

(European) Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* (? circa 26, 1).

(Breeds Europe and Asia east to Lake Baikal and eastern Mongolia. Winters south of the Sahara).

From Thompson's time right through to the 1900s, the Nightjar was regarded as a common but somewhat local summer visitor and perhaps due to this its distribution is not well documented. Thompson gives details of its occurrences, some from around Belfast, where he regarded the species as "rarely seen". *Thompson* 1849.

Mrs. Gage in her history of Rathlin Island, County Antrim regarded the species as "rare". *Gage* 1851. Workman regarded the species as plentiful around Belfast and noted one on 4th July at Cavehill. *Workman* 1901.

Stewart gives further details of sites where they are to be found around Belfast. *Stewart* 1901.

A 15th specimen in the Ulster Museum was taken at Glenarm, County Antrim on May 1917.

Foster 1922 suggests that the species nested on the Antrim Hills, a few miles north of Hillsborough, County Down and on Slieve Croob, some five miles to the south.

Brown has given details of a bird seen near Glassdrummond, County Down, *Brown* 1901 while others reported its occurrence and breeding in the Mourne, County Down. *Anon.* 1902; *Anon.* in IN1903.

J.P. Burkitt ascertained that the bird in question was a Nightjar and suggested that in 1954, it was suggested that it was a summer resident in small numbers in all counties, very local in distribution, with a stronghold in County Fermanagh.

It was recorded every summer on Rathlin Island, County Antrim though breeding was never proved.

The Mourne mountains, County Down were another favoured locality. *Deane* 1954.

Kennedy, Ruttledge & Scroope 1954 have the following to say on its status in Northern Ireland; "Fermanagh appears to be most frequented of the northern counties, but the bird is rare in Down and, according to Rankin, very infrequently met with in the Mourne area. Rankin does not list it for Antrim, but Benington says its breeds in bogland near Ballymoney [Garrybog], but this is not generally known. The late S. McAdam stated that it was well distributed in the Ballymena district, where, however, breeding has not been proved."

Published records since 1950:

1951

One Lighthouse Island, Copeland Bird Observatory, Copeland Islands, County Down, [date unknown]. *Deane* 1954.

1953

One: Lenaderg, Banbridge, County Down, "summer". *Furphy* 1955.

1960

At least two: Ballyscullion Moss [a peat bog] Lough Beg, County Antrim, breeding was proved. *D'Arcy* 1978.

1965

Believed to breeding around the Ballycastle District, County Antrim. *USPB Bird Report* 1965.

1966

One: Castledillon, County Armagh [date unknown]. *ANFC Report* 1966.

One: Juvenile. Dead, killed by car? Ballynahinch, Richill, County Armagh, 18th August. *ANFC Report* 1966.

One: Sand dunes. Portstewart, County Londonderry, 25th August. *Bennett et al.* 1972.

1971

One: Maghery, Birches, Portadown, County Armagh [date unknown]. *AFNS Reports* 1971.

1972

Six: Churring. North, County Armagh, 7th July. *AFNS Report* 1972.

1977

One. Heard. Birches, Portadown, County Armagh [date unknown in July]. *AFNS Report* 1977.

1980

Three: Two males and one female Springwell Forest, Coleraine, County Londonderry, 11th June (P.S. Watson). *NIBA* 1982.

1987

Two: One pair. County Tyrone (C. Dawson cited by *Hutchinson* 1989); the observer believed this species to be in the neighbourhood for many years.

1990

At least one. Calling. Derrylee, Birches, Portadown, County Armagh [date unknown]. *AFNS Report* 1990.

1991

At least one: County Armagh [date unknown]. *AFNS Report* 1991.

2016

One: In flight, chased by a Sparrowhawk. Derrycrow Road, Reedy Flats, Charlestown, County Armagh, 18th September (Derek Charles). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

The following published record we do not include in our totals:**2006**

One was "reported" Islandmagee, Larne, County Antrim, 6th - 8th May (D. Galbraith). *NIBA* 2008a.