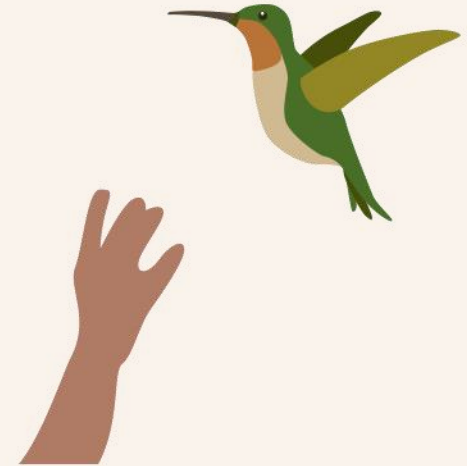


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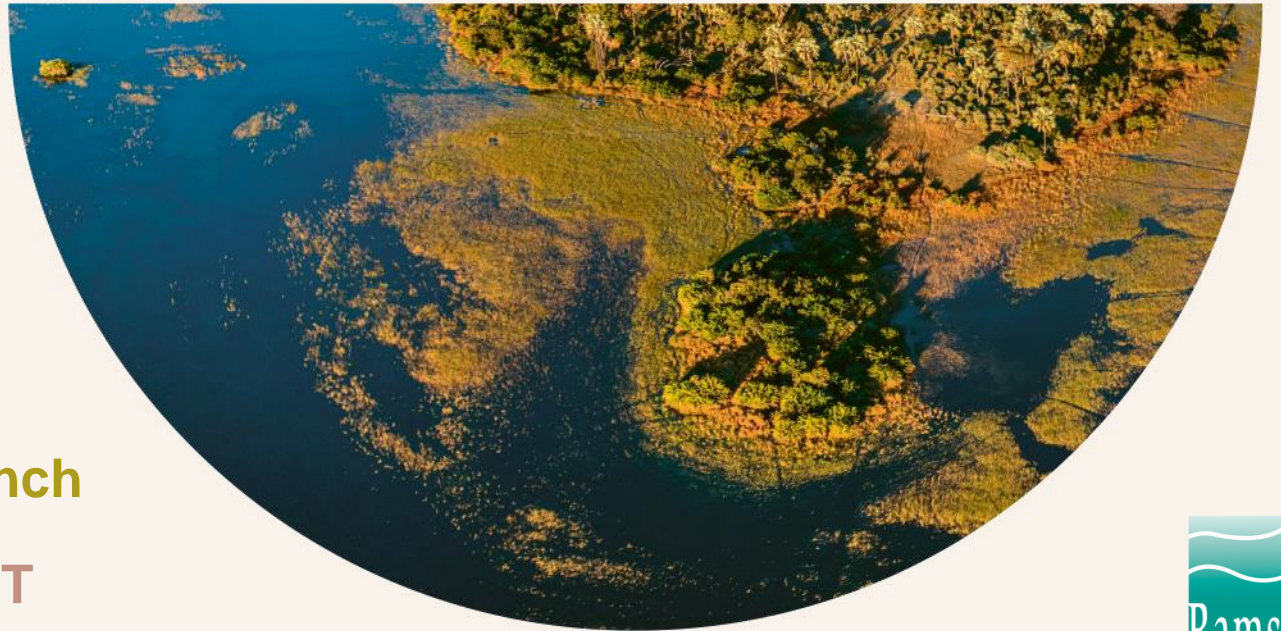
**Wetlands and Human Wellbeing**



# **Wetland Birds and Wintering Wildfowl in Limerick**

**Tom Tarpey, BirdWatch Ireland Limerick Branch**

**CARE – NURTURE – SUPPORT**



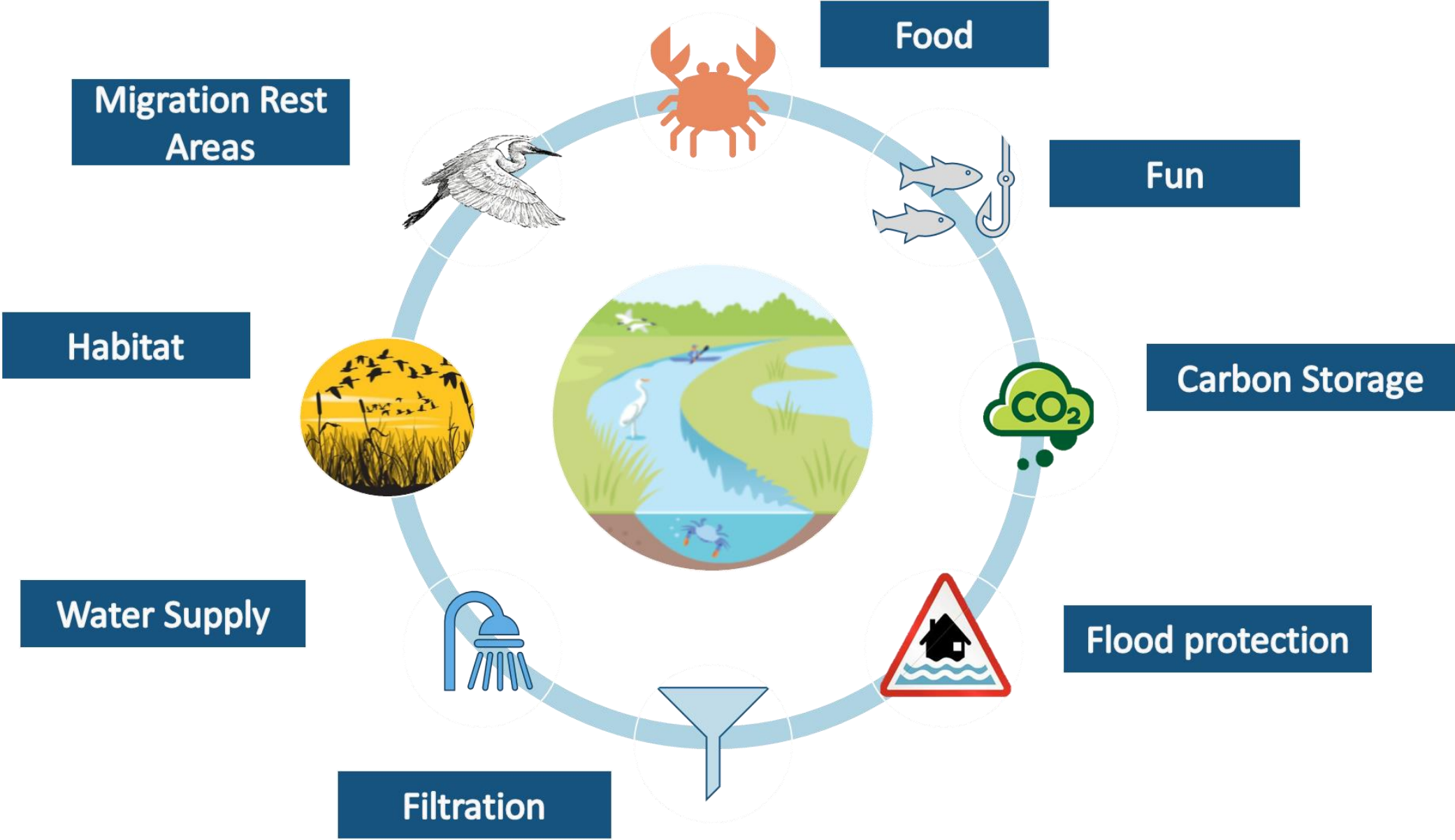
# What are Wetlands?

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- They cover everything from Wet Grasslands to Shallow Coastal Waters
- They include:
  - Estuaries and their surrounding flood plains,
  - Lakes, turloughs, lagoons and ponds,
  - Rivers and their flood plains, canals, streams and drains,
  - Bogs, fens and swamps,
  - Dune slacks and wet machair
  - Coastal shorelines

# Why are Wetlands Important?



# Wetlands are not Wastelands

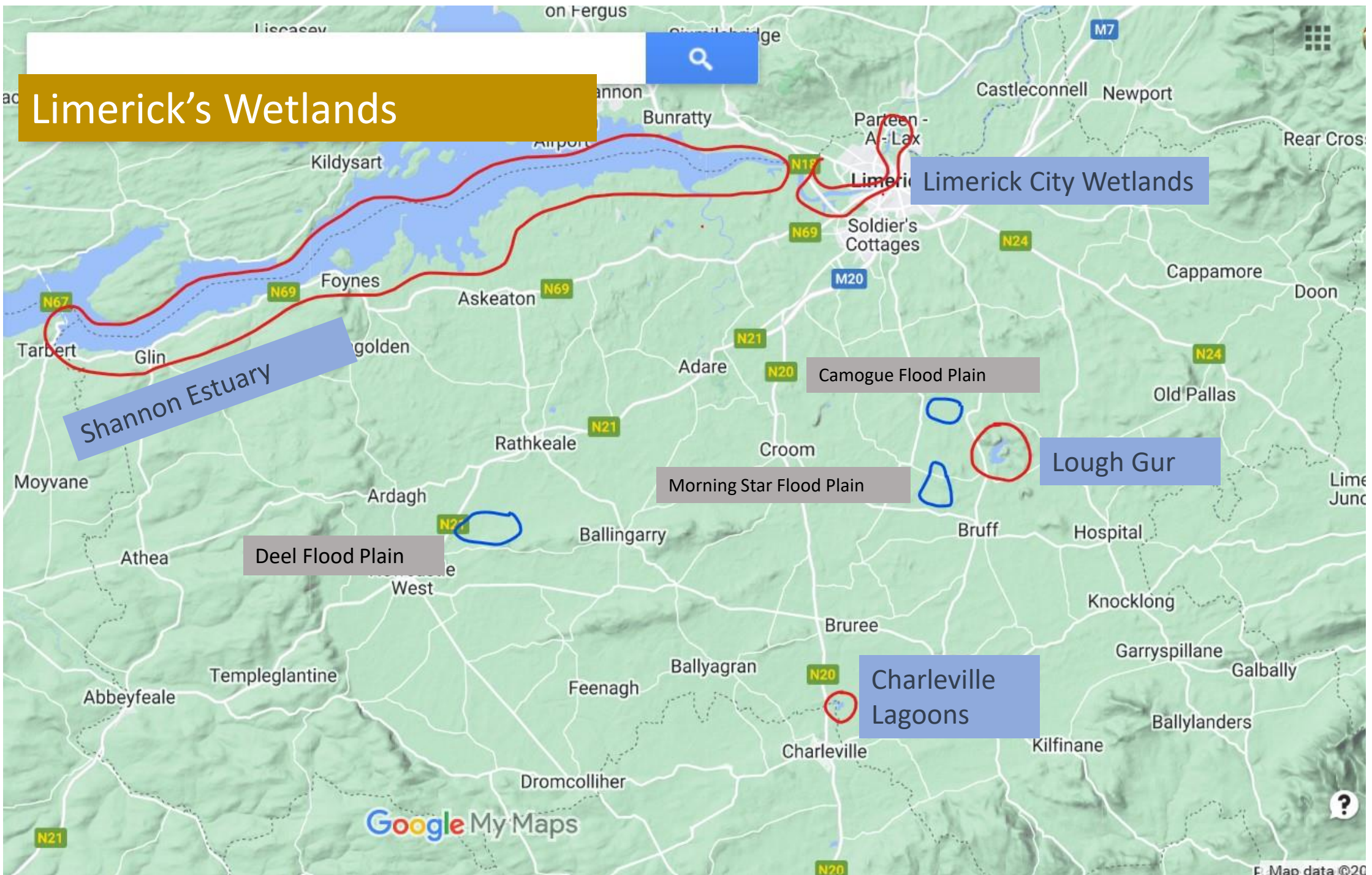
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- Wetlands and their biodiversity are crucial for **mitigation against** the effects of **climate change**
- Protection and restoration of wetlands is essential
- We need to stop destroying them and **start restoring them!**



# Limerick's Wetlands





# Limerick City Wetlands



# Coonagh Wetlands





# Lough Gur



# Swans, Ducks & Geese

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- Declining numbers in the past 40 years (50% loss)
- Resident Mute Swans and wintering Whooper Swans
- Greylag Geese, former winter migrant, introduced resident
- Wintering Brent Geese
- Dabbling Ducks
  - Mallard, Shoveler, Teal, Wigeon, Gadwall & Shelduck
- Diving Ducks
  - Tufted Duck, Pochard & Scaup



# Whooper Swan

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# White-fronted Goose & Greylag Goose

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# Brent Goose

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# Dabbling Ducks - Mallard

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# Dabbling Ducks – Teal & Gadwall

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# Dabbling Ducks – Wigeon & Shoveler

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# Dabbling Ducks –Shelduck & Pintail

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# Dabbling Ducks – Garganey

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# Diving Ducks – Tufted Duck & Pochard

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# Diving Ducks – Scaup & Red-breasted Merganser

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# Waders

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- Largest numbers on the Shannon Estuary

Some also frequent fresh water wetlands and damp grasslands

- Lapwing, Curlew, Snipe, Golden Plover, Black-tailed Godwit
- Large wintering numbers
  - Dunlin, Golden Plover, Redshank, Curlew
- Notable passage migrants
  - Curlew, Whimbrel, Dunlin
- Virtually all breeding waders have disappeared
  - Snipe, Lapwing, Curlew, Dunlin, Redshank

# Waders – Redshank & Greenshank

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# Waders – Dunlin & Knot

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# Waders –Curlew & Whimbrel

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# Waders – Black-tailed & Bar-tailed Godwit

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# Waders – Golden Plover & Grey Plover

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# Waders – Snipe & Lapwing

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# Waders – Common Sandpiper & Green Sandpiper

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# Waders – Oystercatcher, Turnstone & Ringed Plover

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# Other Water Birds

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- Cormorant
- Coot & Moorhen
- Grebes
- Herons
- Water Rail
- Kingfisher
- Dipper

# Cormorants

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# Coot & Moorhen

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# Other Waterbirds – Great Crested & Little Grebe

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# Grey Heron & Little Egret

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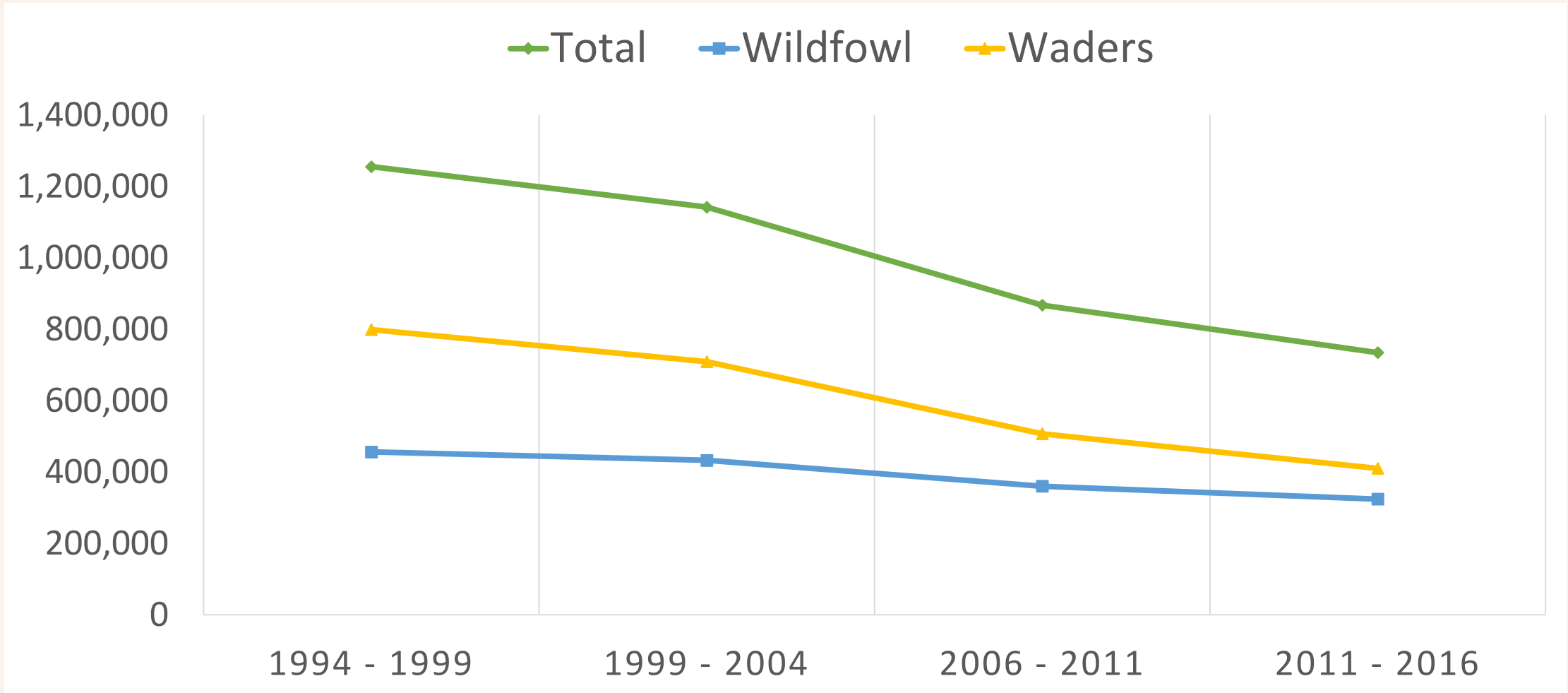
# Dipper, Kingfisher & Water Rail

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# Population Changes Over Time



# Shannon Estuary Wildfowl & Waders

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Species	Mean Peak Count Pre 2000	2017-2020 Peak Count	Recent Population Changes	Status
Brent Geese	509	289		Amber List
Black-tailed Godwit	2,024	3,365	Global Concern	Red List
Redshank	2,289	2,835	Loss of Breeders	Red List
Whooper Swan	153	522	Increasing	Amber List
Shelduck	1,243	724	-30%	Amber List
Wigeon	5,799	3,463	-44%	Amber List
Gadwall	32			Amber List
Teal	2,610	2,975	Loss of Breeders	Amber List
Pintail	69	2	Localised	Amber List
Shoveler	107	74	-52%	Red List
Scaup	129	2	-58%	Red List
Ringed Plover	145			Amber List
Golden Plover	6,684	8,441	Loss of Breeders	Red List
Grey Plover	419	208	-54%	Red List
Lapwing	17,166	7,432	-67%	Red List
Knot	2,001	1,167	Global Concern	Red List
Dunlin	13,174	6,790	-62%	Red List
Bar-tailed Godwit	608	275	Global Concern	Red List
Curlew	2,550	2,951	-65%	Red List
Greenshank	71	213		Green List
Cormorant	357	517		Amber List
Black-headed Gull	1,911	8,416	Loss of Breeders	Amber List
Common Gull	236	641	Loss of Breeders	Amber List



# Lough Gur Water Birds

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Species	Mean Peak Count 1996 - 2000	Peak Count 2022 - 2023	Status
Gadwall	67	32	Amber List
Shoveler	121	28	Red List
Mute Swan	44	35	Amber List
Whooper Swan	68	73	Amber List
Wigeon	817	384	Amber List
Mallard	346	66	Amber List
Teal	542	78	Amber List
Pochard	416	0	Red List
Tufted Duck	334	124	Amber List
Goldeneye	6	0	Red List
Curlew	176	29	Red List
Lapwing	740	36	Red List
Coot	225	18	Amber List
Little Grebe	22	10	Green List
Great Crested Grebe	7	1	Amber List
Cormorant	38	13	Amber List
Grey Heron	15	5	Green List

# Wetland Passerines

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- Specialists adapted to particular habitats
- Some are long distance migrants



# Grey Wagtail

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# Willow Warbler & Reed Bunting

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# Sedge Warbler

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# Reed Warbler

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# Sand Martin





# Gulls & Terns



- Highly Migratory
- 10 Species of Gull regularly seen in Limerick
  - Black-headed Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull are the most numerous
- Smaller range of Tern Species likely to be seen in Limerick
  - Common Tern and Sandwich Tern more common
  - Arctic Tern and Black Tern are scarcer passage migrants
  - Little Tern is a former breeder in the Shannon Estuary



# Lesser Black-backed Gull

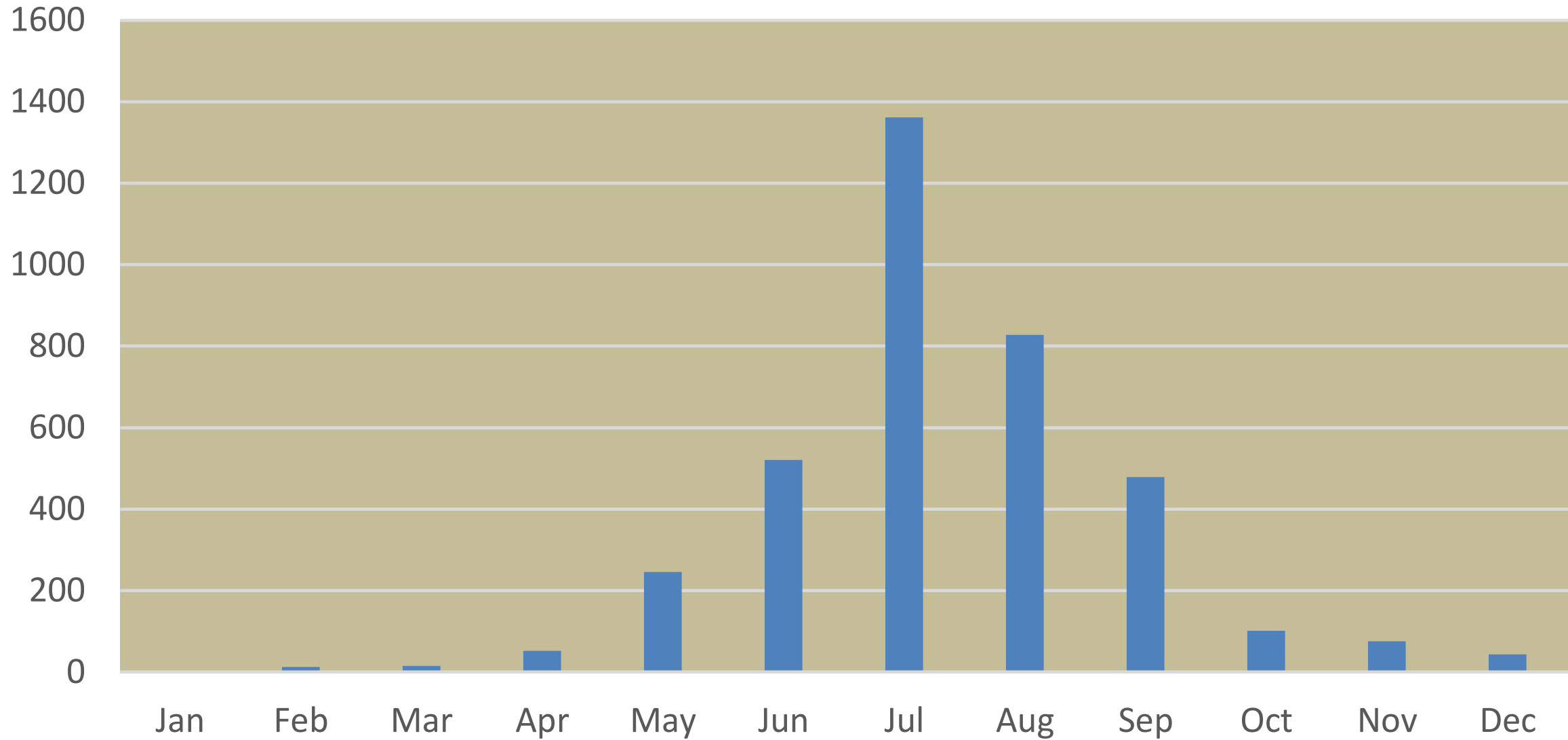
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- Mainly summer visitor, several pairs breed on roof tops in the city



# Lesser Black-Backed Gulls in Limerick





# Lesser Black-backed Gull

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# Iceland Gull

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# Black-headed Gull

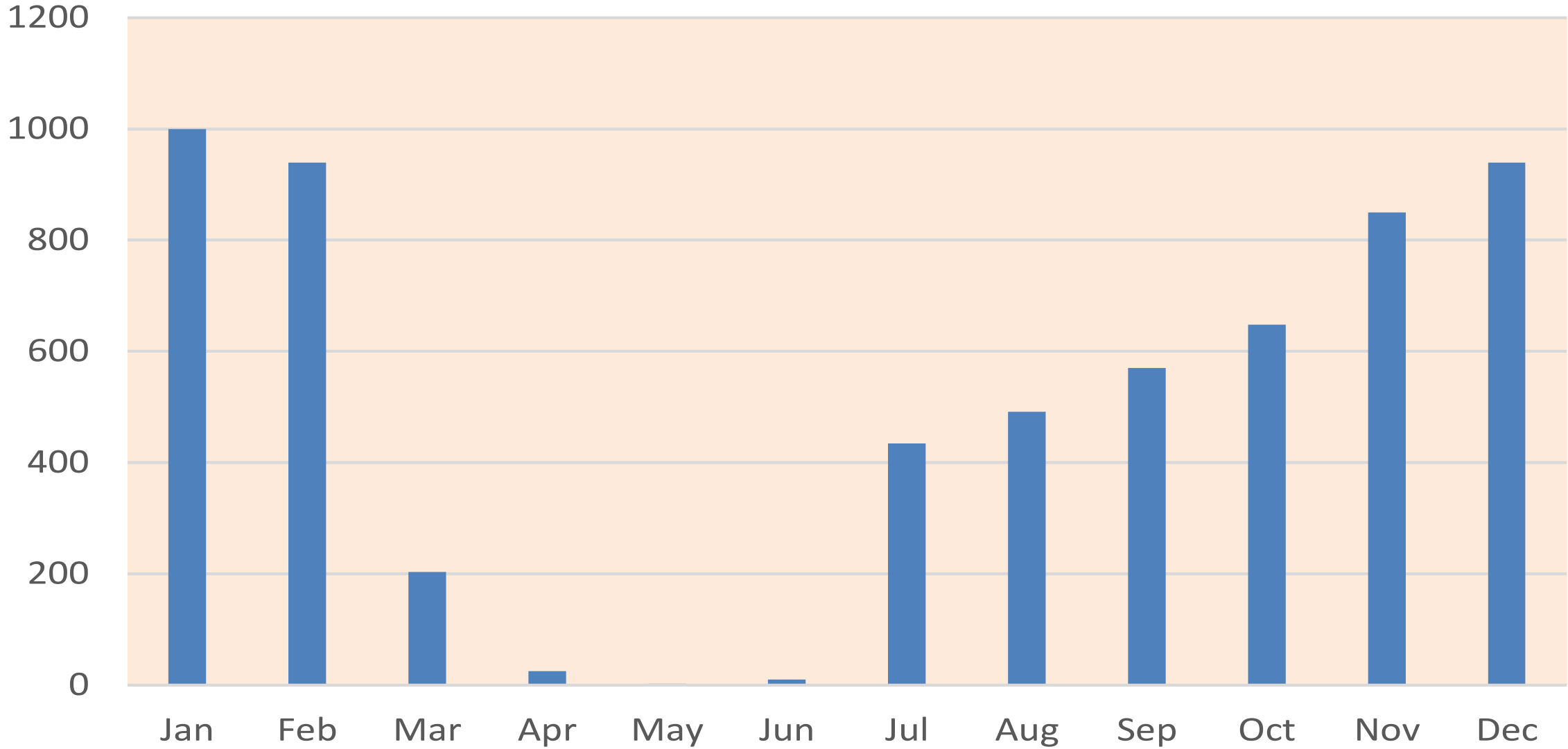
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- Abundant in winter



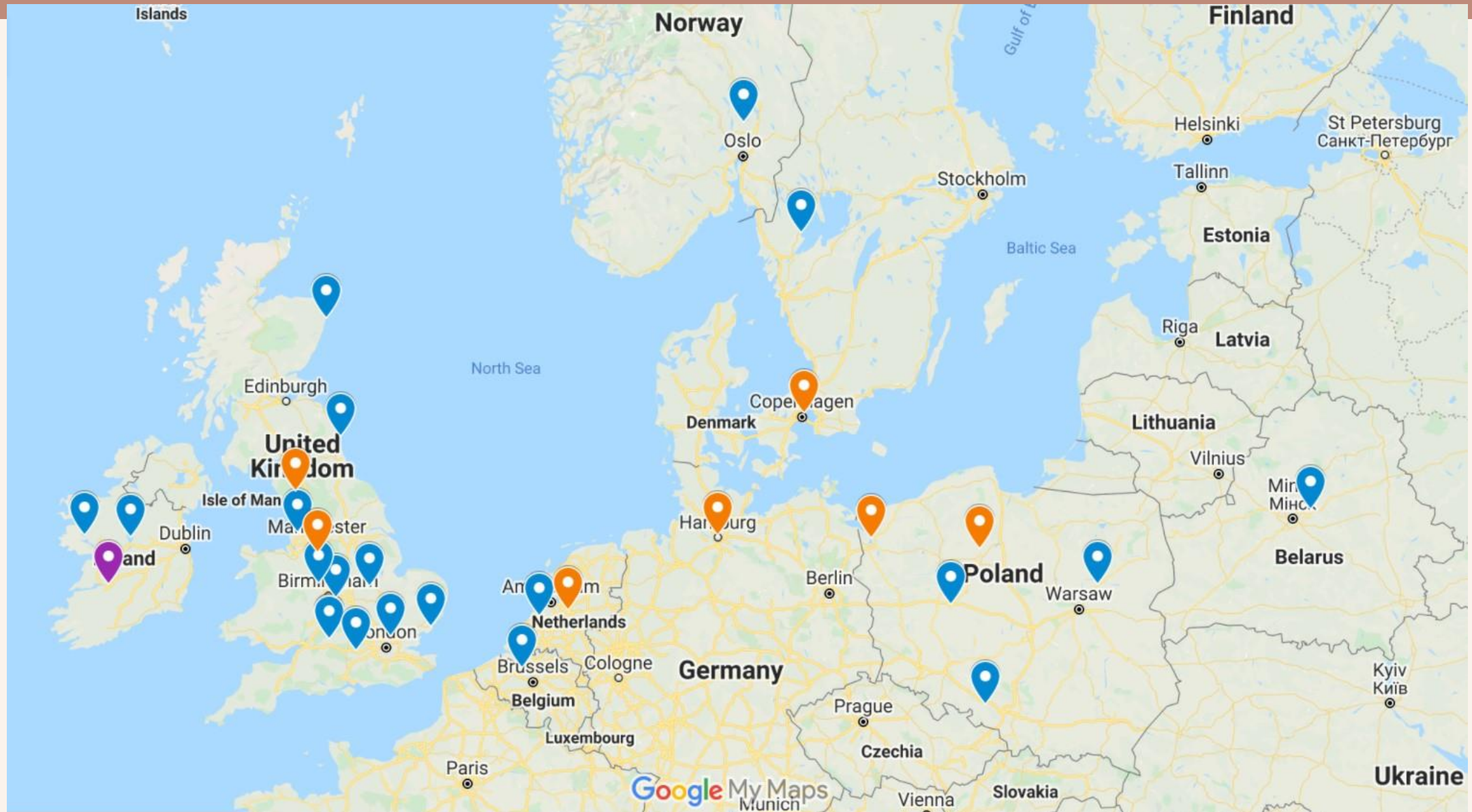
# Black-headed Gulls in Limerick





# Black-headed Gull

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# Mediterranean Gull

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- Recent coloniser in Ireland





# Common Tern & Sandwich Tern

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The End