

Common Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

(Breeds most of Europe and western Asia and Morocco. Winters central Africa, Arabia, south of the Saharan Desert but north of the Equator, from Senegal east to Yemen).

This species was virtually unknown as an Irish species in Thompson's time (1849) though he mentions a specimen shot near Belfast at some time prior to 1828 and another apparently obtained near Tandragee, Co. Armagh at an unspecified date (Thompson 1849).

Breeding was first confirmed in Northern Ireland in 1894 when Ussher was shown a breeding pair at Baronscourt Demesne, Co. Tyrone; these birds had apparently bred in the same location since 1891. Ussher also refers to a singing male seen in May 1888 by the Rev. G.W. Peacock at Rash Wood, Co. Tyrone not far from Baronscourt. (Ussher 1894, 1894a).

It has been suggested that breeding took place at Baronscourt until 1906 (Deane 1954); however, during a Belfast Naturalists' Field Club excursion to Baronscourt in July 1911, it was suggested that the Redstart had not bred in that locality for 12 years (Anon. in Irish Naturalist 1911).

In 1889 a female was shot at Sydenham, Co. Down but from then until 1954, only four were recorded in Northern Ireland all apparently striking light stations (Deane 1954).

Chase (1949), however reports its occurrence (on the authority of H.T. Malcolmson) at Campbell College, Belfast, presumably some years prior to 1949.

Observations at Copeland Bird Observatory, Co. Down (since 1956) indicate the Redstart to be an annual passage migrant in spring being recorded in all but six years from 1956 to 1995 with between one and 22 birds recorded in each of those years.

Autumn records during the same period show it to be much less regular, being recorded on average only every other year and with a maximum of only four birds. Birds moving through Copeland Island are assumed to be part of the substantial breeding population in the west of Scotland (Stewart 1996).

1954

One: Ballyferris, County Down, 8th May.

One: Fair Head, Ballycastle, County Antrim, 2nd June.

1955

Six: Two adults and two juveniles, Ballygawley, Co. Tyrone July. *Ruttledge* 1956.

Six: Two adults and two juveniles, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim 17th July. *Ruttledge* 1956.

One: Male. Glenshesk, County Antrim, 24th July. *Ruttledge* 1956.

1956

One: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 18th August. *Ruttledge* 1957.

1957

Three: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 3rd April, 5th May and 1st August. *CBO Bird Report* 1957.

One: Carnlough, County Antrim, 22nd April.

One: Lough Beg NNR, County Londonderry, 11th August. *USPB Bull.* No.3.

1958

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; one 6th May, one 12th May and two on 24th May. *CBO Bird Report* 1958. *Ruttledge* 1959 published just one individual the bird on the 6th May.

1959

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 21st and 24th April. *Ruttledge* 1960.

On an unspecified date in the early 1960s, a nest was found in County Armagh. *Hutchinson 1989*.

1960

Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; recorded on 7 days in the first half of May and 7th-8th June. *CBO Bird Report 1960*. *Ruttledge 1961* recorded "Passage at Copeland in first half of May" and one recorded on 7th June.

1961

Two: Rathlin Island, County Antrim; singles 28th May and 4th September. *Ennis & Watson 1961*.

Six: Up to six birds were around the light at the Maidens, Larne, County Antrim, 2nd - 5th September. *Ennis & Watson 1961*.

Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; recorded on 5 days in second half of April and 15th – 16th May. *CBO Bird Report 1961*.

1962

Three: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 22nd April, 12th September and 6th October *Ruttledge 1963*.

1963

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; present 4 days in spring 23rd – 28th April one 27th – 28th August. *CBO Bird Report 1963*.

Ruttledge 1964 published three between 23rd -28th April.

1964

One: Killough, County Down, 11th October.

Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; up to three on six days from 18th April – 16th May, with a single on 14th September. *CBO Bird Report 1964*.

1965

Three: St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, in spring. *Deane 1965g*.

Reported as breeding occasionally near Fair Head, Ballycastle, County Antrim. *USPB Bird Reports 1965*.

16: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; 16 birds in period 14th April – 12th May, maximum of five birds on 1st May. *CBO Bird Report 1965*.

1966

At least six: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; three 22nd April, one 23rd April, one 24th April, one 10th May and one 15th May. *CBO Bird Report 1966*.

Circumstantial evidence of breeding on the Cave Hill, Belfast, County Antrim. *Ruttledge 1967*.

1967

At least ten: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; three 6th May, two 7th May, one 8th May, five 9th May and one 12th September. *CBO Bird Report 1967*.

1968

At least four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down: one 16th April, two 19th – 20th and one 27th April. *CBO Bird Report 1968*.

1969

Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down: one to three on five days from 10th – 23rd May and one 20th October. *CBO Bird Report 1969*.

1971

Two: One pair. Were believed to have bred at Ballymoney, County Antrim. *Bennett et al.* 1972.

1972

One: Adult female with brood patch. Trapped. Glendun River, County Antrim (Ian Forsyth). Record not published.

1976

Five: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 30th April, 1st May, 5th May, 7th May and 1st October. *CBO Bird Report 1976*.

1977

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 14th September *CBO Bird Report 1977*.

1978

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 29th April, 6th May with two on 7th May. *CBO Bird Report 1978*.

1979

Three: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 10th, 12th and 13th May. *CBO Bird Report 1979*.

1980

One: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 30th August *CBO Bird Report 1980*.

1981

Seven: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; six birds in May [dates unknown] and one female 7th September. *CBO Bird Report 1981*.

Four: Two adults and two juveniles. Undisclosed location in north County Antrim. *NIBRC 1982*.

1982

One: Rathlin Island, County Antrim 6th May.

One: St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 13th May.

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands: singles on 9th and 13th May. *CBO Bird Report 1982*.

1983

One: St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 24th April.

Eight: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 29th April, 2nd and 5th May. One 24th August increased to two birds 25th May with singles 4th and 5th September and 17th October. *CBO Bird Report 1983*.

1984

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down: singles 20th May and 8th September. *CBO Bird Report 1984*.

One: Copeland main island, County Down, 29th September. *CBO Bird Report 1984*.

One: Richill, County Armagh, 8th May. *NIBRC 56/1984*.

One: Pair. Carntogher Mountain, near Maghera, County Londonderry, 20th May.

One: Caledon, County Armagh [no date]. *AFNS Report 1984*.

One: Male. Banagher Glen, County Londonderry, first half of June. *NIBRC 1987*.

1985

One: Kilkeel, County Down, 9th May.

1986

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; one 26th April with three on 27th April. *CBO Bird Report 1986*.

One: Female. Banagher Glen, County Londonderry, 25th June. *NIBA 1992*.

Four: Two adults and two juveniles. Near the Finglen River, County Tyrone. *NIBA 1992*.

1987

Four: Redlands, Larne, County Antrim, 16th - 29th April.

One: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 24th April. *CBO Bird Report 1987*.

One: St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 30th April.

1988

At least four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; two 22nd April, 3 23rd April, two 24th April with a single on 15th May. *CBO Bird Report 1988*.

One: Male. Banagher Glen, County Londonderry, 11th June. *NIBA 1992*.

1989

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 30th April, 1st May, 14th and 21st May. *CBO Bird Report 1989*.

One: Female. Capanagh Forest, County Antrim, May. *NIBA 1992*.

One: Male. Banagher Glen, County Londonderry, May. *NIBA 1992*.

1990

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 12th May and 2nd September. *CBO Bird Report 1990*.

1992

One: Found dead. Killard Point, County Down, 25th April.

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; one 3rd May, two 30th May and one 27th September *CBO Bird Report 1992*.

1994

One: St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 30th April (Jim Nicholl). *NIBA 1996*.

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; three 23rd April with a single on 8th May *CBO Bird Report 1994*.

1996

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 21st April. *CBO Bird Report 1996*.

One: Ballypatrick Forest, Ballycastle, County Antrim, 28th April (F. Lavery).

1997

One: Female. St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 27th - 28th April. (Dennis Weir, Eugene Archer *et al.*).

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; two 27th April, with singles on 30th April and 4th May. *CBO Bird Report 1997*.

One: Male. 63 Gortshalghan Road, Dungannon, County Tyrone, 8th – 12th November (*per* Killian Mullarney *et al.*).

1998

One: Male. Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 23rd April (Colin Guy). *NIBA* 2000.

Two: Banagher Forest, County Londonderry; one 15th May, two 22nd May with single males 1st, 12th and 19th June. Note changes to *NIBA* 2000.

One: Female. Found trapped in greenhouse. Old Galgorm Road, Ballymena, County Antrim, 30th September (H. Crockett). *NIBA* 2000.

One: Female. Kelly's Wood, St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 17th October (David Nixon, W. Voles). *NIBA* 2000.

1999

Three: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 4th April, 2nd May and 4th September. *CBO Bird Report* 1999.

Two: Banagher Forest, County Londonderry, 24th May (Chris Murphy). *NIBA* 2001.

2000

Four: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down: singles 21st [male] and 23rd April, 28th August and 24th September *CBO Bird Report* 2000.

2001

Five: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 12th, 15th and 16th April with two on 23rd April. *CBO Bird Report* 2001.

2002

One: Male Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 1st-2nd June (Neville McKee). *CBO Bird Report* 2002.

2003

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; one female 27th April and one 8th September. *CBO Bird Report* 2003.

One or two: Breen Wood, Ballycastle, County Antrim, 27th May (Dermot Hughes, John O'Boyle). *NIBA* 2006. Note changes to *NIBA* 2006.

2004

One: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 20th April. *CBO Bird Report* 2004.

One: Annalong Wood, Mournes, County Down, 12th May (Leonard Charles). *NIBA* 2006. Note changes to *NIBA* 2006.

2005

Three: Kellys Wood, St Johns Point, Killough, County Down; one 9th October (Dave Allen) with two 16th October (Dave Hadrick, Orcilla Hadrick). *NIBA* 2008a

2006

One: Male. Belfast Lough RSPB, Belfast Harbour Estate, Belfast, County Down, 26th April (Stuart McKee). *NIBA* 2008a.

One: Male. St Johns Point, Killough, County Down, 26th September. *NIBA* 2008a.

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 22nd April and 11th September. *CBO Bird Report* 2006.

2008

Two: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down; singles 25th April [male] (David Galbraith) and 31st August [female] (Neville McKee). *CBO Bird Report* 2008.

One: Female. Glastry Clay Pits, Outer Ards Peninsula, 12th May (Keith Bennett). *NIBA* 2008b.

2012

One: Female. Cabra, Hilltown, County Down, 13th April (Ryan Gallagher). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

One: Male. Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 13th May (Chris Acheson *et al.*). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

2013

One: Male. Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 13th April (David Galbraith). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

Two: St. John's Point, Killough County Down; single males 18th and 20th April (Derek Charles, Walter Veale, Majella Callaghan, Keith Bennett *et al.*). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

Two: Rathlin Island, County Antrim; single males were recorded on 20th April and at Ushet Lough Pines on 12th May (Neal Warnock). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

2014

One: Male. Moira Road, Dollingstown, County Down, 17th April (Derek Charles). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

One: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands, County Down, 10th May. *CBO Bird Report* 2014.

2015

One: Male. St. John's Point, Killough, County Down, 4th May (Tim Murphy). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

2017

Three: Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Copeland Islands County Down; two [one male and one female] 29th April with a different female on 30th April (Wesley Smith *et al.*). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

Two: Rathlin Island, County Antrim; one female 1st May with a second bird on 12th May (Ric Else, Hazel Watson, Neal Warnock). *Charles and Crory* 2019.

2019

One: Female / immature. Kearney, Outer Ards Peninsula, 21st September (Billy Miskelly).

One: Kellys Wood, St John's Point, Killough, County Down, 2nd October (Chris Murphy)