Turnhout, Landschap De Liereman (A), 1 ex.

29 May, Koksijde (W), 1 ex.

Bonelli's Eagle *Aquila fasciata*

ADDENDUM

7 April 2018, Frasnes-lez-Buissenal (H), 1 ex.

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus*

31 October, Eke (O), 1 ex.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus*

6 November, Heist, Kleiputten (W), 1 ex.

Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*

26 October, Zeebrugge, Achterhaven - Haagje Heist (W), 1 ex.

30 October, Heist, De Sashul (W), 1 ex.

Iberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus ibericus*

30 March, Knokke-Heist, Zwinbosjes (W), 1 m. 2cy+

1 - 15 May, Stekene, Stropersbos West (O), 1 ex.

8 June, Wijgmaal, Wijgmaalbroek (VB), 1 ex.

Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*

25 August, Zeebrugge, Voorhaven - Westdam (W), 1 ex.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*

17 October, Herstappe (L), 1 ex.

Contact BRBC

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

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