



The Twite has become increasingly rare in the area.

Recording bird sightings

For several years now we have been encouraging people to record and submit their sightings to us. By compiling and publishing this information, we can help direct conservation measures toward vulnerable species. Recording unusual numbers and species can help to protect habitats and raise awareness of our natural heritage.

Some of the most vulnerable species include Corncrake, Barn Owl, Cuckoo, Chough, Twite and Hen Harrier, but many other species are very important to record, and all records have some significance.

To help you judge the significance of the birds you see, and to encourage you to send your records to us, we have published the *Dingle Peninsula Bird Report 2002-2004*, by Michael O'Clery. It shows the status of every bird species ever recorded on the peninsula. It illustrates:



- all species of bird seen in the area
- where and when they were seen
- how common or scarce the bird is and whether it is in decline or doing well
- its conservation status as a red- or amber-listed bird

It can be purchased at Ventry Post Office, The Dingle Bookshop, Oceanworld, Dingle, or by post (from Lucie Hankey, Monaree, Dingle, Co. Kerry, 10euro +1.50euro p&p, cheques payable to The West Kerry Branch, BirdWatch Ireland). All proceeds go directly to support the group's recording and conservation work.

We would encourage you to submit your bird sightings by email to Lucie Hankey ldhankey@indigo.ie or post them to Monaree, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

Further information

More info from:

our email newsletters in Dingle Library or from crosher@eircom.net

Dingle Tourist Office

Frank King's Radio Kerry programme, Thursdays, 10.30am

Maps

The Discovery series, (Ordnance Survey) Numbers 70 & 71 are the best maps for the region. Both are widely available in garages, newsagents and bookshops in the area.



BirdWatch Ireland
Rockingham House
Newcastle, Co. Wicklow

Membership enquiries
Tel: 01 2819878, or see
www.birdwatchireland.ie

Registered Charity 5703

Birding *on the* Dingle Peninsula

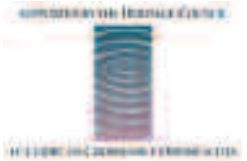
Chough: Photo by Michael O'Keefe



Birdwatching is a growing activity on the Dingle Peninsula. Many serious birders travel to Dingle to watch the thousands of seabirds, waders and duck, to find rare waders and wildfowl blown across the Atlantic in autumn, or to find rare gulls in winter.

The more general wildlife enthusiast will be keen to watch Kerry's special breeding birds such as Chough, Black Guillemot or Hen Harrier. Every season brings its excitement and interest in a range of important wildlife habitats.

The Dingle peninsula also has internationally important island seabird colonies, wetlands and reedbeds, harbours and estuaries, sand dunes and coastal cliffs, each with their own special interest. The Dingle Peninsula is sure to offer an unforgettable birdwatching experience at any time of year.



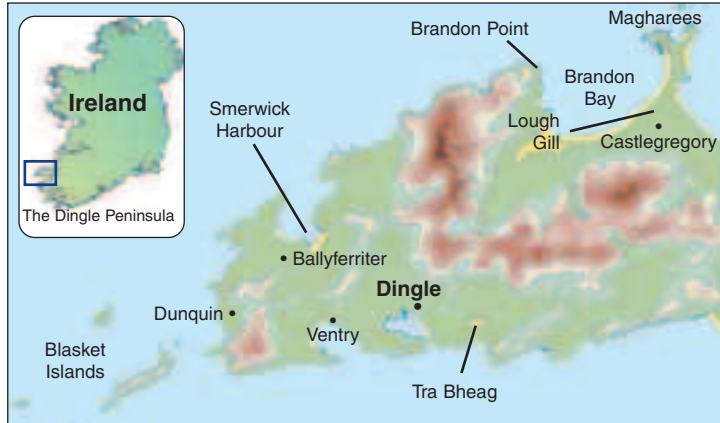
Birding hotspots

All of the following, except Burnham, allow for birding from the car or a wheelchair. Unless otherwise indicated, all are best in autumn and winter.



Michael O'Clery

Gannets can be seen throughout the year



Map by Michael O'Clery

- **Tra Bheag** From the road on the south side of the estuary, waders, duck, gulls, Peregrine, Kingfisher & Little Egret can be found.
- **Dingle Harbour** Good for winter gulls, Great Northern and Red-throated Diver, Red-breasted Merganser & Black Guillemot. Milltown Bridge nearby for waders, Little Egret, gulls & Grey Heron
- **Burnham Lagoon** At the most westerly end of Dingle Harbour is a short track through the woods which takes you down to a small estuary, lagoon and woodland area. Waders, gulls, Little Egret & Kingfisher are often present, and many woodland species.
- **Ventry Harbour** The bay and around Cuan pier is good for shorebirds, seabirds and waterfowl. Waders frequent the beach at the south end of the bay, and small numbers of Light-bellied Brent Geese, Water Rail, Great Northern and Red-throated Divers and Black Guillemot are present in winter.
- **Slea Head, Dun Chaoin & Great Basket** Seabirds, Chough, Raven, Dipper, Merlin, and whales and dolphin. Try any bit of cover or trees for summer visitors and migrants such as Willow Warbler, Goldcrest, Chiffchaff, Sedge and Grasshopper Warbler.
- **Smerwick Harbour** Waders, gulls and wildfowl, especially at the south east side. Hen Harrier is often present around the reedbeds.
- **Brandon Point** Autumn seawatches for shearwaters, petrels and skuas in W and NW winds. Chough, Peregrine, Bottlenose Dolphin.



Michael O'Clery

Pied Wagtail is common throughout the area all year

- **Brandon Bay** Large numbers of Common Scoter, divers and gulls. Terns in summer, Arctic and Great Skua in autumn.
- **Lough Gill** Look from the small jetty, 1km W of Castlegregory, for Mute and Whooper Swan and many wildfowl.
- **Magharees** Good for seabirds, Common Scoter, Brent geese, and divers. Little, Sandwich and Arctic Terns in summer.



Michael O'Clery

Special birds of the Dingle Peninsula

Chough The Dingle Peninsula has the largest concentration of Chough in North west Europe. They are most commonly seen around coastal cliffs and pastures.

Corncrake There are records of Corncrake calling every summer, usually in overgrown fields on the most westerly coastal fringes.

Hen Harriers have been persecuted to near extinction in Ireland. They still breed in east Kerry and winter in west Kerry where you can see them quartering low over reedbeds.

Seabirds Brandon Point is famous for large numbers of seabirds, including many rare species. Best from August to October, but worth a visit at any time of year. Boat trips around the Blaskets are a good opportunity to see breeding auks, Kittiwakes and shearwaters.

Terns Try around the Magharees in May, June and July for Little, Arctic and Sandwich Tern.

Rare birds Very rare American waders and wildfowl are seen each year. September is the best month.



R.P. Miles

Puffins breed on the Blaskets in summer



Michael O'Clery

Pale-bellied Brent Goose is regular in winter