

# An annotated checklist of rare and vagrant bird species in the Leningrad Region: a historical review and updated inventory

Vladimir Khrabryi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 1 Universitetskaya Emb., Saint Petersburg, 199034, Russia

Corresponding author: Vladimir Khrabryi ([lanius1@yandex.ru](mailto:lanius1@yandex.ru))

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## Abstract

This article provides a comprehensive annotated review of all documented encounters with rare and new vagrant bird species in the Leningrad Region, spanning the entire history of ornithological observations up to the present. Species are categorized as "rare vagrant" (recorded prior to the 1983 regional avifaunal summary by Malchevsky and Pukinsky) or "new vagrant" (recorded since 1983). In total, 87 species are recognized as vagrants within the study area: 46 classified as rare vagrants, with records predominantly from the 19th and early 20th centuries, and 41 documented here for the first time, representing additions to the regional ornithofaunal list. For each species, the locations, dates, and circumstances of encounters are summarized, with references to published sources and verified unpublished observations. The compiled data significantly expand the known bird diversity of the Leningrad Region and provide a detailed baseline for future faunal and biogeographical studies. The observed occurrence of vagrant species may reflect a combination of natural range dynamics, migratory displacement, and, in some cases, probable escapes from captivity. This inventory serves as a reference for specialists maintaining regional biodiversity records and contributes to the foundation for future assessments of avifaunal change in the context of the Red Data Books of Saint-Petersburg and the Leningrad Region.

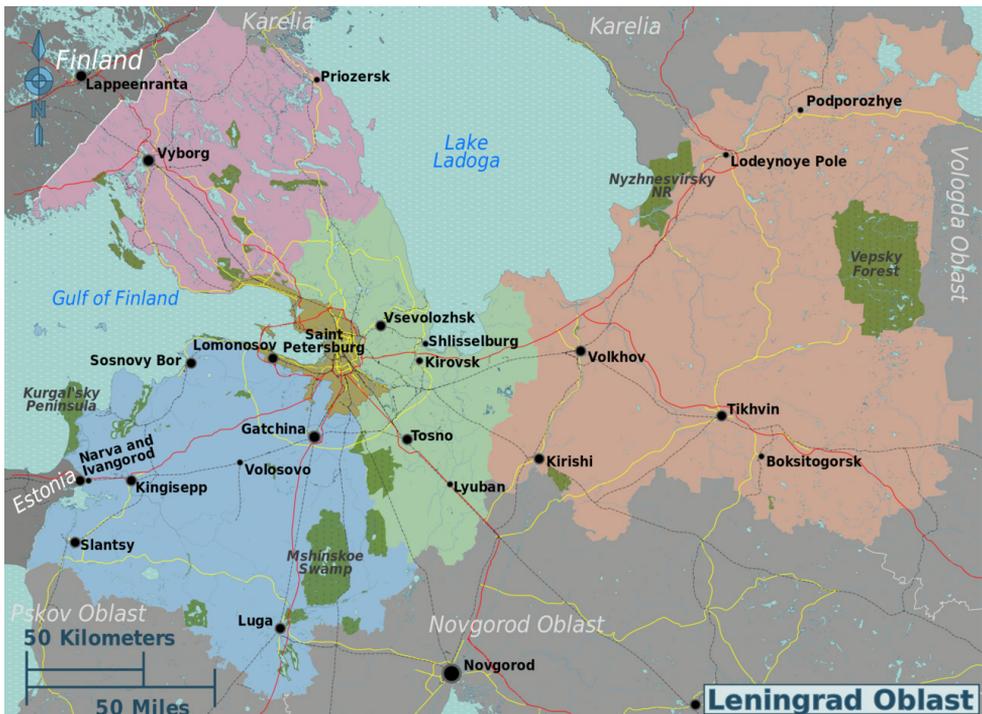
## Keywords

Bird diversity, vagrant species, range dynamics, ornithological records, Leningrad Region, avifaunal inventory, faunal baseline

## Introduction

The Leningrad Region is located in the northwest of the European part of Russia, within the northwest of the East European Plain, encompassing the basins of the Neva, Svir, Volkhov, Vuoksa, Narva, Luga, and other rivers. The region includes parts of Europe's largest lakes – Ladoga and Onega, as well as a portion of Lake Peipsi. Its total area, including the administrative territory of Saint-Petersburg, is 96,106.7 km<sup>2</sup>, of which approximately 11,000 km<sup>2</sup> comprises the waters of the Gulf of Finland, Lake Ladoga and Lake Onega (Fig. 1).

More than 300 bird species have been documented in the region. This relatively high species richness is broadly attributed to two complementary factors: the diversity of natural and semi-natural biotopes (coastal, wetland, forest, meadow and agricultural habitats), and the region's position at the junction of the White Sea-Baltic migration flyway (Noskov, Rymkevich 2016). This geographical setting results in a regular influx of migrating birds belonging to various ecological groups: waterfowl, waders, gulls, passerines and others, many of which linger for extended periods during passage.



**Figure 1.** Map of Leningrad Oblast, Russia.

The most comprehensive summary of the regional avifauna remains the two-volume work by Malchevsky and Pukinsky (1983a, b). In the four decades since its publication, however, numerous additional bird species have been recorded in the Leningrad Region for the first time. Many of these are vagrants – individuals encountered far outside their normal breeding, migratory or wintering ranges. While some of these occurrences may reflect natural range fluctuations, migratory displacements, or improved observer coverage, others have been suspected or confirmed to involve escapes from captivity. A complete, critically evaluated compilation of these records is lacking, hindering both the updating of regional checklists and the assessment of long-term avifaunal change.

Such an inventory is also directly relevant to regional conservation. Both Saint-Petersburg and the Leningrad Region maintain Red Data Books, which require periodic revision based on current knowledge of species occurrence, abundance and trends. A verified baseline of vagrant and rare species is therefore an essential prerequisite for informed conservation decisionmaking.

This study aims to compile, verify, and present a comprehensive annotated inventory of all rare and new vagrant bird species ever recorded in the Leningrad Region, with the primary objectives of (1) updating the regional avifaunal checklist, (2) documenting the circumstances and locations of each encounter, and (3) providing a detailed baseline reference for future ornithological monitoring, biogeographical analyses, and conservation assessments.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Study area**

The study encompasses the entire territory of the Leningrad Region, including the administrative boundaries of Saint-Petersburg, as defined in the Introduction (Fig. 1). Both mainland areas and islands within the Gulf of Finland, Lake Ladoga, and Lake Onega are included.

### **Data sources**

Records of rare and vagrant bird species were compiled from all available sources spanning the entire history of ornithological observations in the region (from the early 19th century to December 2025). Where possible, original sources were consulted to verify dates, locations, and circumstances.

### **Inclusion criteria and species categorization**

A species was included in this review if it met the definition of a vagrant in the Leningrad Region – i.e., recorded outside its regular breeding, migratory, or wintering range, with no evidence of established, self-sustaining population at the

time of observation.

Species were assigned to one of two categories:

- Rare vagrant: species recorded at least once within the study area prior to the publication of the comprehensive regional avifaunal summary by Malchevsky and Pukinsky (1983a, b).
- New vagrant: species recorded within the study area for the first time after 1983, regardless of subsequent records.

Species known or strongly suspected to originate from captive stock (e.g., *Cygnus atratus*, *Aix galericulata*, *Psittacula krameri*, *Acridotheres tristis*) were included in the list with appropriate noting their probable anthropogenic origin.

## Taxonomy and nomenclature

Scientific names, English common names, and taxonomic sequence generally follow Koblik and Arkhipov (2014). In a few cases, more recent taxonomic revisions are adopted where they reflect current consensus; these deviations are noted in the species accounts.

## Data presentation

For each species, the following information is provided, where available: status category (rare or new vagrant), earliest and subsequent record dates, precise or approximate locality, number of individuals, habitat or circumstances of observation, and source citation. Records from within the current administrative boundaries of Saint-Petersburg are included and clearly indicated.

## Results

**Black Swan** *Cygnus atratus* (Latham, 1790). New vagrant species. Single black swans were first spotted in the summer of 1994 near Gogland Island, then in April 2013 over Lake Samro, and at the end of October 2016 on the Serebryanka River in the Luzhsky District (Khrabryi 2022c).

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus* Baillon, 1833. New vagrant species. For the first time, single short-billed geese were recorded in the spring of 1996, 1999, and 2000 in the vicinity of Vyborg in flocks of migrating bean geese and white-fronted geese (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014). G.A. Afanasyeva (Afanasyeva et al. 2001) reports the sighting of a single short-billed goose in the spring of 1999 in the north of the Neva Bay. On March 29, 2025, at least eight short-billed geese were spotted in a flock of *Anser albifrons* white-fronted geese feeding in fields near the village of Krasnoozernoye (Vyborgsky district), and on May 12, 2025, five individuals of the short-billed geese (Khrabryi 2025a, b) were observed and

photographed in a mixed flock with other geese within the administrative borders of Saint-Petersburg (Fig. 2).

**Bar-headed Goose** *Anser indicus* (Latham, 1790). New vagrant species. Two individuals of the bar-headed goose were first recorded in the spring of 1995 in the vicinity of Vyborg in a flock of migrating white-fronted geese (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014).

**Snow Goose** *Anser caerulescens* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. For the first time, one individual of the snow goose was recorded in the spring of 1995 in the vicinity of Vyborg in a flock of migrating white-fronted geese (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014).

**Canada Goose** *Branta hutchinsii* [*canadensis*] (Richardson, 1832. New vagrant species. For the first time, two individuals of the small Canada goose were recorded in a flock of migrating white-fronted geese and bean geese in the spring of 1999 in the vicinity of Vyborg (Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014).



**Figure 2.** Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* (Saint Petersburg, May 12, 2025). Photo by E. Gavichevaya.

**Red-breasted Goose** *Branta ruficollis* (Pallas, 1811). Rare vagrant species. In the Leningrad Region, the first mention of the red-breasted goose, taken in October 1967 on Lake Dolgoe (south of the Karelian Isthmus), is given in the report by A.S. Malchevsky and Yu.B. Pukinsky (1983). New sightings of migratory red-breasted goose were recorded near Vyborg in May 1994, 1996, 2000, 2001, and 2003. A total

of 7 individuals were observed during these years, flying mainly in flocks of white-fronted geese *Anser albifrons* (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014). In October 1999, one bird was captured in the southern Ladoga region in Black Satama Bay (Khrabryi 2001). On May 1, 2000, a red-breasted goose was observed on the Vuoksa River in the vicinity of Baryshevo settlement (Iovchenko et al. 2016). On May 29, 2009, a single bird was seen on the ponds in Moskovsky Victory Park in Saint-Petersburg (Stefanov 2024). In early October 2022, according to the testimony of hunter A. Filatov, threered-breasted geese were feeding on a mowed field in the vicinity of Putilovo village in the Kirovsky District. A new sighting of these birds occurred on April 28, 2024, when a single red-breasted goose was photographed in a flock of feeding white-fronted geese in a field in the vicinity of Shushary village in the Pushkinskiy district of Saint-Petersburg (Khrabryi, Borovik 2024).

**Ruddy Shelduck** *Tadorna ferruginea* (Pallas, 1764). Rare vagrant species. The first record of a single individual was made in October 1913 near the Moloskovitsy station in the Volosovsky District (Kaigorodov 1913). In June 1999, two flying shelducks were observed over Lake Bolshoye Rakovoye on the Karelian Isthmus (Iovchenko 2011). Within the city of Saint-Petersburg, this duck was seen in May 2003 near the 2nd Yelagin bridge across the Srednaya Nevka River connecting Yelagin Island with Krestovskiy Island, and in early September 2014 on the pond in Moskovsky Victory Park (Khrabryi, Ponomartsev 2016). In May 2019, a female keeping company with a male mallard on the Tushemelka River (Bogositogorsky District) was seen by Ayrapetyants A.I. On June 13, 2019, a male roody shelduck was observed in Tosnensky District on the Izhora River opposite the village of Telmana (Ostapenko and Turko 2019).

**Mandarin Duck** *Aix galericulata* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. The first encounter with a male mandarin duck occurred in Saint-Petersburg in 1999 (Khrabryi 2015), and subsequently it was observed in the city several times (Nazarova 2005; Dombrovsky 2010; Ostapenko 2018; Tarasenko 2018; Bardin 2020). In 2017 and 2019, the mandarin duck was encountered in the city of Vyborg and in the Kingiseppsky District (Ostapenko 2019; Ostapenko, Vinogradov 2020). In May 2022, a male mandarin duck was observed in the S.M. Kirov Central Park of Culture and Recreation on Yelagin Island in Saint-Petersburg (Tsyplakov 2022). In 2024, a single male was observed in Sestroretsk on March 31, and on April 10 on the Luga River within the city limits. In April 2025, a single male was again observed in Sestroretsk.

**Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* (Linnaeus, 1773). Rare vagrant species. The first mention of the red-crested pochard in the Leningrad Region is found in the summary by I.F. Brandt (Brandt 1880). The next sighting occurred 75 years later in February 1955, when a male was captured on an ice hole near Priozersk, and in May 1968 another male was seen near the mouth of the Vuoksa River (Malchevsky and Pukinsky 1983). In March 2017, a female red-crested pochard was observed within the boundaries of Saint-Petersburg in a flock of mallards and diving ducks on an ice hole of Babigonsky Pond in Petrodvorets' Lugovoy Park (Ashmarina 2017). In

October 2024, a male of this species was spotted on the ponds of Yelagin Island (Golovan 2024).

**Ferruginous Duck** *Aythya nyroca* (Güldenstadt, 1770). Rare vagrant species. The first record of the white-eyed pochard was made in 1981 in the southern Lado-ga region (Podkovyrkin 1981). Migrating white-eyed pochards were subsequently observed in Lekhmalakhti Bay in the northwest of Lake Ladoga, on the Rakov Lakes and on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland (Boyarinova and Kavokin 1998; Bublichenko 2000; Iovchenko et. al. 2004; Rychkova 2003; Menshikova 2005; Khrabryi 2011).

**Steller's Eider** *Polysticta stelleri* (Pallas, 1769). Rare vagrant species. Migrating birds have been observed several times in the Gulf of Finland and on the Svir during fall migration and in winter (Bichner 1884; Buzun 1998; Kondratyev, Lapshin 2003; Mikhaylova, Bardin 2023; Kovalyov 2024).

**King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. In late October 1889, one specimen was captured in the Petrokrepost Bay (Schmidt 1899). In August 1989, a dead male king eider was found on Kamenny Island in the southwestern part of the Ivinsky floodplain (Strelets 1989). Subsequently, migrating birds were recorded in the Vyborg Bay (Kontio Korpi 2000; Bublichenko 2000; Kontio Korpi, Rusanen 2014; Zainagutdinova, Kouzov 2018).

**Harlequin Duck** *Histrionicus histrionicus* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. For the first time a single male of the harlequin duck was recorded in October 2017 near the Kronverk Bridge in Saint-Petersburg (Stroilov 2017). The winter stay of the bird from that time continued until 2023 (Khrabryi 2018, 2021; Golovan, Ostapenko 2019). In November-December 2023, a single male was repeatedly observed on the Neva River, mainly near bridges in the central part of the city (Fig. 3). No harlequin ducks were recorded during waterfowl surveys in January 2024–2025.

**Great Northern Loon** *Gavia immer* (Brünnich, 1764). New vagrant species. Solitary migrating great northern divers were recorded for the first time in the spring of 1991, 1995 and 2003 in the vicinity of Vyborg (Kontio Korpi and Rusanen 2014).

**White-billed Loon** *Gavia adamsi* (G.R. Gray, 1859). Rare vagrant species. At the beginning of the last century, the white-billed loon was observed on the Svir River (Menzbir 1902). New sightings occurred in the spring of 1998 and 2008 in the vicinity of Vyborg, when single migrating birds were observed (Kontio Korpi 2000; Kontio Korpi, Rusanen 2014). In October 1996, a migrating bird was recorded in the central part of the Gulf of Finland in the vicinity of Bolshoy Tyuters Island (Buzun 2006).

**Leach's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (Vieillot, 1817). Rare vagrant species. There is only one record of a vagrant storm-petrel. In the early spring of 1886, one individual was caught in the Gulf of Finland near Vyborg (Mela, Kivirikko 1909).

**Great White Pelican** *Pelecanus onocrotalus* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. In the autumn of 1881 and 1882, several individuals were caught near Oranien-

baum (Bichner 1884). There are reports of pelicans being observed on Lake Ladoga (Vasilkovsky 1928; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983). A new encounter took place in April 2020 in the vicinity of the village of Novy Svet, Gatchinsky District, Leningrad Region (Lobanov 2020a).

**Little Egret** *Egretta garzetta* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. Two egrets of this species were first spotted near Saint-Petersburg in the vicinity of Shushary in the spring of 1954 (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983). Sixty-seven years later, another little egret was observed and photographed in October 2021 near the southwestern border of the Yuntolovsky Reserve (Pokotilov, Bardin 2021).

**Purple Heron** *Ardea purpurea* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. The only vagrant of a purple heron was recorded in the summer of 1962 on the Volkhov River (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983).

**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* (Linnaeus, 1766). Rare vagrant species. The glossy ibis was recorded three times: in autumn of 1900, one bird was captured in the vicinity of the village of Chernaya in the southern Priladozhye (Bianki 1903), in August 1992, two young birds were observed on Lakhta Bay in the Nizhnesvirsky Nature Reserve (Kovalev et al. 1996), and in September 1999, a third bird was captured on the shore of Lake Ladoga in the vicinity of Nizhnyaya Naziya (Khrabryi 2022b).



**Figure 3.** Harlequin Duck *Histrionicus histrionicus* (Saint Petersburg, March 10, 2019). Photo by D. Ostapenko.

**Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus roseus* Pallas, 1811. Rare vagrant species. In the first half of the last century, vagrant birds were recorded in the vicinity of Saint-Petersburg (Isakov, Fomozov 1946; Tugarinov 1947). Greater flamingos were also observed on the coast of Lake Ladoga near the village of Zagubye in the Volkhovsky district (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983) and in the Gulf of Finland on the islands of Gogland and Vigrund (Bublichenko 2000).

**Eurasian Griffon** *Gyps fulvus* (Hablizl, 1783). New vagrant species. The young individual was first encountered in June 2012. The bird was shot by locals on the nest of a white stork *Ciconia ciconia* in the village of Trubnikov Bor, Tosnensky District, Leningrad Region. According to the villagers, the Eurasian griffon was pecking at the chicks in the white stork's nest and did not respond to any attempts to chase it away. As a result, it was shot (Fig. 4). The bird was stuffed and is now kept in a private home (Khrabryi 2022a).

**Pallid Harrier** *Circus macrourus* (S.G. Gmelin, 1771). Rare vagrant species. In the current century, the frequency of pallid harrier encounters has increased; currently, 10 cases of encounters with this predator have been recorded, mainly in the southern and southeastern regions (Kontiokorpi 2000; Savinich 2002; Iovchenko 2011a; Rezvyi, Golovan 2014; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014; Iovchenko et al. 2016; Ashmarina, Bardin 2018; Ostapenko 2018b; Zametnya, Krachkovsky 2019; Ostapenko et al. 2020).



**Figure 4.** Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus* (Leningrad Region, June 2012). Photo by N. Fedorov.

**Long-legged Buzzard** *Buteo rufinus* (Cretzschmar, 1827). New vagrant species. A single young long-legged buzzard was first observed in September 2013 in the Volkhovsky district (Stroilov 2013), the second time this predator was seen in June 2023 in the Lomonosovsky district (Ashmarina 2024).

**Imperial Eagle** *Aquila heliaca* Savigny, 1809. Rare vagrant species. There is only one report in the literature of an imperial eagle being caught in the vicinity of the city of Luga (Fischer 1870).

**Booted Eagle** *Hieraaetus pennatus* (J.F. Gmelin, 1788). Rare vagrant species. E. Bichner (Buchner 1897) reported seeing this predator in the summer of 1886 in the vicinity of Lake Cheremenets.

**Little Crake** *Porzana parva* (Scopoli, 1769). New vagrant species. The vagrant was recorded in 1980, when one bird was captured at Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 1981). In May–July 1988, three more little crake individuals were captured there (Kovalev et al. 1996; Iovchenko et al. 2016).

**Baillon's Crake** *Porzana pusilla* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. One specimen of the Baillon's crake was first caught in June 1988 at Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Kovalev et al. 1996). It is also known to have been encountered during the nesting period in the immediate vicinity of the Leningrad Region border in southeastern Finland, in the vicinity of Imatra (Paatela 1966).

**Great Bustard** *Otis tarda* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. The only one vagrant is known, when in May 1877, one specimen of this species was found near Peterhof (Bichner 1884).

**Little Bustard** *Tetrax tetrax* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. The little bustard flew into the region several times at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries (Buchner, Pleske 1881; Bichner 1884; Bianki 1912).

**Eurasian Stone-Curlew** *Burhinus oedicnemus* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. There is only one known record of a specimen being collected in the early 19th century near Saint-Petersburg (Meyer 1815).

**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. Only once, in the middle of the 19th century, one specimen of this species was caught in the vicinity of Saint-Petersburg (Brandt 1880).

**Grey Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. Only once, at the beginning of the last century, one specimen of this species was caught in the vicinity of Saint-Petersburg (Bianki 1912).

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Temminck, 1815). Rare vagrant species. The vagrant bird was first caught in the vicinity of Lakhta at the end of the 19th century (Brandt 1880). Subsequently, the pomarine skua was encountered several more times, mainly in September and October, in the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Golovan et al. 2011). The spring encounter occurred on May 17, 2025, when two pomarine skuas flying in a north-easterly direction were observed and photographed on the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland (Khrabryi 2025c) (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5.** Pomarine skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* (Bolshaya Izhora, September 7, 2023). Photo by A. Petrov.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. During seasonal migrations, single birds and small groups are encountered over the waters of the Gulf of Finland and Lake Ladoga (Russow 1880; Bichner 1884; Putkonen 1936; Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Bublichenko 2007; Golovan et al. 2011). The last sighting of a single bird was recorded on Kotlin Island on August 16, 2025.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus* Vieillot, 1819. Rare vagrant species. Cases of long-tailed skuas flying into the vicinity of Saint-Petersburg were reported by E.A. Bichner (1884) and later by V.L. Bianki (1907). In August 1977, one bird was encountered in the waters of Lake Ladoga near the Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 1981). In the spring of 1993, 1996, 2000-2002, eight vagrant birds were recorded in the vicinity of Vyborg (Kontio Korpi 2000; Kontio Korpi, Rusanen 2014). In May 1998, a single migrating individual was observed near Cape Lohaniemi on the Vyborg Bay (Buzun 2001). In September 2019, a badly decomposed carcass of a young long-tailed skua was found on the Laskovy beach in the village of Solnechnoye (Kurortny district of Saint-Petersburg) (Smirnov, Reznikova 2019). In September 2023, a young individual was encountered on the shore of the Gulf of Finland near the village of Solnechnoye. On July 2, 2025, a single bird was spotted in a field near Volosovo.

**Heuglin's Gull** *Larus heuglini* Bree, 1876. New vagrant species. Migrating gulls were first recorded in April 1998 in Vyborg Bay (Buzun 2001). It later turned out that the current status of the species in the Leningrad Region is characterized

as ‘non-nesting vagrant bird, occasionally flying and vagrant’ (Lobanov 2025).

**Caspian Gull** *Larus cachinnans* Pallas, 1811. New vagrant species. The first reliably identified gull was registered in May 2022 in the vicinity of the village of Novy Svet, Gatchina District, on the service territory of the solid municipal waste (MSW) landfill of Novy Svet-ECO LLC (Lobanov 2022).

**Yellow-legged Gull** *Larus michahellis* J.F. Naumann, 1840. New vagrant species. This gull was first recorded in August 2023 in the vicinity of the village of Novy Svet, Gatchina District, on the service territory of the solid municipal waste (MSW) landfill of Novy Svet-ECO LLC (Lobanov 2024).

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucoides* Meyer, 1822. New vagrant species. A young iceland gull was first observed in January 2021 on Lake Beloye in the Palace Park of Gatchina (Zametnya 2021). A new meeting took place on March 6, 2025, in the outskirts of the village of Novy Svet, Gatchina District, on the service territory of the solid municipal waste landfill of Novy Svet-ECO LLC (Lobanov 2025) (Fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* (Beloe Lake, Gatchina, January 12, 2025). Photo by I. Morozova.

**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus* Gunnerus, 1767. Rare vagrant species. In the 19th century, this gull was observed several times during seasonal migrations (Russow 1880; Bichner 1884; Bianchi 1907). In the spring and winter of 1990-1991, single glaucous gulls were recorded on the seashore near Lisii Nos and on the Neva in Saint-Petersburg (Khrabryi 1991). Single visits are also known in the vicinity of

Vyborg (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014) and in the Neva waters within the city limits (Aleksandrov 1997; Birina 2002; Kovalev 2005; Golovan et al. 2011; Iovchenko 2015, 2016; Khrabryi 2018, 2021; Lobanov 2020b).

**Great Black-headed Gull** *Larus ichthyaetus* Pallas, 1773. New vagrant species. This gull was first recorded in October 1986 on the Neva in the city centre near Troitsky Bridge (Birina 2004). The second encounter occurred in the second half of October 2001, when a single bird was observed in the Vyborgsky district on a pond near Svetlanovsky Prospekt and Jacques Duclos Street (Lobanov 2001).

**Mediterranean Gull** *Larus melanocephalus* Temminck, 1820. New vagrant species. The first vagrant juvenile of the Mediterranean Gull was observed in April and May 2002 in the lower reaches of the Svir River (Kovalev, Smirnov 2004).

**Black-legged Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. The first adult specimen in full breeding plumage was caught in March 1894 on Krestovsky Island (Bichner 1897). In the middle of the last century, kittiwakes were observed in open Ladoga (Noskov et al. 1981; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Kovalev et al. 1996). In the spring of 1993-2000, one adult kittiwake and 22 young birds were recorded in the vicinity of Vyborg (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014). In October 2020, a single individual was seen on an inland water in Krasnoe Selo (Dombrovsky 2020).

**Sandwich Tern** *Thalasseus sandvicensis* (Latham, 1787). New vagrant species. The first single mature sandwich tern was recorded in June 1991 on Hangeloda Island (Kurgalsky Reef) (Buzun, Merauskas 1993). Currently, it is likely that a few pairs nest annually (Buzun, Merauskas 1993; Kouzov 1995a; Bublichenko 2000; Boguslavsky 2010; Rechitsky 2024).

**Whiskered Tern** *Chlidonias hybridus* (Pallas, 1811). New vagrant species. For the first time, two whiskered terns were recorded in May 2020 on the Izhora River in the Tosnensky District (Ostapenko, Bardin 2020). Currently, it is likely that a few pairs nest annually (Matantsev, Khrabryi 2021; Iovchenko 2022).

**White-winged Tern** *Chlidonias leucopterus* (Temminck, 1815). New vagrant species. It was first recorded in 2000 on the Karelian Isthmus in the Vyborgsky district on the territory of the Rakovye Lakes Nature Reserve (Iovchenko, Chuyko 2009). Currently, it is likely that a few pairs nest annually (Khrabryi 2022d; Iovchenko 2022).

**Little Auk** *Alle alle* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. Four encounters with the little auk have been recorded in the Leningrad Region: the first single bird was seen in November 1942 on the Svir River (Koskimies 1979), two more occurred in October 1979 and 2001 on the Ivinsky floodplain (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Popelnuykh 2002), and in October 1984, a dead bird was found on Krestovsky Island in Saint-Petersburg (Khrabryi 1991).

**Pallas's Sandgrouse** *Syrhaptes paradoxus* (Pallas, 1773). Rare vagrant species. At the end of the 19th century, several birds of this species were caught in the Luga District near the village of Knyazhya Gora. And in September 1960, one sandgrouse

stayed with a flock of pigeons in the Vyborgsky district of Leningrad for several days in a row (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983).

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* (Scopoli, 1769). New vagrant species. A single rose-ringed parakeet was first observed in June 2017 on the northern shore of the Neva Bay in Saint-Petersburg (Zametnya 2017) (Fig. 7).

**Oriental Cuckoo** *Cuculus optatus* Gould, 1845. Rare vagrant species. Two encounters have been recorded in the east of the region in the Lodeynopolsky and Podporozhsky districts (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Khrabryi 2023b).

**Barn Owl** *Tyto alba* (Scopoli, 1769). Rare vagrant species. There are records of three encounters with this owl in the Leningrad Region and in Saint-Petersburg (Fischer 1870; Gaginskaya 2003; Lobanov 2015).

**European Scops Owl** *Otus scops* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. In the last century, the scops owl was recorded twice in the territory under consideration (Bianki 1908; Alferaki 1906, 1907; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983).

**Little Owl** *Athene noctua* (Scopoli, 1769). New vagrant species. The little owl was first seen in October 1993 in the Luga District (Payevsky 1993). It was seen for the second time in May 2002 in the vicinity of the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 2006).



**Figure 7.** Rose-ringed parakeet *Psittacula krameri* (Saint Petersburg, June 11, 2017). Photo by V. Zametni.

**European Bee-eater** *Merops apiaster* Linnaeus, 1758. New vagrant species. The first solitary European bee-eater was spotted on May 20, 1986 in the village of Kovkinittsy, Lodeynoye Pole District (Kovalev et al. 1996). A small group of European bee-eaters flying north over the central part of Tikhvin was seen for the second time in July 2010 (Bardin 2010).

**Middle Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopos medius* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. For the first time, the middle spotted woodpecker was recorded in Saint-Petersburg and the Leningrad Region in the autumn-winter season of 2021/2023-2024 in the parks of the southern coast of the Neva Bay (Daneliya, Kandalovskaya 2022; Ostapenko 2022; Zametnya, Nikiforova 2022; Tsyplakov, Kukuev 2022; Stolyarova, Bardin 2024; Tarasenko 2024) (Fig. 8).

**Calandra Lark** *Melanocorypha calandra* (Linnaeus, 1766). New vagrant species. An adult bird was first observed on May 3, 1997 in the Kukas tract on the border between the Republic of Karelia and the Leningrad Region (Zimin et al. 2007).

**Bimaculated Lark** *Melanocorypha bimaculata* (Menetries, 1832). Rare vagrant species. This inhabitant of steppes and semi-deserts was caught once in December 1883 within the boundaries of Saint-Petersburg near the Obvodny Canal, where it was staying in a flock of sparrows (Bichner 1884).



**Figure 8.** Middle Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos medius* (Pavlovsk, Saint Petersburg, January 14, 2022). Photo by I. Kondratieva.

**Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. In the past, nesting cases were known (Bianchi, 1903, 1904, 1907). Individuals do not overwinter regularly (Bichner 1884; Putkonen 1936, 1942; Tsyplakov 2021).

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus richardi* Vieillot, 1818. New vagrant species. The steppe pipit was first recorded in October 1979 at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 1981). Single individuals were captured here in 1983, 2001 and 2003 (Noskov et al. 2006; Iovchenko et al. 2020; Starikov et al. 2021).

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. At the beginning of the last century, tawny pipits were found on the coastline of the Petergof district, between the villages of Lebyazhye and Chernaya Lakhta (Bianki 1914). In June and August 1981, and in June 1992, single birds were captured at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996). An actively singing male was seen in June 1994 and 1996 in the vicinity of the village of Kurgolovo (Bublichenko 2000).

**Siberian Accentor** *Prunella montanella* (Pallas, 1776). New vagrant species. In September 1987, a young individual of the siberian accentor was caught for the first time at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Kovalev et al. 1996; Kovalev 2004a). Then, from 1989 to 2016, seven more individuals of this species were captured (Iovchenko et al. 2020).

**Black-throated Accentor** *Prunella atrogularis* (J.F. Brandt, 1844). New vagrant species. For the first time in the late 1960s, one individual of this species was caught during autumn migration on the northern coast of the Gulf of Finland near the village of Molodezhnoye (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983).

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. The first sighting of a white-throated thrush in the Luga District was recorded by D.N. Kaigorodov (1908). The second time a single male was observed was in the spring of 1995 in the vicinity of Vyborg (Kontio Korpi, Rusanen 2014). The next registration of the species took place in the 21st century: in April 2001, a single bird was encountered on the northern shore of the Neva Bay in the vicinity of Olgino (Khrabryi 2011), and in April 2016 in the vicinity of Lake Penino in the Slantsy District (Khrabryi 2016). Finally, in October 2016, this thrush was caught in the southeastern Priladozhye at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in the Gumbaritsy tract (Starikov 2016). Subsequently, single birds were caught here twice more (Starikov et al. 2019; Starikov, Ryzhenkova 2022).

**Northern Red-flanked Bluetail** *Tarsiger cyanurus* (Pallas, 1773). Rare vagrant species. In the Leningrad Region, the bluetail was first discovered only in the 1970s in the southeastern Priladozhye, at the Ladoga Ornithological Station (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev 1996). After a long break, the bluetail began to be recorded in the region again (Khrabryi 2001; Dyakonova 2006; Starikov et al. 2009a; Noskov et al. 2012; Ivanov, Bardin 2020; Iovchenko et al. 2020).

**Stonechat** *Saxicola rubicola* [*torquatus*] (Linnaeus, 1766). New vagrant species. In 1984 and 1994, single stonechats were seen and caught at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Kovalev et al. 1996). In May 2006, a single singing

male was observed in a vacant lot on the southern outskirts of Saint-Petersburg (Zanin 2013).

**Desert Wheatear** *Oenanthe deserti* (Temminck, 1825). New vagrant species. The first record of a desert wheatear in the vicinity of Vyborg in the spring of 1997 is given in the table 'Rare bird species' (Kontiokorpi 2000; Kontiokorpi, Rusanen 2014).

**Collared Flycatcher** *Ficedula albicollis* (Temminck, 1815). New vagrant species. An actively singing male was first seen in the summer of 2011 in a spruce-deciduous forest area of Pavlovsky Park in the city of Pavlovsk near Saint-Petersburg (Matantsev, Matantseva 2013; Matantseva, Matantsev 2015).

**Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata* (Temminck, 1840). New vagrant species. The spotted warbler was first recorded in the Leningrad Region in the Rakovye Lakes Nature Reserve in the summer of 1997 (Huttunen et al. 2003). In May 2013 and June 2014, single birds were caught at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Iovchenko et al. 2020).

**Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola* (Jerdon, 1845). New vagrant species. Single birds were first recorded and also caught at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy in the summers of 1987, 1989, 1992 (Kovalev et al. 1996; Popelnyukh 2000).

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus* (Blyth, 1842). Rare vagrant species. At the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy, individual birds are recorded annually during autumn migration (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996; Starikov 2009b).

**Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus* (Pallas, 1811) Rare vagrant species. Not every year, single birds are caught at the Ladoga Ornithological Station (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996; Noskov et al. 2006; Starikov et al. 2021; Iovchenko et al. 2020). There is a known sighting in Saint-Petersburg (Dombrovsky 2021).

**Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus* (Blyth, 1842). Rare vagrant species. Only seven dusky warblers were caught at the Ladoga Ornithological Station (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996; Kretova et al. 2022).

**Asian Desert Warbler** *Sylvia nana* (Hemprich et Ehrenberg, 1833). New vagrant species. The first encounter with the desert warbler occurred on the western shore of Lake Ladoga on a cape near the Osinovetsky lighthouse. On October 12, 2024, A.E. Frumes observed and photographed a small gray bird that was fluttering across the grass and bushes. The bird was staying in the lower tier of coastal bushes, actively moving around in search of food. Upon closer examination of the photographs, it turned out to be an adult desert warbler (Khrabryi, Frumes 2024) (Fig. 9).

**Firecrest** *Regulus ignicapillus* (Temminck, 1820). Rare vagrant species. Vagrant species the flights were known in the 19th century (Bichner 1884). In April 2022, a small flock of firecrests was observed in Saint-Petersburg (Khrabryi 2023a). In early November 2023, two firecrests moving among the willow branches were seen and photographed in the Lugovoy Park of Peterhof near the Saperny Pond (Tsyplakov, Kukuev 2023) (Fig. 10).



**Figure 9.** Desert warbler *Sylvia nana* (Ladoga Lake, Cape Osinovets, October 12, 2024). Photo by A. Frumes.

**Siberian Tit** *Parus cinctus* Boddaert, 1783. Rare vagrant species. In the past, it was repeatedly caught near Saint-Petersburg (Bichner 1884; Bianki 1907). Two grey-headed tits, staying in a flock of puffbirds, were seen in December 1948 near the village of Komarovo (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983). Also, in the autumn-winter period, it is occasionally observed at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Noskov et al. 1981; Kovalev et al. 1996; Starikov et al. 2021).

**Lesser Grey Shrike** *Lanius minor* J.F. Gmelin, 1788. Rare vagrant species. Single lesser grey shrikes were recorded four times: in the late 1940s in the Luga District (Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983), in June 1971 on the southeastern coast of Lake Ladoga (Noskov et al. 1981); in May 1994 at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Kovalev et al. 1996), and in July 2021 on a vacant lot in the village of Kovkenitsy, located on the right bank of the Svir (Kovalev 2022).

**Red-billed Chough** *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. The red-billed chough was first observed in March 1975 in Krasnoye Selo near Saint-Petersburg (Dombrovsky 2007). The second time it was seen was in March 2004 in the village of Shulgino in the Boksitogorsk District in the southeast of the Leningrad Region (Ayrapetyants 2004). It is also interesting to note that, according to N.V. Skuratova, a resident of the village of Volnavolok in the Podorozhsky District, over the past 10 years, she has encountered single choughs several times in

March that stayed for some time in the vicinity of the village. It is also known that in Latvia in the 20th century, choughs were observed at least three times (Viksne 1983). In any case, the question arises: could the chough naturally penetrate our region? Probably, we still do not know much about the seasonal movements of this species. Another interesting fact is that all known encounters (both in the Leningrad Region and in Latvia) occurred in March.



**Figure 10.** Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* (Polezhaevsky Park, Saint Petersburg, October 12, 2024). Photo by D. Khrushchev.

**Oriental Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone* Linnaeus, 1758. Rare vagrant species. Single individuals of a single black crow were recorded on the Svir River in 1848 (Koskimies 1979) and in October 2010 (Kovalev, Starikov 2022). In addition, a single black crow was encountered near the Baltic Station in Saint-Petersburg in December 2006 (Boguslavsky 2007), and in January and February 2011 in the 9th January Park (Travin 2012). In May 2025, a single black crow was observed and photographed in the southwestern district of Saint-Petersburg (Tsyplakov 2025).

**Common Myna** *Acridotheres tristis* (Linnaeus, 1766). Rare vagrant species. In the 1970s, due to unintentional introduction, several pairs of wild mynas were encountered in various locations in the Leningrad Region in different seasons and even attempted to breed (Noskov et al. 1981; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Kovalev et al. 1996).

**Rosy Starling** *Sturnus roseus* (Linnaeus, 1758). Rare vagrant species. In the 19th century, one bird was found near Saint-Petersburg (Pallas 1831). Around the same time, a case of a rosy starling flying into the Saint Petersburg Governorate was noted by V.L. Bianki (1907). In the summer of 1943, four individuals were encountered on the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga (Koskimies 1979). In June 2003, one bird was encountered on the right bank of the Svir in the village of Kovkenitsy (Kovalev 2004b).

**Pallas's Rosefinch** *Carpodacus roseus* (Pallas, 1776). New vagrant species. A pair of adult siberian rosefinches, which stayed in the undergrowth of a mixed coniferous-deciduous forest of the edge type in the central part of the Nizhne-Svirsky Nature Reserve, was first observed in June 2011 by T.I. Oliger. The second meeting took place here in June 2015 (Oliger 2016).

**Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera* J.F. Gmelin, 1789. Rare vagrant species, appearing only in certain years (Bichner 1884; Bianchi 1923; Noskov et al. 1981; Malchevsky, Pukinsky 1983; Khrabryi 1991, 2015a, 2021a; Kovalev et al. 1996; Zanin 2008b; Golovan et al. 2011; Iovchenko 2011a; Dobryakov 2012; Zimin 2014).

**Corn Bunting** *Emberiza calandra* Linnaeus, 1758). New vagrant species. An adult specimen was first caught in June and July 2007 at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Starikov et al. 2009a).

**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos* S.G. Gmelin, 1771. New vagrant species. In the 1980s, it was caught several times at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Iovchenko et al. 2020).

**Red-headed Bunting** *Granativora bruniceps* Brandt, 1841. New vagrant species. The female red-headed bunting was first caught in July 2018 at the Ladoga Ornithological Station in Gumbaritsy (Iovchenko et al. 2020; Starikov et al. 2021).

**Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala* Scopoli, 1769. New vagrant species. For the first time, an adult female black-headed bunting was captured in June 1991 in a spider web at the Ladoga Ornithological Hospital in Gumbaritsy (Kovalev et al. 1996; Kovalev 2004a).

## Discussion

Thus, of the 345 bird species currently registered in the Leningrad Region (Khrabryi 2026, in print), 87 species have the status of vagrant. Of these, 46 are rare vagrant that have been recorded several times, while 41 species have been recorded in the region for the first time. Of the total list of vagrant bird species, 15, namely: Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Booted Eagle (*Hieraaetus pennatus*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Baillon's Crake (*Por-*

*zana pusilla*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), Little Bustard (*Tetrax tetrax*), Eurasian Stone-Curlew (*Burhinus oedicanus*), Kentish Plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), Grey Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), Pallas's Sandgrouse (*Syrrhaptes paradoxus*), European Scops Owl (*Otus scops*), Bimaculated Lark (*Melanocorypha bimaculata*), Black-throated Accentor (*Prunella atrogularis*), Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) were recorded in the territory under consideration in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries.

This study provides the first comprehensive, critically verified compilation of all documented vagrant bird species in the Leningrad Region from the earliest records to the present. The main findings are as follows:

1. A total of 87 species currently included in the regional avifaunal list (345 species; Khrabryi 2026, in print) are classified as vagrants. This represents 25.2% of the region's entire avifauna, a substantial proportion that underscores the importance of vagrancy as a persistent biogeographical phenomenon in the area.
2. Of these 87 species, 46 are categorized as "rare vagrants" (recorded prior to the 1983 summary by Malchevsky and Pukinsky), while 41 are classified as "new vagrants" (first recorded after 1983). The latter constitute additions to the regional checklist and expand the documented species richness of the Leningrad Region by approximately 12% relative to the baseline established four decades ago.
3. Fifteen species, including Leach's Storm-petrel (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Imperial Eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), and others, are represented exclusively by records from the 19th or early 20th centuries, with no confirmed occurrences in recent decades. Whether these species have ceased to occur as vagrants, or whether their absence reflects reduced observer coverage or changing identification practices, remains an open question.

The inventory presented here serves three primary functions. First, it provides an authoritative baseline for the regional avifaunal checklist against which future records can be assessed. Second, it offers a detailed, source-verified dataset for biogeographical analyses of species range dynamics and vagrancy patterns in northwestern Russia. Third, it supplies directly applicable information for regional Red Data Book maintenance, enabling informed decisions regarding the inclusion, recategorization, or removal of species based on documented occurrence history.

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