

Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* **SV**

(Breeds Ireland, UK, Isle of Man. The mountains of Morocco and Spain eastwards through southern Europe and the Alps, across Central Asia and the Himalayas to western China).

Unpublished records:

2009

Antrim

Three: Rathlin Island, 10th September (Flightline).

Three: Murlough Bay, Fair Head, Ballycastle, 31st October (Neal Warnock).

Down

One: Mourne Mountains, Newcastle, 25th August (Flightline).

2010

Down

Two: Fair Head, Ballycastle. One, 3rd April with two on 4th October (Patrick Barton *et al.*).

Two: Rathlin Island, 14th October (Neal Warnock).

2011

Antrim

One: Fair Head, Ballycastle, 23rd January (Keith Bennett).

One pair bred Knockakans, Rathlin Island, raising two juveniles (RSPB NI).

2012

Antrim

Up to three: Rathlin Island, 3rd May to 24th October (Ronald Surgenor *et al.*).

Up to four: Fair Head, Ballycastle, 2nd September to 6th October (Ian Enlander, Richard Donaghey).

2013

Antrim

Up to three: Adults. Rathlin Island, 26th February to 3rd September (Ronald Surgenor James Robinson *et al.*).

Breeding was attempted.

Down

One: Sheepland, Portaferry, 5th April. (David Nixon).

One: Heard only. St. John's Point, Killough, 19th April (Tim Murphy, Doris Murphy, Sharon Parr).

2014

Antrim

Up to five: Rathlin Island. Two adults & three juveniles, 11th June to 17th October (Colin Guy *et al.*).

Two: Fair Head, Ballycastle, 6th November (Nicholas Veale).

Down

One: Orlock Point, Belfast Lough, Groomsport, 21st September (Billy Miskelly).

2015

Antrim

Up to two: Rathlin Island, 18th March to 9th May (Colin Guy).

One: Giants Causeway, Bushmills, 15th April (Norma Wallace).

Up to three: Fair Head, Ballycastle, 2nd to 22nd November (Patrick Barton, Keith Bennett).

2016

Antrim

Up to three: Rathlin Island, 15th February to 24th October (Colin Guy *et al.*).

British Birds Vol. III 635-710 published that one pair bred in Northern Ireland in 2016.

2017

Antrim

One: Fair Head, Ballycastle. One, 27th February and the same at Lough na Crannog, 26th April (Clive Mellon, Richard Donaghey).

One: Rathlin Island, 10th February to 18th September (Richard Donaghey *et al.*).

One: The Gobbins, Islandmagee, 10th April (Nick Simpson- Eye).

Londonderry

One: Balls Point, Lough Foyle, 29th October (Derek Charles).

Chough did not breed in Northern Ireland in 2017.

2018

Antrim

One: Rathlin Island, 5th February to 21st August (Hazel Watson, Ric Else *et al.*).

One: Fair Head, Ballycastle, 8th May (Robert Plant).

The above records appear to document the long slow decline of Chough as a breeding species in Northern Ireland. Chough did not breed in both 2017 and 2018 and the 2018 individual (pictured below) appears to be the last remaining bird in Northern Ireland.



Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*,
Rathlin Island, 2018. Photo courtesy of Ric Else.