







# Scottish Birds

*THE JOURNAL OF*  
*THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB*



*Edited by*  
M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN

*with the assistance of*  
D. G. ANDREW                      A. T. MACMILLAN

*Business Editor, A. J. SMITH*

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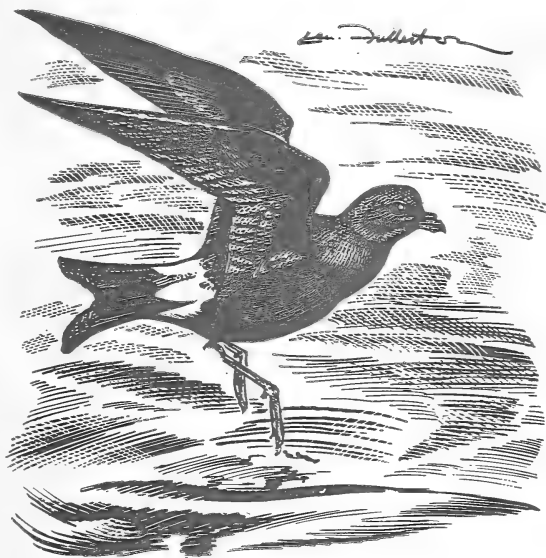
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. 1. No. 1*

*Autumn 1958*

Reprinted 1971

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. At present the Annual subscription is £1; or 5s in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. Please note however that the Council are recommending that the annual subscriptions be raised from 20s to 25s; and 5s to 7s 6d at the Annual General Meeting of the Club to be held in Perth on 25th October, 1958.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. President, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Foreword

By SIR CHARLES G. CONNELL  
President of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club

EVER since 1871, (apart from an interval during the years of the Second World War), records on Scottish Ornithology have been published in the *Scottish Naturalist*. The scientific standing of that journal ensured that it was always authoritative, and countless references to its pages are found in ornithological literature. Faced with rising costs and other difficulties, the publishers were forced, with reluctance, to terminate publication after the issue of the 1957 volume.

This new publication—*Scottish Birds*—will, I trust, take the place of the now defunct *Scottish Naturalist* in the ornithological world. As the official publication of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club every care will be taken by the Editor, his consultants, and the Council of the Club to ensure that it maintains a high standard of scientific value.

It will not be composed entirely of scientific papers and records. The Council believe it to be necessary to provide something of general interest for those Members of the Club whose outlook is not wholly scientific; and to this end it is hoped to publish articles such as biographies of leading Scottish ornithologists, and accounts of notable bird Reserves or specially interesting areas, illustrated where possible with photographs. The articles and records will be confined entirely to Scotland, and it is hoped that Members will contribute articles and short notes on anything of value and interest for publication.

The publication of a quarterly journal of this type is a



PRESENTATION TO FOUNDER PRESIDENT — DR EVELYN V. BAXTER

at "Coming of Age" Dinner, North Berwick, 26th October, 1957. (Left to right) Lady Connell; Mr Arthur B. Duncan; Dr E. V. Baxter; Mr R. E. Moreau; Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards; and Mr H. G. Hurrell.

considerable undertaking. We are fortunate in having Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn, (Vice-President of the Club), as Editor; and Mr Arthur J. Smith (Member of Council) as Business Editor. Their aim will be to produce—punctually each quarter—a readable and interesting journal.

You will see from the Agenda for the Club's Annual General Meeting to be held in Perth on 25th October, that the Council recommend that *Scottish Birds* should be issued free to all Members of the Club on the understanding that Members will agree to an increase in the Club subscription from 20/- to 25/-. If this increase in subscription is *not* approved, then the journal will have to be issued at a separate annual subscription of 10/-. If Members agree to accept this increase in the Club subscription, information formerly published in the *Syllabus of Lectures* and in the Club *Bulletins* will thereafter be included in an Official section in this journal—thus saving costs.

The Council have decided to issue this first number of the journal free to all Members, so that they can get the opportunity of judging its value in the light of the proposal to increase the Club subscription.

The publication of *Scottish Birds* marks an important development in the history of our Club which last year attained its twenty-first birthday. This was celebrated by a most enjoyable "Coming of Age" Dinner following the Annual General Meeting in North Berwick, and on the opposite page is a photograph taken at this function when Mr Arthur B. Duncan (Founder Chairman) made a presentation of a suitably inscribed clock to Dr Evelyn V. Baxter (Founder President) on behalf of all the Members.

Our Club is a very live organisation and the Council feel that the journal will form a valuable link between the whole membership of the Club, many of whom in outlying areas have been largely debarred from much active participation in the Club's activities.

The journal will strive to carry on the tradition of the *Scottish Naturalist*, to maintain its standard, and to provide something of permanent value for our ever-growing membership.

I urge you to give it your wholehearted support and thus ensure its success.

CHARLES G. CONNELL.

## EDITORIAL

FOR a long time the Scottish Ornithologists' Club has hoped to publish its own journal, and here at last it is, a modest little paper, similar in size and plumage to the Crested Tit *Parus cristatus scoticus*. To begin on a small scale is advisable, though later we may expand and even indulge in more illustrations. It is hoped that it will not later be found necessary to change the title of the journal to *The Grouse*.

Our main purpose is to give publication to the records of our members. In the past the *Scottish Naturalist* has largely performed this useful function and, when that journal most regrettably ceased to exist at the end of 1957, its Editors, with great generosity, passed over to *Scottish Birds* the ornithological material remaining on their hands. Of this material the first number of *Scottish Birds* is largely composed, and we must thank Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards and Dr Adam Watson not only for presenting us with many of the records which you now see before you, but also for having vetted and edited them.

In selecting the first batch of observations for publication, we have taken them strictly in the order of time in which they were made. It is thus no more than a coincidence that so large a proportion of the first number of *Scottish Birds* comes from the typewriter of its Editor. The criticism may be made that the preponderance of Short Notes may tend to monotony, but, as already stated, their publication is our primary function and the quickest possible issue of back material is of great importance.

We differ from the *Scottish Naturalist* in using capital letters for the English names of birds. This is in accordance with the usual practice of journals dealing with birds alone, and readers will thus also be able to distinguish a Little Ringed Plover from an immature banded Peewit.

This is intended to be a serious journal, but we wish to avoid undue solemnity and to dispense with that dry, stereotyped language which is wrongly called "Scientific," since it so often obscures, rather than reveals, the truth. We wish to give as much opportunity as possible to our contributors to express themselves and their ornithological experiences in their own terms. The purpose of a journal is to be read with interest and pleasure.

A journal like *Scottish Birds* cannot hope to survive unless it is supported by numerous regular voluntary contributions. It has been said that the Scottish bird-watcher is readier to lift the binoculars than to put pen to paper, but there is little



point in bird-watching unless the results are made known, and you are therefore asked to submit your records to us, when they will be treated with as much fairness as we are capable of.

Special thanks are due to Mr Len Fullerton for his gift of a cover design for each quarterly issue.

## REPORT ON BIRDS OF THE CLYDE AREA

1956

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN AND C. E. PALMAR

AS in previous years this report consists of records concerning the occurrence of rare birds in the Clyde area, and unusual or new features of distribution. As before, we have also covered the Aberfoyle and Flanders Moss districts, which are in the Forth area but readily accessible from Glasgow.

This report lays no claim to completeness. While we regret not receiving more notes, we are grateful to those who have helped us with theirs.

Contributors are: John Baird, P. G. R. Barbier, Gordon Bennett, M. Forrester, F. D. Hamilton, Ian Hay, G. Hughes-Onslow, K. Jackson, K. Macgregor, D. McRedie, H. Mayer-Gross, R. Macalpine Ramage, W. K. Richmond, A. H. Shaw, D. Stalker, L. A. Urquhart, the Rev. E. T. Vernon, T. Weir, an anonymous inspector of police, and the compilers.

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps nigricollis*. On 6th June, H. M.-G. found a pair on a loch in the Clyde area. He is familiar with the species, and was able to see the "eared" appearance as well as the upturned bill. On 15th June he saw two young birds with the pair. There is no previous breeding record for the Clyde area.

**BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris*. Mr Wright, gamekeeper at the Ward's Farm, Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire, informs us that a Bittern was heard booming in the big reed-bed there about 20 years ago. Mr Wright is a good observer and the locality is very suitable for this species.

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera*. A pair were on Dunwan Dam, Renfrewshire, on 12th December, 1954, an unusual date in this area (L.A.U.). One at Hamilton on 28th October (H.M.-G.).

**SHOVELER** *Spatula clypeata*. In *Scot. Nat.*, 68: 158, we claimed a 1955 breeding record from near Balmaha as the first for

West Stirling. H.M.-G. informs us that he found a nest with nine eggs in the same area on 12th June, 1954.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*. On 24th November, W.K.R. saw about twenty-five in a locality in West Stirling, where they were also seen by M.F.M.M. on the following day.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. This species is now numerous in winter on Flanders Moss, and in 1956 there were many more records than usual from the Hamilton area.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. A pair nested on Rowbank Reservoir, Renfrewshire (D.McR.), and we have been told by an anonymous police inspector in a train that they also nested on Loch Thom; this is partly confirmed by E.T.V., who in May saw three adults and three goslings in Routerburn Glen above Inverkip—in the same area. It is likely that these are birds from a collection at Cove, Dunbartonshire, where they are kept in a free-flying state.

BEWICK'S SWAN *Cygnus bewickii*. On 24th November there was a family at the Endrick mouth, West Stirling (W.K.R.).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. As reported for previous winters, a Peregrine haunted a tall tower in Glasgow during the winter months (G.B., H.M.-G.). "It was seen fifteen times between 10th January and 10th March, and eighteen times between 3rd September and 6th December." (H.M.-G.).

NORTHERN GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius apricarius altifrons*. Barassie, 21st April, seventy-five. "Nearly all these birds were perfectly clean-cut specimens of *C. a. altifrons*." (L.A.U.). Of a pair at Hamilton on 3rd May one was clearly *altifrons* in summer plumage (M.F.M.M.). See, however, *Scot. Nat.* 69: 89, where doubts are cast on the validity of this race.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. One at Troon, 6th January (K.J.). Three at the Endrick mouth, West Stirling, 14th May (D.S.).

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. One at Hamilton on 3rd January (T.W.), seen by various observers until the 24th. H.M.-G. informs us that the record of ten Bar-tailed Godwits at the Endrick mouth on 8th May 1954 (*Scot. Nat.* 67: 69) ought to refer to this species. The error was due to a misprint.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. One at Hamilton on 3rd January (F.D.H.), seen by various observers until 21st March (L.A.U.); also on 9th, 15th and 22nd July (M.F.). One was seen in a partly flooded sand-quarry at Mount Vernon, in the eastern suburbs of Glasgow on 18th July (D.S.).

DUSKY REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. One at Hamilton from

10th March (D.S.) until 16th April (M.F.M.M.), also on 10th and 12th September (M.F.).

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*. One at Hamilton on 20th, 21st and 26th September (M.F.).

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** *Calidris acuminata*. On 13th October a bird of this species was discovered by W.K.R. on a patch of muddy ground overgrown with *Persicaria* at Hamilton. It remained until the 21st and was seen by a number of observers. A full account of the occurrence has been sent to *British Birds*. There is no previous record for Scotland.

**CURLEW-SANDPIPER** *Calidris subarquata*. One at Troon on 8th September (M.F.).

**SANDERLING** *Crocethia alba*. Four were seen at Bothwell Bridge on 10th September by A.H.S., from whom we have received a detailed description. Two Dunlins were also present for comparison.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*. A male was at Hamilton from 3rd January (F.D.H.) until 3rd May, when it was in full black summer plumage (M.F.M.M.). What may have been the same bird was seen on 21st and 25th July (D.S., L.A.U.), when it was losing its breeding plumage. As many as four Ruffs were seen during the autumn, four being still present on 4th November (L.A.U.). On 23rd September two were seen feeding in a field near Ayr, where thousands of Peewits and Golden Plovers were gathered (L.A.U.).

**GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*. On 27th May a nest containing three eggs was found on Flanders Moss among the colony of Lesser Black-backs *Larus fuscus* (H.M.-G.). This inland breeding record is of exceptional interest in view of the increase in inland records of this species.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*. At Hamilton rubbish-dump an immature bird was seen on 13th January (M.F.M.M.) and another on 14th October (M.F.M.M., W.K.R.), the latter staying until 4th November (L.A.U.).

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucoides*. On 29th April, at the Doonfoot, Ayr, was seen an immature bird of the white type (L.A.U.). We have received an excellent description of this bird.

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*. On 24th June two nests were found on the Clyde above Hamilton (cf. *Scot. Nat.* 68: 160); one was empty, the other contained two eggs. By 5th July they had been flooded out (M.F.).

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*. On 21st August a bird of this species was seen flying overhead at Hamilton. The ob-

server saw its large size, short tail-streamers and heard the "kirric" call (P.G.R.B.). There is no previous record for Lanarkshire.

**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*. A very early record was of one seen on 11th March at Maidens, Ayrshire. It was seen at very close quarters, and the brownish colour, dark legs and even the wing-shape were visible (M.F.M.M.).

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. A male, Loch Ard, 3rd June (D.S.). One, probably a female, in a damp wood near Larkhall, 27th July (P.G.R.B.).

**SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*. One in pine-trees at Milton by Bowling, Dunbartonshire, on 1st July (M.F.M.M.).

**CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*. Several small parties in the Big Wood of Menteith on 24th September (W.K.R.); another party in the same area on 27th October (F.D.H., K.McG.).

**LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*. On 28th January W.K.R. observed a cock Lapland Bunting at about 1,500 feet on Lecket Hill in the Campsies (West Stirling, Clyde drainage area). It was "very tame, with some chestnut still on the nape, the usual 'shuffle-walk' and 'ticketty-tyoo' note on rising." The observer knows the species well. There is no previous record from the Clyde area, not even from the coast.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*. On 18th February five were seen at Bhalloch Farm, one mile south of Girvan (R.M.R.), and seen in the same place on 20th February (G.H.-O.).

## SHORT NOTES

### CORY'S SHEARWATERS IN THE FIRTH OF FORTH

On 20th September 1957 at the Isle of May the wind was in the south-east and the weather overcast with drizzle; at about 0800 hours GMT great numbers of characteristic "drift migrants" began to arrive—Ortolan *Emberiza hortulana*, Little Bunting *E. pusilla*, Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*, Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*, Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*, Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum*, Ring Ouzel *T. torquatus*, Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*, Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*, Wry-neck *Jynx torquilla*, Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* and Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. The most numerous were, as usual, Pied Flycatchers, Whinchats and Redstarts, others being limited to one or two individuals.

On 21st September similar weather conditions continued

and, although many birds from the previous day had left the island, birds continued to come in, including three other species, Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*, Blackcap *S. atricapilla* and Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*.

The weather conditions had also brought large numbers of sea birds into the Firth of Forth and, when we left the island on the return trip to Pittenweem, we saw (among other things) one Great Skua *Stercorarius skua*, four Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus* and numerous Arctic Skuas *S. parasiticus*. Hundreds of Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus* were flying eastward in a long line over the sea and with them were three Sooty Shearwaters *P. griseus*. About half-way over a very big shearwater flew across our bows. It was noticeably larger than the Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* which were near it—which would not be the case with the Great Shearwater *P. gravis*, a species of about the same size as the Fulmar. It was white below and plain brown above, with no white patch above the tail and lacking the capped appearance of *gravis*, in which the head is darker brown than the back. The bill was light in colour and heavier than that of the Great Shearwater. I am very familiar with both *Puffinus gravis* and Cory's Shearwater *Puffinus kuhlii*, one in the South Atlantic and the other in the Mediterranean, and have no hesitation whatsoever in identifying this bird as Cory's Shearwater, the second record for Scotland. It was also seen by Miss W. U. Flower, N. G. Campbell, M. E. French, A. C. Geddes and J. E. King.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

During the forenoon on 3rd November 1957, Miss M. I. Kinnear, Miss M. Peters and I were returning from the Isle of May to Anstruther, Fife. About mid-way in the crossing we noticed a large shearwater about four hundred yards distant, flying away from us. It had the typical gliding, tilting flight and narrow, rigidly extended wings of all shearwaters, and a passing Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* gave an excellent measure of its size. The wings of the shearwater were obviously considerably longer, so that from behind it looked a much bigger bird. The light was good and, through 8x binoculars, the bird's uniform crown, head and upperparts, merging gradually into the pale throat and breast, were clearly noted. We saw no sign at all of any white on the back. After consulting *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* we had no doubt that the bird was a Cory's Shearwater *Puffinus kuhlii*, a conclusion confirmed by my examination of skins in the Royal Scottish Museum. This is the second Cory's Shearwater seen in Forth in the autumn of 1957 (see note above), and the third Scottish record.

During the same crossing we saw two Great Skuas *Ster-*

*corarius skua*, one Little Auk *Alle alle* and an adult Little Gull *Larus minutus* in winter plumage, in addition to the other sea birds normally encountered on this stretch of water.

W. J. EGGELING.

### GREEN-WINGED TEAL IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 31st March 1957 a visit was made, in dull weather with a slight haar from the sea, to a number of small lochans in the sands of Forvie, about two miles north-east of the Ythan Estuary. On the largest pool were a number of Shelduck, Mallard, Wigeon and Teal. Of the dozen or so of the latter, some were on shore and not clearly visible in the grass and reeds at the water's edge. One of the drakes, however, did not show a horizontal white bar above the wing and this bird was closely observed until eventually it entered the water. It was then noticed that, in addition, it had a conspicuous white line curving downwards and forwards from the shoulder towards the lower breast. No doubt then remained that this bird was a male Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca carolinensis*. Apart from the two features mentioned above the plumage appeared, in the poor light, to be similar to that of the European race *Anas c. crecca*.

The bird remained for three weeks, ranging freely between the original lochan, Sand Loch, Collieston and Cotehill Loch. Identification was later confirmed on different dates by Miss E. A. Garden, G. F. Raeburn, A. J. M. Smith, A. Tewnion and V. C. Wynne-Edwards. It was last seen on 20th April by A.J.M.S. and A.T. on the Forvie lochan in company with a pair of *crecca* Teal.

A.J.M.S. watched the bird for a total of six and a half hours in perfect light and has supplied the following additional notes: "Although it did not appear longer *carolinensis* was definitely plumper looking than any of the *crecca* Teal. The finer vermiculations of the grey-creamy white on mantle and scapulars render the *carolinensis* a decidedly more uniform grey than the other. The grey on its sides extended below the water line, whereas the European birds all showed creamy white above the water line."

Both A.J.M.S. and A.T. described the diagnostic white mark as "a crescent angled at about 60 degrees from the lower breast to the front of the wing at the wrist," and agreed that "the white of the short under-tail covers in *crecca* was distinctly creamy buff in *carolinensis*."

The bird was once seen being chased by a drake European Teal, and once displaying to a duck European Teal.

The Director of the Wildfowl Trust stated, in a letter to E.A.G., that no free-flying specimen of *Anas crecca carolinensis* was known to be in any collection in Britain or Europe. There is good reason, therefore, to believe that this bird was a genuine immigrant from North America.

WILLIAM CRAWFORD.

#### PINK-FOOTED GEESE IN SHETLAND IN JUNE

In view of the late date, it is of interest to record that on 23rd June 1956 I saw three Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* on a grass area about a hundred yards from the sea at Hamars Ness on Fetlar. I watched the geese for fifteen minutes while they rested and preened. I did not see them feeding and, on being disturbed, they flew away in a south-westerly direction. Though I stayed on the island till 27th June, I did not see them again.

J. M. HARROP.

#### BRENT GEESE IN WIGTOWNSHIRE

On 20th and 21st September 1957 I saw three Brent Geese *Branta bernicla* feeding on *Zostera* in Loch Ryan. Over the last five years or so, although I have watched Loch Ryan fairly regularly, I have never seen Brent Geese in Wigtownshire before.

JOHN MURRAY.

#### KITE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 13th February 1958 at Seaton Park, Old Aberdeen, while standing by the Don, I noticed a bird sailing a few hundred feet up, at a distance of about 500 yards. At first glance it suggested a Buzzard, but through Zeiss 8 x 40 binoculars it was immediately recognisable as a Kite *Milvus milvus*. It remained in sight for two or three minutes and, by the time it disappeared was perhaps 1,000 yards away. The time was 8.50 a.m. and the bird was seen against a bright sky to the north, though the sun was temporarily hidden by clouds. Before leaving the place I made a note of the following details. The colour appeared uniformly dark, relieved only by a pale carpal area on the undersides of the wings. The long tail was very distinctly forked. The wings were pointed and their span roughly the same as that of Herring Gulls visible at the same time; the wing-beat was measured and deep and the flight buoyant. There is no doubt that the bird, in spite of its dark appearance when seen against the

sky, was a "common" and not a Black Kite: the deeply forked tail and light carpal wing-patches, conspicuous at a great distance, seem quite conclusive.

V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS.

#### WATER-RAIL IN WESTER ROSS

On 13th November 1956, I received from Mr Robert Mackenzie, schoolmaster at Applecross, the body of a Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* which had taken refuge in his kitchen on the night of the 7th and died there. I can trace no other record from Wester Ross.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

#### PROBABLE COMMON CRANES IN SHETLAND

About the end of May 1957 a rumour reached Lerwick that two cranes had been seen in the parish of Dunrossness at the south end of Shetland. On 7th June I was told that the birds had been seen again in the same district, but that they were now bustards. It was time to visit the spot, and the following morning with two friends I went down to Huesbrek in Dunrossness where the birds had been reported. I was having a talk with the croft folk at the door of the house and being told that the birds had been seen quite near the day before, when my friends at the car shouted that they could see the two birds. When I reached the car I could see them about 150 yards away on the other side of the road. The first glimpse of these tall stately birds was sufficient to establish that they were cranes; and the fact that they were taller than a Heron—they were looking at us over the top of a wire fence—made it reasonably certain that they were Common Cranes *Grus grus*. I got my binoculars on to them at once, but unfortunately they took wings and my view of them was very fleeting before they were in the air. Looking at them against the light I was unable to see the head markings, nor, as they were in the act of getting on the wing, could the drooping feathers over the tail be seen. While both birds were roughly the colour of a Heron, there was no similarity with a Heron when they were on the wing, with their long extended necks and legs stretched out horizontally. With a slow deliberate flight they flew away in a northerly direction, slowly gaining height, until they disappeared in the distance and were never seen again.

It may be noted that Saxby recorded quite a number of this species in Shetland during the last century, viz.: a small flock in 1807, two between 1831 and 1835, one in 1848, four in 1864 and one in 1869. According to Venables and Venables (1955), he also recorded one in Unst on 16th May, 1906.

G. T. KAY.



## UNUSUAL COLOUR OF LAPWING'S EGGS

On 2nd May 1957 I found, near Connel Ferry bridge, the nest of a Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* with four eggs of an unusual colour. The ground colour was beige with a blue-green tint. There were small black spots at the blunt end and underlying grey-blue blotches. None of these eggs hatched later on.

Miss RUSSELL-FERGUSON.

## BREEDING OF WHIMBREL IN LEWIS

While walking over a Lewis moor on 8th July 1957, I found myself being pestered by a pair of Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* which flew round me, calling incessantly and landing within a few yards of me from time to time. They seemed to be particularly anxious near a certain area, which I searched without success. I then retired behind a nearby eminence to watch, still attended by one of the birds, which gave me ample opportunity to study its conspicuously striped head, smaller-than-curlew size, and the peculiar bubbling call that I heard only the previous morning in the B.B.C. programme of bird song. Soon I picked out the other bird in the area I had searched and, to my delight, a young chick beside it. The chick was slowly exploring the neighbourhood, the parent following closely behind. It gave me great pleasure to find my first evidence of this species breeding in Lewis.

A pair also nested in the same spot in 1958 when I discovered a nest containing four eggs.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

## BLACK-TAILED GODWITS IN SOLWAY

No Solway records of the Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* were given in a paper on recent occurrences of this bird in *British Birds* xlix: 258ff. My records are as follows:

Carsethorn, Kirkcudbrightshire: 22nd September 1952, a flock of twelve; 1st November 1952, about five; 27th December 1952, two.

Glencaple, Dumfriesshire: 22nd August 1954, a flock of nineteen; 5th September 1954, about eight.

My visits to suitable shores have been mainly after mid-September, so a regular early autumn passage might have been missed.

H. MAYER-GROSS.

## GREEN SANDPIPERS IN SOLWAY

The Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* is described as irregular on passage in the Solway. I have recorded it in four successive springs and three successive autumns at one place by the R. Nith, one mile below Kingholm Quay. During the times of year covered by the dates given I have only once, in late July 1954, looked for birds in this locality with no success. Only one November visit, however, was paid.

Spring records: 18th April 1953; 31st March 1954; 28th March 1955; 14th April 1956.

Autumn records: 7th September 1953, three; 7th July 1954; 7th August 1954, five; 23rd August 1954, five; 29th August 1954; 10th September 1954; 3rd, 7th and 10th October 1954; 6th November 1954; 6th and 20th July 1955.

Except where mentioned, either one or two birds were seen each time. That on 10th October 1954 was seen by a number of other observers.

At Kirkconnell Merse on the Nith Estuary, I have recorded one or two birds on 23rd August 1952, 28th August 1953, and 9th October 1953.

It therefore seems that on the lower reaches of the River Nith the Green Sandpiper is regular on passage, especially in autumn. The first of the localities mentioned is on the Dumfries-Kirkcudbrightshire border, the second in Kirkcudbrightshire.

H. MAYER-GROSS.

GREAT SKUA BREEDING ON PAPA WESTRAY,  
ORKNEY

Neither in *The Handbook* (1948), *The Popular Handbook* (1952), *The Birds of Scotland* (1953) nor *The Birds and Mammals of Shetland* (1955) is any mention made of the Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* breeding in the Orkney Islands elsewhere than on Hoy. It is therefore of some interest that on 18th July 1953, in company with a Mr Thomson of Pierowall, Westray, I visited the adjacent island of Papa Westray in North Orkney, and after some search located a Great Skua chick almost five weeks old. It was still unable to fly and was hiding in rank grass on the moor about a mile from the north end of the island. The adult birds were present and constantly attacked, while another pair which continuously circled in the vicinity were accompanied by two very recently fledged young ones. Mr Thomson had suspected for some years that the Great Skua was nesting on Papa Westray for

he had become accustomed to seeing the birds regularly on the coast of Westray (where they do not nest) during the breeding season. Until my visit, however, he had been unable to confirm his suspicion.

A. TEWNION.

### GREAT SKUA IN NORTH PERTH

As inland occurrences of the Great Skua *Stercorarius skua* are very infrequent anywhere, it is worth recording that I saw one crossing the moorland on Garth, some three and a half miles NNW of Kenmore, Perthshire, on 15th August 1957. At the time there was a northerly gale, which had been blowing for about 12 hours. Excellent views were had of this bird as it eventually passed in an easterly direction within 35 yards of me. I know the Great Skua well on its breeding grounds. There appears to be no previous record for North Perth.

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

### KITTIWAKES IN NORTH PERTH

On 10th February 1957 I found a dead adult Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* on a tangle of flotsam by the River Tay about half a mile west of Grandtully Bridge, Strathtay. The bird on dissection was found to be extremely emaciated, with no subcutaneous fat, and it had evidently been dead for at least a week. The upper alimentary tract was empty. The plumage was perfect, without a trace of injury. Later that day I retrieved the remains of a gull entangled in riverside scrub about a quarter of a mile east of the first corpse; this had been badly mauled, probably by rats, but enough remained intact to show that it was also a Kittiwake. About the same time I had seen another gull floating down, unfortunately on the other side of the Tay; this was very likely another Kittiwake, but it was too far off for certainty, and could possibly have been a Common Gull *Larus canus*.

On 23rd March, I found another dead adult Kittiwake within fifty yards of where I had seen the second bird. This had also been mauled and had been dead for several weeks. Mr William Davidson, Director of the Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, informs me that he received a Kittiwake from Pitlochry in November 1956. It seems likely that there had been a wreck of these birds this stormy winter, 1956-7. It is interesting that the examples seen by me were in the area which produced several specimens of Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* during their wreck in October-November 1953.

Harvie-Brown (*Fauna of the Tay Basin and Strathmore*

(1906) p. 340, remarks that this species is of quite exceptional occurrence at any inland locality, but gives no records for this area of any away from the coast. The only previous occurrence from North Perth that I can trace is recorded in the register of birds in the Perth Museum collection; this was an adult male in winter plumage, obtained by J. Macdonald, gamekeeper, at the head of Loch Rannoch on 23rd February 1882. The bird is no longer in the collection and Mr Davidson tells me that it was probably discarded many years ago with other old specimens, being replaced by another Kittiwake in better plumage from outside the area. It seems a pity that specimens like this, which are of considerable historical value to students of local faunal areas, should be discarded and replaced by new specimens, in order to maintain the "display" standard of collections.

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

#### LATE BLACK TERN IN ANGUS

On 26th October 1957 I watched an immature Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* feeding at high tide along the western shore of Montrose Basin, Angus. This seems worthy of record in view of the late date and the scarcity of the species in northern Scotland.

JEFFERY G. HARRISON.

#### BLACK TERN IN SOUTH UIST

At about 1100 hours on 6th June 1957, I saw a Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* on Loch Hallam flying with Arctic Terns *Sterna macrura*. An adult bird in full summer plumage, it was heard to call and watched feeding. It remained for about two hours, after which it flew off due north. The bird was also seen by R. E. Emmett and H. P. Medhurst.

JOHN IZZARD.

#### BLACK TERN IN SOUTH PERTH

When fishing on the Lower Rhynd Loch, near Carsebreck, on 11th June 1958, we had the company of a Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* for most of the evening. It appeared about 2000 hours and was still there when we left at 2330 hours. During most of that time it was circling round scooping flies off the surface of the water, often quite near the boat, giving us an excellent view.

GEORGE T. JAMIESON.

#### LITTLE TERN BREEDING IN WIGTOWNSHIRE

At the end of June 1957 I found the nest of a Little Tern

*Sterna minuta* in a small colony of Arctic Tern *S. macrura* on the shore of Loch Ryan, Wigtownshire. On 2nd July there was one young bird and two unhatched eggs in the nest. I can find no previous record of breeding in the county.

The birds were also present at the same locality in 1958.

JOHN MURRAY.

### NUMEROUS LONG-EARED OWLS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

While I was attending a covert shoot on 20th November 1957 numbers of Long-eared Owls *Asio otus* were seen at Murby Plantation, Ballogie, near Aboyne. The figures for individual drives were seven, eighteen and four birds. One Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* was also seen. The owls were driven out of coniferous plantations mainly composed of Scotch Pine *Pinus sylvestris*. Another shoot on 4th December 1957 at Pit-slugerty Croft, Ballogie, yielded further counts of one, two, five and three Long-eared Owls, and of six Tawny Owls. Long-eared Owls were easily recognised by the presence of a black spot on the underside of the wing as they flew overhead. One Long-eared Owl was accidentally shot by one of the guns. The nature of the shoot was such that it is possible that the same bird may have been counted more than once during the course of the three or four drives held at the two shoots, but the maximum counts (e.g., eighteen and five) are true maxima.

R. W. ALLAN.

### FEEDING HABITS OF RAVEN IN SHETLAND

One has always been led to believe that Raven *Corvus corax* fed solely upon any offal it could pick up, but during the course of my observations over the past three years, I have noticed their feeding habits changing.

At Baltasound, Unst, in 1955, when the oats were newly sown, I observed a few Ravens eating what I took to be grubs which had been turned up by the harrows; but in the fall of that year, when the oats had been cut and stoked, not only were the birds on the ground, but were actually sitting on top of the stooks, eating oats. In the season of 1956 the same procedure took place, but the birds were far more numerous; I observed between fifty and sixty of them on a three acre field. One that was shot was found to be full of oats.

With the advent of milder winters there has not been any severe snow to kill off many of the hill sheep and so the Raven has to some extent been deprived of much of its nat-

ural food: bearing this in mind one wonders if the Raven, not being able to find carrion, may not yet have to resort to the more palatable breakfast of porridge!

S. T. SAXBY.

### JAY IN AYRSHIRE

A few days before 21st November 1957 a Jay *Garrulus glandarius* was both seen and heard by my keeper at Rowallan, and I myself was puzzled a few days later when I heard what I would have sworn was a Jay, but, never having seen them here as far back as memory goes, I could not imagine what it was. Since then it has been seen several times by my keeper, always in some woodland strips round the Home Farm, and during a covert shoot I saw and was able to identify it without any doubt as it flew about 150 yards and perched on the top of a tree. It was also seen by the beaters and one of the walking guns.

I have given orders that the Jay is not to be shot; not that I really want Jays about the place, but it will be exceedingly interesting to see if it acquires a mate and how long it remains. The bird's call and flight left no possible chance of mistaking its identity.

ROWALLAN.

(Lord Rowallan has since written, 9th July 1958: "I am afraid the Jay has left us."—ED.)

### TWO UNUSUAL NESTS OF THE BLUE TIT

Two unusual nests of the Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* seem to deserve record. The first was found by M.F.M.M. on 19th May 1957, near Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire. It was a domed nest in a fissure of the trunk of a lime-tree and had undoubtedly been originally built by a Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. It was constructed mainly of old leaves, especially those of bracken, and was a typical Wren's nest in site, shape and material. Within, however, a Blue Tit was sitting close: the bird's white forehead and blue crown were visible, and the characteristic hiss was uttered when a finger was placed on the lip of the hole. The second nest was found by I.C.C. near Caldarvan, Dunbartonshire, on 26th May 1957, when it contained small chicks. It was built in the open and resembled the nest of a Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*, being domed and made of moss and lichen. The nest was in a small hawthorn bush, beside which was growing a clump of the pal-mate bamboo. A fallen tree had forced the tops of a few bamboo stems against the stem of the hawthorn, and the tits had made a large platform of moss on the crowded leaves. The nest and dome were on one side of this platform, against the hawthorn stem.

IAIN C. CHRISTIE,  
M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

## BARRED WARBLER IN FIFE

At Fife Ness on 22nd September 1957, George Dick and I saw an extremely skulking bird frequenting the gorse. In size it compared, say, with a Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* and was larger than the House Sparrows and Garden Warblers that were about. On being flushed, six or seven times, it was seen to have the typical warbler flight, though rather heavy, and the habit of always diving for cover, so that we were never lucky enough to put glasses on it. Its most striking feature was the general colour, a very noticeable light or ash grey. G.D. noted whitish at the sides of the tail. We are of the opinion that this bird was a Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*.

Strong easterly winds had been blowing for three days before, and Barred Warblers were seen on the Isle of May during the same period. Other migrants seen at Fife Ness the same day were Goldcrests, Pied Flycatchers, Redstarts, Garden Warblers, Blackcaps and a single Lesser Whitethroat.

JOHN HOY.

PIED FLYCATCHER BREEDING IN  
CLACKMANNANSHIRE

In company with Mr A. Crawford, I observed a pair of Pied Flycatchers *Muscicapa hypoleuca* feeding young at a nest in Dollar Glen, Clackmannanshire on 16th June 1957. The nest, which contained four young between seven and ten days old, was in a hole in a rowan tree. During earlier visits the male was in full song on 19th May, and was again seen on the 25th. This appears to be the first breeding record of the Pied Flycatcher in Clackmannan. It should also be noted here that a male Pied Flycatcher was seen in Dollar Glen in the summers of 1951 and 1956 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 1: 70, 7: 16).

Pied Flycatchers bred in the same nesting hole at Dollar Glen in 1958, the young hatching and probably fledging. A second male was present and singing continuously throughout the season. In 1958 both males were first summer birds, sooty brown instead of black, with dingy white breasts, whereas the 1957 male was fully adult.

JOHN HOY.

## GREY WAGTAIL BREEDING IN LEWIS

On 28th and 29th June 1957, I watched a family of Grey Wagtails *Motacilla cinerea* on and near the banks of the Bay-

head River in Stornoway. The two young birds were fully fledged and were attended by both parents. I had previously seen a pair on the River Creed near Stornoway on 25th and 31st March 1957, but not thereafter.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

#### YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING AT THE ISLE OF MAY

On 18th September 1957 on the Isle of May the weather was overcast and rather misty, the wind being SSE, Force 2, declining to nil in the afternoon. Pied Flycatchers *Muscicapa hypoleuca*, which are nearly always evidence of drift migration across the North Sea, were present.

At about 1400 hours GMT, just north of the Pilgrims' Haven, I saw a bird new to me in the company of Rock Pipits *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*. In a first brief view—after which it temporarily vanished—it appeared to be a small finch or bunting with striking yellow-buff underparts and a pale appearance on the upperparts on account of yellowish edgings to certain feathers, a similar colour scheme, one might say, to that of the Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The bird was later re-discovered perched on the stay of a mast near the Top Lighthouse, where it was watched in a bad light, but better views were later had at close range as it perched on a rock. It was finally chased away by Rock Pipits and not seen again.

It was very small for a bunting, about the size of a Linnet. While perched it constantly uttered a loud "tick", which could easily have been mistaken for that of the Robin *Erithacus rubecula*: the sound was much more like the call-note of the Robin than is that of the Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*, which was heard two days later. The head looked very stripy. The crown was pale, bordered with black. Very marked yellowish-buff eye stripe. Dark line through eye. Ear-covers buff with dark line below. Underparts uniform bright yellow buff; no streaking observed. Closed wing had bright buff on edges of covert feathers, giving a markedly pale appearance. There was some white on the outer tail feathers. The bill was pale. I have no doubt that the bird was a Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*, a species which cannot easily be confused with any other. I am familiar with twelve other species of Palaearctic buntings.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

#### LITTLE BUNTING—AND OTHER BIRDS—ON RHUM

On the 8th October 1957 Mr Peter Wormell and I noticed a small bird feeding in short grass beside the shepherd's house



at Harris on the Isle of Rhum. It was a bunting which neither of us had met before, but from its head pattern and small size we thought it must be a Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla*. Having noted its salient features one of us motored back to Kinloch and returned with *A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, and the relevant volume of *The Handbook*. The bunting was very tame and we were able to examine it by telescope (x25) at such close range that it filled the whole field of the glass. Checking against the descriptions and plates in the reference books we were able to confirm with complete certainty our provisional identification and to place it as a first winter bird. The dark-sided buff chestnut crown, foxy side of the head, black malar markings and breast streaks, and pale legs were clearly obvious. The bird fed incessantly, returning again and again to favourite patches of short grass on the roadway which contained fruiting plantains. It moved mouse-like over the ground and with great ease we manoeuvred it into a roughly constructed funnel of fish-netting, from which with equal facility it escaped, the mesh being just too large to contain it. This is apparently the first record of a Little Bunting from the Inner Hebrides.

It may be noted here that since 1956 seventeen species or subspecies of birds have been seen on Rhum which are not recorded in Dr W. R. P. Bourne's recent list (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 21-31), in addition to the resident Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*, omitted from his list in error. These additional birds are: Teal *Anas crecca*, Greenland Whitefronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*, Velvet Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*, Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, Little Stint *Calidris minuta*, Dunlin *C. alpina*, Sanderling *Crocethia alba*, Carrion Crow *Corvus corone corone*, Rook *C. frugilegus*, Jackdaw *C. monedula*, Tree-Creeper *Certhia familiaris*, Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, Redwing *T. musicus*, and White Wagtail *Motacilla alba alba*. Sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus* have been seen two or three times, Swallows *Hirundo rustica* fairly often, a Swift *Apus apus* at least once, and flocks of Lesser Redpolls *Carduelis flammea* on several occasions. A single Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus*, present both in 1956 and 1957, was almost certainly the only one of its kind on the island.

Dr Bourne states that he found no endemic mammals, reptiles or amphibia; but Pygmy Shrews *Sorex minutus*, Fieldmice *Apodemus*, lizards and newts do in fact occur. Rhum is now a National Nature Reserve with a resident warden: from regular observations many new records, not only of birds but also of other fauna, may confidently be expected.

W. J. EGGELING.

## THE LATE JAMES BARTHOLOMEW OF GLENORCHARD

A notable figure in Scottish ornithology for over half a century passed away when James Bartholomew, M.B.O.U., died in the autumn of last year. "J.B." as he was more familiarly known among his contemporaries was in his 85th year, and during the course of his long life he made many valuable contributions to ornithological journals, the fruit of careful and competent field-observations in the area of Glenorchard, his beautiful home near Balmore. He was one of the first in Scotland to take up the bird-ringing scheme when it was first introduced by the late H. F. Witherby, and many of the more interesting of early recoveries were from his hand.

He made his first contributions to the Annual Reports as early as 1902, and from that time his name appears frequently in the "Annals of Scottish Natural History" and "The Scottish Naturalist," as well as "The Glasgow Naturalist." He was a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and a founder-member of the Scottish Society for the Protection of Wild Birds, and became the first President of the Society from its formation in 1927 until he relinquished the position for reason of health in 1945, when he was made an Honorary President.

He was a founder-member also of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club when it was initiated in 1936, and a member of its first Council till its activities ceased in 1940. On the revival of the Club after the war he became Vice-Chairman of the Glasgow Branch until the year before his death. In 1950 he was elected a Member of the British Ornithologists Union.

For one with such knowledge and experience he was one of the most unassuming of men, never seeking to parade his knowledge or vaunt his opinions. To spend an afternoon with him at Glenorchard at any time of year was to be caught up and re-infected with something of this man's absorbing passion of his lifetime; and his obvious delight at some discovery of the new or unusual, such as the wintering of blackcaps in his own grounds, could not fail to convey something of its thrill to the listener. He has bequeathed a sum of money to the S.O.C. and also his comprehensive library on ornithology, which is now housed with the Club library in Edinburgh.

He slipped away on the great migration as peacefully and quietly as he had lived. Perhaps more valuable to some of us than his legacy is the memory he has left of a gracious and friendly man, loving all life whether of human or avian form, incapable of hurt to anyone, generous and self-effacing, and without a trace of meanness or smallness in his soul.

E.T.V.

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### NOTICE TO MEMBERS

IMPORTANT—Annual Subscriptions for the current session should NOT be paid until a decision is reached at the Annual General Meeting in Perth on 25th October regarding the recommendation by Council to increase subscriptions from 20s to 25s, and from 5s to 7s 6d. (See Agenda for Annual General Meeting on p. 24). All Members will be notified of the decision, and also of the name and address of the new Hon. Treasurer, in the Winter number of "Scottish Birds."

## The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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### *ELEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE PERTH*

24th/26th OCTOBER, 1958

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#### PROGRAMME

##### **FRIDAY, 24th OCTOBER :—**

- 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Reception Office in the Museum and Art Gallery, George Street, opens for Members and Guests to register for the Conference (5s each). Collect Name Cards and Annual Dinner tickets (12s 6d each).
- 6.15 p.m. Meeting of Council.
- 8 p.m. Public Lecture — "HIGHLAND BIRDS" — in aid of the funds of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. A full-length colour film of the bird-life of the Central Highlands with commentary by Mr George Waterson. In the Large Town Hall. Admission (payable at entrance) 3s 6d & 2s 6d. Schoolchildren half-price.
- 8 p.m. to midnight Ballroom in the Royal George Hotel reserved for informal discussions and refreshments.

##### **SATURDAY, 25th OCTOBER :—**

- 8.45 a.m. Reception Office opens for Registrations.
- 9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Lecture Hall, Museum and Art Gallery, George Street. ADDRESS OF WELCOME by John Buchan Esq., D.L., J.P. (Lord Provost of Perth).
- 9.30 a.m. LECTURE on "Field taxonomy at Bird Observatories" illustrated with slides and specimens, by Mr Kenneth Williamson (Migration Research Officer of the British Trust for Ornithology).
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. COLOUR FILMS of "North Rona and Sulisgeir" with personal commentary by the photographer, Mr James MacGeoch (Nature Conservancy Warden).
- 12.30 p.m. CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH outside the Museum.
- 1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches. (Hotels must be informed).

- 2 to 5.45 p.m.      **EXCURSIONS to:—**  
 (a) Morton Lochs and Tentsmuir.  
 (b) Lindores Loch and Eden Estuary.  
 (c) Dunkeld Lochs.  
 (d) Angus Lochs.  
 (e) Loch Leven.  
 Transport by private cars leaving Museum and Art Gallery.
- 6.15 p.m.      **22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB** in the Lecture Hall, Museum and Art Gallery, George Street.  
**BUSINESS:—**  
 (1) Apologies for absence.  
 (2) Approval of Minutes of 21st Annual General Meeting held in North Berwick on 26th October, 1957.  
 (3) Report of Council for Session XXI.  
 (4) Approval of Accounts for Session XXI.  
 (5) Appointment of Auditor.  
 (6) Approval of the following alterations to the Constitution recommended by the Council:—  
 (a) That under MEMBERSHIP 3 (h) "Any Member whose subscription is three years in arrears shall cease to belong to the Club", the words "is three years in arrears" be deleted, and the following substituted:—"due on 1st October is not paid by the following 31st March."  
 (b) That under MEMBERSHIP 3 (e) "The Annual Subscription shall be £1 ; or 5s in the case of Members who are under 21 years of age or in the case of University Undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year", the words "£1 ; or 5s." be altered to "25s ; or 7s 6d." (This motion to be approved on the understanding that the Club will publish a quarterly magazine "Scottish Birds," to be issued free to all Members.)  
 (7) Approval of the appointment of a new Honorary Treasurer. (Mr A. G. S. Bryson, C.A., who at the end of this Session will have served the Club in this capacity for twelve years, has intimated that he does not wish his name to go forward for re-election.)  
 (8) Election of two new Members of Council. (The Council recommend the election of Mr A. G. S. Bryson and Lt. Col. J. P. Grant, Younger of Rothiemurchus, to replace Mr W. Austin and Miss Winifred Flower who retire by rotation.)  
 (9) Any other business.
- 7.30 p.m.      **RECEPTION** and refreshments in York House, York Place.
- 8 p.m.      **ANNUAL DINNER** in York House, York Place. Dress informal. (Price 12s 6d each, inclusive of tip. Drinks extra.)

**SUNDAY, 26th OCTOBER :—**

- 9.30 a.m. COLOUR FILMS AND SLIDES of "The Osprey and other Scandinavian birds" with personal commentary by the photographer, Mr M. D. England.
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. EXHIBITION OF BIRD PAINTINGS by Donald Watson in the Lecture Hall, Museum and Art Gallery.
- 11.15 a.m. MILLAIS COLLECTION OF BIRD SKINS: The Museum will be open for inspection.
- to 12.30 p.m.
- 2 p.m. EXCURSIONS (as for Saturday) by private cars leaving the Museum and Art Gallery.

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**INFORMATION**

In order to simplify arrangements, it is essential that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed postcard and send it to the Club Secretary NOT LATER THAN 21st OCTOBER.

Members may invite guests, and are particularly asked to provide private cars where possible, for Excursions. Petrol expenses should be shared.

Everyone attending the Conference must register (5s each) on arrival, at the Reception Office. (Open Friday 24th, 6 to 7.30 p.m.; and Saturday 25th, 8.45 to 9.30 a.m.) Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting ONLY do not require to pay the registration fee which covers incidental expenses—hire of rooms, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

Payment for tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 12s 6d inclusive of tips) should be made when registering on arrival. NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE.

All Hotel bookings should be made direct with the Hotel at which you wish to stay. Owing to the general shortage of single rooms, younger members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day. The Secretary is NOT responsible for Hotel bookings.

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN PERTH**

ROYAL GEORGE HOTEL (Conference H.Q.) (Telephone 890)	B. & B. from 21s.
Atholl Private Hotel (Tel. 951)	B. & B. from 14s 6d.
Queen's Hotel (Tel. 1295)	B. & B. from 18s.
Salutation Hotel (Tel. 836)	B. & B. from 24s 6d.
Station Hotel (Tel. 741)	B. & B. from 23s.
Waverley Hotel (Tel. 165)	B. & B. from 17s 6d.

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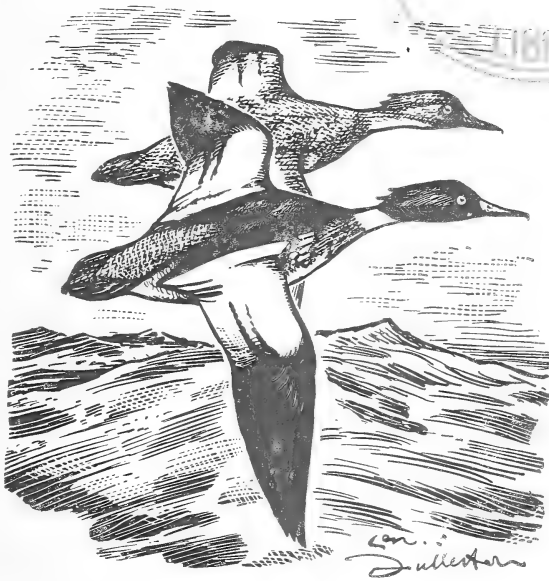
**CLUB LIBRARY**

The Club Library is now housed in the Secretary's Office at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2. The collection has recently been augmented by several gifts, and Council appeals to Members to donate books and periodicals which they may wish to dispose of. We have no volumes of the "Ibis" prior to 1944. The Library is open during office hours for reference. Books or magazines, of which we have duplicate copies, can be obtained on loan.



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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. I. No. 2

Winter 1958

Reprinted 1973

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time of which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland".

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Hon. Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.



# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. 1 No. 2

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Red-breasted Mergansers) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

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## Editorial

THIS second number of *Scottish Birds* will be seen to be larger than the first, thanks to the many members of the S.O.C. who have sent us their notes. These, as will be seen, are of high quality and interest, although we must make a request for greater geographical and chronological precision: to say that a bird occurred at Milton on Friday is not enough. Which Milton and which Friday is what is required. This number has brought the back records almost completely up to date, and it is now hoped to publish future ones in the issue of *Scottish Birds* after which they have been submitted.

The most striking ornithological event of 1958 has also been the most depressing—the attempted nesting of the Osprey and the subsequent destruction of its eggs. This has also been a “Crossbill year”, and drift migration was especially remarkable at the beginning of September.

With the publication of *Scottish Birds*, the *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* and *Glasgow Bird Bulletin*, which have played such a useful part in Scottish ornithology in recent years, are committing a generous suicide. We hope to publish a short account of these periodicals in the next issue.

Again thanks are due to Mr Len Fullerton for his admirable cover design. It should be explained that it is intended to have a different typically Scottish bird for each quarter of the year.

Thanks should be given to all contributors, especially to Mr Alistair Smith, who has sent a voluminous collection of notes, many of which are printed here, and to Mr Finlay McIntosh, for his accurate correction of typed drafts.

## THE CONFERENCE OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB 1958

The annual conference of the S.O.C. at Perth was quite as enjoyable and remarkable as usual. The week-end, 24th to 26th October, was fine and Perthshire was at its best, especially for the outings on Saturday afternoon. Nobody seemed to see anything very startling, but there was talk afterwards of geese, gadwall, godwits and black-necked grebes. There were perhaps fewer visitors from England than in past years, but we were glad to welcome a party of ornithologists from Northern Ireland who surprised us by their knowledge of the birds of Antarctica as well as their excitement over a short-eared owl on the Eden estuary. We worked our guests hard. Mr Kenneth Williamson gave a masterly summary of the work of British bird observatories and suggested some of the lines of future research, especially in the taxonomy of the living bird as opposed to the museum skin. Mr Derrick England brought an exhibition of his magnificent bird portraits, mostly of Scandinavian species, and also showed some remarkable colour films. Mr James McGeoch showed us the results of his latest visit, this time with a ciné camera, to North Rona and Sulisgeir, and further enhanced our high opinion of him as a photographer. Although taken under very difficult conditions and as yet unedited, this film contained some of the best material seen by an S.O.C. audience for many years. Two other talks, both illustrated with ciné film, took us to Antarctica with Mr Cecil Scotland and to Iceland with Miss Valerie Thom. There is no doubt that ornithologists travel more than most and that we are fortunate to have so many members and guests who are able now with the help of films to share their experiences with us on their return. An informal showing of slides on the first evening of the Conference took us to the 1958 International Congress at Helsinki with Mr Ian Munro, to the bird observatories of south Sweden with Dr David Jenkins, and even to Antarctica and the Antipodes.

The undoubted success of the Conference was due largely to the hard work of the Secretary and the efficiency of the Chairman. Sir Charles Connell steered the increased subscription through the A.G.M. with persuasive logic, and *Scottish Birds* received a unanimous blessing. We parted with our old-established Treasurer, Mr A. G. S. Bryson, with sorrow and gratitude, and welcomed Mr Robert Hillcoat in his place. Sir Charles also conducted our affairs at the Annual Dinner in a way which almost compensated for the shortage of wine waiters, and the postprandial speeches were well up to the

expected standard. To Mr England must go the credit for quite the best story of a vicar's daughter we have heard for some time; to Miss Winifred Flower a bouquet for a polished and witty reply and a personal testimony to the social value of the fraternity of ornithosophists all over the world. Dr Ian Pennie laughed as heartily as the rest of us at his own Highland humour; and Mr James Ferguson-Lees replied for the guests with a plaintive reminder that only the latest alteration to the Constitution approved two hours before had voted him out of the Club and into the status of a guest whose subscription was about two years in arrears. After a slick tie-changing demonstration to affirm publicly his intention to mend his ways, he proposed a counter-toast to the Club, coupled with the names of Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn and Mr George Waterston. In drinking it we pledged our co-operation to them both. We hope that in future some practical help will be given to the Secretary in organising the Conference so that he too can be allowed to enjoy it as much as the rest of us always do. It is after all thanks to his organisation that it has now reached proportions such that nobody could be expected to run the whole show single-handed.

C. K. M.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

With reference to the Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* in Wester Ross (*antea* 1: 12), I have been checking up general west coast distribution and find that, though Baxter and Rintoul (*The Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*) give no record for Wester Ross, Harvie-Brown and Macpherson (*A Fauna of the North-west Highlands and Skye*) do so. They mention one sent from Braemore for preservation and, with less conviction, a sight record of "a flight" at Inveran. They also refer to a skin from Kyleakin Lighthouse which, as I have checked on large scale maps, stands on a twenty-acre odd island, forming part of the Parish of Lochalsh. This record, therefore, also belongs to Wester Ross.

J. W. CAMPBELL.

## REVIEW

WILD VENTURE, A Bird Watcher in Scotland, by KENNETH RICHMOND. pp.223. 25 photographs. London, Geoffrey Bles, 1958. 21/-.

Both the title of this book and its subtitle are apt: to its author Scottish bird-watching is a great adventurous enterprise, an adventure of the mind as well as of the body. Mr Kenneth Richmond's physical aspirations, sometimes of the Ben-Narnain-before-breakfast type, are matched by an equally agile mind, which is constantly re-examining those hoary old conceptions with which ornithology is littered, and adding spicy unorthodox arguments of his own.

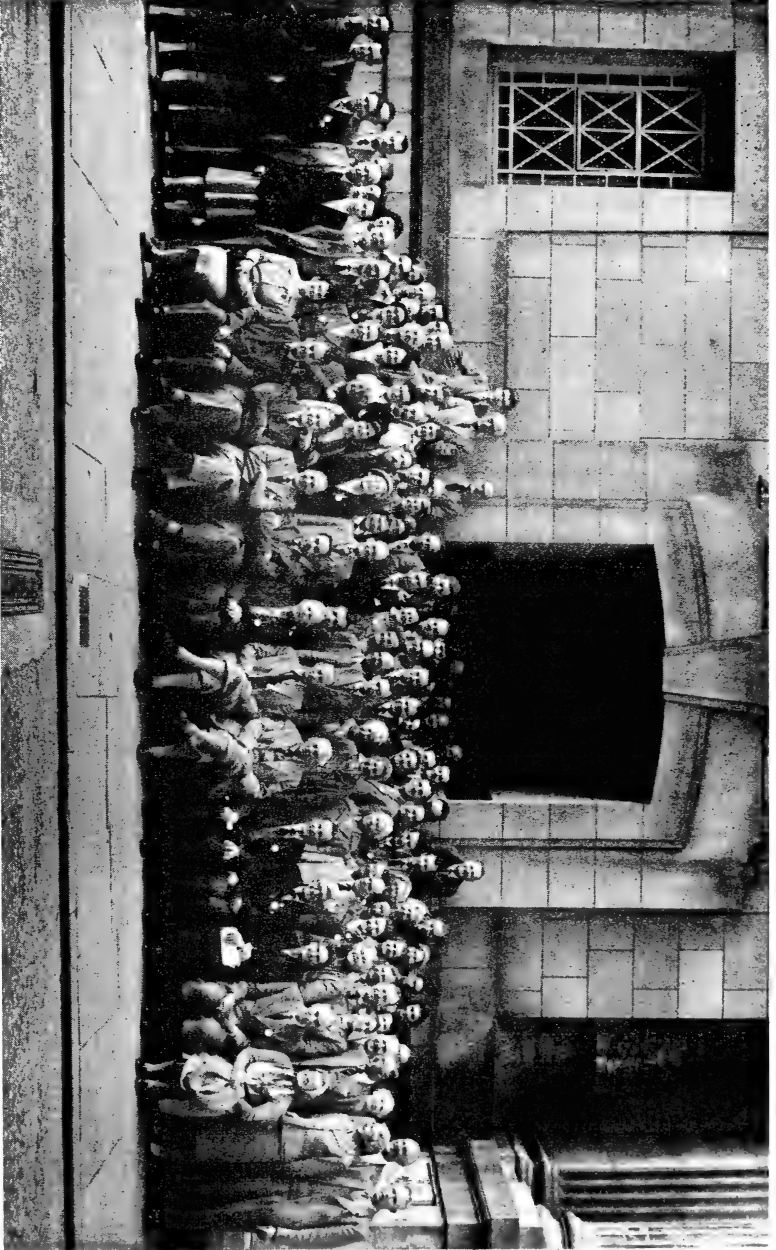
As an ornithologist Mr Richmond must be one of the best all-rounders in Britain to-day. He studies great birds of prey and small passerines, wild fowl and game birds, waders and sea-fowl with equal enthusiasm; no bird is dull to him. Courtship and nest-finding, feeding and rearing young, the effect of meteorological considerations on such widely different topics as drift migration and the breeding distribution of the Ptarmigan, attempts to enter into the mind of various sick and wounded birds which he has nursed and grown to know intimately, rare birds and common birds—all are of interest to him. He indulges in motoring, mountaineering, university lecturing and broadcasting; numerous bird essays from a fertile pen; exquisite paintings in water colour and now, quite recently, bird photography—all these facets of the man and his book compel one to classify him alongside Wilsons Phalarope as a *rare avis*.

Besides the last named species, the Storm Petrel, Gannet and various waders are dealt with under "Sea and Shore Birds"; the Whooper Swan, six species of goose, the Red-throated and Black-throated Divers and the Red-necked Phalarope are discussed under "Wild Fowl and Waders"; Black Grouse, Ptarmigan and Capercaillie under "Game Birds"; and Golden Eagle, Buzzard, Hen Harrier, Goshawk, Iceland Falcon and Short-eared Owl under "Predators".

The book, including the dust-cover, is illustrated by photographs of varying technical quality. A number of them are of tame or sickly birds.

Finally—or should one not say "firstly"?—a graphic introduction describes how, through the eyes of this Tees-sider, the book is inspired as much by an enthusiasm for the Caledonian sternness and wildness as for the birds that are found there.

C. E. P.



Group outside Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, 1958

*Photograph by D. K. McLauren.*

## REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1957

EVELYN V. BAXTER

The records published in 1957 are not very many nor very outstanding. The Scottish Birds Records Committee of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club have now reviewed them and present their report.

### BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

RED-BREASTED GOOSE *Branta ruficollis*.

This species is now accepted for the Scottish List. One was seen in early October 1956 on a firth in N.E. Scotland (*Field* 1956: 1124), and what may have been the same bird was seen on the Beaully Firth on 20th January 1957 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 118). Breeds in central north palearctic region.

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*.

One trapped on Fair Isle, 28th May 1957 (*F.I.B.O. Bull.* 3: 111, *Scot. Nat.* 69: 145-147). Breeds arctic America.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*.

A pair at Covesea, Morayshire, June 1957 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 188). Part of the westward movement from the Near East. (See also under "Breeding Records").

GREAT GREY SHRIKE (Transcaspien race *Lanius excubitor pallidirostris*).

One trapped on Fair Isle, 21st September 1956 (*F.I.B.O. Bull.* 3: 111, *British Birds* 50: 246-249). First British record. Breeds Transcaspien.

### BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*.

In the *Scot. Nat.* 65: 186 one was recorded from Househill-wood, Glasgow S.W. and referred to Lanarkshire; it should have been Renfrewshire (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 53). It is not the first record for Renfrew (see McWilliam, *Birds of the Firth of Clyde*, p. 101).

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*.

The Committee cannot accept the record of one seen on Loch Leven, 25th July 1957 (*Field* 1957: 279).

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Procellaria grisea*.

One seen between Girvan and Ailsa, 16th June 1955, is the first record for Ayrshire (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 53).

**NIGHT HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*.

One seen at Dunfermline, 16th July 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 79) was almost certainly a wanderer from the Edinburgh Zoo.

**SPOONBILL** *Platalea leucorodia*.

One seen at Tynninghame, East Lothian, 13th October 1957, and an immature bird (possibly the same) near Alloa between 14th November and 8th December 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 8: 9). The latter is the first record for South Fife and Clackmannan.

**AMERICAN WIGEON** *Anas americana*.

A male seen at Meikle Loch of Slains on 4th and 5th May 1957 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 196) is new to Aberdeen.

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*.

Recorded off Grangemouth (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 26). New to East Stirling.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*.

One seen near Ettrickbridge, 20th October 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 8: 12) is the first record for Selkirk.

**BEWICK'S SWAN** *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*.

One found dead on the Isle of May, 15th April 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 136) is new to the island.

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*.

One seen at Loch Leven, 14th September 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 80) is new to Kinross.

**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*.

One seen in Orkney, 26th June 1957 (*F.I.B.O. Bull.* 3: 197) is new to the island group.

**HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*.

A pair, N. Fife, April to 23rd July 1949. One shot. (*British Birds* 50: 142). The first definite record for N. Fife.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*.

One seen near Elgin on 31st August and 1st September 1957 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 184), and one seen at Chanonry Ness, Black Isle, on 3rd October 1956 (*British Birds* 50: 120) are new to Moray and Easter Ross respectively.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*.

One seen on Islay on 6th December 1955 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 125) is new to the Inner Hebrides.

**TEMMINCK'S STINT** *Calidris temminckii*.

One seen at Waulkmill Dam Reservoir is the first record for Renfrewshire (*Glasgow Bird Bull.* 6: 27) but not, as claim-

ed, the first for the Clyde area, as the Committee upholds the Ayrshire record of 1934 (*British Birds* 28: 209).

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*.

One seen at Fair Isle on 23rd June 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 195) is new to the island.

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*.

Eight near Chanonry Ness, Black Isle, on 20th October 1956 (*British Birds* 50: 120) are new to the Moray area and Easter Ross.

CRESTED TIT *Parus cristatus*.

One seen near Dornoch on 13th October 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 57) is new to S.E. Sutherland.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochrurus*.

An adult male seen at Galashiels on 25th March 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 60) is new to Selkirk.

GREY-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava thunbergi*.

One seen on St Kilda on 7th July 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 109) is new to the Outer Hebrides.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*.

One seen on the Moor of Forvie on 30th September 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 60) is new to Dee and to Aberdeenshire.

#### BREEDING RECORDS

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*.

Now established as a breeding species in Arran (J. A. Gibson, *The Birds of the Isle of Arran*. Rothesay: Bute Newspapers Ltd. 1956).

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*.

Several pairs bred on the Lamb, East Lothian, in 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 78). This is the first breeding record for the county.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*.

Bred in 1953 on Caerlaverock Merse and east of mouth of R. Lochar; one pair bred on Caerlaverock in 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 186-7). First breeding records for Dumfries.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*.

Bred on Caerlaverock Merse in 1953, and probably in 1954 and 1955; several pairs in 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 186). First breeding record for Dumfries.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*.

At least six pairs bred at Carron Valley Reservoir in 1957



(*Edin. Bird Bull.* 7: 82), and has bred on Caerlaverock Merse in 1951 and subsequently, about 50 pairs in 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 186). These are the first breeding records for East Stirling and Dumfries respectively.

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*.

A pair bred at Covesea, Morayshire, in 1957 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 188). This is the first breeding record for Scotland.

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis*.

On 9th July 1957, three if not four birds were seen beside a recently used nest-hole on Archerfield estate near Dirleton (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 8: 13). The first breeding record far East Lothian. On 10th May an anxious female bird was seen near a freshly excavated nest-hole in Penicuik House grounds, Midlothian (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 8: 14).

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*.

A pair bred on the Isle of May in 1957 (*Edin. Bird Bull.* 8: 48). First breeding record for the island.

**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*.

Seen in summer and feeding newly fledged young at Paisley in 1956 (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 60). First breeding record for East Renfrew.

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## SHORT NOTES

### BLACK-NECKED GREBE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

While making a duck count on 16th April 1958 at one of the small lochans on Forvie Moor I saw a Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps caspicus* in full breeding plumage. It was feeding hard and I was able to approach within a hundred yards, and kept it under observation for half an hour. I last saw the grebe on 20th April.

ELIZABETH A. GARDEN.

(What was probably the same bird was seen by Mr Alistair J. M. Smith on the following day.—ED.)

### SPOTTED REDSHANK IN MORAYSHIRE AND NAIRNSHIRE

On 8th September 1956, near the boundary between Moray and Nairn, opposite the Old Bar of Findhorn, I saw a Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* feeding on the saltings with several Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*. I flushed it and it rose to several hundred feet, and circled calling its lovely ringing

*Chee-wit* call over and over again. Now it was in Morayshire and now in Nairnshire, a most convenient state of affairs, as there seems to be no previous record from Nairnshire.

Three days later I put up a Spotted Redshank from the mud at the mouth of the River Nairn. It rose high, calling, and headed towards the west beach. Presumably this was the same bird.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

(Mr Smith has supplied a satisfactory plumage description of this bird.—ED.)

#### DOWITCHER IN BERWICKSHIRE

On 29th September 1958 Sydney J. Clarke and I watched a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* soaring over the moor on Hule Moss, Berwickshire, and, at the same time, saw an unusual wader fly up from the moor, obviously flushed by the Buzzard overhead. At first sight, from a distance of about 150 yards, it suggested a Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, being about the same size and showing a very large area of white on the rump and tail. A very long bill was seen and we both thought we saw bars on the tail. One of us (W.M.) thought there was a good suggestion of brown colour on the wings.

The bird was seen to land among some heather so we set out to try and stalk up to it. Within a few minutes we found it and were able to get within twenty feet! The bird seemed very tired, and thus we were able to take a description of it, as well as to draw pictures.

The same afternoon we returned to the site with Colonel W. M. Logan Home, but failed to find the bird; on the 31st, however, after dragging the Moss with a rope for about three hours, we flushed the bird again, but it unfortunately went down among some reeds which we could not get at as it was too boggy. This was the last we saw of the bird.

We concluded that the bird was a Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus*, which has been recorded three times previously in Scotland, but not from Berwickshire or the Tweed area.

The following points were noted: size of Greenshank, but stout in shape. Bill very long and straight, dark brown or black in colour. The stout body was supported by very short legs, which were of a dark colour, but could not be seen very clearly on account of the heather. Crown, nape and hind neck dark brown. Face greyish white and front of neck greyish, shading into buff on upper breast. A very small dark stripe ran through the eye. Each of the feathers on the upper back and wing coverts had dark centres and were edged with buff and brown. The upper breast was very slightly tinged with brownish buff, shading towards the vent, which was very white. There were a few streaks of buff on the flanks. The bird

held its neck erect when it was alarmed or when it was among the longer heather.

W. MURRAY.

(Mr Murray has submitted sketches which leave no possible doubt of the bird's correct identification. They show two features not mentioned in the written account above, a pale eyestripe and the colour of the primaries, which appear as dark brown, some of the feathers having lighter patches.—Ed.)

### BAR-TAILED GODWITS MIGRATING THROUGH MORAY FIRTH

Between four and five p.m. on 2nd September 1956, from the east beach at Nairn I witnessed a large scale migration of Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica*. My attention was attracted to this movement when some 1,500 godwits fell out of the skies at a terrific speed and alighted in a long line on the tide-line far out on the sand which was exposed at low tide. I searched the sky with binoculars and saw parties of this species flying at a great height from north-east to south-west along the Moray Firth. During the hour that I watched this spectacle I estimated that over 3,500 birds had passed. These were joined by the majority of those which had landed on the beach. I believe that the movement was in progress before I noticed it, and when I left it was still going on.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

### SEMI-PALMATED SANDPIPER ON THE ISLE OF MAY

On 19th September 1957 on the Isle of May the wind was in the north-west and there had been north-westerly gales on the second and third days before that. In the afternoon I flushed a tiny wader from a small pool among the rocks of the South Ness. It flew towering into the air and, on account of this, I took it at first for a Temminck's Stint *Erolia temmincki*, but it uttered a call-note different from that of that bird. It had probably only just reached the island since it had not been at the place at which I flushed it half an hour before and, when it alighted again at another pool, it went to sleep. I managed to approach within ten yards, and watched it for about twenty minutes with 12 x 50 binoculars, before it became alarmed and flew off to the North Ness. Here brief views of it were obtained by N. G. Campbell, Miss W. U. Flower, M. E. French, A. C. Geddes and J. E. King, who were at least able to hear the bird's distinctive note and see its distinctive back pattern. It was not found again.

*Size.* Certainly smaller than a Dunlin *Erolia alpina*. Seemed larger than Little Stint *Erolia minuta*, with longer bill and legs in proportion. This may be illusory with regard to the

legs, since the bird was standing on dry land, whereas the Little Stint is nearly always seen wading. *The Handbook* gives the same length for the tarsus in the Little Stint and the Semi-palmated Sandpiper (which I believe the Isle of May bird to be).

*Shape.* A rather stout and upright little sandpiper. The wings looked slender in flight.

*Voice.* An abrupt *chip* constantly uttered in flight. This description, written in my notebook at the time, has almost precisely similar wording to that in *The Handbook*. Mr James Anton, who knows the Semi-palmated Sandpiper in Bermuda, tells me that the note is the feature by which the species is most readily identified.

*Habits.* On the Isle of May frequented shallow pools of fresh water among rocks. When flushed towered like a Temminck's Stint.

*Plumage.* Crown and nape grey, flecked darker, crown being darker than nape. Paler buffish feathers on sides of crown, forming faint line visible when head lowered to preen. Face pale buffish grey. White eyestripe, broader behind eye. White patch under eye. Chin whitish. Neck and throat pale grey on sides, whiter in centre. Grey suffusion on upper breast ("young birds have greyish buff suffusion right across", I. C. T. Nisbet *in litt*. See also Shortt and Snyder, *Arctic Birds of America*). Buff patch at side of breast. Back not seen so well as bird was consistently trying to sleep until frightened away by some unknown agent, but predominantly blackish, with very conspicuous V—the most noticeable plumage character—meeting on rump: this V was white at the shoulders, yellowish lower down. The white feathers were raised by the sleeping bird's bill, being then very conspicuous. Underparts white. Dark colouring at bend of wing (see *Handbook* IV, 249). Wing coverts scaly looking and black with greyish-buff edgings, becoming greyer lower down, not so yellow as in the Little Stint. The visible part of the primary coverts, when wing closed, white, so that line of demarcation between them and flanks difficult to perceive. Primaries black, about same length as tail, but probably a little longer ("the extension of the wings beyond the tail is a better character than I first thought, always conspicuous in Baird's, and only rarely so in Semipalmated, though sufficient often to make it unreliable as a clinching character." I. C. T. Nisbet *in litt*). Secondaries dark with buff edgings. Tail black, outer feathers edged whitish. No prominent wing bar. Bill and legs black; bill slightly swollen at tip. Eye dark. The feet were unfortunately not seen, being concealed by a rise in the rock on which the bird was standing.

*Identity.* I believe the bird to have been a Semi-palmated Sandpiper *Erolia pusilla*, probably, from the colouring of the

secondaries and breast, a juvenile. Especially in the colour of the breast, a feature not mentioned in *The Handbook*, information from I. C. T. Nisbet supports my identification. There is one previous record of the species from Scotland.

*Similar species.* I am too familiar with *Erolia minuta* and *temmincki* to confuse the Isle of May bird with either. From other American species of *Erolia* with which it is liable to be confused (*minutilla*, *bairdii* and *mauri*) it seems to be distinguished by the *call-note* and *swollen tip to the bill*. In addition from the American Stint *minutilla* by leg colour, lack of streaking on breast, buff breast colouring only on sides, and white feathering in dorsal V. From Baird's Sandpiper *bairdii* by greyish, rather than buffy, head back pattern, size and lack of streaking on breast. The Western Sandpiper *mauri* is rather a harder problem, but, in addition to the bill shape and call-note mentioned above, it lacked the warm brown nape and chestnut in the scapulars mentioned as diagnostic by Nisbet.

I would like to express my gratitude to I. C. T. Nisbet for the use of his field notes on American "peeps".

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

#### LITTLE GULL OFF EAST LOTHIAN COAST IN SUMMER

On the way to the Bass Rock on 6th August 1958 I saw a Little Gull *Larus minutus* in full adult plumage.

E. A. R. ENNION.

#### COLLARED DOVES IN MORAYSHIRE

The population of Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto* in Morayshire has now, 17th September 1958, increased to seven, four having been hatched this year, and I rather suspect that the old hen is sitting again. They came through the winter extremely well and seem to be quite at home. An interesting point is that I have never seen them more than 200 yards away, and they seem to mingle with the Wood Pigeons *Columba palumbus* on very amicable terms.

A. ADAM.

#### LITTLE OWL NESTING IN SCOTLAND

Mr William Fergie, the local postman, said that on 1st July 1958, and also on three days of the previous week, he had seen a very small owl near Edrom in Berwickshire. Together with my friend W. T. Murray, I immediately followed up this statement and on the same day (1st July) found a nest in an old ash tree about four feet from the ground. In it were an

adult female Little Owl *Athene noctua* and two almost fully fledged chicks. The nest was at the bottom of a cavity two feet deep and the tree was growing by the side of a quiet dis-used country lane. The ground surrounding the site consisted mainly of open fields where grew a variety of crops (oats, barley, turnips and potatoes). The only trees around were a few growing on the side of the lane. Armed with leather gloves, we removed the birds from the nest and ringed all three. The female (I suspect it was the female as it had a very obvious brood-patch) was remarkably quiet for an owl, and throughout the ringing and examination remained very calm: but the two chicks were the very opposite, scratching and snapping their beaks. One of them hissed like a cat. Inside the nest we found three pellets, which consisted entirely of the wing-cases of beetles *Carabus* spp. as well as the remains of an adult Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum*.

The plumage corresponded exactly to published descriptions. The only plumage difference between the adult and young was in the underparts which in the latter were grey-white and unmarked. The eyes of the adult were brighter, being lemon-coloured and very clear; this, and the flat forehead gave the bird a very fierce expression. The eyes of the young were greyer.

The birds were also seen by Sydney J. Clarke, A. Cowieson, W. M. Logan Home, R. S. Murray and M. K. Young.

Breeding of the Little Owl in Scotland had been expected but this is the first nest to be found.

W. MURRAY.

#### SHORT-EARED OWL NESTING IN MORAYSHIRE

Towards the end of May 1939 I found the nest of the Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, containing six eggs, on the east side of Birkenhill, near New Elgin, Morayshire. The nest was among heather, just clear of the plantation of Scots Pine which borders the marsh on the east side. The bird sat on four eggs for well over a week, when these suddenly disappeared. During the months of May and June in 1938 and 1939 a pair of Short-eared Owls were seen frequently in this vicinity.

There seems to be no previous breeding record for Morayshire.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

#### HOOPOES IN NORTH PERTH AND WEST INVERNESS

On 30th September 1958 N. Buttercase noticed an unusual bird at Borlick Farm, Aberfeldy. Subsequently it was seen daily in the vicinity of the steading. The weather at the time was unusually wet, even by this summer's standards, and the

bird appeared to be lethargic and distressed. On 3rd October, while perched in a tree, it allowed itself to be caught and it was identified as a Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. I saw it the next day, when it had revived somewhat and was said to have devoured some earthworms which had been provided. It was arranged for the Hoopoe to be freed when the weather improved, but unfortunately it died during the night of 4th October. I am indebted to A. Buttercase for bringing this occurrence to my notice.

There are a few old records of the Hoopoe in North Perth, but I have traced none for recent years, nor does it appear ever to have been detected previously in the Aberfeldy district or upper Strathtay.

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

In the early afternoon of 11th October 1958 I was being motored by a friend, Mr Russell Broom, up Glenloy, Inverness-shire, when a bird flew up from the side of the road which I instantly recognised as a Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. It alighted in an alder tree within twenty-five feet of the car and we watched it for about fifteen minutes. During this period it frequently erected its crest when the black tips showed very prominently. The very distinctive pattern of the black and white barring on the wings and tail was a very striking feature and contrasted strongly with the pinkish buff colour of the head, neck and breast. The long slender curved bill was also a distinctive feature of this bird, which I do not think could be confused in the field with any other British species. I was able to make a few quick sketches during the period of our observation.

J. A. ANDERSON.

(In *The Glasgow Herald* for 10th October 1958, Mr James Foster, giving details of identification, reports a Hoopoe from the Loch Treig area on 29th September, and one on 2nd, 3rd and 4th October from the Strone area, north of Fort William. Mr Foster suggests that these two records could apply to the same bird, and it is possible that Mr Anderson's bird was also the same.—Ed.)

#### WRYNECK IN SOUTH-EAST SUTHERLAND

As I was walking over an area of rough ground on the Dornoch golf-course, on the afternoon of 3rd September 1958, a slender brownish bird flitted up from the dense whin cover and perched on the topmost wire of the fence bordering the railway-line. For the moment I took the bird to be a Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum*, owing, perhaps, to its rather elongated shape and passerine attitude when perched, but a closer examination revealed quickly the distinctive plumage markings of a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*.

A minute or so later the bird flew on to the post of a fence, where it assumed a more upright posture, characteristic of bird-book portraits of the species. The outstanding details noted were the dark streaks extending from the nape through the mantle, the barred underparts and the rather long tail.

On that date and during the preceding few days weather conditions were highly favourable to migrational drift across the North Sea and many Wrynecks were recorded on the east coast of Britain.

D. MACDONALD.

### CRESTED TITS IN MORAYSHIRE

On several occasions during the months of October, November and January in 1945, 1946 and 1947, I encountered Crested Tits *Parus cristatus* among the Scots Pines and on the heather covered moor bordering the Spynie Canal, near Lossiemouth, Morayshire. I never saw less than four nor more than six, usually in company with mixed parties of Blue Tits *Parus caeruleus*, Coal Tits *Parus ater*, Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* and Tree Creepers *Certhia familiaris*. Once, on 12th January 1947, as I was waiting for the evening flight of duck in a dug-out quite close to the sea, a party of six Crested Tits came by feeding among the stunted heather. There was not a tree for at least a quarter of a mile.

I have never yet seen Crested Tits in or near the Spynie woods at any other time of the year and I feel that there may be a regular annual local migration of Speyside birds to this area during the winter.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

### BLACKCAP NESTING IN MORAYSHIRE

During the month of June 1939 I found the nest of a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, containing five eggs, on the Birkenhill, near New Elgin, Morayshire. The nest was situated about two and a half feet up in the centre of a clump of scrub birch with heather growing to eighteen inches. Two eggs were removed, one I regret to say by myself (at that time an enthusiastic egg-collector), the other by a friend.

The bird continued to sit and in due course three young hatched and reached the fledgling stage. At the time I found the nest I had never seen a Blackcap before, but during the fourteen days or so that I visited it regularly I saw both birds at close range on many occasions. Usually I had practically to remove the hen by force. From these experiences and my later familiarity with the species there can be no doubt as to the bird's identity.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.



## LESSER WHITETHROATS IN SKYE AND WESTER ROSS

At 0745 hours, on 3rd June 1957, between Portree and Armadale, Isle of Skye, we both saw and heard singing a Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*.

JOHN IZZARD.  
H. P. MEDHURST.

On 6th and 7th June 1957, at Achintraid, Loch Kishorn, Wester Ross, I saw a Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* and heard it singing.

P. W. G. GUNN.

(These observers have attached a satisfactory description of the Lesser Whitethroat's plumage and song.—ED.)

## SUBALPINE WARBLER ON THE ISLE OF MAY

A female Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantillans* was ringed on the Isle of May on 16th July 1958 and retrapped on 22nd July. In the field it looked a very small almost mouse-like skulking bird, with rather dark drab-brown wings set off against lighter, greyer back and top of head. General impression was not unlike a small, slim Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca*, lacking the dark ear covers and with more buff on the flanks and breast. A remarkably close field view would have been required to make out the red orbital ring or the white moustachial streak as distinct from the buffish white of the throat.

In the hand it lacked the bulk of a Common Whitethroat *S. communis* or even of a Lesser. This was confirmed by a weight, after a week presumably spent on the island, of 8.3 gms. The red orbital ring (note also the light *Sylvia* iris), wing formula, measurements, and plumage colour together added up to a Subalpine. The patchy state of the plumage and worn moulting tail feather indicated an adult or first summer bird, perhaps the latter from the presence of only slight buffish traces on the throat. It was in very poor condition, and unfortunately died on 22nd or 23rd July. A full description was recorded from which the following details have been taken. Wing measurement 55-56 mm.; 1st primary approximately one millimetre shorter than the longest primary covert. The bill was rather broad at the base, tapering to a fine point. The colour of the orbital ring was between brick-red and orange-red; it was complete but very narrow below the eye. The iris was light yellowish brown. The upper parts were mainly grey brown, paler and browner on the ear coverts, darker and browner on wings and tail; the outer tail feathers dull white on outer webs and rather prominently

tipped with whitish cream. The tail was very slightly graduated. The rather indistinct whitish moustachial stripe extended well back below the ear coverts. The sides of the breast and flanks were suffused with buffish brown, the centre of the breast and belly whitish. There was a very slight tinge of cinnamon across the breast. The legs were dull pink, straw yellow on the hind edge and on the soles of the feet.

It is impossible to say whether this bird was a new arrival on the island on 16th July, though a Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* evidently was. Previously to the 14th the island had not been manned by ornithologists for several weeks and in any event the warbler might have remained undetected among the lighthouse-keepers' potato crop. The only previous occurrence for the Isle of May is of a male recorded by Baxter and Rintoul on 30th May 1924. The skin of the present bird is in the Royal Scottish Museum.

DONALD WATSON.

#### ARCTIC WARBLER IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 2nd September 1958, a day of strong winds from an easterly quarter, with banks of mist rolling in from the sea, I was watching a number of drift migrants which I found skulking in or near a patch of dead thistles among the coastal marram dunes of Sands of Forvie, Aberdeenshire. There were Whinchats *Saxicola rubetra*, Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe*, Redstarts *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*, Meadow Pipits *Anthus Pratensis* and many Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus*. While I was checking on a pair of the latter apparently feeding among the dead vegetation, an unusual *Phylloscopus* presented itself on the top of a thistle about five yards away. I saw immediately that this bird had a fairly striking wing bar, and with the aid of 7 x 50 binoculars I took a mental description of the bird as it remained in full view for about half a minute. It then disappeared, and it was several minutes before it again appeared in a similar position for a similar length of time. This was the last time that I saw it, for its skulking habits made it impossible to isolate and I lost it among the marram dunes.

I noted then the following description: About the size of a Willow Warbler, but apparently slightly larger; this perhaps due to the brightness of its plumage. The underparts were off-white with noticeable traces of lemon on the breast. Back from mantle to tail was brownish green, grading to distinct green on wings—more green than *P. trochilus*. Prominent eyestripe and single wing-bar, both creamy yellow. Legs appeared dark, but colour noted accurately. This description seems to fit that of the Arctic Warbler. Williamson (*British*

*Birds* 45: 415) mentions that raising the crown feathers into a crest is a good field characteristic of the Arctic Warbler. I distinctly remember my bird doing this on one occasion, but I did not think of noting it at the time.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

(This record has been approved by Mr Kenneth Williamson. It is the first for Aberdeenshire, the Dee area and the mainland of Scotland. It should be remarked that the first week in September is the time when Arctic Warblers have been most often observed in Britain, and that in 1958 this week saw a numerous influx of drift migrants on the east coast of Britain.—ED).

### ALBINO PIPIT ON THE ISLE OF MAY

On the evening of 1st August 1958 my wife and I briefly saw an albino pipit among a gathering of Rock Pipits *Anthus spinoletta petrosus* around the Low Light, Isle of May. The general colour was a beautiful pale cream, with traces of brown on the wings. At the time I considered it a Rock Pipit, but the following week it was watched at close quarters by Mr Kenneth Williamson, who inclined to the view that it was a Meadow Pipit *A. pratensis*. Short of examination in the hand he thought the species could not be positively stated. The pale colour perhaps exaggerated the size—it certainly looked at least as big as a Rock Pipit. It was a charming and surprising vision among its drab companions, which pursued it relentlessly.

DONALD WATSON.

### ROSE-COLOURED STARLING IN WIGTOWNSHIRE

On 14th and 15th August 1958 my neighbours in Wigtown saw "a queer-looking bird among the Starlings". After they had described it to me, I saw it on the 18th. Having put food on the bird table that morning, I stood by the window to watch; the Starlings came down as usual in hordes, and then I saw the "queer-looking" one. It settled on the ground below the bird table and ate the food which fell: this was wet bread with oameal stirred in. I would be, at the window, about nine feet from the table and I watched it for at least two minutes.

The back and breast of the bird were pale pink, against which the wings and head looked very dark. It seemed more bulky than the common Starlings, but that may have been because of the marking, and also the crest, which enlarged the appearance of the head. The beak seemed shorter and of a neutral shade, certainly not yellowish: legs similar. I saw

the bird in flight later the same day, and then not again.

This is the first record of the Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus* in Wigtownshire.

MARY MCKINNA.

### LAPLAND BUNTINGS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

It seems desirable to record the occurrence of five Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* on 23rd January 1953, near the point where the River Ythan is joined by the Tarty Burn, north of Newburgh village, Aberdeenshire.

During the forenoon of that day I walked up the south side of the Ythan towards Tarty, disturbing as I did so, small parties of Corn Buntings *Emberiza calandra*, Yellowhammers *Emberiza citrinella*, Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* and Greenfinches *Chloris chloris*. I then noticed an unusual bunting alight for a moment on a fencing wire about twenty yards away. I moved closer and several of these buntings flew up with a party of Corn Buntings. They quickly detached themselves and alighted on the ground near a patch of dead Rose-bay Willowherb *Chamaenerion augustifolium*. In this area I watched them in a good light with 7 x 50 binoculars for five minutes, at distances varying from two to fifteen yards. I readily identified them as Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* with the help of *The Popular Handbook*, which I carried with me. I heard the call-note described in the literature as *ticky-ticky-teu* when I put these birds to flight. I also heard two notes which I would describe as *tzit* and *tyou*. There were two types of plumage involved: Type A. Similar in size to Yellow-hammer *Emberiza citrinella*. Upper parts mid-brown with faint chestnut tinge, streaked with dark brown. Buff tips to secondaries and wing-coverts gave impression of faint wing-bars. Chestnut collar very pronounced, more so than in *Handbook* plate. Buff to light brown stripe just over or through eye extending to nape. White chin. Necklace of dark brown or blackish streaks on sides of neck and more concentrated on upper breast. Belly and under parts white. Some slight streaking on sides of belly. Bill was yellow with brownish tinge. Legs dark brown. Type B. Both in similar plumage. Appeared like female Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* except for slight trace of chestnut collar, and lightish crown stripe. A general brownness which I noted may suggest immature birds.

Wynne-Edwards (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 60 and *antea* 1: 32) records a Lapland Bunting from the Moor of Forvie, just over a mile away, in September 1956.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

## SNOW BUNTINGS FEEDING ON MOOR RUSH

Around Braemar, where Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax niv-alis* are generally common winter visitors, a favourite winter food seems to be the seeds of the Moor Rush *Juncus squar-rosus*. Often I have seen their unmistakable spurred tracks all over the snow wherever there are patches of rush heads sticking through, and several times I have watched flocks of them feeding there.

V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS.

## TREE SPARROWS NESTING IN AYRSHIRE

During the breeding season of 1957 I made some visits to that area of northern Ayrshire from which I reported Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* present in the spring and autumn of 1954 (*Scot. Nat.* 67: 71) and was successful in getting breeding records.

Nests were found on the following dates: 27th May, two; 2nd June, one; and 15th July, one. All were in holes in beech trees, the common hedgerow tree of the district, and all contained young. One of the nests found on 27th May was, on 7th July, discovered to be re-occupied, and what was probably the same pair of birds was once more carrying in food to the young. Thus a total of five broods are known to have been in the four nests found. What proportion successfully fledged I do not know, but a number of fledged young were seen, ten or twelve in all, mostly being fed or importuning adults for food.

All nests were in the parish of Dreghorn: three, including the double-brooded one, close to one another near Overton, and the fourth about a mile from these, near Dykehead. They were found without a great deal of effort and, as other Tree Sparrows were frequently seen in the area, I got the impression that only lack of time and opportunity prevented the certain discovery of more nests.

L. A. URQUHART.

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### *Requests for Information*

As is known, this is a "Crossbill year" and all information concerning Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra*, from areas where they do not normally occur, will be welcome.

The Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* appears to have been unusually frequent during the autumn of 1958, and records are requested.

Any records indicative of extension of breeding range on the part of the Carrion Crow *Corvus corone corone* and Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* are also asked for.

## Spring Observations on the Manx Shearwater and Small Petrels on St Kilda and Rhum

J. MORTON BOYD and PETER WORMELL

Large numbers of Manx Shearwaters *Procellaria puffinus* were seen flying over the sea off St Kilda on 17th April 1958, at about 1700 hours GMT. On the night of 21st April the first shearwaters were heard calling from the rocks on the Carn Mor at 2115 hours GMT, and birds began to arrive from the sea about thirty minutes later. A net set up round a boulder caught six in the space of fifteen minutes (2155 to 2210 hours GMT). Thereafter activity waned, although there were always some birds flying and calling. Calling from the rocks continued at fairly even intensity until 2230 hours GMT, when J.M.B. left. During this visit Leach's Petrels *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* were heard or seen. One Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus* was calling in a *cleitan* (dry-stone cell) in the access gully to the Carn Mor.

The Carn Mor was visited again on 22nd April, when activity followed a somewhat similar pattern but was later by about thirty minutes, probably because of a clear sky and a moon. Only one Manx Shearwater was caught. At the peak of arrival from the sea, activity did not seem to be as intense as the night before, but there was much the same amount of calling from the rocks. No Leach's Petrels nor Storm Petrels were seen or heard. On 26th April activity was much reduced owing to the stillness and brightness of the night. Two Manx Shearwaters were ringed. No small petrels were seen or heard. On 3rd May, a dark calm night, the Manx Shearwater activity was fairly intense and the activity of the Leach's Petrels was striking. Although the latter were calling loudly and very frequently from the air, none was calling from the burrows. The numbers in flight were considerable and the birds could be clearly seen overhead.

It is reported from the Isle of Eigg that Manx Shearwaters arrive at the nesting areas there every year about the 19th of February. The exact date of arrival on Rhum in 1958 was not recorded but shearwaters were heard on most nights after 16th March, flying in over Kinloch towards Hallival and Askival. When these peaks were visited by P.W. on 6th April, snowdrifts still lay on parts of the shearwater breeding-grounds, but several birds were calling from their burrows. The shearwaters had not dug through deep snow to get to their holes, but tunnels which had been only partially blocked



Looking up Glen Harris to late February snows on the summits of Hallival and Askival in the Isle of Rhum. On those mountain tops are situated large colonies of Manx Shearwaters well over 2000 ft. above sea level.

*Photograph by courtesy of THE TIMES.*

had been cleared by the pushing and scratching of the birds.

The greatest concentration of burrows on Rhum is on the north-facing slope of Hallival between 2,000 and 2,300 feet. This area was visited on the night of 11th April when P. W. arrived at about 2200 hours GMT, to find much activity. Many birds were calling from their holes and flying overhead. A number of birds were sitting together in pairs, side by side, at the entrance to or just inside their burrows. 46 were caught and ringed between 2200 hours on 11th and 0100 hours on 12th April. Later visits to this same area were less successful. On 30th April, together with Dr W. J. Eggeling, P.W. found little activity. It was a clear calm night, and only six birds were ringed. The first record of an egg was not until mid-May.

Lockley (1942) found the first Manx Shearwaters returning to the Skokholm breeding grounds on 2nd February. It would appear that the first arrivals on Rhum and Eigg are about a fortnight later. Lockley found, however, that the shearwaters failed to arrive while the island was snow-covered and in the grip of cold east winds between mid-February and early March. They returned immediately at the onset of warmer weather and subsequent occasional white frosts were not enough to stop their nightly arrival. The presence of shearwaters on the summits of Hallival and Askival in the wintry conditions of early April 1958 would seem to be unusual.

*The Handbook* (Witherby *et al.* 1940) puts the arrival time of Leach's Petrels at the breeding grounds between "April and June". This seems accurate for St Kilda where, in 1958, it is fairly certain that the species arrived in numbers some time between 27th April and 3rd May, although individual birds may have been earlier. The Storm Petrel, according to *The Handbook*, arrives at its nesting places from the fourth week of April to early May. The bird heard on St Kilda on 21st April was probably therefore one of the first to return in 1958.

### References

- R. M. Lockley. *Shearwaters*. London, 1942.  
H. F. Witherby *et al.* *The Handbook of British Birds*, Vol. IV.  
London, 1940.



## The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

### REPORT OF COUNCIL — SESSION XXII 1957 - 1958

The Council have the honour to submit the following Report for Session XXI which was adopted at the 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Club at Perth on 25th October, 1958 :—

**MEMBERSHIP:** It is gratifying to be able to report a slight increase in Club Membership this year. Comparative figures are as follows :—

	31/8/54	31/8/55	31/8/56	31/8/57	31/8/58
Ordinary	804	842	755	723	738
Junior	101	121	132	132	148
Honorary	9	11	11	11	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>897</b>

**COUNCIL MEETINGS:** Four meetings of Council were held during the Session and much important business transacted.

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** A full programme of Lectures was carried out during the winter in 5 Branches. The Council wishes to express its thanks to all the Lecturers who gave so freely of their services, and would also like to thank Branch Officials for arrangements and hospitality.

**EXCURSIONS:** Apart from Excursions organised by Branches to various places of interest during the summer months, the Club also organised a weekend Excursion to Aviemore in May.

**REPRESENTATION:** Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards officially represented the Club at the 12th International Ornithological Congress at Helsinki in June. Mr George Kerr represented the Club at an inaugural meeting in Glasgow of the Council of Nature which the Club Council has decided to support. The Secretary continues to represent the Club on the Council and Scientific Advisory Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology, thus maintaining useful liaison with ornithologists in the south.

**"SCOTTISH BIRDS":** Members will have learned with regret that the publishers of "The Scottish Naturalist" had been forced to discontinue publication of this old-established journal at the end of 1957 owing to lack of support from subscribers. After much deliberation, the Council has decided to issue a quarterly magazine—"Scottish Birds"—free to all Members of the Club on the understanding that the Club will agree to the subscriptions being increased from 20s to 25s for Members, and from 5s to 7s 6d for Junior Members. (See Minutes of 22nd Annual General Meeting). We are fortunate in persuading Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn to edit this Journal and it is hoped that it will form a useful link for the whole membership of the Club. It is the earnest hope of the Council that "Scottish Birds" will follow in the fine traditions established in the past by "The Scottish Naturalist".

**SCOTTISH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE:** This important Committee meets once a year to adjudicate on all records published annually. Reports have formerly appeared in "The Scottish Naturalist," but will now appear in "Scottish Birds". Our Hon. President Dr E. V. Baxter acts as Convener of the Committee.

**CLUB LIBRARY:** Our collection of books continues to expand and accommodation for them in the Secretary's Office is now presenting an acute problem. During the year we received a substantial addition as a result of the Bequest of the late Mr James Bartholomew of Glenorchard. Members are reminded that books can be consulted during Office hours; and where duplicates are available, may be borrowed.

**GENERAL:** To conclude, we can safely say that the Club continues to flourish, and plays an important part in the development of ornithology in Scotland.

For the Council,

CHARLES G. CONNELL,  
President.

## Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting

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The Twenty-second Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Museum and Art Gallery, Perth, on Saturday, 25th October, 1958, at 6.15 p.m. There was an attendance of over one hundred members presided over by Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting held at North Berwick on 26th October, 1957, were read and approved.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL:** This was submitted by the President and adopted. (See preceding page).

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Hon. Treasurer made a brief report on the position of the Club's finances. Attention was drawn to the fact that during the year we had received a legacy of £100 from the late Mr James Bartholomew. The Accounts were approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:** Mr Arthur Walker, C.A., was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing Session.

**HON. TREASURER:** Mr A. G. S. Bryson, C.A., who had served the Club as Hon Treasurer for the past twelve years had informed the Council that he did not wish his name to go forward for re-election. On the motion of the President, Mr Bryson was accorded a very hearty vote of thanks for his outstanding services to the Club. The Council recommendation that Mr Robert Hillcoat, C.A., be elected in his place was unanimously approved.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Mr William Austin and Miss Winifred U. Flower, being due to retire from membership of the Council by rotation, were accorded a hearty vote of thanks for their services. The Council recommendation that Mr A. G. S. Bryson and Lt. Col. J. P. Grant, Younger of Rothiemurchus be elected was approved.

**AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION:** Due notice having been given to all Members in the Agenda, the following amendments to the Constitution, recommended by the Council, were unanimously approved:—

(a) That under Membership 3 (h) "Any Member whose subscription is three years in arrears shall cease to belong to the Club", the words "is three years in arrears" be deleted and the following substituted:—"due on 1st October is not paid by the following 31st March".

(b) That under Membership 3 (e) "The Annual Subscription shall be £1; or 5s in the case of members who are under 21 years of age or in the case

of University Undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscription falls due in any year", the words "£1; or 5s" be altered to read "25s; or 7s 6d". (This amendment was approved on the understanding that the Club would publish a quarterly magazine "Scottish Birds" issued free to all Members).

**BRITISH TRUST FOR ORNITHOLOGY:** Dr Bruce Campbell (Secretary of the B.T.O.) drew the attention of Club Members to the various co-operative enquiries organised by the Trust. He mentioned that the response to the Black-headed Gull Enquiry had been most disappointing; and very little information had been received on the enquiry on Inland Breeding Habitats of the Oystercatcher.

**VOTES OF THANKS:** The Meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman on the motion of Dr E. V. Baxter.

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### WEEKEND MEETING AT DUMFRIES

The British Trust for Ornithology will hold the Annual Conference of Regional Representatives in the County Hotel, Dumfries, from Friday 30th January to Sunday 1st February 1959. Members of the S.O.C. are invited to attend the open meetings held during the weekend.

On Saturday morning, after the official opening, Donald Watson will talk on "The Birds of Dumfries-shire and Galloway" and an exhibition of his paintings will be on view during the Conference. After coffee there will be Excursions by private cars until tea-time. The Business Meeting of Representatives will take place before Dinner, after which Hugh Boyd (The Wildfowl Trust) will give a talk on "How many Geese?". Sunday will be devoted to an all-day Excursion to the Solway where it is usually possible to see seven races of geese at this time of year.

The Council hope that this weekend meeting will be well supported by members of the Club. Anyone wishing to attend should inform Dr Bruce Campbell, The British Trust for Ornithology, 2 King Edward Street, Oxford, who will supply full details.

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### BOOK NOTICE

"Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust: Annual Report for 1957". (Mr George Waterston, Edinburgh. 5s).

Supporters of the Trust will be pleased to note a marked improvement in the financial affairs of the Observatory. The position is however still far from satisfactory, and an appeal is made for more subscribers—"Friends of Fair Isle", at a guinea per annum.

During the summer, the Observatory catered for a record number of visitors, and the new Hostel arrangements have functioned smoothly.

Some notable rarities were identified during the year, including an immature Mediterranean Gull (first Scottish record); an adult male Black-throated Thrush; a Thrush-Nightingale; and a Serin. During the year, 2,295 birds of 87 species were ringed. Among recoveries, the most spectacular was that of a 1954 Arctic Skua chick caught on a fishing vessel off Mossamedes, Angola, on November 3rd 1957. This is the second recovery of this species from south-west Africa.

Peter and Angela Davis are to be congratulated on an auspicious start to their administration of the Observatory.

M.I.W.

## The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

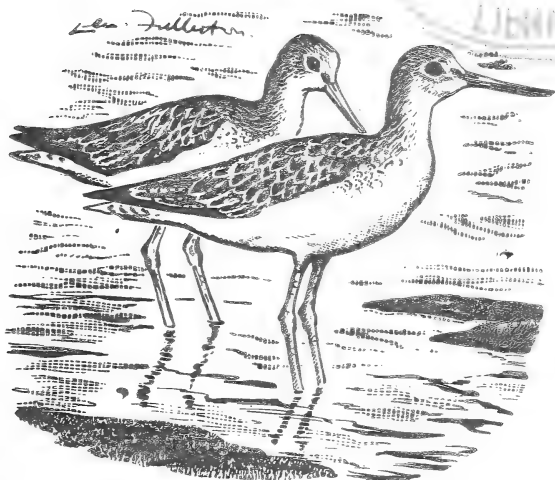
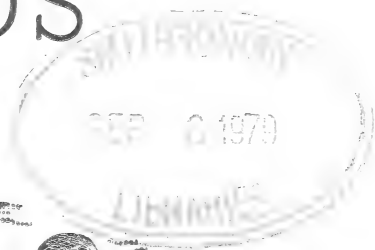
INCOME :—	REVENUE ACCOUNT	Year to 31/8/58	Year to 31/8/57
Subscriptions received	... ..	£778 15 0	£755
Add: Received in advance at 31/8/57	... ..	10 0 0	14
		£788 15 0	£769
Less: Received in advance at 31/8/58	... ..	10 5 0	10
		£778 10 0	£759
Income from Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment		40 5 10	40
Savings Bank Interest	... ..	12 10 2	12
Badge Sales	... ..	5 12 6	5
Eric Hosking Exhibition Net Proceeds	... ..	9 13 4	—
		£846 11 10	£816
<b>EXPENDITURE :—</b>			
Hobbies Exhibition expenses	... ..	£0 0 0	£4
Lantern Expenses	... ..	16 1 0	19
Lecturers' Expenses	... ..	62 9 7	72
Rents	... ..	61 15 7	71
Postages, printing, etc.			
Less: Donations, etc. £15 13 9	... ..	173 13 7	183
Subscriptions to I.C.B.P., B.T.O. and R.S.P.B.		4 2 0	4
Conference and Conversazione Net Cost	... ..	28 0 1	6
Fee for Secretarial Services	... ..	400 0 0	400
Library Shelving	... ..	12 1 6	10
		£88 8 6	£47
Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet	... ..	88 8 6	47
		£846 11 10	£816
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>			
		As at 31/8/58	As at 31/8/57
Surplus at 31/8/57	... ..	£493 7 9	£447
Add: Surplus for year per Revenue Account	... ..	88 8 6	46
Add: Legacy from J. Bartholomew	... ..	100 0 0	—
		£681 16 3	£493
Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment (the free annual income is available for the advancement of ornithology)		1000 0 0	1000
		£1681 16 3	£1493
Cash in Edinburgh Savings Bank	... ..	£580 3 8	£468
Cash in Royal Bank of Scotland	... ..	111 16 5	30
Cash in hand	... ..	0 1 2	5
		£692 1 3	£503
Less: Subscriptions received in advance	... ..	10 5 0	10
		£681 16 3	£493
£1,151 3¼% War Stock at cost (Endowment)	... ..	1000 0 0	1000
		£1681 16 3	£1493

EDINBURGH, 30th September, 1958.—I have examined the foregoing Revenue Account and Balance Sheet of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the year ending 31st August, 1958, and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

ARTHUR WALKER, Chartered Accountant.

70  
4543  
birds

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I. No. 3*

*Spring 1959*

Reprinted 1973

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time of which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland".

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Hon. Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

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### CLUB LIBRARY

The Club Library is now housed in the Secretary's Office at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2. The collection has recently been augmented by several gifts, and the Council appeals to Members to donate books and periodicals which they may wish to dispose of. We have no volumes of the "Ibis" prior to 1944. The Library is open during office hours for reference. Books or magazines, of which we have duplicate copies, can be obtained on loan.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. 1 No. 3

Reprinted 1973

Spring 1959

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW  
and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design  
(Greenshanks) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

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## Editorial

**I**F the success of a periodical can be measured by the number of contributions received, then we should be pleased with the progress of *Scottish Birds*, for, in the past quarter, the bulk of material has been so large that we may be forced to print more of it in small print than we would wish. However, without in any way criticising the value of the records received, it is impossible not to reflect that too many of them come from too few places—that is to say that places known to be “good for birds” are visited disproportionately often, like Aberlady Bay, while large areas of Scotland (we might take Wigtownshire as an example) are virtually unexplored ornithologically. That new-fangled petrol-driven machine, the motor-car, which allows the bird-watcher to proceed rapidly from one “good place” to another, is perhaps a hindrance rather than a help to a knowledge of the birds of the country. Much more is seen by the observer on foot, especially if he is careful to walk with the sun at his back, and his observations of an area will always be the most thorough and comprehensive because he moves slowly. He is the tortoise of the fable.

## The Late Professor-Emeritus James Ritchie

Scottish Ornithology and the Club has suffered a great loss in the death on 19th October 1958 of our founder member James Ritchie, C.B.E., M.A., D.Sc., F.R.S.E.

Ritchie was essentially a naturalist; but his interests were wide—ranging from archaeology through the whole field of biology. He was also an accomplished artist, producing many lovely water-colour sketches of his beloved Highlands.

For nine years he was Keeper of the Natural History Department of the Royal Scottish Museum; for six years Regius Professor of Natural History in the University of Aberdeen; and for the last sixteen years of his active life, Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh. The publication of his book "The Influence of Man on Animal Life in Scotland: A Study of Faunal Evolution" in 1920 had a great influence on the growth of the study of animal ecology and of its applications to conservation in which he was always keenly interested. He was Chairman of the Scottish Wildlife Conservation Committee appointed by the Secretary of State which published in 1949 a list of recommended Nature Reserves in Scotland, and was one of the initial members of the Scottish Committee of the Nature Conservancy. He took a leading part in the work of the Royal Scottish Zoological Society, being a member of its first Council in 1909 and later becoming Vice-President. He edited *The Scottish Naturalist* for fourteen years.

It was as a Chairman of meetings that Ritchie's great gifts of knowledge, charm, firmness, tact and humour got full rein, and he presided with distinction over meetings of the Advisory Committee on the Protection of Birds for Scotland; the Duddingston Loch Bird Sanctuary Committee; and the Royal Society of Edinburgh of which he was President for the last four years of his life. He was a Trustee of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and never missed a meeting. He also took a keen interest in the Isle of May Bird Observatory. His collection of books on ornithology has been bequeathed to our Club Library.

As Professor C. M. Yonge has said—"No one in his generation has done more to describe and to interpret the natural history of this country."  
G.W.

## THE EDINBURGH BIRD BULLETIN

In these days of ever-increasing professionalism it is pleasant to recall that the *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* was born as a thoroughly amateurish undergraduate experiment. In 1950 there was a large band of young ornithologists, mostly recently



returned from the Forces, who were extremely active in and around Edinburgh, and Stewart Kirkaldy, now a general practitioner in Canada, was the moving spirit in dreaming up an intimate local magazine which would encourage members to keep in touch with each other and to record events which, though not remarkable enough to merit publication in the national magazines, would help build up a clearer picture of the bird life in a comparatively small area.

The first number appeared on 30th November 1950, and right from the start it received the most encouraging support from local members of the S.O.C. Since then its history has been one of steady expansion. Stewart Kirkaldy stayed long enough only to see the first year of publication. After his departure the late Commander Tom Yeoman took over the post of advisory editor and continued to act in this capacity for the next four years in spite of being almost completely incapacitated by illness. Under his influence the magazine came to acquire a wider reputation for reliability which considerably exceeded the lighthearted aspirations of its founders. Until 1955 the *Bulletin* had remained a purely private venture, but pressure of work made it impossible to continue this arrangement, and in December of that year it was formally handed over to the S.O.C. and George Waterston very gallantly added the responsibilities of Editor to his many other tasks. After two years he in turn handed over to Andrew Macmillan, who has been responsible for the magazine's eighth and last year of life—and this seems an excellent opportunity of paying a most sincere tribute to the thorough competence with which he has discharged his duties.

It may seem sad that a magazine which is fulfilling such a useful purpose should go out of publication at a time when its quality and success have never been more assured. But many of its functions will be taken over by *Scottish Birds* and it would be difficult to avoid either duplication or competition if the S.O.C. were to run two magazines for general and local consumption. It may also be recorded here that one of the main objects of the *Bulletin* when it was founded was to provide a pilot magazine which would pave the way for and be incorporated in a club publication.

So the *Bulletin* may also claim to be an ancestor of *Scottish Birds*. One may be allowed to hope (with some confidence) that the child may once again prove to be father of the man.

D.G.A.

(Mr D. G. Andrew, the author of this notice, has with characteristic modesty suppressed his own name. He bore a great share of the editing in the first years of the *Bulletin's* life and was largely responsible for its accuracy and for the additions made by it to our knowledge of the ornithology of the south-east of Scotland.—ED.)

## MIGRANTS AT ST KILDA IN 1957 AND 1958

W. J. EGGELING

This note covers the periods 16th April to 25th September 1957 and 16th April to 1st September 1958. It has been compiled from the daily census book in which observers (mainly Nature Conservancy staff or representatives) record the birds they see. Only migrants or visitors are dealt with, not breeding birds. Species not previously reported from St Kilda are indicated by asterisks. All the observations were made on Hirta.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Procellaria grisea*. One on 1st September 1958.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. One on 14th September 1957.

HERON *Ardea cinerea*. One on 19th-21st May 1957. One on 7th and 8th July. Recurring notices of a bird between 14th July and 7th August, when one was picked up in a very wasted condition. One on 13th September 1957.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. In 1957 one on 19th June, two on 23rd June, and five on 8th December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*. In 1957, one on 13th May and two from 18th to 20th September. In 1958, two on 2nd May, one on 23rd May, and one on 22nd August.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*. In 1957, three on 24th and two on 25th April, one on 22nd May, one on 1st July and one on 24th September. Four on 30th April 1958.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*. In 1958 two on 30th April, one on 30th August.

\*TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. A drake from 11th to 22nd and 30th to 21st May 1958.

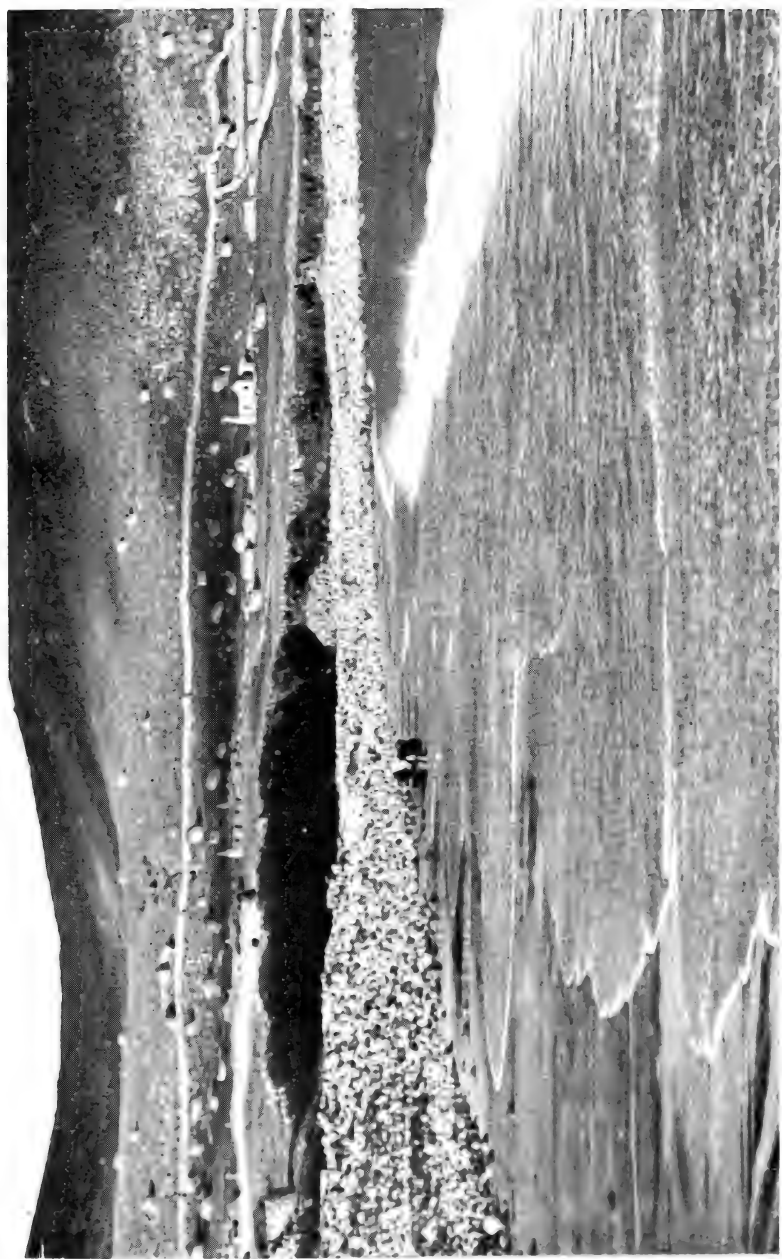
\*SCAUP *Aythya marila*. An exhausted duck, picked up on 19th May 1957, died next day.

\*COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. In 1957, one from 19th to 25th and 29th to 31st May; one 1st to 4th June; one 15th and 16th September. Two on 27th and one on 28th August 1958.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*. In 1957 one from 21st to 25th May, one on 3rd June. In 1958, one from 6th to 16th May, one on 24th and 28th June, one on 2nd July.

GREY LAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. One on 8th May 1957.

\*BEAN GOOSE *Anser arvensis*. One on 15th September 1957 was identified at very close quarters by C. Fisher, H. G. Brownlow and K. Williamson. According to the R.A.F. garrison, it was joined in late October by two other "grey geese", all three remaining until mid-December.



Village area, St Kilda, in 1952, showing boulder beach, snipe-frequented fields and scattered cliffs. Twites and St Kilda Wrens nest on the erosion scarp behind the beach. In 1957 and 1958, mist nets caught many migrating White Wagtails and Meadow Pipits at its base; a Mar-ly Sandpiper in front of the Factor's House (where observers are accommodated) and a Nightingale among the boulders in the foreground.

*Photograph by J. Morton Boyd.*

\*PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. At least 110 on 25th April 1957.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*. One on 10th June 1957.

\*BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. Twenty-six on 24th April 1957. Thirty-four on 2nd May and twenty-four on 8th and 9th May 1958.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*. In 1957, one in mid-April, two from 27th to 29th April, one from 1st to 4th May and one (on Soay) from 12th to 26th May.

GOLDEN EAGLE *Aquila chrysaetos*. One on 15th May 1957.

\*BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*. One on 24th August 1958.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. Occasional records in both years; did not breed on Hirta, but may have done on Soay or Boreray.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. In 1957, one or two most days from 17th April to 5th May, one on 11th May, one on 14th, 15th, 25th and 26th September. In 1958, one on most days from 21st April to 11th May, one on 16th and 18th, two on 20th and one on 31st May, one on 3rd June, one on 9th August.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. One on 9th, 12th and 28th May 1958.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. One on 20th May 1957.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*. In 1957, one on 28th April and 4th, 8th, 9th and 11th May, with a different bird on the 12th. One on 13th and 14th May 1958.

\*MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*. In 1957, one from 13th to 15th and 21st to 22nd May, one on 13th September.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. In 1957, one on 21st May, 21st June and 8th July. In 1958, three on 22nd April, one on 12th and 27th May, 4th July, 24th, 27th, 29th and 30th August.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. Two on 3rd May 1957, and seven other single occurrences in spring, latest 4th June; one on 24th July. Considerable movement in autumn, beginning 14th August, with maximum of fourteen on 9th September. Much the same pattern in 1958: a few in spring with autumn maximum of twenty-seven on 20th August.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius apricarius*. Well marked spring passage in both years, but very slight autumn movement. In 1957 only on three days in late August and three days in late September. In 1958 no autumn birds up to 1st September, when observations discontinued.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Nine on 17th April 1957 had all left by 20th. Up to four birds on nine days in May; two notices in June, three in July, six in August. Seen daily from 1st September, with maximum of forty on 17th. Some overwintered, for at least three of the small flock present in April 1958 carried rings put on the previous autumn. Most of this

flock remained until mid-June 1958; others seen in late June, on ten days in July and once in early August. After 18th August seen daily.

SNIBE *Capella gallinago*. Spring and autumn passage noticed in both years, but not easily assessed in view of the presence of resident birds of the same race *faeroensis*.

\*JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One on 21st September 1957.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. The remains of one seen April 1957.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. In 1957 two April, one July, five August and four September notices, never more than two on any day. In 1958 one April, seven May and ten August occurrences, maximum of ten on 2nd May.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Well marked spring passage in both years, from late April till end of June. Maxima twenty in 1957, seven in 1958. Autumn movement very slight: in 1957 up to three birds on three days in late July, two on 6th August. In 1958 one on 15th July and 24th August.

\*WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. One on 25th and 26th May 1958 was caught and ringed.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*. One on 11th and 21st May 1957.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. Single birds seen on six days between 17th and 25th April 1957; two on 27th; one on 4th May. In 1958 one or two on six days between 20th and 29th April; fourteen on 30th; forty on 1st May and five notices of single birds between 8th and 23rd May; one on 8th July, 11th and 19th August.

\*GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. One on 3rd August 1957.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. In 1957 six occurrences of one or two birds between 15th August and 15th September; four on 31st August. In 1958, one to three birds seen every day except one between 20th and 30th August.

\*LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. One from 13th to 15th September 1957.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*. In 1958 two on 20th and 27th April, two on 17th and 18th August. First records for Hirta, but previously recorded from Boreray.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*. Slight passage in spring (mainly May) and autumn (mid-August to September) in both years. Two on 26th July 1957.

SANDERLING *Crocethia alba*. In 1957, two from 14th to 16th August; one to three between 26th August and 18th September on nineteen days. In 1958, single birds from 17th to 25th August, on 30th August and 1st September.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. In 1957 single birds from 24th

to 29th July, and from 11th to 13th September. In 1958 one on 24th and 25th August.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. One on 24th July 1958.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. In 1957 two on 21st May and single birds twice in July and once in August. In 1958 two on 6th June, and one to six on eight days between 22nd August and 1st September.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. In 1958, one from 17th April to 7th May, two from 8th to 18th May, one from 19th May to 3rd June and sporadically thereafter until 27th June. Probably only two individuals involved; only one previous notice.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. In 1957, one to four on one day in April, nine days in May and one day in June, July and September. In 1958 similar sporadic occurrences, on one day in April, fourteen in May, five in June and one day in July and August.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*. One on 23rd June 1958. The possibility of this being a feral pigeon should not be overlooked.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*. In 1957 one on 25th April and one or two on four days in May.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. One from 29th May to 5th June 1957.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. One from 24th to 25th May 1957.

\*SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. In 1957 single birds on 22nd May and 25th September. In 1958, one, almost certainly the same individual, on 13th, 18th and 24th May, and one, perhaps the same, on 2nd June.

\*LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. One on 10th August 1958.

SWIFT *Apus apus*. In 1957 single birds on four of the last eight days of May, and from one to three birds in the first week of June. Noticeable passage, from one to fifteen birds daily, in the last nine days of August 1958.

\*SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella cinerea*. A very rufous example, probably of the race *brachydactyla*, seen by Kenneth Williamson from 29th May to 5th June 1957.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. One on 18th April 1957 and on 12th and 14th May 1958.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. In 1957, one on 17th April, followed by a steady movement (mostly one to four birds a day, but once ten) from 12th May to 21st June; one on 8th July. A similar movement (most in a day six) between 2nd and 31st May 1958, with single birds on 19th and 23rd June. No autumn Swallows in either year.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. In 1957, up to three birds a day from 23rd May to 18th June; five on 23rd August. A similar trickle, again never more than three birds a day, between

6th and 28th May 1958; one or two birds on five days in June and two days in July (latest 4th July).

\*SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. Single birds on 27th and 30th May 1958.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*. One on 19th May 1957.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*. Single birds on 5th and 14th May 1958.

REDWING *Turdus musicus*. In 1957 between one and nine almost daily in April; one to four daily on eleven days from 1st to 20th May. In 1958 a few in April and early May, a single bird remaining until 3rd June. Some *coburni* certainly involved.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. In 1957, a male seven times from 17th to 29th April and a female four times from 29th April to 6th May.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. Passage in both years April to June and (slight) late August to September, with typical, Greenland (*leucorrhoea*) and intermediate ("Iceland" i.e. *schioleri*) birds all present at these seasons.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. Single birds on 13th and 27th May, and 20th September 1957. One on 13th May 1958.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. In 1957 single birds on 11th May, and 20th, 23rd and 24th September; different individuals each day.

\*NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One on 12th May 1958; trapped and examined in the hand. First record for the Hebrides.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*. One on 22nd September 1957.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. One on 25th and 26th May 1957. In 1958 single birds (several individuals) on the dates from 12th to 31st May; one on 5th June.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. One on 26th August 1957.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. One on 13th August, and one from 28th August to 2nd September 1957. Both examined in the hand.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. One on 1st June 1958.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. In 1957, one or two on 11th May and two on 20th. In 1958, three on 14th May, two of these remaining until 16th and one until 22nd; single birds on 26th and 28th May, 3rd June and 22nd August.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. In 1957, single birds on 2nd, 3rd, 28th and 30th August; two on 9th and 10th September. In 1958, single birds on 11th, 14th and 26th May, two on 27th and one from 29th to 31st.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. One on 13th May 1958.

\*WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Single birds on 4th and 5th, and 13th to 17th August 1957.

\*YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One on 20th September 1957.

\*SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*. One on 25th May 1957. One on 26th, three on 27th, one on 28th May 1958.

\*HEDGE SPARROW *Prunella modularis*. One from 10th to 21st May 1958.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. One on 25th May 1957. At least three on 12th May, two on 8th August 1958.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. Passage in considerable numbers in both years in April and May, August and September. Up to fifty in Village Bay at a time.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*. Strong passage in both years. In 1957 spring movement started from 23rd April to 22nd May, with peak of over 100 birds on 26th April. In autumn from 11th August to 25th September, with over 100 birds on 13th August; one on 7th July. In 1958 from 23rd April to 31st May, with single birds on 2nd and 16th June. In autumn from 19th August. Numbers fewer than 1957.

GREY-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava thunbergi*. One on 29th May 1957.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris bensonorum*. A summer resident; none were seen in 1957 after 14th September. In 1958, a noticeable increase on 21st and 22nd May, after low numbers before.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. A single bird on 30th May 1958 was almost certainly a Greenland Redpoll *rostrata*.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*. In 1957 single hens on 27th and 29th April, and from 4th to 11th May, possibly same individual. In 1958 a cock on 18th and 19th April, and a hen on 18th, 20th, and 25th April, and 2nd May. A hen, found to be close-ringed and present from 11th May to 3rd June, could have been that noticed earlier. One hen on 10th and 12th June.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. A male, 21st to 29th May 1958.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*. One from 17th to 20th May 1957.

\*RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. A male from 14th to 22nd May 1957.

\*REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Single hens on 5th and 12th May 1957.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. In 1957, one on 16th September, two on 17th, about twelve on 18th and 24th, over sixteen on 25th.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. In 1957, one on 5th May, a pair from 8th to 17th, one on 21st, twenty on 17th September, about six on 18th, one on 24th.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. In 1957, two to seven daily



from 10th to 16th May, five on 25th. In 1958, one on 11th May, three on 12th, four from 13th to 25th, 25 on 30th, eight on 1st June, twelve on 2nd and 3rd, eleven on 4th, one on 5th and six on 11th.

\*HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. A female from 11th to 20th May 1958.

After only two seasons of sustained observation, it is difficult to draw any worthwhile conclusions concerning the pattern of migration at St Kilda. There are, however, a few indications.

In addition to the specific notices of geese listed above, there were four occurrences in 1957 and 1958 of "grey geese" in spring, 26 on 24th April 1957, over 70 on 25th and one on 30th; 45 on 30th April 1958. It appears likely, therefore, that the islands lie on the line of a spring flyway for these birds (and perhaps also for Whooper Swans) heading from Britain to Iceland and Greenland. Until more information is obtained concerning the latter part of the autumn the position at that season must remain uncertain, but at the moment it seems possible that the return journey southwards is made further to the east.

It is equally clear that northward route via St Kilda is used by many waders and small birds making for the Faeroes, Iceland and Greenland. Thus, in both the years under discussion, where there was a well-marked passage in spring of Golden Plover, Whimbrel, Meadow Pipits, White Wagtails, Greenland and "Iceland" Wheatears, and to a lesser extent of Iceland Redwings, Faeroe Snipe and, probably, Iceland Merlin. The Redwing passage may well be heavier than the records suggest, for the bulk of the movement may have passed earlier, before observations began. Again, data for autumn are scanty but, to judge by 1957 when observation extended to 25th September and the majority of the above species except Redwing should have passed (or at least begun to come through if they were coming at all), the return movement was mostly on a much smaller scale, so that many of the birds would similarly appear to return by a different route. This generalisation does, however, need qualification, for in the case of the Meadow Pipit and White Wagtail there was in both years a considerable autumn passage. The waders present a complex picture and it is perhaps worth noting that, for example, Ringed Plover and Curlew occurred at both seasons in both years but with heavier movement in autumn than spring; that in the case of Knot and Sanderling there were no spring but several autumn notices; and that Whimbrel and Redshank on the other hand had what we might term the "Wheatear Pattern" of a heavier movement in spring than in autumn.

Many questions remain unanswered and there is obviously

great scope for continued watching and ringing. For instance to what breeding station are Tree Sparrows heading when they call in on St Kilda in May and June, and whence do they come?

## REPORT ON BIRDS OF THE CLYDE AREA 1957 - 1958

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN

This is the last report of its series to be written. From 1950 to 1956 C. E. Palmar and the present writer published six similar reports in *The Scottish Naturalist* and one in *Scottish Birds*. Hereafter records from the Clyde area will take their place in *Scottish Birds* on a similar footing to those from other areas, but it has been thought advisable to put into print a number of records from 1957 and the early months of 1958 which would otherwise not have seen the light of day. The majority, but not all, have already been included in *The Glasgow Bird Newsletter*, a duplicated sheet produced occasionally for the benefit of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

As in previous reports a few records come from that part of the Forth area which is readily accessible from Glasgow.

The contributors of the following notes are G. H. Acklam, Cdr. and Mrs J. F. Bayliss, Miss W. U. Flower, M. Forrester, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, C. E. Palmar, W. K. Richmond, A. H. Shaw, T. C. Smout, D. Stalker, Alistair Tyndal, L. A. Urquhart, T. Weir. Unless otherwise stated, dates apply to 1957.

RED-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps griseigena*. One offshore, about 50 yards out, at Portencross, 25th February (D.S.).

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. A freshly dead bird was picked up at Tollcross, within Glasgow city boundary, on 11th March 1958 and is now in the Kelvingrove Museum (C.E.P.).

BITTERN *Botaurus stellaris*. One was seen at Loch Macanrie, Flanders Moss, on 3rd January 1958 (A.T.). The bird was described as resembling "a Short-eared Owl with long legs": it could not have been an American Bittern as it did not have black wing-tips. Occasional in South Perth. (Forth area).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. A pair on Loch Macanarie, S. Perth, 23rd November (D.S.).

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. A female or immature, Hillend Reservoir, Lanarkshire, 20 October (C.S.). A juvenile on the rubbish-dump pool, Hamilton, 22nd December (C.E.P.); thereafter until 16th February seen either there or at Bothwell Bridge (D.S.). On the Lake of Menteith (Forth area) there were four immature birds on 16th November

(D.S.), one on 5th and 11th January (W.U.F., M.F., T.W.). There appears to be no previous record for South Perth.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. On 14th March 1958 a first year female was swimming in the River Kelvin at Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow (C.E.P.).

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*. At Hamilton on 29th October an adult was seen (W.K.R.) and an immature on 13th December (M.F.M.M.). Orange legs showed both to be of the race *flavirostris*.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. On 19th May a pair of Water Rails, accompanied by five newly hatched chicks, were watched at close quarters in a swampy wood beside the R. Endrick near Balmaha (M.F.M.M.). There is no previous breeding record for W. Stirling.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One at the Endrick mouth on 19th May, seen both in Dunbarton and W. Stirling (M.F.M.M.), and two in the Clyde valley above Hamilton on 11th August (D.S.). These are the first records for W. Stirling and Lanarkshire.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. One at the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton bank, on 1st March 1958 (J.F.B., M.F.M.M.).

SANDERLING *Croecthia alba*. Four were seen at Bothwell Bridge on 10th September 1955 (A.H.S.): Dunlins were present for comparison and the observer has submitted a very satisfactory description. There seems to be no previous record for Lanarkshire.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. A bird of this species was discovered at Hamilton on 27th October (L.A.U.) and seen by other observers on the following two days: see *British Birds* 51: 193.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus fuscus*. On 11th January 1958 there were at Milngavie Reservoir one bird of the British race *graellsii* and three of the Scandinavian race *fuscus* (C.E.P.). The latter were seen in a good light and the black of the back was the same colour as the wing-tips. There were hundreds of Herring Gulls present for comparison. There is no previous record of this race for Dunbartonshire.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. An immature bird at the Heads of Ayr, 26th February (D.S.).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. An immature, probably first winter bird, at Hamilton rubbish dump, 22nd February (M.F.M.M.) and 24th February 1958 (G.H.A.).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One at Doonfoot, Ayr, on 12th October (Miss Irving): the observer has sent an excellent description of this bird.

MAGPIE *Pica pica*. In view of the scarcity of recent occurrences of this species in the Loch Lomond area, the following records are of interest: one, Drymen, 5th November 1950;

one, Buchanan Castle woods, 11th December 1954; one, Drymen, 6th July 1958—all in West Stirling. One, near Gartocharn, Dunbartonshire, 23rd February 1958 (M.F.M.M.). A pair at Balmaha, W. Stirling, 1st December 1957 (G.H.A.).

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*. One on Flanders Moss, near Gartmore, S. Perth, 16th March 1958 (M.F.M.M.). See *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 92.

## SHORT NOTES

### GLOSSY IBIS IN TIREE

Early in October 1958 at Balemartine, Tiree, the school-children told me that they had seen a "big black curlew" on the way to school and I asked them to draw my attention to it the next time they saw it. On the following morning there was a shout from several voices: "Oh, Miss, there's the black curlew" and there it was, quite near to the bus. Subsequently I saw it at several places in the neighbourhood, the last occasion being at Crossapool on 26th October.

It seemed rather larger than a Curlew and much darker, but it definitely had a similar bill. When it took to flight, however, it immediately lost its resemblance to a Curlew, and became more like a Heron—very like one, in fact, having the same way of stretching its legs out behind, the same flapping movements of the wing and the appearance of having its neck folded in to its body, though actually the neck was short. When I saw the bird standing I thought it was black with touches of bronze glinting in the sunlight. When it was flying, I could see the dark, dark wings, but the back had a sort of shiny grey appearance. The bird can only have been a Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*, the second occurrence in Tiree.

MAIRI MCKINNON.

### SPREAD OF EIDER IN EAST SUTHERLAND

It is interesting to follow the spread of the Eider *Somateria mollissima* during the past fifty years or so from Orkney down the east coast of Caithness and Sutherland into the Moray Firth. In 1887, when Harvie-Brown published his *Fauna of Sutherland, Caithness and West Cromarty*, the Eider bred on the Pentland Skerries but no further south, though by 1895, the same author stated that it was "commoner in the Moray Firth than formerly" (*A Fauna of the Moray Basin*). In 1931 Miss Baxter and Miss Rintoul (*Birds of Scotland*, 1953) found a sucked egg between John o' Groats and Duncansby Head—less than seven miles from the Pentland Skerries. How-

ever, in the same year, Miss E. O. Armstrong (*British Birds* 36: 114) found a nest at Berriedale and recorded females with young in subsequent years. Later records of females with young are: off Brora 1936 (*Birds of Scotland*); Loth 1942 (Armstrong *op. cit.*); Brora 1947, several broods (Adam Watson, *Scot. Nat.* 60: 53).

My own records are from 1949 when I saw females with young off Brora, but more recently there is evidence of breeding south of this. In 1956 D. Macdonald of Dornoch observed two broods of ducklings at the mouth of Loch Fleet opposite Skelbo Castle, and the following year I saw at about the same place three broods, two of two ducklings and one single, the small numbers being almost certainly due to predation by gulls. Actual nests were not in this area until the summer of 1958, when the Hon. G. L. Charteris found three nests in the heather at the Little Ferry, near the entrance to Loch Fleet. So far no nests or broods have been seen south of this point, but there are recent breeding records for Banffshire (*Scot. Nat.* 66: 39-40).

To these I am now able to add an even earlier record, hitherto unpublished, of breeding near Navidale on the Sutherland coast. The nest was found in either 1915 or 1916 by Dr H. Stewart MacIntosh, present Director of Education for the City of Glasgow: in his letter, which gives a detailed account of the finding of the nest, he adds that his father, who knew the shore well from boyhood, had never heard of a nest being found previously, nor had any of the older inhabitants of the district.

IAN D. PENNIE.

### SNOW GEESE IN NORTH ARGYLL AND ABERDEENSHIRE

On 6th November 1958 I was waiting outside Appin School. It was 3 p.m. and the sun low in the sky, lighting up the upper peaks. From the ESE—i.e., from the general direction of Loch Awe-Tyndrum—came an unmistakable goose, flying in the direction of Ardnamurchan. As it passed, to the north of my line of vision, it was brilliantly lit up by the sun, a winter sun giving a very sharp radiance. The clear white, black wing-tips and general shape of the bird, with extended goose-like head and neck, were clearly defined. A Gannet is course cigar-shaped and is very different in other respects, and that I presume is the only bird with which one could confuse a Snow Goose *Anser hyperboreus*, which I suppose this bird to have been. It was in view for about three minutes.

MAIRI CHISHOLM OF CHISHOLM.

On 22nd October 1958 while making a duck count at the Loch of Strathbeg, Aberdeenshire, I saw three white geese roosting with about a thousand Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* in the sand-dunes between the loch and the shore. I was able to get within fifty yards and to my great pleasure they were undoubtedly Snow Geese *Anser hyperboreus*, the pink legs and bill, and the black-tipped wings being clearly seen. There was no sign of staining on the head or neck. In size they were similar to the Pink-feet. The birds were still there in late November and in early November I heard from the Wildfowl Trust that they had no knowledge of "lost" Snow Geese at that time.

It may also be of interest to record that 472 Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* were feeding or roosting on the same loch.

ELIZABETH A. GARDEN.

#### AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER ON FAIR ISLE

In the late afternoon of 14th September 1956 F.R.A., R. G. McCaskie and G.W. discovered an unusual bird in a flock of twelve Golden Plover *Charadrius apricarius* on the moor of Vaasetter on Fair Isle. At first sight it appeared to be a Grey Plover *Squatarola squatarola*, but was soon seen to lack the black auxiliaries of that species and to have no white on the rump and upper side of the tail. The possibility of its being one of the races of *Charadrius domenicus* (American *domeenicus* or Asiatic *fulvus*) presented itself and this supposition was strengthened by a statement in *The Handbook* (IV, 372) that the American Golden Plover in autumn resembles a young Grey Plover.

In the evening of the same day the bird was watched by the three original observers together with M. Armelin, M. I. Kinnear, M.F.M.M., and C. Walker. The following features were observed: on the ground, perhaps because of its lighter colouring against the dark heather, it seemed slightly larger than the European Golden Plovers, but in flight was seen to be very slightly smaller. R.G.McC. noticed that it stood at the same height as they did, thus arguing a longer length of leg in proportion. The skull was markedly rounded, giving a bull-headed appearance. "Bullhead" is a dialect name for the American Golden Plover. The whole appearance of the bird was very white and grey making it almost indistinguishable from a Grey Plover until it flew, when the auxiliaries were seen to be brownish grey, like the rest of the underwing, and the rump and upper parts of the tail to resemble the rest of the upper parts in colour. Its most striking field character was a very broad white eyestripe and a very white forehead. The crown was dark brown verging on black, with lighter flecks; the nape dark grey brown. The upper parts had a yellowish

grey appearance, less spangled than in *apricarius* and in museum specimens of *domenicus fulvus*. There was a greyish streak through the eye continuing in a circle round the cheeks to the throat. The underparts were white with noticeable traces remaining of the black feathers of summer plumage; they formed a sort of collar on the lower throat, and were thick down the centre of the breast. The bird was only heard to call once, when the whole flock rose in alarm; it uttered a triple "tee tee tee" of a peculiar harsh nasal quality, like the whinny of a horse. Early next morning it rose from the moor of Eas Brecks and flew away southwards by itself, after which it was not seen again. On this occasion it called continually, the call being trisyllabic, with the second syllable hardly accented, and the third lower in pitch. It could be rendered "tialoo" and was higher pitched than the call of the European Golden Plover heard at the same time.

F.R.A. and M.F.M.M. have examined specimens of *Charadrius domenicus domenicus* and *fulvus* in the British Museum (Natural History) and the Royal Scottish Museum and are agreed that the Fair Isle example was of the typical race, the American Golden Plover. One specimen of *domenicus* in the R.S.M. agreed almost perfectly; it is a male obtained at Ajo, Buenos Aires, on 10th September, 1899. The mounted specimen of *domenicus* in the showcase of the R.S.M. also closely resembles the Fair Isle bird. The Fair Isle bird differed from all specimens of *Charadrius domenicus fulvus* examined by us in the following respects: size, not very much smaller than *apricarius*; grey colouration of upper parts and very white eyebrow; generally less brown and less spangled above, lack of yellow on throat, though two specimens of *fulvus* in the B.M. have hardly any.

For the sake of future possible observers it should be observed that there was no possibility of confusing this bird in the field with *Charadrius apricarius*; it was wholly unlike. This is the second Scottish record.

F. R. ALLISON  
M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.  
GEORGE WATERSTON.

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER

(See plate on page 75)

There seem to be three features by which the American Golden Plover *Charadrius domenicus domenicus* may be distinguished in the field from the Asiatic Golden Plover *fulvus*, and all point to the Fair Isle bird being the former.

1. Size. There is hardly any overlap between the two and

the fact that the Fair Isle bird was only slightly smaller, and indeed appeared larger when on the ground, than *C. apricarius*, indicates that it was of the typical race. The question of inter-breeding and intermediates might arise, but Conover's paper on *domenicus* and *fulvus* in Alaska (*Auk* 62: 568-574) suggests that the two are possibly specifically distinct.

2. *Colour*. Writers on the two races comment on the ease of distinguishing them. "The two seem to be very distinct" (Seebohm, *Ibis* 1877: 165). "*C. virginianus* (= *domenicus*) at all seasons (but more especially in winter) has far less of the golden colour on the dorsal plumage and on the breast than *C. longipes* (= *fulvus*) has" Dresser, *Birds of Europe* VII: 477). Rand (*Auk* 64: 283), commenting on a specimen of *fulvus* collected in Greenland on 16th September 1940, says: "This specimen, compared with our series of sixteen *domenicus* in similar plumage is strikingly different." Conover (*op. cit.*) writes: "Adults taken after the first part of July often have enough of the new winter plumage on the underparts to make identification possible by colouring alone. The first new feathers appear on the sides of the face, throat and upper chest. In *fulva* these are quite yellowish and contrast strongly with the black feathers of the breeding plumage, while in typical *domenica* they are pale brownish grey and much less noticeable". Furthermore we have discovered, by examination of the series in the British Museum and the Royal Scottish Museum, that adults in autumn of *domenicus* can immediately be picked out by the unspangled, yellowish grey colouration of the upperparts. We can find no evidence, either in literature or in skins, that such a plumage ever occurs in *fulvus*.

3. *Voice*. J. T. Nichols, so far as we can discover the only observer to make notes on the calls of both races, states (Bent, *Life History of American Shore Birds* II: 183) that the call of *domenicus* is "in migration a far-reaching que-e-e-a with a quaver in the middle and falling at the end": this seems to be about the same as the call of the Fair Isle bird, allowing for individual peculiarities of transcription. He adds (*ibid.* 199), writing on *fulvus* in Alaska, "its notes are quite unlike the flight call of the eastern bird in migration."

M.F.M.M.

#### BLACK-TAILED GODWITS IN SOLWAY

In addition to H. Mayer-Goss's records (*antea* 1: 13) we have received the following from William Austin, Robert Smith and Donald Watson. Unless otherwise stated they refer to the Carsethorn Shore, Kirkcudbrightshire.

1947: several during mid-September.



1952: 7th August, one; 14th, fourteen; 16th, two; 17th three; 19th, two; 23rd, several; 25th, at least ten; 26th, several; 31st, three; 7th September, fifteen; 14th, thirteen; 23rd, seventy; also on 23rd one at mouth of Piltanton Burn, Luce Bay, Wigtownshire.

1954: 29th September, about twelve; 30th, at least twenty; 9th October, several; 2nd November, two.

1958: 11th January, two; 31st August, seven at Southernness (Kirkcudbrightshire); 2nd November, two.

From D. G. Andrew: nine at Carsethorn, 8th October 1954.

From John Murray: one on Loch Ryan, Wigtownshire, just outside Stranraer, on 5th January 1959.

### SPOTTED REDSHANKS IN AUTUMN 1958

The following notices of Spotted Redshanks *Tringa erythropus* in Scotland have been received:

**Solway.** At Caerlaverock Merse, Dumfriesshire, on 15th and 26th September (E. L. Roberts). A. D. Watson also reports two old records from Carsethorn, Kirkcudbrightshire, one on 23rd August 1953 and one on 18th August 1954.

**Clyde.** One at Hamilton in latter part of 1958 and early January 1959 (several observers).

**Tweed.** At Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 16th September we saw a Spotted Redshank, being attracted first by its "che-wit" call. It was white below and grey above, with a small but conspicuous white rump and no wing bar. The bill was longer than a Redshank's and in flight the red legs trailed out behind. This is the first record for Berwickshire, and apparently for Tweed. (W. Murray and S. J. Clarke).

**Forth.** Between Grangemouth and Kincardine, East Stirling, single birds on 31st August, 4th, 5th and 27th September, and 26th October. (George Dick, J. Hoy, J. Potter). There seem to be no previous published records for East Stirling. At Cult Ness, Fife, single birds on 24th, 26th and 30th August, 11th, 21st, 27th and 28th September, 12th, 19th and 26th October, and 2nd, 16th and 23rd November. Two on 4th, 7th, 10th and 14th September. (P. G. R. Barbier, George Dick, J. Hoy, C. K. Mylne). One seen on the Isle of May on several days in September and early October is the first for the island: fuller details will be given in the Observatory report.

**Moray.** One at Lossiemouth, Morayshire, on 5th September (Ian Hay) and one at Skibo estuary, Dornoch Firth, S.E. Sutherland, on 10th September. (D. Macdonald).

## BLACK-WINGED STILT IN RENFREWSHIRE

On the afternoon of 5th October 1958 on the south side of the R. Clyde about a quarter of a mile west of Erskine Ferry I saw a Blue-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* at a small muddy spit frequented by waders at high water. It was seen through binoculars in a good light. Its very long legs, and the fact that it was wading in much deeper water than Redshanks, were immediately conspicuous. Long fine straight bill also noticeable. Back was grey-black, but not jet black. Breast and underparts white. Legs dull pinkish. The joint of the leg was conspicuous (sketch submitted). No call was heard. In flight the black wings were very noticeable; paler colour and white on the tail, but tail pattern not clearly seen. The legs trailing behind in flight were characteristic. When first seen the bird was alone, but on being put up joined a party of four or five Redshanks and a larger number of Oystercatchers. When standing in the water the Stilt bobbed its head up and down continually. In flight a relaxed "skipping" effect was noticeable; while the Redshank flew with regular direct wing-beats, the Stilt did three or four beats followed by a glide, and so on. There is a record of 1850 for Renfrewshire.

R. P. CAMPBELL.

## TURTLE DOVES IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On the evening of 6th June 1958 I watched a single Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* at Fontainebleu Farm near Newburgh. It was last seen going to roost in a tree near the farmhouse. Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards saw a Turtle Dove resting on telephone wires near this farm on 25th September 1955. There are none kept captive in the area.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

## ROLLER IN SHETLAND

On 5th September 1958, in Mid Yell, Mr Robert Tulloch observed a Roller *Coracias garrulus*, which was being mobbed by a Kestrel; it protected itself by turning on its back in the air and extending its claws.

CHARLES J. INKSTER.

(In a cutting from *The Shetland News* of 16th September, sent us by Mr Inkster, an unmistakable description of the bird is given. The cutting also refers to a roller "found dead about this time last year by Miss Harriet Thomason of Camb."—Ed.)

## GREEN WOODPECKERS IN LANARKSHIRE

Mr W. K. Richmond reports twice hearing a Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* on 23rd January 1958 near Merryton Farm on the Clyde above Hamilton, and, in the same district, on 25th October 1958, Mr Thomas F. Kerr saw one in Avon Glen near Fairholm Bridge, Larkhall. Good views were had from twenty yards. Mr Kerr, who has watched birds for many years in the area, has never seen this species there before.

## BLACK REDSTARTS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 1st April 1958 we saw two Black Redstarts, both females, in a turnip field near Cotehill Cottage, by Collieston, Aberdeenshire.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.  
R. MAXWELL.

## CHIFFCHAFF IN WINTER IN AYRSHIRE

On the afternoon of 12th January 1958 my wife and I observed a Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* on the shore about three miles north of Ardrossan. The day was bright with a gusty onshore wind and the bird was searching for food low in the field layer just about the drift line. It regularly allowed approach to within five yards, thus making identification pretty certain. Presumably its occurrence was associated with the strong south-westerly gale during the previous week which, strangely enough, grounded an Irish boat on the shore a mile or two south of where we saw the bird; probably, like the boat, it came from Ireland.

J. C. SMYTH.

## CORRESPONDENCE

I am much indebted to Dr J. W. Campbell (*antea* 1: 27) for pointing out a record of the Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* in Wester Ross, omitted from our *Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*. With regard to the skin from Kyleakin lighthouse, we state in our introduction that "Skye and its islets" are treated separately from the mainland (*op. cit* p. v). We therefore included it under Skye.

E. V. BAXTER.

The note in *Scottish Birds* (1: 30): "the Committee cannot accept the record of a Manx Shearwater seen on Loch Leven, 25th July 1957", made me look up my last year's diary, where

I found, as I thought, that I had noted seeing a Manx Shearwater while fishing at Loch Leven on 26th July 1957. I had not realised that this was sufficiently unusual to be worth reporting, but I had no doubt at the time that it was a Manx Shearwater; I've seen lots of them around Ardnamurchan Point and out towards Eigg, as well as a close-up of one which appeared on Loch Shiel at Acharacle after a gale, either damaged or too exhausted to fly. The day at Loch Leven was very stormy and we eventually had to abandon the boat. The bird was in the comparatively quiet water under the shelter of a strip of trees along the south-west shore and, when we got too close, flew out past the boat into rougher water where we lost sight of it.

Incidentally I saw a pure white Sand Martin at Loch Leven the same day.

GEORGE T. JAMIESON.

I was very surprised to read in *Scottish Birds* (1: 31) that a Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* seen near Ettrickbridge on 20th October 1957 was a first for Selkirk. I rent the Ettrick shootings and most years a small flock of Barnacles spends the autumn in the valley. I never allow them to be shot. The largest party was twenty-one in October-December 1954, and the smallest seven in 1956. I have not seen them in 1957 or 1958, but last year a small flock frequented the neighbouring Yarrow valley. I first saw them in 1948 near Ettrickbridge. I have also seen them several times in Yarrow.

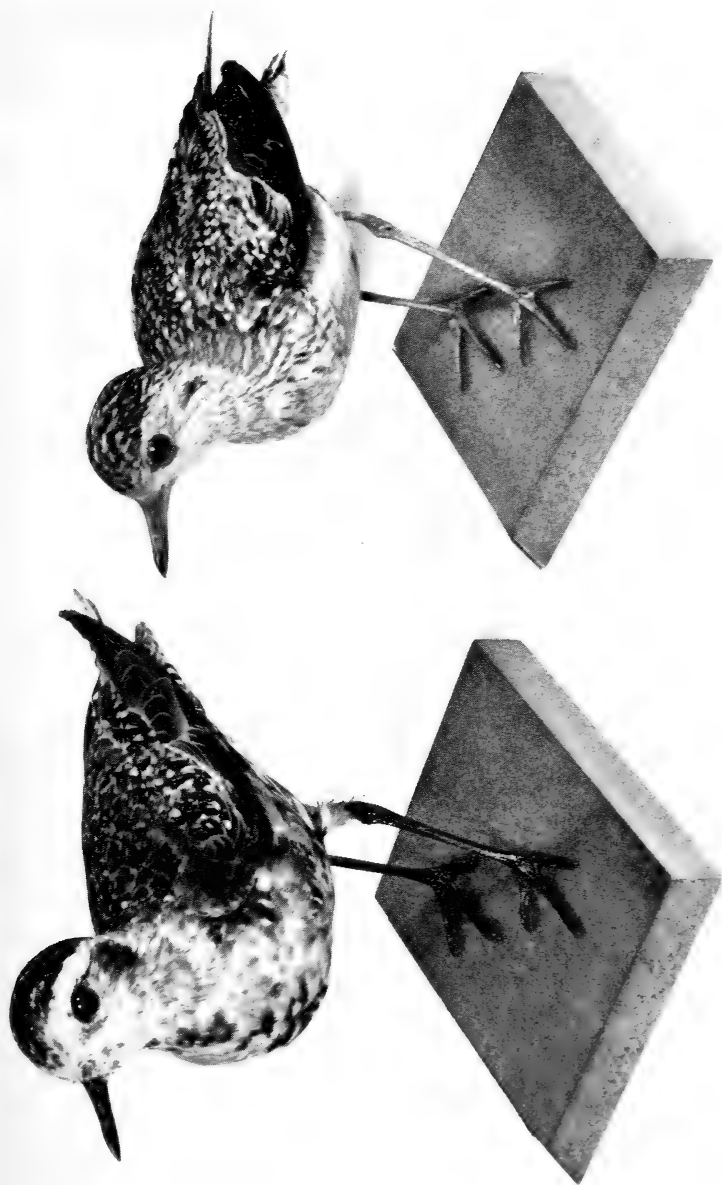
The Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus* (*antea* 1: 38) is quite a common nesting species on the moors in upper Morayshire, as it is in Banffshire. I saw two pairs near Carron in Moray and four pairs near Cabrach in Banff in June 1958.

PHILIP CHRISTISON.

With reference to the report (*antea* 1: 32) of the breeding of the Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus* and Herring Gull *L. argentatus* at Caerlaverock Merse, the first record for Dumfriesshire, it may be of interest to report that in 1958 three pairs of Greater Black-backs, ten pairs of Herring Gulls and fifty pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* successfully bred in the same locality.

E. L. ROBERTS.

Regarding the note (*antea* 1: 14) by A. Tewnion in which he states that there is no published record of the Great Skua *Catharacta skua* breeding in Orkney elsewhere than in Hoy and that he had proved breeding on Papa Westray in 1953, may I report that the late George Arthur knew of some two or three pairs of Great Skuas nesting annually on Papa Westray



Mounted specimens in the Royal Scottish Museum of the American Golden Plover *Charadrius dominicus dominicus* (left) and the Ashile Golden Plover *C. d. fulvus* in typical autumn plumage. The difference in size, extent of eyebrow and shape of head is well shown. (By courtesy of the Royal Scottish Museum).

for a number of years before his death in 1952, but kept the fact secret. During the past years I have been checking up on the Great Skua throughout Orkney and have found that it has increased in Hoy, and has nested on at least three islands besides Hoy and Papa Westray. In 1955 one pair nested on Rousay and in 1957 and 1958 one, and probably two, pairs nested there. One pair nested on Eynhallow in 1956 and one on Westray in 1958. It is interesting to note that Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* have preceded Great Skua at each of the places named above, by several years, in some cases ten or more.

E. BALFOUR.

### CORRIGENDA

*Antea* 1: 30. Under "Semipalmated Sandpiper" for "1957" read "1956".

*Antea* 1: 34. The date on which the Dowitcher was seen in Berwickshire should read "20th September", not "29th September". Col. W. M. Logan Home saw the bird again on 20th November.

*Antea* 1: 42. The skin of the Subalpine Warbler is not in the Royal Scottish Museum, as stated.

### CURRENT NOTES

The most striking ornithological event of the winter has been an invasion of Waxwings *Bombycilla garrulus*. A. T. Macmillan has summarised the movements up to 26th January. The earliest record is of two birds at Colinsburgh (Fife) on 19th November; this, however, is so much earlier than the big movements in December that it cannot be considered part of them.

Odd birds were seen from about the second or third weeks of December in or near Kirkwall (Orkney), Wick (Caithness), Golspie (Sutherland), Rannoch Station (Perthshire), Crail (Fife), Dunfermline (Fife), Cockburnspath (Berwickshire) and Mount Vernon (Glasgow).

By faunal areas the number of records to date is approximately: Solway, present but no details; Clyde, 5; Tweed, 2; Forth, 26; Tay, 27; Dee, 8; Moray, 21; Argyll, 6; Caithness, 4; Skye, 1; Inner Hebrides, 2; Outer Hebrides, 1; Orkney, 2. Duplication of records has probably taken place in Forth and Tay. The largest flocks are recorded in:—

Golspie (Sutherland)	25	21/26 Dec.
Spinningdale (Sutherland)	20	6 Jan.
Granton on Spey (Moray)	40	20 Jan.
Corpach by Fort William (Inverness)	20	26/28 Dec.

Aviemore (Inverness) two or three flocks of up to	50	28 Dec./ 20 Jan.
Ballater (Aberdeen)	50	1/12 Jan.
Rannoch Station (Perth)	30	18 Dec.
Aberfeldy (Perth)	27	27 Dec.
Bridge of Cally (Perth)	16	28/29 Dec.
Dundee (Angus)	14	3 Jan.
Elie (Fife)	15	31 Jan.
Kirkcaldy (Fife)	20	7 Jan.
Dalkeith (Midlothian)	20	21 Dec.

Between mid-July and the end of the year a number of parties of Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* have been reported in S.E. Scotland, the largest number being forty seen in early December by W. Murray at Kyles Hill, Berwickshire.

Four Tree Sparrows were seen by George L. A. Patrick between Busby and Newton Mearns, Renfrewshire, on 20th July, and four in the same area on 4th January. A Buzzard was repeatedly seen at Kilmacolm in early November (G.M.T. Conacher).

Among scarcer winter visitors may be mentioned a Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* seen more than once in mid-November at Auldhouse, Lanarkshire, apparently the first record for the county (L. A. Urquhart); a Quail *Coturnix coturnix* in the south part of Arran on 24th November, seen by two sportsmen who are familiar with the bird in the Near East (J. A. Anderson); a Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* at Bennane Head, Ayrshire, on 18th January (M. F. M. Meiklejohn); an Iceland Gull *L. glaucoides* in Ayr harbour on 14th December (F. McIntosh and others); a Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* near Hawick on 5th December (W. S. Medlicott); and a Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis f. flammea* seen at Gartmore, Perthshire, on 11th January among a party of Lesser Redpolls, from which distinguished by paler colouration and slightly larger size (F. McIntosh, M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

Late Swallows *Hirundo rustica*: five at Dunbar, 16th November (J. Dann) and one at Anstruther on 2nd November (W. J. Eggeling). The following wintering Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* have been reported: A female killed against a window, near Cupar, Fife, about 2nd December (J. K. Stanford); a female at a bird table at Bonnybridge, Stirling, on 20th and 21st December (Mrs K. H. Paterson); a female at Avoch in early January (John Lees); and a male at Dornoch on 10th January which, despite severe frost and heavy gales, survived at least up to the 26th (D. Macdonald).

Black-headed Gulls *Larus ridibundus* were observed feeding on haws at Bothwell Bridge on 31st December and at Auldhouse, Lanarkshire, on 9th November (cf. *British Birds* 50: 75 and 347). They took the berries both from the air and while perching (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, L. A. Urquhart).

## The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

### SUMMER EXCURSIONS

**IMPORTANT:**—Members intending to come on Excursions must, where necessary, inform the respective organisers immediately so that arrangements can be made for numbers. Numbers on some Excursions are limited, and the applicants will be accepted in strict order of application. Members of the Club are entitled to attend ANY Branch Excursion. Guests may be invited where numbers are not limited.

#### ABERDEEN

Applications for all Excursions to be made to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, (Tel.: Newburgh 95), one week in advance. Transport will be by private cars, and members having spare seats should inform Miss Garden.

##### Sunday 12th April

**YTHAN ESTUARY AND LOCHS**—Leader, Miss E. A. Garden. Meet Ythan Hotel 10.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

##### Sunday 17th May

**LOCH DAVAN AND KINORD**—(By kind permission of Sir Malcolm Barclay-Harvey). Leader, Mr C. Murray. Bus leaves Bon-Accord Street, 10 a.m. Return 6.05 p.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Meet Dinet Station 11.40 a.m.

##### Sunday 6th September

**YTHAN ESTUARY AND LOCHS**—Leader, Miss E. A. Garden. Arrangements as for 12th April.

#### DUNDEE

All applications and enquiries to Mrs Jack Grierson, 62 Sherbrook St., Dundee. (Tel.: Dundee 87752).

##### Saturday 11th April

**BARNHILL TO EASTHAVEN**—Meet at Barnhill Shelter, 2 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

##### Saturday 16th May

**BENVIE**—Meet at Invergowrie Circle, 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

##### Sunday 28th June

**ISLE OF MAY**—Applications to Mrs Grierson as soon as possible. Number limited to twelve.

##### Sunday 13th September

**TAYPORT TO TENTSMUIR POINT**—Meet at Taybridge Station for 9.35 a.m. train. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

#### EDINBURGH

Times of buses and trains should be checked with Summer Time-tables. Costs may also be subject to alteration. Private hire buses will only be provided at the charges shown on condition that a minimum number of 30 attend. Anyone unable to attend, and having booked a seat, may be required to pay the fare unless good notice is given.



**Saturday 2nd May**

**ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE**—(Spring migrants). A conducted tour. Meet Timber Bridge, 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at approx. 1.40 p.m.). Leaders, Mr K. S. Macgregor and Mr Charles Cowper.

**Saturday 23rd May**

**PENICUIK HOUSE GROUNDS**—(By kind permission of Sir John D. Clerk, Bt.). Meet outside Penicuik Post Office, 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at 1.30 p.m.). Leader, Mr R. W. J. Smith.

**Sunday 31st May**

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM**—(By kind permission of the Earl of Home). Limited number. Applications by 23rd May to Mr Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Leader at the Hirsell, Major the Hon. Henry Douglas Home. Private bus will leave Waverley Bridge at 11 a.m. returning at approx. 7 p.m. Picnic lunch and tea to be taken. Cost: bus approx. 8/- per person.

**Saturday 6th June**

**ISLE OF MAY**—Limited number (12). Applications by 30th May to Mrs George Waterston, 11 Brandon Street, Edinburgh. Train to Anstruther leaves Waverley Station, 9.10 a.m. Boat leaves harbour 11.40 a.m. prompt. Time on island approx. 12.45 to 4.30 p.m. Return train leaves Anstruther 6 p.m. arriving Edinburgh 8.56 p.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost: Day return rail tickets, 8/11; Boat approx. 9/-.

**Sunday 5th July**

**FARNE ISLANDS**—Limited number. Applications by 27th June to Sister E. A. Robertson, Wards 39/40, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. Leader from Seahouses, Dr E. A. R. Ennion. Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge, 9 a.m. arriving Seahouses 12.30 p.m. Boats leave harbour on arrival. Bring picnic lunch. Cost: Bus 11/-; Boat 11/-; High tea at Monkshouse 6/-.

**Saturday 18th July**

**BASS ROCK**—(By kind permission of Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple, Bt.) Applications by 11th July to Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Sq., Edinburgh 2. (Tel.: 34872). Boats leave North Berwick Harbour, 2.30 p.m. and return at 7 p.m. Bring picnic tea. Cost: boat 7/6.

**Saturday 22nd August**

**ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE**—(Autumn migrants). Leaders, Mr K. S. Macgregor and Mr Charles Cowper. Arrangements as for 2nd May.

**GLASGOW**

Times of buses and trains should be checked with Summer Time-tables. For all Excursions except the first, application must be made as stated so that adequate reservations may be made.

**Saturday 25th April**

**BIRD SANCTUARY, HAMILTON**—(By kind permission of the Town Council of the Burgh of Hamilton. (Meet at Hamilton Cross at 2.30 p.m. Leader, Mr D. Stalker.

**Sunday 31st May**

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM**—(By kind permission of the Earl of Home). Train to Edinburgh leaves Queen St., 9.40 a.m. arrives 10.54

a.m. S.M.T. bus leaves Waverley Bridge, 11 a.m. Joint excursion with Edinburgh Branch. Applications by 23rd May to Mr Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost: bus approx. 8/-.

#### **Saturday 6th June**

**AILSAS CRAIG**—Maximum number, two parties of 14. Boat leaves Girvan Harbour with first party at 11 a.m. Time on Ailsa, 3 to 4 hours. Fare 10/- . Bring picnic lunch and tea. Applications to Miss Mabel G. Scott, 68 Evan Drive, Giffnock, not later than 30th May.

#### **Sunday 14th June**

**LUSS ISLANDS, LOCH LOMOND**—(By kind permission of Sir Ivor Colquhoun). Service bus via Balloch to Luss; alight at Bandry Bay,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south of Luss. Ferry boat leaves 1 p.m. & 2 p.m. returning 5.30 p.m. Fare approx. 3/- . Bring picnic tea. Applications to Mr George Kerr, 166 Old Castle Road, Cathcart, by 6th June.

#### **Saturday 20th June**

**LITTLE CUMBRAE**—(By kind permission of Mr Ian Parker). Boat leaves Fairlie 11.30 a.m. Fare 3/6. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Applications to Miss Mabel G. Scott, 68 Evan Drive, Giffnock, by 13th June.

### **ST ANDREWS**

Applications for all Excursions should be made to Miss M. M. Spires, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews (Tel.: 852), not later than ten days before each excursion. Transport will then be arranged.

#### **Saturday 30th May**

**KILCONQUHAR LOCH**—(By kind permission of Nairn Estates). Leave St Andrews Bus Station 2 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

#### **Sunday 14th June**

**LOCH LEVEN**—(By kind permission of Kinross Estates). Leave St Andrews Bus Station, 10 a.m. Boats leave from the Sluices, Scotlandwell for St Serfs Island at 11 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

#### **Sunday 28th June**

**ISLE OF MAY**—Limited number (12). Boat leaves harbour 11.15 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

#### **Saturday 11th July**

**TENTSMUIR**—(By kind permission of Mrs Purvis). Afternoon Excursion. Leave St Andrews Bus Station 2 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

### **WEEK-END EXCURSION TO AVIEMORE**

Arrangements have again been made with Mrs M. J. Grant, The Dell, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore, (Tel.: 216) for a week-end excursion to Speyside.

Accommodation for up to twenty members has been reserved for the weekend 8th to 10th May at inclusive terms of 45s per person as follows: Bed on Friday night 8th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner, and bed on Saturday 9th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 10th.

Members wishing to come on this Club Excursion should book direct with Mrs Grant, mentioning that they are Members of the Club. Members may bring guests. Reservations will be accepted in strict order of application. Arrangement for transport by private cars should be arranged through Branch Secretaries.

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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. 1 No. 4

Summer 1959

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

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### CLUB LIBRARY

The Club Library is now housed in the Secretary's Office at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2. The collection has recently been augmented by several gifts, and the Council appeals to Members to donate books and periodicals which they may wish to dispose of. We have no volumes of the "Ibis" prior to 1944. The Library is open during office hours for reference. Books or magazines, of which we have duplicate copies, can be obtained on loan.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. 1 No. 4

Summer 1959

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Editorial

### BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: CENTENARY CONFERENCE

THIS extraordinarily interesting and ably organised meeting was held at Cambridge, the original nesting-site of the B.O.U., from 20th to 23rd March, a select representation of the S.O.C., including two from as far north as Sutherland, being there. The meetings for the most part consisted of four half-hour talks each, and each meeting dealt with a single aspect of ornithology (migration, behaviour, etc.). The amateur ornithologists were delighted to find that themes which they might have considered beyond their scope—systematics, for instance—were treated with brilliant clarity by the pundits, although a few of the lectures were undoubtedly below standard for an occasion such as this, not from the point of view of subject matter so much as from that of delivery. Ornithologists ought to realise two things: that figures and graphs are not suitable subjects for a lecture any more than a metronome, however much it may assist the musician, makes a symphony, and that lecturing is a subject that has to be learned like any other. A lecturer who mumbles off a sheet of paper is like a one-legged woman setting up as a ballerina. It was a pleasure for everyone to meet old friends from abroad, although leisure for talking to them was rather scant. The exhibitions were on traditional lines, with the exception (as one would expect) of that set out by Colonel R. Meinertzhagen and consisting of down from the nests of ducks and geese of the world, and of objects taken from the crops of birds, which included two-pound jars filled with pebbles taken from a single Ostrich and even stones from the crop of a Dodo. The show of bird-books from the Newton Library was of fascinating interest and beauty. On the Monday a gargantuan banquet, at which the carousers were served with a whole chicken each, took place at Fishmongers' Hall in London; but for the Scottish delegates the gastronomic delights were exceeded by the delight of seeing Dr E. V. Baxter and Dr D. A. Bannerman add to their numerous ornithological honours by receiving the Medal of the Union.

## ISLE OF MAY BIRD OBSERVATORY AND FIELD STATION REPORT FOR 1958\*

Prepared for the Observatory Committee by W. J. EGGELING,  
Hon. Secretary.

As is appropriate to a National Nature Reserve, the Isle of May Observatory concerns itself with the whole field of natural history. This report deals with all the activities involved.

Observer cover in 1958 was about average, at 160 "watched days." There were, however, some unfortunate gaps, notably at the very beginning of September when other East Coast observatories were experiencing one of the most spectacular autumn influxes ever seen, outdoing even that of 1957. It was only by chance that a picnic excursion on 6th September enabled the tail-end of this exceptional movement to be recorded. The year was not outstanding for rare species, the highlights being the island's first Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* and its second Subalpine Warbler *Sylvia cantilans*.

### MIGRATION

The first visit of the year was in many ways the most rewarding of all. The Hon. Secretary had gone out on 18th March, intending to stay four days: he got off on 2nd April, having been storm-stayed eleven days beyond his time! On the 26th an easterly gale was in full blast, continuing until the 29th: on the 30th there was fog and on the 31st a gale from the south. During the 26th birds began to arrive, five Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus*, twelve Skylarks *Alauda arvensis*, two Mistle Thrushes *Turdus viscivorus*, about fifteen Song Thrushes *Turdus ericetorum* and about thirty Blackbirds *T. merula*. For the next six days the numbers of all these species remained high, although fluctuating considerably: Lapwings rose to sixty on the 27th, with a maximum of 150 on the 31st; Skylarks totalled 150 on the 28th, declining thereafter; there were at least twelve Mistle Thrushes on the island at once; up to 65 Song Thrushes; over 100 Blackbirds on the 28th and over 500 on the 31st. Only a handful of Fieldfares *T. pilaris* and even fewer Redwings *T. musicus* were seen.

A Black Redstart *Phoenicurus obscurus* on the 27th, four Stonechats *Saxicola torquata* on the 27th and 28th, three Reed

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\*Previous reports in this series have appeared as follows: for 1935-38, 1946-50, 1953-56 in *The Scottish Naturalist*; for 1951-52 in the *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report*; for 1957 in the *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* (Vol. 8, Special Number).

Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus*, the first Wheatears *Oenanthe oenanthe* of the season and three Moorhens *Gallinula chloropus* helped to enliven proceedings, but the most notable feature of the movement was the presence throughout of big numbers of Chaffinches *Fringilla coelebs*, Robins *Erithacus rubecula* and Hedge Sparrows *Prunella modularis*, with maxima of sixty, sixty and eighty respectively on the 30th. Many if not all of the Robins and Hedge Sparrows were Continental, and it is probable that the Chaffinches and Stonechats, as well as some of the other species involved, had the same origin. Less certain as to source were two Tree-Creepers *Certhia familiaris*, which arrived on 30th March and 1st April (first spring notices) after the easterly gale had passed: neither was examined in the hand.

At the height of the gale, which was accompanied by much rain, the island was an extraordinary sight. It was oozing with water, there were torrents like Highland burns in spate rushing down the slopes, and little mobs of Lapwings were sheltering in every hollow, in the cover before the traps and (with Skylarks and Chaffinches) in the walled gardens. By the 29th the Harbour Rocks up to the edge of the turf were almost hidden from view by spume and spindrift lying in shivering drifts from three to five feet deep. Within this fortnight more Hedge Sparrows (46), Skylarks (13) and Mistle Thrushes (3) were caught than in any year before. Lapwings (4) were ringed for the first time, only two fewer Blackbirds (162) were taken from the traps than in the whole of 1957, and more Song Thrushes (41) than in any of the preceding three years. Never, before this, had Continental Robins and Hedge Sparrows been recorded in more than ones and twos in spring.

April, May and June were unexciting by comparison. July yielded the Subalpine Warbler (from 16th to 22nd, when it was found dead) and the second July notice of a Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* on the 27th. In August there were three Icterine Warblers *Hippolais icterina* (one on 19th, two on 28th), an unusual number of Garden Warblers (over fifteen on the 20th), a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* and Red-backed Shrike *Lanius cristatus* on the 23rd, and a good movement of Willow Warblers *Phylloscopus trochilus* at the end of the month (over 75 on the 24th, when 57 were ringed). From 29th August to 5th September came the regrettable gap: then, on 6th September, the writer went out to the island and found it alive with migrants. He and his two sons abandoned the picnic, concentrated on the birds, watched the rest of the party sail away, and stayed the night. This proved well worth doing for, that afternoon and evening, and the following forenoon, a fine selection of birds was seen. It was clearly only the last phase of a very large movement which, according to the Principal Lighthouse-keeper, Mr W. Watt, had been at its height on

the 2nd and 3rd. By noon on the 7th almost all the birds had passed on, but during the twenty-four hours the following had been recorded and (in brackets) ringed: Wryneck 2 (2), Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* 3 (3), Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* over 50 (14), Bluethroat *Cyanosylvia svecica* 1 (1), Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* 1 (1), Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* 1 (1), Garden Warbler over 20 (11), White-throat *Sylvia communis* 2 (2), Lesser Whitethroat *S. curruca* 1 (1), Willow Warbler about 50 (23), Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* 6 (1), Pied Flycatcher about 20 (9), Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* 2 (1), Red-backed Shrike 1 (1), Ortolan *Emberiza hortulana* 1, Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus* 1. It is unfortunate that all we know about the peak of this movement is that there were more small migrants on the island than Mr Watt had ever seen, with Redstarts particularly noticeable, but warblers and flycatchers also prominent and several Wrynecks.

The rest of September until the 27th was fully watched, but only the 6th to 12th and 20th to 22nd October, and the 8th to 10th November. There was at least one more Wryneck in September, on the 9th, three more Bluethroats (two on 9th, one on 26th-27th), some intensive Swallow *Hirundo rustica* passage (maximum about 400 on the 8th), and an exceptionally numerous movement of Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis*, which began with 2,000 birds on the same day. A third Red-backed Shrike turned up on 9th September and single Red-breasted Flycatchers *Muscicapa parva* on 11th and 26th. The first Spotted Redshank to be recorded on the island was seen on the 17th, 18th, 25th and 26th September, and 7th and 9th October. Grey Wagtails *Motacilla cinerea* were more numerous than in any previous autumn: three on 9th and two on 15th, 20th and 27th September, and one on 23rd September. There was a late Black Redstart on 9th November. The usual big autumn influx of Blackbirds was missed entirely, but according to Mr Watt there were many hundreds on the island in the first week of November.

#### ADDITIONAL UNUSUAL OCCURRENCES

Manx Shearwater *Procellaria puffinus*. Three on 10th June. First June notice.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. One on 20th March. First March notice.

Grey Plover *Charadrius squatarola*. One on 6th September. Second notice.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*. Unusually high numbers on 14th September (over 100) and 22nd September (85).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. One on 7th June. Fifth notice and first for spring.





COMMON TERNS

*Photograph by Alistair J. M. Smith*

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*. One on 23rd March. First March notice.

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*. Twelve on 9th November, the highest number yet recorded.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. Fifty on 23rd April, a high number for spring.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. One on 7th June. First June notice.

### BREEDING POPULATIONS

On 18th March, when the Observatory opened, there were two Hedge Sparrows in the Top Garden and two in the Thistle Field and Bain Trap area; both couples were clearly paired. One of the Top Garden birds disappeared, its mate finally departing also, but the other pair nested successfully late in the season, although nobody knows where, and produced two young that fledged in early July. This is the first breeding record for the island since 1884! On 10th June, when this pair had just laid the foundation of a nest which they never finished, they were seen carrying food to a nestful of young Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* and one was twice seen to remove a faecal sac on its departure. Probably nine or ten pairs of Linnets bred and several raised at least two broods. Five nests were located on grassy banks, with at least four pairs involved. G. L. Sandeman again did sterling work in assessing the breeding populations of Linnets, Rock Pipits *Anthus spinoletta*, Meadow Pipits and Wheatears. Between 7th and 14th June he tracked down nests of just over thirty Rock Pipits, seven Meadow Pipits and nine Wheatears, and estimated the populations at forty to fifty, nine or ten, and ten or eleven pairs respectively. An albino pipit (species uncertain) seen during July and August (*antea* p. 43) may well have been reared on the island. Two pairs of Pied Wagtails *Motacilla alba yarrelli* established territory, but one bird early vanished and the other pair only reared two young. No Pied Wagtails were ringed, which has not happened since 1934. A pair of Swallows nested in the Naval Huts for the third successive year and raised a single brood. No Wrens *Troglodytes troglodytes* bred, so that the 1957 nest remains unique.

Of the sea-birds the Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* was, as always, the first to nest. Many had already started nest building by the 18th March but the wild weather which followed, persisting well into April, put the great majority off their stride and caused a mass exodus. On 11th April only 22 were counted around the entire coast. Although all returned later, nesting was much delayed and only the few intrepid individuals which had persevered in sheltered sites, or high up on the cliffs, got their young away at the normal time. But the progressive build-up of this population continued, there

being eventually more nests than in 1957 when at least 315 pairs bred. Numbers of Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus* showed little change, and, though no counts were made, being eventually even more nests than in 1957 when at least 315 the same is probably true of the huge Herring Gull *L. argentatus* population, which may even have increased. Breeding Oyster-catchers *Haematopus ostralegus* suffered much from the gulls and there can be little doubt that it was only the latter which prevented the fairly extensive breeding of Puffins *Fratercula arctica* on the west side. One young Puffin, hatched on the May, was only the second of its kind to be ringed there.

No terns *Sterna* spp. bred: very few appeared and they made no attempt to nest. The Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* fared much as usual: by mid July less than a third of the nests still had contents, and from the eleven which at that date contained either an egg or a chick it is improbable that more than about half a dozen young were reared: gulls were almost certainly to blame. It is satisfactory to record that "Joe" and "Jessie" were among the successful parents: the former has been known since 1949 and the latter since 1952 at the same site, and have been mated for at least seven years. Both were given new rings.

The Eider *Somateria mollissima* population, estimated in 1951 and 1952 at about 70 pairs, and in 1955 at about 100 pairs, is still growing, despite heavy predation by gulls. An estimate on 25th May, when probably about fifty ducks were brooding, suggested a population of 150 to 160 pairs, plus about two dozen unpaired individuals.

### RINGING

Only 1,333 birds of 58 species were ringed, the lowest total since the war. Over a quarter were caught in the first fortnight of the season. Subalpine Warbler and Lapwing were ringed for the first time.

### RECOVERIES

Seventeen reports of first year Shags, and one of a second year Shag, were received from the east side of Britain between Ross-shire and Essex. The recoveries from England, several of them from quite far inland, were associated with a "wreck" of this species after severe gales. As young birds were chiefly involved, it would seem that adults were better equipped to deal with such conditions.

Among other recoveries reported during the year are the following:

Sparrowhawk 329143. Ringed, first winter male, 23.9.57. Trapped and released at Fair Isle, Shetland, 7.5.58.  
Guillemot *Uria aalge*. AT 33712. Ringed, young, 26.6.57. Shot

- about eight miles SSW of Torbjornsker Lighthouse, Oslofjord, Norway, mid-January, 1958.
- Blackbird X 65325. Ringed, full-grown, 13.10.57. Caught and released, Heligoland, Germany, 8.4.58.
- Redstart C 64486. Ringed, full-grown female, 21.9.57. Shot at Alcalá de los Gagués (Cadiz), Spain, about 10.11.57.
- Gannet *Sula bassana* 132227. Ringed, first winter, 14.9.58. Caught (oiled) and released, near Breskens (Zeeland), Holland, 25.9.58.

Five Gannets altogether have been ringed on the May (all in different years) and it is likely that they allowed themselves to be caught only because they were sickly. Three of the birds have been reported, all within twenty days of ringing and one after only nine days, from this same part of Holland.

Greater Black-backed Gulls *Larus marinus* are roosting on the May in winter in greater numbers than ever before; over 500 were seen on 25th September. On 21st March, a recently dead Greater Black-back (ring no. 410894) was picked up on the North Ness, where it had been ringed as an adult on 9th November 1956. This is one of the few definite instances of a sea bird which breeds away from the island returning there in different winters.

### RETRAPS

Linnets and Meadow Pipits are examples of species which breed on the island and winter off it. At least twelve of the Linnets and six of the Meadow Pipits which arrived in the spring of 1958 were present the previous summer. One of the Linnets, back for certainly the fourth successive year, was at least five years old. We know that not all the returning first year birds of these two species stay to breed and from the data now available it seems probable that in the case of the Linnet, at any rate, family groups or "island aggregates" stay together throughout the winter. What probably happens is that the winter parties break up finally at the onset of the breeding season, after they have returned to the island, and it may well be a shortage of nesting sites which forces the younger birds to leave and make their homes elsewhere.

### OTHER OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### MAMMALS

Rabbits are once again teeming, despite efforts by the lighthouse-keepers to reduce their numbers with guns, snares, and ferrets. There has been no recrudescence of myxomatosis. So far no black or white individuals have been reported in the new population. The increased sheep flock had a good lambing but despite being grazed by some 65 ewes and lambs, and by swarms of rabbits, the grass cover is still rank.

Grey Seals *Halichoerus grypus* were present in larger numbers than ever before. That they represent an off-shoot of the Farne Islands colony is now certain, for individuals tagged there as pups have been identified. The highest counts were made in summer, over 60 on 22nd June, over 50 on 21st July and between 60 and 70 on 1st August. Twice in spring light-house-keepers were able to crawl up to (and on one occasion catch) tagged seals basking on the rocks and "take their numbers," whilst a third individual was stalked at night by an observer who crept close enough to read the serial by torchlight. Of the 17 animals on the rocks on this latter occasion, at least six carried Farne marks. If one is looking for them, the tags are not particularly difficult to see and on 18th September were clearly distinguished not only on a seal on the Norman Rock but also on another in the water. Details of the three seals so far identified are:

3555. Marked North Wamses, Farne Islands, on 24.11.57 (a male in first coat, 3-4 days old). Caught and released Isle of May 5.4.58.
3720. Marked Brownsman, Farne Islands, on 17.11.57 (a male, seven days old, weighing 47 lb.). Tag read by daylight, Isle of May, 14.3.58.
3782. Marked Staple Island, Farne Islands, on 24.11.57 (a female 3-4 days old). Tag read by torchlight, Isle of May, 19.3.58.

#### INVERTEBRATES

The Junior Honours Zoology class from Glasgow University, which visited the island from 20th to 27th June, concentrated most of its attention on freshwater and marine biology. The material collected is still being identified but is expected to include a number of new notices.

From 5th to 7th July Mr E. C. Pelham-Clinton made preliminary reconnaissance of moth-trapping possibilities using both a mercury vapour lamp and sugar baits. He found moths disappointingly scarce, with the exception of the Diamond-back *Plutella maculipennis*, that scourge of brassica crops, of which there had been a mass invasion from the Continent the previous week. Much of the East Coast of Britain was affected and although the May did not suffer the vast hordes recorded elsewhere (e.g. East Lothian and the St Andrews area) the species was nevertheless "a considerable nuisance when collecting other small moths." Altogether 37 species of moths were collected during the week-end, fourteen of which had not previously been recorded.

Two half-days spent by W. J. Eggeling collecting earthworms were equally profitable, resulting in five new occurrences for the May (named by Dr J. Morton Boyd) and bringing the total of species recorded to twelve.

First notices of a large number of other invertebrates, including slugs, snails, woodlice, harvestmen, freshwater bugs and water fleas, resulted from a visit by Mr T. Huxley (Nature Conservancy) from 15th to 18th September. It is greatly to be hoped that he and Mr Pelham-Clinton will be able to repeat their visits, and that other persons interested in the invertebrate populations may also be persuaded to add their quota of information to the general survey now under way.

#### PLANTS

The fungi of the May are still imperfectly known. A collection made by T. W. Eggeling on 18th September, kindly identified by Mr D. M. Henderson, produced three new notices and brought the number recorded to 37.

On 24th September M. F. M. Meiklejohn and L. J. Reed found a small colony of Field Pansy *Viola arvensis* on the North Ness, the first definite notice of the species. Corn Marigold *Chrysanthemum segetum* again flowered.

#### ANCIENT MONUMENTS

The Committee are pleased to report that, after a visit by an Inspector of the Ministry of Works, St Adrian's Chapel and the Old Lighthouse have been scheduled as Ancient Monuments. Recommendations by the Ministry for the preservation of the Chapel are being studied.

#### PUBLICATIONS

The following notes relating to birds on the May appeared during the year:

- FLOWER, W. U. Goldcrest caught on hooks of burdock. *Brit. Birds* 51:276.
- MEIKLEJOHN, M. F. M. Yellow-breasted Bunting at the Isle of May. *Scottish Birds* 1:20.
- MEIKLEJOHN, M. F. M. Semipalmated Sandpiper on the Isle of May. *Scottish Birds* 1:35.
- M(EIKLEJOHN), M. F. M. Waiting for Godwit. *Glasgow Herald*, 4th October 1958.
- M(EIKLEJOHN), M. F. M. The Bluethroats. *Glasgow Herald*, 11th October 1958.
- R(AWCLIFFE), C. P. September Migrants at the Isle of May. *Scotsman*, 4th October 1958.
- WATSON, DONALD. Subalpine Warbler on the Isle of May. *Scottish Birds* 1:41.
- WATSON, DONALD. Albino Pipit on the Isle of May. *Scottish Birds* 1:43.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are glad of the opportunity to express again the gratitude of all observers to the Principal Lighthouse-keeper and

Mrs Watt, and to the other keepers, for their unfailing help and kindness. They are an object lesson in hospitality. It is also a pleasure to say Thank-you to our boatman, Mr Willie Hughes, for his tolerance to bird-watchers in general, and for the genial and friendly way in which he so invariably seeks to meet their often odd requirements.

## SHORT NOTES

### WHITE-BILLED DIVERS IN EAST ROSS-SHIRE

On the afternoon of 4th February 1959, in bright sunlight with a very calm sea, I saw near Avoch Harbour, Inverness Firth, a diver swimming some 50 or 60 yards offshore. It was of heavy appearance and its bill was white with a very definite uptilt. The back and wings appeared through binoculars to be a plain brownish black, the same colour extending up the back of the neck. There was more of this colour than of white on the neck, the somewhat indefinite dividing line coming almost straight down from the line of the bird's eye. Two timed dives were of 30 and 32 seconds.

The bird was watched through a 3" x 60 telescope on 5th February in company with Mr J. Macintosh, on the 6th with Dr Maeve Rusk and on the 11th with Mr A. Anderson. Under greater magnification the bill was examined: the top edge of the upper mandible looked slightly upcurved and the bottom edge of the lower mandible very definitely so. The line of the gape gave a slightly tapered appearance to the top mandible, which projected very slightly beyond the bottom mandible. We could see the acutely pointed dark mark where the feathering joined the top mandible and the delicate dark line where, from the angle of the gape, the edge of the white feathering curved irregularly to the base of the bill. The bill was ivory white, with a suggestion of greying towards the base. The back showed some irregularity of tint, some parts being rather browner than others. The dark edging of wing and back came down to water level, the lighter part showing only when one of the legs was uplifted.

While I was examining the diver with binoculars on 4th February a sweep of the sea brought into view another diver, some 200 yards offshore. It had a yellowish bill, upturned but not so definitely as in the first bird. It had rather conspicuous white spots above, those on the lower back being larger and whiter than those on the upper back. On 8th February I got a close-up view of this bird, about a mile further east. The bill was yellowish, with a darkening towards grey both at the base and the point. The neck had much more white than in the former bird, the line of demarcation (well

behind the eye-line) being very indefinite. The area over the eye was white. The back and wings looked almost black; spread over the back area were what looked like tufts of white feathers of varying size, but on the lower part of the wings forming an almost reticular pattern. The upper edge of the bill was practically straight.

I have no doubt that these birds were White-billed Divers *Gavia adamsii*. The bird from Sweden, illustrated in *British Birds* 48, no. 11, was in some ways similar to the second bird, but the latter had a more definite uptilt of the bill, and the light spots were more pronounced on the lower coverts than the upper.

JOHN LEES.

### HERON FEEDING ON CARRION

On 13th March 1959 in the Beinn Eighe Nature Reserve, near Loch Clair in Glen Torridon, I noticed three birds feeding on the fresh gralloch, head and hooves of a stag: a Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*, a Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* and a Heron *Ardea cinerea*. The gull and the crow were feeding intensively, while the Heron advanced somewhat timidly, skulking into the proceedings and making dabs at the carrion. I could not be sure, even with the use of my telescope, that the Heron actually swallowed carrion, but its behaviour suggested strongly that it did.

J. POLSON.

### GADWALL BREEDING IN SOUTH INVERNESS

On 29th July 1957 I saw a pair of Gadwall *Anas streperus* with four young on Loch Ghuilbinn, to the north of Loch Ossian. They were seen at close quarters and the following details noted: appearance very similar to Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*, white speculum, orange sides of bill and yellowish legs. The age of the young would be hard to say, but I would think a few weeks old as they had developed the white speculum.

A. V. SMITH.

(Note by courtesy of P. F. Goodfellow.—ED.)

### VELVET SCOTER IN KINROSS-SHIRE

On 15th March 1959 I saw a Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* near the sluice on Loch Leven. It was an adult drake, black except for the prominent white wing-patches, and in a very good light at close range I was able to see a small white crescent under the eye. There was a noticeable thickening at



the base of the bill. The bill was pale orange on the upper mandible with a heavy dark nail. This seems to be the first record for Kinross-shire.

GEORGE DICK.

[Notes on the Snow Goose in North Perth, West Lothian and Inverness are temporarily held over]

## WHITE CYGNETS OF MUTE SWANS AT DALBEATTIE

(See illustrations on page 103)

For the past four years a pair of Mute Swans *Cygnus olor* on a pond at Collieston Park, Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire, have hatched out young birds. Each year they have produced either one or two white cygnets of the type described as the "Polish Swan" by Yarrell (*Proc. Zool. Soc. London* 1838). The plumage of the normal cygnets is grey brown, but in the mutants it is white.

On one Sunday in June 1955 I was informed that the parent cob had killed one of the two white cygnets and that it was attacking the other one. When I arrived the remaining white cygnet was almost dead and had to be humanely destroyed: it was about six weeks old. The other five grey cygnets were not attacked and fledged successfully.

On 19th June 1956 I was notified by the Dalbeattie Police that two boys had rescued the only white cygnet in a brood of six, after it had been attacked by the parents, chiefly the cob again. I called at Dalbeattie Police Station and found that the youngster was not too severely injured, although it had been pecked on the back of the head and back. Captain and Mrs P. G. Barton of Auchenskeoch undertook to look after this bird and it was kept in a small enclosure in a burn and housed by night until it was about three-quarters grown, when it was given the freedom of the pond along with several Chinese Geese. It remained there for about eighteen months and then suddenly disappeared.

In 1957 I arranged through my Headquarters to convey the one white cygnet in a brood of nine to the Zoological Park, Edinburgh, when it was about five weeks old, before another attack was due from the parents. Mr G. D. Fisher has since told me that this cygnet died.

In 1958 two grey and two white cygnets hatched from a clutch of seven eggs. The parents were unable to get the first newly hatched young back up a ramp to the nest on the small island, and the remaining three perished while hatching. These were two grey and one white, which would have made four grey and three white if this misfortune had not happened. On 21st June I again arranged to convey the two white

cygnets, about five weeks old, to the Zoological Park, Edinburgh, where they can be seen and are doing well. They have pale grey feet and legs, and a grey beak. Their eyes are perfectly normal.

G. P. McWILLIAM,  
Inspector, S.S.P.C.A.

### RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE IN SCOTLAND

About the middle of December 1958 a friend of mine shot a Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa*, one of a pair unfortunately, within half a mile of Melrose, Roxburghshire. I enclose some flank feathers of the bird as evidence of identification. I have made extensive inquiries from the large landowners round about in three counties and none have put any down or imported any eggs.

PHILIP CHRISTISON.

### GREATER YELLOWLEGS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 25th October 1957, J. G. H. watched a Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* at close range sitting on the golf course beside the Ythan Estuary, Aberdeenshire, and within thirty yards of the houses of Newburgh. The bird allowed close approach and behaved in a most odd manner, sitting with its head hunched into its shoulders and with the plumage fluffed out. When it flew it quickly pitched again and was silent.

Searching for it later the same day J. G. H. found it dead, with feathers scattered around: it appeared to have been killed by some animal, probably a dog from the village. The bird was extremely wasted. It was sent to J. M. H., who found that it was suffering from an extensive enteritis. It was an immature male in moult to winter plumage. This appears to be the first record for the mainland of Scotland, the previous record being from Shetland in 1953.

JEFFERY G. HARRISON.  
JAMES M. HARRISON.

### SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER IN LANARKSHIRE

On 18th October 1956, beside the banks of the Clyde in the Old Parks at Hamilton, on a patch of muddy ground overgrown with persicaria, W.K.R. discovered a "Pectoral Sandpiper". The inverted commas indicate the provisional nature of the identification: from the first, the pale appearance of the bird, especially in flight, its apparently smaller size and its twittering call-note were points which did not correspond

with this observer's previous experience of the Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*. On the following day, and on the 16th, it was seen by M.F.M.M. The bird was snipe-like in habit and squatted until closely approached, when it would fly off in a wide circle until it landed—usually on the other side of the river, where it was lost. At first, on account of the white lateral upper tail-coverts (giving it the appearance of a small Reeve *Philomachus pugnax*) and the black rump and centre of tail, it was thought that the bird was a Pectoral Sandpiper *C. melanotos*, possible differences being attributed perhaps to immaturity, a pardonable error when it is considered that only the back of the bird was seen, and that not particularly closely. The bird's call-note, invariably uttered on rising, was a rather shrill "trrt", sometimes repeated as "teet teet trrt-trrt", and of a swallow-like quality. On 20th October good views were had by a number of observers (John Baird, Guy McCaskie, C. E. Palmar and W.K.R.), who then noted for the first time that the streakings on the breast were confined to its sides, except for a few in the centre which were visible only at close range in a very good light, and that the continuous line of demarcation, so characteristic of *C. melanotos* in all plumages, was absent. W.K.R. immediately suggested that the bird was the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *C. acuminata* ("Siberian Pectoral Sandpiper" in *The Handbook*), a suggestion which received further confirmation when the bird flew directly overhead revealing the shape of its tail—the central feathers elongated, but the others decreasing gradually in size towards the outermost. Later in the afternoon the bird was seen by D.S. who, by a lucky coincidence, had recorded an (American) Pectoral Sandpiper on Holy Island only a fortnight before. He commented: "Each time, when it was flushed, it gave a fairly high-pitched melodic twitter. This call, I feel, is quite dissimilar to that of the Pectoral Sandpiper I observed on 30th September and 1st October on Lindisfarne. The American call was very much lower pitched, and of entirely different rhythm. It consisted of two distinct notes at intervals and was of a reedy character as noted in *The Handbook*—rather reminiscent of a telephone heard ringing before the receiver is lifted at the other end". The bird was again seen on 21st October by D. McRedie, M.F.M.M., C.E.P. and D.S., when, as the bird sat in a curiously upright position behind a grass tussock, with its breast facing the observers, it gave the impression of being, as far as its underparts were concerned, a pale bird rather than a fairly dark bird, as *C. melanotos* would seem to be.

The following details were observed: crown buffish, with heavy dark streaking; nape dark; light eyebrow continued to form thin band over bill—eyestripe appeared rather lighter than in American bird (D.S.); lores dusky; upperparts as in

*melanotos*, the pointed feathers, dark with bright chestnut-buff edgings giving a very brilliant effect; pale diagonal line runnings across wing from bend, bordered by darker lines; "strong and distinct V marking on darker back is probably common to both species, but very prominent in this bird" (D.S.); a curious pale oval patch of side of breast by bend of wing with darker smudges running across it; outer tail feathers with white tips; underparts white with a slight buffish tinge on breast, and thin dark streaks on the sides of breast continued down almost to flanks; a few dark streakings were visible in the centre of breast at ten or fifteen yards in good lighting conditions (J.B., G.McC.) but could not be seen at ten yards in less favourable conditions; the bill was rather thick at the base, long and tapering, with slight downward curve near tip—dark, but yellowish at base; legs yellow ochre. No suggestion of the line of demarcation across the breast, as in *melanotos*, but otherwise a very similar bird, both in appearance and habits.

The colours of the soft parts as given in *The Handbook* are no doubt taken from museum specimens; descriptions in *The Ibis* (1904:423 and 1955:335) support ours.

The bird's favourite resort was flooded on the 24th, when it was absent.

We have no doubt that the bird was the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*, the first for Scotland and fifth for Britain, as well as the only one recorded outside Norfolk.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.  
W. K. RICHMOND.  
D. STALKER.

## ROLLERS IN ORKNEY

On the morning of 27th May 1958 a brilliantly coloured bird about the size of a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula* alighted on the branch of a tree in our garden at Isbister House, Rendall. It stayed only a brief time, perhaps no more than a minute, and was off again in a flash of bright greenish blue and chestnut. There is no doubt it was a Roller *Coracias garrulus*. It was predominantly of a bright greenish blue, with darker borders to the wings and dark central tail feathers. It had a large chestnut-brown saddle-like patch across the back. The dark coloured beak was fairly short and strong-looking and in all it was a thick-set robust bird of rather corvine appearance.

Then on 7th June a friend telephoned to tell me of a brilliantly coloured bird which was frequenting a roadside in Deerness. I could not see it myself, but it was found later and identified as a Roller by Miss Marjory Traill-Clouston and a friend. It stayed for several days.

Towards the end of June Mr R. Watson and others reported a Roller from Wideford Brae, about five miles west of Deerness. The bird made a small group of low trees and bushes by the roadside its headquarters and fed largely in a big field of turnips heavily infested by Black Diamond moth. On 19th July Mr Watson took two colour photographs of it. It was last seen on the 21st. The possibility of these records referring to the same bird should be considered.

E. BALFOUR.

### OVERLAND MASS MIGRATION OF REDWINGS

On 18th October 1958, while crossing Rannoch Moor in darkness, I heard Redwings *Turdus musicus* and disturbed a flock from the wood at Kingshouse on the morning of the 19th. Weather was wild, with strong south-west wind, and it kept us in most of the day, but in the evening among the woods of the Black Mount Forest, west of Loch Tulla, we put up flock after flock of Redwings from trees and moor. It was not until we had climbed clear of the wood that we became aware that a large passage of birds was taking place, with flocks in the air wherever we looked. Some were mere specks, some were low flying flocks, and, so far as we could make out, they did not seem to be following any particular direction. Certainly we saw many thousands of birds, mostly Redwings, but there were a fair number of Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* among them, perhaps ten per cent. It was on this same day that large numbers were pouring into Skokholm.

T. WEIR.

### ROCK PIPIT IN KINROSS

On 16th November 1958 we had a good view in indifferent light of a Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta* at Loch Leven. The mantle had the typical olive appearance, there was no conspicuous white eyestripe or outer tail feathers, and the legs were dark. The bird fed among stones close to the water's edge and called typically when flushed. This is the first record for Kinross.

T. BOYD.

R. W. J. SMITH.

### WINTER BREEDING OF STARLING IN SHETLAND

In the first week of December 1958, at Baltasound, Shetland, it was brought to my notice that a pair of Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris zetlandicus* had been seen carrying food into a hole in the wall above the door of a cattle-shed. Upon investigation I could hear the young calling, but could not see them. Up till the end of December the weather was extremely mild for these parts, although this island of Unst is the most northerly of the British Isles. Unfortunately January brought

heavy frost and snow; one of the parents was found dead, while the young were not heard again.

S. T. SAXBY.

### HAWFINCHES IN ABERDEEN

On 5th October 1958 I was in Allervale Cemetery, Aberdeen, beside the River Dee, when my attention was drawn towards the peculiar notes of some bird and, in a matter of seconds, I caught sight of a pair of Hawfinches *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* flitting about, and flying over and between the headstones of the graves. When I was a boy my grandfather had a Hawfinch sent him from England and I am therefore familiar with the appearance of the bird.

E. WYLLIE FENTON.

### NORTHERN BULLFINCH IN THE CAIRNGORMS

On 28th October 1958 my wife and I observed a male Northern Bullfinch *Pyrrhula p. pyrrhula* on the Silver Mountain in the northern foothills of the Cairngorms (Inverness-shire). It was above the tree-line at 1,600 feet feeding on heather seeds which my wife was able to identify from the plant as those of the Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*. The bird was unmistakable, being extremely large, with the breast and cheeks brilliant scarlet pink and the back a pure and pale French grey. I may add that I am familiar with this race of the Bullfinch, both in the field on the Continent and in the museum, having assisted my father, Dr James Harrison, when he was reviewing the races of the Bullfinch. The contrast was all the more marked because Scottish Bullfinches tend to be darker and duller than those elsewhere in the British Isles.

This record appears to be the first from inland in Scotland. According to Baxter and Rintoul (*Birds of Scotland*), all the definite records are from the east coast or northern isles. The situation, high on the open moors, is also a surprising one, and the very unusual site further confirms the record.

JEFFERY G. HARRISON.

## CURRENT NOTES

(These notes are considered to be fully authenticated. To preclude possible confusion it should be pointed out that the name "John Murray" refers to two different observers).

*Records for 1957 and 1958.* Apparently unpublished are records of the Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris testacea* from the Endrick Mouth (Dumbarton) on 9th June 1957 (M. Forrester,

T. Weir) and of a Grey Plover *Charadrius squatarola* on the Clyde above Hamilton on 25th September 1957 (T. Weir). 58 Bean Geese *Anser arvensis* were seen near Auldhouse, Lanarkshire, on 16th March 1958, and one at the Doonfoot, Ayr, on 20th April 1958 (L. A. Urquhart). An immature male Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* passed the whole summer of 1958 at the mouth of the River Ythan (Aberdeen), being last seen on 25th November (A. J. M. Smith). Other Solway occurrences of the Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* are from Caerlaverock Merse (Dumfries) in autumn 1958: two on 21st August, at least 15 on 23rd and ten on 29th, also two on 2nd October (E. L. Roberts). Spotted Redshanks were seen at the River Ythan on 22nd August (two), 20th September (one) and 4th October (two) (A. J. M. Smith). Terns *Sterna* sp. were heard passing in numbers to the SW over the Braids, Edinburgh, in the dark at 2045 hours on 11th October (G. L. Sandeman) and a late House Martin *Delichon urbica* occurred at Dunbar on 4th November (A. Macdonald).

*Winter visitors.* A Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* continually perched on the steeple of the Leckie Memorial Church, Peebles, in February (Mary E. C. Rankine). Gadwall *Anas strepera* were seen regularly during the winter on the Ken-Dee marches (Kirkcudbright) (Donald Watson) and on Figgate Pond, Edinburgh (P. Holt) and a pair on the sea at Leith on 7th February (S.O.C. excursion from Glasgow). Smew *Mergus albellus*, of both sexes, were seen intermittently on Loch Ken, R. Dee and Carlingwark Loch (Kirkcudbright) from 8th January (Donald Watson) and a pair on L. Milton (Kirkcudbright) on 1st January (W. Austin *et al.*); a female on L. Macanrie (S. Perth) on 1st March (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). A White-fronted Goose of the eastern race *Anser a. albifrons* was seen with the Bean Geese at Castle Douglas on 2nd and 3rd February, and a Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus* from 30th January to 4th February (H. G. Alexander, Donald Watson). Five Brent Geese *Branta bernicla*, of which four were Light-breasted *hrota*, were at Tynninghame (E. Lothian) on 18th January (T. Boyd, R. W. J. Smith). The Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*, seen at Auldhouse (Lanark) on 9th November 1958 (*antea* 1:77), was also seen on the same day at Dunwan Dam (Renfrew), on each occasion accompanied by a hybrid, perhaps between Barnacle and Grey Lag *Anser anser*, of which it is hoped to publish a fuller account later (L. A. Urquhart). A pair of Bewick's Swans *Cygnus columbianus* were at Merryton (Lanark) on 28th November 1958 (L. A. Urquhart). A Buzzard *Buteo buteo* was seen over Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow, on 17th February (John Murray). A Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, seen in the Loch Ken area from 28th December, will receive a separate note (Robert Smith *et al.*). A Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* haunted Black-

ford Pond, Edinburgh, between 12th January and 2nd February (Ian Hay, Mrs Elspeth Hamilton). An adult Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* was seen at Craigmaddie (W. Stirling) on 8th February (M. F. M. Meiklejohn) and an immature bird, probably the same as was present during the first half of 1958, at Tongland power station (Kirkcudbright) (D.W.). Two or more Tree-creepers *Certhia familiaris* were in the Stornoway woods on 28th March (W. A. J. Cunningham) and another wintering Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*, a female, is reported from Wigtown in the first half of February (Mary McKinna). A Mealy Redpoll *Carduelis f. flammea* was seen near New Galloway (Kirkcudbright) on 3rd February (H. G. Alexander, Donald Watson) and three Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* on the Moor of Forvie (Aberdeen) on 25th November (A. J. M. Smith).

*Distribution and breeding.* Single Great Crested Grebes *Podiceps cristatus* are reported from Loch Fyne on 11th December 1955 and on 2nd April 1959, and two from Loch Sween on 7th January 1956 (I. Rainier). A Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* hatched a brood of seven on 15th November at Carsebreck (Perth) (G. T. Jamieson). Single Black Guillemots *Cephus grylle* occurred near the Bullers of Buchan (Aberdeen) on 17th May 1958 and near Fowlsheugh (Kincardine) on 27th May 1958 (A. J. M. Smith): one in summer plumage was seen at Eyebroughty (East Lothian) on 1st April 1959 (A. Ablett). Mrs Rainier reports the colonisation of North Knapdale by the Jay *Garrulus glandarius* beginning in October 1957. Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus collybita* were heard singing in three new localities in Islay, in addition to Bridgend: Port Askaig, Kildalton (at least four) and Kilmory (John Murray). A pair of Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* were building a nest in Bennan Forest, New Galloway, on 13th January, but no proof of successful breeding: birds were seen in the district up to 3rd May (Donald Watson).

*Spring Migration.* Among scarcer migrants may be mentioned a pair of Garganey *Anas querquedula* at the Endrick Mouth (seen in both W. Stirling and Dunbarton) on 19th April (K. H. Paterson, W. K. Richmond), and two drakes and one duck at the Loch of Strathbeg (Aberdeen) on 25th April (D. P. Willis). *British Birds* (52:140) reports exceptional numbers of Garganey on passage in England. A Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* was at Gullane Point (E. Lothian) on 8th March (J. E. King); at Rosyth mudflats there was one on 21st, two on 23rd and six on 25th April (P. G. R. Barbier) and at Bothwell Bridge six on 24th April (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). An exceptionally early Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* occurred at Fort George (Inverness) on 23rd March (David Hope).

*Habits.* Alick Ross (Barrahead Lighthouse) reports that at



Suleskerry nests of the Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* have been found containing old bolts, nuts, etc., thrown out of the engine-room. The Rev. E. T. Vernon reports the perfect impression of a bird, probably a Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus*, on his dining-room window at Bridge of Weir. "The bird must have flown against it with considerable force. The wing-span is complete, the individual primaries clearly marked; the head, legs and even claws show up well." (Cf. *British Birds* Nov. 1955 and Sept. 1957).

#### CORRIGENDA

*Antea* 1:42. Under Arctic Warbler add scientific name *Phylloscopus borealis*.

*Antea* 1:57. In caption of photograph for "Marsh Sandpiper" read "Wood Sandpiper".

*Antea* 1:68. For "auxiliaries" read "axillaries."

*Antea* 1:77. The last flock of Waxwings at Aviemore was on 10th and not 20th January. The flock at Elie was on 31st December not 31st January.

#### THE GLASGOW BIRD BULLETIN

"The Glasgow Bird Bulletin" was founded in 1952 to provide an outlet for the rapidly increasing number of notes on birds of the West, a more or less direct descendant of "Clyde Bird News," the news-sheet I issued in 1944-5. It began with a handful of subscribers and at best had just over 300. Published quarterly at 5/- per annum, it was originally called "The Glasgow and West of Scotland Bird Bulletin", the name being shortened in 1956. It had many similarities with "The Edinburgh Bird Bulletin", but in many ways was quite different. It was not confined to the local branch of the S.O.C., about a third of the subscribers not being members of the Club and ranging throughout the West of Scotland, and elsewhere. It did not go in for a series of local reports, but was more concerned with accounts of visits to islands in which the West abounds, local lists for various regions, etc. Sometimes it gave the first published account of the birds of a particular region. Some of the articles were based on observation of only a few hours or days duration; others were more substantial, covering a life-time's experience. Much of the material was therefore transient in interest, as it should be, but some is of permanent value and will be consulted for many years to come. Among the more important items published can be mentioned Major F. M. Crum on "The Birds of Rosneath," James Bartholomew on "The Birds of Baldernock Parish," Lord David Stuart on "The Birds of Bute," James Greenlees on "The Birds of Southend," Iain M. Murray on "The Birds of Skye," and my own articles on the Clyde islands, and on the breeding birds and waders of Renfrewshire. The Bulletin has undoubtedly made mistakes, but on the credit side can fairly claim to have been right when other more illustrious publications have been wrong. "The Glasgow Bird Bulletin" was subject to probably the most remarkable series of irregularities and delays in publication that ever afflicted a bird journal: it can now be disclosed that the real reason for this was the inherent laziness of the Editor. In view of this the Editor would like to thank his subscribers sincerely for the loyalty they showed him over the years. Editing was great fun and made me many new friends.

J. A. GIBSON,

### B.T.O. CONFERENCE, DUMFRIES, 1959

The twelfth Annual Meeting and Conference of Regional Representatives of the British Trust for Ornithology was held for the first time in Scotland at the County Hotel, Dumfries, from 30th January to 1st February 1959 and was attended by over 70 representatives and members of the B.T.O. and the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, who were associated with the Conference on this occasion. The conference, planned to give the maximum time in the field, was opened by the President, R. C. Homes, who introduced Donald Watson to give a talk on the birds of Dumfriesshire and Galloway with particular reference to their habitats: this was illustrated with slides from his own paintings, some of which were on exhibition in the hotel. After this talk, an expedition was made to the Caerlaverock Nature Reserve under the leadership of E. L. Roberts, who ably steered the whole party along a hedge on the other side of which was a flock of about 1,300 Barnacle Geese. In the evening, with A. B. Duncan, Regional Representative for Dumfriesshire and Chairman of the Nature Conservancy, in the chair, H. J. Boyd spoke on "How Many Geese?", describing some of the recent work of the Wildfowl Trust on the distribution, numbers and breeding success of goose populations, with examples from his recent survey of the geese in Islay.

On 1st February the field excursion was to the Castle Douglas area, where Donald Watson led the party along a lane from which it was possible, without disembarking from the cars, to observe a flock of Bean Geese, among which was a single Lesser White-fronted Goose which had appeared for the first time the previous day and, on the way back to Castle Douglas, a Marsh Harrier flew slowly past the entire procession of 25 cars. In the afternoon the main party visited Loch Ken where they were able to see the seventh advertised species of goose, the Greenland White-front. Other species of interest recorded by breakaway groups included Peregrine, Smew and Waxwing, these completing a week-end that will long be remembered for the excellence of the local arrangements by W. Austin, the birds, the weather and the lectures.

## THE INVASION OF WAXWINGS

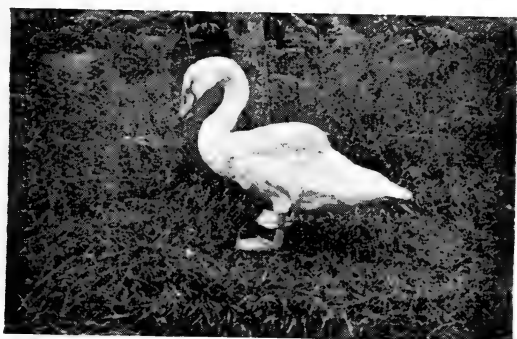
### *Bombycilla garrulus*, December 1958

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN

This summary deals mainly with the third substantial invasion of Waxwings into this country during the past three winters. The ultimate factors which lead to these irregular invasions, as distinct from the proximate factors which start the birds on their flights, have been discussed in a very interesting paper by Dr Gunnar Svårdson ("British Birds" 50: 314-343). He suggests that irruption-species such as the Waxwing start a flight each year stimulated by the same proximate factors as other migrants but that the movement stops where they encounter an abundant food supply. Irruptions occur when they do not find adequate food supplies within their normal range.

In the winter of 1956/57 the rowan crop in Sweden was quite exceptional and Waxwings appeared there from December 1956 onwards. Numbers in some places were greater than ever before and Svårdson predicted that Waxwings would breed abundantly in Fenno-Scandia during 1957 and, since the crop of rowan berries would certainly be inferior in the autumn because of tiredness, there might well be an irruption into Great Britain in the winter of 1957/8.

As it turned out some overspill from the invasion of Sweden reached the east coast of Scotland and England during the second half of February and the beginning of March 1957. This was probably the biggest invasion since the winter of 1946/7 and came at a rather unusual time of



#### WHITE CYGNETS OF MUTE SWAN AT DALBEATTIE

I.—1955. Parents with normal cygnets. II.—White cygnet from same brood as that shown above, taken at same age. III.—1957. Parents with eight grey cygnets and one white about a week old.

year but it was evidently just the overflow from the far larger immigration into Scandinavia where plenty of food was available to halt the birds.

As predicted by Svårdson the crop of rowan berries in Sweden was very poor in the autumn of 1957 and, there being no abundance of food to stop their migration flight, Waxwings began to arrive in this country about 6th November 1957 and were recorded from many parts of the country in ones and twos and small flocks.

After invasions in two successive winters one might have expected no more Waxwings for a while but, from late September 1958 throughout October, there came reports of an unusually early and heavy movement south and west in the Baltic area, followed by a build-up in southern Scandinavia in November and an invasion of Germany in December ("British Birds" 52: 32).

Small numbers of Waxwings visit Scotland every winter and until mid December 1958 the pattern for the winter was normal. Only a few earlier records have been received, single birds having been seen south of Nairn on 23rd October, at Avoch in Ross-shire on 11th November and at Fortrose, two miles away, on 2nd December. There was one on Fair Isle on 18th, 19th and 24th November, and two at Colinsburgh (Fife) on 19th November.

The invasion did not start until about 13th December when a single Waxwing was reported from Golspie (Sutherland). The following two days odd birds were noted at Crail (Fife), Dunfermline (Fife) and Glasgow; about this time, too, there were records from Kirkwall (Orkney) and Wick (Caithness). On the 16th two spent the day at Rannoch Station (Perth) and on the 17th six were noted in Stornoway (Lewis). By this time they were also present near Cockburnspath (Berwick).

All these reports referred to very small groups but on the 18th a flock of twelve was noted in Glen Nevis (Inverness) and thirty made a brief stop at Rannoch Station. Next day two were reported at Thurso (Caithness) and three had reached Canna (Skye). On the 20th there were small flocks in Aberdeen, Perth and Guardbridge (Fife), and next day twelve were seen at Golspie and 25 at Dalkeith (Midlothian), as well as small numbers by Loch Tay (Perth), at Avoch and at Pittenweem (Fife). Nine were reported from Fort William (Inverness) on the 22nd.

It is fairly easy to catalogue the records which have been sent in, but less easy to eliminate bias from them. It is most noticeable that there tend to be more records on Sundays than on other days of the week. Another source of bias is that the bulk of the reports sent in were received in response to letters published in "The Scotsman" on 3rd January and "The Glasgow Herald" on 12th February. Though these papers have a wide circulation throughout Scotland there is naturally a bias against those areas where they are not extensively read. Furthermore, the tendency is clearly for people to write when they see the request for information; one is therefore sent the records that are fresh in their minds, and older and subsequent notes come only from those who are most interested in the birds.

During the next few days, up to 26th December, odd reports were received from a number of scattered localities. By Christmas Day seven had reached the Solway at Glencaple (Dumfries) and on Boxing Day there were twenty at Corpach (Inverness).

At this time there was a most spectacular invasion into NE Northumberland, just outside our area. 65 Waxwings arrived on 26th December, followed by 150 at midday on the 27th. During the afternoon many parties were watched flying in from over the sea and at least 500 were counted. Numbers seemed to increase from the 29th to the 31st until every sizeable hedge had its quota of Waxwings eating the heavy crop of berries and by 4th January there were at least 1,000 in the area.

On 27th December, while this great invasion of England was taking place, there were 27 at Aberfeldy (Perth) and next day 30 at Aviemore

(Inverness), twelve at Dundee and 16 at Bridge of Cally (Perth). About this time there was an increase of 20 at Ballater (Aberdeen) and on 28th and 29th smaller numbers were recorded in a number of places, including the first for the winter at Gullane (East Lothian), in a garden, where they are seen with such regularity that this is the fifth successive winter in which they have been noted.

Numerous records for the next few days may perhaps be put down to the publication of the letter in "The Scotsman" on 3rd January, but there were reports from no fewer than nine new localities for 31st December, including the first for St Andrews (Fife) whence eleven different people wrote about the comparatively small flocks that frequented the town until the beginning of April. A single bird on Tiree (Inner Hebrides) on 1st January is claimed as the first record for the island. Flocks included twelve in Elgin and fourteen in Callander (Perth) on 2nd January, and eleven at Inverness and twelve at Banchory (Kincardine) on the 3rd. About the 5th and 6th there were increases at Ballater and near Aviemore, and on the 6th twenty were recorded at Spinningdale (Sutherland). Flocks of twelve were seen near Croy (Inverness) and Nairn in early January and there were twenty at Kirkcaldy (Fife) about the 7th.

All these records refer either to the first reports of the birds in the areas or to local increases but, as the season progresses, confusion is obviously created by flocks moving from place to place and there is of course no guarantee that the day the birds are first noted is the day they arrived.

7th January saw the start of a general invasion of the Black Isle and between then and the end of the month there were many reports of small parties and flocks of up to 25 birds in the area.

Fresh records for the next twelve days of January are fairly evenly spread out and the most notable features was the presence about 10th January of several flocks in the Aviemore area totalling roughly 100 birds.

About the 20th and 22nd there seemed to be local increases at Inverness, Grantown (Moray) and Gullane, while twenty were noted near Callander and four at Tillicoultry (Clackmannan). There was a further small group of records for the 25th to 27th with flocks at Boat of Garten (Inverness), Broughty Ferry and Dundee, Crieff, Comrie and Dunblane (all three Perth), and yet a third small group of records about the 2nd and 3rd of February. It is difficult to know what significance should be attached to these records but it seems more likely that they reflect movement within the country rather than fresh influxes from Scandinavia. Flocks of Waxwings continued to turn up in new localities until the very end of the season. Ten were in south Glasgow on 10th February, 16 near Melrose (Roxburgh) on 9th March, twelve at Fochabers (Moray) on 3rd April, five at Dallas (Moray) on 5th April and a number at Evanton (Ross) from 8th to 15th April when one flew against the window of the manse and was killed: five there on the 16th and 17th are the latest reported this winter.

On 1st March there was a notable flock of 60 Waxwings at Avoch: these birds were very restless and took a massed flight round a field before returning to the tree they had just left. Vigorous flight alternated with periods of gliding. Such large numbers had not been seen together before in the area and, although a few birds lingered there until the middle of April, it is possible that this flock was thinking of going home. As in past years, most of the birds seem just to disappear and this is almost the only note sent in that gives any hint of their going.

In some localities, presumably where food was most abundant, the Waxwings remained for a considerable time and some 210 birds (26 reports) were reported in March and April. Apart from localities already mentioned they were present during April in Inverness (twelve from 10th to 12th), Invergowrie (Perth) (several on 1st), St Andrews (until at least

7th) and Perth (one on 11th).

The total number of reports received from Scotland in the winter is about 200, referring to over 1,300 Waxwings. The bulk of these reports naturally refer to the east coast, with approximately 490, 140, 270 and 230 birds recorded in the Faunal Areas of the Moray Basin, Dee, Tay and Forth respectively. From records received last year it seems that the invasion in November 1957 was of much the same size in Scotland but the figures are not at hand for comparison with the earlier invasion in February and March 1957. Almost certainly each of these three invasions was bigger than any since 1946/47. In that winter about 12,500 were reported in Great Britain, of which some 7,000 were in Scotland. The two smaller irruptions in 1948/9 (over 200) and 1949/50 (over 2,000) hardly touched Scotland, with one report for the former years and about 300 birds in the other ("British Birds" 44: 158-163 and 418-419). On the other hand there was a very small but well marked influx in November 1951 ("Edinburgh Bird Bulletin" 2: 20 and 34).

Numbers reported from outside the Faunal Areas already noted were five in Orkney, eight in Caithness, eight in the Outer Hebrides, four in Skye, 45 in Argyll, two in the Inner Hebrides, 37 in Tweed, 40 in Clyde, and 69 in Solway. It is interesting to observe that some of the earliest records come from the west of Scotland (Lewis, Mull, Skye, Glen Nevis and Glasgow), just as Baxter and Rintoul noted for 1921, 1937 and 1946 ("The Migration of Waxwings into Scotland, 1946". Edinburgh 1947). There are also reports from all parts of England and even from Ireland, but these form no part of this paper.

It is instructive to compare the choice of food of Waxwings in different years and this is no doubt dictated by the relative abundance of the various berries. In 1921 their preference was for hips, while in 1937 it was for cotoneaster and in 1946 for haws (Baxter and Rintoul).

The favourite berries this winter were again of cotoneaster (59 reports) as in 1957/8 ("Edinburgh Bird Bulletin" 8: 30-32), but there were not nearly so many reports of berberis (15) as last year. Other favourites were hips of various kinds (24) and haws (14). Where the cotoneasters were identified they were *Franchetii* (1), *horizontalis* (4), *salicifolia* (1), *frigida* (1) and *Simonsii* (1). One observer noted that the first three were favoured in that order.

Other berries mentioned were holly (6, including two occasions when it was put out in a vase), elder (3), rowan (the three parties at Rannoch Station took the berries from the ground), juniper (2), honeysuckle (2), privet (1), viburnum (1) and "*Malus Yunnanensis*" (1) in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. There are three reports of birds taking crab apples (rotten in one case) and nine references to feeding on apples either still on the trees or put out for the birds. One Waxwing was suspected of eating the newly formed buds of an apple tree. A bird in Skye made several unsuccessful endeavours to swallow a breadcrumb, but another at Buchlyvie seemed to enjoy the bread and toast on which it was fed. It was enthusiastic about some holly in a vase, but only pecked at a cabbage, it was offered and did not eat any.

One bird at Lundin Links, watched feeding on the hips of a dog rose, suddenly tossed one into the air and deftly caught and swallowed it. Twice it tried to repeat this feat of leger-de-bec, but failed; it watched closely as the berry found its way down through the branches to the ground.

My sincere thanks are due to the very large number of people who sent in the records without which this summary could not have been written. Lack of space unfortunately makes it impossible to publish a list of all who have helped. This same shortage of space also means that there is no room for a detailed list of records, but the complete data will be passed to the Editors of "British Birds" for their proposed analysis of the invasion in relation to the whole country.

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

## A SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD PROTECTION

OVER the last four years the Club has been indebted to the National Trust for Scotland for the provision of free office accommodation at 5, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh. It has, however, become increasingly obvious that the room, which has also been used as an office for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is no longer adequate, particularly in view of Mr G. Waterston's recent resignation from the position of club secretary. The Council has also been aware for some time that, in view of the continued expansion of the National Trust for Scotland, the Club should not trespass upon their hospitality much longer. The Council wishes to record its gratitude to the Trust for the way in which it has helped both the Club and the interests of ornithology in Scotland over the years.

A sum of money was recently offered by an anonymous donor to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Endowment Fund for the purpose of establishing, with the co-operation of the S.O.C., a Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection. By agreement with the donor the F.I.B.O. Endowment Trust has now purchased premises in Edinburgh which will be let to the S.O.C. In view of the unique opportunity which this presented to develop the interests of ornithology in Scotland, the Council of the Club, after full consideration of the responsibilities and implications, unanimously agreed to accept this most generous arrangement. It considered that such a centre would serve the constitutional purposes of the Club, and was workable and financially sound.

Premises at 21, Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, have been acquired, which will provide suitable accommodation for the Club Office, the Library, Council Meetings and informal discussion groups. Office accommodation will be sub-let by the Club to the R.S.P.B. representative, the terms having been agreed with the Society. The two upper floors of the building will be let to Mr and Mrs George Waterston.

The Council have confirmed the appointment of Mrs Waterston as Secretary and Treasurer of the Club. Mr Robert Hillcoat remaining as Hon. Treasurer.

The Council considered this centre as a separate financial proposition, and it is estimated that the two rents from the two sub-lets referred to will provide enough income to meet the annual burdens, limiting the Club's commitments to £50 per annum. The Council realise that the removal from the present premises will entail payment of rents, rates and other associated burdens, and, to counteract this, Mrs Waterston has accepted her appointment at a lower salary than was paid to Mr George Waterston.

It is intended that the Library should be made available to members during office hours and on certain additional evenings, while at other times members could use the Library by previous arrangement. The residence of Mr and Mrs Waterston will ensure that the Club Room is available to members. Evenings for informal discussion groups will be arranged, and also the borrowing by post of duplicate books from the Library.

It is hoped that alterations and redecoration of the house and the removal of the Library from its present accommodation will be completed by the end of July. Details of the hours when the office and Club Room will be open will be announced to members in due course. The Council believes that the new Centre will be of great benefit to members of the Club and to ornithologists throughout Scotland, and when visiting Edinburgh they are warmly invited to make full use of the centre.

CHARLES G. CONNELL,

President,

10, Duke Street, Edinburgh.

### SUMMER EXCURSIONS

Members are reminded of the Branch Excursions arranged for this summer, and are asked to give them their full support. Early booking is appreciated by the leaders, particularly if boats or buses have to be reserved. Full details are given in "Scottish Birds", Vol. 1, No. 3.

ABERDEEN—Sunday, 6th September: Ythan Estuary and Lochs.

DUNDEE—Sunday, 28th June: Isle of May. Sunday, 13th September: Tay mouth to Tentsmuir Point.

EDINBURGH—Sunday, 5th July: Farne Islands. Saturday, 18th July, Bass Rock. Saturday, 22nd August: Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve.

GLASGOW—Saturday, 20th June: Little Cumbrae.

ST ANDREWS—Sunday, 28th June: Isle of May. Saturday, 11th July: Tentsmuir.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The twelfth Annual Conference of the Club will be held at the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, from 23rd to 25th October, 1959. The conference programme will be published in the next number of "Scottish Birds," and this intimation is given in order that members may make reservations at hotels in Stirling in good time. All hotel bookings are made direct with the hotels in which you wish to stay. Owing to the general shortage of single rooms, younger members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your hotel for lunches each day. The Secretary is NOT responsible for hotel bookings.

#### Hotel Accommodation in Stirling

GOLDEN LION HOTEL, 10 King Street (Tel. 1950), Conference H.Q.	Bed and Breakfast from 27/6.
STATION HOTEL, 56 Murray Place (Tel. 1057)	Bed and Breakfast from 27/6.
WAVERLEY HOTEL, King Street (Tel. 1950)	Bed and Breakfast from 27/6.
GARFIELD HOTEL, Victoria Square (Tel. 430)	Bed and Breakfast 19/6.
DOUGLAS HOTEL, 4 Arcade (Tel. 286)	— Bed and Breakfast 19/6.
ALLAN PARK HOTEL, 20 Allan Park (Tel. 298)	Bed and Breakfast 18/6.

Mrs GEORGE WATERSTON,  
Secretary and Treasurer.

### NOTICES

BIRD MIGRATION, a Bulletin of the British Trust for Ornithology. Edited by Kenneth Williamson. Published twice a year, No. 1 appeared in December 1958. Reports of the Bird Observatories for autumn 1958 and analyses of interesting movements. Copies 2/6 post free. Cash with orders to Business Editor, B.T.O., 2, King Edward Street, Oxford.

REPRINTS FROM BIRD STUDY. Scottish Census of Heronries, by E. A. Garden, 1/-, postage 2d. Scottish Mute Swan Census, by C. P. Rawcliffe, 6d, postage 2d. Cash with orders to B.T.O., 2, King Edward Street, Oxford.



# The Scottish Ornithologists' Club Tie

Illustrated is the Official Club Tie, of which R. W. Forsyth's are the sole suppliers. The tie is made from repp rayon, with the bird motif in silver. Blue or green background. 13/9.



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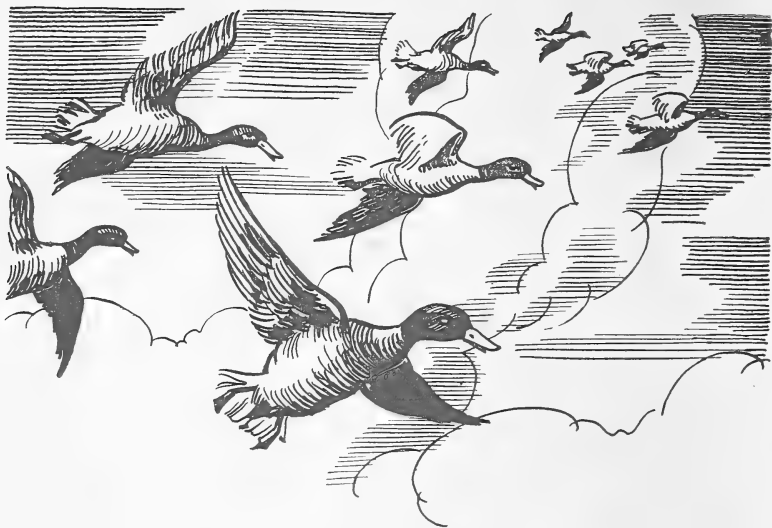
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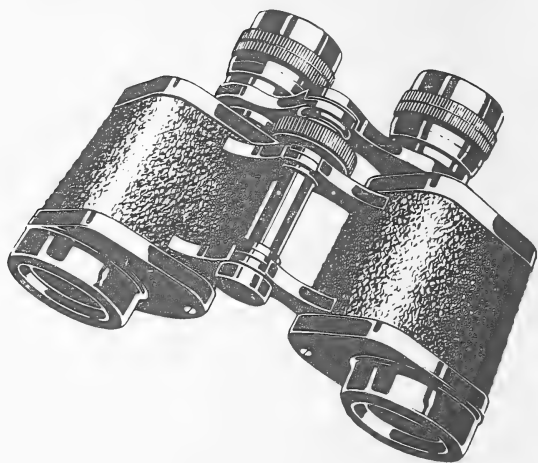
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I. No. 5*

*Autumn 1959*

Reprinted 1974

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time of which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland".

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

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Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mr George Waterston, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh 2.

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### CLUB LIBRARY

The Club Library is now housed in the Secretary's Office at 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, 2. The collection has recently been augmented by several gifts, and the Council appeals to Members to donate books and periodicals which they may wish to dispose of. We have no volumes of the "Ibis" prior to 1944. The Library is open during office hours for reference. Books or magazines, of which we have duplicate copies, can be obtained on loan.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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Vol. 1 No. 5

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MAOMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly*

## Editorial

WITH the present fifth number of *Scottish Birds* all the material which had been left unpublished from past years and that which we have received during the past year is now in print, with a few minor exceptions. By the time Number 5 appears, however, the breeding season of 1959 will be over the autumn migration well on its way, most members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club will have had their holidays and will (let us hope) have accumulated a large number of interesting notes. Many of these will deserve publication and we would like to have them. Scottish ornithologists have a deplorable tendency to sit on their notes, and they often begin to do so in September. *The Handbook* does not record broodiness in the Crested Tit in autumn, but so it is. The proportion of members of such a large club as the S.O.C. who send in their notes to *Scottish Birds* may be gauged by the number of times the names of regular contributors appears there. Some are withheld by shyness and modesty, others (dare we say it?) by sheer idleness. But *Scottish Birds* is the journal of the Club and it is the members who must write it. We are now in a position to publish not only field notes and regular reports of different areas, but also discursive and more entertaining articles. The contribution of photographs will also be welcomed, both of birds themselves and of bird habitats, or of anything else of ornithological interest. We would also like to receive, for a Personalities Column, notes on the activities of members, on their expeditions or on any line of work on which they may be engaged. All localities of the breeding of rare species will, as hitherto, be kept confidential and will not be published unless the observer himself is perfectly sure that publication will not adversely affect the welfare of the bird. Very often the Editors learn by hearsay of some important occurrence which has not been reported to them and have to write to the observer for details: this very greatly increases their work, whereas the work of the observer is not increased if he sends in his record straight away

instead of waiting to be asked for it. The ribald layman will often ask: "What is the point of bird-watching?" and one answer is that there is very little point in bird-watching unless the bird-watcher makes his discoveries known. If your records are published, you will have the satisfaction of having added to knowledge, and *Scottish Birds* is the medium especially created for you to do so. You will also, human nature being what it is, have an even greater satisfaction—that of seeing your name in print.

## BIRDS OF THE FLANNAN ISLES

MICHAEL ROBSON AND PETER WILLS

(See Plate on p. 114)

**T**HE following notes describe the bird population of the Flannan Isles in the summer of 1957. We spent eight days out in the islands, from 26th June to 4th July, and were fortunate in that calm sunny weather prevailed most of the time. Reference is made to the notes published by D. G. Andrew and G. L. Sandeman in *The Scottish Naturalist* (65: 157-166), "On the Birds of the Flannan Isles," which combine earlier observations with the results of a visit made in 1951. We landed first on Eilean Tighe, then on Eilean Mor and lastly on Roareim.

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. In the summer nights, wet or fine, the Flannans belong to Leach's Petrels.

On Eilean Tighe the petrels were breeding in several places. They were in and around the little summit cairn of stones and turf, along the northern edge of Geodh' an Truillich, in the stone-heap ruin of a monk's cell at the head of Geodha, under stones along the southern peninsula, and, in greatest numbers, among the Puffin burrows beside and just above our tent site on the slope north of the island summit. In 1951 there was only an unconfirmed report that they were breeding on the island.

On Eilean Mor the position seemed to be a little different from that in 1951. The birds were most numerous in the area of the lighthouse flagpole and in and around the bothies at the other tip of the island. Along the northern cliffs the burrows were more scattered, but there were many on Meall Meadhonach. We found petrels along the eastern cliff-top, as far as the East Landing railway, but not as yet beyond.

On Roareim, one of the western group of the Flannans, we found, after a long search, a colony of petrels on the southern slope facing Eilean a' Ghobha.

No previous report of petrels, or other species, seems to exist for the islands of the western and southern groups.

Leach's Petrels prefer soft soil and hollows beneath stones for their burrows. Thus they were most frequent in the ruined cells, and mixed up among the Puffins, as, for example, on Roareim. There were no birds in Beannachadh, the chapel on Eilean Mor. On Eilean Tighe we had two wet and windy nights out, watching the birds for the first time, but thereafter our vigils in the dark hours were fine and calm. Recording one night in the bothies, we heard a sound coming from a cranny which we did not hear again, a rasping wheeze that might have been a unique instance of bad temper; for otherwise the petrels filled the island tops with their purrs of joy and their searching twitter. We saw Puffins on all the islands, and it is probable that Leach's Petrels are on all too.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. In 1951 it was reckoned that the breeding population of Eilean Mor was between ten and forty pairs. We found no Storm Petrels on any of the islands we visited, though it is possible that a few remain somewhere. Perhaps Leach's Petrels have in fact taken over.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*. The birds were in considerable numbers on all the islands, though by far the largest colonies were on Eilean Mor and Eilean Tighe. As with the petrels, the burrows contained eggs about to hatch, and new-born chicks; but the Puffins were slightly ahead. On occasion the island would be well-nigh empty of Puffins, and there was a strange stillness, until they came soaring back with beakfuls of tiny fish or sand-eels. The chorus of groans which echoes across the turf in the twilight is the unforgettable conversation of the islands.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*. We found scattered groups all round the islands. On Eilean Tighe there were no large colonies. Guillemots mingled with Razorbills and Puffins in the boulders and weeds above the north-west facing cliffs; elsewhere they lined the ledges—at the entrance to Geodh' an Truillich, on the cliffs round the south coast as far as the deep gullies opposite the west tip of Hamasgeir; while a few shared a ledge on the inner, north side of the stack.

On Eilean Mor the biggest colony was on the stack off the western headland, a rock called the Sgarr. The top of the stack slopes to the south, and was very popular with the birds. A few nested at the back of Skiobageo and on the tall cliffs which form the west side of Tom na Geodha, most westerly of the northern creeks. The only other birds occupied a long ledge at the back of the wide steep slabs which curve up at the foot of the crags north of the flagpole. There were no Guillemots in the eastern geos.

Between Eilean Mor and Eilean Tighe are two great rocks,

capped with tussocks of weeds and thrift, over which the sea pours in winter storms. These, Lamh a' Sgeir Beg and Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, had small numbers of Guillemots on ledges facing south to Eilean Tighe, from which island the birds could be seen.

Looking at Eilean a' Ghobha from the sea we made out birds on the cliffs to the south and at the east tip; there seemed to be none on the remaining sides of the island.

On Bronna Cleit, the huge stack which is the westernmost part of the Flannans, we saw no Guillemots, nor any other bird, but it is possible that Guillemots do nest there from time to time. The exposure to the full force of the Atlantic is particularly great.

Roareim was a different matter. It is a roundish island, cliff-bound as are all the rest; from its southern side jut out two stacks in a line at right angles to Roareim, to which they are connected by a wedged rock forming a birdge. They have been made into fine arches by sea-erosion. Across a narrow deep channel from the outer arch is a low-lying skerry, covered with thrift and other plants. This we called Sgeir nan Eoin, the Rock of the Birds, to distinguish it from other skerries. We landed first on this Sgeir and came on Guillemots scattered among the stones and plants; but from there we had the best view of the great multitude of birds on the arches. This colony we had seen from some way off, and now we reckoned it numbered at least 1,500 pairs, probably more than 2,000. The cliffs were white with guano and the noise was very loud. Causing some disturbance, we crossed into the settlement by way of the narrow greasy bridge, which itself was laden with young chicks. Most of the eggs had recently hatched, as in the colonies on other islands, but here we noticed one or two young in the water.

Small numbers of Guillemots nested in the westerly creek on the north side of Roareim, and at the north-eastern end of the island.

Razorbill *Alca torda*. Birds were in good numbers on all the isles. Where the Guillemots bred so also did the Razorbills, but there were none on the Roareim arches. They also nested in the eastern geos of Eilean Mor and at the entrance to the cavern where the sea washes through a tunnel into Skiobageo. Nests were generally in holes made by jumbled boulders or in the more inaccessible niches of a cliff.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*. We found three birds frequenting the north side of Eilean Mor, usually in the region of Tom na Geodha, where they often flew down from the cliff near the back of the creek. It is probable that a pair nested there. This species was not observed by Andrew and Sandeman in 1951.







FLANNAN ISLES. Looking south from Eilean Mor with, from left to right beyond the railway line, Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, Eilean Tighe and the Soray group (looking like a single island from this angle). (D. G. Andrew)

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. This bird was common and nested on each of the islands we visited. The young scabbled and slept in the boulder recesses and on the cliff ledges beloved by the Razorbills. On Eilean Tighe Shags were found on the stony cliffs opposite Lamh a' Sgeir Mor, on the south side of the island and on the broken top of the long eastern peninsula. Not many lived on Eilean Mor\*, which had only a few nesting about Skiobageo, though some may have been hidden away at the back of Tom na Geodha. A small colony was scattered along the north side of Roareim and one or two birds were seen on Eilean a' Ghobha.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. It may be that this species is more widely spread than in 1951 and that the colonies have increased. At any rate, each island was well supplied with them, nearly every geo being occupied by at least fifteen or twenty pairs. We found them on Eilean Tighe in Geodh' an Truillich, the geos by Hamasgeir, on the southern cliffs and on the inner side of Hamasgeir itself. The north face of Lamh a' Sgeir Beg, which overhangs slightly, also had a few pairs. As for Eilean Mor, every geo had its Kittiwakes—the two northern creeks, all those on the east, Skiobageo and the cavern to the west of it. They nested, too, on the "slab ledge" below the flagpole. Most of the eggs had hatched, some of the chicks being well grown. Roareim had three colonies.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Fulmars bred on Eilean Tighe around Geodh' an Truillich and right along the east peninsula to the hump at the end, as well as above the Hamasgeir geos and on the northern cliff-top. They were on Lamh a' Sgeir Beg but not on Lamh a' Sgeir Mor. There were small numbers on one of the east geos of Eilean Mor, on the east side of the Meall Meadhonach, at the entrance to Skiobageo, below the summit of the western headland, and on the top of the Sgarr. The largest colony was on Sgeir nan Eoin and on the crest of the inner arch of Roareim, where we could scarcely move without putting a foot on a coughing adult or chick. Some pairs nested on Roareim itself.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*. In 1951 it was confirmed that a marked decrease in numbers had taken place since Harvie-Brown and Eagle Clarke made their visits to the Flannans. R. Atkinson saw none in 1937 and only four birds were seen in 1951. However out along the east peninsula of Eilean Tighe, we discovered one group of four very young Eiders crouching in the thrift and on the hump at the end were two nests, each having four eggs. Unfortunately, before the startled duck had

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\*This is an early nesting species. Andrew and Sandeman saw a few on Eilean Mor, but were told that a good many broods had already fledged.—Ed.

time to return to the first of these clutches, the gulls descended. The Eider, then, is still on the Flannans, and perhaps other nests lay hidden somewhere, though we came on no more.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. The status of the gull population on the Flannans has been somewhat uncertain. In 1951 it was thought that gulls were scarce and indeed this was so with regard to Eilean Mor, where no gulls were breeding. In 1957, on Eilean Mor, gulls did no more than rest in the sunshine. None bred on that island. Yet on the east point of Eilean Tighe about twenty pairs of Herring Gulls had their nests and the young birds scampered away over the boulders at our approach. This was the largest number, but two more pairs at least were nesting on Roareim. There did not seem to be any on Eilean a' Ghobha.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*. Roareim was the stronghold of this species, although two pairs nested on Lamh a' Sgeir Beg, and two on Eilean Tighe. From fifteen to twenty pairs were on Roareim and this colony may account for the small number of Puffins and petrels on the island.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. At least one pair bred on Eilean Mor in 1951 and the situation seemed unaltered in 1957. The position was similar on the other islands. On Eilean Tighe there may have been four nests, but probably only three; our movements in the night there never failed to draw mournful warnings from Oystercatchers and gulls. Over on Roareim we found two more pairs in amongst the gulls.

Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. We found two nests, each with five eggs, one on Eilean Tighe and one on Roareim. The former island contained about three pairs, as did Eilean Mor, but Roareim had only one or two. Sgeir nan Eoin held a pair as well, and no doubt the numbers on other islands were much the same. It is easy, however, to underestimate the populations of these little birds.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Numbers seemed to be unchanged since 1951. A large flock of about fifty lived on Eilean Mor, nesting under boulders, in cracks in the concrete steps leading down to the landings, and perhaps round the lighthouse. The only other birds we saw were a party of five on Roareim; they were probably out on an excursion.

Raven *Corvus corax*. On our first day we disturbed four from Geodh an Truillich and they flew off towards Eilean Mor. They were not seen again.

During our stay on the Flannans three other species visited the islands. A Dunlin *Calidris alpine* spent a few hours on the edge of the southern cliffs of Eilean Mor, three Curlews *Numenius arquata* came one morning and left the following night, and for two days five Swifts *Apus apus* hunted insects and

flew dangerously near the lighthouse tower when the light had just come on. We saw no signs of any other of the birds mentioned in the 1951 list as possibly breeding on the Flannans.

## REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1958

EVELYN V. BAXTER

**T**HE Scottish Bird Records Committee have reviewed the records published in 1958 and present their report. As implied in their name it is only the records which are included. There must be many occurrences which have not been recorded and these obviously cannot be considered. As the "Recent Reports and News" published in *British Birds* (51: 39, etc.) are largely unchecked and must not be regarded as authenticated records, we do not include them in this review. Two new birds have been added to the Scottish List and there are a good many additions to areas and counties.

### BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** *Tryngites subruficollis*. One near Hamilton, Lanark, 27th to 30th October 1957. Habitat Arctic America. (*British Birds* 51: 193).

**MEDITERRANEAN GULL** *Larus melanocephalus*. Two Fair Isle, on 31st August and 14th October 1957. Habitat Mediterranean, Black Sea and Hungary. (*Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* 4: 3).

### BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

**CORY'S SHEARWATER** *Procellaria diomedea*. One Firth of Forth 20th September 1957. One Firth of Forth 3rd November 1957. (*Scottish Birds* 1: 8-10). New to Forth.

**GREEN-WINGED TEAL** *Anas crecca carolinensis*. One Aberdeenshire 31st March to 20th April 1957. (*Scottish Birds* 1: 10). New to Dee.

[**RED-CRESTED POCHARD** *Netta ruffina*. A female seen on Cauldshiels Loch from 22nd to 25th December 1957 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 26) and a male at Portmore Reservoir on 19th October 1958 and at Gladhouse the same day (*ibid.* 8: 108) may have been escapes.]

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*. One shot on St Mary's Loch on 5th November 1957 is the first for Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 82).

**VELVET SCOTER** *Melanitta fusca*. A pair at Portmore Loch on 6th April 1958 is the first record for Peebles-shire (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 67).

KITE *Milvus milvus*. One seen at Aberdeen on 13th February 1958 is the first recent record for Dee (*Scottish Birds* 1: 11).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. An early record of this species from Braemore, Wester Ross, will be found in Harvie-Brown and Macpherson, *A Fauna of the North-west Highlands and Skye*, p. 278. (Cf. *Scottish Birds* 1: 27).

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. One at St Mary's Loch on 5th June 1935 is the first record for Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 84).

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. One, at St Mary's Loch, 10th May 1936 and Akermoor Loch, 11th May 1958. New to Selkirk (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 84).

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER *Calidris fuscicollis*. One at Tynninghame estuary on 12th October 1958. New to East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 112).

SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER *Calidris pusilla*. One, Isle of May, on 19th September 1957 is the first record for that island and for Forth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 35 and *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 114).

AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*. Five seen 6th April 1958, Aberlady, two staying till 11th April. First for East Lothian. (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 85).

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. One near Kenmore, 15th August 1957. First for North Perth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 15).

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One near Grangemouth, 31st August 1958. First for East Stirling (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 114).

BLACK TERN *Chlidonias niger*. One at Carsebreck, 11th June 1958. First for South Perth (*Scottish Birds* 1: 16).

ROSEATE TERN *Sterna dougallii*. One seen at Tiree in June 1955. First for Inner Hebrides (*British Birds* 51: 104).

ALPINE SWIFT *Apus melba*. One at Dunbar, 11th October 1958, is the first for Forth and East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 116).

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. Single birds up Glenloy, 11th October 1958; Loch Treig area, 29th September 1958; and Strone area, 2nd to 4th October 1958. All in West Inverness, whence the species has not previously been recorded (*Scottish Birds* 1: 38).

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. One at Dornoch, 3rd September 1958, is the first record for South-east Sutherland (*Scottish Birds* 1: 39).

MARSH TIT *Parus palustris*. In our report for 1956 we accepted the record of this species from the Hermitage of Braid as new to Midlothian (*Scottish Naturalist* 69: 174). A. T. Macmillan has since pointed out that one of the birds concerned was close-ringed (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 4: 45 and 7: 46).

Since it is clear that one, if not both, had escaped from captivity, the record cannot stand.

**BLACK-THROATED THRUSH** *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis*. A male from 8th December 1957 to about 22nd January 1958 on Fair Isle is new to that island and Shetland (*Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* 4: 6).

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*. One, Skye, 3rd June 1957, is the first for Skye (*Scottish Birds* 1: 41).

**ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*. One on the Sands of Forvie, 2nd September 1958, is the first record for the Scottish mainland, for Dee and for Aberdeen (*Scottish Birds* 1: 42).

**LESSER GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius minor*. One at Wormiston, 8th June 1958, is the first record for Tay and for North Fife (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 92).

**ROSE-COLOURED STARLING** *Sturnus roseus*. One at Wigtown, 14th to 18th August 1958, is the first for Wigtownshire (*Scottish Birds* 1: 43).

**SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus*. Three at Gartmorn Dam on 28th December 1957 are the first for Clackmannan (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 40).

**RED-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza bruniceps*. A male on St Kilda from 14th to 22nd May 1957 is the first record for the Outer Hebrides (*Nature Conservancy Annual Report* 1957: 54).

**LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*. One on Rhum, 8th October 1957, is the first record for the Inner Hebrides (*Scottish Birds* 1: 20).

**LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*. The first record of this species for Clyde comes from Lecket Hill, West Stirling, on 28th January 1956 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 8).

The British Records Subcommittee recommends the admission of the following races of species already on the British List:

*Falco columbarius columbarius*. A male, South Uist, 11th November 1920.

*Falco columbarius subaesalon*. Winter visitor.

*Limosa limosa islandica*. A male, North Uist, 24th April 1951.

*Stercorarius longicaudus pallescens*. A male, Sound of Harris, 19th August 1941.

*Eremophila alpestris alpestris*. A male, South Uist, 29th September 1953.

*Emberiza citrinella citrinella*. Winter visitor.

*Plectrophenax nivalis insulae*. Occasional visitor. See *Ibis* 100: 300.

#### BREEDING RECORDS

**BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia arctica*. Seton Gordon (*Country Life* 1958: 1341) states that this diver does not now breed in Skye.

BLACK-NECKED GREBE *Podiceps caspicus*. Bred Clyde area 1956, the first recorded breeding in Clyde (*Scottish Birds* 1: 5).

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*. First breeding record for West Stirling is 12th June 1954, not 1955 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 5).

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. Breeding Ayr and Renfrew 1953 (*Bird Study* 5: 218).

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*. Breeding Banff, Moray, Nairn, Caithness (*Bird Study* 5: 54).

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Attempted to breed Scotland in 1955 and later (*British Birds* 51: 406).

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Nest and eggs on Flanders Moss, East Stirling, in 1956 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 7).

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*. First breeding in Wigtown recorded 1957 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 16).

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. Two nests found Longniddry 1958, one brood hatched. First breeding record for East Lothian (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 88).

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Bred again in Moray 1958 (*Scottish Birds* 1: 37).

LITTLE OWL *Athene noctua*. Bred near Edrom, Berwickshire, in 1958 (*Scot. Birds* 1: 37). First breeding record for Scotland.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. Though there appears to be no previous published breeding record, we are informed that this species breeds regularly in upper Morayshire and Banff (*Scottish Birds* 1: 74).

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. The first record of the Chiffchaff breeding in South Fife comes from High Valleyfield on 2nd May 1958 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 91).

PIED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. Bred in Dollar Glen, Clackmannan, in 1957 and 1958; first breeding record for the county (*Scottish Birds* 1: 19).

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*. Bred probably near Stornoway 1957; adults and fully fledged young seen (*Scottish Birds* 1: 19).

[WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. The Committee does not consider that a satisfactory identification can be reached on the clutch of eggs found in Renfrewshire in 1904 (*Glasgow Bird Bulletin* 7: 1).]

## SHORT NOTES

### GOOSANDER PROSPECTING FOR NEST-SITE

On 30th April 1959 Mr Parkinson caught a female Goosander *Mergus merganser* in the stoke-hole of Carsfad Power Station, Kirkcudbrightshire. It had laid an egg (rather soft-shelled, perhaps laid premature from shock!) on the floor in front of the empty furnace. No fires had been lit for a fortnight and all entrances at ground level were locked and barred. The bird obviously came down the sixty foot chimney. The top of



the chimney is a hole about two feet in diameter, flush with the flat roof of the power station. Clearly the bird had alighted on the roof and presumably started to investigate the chimney as a possible nesting-site. When it was found it was very lively, though rather sooty, and, although the stoke-hole had not been visited for some days the bird must have come down very recently. On 4th May with Mr Parkinson I looked at the roof, chimney and stoke-hole; there seemed no possibility of a nest-site from which the Goosander could have made regular exit.

This record is perhaps of special interest for the height at which a Goosander was prepared to investigate a hole, and a man-made one at that. I am very grateful to Mr Parkinson for his interest and help in bringing to light this rather quaint episode.

DONALD WATSON.

#### SNOW GEESE IN NORTH PERTH, WEST LOTHIAN AND INVERNESS

On 16th November 1958 I was watching some grey geese on the flats at Kingoodie, Perthshire, where they were grounded by thick mist. Among them was a white bird which I at first assumed was a swan. However when it started to move I was able to see its short neck, heavy deep-based bill and the pale colour of the bill and legs. The tips of the wings seemed to be dark and there was little doubt that it was a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens*. Two days later, at Invergowrie Bay, a short distance away on the Perth-Angus boundary, I had much better views of the bird standing 200 yards out on the flats. In sunshine this time the black primaries and grey major coverts were clearly seen, as well as the pink bill and legs.

On 12th and 13th January 1959 I saw a Snow Goose in flight and feeding in some fields south of Longforgan, Perthshire, and other observers also reported seeing it about this time.

One of two Snow Geese was shot near Errol, Perthshire, about 30th November 1957 and I was asked to identify it. Measurements indicated that it was of the Lesser form *A. c. hyperboreus*. The bird was sent to Slimbridge and I understand that the skin is preserved.

HENRY BOASE.

On 30th November 1958 A. M. B. Maclean one of my pupils, was visiting a farm near South Queensferry when four white geese landed very close to him in a field. He is not an ornithologist but knows the difference between ducks and geese. When I asked for a fuller description he mentioned that the birds had black wing-tips. I am satisfied that he saw four

Snow Geese *Anser caerulescens*. Although the farmer reported that they had been about for a few days they were not seen by anyone else as they were disturbed shortly afterwards by shooting.

JOHN KING.

On 5th April 1959 I saw a solitary white goose between Pit-youlish and Tulloch, Inverness-shire. It was flying north, appropriately enough in a snow shower, and did not alight. Though viewed at a distance of more than 440 yards, the identification was unmistakable. The black ends to the wings were clearly visible and there were a few darker markings on the back, indicating an immature bird.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

#### MARSH HARRIERS IN KIRKCUDBRIGHT, WEST STIRLING AND ABERDEEN

On 28th December 1958 Robert Smith, Lochmaben, discovered a first winter Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* hunting the marshes bordering the R. Dee, on the Livingston estate. I joined him that afternoon and we had good views of the bird together, and on the following morning I watched it for about two hours at close range from below Balmaghie church. Later it was seen by many others on a number of dates up to 15th February, ranging over marshland from Hensol to the Gelston lane, a distance of about seven miles. The possibility of a second bird cannot be excluded, as a bird or birds were seen six miles apart on successive days (4th and 5th February) and the bird seen on 1st February was thought by some of the B.T.O. members to have slight grey on the wings, which was emphatically not present when I and others had close views in late December and early January. General impression was of a large dark long-tailed predator with wavering, apparently slow flight which belied the speed at which it quartered the marshes. The long yellow legs were often held dangling as it almost stalled and dropped into the marsh, sometimes also landing on a grassy bank and on the top of small trees and bushes. The upperparts were dark brown, crown and forehead to nape pale creamy grey (very conspicuous), slightly flecked darker. There was no trace of a light leading edge to the wings. The underparts were rich chocolate brown. It was frequently attended by a crowd of Jackdaws, Rooks and sometimes Black-headed and Common Gulls. Both duck and geese feeding in marsh and field rose and made off as it approached. Once it appeared to make a half-hearted dive at some Teal which it surprised.

DONALD WATSON.

On 7th and 12th May 1959 at a locality in West Stirling I saw a Male Marsh Harrier, a rather streaky bird with grey

sleeve in wings. A female spent ten days in late May on a neighbouring marsh—a very distinctive individual, uniformly gingery brown (including tail) with no trace of yellow on shoulders or forewing. Head and chin creamy yellow.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

On the afternoon of 26th May 1959 at the south-west boundary of the Sands of Forvie Nature Reserve, Aberdeenshire, we saw a Marsh Harrier patrolling the *Ammophila* sandhills. It appeared larger than the Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* which we saw only an hour previously, and lacked the white rump. This bird was coloured a fairly even deep brown all over, except for several lightish, probably dirty white, markings about the nape and throat. It flew only about ten feet above the marrams, with a slow heavy flap and an occasional short glide. It was mobbed by Carrion Crows and Black-headed Gulls.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.  
R. MAXWELL.

(Plumage details have been included here since at least three individuals seem to be involved. These are respectively the first recent record for Kirkcudbright, the only one for West Stirling and the third recent record for Aberdeen, cf. *Scottish Naturalist* 66: 41 and 123.—ED.)

#### KESTREL'S ASSISTED PASSAGE TO NORWAY

On 31st May 1958, when I was crossing from Newcastle to Bergen on the s.s. *Leda*, at about eight o'clock in the evening a female Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* came up astern, overhauled the ship and landed on the gunwale of a lifeboat above the promenade deck. From there it appeared to hop down into the lifeboat, vanishing from sight. Shortly afterwards it reappeared, made a circle or two over the ship and landed on a ventilator set into the side of the funnel. It clung there for several minutes, eventually flying to lifeboats on the opposite side of the ship, and alighting out of sight. Nothing more was seen of it that evening.

Coming on deck about eight the next morning, I was astonished to find a female Kestrel following astern with the gulls, almost certainly the same bird. It remained while we went for breakfast and was last seen about 9.15 a.m., a quarter of an hour after land was sighted, when it left the vicinity of the ship and headed off purposefully for land.

The weather on the evening of 31st May was sunny with light to moderate easterly wind, followed by a fine, warm, rather hazy morning on 1st June.

It may also be of interest to mention that at 9 p.m. on 31st

May three Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* appeared astern, followed the ship for about fifteen minutes, then gradually dropped out of sight again. Ships speed 22 knots.

L. A. URQUHART.

#### WOOD SANDPIPERS IN EAST INVERNESS, LANARK AND EAST LOTHIAN

On 28th May 1959, with Dr James Campbell, I found a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* on fresh water pools on the north shore of Loch Inch. The bird was exceedingly tame and we had no difficulty in identifying it at ten to fifteen yards range. All the salient points were noted—mottled plumage, whitish eyestripe and greenish legs. The *chiff-iff-iff* call was heard but no display note.

On 30th May 1959 I saw another Wood Sandpiper at Hamilton Low Parks. This bird was much shyer, but I had some good views and on this occasion the beautiful display notes were heard for a short time during flight. The bird was seen the same evening by M. Forrester and on 1st June by M. F. M. Meiklejohn.

DONALD STALKER.

(K. S. Macgregor also saw a Wood Sandpiper at Aberlady on 25th May, where, however, the species is of more regular occurrence.)

#### COMMON SANDPIPER CARRYING YOUNG

On 20th June 1959 at Carron, near Aberlour, Banffshire, I saw a Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos* running in front of my car on a private road used as access to a fishing hut. It had one well-grown chick running with it, and two others dived into the long grass. I was going very slowly when suddenly it picked up the chick between its feet and flew off along the track with it. After about fifty yards the chick (which looked as big as its parent!) was dropped and flew happily on.

PHILIP CHRISTISON.

#### GREAT SKUA NESTING IN OUTER HEBRIDES

On 12th June 1959 I discovered at a locality in the Outer Hebrides three nests of the Great Skua *Catharacta skua* and suspected the presence of a fourth. The nests were wide shallow scrapes lined with dead grass and the eggs unmistakable, being three inches long and proportionately broad. Great Skuas have been seen in this locality for some years, but this is the first time that a nest has been found.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

## LONG-TAILED SKUA IN LEWIS

On 25th May 1959, when I was visiting a colony of Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus* in Lewis, my attention was drawn to a skua on account of its much lighter colour on cheeks, neck and breast, and its clearly defined cap of dark brown, narrowing to a point on the nape. When it rose from the ground, having let me approach much closer than is usual with Arctic Skuas, its very long slender tail was conspicuous: it appeared almost as long as the body, proportionately much longer than in the Arctic. It remained in the company of a dark phase Arctic, as if paired to it, and it may be significant that it called frequently with a distinctive shrill kind of bark, for it is supposed to be silent except on the breeding grounds. By 6th June, however, when I was next able to visit the place, the bird had departed.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

(There is a similar record by Kenneth Williamson of a Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* appearing among the breeding Arctic Skuas on Fair Isle in the *Scottish Naturalist* 69: 195.—Ed.)

## COLLARED DOVES IN AYRSHIRE

In May 1959 the presence of "turtle doves" was reported to me from a locality in Ayrshire and on 26th May I identified them as Collared Doves *Streptopelia decaocto*. There were three birds present, a pair and a bird which was not so brilliant in colour as the mated male, but which nevertheless cooed and so was probably a young male. One of the gardeners has reported that birds of the same kind had been present in the locality since 1957. I have also been given a description of two birds which were almost certainly Collared Doves and which spent the winter of 1958-59 in gardens in a neighbouring town.

The pair at the first locality built a nest in a cedar of Lebanon, but it came to grief in a storm, when one egg was discovered on the ground below. Thereafter the pair haunted a silver fir about a quarter of a mile away, where they probably had a nest. The birds came to feed on grain and bread put out in front of the drawing-room window, where it was possible to obtain excellent views and full descriptions. The male could readily be distinguished by his brighter, more blue-grey colouring. The birds were seen on several occasions in July by M. F. M. Meiklejohn and were photographed and filmed by C. E. Palmar on 26th July (see Plate on p. 131). Much gratitude is due to the lady on whose land the doves are for her help and co-operation with the observers.

This is the second record of the Collared Dove nesting in

Scotland and the farthest point west that the species has so far reached.

G. HUGHES-ONSLow.

#### HOOPOES IN INVERNESS AND MID-LOTHIAN

On 11th May 1959 at 8.30 a.m. Mr Hugh F. Mackenzie, driver of the school bus from Glen Urquhart to Inverness, saw a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* near Corrimony, about five miles from Glen Urquhart House and south-west of Inverness. It was about ten yards away and flew about five yards above the ground from one tree to another along what is called Prince Charlie's Avenue. Mr Mackenzie has given an unmistakable description of the bird and both he and Edward Girvan, a schoolboy who was a passenger on the bus, have independently identified it from pictures.

G. H. WILKINSON.

On 13th May 1959 a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* spent the entire day in my garden at Stow, Mid-lothian. It was in very beautiful plumage and condition, but seemed very hungry as it never ceased to prod out worms, grubs, beetles etc. from the grass, eating them in that characteristic way of throwing back the head to get them back on its tongue and so swallow them. It had surprisingly short legs on which it walked in a very purposeful manner while feeding. When a crow (we have quite a lot of Carrion Crows here) passed over the Hoopoe, up shot the crest fan-like to a height of about two inches, almost rose-pink coloured and tipped with big black spots. The bird was here so long, and so near—about four yards away from me—that while looking at it I could compare it with illustrations in the books which I looked up.

HUGH N. MACLACHLAN.

(Dr Maclachlan has attached a full and detailed description to his record.—Ed.)

#### BIGAMY AND MULTIPLE NEST-BUILDING OF SONG THRUSH

The unusual occurrence of a Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum* with two wives and seventeen nests or nest-foundations was noted in April 1958 on a building site near Fairmilehead, Edinburgh. Unfortunately it was some time after the finding of the first nests that the others were discovered. They were built in five adjacent houses of a seven house block, and were built on top of a wall which supported the upstairs joists in each house, the joists being spaced out to leave six eighteen-inch spaces (A to F) on each wall.

House 1. Foundation in A (17th April)

House 2. Foundations in A and E, cup but no foundation in D (17th April).

House 3. Foundations in A, C, E and F, partially mud-lined nest in D (17th April).

House 4. Poorly constructed nest in A, with cup only about one and a half inches high and no mud lining, containing one egg on 31st March and two the next day. As an experiment the eggs were removed to an unlined nest in D on 1st April and the original nest destroyed. Nothing happened until the 7th when the eggs were covered with a lining of dry grass. C contained a foundation and E an unlined nest.

House 5. Complete nest with four eggs in A on 17th April. One hatched next day, but the others were infertile, probably chilled by the cold weather, there having been snow on the 4th. Another complete nest in D held three eggs which hatched on 26th or 27th April. There was a complete nest in C and a foundation in E.

The presumed cock was later watched standing over one sitting bird before going to the other nest to feed the second hen. Though there was a distance of eighty feet between the outermost nests, there was only four feet six inches between the two eventually occupied. Both birds sat very tight and there was no apparent animosity between them, although the poor construction of nest 4 A, when both birds would be laying, suggests that there may have been friction at an earlier period. Two Song Thrushes were seen fighting violently one day in early March.

The difference in temperament of the two hens was most marked. When the nestlings were ringed hen 5 A jumped off the nest while I removed the chick, but sat down again immediately to brood the infertile eggs until the chick was replaced. Hen 5 D, on the other hand, seemed to go berserk on my touching the chicks, and she cursed loudly and dive-bombed continuously until I left the house: she did the same on every subsequent visit. One wonders how much of this behaviour was inherent and how much due to the peculiar circumstances.

R. W. J. SMITH.

#### UNUSUAL FLAVA WAGTAIL IN FIFE

On 30th April 1959, at Cultness, near Rosyth, I found a male wagtail which corresponded to descriptions of the Ashy-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava cinereocapilla*. It was in beautiful plumage, with bright yellow underparts and greenish yellow mantle as in the Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava flavissima*. The cap was dull blue-grey, with no eyestripe. Most important of all, the throat was pure white and very noticeable, a feature which should distinguish it from the Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi*, a race with which I am fam-

iliar (see *Scottish Naturalist* 67: 120). I could detect no difference between the call of this bird and that of the Yellow Wagtail. An Ashy-headed Wagtail in Essex on 7th and 8th April is briefly recorded in *British Birds* 52: 174.

JOHN HOY.

## CURRENT NOTES

### SPRING MIGRATION

A male Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus* was seen near North Berwick on 10th June (J. C. Thomson Shepherd).

Another Garganey *Anas querquedula* record is of a male swimming on the sea together with seven Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 8th May (P. D. Calder), and a pair of Gadwall *Anas strepera* on 3rd May were seen on Dunsappie Loch, Edinburgh (I. A. Millar, Peter Holt). A single Gadwall was on Gladhouse Reservoir on 31st May (R. W. J. Smith).

Previously unrecorded Smews *Mergus albellus* are a female at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 23rd February (J. E. King, C. K. and Margaret Mylne); a male on Cameron Reservoir, Fife, on 8th March (R. S. Weir); and a male on Hoselaw Loch, Roxburgh, on 22nd March (K. S. Macgregor).

Single Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were observed at Aberlady Bay on 12th April (K. S. Macgregor) and at Gladhouse on 25th April (R. W. J. Smith). A Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* was consorting with a Redshank *T. totanus* and Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponicus* at Aberlady on 6th May (Arthur Ablett). A Knot *Calidris canutus* in winter plumage was seen at Gladhouse on 16th May (R. W. J. Smith) and a similar grey bird at the mouth of the River Endrick (in Dunbartonshire) on 20th May (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). A species not commonly recorded in spring in Scotland is the Little Stint *Calidris minuta* one of which occurred at Aberlady Bay on 25th May (K. S. Macgregor). A Sanderling *Crocebia alba*, just coming into summer plumage, was at Gladhouse on 25th May (R. W. J. Smith).

Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* wintered in East Lothian. A single bird was seen at Aberlady during October 1958 and during the following months as many as three were seen fairly regularly by a number of observers. Early in April 1959 the number of birds had increased to six and these were found both in the Bay and in growing crops about a mile inland, one bird being seen also on a ploughed field. By 19th April there were three Ruffs and four Reeves, but numbers were down to four on the 26th and these had gone by the end of the month. At the beginning of April all the birds were in a very grey winter plumage but by the time they left one bird



especially (a Ruff) had completed about two thirds of its moult into the breeding plumage and all the others showed various degrees of change (J. Baird, K. S. Macgregor).

A summering Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoides* was seen in the bay at Portree, Skye, on 16th June (L. A. Urquhart) and large numbers of Little Gulls *Larus minutus* were seen in the Tay area on 26th April (V. M. T., *The Scotsman*, 2nd May 1959).

After strong south-westerly gales two Swifts *Apus apus* occurred near Stornoway on 6th June; they were hawking over a small loch in company with four House Martins *Delichon urbica* (W. A. J. Cunningham, M. F. M. Meiklejohn). Both these species are unusual in Lewis, but the same evening five House Martins were seen over the woods of Stornoway Castle, and on 7th June more than ten House Martins, together with two Swallows *Hirundo rustica* were feeding under trees behind a farmhouse on the outskirts of Stornoway (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). Six to eight Swifts were also seen in spring at Barrahead Lighthouse (Alec Ross).

An immature male or female Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* turned up at Fife Ness on 26th March (R. S. Weir) and a female was seen in same locality on 17th May (John Hoy).

A Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* (rarish in the east) is recorded from Kincardine, Fife, on 21st April (J. Potter) and another at Cultnass, Rosyth, on 23rd and 30th April (John Hoy).

A female Blue-headed Wagtail *Motacilla flava flava* is reported from Gladhouse on 9th May, "having the long and very prominent white eyestripe of the race" (R. W. J. Smith), and a male was seen on the south shore of the Forth just west of Grangemouth (in Stirlingshire) on 22nd June; with it was a male Yellow Wagtail *M. f. flavissima*. Detailed descriptions have been given of both these birds. They were seen together again on 4th July, but on neither occasion were females present (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy).

#### BREEDING AND DISTRIBUTION

On 4th June three Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis* were seen circling high over the south shore of the Forth west of Grangemouth (Stirlingshire) (P. G. R. Barbier).

The colony of Cormorants *Phalacrocorax carbo*, on the Lamb, the only one in Forth, continues to grow: there were five nests in 1957 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 7: 78), eight in 1958 and 44 this year (R. W. J. Smith).

The Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*, described as "rare in the west of Scotland" (Baxter and Rintoul, *Birds of Scotland* 440), seems to be of fairly regular occurrence in winter at the mouth of West Loch Tarbet: on 28th March 1959 eight were seen there (R. J. Olliver), and previous records are a male on 17th

November and three males on 19th November 1956, and one male on 18th November 1957, a day when even the ship's stewards, but not the observer, were sea-sick (M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

The occurrence of Golden Eagles *Aquila chrysaetos* in Peebles-shire has been reported in *The Scotsman*, a young female having been caught in a crow-trap on 8th May at Innerleithen and a young male four days later. It seems that these birds were later released.

It is satisfactory to place on record that in 1959 Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* nested in two Scottish counties where they have not nested during the present century. In the first case no male was ever observed and the eggs were subsequently taken by crows, but in the second the young succeeded in flying.

The most sensational ornithological event in Scotland during 1959 was the nesting of a pair of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* in Inverness-shire, a third bird being present. At the date of writing (3rd August) progress is reported to be satisfactory, and George Waterston and his volunteer helpers deserve all the congratulation we can give them.

The Quail *Coturnix coturnix* has perhaps been more numerous than usual in Scotland in 1959. One was found dead at Biel, East Lothian, on 7th May and examined in the (putrefact) flesh by A. T. Macmillan; this bird was reported by *The Scotsman* and *The Edinburgh Evening News*. On 11th June one was heard near Dornoch: "it was in a field of grass pastures where dairy cows were grazing. I made an effort to stalk the bird but was quite unsuccessful, the note always appearing to come from a spot thirty or forty yards ahead. The field had numerous patches of thick, lush grass which suited the bird's skulking habits." (D. Macdonald). Quails were heard and seen on 14th June near Abbey St Bathans, Berwickshire. On the 16th the observer again heard and saw the old birds when the hay was being topped and also saw one of the chicks. There were several more chicks nearby making a noise, but he did not wish to stand on them and so withdrew. The birds were seen and heard also on the 18th when they were thought to have moved their family into a cornfield (Andrew Dickson per W. M. Logan Home). In addition one is reported calling at Fearn, Easter Ross, in late June or early July (*Ross-shire Journal*, 10th July 1959 per G. H. Wilkinson).

On 18th July a Corncrake *Crex crex* was heard on the golf-course in Pollok Park, Glasgow. Although this area is completely surrounded by houses the birds have been there since 1952 in each year except possibly 1958 when the observer had no chance of recording them. In both 1952 and 1953 a pair was seen (Ian Hay).

A pair of Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* bred at



Collared Dove, Ayrshire, July 1959.

(C. E. Palmar)

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### THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**MEETINGS FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS:** Informal Meetings for discussions, exhibition of slides and films, etc., will be held in the Club-room on the first Wednesday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

**SLIDE PROJECTOR:** By arrangement with the Secretary, the Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector may be used by members for the informal showing of slides in the Club-room, at a charge of 2/6 per night to cover the cost of replacement of bulbs.

Gladhouse Reservoir, the first record for the locality, a clutch of four eggs being found on 18th June. There are very few breeding records for Mid-lothian (R. W. J. Smith).

Summer records of the Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*, outside its known breeding area, refer to single birds seen on the Forth between North Queensferry and Inverkeithing, Fife, on 15th June (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy) and one, a dark bird, at Ayr on 6th July (M. F. M. Meiklejohn).

Sixteen pairs of Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* nested on the Lamb in 1959, a new colony (R. W. J. Smith).

Turtle Doves *Streptopelia turtur* again frequented Longniddry, East Lothian; one was seen on 28th June (K. S. Macgregor) and two birds were reliably reported to be present.

The Little Owl *Athene noctua* nested in the same hole in a tree in Berwickshire as in 1958 (W. Murray). Cf. *Scottish Birds* 1: 37 and 38.

Records of the Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* continue to accumulate from further north and further west in Scotland. One was both seen and heard on the wooded shore of West Loch Tarbert, Argyll, on 28th March (A. Allen, R. J. Olliver). "From about 8 to 9 a.m. on 9th May 1959 a Green Woodpecker yaffled repeatedly at Blanefield, West Stirling, then gradually moved out of earshot down the valley. I was able to play the Koch records of the Green Woodpecker in between live yaffles, and the sounds were identical. The bird was once briefly seen moving from tree to tree. The only Stirlingshire locality given in *The Birds of Scotland*, Tor Wood, is in East Stirling (K. H. Barr). The record of the Green Woodpecker from Avon Glen, near Larkhall, (*Scottish Birds* 1: 73) is confirmed by George L. A. Patrick, who heard one there on 11th May 1957, a Swedish ornithologist knowing the bird's call also being present, and on 2nd August 1959 excellent views of a pair were had at Thinacres Farm, Quarter, in the same neighbourhood (A. Potter, J. C. Taylor).

A Chough *Coracia pyrrhocorax* was seen near Auchencairn, Kirkcudbrightshire, in the first fortnight of July 1958; "it was flying with a flock of Jackdaws below the cliffs and was conspicuous because of its bright red bill and unusual flight" (Henry L. Martin, *Glasgow Herald*, 13th February 1959).

The Rev. R. I. Mitchell in an article in *The Scotsman* (11th July 1959) records the nesting of a pair of White Wagtails *Motacilla alba alba* in 1959 in his garden at Kilconquhar, Fife. He only gives a detailed description of the cock bird, but it is clear from this that the male bird at least was of the typical race of this species.

A nest of the Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was discovered in an apple-tree at Luffness, near Aberlady, on 26th April. It contained five eggs and later when the observer re-

turned from holiday it was empty, but, in view of the short fledgling period of this species, he cannot say whether it was successful (W. Birrell).

Records of the Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* in the south of Scotland during the spring of 1959 seem to have been more numerous than usual. On 1st March eight were seen on the south side of the Big Wood of Menteith, Perthshire (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, L. A. Urquhart); these were certainly continental birds, judging from their call-note, which is readily distinguishable from that of the Scottish race, being much more loud, definite and explosive—a conclusion reached in the summer of 1958 when listening to immigrant Crossbills in the south of England very shortly after hearing the native birds on Deeside (M. F. M. Meiklejohn). On 8th March six were seen near Gladhouse where there was some evidence of nest building and a pair were still present on 5th April when five adults were at Edgelaw, Midlothian, feeding with Siskins and Redpolls (R. W. J. Smith). On 22nd March four were observed in Bowmont Forest, Roxburgh, and 4th April two in Baro Wood, East Lothian (K. S. Macgregor). In Dunfallandy Wood, Strathtay, Perthshire, seventy were seen on 19th April, every second bird being a red male and no young being present (P. G. R. Barbier, John Hoy). Dr James Campbell states that two or three pairs nest regularly in this wood, but considers the others to have been migrants.

#### AUTUMN MIGRATION

Already at the date of writing (3rd August) reports of the southward passage are beginning to come in. On 19th July at Gladhouse there were a Greenshank, 85 Dunlin and a Sanderling, as well as a big passage of Oystercatchers (R. W. J. Smith); while on the 21st, at the mouth of the River Ythan, Aberdeenshire, Dunlin had much increased, there were two dark phase Arctic Skuas among the terns and at least eleven Red-throated Divers *Gavia stellata* on the sea (A. J. M. Smith). On 1st August there were two Greenshanks at Tynninghame and Whimbrel were heard there (A. T. Macmillan) and on 2nd August four Greenshanks were seen on the Eden estuary and at least three Velvet Scoters, which may have been, however, summering birds, in St Andrews Bay (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, C. E. Palmar).

The most interesting evidences of autumn passage are, however, the following. On 20th July there were eleven adult and two 1st summer Little Gulls on the shore between Leven and Lundin Links, which had not been there on the 17th (R. S. Weir) and fourteen adults and one 1st summer in the same locality on the 21st (A. T. Macmillan, M. I. Waterston). All but one of the adults, which had a white forehead, were in

full summer plumage, their heads being noticeably black compared to those of Black-headed Gulls. They were very approachable. The highest count so far was 31, all adults, on 24th July and the first juvenile was not seen until 1st August when about one third of the adults were in winter plumage (R. S. Weir).

About seventy Crossbills were seen over Earlston, near Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire, on 21st July (F. Dalziel) and three immature birds on 25th July alighted on the tree in Ayrshire in which the Collared Doves had nested (C. E. Palmer). These records are evidence of a new invasion.

#### BEHAVIOUR AND HABITS

A curious incident of Scottish ornithology is reported by Dr Jolly of the Bristol General Hospital in *The Falconer* (III, No. 3, 1956). The eyrie of a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* was discovered in Scotland containing two falcons a few days old and, with them, a young Common Gull *Larus canus* of about the same age. At the end of three weeks, the Peregrines were taken for falconry purposes and the gull, which had survived, was removed with them. At this stage the gull was much more active than its companions, but would sleep between them and take bits of meat from them. It was the first to fly and, a day or two after doing so, it disappeared. (Information by courtesy of Mr Stephen Frank, who has also sent a photograph of the three birds together).

On 5th July 1959 at Cally Loch, Gatehouse of Fleet, several Moorhens *Gallinula chloropus* were seen climbing up the stalks of Reedmace *Typha latifolia*. Usually they quickly sank out of sight behind the vegetation as the plants collapsed under their weight, but in two cases the plants remained upright and the Moorhens fed greedily on the female flowers of the Reedmace (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Donald Watson).

On 12th July 1959 two young albino Swallows *Hirundo rustica* were seen near Calderside Farm, East Kilbride. The farmer told the observer that both had come from the same nest, which also contained three normal young ones (David Lawson).

A curious nest of the Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* is reported in 1959 from Colinton, Edinburgh. It was fifteen feet up in a cranny in an old garden wall, where it had a flourishing brood of young (I. V. Balfour-Paul).

On 17th January 1959 a Dunnock *Prunella modularis* was seen in the cage of the Black Vulture at the Edinburgh Zoo feeding upon red raw meat (Peter Holt).

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the new Session are now due, and should be paid to the Secretary and Treasurer, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. Members, 25s; Junior Members, 7s 6d; Non-Members (Scottish Birds only) 20s.

## TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, 23rd/25th October, 1959

### PROGRAMME

#### Friday, 23rd October :

- 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. Conference Office in the Golden Lion Hotel opens for Members and Guests to register (7s 6d each). Collect Name Cards and Annual Dinner tickets (12s 6d each).
- 6.15 p.m. Meeting of Council.
- 6.30 p.m. to midnight Lounge and Oakroom reserved for informal discussions and refreshments, and showing of slides and films.

#### Saturday, 24th October :

- 8.45 a.m. Conference Office opens for Registrations.
- 9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Ballroom of the Golden Lion Hotel.  
ADDRESS OF WELCOME by William Macfarlane Gray, Esq., J.P. (Provost of Stirling).
- 9.30 a.m. LECTURE on "New Field Studies of the Behaviour of Gulls", illustrated with slides and film, by Professor Niko Tinbergen (Department of Zoology, University Museum, Oxford).
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. LECTURE on "Falconry" by Dr James Robertson Justice.
- 12.30 p.m. CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH in the Ballroom.
- 1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches. (Hotels must be informed).
- 2 to 5.45 p.m. EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving Car Park, Corn Exchange Road.  
Excursions are being arranged to various places of interest; details of these will be posted on the Conference notice board.
- 6.15 p.m. 23rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Lounge.  
BUSINESS :—
- (1) Apologies for absence.
  - (2) Approval of Minutes of 22nd Annual General Meeting held in Perth on 25th October, 1958.
  - (3) Report of Council for Session XXII.
  - (4) Approval of Accounts for Session XXII.
  - (5) Appointment of Auditor.
  - (6) Election of Hon President. (The Council recommend the election of Dr David A. Bannerman, M.B.E., Sc.D., F.R.S.E., as an Hon. President of the Club in recognition of his services to Ornithology).
  - (7) Election of two new Members of Council. (The Council recommend the election of Mr Donald Watson and Mr George Waterston, to replace

Dr David Bannerman and Dr W. J. Eggeling,  
who retire by rotation.

7.30 for 8 p.m. ANNUAL DINNER in the Ballroom. Dress informal. (Price 12s 6d each, inclusive of tip. Drinks extra).

**Sunday, 25th October :**

9.30 a.m. EXHIBITION OF FILMS in the Ballroom. "The Reed Warbler" and "The Return of the Osprey" (by courtesy of the R.S.P.B.)

10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.

11.15 to 12.30 p.m. By kind permission of the Trustees, the SMITH ARTS INSTITUTE, Albert Place, will be open to Members of the Club.

1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches.

2 p.m. EXCURSIONS (as for Saturday) by private cars leaving Car Park outside Golden Lion Hotel.

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**INFORMATION**

In order to simplify arrangements, it is essential that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed postcard and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 19th October**.

Members may invite Guests; and are particularly asked to provide private cars where possible for Excursions. Petrol expenses should be shared.

Everyone attending the Conference must register (7s 6d each) on arrival, at the Conference Office. (Open Friday 23rd, 6 to 7 p.m.; and on Saturday, 24th, 8.45 to 9.30 a.m.) Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting **ONLY** do not require to pay the Registration fee which covers incidental expenses—hire of rooms, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

Payments for tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 12s 6d inclusive of tips) should be made when registering on arrival. **NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE.**

All Hotel bookings should be made direct with the Hotel at which you wish to stay. Owing to the general shortage of single rooms, younger members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day. The Secretary is **NOT** responsible for Hotel bookings.

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN STIRLING**

GOLDEN LION HOTEL, 10 King Street (Tel. 1950) Conference H.Q.  
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

STATION HOTEL, 56 Murray Place (Tel. 1057)  
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

WAVERLEY HOTEL, King Street (Tel. 1950)  
Bed and Breakfast from 27s 6d.

GARFIELD HOTEL, Victoria Square (Tel. 430)  
Bed and Breakfast from 19s 6d.

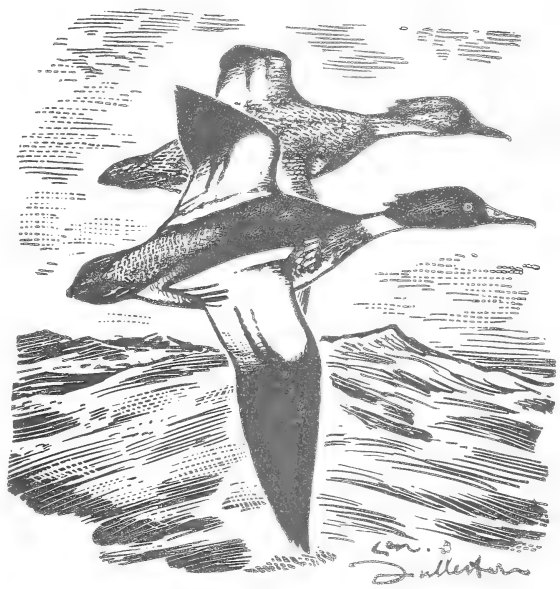
DOUGLAS HOTEL, 4 Arcade (Tel. 286)  
Bed and Breakfast from 19s 6d.

ALLAN PARK HOTEL, 20 Allan Park (Tel. 298)  
Bed and Breakfast from 18s 6d.



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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I. No. 6*

*Winter 1959*

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Reprinted 1977

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

Informal meetings for Junior members will be held in the Club-room on the first Friday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. I. No. 6

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Winter 1959

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (red-breasted Merganser) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly*

## Editorial

**A**LL members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club will have been very sorry to read, at the beginning of October, of the death of Dr E. V. Baxter. Everyone at this year's annual Conference must have felt our loss when they realised that, for the first time, she was absent. It is not given to many to remain so active, mentally and physically, up to the end of a long life (even in her last year she saw a bird she had not seen before in Scotland, the Black Tern), nor to be admired and liked by a whole generation younger than herself. We hope to publish an account of her life and achievements in our next issue, and in this number we are including both her photograph and that of her friend and colleague, the late Miss L. J. Rintoul.

Dr Baxter lived to know of the future installation of the Scottish Ornithological Centre at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, and it must not be forgotten how much her inspiration, as the leader of Scottish ornithology, was behind this venture. The premises were opened, on 26th October, with a delightfully informal ceremony, by the Earl of Wemyss and March. The arrangement, with the living quarters for Mr and Mrs Waterston, offices for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and library and meeting premises for the members of the Club, seems ideal. With such headquarters Scottish ornithology may look forward to a bright future, and again we must thank the anonymous donor who made the purchase of the house possible. Since he is anonymous, we cannot thank him face to face, but we can assure him that that is what we would like to do.

## MIGRANTS ON NORTH SEA CROSSINGS 1951 - 1953

C. K. MYLNE

In the autumn of 1951, 1952 and 1953 records of migrants, mostly hawks and passerines, were collected on eight crossings of the North Sea from Newcastle to Norway. Most of these journeys were made by members of the Cambridge Bird Club on their way to and from Lista, where a five year study of migration was being undertaken. It had been hoped to collect further records in subsequent years before publishing any results, but, as none of any significance occurred after 1953, it seems worth while publishing these, partly in the hope that they might induce other observers with similar records to put them into print.

I am grateful to Mrs M. I. Waterston for notes on the first 1951 crossing, to M. K. Swales for those on the last crossing in 1952 and to M. R. K. Plaxton for 1953. The distances given are only approximate and have been worked out from the times of the various observations presuming a constant speed of the ship over the 400 mile journey. All times given are G.M.T.

### 1. Newcastle to Stavanger, 19th August 1951 (M.I.W.)

Left on the evening of the 18th. At 1000 hours on 19th a Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca* came on board, about 200 miles from land. Another, possibly the same bird, was still about the ship at 1600 hours. The weather was stormy and wet and it seems unlikely that in these conditions a small passerine would readily leave the ship. If this was the same bird it was carried about 100 miles to the north-east. Two single Dunlin *Calidris alpina* were encountered during the morning about 150 miles from Norway, and about 100 miles from shore, two or three small passerines probably of the genus *Saxicola*.

### 2. Newcastle to Bergen, 5th September 1951 (C.K.M.)

Left on the evening of the 5th. At 2030 hours, about eighty miles out, a Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis* flew into a lighted saloon, where it was caught and ringed. It weighed 16.0 gms. The bird was very lively and full of energy and so was released. After sitting on the deck for about five minutes, it perched on the rail and then flew strongly alongside for a while before it dropped astern into the darkness.

### 3. Stavanger to Newcastle, 3rd October 1951 (C.K.M. et al.)

Left just before midnight on the 2nd in calm cool weather. The 3rd was bright with patches of sunshine and some cloud.

This crossing was made at the height of one of the most spectacular autumn passerine movements in recent years, a full account of which has been written by Jenkins (1953) who was one of the party on board. Anticyclonic weather and bird movements had both been building up over Scandinavia in the last days of September, and on 1st and 2nd October large numbers of night migrants, especially Robins *Erithacus rubecula*, were reported both in south Norway and at all the British east coast observatories.

From the time our observations started at 0630 hours there were always some small passerine birds to be seen, mostly keeping up with the ship and landing on it from time to time. Several birds flew on ahead of the ship, which was probably moving at about fifteen knots, and then turned back in a wide circle to come in astern again. For this reason it was hard to tell how long individuals stayed with us, but the impression was that they were using the ship to help them on their way. The species involved were:

Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum*. One at 0630 hours, not seen again.

Redwing *T. musicus*. One early, joined by two others at noon. One was still with the ship at 1715 hours, 100 miles further on.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. A redstart was with the ship most of the day, but unidentified until cornered in the 1st Class lavatory at 1630 hours.

Phylloscopus. One, probably *collybita*, at 1430 hours.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. One bird (or more) seen all morning until noon.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. One from 1000 to 1530 hours.

Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. One seen on board, 1500 hours.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. One, seen first at 1100 hours, was captured at 1740 hours in an exhausted state.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*. Two from early morning until noon, after which they were not seen again.

Both the Black Redstart and the Chaffinch after capture were kept overnight and released in Newcastle on the morning of 4th October. Both flew off fairly strongly over the docks from the ship, but it is interesting that both were recovered dead shortly afterwards—the Black Redstart (Ring No. NF 0149) at North Shields on 5th October 1951, and the Chaffinch (Ring No. NF 0147) at Dunson, Gateshead, on 5th February, 1952.

#### 4. Newcastle to Kristiansand, 24th August 1952 (C.K.M., M.R.K.P.)

One Redshank *Tringa totanus* was seen at midday about fifty miles off the Norwegian coast, flying round the ship in company with Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis*.

5. *Kristiansand to Newcastle*, 11th September 1952 (C.K.M., M.R.K.P.)

Left at 0130 hours after a spell of fine weather on the Norwegian south coasts during which many day and night migrants had been recorded passing. On the sea, which was quite rough, there was a fresh east or north-east breeze following the ship. The only passerine species seen were one White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*, that remained with the ship all afternoon until dusk, and a Meadow Pipit flying about the upper deck and settling frequently. Both birds would often fly out astern, but always returned. In complete contrast to this behaviour was that of a remarkable number of hawks seen during the day which paid little or no attention to the ship, but seemed to be heading south-west. The first sighted was a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* at 0945, then a Merlin *Falco columbarius* at 1130 hours. Later, however, in half an hour between 1430 and 1500 hours, when we were over 200 miles from Norway and over 150 from England, we watched three Buzzards *Buteo buteo*, two Sparrowhawks and eight Kestrels *Falco tinnunculus* fly past. The Buzzards were soaring in circles, presumably using thermals, but it was noted that in the half hour during which they were in sight they had moved a considerable distance towards the south-west, being finally lost to sight astern. The smaller hawks, flying at between fifty and a hundred feet above the sea, appeared to catch us up from astern, fly alongside for a short while and then head out over the sea at an angle to our west-south-west course which must have taken them south-south-west. Some were watched following this line of flight until they could no longer be seen through x8 binoculars. The impression we got from these hawks was that we were passing through a broad front movement of birds, all flying singly except two "pairs" of Kestrels, i.e. two birds flying at least within sight of each other, and moving faster than we were, carrying on, with very slight regard for the ship, in their preferred direction.

6. *Stavanger to Newcastle*, 5th October 1952 (M.K.S.)

Left Stavanger just before midnight on the 4th. A Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix* was seen about 140 miles out and flew off to the north. Between 1030 and 1230 a number of passerines were watched, mostly flying parallel to the ship: two Song Thrushes, five Robins, two Meadow Pipits and one Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. One Song Thrush which lagged behind the ship almost certainly fell into the sea about 200 yards astern. On this trip Common Scoters *Melanitta nigra*, seven at 1000 and two at 1600 hours, were also seen, flying south-west.

7. *Newcastle to Stavanger*, 2nd October 1953 (M.R.K.P.)

The only bird seen was a single Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*, seventy-five miles off the Norwegian coast.

8. *Stavanger to Newcastle*, 18th October, 1953 (M.R.K.P.)

Forty miles out from Stavanger two Meadow Pipits were seen going south-west.

*Discussion.*

Although sporadic observations of this type are too few to be of much significance in themselves, they give useful evidence of what happens to migrants on their way from the mainland of Europe to Britain. As a good many naturalists presumably cross to Scandinavia nowadays, it should be possible to collect some useful information to supplement and support the observations collected by the British east coast observatories, and also the new work being done on North Sea migration by radar detection. (Lack 1959). Records of land birds actually moving over the sea sometimes have a special value, as coastal observations are affected, especially in the recording of direction, by the local configuration of the land. Owen (1953) on the Kentish Knock Lightship, twenty-two miles out from the Essex coast, noted that a stationary vessel does not deflect migrants unless they are exhausted. Our records confirm this with the larger species, but most of the small passerines seemed to be influenced by the presence of a moving ship at sea with something of the same effect as that of geographical features over land, the course of the ship becoming a form of diversion-line (as defined by Lack and Williamson, 1959). This may happen for long distances often over 100 miles on a journey which, as a direct crossing, would not be more than 400 miles at the most. This happened even with following winds, so that the speed of the ship was probably at the most half of the ground speed of which the birds were capable if they had gone on ahead. However, as is shown below, most of the small birds thus affected were probably disoriented and tired anyway.

Larger species to which the sea crossing is presumably not such a hazard may not be affected in this way. The hawks seen on 11th September 1952 confirm the normal south-west migration postulated for all four species by Rudebeck (1950) who observed them leaving south Sweden at Falsterbo. It is interesting too that the only hawks recorded by Owen at the Kentish Knock were a Sparrowhawk heading west-south-west and a Kestrel heading south-west. The behaviour of the Buzzards seen is of special interest: Rudebeck has shown a striking correlation between high pressure weather and Buzzard movements, because the species makes extensive use of thermal up-currents of wind. More than ninety per cent of the Buzzards passing Falsterbo were recorded migrating in this manner, gaining height by "thermic" soaring and then



LEONORA JEFFREY RINTOUL, 1878-1953

An appreciation of Dr E. V. Baxter, who died recently, and of her friend and colleague, the late Miss L. J. Rintoul, will appear in the next number of "Scottish Birds."

(Photographs by J. Moffat, Edinburgh).



EVELYN VIDA BAXTER, 1879-1959



gliding forward till the next thermal was met. Thermal currents over the sea are likely to be very slight at the best by comparison with those over land, yet the Buzzards observed from the ship appeared to spend much of their time soaring in wide circles. With the wind north-east these soaring movements would result in slow but steady progress to the south-west, which was exactly what was observed. It was noticeable, however, that this method of progression, with no gliding flight between spells of soaring observed, was much slower than the direct flight of the Sparrowhawks and Kestrels. As a result the Buzzards were left behind by the ship and the impression gained was that they were employing a method of flight learned overland where it is efficient and which they could not adapt to the unusual conditions of flying over an unfamiliar element like the sea. Rudebeck estimates that only 15 to 30 per cent of the Sparrowhawks passing Falsterbo, where the thermals would be much stronger, use this method of progression, and also that they have no obvious aversion to flying over the sea (*op. cit.* p. 47). The impression which these birds and the Kestrels gave in mid North Sea was of being on a normal migration flight, *Normalzurichtung* as defined by Geyr von Schweppenburg (1933), at a speed which, with a following wind, was probably between thirty and forty m.p.h., enabling them to cross from Scandinavia to Britain in about ten hours. The height of flight of the birds observed was not more than 100 or 200 feet, which is contrary to our own experience of birds flying with the wind on the coast at Lista (Hyatt and Mylne 1952) and to the records at Falsterbo (Rudebeck 1950). But of course one may only be seeing those individuals flying low enough to be visible out of a much larger movement proceeding overhead out of sight.

The three days on which any numbers of birds were recorded over the North Sea (3rd October 1951, 11th September 1952 and 5th October 1952) were all preceded by several days of fine anticyclonic weather, when migrants would be expected to be on the move. The south-west heading of almost all the birds for which a direction was recorded agrees with the records obtained by radar of arrivals on the Norfolk coast in autumn (Lack 1959) and suggests a direct crossing from Scandinavia to England, at any rate for the diurnal migrants. Among the passerines recorded by day, however, were several species normally regarded as nocturnal migrants e.g. thrushes, warblers, flycatchers. This feature was also noted by Owen at the Kentish Knock at the southern end of the North Sea. If these species left at dusk, as one would expect, they would clearly not still be only 120 or 200 miles out from Norway at 0630 hours, still less so at noon, when many of the birds on 3rd October 1951 were first seen. Of the passerines observed that day only the Chaffinch and Brambling

are diurnal migrants. As these species were normally observed leaving Lista from dawn until about 1100 hours (Hyatt and Mylne 1951), the Bramblings observed over 100 miles out at 0630 were not likely to have left that day. All nine species had been recorded by us in the movement through south Norway during the previous days (Hyatt and Mylne 1952), but it would appear that neither the diurnal nor nocturnal migrants seen in mid North Sea are likely to have started their sea crossing in Scandinavia. The times of our records are therefore interesting confirmation that such species were involved in the extensive drift caused by bad visibility in the sea crossings to Denmark or Germany. They had presumably left on the night of 2nd October, lost their way in poor weather and been subject during the following day to either down-wind or disoriented drift on the south-east winds which prevailed across the North Sea exactly as described by Jenkins (*op. cit.* p. 98). It is not surprising in these conditions that birds such as the tiny Goldcrests were making full use of the ship to rest after flying possibly for anything from twelve to eighteen hours over the sea.

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## SHORT NOTES

### EXTRAORDINARY NUMBERS OF SOOTY SHEARWATERS IN THE FORTH

Our week on the Isle of May was enjoyable, but unspectacular for birds, except for the astonishing number of Sooty Shearwaters *Procellaria grisea*, at least 500 at one time,

on 25th September 1959, with an equal number of Manx Shearwaters *P. puffinus*. On that day there were three great rafts of shearwaters sitting on a glassy calm sea not more than a quarter of a mile off the east side of the May—a sight surely more appropriate to the south Pacific than the North Sea. Probably there were thousands of Sooties in all, as many appeared to be drifting past on other days in a southerly direction.

A. DONALD WATSON.

(Other observers on the Isle of May this autumn have seen unusual numbers of Sooty Shearwaters, of which details will be published in the Isle of May report, but none have seen such a huge total as Mr Watson and his companions, a total which must be unequalled in the history of British ornithology.—Ed.)

#### WHITE STORKS IN FIFE

On 2nd October 1959 not very far from Cameron Reservoir, Fife, I saw two White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* flying very high indeed in a southerly direction. I was in my car driving north and unfortunately had not my binoculars with me. I saw them first through the sunshine roof and thought they were swans. I quickly realised, however, that there was something wrong. The wing-beat was slow and laboured, the neck and head stuck out in front, the legs were only just visible owing to the angle of vision, but the most striking thing was the wings. I pulled up and did the best I could with the naked eye. The wings appeared to be "dome-shaped"; they were white with, not a black tip, but a broad black band deeply covering the tip and continuing tapering right round the trailing edge. Owing to the height I was not able to see any other colour at all; they must have been flying at well over 700 feet. They were immensely large, much larger than Gannets *Sula bassana* (which I know well) or geese.

A. M. WILSON.

(Mrs Wilson has sent a sketch which leaves no doubt of the correctness of her identification. On 2nd October there was also a large influx of continental species on the Isle of May.—Ed.)

#### SURF SCOTER IN OUTER HEBRIDES

During a visit to south Harris, Outer Hebrides from 28th August to 10th September 1959, I spent some time examining with a stand telescope (x40) the flock of scoters which summer in the Sound of Taransay and West Loch Tarbert. On the

afternoon of 4th September, when spying from Traigh Nisabost, I found an adult drake Surf Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata* swimming among the Common Scoters *M. nigra* some 300 yards offshore. The white patches on forehead and on nape showed up conspicuously in the excellent lighting conditions. There were often Common Scoters with the Surf Scoter in the field of the telescope together, so that the marked differences in shape and colouring of the bill were apparent. The Surf seemed overall rather larger than that Commons, and the shape of its head more like that of the Velvet Scoter *M. fusca*, with which it was subsequently seen.

This bird was also viewed by my wife and sons. I watched it first of all for about forty-five minutes. The Common Scoters, with which it mixed unconcernedly, were predominantly adult drakes, in a constant state of excitement over the few ducks that were with them; there was much display, with chasings, short flights and diving. In these the Surf took no part, nor was it ever molested in any way, or any sign of resentment shown over its presence. Although much less restless than the Commons, the Surf Scoter took wing on several occasions by itself, showing the absence of any white on the wing.

Later, after a break of about half an hour, I found the Surf Scoter again in the same area, swimming this time with fifty or sixty Velvet Scoters, again predominantly adult drakes. It made several short flights and after about ten minutes was last seen flying westward, alone. Although specially searched for on several other days, it could not be found, nor incidentally were any Velvets, perhaps of some significance in view of J. G. Millais' remarks (*British Diving Ducks II*: 79) that "where (the Surf Scoter) comes as an accidental visitor, it nearly always associates with the Velvet Scoter."

The capabilities of my stand telescope of naval pattern are well known to some members of the S.O.C.; it is a somewhat bulky item of equipment, but the decision to take it to Harris to study scoter flocks could not have been better justified

The only previous recorded occurrence from the Outer Hebrides is of one shot, in the winter of 1865, at Holm, near Stornoway, Lewis. It was preserved in the Castle collection (R. Gray, *Birds of the West of Scotland*, p. 383).

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

#### DRAKE EIDER SITTING ON A SINGLE EGG

On 7th June 1957, when we were crossing the Moor of Forvie, Aberdeenshire, looking out for subjects to photograph, we saw a drake Eider *Somateria mollissima* sitting on the moor. A cautious approach took us to a point within ten yards of the sitting bird. When we stood up, the bird flapped away

in the manner of a duck Eider leaving a nest and we saw that the bird had indeed left a down-filled nest containing one egg much soiled by newly voided foul-smelling droppings. On a return visit we found this nest empty, no doubt on account of the activity of numerous egg-collectors.

R. MAXWELL.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

### HYBRID GEESE IN KIRKCUDBRIGHTSHIRE, LANARKSHIRE AND RENFREWSHIRE

During recent years I have twice noted dark, apparently hybrid, geese among Grey-lag Geese *Anser anser* in the vicinity of Loch Ken. Both birds showed some similarity with that described below by L. A. Urquhart.

The first occurred on 20th October and during November 1955. It was of Grey-lag size with pale flesh-coloured bill and legs; the bill was rather large. The white cheek-patch extended on to the fore crown and just over the eye, continuing also for about one third of the way down the front of the neck, the whole patch untidily edged. There was no black on the lores. The rest of the head, neck and upper breast were black, merging into dark sooty grey on the body generally, except for a white area from abdomen to under tail-coverts and black tail. At close range and specially in flight the back and wings were seen to be patterned by slightly lighter feather edgings. In flight the bird was not unlike a large dark Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*.

A description and sketch of this bird were shown to Peter Scott and in his view it was probably a hybrid between the Grey-lag and one of the *Branta* geese.

The second bird was seen briefly at the same spot, resting on the water with Grey-lags and a Barnacle Goose on 8th March 1958. Again size was as Grey-lag, but bill bright reddish pink; an untidy white dirty patch on the cheeks only; rest of head and neck black, body otherwise sooty tinged brownish except for white from abdomen to under tail-coverts. I have no note of the colour of legs or tail, which were not clearly seen. It was an ugly-looking creature.

It may be worth pointing out that the 1955 bird in particular was not so very unlike a Blue Snow Goose *Anser c. caerulescens* in its general colour pattern. The black tail, of course, was a strong indication of *Branta*.

A. DONALD WATSON.

On 9th November 1959, near Auldhouse, Lanarkshire, I was making a count of Grey-lag Geese *Anser anser* when I discovered with them, first a Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*

and then an unusual looking goose of the following description:

About the size of a Grey-lag Goose, very dark, but not black, over the crown and the whole neck, breast and belly. On each cheek a rounded white patch, as in the Barnacle, but not extending above the eyes. The back was darkish grey, but not so dark as the underparts. Vent and tail-coverts white. The bill was a dullish indeterminate shade and the legs were, I thought, pink; pale anyway, not black. It had a more rapid feed-rate than the Grey-lags. Unfortunately, before I had time to get down to a more detailed study of this bird, two youths came into the field and put all the geese up. I did not see the strange goose's flight pattern, as about 350 birds rose *en masse*.

The flock was eventually located at Dunwan Dam across the border into Renfrewshire. The Barnacle and the strange goose were quickly picked out and I noted a further important feature of the latter as it swam directly away from me—it had a black tail.

L. A. URQUHART.

Mr Watson comments: "It can be seen that the three dark geese had common features and it is worth noting that all occurred with Grey-lags, two of them when a Barnacle was also in the flock." Both observers are agreed that the three birds are most likely to be hybrids between Barnacle and Grey-lag Geese.—Ed.)

### HONEY BUZZARD IN MULL

During the morning of 13th September 1959, while we were bird-watching on the coast at Langamull, north Mull, we had the good fortune to observe and independently identify a Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*. The bird was flying due west along the short-line at a height of about twenty feet and passed within fifty yards of all the observers. The light was fairly good, strong binoculars being used.

The following points were those on which we based our identification:

(a) *Shape*. 1. The long neck, which made the head prominent and pigeon-like, quite unlike that of a common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*, was an immediate and striking character. 2. The long narrow tail, shaped like a folded fan, was equally conspicuous and unlike that of a common Buzzard. 3. The wings were narrower and proportionately longer than those of a common Buzzard. 4. The general impression was of a smaller and lighter built raptor than the other species.

(b) *Plumage*. 1. Grey-brown head, with conspicuously white throat. 2. Rest of upperparts uniform dark brown. 3. Under-

parts not seen clearly, but lightish. Under tail not seen at all. (Despite the insistence of the books on the barring of the tail being a striking character, I have always found it most difficult to see in ordinary conditions.—T.C.S.). 4. Under wings a striking pattern of two or three heavy black bars apparently running most of the length of the wing, with black patch at the carpal joint and greyish underwing-coverts.

(c) *Flight*. This was extremely characteristic and in our experience one of the best ways of distinguishing *Pernis* from *Buteo*. It is, nevertheless, not easy to describe. The wings, in the glide, are held so that the proximal half, from the body to the carpal joint, is raised a little and held a little back: the wing beyond the carpal joint is depressed and held much more back, while the tips of the primaries are raised again and twist over, while still being held back. (Diagrams attached).

Identifications took place quite independently; E. K. shouted her suspicions to T.C.S., who failed to hear. All three observers are well acquainted with the Honey Buzzard, E.K. at Gibraltar, A.M.S. in Denmark and Sweden, and T.C.S. in Denmark, Sweden and Turkey. There were also plenty of common Buzzards on Mull with which to compare our impressions, including one seen a moment before the Honey Buzzard was lost to view at Langamull, and thereafter watched for some time.

ELLA KNIGHT.

ANNE-MARIE SMOUT.

T. C. SMOUT.

(This is the first record of the Honey Buzzard from Mull. We are informed by P. E. Davis that a bird of this species occurred in June at Voe, Shetland, its remains being picked up about the end of July—ED.)

## SUCCESSFUL BREEDING OF OSPREYS ON SPEYSIDE

Last summer a pair of Ospreys *Pandion haliaetus* attempted to nest at any eyrie on a dead pine in the marsh at the south end of Loch Garten, Inverness-shire. Halfway through the incubation period the nest was raided by an egg-collector in the early hours of the morning under cover of darkness. The eggs were smashed. The birds later built another eyrie on a fifty foot living Scots Pine about a mile east of the north end of Loch Garten. It was now, however, too late for breeding success and, after completing the nest, the birds left the area.

This year the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, supported by the Nature Conservancy, organised special measures to safeguard the birds. The male arrived first on 18th April and began displaying over the new eyrie. We went

into action at once; the lower branches of the tree were sawn off and the trunk and base smothered in barbed Dannaert wire. A section wooden hide to which there was a covered approach was erected. These preparations were completed when the female arrived on 22nd April, and courtship and nest-building began at once.

A rotation of three teams each of two watchers guarded the eyrie day and night through the entire incubation period of thirty-five days. Eggs were laid towards the end of April and hatched early in June. We are glad to report that there was no disturbance of the birds this year.

When we were satisfied that the young had hatched safely and were being fed regularly, we established an observation post for the public, about 200 yards from the eyrie. Access to this was by a peat road leading off from the Tulloch road, close to Loch Garten, and the track was screened from the birds by pine trees. At this O.P. through a pair of binoculars mounted on a tripod over 12,000 visitors were able to watch the young being fed by the female, and got excellent views of the male flying in to the eyrie with trout.

On several occasions the pair at the eyrie were visited by an apparently unmated adult which frequented the district.

The watchers kept a log of the movements and behaviour of the birds, night and day throughout the whole period, forming what must be a unique record of the breeding biology of any pair of birds.

On 2nd August the first young bird flew from the eyrie, to be followed a few days later by the other two. For the first few days they returned to the eyrie to feed and roost, but now (early August) the three young birds are away and strong on the wing.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

(Mr Waterston and his helpers have earned the gratitude of all ornithologists by the success of their operation. For a more detailed, and highly entertaining, account of the proceedings, you are referred to *Bird Notes* 28: 494-500.—Ed.)

#### WOOD SANDPIPER BREEDING IN SUTHERLAND

On 18th July 1959 we were walking round the edge of a marsh in Sutherland when a Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* flew up from the marsh about fifty yards away and flew round out heads "chipping" continuously. Once it broke into a long trill on the same note, and its whole manner was agitated.

On the 23rd I.D. went alone to the marsh and sat in the open, there being no cover near. It took 55 minutes for the



bird to settle down and feed which it eventually did within about 40 yards. During this time it "chipped" from the ground, or flew towards him and then back again. It also bobbed, as Redshanks *T. totanus* do when alarmed. He could see it frequently for the next half hour, but it appeared to be feeding alone. Then he waded over and flushed the bird, which started "chipping" again. Within about fifteen yards of where it had been, he flushed two others which behaved entirely differently, flying about twenty yards and dropping down again. One was followed and close views were obtained, since it preferred to run several yards before getting up. Patches of down on the head and along the neck were clearly visible, particularly when the light was behind the bird. It did not call.

The same afternoon we both returned and watched another (or the same) juvenile-type bird. The back was spottier than in the adult and in flight the wings appeared darker. One of the presumed juveniles was also seen on the 25th, when it gave a rather sweeter version of the typical *chiff-if-if* call heard on migration. This was also the only occasion on which the dirty yellowish legs were noticed.

On the 26th both the young birds were seen by Dr I. D. Pennie, who fully confirmed our identification. We are familiar with Wood and Green Sandpiper *T. ochropus* on migration, and with their call-notes. The young birds were last seen on 5th August, the day before our departure.

IAN DOWNHILL.

G. HALLAS.

(H. P. Medhurst informs us that on 3rd June 1959 P. R. Colston and R. E. Emmett watched a Wood Sandpiper feeding in the Isle of Skye, where it does not appear to have occurred previously. Both observers are familiar with the species and provided Mr Medhurst with a good description.—Ed.)

#### IVORY GULL IN FIFE

On 4th October 1959, on the flats close to the Paper Mill at Guardbridge, Fife, we saw an unusual gull together with a large mixed collection of other gulls and waders. It was perhaps a little larger than a Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*, completely white and rather "fluffy"—for want of a better word. The legs were black and the bill yellowish, and it had the look to a certain extent of a pigeon. The bird was on the ground, not on the wing, and there was no colour other than white in its plumage. We puzzled over it for some time, knowing that it was none of the gulls which usually

frequent this coast. We concluded that it was an Ivory Gull *Pagophila eburnea*.

A. M. WILSON.  
DORIS WILSON.

### FEEDING FLIGHT OF INLAND NESTING TERNS

Several times during the past two nesting seasons I have seen Common Terns *Sterna hirundo* from the colony at Loch Leven, Kinross, flying overland back from the sea carrying sand-eels. To find out if this habit were general I watched on 8th July 1959 from a point on the sluice road at a time when there was a rising tide in the Forth. Between 1400 and 1630 hours I counted twenty-five terns flying in and fifteen of them were carrying sand-eels. This was a good proportion of the birds involved, as there were only thirty nests in the colony on 14th June. Considering that observations were limited to a shallow valley north of Findatie Farm, it may be supposed that other birds, flying in elsewhere, were missed. The round trip would involve a flight of eighteen to twenty miles.

GEORGE DICK.

### GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO IN ORKNEY

On the afternoon of 21st August 1959 I was informed by telephone that a strange, long-tailed, crested bird had been frequenting several of the farms on the North End district of Rendall for about a week and that it was then in the vicinity of a certain cabbage patch. On arrival I found that it had gone, but interviewed several of the people who had seen it and concluded that it must be a Great Spotted Cuckoo *Clamator glandarius*. However, as the Great Spotted Cuckoo had never previously been recorded in Scotland, I was very anxious to make certain of its identity. Though I visited all its known haunts that afternoon and evening, and on the following day, I failed to find it. Then, shortly after 10 p.m. on the 22nd, Mr Tulloch of Tingwall rang up to say that the bird was roosting in a neighbouring garden. As it was then quite dark I decided to wait until the morning, but, before I had finished dressing, the 'phone rang and Mrs Tulloch announced: "the bird is here at Tingwall in the garden." I grabbed binoculars and camera and, without breakfasting, did the three and a half miles in record time. I was rewarded by seeing at very close range and being able to identify positively an immature Great Spotted Cuckoo.

Slightly bigger looking than the common Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, its most striking feature was its very long, magpie-like, graduated tail, the central feathers of which were

blackish with a metallic sheen—other feathers brownish, all with small amount of white at tips. The head was black, with the suggestion of a crest. The rest of the upperparts were brown with whitish or creamy spots on the back, wing coverts and secondaries. The primaries were bright chestnut, except for the outer quarter which was brown with whitish or creamy tips to the feathers: the chestnut showed up well when the bird was at rest, or in flight. The underparts from the chin were pale creamy buff, forming a half collar to the neck. The legs and feet were blackish, with creamy feathers to the tarsal joint. Iris blackish with a rather indistinct orbital ring of pale brown.

The flight resembled that of the common Cuckoo or of a hawk, and other birds—Lapwings and Blackbirds—mobbed it. It would readily perch on any fence, post, tree, bush, overhead wire or building, often flicking its long tail. Quite tame, it could be approached to about four or five yards. When on the ground it hopped about in an ungainly manner with legs wide apart. It visited cabbage-patches at several farms in the district and fed avidly on the caterpillars of the Cabbage White Butterfly, which were very numerous this season. Its chin was stained green as a result of this feeding.

I succeeded in taking a reasonably good colour photograph. The bird was first seen at Tingwall on 14th August and last seen on 30th August.

E. BALFOUR.

### BEE-EATER IN SUTHERLAND

About 1400 hours BST on 14th August 1959, when I was by a burn near the mouth of the Halladale River in north Sutherland, an unusual bird flew by me. The light was excellent and the bird passed the small valley at about eye-level heading south. The most arresting thing about it was the brilliant colour. It was about the size of a Blackbird *Turdus merula* with a swift, swooping flight like a Swallow's. On the back it was a bright golden yellow and tawny, with a pointed tail and pointed green-blue wings, and as it flew it called repeatedly *prui*. The only name that occurred to me was Bee-eater *Merops apiaster*.

There had been a strong, probably gale-force wind from the south or south-east since the previous evening, with heavy rain in the morning,

MARY HENDERSON.

### FIRECREST ON THE ISLE OF MAY

On 30th September 1959 on the Isle of May I found a Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* feeding among nettles near the

Bain Trap. It flew from there into an abandoned naval hut, where it fed busily among the rafters, but was later coaxed back into the trap, where it was captured.

Since the bird appeared tired and its identity was evident, a detailed plumage examination was not made, but the following details, distinguishing it from the Goldcrest *R. regulus*, were noted: bright orange crest, indicating a male, surrounded by a black border; conspicuous white eyebrow; black line through eye; white patch under eye; bright grass green back and greenish gold patch at side of neck; throat buffish, but rest of underparts white; wing pattern much as in Goldcrest. Opinions differed as to whether its call-note could be distinguished from that of the Goldcrest.

The bird was photographed, and seen by M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Eileen and Dennis Munns, R. W. J. Smith and W. Watt. It remained on the island until 3rd October, when it was also seen by W. J. Eggeling and J. Hoy. On the 2nd the Firecrest, two Goldcrests and a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* were feeding simultaneously in Mr Watt's garden. Strong south-east winds had been blowing since the afternoon of the 29th September.

The species is new to Scotland, although there are records from Holy Island, Northumberland, and the Faeroes.

D. R. GRANT.

#### HAWFINCH IN TIREE

On 25th October 1959, after a period of strong west and south-west winds, a dead Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was picked up by one of my pupils at Kenovay, Tiree.

ALLAN C. McDOUGALL.

#### TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL IN INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 21st August 1959, at Newtonmore, I was handed a newly dead adult male Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata* with fresh blood at the nostrils a slenderer, more Chaffinch-like bird, with its boldly pied wings, than the Scottish Crossbill, and with thinner and more delicately twisted mandibles. Even in death its colouring was an exquisitely mottled blood-red—a brighter hue than the apple-and-brick-red of our own Crossbill. The skin is at Aberdeen University, where Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards checked the measurements against the unlikely contingency of its proving to belong to the American race. The only previous record from the interior of the Highlands seems to be of one that George Bolam

found in an Inverness taxidermist's, said to have been obtained locally.

RICHARD PERRY.

(We are informed that another bird of this species occurred on Foula on 21st August 1959, but have not received details.—Ed.)

### CHAFFINCH NESTING ON GROUND

On 16th May 1959, as I was walking through a wood near Saline, Fife, a hen Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* rose from a patch of Wood Anemone *A. nemorosa*, fluttering away from underfoot in the manner of a ground-nesting bird trying to draw me away from the area. It grounded without calling. The nest was on the open ground with no cover other than the foliage of the anemone, and contained four eggs. The hen Chaffinch returned after a short interval, flying in about a foot above the ground and walking the last six feet or so like a lark in an open field. The bird's behaviour and choice of nesting-place were all the more unusual in view of the number of conventional sites available in the area.

GEORGE DICK.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *Appeal for information on bird migration.*

A year's investigation of bird migration with radar on the east coast of Scotland has shown that while it is usually easy to detect high-flying birds by this means, most movements take place either by night or too high to be seen from the ground by day, so that it is frequently difficult to identify the species involved by direct observation. It has proved possible, however, to identify the constitution of most of the important passages observed through a study of (1) general arrival and departure dates, (2) the occurrence of drifted migrants at the Bird Observatories, and especially (3) the appearance of grounded migrants with a local deterioration of the weather. For instance, the identity of one large arrival from the direction of Scandinavia was indicated by a note from Tom Weir in your last issue (1: 97) concerning Redwings *Turdus musicus* and a few Fieldfares *T. pilaris* in the Rannoch area on 18th and 19th October 1958. I have received several other reports of precipitations of rushes of winter visitors which came in high over the coast, but descended where they met bad weather inland. It seems likely that other observers must from time to time make casual observations of this sort which would be of great value for identifying the movements

seen with radar. I would thus be very grateful for information concerning the time of arrival and departure of migrants, or observations of visible migration, in Scotland from the late summer of 1958 until further notice.

W. R. P. BOURNE.

Edward Grey Institute,  
Botanic Garden, Oxford.

### *Great Skua nesting in Outer Hebrides*

As W. A. J. Cunningham's note under the above heading (*antea* 1: 124) is the first published reference to the breeding of the Great Skua *Catharacta skua* in this faunal area in recent times, it seems desirable to record some additional information which I have. Earlier publication was withheld in order to avoid risk of embarrassment to this species in a "new" area.

The first intimation I had of breeding in the Outer Isles was received in August 1945 from a correspondent, Gilbert Holmes, who stated that a few pairs nested in a certain district. I was unable to pay a visit until June 1955, when on the 30th, with Donald MacDonald, I found two nests, one containing two eggs. From the condition of the vegetation beside the nests and at the prominent nesting hummocks, it appeared that the site must have been occupied for some years, although Greater Black-backs *Larus marinus*, which were using similar terrain, might have been responsible for the original manuring and vegetation changes. Four pairs of Great Skuas were present here. Later a single bird was seen, from a distance, settled in another locality less than two miles from the first; unfortunately there was no time to look for a nest. On 4th June 1956 there were three single birds here, and three pairs on 3rd June 1957, but on neither occasion did the behaviour of the birds suggest that nesting had progressed very far. W.A.J.C.'s 1959 nests were found here, I believe.

In June 1956 and 1957 the first locality where nests had been found in 1955 was also revisited: on 3rd June 1956 two, or perhaps three, pairs were present and one nest was found. on 2nd June 1957 there were three single birds, which behaved as if nesting had not started.

Unfortunately it is impossible to give a reliable date for the first colonisation. This may have occurred much earlier than the available information suggests, for the locality where the skuas nest is one which, until recent years, has been almost entirely avoided by ornithologists. There is no record of the Great Skua in the Outer Hebrides at any season until 1893; Harvie-Brown (*Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll and Inner Hebrides* 1892, p. 194) referred to a report of breeding in the

Outer Isles received by Graham, but this was never verified and has never been taken seriously.

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

### *National Wildfowl Counts*

Regular monthly counts of wildfowl are made on lochs, estuaries, coastal waters, etc. from September to March. Counters are required in Scotland. Anyone interested in helping should write to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, who will supply full details.

### CORRIGENDA

Dr W. J. Eggeling has asked us to make the following corrections to earlier Isle of May Observatory reports:

In the 1956 report (*Scottish Naturalist* 69: 137) under "Cross-bill" for "1st-9th June" read "1st-9th July."

In the 1957 report (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: Special number) on p. 41 5th line from foot, for "17th" read "19th". On p. 43, line 6, for "31st June" read "30th June."

*Antea* 1:88, line 6, for "de los Gagules" read "de los Gazules." Line 10, altogether six Gannets (not five) have been ringed on the May.

*Antea* 1:94, 7th line from foot, for "18th October" read "13th October."

*Antea* 1:99. The late House Martin at Dunbar was seen on 1st November, not 4th November.

*Antea* 1:99. Under "Bewick's Swan" for "28th November" read "28th December."

*Antea* 1:100. The early Sandwich Tern seen at Fort George occurred on 23rd March 1957, not in 1959.

## REVIEW

BRUCE CAMPBELL. *Bird Watching for Beginners*. Puffin Books, 1959, pp. 240. 2/6.

This useful little book has been brought sufficiently up to date to include the Golden Eagle nesting in England and the disaster to the Ospreys' nest in 1958, though not their success in 1959. Though intended for schoolchildren and sometimes talking down to them a little ("I shall not be popular with your parents if I make you too interested in the Nightjar"), it is a book from which nearly all adult bird-watchers can profit, especially with regard to the lines of useful investigation suggested for amateurs. Mr R. A. Richardson's pictures are still a delight, but the sketch of a Dunlin ("Can you identify the bird?") from the author's own

notebook was mistaken by us for an aberrant Water Rail. We congratulate Dr Campbell on this new and improved edition and are only sorry that he has been so long in England that he now considers that the Glaucous and Iceland Gull are "very hard to tell apart."

M.F.M.M.

## CURRENT NOTES

[The Current Notes section is held over to the following number.—Ed.]

### The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

#### TWELFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

When I travelled north on Friday, October 23rd, it was with pleasurable anticipation of an enjoyable weekend ahead, for this was the second time I had attended an S.O.C. Conference and I knew that if Stirling 1959 was as good as North Berwick 1957, I was in for a good time.

The Conference headquarters were the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling. By 7 p.m. on the Friday evening it was wet and dismal in the streets of Stirling, but within the "Golden Lion" an atmosphere of warmth and great friendliness prevailed amongst the Scottish ornithologists and their guests. It was good to find oneself amongst ornithologists who, for the time being at any rate, did not take themselves too seriously all the time.

Friday evening was a time for registration and informal business and discussions. A programme of films was ably introduced by Mr C. E. Palmar. Iain Thomson showed some of his remarkable colour films with notable sequences of Black-throated Divers and Slavonian Grebe (as good as any I have seen of this species) following which Mr Palmar exhibited some of his own colour films, which included brilliant shots of duck.

The lecture by Professor Niko Tinbergen on Saturday morning, which followed the formal opening by the Provost of Stirling, was one of the most stimulating and interesting ornithological talks I have ever been privileged to hear. His subject, "New Field Studies of the Behaviour of Gulls," was illustrated by slides and a film, most of the shots being taken at Ravenglass in Cumberland. If one had not already been aware from his books and his world-wide reputation that Dr Tinbergen was a master of his subject, this must have been apparent to anybody listening to his lecture. I have seen many thousands of feet of bird film of one kind and another, but I have never seen a bird so completely unaware of the camera and of the presence of human beings as in the close-up shot of a sleeping Black-headed Gull that Dr Tinbergen showed us. If proof were needed that these studies of gulls were indicative of completely natural reactions in the field, one had it here.

By way of complete contrast, the second half of Saturday morning was devoted to a lecture on Falconry by Dr James Robertson Justice. He gave a fascinating account of how falcons are trained, much enlivened by the presence of two live falcons, with whom Dr Justice carried on private conversations from time to time.

The climax of the Conference came on Saturday night, when something approaching 200 people attended the Club's Annual Dinner in the large





The Official Opening of the new Centre at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, on Monday, 26th October, 1959. Left to right: Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club; the Right Hon. the Earl of Wemyss and March, Chairman of the National Trust for Scotland; the Right Hon. Lord Hurcomb, Chairman of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and Mrs George Waterston, Secretary of the Club. ("Scotsman" photograph).

ballroom of the Golden Lion Hotel. Distinguished guests were the Rt. Hon. Lord Hurcomb, chairman of the Council of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Dr Niko Tinbergen and Dr James Robertson Justice. When an excellent dinner had been eaten and the Loyal Toast proposed by the chairman, Sir Charles Connell, had been drunk, we sat back expectantly to await the after-dinner speeches. The toast of the S.O.C. was proposed most ably by Dr Tinbergen, and fittingly replied to by Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards. Both speakers referred to the recent death of Dr Evelyn Baxter and paid tribute to the great contribution she had made during her lifetime to Scottish ornithology. Mr Donald Watson then proposed the toast of the guests with an easy and gracious turn of wit, which was replied to by Dr James Robertson Justice.

But if this brought the formal dinner to a close, let no one think that the evening was over. Conviviality was the order of the night, indicative of the happy atmosphere which is such a remarkable feature of S.O.C. conferences.

The last session of the Conference on Sunday morning consisted of a programme of films, "Ospreys Return" and "Reed Warblers", shown by courtesy of the R.S.P.B., and "Journey into Spring," by courtesy of British Transport Films. "Ospreys Return" was of special interest, as it showed the Osprey family successfully reared in Speyside this summer. At the conclusion of the films, Colonel J. P. Grant made a very strong appeal for practical support for the work of the R.S.P.B. Votes of thanks to speakers and those responsible for the organisation of the Conference followed, and this, sadly enough, brought the official programme of the Conference to an end.

As a visitor, it seemed to me that everything had gone smoothly, but this is the secret of good organisation. Mrs Irene Waterston is to be congratulated most warmly on carrying through the Conference with such conspicuous success at the outset of her secretaryship of the Club. I have now attended two S.O.C. Conferences as a fledgling guest. I look forward to attending the Thirteenth Conference as a free-flying member of the S.O.C.

GWEN DAVIES.

## Report of Council - Session XXIII, 1958-59

The Council have the honour to submit the following Report for the past year :—

**MEMBERSHIP:** It is satisfactory to be able to report that the Membership of the Club has maintained its high level in spite of the increase in the subscription. During the Session, 150 members resigned or were removed from the books as having unpaid subscriptions, and 147 new members were enrolled. Comparative figures are as follows:

	31/8/55	31/8/56	31/8/57	31/8/58	31/8/59
Ordinary	842	755	723	738	747
Junior	121	132	132	148	140
Honorary	11	11	11	11	7
Total	<u>974</u>	<u>898</u>	<u>866</u>	<u>897</u>	<u>894</u>

**COUNCIL MEETINGS:** Five Meetings of Council were held during the Session, when much important business was transacted.

**GENERAL MEETINGS:** A full programme of Lectures was carried out during the winter in five Branches. The Council wishes to express its

thanks to all the Lecturers who gave so freely of their services, and would also like to thank Branch Officials for arrangements and hospitality.

**EXCURSIONS** : Apart from Excursions organised by the Branches to various places of interest during the summer months, the Club also organised a weekend Excursion to Aviemore in May, and joined with the British Trust for Ornithology in a weekend Conference at Dumfries in February.

**"SCOTTISH BIRDS"** : Four numbers of the Club's new Journal have appeared during the Session and it is gratifying to report that it has been well received, and has gained support not only from members of the Club but also from additional subscribers, including many Libraries. The Council are confident that the publication of the Journal has contributed materially to the steady recruitment of new members, and wishes to congratulate Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn and his Assistant Editors on the high standard already reached by the Journal.

**SCOTTISH BIRDS RECORDS COMMITTEE** : This Committee, hitherto under the Chairmanship of our Hon. President, the late Dr E. V. Baxter, meets regularly each year to adjudicate on all records published annually. The Review for 1958 is published in "Scottish Birds."

**SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD PROTECTION** : As already reported in "Scottish Birds", the Council agreed to accept a donation of £4,000 from an anonymous donor to establish a Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection in Edinburgh. The Office and Library were removed to the new premises on 7th July 1959. The Club has been greatly indebted to the National Trust for Scotland for providing an office for the Club rent free for the past five years. The premises are to be officially opened by the Earl of Wemyss and March on Monday, 26th October, when representatives of various ornithological organisations will be invited. While all members of the Club are warmly invited to visit the new Centre, limited accommodation prevents the Council from extending a general invitation on this occasion.

**CLUB LIBRARY** : During the year we received a number of books from the Library of the late Professor James Ritchie which have been a valuable addition to the Reference Library of the Club. The donation of a handsome oak bookcase has been received from Dr and Mrs R. E. McIntyre of Edinburgh.

**APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY** : In early March the Council accepted with regret the resignation of Mr George Waterston as Secretary of the Club, a position he has held since its inception in 1937. At a Council meeting on 1st April it was decided to appoint Mrs George Waterston as Secretary and Treasurer of the Club. Mr Robert Hillcoat remains as Hon. Treasurer.

For the Council,

CHARLES G. CONNELL, President.

### CLUB LIBRARY AND MEETING FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS

Members are asked to refer to the inside front cover of this Journal for information on alterations to the opening hours of the Club Library, and in the evenings reserved for Junior members.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions for the new Session are now due, and should be paid to the Secretary and Treasurer, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, or to Branch Secretaries.

Members 25s; Junior Members 7s 6d; Non-Members (Scottish Birds only) 20s.

## TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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The Twenty-Third Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Golden Lion Hotel, Stirling, on Saturday 24th October 1959, at 6.15 p.m. An attendance of over 100 members was presided over by Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club.

**DEATH OF DR E. V. BAXTER:** After paying tribute to the late Dr E. V. Baxter, the Chairman asked the company to stand for a minute, in respect to her memory.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Twenty-Second Annual General Meeting, held in Perth on 25th October 1958, were read and approved.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL:** In moving the adoption of the Report, the Chairman said that the Council hoped to be able to provide more funds for the development of "Scottish Birds" in the future. The Council also welcomed the opportunity provided by the new Scottish Centre for developing the Club's association with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, particularly at a time when the extending tourist season made it imperative that our birds should be protected. He paid tribute to Mr George Waterston, who had relinquished the position of Secretary of the Club during the Session, for the work he had done both in building up the Club, and for ornithology in general. The Report was adopted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** In the absence, due to illness, of the Hon. Treasurer, the Chairman reported briefly on the present finances of the Club. He drew attention to the good surplus for the year, but pointed out that this could not be a ground for complaisance as there would in future be more calls upon the Club's income. The capital position, he felt, was good for a Club of only 26 years' standing. The Council had received intimation that the late Dr E. V. Baxter had bequeathed the very generous sum of £1,000 to the Club. The Accounts were approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:** Mr Arthur Walker, C.A., was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing Session.

**HON. PRESIDENT:** In moving the election of Dr David A. Bannerman, M.B.E., Sc.D., F.R.S.E., as an Hon. President of the Club, the Chairman spoke of the encouragement he had given to the Club by his interest and support since he came to live in Scotland. His election was unanimously approved.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** The Council's recommendation that Mr George Waterston and Mr Donald Watson be elected to Council to replace Dr David Bannerman and Dr W. J. Eggeling who were due to retire by rotation, was approved, and warm appreciation was expressed by the Chairman to the retiring Members for their services.

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:** The Chairman stated that, arising out of a discussion at the last Annual General Meeting, the Council had considered a suggestion for a Family Membership subscription. As this involved a change in the Constitution, no definite proposal could be made to the Club until the next Annual General Meeting. They recommended, however, a subscription of 40/- for married couples who would receive one copy only of "Scottish Birds" unless otherwise requested; this subscription would not include children as it was felt that they would prefer, and should be encouraged to receive their own copies of the Journal. Members were invited to submit to the Council their observations on this recommendation, which would then be taken into further consideration and laid before the Club as a definite proposal.

**COUNCIL FOR NATURE:** At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr R. S. R. Fitter, Secretary of the Council for Nature, drew the attention of members of the Club to the various aspects of the work of his Council, and invited their assistance in finding suitable tasks of a scientific nature

for the Conservation Corps to carry out in Scotland; in encouraging support for planned courses in amateur cine photography; and in forming a comprehensive list of Natural History films which would be available to Societies.

**PROFESSOR V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS:** The Chairman drew attention to the recent honour conferred on Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards, who had been elected a Corresponding Fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union in Saskatoon.

**Miss E. A. GARDEN:** The Chairman expressed the Club's gratitude to Miss E. A. Garden for the gift of a clock to use in the Clubroom at the new Scottish Centre in Edinburgh, and also to those who had given their help so generously in various ways.

**VOTE OF THANKS** The Meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman on the motion of Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards.

### THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

#### Revenue Account for Year ended 31st August 1959

INCOME :—	Year to 31/8/59	31/8/58
Subscriptions received during year ... ..	£1000 19 6	£779
Add: Received in advance at 31/8/58 ... ..	10 5 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1011 4 6	£789
Less: Received in advance at 31/8/59 ... ..	0 0 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1011 4 6	£779
Income from Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment	40 5 10	40
Savings Bank Interest ... ..	13 2 5	12
Badge Sales ... ..	5 6 6	6
Eric Hosking Exhibition Net Proceeds	0 0 0	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1069 19 3	£847
<b>EXPENDITURE :—</b>		
Hire of Lecture Halls and Equipment ... ..	£88 8 9	£78
Lecturers' Expenses ... ..	53 6 10	62
Postages, printing, stationery, sundry expenses	101 9 7	174
Subscriptions to British Council, the Council for Nature, B.T.O., R.S.P.B. and I.C.P.B. ... ..	10 2 0	4
Fee for Secretarial Services ... ..	353 1 2	400
Conference Net Cost ... ..	39 15 8	28
Scottish Birds—Vol. I Nos. 1 to 4—net cost less sales to non-members £35, 11s 6, and advertisement receipts £66 ... ..	171 3 2	0
Removal Expenses to Regent Terrace ... ..	21 1 0	0
Furniture and equipment including carpet, tables chairs and shelving for Library £59, 3s 0d and reconditioned typewriter £36 ... ..	95 4 0	12
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£933 12 2	£758
<b>Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet ... ..</b>	<b>136 7 1</b>	<b>89</b>
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1069 19 3	£847
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Balance Sheet as at 31st August, 1959</b>		
	31/8/59	31/8/58
Surplus at 31st August, 1958 ... ..	£681 16 3	£493
Add: Surplus for year per Revenue Account	136 7 1	89
Legacy from J. Bartholomew ... ..	0 0 0	100
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£818 3 4	682

Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment (the free annual income is available for the advancement of ornithology) ... ..	1000	0	0	1000
	<u>£1818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1682</u>
Cash in Edinburgh Savings Bank ... ..	£693	6	1	580
Cash in Royal Bank of Scotland Current Account	100	10	1	112
Cash in hand ... ..		6	7	0
Debt due to the Club for adverts. in Scottish Birds	18	0	0	0
	<u>£818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>692</u>
Less: Subscriptions received in advance ...		0	0	10
	<u>£818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>682</u>
£1151 3½% War Stock at cost (Endowment) (Market Value at 31/8/59 £760) ... ..	1000	0	0	1000
	<u>£1818</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1682</u>

EDINBURGH, 14th October, 1959.—I have examined the foregoing Revenue Account and Balance Sheet of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the year ending 31st August, 1959, and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

ARTHUR WALKER, Chartered Accountant.

#### OPERATION OSPREY 1960: Appeal for Volunteers

In the event of the probable return of the Ospreys to the same site at Loch Garten in 1960, the R.S.P.B. will require the help once again of volunteer Wardens to guard the eyrie from disturbance.

Wardens will be required from mid-April until mid-August, preferably for periods of not less than a week at a time. Food, tents, and camp equipment will be provided free, but each person is expected to bring his own sleeping bag and pillow slip. Provided a sufficient number of Wardens are available, each one will have every third day free of duties. A succession of female cook-caterers will also be required for the period.

Anyone wishing to assist should send full details and references as soon as possible to Mr George Waterston, 21 Regent Terr., Edinburgh 7.

#### WEEK-END EXCURSION TO DUMFRIES

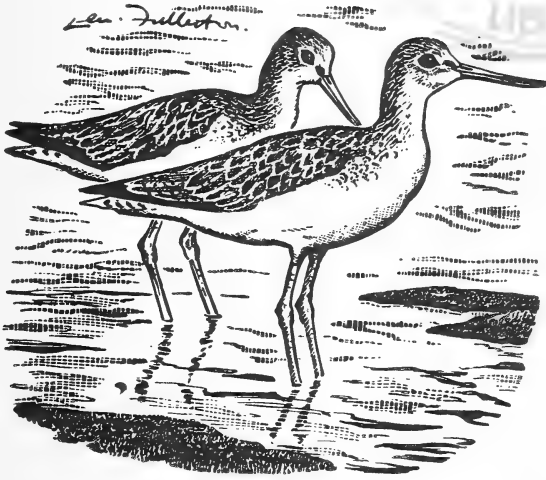
Arrangements have been made with the County Hotel, Dumfries, for a weekend Excursion to the Solway area to see the geese.

Accommodation has been reserved for the weekend 5th to 7th February 1960 at inclusive terms of £4 per person as follows: Bed on Friday night 5th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday 6th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 7th.

Members wishing to come on this Club Excursion should book direct with the Manager, The County Hotel, Dumfries (Tel. 146), mentioning that they are members of the Club. Members may bring guests. Arrangements for transport by private cars should be made with the Branch Secretaries.

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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. I No. 7

Spring 1960

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Reprinted 1978

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2, at a cost of 13s 9d post free. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

Informal meetings for Junior members will be held in the Club-room on the first Friday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 20 Falkland Street, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.



# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. 1 No. 7

Reprinted 1978

Spring 1960

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Greenshanks) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Editorial for Beginners

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**E**XPERIENCED ornithologists may skip this and pass on to the body of the journal, but a large proportion of the members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club are beginners, and they are asked to delay for a minute or two before going on to more interesting reading.

Ornithology is a cheap hobby: only think of the cost of a set of golf clubs. All we need is a pencil, the back of an old envelope, a good pair of walking boots, a pair of Wellingtons for watching water birds, and a pair of field glasses. This last, although some consider motor cars as an essential, is the most expensive item of equipment. For most purposes 8x35 binoculars are sufficient, and very good ones can be got second-hand, though in special circumstances something larger is needed, higher powered glasses or a telescope being necessary, for example, in watching birds out to sea, or on extensive inland waters. Remember that it is the thinner end that you put to the eye.

Then begins the ABC of bird-watching, getting to know the common birds. This is essential. If you start hunting rare birds at the very start, you will have no valid standard of comparison for the ones you see. It is useless to try and identify the rarer waders, for example, if you cannot know at sight the Dunlin, Ringed Plover, Redshank and so on. There are now many excellent volumes for the identification of birds in the field, Peterson, Hollom and Mountfort's *Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* being perhaps the most popular. But two words of warning are necessary in the use of birds books: as a rule they will only show the adult plumage of the two sexes of each species, and you will often be puzzled by birds which seem not to correspond to any picture in your book: these will mostly be of immature birds, especially in autumn, and here you will have to have recourse to *The Hand-*

*book of British Birds*, which is about the only book to show the immature plumages—and not all of them. In addition it is advisable not to take books with you into the field: it is far more safe to take notes on the spot of any species you don't know and then check your results when you get home. The presence of a bird book is liable to make the inexperienced observer decide that his bird is one that vaguely resembles a plate in the book, and much valuable time, which might have been spent in taking down notes, is wasted in turning over the pages and trying to reach an immediate decision. The psychological effect of suggestion can be very powerful in bird illustration, an example being that many more people than ought to do so think they see Firecrests, simply because a popular manual has a picture of Firecrests on the dust jacket.

If you see an unusual bird, how do you set about reporting it? The important thing is to note down absolutely everything you can. Colour—in difficult species the minutest details are necessary. Shape—what other bird does it most closely resemble to your eye? Size—compare your bird with any other bird that may be present; it is very hard to judge the size of a bird which is by itself, since this depends on the conditions of lighting. Behaviour—many birds will have individual tricks of stance, flight and feeding behaviour which may make your description diagnostic. Voice—here again two very similar species, as for example the Tawny Pipit and Richard's Pipit, may be conclusively determined by a good account of call-notes.

And how do you know whether a bird you see is unusual in your area or not? There are books to tell you that: first of all Baxter and Rintoul's *Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*, which is now, however, 32 years old, and the need for a new edition is illustrated by the fact that Dr Baxter started on a revision shortly before her death. The same authors' *Birds of Scotland*, though, is much more recent, and will fill many gaps for the intervening period. The regional faunas of Scotland are now mostly very old, and there are still parts of Scotland (Lanarkshire is the outstanding example) which have never been adequately covered.

With a thinner density of ornithologists than exists in England, much work remains to be done on the distribution of birds in Scotland; and remember that this is changing all the time. The general tendency is for southern species to spread northwards; this is especially noticeable in Scotland with warblers such as the Chiffchaff, Whitethroat and Garden Warbler. The Carrion Crow is also at the present time invading the Highlands and islands, with a resulting scarcity of its fellow subspecies, the Hoodie. Birds previously regarded as English

rather than Scottish are spreading north of the Border. A recent number of *Scottish Birds* described the first nesting of the Little Owl and now the Nuthatch is said to be nesting in Scotland, although full details are not to hand. At the same time arctic birds are growing scarcer at the southern limit of their range, the Ptarmigan being perhaps the best example.

To get an idea of the distribution of birds in your area the best method is to walk across country. Here Ordnance Survey maps can be of great assistance: look out places sparsely inhabited by humans, especially if they are well watered or well wooded. You can frequently find large concentrations of birds by this means, and it is perhaps the best way of finding flocks of geese. You will meet with frequent disappointments, but that is part of the game and you will have the consolation of having covered the countryside thoroughly.

Going out with observers more experienced than yourself is advisable and, indeed, almost essential, twice as valuable as the help given by books. You are no longer working in a void, and better observers can correct your mistakes as a book which cannot answer you back, can never do. This is especially valuable in the case of birds' calls, which cannot be committed accurately to paper. You will learn bird noises far quicker if there is somebody at your side to tell you what they are, than by turning over the pages of a book, and finding a written transliteration of the call, which may or may not be the right one. Gramophone records are, of course, very helpful but the cases in which they can be used in the field for direct comparison are few and far between.

Not all ornithology consists in the identification of birds and the plotting of their distribution. These are only the initial steps, but they have to be taken before further progress is made. One of the spheres of ornithology in which amateurs can make, and have made their greatest contribution is that of bird behaviour. Any interesting aspect of this should be noted down, and amateurs, especially if living in the country, have unrivalled opportunities for doing this, especially those that have bird-tables and see the same individuals regularly. The colour ringing of birds in the garden will greatly help you in this.

Here it is difficult to know what is worth recording and what is not, and in most cases only life histories of the birds concerned can help you, together with articles in such journals as *British Birds*, *Bird Study* and so on: but even if a form of behaviour may have been recorded before, it is often worth while to report it again, just to see how regular such behaviour may be.

Finally, this is the last number of *Scottish Birds* to appear before the breeding season of most birds gets under way, and

the question of protection of their nests and eggs arises. It was Lord Grey who suggested that the best way of protecting the nest of a bird was not to look at it all, or if it is found accidentally not to visit it again. Birds are temperamental animals and quick to desert the nest, and the larger, one-brooded birds may not be able to lay again if they fail the first time. Furthermore, if you find the nest of a rare species, secrecy is the best policy. Your urge, in the excitement of your discovery, will be to gain as much credit as you can, and reveal the fact; but human beings have very big ears, and the race of egg-collectors is not yet extinct, especially in summer in Scotland, when the invasion of these sportsmen from south of the Border takes place. If, however, you report your discovery to the Editor of a responsible journal, you may be sure that the locality is kept secret, as has been done in the case of the Redwings reported in this number of *Scottish Birds* and of the Wood Sandpipers in the last. Of course, some large birds, especially when nesting within sight of a road, cannot escape general invasion; and, in the case of the Ospreys on Speyside, for example, it was obviously better to invoke the sympathy of the Press and the public on their behalf than to try to keep secret what was a secret no longer.

You may, of course, be simply watching birds for your private enjoyment and, since this is a personal matter, nobody can quarrel with your attitude. It may be suggested, though, that your enjoyment will be greatly increased if your records are published, with the additional satisfaction of assisting other people and of cooperating in the large body of ornithological work that it going on all over Scotland.

## DR E. V. BAXTER

The names of Miss Baxter and Miss Rintoul may become something of a legend among future generations of Scottish naturalists, but to those who knew them, their mention will always kindle a glow of affectionate personal memory.

Evelyn Vida Baxter, who died on 1st October 1959, found in her near neighbour, Leonora Jeffrey Rintoul, a kindred spirit and inseparable companion who shared her love of country activities and particularly of natural history. Miss Baxter was born on 29th March 1879, the daughter of John Henry Baxter of Gilston, Largoward, Fife: Miss Rintoul was born at Largo in the previous year. While still in their teens they began to visit Tentsmuir in north-east Fife, which was then being made into a nature reserve. Intimately connected with this project were Dr Lewis R. Sutherland, Professor of Pathology in University College, Dundee, and a pioneer in the study of bird

diseases, and Dr Eagle Clarke of the Royal Scottish Museum. These two eminent ornithologists gave "the girls" every encouragement to study birds in the field, for they were themselves both field naturalists, no less than workers in laboratory and museum. To Tentsmuir, also, during the early years of the century, came naturalists from many parts of the United Kingdom and overseas. Grouse and blackgame, artificially introduced to the moor, were being made the subject of special studies in connection with the Grouse Inquiry of 1904 to 1911. The Reserve also more than fulfilled the most optimistic expectations as to its attractiveness for birds on migration. Miss Baxter used to say that Tentsmuir had been the door through which she had entered ornithology.

At that time Dr Eagle Clarke was increasingly absorbed in studying migration. In 1905 he made his first visit to Fair Isle and his observations stimulated Miss Baxter and Miss Rintoul to investigate migration at the Isle of May, on approximately the same longitude as Fair Isle, but some two hundred and fifty miles further south. They spent a fortnight there in September 1907, staying at the lighthouse, and they returned to the May to study migration in spring and autumn for the next twenty-five years. The Observatory in the Isle of May National Nature Reserve carries on their work—one of the many monuments to their memory.

Eagle Clarke was working on the assumption that migrating birds followed long-established routes, on which the islands might serve as essential resting places. Miss Baxter became impressed, at an early stage in her own observations, by the apparent influence of weather. In 1918 the two ladies published their classic paper in the *Ibis* emphasising the importance of "drift." Two quotations illustrate what were then revolutionary ideas: "The direction of the wind does not prevent birds migrating—they move when the wind is at every point of the compass—but although this is so, in our opinion the direction of the wind has a great influence on the route followed and therefore on the species which occur on our shores." "We believe that the deviation from the direct route is largely, perhaps mainly due to drift, though voluntary 'tacking' may be a factor."

Studies of migration led Miss Baxter and Miss Rintoul to examine afresh the normal distribution of birds in Scotland, and particularly to establish data against which future changes might be checked. In 1922 they published *Some Scottish Breeding Duck, their arrival and dispersal* and in 1928 came the indispensable *Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*. The joint authors contributed a large number of papers to *The Scottish Naturalist* and other journals, not all devoted to ornithology, and their *Vertebrate Fauna of*



DRAKE GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. This photograph, characteristic of Mr. Palmer's pictures away from the nest, was taken on the Clyde above Hamilton.  
Photograph C. E. Palmer

*Forth* was a worthy addition to the nine regional faunas already issued in the series begun by Harvie-Brown. Their greatest literary work was the completion, just before Miss Rintoul's death in 1953, of the two volumes on *The Birds of Scotland, their History, Distribution and Migration*, a book revealing its authors' knowledge and love of Scotland, no less than of its birds.

The achievement which probably ranked first in Miss Baxter's estimation was the part she played, with Miss Rintoul, in the creation of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. It was founded on 24th March 1936, with only a score of supporters, and she saw it grow within twenty years to a membership of nearly a thousand; and to an extraordinarily large number of the members Miss Baxter was not only the club's Honorary President, but a personal friend whose advice was keenly sought and unstintingly given.

It was not only as an ornithologist and naturalist that Miss Baxter was well known throughout Scotland. Her versatility and energy led her in many directions. She was keenly interested in agriculture and was an organiser of the Women's Land Army in the 1914-18 War and again in 1940, when she was also a member of the Agricultural Executive Committee and of the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board. She was a leading member of the Women's Rural Institute movement and served in many offices in Institute, Federation, Area and Central Council. Skilled with her own hands, she took the Demonstrator's and Judge's tests and toured Scotland visiting Institutes from the Shetlands and Outer Hebrides to the Borders. She was Convener of the Handcrafts Committee of the Central Council. Young people followed her leadership as keenly as did their parents and she loved to serve them, not more in a broad field, for example as a Commissioner in the Girls Guildry, than in the personal intimacy of her Sunday School in Largo Parish Church.

Many distinctions and honours came to Miss Baxter, but they seemed only to increase her natural humility. In 1945 she was awarded the M.B.E. for her war work. In 1951 when she and Miss Rintoul were made fellows of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, they were among only eight ladies elected up to that time, and were the only non-graduates so honoured. In 1955 the University of Glasgow conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws upon her. Miss Baxter was the first lady to become a Vice-President of the British Ornithologists' Union and at the Centenary Banquet, in March 1959, she was presented with the Medal of the Union. The reward she valued most, however, and the one she had most fully earned, was the universal affection and respect in which she was held by all who knew her; her integrity would never allow her to condone

inferior work, whether of hand or head, but her humour and understanding enabled her criticisms to be constructive, kind and welcomed. Miss Baxter's influence will extend far beyond the fourscore years of her own fine life, now sadly ended.

J. B.

## ISLE OF MAY BIRD OBSERVATORY AND FIELD STATION REPORT FOR 1959

Prepared for the Observatory Committee by  
W. J. EGGELING, Hon. Secretary

The Low Light was manned for 161 days between 28th March and 24th November. April, May, August and September were covered almost fully, but observer gaps in June, July and October resulted in few nestling seabirds being ringed and a period of considerable migrational activity went unrecorded.

The island's first Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* was reported; other unusual species included a Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica*, a Scarlet Grosbeak *Carpodacus erythrinus* and a party of Continental Great Tits *Parus m. major*. The great expansion of nesting Shags *Phalacrocorax aristotelis* continued.

### *Migration*

#### SPRING

The spring was mild and dry; strong winds were noticeably absent and there was little haze or fog. On only fifteen days in April and May was the wind in the south-east, and only once (23rd-24th April) did it stay in that quarter for more than a few hours.

*March.* Judging from the birds present on the island on 28th March, and from what the lighthouse keepers reported, there had been a slight drift movement involving Continental Hedge Sparrows *Prunella m. modularis* and Continental Robins *Erithacus r. rubecula* the previous week. The first Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* had appeared on 24th March, the first Shag's egg was laid on 25th, the first of the breeding Linnets *Carduelis cannabina* returned on 28th and the first Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* was reported on 30th—this stayed until 3rd April and is the earliest notice to date.

*April.* The wind was continuously west until 7th, with the 8th and 9th calm. Throughout this period there was a slight but steady movement of Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis*, Wheatears and on some days Curlews *Numenius arquata*. Single Black Redstarts *Phoenicurus ochruros* were noted on 2nd and 3rd, the first Redstart *P. phoenicurus* and Willow



Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* on the 10th, and the first Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* and Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* next day. South-east winds with haze on 23rd and 24th brought the first considerable Willow Warbler influx of the year—about thirty birds, half of them caught. On 25th April the first Swallow *Hirundo rustica* and Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* were seen, there was another Redstart on 27th, the first Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* turned up on 28th, and there was a Corncrake *Crex crex* from 30th April to 3rd May.

May. The pattern of movement remained much as before, but with more birds and species implicated. On the 3rd of the month a B.B.C. "round-up" of Bird Observatories included the Isle of May; its contribution was made up from the main Lighthouse, looking down on the Top Trap. Although there was not a great deal of movement on that particular day, the Corncrake helped to provide a talking point. As the broadcast proceeded, it was noticeable how well the dates of arrival of spring migrants in the Forth fitted into the pattern of systematic northward spread throughout the country.

6th May was noteworthy not only for the visit of over 150 passengers from M.S. *Meteor* on the National Trust for Scotland's Islands Cruise but also for the obliging appearance of a first year Rustic Bunting which, after being trapped, was admired by a number of the visitors. Weighing 16.3 grams, it arrived on the sixth consecutive day of westerly wind.

The 6th, 8th and 9th were good ringing days, dominated by Willow Warblers: on 9th, after half a day of south-east wind on 8th, 63 Willow Warblers and 17 Whitethroats were taken. A Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*, a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* and a Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* figured among the birds ringed on 11th. On 13th, thirty Willow Warblers, seven Sedge Warblers *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*, two Lesser Whitethroats *Sylvia curruca* and fifteen Whitethroats were trapped. Whitethroats (22) dominated the catch on 25th and 26th. A movement of special interest was a northward passage of 237 Fulmars *Fulmarus glacialis*, up to seven at a time, on 20th May. Has a steady movement of these birds ever been recorded?

It is worth noting that none of the unusual birds recorded in May, for example the Wryneck on 10th and 11th, a Red-backed Shrike *Lanius cristatus collurio* on 20th and a Bluethroat *Cyanosylvia svecica* on 22nd and 23rd came after south-east winds; in each case the wind had been due east or north for at least three days. A Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* trapped on 27th May was carrying a Vogelwarte Helgoland ring; it had been ringed full-grown on Helgoland on 23rd August 1957.

## AUTUMN

Observers were present from 30th July to 12th August, 21st August to 17th September, and 19th September to 7th October. Passage was already in progress on 30th July, when over 200 Curlews, a Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* and nine Swallows were recorded. A Dark-breasted Brent Goose *Branta b. bernicla*, probably a bird of the previous year, which may have been present for some time before it was first seen on this date, remained until 22nd August, providing the third recorded occurrence on the island and the first Brent to be determined racially. The dates are very unusual for Britain.

*August.* The biggest fall of the month was on 4th, when, after 2 days of west wind, overnight fog brought down about 120 Willow Warblers, mostly juveniles, 79 being trapped and ringed. Other birds involved were four Sedge Warblers, two juvenile Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* and a Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*. The 7th was notable for the southward departure of many Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus argentatus* and *fuscus*, leaving after the breeding season. Almost 240 (nine tenths Herring Gulls) were counted moving off between 10.30 and 11.30 a.m. Easterly winds with haze and light fog ensured the arrival of more migrants during the next few days, with small numbers of Willow Warblers a constant feature. On 9th there were five more Crossbills, two Redstarts, two Whinchats and another Cuckoo; the numbers of Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* rose by at least fifty to 250, with a further rise to 300 next day. On 11th four Whinchats, two Pied Flycatchers and a Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* arrived. Easterly wind, Force 2, with fog from 2 a.m. till noon, saw a marked influx on 12th. Willow Warblers (about fifty; half of them juveniles; 39 ringed) were again the most numerous species, other arrivals including five Whitethroats, a Garden Warbler, two Barred Warblers, two Pied Flycatchers, a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, five Whinchats, a Redstart, a Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* (the earliest autumn notice so far), another Crossbill and a Whimbrel. After a gap in observation from 13th to 20th August, the party landing in the late afternoon of 21st (mostly foggy with a fresh easterly wind) ringed thirty birds before dark, among them thirteen Pied Flycatchers, seven Willow Warblers, six Garden Warblers and two more Barred Warblers. A Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus* was caught next day.

Small scale coasting movements, mainly in clear visibility and with Force 1 to 4 winds from a variety of directions, continued until the end of the month. Two Manx Shearwaters *Procellaria puffinus* had been seen on the 21st, and from 23rd until 30th never less than eleven were recorded daily, with a maximum count of 38 on 24th. A Sooty Shearwater *P. grisea* was recorded on 25th and two on 26th. On the latter date, a

clear sunny day with south-west wind abating from Force 6 to Force 1, and veering north-west, there was a considerable immigration of butterflies, mostly Large, Small and Green-veined Whites *Pieris brassicae*, *rapae* and *napi*, but with Red Admirals *Vanessa atalanta*, and a few Small Tortoiseshells *Aglais urticae* and a Peacock *Nymphalis io*: all arrived from the east. More butterflies were recorded on 27th, 29th and 30th. On the 28th and 29th a Scarlet Grosbeak provided excitement and on the 31st the seventh Barred Warbler of the year occurred.

*September.* To round off a phenomenally fine summer, September was another hot and almost rainless month. Water had to be sent out to the Observatory. Winds throughout were very variable, seldom above Force 3 and then for short periods only. The weather was thus for most of the time well suited to normal autumn coasting movements and there was the usual well-marked passage of Curlews, Great Skuas *Catharacta skua*, Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus*, terns, *Sterna* spp., Meadow Pipits, Wheatears and hirundines. In addition there was a steady trickle of arriving birds which may well have been taking advantage of the settled conditions to make a direct crossing of the North Sea. Goldcrests, for example, were passing through daily in small numbers, notably in the first fortnight of the month, and on two occasions small parties were seen to arrive from the east against what wind there was. Butterflies—Admirals, Whites and Tortoiseshells—came in during the first week, as well as some Silver Y moths *Plusia gamma*, with further butterfly arrivals on 26th and 30th.

The first autumn Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* was reported exceptionally early on 2nd September, on the third day of light south-east wind. On the same day there was the unusual count of nineteen Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, the highest number yet noted. The first autumn Chiffchaff was trapped on 4th, and a big passage of Swallows and Rock Pipits *Anthus spinoletta petrosus* (several hundreds each), observed early on 6th, was emphasised by normal Rock Pipit numbers next day. On 7th two Grey Wagtails *Motacilla cinerea* were recorded; on 9th a Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus* and a Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* appeared: a Barred Warbler, five Pied Flycatchers and another Grey Wagtail were noted on the 11th; and there were single Grey Wagtails again on 14th and 23rd September, and 4th October. So distinct a passage of this species is unusual on the May.

Mid-September brought the arrival of two Blackcaps on 13th, an increased (evening) passage of 250 "Comic" Terns *Sterna "macrundo/hirura"* on the 14th, and the arrival of a Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* and a Spotted Red-

shank *Tringa erythropus*, recorded previously only in 1958, the same day. The 16th, which saw the trapping of what was by then the tenth Barred Warbler of the season, was followed on the 17th by a small movement comprising 10 Pied Flycatchers, a Red-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa parva*, another early Fieldfare, a Little Bunting *Emberiza pusilla* (present on 18th also), a Robin and a Redstart, with a Sooty Shearwater out to sea. These birds appeared on the third successive day of NNE or north-east wind.

The last ten days of September were particularly interesting. On 20th at least 100 Manx Shearwaters and over twenty Sooty Shearwaters were seen, and on 22nd, after three days of westerly wind, more than forty of each were recorded. The 24th was showery; the wind was in the south most of the morning, south-east for a short time about noon, then went south again, and finally south-west. Next day (25th) twenty-five Song Thrushes *Turdus ericetorum*, fifteen Redwings *Turdus musicus*, three Bramblings *Fringilla montifringilla* and two Pied Flycatchers appeared, but overshadowing all else were the quite unprecedented numbers of shearwaters of the east shore, at least 500 Manx and the same number of Sooty, concentrated mainly into three large rafts.

The 26th brought a Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*, a duck and drake Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* (third occurrence, first in autumn) and about twenty Red Admiral butterflies. Shearwater numbers were down by the 27th—over 20 Sooty but only three Manx noted—but more than 1,000 Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* were observed moving south. Only about five Red Admirals remained but more came in on 28th, when two seen arriving from the north, low over the water.

On 30th arrivals included a Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*, six Fieldfares, about fifty Song Thrushes, twelve Redwings, fifteen Blackbirds *Turdus merula*, a Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*, the male Firecrest already mentioned (it weighed 5.3 grms. on 3rd October, the day before it left), two Red-breasted Flycatchers, a Reed Bunting and a Lapland Bunting. A Manx Shearwater and seven Sooty, many terns and an adult Little Gull *Larus minutus* (fourth occurrence) were seen. The wind was south-east, Force 4 to 5, after a light south-east breeze the previous evening.

*October.* Only the opening week was watched, but it is known from the Principal Keeper that there were big movements of birds later in the month. 1st October was cloudless with south-east wind, but the day quickly became overcast, the wind dropping to nil. Altogether 52 birds were trapped including 17 Blackbirds, eight Song Thrushes, two Blackcaps, a Chiffchaff, a Pied Flycatcher, four Hedge Sparrows, six Chaffinches *Fringilla coelebs*, five Bramblings, and three out of

eight Reed Buntings. Throughout the day Blackbirds (about 75), Song Thrushes (about 50), Redwings (12), Chaffinches (50) and Bramblings (35) were moving: until noon a north to south passage of Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* (80 counted) went on and 4 Siskins *Carduelis spinus* were also noted. In the morning and evening of 2nd the wind was light from the south-east but in the middle of the day was calm. Nineteen birds were trapped including seven out of about fifteen Reed Buntings, five out of 25 Song Thrushes and a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. About thirty Swallows, two House Martins *Delichon urbica*, a Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*, about thirty Skylarks, fifteen Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis*, five *alba* wagtails and a flock of 44 Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* were noted passing. About 65 Manx and fourteen Sooty Shearwaters were seen, and an unusual visitor was a Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*, only the eighth notice. Two more Reed Buntings were included in the thirteen birds trapped on 3rd (wind still in south-east), when a newly arrived Robin proved to be one which had wintered the previous year. Over 200 Skylarks passed between 8 and 10.30 a.m. 4th - 7th October were hectic: a calm dawn on 4th gave way to a stiff south-east breeze reaching gale force in the afternoon, with thick mist at night; throughout 5th and 6th the wind remained south-east, Force 6 to 7, hazy in the mornings but clearing later. On 7th (foggy in the afternoon) the wind was still south-east, but less strong (Force 4), dropping at night. On these four days the traps reaped a rich harvest: 57 birds were ringed on 4th, 107 on 5th, 60 on 6th and 71 on 7th. Among individuals totals were: 71 Goldcrests, 69 Song Thrushes, 42 Blackbirds, 23 Bramblings, 18 Robins, 16 Reed Buntings, 9 Chiffchaffs and 9 Chaffinches; there were also five Blackcaps, two Ring Ouzels, three Siskins, a Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*.

On 4th October big flocks of Skylarks were again noted passing in the early morning and parties of Redwings (50), Bramblings (20) and Chaffinches came in during the forenoon. Blackbirds (over 100) were in the majority in the morning but were outnumbered in the afternoon by Song Thrushes (250). Seven Ring Ouzels were counted. *Turdidae* were still numerous on the 5th and a mixed party of between 200 and 300 Bramblings and Chaffinches was seen to arrive at the North Foghorn in the evening. There was also a big fall of Goldcrests; 59 were ringed out of over eighty on the island. Goldcrest numbers had more than doubled by the 6th, with Redwings (200) more numerous also; Song Thrushes (300) and Blackbirds (100) were in about the same strength as before. Starlings were passing and another Great Grey Shrike and two more Red-breasted Flycatchers appeared. For the first time no Wheatears at all were seen.

On 7th, when Chaffinches and Bramblings were still coming in, Siskins (30) and Reed Buntings (12 out of 24 ringed) had increased. Redwing numbers rose to 300 and the sixth Red-breasted Flycatcher of the season was reported.

Reduced seas on the 8th unfortunately permitted the departure of the two watchers who had been privileged to partake of this feast of movement. The remainder of October went unrecorded.

*November-December.* Observers were in residence on 1st-2nd, 7th-9th and 21st-24th November: their records have been supplemented by notes from the Principal Keeper, Mr W. Watt.

Three Waxwings *Bombycilla garrulus* arrived on 2nd November, passing on the same day: two others were present on 17th and 18th. They constitute the fourth and fifth notices for the island. There was a very high count of 230 Curlews on 23rd, the birds arriving on the North Ness in flocks of thirty or forty at a time at short intervals from the direction of Fife Ness. On the same day five Greenfinches *Chloris chloris* and a Redpoll were recorded. Two Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis* were seen on 23rd and 24th: on the 24th one of them and a Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* were caught in the same drive of the Low Trap; the Goldfinch was of the British race *britannica*. Two Blackcaps appeared on 17th and one was noted on 21st. Although not recorded between 22nd and 24th November, a male and female were "still visiting" the Watts' bird-table on 4th December, so that perhaps the same two birds were present all the time. A small party of Continental Great Tits had arrived on the island some time after 7th October and four of these were ringed on 4th November. Three of the birds stayed on and were still on the island at the end of the year. Great Tits have been recorded on the island only four times before.

### *Unusual Occurrences*

Most of the unusual occurrences of the year have been mentioned above, but the following are also deserving of notice:

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*. One on 10th November. Sixth notice.

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*. One on 30th November. Seventh notice.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*. One on 16th May. Third spring notice.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*. One on 12th May. Fifth occurrence.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. One from 11th to 14th May. Third occurrence.

Knot *Calidris canutus*. Two on 29th and 31st March. Second spring notice.

Great Skua *Catharacta skua*. One on 16th May. Third spring notice.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*. Three on 25th August. Recorded previously only in 1954.

Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus*. One was seen on 22nd November: race uncertain. Sixth occurrence.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. The single birds on 2nd and 17th November are the earliest yet recorded.

White Wagtail *Motacilla a. alba*. One on 1st June is the latest notice for spring.

Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra*. One on 18th May. Only the sixth recorded occurrence in 35 years.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. The movement from 1st to 7th October, which peaked on 2nd and 7th with 15 and 24 birds respectively, was in larger numbers than ever recorded before.

### *Ringling*

The year's total of 1,635 birds of 56 species ringed, the highest since 1954, can be regarded as satisfactory. Less than one tenth were nestlings and it is disappointing that so few people thought it worth visiting the island in the latter part of the nesting season. The ringling of young Razorbills *Alca torda* and Guillemots *Uria aalge* is especially to be desired, for their movements are imperfectly known. Like the Shags, which deserve particular study in view of the continuing increase of their colony, they yield a high percentage of recoveries.

The trapping total of 475 Willow Warblers was well in excess of the previous highest (331 in 1949), Reed Buntings at 32 were also a record (previous highest 20) and so were Song Thrushes at 117 (94). Several other species produced totals falling only a little below the previous highest, for example Pied Flycatcher 53 (59), Barred Warbler 8 (9), Chiffchaff 20 (27), Goldcrest 112 (136) and Rock Pipit 79 (107). In contrast only 105 Blackbirds were ringed, less than one third of the average for the ten preceding years.

### *Recoveries*

Two young Shags ringed as nestlings in 1958 have been recovered at a distance, one at Chapel St Leonards, Skegness, Lincs., in January 1959, and the other on the island of Flotta, Orkney, in July 1959. Two more Guillemots of a batch of young ringed in June 1957 have been recovered, one on the west coast of Texel, Holland, and the second in the Oslofjord,

Norway, where eleven other Guillemots ringed on the May have been reported shot in previous years.

There have been eight Blackbird recoveries since the last annual report was written, four from Norway, two from Sweden, one from Holland and one from Ireland. All fit in well with the pattern of previous movements.

The two most interesting retrappings of breeding species were those of Fulmar "Joe," known from the same site since 1949, and of a Herring Gull ringed as an adult in May 1949, re-caught on a fishing boat four miles ENE of the Bass Rock in February 1959, and subsequently released. It was then at least fourteen years old.

A bird which would undoubtedly have yielded valuable information if it had been caught was a ringed Turnstone seen on 24th September. 52 Turnstones were caught and marked on the island between 1952 and 1957, and the probability is that it was one of these.

### *Breeding Populations*

The pair of Hedge Sparrows which nested on the island in 1958 did not return in 1959, nor did any Blackbirds or Song Thrushes try to breed. The Swallows, which first nested in 1956, were back again in 1959 and reared two broods, and a pair of Pied Wagtails *Motacilla alba yarrelli* was similarly successful. A second pair may have nested also. The Linnet population remained at not less than ten pairs, half of them nesting in the traps and half in grass tufts. There was no noticeable change in pipit numbers, but they may have been rather fewer Wheatears.

A pair of Carrion Crows *Corvus c. corone* built on the cliffs and eggs were laid, but this nest was deserted later: the site may have been used in former years without having been discovered, for it is extremely well concealed.

In face of the now commonplace superfluity of nesting gulls, the Puffins *Fratercula arctica* again failed to establish themselves away from the cliffs, and for the second successive year not a single tern laid. The phenomenal build-up of the Shag colony continued; 352 nests were counted on 17th May and, making allowance for nests hidden in caves, it is considered that about 400 pairs must have bred.

A detailed assessment of the Kittiwake colonies was made for the first time for several years. On 17th May, when there were hardly any full clutches and much building was still in progress, 1,276 nests were counted. Ten days later, on 27th, there were 1,517, to which about 150 could be added in respect of dead ground, and on 13th June Dr J. C. Coulson coun-



ted 1,651 nests from the sea. There were eighteen nests in the East Tarbet colony and thirteen at the South End.

Probably about 37 pairs of Fulmars nested. There were twelve chicks on the ledges on 9th August and all of these may have flown.

## *Miscellaneous Observations*

The phenomenally dry summer, combined with the attentions of a multitude of Rabbits (back to pre-myxomatosis level) and the grazing of over 100 ewes and lambs, reduced the grass growth to something approaching the close cropped sward of five years ago. Two more ferrets have been acquired by the Head Keeper and many hundreds of Rabbits have been accounted for, although this is unlikely to do more than slightly retard their natural increase.

Grey Seals *Halichoerus grypus* continue to frequent the North Ness in numbers. A pup dropped on the island in November is only the third known to have been born there.

During the year six more seals marked on the Farnes were captured on the May, their serial numbers recorded and the animals released. One of them provides a record of exceptional interest: it was tail-tagged on the Brownsman, Farne Islands, on 23rd November 1959 as a male two to three days old, was caught and released on the May on 21st December 1959 when thirty to thirty-one days old, and was found entangled in a fishing net at Kvalavag, Karamoy, Norway, on 30th December 1959, when 39 to 40 days old.

Several invertebrates new to the island were recorded. They included a Garden Spider *Araneus diademata* and the mite *Poecilochirus necrophori*, both collected by J. G. Elliott and K. Holt and determined at the Royal Scottish Museum.

Two weeds of cultivation not previously reported were found in Lachie's Garden by Mrs W. Watt, Black Nightshade *Solanum nigrum* and Small-flowered Melilot *Melilotus indica*. Neither is common in Scotland.

The year saw a number of improvements to the Observatory, notably the provision of a new range in the living room and replacement of the piping leading from the water tanks to the kitchen. Also on the credit side is the fact that an especially severe storm in November removed one of the island's war-time relics, the big naval hut in the Thistle Field. This had been becoming increasingly derelict yearly and it was a relief to see it finally collapse, the keepers making a prompt job of disposing of the remains. Unfortunately this same gale caused considerable damage to the Low Light roof, the renewal of which is now a top priority, and also played havoc with the

traps, which will need more than usually extensive repair in the spring of 1960. The Gully Trap has been so hard hit that, if it is to become effective once more, it will have to be virtually rebuilt. This trap has never been very productive, although it has sometimes yielded quality if not quantity, and the final decision may well be that it ought not to be replaced.

### **Publications**

The following articles, papers and notes relating to the May appeared during the year:

- BELL, G. S.—The Vegetation of the Isle of May, Firth of Forth, in 1957, relative to exposure features. *Coturnix* (Ann. Rep. Bishop's Stortford College Nat. Hist. Soc.) 1958:23.
- CERELY, S. Back to the Isle of May. *Country Life*, 24th September.
- DUNCAN, A. A. M.—Documents relating to the Priory of the Isle of May, c. 1140-1313. *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 90: 52.
- EGGELING, W. J.—Reports from Bird Observatories: Isle of May. (a) Spring Migration 1959, *Bird Migration* 1, 2:43. (b) Autumn Migration 1959. *Bird Migration* 1, 3:100.
- "ESKDALE"—For Sunshine go to the May. *Edinburgh Evening News*, 12th June.
- FRESHWATER, P. B.—Isle of May—Structural Features and Historical Data. *Coturnix* 1958:20.
- G(RANT), D. R.—Firecrest at Isle of May. *Scotsman*, 24th October.
- GRANT, D. R.—Firecrest on the Isle of May. *Scottish Birds* 1: 153.
- M(EIKLEJOHN), M. F. M.—A new Scottish Bird. *Glasgow Herald*, 10th October.
- OAKLEY, R. G.—The Birds of the Isle of May, Firth of Forth, August 10-24, 1957. *Coturnix* 1958:29.
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### **Acknowledgments**

The debt owed by the Observatory to Principal Keeper W. Watt and his wife for innumerable kindnesses increases annually, and a similar mounting debt is owed to our boatman Mr W. Hughes of the *Fair Morn*. On behalf of everyone who visited the island in 1959 we say Thank-you to all three.

## SHORT NOTES

(A number of the notes printed below were originally submitted to *British Birds* and, through the courtesy of the Editors have been forwarded to us for publication in more detail than would be possible in that journal. The records in question are those of Little Bittern, Baldpate, King Eider, Goshawk, Crane, Icterine Warbler, Rose-coloured Starling and Two-barred Crossbill. They have all been approved by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds*, to the Secretary of which, Mr G. A. Pyman, we are especially grateful for his kindly cooperation.—Ed.)

### LITTLE BITTERN IN ANGUS

At about 10.30 a.m. on 12th July 1958 I saw a strange bird going across the road to Balgavies Loch, just below Auldbar Station, Angus. It was the size of a Woodcock or Lapwing, about 12 inches long, of a dirty brownish colour, with bill and legs yellowish. I was about fifteen yards from it and, as it was crossing the road, its head seemed sunk into its shoulders. I hurried down to the water's edge and here it was sitting among some irises, with neck stretched straight into the air. It seemed to me just like a Heron with wings tight into the body, like a statue. I mentioned this to a retired gamekeeper, Mr Anderson, and before I had given him a full description, he told me it was a Little Bittern: he had seen a pair a good number of years ago on Rescobie Loch. I have no doubt whatever that my bird was a female Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*.

R. MIDDLETON.

(This seems to be the first record of the Little Bittern in Angus.—Ed.)

### BALDPATE IN INVERNESS

Midday on 9th October 1958 brought broken skies and bright sunlight to the Beaully Firth. A strong breeze from the south-west had roughened the sea and in the lee of the south shore many parties of waders and surface-feeding duck were resting and feeding. At 1130 hours I was driving west along the coast road to Dingwall making frequent stops to enjoy the spectacle. During one such halt, three quarters of a mile east of Lenham Station, I was looking through a flock of thirty Wigeon *Anas penelope* when I noticed one bird which immediately struck me as paler than the others. As I watched it move through the flock I became more and more certain it was not *penelope*.

Aided by x9 binoculars and a x30 telescope and with the sun behind me, I examined the bird in detail for fifteen minutes at a range of forty yards. I made a sketch and field notes, of which the following is a summary: "a Wigeon appearing slightly larger and distinctly paler than duck *penelope*; further distinguished by dirty cream forehead and fore-crown,

distinct dark shade behind eye, greyish ear-coverts, throat and neck (darker on hind neck) contrasting with pinkish buff-brown chest and flanks (those of duck *penelope* were much darker and warmer), greyer back and a bill showing some bright blue-grey; in flight no prominent white wing coverts but whitish edges to greater coverts quite prominent."

In addition to the above differences I was interested to observe that two Wigeon showed aggressive behaviour towards it, though the reason remained obscure. I was convinced that the bird was a Baldpate *Anas americana*, a species that I got to know well in Canada in 1956.

Two days later Miss Karin Bryde-Williams (who had been with me) and I were able to compare my notes and sketch with the descriptions and plates of *americana* in *The Popular Handbook*. My companion did not hesitate in picking out the illustration of an immature drake, and I agreed.

We could not find the bird again on 13th October.

D. I. M. WALLACE.

(This appears to be the first record for East Inverness.—Ed.)

#### TUFTED DUCK BREEDING IN SHETLAND

Though the Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* has greatly increased in Shetland since the days of Dr Saxby (1859-1871), there have previously been only two breeding records for the islands: brood /6 on the Loch of Hillwell, Dunrossness, 2nd June 1952 and brood /2 on Loch Kirkigarth, Walls, 31st July 1957.

On 29th May 1958, when we were at the Loch of Collaster, Sandness, with Dr M. Rusk and Miss I. M. N. Ryan, we were interested to see a pair of Tufted Ducks and two solitary males. On 28th July 1959, when Miss M. Sanderson visited this loch, she found three females with broods on the water (broods/7, 6, and 3) as well as three other adult females and six adult males.

None of these localities is a typical acid moorland loch. All are situated in or below cultivated land with consequent mineral-rich influx burns, resulting in a good growth of water plants around the loch shores.

L. S. V. VENABLES.

U. M. VENABLES.

#### KING EIDER IN SHETLAND

On the morning of 24th June 1959 a King Eider *Somateria spectabilis* was seen on Bigton Wick between St Ninian's Isle and the mainland of Shetland. It was watched from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. by several observers, including Miss Goodfellow, Mr

Tom Henderson, Mr and Mrs William Kay, Dr H. Mackay and myself. The bird spent the greater part of the time at rest, except for a short flight, and moving from place to place on the water. It came ashore twice for short periods and was diving and feeding for approximately an hour and a half. It was last seen swimming strongly towards the open sea.

The following notes were taken on the spot: 1. Upper parts black except for white stripe on forewing and white spot near short tail. 2. Breast off white with all black upperparts seen several times when bird raised itself to flap wings. 3. Bill orange, with colour continuing to top of head where edged with black against grey crown. Latter divided from greenish side of head by clear yellow eyestripe stretching downwards to neck.

We concluded that the bird was an adult male. I enclose photograph.

E. A. GROVE.

#### SNOW GOOSE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 21st December 1959 at 2.30 p.m. in good light and clear visibility, standing at the middle of the south shore of the Loch of Strathbeg, Aberdeenshire, I saw a flock of about 200 grey geese get up from the east end of the loch and fly along in front of me. Behind this flock was a solitary white bird, goose-shaped and noticeably smaller than the grey geese it followed. Its black wing-tips were visible to the naked eye, and through 8x binoculars I could see that it was obviously a goose and had a pale bill. I am very familiar with the shape and flight of Gannets and know that this was not a Gannet. My father, Dr Alan Lyell, was with me and we agreed that the white bird could only be a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* subsp.

BRIAN A. LYELL.

#### FEMALE SPARROWHAWK ATTACKING INTRUDER AT NEST

In the 1957 breeding season I had the nest of a pair of Sparrowhawks *Accipiter nisus* under observation in a conifer plantation in the neighbourhood of Dornoch. The nest was built at a height of over twenty feet in a larch. During the early stages of incubation the female bird showed no aggressive behaviour. When flushed on 1st June, however, instead of flying away as she had done on previous occasions, she alighted in a nearby tree, where she kept up an insistent "kekking" and, as I was looking into the nest, which held five eggs and a chick, she dashed past almost touching my head. On 5th June she again became very noisy when flushed from the nest. As I was climbing the tree the "kekking" note suddenly ceased and, next moment, she swooped past, striking me a sharp

blow on the back of the head and sweeping my hat to the ground. Later I succeeded, without further molestation, in reaching the nest, which then contained four chicks and two eggs. Unfortunately a few days later the nest was found plundered.

I cannot find any reference in the literature to a similar attack, although J. H. Owen, who had unrivalled experience of the species, refers to an incident (*British Birds* 10:25) when "one bird and only one shrieked 'kill-kill-kill', and flew backwards and forwards through the next tree after passing within a few inches of us and on rare occasions even touching us."

D. MACDONALD.

#### GOSHAWKS IN ISLAY

On 28th April 1959, at Loch Ballygrant a large bird of prey was seen flying across the water. It resembled a large Sparrowhawk with broad blunt wings and a very long tail. The most conspicuous part of the plumage was the under tail coverts, which were white, and noticeable when the bird twisted out of the trees. The underparts were pale, lined across. The upper parts brown. As it hung motionless above the conifers it looked as large as a Buzzard and, compared with a Wood Pigeon in the immediate vicinity, it was much longer and larger. It flew with glides and flapping wingbeats, jinking from side to side. Once it dived into the conifers from a height, very much like a Sparrowhawk.

S. GREENWOOD.

(Mr B. E. Cooper, who also saw the bird, has submitted a very similar description, except that he describes the upper parts as "greyish brown."—Ed.)

#### PARTRIDGES NESTING AT HIGH ALTITUDES

The Partridge *Perdix perdix* is generally a bird of agricultural areas, but in Scotland it is well known to breed at deserted old crofts or farms in upland places, and "a certain proportion do inhabit the edges of the moors and may even be found far out on the hillsides" (*The Birds of Scotland*: 738). However, the highest Scottish nesting records in that book come from Tomintoul (1157 feet) and Dalwhinnie (1153 feet). In Deeside the Partridge has regularly bred at higher altitudes at least since 1950. I have records for two years of a pair of Partridges rearing young near an old crofting place (deserted after the '45) at about 1,400 feet in Glen Lui, west of Braemar. In nearby Glen Ey, I have notes of a pair rearing young several years near the house at Auchelie, at about 1,450 feet, and in Glen Muick near Ballater I have seen a pair with small young near the top of the glen at 1,350 feet. At all these places the habitat was rough grassland, grazed by deer. In July 1958 I

found a pair with small young at 1,600 feet on the moors north of Balmoral, and eventually this pair reared eight young which were still there in late October. The habitat was a shallow basin with patches of grasses among long heather, and juniper bushes here and there. The nearest deserted croft lies over three quarters of a mile away. All the above pairs became resident in these places weeks before egg-laying, so there was no question of them having bred lower down and later moved up with their young.

ADAM WATSON.

### CRANE IN SUTHERLAND

At 2 p.m. on 6th August 1958 I disturbed a Crane *Megalornis grus* from the long grass on the raised beach near Lothbeg Point, Helmsdale, Sutherland. The Crane flew a short distance before settling again at a distance of about fifty yards. The bird was much larger than a Heron, standing very upright high above the grass. The plumage of the bird was mainly a light slate grey, except for the very long neck and the wing-tips. The neck was a very dark grey or black with a broad stripe of white on each side, running from the eye to halfway down. The wing-tips were black and the inner secondaries drooped beyond the tail. The bill and legs seemed to be greyish in colour. The red crown was not visible.

As I approached the Crane took flight, flying goose-like with its head and neck fully extended, drooping slightly earthwards, and its long legs extending well beyond the tail. In flight the grey scapulars and wing coverts appeared to have a mauve tint. The primaries were black and in flight they were separated at the tips, appearing to bend clumsily after a wing beat. The Crane flew below fifty feet northwards along the coast, with slow wingbeats. It appeared very wild and its feathers not damaged at all.

D. J. MITCHELL.

### SONG OF THE WATER RAIL

In June 1949 on the marsh at Cley, Norfolk, M.F.M.M. heard a bird call which was new to him coming from a reed-bed. This call, which was heard also by a number of other observers, began regularly at sundown and continued without intermission for a considerable time, perhaps even all night. It consisted of a series of ticks—usually three, sometimes more—followed by a thin, agonised, wheezy scream, often declining in pitch at the end. It could be rendered as "tic tic tic wheee-oo." The bird responsible, known for convenience as the Hip-hip hooray Bird, was thought to be possibly the Little Crake *Porzana parva*, one of whose notes is described by *The Handbook V*, 188) as "tjip-tjip-tjip-treeo." R. A. Richardson tells us that in the spring of 1950 there were two, if not

three, birds making the same noise on Cley Marsh. The possibility of a Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus* being responsible was thought unlikely because of the unfamiliarity of the call, and because no exactly corresponding description could be found among the Water Rail's notes described in the literature.

On 12th April 1956 M.F.M.M. heard the same call proceeding out of a reed-bed at Whitwell, Hertfordshire. He informed other ornithologists and A.R.J., F. C. Gribble, A. C. Morriss and Henry Key succeeded in hearing the bird. H. Key made a recording of the call, intending to play it back and attract the bird within view. A few days later, however, A.R.J., using 10 x 40 glasses at about fifteen yards, succeeded in obtaining a very clear view of the bird in the repeated act of calling. To his surprise it turned out to be a Water Rail!

*The Handbook* (V, 194) says that the Water Rail has "a sharp *kik-kik-kik* and variants. Especially in spring and summer these may be repeated with great persistence at dusk and through a great part of night in long sequences, which may be more or less uniform or increasing in speed to the finish or rising to a climax and tailing off in a few disconnected notes, or with other variations." These remarks are probably meant to include, but do not accurately describe, the call heard, which was, by contrast, of a set and formal type, only varying in the number of tickings and, sometimes, in the quality of the final scream. It seems likely that the call is only uttered for a short period in the breeding season and may be of the nature of a song. This seasonal aspect, together with the fact that it is more often uttered by night, may account for its being unfamiliar. The Whitwell bird, however, frequently called by day, though not continuously. We feel that this note is worth publishing if only in order to prevent other ornithologists who hear the sound suspecting the presence of one of the rarer crakes and going to a great deal of trouble to prove the identity of the bird.

A. R. JENKINS.

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

#### LESSER YELLOWLEGS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On the afternoon of 15th September 1959, at the Cotehill Loch, by Collieston, Aberdeenshire, our attention was drawn to an unusual wader close to two Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax*. It was feeding leg-deep in the water, after the fashion of a Greenshank, but, although we critically examined it from about fifty yards in a good light, we could not identify it. A.J.M.S. thought it rather resembled a large Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, using a nearby Lapwing for size comparison. R.M. thought it grey above and white beneath, rather like a



delicately proportioned Greenshank. A.J.M.S. approached to within 30 yards of the birds before the Ruffs flew up and were joined by the strange wader. Excellent views were obtained in flight before the birds again alighted in deep grass nearby: seen from above the upper parts of the stranger again recalled the Wood Sandpiper. The crown, mantle, wing and rump were greyish, with large scaly pattern of darker, probably brownish grey, colour. The tail was whitish, providing Greenshank-like contrast, and boldly barred with greyish brown. As it alighted a very good view was had of the legs, a distinct bright yellow, quite different from the greenish yellow of the legs of one of the Ruffs. In the general din of other birds calling we thought we heard the "tew, tew" call, but could not be certain.

We feel that it was a Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* because its finer proportions, particularly with regard to its delicate bill, differentiate it from the only other wader it could possibly be, the Greater Yellowlegs *T. melanoleuca*.

ALISTAIR J. M. SMITH.

R. MAXWELL.

#### COLLARED DOVES IN FIFE

On 23rd and 25th August 1959 I observed a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* which was calling regularly and lustily from a poplar in a garden near the park above Lower Dunfermline Station. It was very shy and kept to the treetops so that it was extremely difficult to get good views of it among the foliage. I had suspected its identity from the call-note, an unmistakable deep *coo-coo-coo* in the tones of a Wood Pigeon *Columba palumbus* and with the stress on the second syllable. I know the call in Norfolk. The bird's head appeared to be a bluish grey with a dusty brown crown and a black half collar round the back of the neck; the general colour of the rest of the upperparts was pale dusty brown and the underparts were paler with a pink tinge on the breast; in flight the primaries showed sooty and darker than the rest of the wings. I was unable to get a proper view of the tail but George Dick, who originally drew my attention to the bird, was able to see the characteristic black and white pattern. We have no doubt the bird we saw was a wild Collared Dove. We had previously wondered if it could have been an escaped Barbary Dove *S. risoria* from Pittencrieff Glen aviary in Dunfermline, but we were told that escape from the cages was impossible and that no doves had escaped for years. We were able to contrast the plumage of these birds with our Coloured Dove and among other points noted their creamy colour and the lack of dark wing-tips. The call was quite different, being softer, higher pitched, with a rhythm reminiscent of a crowing cock, and a tone more like a Turtle Dove *S. turtur*

than a Wood Pigeon. This is the first record of a Collared Dove in Fife and Forth.

P. G. R. BARBIER.

On 4th October 1959 I found a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* lying under a shrub in my garden at Methil, Fife. It was very bedraggled and exceptionally tame, allowing me to pick it up. The tail was almost completely absent, only a few stumps being left; the rump was bare, as if the feathers had been ripped out, possibly by a predator. There was no ring on its legs. After two days, when the bird seemed much brighter, it was released at Leven.

T. S. WEBSTER.

(There is no doubt, from the description sent by the recorder, that this was a Collared Dove. The circumstances of its arrival and capture, however, might be thought to cast a little doubt on its truly wild status.—Ed.)

#### ROLLER IN SHETLAND

On 20th July 1959 the local postman noticed a Roller *Coracias garrulus* in a narrow dale called Trollodaal in the parish of Northmavine, and on the following day I and some friends also discovered the bird. Larger than a Blackbird, but not so bulky as a Rock Pigeon, it resembled a crow in outline. It was an adult in full plumage, generally greeny blue with chestnut back. It perched on telegraph wires, from which it repeatedly flew down to feed, appearing really brilliant when it did so. It remained for three or four days.

J. PETERSON.

#### SONG THRUSH CARRYING YOUNG

On 12th May I was walking with my three children at Bieldside, near Aberdeen. As we walked up a wooded lane one of the children drew my attention to a "humpy-backed" bird which had flown from a tree and landed about thirty yards in front of us on the roadway. I got to within twenty yards and through my binoculars I identified a Song Thrush *Turdus ericetorum* with a fledgling hanging on to its back. It was positioned well up on the shoulders and facing front. The Song Thrush remained for a few moments on the ground and then flew into the trees with the youngster still on its back.

R. MAXWELL.

#### REDWINGS BREEDING IN SUTHERLAND

Consequent on the recent publication of a note on Redwings *Turdus musicus* breeding in Ross-shire (*British Birds* 52:315), it now seems opportune to place on record that there is evidence to suggest that Redwings have bred more or less reg-

ularly in Sutherland for about the past six years.

The information that there were breeding Redwings in the country was first obtained, almost casually, in 1956, by Mr George Waterston from an unusually interested and alert gamekeeper. Mr Waterston passed the news on to me and together we visited the place on 6th May 1956. We were informed by the keeper that the birds had been there for two or three years and that in the previous year (1955) there had been three nests from which a total of nine young had been reared. We certainly confirmed the presence of several adult Redwings, which we both saw and heard, although we found them to be exceedingly shy and unobtrusive. We did not find any nests. On 31st May 1956 I revisited the place and camped overnight. Redwings were singing well, particularly in the early morning and late evening, but again I did not succeed in finding any nests in spite of a careful search.

For subsequent years I have only the information supplied by the keeper. In 1957 there were two or three pairs, and later five flying young were seen. Redwings were present in the breeding area throughout the winter, though of course there is no proof that these were not immigrants. Two pairs were in the breeding area in the spring of 1958, and this year (1959) two nests were found by the keeper, who thinks there may also have been a third. The birds were there throughout the summer and in September it was believed that there was a total of fourteen around the area, including adults and young.

Redwings nested elsewhere in Sutherland in 1925, probably 1927 and in 1933 (*British Birds* 40:277). The locality was not published, but I have good reason to believe that it was at Skelpick, near Bettyhill, where however none have been seen subsequently in the breeding season. There is also a record (*British Birds* 37:17-178) of a singing Redwing elsewhere in north Sutherland on 16th June 1943, though no nest was found.

It is quite possible that Redwings nest in the north of Scotland more often than is generally realised, and visitors to the Highlands should bear this in mind; but it is also worth remarking that the Skelpick pair nest in a red-currant bush, and there is no harm in telling that the pairs described above have been in rhododendrons in a garden, so habitats other than birchwoods ought to be looked for.

IAN D. PENNIE.

#### ICTERINE WARBLER IN SHETLAND

An Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina* was watched for about half an hour by myself, L. S. V. Venables and Miss I. M. N. Ryan at the west side of Loch Spiggie, South Shetland, on the evening of 3rd June 1958. The bird was first seen in a small group of willows but later moved to a nearby croft where it

spent some of the time inside the derelict buildings. It is of interest to note that the pale edgings to the secondary feathers formed a continuous light patch on the closed wings.

Description: size about the same as Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* with which it was in company for part of the time. Head, back and rump olive green. Prominent yellow eyestripe. Wings and tail dark brown. Light patch on wing. The underparts were bright yellow with the exception of the under tail coverts that were whitish. The bill was flesh-coloured and of uniform depth for nearly the whole length. Legs bluish black. The wing when closed was long and pointed, the tip of the longest flight feather extending about halfway down the tail. The flight was like that of the Whitethroat. A conspicuous feature of the bird was the high forehead which was noted at all times. It was not heard to call or sing.

LESLIE A. BROWN.

(Mr Brown has also submitted an accurate sketch of this bird.—Ed.)

#### RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 12th October 1959 we were mist-netting along the hawthorn hedges which border Culterty Field Station, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, when we saw a Red-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa parva*.

Strong easterly winds had sprung up in the early morning and there was a large influx of drift migrants, including Blackbirds, Robins, Goldcrests, Blue Tits, three Redstarts, a Willow Warbler and a male Blackcap. The first three mentioned were in large numbers with about 200 passing through every hour during the early hours of daylight.

When the Red-breasted Flycatcher was first seen, it was half hidden in the hedgerow and A.J.M.S. thought it resembled a Lesser Whitethroat as it moved away from us in the thick hawthorns. Then it flew out in front of us and perched in the open no more than five yards away. In flight it showed two fairly broad longitudinal white patches, one on each side of the tail. We watched it with binoculars as it remained in view for several minutes. It was so close that we had to move back in order to bring the bird into focus. It was slightly smaller than a Robin, a dainty bird; brownish upperparts with pale underparts; light eye-ring; whitish throat and belly, warm buff on breast; white patches extending from base of tail slightly more than halfway down the outer tail feathers; darkish legs.

There was no doubt that it was a Red-breasted Flycatcher. We continued to watch it for nearly fifteen minutes, while we viewed it from all angles as we attempted to drive it into the

mist-net. Unfortunately when disturbed it flew to the topmost branches and always passed over the top shelf of the net. A maddening experience! On several occasions it uttered a typical flycatcher note, which we rendered as "chik."

ALASTAIR J. M. SMITH.  
R. MAXWELL.

(This is the first record for Aberdeenshire and the third for the Scottish mainland.—ED.)

#### ROSE-COLOURED STARLING IN SHETLAND

On 7th September 1958, while I was staying in Fetlar, one of the residents of the Hubie district reported that he had seen a "black and white magpie" that morning and that it seemed rather an unusual occurrence. Others had seen it too and reports varied: one even said it was "as big as a pigeon." When I heard, however, that "some of da boys said it wis pink," I wasted no further time, but wandered round the Hubie houses in search of the bird. I soon discovered it perched on a fence with a flock of Shetland Starlings. I did not see it stationary at any time for more than a few seconds, so the crest was not immediately noticeable. I had the impression that the dark parts (head, neck, wings, tail) were very much darker than the corresponding parts of the common Starling. The pink colouring was quite beyond dispute, though not very brilliant in quality. There was some light colouring in the bill.

The bird was an undoubted adult Rose-coloured Pastor (or Starling) *Sturnus roseus*. It was still present on the following day.

R. N. WINNALL.

#### TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL IN SHETLAND

On 21st August 1959, while camping on Foula, Shetland, I noticed a bird flying along the cliff-top at the north of the island which I first took to be a female Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, an uncommon visitor to the island. I watched it settle on some rocks and further examination showed it to be an immature Two-barred Crossbill *Loxia leucoptera*. It remained for about an hour feeding on seeds of Thrift *Armeria maritima* on the rocks and grassy slopes.

The superficial resemblance to a hen Chaffinch was remarkable, due to the greenish-grey plumage and white wing bars. Upper parts grey-green, crown and back with heavy black streaking, underparts paler with longer narrower streaks from breast to under tail, most conspicuous on flanks; wings dark with two very broad white crescent bands, lower band broader, and with three short white bands on the second

daries, giving barred effect. Bill stout but quite long, upper mandible strongly hooked, closed bill inconspicuously crossed. Legs and eyes dark. Smaller and slenderer than Crossbill *L. curvirostra* and comparable in size to Chaffinch.

Crossbills were numerous in Shetland at the time, with other migrants from east Scandinavia. The bird was also seen by R. I. Duncan and H. G. Rees.

J. V. Boys.

#### NOTES FROM ISLAY

(The following notes are selected from data provided by A. Allen, Hugh Boyd, D. Gardener-Medwin, J. E. King, E. A. Maxwell, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, John Murray, R. J. Olliver, H. G. Usher and Alan Walker).

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*. A pair were displaying and calling off the east coast in April 1959 (D.G.M.)

Dabchick *Podiceps ruficollis*. In April 1959 pairs calling on Loch Lossit, L. Ballygrant, L. nan Cadhan and L. nan Diol (J.E.K., J.M.)

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. What was probably an abnormal Barnacle Goose was seen near Bridgend on 25th January 1959: face usual creamy white, but rest of head and most of neck brown, not black. Black band encircling lower neck and upper breast; back and scapulars very pale grey, barred darker; primaries white. The breast and flanks were clear white, instead of ash grey; soft parts black. "We hope this ugly goose lives a long time and is seen by many people, as records of its occurrence could help to track the movements of the Islay geese." (H.B., E.A.M.)

Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*. Two brown birds in centre of the island on 16th February 1959 (M.F.M.M.); a male near Port Ellen on 29th March 1959 (A.A., R.J.O.) and another there in April 1959 (J.E.K.)

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. In late August 1957 three were seen near Port Ellen and one near Loch Gruinart (A.W.)

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides*. One at the head of Loch In-daal on 1st April 1959 (A.A., R.J.O.)

Greater Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*. In April 1959 one was seen in the wood at Loch Lossit and one in a wood near Ardbeg (D.G.M.)

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*. M.F.M.M. saw four at Machrie on 17th November 1957 and two there on 14th February 1959. D. G-M. reports one at Port Ellen (April 1959) while J.E.K. (April 1959) says that it is "widely scattered over island."

Long-tailed Tit *Aegithalos caudatus*. A family party at Kildalton in June 1955 (H.G.U.). Also reported from Port Askaig, Loch Lossit and Loch Skerrols.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*. To the localities reported

(*antea* 1:100) add Ballygrant, June 1955 (H.G.U.).

Goldfinch *Carduelis elegans*. A pair at Laggan Bridge on 17th November 1957 (John Cameron, M.F.M.M.) and a pair at Loch Skerrols, 1st April 1959 (A.A., R.J.O.).

## CORRESPONDENCE

### FIRECREST IN SCOTLAND

It has been assumed that the Firecrest *Regulus ignicapillus* seen on the Isle of May this autumn (*antea* 1:153) was the first for Scotland. Certainly there is no mention of one in *The Birds of Scotland* or in *The Handbook*: there is, however, a mention of a Firecrest in Gray's *Birds of the West of Scotland*, p. 100, where he notes the one referred to in *The Birds of East Lothian* by Turnbull. I have this week seen for the first time a copy of this book of Turnbull's and what he says about the occurrence is the following, under stragglers or irregular visitors:

"Fire-crested Wren *Regulus ignicapillus*. Two seen by me in Gladsmuir Woods in 1848. Afterwards shot one in Forest Wood."

The copy of Turnbull's book which we now have here (The Nature Conservancy, Edinburgh) is his own working copy, with an interleaved duplicate at the back containing his notes from 1863 to 1864. In this he has inserted some additional notes. He has amended his original description by adding after "Gladsmuir Woods" "in summer of 1848", and says of the one shot in Forest Wood: "I shot one in 'Forest' Wood in 1848, its markings as described by Jardine in *Birds of Great Britain*, Pt. 2, Fol. 160—it was rather larger than the Goldcrest.

I do not know whether the authors of *The Handbook* and of *The Birds of Scotland* overlooked this record or whether they dismissed it as unsatisfactory. Just possibly Turnbull's skin may have been preserved.

W. J. EGGELING.

### HYBRID GEESE

Messrs A. D. Watson and L. A. Urquhart (*antea* 1:147-8) have described hybrid geese seen in Kirkcudbrightshire and Lanarkshire.

In 1939 one of my Greylag males paired with a Barnacle Goose, four young being reared. I gave two to Dr John Berry of Tayfield and left the remaining two loose on Lindores Loch, Fife. I sold Lindores in 1941, and did not visit the loch again until 1945 or 1946, when I saw that this pair were still on the loch with one young one. Whether Dr Berry's bred and escaped, or whether the ones I bred went to Lanarkshire or

Kirkcudbrightshire, I do not of course know, but it does seem that these were the hybrid geese described.

Holmwood, Perth.

J. C. LAIDLAY.

We submitted the preceding letter to Dr John Berry, who comments as follows:

I had read the note in *Scottish Birds* with interest and had considered whether the hybrids seen in south-west Scotland might have been Tayfield birds. Some of those which have flown away from Tayfield in recent years might fit the description, but on the whole I am much more inclined to think that these were genuinely wild hybrids. The two Grey-lag x Barnacle Geese which, as described by Mr Laidlay, nested at Lindores Loch, have not been seen or heard of for several years, nor have their progeny. If only on size, I would respectfully reject Mr Laidlay's suggestion that the south-west birds were of Lindores stock.

When Mr J. C. Laidlay sold Lindores in 1941, along with other geese transferred to Tayfield were two hybrids, Grey-lag male x Barnacle female. These two geese were pinioned; two others of the same brood were full-winged and, having thus escaped capture, remained on Lindores Loch. All four hybrids bore a remarkable resemblance to Canada Geese *Branta canadensis*, except that they were nearer to Barnacle Geese in size and the black of the neck extended on to the breast, as in the Barnacle. A photograph of the birds, their descriptions and measurements, and a discussion of this and other similar cases of hybridisation, was published in the *Avicultural Magazine* 1942 (Ser. 2, VII, pp. 83-6).

The two full-winged hybrids continued to frequent Lindores Loch in subsequent summers and bred there. The young resembled the parents. The two pinioned birds were also a male and a female, but the male paired with a Barnacle Goose. A photograph showing him at the nest was published in 1945. The accompanying article refers to his threequarter Barnacle progeny and also notes that hybrids produced by a Grey-lag gander, who had simultaneously guarded the nests of three Barnacle females with whom he had mated in that year, closely resembled the reverse cross of a Barnacle male x Grey-lag female. *Avicultural Magazine* 1945 (Ser. 5, X, pp. 102-107).

Plumage and the colour of bills and legs of geese may change materially during the first few years, and this is noticeably the case with hybrids. In subsequent years change in plumage of the black geese and their hybrids is unusual. In 1960 the Greylag x Barnacle hybrid male is still exactly as pictured sixteen years ago in the second article mentioned above. Nor does size normally increase after maturity. In my



experience few Barnacle hybrids are as large as Grey-lags; even Barnacle male x Chinese female *Anser cygnoides* hybrids are conspicuously smaller, although a (Snow x Grey-lag) male x Barnacle female was an unexpectedly large bird. Canada x grey goose hybrids are usually about the size of Grey-lags and resemble Barnacle x grey goose hybrids, except that the breast is unlikely to be black unless there has been Barnacle (? or Brent) in the recent pedigree. Barnacles, however, seem particularly prone to cross-breed. Miss A. P. Gray (*Bird Hybrids* 1958) lists sixteen different crossings with a Barnacle.

Apart from the significant fact that two of the hybrids recorded in south-west Scotland were seen with a Barnacle in a flock of Grey-lag, I agree, from the descriptions, that the hybrids were probably Grey-lag x Barnacle, and quite possibly from fully wild parents.

## CURRENT NOTES

These notes are divided into two sections, the first of which has been held over from the preceding issue of *Scottish Birds*. The second section consists of those notes which have been sent in since 1st December 1959.

### *Part I.*

(These notes are considered to be fully authenticated. Notes from Fair Isle are published in the *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* and those from the Isle of May in a separate report in *Scottish Birds*. Unless otherwise stated, all dates apply to 1959).

#### BREEDING AND DISTRIBUTION

A Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps caspicus* in summer plumage was seen at the Clyde breeding haunt (cf. *antea* 1:5) on 24th July (P. G. R. Barbier). On 26th August a Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* appeared as far up the Forth as Longannet Point, opposite Grangemouth (G. Dick): in Edinburgh single Fulmars have been seen over St Margaret's Loch on 18th June 1958 and near Samson's Ribs on 5th August ("Eskdale," *Edinburgh Evening News*, 29.8.59). Gannets *Sula bassana* have been seen above the Forth Bridge, all of them immature birds: one off Culross on 6th September and one off Cults Ness on 1st October (G. Dick), also two between Grangemouth and Kincardine on 8th September (J. Hoy). In the last week of June 1958 a pair of Gadwall *Anas strepera* were several times seen in the Tongue area of Sutherland (R. J. Ross). In late August numbers of Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus* were seen

on the Forth above the Forth Bridge and on 23rd August three of these flew beyond the Kincardine Bridge in the evening (P. G. R. Barbier). On 14th June at St Serf's Island in Loch Leven there were three Lesser Black-backed Gulls *Larus fuscus graellsii* and later one of them flushed from three eggs (A. Macdonald). A Herring Gull with pale yellow legs, resembling the race *Larus argentatus omissus*, was at Fig-gate Pond, Edinburgh, on 22nd October (D. R. Anderson). A Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* was seen on 19th June near Bonnybridge Generating Station, Stirlingshire (Ronald Logan). At the Ayrshire nesting site of the Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (cf. *antea* 1:125) nine birds were present in late October, six adults and three juveniles (Helen C. Todd). On 16th August a Little Owl *Athene noctua* was seen at Barnes Ness, East Lothian: it had a little down above the eyes, but flew strongly (A. Macdonald). A Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia* was heard at Bordie, Kincardine, Fife, on 3rd June (J. Hoy, P. G. R. Barbier) and another at Cameron Reservoir, Fife, in late July (A. Macdonald, R. I. Mitchell). New species for Cramond Island are a Blue Tit *Parus caeruleus* seen on 13th December 1958, and single Reed Buntings *Emberiza schoeniclus* on 3rd May 1958 and 15th August (P. Holt).

### MIGRATION

Two records not previously published are of a female Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* at Stobo, Peebles, on 18th May 1958 (R. Traquair Thin) and of a number of Pied Flycatchers *Muscicapa hypoleuca* at Sands of Forvie, Aberdeen, on 2nd September 1958 (A. J. M. Smith).

#### *Winter 1958-59.*

A Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* was at the Doonfoot, Ayr, on 25th January, and on 8th and 15th February (L. A. Urquhart). At Barassie, Ayrshire, an immature Iceland Gull *Larus glaucooides* was present on 19th April (L. A. Urquhart). A Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* seen on the late dates 16th and 18th June in the Morar area, W. Inverness (Marion Dickson per R. W. J. Smith) was doubtless a delayed winter visitor, as may have been Crossbills *Loxia curvirostra* seen at Ormiston, East Lothian, two on 15th May and one on 14th June (John Baird).

#### *Spring 1959.*

An interesting paper on *Spring Migration (1959) at the Butt of Lewis* by B. A. E. Marr, J. Reaney, W. H. Truckle and E. J. Wiseman was published in *Bird Migration* I (2). Extensive northward migration of geese was observed and among the

scarcer species seen were Gadwall, Black-tailed Godwit, Iceland Gull and Little Auk.

A drake Garganey *Anas querquedula* was watched at Aberlady on 10th May (John Baird). Large numbers of Little Gulls *Larus minutus* have already been reported (*antea* 1: 129): in addition, at Morton Lochs, Fife, 32 were seen on 12th April, 23 on 23rd April, and smaller numbers on other occasions: there were also 42 on the sands at Tentsmuir on 29th April (L. Fullerton). Swifts *Apus apus* were seen in Skye on the following occasions: six on 21st June at the head of Portree Loch, three on 22nd June four miles west of Portree, and two, flying south, on 25th June between Portree and the Storr Lochs (L. A. Urquhart).

#### Autumn 1959

Two Red-necked Grebes *Podiceps griseigena* still with chestnut necks, were at Aberlady Bay on 2nd September (A. Ablett).

A Sooty Shearwater *Procellaria grisea* was seen ten miles south of Sula Sgeir on 8th September (W. A. J. Cunningham).

A female Garganey *Anas querquedula* was at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 15th August (W. Murray). As many as 21 Pintail *Anas acuta* were together on Loch Leven on 9th October, and two on Peppermill Dam, Kincardine, Fife, on the 10th (G. Dick). Inland records of Scaup *Aythya marila* come from Hule Moss—three on 9th and 15th August and four on 22nd—(W. Murray) and from Peppermill Dam, a duck bird on 10th October (G. Dick). Early arrivals of Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* are 23rd September at Strathtay, Perthshire (J. W. Campbell) and 24th September, when 93 were counted over Blackford Hill, Edinburgh (W. J. Egge-ling). A big southward movement was observed at Strathtay on 17th October, over 430 birds being counted from a single spot between 9.30 and noon: others were heard but not seen. On the same day 80 "geese" flew south over Pitlochry and a big lot of "geese" near Dalwhinnie. About 200 more passed over Strathtay on the 18th, but none have been seen since (J. W. Campbell). Several Barnacle Geese *Branta leucopsis* have appeared outside their usual areas: two at the Endrick Mouth, Dunbarton, on 27th September (D. Stalker) and three there on 10th October (T. Weir); one at North Berwick on 2nd October (T. C. Smout), there having been a single bird on the Isle of May the same morning; and four at Gladhouse on 4th October (D. G. Andrew). The first Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus* reported was at Cobbinshaw Reservoir on 19th September (T. Boyd): other arrivals are of 22 flying up the Forth at Grangemouth on 18th October (J. Potter) and of

two adults and two young birds flying west at Seafield, Leith, on 25th October (A. T. Macmillan).

One Grey Plover *Charadrius squatarola* was seen at Gladhouse on 20th September (R. W. J. Smith) and two on 27th (D. G. Andrew). On 28th September two Grey Plovers were seen at Ardmore, Dunbarton (C. M. Morrison) and one at the mouth of the River Endrick in the same county on 4th October; it had been there for over two weeks (T. Weir). We can trace no previous occurrence of this bird in Dunbartonshire (Ed.) Two Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were seen at Tankerness Loch, Orkney, on 15th September (John Baird): the other autumn records of this species come from Forth and Tay—one at Tynninghame, 26th July (R. W. J. Smith); one at Aberlady, 5th August (A. Ablett); north of Grangemouth there were one or two from 11th to 22nd August, one on 5th and seven on 20th September, and two on 3rd October (P.G.R.B., G.D., J.H., and J.P.); nine at Loch Leven on 5th September and 4th October (T. Boyd, R. W. J. Smith); and single birds on the Eden Estuary on 12th and 15th September (G.D.). A large flock of 500 Bar-tailed Godwits *L. lapponica*, many of them in breeding plumage, were at Tentsmuir Point, Fife, on 5th August (Graham Williams) and an inland record of this species comes from the Endrick Mouth, Dunbarton, on 4th October (T. Weir). Records of Green Sandpipers *Tringa ochropus* come from Clyde—one near Carstairs on 16th August (T. Boyd); from Tweed—three at Hule Moss on 9th August, and single birds on 15th and 22nd August, and 13th September (W. Murray)); from Forth—single birds at Tynninghame on 10th August (Ian Hay) and on the 23rd (R. W. J. Smith) and 26th (A. Ablett); also north of Grangemouth a single bird from 9th to 15th August (P. G. R. Barbier, J. Hoy) and on 13th September (G. Dick); and one on the Blackhope Burn, Moorfoots, Midlothian, on 5th September (W. Brotherston); and from Tay—one at Morton Lochs, 27th July (A. Macdonald), one at Cameron Reservoir, 7th August (R. S. Weir) and one on the R. Eden on 15th September (G. Dick). A number of Wood Sandpipers *T. glareola*, all solitary birds, have been seen: at Morton Lochs on 28th July (A. Macdonald), at Gladhouse on 29th July and 22nd August (R. W. J. Smith), at Cult Ness, Fife, from 31st July to 10th August (P. G. R. Barbier, G. Dick and J. Hoy), at Aberlady on 23rd August (A. Ablett) and north of Grangemouth from 5th to 7th September (G. Dick, J. Hoy and J. Potter). Records of Spotted Redshanks *T. erythropus* come from Solway—one at the Piltanton Burn, Glenluce, on 31st August (A. W. F. Mills, A. D. Watson); from Clyde—one at the mouth of the R. Endrick, Dunbarton, on 10th October (T. Weir); from Tweed—a single bird at Hule Moss from 22nd to 28th August and on 13th September (W. Murray); and from Dee—single birds at

the R. Ythan on 1st and 29th September (A. J. M. Smith); but the majority of autumn Spotted Redshanks have been seen in the Forth area—single birds at Gladhouse on 9th and 29th August (R.W.J.S.), at Cobbinshaw on 22nd August and 19th September (T. Boyd), north of Grangemouth on 22nd August and repeatedly between 2nd September and 3rd October, two birds occurring on 13th September (P. G. R. Barbier, G. Dick, J. Hoy), at Cult Ness on 3rd September (G. Dick), at Tynninghame on 13th September (K. S. Macgregor, R. W. J. Smith) and at Fife Ness on 29th September (G. Dick). Inland records of the Knot *Calidris canutus* include two at Carstairs (Lanark) on 16th August (T. Boyd), single birds at Hule Moss on 22nd and 23rd August, and two there on the 26th (W. Murray). At Gladhouse numbers were exceptional for an inland locality, thirteen on 12th August, four on the 13th, six on the 15th, ten on the 19th, nine on the 22nd, eight on the 26th, two on 6th September: none were seen on 2nd September (D. G. Andrew, R. W. J. Smith). In connection with these records it is interesting to note that 25 flew south from Tynninghame at 1650 hours on 9th August on a route that would probably land them at Gladhouse by way of the Moorfoots: similarly thirteen took off in the same direction at 1600 hours on 23rd August (R. W. J. Smith). Another inland record is of one at Cobbinshaw on 3rd October (T. Boyd). All but two records of the Little Stint *Calidris minuta* are from the Forth: two at Aberlady on 5th August (A. Ablett) and on the 18th (A. Macdonald); one at Tynninghame on the 23rd (R. W. J. Smith); one at Fife Ness on the 30th and 31st (P. G. R. Barbier, J. Hoy); one north of Grangemouth on 13th and 14th September (G. Dick, J. Hoy); one at Gladhouse on the 17th (R. W. J. Smith); one at Loch Leven on 21st September and 4th October (T. Boyd, R. W. J. Smith); one at Aberlady on 30th September and two there on 4th October (K. S. Macgregor). The other records are from Clyde—one seen at the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton, on 10th October (T. Weir); and Dee—two near Collieston, Aberdeenshire, on 15th September (A. J. M. Smith). Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris testacea* have been unusually numerous: in Solway—one at Browhouses near Annan on 27th August (E. and R. Smith) and three there on 13th September (W. Austin, R. Smith); nine at the mouth of the Piltanton Burn, Glenluce, on 31st August (A. W. F. Mills, A. D. Watson); two on the shore of Loch Ryan on 12th September (A. D. W.); one on 14th September on the extensive mud then exposed on the Ken-Dee marshes at Livingston, Kirkcudbrightshire (L. A. Urquhart, A.D.W.); and one at Maryport, Mull of Galloway, on 14th October (A.D.W.). A. D. Watson comments that Curlew Sandpipers have not often been recorded from Kirkcudbright and Wigtownshire. In Clyde—at Hamilton on 5th September two Curlew Sandpipers

(W. U. Flower, D. Stalker) and four there on the 6th (W. K. Richmond, D.S.); five at the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton, on 4th October (M. Forrester, T. Weir). In Forth the first Curlew Sandpiper was seen at Aberlady on 5th August (A. Ablett) and the only others that month were four north of Grangemouth on the 22nd; later seven were counted there on 5th September, ten on the 7th and between three and eight until the 20th; a single bird was present on 5th October (P. G. R. Barbier, G. Dick, J. Hoy and J. Potter). At Aberlady there were three or four on 13th September (K. S. Macgregor) and one on the 19th (R. W. J. Smith); at Tynninghame two on the 13th (T. Boyd); at Gladhouse single birds on the 12th and 20th (R. W. J. Smith); at Musselburgh two on the 28th (J. Baird); and at Loch Leven three on 21st September and one on 4th October (T. Boyd, R. W. J. Smith). In Tay—one Curlew Sandpiper was at Guardbridge, Fife, on 30th September (Doris M. Wilson). Inland records of Sanderling *Crocethia alba* come from Gladhouse where, as already recorded, one was seen on 19th July (*antea* 1:133): on the 25th there were four and it is interesting to note that the following day the observer found 150 at Tynninghame, the largest number he has ever seen there. Single Sanderling were also seen at Gladhouse on 9th and 15th August (R. W. J. Smith) and at Hule Moss on the 19th and 22nd (W. Murray). The majority of Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* are recorded from the Forth area, forty having been seen between 1st August and 11th October, at Cult Ness, Grangemouth area, Cobbinshaw, Gladhouse, Aberlady and Tynninghame: the largest number (eight) being at Gladhouse on 2nd September (R. W. J. Smith). Elsewhere there are records from South Uist, a male moulting into winter plumage on 13th July (R. W. J. Smith); from Hule Moss, a single bird on 2nd August (W. Murray); from Carstairs, one on 16th August and three on 6th September; from Hamilton, one on 9th August (L. A. Urquhart); and from the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton, five on 2nd October (T. Weir).

On 16th July an immature Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* was seen flying south after a north-west gale off South Uist (T. Boyd, R. W. J. Smith) and another immature was seen at Aberlady on 4th October (K. S. Macgregor). An almost adult Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* was seen in company with Greater Black-backed Gulls *L. marinus* at Cult Ness on 16th September (G. Dick) and another Glaucous Gull on the R. Ythan on 29th September (A. J. M. Smith). Some details have already been published (*antea* 1:133) of Little Gulls *Larus minutus* in the Leven-Largo area of Fife, smaller numbers, up to eighteen, were recorded there throughout August, the last three being seen on 2nd September; the only number of juveniles seen was ten on 30th August. Six were at Ruddon's Point, Largo Bay, on 9th Septem-

ber (R. S. Weir). Single birds were seen at Fife Ness on 3rd, 13th and 14th September (J. Hoy, R. S. Weir) and at Cameron Reservoir on 31st July, while on 30th July several were seen in a daylight roost of other gulls half a mile inland on the road from Lundin Links to Cupar (A. Macdonald). Three were resting at Tentsmuir Point on 30th September (L. Fullerton), but by far the most interesting and unusual record is from Loch Earn, Perthshire, on 17th September, when five or six immature Little Gulls were seen at intervals along the edge of the loch, in one or two cases side by side with Black-headed Gulls *L. ridibundus* and mostly standing at the edge of the water (L. Fullerton). Black Terns *Chlidonias niger* have occurred in the Clyde area—one at Castle Semple Loch, Renfrewshire, on 13th September (Gordon Fraser, Wallace H. Wild), in Forth—one on 31st July at Lundin Links (R. S. Weir), one near Torryburn, Fife, on 6th September (G. Dick) and one at Aberlady on 3rd October (M. F. M. Meiklejohn); and in Tay—two on the Eden estuary, Fife, on 12th September (G. Dick). The following occurrences of the Guillemot *Uria aalge* exceptionally far up the Forth have been noted: three on 6th September opposite Valleyfield and one a mile below the Kincardine Bridge on 5th October (G. Dick, J. Potter).

An early flock of Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris* were observed on 27th August on Whiteside Law, Midlothian (W. Brotherton).

The immigration of Redwings *Turdus musicus* was at its peak about 11th October, when about 1,000 were seen at Bonnybridge, Stirlingshire (Ronald Logan) and then and on the ensuing days many Redwings were seen or heard at night in different parts of Scotland. The situation is well summed up in Dr J. W. Campbell's account of passage over Ardrennich, Strathtay, Perthshire.

"October 6th. The first seen this autumn were two or three passing south-east at 0730 hours.

"October 7th, 8th and 9th. Odd Redwings passing south-east.

"October 10th. Small parties passing south-east all day. One heard calling at 2200 hours.

"October 11th. Small parties passing all morning and early afternoon. On the 10th and 11th hundreds must have passed through. Occasional parties perched, but only remained for minutes. The steady passage was noteworthy and is the largest movement seen here for some years.

"October 12th. Still a few passing south-east in the morning.

"October 13th. No evidence of movement.

"October 18th. Heard passing after dark.

"On 14th October there was a large flock at 1250 hours, with a few Fieldfares at the south end of the Sma' Glen, and on the 19th many large flocks, hundreds being involved, were passing south west of Doune, Perthshire."

On 11th and 12th October there was an extensive fall of passerines on the east coast of Scotland and at Aberlady on the 11th Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* were numerous and a male Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* was seen. There had been another Stonechat (a different individual) present there on 4th October, and a male was seen at Glencorse Reservoir, Midlothian, on 7th October (A. Ablett). On 11th October a male and female Stonechat (not together) were seen between Buchlyvie and Gartmore, Stirling, in an area where they do not usually occur (M. F. M. Meiklejohn, K. H. Paterson). On 9th August thirty Whinchats *S. rubetra* were counted between Kincardine Bridge and Skinflats, Stirling, and sixteen on 15th August (J. Hoy): the observer states that these birds do not breed there and evidently some sort of movement was taking place; he has noticed similar movements at this time of year about his house on the other side of the Forth at High Valleyfield, Fife. An immature Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* spent 30th and 31st August in the garden of the observer at Rendall, Orkney (E. Balfour) and single Barred Warblers (of which full notes have been provided) were seen at Fife Ness on 29th August and 14th October (P. G. R. Barbier, R. S. Weir).

Four "yellow" Wagtails *Motacilla flava* were at Barnes Ness, East Lothian, on 9th August (T. Boyd) and a male *flavissima* at Watch Reservoir, Berwickshire, on 29th August (W. Murray), while a male Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava* on the River Esk near Edinburgh on 21st August is described in *The Scotsman* (19.9.59).

A Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* occurred at Fife Ness on 11th October (W.J.E., R.S.W.): it remained on the same Brussels sprout plant while the former went to fetch his wife from Anstruther. Another Great Grey Shrike was seen on the Stevenston side of the River Garnock, Ayrshire, on 25th and 26th October (Gordon Fraser).

A Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus* frequented a garden at Kirkwall, Orkney, for about a week at the end of August and beginning of September, feeding on cotoneaster berries (E. Balfour).

Much interesting evidence of yet another invasion of the Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* has been sent in, in addition to that already reported (*antea* 1: 134). A small flock were seen at Lerwick, Shetland, on 25th July (J.P., *Scotsman*, 8th August) and another small flock at Borve, Har-



ris, where they had probably also been earlier in August, on 30th August and 1st September (J. W. Campbell). At Applecross, Wester Ross, there was a party in the first fortnight of August (I. F. Stewart). At Gladhouse eight arrived on or about 29th July (R. W. J. Smith). At Coldingham, Berwickshire, there were about twenty, including one red male, on 1st August (C. M. Morrison). A few were reported at the Isle of May about the second week of August (*per* W. J. Eggeling). At Keith Bridge, near Humbie, East Lothian, ten were seen on 16th August and 13th September, three remaining till 11th October (G. and M. I. Waterston) and five were at Stobo, Peebles-shire, on 31st August (R. Traquair Thin). Finally, the remains of a male, dead for some time, were picked up in a garden at Muirhouse, Edinburgh, on 12th October (W. A. Cameron).

#### *Habits.*

On October 2nd 1959 boys at Gordonstoun School reported a nest of the Tawny Owl *Strix aluco* on the estate. Investigation showed two chicks estimated at about ten days of age. The nest was in the hollow of an isolated ash about fifteen feet from the ground (Roland Richter).

Dr D. A. Bannerman writes from Boreland of Southwick, by Dumfries: "The last few years we have always had House Martins *Delichon urbica* here, as many as eight nests, usually on the farm house. Last year, in awful rain and gales, the nests all fell down and, though it was late in the season, no young were hatched. In 1959 not a single bird came near the house, until 28th July, when a number of birds came back with their grown young, at least ten in all, and spent the whole afternoon flying up to the eaves where the House Martins had the disaster last year and to the very same spots where the nests had been, the young ones following the parents' example. On the 29th all had disappeared."

On 24th February 1957 a party of fifteen Twites *Carduelis flavirostris* were watched near Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, feeding on Marsh Samphire *Salicornia herbacea*. One was noticed raising a foot to grasp a plant and feed on it, while it stood firmly on the wet mud with the other. The observer adds: "I am familiar with the way in which some passerines, notably crows and tits, will clamp things with their feet while they work at them with the bill, but I have not at any other time seen a bird of this family apparently steadying a food plant in this way to facilitate nibbling at it. When moving about among the vegetation the Twites sometimes walked and sometimes hopped, landing in the latter case on one foot noticeably before the other." (I. F. Stewart). (The Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis* frequently progresses by this "cantering" method of hopping.—Ed.)

## Part II.

(In this section, to save space, we are not employing scientific names for species that have been mentioned elsewhere in this number. Initials denote the following observers: A. Ablett, J. Baird, H. Boase, J. Hoy, R. W. Marriott, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, W. Murray, A. J. M. Smith, R. W. J. Smith, L. A. Urquhart and A. D. Watson. Unless otherwise stated dates apply to late 1958 and early 1959).

### *Distribution and Breeding.*

A Buzzard *Buteo buteo* was seen on 18th October 1959 by Gryfe Reservoir, Renfrewshire, two miles from Upper Greenock Station (J. D. Stewart).

Several Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis* were seen over the Kyle of Eriboll, Sutherland, in late July, and one near Lairg in early August (R.W.M.).

Further records of the Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* are of one seen at Gartcosh, Lanarkshire, about ten years ago (S. M. Stewart) and of one at Larkhall, in the same county, on 6th December (D. Stalker). One, possibly two, Greater Spotted Woodpeckers *Dryobates major* were seen near Bonar Bridge, Sutherland, on 20th September (Sir Charles Connell).

A flock of ten Carrion Crows was seen in the Melness area of northern Sutherland in late July (R.W.M.), and a Magpie *Pica pica* in the parish of Rosskeen, Ross-shire, on 20th September (Sir Charles Connell).

Other interesting Sutherland records are of a Blackcap in the pine-wood at Lairg on 9th August and five singing Chiffchaffs in the same place on 11th August (R.W.M.).

The Pied Flycatcher has nested in a garden wall at Port of Menteith, Stirling, for the last three years (F. G. S. Graham).

During December 1956 a Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* was twice watched at close quarters from a caravan at Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire (J. D. Stewart) and in August 1959 one was seen by two different observers in a garden at Lochgilphead, Argyll (P. S. Govan).

Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* continue to thrive in north Ayrshire, where eight nests were found in the Overton district in May and June, three of them having second broods: all the nests were in holes in trees (L.A.U.).

### *Autumn 1959.*

Donald E. Baird has sent us an interesting list of non-breeding species seen in the Flannans between 30th June and 14th August, of which full details have been submitted to *Bird Migration*: they include Heron, Kestrel, Lapwing, Ring-

ed Plover, Golden Plover, Curlew, Whimbrel, Redshank, Knot, Little Stint, Dunlin, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Wheatear, Willow Warbler, White Wagtail and Crossbill.

On 17th September a Sooty Shearwater was seen off Collieston, Aberdeenshire, and on the following day three between Shetland and Fair Isle (V. M. Thom).

About 150 Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* were offshore near the mouth of the R. Ythan, Aberdeen, on 1st September (A.J.M.S.) and an inland record of a duck Common Scoter *M. nigra* is from High Dam, Eaglesham, Lanark, on 10th October (L.A.U.).

A record of an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* from near Poolewe on 16th October, accompanied by a good description, was published in *The Ross-shire Journal* of 30th October (Ian Cameron).

Four Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa* were at Kingoodie, Perthshire, on 27th August, and fourteen in the neighbouring Invergowrie Bay on the 30th (H.B.): they were last seen there on 22nd September. Late records (which might perhaps be better included under wintering birds) are of at least one at Aberlady on 7th November (W. K. Richmond), three at the same place on 11th November (A.A.) and of three on the Clyde above Dumbarton on 11th December—a locality from which there are but few records (E. M. Brock).

A Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* was seen at the mouth of the R. Ythan on 1st September (A.J.M.S.) and two at Lintrathen on both 29th September and 1st October (H.B.).

Other records of Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris testacea*, in a year when these were especially numerous, come from Solway—at least twelve on 16th September at Browhouses, Dumfries (E. L. Roberts); from Clyde—one at Ardoch on 29th September (E. M. Brock) and single birds at Barassie on 4th and 18th October (L. A. U.); from Forth—one at Aberlady on 10th, 17th and 20th October (Alastair Macdonald); and from Tay—one at Invergowrie Bay on 12th October (H.H.B.).

Single Ruffs *Philomachus pugnax* occurred at Kinnordy, Angus, on 29th August and at Kingoodie, Perth, on 9th September (H.B.). At Aberlady there were six Ruffs on 18th October and 1st November, but only three on 15th November and after that no more (J.B.).

A light-breasted adult Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus* was seen on 27th October at Kingoodie, Perth, on arable land, feeding on a dead Black-headed Gull (H.B.).

October records of Sandwich Tern are one at Tayport on 4th (H.B.) and three at Seafield, Leith, on 19th (A.A.).

Seven Swallows were seen at Cult Ness, Fife, on 1st November (J.H.), one sought refuge in a house at Beauly on the

14th (M. L., *Scotsman*, 28th November), one was still about at Colinton, Edinburgh, on the 24th (J.B.M., *Scotsman*, 28th November), and one flew in from the sea at Gullane Point, East Lothian, on 6th December (J.B.). A late House Martin was seen at St Andrews on 10th and 15th November (E. P. Dickie).

A very late Ring Ouzel, a female, was seen at Dalserf, Lanarkshire, on 23rd November (D.S.), and one at Barnes Ness, East Lothian, on 4th October (A. Macdonald).

Of particular interest is a record of a Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra* and a Redstart on 1st September at the R. Ythan mouth, Aberdeenshire, both of which were carrying rings (A.J.M.S.). On 17th August Redstarts, not usually present in the locality, occurred in numbers in the hedges at Milton, Dunbarton (E. R. Brock).

A late Sedge Warbler was at Barnes Ness, East Lothian, on 4th October (A. Macdonald) and great numbers of Goldcrests *Regulus regulus* are reported from Orkney on 14th October (E. Balfour) and from Unst, Shetland, at the end of that month (S. Saxby).

An adult male Yellow Wagtail *flavissima* was at Watch Reservoir, Berwickshire, on 29th August (W.M.).

#### *Invasions.*

In the late autumn and winter several species have been unusually numerous.

Two Grey Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius* were seen at Fife Ness on 28th and 29th October (Mary Henderson), one at Gullane Point, East Lothian, on 29th October (C. Pountain) and three at North Berwick on 16th December (I. C. T. Nisbet, T. C. Smout). (Full details of the above have been received. The first of them seems to be the first record of the species in South Fife. Readers of *British Birds* will know that there have been many reports of Grey Phalaropes in the south of England and elsewhere, mainly in October, including a fantastic carpet of some 350 birds in St Agnes Bay, Isles of Scilly, on the 23rd.—ED.)

Little Auks *Plautus alle* occurred at many places, mostly on the east coast, from the end of October throughout November. In Moray: one was found at Evanton, Ross, five miles inland, on 19th November and survived for a few hours (John Lees). In Tay: on 15th and 21st November single birds were seen off the pier at St Andrews (J. Holdroyd, Miss Haig); on the 18th one was found alive but exhausted in a garden at Brechin (photograph in *Dundee Courier*, 19th Nov.); and about the same date one was found alive but exhausted at Ladybank, Fife (*Dundee Courier*, 23rd Nov.). In Forth: at

North Berwick a few were about from 28th October (F. Marr) and seventeen were flying past Dunbar on 31st October (A. Macdonald); on 1st November single birds were reported from Trinity Bay, Edinburgh, (B. R. Thomson) and Aberlady, as well as four probables at Gosford Bay (J.B.); six or seven at Lundin Links, Fife, on the 3rd (R. S. Weir); one by the Forth Bridge on the 7th (J. W. Wightman); twelve between Leven and Lundin Links on the 9th (T. S. Webster); four at Joppa on the 10th and 11th (J. Milne); four at Gullane Point on the 15th (J.B.); two at Seafield, Leith, on the 21st (A. T. Macmillan, B. R. Thomson); five at South Queensferry at causeway of road bridge and by the pier from 25th to 30th (John Hyatt); and one hit by a car at Inverkeithing on about the 27th (Sheelah Anderson). In Tweed: one occurred on 31st October at Hule Moss, Berwickshire (W.M.). In Solway: one was shot in late November at Colvend, Kirkcudbright, by Mr W. Robertson, who mistook it, as it swam, for the head of an otter (*Dumfries Advertiser*, 28th Nov.). In the Inner Hebrides: one was picked up dead on 17th December near Portnahaven, Islay (R. M. H. Cree).

Migrant Great Tits *Parus major*, probably of continental origin, as follows: there were four pairs at Halligarth, Unst, and others elsewhere on the island at the end of October (S. Saxby); two on Fetlar on 16th October and others, at least six, till the end of the month (L. Brown); and two at Voe, Shetland, on 3rd December (Mrs D. Adie). Continental Great Tits have also occurred on the Isle of May (see above).

A quite extraordinary number of wintering Blackcaps are reported. Mr Peter Davis informs us that numbers seen and trapped on Fair Isle in autumn were exceptional, several staying until late in November, the last one being seen on the 27th. In the Skye area: a male and female on Rhum from 16th November until at least 3rd December (P. Wormell per W. J. Eggeling). In Moray: a male was seen at Newton, near Elgin, from 15th November till 12th December, feeding on aphids among brussel sprouts, but also at a bird-table (E. Baldwin); and another male occurred at Lossiemouth on 17th and 18th December, which, like others recorded, was very aggressive to other small birds (E. S. Mingay); and about 22nd November two females and a male were at Evanton, Ross (J. Lees). In Tay: a male occurred in Perth on 14th October (V. M. Thom); one at Killiecrankie in late November fed on fat put out for tits (F. A. Becher); from 4th to 12th December a female was present in Dundee (B. Neath) and another female at St Andrews from 18th to 22nd December (J. McFarlane). Probably also in the Tay area were a male and female in west Perthshire for a fortnight up to 3rd December (W.A.R., *Scotsman*, 2nd Jan). In Forth: Blackcaps at the Isle of May have been mentioned above. In Tweed: a pair near West Lin-

ton, Peebles, on 22nd November (A. D. F. Leishman). In Clyde: about Christmas a male Blackcap spent two or three days in a garden at Bardowie, W. Stirling (M. D. Smith) and a female occurred on 11th and 12th January at Kilmacolm, Renfrew (D. MacRobert). In Solway: a female Blackcap haunted a garden at Dalry, Kirkcudbright, from 23rd November to 15th December, apparently feeding exclusively on rotten apples hung up to attract Waxwings, preferring Cox's Orange Pippin to Laxton Superb. At first it was chased by a Robin and sometimes dispossessed of its apple by House Sparrows, but after a week became very aggressive: then it drove away Chaffinches, Dunnocks, Great, Blue and Coal Tits, stood its ground with Robin and House Sparrows, and only gave way to Starlings and Blackbirds. It had a fierce battle with a Robin: result indecisive (A.D.W.). A male Blackcap was seen at Gatehouse of Fleet on 12th December; it remained a few days and fed on apples and breadcrumbs (Dr Grace Fleming).

Details of the invasion of Waxwings are still being collected.

#### Winter 1959-1960

This appears to be an excellent winter for ducks. W.M. reports that he has never seen so many at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, since he started going there in 1946; at one time there were over 100 Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*. Teal *Anas crecca* seem to be especially numerous: 400 were seen together on Loch Leven on 24th October "in close company" (H.B.) and 89 at Duddingston on the 27th is three times the previous record for that loch (D. R. Anderson): at about the same time there were 800 at Gladhouse (D. G. Andrew, R.W.J.S.). Gadwall *Anas strepera* are again wintering in Edinburgh, a pair being seen at Dunsappie between 7th November and 8th January (T. C. Smout), and a drake at Duddingston on 8th and 14th October (T.C.S.) and a pair there (perhaps the Dunsappie birds) some time later (D. R. Anderson). Two Scaup *Aythya marila* with white foreheads were at Hamilton on 8th November (L.A.U.) and between Grangemouth and Kincardine twelve Scaup on 3rd November and fifteen on the 15th are the first J.H. has seen in the area during the ten years he has watched it. 636 Tufted Ducks at Duddingston on 17th January is the highest number recorded there (D. R. Anderson).

A Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* was on Hule Moss on 31st October and 1st November (W.M.) and a male on Forfar Loch on 4th November (H.B.). Smews *Mergus albellus* have been more widespread than usual this January on the Kirkcudbrightshire lochs, one or two, both adult drakes and "redheads" having been on at least six different inland waters

(A.D.W.). On 9th January there was a "redhead" on Bogton Loch, Ayrshire (R. Stokoe, A.D.W.).

A European White-fronted Goose *Anser a. albifrons* (pink bill noted) flew over the R. Carron at Bonnybridge, Stirling, on 1st November (R. Logan). Seven dark-breasted Brent Geese *Branta b. bernicla* were at Aberlady on 13th and 20th December (J.B., M.F.M.M.), four Barnacle Geese *B. leucopsis* at Gladhouse on 1st November and two at Hule Moss on 31st October and 1st November (W.M.).

A Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewicki*, in company with six Whoopers, was on the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, Lanark, on 10th January (J. A. Begg). Still there on 31st.

A Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* was flying round the tower of the University, Glasgow, on 27th November (M. J. M. Larkin): it was probably this bird that was responsible for a headless pigeon falling at the feet of a lecturer in Eng. Lit. some time previously.

A late Corncrake *Crex crex* is reported from near Auchencairn, Kirkcudbright (where it had been for a fortnight before) on 9th November (Rev. M. D. Walker).

A good year for Jack Snipe, especially at Duddingston (D. R. Anderson). J.H. saw his first north of Grangemouth on 15th November, and at Tynninghame on 1st January, at high tide, seven were flushed in an area fifteen yards square; perhaps they had come in with the north winds (R.W.J.S.). Two were seen at Stranraer on 16th January (M.F.M.M.).

Wintering Greenshank are reported from Tentsmuir on 20th November (L. Fullerton), Aberlady on 28th November (J.B.), and Doonfoot, Ayr, on 9th December—there was also one there between 25th January and 15th February last winter (L.A.U.). Two Green Sandpipers are passing the winter (last seen 3rd January) alternating between Bells Burn, Edrom, and Duns Sewage Works (W.M.).

A Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus* was seen at the Ythan mouth, Aberdeen, on 29th September (A.J.M.S.) and an adult Iceland Gull *L. glaucoides* at Troon harbour on 24th January (M.F.M.M.).

Large numbers of Wood Pigeons *Columba palumbus* have been reported from various areas, but it should be remembered that, despite a general opinion to the contrary, we as yet have no conclusive evidence that any of these have crossed the North Sea. On 11th December W. J. Eggeling was at Lathones, SSW of St Andrews, out at dawn hoping to see geese: "just before 8 a.m. Wood Pigeons began to pass over and pitch in the kale and turnip crops behind me, odd birds at first, then parties of ten to thirty and then flocks of 100 to 200, till they were pouring past. I was unable to keep a count

in spite of several attempts, but later put the birds up from the crops; they were in numbers such as I have never seen before, certainly 3,000 and probably as many as 5,000. All the birds I saw came from the west and for the most part they were feeding on the kale leaves. Large numbers of Greenfinches were also coming in at the same time. The same pattern was repeated next morning and again on 19th December. On the latter there were certainly fewer pigeons and I was able to estimate that there were about 3,000 (to the nearest 500). All of these birds definitely came from far out of sight to the west, probably from some huge roost, and were flying eastwards."

A male Shorelark *Eremophila alpestris* was seen at Aberlady on 11th November (A.A.).

Two Jays *Garrulus glandarius* were in the woods at Valleyfield, Fife, on 10th November, only the observer's second winter record for the area (J.H.).

On 8th November at Herbertshire Estate, Bonnybridge, Stirling, a Long-tailed Tit was seen which resembled the northern race *Aegithalos c. caudatus*: it had a pure white head and its underparts were also whiter than those of about ten Long-tailed Tit with striped heads with which it was associating (R. Logan).

Large numbers of Fieldfares *Turdus pilaris*, 2,000 to 3,000 in all, were seen in fields between Kincardine and High Valleyfield, Fife, on 25th October (J.H.); on the 31st unusual numbers (150) were seen at Cobbinshaw and movement was doubtless going on (T. Boyd, R.W.J.S.); and on the following day they were arriving, with Starlings, all day at Tynninghame, in small parties (T.B., R.W.J.S.). Unusual numbers were near Glencorse Reservoir on 7th November, settling in heather and rough grass, which is unusual too (R.W.J.S.).

Two Stonechats *Saxicola torquata* were at Cult Ness on 1st November and two at Longannet Point, S. Fife, on the 30th (J.H.). A pair were at Threipmuir on 7th November (R.W.J.S.).

Two Great Grey Shrikes *Lanius excubitor*, one of which was eating a Linnet, were seen in Orkney about 14th October (E. Balfour); one occurred at Port of Menteith, Stirling, on 6th December (A. J. B. Loudon) and one at Taraside, Angus, on 15th December (D. Jenkins). Another was at Stevenston, Ayrshire, at the end of October and the beginning of November: on 4th November its song was heard, "a mixture of low warblings and harsh grating sounds, which on the whole was rather pleasing" (G. Fraser). We have late news of a sixth Great Grey Shrike, in Arran, between Brodick and Lamlash, on 16th November (A. R. Hutchison, I. K. Munro).

Larger flocks of finches than usual seem to be present, as,



for example, in East Lothian (A. Macdonald), big numbers of Greenfinches being especially noticeable. On 30th November near Carnbee in Fife there was a very large finch flock in kale and on recently cleared sugar beet: about 1,500 all told, with Chaffinches in the majority, but almost as many Greenfinches, a number of Brambling and a few Goldfinches. Several hundred Skylarks, and numbers of Fieldfare, Redwing and Song Thrushes were also present. On 11th December at Lathones, Fife, Greenfinches came trickling in with the Wood Pigeons till there were at least 1,000; fewer on subsequent dates (W. J. Eggeling). In the wintering flock of Greenfinches at Seafeld, Leith, there was a sudden peak at the beginning of December, 900 being counted on the 5th (A.T.M.). 500 Greenfinches at Mount Lothian, near Gladhouse, on 6th December, was a very big flock for that area (R.W.J.S.). At Fala Toll on 27th December there were about 1,500 Chaffinches and 200 Bramblings (R.W.J.S.), while at Longannet, S. Fife, there were the exceptional numbers of about 600 Bramblings on 20th January (J. Potter) and about 350 two days later (J.H.). A few Bramblings, fairly scarce in Clyde, were noted at Dunoon in December (K. M. Kesson). Nearly 400 were seen in fields at Portmore, Peebles, on 20th December (J. E. King and others).

As is usual in "Crossbill years," Siskins have also been numerous. About fifty were seen near Loch Faskally, Perth, on 9th October (H.B.) and about 100, in two flocks, at Tynninghame on 1st November (T. Boyd, R.W.J.S.), while fifty were flying west at Dirleton on 8th November (T.B.). One was at Gosford, East Lothian, on 11th November (T. C. Smout) and small parties at the end of the year near Milton Bridge, East Lothian (C. K. Mylne). At Duddingston the first seen there since 1950 were three on 19th January (D. R. Anderson). From the west come reports of three at the Doonfoot, Ayr, on 26th November (D.S.), about fifteen near Milngavie on 14th November, and about thirty, of which one was picked up dead, at Blanefield, Stirling, on 12th December (J. W. Taylor).

The following wintering Twites *Carduelis flavirostris* have been reported: at Aberlady a total of twenty-four on 1st November was a record, but there were over fifty on the 7th and 15th, and seventy or more on the 22nd and 28th. The peak was on 6th December when there were at least 150, mixed with Linnets: on the 20th numbers were down to about seventy and on 10th January there were a mere thirty or forty (J.B.). At Cult Ness there were thirty or forty on 22nd November (J.H.), north of Grangemouth a large flock on 29th November (J. Potter), at Barnes Ness forty on 6th December (T. Boyd).

There were several Lapland Buntings *Calcarius lapponicus* at Aberlady on 1st November (J.B.). What is the first record for the Edinburgh area, and doubtless also for Midlothian,

comes from Dr I. C. T. Nisbet: "while descending Arthur's Seat on 14th December I heard the unmistakable 'teu . . . teu . . . tikitikitik' of a Lapland Bunting in flight overhead. I am very familiar with this species and had watched it in East Anglia only two days before."

For the first time in ten years J. H. saw Snow Buntings at Longannet Point, S.W. Fife, nearly forty birds on 30th November, and on 7th December he and J. Potter saw over fifty there, the numbers rising to 100 by 22nd January. A count of 180 in the Portmore-Gladhouse-Rosebery area on 27th December is unusually high for such a date (R.W.J.S.). They have also been unusually numerous on the Clyde Coast: on 30th December, at Girvan, between fifteen and twenty were seen on the North Shore (R. M. Ramage, J. Shanks); on 17th January about 150 at Lendalfoot and fifty just south of Girvan (M.F.M.M.); and on 23rd January several at Stevenston (G. M. T. Conacher).

#### *Behaviour and Habits*

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*. On 25th May four Fulmar nests were located in a field at the foot of Saxa Vord hill, Unst. This is between half and three quarters of a mile from the sea and, being in a hollow, birds on the ground would not be able to see the sea either at Haroldswick or Norwick Bay. The grass near the nests was cropped short, but nearby was a stream and marshy land almost dry after a period of fine weather. Three nests were on the ground at the foot of an old stone pen, two inside the small compound, the walls of which were about three feet high, and the third in a corner outside where a wall had been extended. The fourth nest was some fifty yards away on rising ground in a hollow that may once have been a rabbit hole. Each nest had one egg. Two nests came to grief, but on 2nd July the remaining two birds were still sitting (D. J. Mentier).

**GANNET** *Sula bassana*. About 7 a.m. on 23rd November the caretaker of my flat in Ravelston Gardens, in the centre of Edinburgh, was surprised to see a large white bird plane down and crash-land in the rose-bed. From my window above I saw it was an adult Gannet, appearing in good condition and able to walk and flap well. I was much relieved when it took itself off to a patch of waste ground some way from the dogs and traffic, since the verge of the road seemed no place for a Gannet. When I left for work, having summoned the S.S.P.C.A., the Gannet had several admirers, including the postman and a spaniel. By 10 a.m. it could not be found. Previously it had seemed unable to take off, but with a rising wind it had probably been able to make use of a six foot drop

on the waste ground to launch itself into the air. (P. Alexander).

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*. On 24th January, with a cold south-east wind blowing, I was waiting at Feolin Ferry, Jura, opposite Port Askaig, when up the Sound of Islay, flying due north, came a few flights of Eider. These suddenly became a stream and I began to count them. In the course of ten minutes or so over 600 Eider went past. The large flights I estimated by counting ten and then comparing this with the whole flock. The largest flight was about seventy birds, but a few went by in pairs. (K. Townsend).

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo* and **ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*. On 23rd September I was watching Common Terns fishing on the ebb tide at Kingsbarns, Fife. Every now and then they would be harried by Rooks, which seemed to be chasing them out of sheer devilment and not for the sand-eels they were catching. The Rooks would keep up the chase for some minutes, although they were outmanoeuvred easily. When they tired of chasing the terns they would return inland to their rookery, cawing loudly, to return to the fun a few minutes later. (M. H. E. Cuninghame).

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*. About 22nd November and on 2nd December a Starling was seen in Hermitage Gardens, Edinburgh, with a bill shaped liked that of a Whimbrel, both mandibles being elongated, and more than twice as long as normal. The bill was creamy yellow towards the tip. The bird fed by probing in the usual way. An interesting discussion of the persistence of this deformity in the area will be found in *The Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* (4:55-56). (N. B. Watson).

## SOLWAY WEEK-END

Quite often we seem to get some wonderful sunny days at the beginning of February, and they seem that much more exciting because of the gloomy weather that has gone before. For the Club's Week-end Excursion to the Solway from 5th to 7th February the weather could not have been better, for, in spite of the most depressing forecasts and dense fog in Glasgow, the early morning mist on Saturday cleared away and gave us two gorgeous sunny and almost windless days to explore the beautiful countryside around Dumfries.

A record number of fifty-five members and friends, including some lone wolves and splinter groups, came for the week-end and voted it one of the best yet. Members came from as far away as Peterhead, Aberdeen, Wolverhampton and Oxford. Most of us managed to get to the County Hotel on

Friday night to be briefed for the morrow. Thereafter conviviality was the order until well after midnight when a very jolly party found themselves on opposite platforms in Dumfries Station waiting to welcome our Irish guests from either direction. Back at the hotel the staff of a big local garage were having a great time at their annual dance, and sleepless bird-watchers were busy rehearsing for the next day their individual claims to have been sited in the bedroom most directly above the noise.

After breakfast on Saturday a long line of cars set off to look for Barnacle Geese at Caerlaverock where, we had already been warned, we would be unlikely to find them. After turning back from the correct road, driving several miles up the wrong cul-de-sac into the wrong farmyard, and twice passing the same unaccompanied cows on a narrow country lane, the survivors eventually straggled down to the Reserve. The car which had agreed to follow behind and round up any laggards had evidently got there some time earlier.

Led by Langley Roberts, the Warden of the Reserve, forty eager bird-watchers set off through the mud and disappearing mist for a four-mile walk over field, fence and ditch—not to mention ooze. In fact, at one point, when we forded a shallow but treacherously soft stream, it seemed that we might lose one or two members in the ooze. By the time half the party had crossed quickly over, the soft crust got so puddled up that one member was soon over his knees and sinking steadily: helpers rushed to his aid and began to sink as well, or were pulled over by other enthusiastic rescuers. Eventually a chain of hands hauled everyone out and retrieved all their footgear, but quite a few people got more than a little muddy in the process and there were a lot of squelching Wellington boots for the rest of the morning.

Langley Roberts was most apologetic about the flock of 1,650 Barnacles which had inconsiderately flown off to feed on the English side of the Solway. However, with the great concentration of optical fire-power, two of them were at last identified as they walked on the distant mud—one of them with a broken wing. One of the tragedies of the bird world is the sight of a lone goose by the side of its wounded and flightless mate when all the others have gone away. Suddenly the sky was filled with geese, not Barnacles but Grey Lags and Pinkfeet, pouring in to settle on the fields at East Park farm where we ate our sandwiches. Along the road to Glencaple we saw many more and were able to watch them at point-blank range without getting out of the cars.

In the afternoon most people went down the west side of the Nith to Carsethorn passing a flock of thirty-seven Whoop-

ers feeding in a field just outside Dumfries. The tide was out at Carsethorn but we had superb views of Pintail and there were flocks of Scaup further out. A skein of black geese which flew past some way out were thought by several people to be Brents—very unusual in the area—but local opinion was against the identification. Subsequent events at Carlingwark the next day suggested that even good observers might have been misled.

In the evening Miss Valerie Thom showed her fine 8 m.m. documentary film of life on Fair Isle, with sequences of all the activities and industries of the island and a commendable absence of pictures of bird-watchers. We also saw a short film of local Waxwings and a fine assembly of Whoopers at Glenbuck by Mr J. Lockerbie, Sanquhar.

On Sunday morning, lured by tales of the birds to be seen and undeterred by forecasts of heavy fog, five enthusiasts were away by 7.45 a.m. to look at L. Arthur as soon as it was reasonably light. Such keenness was rewarded by the sight of no less than five Smew on this one small loch, four red-headed birds and a fine drake swimming and diving as we watched them. Beside the road we found a party of Long-tailed Tits, a Tree Creeper and a Great Spotted Woodpecker—and all before breakfast, to which we returned full of virtue.

On the way to Castle Douglas a brief call at Auchenreoch turned up a nice variety of birds including a Willow Tit and splendid views of Goosander glinting in the sun as they flew past close to the road. On Carlingwark, under the able direction of Willie Austin, we located two more Smew—red-heads again—and it cannot be often that one can see seven in so short a time. A party of about seventy geese flew over honking as we were leaving and hardly anyone gave them a second glance. After they had gone the local experts set about explaining that they were not Grey Lag but Bean Geese and that we should probably see no more that day. In fact we did see some twenty-five close to the road later in the day, but they have been difficult to find and numbers are low this year.

From Castle Douglas we headed up L. Ken in a long convoy of cars with Willie Austin to the fore. At the expected spot Greenland Whitefronts were duly located. The first was only a head sticking up behind a grassy bank on which a fine flock of Wigeon was resting, but we saw others later.

On Woodhall Loch we found yet another species of duck. Very few dissentient voices were raised when a distant black and white blob was diagnosed as another Smew, but a quarter-mile walk along the road turned it into a Long-tailed Duck (more or less tailless of course)—a very unexpected visitor there. This was the sixteenth, and probably the seventeenth, species of duck to be seen in two days.

At the New Galloway end of L. Ken an abortive search for Willow Tits was not kept up for very long. A few more persistent souls, however, were well rewarded for their greater enthusiasm by hearing a Willow Tit and a Jay almost at the same time. On a carpet of washed-up vegetation and seeds by some marshy willow-scrub we found a small party of birds including Siskins and Redpolls which were chased by a Sparrow Hawk that appeared from nowhere. Even a Tree Creeper took to the thicket growing in the water and looked most out of place climbing the thin stems of the bushes.

So ended a superb week-end as people disappeared in search of food, buses, trains and the road home. About eighty-five different species of birds were seen by one of the writers, and the tally for the whole party cannot have been very far short of a hundred—not bad for a week-end in the coldest month of the year.

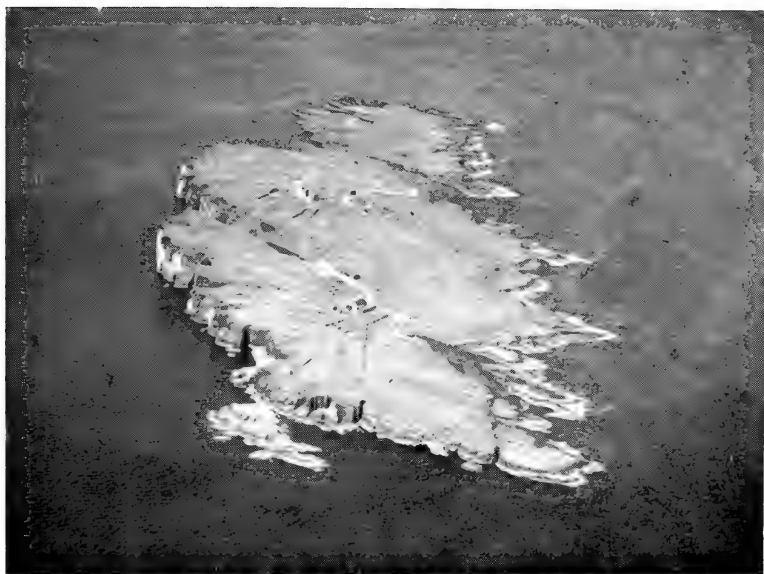
ANDREW T. MACMILLAN.  
GEORGE WATERSTON.

## UNUSUAL MORTALITY OF YOUNG PUFFINS ON ST KILDA, 1959

DAVID BODDINGTON

The population of Puffins *Fratercula arctica* on St Kilda during the breeding season probably numbers one million pairs, the largest and most dense colony being on the island of Dun, which forms the south side of the Village Bay. Landing on Dun is only possible in periods of calm weather, but the colonies on Hirta are accessible more easily.

On 20th July 1959 a large number of dead young Puffins, from two to four weeks old, were found on the Hirta colony of Carn Mor, most of which showed no signs of injury. On 24th July a number of dead birds were lying on the talus slopes below Ard Uarchdarachd. There were freshly dead young among the boulders of Carn Mor on 31st July. On the next day a landing was made on Dun and a transect of 1,100 yards was made at a height of 200-300 feet as far as Point of Dun, thereby covering all but 200 yards of the complete length of the island. Weather conditions did not allow more than three hours stay and the luxuriant vegetation, of which Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* was the dominant species, made a thorough search impractical. In the five yard wide transect through the most densely populated area, 205 dead birds were counted on the way to the Point of Dun and 166 along a slight-



The Isle of May from the south-east. On the top of the island the Lighthouse can be seen, and the Low Light, where visitors stay, is at the end of the white wall to the right of it. The May is just over a mile long.

*Aerofilms Ltd.*



FIRECREST on the Isle of May, 30th September 1959 (see *antca* 1:153). The characteristic head markings of this species are well shown.

*Photograph Dennis Munns.*

ly higher level on the return journey. All the birds were estimated to be between twelve and 40 days old, and only a small number showed any evidence of injury.

On the assumption that fifty acres of this eighty acre island are as thickly colonised by Puffins, there must have been at least eight thousand dead birds, not counting those below ground or in thick vegetation. Examination of several birds was made and three specimens, thirty to forty days old, were sent to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Veterinary Laboratory, Lasswade, Midlothian, where R. H. Duff, M.R.C.V.S., made a pathological report, of which an extract follows.

"Post-mortem examination showed that the Puffins had died in very poor condition. The crops and gizzards were empty. The intestines were very narrow and thin-walled and flaccid. The kidneys were brownish . . . and the livers were small. No parasites were in the intestines and the presence of *Escherichia coli* was of no pathogenic significance . . . From these findings starvation is the most likely cause of death."

Lockley states that the young Puffin is deserted about the fortieth day. At this time and until it goes to sea it would be expected that the alimentary canal would contain no food, but younger birds examined showed similar features. Fish is stated to constitute 32 per cent of the animal matter in the Puffin's diet (*The Handbook of British Birds*), being composed of Sand Eels *Amnodytes* spp. and the fry of Herring *Clupea harengus* and of Pollack *Gadus pollachius*. Boyd *et al.* have recorded specimens of Norway Pout *G. esmarkii* in a puffinry on St Kilda.

It seems likely that food shortage was the main cause of the unusually high mortality and the fact that, during the many hours spent in the St Kilda Puffin colonies, no discarded fish and few birds bringing in fish were seen, lends support to this.

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# The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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## SUMMER EXCURSIONS

**IMPORTANT**—Members intending to come on Excursions must, where necessary, inform the respective organisers immediately, so that arrangements can be made for numbers which in some cases are limited. Bookings will be accepted in strict order of application. Members of the Club are entitled to attend ANY Branch Excursion, and guests may be invited where numbers are not limited.

### ABERDEEN

Applications for all Excursions to be made to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire (Tel. Newburgh 95) one week in advance. Transport will be by private cars, and members having spare seats should inform Miss Garden.

#### Saturday, 7th May :

**YTHAN ESTUARY AND LOCHS**—Leader, Miss E. A. Garden. Meet Ythan Hotel 2 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

#### Sunday, 5th June :

**CRATHIE AREA**—Leader, Mr C. Murray. Meet Crathie Post Office 11 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

#### Sunday, 4th September :

**FORVIE MOOR (Autumn Migrants)**—Leader, Mr A. Smith. Meet Ythan Hotel 10.30 a.m. A ferry service will be arranged over the river, so that a walk up the coast to Collieston can be made. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

### DUNDEE

When private cars are to be used, applications for all Excursions should be made to Mr Jack Scobie, 3 Constitution Road, Dundee (Office Tel. 3141) one week in advance.

#### Sunday, 6th March :

**FORFAR RESCOBIE AND BALGAVIES LOCHS**—Meet City Square 10 a.m. Transport by private cars. Bring picnic lunch.

#### Sunday, 3rd April

**FORT ALAN AND RIVER TAY**—Meet Perth Bus 10.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch.

#### Sunday, 15th May :

**NORTH ESK ESTUARY AND AUCHMITHIE**—Meet City Square 10 a.m. Transport by private cars. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

#### Sunday, 12th June :

**TENTSMUIR AND SHELLEY POINT**—Meet Tay Ferries 9.45 a.m. Transport by private cars. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**ISLE OF MAY**—Date to be announced later. Limited to twelve members.

#### Sunday, 18th September :

**EDEN ESTUARY (GUARD BRIDGE to ST ANDREWS)**—Meet Tay Ferries 9.45 a.m. Transport by bus. Bring picnic lunch.

### EDINBURGH

Times of buses and trains should be checked with Summer Time-tables. Costs may also be subject to alteration. Private hire buses will only be provided at the charges shown on condition that a minimum of 30 attend. Anyone unable to attend, and having booked a seat, may be required to pay the fare unless one week's notice is given.

#### Saturday, 14th May :

**ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE** (Spring Migrants)—Leaders, Mr W. Birrell and Mr C. N. L. Cowper. Meet Timber Bridge 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. Bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at approx. 1.40 p.m.)

#### Saturday, 21st May :

**PENICUIK HOUSE GROUNDS** (by kind permission of Sir John D. Clerk, Bt.)—Leader, Mr R. W. J. Smith. Meet outside Penicuik Post Office 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. Bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at 1.30 p.m.)

#### Sunday, 29th May :

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM** (by kind permission of the Earl of Home)—Limited number. Applications by 21st May to Mr Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Leader at the Hirsell, Major the Hon. Henry Douglas Home. Private bus will leave Waverley Bridge at 11 a.m. returning at approx. 7 p.m. Picnic lunch and tea to be taken. Cost : bus approx. 8/- per person.

#### Saturday, 11th June :

**ISLE OF MAY** Limited number (12)—Leader, Dr W. J. Eggeling. Applications by 4th June to Miss O. T. Thompson, 52 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh. Train to Anstruther leaves Waverley Station at 9.10 a.m. Boat leaves harbour 11.40 a.m. prompt. Time on Island approx. 12.45 to 4.30 p.m. Return train leaves Anstruther 6 p.m. arriving Edinburgh 8.56 p.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost : Day return rail ticket, 8/11; boat approx. 9/-.

#### Sunday, 19th June :

**PARADISE WOODS, DUNS, AND ST ABBS HEAD CLIFFS** (Limited number)—Applications by 11th June to Miss O. T. Thompson, 52 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh. Leader at Paradise Woods, Mr W. Murray. Private bus will leave Waverley Bridge at 10.45 a.m. and return approx. 6.30 p.m. Picnic lunch and tea to be taken. Cost : approx. 8/-.

#### Sunday, 3rd July :

**FARNE ISLANDS** (Limited Number)—Applications by 25th June to Mr A. G. Ablett, 7 Craigmount Gardens, Edinburgh 12 (COR 4258). Leader from Seahouses, Dr E. A. R. Ennion. Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge 9 a.m. arriving Seahouses 12.30 p.m. Boats leave harbour on arrival. Bring picnic lunch. Cost : Bus 11/-; boat 11/-; High tea at Monks House, 6/-.

#### Saturday, 16th July :

**BASS ROCK** (by kind permission of Sir Hew Hamilton Dalrymple, Bt.)—Applications by 9th July to Mr John King, 103 Marchmont Road, Edinburgh 9. Boats leave North Berwick Harbour 2.30 p.m. and return at 7 p.m. Bring picnic tea. Cost : Boat 7/6.

#### Saturday, 20th August :

**ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE** (Autumn Migrants)—Leaders, Mr W. Birrell and Mr K. S. Macgregor. Arrangements as for 14th May.

**GLASGOW**

Times of buses and trains should be checked with Summer Time-tables. For all Excursions, excluding the first, applications must be made as stated so that adequate reservations may be made.

**Saturday, 30th April :**

**HAMILTON BIRD SANCTUARY** (by kind permission of the Town Council of the Burgh of Hamilton)—Leader, Mr D. Stalker. Meet at Hamilton Cross at 2.30 p.m.

**Sunday, 29th May :**

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM** (by kind permission of the Earl of Home) (Limited number)—Joint Excursion with Edinburgh Branch. Train to Edinburgh leaves Queen Street Station at 9.40 a.m. and arrives 10.54 a.m. Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge at 11 a.m. returning approx. 7 p.m. Applications by 21st May to Mr Andrew T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Picnic lunch and tea to be taken. Cost : Bus approx. 8/-.

**Saturday, 4th June :**

**AILSAS CRAIG**—Maximum number, two parties of 14. Applications by 28th May to Miss M. G. Scott, 68 Evan Drive, Giffnock, Glasgow. Boat leaves Girvan Harbour with first party at 11 a.m. Time on Ailsa Craig, 3 to 4 hours. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost : Boat 10/- per person.

**Saturday, 19th June :**

**LITTLE CUMBRAE**—Applications by 11th June to Miss M. G. Scott, 68 Evan Drive, Giffnock, Glasgow. Boat leaves Fairlie 11.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost : Boat 3/6 per person.

**ST ANDREWS**

Applications for the Excursions to the Isle of May and Loch Leven must be made to Miss M. M. Spires, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews (Tel. 852) not later than 1st June.

**Saturday, 28th May :**

**LINDORES LOCH**—Leave St Andrews Bus Station on Perth Bus at 12.45 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

**Sunday, 12th June :**

**ISLE OF MAY** (Limited number, 12)—Boat leaves Anstruther Harbour 10 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Sunday, 26th June :**

**LOCH LEVEN** (by kind permission of Kinross Estates)—Boats leave from the Sluices, Scotlandswell, for St Serfs Island at 11 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**SCOTTISH BIRDS : VOLUME I, No. 1**

A number of requests have been received from Libraries for complete sets of "Scottish Birds" to date. As the first issue, Volume I, No. 1, (September 1958) has been out of print for some time, the Secretary will be very glad to receive any copies, in whatever condition, which members can spare to enable these orders to be fulfilled.

### WEEK-END EXCURSION TO AVIEMORE

Arrangements have again been made with Mrs M. J. Grant, The Dell Hotel, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore (Tel. 216) for a week-end Excursion to Speyside.

Accommodation for up to twenty members has been reserved for the week-end 6th to 8th May at inclusive terms of 45/- per person as follows : Bed on Friday night 6th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday 7th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 8th.

Members wishing to come on this Club Excursion should book direct with Mrs Grant, mentioning that they are members of the Club, and are asked to send her a postcard to acknowledge their booking, once this is made. Members may bring guests. Reservations will be accepted in strict order of application. Arrangements for transport by private cars should be made through Branch Secretaries.

### CLUB LIBRARY

Members are asked to note that the Club Library will not be open on Wednesday evenings during the summer months. The Secretary will be glad, however, to welcome members who wish to use the Library in the evenings if previous arrangements are made. There will be no Junior Meetings during the summer months.

### Dr N. TINBERGEN ON "BEHAVIOUR OF GULLS"

Members who were present at the Stirling Conference and who heard Dr Tinbergen's fascinating talk will be interested to hear that he has kindly presented copies of reprints of his recent work, "Comparative studies of the behaviour of Gulls : A Progress Report," 1959, to the Club Library. They are available for borrowing.

### DUNDEE BRANCH

Owing to a mis-print in the Syllabus of Winter Lectures, the date of the Dundee Branch Lecture in April has been given as 26th; this should read 28th April.

### OPERATION OSPREY, 1960

There are still vacancies for Volunteer Wardens (male) and Cook-caterers (female) during the period 28th May to the end of August. Anyone prepared to assist should contact George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, at once.

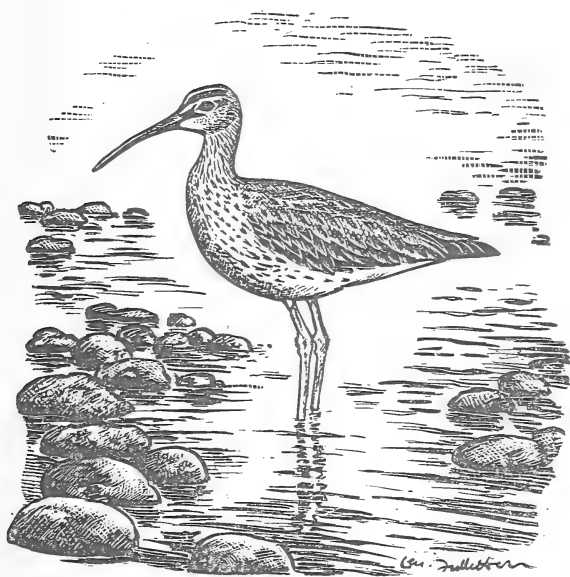
### THE LATE T. LESLIE SMITH

Members will learn with regret of the death of Mr T. Leslie Smith who served on the Club Council as the Dundee Branch Representative since March 1959.

Mr Smith was a man of wide interests, particularly in Youth work, and was president of the Y.M.C.A. in Dundee for nearly twenty years. He joined the Club in 1956 and took a keen interest in all its affairs.

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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. I No. 8

Summer 1960

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

Informal meetings for Junior members will be held in the Club-room on the first Friday of each month from October to April at 7.30 p.m.

### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. I No. 8

Summer 1960

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Editorial

AFTER our mammoth spring number, the summer number returns to a smaller size, but we hope it will be possible to bring out larger numbers from time to time, especially when the accumulation of material demands it. At present our main difficulty is acquiring material as regards photographs: we prefer to publish those taken in Scotland and by members of the Club—whether they show birds or places of ornithological interest—and we would therefore be grateful for the gift of any photographs which the photographer himself thinks worthy of publication.

## ASSISTED PASSAGE

C. P. RAWCLIFFE

The substance of this article was delivered to the members of the Edinburgh branch of the S.O.C. on 17th February 1960. In it I deal with the birds I have found upon ships arriving at Leith Docks.

11th April 1953. M/v *Bucklaw* from Holland. About twenty miles north of Ymuiden, the wind being southerly and the weather fine and clear, a Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla* came on board. Others flew over, but only this one alighted. Time about 2000 hrs GMT on the 10th. Bird flew away at the Imperial Docks.

19th November 1953. A damaged Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* found on M/v *Midsland* from Rotterdam.

??1954. A Snipe *Capella gallinago* came on board the S/s *Gothland* from Copenhagen. It died ashore and the skin was preserved by the Royal Scottish Museum.

12th October 1957. On the S/s *Mansuria* from Gothenburg

I found the following dead birds on the decks in out of the way places: two Skylarks *Alauda arvensis*, one Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*, one Goldcrest *R. regulus*, two Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis*, one Starling and one Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*. Unfortunately the bodies were decomposed. The vessel had left Gothenburg on the 9th. The 10th was overcast and birds, mostly Starlings, came on board during the night.

6th November 1958. When the M/v *Midsland* arrived from Amsterdam, I found a dead Skylark aboard. I was told that many had come on the ship and that those which fell into the sea were soon snapped up by gulls.

5th October 1959. In the alleyways amidships of the M/v *Dryburgh* from Rotterdam I found two live birds, a Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* and a *phylloscopus*. I was able to catch the Chaffinch and from the brightness of the ruddy breast judged it to be of one of the Continental races.

6th October 1959. On this day the M/v *Cantick Head* came from Leningrad. I found dead on board a Skylark and a Long-tailed Tit of the Northern race *Aegithalos c. caudatus*. Many birds came on board; many died and went overboard during the washing-down of the decks. The Long-tailed Tit was a lovely bird to handle even when dead; its head was pure white, but when the feathers were disturbed one could see that the basal half of each feather was black.

8th October 1959. On M/v *Midsland* from Rotterdam there was a dead Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*. On M/v *Heriot* from Amsterdam there were three live Starlings crouched under a winch. Captain Masson reported that many Goldcrests had come on board, but they left when the ship was abreast of the Longstone Light.

16th October 1959. When the M/v *Frida Blokzul* came from Maasluis, Holland, and the holds were opened up for discharge of cargo, Starlings flew out. It was thought that they had gone in to roost before the hatches were put on and thus became trapped. One dead Starling was also found.

19th October 1959. This day the M/v *Haskerland* arrived from Harlingen, Holland. Captain Kuiper reported to me that an owl came on board, the first in his long experience, but was later lost in the gale. He remarked that migratory birds crossing the North Sea fly down-wind and that, if the wind direction changes, then the birds too change direction. He had seen this happen.

10th November 1959. M/v *Peka* from Copenhagen. The Captain had a female Continental Twite *Carduelis f. flavirostris* in a budgerigar cage. The bird had come on the ship when it was about 120 miles west of the Skag Lightship (6 p.m. MET). It had fed on seeds and was in good condition. On



behalf of the Captain I released it on the dock, where it fed on grass and dandelion seeds.

### *Corrigenda*

*Antea* 1:206. Part II of "Current Notes" apply to late 1959 and early 1960, *not*, as stated, to late 1958 and early 1959.

*Antea* 1:206. For "Port of Menteith, Stirling" read "Port of Menteith, Perthshire."

*Antea* 1:207. For "Eaglesham, Lanark" read "Eaglesham, Renfrew."

*Antea* 1:213-4. The Lapland Bunting on Arthur's Seat is not the first record for Midlothian. It has been recorded from Gladhouse (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 4:4).

## CURRENT NOTES

(These records, all of them believed fully authenticated, apply to late 1959 and early 1960 unless otherwise stated. Initials denote the following observers: J. Ballantyne, P. G. R. Barbier, H. Boase, T. Boyd, W. Brotherston, W. A. J. Cunningham, George Dick, W. J. Eggeling, Sir Robert Erskine-Hill Bt., Miss W. U. Flower, P. Holt, J. E. King, A. T. Macmillan, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, W. Murray, J. Potter, C. P. Rawcliffe, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, L. A. Urquhart, G. Waterston and M. I. Waterston).

The Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer* is not so numerous off the east coast as off the west: T.C.S. notes the following occurrences—single birds off Gullane Point on 16th December and 12th March; one at Broughty Ferry on 13th February and two on the 14th. The Slavonian Grebe *Podiceps auritus*, common in East Lothian, is not so often recorded for Midlothian: one was at Eastfield, Edinburgh, on 5th March (J.B.).

A Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis* flew past the windows of the Scottish Centre for Ornithology on 8th April (G.W., M.I.W.).

A Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* bearing the characteristics of the "southern race" *sinensis* was seen at Hamilton on 10th April: "neck and head hoary white except for a black crescent from the throat to the forehead" (A. S. Temple). These white-headed birds are not infrequent, especially in S.W. Scotland, and recent studies by R. Stokoe (*British Birds* 51:165-179) show that the two races cannot be separated in the field. Numbers of Shags *P. aristotelis* come into Leith Docks on infrequent occasions (see *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 4:65) and C.P.R. sends the following totals from there: 22 on 4th February, 34 on the 5th, and 12 on 1st March.

(Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. In late July 1959 up to seven were noted at dusk flying down the R. Almond to feed on the mud at the mouth (*per* J. E. King) and an adult was seen at the mouth of the Water of Leith at 2230 hours on 17th February 1960 (C.P.R.). Though certainly escapes from Edinburgh Zoo, we are recording these occurrences in case the bird ever establishes itself in the wild.)

Duck—large numbers. The 400 Teal *Anas crecca* reported from Loch Leven (*antea* 1:210) seem to have been nothing much! R.W.J.S. on 21st September saw at least 2,000, and probably closer to 3,000, flying in a swirling mass over St Serf's Island. On 13th December, after a period of strong easterly winds and driving rain, there was a very large concentration of duck between Kincardine and Grangemouth: 1,285 Mallard, 1,280 Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, 516 Teal, 330 Pintail *A. acuta*, 14 Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*, four Tufted Duck, 13 Goosander *Mergus merganser* and 42 Merganser *M. serrator*. The figures for Shelduck and Pintail are quite exceptional. Shelduck were down to 750 on 17th January and 650 on 13th February (previous maximum recorded 400-500). Pintail down to 200 on 17th January and only eight on 13th February (previous maximum recorded 20-30). Pintail were also in numbers at Loch Leven at the time and were recorded from Peppermill Dam for the first time (G.D., J.P.). There is a hitherto unrecorded concentration of Pintail in early spring on Tullibody Island above the Kincardine Bridge. On 28th February their numbers rose to 190, and two hours later 215 were seen north of Grangemouth (as above) (T. Paterson).

A pair of Garganey *A. querquedula*, the first for Lewis, were seen on a flooded field at Fivepenny Ness on 27th March (W.A.J.C., A. McEachern, M.F.M.M.). A pair were at Hamilton Low Parks on 2nd April and a drake on the 16th (L.A.U., M. Forrester, D. Stalker, A. S. Temple).

Three Gadwall *A. strepera* at Quothquan, Lanark, were the first the observer has seen there (R.E.-H.). The Edinburgh wintering pair continue to be seen, mainly at Dunsappie (latest date 13th April), but also at Figgate Pond (T.C.S., G.W., M.I.W.). On 30th March one was at sea off the Doonfoot, Ayr (L.A.U.).

A female Scaup *Aythya marila* was at the mouth of the R. Endrick on 24th January (W.U.F.). Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula* have also been numerous. On 19th November 300+ at the sewer outfall at Stannergate, Dundee, is a record—about 60 per cent were adult drakes. On 17th November there were 200, and 250+ on 22nd December (H.B.). Off the Edinburgh coast in midwinter there are up to 700 at Seafeld and others elsewhere in smaller flocks (A.T.M.). On 14th December 800 flew east at Portobello (T.C.S.), possibly the total from this section of the coast. On 23rd March rather more than

1,000 arrived at Musselburgh in the evening (90 per cent from the direction of Portobello) between 1630 and 1830 hours—still a few coming when observer left (J.B.). This eastward movement may well be regular. A Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* was on Loch Ken on 20th March (M.F.M.M., A. D. Watson).

Smew *Mergus albellus* have been seen regularly at L. Arthur, Kirkcudbright, the latest date reported being 5th April, when a "red-head" was still there (D. Lawson). A duck and a drake were on Carlingwark Loch, Castle Douglas, on 21st March (M. D. Walker). Numerous observers have seen a "red-head" at the Endrick mouth and an adult drake in the Hamilton area during the early months of the year. One "red-head" was at Threipmuir on 6th February and 5th March (T.B., R.W.J.S.), three near the sluice on Loch Leven in second week of February and two on river below sluice on 24th February (G.D.).

An albino Grey Lag Goose *Anser anser* was seen near Bridge of Dee on 6th April. Size of accompanying Grey Lags; pale orange bill and flesh-coloured legs. Plumage dirty white, with some brown markings on back (D. Lawson, A. McConnell). 43 Bean Geese *A. fabalis* were at Hule Moss, Berwick, on 7th November (W.M.). A pale buffish-coloured goose, almost certainly a Pink-foot *A. brachyrhynchus*, was seen with Pink-feet at East Fortune on 28th January and elsewhere later (A. Macdonald) and at Tynninghame on 28th February (T.B., R.W.J.S.).

On 6th December a pale-breasted Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota* was seen with Pink-feet near Middleton, Midlothian (W.B.). Two Barnacle Geese *B. leucopsis* were seen with Pink-feet at Middleton on 29th October, and from 13th November to 5th December a party of eight were with Pink-feet in the same area (W.B., R. Walker). One was seen with Pink-feet at East Fortune on 28th January (A. Macdonald) and at Tynninghame on 28th February (T.B., R.W.J.S.): the presence of the pale Pink-foot (see above) shows that the same flock was involved in the two cases.

An immature Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* was with Mute Swans on Biggar boating pond from 16th December until 11th January (R.E.-H., Rona S. Hunter). A Mr Murdoch reported an adult at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 20th April and A.T.M. saw it there on the 21st.

On 16th January a Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos* was disturbed on Barra just after it had killed a Barnacle Goose; this is the first eagle the observer has seen on the island (Alick Ross). An Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* was found on 7th April by J. Hoy at Tulliallan Loch, Fife: it was sitting on a dead tree eating a fish. Later it was seen to catch a trout, and the skin and bones of another were found below its perch. It remained until the 10th.



Buzzard.

(Photograph by W. Kenneth Richmond).

An interesting movement of Lapwings *Vanellus vanellus* was observed at various places on 27th/28th February:

Tynninghame, 28th. Continuous movement of small parties up the coast northwards offshore and others heading inland up the Tyne—several hundreds in all (R.W.J.S.).

North Berwick, 27th, 3 to 5 p.m., strong S.W. wind, warm, sky clear. Constant movement from Tantallon towards Craigleith and due west. Small parties and usually low over the water—hundreds in all. At least thirty Snow Buntings and other passerines as well (T.C.S.).

Aberlady, 27th. Several parties offshore heading up Forth. Fresh to strong S.W. wind. Perhaps return passage after a cold spell (R.W.J.S.).

Gladhouse, 28th. A few came in from the north (D. G. Andrew).

A nest with one egg at Penicuik on 23rd March (W.J.E.).

A Grey Plover *Charadrius squatarola* was seen at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 20th September 1959 (W.M.). A great flock of some 1,500 Golden Plover *C. apricarius* in every grade of plumage was seen at Humble, East Lothian, on 28th March (A. Macdonald).

Ten Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* were at the Nith estuary, Glencaple, Dumfries, on 17th March and for about a week after (E. L. Roberts). Seven at the mouth of R. Endrick on 24th April and six on 1st May (M. Forrester, D. Stalker). A Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* was on the Clyde at Quothquhan on 21st September (R.E.-H.). A Spotted Redshank *T. erythropus* is reported from Hule Moss on 20th September (W.M.); two from Loch Leven on 21st September (apparently the first record for Kinross) (T.B., R.W.J.S.); and one near Fraserburgh on 3rd March (T. G. H. Woods). A Greenshank *T. nebularia* is reported from Islay on 25th or 26th January 1959 (I. Rainier) and one was seen at St Andrews and another on the Eden estuary on 1st February 1960 (B. Neath). A Little Stint *Calidris minuta* was seen at Aberlady on 27th September (David Hope).

On 22nd October at the mouth of the Galson River, Lewis, A. McEachern saw four Grey Phalaropes *Phalaropus fulicarius* and two Red-necked *P. lobatus*: this was the day before the "fantastic invasion" in the Isles of Scilly (*British Birds* 52:439). A fresh headless male Grey Phalarope on the beach at Gullane on 29th December may have been the one earlier at Gullane Point (*antea* 1:208). One, perhaps two, at Lundin Links on 22nd January (J. W. A. Hill).

On 19th and 22nd December a Scandinavian Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus f. fuscus* was seen at Drumpellier Loch, near Coatbridge, Lanark (W. Stein). The following Glaucous Gulls *L. hyperboreus* (all immature) are reported: one, Loch

Fleet, Sutherland, 31st May 1959 (T. Hedley Bell); one at Monifieth, Angus, on 30th January (B. Neath); two, Loch Indaal, Islay, 14th February (John Cameron, M.F.M.M.); one, Saltcoats, Ayrshire, 12th March (G. Fraser); one, Stornoway, 29th March (W.A.J.C., M.F.M.M.); one, Mallaig, 30th March, and one, Dunbar, 17th April (M.F.M.M.). An Iceland Gull *L. glaucoides* was at Girdleness, Aberdeen, on 20th March (D. I. M. Wallace): one spent most of the winter in Stornoway Harbour and a second bird was there on 27th March (W.A.J.C., M.F.M.M.).

On 30th January at Monifieth, Angus, there was a continuous stream of Little Gulls *L. minutus* moving east towards the mouth of the Tay over at least three hours; well over 100, probably 200, seen. About one in twenty was immature (B. Neath). Two at Dundee on 29th March (C. M. Morrison), and one at Gullane Point on 14th February (P. Gardiner, D. R. Grant, R. P. Snodgrass, etc.).

A Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* was seen at Aberlady on 18th August (David Hope) and an exceptionally late Common or Arctic Tern at Lundin Links on 7th November (R. S. Weir).

Three pairs of Wood Pigeons *Columba palumbus* and four Long-eared Owls *Asio otus* have wintered in a small patch of trees in Unst, Shetland, the former not having wintered there before (S. T. Saxby).

A Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis* at Quothquhan on 2nd August is R. E.-H.'s first for the area. One at Colinton Dell on 3rd February is the first for that part of Edinburgh (W. Pryde per I. V. Balfour-Paul).

The three Continental Great Tits *Parus m. major* on the Isle of May stayed over winter and, on 3rd April, five more arrived and fought with them—all were caught as they bickered in the trap (W.J.E.). Three also passed the winter in Unst (S. T. Saxby). Cf. *antea* 1:178 and 209.

A Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, a rare visitor to Shetland, was at Baltasound, Unst, during the latter half of March. A Ring Ouzel *T. torquatus* on 18th October at Garvald Farm, Peebles-shire, was evidently from farther north, as the local birds were all gone and the first Fieldfares arrived then (W.B.).

A Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* at Middleton Mains Farm, Midlothian, from 11th November until at least 26th December, is only the third the observer has seen in the area in eight years (W.B.). A pair in Leith Docks, with a Robin, on 4th February (C.P.R.). A pair and another female on coast opposite Fidra, East Lothian, 20th March (C. P. Ross). On 24th January, J.P. saw a male Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* among huts in the W.D. enclosure at Longannet, Fife.

On 17th March a male Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* was seen

in a garden at Bearsden, Dunbartonshire (G. E. R. Young) and another was seen at Falkirk from 3rd March to 1st April: it fed on food put out on a window-sill (Mrs V. Meadows).

At the height of the frost on 15th February a Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita* appeared in an Edinburgh garden (A. P. Meiklejohn). One was seen near Libberton, Lanark, on 13th March (M.F.M.M.). On 26th March one, which had apparently been present for a few days, was seen at Borve, Harris, and on the 27th one was singing at Laxdale, north of Stornoway (W.A.J.C., M.F.M.M.). On 3rd and 4th April one was seen and heard at Dornoch, and on the 9th one at Loch Evelix, three miles west of Dornoch: these are only the observer's third and fourth records for S.E. Sutherland (D. Macdonald).

A Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* was seen several times at Tarfside, Angus, between November and February (cf. *antea* 1:212) and what was probably the same bird was found dead in March (D. Jenkins). Another was seen on a number of occasions between 20th January and 17th March near Thornhill, Dumfries-shire and was once heard to sing (J. H. Swan): what may have been the same bird was seen at Durisdeer on 8th February (W.U.F.). Other single birds have been seen at milepost 5 on the road from Stirling to Doune on 31st March (W.J.E.); one near Loch Mhor, between Inverness and Fort Augustus, on 16th April (R. E.-H.); and one between Brodick and Lamlash, Arran, on 16th and 17th April (D. Stalker).

Eight or ten Siskins *Carduelis spinus* were in the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, on 12th February and single birds for a few days after (Jane Sandeman). About sixty Twites were at Longannet, Fife, on 7th January and twenty at Culross on the 10th (P.G.R.B.). R.E.-H. saw an immature male Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra* at Quothquhan, Lanark, on 2nd May 1959 and there were about twelve there, including two adult males, on 30th July 1959.

Between twenty and thirty Bramblings were in a field by Loch Ardinning (W. Stirling) on 25th January and 26 there on 13th February (W.U.F.), and about twenty near Crawfordjohn on 4th April (D. Lawson, A. McConnell). On 21st February one visited the Scottish Centre for Ornithology (G.W., M.I.W.) and there was a great flock of over 1,000 on 20th March at Mount Lothian, Midlothian (R.W.J.S.).

A small flock of Snow Buntings *Plectrophenax nivalis* was in the grounds of Jordanhill College, Glasgow, on 13th February (C. M. Morrison); eight on the north shore at Troon on 22nd February (R. M. Ramage, J. Shanks); and one—a new bird for the locality—in Hamilton Low Parks on 13th March (D. Lawson, A. McConnell).

A flock of 200 Tree Sparrows *Passer montanus* on 24th Jan-

uary at Crichton Castle, Midlothian, is very large for the area (C. K. Mylne).

## SHORT NOTES

(The note on the Scarlet Grosbeak is published through the kindness of the Editors of *British Birds*).

### BITTERN IN ROXBURGHSHIRE

A Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* was reported at a small pond near Riddell, Roxburghshire, on 27th January 1960. I visited the area on 31st January and received an excellent description of the bird from a farmer who had had a clear view of it standing in open water. He telephoned me next morning that he had seen it again, so I hurried out, taking some fish offal, since natural food would be scarce, there having been a heavy snowfall since its first appearance. Eventually, a lighter "tuft of grass" by the pondside proved to be the Bittern crouching down with neck retracted, only the streaks on the long neck feathers giving it away. The beak was held vertically. When a shepherd approached the neck was suddenly extended, the beak still vertical, and so it remained until a noisy tractor came near, whereupon the Bittern stalked into the cover of willowherb stems in slow motion and hunched attitude, giving me a view of green legs and long feet.

On 4th February it could not be found, but at the place where it was last seen was a heap of jelly on the grass and, poking among this, I discovered a group of unlaidd frog's eggs without covering jelly. It seems probable that a frog had been gutted, perhaps by the Bittern. It is an early date for a frog and too early for spawn this year.

The last local record was in December 1947 when a Bittern was found dead in Yarrow, Selkirkshire.

ARTHUR J. SMITH.

### STELLER'S EIDER IN SUTHERLAND

In bright sunshine on the afternoon of 22nd September 1959 we were looking at ducks from the roadside at the south-east corner of Loch Fleet, near Dornoch, Sutherland. The tide was in and there were many common Eiders *Somateria mollissima* swimming quite near us. A.W. noticed that one duck, only about 150 yards from the road, seemed unusually dark and also had a prominent purple speculum edged with bright white bars. Near this bird a very white common Eider was swimming as well as another duck with a purple speculum: (this was a common Eider; see following note.—Ed.). All three were away from the main mass of Eiders. When P.G. saw the



first duck swimming away from him, he said that it looked like a Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. D.J.'s first comment was that it looked like a small edition of a cross between a common Eider and a Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*.

We watched these birds with binoculars for the next quarter of an hour and were able to get within a hundred yards of them by walking down to the water's edge. The first bird was about the size of a Tufted Duck and was less mottled, much darker and much smaller than the common Eider females nearby. It sat very high on the water, with head and tail erect like a Tufted Duck. The speculum on its wing was a dark purple edged with two clear white bands, and it had a slight sheen in the sun unlike the matt surface of the rest of the plumage. The head was more delicate than a common Eider's and the bill more slender. Like most species of duck the bird had a fairly steep forehead, and the head and bill did not give that characteristic flattish impression given by the common Eider. This impression in the common Eider is heightened by the strip of feathers running far forward below the forehead, a strip absent in our bird. These characters were so distinct that we considered the bird to be a Steller's Eider *Polysticta stelleri*.

PHILIP GLAZIER.

DAVID JENKINS.

JAMES ROBERTSON-JUSTICE.

ADAM WATSON.

#### LITTLE CRAKE IN SHETLAND

During April 1959 a male Little Crake *Porzana parva* was picked up dead on the shore of a small loch at Unyeasound in the south part of Unst. One side of this loch is only about twenty-five yards from the sea, the other is bordered by hayfields. The prevailing winds during the month had been southerly. The identification of the bird was confirmed by Mr George Waterston and the bird is now in the Royal Scottish Museum.

S. T. SAXBY.

#### SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW IN SCOTLAND

On 25th February 1960 some boys appeared at my door, carrying a curlew-like bird, and Robert Robertson of Avoch, Easter Ross, explained how he had seen this bird probing about in the snow in his garden as if looking for food. When he approached it, it walked away, making no attempt to fly, and, in the enclosed space of the garden, a capture was easily made. A single glance at the carried bird showed me that here was no ordinary curlew: the Whimbrel size, the absence of Whimbrel headstripe, the bill more slender at the base than the Whimbrel's, combined with the grey colour to make

the identification of the bird as certainly a Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris*, and a detailed examination confirmed this.

Most of the feathers of the bird had considerable areas of a light colour, which gave the impression of a bird much lighter in tint than common Curlew *N. arquata* or Whimbrel *N. phaeopus*.

Head feathers were grey, white fringed; mantle brown-grey with white fringes; rump white with some spotted feathers; underparts pure white, spotted on the flanks with very definite and mostly heart-shaped sepia marks. These marks tailed out almost completely on the belly. Primaries were dark brown and the upper tail was barred brown and white.

A few measurements were taken: Length of bird, 385 mm.; wing, 255 mm.; beak, 80 mm. (From *Handbook* data a female).

I could find no injury, but the bird was suffering from hunger and exhaustion, as if it had flown a great distance beyond its strength. The open shore seemed to give it the best chance of rest and food, so I asked Mr John Macintosh next door to ring the bird and release it there. Later, after confirming the identification, he told me that on the shore, the curlew seemed unwilling to move, but soon had disappeared entirely. Had it turned up dead upon the shore I think I should have heard of it. This is the first record for Scotland of this species.

JOHN LEES.

(The Rev. Mr Lees submitted a typical feather from the underparts of this bird. Although the heart-shaped mark was not precisely identical with that illustrated in *The Handbook* (vol. 4, 179), it was very similar, and examination of skins of *tenuirostris* and other curlews in the Royal Scottish Museum show that there can be no doubt about the correctness of his identification. We can see exactly what Mr Lees means by its looking "grey, not brown." The centres of the mantle feathers in *tenuirostris* are a less intense brown than in the two common species, *arquata* and *phaeopus* (Curlew and Whimbrel), but more striking are the broader, paler grey fringes.—ED.)

#### PECTORAL SANDPIPER IN DUNBARTONSHIRE

On 18th October 1959, on the Dunbartonshire bank of the river Endrick at the point where it enters Loch Lomond, I flushed a small wader from the edge of a small pond fringed with persicaria. It flew off a short distance with a *tritt-tritt* call. Approaching its new resting place I saw it was slightly larger than a Dunlin, with long greeny yellow legs, a very obvious bib and a long neck with smallish head.

The head was brown with dark streaks and pale eyestripe;

bill dark, slightly down-curved and pale at base; back brown with ashy-edged feathers, like a scaly Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*; also on the back was a very distinct V marking; breast greeny yellow, with brown streaks and speckles ending in an apron very white below; tail black in the centre, white at the sides.

On several occasions I found myself being watched by the bird, which stretched its neck, peered at me and ducked down out of sight again. It showed a distinct preference for the grassy persicaria-edged pond.

I have no doubt that the bird was a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*.

M. FORRESTER.

(This is the locality where the only other record of the species for the Clyde area was made, in 1882; see McWilliam, *Birds of the Firth of Clyde*, p. 117—Ed.).

#### COLLARED DOVE IN PERTHSHIRE

On 16th February a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* entered the loft of a local pigeon fancier near Faskally, Pitlochry. The bird was brought to me and fully recovered, its identity in the meantime being confirmed by Dr James Campbell. It was released on 27th March in perfect health, when it flew strongly and high to a fir wood about a quarter of a mile away and was then lost to view. The delay in setting it free was due to it having moulted all its tail feathers *en bloc*, perhaps as a result of its hardships before it reached me. New quills, however, appeared almost immediately and were in use for several days before its release.

J. A. STUART.

(Mr Stuart has enclosed several of the moulted tail feathers which leave no doubt as to the bird's identity. This record is of considerable interest in showing how often the Collared Dove arrives in a new locality in an exhausted condition (cf. *antea* 1:190) and also shows how much this species is dependent on human support; but although the Collared Dove is likely now to turn up unexpectedly anywhere in Scotland, observers should be reminded of the existence of the very similar Barbary Dove *S. risoria*, a species only known in captivity, which has a black neck ring like the Collared, but differs from it in its more sandy colouration, in its pale primaries, and in the lack of a black base to the underside of the tail feathers. Its call also differs, that of the Collared Dove being a Wood Pigeon-like *coo-COO-coo*. The possibility of the Barbary Dove appearing in strange localities in the same way as the Collared Dove is illustrated by the fact that one arrived tailless and exhausted at Port Ellen, Islay, at the end of October 1959.—Ed.).

## SNOWY OWL IN KINCARDINESHIRE

On 3rd March I travelled from Aberdeen to Dundee by way of Cairn O' Mount. Over the summit (1488 feet a.s.l.), with the ice hacked back to the roadsides, I stopped and scanned the rising ground to the west. Some four or five hundred yards away there was a large pale bird beating along the broken ground. With 8x40 binoculars I saw that it was not only pale but white—not detergent white, but rather like the other girl in the advertisement. As it flapped and glided slowly towards me I saw the obvious head of an owl. Once it rested on a boulder, then on its fairly low-flying way. It was big—Buzzard size—and, as it neared, it seemed whiter. The upper wing was flecked irregularly with pale, milk chocolate marks—particularly in mid section. The head, tail and back were white: I could see the feet. Once the bird flipped over to pass behind some rocks and I saw the underwing and belly—white and unmarked. I know the Short-eared Owl; this was lighter and bigger. In all I watched it for five minutes, broken by the excursions it made behind the folds in the terrain, and it finally climbed high over the hill to the west. I take it that the bird was a Snowy Owl *Nyctea scandiaca*.

A. S. TEMPLE.

## CHOUGH IN ARGYLL

On a day between 30th May and 13th June 1959 my wife and I saw a bird which we are convinced was a Chough *Coracia pyrrhocorax* on a cliff face about a quarter of a mile north of Gannavan Sands, near Oban. Its unusual boisterous note first attracted me and, as it was disturbing the foliage of the creeper covering the cliff, I was able to focus my glasses on the spot before the bird showed itself. In size it resembled a Jackdaw, certainly no smaller, and its plumage was shiny bluish black. Its head was slightly elongated with a very bold eye and the most striking feature was its long, slightly down-curved bill, which was bright orange red. I was unable to see the bird's legs because of its position.

JOHN WHYTE.

(On 20th January 1960 a Chough was seen at Blairgowrie (Mrs Jean Hodge *per* Henry Boase) but, since it alighted in a garden, we cannot help thinking that it must have been an escape from captivity.—Ed.).

## DUSKY THRUSH IN ARGYLL

Just before the end of 1959 a strange bird arrived in our garden at Port Appin, Argyll. Although ravenously hungry, it was most wild and shy. It was in a very battered and storm-tossed condition. At first glance I thought it was a Redwing *Turdus musicus*, then the larger build, black breast, feathers

with white edges and outstanding white eye-stripe sent me running for the bird-books. I just did not know what to look for, but eventually found that the description of the Dusky Thrush *Turdus eunomus* tallied exactly with the bird I had seen. Neither my husband nor I are "out for rare birds" and so decided to say nothing about it, as we felt that people might think we were imagining things, but, when we heard on the wireless of one having been seen by experts, I decided to write to the B.B.C. about it.

In size the Dusky Thrush was smaller than a Mistle Thrush *T. viscivorus*, but a more robustly built bird than the Song Thrush *T. ericetorum*; it resembled the Redwing rather than either of them. It had a white (not cream or buff) eyestripe. Under the body could be described as white, but the breast and sides were definitely streaked with black. There was noticeable rufous colouration on the rump and the quills appeared to be bordered with rufous. When it took flight the rufous shade under the wings was easily seen.

CATHERINE McLENNAN.

(We agree with Mrs McLennan's identification of this bird as a Dusky Thrush; there can be no possibility of confusion with a Redwing—a species which she knows well. Another bird of the same species was found in Co. Durham in the same month (*British Birds* 53:96). The only other Scottish record of the Dusky Thrush is placed in square brackets in *The Birds of Scotland*.—Ed.).

#### YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER IN LEWIS

W. A. J. Cunningham writes: "On 10th November 1959, Mr A. McEachern, Principal Keeper at the Butt of Lewis lighthouse, telephoned to say that there was a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus* in his garden. His description tallied with *The Field Guide* in characteristics and behaviour and he is not unfamiliar with the bird, having handled one in Wales. He had been within six feet of it and at once noticed its small size, flycatcher-like flight and two wing-bars."

(We have since had the opportunity of discussing this occurrence with Mr McEachern personally and are convinced that it is correct.—Ed.).

#### ALBINO MEADOW PIPIT IN BENBECULA

On 26th May 1957, near Loch Torcusay, Benbecula, my wife and I discovered an albino pipit which was completely pale *café-au-lait* in colour. We both had excellent views (x12 binoculars) of this bird in flight, and from a few yards when it perched on a fence. No obvious markings could be seen in its plumage, so that it appeared of a uniform shade. Its legs

were pale pinkish and the eye dark; both its voice and its size were those of the Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. The albino was mildly mobbed at times by two or three normally plumaged Meadow Pipits collecting food for nestlings, but it was not in any way deterred, and, in fact, on occasions appeared to be attempting to court one of them.

Since albino pipits are infrequent this observation seems to be worthy of record and it is of interest that a somewhat similar individual was recorded on 1st August 1958 on the Isle of May by Donald Watson (*antea* 1:43).

JAMES W. CAMPBELL.

### SCARLET GROSBEAKS ON FOULA

On 2nd September 1959 a Scarlet Grosbeak *Carpodacus erythrinus* appeared in a small croft garden at the south end of Foula, which also contained Crossbills, two Barred Warblers and an "impossible" *Acrocephalus*—probably a Marsh Warbler. It was watched at close range for a long time. First seen front view, very close, a drab brown bird, not unlike a heavily built Twite with uniform thin streaking on the sides of the grey-brown breast, and a large steely sparrow-like beak. In side view it was a featureless bird, except for the two well delineated but very narrow bars on the closed wing, and the rather large and beady eye. In flight over short distances it was very sparrow-like, but with a forked tail, and flight rather undulating.

This bird was seen regularly in the same place up to the evening of 5th September, but on that day an identical bird appeared a mile further north in a cabbage-patch—first seen in the morning and still there the next day, when the other bird had gone.

JOHN BOYS.

### Obituary

#### THE LATE SAMUEL BRUCE

With the passing of Sammy Bruce at the age of eighty-one, Shetland has lost a great character and many bird-watching visitors to the islands have lost a staunch friend.

Bruce was a native of Whalsay and a boat-builder by trade. Among the boats which he and the late Peter Tulloch built was the *Soldian*, formerly owned by Mr G. Theo Kay, a yacht which took many keen bird-watchers on island trips. In Lerwick everyone knew Sammy, with his old-fashioned "Shetland-type" moustache and his keen blue eyes. During the migration periods he was often to be seen peering over garden walls into shrubberies with his small telescope, seeing whether there

were any "streenge birrds" about. He had a life-long interest in ornithology and was a first-class taxidermist.

His contributions to Shetland ornithology are considerable. His outstanding achievements were the addition to the Scottish List of the Greenish Warbler (1945) and the Collared Flycatcher (1947), while his Red-flanked Bluetail (1947) was the first for Britain. Bruce was an Honorary Member of the S.O.C. and a Life Member of the B.O.U. In June 1947 he attended the joint B.O.U./S.O.C. Conference in Edinburgh.

G. W.

## The Invasion of Waxwings *Bombycilla garrulus* in Scotland in October and November 1959

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN

**INTRODUCTION.** When the editors of "British Birds" refer to Waxwings almost disdainfully as a "now perennial subject" one almost feels that some excuse is needed for publishing a mere summary of records. This is the fourth successive winter in which there has been a sizeable invasion but, in spite of this unprecedented series of Waxwing-years, it should not be assumed that we can look for further annual irruptions. Furthermore, no two invasions seem to follow quite the same pattern, and this one was certainly strikingly different from those of the previous three winters. It therefore seems worth putting down some comments on the invasion while it is still fresh in mind, and also by way of thanking the very large number of observers who have sent in records and who are so numerous that there is unfortunately too little space to mention them by name.

**THE INVASION.** There were two early reports of Waxwings seen in the northern isles before the general invasion of Scotland; a single bird in Kirkwall from the end of August (*antea* 1:204) and a number observed in Unst during September and October. These records have not been included in the various tables and analyses of the invasion.

There were few other records until the last two days of October. The earliest report comes from Pitlochry—a place much favoured by the Waxwings this winter—where an observer who had Waxwings in the garden for six weeks up to 15th April 1959 heard them again on 22nd October and saw 5 two days later. The first few arrived at Thurso and Banchory about this time, and two were seen at Glassel on the 27th.

The invasion really got under way on Friday 30th October when a single Waxwing was seen at Dornoch, and there were 30 at Killin. On the last day of the month 10 were at Gullane—in the usual garden—six at Comrie, and odd birds at Fair Isle, Easter Ogil, and on the Isle of Canna. The only other record for October was of one in Newtyle at the end of the month.

From 1st to 25th November there were first reports from various places each day; thereafter there are very few records of new arrivals. A large proportion of the records came in answer to letters in the "Glasgow Herald" and "Scotsman" on 20th and 24th November respectively. Very few letters were received after the first flood of replies in spite of individual appeals for information sent to all correspondents. This was in complete contrast to last year when notes came trickling in for months and many observers wrote several times. That the Waxwings did not linger any-

where for long is clear both from the abrupt end to this correspondence and from the notes sent in. This was the most striking feature of the invasion when compared with those of recent winters. There seems little doubt that the reason for it was a general shortage of berries in Scotland. Thus there would be nothing to induce the birds to pause in their irruption-type migration (see Svardson: "British Birds," 1957:314-343). One is led to speculate whether they continue towards the south-west until they are lost in the Atlantic. In that case one might expect reports from Ireland and perhaps from ships at sea. Even in a normal year it is very difficult to get any direct observation of the departure of the birds—they just seem to fade away. Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn has suggested to me that this fourth invasion in three years may be the last meantime; he suggests that very few of the birds which reached Scotland are likely to survive the winter and return to their breeding haunts this time.

The following table lists the places where new arrivals or increases were noted each day during November; the number of birds is given in brackets. Much data cannot, of course, be tidily fitted into this table, and there is naturally no guarantee that the birds had arrived on the dates when they were first seen and reported, but the table does give the impression of a steady movement into and through the country. There is no obvious peak day for new arrivals, and it will be noted that the dates for which the most records have been listed were usually at the week-end.

**ARRIVAL OF WAXWINGS IN NOVEMBER 1959**—For earlier records see above. This table includes only accurately dated observations, though there is no guarantee that the birds actually arrived on these dates. A plus sign indicates an increased count at a place where Waxwings were already present.

- 1st—Poolewe (2) Stonehaven (15) Invergowrie (12) Kinnoull (7) Aberlady (18) Buchlyvie (4) Houston (5) Bridge of Weir (1) Isle of Cumbræ (6) Sannox, Arran (4 & 6) Girvan (5 & 2).
- 2nd—Forres (1) Pitlochry (+20) St Andrews (1) N. Berwick (18) Haddington (6) Loganlea (7) Greenock (6).
- 3rd—Kirkwall (6) Isle of May (3) Levenhall (14).
- 4th—Dornoch (+7) Ardgay (25) Aberdeen (1) Dundee (—) Kingoodie (—).
- 5th—Unst (1) Findhorn (20) Edinburgh (7 & 5) Glasgow (2) Maidens (1) Haugh of Urr (1).
- 6th—Golspie (7) Ullapool (1) Forres (+30) Crianlarich (12) Oban (1) Galashiels (1).
- 7th—Voe (—) Golspie (+18) Cromarty (12) Nairn (25) Old Meldrum (1) Montrose (7) Pitlochry (++) Elie (1) Barnacarry (2) Chapelton (2) Corrie, Arran (1) Moniaive (14).
- 8th—Inverness (20) Ellon (2) Laurencekirk (2) Cupar (3) Dysart (1) Kirkcaldy (30) Coldingham (2).
- 9th—Balintore (2) Pitlochry (+) Lochore (3) Stirling (4) Bearsden (2) Uplawmoor (1) Dumfries (15).
- 10th—Munlochry (2) Poyntzfield (6) Connel (2) St Andrews (+7) Crail (5) Dunbar (6) Castle Douglas (14).
- 11th—Avoch (3) Stornoway (1) Borge (1) Ullapool (+10) Ardrishaig (7) Kilmacollm (—) Gourrock (1).
- 12th—Lerwick (1) Plockton (1) Rhum (4) Torphins (4) Strathtay (1) Coshieville (1) Rathillet (12) Milngavie (1).
- 13th—Wick (1) Huntly (1) Rosyth (11).
- 14th—Nigg (1) Aberfeldy (6) Largo (1) E. Linton (6) nr. Tarbert (5).
- 15th—Plockton (+6) Aviemore (1) Kingussie (2) Killiecrankie (3) Broughty Ferry (12) Polmont (1).
- 16th—Helmsdale (2) Evanton (50) Gairloch (1) Aviemore (+3) Milton



- of Balgonie (5) Duns (2) Lochmaben (6) Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire (4).  
 17th—Arbroath (12) Kilmelford (15) Isle of May (2) Milnathort (25) Mauchline (30).  
 18th—Callander (8) Selkirk (2) Caerlaverock (1).  
 19th—Rogart (12) Aviemore (+13) Benmore, Dunoon (1).  
 20th—Appin (4) Newton Mearns (1) Kilmarnock (2) Ayr (9).  
 21st—Lybster (1) Skye (6) Coupar Angus (2) Dalmally (1) Crarae (?15) Grangemouth (1) Ayton (1) Reston (2) Earlston (40) Greenlaw (6) Dumfries (++) Caerlaverock (15).  
 22nd—Inverinan (1) Rattray (2) St Andrews (+20) Inverkeithing (2) S. Queensferry (15) Heiton (2) Gattonside (2) Galashiels (+10) Biggar (6) Kilmarnock (+6) Langholm (7).  
 23rd—Scourie (2) St Boswells (2).  
 24th—Invergordon (3) Dyce (1) Peterculter (2) Lochgilhead (3) Eyemouth (1) Hawick (1).  
 25th—Barcaldine (6) Dirleton (3).  
 26th & 27th—  
 28th—Pitcaple (+7).  
 29th—Burntisland (—).  
 30th—

As in many past years, it is most noticeable that some of the earliest records are from the west of the country—on 1st November for example. On the other hand there was a definite pause before more than odd birds reached the Solway area. The biggest, though not the first, influx in the south-west appears to have been on 21st November when Waxwings were seen in over a dozen sites about Dumfries. On the same day they were also noted elsewhere in the Solway area, numbers increased in Ayr, and they were seen in a number of places in Berwickshire.

**LARGE FLOCKS.** No exceptionally big flocks were reported except for one, mentioned in the "Inverness Courier" on 24th November 1959, which arrived at Fort Augustus one day the previous week and fell to devouring the elder and cotoneaster berries. There were over 200 birds in this flock. In previous years there has also been evidence of movement south-west down the Great Glen. The dates on which large flocks were seen are fairly complete so that it is perhaps worth listing all those of more than about 20 birds. The following table indicates the approximate numbers in the flocks and the dates on which they were first seen in such numbers. The popularity of flocks of 25 to 30 birds is rather striking.

- 30th Oct.—Killin (28)  
 2nd Nov.—Pitlochry (25)  
 4th Nov.—Ardgay (25)  
 6th Nov.—Forres (30)  
 7th Nov.—Golspie (25) Nairn (25)  
 8th Nov.—Kirkcaldy (30)  
 9th Nov.—Pitlochry (now up to 60)  
 c. 11th Nov.—Earlsferry (35)  
 14th Nov.—Kilmacolm (25)  
 " 16th Nov.—Evanton (50)  
 17th Nov.—Milnathort (25) Mauchline (30)  
 c. 18th Nov.—Fort Augustus (200)  
 21st Nov.—Earlston (30) Ayr (40)  
 22nd Nov.—St Andrews (30)

There is one further record—of 50 at Cardoness near Gatehouse of Fleet on 12th or 13th January. The presence of these birds when there were few Waxwings anywhere in the country, may have been connected with a remarkable hard-weather movement about this time which is mentioned in "British Birds" (1960:141).

**LATE RECORDS.** A mere 20 reports (96 birds) refer to Waxwings seen after the end of November. In December there were 12 reports (32 birds); in January, 6 reports (59 birds including the flock of 50 at Cardoness); in February, 3 reports (10 birds). Because some birds were present at the end of one month and the start of the next these figures do not agree with the totals given above. The January records come from Aberdeen (1 on 8th) Invergowrie (1 on 9th, 11th & 20th) Dundee (4 on 29th) Edinburgh (2 on 15th) Eskbank (1 on 6th) and Cardoness (50 on 12th or 13th). In February Waxwings were seen in Invergowrie (5 on 6th) Dundee (4 on 14th) and Burnside, Rutherglen (a single bird—the last reported—on 20th & 21st).

**DISTRIBUTION.** These meagre totals for the later months of the winter should be compared with a grand total of over 400 reports which were received recording more than 2,100 birds. A summary of these records is given at the end of this paper, and it will be seen that they come from all over the country. High totals come, as one would expect, mainly from the east coast, but the large numbers reported from the Clyde and Solway Faunal Areas are noteworthy. Relatively many more birds were reported from the west than last winter, and the dates of these records confirm that the Waxwings did not linger for long on their way across Scotland. This invasion seems to have been on a larger scale than the previous three, and the relative shortness of it heightened the impression one got of this at the time.

When Baxter & Rintoul compiled "The Geographical Distribution of Birds in Scotland" (1928) they sub-divided the Faunal Areas of Scotland into 50 smaller areas. They had records of Waxwings for 43 of these areas, and by 1939 they had added a further 3 in their annual lists of additions. Only Kinross and the islands of St Kilda, Bute, and Arran were Waxwingless. In their report on "The Migration of Waxwings into Scotland, 1946" (Edinburgh, 1947) the same authors give records for the Island of Bute. This winter there are several records from the Isle of Arran which seem to be the first; and the reports from Kinross would appear to be the first for that county so that only St Kilda still awaits the arrival of its first Waxwing.

This winter, Waxwings were recorded in no fewer than 44 of the 50 areas; the only areas in which none was seen being St Kilda, North Sutherland, West Inverness (a rather small area), South Inverness, Banff (but if one includes with Banff the small part of Aberdeenshire in the Moray Basin there are two records), and West Stirling.

On 19th November 1959 a dead Waxwing was picked up in Kirkcaldy bearing a Stockholm ring YM 3496. This bird had been ringed when full-grown, near Kalix in the Norrbotten district of northern Sweden (65.51 N, 23.08 E). Miss E. P. Leach reports that this is the first British recovery of a foreign-ringed Waxwing.

**FOOD.** In spite of the general scarcity of berries in Scotland this winter, Waxwings were not recorded taking other food to any great extent. Their favourite berry, as in the past two winters, was cotoneaster (116 reports). There are quite a few records for rose hips (40) and berberis (31) but the only other fruits of any significance were apples (11) and haws (10). A few observers named the species of cotoneaster visited and the total includes five records each of *horizontalis* and *simon-sii* and single records of *frigida* and *prostrata*. The berberis records include two each of *thunbergii* and *wilsonii*.

The exceptionally sunny summer of 1959 may account for Waxwings being able to find pears (4) still on the trees in Forres, Huntly, Edinburgh and Stevenston. Other berries and fruits mentioned were elder (3), privet (3), honeysuckle (2), rowan (2), bramble (2), viburnum (2)—including the yellow berries of *v. opalis sterile fructa luteo*), escallonia (2), holly (1), juniper (1) and crab apple (1).

In Shetland, where berries are hard to find at the best of times, Waxwings were seen taking the fruit of St John's-wort at Voe, and feeding on scraps in Lerwick with a group of Starlings. In Aberdeen one took brown bread put out on the lawn, and even fed it to another—possibly an immature bird. In St Andrews sultanas were taken. Young willow buds were tried at Kilmelford but the bird did not appear to like them. In their breeding haunts Waxwings freely take insects but this is an unusual item in their winter diet in this country. Birds seen at Nigg in elder bushes and at Montrose on a damson tree were thought to be searching for and taking insects, but it is difficult to be quite certain as both elder and damson might be visited in search of the fruits.

**SUMMARY OF RECORDS.** In this list a "report" means each separate group or movement reported by each observer. Thus, where the same birds have been reported independently by more than one observer, they count as more than one "report." So far as possible, each bird has been counted only once in the total column. Where observers have not given exact counts of the birds, estimates have been made and the total for that place has been shown in brackets.

	No. of reports	Total No. of birds	Earliest record
<b>ORKNEY &amp; SHETLAND</b>			
<b>Shetland</b>			
*Unst	1	1	5 Nov.
Voe	1	(5)	7 Nov.
Lerwick	1	1	12 Nov.
<b>Fair Isle</b>	1	2	31 Oct.
<b>Orkney</b>			
¶Kirkwall	1	6	3 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	5	15	31 Oct.

\*A number were seen in Unst during September and October.

¶One was seen in Kirkwall for about a week at the end of August and beginning of September (*antea* 1:204).

Both these early records have been left out of all the totals as they do not seem to belong to the main invasion.

#### OUTER HEBRIDES

Borve, South Harris	1	1	11 Nov.
Stornoway, Lewis	1	1	11 Nov.
Leurbost, Lewis	1	1	c. 20 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	3	3	11 Nov.

#### NORTH COAST & CAITHNESS

##### Caithness

Thurso	4	5	c. 25 Oct.
Wick	1	1	13 Nov.
Lybster	1	1	21 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	6	7	c. 25 Oct.

#### MORAY BASIN

##### Sutherland

Dornoch	3	12	30 Oct.
Golspie	3	25	6 Nov.
Brora	1	(5)	early Nov.

Helmsdale	1	2	16 Nov.
Rogart	1	12	19 Nov.
<b>Ross</b>			
Ardgay	1	25	4 Nov.
Cromarty	1	12	7 Nov.
Balintore	1	2	9 Nov.
Munlochy	1	2	10 Nov.
Poyntzfield	1	5	10 Nov.
Avoch	1	3	11 Nov.
Nigg	1	2	14 Nov.
Evanton	1	50	16 Nov.
Invergordon	1	3	24 Nov.
<b>Inverness</b>			
Inverness	8	25	8 Nov.
Aviemore	3	22	15 Nov.
Kingussie	1	2	15 Nov.
Fort Augustus	1	200	c. 18 Nov.
<b>Nairn</b>			
Nairn	3	25	7 Nov.
<b>Moray</b>			
Forres	5	35	2 Nov.
Findhorn	4	20	5 Nov.
Lossiemouth	1	2	early Nov.
Elgin	3	12	c. 10 Nov.
<b>Aberdeen</b>			
Huntly	2	2	13 Nov.
	<hr/> 49	<hr/> 505	<hr/> 30 Oct.
<b>DEE</b>			
<b>Aberdeen</b>			
Aberdeen	11	30	4 Nov.
Oyne	1	1	7 Nov.
Ellon	1	2	8 Nov.
Kintore	1	(5)	early Nov.
Old Meldrum	1	1	early Nov.
Pitcaple	2	8	early Nov.
Torphins	1	4	12 Nov.
Culter	1	1	c. 15 Nov.
Dyce	1	4	c. 18 Nov.
Peterculter	1	2	24 Nov.
<b>Kincardine</b>			
Banchory	3	(30)	c. 25 Oct.
Glassel	1	2	27 Oct.
Stonehaven	3	22	1 Nov.
	<hr/> 28	<hr/> 112	<hr/> c. 25 Oct.
<b>TAY</b>			
<b>Kincardine</b>			
Laurencekirk	1	2	8 Nov.
<b>Angus</b>			
Newtyle	3	5	in Oct.
Easter Ogil	2	9	31 Oct.
Invergowrie	3	20	7 Nov.
Dundee	5	18	4 Nov.
Montrose	3	(20)	7 Nov.
Forfar	1	(5)	early Nov.



Cock King Ouzel and Young.

(Photograph by William Protherston).

Monifieth	2	8	c. 10 Nov.
Broughty Ferry	1	12	15 Nov.
Arbroath	1	12	17 Nov.
Kirriemuir	1	1	mid Nov.
Tealing	1	(5)	early Dec.
<b>Perth</b>			
Pitlochry	8	75	heard 22 Oct. seen 24 Oct.
Killin	1	30	30 Oct.
Comrie	1	6	31 Oct.
Rosemount	1	11	c. end Oct.
Kinnoull	1	8	1 Nov.
Kingoodie	1	(5)	5 Nov.
Crianlarich	3	12	6 Nov.
Bridge of Tilt	2	12	early Nov.
Coshieville	1	1	12 Nov.
Strathtay	1	1	12 Nov.
Aberfeldy	1	6	14 Nov.
Killiecrankie	2	15	15 Nov.
Coupar Angus	1	2	21 Nov.
Rattrav	1	2	22 Nov.
<b>Fife</b>			
Newburgh	3	13	c. 2 Nov.
*St Andrews	17	(45)	2 Nov.
Cupar	1	3	8 Nov.
Gateside	1	7	early Nov.
Rathillet	1	14	12 Nov.
	73	385	22 or 24 Oct.

\*Only a single bird in St Andrews before 10th Nov. in spite of the large number of reports.

**FORTH**

<b>Isle of May</b>	2	3	2 Nov.
<b>Fife</b>			
Colinsburgh	2	6	1st wk. Nov.
Elie	2	8	7 Nov.
Dysart	1	1	8 Nov.
Kirkcaldy	9	35	8 Nov.
Lochore	1	3	9 Nov.
Crail	4	12	10 Nov.
Earlsferry	1	35	c. 11 Nov.
Rosyth	1	11	13 Nov.
Milton of Balgonie	1	5	16 Nov.
Inverkeithing	1	2	22 Nov.
Burntisland	1	(5)	29 Nov.
Anstruther	1	(5)	— Nov.
Lundin Links	1	(5)	— Nov.
<b>Kinross</b>			
Milnathort	4	30	12 Nov.
<b>Clackmannan</b>			
Alloa	1	4	c. 24 Nov.
<b>Perth</b>			
Callander	2	(15)	early Nov.
<b>Stirling</b>			
Buchlyvie	3	8	1 Nov.
Stirling	1	4	9 Nov.
Cambuskenneth	1	2	c. 12 Nov.

Polmont	1	1	15 Nov.
Grangemouth	2	3	21 Nov.
<b>West Lothian</b>			
South Queensferry	1	15	22 Nov.
<b>Midlothian</b>			
Loganlea	1	7	2 Nov.
Levenhall	2	14	3 Nov.
Edinburgh	12	28	5 Nov.
Kirknewton	1	(5)	— Nov.
Eskbank	1	1	6 Jan.
<b>East Lothian</b>			
North Berwick	2	22	c. 30 Oct.
Gullane	1	10	31 Oct.
Aberlady	8	20	1 Nov.
Haddington	3	16	2 Nov.
Dunbar	3	15	10 Nov.
East Linton	1	7	14 Nov.
Dirleton	2	4	25 Nov.
	—	—	—
<b>TWEED</b>	81	367	c. 30 Oct.
<b>Berwick</b>			
Coldingham	3	3	8 Nov.
Paxton	1	(5)	c. 11 Nov.
Duns	10	15	16 Nov.
Ayton	1	1	21 Nov.
Reston	1	2	21 Nov.
Earlston	8	40	21 Nov.
Greenlaw	1	6	21 Nov.
Eyemouth	1	1	24 Nov.
Whitchester	1	1	13 Dec.
<b>Peebles</b>			
Broughton	1	(5)	— Nov.
<b>Selkirk</b>			
Galashiels	4	17	6 Nov.
Selkirk	1	3	18 Nov.
<b>Roxburgh</b>			
Denholm	2	(7)	c. 21 Nov.
Gattonside	1	2	22 Nov.
Heiton	1	2	22 Nov.
St Boswells	1	2	23 Nov.
Hawick	1	1	24 Nov.
	—	—	—
	39	113	6 Nov.
<b>NORTH-WEST HIGHLANDS</b>			
<b>Sutherland</b>			
Scourie	1	2	23 Nov.
<b>Ross</b>			
Poolewe	2	4	1 Nov.
Ullapool	2	15	6 Nov.
Plockton	3	8	12 Nov.
Gairloch	1	1	16 Nov.
	—	—	—
	9	30	1 Nov.
<b>SKYE &amp; INNER HEBRIDES</b>			
Isle of Canna	2	2	31 Oct.

Isle of Rhum	1	4	12 Nov.
Scorrybreck, Skye	2	6	21 Nov.
	<hr/> 5	<hr/> 12	<hr/> 31 Oct.
<b>ARGYLL</b>			
<b>Argyll</b>			
Ledaig	1	8	2 or 3 Nov.
Oban	1	1	6 Nov.
Airds Bay, L. Etive	1	5	?early Nov.
Connel	1	2	10 Nov.
Tarbert	1	5	14 Nov.
Kilmelford	1	15	17 Nov.
Appin	1	4	20 Nov.
Dalmally	1	1	21 Nov.
Inverinan	1	1	22 Nov.
Barcaldine	1	6	25 Nov.
	<hr/> 10	<hr/> 48	<hr/> 2 or 3 Nov.
<b>CLYDE</b>			
<b>Bute</b>			
Isle of Arran	4	14	1 Nov.
Millport, Cumbrae	1	6	1 Nov.
<b>Argyll</b>			
Barnacarry	1	2	7 Nov.
Ardrishaig	2	7	11 Nov.
St Catherine's	1	2	c. 11 Nov.
Tighnabruaich	1	2	c. 14 Nov.
Benmore, Dunoon	1	1	19 Nov.
Crarae	1	(10)	21 Nov.
Lochgilphead	1	3	24 Nov.
<b>Dunbarton</b>			
Helensburgh	3	2	8 Nov.
Bearsden	1	6	9 Nov.
Milngavie	1	1	12 Nov.
<b>Lanark</b>			
Glasgow	8	35	5 Nov.
Chapelton	1	2	7 Nov.
Biggar	4	16	22 Nov.
Burnside, Rutherglen	1	1	20 Feb.
<b>Renfrew</b>			
Houston	1	5	1 Nov.
Bridge of Weir	5	13	c. 1 Nov.
Greenock	1	6	2 Nov.
Uplawmoor	1	1	9 Nov.
Gourock	2	2	11 Nov.
Kilmacolm	4	26	11 Nov.
Kilbarchan	2	11	c. 12 Nov.
Howwood	1	(5)	mid Nov.
Lochwinnoch	1	(5)	mid Nov.
Newton Mearns	1	1	20 Nov.
Giffnock	1	(5)	c. 23 Nov.
<b>Ayr</b>			
Girvan	5	31	1 Nov.
Maidens	1	1	5 Nov.
Prestwick	2	5	c. 5 Nov.
Stevenston	1	3	9 Nov.
Largs	1	1	14 Nov.
Mauchline	1	30	17 Nov.



Kilmarnock	2	9	20 Nov.
Ayr	5	62	20 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
<b>SOLWAY</b>	70	332	1 Nov.
<b>Wigtown</b>			
Stranraer	1	6	c. 11 Nov.
<b>Kirkcudbright</b>			
Haugh of Urr	1	1	5 Nov.
Kendoon	1	(5)	early Nov.
Castle Douglas	3	15	10 Nov.
Kirkcudbright	2	5	c. 15 Nov.
Dalry	2	4	16 Nov.
Gatehouse of Fleet	1	1	early Dec.
Cardoness	1	50	12 or 13 Jan.
<b>Dumfries</b>			
Moniaive	1	14	7 Nov.
Tynron	1	(5)	c. 7 Nov.
Dumfries	14	(70)	9 Nov.
Lochmaben	2	6	16 Nov.
Caerlaverock	2	16	18 Nov.
Thornhill	1	(5)	mid Nov.
Lockerbie	1	(5)	mid Nov.
Annan	1	(5)	mid Nov.
Langholm	1	7	22 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	36	220	5 Nov.

**To summarise these details:**

Orkney & Shetland	5	15	31 Oct.
Outer Hebrides	3	3	11 Nov.
North Coast & Caithness	6	7	c. 25 Oct.
Moray Basin	49	505	30 Oct.
Dee	28	112	c. 25 Oct.
Tay	73	385	Heard 22 Oct. Seen 24 Oct.
Forth	81	367	c. 30 Oct.
Tweed	39	113	6 Nov.
North-west Highlands	9	30	1 Nov.
Skye & Inner Hebrides	5	12	31 Oct.
Argyll	10	48	2 or 3 Nov.
Clyde	70	332	1 Nov.
Solway	36	220	5 Nov.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	414	2149	Heard 22 Oct. Seen 24 Oct.
	<hr/>	<hr/>	

**THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB****OFFICIAL SECTION****CLUB LIBRARY**

The Club is much indebted to the following members and friends who have generously donated books and Journals to the Club Library: T. C. Cairns, James Fisher, Dr Ronald Fairbairn, P. W. G. Gunn, Peter Holt, John King, Ronald Logan, R. A. MacBride, Derek H. Mills, Dr Ian

Pennie, Ian M. Thomson and A. Dick Wood, Mr and Mrs J. H. B. Monro, the Misses C. C. Campbell, Rona Hunter and E. A. Munro, and the Nature Conservancy. In addition, nearly 200 books were received from the estate of the late T. Leslie Smith of Dundee. These books have greatly increased the scope of the reference and lending sections of the Library, and members are reminded that it is possible to borrow duplicate volumes. Anyone wishing to borrow a book on a specific subject should consult the Secretary.

During the winter, Discussion groups for both Members and Junior Members were held monthly and were well attended.

### J.B.R.C. CONFERENCE

The Junior Bird Recorders' Club (the Junior Branch of the R.S.P.B.) held a very successful weekend Conference in the Club Library from 8th to 10th April 1960, when approximately twenty members met for lectures, films and discussion.

### CLUB TIE AND BADGE

Members should note that the cost of the Club tie, a crested tit motif in silver on a blue or green background, has now been increased to 16/9 post extra. The ties are available at R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Edinburgh.

The Club badge, a crested tit in silver on blue enamel brooch, is available from the Secretary, price 2/6.

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The thirteenth Annual Conference and twenty-third Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held in the Marine Hotel, North Berwick, from 28th to 30th October 1960. The Conference programme will be published in the next issue of "Scottish Birds," and this intimation is given in order that members may make reservations at hotels in North Berwick in good time. **Bookings for the Marine Hotel should be made through the Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.** Bookings for ALL OTHER HOTELS must be made direct with the hotel in which you wish to stay. Owing to the shortage of single rooms, members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your hotel for lunches each day.

### Hotel Accommodation in North Berwick

MARINE HOTEL (Tel. 2406). Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday 28th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday 29th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday 30th—£4, 15s 0d.

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The above terms are quoted as a guide ONLY, and prices should be confirmed.

# The Scottish Ornithologists' Club Tie

Illustrated is the Official Club Tie, of which R. W. Forsyth's are the sole suppliers. The tie is made from Terylene with the bird motif in silver. Blue or green background. 16/9.

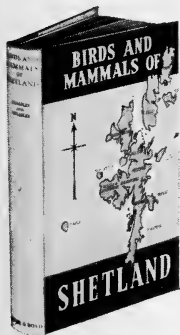


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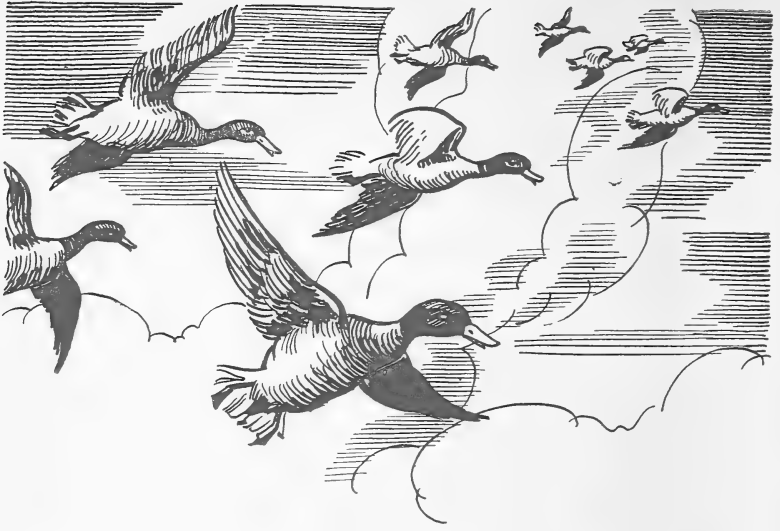
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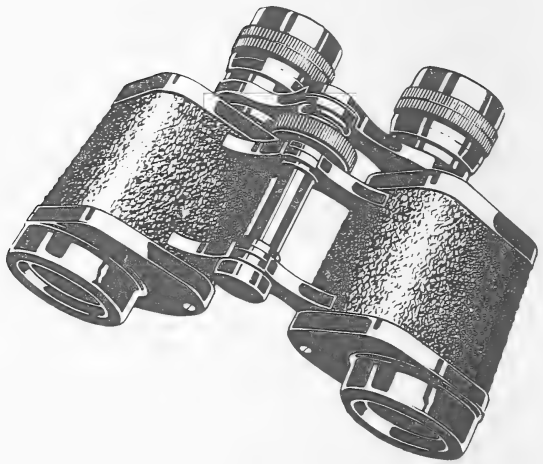
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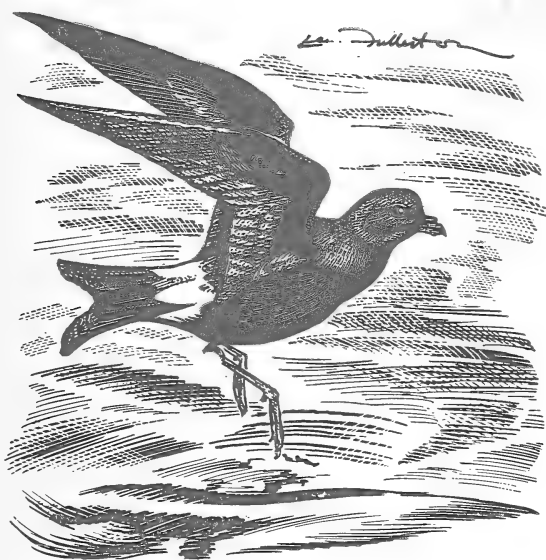


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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I No. 9*

*Autumn 1960*

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. 1 No. 9

Autumn 1960

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Editorial

**R**EADERS of the present number of *Scottish Birds* will notice such details as a number of records of the Chiffchaff from the northern Highlands or a report on the increase of the newly established Cormorant colony in the Forth, and we feel that information on alterations in the range or populations of birds in Scotland is of special interest and, in the long run, of more importance than isolated records of very rare vagrants. The first recorded nesting (in 1958) of the Green and Wood Sandpipers in Scotland, the re-establishment of the Osprey, and colonisation by the Collared Dove are of course sensational, but the spread into the north and west of such species as the Carrion Crow, Garden Warbler and Chiffchaff needs to be as fully documented, as does the spread over the Border of southern species like the Turtle Dove, Little Owl and Green Woodpecker, or the spread of such a well-known bird as the Eider. Several of these problems are already in capable hands, but there is a lot still to be investigated: does the Nuthatch, as rumoured, really breed in Scotland—and so on? These few words are, in short, a plea for less attention to rarities and for more attention to distribution and changes in distribution.

## REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1959

JAMES W. CAMPBELL

### *Introduction*

In 1954 the Council of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club appointed a Scottish Bird Records Committee to review annually the records of importance to Scottish Ornithology. This committee was under the Chairmanship of the late Dr E. V. Baxter; in January 1960 I was invited by the Council to act as Chairman and to prepare a report on the findings of the

Committee relating to records *published* during 1959.

The members of this committee at the present time are: D. G. Andrew, A. G. S. Bryson, A. B. Duncan, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Commander Sir Geoffrey Hughes-Onslow, Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Dr Ian D. Pennie, George Waterston, Kenneth Williamson and Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards. This is the seventh report to be published; it is concerned primarily with records *published* during 1959. The following journals have been searched: *Scottish Birds* (S.B.), *British Birds* (B.B.), *Bird Migration* (B.M.), *Bird Study* (B.S.), *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* (F.I.B.O.B.), *Ibis*, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* and *Scottish Field*. The abbreviations used in this report are shown in brackets; in addition, S.N. refers to *The Scottish Naturalist*.

Records published in *Country Life*, *The Field* and *Bird Notes* have been considered in the past, but are not included in the present report; any relevant observations, however, for 1959 will be included in the 1960 report. A certain number of 1959 records not referred to here are being held over for further consideration.

Previous Reports by this Committee were published in *The Scottish Naturalist* 1955:98, 1956:1, 1957:37, 1957:170, and *Scottish Birds* 1958:30, 1959:117.

## BIRDS NEW TO SCOTLAND

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*. One near Hamilton, Lanark, 13th-21st October 1956 (S.B. 1:94).

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO *Clamator glandarius*. One at Tingwall, Orkney, 14th-30th August 1959 (S.B. 1:152).

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. One Loch Brow, Shetland, 4th-5th June 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:61). See also caveat B.B. 53:168.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*. One Isle of May, Forth, 30th September-3rd October 1959; trapped and photographed (S.B. 1:153). The possibility of earlier records has been suggested in S.B. 1:195, but in our opinion these cannot be accepted on the information available.

SONG SPARROW *Melospiza melodia*. One Fair Isle, Shetland, 27th April-10th May 1959; trapped and photographed (B.B. 52:419). There appears to be no previous European record of this American species; the closely allied *M. lincolni* has occurred once, in Germany.

## NEW BREEDING RECORDS FOR SCOTLAND

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. A pair, with one chick, found in Inverness-shire 29th May, 1959 (B.B. 52:430).

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. Adult, with two flying young still with traces of down, found in Sutherland 23rd July 1959, and subsequently until 5th August (S.B. 1:150).



## BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

WHITE-BILLED DIVER *Gavia adamsii*. Two near Avoch Harbour, 4th February 1959 (S.B. 1:91); first for East Ross.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*. One on Loch Fyne, 11th December 1955 (S.B. 1:100); first for South Argyll.

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*. In the Review for 1957 (S.B. 1:30), the Committee rejected a record of one seen, Loch Leven, 25th July 1957 (*Field* 1957:279). Further information has been published showing that G. T. Jamieson also observed a Manx Shearwater on Loch Leven on 26th July 1957 (S.B. 1:73). We now accept both these records as the first for Kinross.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*. A pair east of Endrick Mouth, 19th April 1959 (S.B. 1:100); first for West Stirling.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. A pair with young on Loch Ghuilbinn, north of Loch Ossian, 29th July 1957 (S.B. 1:92); first for South Inverness.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*. One at St Kilda, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. One at St Kilda, 11th May 1958 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. Four on Lake of Men-teith, 16th November 1957 (S.B. 1:64); first for South Perth.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. One on Loch Leven, 15th March 1959 (S.B. 1:92); first for Kinross.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. One at St Kilda, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

SMEW *Mergus albellus*. One on Loch Macanrie, 1st March 1959 (S.B. 1:99); first for South Perth.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. One at St Kilda, 11th July 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons albifrons*. One, sometimes two, in a locality in Kirkcudbrightshire, 18th December 1955 (B.B. 49:227); first definite record of the eastern race for Solway and Kirkcudbright.

GREENLAND WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. One at Hamilton, 29th October 1957 (S.B. 1:65) is the first record of the western race for Clyde and Lanark.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser arvensis*. One at St Kilda, 15th September 1957 (S.B. 1:56); first for island.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. At least 110 at St Kilda, 25th April 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

SNOW GOOSE *Anser caerulescens*. One shot near Errol, about 30th November 1957, was identified as "of the Lesser form *A.c. hyperboreus*", now *A.c. caerulescens* (S.B. 1:121); first for North Perth. Three Loch of Strathbeg, 22nd October 1958 (S.B. 1:68); first for Dee and Aberdeen. One Appin, 6th November 1958 (S.B. 1:67); first for Argyll and North Argyll.

Four near South Queensferry, 30th November 1958 (S.B. 1:121); first for West Lothian. One between Pityoulish and Tulloch, 5th April 1959 (S.B. 1:122); first for East Inverness. It has been reported (B.B. 53:162) that three Snow Geese, two of them of the blue phase, wandered from a collection near Dumfries early in 1958.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*. Twenty-six at St Kilda, 24th April 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island. One at Auldhouse, mid-November 1958 (S.B. 1:77); first for Lanark.

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*. One at St Kilda, 24th August 1958 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

**QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*. One at St Kilda, 20th May 1959 (B.M. 1:73); first for island.

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*. One at St Kilda, 13th May 1957 (S.B. 1:58); first for island.

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Charadrius d. domenicus*. One at Fair Isle, 14th September 1956 (S.B. 1:68); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

**TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*. One east of Endrick Mouth, 19th May 1957, and two in Clyde Valley above Hamilton, 11th August 1957 (S.B. 1:65); first for West Stirling and Lanark respectively.

**DOWITCHER** *Limnodromus* sp. One at Hule Moss, 20th September 1958 (S.B. 1:34 & 76); first for Tweed and Berwick. Two species of Dowitcher are recognised, but there is insufficient detail for specific determination.

**JACK SNIBE** *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One at St Kilda, 21st September 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*. One at St Kilda, 26th July 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*. One at St Kilda, 25th May 1958, caught and ringed (S.B. 1:59); first for island. One at Hamilton Low Parks, 30th May 1959 (S.B. 1:124); first for Lanark. One in the Isle of Skye, 3rd June 1959 (S.B. 1:151); first for North West Highlands and Skye.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*. One between Grangemouth and Kincardine, 31st August 1958 (S.B. 1:71); first for East Stirling. One at Hule Moss, 16th September 1958 (S.B. 1:71); first for Tweed and Berwick. One on Isle of May, 17th September 1958 (B.M. 1:5); first for island.

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** *Tringa melanoleuca*. One at Newburgh, Ythan Estuary, 25th October 1957, subsequently found dead (S.B. 1:94); first for Scottish Mainland, Dee and Aberdeen.

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*. One at St Kilda, 3rd August 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris maritima*. One at St Kilda, 13th September 1957 (S.B. 1:59); first for island.

**SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER** *Calidris acuminata*. (See Birds New

to Scotland); first for Clyde and Lanark.

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One at Fair Isle, 18th September 1958 (B.M. 1:3); first for island and second Scottish record.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus fuscus*. Three at Milngavie Reservoir, 11th January 1958 (S.B. 1:65); first record of Scandinavian race for Dumbarton.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. One at Craigmaddie, 8th February 1959 (S.B. 1:100); first for West Stirling.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Three in Ayrshire, 26th May 1959; may have been present since 1957 (S.B. 1:125); first for Clyde and Ayr.

GREAT SPOTTED CUCKOO *Clamator glandarius*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Orkney.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. One at St Kilda, 10th August 1958 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. One at St Kilda, 22nd May 1957 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*. One near mouth of Halladale, 14th August 1959 (S.B. 1:153); first for North Sutherland.

GREEN WOODPECKER *Picus viridis*. One at West Loch Tarbert, 28th March 1959, and one at Blanefield, 9th May 1959 (S.B. 1:132); first for Argyll and North Argyll, and West Stirling respectively.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calendrella cinerea*. One, "probably of the race *brachydactyla*" at St Kilda, 29th May 1957 (S.B. 1:60); first for island.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. One at St Kilda, 27th May 1958 (S.B. 1:61); first for island.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone corone*. One at St Kilda, 30th August 1959 (B.M. 1:143); first for island.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*. One at St Kilda, 28th April 1959 (B.M. 1:72); first for island.

[PIED WHEATEAR *Oenanthe leucomela*. One Dunrossness, 30th March 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:62); we consider the published evidence insufficient for acceptance.]

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. One at St Kilda, 26th October 1958 (B.M. 1:25); first for island.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One trapped at St Kilda, 12th May 1958 (S.B. 1:61); first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

BLUETHROAT *Cyanosylvia svecica*. One, ?race, at St Kilda, 15th May 1959 (B.M. 1:73); first for island. One, *C.s. cyaneula*, caught at St Ola, 31st March 1958 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:65); first for Orkney.

GREAT REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Shetland.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. One at St Kilda, 4th August 1957 (S.B. 1:61); first for island.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One at St Kilda, 20th September 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for Outer Hebrides and St Kilda.

FIRECREST *Regulus ignicapillus*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Forth and Isle of May.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Moscicapa striata*. One at St Kilda, 10th May 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

HEDGE SPARROW *Prunella modularis*. One at St Kilda, 10th May 1958 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta petrosus*. One at Loch Leven, 16th November 1958 (S.B. 1:97); first for Kinross.

"BLUE-HEADED" WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*. One, resembling the race *flava*, west of Grangemouth, 22nd June 1959 (S.B. 1:129); first for East Stirling.

NORTHERN BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula pyrrhula*. One, northern foothills of Cairngorms, 28th October 1958 (S.B. 1:98); first for Moray and East Inverness. In accepting this record the Committee were not influenced by the moorland habitat in which this bird was reported.

TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL *Loxia leucoptera bifasciata*. One found dead at Newtonmore, 21st August 1959 (S.B. 1:154); this is the first record for Moray and East Inverness.

RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. One at North Rona, 25th June 1958 (B.S. 6:168); first for Outer Hebrides other than St Kilda (See S.B. 1:119).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniculus*. One at St Kilda, 5th May 1957 (S.B. 1:62); first for island.

SONG SPARROW *Melospiza melodia*. (See Birds New to Scotland); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. One at St Kilda, 11th May 1958 (S.B. 1:63); first for island.

## FIRST BREEDING RECORDS FOR AREAS AND COUNTIES

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. (See Birds New to Areas and Counties); first breeding for South Inverness.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. The finding of a nest near Navidale in 1915 or 1916, hitherto unpublished, is the earliest record of breeding in South-East Sutherland (S.B. 1:66). First bred in Caithness 1931 (B.B. 36:114). First evidence of breeding for Banff obtained June 1950 (S.N. 1952:178).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. Pair with five newly hatched chicks seen near Balmaha, 19th May 1957 (S.B. 1:65); first breeding for West Stirling.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. (See New Breeding Records for Scotland); bred Inverness-shire 1959, area not disclosed.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. (See New Breeding Rec-

ords for Scotland); bred Sutherland 1959, area not disclosed.

**GREAT SKUA** *Catharacta skua*. First confirmation of breeding in Outer Hebrides obtained June 1955 when nests and eggs found; reports suggest breeding at least ten years earlier (S.B. 1:156).

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*. Bred in Ayrshire, 1959 (S.B. 1:125); first breeding record for Clyde and Ayr, and second breeding locality for Scotland.

## BIRDS AT NORTH RONA, OCTOBER 1959

J. MORTON BOYD

*Nature Conservancy, Edinburgh*

**AN** expedition from the Nature Conservancy visited the North Rona National Nature Reserve from 1st to 26th October 1959 to study the seal herd. A daily record of the birds was maintained by the author, including observations made by the other members of the party, H. R. Hewer, J. D. Lockie and J. MacGeoch. A general analysis of the migration is given elsewhere (Boyd 1959) and these notes cover the remainder of the observations.

North Rona has been described by Bagenal and Baird (1959) who also supply a sketch map showing the places referred to here. All times are G.M.T.

The party was based on the ruined village and the fank at Fianuis was our advance post for seal study. Each day the author made a circuit of the island, usually starting at 0930 hours. The route was to the cliff edge about Gaedha Blatha Mor, round the north and west cliffs to Sceapull, along the south coast to the southern slopes of Toa Rona, over the summit down to Geodha Mairi and across the slope to Geodha Leis, Sgeildige and the Tunnel Cave. The chasms at Geodha Mairi and Geodha Leis were the main refuges for small migrants. At about 1600 hours another partial circuit was made from fank to village, usually by way of the north-west cliff edges in easterly winds, and by Toa Rona in westerlies. On a few days the route and times were modified by bad weather. The recording of the birds on Fianuis was not systematic due to restrictions on movements caused by the seal study, but a large part of the peninsula was visited daily.

### SYSTEMATIC LIST

*(new records for the island are marked with an asterisk)*

Black-throated Diver *Gavia arctica*. One on 10th and 12th.

Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The party was living in the village, which possesses a dense breeding colony

in July and August (Atkinson 1949: Bagenal and Baird 1959): the author was sleeping in the "Manse" under a tarpaulin roof and the others in tents nearby. No young was heard calling from the walls during the occupation and no adult attempted to enter under the tarpaulin canopy during the first week—later the canopy completely covered the chamber and entry was impossible; nor were young heard calling elsewhere in the village. One chick was discovered on 1st October under a stone on the south side of the Manse. It had moulted about three quarters of its infant plumage when first seen and the burrow was inspected every other day. It was last seen on the 12th.

Adults were heard flight-calling over the village on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th and 13th, but not thereafter. The cessation of flight-calling coincided with the departure of the chick. It was dark by 1800 hours, but flight-calling did not occur until 2300, 2320, 0130, 0230, 0400 and 0415 hours approximately. On the 2nd and 3rd flight-calling was heard twice on the same night, at 0230 and 0430 hours. On all occasions the calling lasted for a few moments and each time the impression was of a single bird fighting. No further evidence of the presence of the species was found after the early hours of the 13th.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Young were heard calling from the walls of the fank on the 1st and at the storm beach on the 5th. Cheeping similar to calls of young were heard at about 2100 hours on the 20th in St Ronan's Cell.

Sooty Shearwater *Procellaria grisea*. Three seen during the voyage to the island on the 1st.

Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Large numbers were present on the cliffs, but none inland. They left the cliffs daily and formed rafts on the water to the lee-side of the island.

Gannet *Sula bassana*. Small flights of mature birds were seen flying past the island daily in the direction of Sula Sgeir; solitary birds were common.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Small number present, particularly on Lidgeir Mhor.

Heron *Ardea cinerea*. One on the 4th and 5th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. One to four on the 3rd, 7th, 8th and 14th.

\*Teal *A. crecca*. One to six on the 3rd and 22nd.

\*Wigeon *A. penelope*. One to four on the 3rd, 7th, 17th and 22nd.

\*Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. One on the 9th.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. Four on the 3rd.

Eider *Somateria mollissima*. Probably more than 100 between the 1st and 26th.

[White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. Four, probably of this species, on the 24th.]

\*Pink-footed Goose *A. brachyrhynchus*. Forty-two on the 16th, as well as one immature on the island. They appeared from the north-east in full cry at about 1630 hours, flew across the island to Scepull and altered course sharply. Climbing, they disappeared in the direction of Sutherland which was visible on the horizon.

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. Eleven to twenty-three on 24th to 26th.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. One found dead on the 7th.

Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. One on the 3rd and 18th.

Merlin *F. columbarius*. One to three each day from the 2nd to 25th.

\*Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. One on the 11th.

\*Corncrake *Crex crex*. One on the 17th.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. Two on the 3rd and one on the 14th.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. One from the 14th to the 17th.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*. One to ten between the 3rd and 12th.

Golden Plover *C. apricarius*. One to fifteen between the 4th and 12th; thirty on the 16th.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. More than twenty among seal wallows and along shore, 1st to 26th.

Snipe *Capella gallinago*. One to eleven daily between the 1st and 26th, but at least twenty on the 15th and 16th.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One to eleven daily between the 1st and 26th, but at least twenty on the 11th and 12th.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. One to three on the 11th, 13th, 18th and 19th.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*. One to five daily between the 1st and 26th.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*. One to ten daily between the 1st and 26th, but thirty on the 15th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*. One on the 14th and 19th.

Purple Sandpiper *C. maritima*. One to twelve, 9th to 11th; one to twenty, 18th to 26th.

Little Stint *C. minuta*. Single birds on the 6th, 7th and 20th.

Dunlin *C. alpina*. One to three daily between the 6th and 20th.

Greater Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*. Flocks, including a small number of Herring Gulls, of up to 200 birds from the 1st to 26th, but about 500 on the 11th. They were concentrated on the fringes of the seal grounds of Fianuis (see plate on p. 263) and Scepull.

During the period 4th to 24th about 1962 seal pups were born on the island, and about 280 pups died. The afterbirths and carcasses provided food. If the pup died lying on its ventral side they were only able to pick out the eyes; if on the

dorsal side they found access to the body cavity by tearing open the umbilicus. The hole was small owing to the toughness of the skin and the connective tissues, and evisceration was difficult. Even in the case of a two year old bull, of which the abdomen was dissected and the carcass left with viscera fully exposed, the gulls made little impression on the tough musculature of the body wall and diaphragm. Only occasionally were gulls seen picking at a carcass, though they were quick to discover and squabble over the placentae. Several were killed or maimed by the seals while feeding on afterbirths or molesting pups.

The newly born pup is vulnerable to attack by gulls. Immediately a birth takes place the birds gather in the vicinity and, depending on how tightly packed the seals are, fly in to feed. At this stage, though the umbilical cord is severed, the pup is still attached or close to the placenta. On wriggling free of the membranes it rolls over on its back flexing its body and exposing the ruptured umbilical cord. If a gull gets hold of the cord at this stage it could probably eviscerate the pup fairly easily, but this can seldom happen owing to the aggressive behaviour of the dam. Pups of more than two weeks old, except when ailing, are capable of warding off gulls without parental help.

Despite the great amount of carrion littering the seal grounds, therefore, very little of it appeared to be accessible to the gulls.

Herring Gull *L. argentatus*. A few were present with the Greater Black-backs.

Black-headed Gull *L. ridibundus*. One on the 16th.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Two seen during the voyage to the island on the 1st; one found dead on the 17th.

Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*. One in East Bay on the 1st.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*. One to ten daily at Poll Thothaton and elsewhere between the 1st and 26th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. One on the 18th.

\*Skylark *Alauda arvensis*. One to five on the 3rd, 7th, 11th-14th, and 17th.

Raven *Corvus corax*. Two to four seen daily, 1st to 26th.

Hooded Crow *C. cornix cornix*. A single bird on sixteen occasions between 7th and 25th.

\*Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. One on the 4th, 13th, 15th, 16th and 18th, and two on the 22nd. The Wren has not been recorded as a breeding species and is absent from the summer and autumn lists of Harrison (1932), Atkinson and Ainslie (1937), Darling (1940) and Bagenal and Baird (1959). The birds seen were probably migrants.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. Passage occurred between the 5th and 23rd, heavy between the 13th and 18th, and particularly





North Rona, 1959. A grey seal wallow on Fiannis showing a bull in the wallow and a large number of cows and calves around it. (Photograph by James MacGeech).

so on the 17th and 18th, when probably more than 200 were present each day.

Redwing *T. musicus*. Passage occurred from the 1st to 26th, heavy between the 5th and 18th, and very heavy on the 17th and 18th when up to 1,000 were present each day.

Song Thrush *T. ericetorum*. Light passage from the 6th to 18th; odd birds with Redwings.

\*Ring Ouzel *T. torquatus*. Two on the 10th, one on the 12th and 14th.

Blackbird *T. merula*. A few present daily from the 5th to 26th. They were frequently seen in the chasm of Geodha Mairi, usually foraging in Kittiwakes' nests and fighting among the rank Scurvy Grass on the north slope of Toa Rona.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*. Passage between the 1st and 26th, heavy from the 1st to 8th, when probably more than fifty were present daily.

\*Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. One on the 8th.

\*Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. One from the 14th to 18th.

\*Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. One on the 6th and 16th; ten on the 7th.

\*Garden Warbler *S. borin*. One on the 7th.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*. One on the 7th, 8th and 20th.

\*Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. One on the 1st, and one to six on nine of the days between the 7th and 18th.

Pied Flycatcher *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. Two on the 6th and one on the 14th and 15th.

\*Red-breasted Flycatcher *M. parva*. One from the 10th to 13th.

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. Passage between the 1st and 26th, heavy between the 1st and 10th and very heavy from the 16th to 18th when about 500 were present daily.

Rock Pipit *A. spinoletta petrosus*. Present in small numbers on the coast, sometimes mixing with Meadow Pipits.

Alba Wagtail *Motacilla alba*. An immature on the 2nd.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. About 200 daily from the 1st to 26th associating with a flock of about 170 sheep.

\*Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*. One on the 20th and 22nd.

\*Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. Two on the 15th, one to twelve from the 17th to 25th.

\*Brambling *F. montifringilla*. One to fifty from the 7th to 24th, but more than fifty on the 17th.

\*Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*. One or two on the 4th, 5th, 14th, 20th and 24th.

Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Passage from the 3rd to 26th, usually more than fifty daily and more than 100 from the 10th to 14th and on the 18th.

\*House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. One to six daily from the 3rd to 26th at the fank and village.

According to the literature 106 species of bird have now been recorded at or around North Rona. Of the seventy species recorded here (White-fronted Goose being discounted) twenty are new to the list.

### WRECK OF THRUSHES AND PIPITS

From the 14th to 17th large numbers of thrushes and pipits arrived on light to moderate SE winds. From the 14th to 16th the visibility was less than fifteen miles—*Sula Sgeir* just visible—and there were probably about 300 Redwings, 50 Fieldfares and 100 Meadow Pipits on the island daily. On the 17th the wind veered from ESE to SSE and the visibility increased to more than fifty miles—hills of Sutherland clearly visible—and the numbers on the island increased dramatically to not far short of 1,000 Redwings, 200 Fieldfares and 500 Meadow Pipits daily. With the island thus heavily stocked the wind veered to west Force 4 on the 18th and NW Force 9, with visibility of less than twelve miles, on the 19th.

On the morning of the 19th the island was strewn with dead Redwings and Meadow Pipits. Six corpses were found in a direct walk in the gale from the village to the fank, and later the entire island was seen to have a similar scattering. Many others were probably out of sight in rocky crevices. A few dead Fieldfares and one Song Thrush were also found. The carcasses had very reduced flight muscles and seemed much underweight.

During the period 1st to 16th visibility had been less than twelve miles and probably no more than three, except during the night of the 12th when the Cape Wrath light could be seen forty miles away. Late in the afternoon of the 16th a change was evident; the hills of Sutherland were just visible and the first flight of geese arrived. On the 17th the air was crystal clear with the distant mountains standing out vividly on the horizon. There was an immediate movement of birds different from any which had been seen up till then. Large flocks of thrushes and pipits were leaving the SE corner of the island directly into the light wind and towards the mountains. Following the departure of one flock with binoculars the author could see beyond it other flocks in line ahead and the mountains beyond. The only detectable difference in the day from the many other bright days with similar winds during the period was the visibility. The appearance of the mountains to the SE, with continuous sunny but hazy weather, was accompanied by large scale movement. This movement continued on the 18th, when the wind went into the west, and by the 19th the wreck had begun.

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## A LANDING ON SULE STACK

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AND

JEFFERY BOSWALL

*B.B.C. Natural History Unit*

**T**HROUGH the kind co-operation of Captain Knut Maurer, of the Norwegian M.S. *Meteor* and the skill of his coxswain and boat's crew, we were able to land on Sule Stack late on 20th May 1960, during the National Trust for Scotland's "Islands Cruise" and to make recordings for B.B.C. sound radio programmes.

Sule Stack is a twin hump of hornblende gneiss, divided by a narrow cleft, at latitude 59°02' N, and longitude 4°30' W, some forty miles NNE of Cape Wrath and an equal distance west of Orkney. It is the site of a well-known gannetry estimated to number 3,500 pairs in 1939, and 2,010 pairs in 1949. Owing to the almost constant swell, aggravated by the flow through the narrow channel separating the two rocks, landing is extremely difficult and defeated Harvie-Brown in 1887 and 1889 and the Duchess of Bedford in 1914. Apart from the gannet-raiders from Ness the only previous landings have been by Malcolm Stewart on the northern half on 31st July 1937, and Dr Ian D. Pennie and Francis Huxley on the southern half on 17th July 1949 from H. G. Haslar's yawl *Petula*.

We got ashore on the eastern side of the northern rock, probably at the same spot as Malcolm Stewart, at 2225 hours, and on the eastern side of the southern rock at 2240 hours. There was little swell and the climb up a narrow chimney to a wide shelf on the East Ledges (see sketch-map in Fisher and Vevers 1943, p. 194) was not difficult, though the rock was treacherously slippery with guano. For this reason and because of the rapidly failing light and the great unrest among the breeding birds, we did not climb to the summit:

nor were we able, in the half darkness and the brief time ashore, to make any assessment of the strength of the gannetry. Rapid counting done by James Fisher and Dr W. J. Eggeling from the bridge of M.S. *Meteor* while she was hove to, and later circumnavigating, suggests that the total breeding strength may be of the order of 2,800 pairs.

The Duchess of Bedford, who rowed round Sule Stack in her dinghy, stated that only the upper third of the northern rock, from the main eastside ledge upwards to the summit (see her Plate IV and Fisher's sketch-map) was occupied by nesting Gannets. Both Stewart, and Fisher and Vevers, showed that nesting birds extended much lower down than this, and such was also the case on our visit. There were at least a score of nests on a broad shelf some fifty feet above our landing point, and scattered among them we were interested to find a number of Guillemots' eggs lying on the bare platform, suggesting that these birds occupied the "dead ground" between individual Gannet territories—if one may regard the Gannet's "territory" as an approximate circle of about two feet radius around its egg. At the northern side of this shelf a three foot wide gully between the main wall and a bastion of rock was so crowded with Guillemots that they seemed to roll back along it like a carpet as we approached, leaving green and blue eggs spinning everywhere: probably this cleft was too deep and narrow to find favour with nesting Gannets. Stewart found "only a few Guillemots", but our impression was that they were very common and widely dispersed among the Gannets, at least on the lower section of the rock; there may have been an increase since his visit.

The smaller southern rock was much less interesting. We found we could not reach the summit from our landing-point, a steep initial pitch taking us to the inner part above the channel between the stacks, where a near-vertical wall barred our way to the top. No nests were seen and from the ship it was obvious that the southern sloping face of this section accommodated largely non-breeders, as has been remarked by previous parties.

Eight Grey Seals were counted quite close to the lesser rock on the western side of the channel. When we approached the main northern section to make our first landing a seal about four feet long, in a white or greyish white coat, slipped into the water. These seals are probably from North Rona.

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## REVIEWS

D. A. BANNERMAN. THE BIRDS OF THE BRITISH ISLES, Vol. VIII. Illustrated by G. E. Lodge. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1959. pp. 397. 26 coloured plates. £3, 3/-.

This volume covers the cormorants, gannet, petrels, shearwaters, grebes, divers, doves and sandgrouse. By now the pattern of this monumental work will have become familiar to all serious bird-watchers. The discursive essays on each species are a far cry from the highly condensed treatment in such modern textbooks as *The Handbook* and this may well prove to be the last book of its kind that can be recommended as reading for pleasure. There are occasional inaccuracies and omissions, but these are relatively insignificant and do not detract from the work's value as a major contribution to our knowledge of British birds. Perhaps its strongest point is Dr Bannerman's immense industry as an editor in tapping unfamiliar sources of information, often from abroad, and the result is refreshingly original and particularly valuable in throwing the status of British birds into true perspective against a wider background.

The present volume is a worthy successor to the earlier ones, and among the more valuable personal contributions are several most readable accounts from Dr Bannerman himself on the tropical Atlantic petrel colonies. The text is always commendably up-to-date and includes accounts, but unfortunately no illustrations, of such recent additions to the British List as the Magnificent Frigate-bird and Collared Dove, and also the Cape Pigeon, which Dr Bannerman would add to the List on the strength of three old records which appear perfectly convincing. Equally convincing is his rejection of the two single British records of the Kermadec and Collared Petrels, both being species which breed in the Pacific on the side of the world diametrically opposite from Britain. One further reason, not mentioned by Dr Bannerman, for suspecting the British specimen of the Collared Petrel is the fact of its being in full moult when shot in November or December 1889, which is inconsistent with our other information on the yearly cycle of this species—young in down in February, adults in full moult in June. Of particular interest to our own members

are the breeding accounts of Slavonian Grebe and Turtle Dove in Scotland, while on a broader scale the essays on the White-billed Diver and Pallas' Sandgrouse make the most superbly thrilling reading.

The general effect of the plates is pleasing but they are all too often lacking in accuracy to serve as definitive bird portraits. The strained attitude and dishevelled appearance which characterise so many of Lodge's birds presumably represent his attempt to break away from the lifeless "museum" representations that were prevalent when he started painting, but the result is often so exaggerated as to destroy the semblance of reality.

The production is of the high standard we have come to associate with the name of Oliver & Boyd, and even at three guineas it represents remarkably good value.

D. G. A.

FRANK D. HAMILTON and KEITH S. MACGREGOR, *THE BIRDS OF ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE*. Reprinted from the Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society, Vol. VIII, by the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. pp. 33. 6 plates and map. 5/- (postage 4d extra).

Aberlady Bay contains more bird-watchers per acre than any other part of Scotland and this booklet will be of the greatest use in telling them what birds they may expect to see there, as well as what birds have not been recorded. Copies can be got from the Secretary of the S.O.C., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, and those who do so will find they have excellent value for their money.

This is a model of local ornithology and shows how much can be achieved by industry and regular (though perhaps often tiresome) routine visits to the same locality. The bulk of this paper is in the form of a check-list, in which it is not so much the rarities that are of interest—there are, indeed, listed only eight "top rarities"—as "the definite patterns to the migrations of several species", patterns which would not have emerged without conscientious census work by the authors.

One small point: full details of the Dowitcher reported in November 1959 will *not* be published in *Scottish Birds* for the simple reason that they have not been submitted to that journal. We understand also that this record has not been accepted by *British Birds*.

M. F. M. M.

#### CORRIGENDUM

Antea 1:65. Dr J. W. Campbell points out that the record of the San-

derling thought to be the first for Lanarkshire is not so. See "Scot. Nat." 1957:41.

## SHORT NOTES

### NOTES ON PLUMAGE VARIATION IN THE COMMON EIDER

The white bird, swimming near the Steller's Eider described *antea* 234, was a common Eider in very unusual plumage. It was creamy white all over, except for a light brown patch on the forehead and around the eye, and two other light brown patches, one on the side of the lower breast and the other on the flanks. The lightness was also patchy, some parts being very creamy, others almost pure white and others a diffused mixture of the two. The third duck alongside the leucistic bird had a prominent purple speculum edged with white bars as in the Steller's Eider, but in every other respect was a typical common Eider *Somateria mollissima*.

When we looked at the other common Eiders on the estuary, we saw that many of them also had a prominent speculum. In some it was a very clear purplish blue, edged with conspicuous white bands as in the Steller's Eider, while others had white bands but only a speculum of very dark brown without any blue or purple. Others again had a speculum and only one white wing bar, and in others the white bars were narrower, sometimes so narrow as to be almost invisible except in very good light. Excluding adult drakes, roughly a third of the Eiders had this character developed to some extent, though not many had a speculum as clear as in the Steller's or the third duck along with it.

The same day we passed the Ythan estuary in Aberdeenshire and here also about one common Eider in every three (excluding adult drakes) in a flock of about two hundred had specula, though again there was a lot of variation.

An interesting plumage character that we noticed in many of the duck common Eiders at both places was the occurrence of a clear light stripe extending from behind the bill to above and behind the eye. Some had the stripe fairly broad and white, others had a narrower, merely lightish, stripe, and most had no trace of a stripe at all.

Reference to many books on bird identification showed that the occurrence of a speculum in the common Eider is not mentioned, though this character sometimes figures in illustrations. For example it is neither illustrated nor mentioned in the text by Coward (*The Birds of the British Isles and their*



Eggs 1920), Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker (*The Handbook of British Birds* vol. 3 1939) or Bannerman (*The Birds of the British Isles* vol. 7 1958). The speculum, however, or one or more of the wing bars, is illustrated in some of the pictures in Kirkman (*The British Bird Book* 1913), Fitter and Richardson (*The Pocket Guide to British Birds* 1952), Peterson, Mountfort and Hollom (*A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe* 1954), Durango (*Fåglarna i färg* 1952) and the Annual Report of the Wildfowl Trust (1951-52). Fisher (*Bird Recognition* vol. 2 1951) is the only author so far as we know to mention the two light bars on the wing, writing that the duck has "two obscure light wing-bars." It seems to us misleading that identification books should not give such distinct plumage variations in either text or plates, and misleading that other books should show them in the plates without mention in the text, thus giving the impression that all duck common Eiders have these characters.

DAVID JENKINS.

ADAM WATSON.

#### LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE IN WIGTOWNSHIRE AND CLACKMANNAN

On 27th March 1960 the Merse below and northward from Wigtown was packed with geese, something like two thousand Pink-feet and some hundreds of Grey-lags. Looking through a powerful binocular telescope within minutes I was focussed on a small goose with a white front and came to the conclusion that it was a Lesser White-fronted Goose *Anser erythropus*. It was at long range, over half a mile, so even with the powerful magnification (60x) I could not possibly see the colour of eyelids or even bill colour for sure; but the following points seemed to me convincing and Miss Mary McKinna and Mr Duncan Griffiths agreed with me on them.

1. Small size: looked distinctly smaller than Pink-feet with which it was feeding, though possibly not much smaller than some first winter Pink-feet.

2. Very striking white "front," as with previous Lessers I have seen—not very noticeable side-on, but standing out face-on, coming well up on to top of head.

3. Upper parts darker than in Pink-foot, breast and belly rather light with no detectable barring; small bars such as a Lesser Whitefront might have in, say, its second year would probably have been impossible to see at the range.

4. Very noticeable, much faster feeding rate than Pink-foot.

The bill was presumably small as I could not make out any details and it did not appear to have a larger bill than the Pink-feet. The association with Pink-feet is recognised as unusual.

Incidentally the number of Pink-footed Geese *Anser brachyrhynchus* appears to be much greater than any previously recorded for Wigtownshire.

DONALD WATSON.

On 20th January 1960 a Lesser White-fronted Goose was shot at the mouth of the R. Devon at Cambus, Clackmannanshire. I did not see the bird, but the description, given by the man who shot it, and later verified by my brother-in-law, who plucked it, leaves no doubt. The bird was about the size of a Shelduck, very dark, with the white reaching well back on the head like the yellow on a Wigeon drake. At the side the white almost touched the eye, and my brother-in-law, when asked about the eye, said without any hesitation that it was ringed with yellow.

T. PATERSON.

#### SNOW GEESE IN LANARKSHIRE

During the early months of 1960 three Snow Geese were discovered one by one with a flock of Pink-feet at Libberton, near Carnwath. None of them was ever seen to associate with either of the others and they seemed to move about quite independently. This is a most puzzling feature, as it is hard to believe that three birds of such rarity can each have found its own way to this one flock of Pink-feet. The birds were all dissimilar and are worth describing in detail.

(?Greater) Snow Goose: white bird. On 4th March Sir Robert Erskine-Hill, Bt., learned from a local farmer that a white goose had been seen with the Pink-feet in the area for at least one month, and probably since December 1959. He was able to locate it and identify it as a Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens* and subsequently it was admired by many people including Andrew T. Macmillan, W. K. Richmond, G. and M. I. Waterston. This was a magnificent pure white bird substantially bigger and standing higher than the Pink-feet and locally it was known as the "gret white yin". It was a burly bird, somewhat thick-necked, and with a massive pinkish Grey-lag type bill and pink legs. W.K.R. got the impression that it was comparatively short in the leg. The tips of the wings were black on the trailing edge and greyish on the leading edge so that it looked extremely like a Gannet as it circled over the fields, visible to the naked eye at an enormous distance. W.K.R. noted that in flight its wing action was much slower and more stately than the Pink-feet's, though in

fact its air-speed was greater and it forged ahead of the gaggles.

Size is a rather unreliable distinction between Greater and Lesser Snow Geese, but the description points strongly to this bird being a Greater Snow Goose *A.c. atlanticus*. The snag about this is that the other two birds must have been Lesser Snow Geese *A.c. caerulescens* as they were of the blue phase, which is not known to occur in the Greater. Blue and white birds may be found in the same brood of Lessers. The Greaters and Lessers, however, neither breed in the same areas nor migrate in the same direction, so that if the white bird was a wild Greater it must have travelled to join the Pink-feet independently of the two blue birds. There is, though, as will be seen, the possibility that it was an unusually large Lesser.

*Adult Lesser Snow Goose*: blue phase. On 8th March Miss R. S. Hunter discovered a second strange goose with the Pink-feet. This bird also was seen by many people and it proved to be a Blue Goose, or, more correctly, a blue phase Lesser Snow Goose. On the ground it was about the same size as the Pink-feet, but in flight it seemed a shade larger and A.T.M. noted that it had a greater wingspan as it flew directly away from him. The forewing showed paler than the Pink-feet's, the tail was white with a grey terminal band, and there was a very striking wedge of white extending well up the rump and back. There appeared to be at least one white stripe across each wing, close to and parallel with the body. G.W. obtained very good views of the bird on the ground, and noted its pure white head setting off the dark eye; white neck with dark line running down back of neck from rear of crown; pink legs and bill; mantle darker and not so slaty as the Pink-feet's; breast dark but flanks white (W.K.R. describes the underparts in flight as pure white with darker markings on the sides of the body); striped appearance of folded wings towards tail; bill and forehead different shape from Pink-feet's. Of the Blue Geese shown in *Wildfowl of the British Isles* (Scott and Boyd 1957) it most nearly resembled the adult (darkest form) on Plate IV except that the flanks were white. The striped markings on the folded wings are well shown in this plate.

*Immature Lesser Snow Goose*: blue phase. This was the third to be discovered and was overlooked by everyone except W.K.R., who saw it several times. On the ground it could be picked out, but in the air it was rapidly lost among the Pink-feet. It was a dusky, thick-set goose with blackish—or at any rate dark—bill and legs, and the typical pale wing-linings; light-edged black scapulars very prominent. It had less white on the head than the immature figured in *Wildfowl*

of the *British Isles*: indeed, apart from a few lighter flecks on the face, the only touch of white feathering was on the chin. It resembled rather the illustration in black and white in Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* (Eastern).

The adult Blue Goose was last seen on 25th April by R.E.-H. and the white Snow Goose two days later with some 2,000 Pink-feet. They were all very restless and had gone by the evening of 28th April.

There is a possibility that one or more of these birds may have been escapes from Mr Walter Duncan's collection at Newlands, near Dumfries. Mrs Duncan has kindly supplied the following details. In August 1954 a pair of Blue Geese was obtained from Slimbridge and in May 1957 this pair reared five blue and one white young. These birds were unringed and full-winged and on 11th February 1958 after severe frost and a SW gale the white bird and two of the blue disappeared (see *British Birds* 53:162). Subsequently all three were seen feeding by the Solway near Glencaple on various occasions until the end of February. They were presumed to have left the country in April 1958. It should be noted that these were Lesser Snow Geese but that the white one was larger than normal; they also associated with Pink-feet but, unlike the Carnwath birds, were always together. If any of the Newlands birds were involved two winters later at Carnwath it is interesting to speculate whether they had made the double migration each summer with the Pink-feet.

The immature Blue Goose is really the key to the problem as it was almost certainly a wild bird; being in immature plumage, it could not have been one of the Newlands birds. This raises the probability of the wild status of the other two, especially when we consider the possibility of the white bird being a Greater Snow Goose and the fact that in recent winters increasing numbers of Snow Geese have been reported, far more than can be accounted for by known escapes.

A. T. MACMILLAN.

### SMALL RACE OF CANADA GOOSE IN ISLAY

On 5th April 1958 at Laggan Point, Islay, I noticed, among about a thousand Barnacle Geese, a goose with the head pattern of a Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (black head and neck with white cheek and throat patch), but slightly, though distinctly, smaller than the surrounding Barnacles. It was also comparatively short-necked and, when lifting its head in alarm, had not the long slim-necked appearance of the typical Canada. Also striking was the general dark colour of the body: feathers of the back dark grey-brown (almost as dark as in the Greenland Whitefront), edged noticeably with lighter colour; whole of underparts slightly lighter, including breast,

and with distinctly rufous tinge; this colouring very dark in area next to white under tail-coverts; tail-coverts white; tail, beak and legs black as in typical *canadensis*. The bird was not seen afterwards.

J. SHEPPERD.

(This bird has been accepted by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds* as belonging to "one of the small races of Canada Goose from the North American Arctic." The description closely resembles that of the Cackling Goose *B. c. minima* from the extreme north-west of America and Mr Peter Scott says: "I would almost have thought it safe to say it was *minima*," adding that he does not consider that the bird could have been an escape.—ED.)

### GOSHAWK IN KIRKCUDBRIGHT

On 1st March 1958, together with Charles Cowper, we saw a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* over Loch Ken in Kirkcudbright. The first indication of its presence came from a Coal Tit which started to chitter excitedly above us and made us look around for the cause. We saw the bird almost overhead about 100 feet up gliding along the slope of a pine-covered hill, giving an occasional wing-beat. The first thought was of the size of the bird and of its *shape* which was definitely like that of a Sparrowhawk on a large scale. It had large rounded wings and a long tail, with prominent barring on the underparts, especially on the under wing-coverts. C.C. saw the barring at the end of the tail.

F. D. HAMILTON.  
K. S. MACGREGOR.

### HOBBY IN INVERNESS

At 2010 hours on 15th May 1960 I was watching the Ospreys from the forward R.S.P.B. hide near Loch Garten, Inverness. The weather was fine and still, with no cloud.

A falcon, which I identified as a Hobby *Falco subbuteo* flew on to a branch of a small dead pine about 75 yards off. For about forty minutes it preened itself and I watched it through a x 60 telescope. In addition to the dark slaty upperparts, the white underparts with black streaks, rusty red thighs and under tail-coverts, broad black moustachial stripe and long pointed wings, I saw the full wing-shape as it flew off towards me overhead at a low altitude.

R. C. DAWKINS.

### GREENLAND FALCON IN PERTHSHIRE

On 13th April 1960, after climbing Stuchd an Lochan, Perthshire, we stopped for about twenty minutes to watch a pair of Peregrine Falcons through binoculars before we de-

scended towards Loch Giorra. A few minutes later a bird flew across the slopes above the loch making up the valley. It was obviously a falcon, but different from the pair we had just been watching. The wing-beats were heavier and more deliberate, giving the impression that this bird was finding the going much harder than the others. It was also very much paler and this almost whitish appearance struck us both most forcibly. Despite the high wind and snow and the few seconds we were able to watch it, it was quite definitely a falcon of a type we had not previously seen.

DOREEN KNIPE.  
HARRY KNIPE.

At the time of Mr and Mrs Knipe's observations I was some 500 feet higher up the mountain and directly above them. From this position the falcon's upperparts appeared to be uniformly white, virtually pure white, with darker pinions. I, too, was struck by the heavy deliberate wing-beats. In the squally conditions (gale-force winds and sleet showers) it was impossible to gain anything like a satisfactory view of the bird, which was heading NW in the direction of Rannoch Moor, but, after comparing notes, the three of us concluded that it was a Greenland Falcon *Falco rusticolus candicans*.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

#### HOOPOES IN PERTH, FIFE, ROXBURGH AND ARRAN

On 15th May 1960 I saw a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* at Mill of Keir near Dunblane. I was driving to visit a patient when I saw a bird of a light horn colour probing zealously with a long beak in the grassy strip in the middle of the little used road. He allowed me to bring the car to within fifteen feet of him and continued feeding, though he appeared to be alerted and occasionally raised and lowered his beautiful crest. When I opened the car door he flew off at once, with a brilliant display of black and white barred wings. I saw the bird twice more on the same day. I am familiar with Hoopoes in India.

J. N. M. FAIRLEY.

On 16th May 1960 I watched a Hoopoe feeding and resting in the long grass of the sand-dunes at Elie Golf Course. In flight its rounded wings and its tail were boldly barred with black and white. When it settled to pick in the grass with its long curved beak I could see the pale cinnamon front and underparts. It flew off after fifteen minutes when some Lapwings mobbed it.

PATRICIA G. BAXTER.

On 17th May 1960 Col. M. Johnson reported a Hoopoe about

a mile south of Riccarton Junction, Roxburgh. He saw the crest raised several times, and as he has lived in India for many years the Hoopoe is a familiar bird to him.

W. S. MEDLICOTT.

On 22nd May 1960 my wife and I saw a Hoopoe at the point at which the Arran west coast road crosses the Dougarry Water. It was less than the width of the bridge away and we had binoculars. It gave a display of hammer-like strokes on the grass verge; it did not hop, but moved with a running gait.

DAVID ORR.

(Dr Orr has attached a detailed description of the bird's plumage. We have also received satisfactory details of a Hoopoe at Dirleton, E. Lothian, on 2nd May (reported in *The Scotsman* on 4/5/60). Others, of which we have not had details, include three from about 5th to 12th May at Denholm, near Hawick, reported in *The Scotsman*: also one near Gordonstoun, Moray, about 18th May (C. J. A. Baker). Unusual numbers of Hoopoes have been seen in England this spring (see *British Birds* 53:318-9).—ED.)

#### EARLY NESTING OF CORN BUNTING

While watching Corn Buntings *Emberiza calandra* a few miles west of Dornoch, Sutherland, on 3rd June 1960, I was surprised to see a female Corn Bunting drop into a hay crop with food her bill. Having seen her make two further visits to the same place, each time carrying food, I went to the spot and, after a short search, found a nest containing five down-clad nestlings. Egg-laying at this nest must have begun not later than 16th May, possibly one or two days earlier.

*The Handbook* (I:111) states that breeding "begins late May but often not till well in June." Ryves and Ryves, who made an intensive study of the species in north Cornwall (*British Birds* 28:2-26) found that it was futile to search for nests until early June. Even in southern England eggs by mid-May are an exception, as Walpole-Bond (*A History of Sussex Birds* I:130) gives the beginning of nesting in Sussex as from 20th May onwards.

D. MACDONALD.

#### CURRENT NOTES

(The observers denoted below by their initials are: A. Ablett, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, W. Austin, J. Ballantyne (J.B.), P. Barraud, Miss P. G. Baxter, T. H. Bell, Dr J. Berry (J.By.), H. Boase, W. Q. Brown, J. Cameron, Dr J. W. Campbell, G. M. T. Conacher, A. Cowieson, E. Cowieson, S. Cramp, R. H. Dennis, Dr W. J. Eggeling, H. F. D.

Elder, M. Forrester, G. Fraser, D. A. Holmes, The Hon. H. Douglas Home, D. Hope, J. Hoy, E. N. Hunter, P. Kerr, R. Logan, Dr A. Lyell, A. Macdonald (A.M.), A. MacEachern (A. MacE.), K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Col. W. S. Medlicott, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, R. I. Milne, W. Murray, B. Neath, J. Oliver, L. J. Reed, W. K. Richmond, E. L. Roberts, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, D. Stalker, J. D. Stewart, J. W. Taylor, Dr R. S. Weir, T. Weir, W. H. Wild. Dates apply to 1960 unless otherwise stated).

## LATE WINTER VISITORS

A slightly oiled **Black-throated Diver** was seen at Peppermill Dam, Fife, on 18th March (J.H.). A very large concourse of fifty **Red-throated Divers** off Gullane on 29th April is noteworthy (T.C.S.).

Two ♂♂ and one ♀ **Scaup** were at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 24th May (J.B.) and a ♂ at Gullane Point on 16th June (D.H.). Eight **Velvet Scoter** ♂♂ were seen flying north past Arbroath on 25th May (M.F.M.M.), and a long dead **Common Scoter** ♂ was found at the edge of St Helen's Loch, Bonnybirdge, on 8th May (R.L.).

Five **Grey-lag Geese** were still at Kingoodie, S. Perth, on 21st June (H.B.), a **Pink-footed Geese** near St Fergus, Aberdeenshire, from 20th to 26th June (W.Q.B.), and a **Barnacle Goose** on a football pitch at Musselburgh on 14th June (J.B.).

The **Bewick's Swan** at Musselburgh (*antea* 1:229) was last seen on 26th April (A.M.) and there were five of this species at Harperrig Reservoir on 25th April (J.By.).

A single **Coot** was at the mouth of the Esk at Musselburgh on 8th May, an unusual date for a bird in such a situation (J.B.).

A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** of the Scandinavian race was seen, together with a bird of the British race, at Seafield, Leith on 7th March (A.A.) and a **Glaucous Gull**, the first occurrence in the locality, paid a short visit to Duddingston Loch on 7th May (D.R.A.).

Late **Waxwings**, not reported in A.T.M.'s paper (*antea* 1: 241-251) were seen at Invergowrie, one on 14th February and three about 18th March (H.B.): four at Dundee on 19th February (S.C.): one at Dumfries on 25th February (W.A.): one near Udny, Aberdeenshire, for three weeks up till 24th April (E.C.): two at Aberdeen from 1st to 5th March and one there from 22nd to 27th March (A.L.).

A **Great Grey Shrike** was seen being chased by Meadow Pipits between Loch Mallachie and Loch Garten, Inverness, on 6th April (R.H.D.): full plumage details have been received of this bird.

Sixteen **Crossbills** were at Manderston, Duns, on 28th February (W.M.) and a female at Yellowcraig Wood, Dirleton, E. Lothian, on 3rd May (A.M.).



## SPRING MIGRATION

A **Marsh Harrier**, probably immature, flew over Kingoodie on 22nd May: it had a pale crown (H.B.). Another, also creamy-headed, bird was at the mouth of the R. Endrick on 1st and 4th July (M.F., W.K.R., T.W.).

An **Osprey** visited Peppermill Dam, where it was mobbed by Carrion Crows, on 15th May and again on 29th May (J.H.) and about the middle of May a pair were at Loch Lossit, Islay, for several days (J.C.). Another Osprey turned up on 4th July at the mouth of the R. Endrick, where it was seen with a fish in its claws (M.F., T.W.).

A **Grey Plover** was seen near the Butt of Lewis in mid-May (A.MacE.), a **Dotterel** was watched at short range at Aberlady on 8th May (J.O.), nine Dotterel were seen on Elie Golf Course on 10th May and seven there on the 11th (P.G.B., R.S.W.). Those seen on the 8th and 11th were accompanied by a single fine Northern Golden Plover.

There was a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Aberlady on 9th March (A.A.), nineteen at Glencaple, Dumfries, on 17th April (E.L.R.) and two on the Eden estuary on 24th May (R.I.M.). A **Wood Sandpiper** stayed at Gladhouse Reservoir from 29th April to 1st May and from 3rd to 5th May (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.) and another stayed for a short time at the Endrick mouth on 5th June (M.F.).

Only one **Curlew Sandpiper** has been reported—at Aberlady on 28th May (T.C.S.) and on 10th June (A.C., W.M., R.W.J.S.). A **Sanderling** at Longanet, Fife, on 14th May was the first seen there by the observer (J.H.) and a **Reeve** was seen at Gladhouse on 17th May (R.W.J.S.).

A ♀ **Red-necked Phalarope** on Unst, where the species is no longer known to breed, on 11th June, may have been on passage (J.D.S.).

Numerous **Little Gulls** are reported from the Tay estuary area: on 9th April one immature at Tentsmuir Point (B.N.) and eight immature at Kingoodie on the 14th (H.B.). On the 25th there were no fewer than 64 at the mouth of the Buddon Burn, Monifieth, of which eighteen were adults: all were restless and noisy (B.N.). On 27th April there were seven, mostly immature, at Barnhill, Broughty Ferry (H.B.), and on 1st May thirty (including two adults) at Morton Lochs and eight on the Eden estuary (B.N.). On 6th May there were 25 immature birds at Monifieth (B.N.), there were eight at Morton Lochs on 17th (R.I.M.) and two at the Buddon Burn on the 26th (B.N.). A more unusual record of the Little Gull, since it is from the west, is of an immature bird at the Endrick mouth—seen both in Stirling and Dunbarton—from 29th May to 5th June (T.W. and others). At the Buddon Burn

there were nineteen immatures on 6th June, at least one nearby on the 29th, and thirty with one adult on 2nd July (B.N.). A single adult on the 19th carries these records through the summer to the week in which the first autumn birds were noted in 1959 (*antea* 1:133) (H.B.).

A **Black Tern** at Peppermill Dam on 15th May was still partly in winter plumage (J.H.), but one at the Endrick mouth on the same day was in complete summer dress (M.F., D.S., T.W.). At the Endrick mouth have also been observed an **Arctic Tern** on 29th May (M.F., T.W.) and a **Little Tern** on 5th June (M.F.M.M.), both interesting records for W. Stirling.

At Fife Ness on 26th May about 75 **Roseate Terns** were counted, a large congregation for this locality (R.S.W.).

A **Turtle Dove**, doubtless on passage, was seen feeding in a field near Elie on 17th May (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

The arrival of the **Swift** was unusually early in 1960. First records are: 26th April, one at Carter Bar, Roxburgh (W.S.M.) and six at Maddy Moss, near Dollar (J.H.); 28th April, six at Duddingston (D.R.A.), and five or six at Strathtay, Perth (J.W.C.); 30th April, sixteen at Bardowie, W. Stirling (J.W.T.). Two at Bonnybridge, Stirling, on 29th April and by 4th May they had arrived in numbers, a flock of 150 to 200 being present at Carron Reservoir (R.L.).

March records of the **Chiffchaff** not previously reported (cf. *antea* 1:233) are of one on Rhum on 15th (W.J.E.) and one heard at Fife Ness on the 27th (R.S.W.).

A **Yellow Wagtail** ♂ (*flavissima*) was at the same place at Skinflats, west of Grangemouth, as in 1959, on 1st June: again no ♀ was seen. (J.H.).

A **Siskin** ♂ heard singing at Valleyfield, Fife, on 21st April is the observer's first spring record for the area (J.H.).

## BREEDING AND DISTRIBUTION

Single **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at their breeding haunt in the Clyde area on 29th May and 19th June (J.W.T.).

The only breeding colony of **Cormorants** in the Forth, on the Lamb, has increased from 44 nests in 1959 to 65 in 1960 (R.W.J.S.).

At least five broods of **Common Scoter** were seen at their Hebridean breeding haunt in early June (K.S.M.).

On 23rd April two **Canada Geese** were seen disputing with Carrion Crows on an island in Marlee Loch, near Blairgowrie (H.B.), and one was at Gladhouse on 19th June (D.G.A.).

A **Quail** was both heard and seen near Stevenston, Ayr, on 3rd June, and on 7th July was again heard calling at a spot about a mile distant from the first (G.F.).

On 29th May an unusual nest of the **Common Gull** was shown

by H.D.H. to about thirty members of the S.O.C. returning from an excursion. It was in the middle of a large field of young wheat at Houdslow, between Greenlaw and Lauder, and contained four eggs. It seems to be the first occurrence of this species breeding in Berwickshire.

The colony of **Black-headed Gulls** at the Crane Loch in the Pentlands, Lanarkshire, is reduced to about 250 birds, about a quarter of the 1959 population (A.T.M.). The colony of **Kittiwakes** on the Lamb (Forth) has increased to 38 nests as opposed to sixteen in 1959, and a nest of this species has been found for the first time on Inchkeith (R.W.J.S.).

A pair of **Stonechats** with two young were seen at Buddon Ness, Angus, on 26th May (B.N.), while on Tulliallan Moor, Fife, two pairs fledged young and there may have been a third pair (J.H.).

Six nestling **Redstarts** were ringed on 13th June at Peppermill Dam: the first local breeding record (J.H.).

The **Grasshopper Warbler** is a scarce and local species in east Scotland and the following records are therefore of interest.

Haddington to Humbie road: two on 7th May, singing all day (H.F.D.E.).

Near Cameron Reservoir, Fife: one seen and heard on 11th May (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

Penicuik, Midlothian: one on 20th May (R.W.J.S.).

Upper Dalhousie, Midlothian: one on 30th May (A.T.M.).

Tulliallan: heard from 31st May (J.H.).

Gladhouse: two singing on 3rd June (R.W.J.S.).

One mile NW of Gladhouse: one on 30th June (A.T.M.).

Temple, Midlothian: three singing in spring (per R.W.J.S.).

In addition Grasshopper Warblers have been reported from places where they are scarce, at Caerlaverock, Dumfries, on 21st April (E.L.R.) and at Bowmore, Islay, on 5th July (M.F.M.M., L.J.R.).

A nest of the **Blackcap** (a rare breeding species in south Fife) was found near Culross on 14th May, the young fledging successfully by 12th June (J.H.).

Both the **Garden Warbler** and **Chiffchaff** are extending their range in the north of Scotland. A Garden Warbler was seen and heard at Dingwall in mid-May and another seen at Garve (H.B.). Records of the Chiffchaff from Ross-shire are all of birds singing: one at Loch Maree, late May 1959 (T.H.B.), one at Glenshiel on 5th April (D.A.H.), one at Inverewe throughout June (E.N.H., P.B.) and one at Kerrysdale, near Gairloch, on 10th June (E.N.H.). Mr Hunter comments that these are the first Chiffchaffs he has heard in ten years' acquaintance with the district.

Other northern records of the Chiffchaff come from Boat of Garten on 9th April (A.L.) and Loch Morlich on 15th June



Parent Song Thrushes at nest, Stirling, July 1960. The nest contains four young birds which were successfully reared. (Photograph by Arthur Eccles).

(B.N.), while the following occurrences are indicative of its increasing frequency in the Forth area:

Near Crail, Fife: one on 26th April (R.S.W.).

Tulliallan: one on 7th April (J.H.).

Valleyfield: three singing birds, of which two apparently remained mateless, while the third fledged six young (J.H.).

Turnhouse Golf Course, Edinburgh: 24th to 27th April (P.K.).

Polton Glen, Midlothian: 17th April (R.W.J.S.).

Dalhousie Castle, Midlothian: 28th and 30th May (A.T.M.).

Two broods of **Spotted Flycatchers** were seen in late June in a garden at Melvich, north Sutherland (T.W.). On 6th May a ♂ **Pied Flycatcher** was seen in two different gardens at Bridge of Weir (G.M.T.C., W.H.), and another at Tulliallan on 12th May (J.H.). One was singing (close to a known breeding site) near Temple Bridge, Midlothian, on 28th and 30th May (A.T.M.).

A ♂ **Grey Wagtail**, a rare species in Shetland, was seen at the Burn of Shaw, Unst, on 12th June (J.D.S.).

## HABITS

An interesting letter from John Peterson in *The Scotsman* (13th May 1960) describes the nesting of the **Starling** in rabbit burrows in Orkney: "disused rabbit warrens had become colonies of nesting Starlings. Two which I observed had over a dozen pairs each, and several were seen using the same entrances. That Orkney has neither stoats nor weasels makes nesting in this manner less precarious."

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CAPERCAILLIE

JEANETTE HARRIS

The following observations on the Capercaillie *Tetrao urogallus* were made in Central Perthshire during the 1958 breeding season. The area in which the birds were studied consisted of small blocks of middle-aged coniferous woodland, mainly Scots pine, with open patches of birch scrub, heather and bilberry in between.

Nests were found within this area in the following situations:

Nest 1. On the edge of a sixty year old mixed plantation of Scots pine, larch and Norway spruce, with open ground nearby. The nest was at the foot of a Scots pine and under a light covering of dead branches. It was lined with pine needles and "decorated" with a pine cone. Altitude 350 feet.

Nest 2. In a Scots pine plantation thirty-five years old, about forty yards from the edge, hidden in thick, recently cut branches with open ground nearby. Altitude 350 feet.

Nest 3. On the side of a rocky knoll above plantations of Scots pine, larch and Douglas fir, forty years old. In grass under heather bush. Altitude 400 feet.

Nest 4. On the edge of a thick untouched plantation of Scots pine, twenty-five years old. Altitude 700 feet.

Nest 5. On an open ride in a pure Scots pine plantation, fifty years old, under a light covering of dead branches. Altitude 1,000 feet.

The smallest full clutch recorded was four (Nest 5) and the largest nine (Nest 2). The intensity of the egg markings, as well as the shape of the eggs, varied between clutches. In spite of this variation individual hens seemed unable to distinguish their own eggs. In one nest, over half the clutch was replaced by the eggs of another, but the strange eggs were readily accepted.

At the lower altitudes clutches were completed and incubation begun within the first fortnight of May. The chicks hatched within the first fortnight of June. At Nest 5, and in two other nests at 1,000 feet in another area fifteen miles to the west, incubation began in the last fortnight of May with a corresponding delay of hatching until the end of June.

From the beginning of incubation the hen birds sat very closely, relying on their colour to keep them effectively concealed. When flushed (at about twenty feet) they always made off in the same direction, irrespective of the direction of the approach of danger. The hen at Nest 1 invariably left the nest, even early in incubation, "injury feigning," running thus for thirty or forty yards along a path before taking flight into the open. The hen at Nest 2, on the other hand, was never observed to "injury-feign" even after the eggs had hatched. She always took flight as soon as she was clear of the nest, downhill into a plantation. At this nest and at Nest 4 the cock bird was usually in attendance nearby, and also after hatching. The cocks of Nests 1 and 3, however, showed little interest in their mates' activities.

The eggs chip at least twenty-four hours before hatching. One chick examined in the egg fifteen hours after chipping began still had a considerable portion of the yolk sac to absorb. In one clutch the first egg began to chip one evening and the other three eggs the following day. The first chick emerged about twenty-four hours after first chipping the egg, followed by the other three within twelve hours. As soon as the egg is chipped the bird can be heard calling strongly within.

Once dry the chicks are remarkably vigorous and active.

A chick a few hours old was seen to snap up a fly. They run, scatter and crouch in the undergrowth if disturbed, and are very difficult to find. The chicks are very soon taken away from the area of the nest to more open ground, and as a rule can be found in quite a restricted area during the fledging period. The hen scratches the ground for them like a domestic fowl. Although the chicks are thought to be mainly insectivorous in the early stages (*British Birds* 51:189), droppings, at about fourteen days old, contained a high proportion of grasses, especially *Festuca ovina*, and bracken fronds. The young birds grow rapidly and at three weeks were the size of a Song Thrush and fluttering strongly.

Once they are able to fly the chicks no longer scatter into the undergrowth when the hen gives the warning guttural *kok kok* at the approach of danger. Instead they flutter up into the trees, where they assume a peculiar attitude like that of a Bittern when concealing itself. The body appears to elongate and the neck is extended with the bill pointing obliquely to the sky. The young bird remains immobile in this manner as long as the hen is giving the danger call. The chicks are difficult to pick out in this attitude unless they have been observed flying into the trees. As long as danger threatens the hen bird walks about in the trees nearby, calling *kok kok* all the time, with head and neck extended, and jerking her body and tail.

The hen and young continue to roost on the ground after the young can fly. One brood, when about four weeks old, was disturbed at dusk. The chicks flew silently up into the trees and, after they were safely out of reach, the hen bird rose and flew noisily away, calling loudly as she went. This particular bird "injury-feigned" to a dog when she had chicks, but not to a human being.

In one area a mixed covey was recorded. Two hens had joined up with broods of different ages, one about three weeks and the other about five weeks old, with the birds nearly twice as big.

On 9th September the brood from Nest 4 was still being guarded by the hen. They were then thirteen weeks old and the hen still "injury-feigned" to a dog on this occasion. At this age they were difficult to distinguish from the mother and were still in the area they had moved to from the nest.

In *The Handbook* it is stated that the Capercaillie is found "mainly on the ground in summer and autumn." With the birds studied this certainly applied to the females and young, but the males did not appear to be on the ground any more than usual. One interesting item of food taken by the adults was the seed of Scots pine. The scales were completely strip-

ped off the cone and the seeds nipped from the seed wing. Cones attacked by Capercaillie are readily distinguished from those damaged by Crossbills and squirrels.

## HOODED CROW AND RED-NECKED GREBE AS PREDATORS OF SALMON

D. H. MILLS

1. On 24th May 1959 a Hooded Crow *Corvus c. cornix* was observed taking and killing smolts of the Salmon *Salmo salar* at a salmon trap on the River Meig, a tributary of the Conon, Ross-shire. The smolt migration was at its peak, 2,807 smolts having passed over the trap in the preceding seven days, and it is possible that the fish had been taken unobserved on other occasions. The weather was bright at the time and the flashing of the fish as they were washed on to the grid of the trap probably attracted the birds in the first instance. When the observation was made the bird was hopping across the top of the trap and catching smolts as they came over. It was seen to kill a number of fish by catching them crosswise between its beak, apparently breaking their backs, and then dropping them. It eventually flew off with one fish held crosswise in its beak. Seven smolts with beak marks on their flanks were found dead on the grid of the trap. A bird, presumably the same one, was shot a short while later on the same day at the trap, and a stomach examination revealed smolt remains. The bird's beak was encased in smolt scales. After this bird was shot no further visits from other birds were noticed.

2. On 23rd March 1960 a Red-necked Grebe *Podiceps gris-eigena* was shot by mistake during a drive for Mergansers and Cormorants on the lower reaches of the River Beauly, Inverness-shire. The bird weighed 32 ounces and was acquiring its summer dress. Examination of the stomach contents revealed: salmon smolts (2), salmon parr (2), salmon fry (3) and fish remains. The following invertebrates were also present: Plecoptera *Taeniopteryx nebulosa*, nymph; Ephemoptera *Ecdyonurus* sp. and *Rithrogena* sp., nymphs; Trichoptera *Hydroptila* sp. and *Limnophilus* sp., larvae; Gasteropoda *Hydrobia jenkinsi*. A large number of feathers, from the back and underparts of the bird, were intermingled with the food and it is probable that it swallowed these while preening.

(Mr Mills has included a plumage description of this bird, which, incidentally, appears to be the first recorded from East Inverness.—ED.)



## THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Marine Hotel, North Berwick, 28th/30th October, 1960

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### P R O G R A M M E

#### Friday, 28th October :

- 5 to 7.30 p.m., and  
8.30 to 9.30 p.m. Conference Office in the Marine Hotel opens for Members and Guests to register (7s 6d each). Collect Name Cards and Annual Dinner tickets (12s 6d each).
- 6.15 p.m. Meeting of Council.
- 6.30 p.m. to midnight Lounges reserved for informal discussions and refreshments, and the showing of films and slides. Exhibition of original paintings by Archibald Thorburn in the Neptune Suite. Also an exhibit arranged by Dr David Jenkins of the Red Grouse Enquiry.
- 9.30 p.m. Excursion Leaders will describe the places of interest to be visited on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; in the Main Lounge of the Marine Hotel.

#### Saturday, 29th October :

- 8.45 to 9.15 a.m. Conference Office opens for registrations.
- 9.20 a.m. Official Opening of the Conference in the Dining-room of the Royal Hotel (near the Station, 6 mins. walk from the Marine Hotel). ADDRESS OF WELCOME by James R. Wishart, Esq., J.P., Provost of North Berwick.
- 9.30 a.m. ADDRESS on "Birds in Literature", by Sir Charles G. Connell, retiring President of the Club.
- 9.45 a.m. LECTURE on "Ornithology in Europe", by E. Max Nicholson, Esq., Director of the Nature Conservancy.
- 10.45 a.m. INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.
- 11.15 a.m. LECTURE on "Ornithology in America", by Dr I. C. T. Nisbet, Kings College, Cambridge.
- 12.15 p.m. DISCUSSION on Lectures.
- 12.30 p.m. CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH outside the Royal Hotel.
- 1 to 2 p.m. INTERVAL for informal lunches (Hotels must be informed).
- 2 to 5.45 p.m. EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Marine Hotel Car Park. Details of the Excursions will be

posted on the Conference Notice Board.

6.15 p.m.

24th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Neptune Suite of the Marine Hotel.  
BUSINESS:—

- (1) Apologies for absence.
- (2) Approval of Minutes of 23rd Annual General Meeting held in Stirling on 24th October, 1959.
- (3) Report of Council for Session 23.
- (4) Approval of Accounts for Session 23.
- (5) Appointment of Auditor.
- (6) Election of President of the Club: (Sir Charles G. Connell, having completed three years term of office, is due to retire and is ineligible for re-election). The Council recommend the election of Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.
- (7) Election of Vice-President: The Council recommend the election of Dr Ian D. Pennie to succeed Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.
- (8) Election of two Members of Council in place of those who retire.
- (9) Consideration of the following alteration to the Club Constitution under MEMBERSHIP (e):— "Married couples shall be eligible for joint Membership at an annual subscription of 40s and shall enjoy all the usual privileges of Membership with the exception that they shall be entitled to receive only one copy of "Scottish Birds" (Club Journal) between them".  
Note: This alteration is recommended by the Council to give effect to the results of the discussion at the last Annual General Meeting.
- (10) Any other competent business.

7.30 for 8 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER in the Diningroom of the Marine Hotel.

**Sunday, 30th October :**

9.30 a.m.

EXHIBITION of films in the Diningroom of the Royal Hotel.

10.45 a.m.

INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.

11.15 to 12.30 p.m.

By kind permission of the Town Council, the North Berwick Burgh Museum will be open to Members and Guests.

1 to 2 p.m.

INTERVAL for informal lunches.

2 p.m.

EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Marine Hotel Car Park.

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### INFORMATION

(1) In order to simplify arrangements, it is **essential** that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed post card and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 24th October**.

(2) Members may invite Guests; and are particularly asked to provide private cars where possible for the Excursions. Petrol expenses should be shared. Leaflets will be available in the Conference Office giving information on the Excursions. Members are urged to bring maps of the area (Ordnance Survey 1" maps: old Edition, Nos. 68 and 75; new Edition Nos. 62 and 63). Members who wish to go out on their own are particularly asked not to go in advance of led Excursions to avoid disturbing the birds.

(3) Everyone attending the Conference must register (7s 6d each) on arrival at the Conference Office (opening times—see Programme). Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting **ONLY** do not require to pay the Registration fee which covers incidental expenses—hire of rooms, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

(4) Tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 12s 6d inclusive of tips) should be purchased when registering on arrival. Members and Guests staying in the Marine Hotel and the Royal Hotel will be charged for the Annual Dinner in their inclusive Hotel bill, but **MUST** obtain a ticket from the Conference Office. All tickets will be collected at the Dinner. **NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE TO THE OFFICE IN EDINBURGH.**

(5) **Booking for the Marine Hotel should be made through the Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, 7.** Booking for **ALL OTHER HOTELS** must be made direct with the Hotel in which you wish to stay. Owing to the shortage of single rooms, Members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend (Single rooms at the Marine Hotel are now fully booked). Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day.

As the Conference Lectures are to be held in the Royal Hotel, it has now been arranged that accomodation will be available there at the inclusive charge of £4, 15s. All meals except breakfast will be taken at the Marine Hotel. The cost of the Annual Dinner will be included in the Hotel bill (see 4.)

### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN NORTH BERWICK

**MARINE HOTEL** (Tel. 2406) Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday, 28th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday, 29th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday, 30th—£4, 15s.

**ROYAL HOTEL**, Station Road (Tel. 2401) Special Conference charge as above, all meals except breakfast taken at the Marine Hotel—£4, 15s.

**DALRYMPLE ARMS HOTEL** (Tel. 2969) Bed and breakfast from 25s  
**COUNTY HOTEL**, 17 High Street (Tel. 2989) Bed and breakfast from 21s.

**IMPERIAL HOTEL**, Quality Street (Tel. 2381) Bed and breakfast from 21s.

**BRAMERTON HOTEL**, 27 Dirleton Avenue (Tel. 2228) Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

**SEABANK PRIVATE HOTEL**, 12 Marine Parade (Tel. 2479) Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

The above terms are quoted as a guide **ONLY**, and prices should be confirmed.

**S.O.C. PUBLICATION**

**"The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve"**, by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor. This article, which has been reprinted in booklet form by the Club from the "Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society", Vol. VIII, is now available to Members for 5s (postage 4d extra) and may be obtained from the Club Secretary or from Branch Secretaries. (See Review on p. 269).

**DEEDS OF COVENANT AND BANKER'S ORDERS**

The Club has now obtained permission from H.M. Inspector of Taxes to reclaim Income Tax on subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant. This will be of great benefit to the Club as it will almost double subscriptions paid in this way. The Council therefore invites Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate to undertake a seven-year Deed of Covenant for their subscriptions (this does not apply to subscriptions to the Journal only). Full details, with a suitable form, are enclosed with this issue. Completed Forms should be returned to the Secretary, who will forward a Certificate for the Deduction of Tax for signature each year.

Members who wish to pay their subscriptions by Banker's Order may conveniently do so by using the form enclosed with this issue. This form should be returned to the Secretary and not to the Bank.

**LIBRARY AND CLUB ROOM**

Members are reminded that books are available in the Club Library for borrowing. It is regretted that meantime it is not possible to publish a list of the books available, owing to the amount of work this would entail, but the Secretary will be glad to supply a short list of books on a particular subject for any Member who is making a specific study. Details of Library opening hours are printed on the front cover of this Journal. The Library is normally open to Members on Saturday mornings between 9 a.m. and 12 noon; there are occasions however when the office is unavoidably closed. If Members wish to visit the office on Saturday, they would be advised to telephone beforehand to avoid disappointment.

**JUNIOR MEETINGS**

It has been decided that owing to homework and other ties in termtime, the Meetings arranged for Junior Members in the Scottish Centre on the first Friday of each month should be discontinued this winter. Instead, it is proposed to hold two Meetings in the Club Room, one in the Christmas holidays and the other at Easter. Dates and further details will be published in the December issue of "Scottish Birds".

**CHANGES IN TIMES OF BRANCH LECTURES**

Members of the St Andrews Branch are particularly asked to note that the October Meeting will be held on Monday, 31st October instead of the usual Friday, due to the dates fixed for the Annual Conference.

Members in the Edinburgh area are asked to note a change in the time of the last two lectures of the winter Session. As quite a number are unable to attend lectures at 5.30 p.m., the Branch Committee feel that they should be given an opportunity of hearing two of the Lecturers this winter. The Meetings in March and April therefore, will commence at 7.30 p.m. and **not** at 5.30 p.m. The later hour will also ensure that black-out arrangements for slides and films will be more effective at this time of the year.

### WHOOPEL SWAN ENQUIRY

The British Trust for Ornithology and the Wildfowl Trust have agreed to sponsor an Enquiry on the Whooper Swans in Great Britain this coming winter.

The purpose of the Enquiry is to ascertain (a) status and distribution of the species; (b) proportion of young in the wintering herds; (c) dates of arrival and departure; and (d) general feeding habits especially in relation to agricultural crops.

To supplement the regular Wildfowl Counts, observers in Scotland and Northern England are asked to make counts of Whoopers as frequently and in as many places as possible. Careful observations of feeding habits are particularly wanted in the Spring.

The Organiser is Miss Betty Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, from whom copies of a Questionnaire may be obtained. It is hoped that as many Members of the Club as possible will co-operate.

### NATIONAL WILDFOWL COUNTS

Regular monthly counts of wildfowl are made on lochs, estuaries, coastal waters, etc., from September to March. Counters are required in Scotland. Anyone interested in helping should write to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, who will supply full details.

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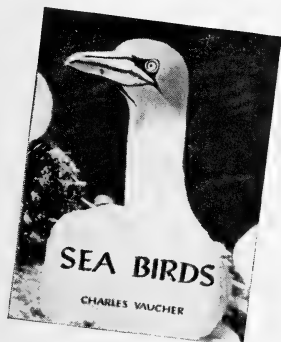


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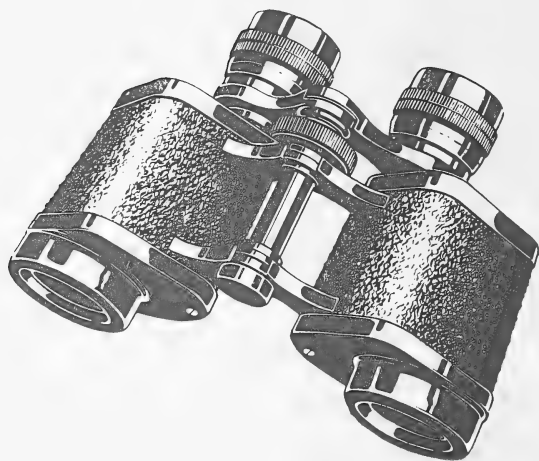
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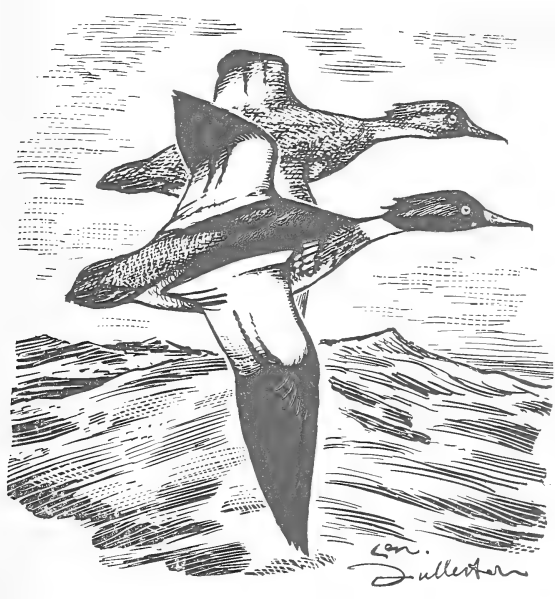
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I No. 10*

*Winter 1960*

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## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

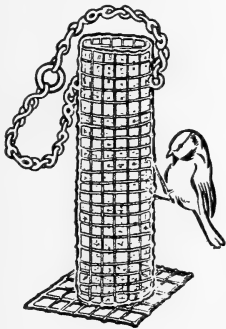
### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

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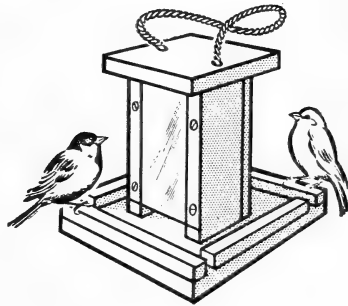
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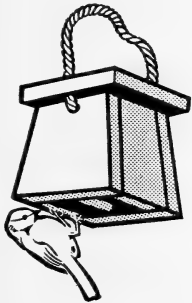
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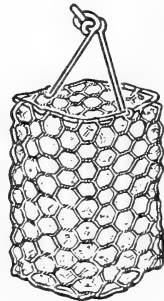
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



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Vol. I No. 10

Winter 1960

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Red-breasted Mergansers) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly.*

## Editorial

SCOTTISH bird-watchers are exceptionally fortunate in winter time, regularly seeing species for which their English colleagues would be liable to organise bus trips. Scots would, for example, be astonished to hear that there is a distinguished and experienced English ornithologist who has never seen a Grey Lag Goose, a species which flies over our houses about once a week. In winter we can see all the regular geese, and there can now be few Scottish bird-watchers who have not also seen a Snow Goose or Lesser Whitefront. Ducks, sea birds and birds of prey are much more numerous than in England: English "list-makers" are proud of themselves if they see a hundred species before the first summer visitors arrive in March, but their Scottish rivals can make their century in a winter week, or even a winter week-end. This winter Waxwings have already been noted in several places, Great Grey Shrikes appear to be numerous, and many members of the S.O.C. have seen a single Rough-legged Buzzard. A report of Lady Chatterley's Plover from Aberlady is unconfirmed, but we nevertheless wish all members of the S.O.C. a successful winter's bird-watching.

## REVIEW

KENNETH WILLIAMSON and J. MORTON BOYD: "St Kilda Summer." London 1960. Hutchinson. pp. 224. Photographs and line drawings. 25/-.

All the outliers of the Outer Hebrides, from North Rona to Rockall, are possessed of a certain charm for the naturalist by virtue of their remoteness and wealth of wild life. Of them all, the best known is St Kilda and, while it cannot be said

that naturalists have flocked there, at least there has been a steady trickle of Fortunatees over the years.

Access became more difficult with the evacuation in 1930 and consequent cessation of regular sailings and for 27 years St Kilda lay uninhabited and relatively seldom visited. In 1957 St Kilda again became news, when an R.A.F. task-force went out to set up a radar installation. With this party went the authors of this book, representing the interests of the National Trust for Scotland, who own the island, and the Nature Conservancy, to whom it was leased. How these interests could have clashed with those of the Rocket Age is demonstrated in the early chapters, and a lively account is given of how the present situation, satisfactory to both, was achieved.

This volume is more than the narrative of the activities of mid-20th Century Man on the island, however: there are chapters dealing ably with the problematical history of the civilisation which existed almost unchronicled for over a thousand years, with the well-known forms of Wren, Field Mouse and Sheep peculiar to the island, and with the resident, migrant and vagrant birds. It is enlivened with accounts of often hazardous but always profitable landings on the other stacs and islands which, together with the main island of Hirta, make up the St Kilda group.

Over all, the authors are to be congratulated on producing a well balanced story of St Kilda as it is to-day and as it was in days gone by. Written in an easy style and well illustrated with black-and-white plates and line sketches, it is worthy of a place on any naturalist's bookshelf.

Throughout even the most factual chapters there runs the thread of the spell which St Kilda casts over those who visit it; a spell proof even against Bailey bridges, oil drums and Nissen huts. It is a spell which is almost tangible as I write these words perched 1,100 feet up on the shoulder of Conachair watching the evening sun slanting across the quiet meadows of Village Bay as we draw towards the end of yet another St Kilda Summer.

D. E. B.

#### CORRIGENDA

*Antea* 1:260. The asterisk against the word "Teal" should be omitted: Dr Morton Boyd informs us that R. Atkinson saw a Teal on North Rona in 1936 (*Island Going* p. 96), so this is not a new species for the island.

*Antea* 1:280, eight lines from bottom. For "early June" read "early July."

# A COMPARISON OF "DRIFT-MIGRATION" AT FAIR ISLE, THE ISLE OF MAY AND SPURN POINT

BY

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## *Introduction*

After my analysis of "drift-migration" into eastern England in autumn (Lack 1960a), various persons pressed me to make a similar analysis for Fair Isle, especially because Williamson's theory of drift-migration was developed with primary reference to this island (Williamson 1952, 1955, 1960 etc.). The present paper shows that the methods which proved fruitful for eastern England in autumn were not nearly so productive further north, primarily, I think, because the weather is much more variable around Fair Isle than in the southern North Sea, so that broad tabulations of the number of arrivals in different types of weather involve a deceptive over-simplification when applied to Fair Isle. Nevertheless, the broad picture presented here will, I hope, supplement the detailed analyses of particular drift-arrivals given by K. Williamson and P. Davis in successive numbers of the "Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin." To save space, full knowledge of my earlier paper on "drift-migration" into eastern England is assumed, including the summary of views on migrational drift, and also my reasons for the methods of analysis there used. My aim being to make the present paper as comparable as possible, I have used closely similar methods of analysis, and have not repeated my reasons for them here except where differences were introduced.

I am extremely grateful to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, founded by George Waterston, for permission to analyse the Fair Isle data, which from 1948 to 1956 were collected by the pioneering efforts of the first warden, K. Williamson, and subsequently by his successor, P.E. Davis, helped by numerous amateur visitors. I am similarly grateful to the Isle of May Observatory and W. J. Eggeling and to Spurn Point Observatory and R. Chislett. I am also extremely grateful to all of these workers, also to W. R. P. Bourne, R. E. Moreau and M. T. Myres of the Edward Grey Institute and to R. C. Homes, for their valuable criticisms of an earlier draft of this paper.

Fair Isle was manned every day in August, September and October 1948-59 inclusive, except from 22 to 31 October 1952

and 13 to 31 October 1953, and it was also manned every day in May 1949-60 inclusive, but I had to omit 1st May 1953 because no record was available for the previous day. Fair Isle was manned much less often in April, and since no big drift-arrivals were recorded in this month, it has been omitted from my study. The Isle of May was manned during most of the same periods as Fair Isle, but with occasional gaps in most years, so that I have not made a full analysis for this island. Spurn Point was manned almost every day during the autumns of 1949-59 inclusive, analysed in the earlier paper, but there were occasional gaps in May in most of the years between 1949 and 1959.

This paper, like the earlier one, is concerned with the typical "drift-migrants," i.e. the night-migrant chats, warblers and flycatchers. But one of the commonest chats, the Wheat-ear *Oenanthe oenanthe*, had to be excluded, because on Fair Isle there was possible confusion between British, Scandinavian, Icelandic and Greenland birds, and this paper is essentially concerned with birds migrating between Scandinavia and southern Europe or Africa. As in the earlier paper, the number of arrivals each day was assessed as the number of each species present in excess of the number on the previous day, or the day before that, whichever was the greater. This figure will have been too low when birds stayed only briefly, while particularly on Fair Isle, with its extensive cliffs, migrants will sometimes have been first recorded a day or two after they actually arrived.

#### *Average Totals at Fair Isle*

The average number of arrivals of each common species on Fair Isle each autumn and each May is shown in Table 1. The sparse but almost regular species are listed in note (i) to this table, while note (ii) shows the effect on the spring figures of including the available data for April. The number of arrivals varied greatly in different years, as shown by the smallest and largest annual totals, placed in brackets after the averages. These marked variations were due primarily to a few large and sporadic arrivals, which once in September 1956 and once in September 1957 included over a thousand birds of the species studied here, a total not otherwise exceeded in the course of a whole autumn. Likewise an arrival in May 1960 included over three hundred birds, a total exceeded for the whole of May in only one other year. Table 1 also shows that the number of Redstarts varied in different autumns between 4 and over a thousand, and in different Mays between 0 and over three hundred, and similar variations occurred in all other species.

Hence the averages in Table 1 mean little. But they at least



show the excessively small totals involved, on an average little more than six hundred birds each autumn and two hundred each May, with far fewer in some seasons. In only two species, Redstart and Willow Warbler, did the average exceed a hundred per autumn, and one per day in May, and only one other species at each season, the Whinchat in autumn and the Whitethroat in May, approached even these small totals. Hence it is misleading to term Fair Isle "the British Heligoland," for in autumn many of the same species are numerous on Heligoland at times. This conforms with the view that Heligoland is regularly crossed by Scandinavian night-migrants, while Fair Isle is not. Both islands, however, agree in having a fantastic list of rarities.

The arrivals of thrushes *Turdus* spp. on Fair Isle have not been analysed in this paper, but the autumn totals are worth mention. Adding the average for September and October, based on ten seasons of observation, to the average for November based on three seasons of observation, the average for the autumn on Fair Isle works out at about 1800 Fieldfares *T. pilaris*, about 4000 Redwings *T. musicus*, mainly Scandinavian but many Icelandic, about 1400 Blackbirds *T. merula*, about 100 Song Thrushes *T. ericetorum* and 5 Ring Ousels *T. torquatus*. Hence on Fair Isle, the Fieldfare, Scandinavian Redwing and Blackbird have been well over ten times as numerous in autumn as any species of warbler, flycatcher or chat (omitting the Wheatear). Their much greater abundance suggests that Scandinavian Fieldfares, Redwings and Blackbirds pass much nearer to Fair Isle on their way to Scotland than do the Scandinavian chats, warblers and flycatchers, also Song Thrushes and Ring Ousels, on their way to southern Europe or Africa, as I suggested earlier from other evidence (Lack 1959 pp. 382-3).

#### *Comparison between spring and autumn totals*

Table 1 shows that the average total for all species in May was just over one-third of that in autumn, and note (ii) suggests that the proportion would not be appreciably raised by adding the figures for April, though the latter are based on too few years to be sure. It does not, of course, follow from this that nearly two-thirds of the migrants passing Fair Isle in autumn have died by the following spring, since the circumstances favouring arrivals might well differ at the two seasons. The latter view is supported by Table 2, which shows that at Spurn, the average number of migrants in May is about one-sixth of that in the autumn, i.e. half of what it is at Fair Isle.

Table 1 shows that, on Fair Isle, most species have been between two and eight times as common in autumn as spring, the latter figure being reached in the Garden Warbler, with

an average of 28 in autumn and almost 3.5 in spring. The Goldcrest appears to have been proportionately far commoner in autumn than spring, but in spring it passes mainly before May, and it may be merely by chance that as yet no big arrival of this species has been recorded there in April. Three species that are rare everywhere in Britain, the Barred and Yellow-browed Warblers and the Red-breasted Flycatcher, are sparse but almost regular on Fair Isle in autumn, but totally absent in spring; nearly all the truly rare species have occurred in autumn, not spring.

Seven species, notably Sedge Warbler and Common White-throat, also Black Redstart, Stonechat, Lesser Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher, differ from the rest in being less uncommon on Fair Isle in spring than autumn. In five of these species, the breeding range does not extend north beyond southern Scandinavia, and this also holds for the Sedge Warbler, apart from its reappearance in the extreme north of Scandinavia, while in the Spotted Flycatcher, which is more widespread, the Scandinavian population (unlike the German) migrates southeast in autumn (Creutz 1941), so is unlikely to occur on Fair Isle at this season. In contrast, nearly all the other common migrants in Table 1 breed well north in Scandinavia and migrate southwest in autumn. Probably species of the latter type are as likely to be displaced to Fair Isle in autumn as spring, but birds breeding only in Scotland or on the Continent to the southeast of Fair Isle are much less likely to be displaced there in autumn than in spring, since in autumn they are heading southward, whereas in spring they are heading northward, and "overshooting" with a following wind is a well-known phenomenon in spring in western Europe and North America. This suggestion was earlier made by Davis (1960) to account for the much more frequent occurrence of the Stonechat on Fair Isle in spring, chiefly in March, than in autumn, and also in connection with various other species.

#### *Comparison with Spurn Point and Isle of May*

Spurn Point in Yorkshire lies some 420 miles south of Fair Isle. Precise comparison between the numbers at the two observatories may be misleading since Spurn Point is a low-lying headland attached to the mainland, whereas Fair Isle is a high and isolated island, so presumably attracts a greater proportion of the passing migrants. Further, the total number of migrants present is more easily assessed on Spurn Point than on the rocky cliff-bound Fair Isle. Finally, an important fraction of the migrants on Spurn Point in autumn probably consists of departing British summer residents and not "drift-migrants" from Scandinavia (Lack 1960a), but such probable

British departures were excluded from the present comparison, as explained in note (ii) to Table 2.

Table 2, which refers to the same dates at both observatories, shows that the migrants at both observatories consisted of the same species in, for the most part, very similar numbers. The total number of all species was rather greater in autumn at Spurn than Fair Isle, but the reverse applied in spring. Most of the apparent differences in the average numbers of particular species at the two observatories can be attributed to the random influence of a few big arrivals, notably of Redstarts on Fair Isle in September, and of Robins and Goldcrests at Spurn in October. But a few species resident in England in summer, notably the Stonechat, Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat, were commoner at Spurn than Fair Isle in autumn, while two sparse northern species, the Bluethroat and Yellowbrowed Warbler, occurred more often on Fair Isle than at Spurn. At Spurn, like Fair Isle, most species were commoner in autumn than spring, with the same main exceptions, since the Sedge Warbler and Whitethroat were commoner at Spurn in spring than autumn, while the Lesser Whitethroat, Grasshopper Warbler (very sparse) and Spotted Flycatcher have been about equally frequent at the two seasons. (The Stonechat and Black Redstart were seemingly commoner in autumn than spring at Spurn, but Table 2 does not include much of their times of passage).

The number of days with an arrival of at least 50 warblers, flycatchers and chats (omitting the Wheatear) was, in the autumns covered in Table 2, 20 at Spurn but only 11 at Fair Isle. On the other hand, in the months of May covered in Table 2, there was only one such arrival at Spurn, but 8 on Fair Isle; however, if arrivals of 47-49 birds had been included, and if allowance were made for the days missed at Spurn, there were 4 at Spurn and 9 on Fair Isle, which is probably a truer comparison. Although the total number of migrants in autumn was greater at Spurn than on Fair Isle, the number of rarities was much greater on Fair Isle. In addition to the 19 regular or almost regular species listed in Table 2, and also the Wheatear, 15 occasional or rare species of warblers and chats occurred on Fair Isle, but only 6 at Spurn, in the autumns reviewed here.

The Isle of May lies almost half-way between Fair Isle and Spurn Point. As it is an island, but at the mouth of the Firth of Forth, the proportion of passing migrants attracted is probably lower than at Fair Isle but higher than at Spurn; the terrain probably makes observation easier than at Fair Isle, though harder than at Spurn. Comparing all days on which both observatories were manned, there were at both seasons more arrivals of at least 50 migrants on the Isle of May than on

Fair Isle, 17 as compared with 10 in autumn, 18 as compared with 11 in May. The corresponding figures for the Isle of May compared with Spurn Point were 17 to 11 in autumn and 17 to about 4 in May, (by chance, the Isle of May was not manned on quite a number of the days in autumn when over 50 migrants arrived at Spurn Point). These comparisons indicate that, for the species studied in this paper, the Isle of May is the most favoured of the three observatories in both autumn and spring; though even on the Isle of May the numbers are negligible compared with the Scandinavian migrations from which the birds concerned are presumably drawn.

#### *Weather factors analysed*

The influence of the weather was analysed primarily with respect to the migrants arriving on Fair Isle, as this observatory provided the fullest record. Analysis was restricted to the years from 1950 onwards, as before this the British Daily Weather Charts were not sufficiently detailed for northern Europe. In autumn, the period selected was between 19th August and 14th October inclusive, as no sizeable arrivals were recorded outside these dates (except as specified in note (i) to Table 4).

Wind-directions, as in the earlier paper, were assessed from the isobars on the Daily Weather Charts. In autumn I used those for the sea east of Fair Isle, at 06.00 hours because K. Williamson informs me that in autumn most migrants arrive on Fair Isle early in the morning. In May I used those in the sea south and somewhat east of Fair Isle, at 12.00 hours because P. E. Davis informs me that in May many migrants arrive around midday. It may be added that these times of day gave a slightly better fit between arrivals and south-easterly winds than did earlier or later times of day. The wind-speed was taken as that recorded in the Daily Aerological Reports at 900 m. above Lerwick, 40 miles north of Fair Isle and the nearest meteorological station to it. For overcast, I used the readings at Lerwick in the British Daily Reports, at 06.00 and 12.00 hours each day in autumn, and at these times and 18.00 hours in May. As in the earlier paper, I scored full overcast as present when 8/8th cloud, fog, mist or rain were recorded at the selected times, and otherwise as absent; the objections to this method were discussed in the earlier paper. In May, wind-directions were also assessed from the isobars east of the Isle of May, while overcast was noted at Leuchars in Fife, the nearest meteorological station to the Isle of May, the readings being for the same times of day as at Fair Isle.

If most Scandinavian "drift-migrants" reach Fair Isle by lateral displacement, as I concluded in the earlier paper for eastern England, then in autumn they probably set out on

the previous evening from mid-Norway some 400-500 miles to the northeast of Fair Isle, between about latitudes  $62^{\circ}$  and  $65^{\circ}$  N., while in May they were probably near that part of France bordering the eastern part of the English Channel on the previous evening. But if, as postulated by Williamson (1952, 1955, 1960), most such migrants reach Fair Isle by a flight directed down-wind, since nearly all of them arrived with a southeasterly wind, they probably came from the Skagerrak, some 400 miles to the southeast of Fair Isle. Hence to examine the possible influence of the weather at the place of departure, one has to make a provisional decision between these two views. So far as I can judge, however, a firm decision is not possible on the basis of the available data from Fair Isle, due partly to the sporadic nature of the few sizeable arrivals, and partly to the changeable weather, which has to be assessed over the sea from records at distant land stations. Since, however, the chief aim of this paper is to provide a comparison with the earlier results from eastern England, I have here tabulated the weather data on the same assumption of lateral displacement, so have used for the autumn the figures for the previous evening in mid-Norway, and in May those for the eastern side of the English Channel. I would stress that this is to see whether the trends found in eastern England hold for Fair Isle, and not because the method by which the "drift-migrants" reach Fair Isle can be certainly established.

Wind-directions, wind-speed at the surface, and overcast, in mid-Norway in autumn and round the eastern side of the English Channel in May, have been assessed from the Daily Weather Charts. So was the general weather situation, which whenever possible was classified as either anticyclonic (A), or disturbed (D) owing to the presence of a depression or front, with transitional (T) for intermediate situations, but the last category was used as little as possible, though necessarily more than in the earlier paper.

As already mentioned, the weather tends to be much more disturbed around Fair Isle than in the southern North Sea, and more disturbed in autumn in mid-Norway than southern Norway. Further, the sea-areas crossed by most migrants reaching Fair Isle in autumn are further from meteorological stations than the sea-areas crossed by migrants reaching eastern England in autumn. For these reasons, the weather summaries in Tables 3-10 are probably much less reliable than the similar tables in the earlier paper for eastern England in autumn. Provided that this limitation is kept in mind, however, it may be helpful to see what a broad classification of arrivals in different types of weather may show. This summary refers to only a few of the possible weather factors whose influence might have been examined, but Tables 3 and 8 give the dates

of all big arrivals should the reader wish to test for others.

*Arrivals of over 50 birds in autumn*

In the autumns of 1948 to 1959 inclusive, there were 14 arrivals of over 50 chats, warblers and flycatchers on Fair Isle, 4 of them in 1951, 3 in 1959, 2 in 1956 and 1957, one in 1950, 1953, and 1958, and none in the other five seasons. Although arrivals of this size occurred on only 14 days, the birds coming on them comprised 63% of all recorded on Fair Isle in the twelve autumns, which once more emphasizes the fortuitous nature of the average figures. Some details have been set out in Table 3, together with the arrivals of over 50 birds on the Isle of May in the same period, but the weather data refer only to Fair Isle. This table may be compared with Table II for eastern England in the earlier paper.

Of the 14 such arrivals on Fair Isle, 6 occurred with anticyclonic weather in mid-Norway, and 8 with what I classified as transitional weather there. Of the 17 such arrivals on the Isle of May, 10 occurred with anticyclonic weather and 7 with transitional weather 400 miles to the northeast (*i.e.* somewhat south of the area selected for Fair Isle migrants). The corresponding figures for arrivals in eastern England averaging 50 birds were 18 with anticyclonic and one with transitional weather in southern Norway; while including those with at least 50 birds at one observatory but a lower average, they were 31 with anticyclonic and 4 with transitional weather. Hence the proportion of arrivals with anticyclonic weather 400 miles to the northeast was markedly lower for Fair Isle than for eastern England, with the Isle of May intermediate. On my system of classification, transitional weather was proportionately commoner further north, which doubtless had much to do with this difference. The most important point is that no arrival of over 50 birds occurred at any of the observatories in question with disturbed weather 400 miles to the northeast. Probably this is mainly because small passerine night-migrants do not normally set out from Norway in autumn in disturbed weather, though weather of this type usually means westerly winds, and hence no westward drift, further south.

It was found in the earlier paper that arrivals of over 50 birds in eastern England were not significantly influenced by the weather in Norway on the five days previous to the day in question and that, in particular, they did not come especially on the first fine day after a disturbed spell. The same lack of correlation with the previous weather applied to the 14 arrivals of over 50 birds on Fair Isle, for which the weather in mid-Norway on the preceding five nights was usually transitional, sometimes settled, occasionally disturbed, and sometimes mixed.

The wind in mid-Norway on the night before these arrivals on Fair Isle was normally light or moderate, the average for the surface-wind at the coastal stations being 13-15 knots on 4 nights and 10 knots or less on the other 10 nights. A similar correlation with light winds in Norway was found for arrivals in eastern England in autumn. The same point was earlier stressed by Williamson (1955, also 1960), and I differ from him only in thinking that other weather factors are also important in initiating migration (Lack 1960b).

The wind in mid-Norway prior to an arrival of over 50 birds on Fair Isle was N.E. on 3 nights, S.E. on 4, S.W. on 5 (on all of which it was S.E. somewhat further south, as indicated in brackets in Table 3), S.S.W. throughout on one, and very light southerly on one. Similarly, the wind was easterly, usually S.E., rather further south in Norway on the night before 13 of the 17 arrivals of over 50 birds on the Isle of May, and in south Norway before 31 of the 35 arrivals of over 50 birds in eastern England.

Table 3 fully supports Williamson that most arrivals on Fair Isle occur with a S.E. wind over the island. This held unequivocally for 7 of the 14 arrivals in Table 3. Further, for the arrival on 21st August 1950 the wind was S.E. during the night though S.W. by 06.00 hours, on 1st September 1951 it was S.W. round Fair Isle itself but S.E. in part of the sea-area between Fair Isle and mid-Norway, on 31st August 1953 it was S.E. during the night, N.W. in the morning, but S.E. again by 18.00 hours, on 4th September 1956 it was N.E. at 06.00 hours but S.E. by noon, and on 20th September 1957 it was N.E. at 06.00 hours but E. by noon. Hence for 12 of the 14 arrivals in Table 3, the wind was S.E., or once E., *i.e.* blowing across the presumed track of migrants heading south from mid-Norway, for at least part of the day or part of the track concerned.

The two apparent exceptions, to judge from the weather maps, were the arrivals of Robins with, respectively, a very light southerly wind, and a moderate S.S.W. wind, on 13th and 14th October 1959, but P. E. Davis informs me that on the 13th the wind was light easterly for most of the day, and on the 14th moderate to fresh S.E. at Fair Isle itself. Hence these two arrivals were not so exceptional as the weather maps suggest.

Similarly, 13 of the 17 arrivals of over 50 birds on the Isle of May occurred with a S.E. wind in the morning, while for one other the isobars indicated a S.W. wind but it was recorded as S.E. at the surface, and for another it was S.W. off-shore in the morning but E. further north, and S.E. off-shore by 18.00 hours; the other two arrivals came with a N.E. wind. Similarly of the 35 arrivals of at least 50 birds in eastern England, 29 occurred with a wind between E. and S.E. in the southern

North Sea; the few exceptions were discussed in the earlier paper.

On the three occasions in Table 3 with an arrival of over 50 birds on Fair Isle but a negligible one on the Isle of May, the wind was S.E. for at least part of the day off Fair Isle but westerly off the Isle of May. However, for the 10 days with an arrival of over 50 birds on the Isle of May but a small or negligible one on Fair Isle, there seemed to be no corresponding difference in wind-direction. On about half the days with an arrival of over 50 birds at either Fair Isle or Spurn Point, but not both, the wind was easterly off the observatory receiving the arrival but westerly off the other, but this did not hold for the other half.

Full overcast was recorded at Lerwick on 10 of the 14 mornings with an arrival of over 50 birds on Fair Isle. It was not recorded at 06.00 hours or noon for three arrivals of 50-71 birds, nor for one of the two outstanding arrivals, that of 20th September 1957, for which Davis (1958) noted that on Fair Isle "the weather was fine and clear throughout this 'great rush'." Full overcast was recorded at Leuchars for 13 of the 17 arrivals of over 50 birds on the Isle of May. But it was recorded round the southern North Sea for only 17 of the 35 arrivals of over 50 birds in eastern England, a difference that perhaps reflects a greater prevalence of full overcast in northern than southern waters in September.

#### *Influence of weather on autumn arrivals*

To allow for points such as that raised in the last sentence, it is essential to analyse the weather on all the days covered by this study, and not merely on the few with arrivals of over 50 birds, and the arrivals at Fair Isle were used for this purpose. Table 4 provides a broad summary on the same lines as Table III in the earlier paper for eastern England (Lack 1960a). Comparison of the two tables shows that whereas in eastern England nearly all arrivals of over 50 birds and many of 20-49 birds occurred with anticyclonic weather to the north and east winds throughout the presumptive journey of the migrants (type 1), at Fair Isle this type of weather was apparently less favoured than some others. This may not have been true, however, since four days with big arrivals on Fair Isle and a S.W. wind in mid-Norway, but a S.E. wind rather further south, were doubtfully classified under type 4 weather. There was almost as good a case for classifying them under type 1, which would have greatly raised the average for type 1 weather and reduced that for type 4. Even so, transitional weather with easterly winds (type 7) was proportionately much more favoured at Fair Isle than in eastern England, as already noted in the last section. In Table 4, the high average



number of arrivals for type 2, and especially for type 6, were based on too few days to be trustworthy.

Comparison of Table 4 with the corresponding table for eastern England also shows that, with westerly winds throughout the presumptive journey, arrivals of 10 or more birds were much rarer on Fair Isle than in eastern England, suggesting that westward drift is essential for a sizeable arrival on Fair Isle, but not in eastern England. (An arrival of over 50 birds on Fair Isle on 1st September 1951, rated as with westerly winds both in Norway and off Fair Isle in Table 4, is deceptive since there was a S.E. wind in between).

Table 4 also shows that 1-9 birds arrived on Fair Isle on just over half the days studied. While migrants sometimes elude discovery on the cliffs or elsewhere, small increases were so frequent, sometimes on consecutive days over long periods, that most of these must have been genuine arrivals. Moreover only a small proportion of them might perhaps have been redetermined movements from Shetland after previous drift, since there were very few big drift-arrivals, and it also seems unlikely that night-migrants starting from Shetland would often alight again after only some twenty miles. There therefore seems to be a thin trickle of Scandinavian migrants passing Fair Isle in autumn in all types of weather. No arrivals were recorded on just over one-third of the days concerned, on most of which the wind was westerly throughout, though on a few there were easterly winds off Fair Isle with anticyclonic or transitional weather in mid-Norway.

In Table 5, the wind-directions off Fair Isle have been analysed in greater detail. This shows that the proportion of days with an arrival of at least 20 birds was only 6 out of 371 (2%) with a wind between N.W. and S.W., 5 out of 45 (11%) with a N.E. wind, and 20 out of 91 (22%) with a S.E. wind. Including the data in the second half of the table for days on which the wind changed in direction between 06.00 and 12.00 hours, the figure for all occasions with a S.E. (or E.) wind for at least part of the day was 30 out of 121, or 25%. But while most birds arrived with a S.E. wind, there were 40 out of 91 (44%) other days with a S.E. wind on Fair Isle when at most only 2 birds arrived.

Much the same was found earlier for eastern England in autumn, and here the wind-speed was evidently critical, big arrivals occurring with a strong but not with a weak S.E. wind. This point has been tested in Table 6 for all days with a S.E. wind off Fair Isle at both 06.00 hours and noon, and suggests, though less clearly than for eastern England, that arrivals were fewer in light than moderate S.E. winds. On the basis of the figure for the wind around sunrise each day at 900 metres (3000 feet) above Lerwick, arrivals of at least

20 birds occurred on only 4 out of 30 days with a S.E. wind of less than 18 knots, but on 10 out of 30 days with a S.E. wind of 18-27 knots; the corresponding figures for arrivals of less than 10 birds were 22 out of 30 for light winds and only 14 out of 30 for moderate winds (see also Appendix Table 1, however, which suggests that for arrivals in the most favourable types of weather, wind-speed had little if any influence).

The general tendency for arrivals on Fair Isle to occur with a S.E. wind favours the idea of drift, but there were some puzzling exceptions. Three of these involved an arrival of over a hundred birds. I have already mentioned the big arrivals of Robins on 13th and 14th October 1959. The big arrival on 5th September 1956 was also puzzling, since though it occurred with an E.S.E. wind, the wind was extremely light. There had been a much bigger arrival on the previous day with a strong S.E. wind and rain and it may be suggested that the birds arriving on the 5th were likewise blown off course on the 4th, but did not make land till next day. There were also some puzzling arrivals of 30-49 birds, notably on 12th September 1950 in col conditions with an excessively light, if anything westerly, wind in the morning, and a moderate S.W. wind later, also on 21st August 1954 with a 10-knot N.E. wind, on 25th August 1954 with a 13-knot north wind (the wind being N.E. that night in mid-Norway), and on 31st August 1957 with a 3-knot wind from slightly north of east. I would stress, however, that these were the exceptions, and that most arrivals came with a moderate S.E. wind.

It may be added that four of the arrivals of over 50 birds on the Isle of May listed in Table 3 occurred with a wind of less than 6 knots in the morning at 900 m. above Leuchars, Fife, those of 24th August 1950, 18th September 1953 and 20th September 1957 with a S.E. wind, and that of 8th September 1956 with a N.E. wind. Of the 35 arrivals of at least 50 birds in eastern England, that of 20th September 1957 occurred with an exceedingly light easterly wind, two others with a S.E. wind of only 8 knots and three others with a N.E. wind of 5-9 knots. But such occurrences seem much less remarkable in eastern England, where some migrants probably pass without being drifted, than at Fair Isle or the Isle of May, where westward drift would seem essential for their occurrence.

#### *Certain sparse species*

In the earlier paper, I showed that in eastern England in autumn, Bluethroats occurred chiefly on days when other Scandinavian migrants arrived, and chiefly with S.E. winds, whereas Barred Warblers, Red-breasted Flycatchers, and

more doubtfully Icterine Warblers, occurred chiefly when few other migrants arrived, and in a variety of winds, including westerlies. The Icterine Warbler was too sparse on Fair Isle for a similar analysis, but the Yellow-browed Warbler could be added to the other three, the results for which are shown in Table 7. In interpreting this table, it should be kept in mind that an individual rarity can easily be overlooked for a day or two after its first arrival on Fair Isle, particularly if it arrives with many other birds or shelters on the cliffs. But this objection should apply as much to the Bluethroat as to the three other species, and Table 7 suggests a marked difference between them, of the same type as was found in eastern England.

Firstly, almost a quarter (24%) of the Bluethroats, but only 4% of the other three species, occurred on the 14 days with an arrival of at least 50 chats, warblers and flycatchers on Fair Isle. Secondly, 60% of the Bluethroats, but only 28% of the other three species, occurred on days with a S.E. wind off Fair Isle during the morning (including the days when it was N.E. for part of the time, but not those when it was westerly for part of the time). Thirdly, in the Bluethroat, as shown in Table 1, the ratio of spring to autumn arrivals was similar to those of most other autumn migrants, whereas the Barred Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher were never recorded in spring.

If, as these figures suggest, Bluethroats arrived on Fair Isle in similar conditions to the common migrants, then presumably the high proportion (26%) of Bluethroats first recorded with a westerly wind consisted in part of individuals that had arrived earlier with S.E. winds but had been overlooked, while a few others may have been on re-determined passage from Shetland. It is reasonable to suppose that these same two factors accounted for a similar proportion of the records of the other three rarities with westerly winds, but in these three species, the overall proportion first recorded with westerly winds was 48%, nearly double that for the Bluethroat. Since easterly winds are much less common than westerlies, more Barred Warblers, Yellow-browed Warblers and Red-breasted Flycatchers reached Fair Isle with easterly winds than would have been expected by chance, but the proportion first recorded with a westerly wind was much higher than in most species. Presumably, therefore, many of them arrived from the Continent with a westerly wind, *i.e.* not down-wind. It also seems safe to conclude that these three species are not "markers" of the place of origin of the main Scandinavian drift-arrivals.

#### *Discussion of autumn arrivals*

The data reviewed in the foregoing sections are far too in-

adequate for a full appraisal of the reasons why Scandinavian night-migrants sometimes arrive on Fair Isle in autumn. Firstly, the numbers involved are extremely small, indeed negligible compared with the numbers leaving Scandinavia, or with the numbers that can be seen when conditions are right on the Continent of Europe. Secondly, more than three-fifths of all those recorded on Fair Isle during the 12 autumns analysed here came on one of 14 irregularly distributed days. Thirdly, the weather often changes rapidly round Fair Isle and in Norway in autumn. Finally, the critical sea-area between Fair Isle and Norway is distant from land-based meteorological stations, so it is hard to assess the weather in it. For these reasons, it was perhaps to be expected that statistical correlations could not be established between the arrivals on Fair Isle and particular weather factors, except for the already well-known tendency for arrivals to occur with south-easterly winds.

Most of the migrants that reach Fair Isle in autumn are presumably drawn from populations heading from Scandinavia in the direction of the Iberian peninsula, but since Fair Isle lies some 200 miles to the west of the most westerly line running directly between these two areas, the birds reaching it are evidently well off-course. For this reason, and because Fair Isle is twenty miles from land, it seems likely that at least most of the Scandinavian chats, warblers and flycatchers that come in sight of it in autumn alight there, *i.e.* that the insignificant numbers on Fair Isle mean an insignificant passage overhead. Further, the general paucity of arrivals, and their tendency to come with a southeasterly wind fully support Coward (1912) and later Williamson (1952, 1955, 1960), as against Clarke (1912), that the migrants in question do not have a regular route through Fair Isle, but occur there chiefly owing to westward "drift."

In my view, however, the available data from Fair Isle do not allow one to determine the nature of this drift, and in particular, they do not appear to provide critical or positive evidence in favour of Williamson's view of drift as a down-wind directed flight. Williamson put forward this theory at a time when it had not been shown that night-migrants can navigate by the stars, and he assumed, by analogy with certain diurnal migrants in Holland, that in autumn Scandinavian night-migrants reaching the west or south coast of Norway turn along it south and southeast, using it as a "guiding line" for navigation. When the migrants come to the Skagerrak, however, they are *ex hypothesi* forced to put out to sea, so here they are in danger of getting lost. Since the Skagerrak lies to the southeast of Fair Isle, and most Scandinavian migrants reach Fair Isle with a southeasterly

wind, it was reasonable, on this view, to conclude that they reach Fair Isle down-wind. But if it is accepted that night-migrants can navigate by the stars, they do not need the coast-line for navigation; and it has lately been shown by radar that small night-migrants leaving East Anglia S.S.E. at night in autumn do not, in fact, follow the coastline, but put out to sea on a broad front, as do the thrushes and other species leaving East Anglia eastward at night in spring (Lack 1959). It seems reasonable to suppose that the same holds in Norway, though the matter has not yet been tested there. (There is also the possibility, in my view remote, that while some of the night-migrants fly high out to sea on a broad front, others follow the coastline too low to be detected by radar). If Scandinavian night-migrants do not follow the west and south coasts of Norway as Williamson postulated, and if, instead, they put out to sea whenever their heading lies that way, then there is no need to postulate that most of the birds reaching Fair Isle started their drift in the area of the Skagerrak, and hence the basis for this argument in favour of down-wind arrival is greatly weakened.

Secondly, the frequent association of drift-arrivals with full overcast led Williamson to postulate that migrants over the sea reorient to fly down-wind when bad visibility prevents their following coastlines or navigating by the stars. But one of the two big arrivals on Fair Isle of the species studied here, that of 20th September 1957, in the season after Williamson left Fair Isle, occurred with fine and clear weather round the island, as did a few other arrivals of between fifty and a hundred birds. Further, the undoubted frequency of arrivals on Fair Isle and the Isle of May in autumn in full overcast might be at least partly incidental and due to the prevalence of overcast with easterly winds at this season. Dr G. V. T. Matthews informed me (*in litt.*) that at the Isle of May in September and October 1926-35 inclusive, the frequency of days with a visibility of 0-2 miles was 16.8% with a wind between N.E. and S.E. but only 3.3% with a wind between S.W. and N.W. Hence it is far from certain that "drift-arrivals" are correlated with full overcast as such, and one of the two big arrivals definitely occurred in its absence.

Thirdly, Williamson supposed that the rarities coming with the main drift-migrants were "markers" of where the drift originated, and since they included species like the Barred Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher, which breed to the east and southeast, but not to the northeast, of Fair Isle, this seemed to provide further support for a southeastern, and hence down-wind, origin. But the evidence given in the last section suggests that Barred Warblers and Red-breasted Flycatchers are not reliable "markers" of the main "drift-arriv-

als," and that they reach Fair Isle under rather different conditions.

I therefore consider that, while Williamson's theory was not unreasonable on the evidence available in 1952, three of the main points on which it rested are at least doubtful, and I have elsewhere raised certain more general objections to it (Lack 1959). Moreover on any view, and particularly on Williamson's, large numbers of Scandinavian night-migrants cross the Skagerrak, yet hardly any reach Fair Isle, which fits better with the view that Fair Isle receives the westernmost fringe of the Scandinavian departures than that, on the nights with full overcast and a southeasterly wind, the migrants crossing the Skagerrak are disoriented and then turn to fly down-wind, since on the latter view one might have expected many more at Fair Isle on occasional days. I conclude that there is, on present evidence, no need to accept Williamson's view, but that the Fair Isle data do not allow of its exclusion.

Radar observations in the southern North Sea have not as yet provided any evidence in favour of Williamson's view but have demonstrated two other types of "drift." Firstly, and normally, when migrants can see to navigate by the sun or stars, they maintain an oriented heading but do not allow for lateral displacement by a cross-wind. Secondly and rarely, when they meet fog or rain, they are disoriented and fly at random, which presumably means that they drift (not fly) down-wind at the speed of the wind (Lack 1958, 1959). Most Scandinavian "drift-migrants" to eastern England in autumn probably come by lateral displacement from their S.S.W. heading, while if disorientation in full overcast has any important influence, it is probably through delay rather than drift on the sea crossing, since fog usually occurs with light winds (Lack 1960a).

The birds reaching Fair Isle in autumn are mainly of the same species as in eastern England, so it is not unreasonable to suppose that their heading is likewise S.S.W.; moreover this is the bearing of Iberia from Norway. On this view, since Fair Isle lies 200 miles west of any line between Norway and Iberia, it is understandable that Scandinavian migrants should be scarce, and also that they should come mainly with southeasterly winds, for displacement will be greatest with a wind at right angles to the birds' heading. Hence while the data are inadequate, I suggest that they are not inconsistent with the view that most drift-arrivals to Fair Isle came either by the lateral displacement of birds heading S.S.W. or by the down-wind drift of birds disoriented in full overcast. The data do not, however, allow one to decide between these two methods, since any possible correlation between arrivals and full overcast near Fair Isle was inconclusive, and one is ignorant

of the extent of overcast in the seas north of Fair Isle, as they are distant from meteorological stations. Since in this area full overcast seems frequent with a strong southeasterly wind, it is possible that disoriented drift down-wind plays a larger part than in eastern England, but this is a guess. It is also possible that some of the drift-migrants came by a combination of both methods, being disoriented for part of their journey and resuming their southerly heading when they emerged from the overcast area.

One tends to assume that Scandinavian night-migrants landing by day on Fair Isle set out from Norway on the previous evening, on which view they flew for some 12-18 hours, and one would not expect them to be exhausted or seriously under-weight on arrival. On the basis of the size of the migratory fat deposits in relation to energy-consumption, Odum (1960) estimated that a long-distance small passerine night-migrant should have enough fat to fly continuously for 1750 miles (for 58 hours at 30 m.p.h.). This figure is based on the energy consumed by a hovering hummingbird, which might be more than that consumed by a migrant in level flight, so if anything the figure may be an underestimate. If it is even roughly correct, it suggests that long-distance migrants reaching Fair Isle badly under-weight set out, not on the previous evening, but two or three evenings before. Hence one may have to seek an explanation for the westward drift of some of the migrants in terms of the weather two or three days before they reached Fair Isle. Conceivably some under-weight birds might have reached Fair Isle solely by lateral displacement from an oriented heading, on the supposition that they flew continuously from north Norway with a strong southeasterly wind all the way. But it seems likely that most under-weight birds would have been drifted out to sea in full overcast for part of their journey, after which they might resume their southerly heading to bring them past Fair Isle. I suggested earlier that this was what might have happened on 5th September 1956.

While most arrivals on Fair Isle occurred with a moderate south-easterly wind, a few, as already mentioned, did not. If these arrivals were primarily due to events two or three days earlier, it is hard to be sure that one has examined the weather in the relevant area at the relevant time, while if the relevant area was the sea well north of Fair Isle, it might not have been possible to infer the weather there correctly from the records at distant land-stations. This gap in knowledge offers a loophole for difficult cases, but it is fairer to say that, while the evidence allows one to postulate lateral displacement or disoriented drift in south-easterly winds for most arrivals, a few sizeable arrivals are unexplained, and

seem extremely hard to explain, on this view.

Further observations are needed on the times of day at which the passerine night-migrants actually land on Fair Isle. This may be hard to establish when the birds seek cover on arrival and stay in it for a few hours before emerging to feed. Also, while many of the birds presumably arrive during the hours of daylight, others perhaps come during the night. One would expect the latter primarily on foggy nights on account of the attraction of the lighthouses in these conditions, since on other nights the birds would presumably be flying high and not attracted to the island. If this view is correct, then there may well be a correlation between some arrivals and fog at night round Fair Isle—a point that needs further study.

The foregoing discussion refers to nearly all the species mentioned in this paper, but not without modification to two groups. Firstly, the Fieldfare, Scandinavian Redwing and Blackbird occur in much larger numbers each autumn than the chats, warblers and flycatchers, so presumably pass much nearer to Fair Isle than the other species, as is reasonable if they cross on a broad front from Norway to Scotland on their way to British wintering grounds (Lack 1959). Presumably, a comparatively small westward displacement is needed to bring these three species of thrushes to Fair Isle. Secondly, the Barred Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher occur relatively more often with westerly winds and less often with south-easterly winds than the regular warblers and flycatchers, and they are also rare in big arrivals of the other species. I cannot suggest why their occurrences should be of this pattern, nor why these eastern birds should occur on Fair Isle as often as they do.

#### *Arrivals of over 50 birds in May*

Arrivals of over 50 birds in a day on Fair Isle and the Isle of May during the month of May are set out in Table 8. Note (ii) to Table 8 refers to the only big spring arrival so far recorded on Fair Isle in March or April, note (iii) gives the arrivals in May of 30-49 birds at both observatories, and note (iv) the few sizeable arrivals at Spurn Point in May. I have included all arrivals of at least 30 birds in the following discussion.

Table 8 and note (iii) show that in May, like the autumn, most arrivals of at least 30 birds occurred with a south-easterly wind, this holding for 14 out of 17 such arrivals on Fair Isle and for 21 out of 27 such arrivals on the Isle of May. It should be added that on a few of these days the wind was S.E. for only part of the time, having occasionally been S.W. in the first part of the morning, and once S.W. from noon onward. On the few other days with an arrival of over 30 birds,



the wind was almost due east once at Fair Isle and three times at the Isle of May, N.E. once at Fair Isle and twice at the Isle of May, and S.W. once at Isle of May. The last arrival on 5th May 1956, with a S.W. airstream over Britain, consisted of 10 Whinchats, 6 Redstarts and 49 Willow Warblers. As these three species breed commonly in Scotland, this was probably a northward movement of Scottish summer residents drifted somewhat eastward and precipitated by the frontal rain which passed over the Isle of May that day. Nearly all the other arrivals, both on the Isle of May and at Fair Isle, presumably consisted of Scandinavian summer residents drifted off course to the west by easterly winds, while a few individuals, as already discussed, may have been more southerly birds which overshot their breeding area with a partly following wind.

Table 8 shows that, on most occasions in May with an arrival of at least 30 birds on either Fair Isle or the Isle of May, there was a negligible arrival on the other. Differences in the direction of the wind off the two islands were evidently responsible for a few of these. Thus for one arrival of over 30 birds on Fair Isle but not the Isle of May, the wind was E. off Fair Isle but N.E. off the Isle of May, while for another it was S.E. for part of the day off Fair Isle but S.W. all day off the Isle of May. Again, of the arrivals of at least 30 birds on the Isle of May but not Fair Isle, five occurred with a S.E. or E. wind off the Isle of May but a N.E. wind off Fair Isle, one with a S.E. wind off the Isle of May but a S. wind off Fair Isle, two with a S.E. wind off the Isle of May but a S.W. wind off Fair Isle, and one with an E. wind off the Isle of May but a N.W. wind off Fair Isle (also one with a S.W. airstream throughout Britain, already discussed). However, for the other nine such arrivals on Fair Isle but not the Isle of May, and for the other 13 such arrivals on the Isle of May but not Fair Isle, the direction of the wind off the two islands was either similar, or did not differ in a way likely to cause the observed difference in arrivals.

In Table 8, I have also included the wind-direction in the southern North Sea off East Anglia at 06.00 hours each day. This was usually similar to that off the Isle of May at noon; when it differed, it seemed to make no difference to the number of arrivals, but the data are inadequate.

I have also included the general weather situation around the eastern side of the English Channel at midnight before the arrivals on Fair Isle and the Isle of May. Using the same terminology as before, this proved to be transitional on 24, disturbed on 10, and anticyclonic on 6 such occasions. However, the arrivals of over 30 birds were too sporadic for this to mean that the species concerned set off mainly in transi-

tional weather, and probably it means chiefly that, in the period studied, south-easterly winds were commonest off eastern Scotland when the situation in the Channel was transitional. It shows, however, that migrants sometimes set off in disturbed weather in spring, which was not found in autumn, and this fits with the evidence from other sources (Lack 1960b).

As regards full overcast, 8 of the 17 arrivals of at least 30 birds on Fair Isle occurred on days when full overcast was recorded at either 06.00, 12.00 or 18.00 hours at Lerwick, and 9 when it was not so recorded, which suggests that it had no influence. Again, of the 26 arrivals of at least 30 birds at the Isle of May with easterly winds, 18 occurred when full overcast was recorded at Leuchars and 8 when it was not; but this is close to the proportion expected on a random distribution, since at Leuchars with easterly winds in the months of May studied, full overcast was recorded on twice as many days as it was not. (The one arrival at the Isle of May with a south-westerly wind may have been precipitated by frontal rain, as already mentioned).

#### *Influence of weather on arrivals at Fair Isle in May*

In May, as in the autumn, the possible influence of the weather on arrivals needs to be analysed for all days, and not merely for the few with arrivals of over 30 birds. Table 9 gives the number of days with arrivals of each size on Fair Isle, in terms of the wind just south of Fair Isle and also 200 miles further south, off the Isle of May. This shows that four-fifths (36 out of 45) of all the arrivals of at least 10 birds on Fair Isle occurred with a S.E. wind at noon in at least part of the sea-area studied. Further, the mean number of arrivals per day with a S.E. wind off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May was 26, while with a S.E. wind off one but not the other (types iii, v) it was 16. On the other hand, with a N.E. wind off both islands it was only 2 and with a westerly wind off both islands it was only 1.

Differences in the prevailing wind were largely responsible for the marked differences in the total number of migrants recorded each year in May. In particular, only 50 warblers, flycatchers and chats (omitting the Wheatear) were recorded on Fair Isle in the whole of May 1956, when the wind was westerly almost throughout the month, and 14 of these birds came on one day, 24th May, when the wind was S.E. for the morning only.

Although arrivals in May were strongly favoured by a S.E. wind, Table 9 shows that, as in the autumn, there were other days with a S.E. wind but few or no arrivals. In Table 10, the possible influence of the speed of the wind has been investi-

gated for the 62 days with a S.E. wind off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May, and it suggests that, as in autumn, big or moderate arrivals occurred chiefly with fairly strong S.E. winds, and not with light winds from this direction. As in the autumn, however, some arrivals occurred with a very light wind, including four of over 50 birds on Fair Isle, included in Table 8, which, as it happened, were not among the 62 days with general S.E. winds analysed in Table 10. The days in question were 8th May 1950, 5th May 1954, 4th May 1955 (when the wind was light S.W. for most of the day but changed to light S.E. in the late afternoon), and 28th May 1955. On all four days, the arrivals included characteristic Scandinavian migrants such as Robins, Bluethroats or Pied Flycatchers, so they were presumably birds on passage to Scandinavia, and though in three of the four instances there had been S.E. winds during part of the preceding few days, I think that they were probably too large to have been derived from re-determined movements of birds drifted earlier to Scotland that were heading back to Norway. Table 8 shows that there were also three arrivals of at least 50 birds on the Isle of May with a very light S.E. wind, on 5th May 1952, 8th May 1953 and 13th May 1959, while on 25th May 1959 the wind was an extremely light easterly.

The 62 days with S.E. winds off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May can also be used to test the possible influence of full overcast, as in the upper part of Appendix Table 2. This is inconclusive, but suggests that full overcast, at least as recorded at Lerwick, had little if any influence. The lower half of this table shows that, provided the analysis is restricted to days with general S.E. winds, the weather situation on the previous night on the easterly side of the English Channel also had little if any influence. Arrivals appeared to be slightly sparser with disturbed than with transitional weather, as might be expected, but the comparative paucity with anti-cyclonic weather may merely have been due to the accompanying light winds in the North Sea.

#### *Discussion of arrivals in May*

Almost all the comments made in discussing the autumn findings apply equally to the spring, in particular the difficulty of establishing correlations when arrivals are sparse and irregular and the weather is changeable and, in large areas, unrecorded. The paucity of migrants and their occurrence chiefly with south-easterly winds indicate that in May, as in the autumn, they come mainly through drift, though in May some are evidently birds carried beyond their breeding area by a following wind. The correlation with south-easterly winds was, if anything, stronger in May than in the autumn,

but perhaps merely because the weather is more stable in May, so that the tabulated weather data were more accurate. Full overcast near Fair Isle was associated with proportionately fewer of the arrivals in May than in the autumn, which perhaps means that it had little or no influence, and that most if not all the migrants arrived by lateral displacement from an oriented heading, but this is far from certain.

The anomalies, or apparent anomalies, in May were similar to those in the autumn. A few arrivals of over 50 birds at either Fair Isle or the Isle of May occurred with an extremely light south-easterly wind, and one of 31 birds on Fair Isle and two of 52 and 227 birds on the Isle of May with a N.E. wind (of 12-14 knots). Also most arrivals of any size on Fair Isle occurred on days when hardly any birds arrived on the Isle of May, and conversely, and on most of these days the difference was not associated with a difference in wind-direction over the two islands. Finally there were many days with a moderate or strong south-easterly wind and no appreciable arrival at either observatory.

Occasional big arrivals with a light south-easterly wind, or with a north-easterly wind, also marked differences in the number of arrivals on the same day at adjacent observatories, and days with a south-easterly wind but no appreciable arrival, were likewise found at Cley, Gibraltar Point and Spurn Point observatories in autumn (Lack 1960a). But Scandinavian migrants evidently pass fairly regularly over eastern England in autumn even without westward displacement, and such occurrences here seem most readily explained through marked variations, in the proportion of passing birds that alight at the coast. On the other hand, there is every reason to think that Scandinavian chats, warblers and flycatchers do not usually reach Fair Isle or the Isle of May in spring or autumn unless drifted westward, and it also seems likely that, when they reach these islands, they normally alight. Hence though one is reluctant to adopt a different explanation for similar occurrences in two areas, it is unlikely that the primary factor at Fair Isle is variation in the proportion of passing migrants that alight. I suggest, instead, that at least some of the apparent anomalies may be due merely to ignorance, both of the track of the migrants before they reached Fair Isle and of the weather in sea-areas far from land, and that had more been known, the influence of drift by south-easterly winds might have been apparent. But as stressed for the autumn, such a possible loophole is dangerous, and there may be other as yet unknown factors involved.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that the "drift-migrants" to Fair Isle and the Isle of May constitute a minute fraction of the migrations of the species concerned and this, coupled

with the sporadic nature of the few arrivals, and ignorance of the weather at sea far from land, provide the chief reasons why the conclusions reached are so indecisive. Nor do I think it likely that more extended records of the same nature, even for twice as many years, will suffice. However, the combination of such records with radar observations has great possibilities, and one object of this paper is to provide a background for such studies.

### *Summary*

1. An average of rather over 600 chats, warblers and flycatchers (mainly Scandinavian) landed on Fair Isle each autumn, and an average of rather over 200 each May, the number varying greatly in different years. Over 50 birds arrived on one day 14 times in 12 successive autumns, and 12 times in 12 successive months of May.

2. Arrivals of over 50 birds in a day were twice as frequent on the Isle of May as on Fair Isle at both seasons, while on Spurn Point they were twice as frequent as on Fair Isle in autumn, but far scarcer in May.

3. Big arrivals were so sporadic, the weather was so changeable, and the weather data for the critical sea-areas were so incomplete, that it was hard to establish any certain correlations between arrivals and particular weather factors.

4. At both seasons, however, most arrivals came with a moderate or strong S.E. wind, so were presumably due to drift, but while Williamson's view of drift as a reoriented down-wind flight seems unlikely, it was not possible to determine whether the lateral displacement of oriented birds or the down-wind drift of disoriented birds was the more important.

5. At both seasons there were a few arrivals with extremely light south-easterly winds, or with a N.E. wind. There was often a big arrival at Fair Isle but not the Isle of May, or conversely, and there were many days with a S.E. wind and no arrival at either. Most of these anomalies have not been explained.

6. Fieldfare, Redwing and Blackbird were comparatively numerous on Fair Isle in autumn, presumably because they pass regularly close to the island.

7. In autumn Barred Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler and Red-breasted Flycatcher rarely occurred with big arrivals of other drift-migrants. They did not occur in spring and were relatively more frequent with westerly winds.

TABLE 1.—Annual totals at Fair Isle in autumn and spring

	10th Aug. - 31st Oct. (1948-59)		May (1949-60)	
	Mean	Limits	Mean	Limits
TOTAL	636	(161-2428)	239	(50-699)
Whinchat ( <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> )	82	(6-513)	18	(2-52)
Redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> )	190	(4-1103)	49	(0-310)
Black Redstart ( <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> )	0.7	(0-2)	2	(0-8)
Bluethroat ( <i>Cyanosylvia svecica</i> )	7	(1-19)	4	(2-8)
Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )	52	(4-423)	16	(0-59)
Sedge Warbler ( <i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i> )	1	(0-2)	11	(2-37)
Blackcap ( <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> )	18	(3-36)	3	(0-5)
Barred Warbler ( <i>Sylvia nisoria</i> )	6	(0-19)	0	
Garden Warbler ( <i>Sylvia borin</i> )	28	(6-62)	3	(0-11)
Whitethroat ( <i>Sylvia communis</i> )	8	(2-13)	26	(0-69)
Lesser Whitethroat ( <i>Sylvia curruca</i> )	8	(1-17)	10	(0-55)
Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	102	(12-535)	55	(7-306)
Chiffchaff ( <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> )	13	(3-27)	1	(0-5)
Yellow-browed Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i> )	3	(0-7)	0	
Goldcrest ( <i>Regulus regulus</i> )	63	(2-317)	0.4	(0-2)
Spotted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa striata</i> )	7	(1-22)	11	(3-46)
Pied Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa hypoleuca</i> )	41	(7-212)	9	(1-42)
Red-breasted Flycatcher ( <i>Muscicapa parva</i> )	2	(0-11)	0	

NOTES: (i) The following 5 species occurred with a frequency of more than 0.5 but less than 2.0 per annum, the autumn average being given before the May: one: Grasshopper Warbler (*Locustella naevia*) (0.4, 1.3), Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*) (1.1, 0), Icterine (*Hippolais icterina*) (1.1, 0.3), Wood Warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*) (1.3, 0.6) and Arctic Warbler (*Phylloscopus borealis*) (0.7, 0). In addition, 4 other species in May and 11 in autumn occurred with a frequency of less than 0.5 per annum.

(ii) The addition of the mean figures for April, watched in 1956, '58, '59 and '60, would have raised the mean spring total by 17 in the Robin, by 6 in the Goldcrest, by 2 in the Chiffchaff and by 1 in Redstart, Black Redstart, Blackcap, Willow Warbler and Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*). The inclusion of 500 Robins on 30 March 1958 would have greatly raised the spring average for that species.

TABLE 2.—Comparison between Fair Isle and Spurn Point.

Annual means between dates specified in 1949-1959 inclusive for all species with a mean of at least 2 at one observatory at one season.

	20th Aug. - 10th Oct.		1st - 31st Fair Isle	May Spurn
	Fair Isle	Spurn		
Stonechat	0.3	6	0	0.2
Whinchat	84	40	15	9
Redstart	205	63	43	7
Black Redstart	0.1	2	2	0.6
Bluethroat	7	1	4	0.2
Robin	15	76	12	2
Sedge Warbler	1	6	12	13
Blackcap	14	5	3	1
Barred Warbler	6	1	0	0
Garden Warbler	26	13	3	3
Whitethroat	7	29	23	45
Lesser Whitethroat	7	3	10	4
Willow Warbler	106	50	32	41
Chiffchaff	7	5	1	0.4
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	0.3	0	0
Goldcrest	57	410	0.3	0.3
Spotted Flycatcher	8	9	11	8
Pied Flycatcher	41	99	6	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	2	2	0	0
TOTAL (including rarities)	603	827	179	138

NOTES: (i) The means for Fair Isle are not identical with those in Table 1 as they refer to a somewhat different period.

(ii) The means for Spurn in autumn exclude all birds that were probably departing from England, the criterion for exclusion being considered in Lack (1960a). Inclusion of all migrants at Spurn would have raised the overall mean to 916 and those of the Whinchat to 56, Redstart to 69, Sedge Warbler to 10, Whitethroat to 51, Willow Warbler to 82, Spotted Flycatcher to 12 and Pied Flycatcher to 102 (cf. Lack 1960a Table 5).

(iii) In 11 years' observations in May at Spurn, 74 out of a possible 341 days were missed, so the totals of arrivals were increased proportionately in calculating the annual means.

TABLE 3.—Autumn arrivals of over 50 birds on Fair Isle and Isle of May, and possible weather factors influencing Fair Isle.

Date	No. of arrivals		mid-Norway at midnight			Fair Isle 06.00 hrs.		
	Fair I.	May I.	Gen. Sit.	Wind Dir.	Full Overcast	Wind Dir.	Wind Str.	Full Overcast (F - front)
21.8.50	96	-	T	SE	$\frac{1}{2}$	SW (SE)	23	+(F)
24.8.50	1	57	A	SE	0	SE (NE)	04	+
12.10.50	3	72	T	NW	$\frac{1}{2}$	SW (SE)	16	+
1.9.51	71	(34?)	T	SW (SE)	0	SW	15	0
24.9.51	53	11	T	SE	+	SE	30	+
1.10.51	265	650+	A	SW (SE)	$\frac{1}{2}$	SE	19	+
2.10.51	38	650+	A	v.	+	SE	19	+
12.10.51	56	67	A	SW (SE)	0	SSE	40	0
14.10.52	0	79	A	SE	0	SE	07	+
31.8.53	51	0	T	NE	0	NW (SE)	07	0
15.9.53	3	52	A	SW	0	SE	36	0
16.9.53	18	55	A	SW	0	SE	25	0
17.9.53	44	80	A	v.	0	SE	24	0
18.9.53	3	62	A	E	0	SE	26	+
4.9.56	1945	157	T	NE	$\frac{1}{2}$	NE (SE)	22	+(F)
5.9.56	319	73	T	NE	$\frac{1}{2}$	SE	05	+
8.9.56	6	99	D	SE NW	$\frac{1}{2}$	N (v.)	06	+
24.9.56	3	63	T	SW (SE)	0	SE	17	+
19.9.57	162	4	T	SE	$\frac{1}{2}$	SE	40	+
20.9.57	1064	409	T	SE	0	NE (E)	11	0
21.9.57	2	154	T	ENE	0	NE	02	0
2.9.58	51	-	A	SW (SE)	0	SE	32	+
5.10.59	317	108	A	SW (SE)	$\frac{1}{2}$	SSE	30	+
13.10.59	160	-	A	S (v.)	$\frac{1}{2}$	S NE (v.)	06	+(F)
14.10.59	201	-	A	SW	+	SSW	18	+(F)

NOTES: (i) The table covers all autumn days 1950-59 when at least 50 birds arrived on Fair Isle or the Isle of May, but the weather is set out solely with respect to Fair I. - means that the Isle of May was not manned on the date in question.

(ii) Under "gen. sit." A means anticyclone, T transitional and D disturbed weather.

(iii) Wind-directions were assessed from the isobars: "v" means variable, usually very light, winds: A second direction placed in brackets after the first means, for mid-Norway, that the wind was S.E. rather further south than lat. 62 deg. N. on the night in question, and for Fair Isle that the wind blew from a different direction before 06.00 hours (on 21.8.50) or later in the day (all other instances).

(iv) Full overcast in mid-Norway was assessed from up to 4 stations on the west coast, being scored as + when all recorded it,  $\frac{1}{2}$  when at least one but not all did so, and 0 when none did so. At Lerwick near Fair Isle, it was scored as + when recorded at 06.00 or 12.00 hours, and 0 if at neither. (F) was added if the weather chart showed a front over the area.



TABLE 4.—Influence of weather situation on arrivals at Fair Isle 19 Aug.-14 Oct. 1950-59.<sup>4</sup>

	gen. sit. mid-Norway	wind-direction mid-Norway	wind-direction Fair I.	total no. of days	No. of days with an arrival of						mean no. of arrivals per day
					50+	20- 49	10- 19	3- 9	1- 2	0	
1.	A	E	E	29	.	4	6	8	5	6	10
2.	A	v.	E	8	.	5	2	.	1	.	25
3.	A	E	W	5	.	.	1	2	1	1	5
4.	A	W	E	27	4	6	3	7	5	2	35
5.	A	W	W	30	1	2	1	7	11	8	12
6.	A	S	S	4	1	.	.	.	2	1	41
7.	T	E	E	53	5	8	7	11	12	10	74
8.	T	E	W	18	2	2	3	4	2	5	15
9.	T	W	E	23	.	.	1	4	7	11	1
10.	T	W	W	98	1	.	2	24	40	31	3
11.	T	S	S	3	.	.	.	2	.	1	4
12.	D	E	E	23	.	1	3	7	6	6	4
13.	D	E	W	54	.	.	1	8	19	26	1
14.	D	W	E	16	.	1	1	1	9	4	3
15.	D	W	W	179	.	1	1	21	68	88	1
TOTAL				570	14	30	32	106	188	200	12

NOTES: (i) The dates analysed were as shown in the title, except that the observatory was not manned on 13th and 14th October 1953, while I added in small arrivals on 15th and 16th October 1952.

(ii) A means anticyclonic, T transitional and D disturbed weather in mid-Scandinavia.

(iii) The wind was recorded as E or W provided it had any appreciable easterly or westerly component, and S (southerly) only when it had not got such a component both in mid-Scandinavia and between Fair I. and southern Scandinavia. It was recorded as "v" when very light indeed in mid-Scandinavia with an easterly wind further south.

(iv) For a corresponding analysis of arrivals in eastern England, see Lack 1960a, Table III, but the numbering of the weather-types differs owing to the insertion of type 6 above.

(v) In 1948 and 1949, omitted from the above analysis, there were 3 arrivals of 20-49 birds, 11 arrivals of 10-19 birds, 34 arrivals of 3-9 birds, 25 arrivals of 1-2 birds and 41 days with no arrivals.

TABLE 5.—Influence of wind-direction off Fair Isle in morning on arrivals 19 Aug.-14 Oct. 1950-59.

Wind-direction	Total No. of days	No. of days with arrival of				
		50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	0-2
similar at 06.00 & 12.00 hrs						
NE	45	.	5	3	10	27
SE	91	6	14	13	18	40
SW, W	239	3	1	7	41	187
NW	132	.	2	1	23	106
different at 06.00 & 12.00 hrs.						
(i) NE (ii) SE or E	6	3	.	3	.	.
(i) SE or E (ii) SW, W or NW	24	1	6	4	5	8
(i) NE (ii) SW or NW	7	.	1	.	2	4
miscellaneous (mainly N or S)	26	1	1	1	7	16
TOTAL	570	14	30	32	106	388

NOTES: (i) The directions N and S were used as little as possible as it seemed specially important to decide whether the wind had an easterly or westerly component, while easterly winds were always classified as NE or SE according to whether they had a northerly or southerly component, and westerly winds (from 260-280 deg.) were grouped with SW winds.

(ii) Changes in direction between 06.00 and 12.00 hours were in either direction and not necessarily from that placed first to that placed second above.

TABLE 6.—Influence of wind-speed on autumn arrivals at Fair Isle for all days with SE wind.

Speed of SE wind (in knots)	Total No. of days	No. of days with arrival of				
		50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	0-2
4-17	30	1	3	4	7	15
18-27	30	1	9	6	2	12
28-45	31	4	2	3	9	13
TOTAL	91	6	14	13	18	40

NOTES: (i) The wind-speed in knots was at 900 m. above Lerwick, at the time nearest to 06.00 hrs. each day, for all days with a S.E. wind off Fair Isle at both 06.00 and 12.00 hours.

(ii) For convenience the wind-speeds were grouped so as to give an almost equal number of days in each group. For easier comparison with Table 10, the 18 days with a wind of 4-12 knots included 14 on which at most 10 birds arrived.

(iii) On 5th September 1956, 319 arrivals were recorded with a 5-knot S.E. wind, this being the only big arrival with a light S.E. wind. Possibly, many of those arriving that day were drifted off-course on the previous day.

(iv) The average number of arrivals for different wind-speeds depends too greatly on the few big arrivals to be of significance. The mean figures for winds of 4-17, 18-27, and 28-45 knots respectively were 17, 22 and 20 birds, but had 5th September 1956 been excluded as doubtful, it would have been only 7 birds for winds of 4-17 knots.

TABLE 7.—Autumn arrivals of four sparse species on Fair Isle  
19 Aug.-14 Oct. 1950-59 inclusive.

Size of arrival of all spp.	(i) Bluethroat	(ii) Barred Warbler	(iii) Yellow-browed Warbler	(iv) Red-breasted Flycatcher	(ii) (iii) & (iv)
	Number of arrival of above species				
over 50	17	4	0	1	5
10-49	22	29	13	8	50
3-9	17	17	9	12	38
0-2	16	16	4	4	24
Direction of wind off Fair I. at 06.00 hrs. & 12.00hrs.					
NE	2	6	1	1	8
SE	37	16	5	10	31
SW, W	14	20	9	10	39
NW	5	14	1	2	17
NE & E, SE	6	2	0	0	2
SE & SW, W, NW	6	5	6	2	13
NE & SW, NW	0	1	1	0	2
N, S, or misc.	2	2	3	0	5
TOTAL	72	66	26	25	117
	Proportion of arrivals with				
50+ arrival of all spp.	24%	6%	0	4%	4%
S.E. wind (including occasions when it was N.E. for part of morn)	60%	27%	19%	40%	28%
SW, W or NW wind all morning	26%	52%	38%	48%	48%

TABLE 8.—Arrivals of over 50 birds on Fair Isle and the Isle of May in May 1950-60 inclusive.

Date	No. of arrivals May I.	No. of arrivals Fair I.	Gen. Sit. E. Channel Midnight	Wind off E. Anglia 06.00 hrs.	Wind east of May I. 12.00 hrs.	Wind south of Fair I. 12.00 hrs.	Full overcast Leuchars	Full overcast Lerwick
8. 5. 50	7	53	D	NE	NE	E	.	.
{ 20. 5. 50	80	28	D	SE	E	NE	+	+
{ 21. 5. 50	77	11	D	NE	SE	NE	+	+
23. 5. 50	267	16	T	NW	NE	NE	+	+
2. 5. 51	93	4	D	SE	SE	SE	+	+
7. 5. 51	52	0	T	NE	NE	NE	.	.
18. 5. 51	67	17	T	NE	SE	S	.	.
20. 5. 51	41	109	T	SE	SE	SE	+	+
1. 5. 52	72	8	D	SE	SE	SE	+	+
{ 5. 5. 52	607	227	D	SW	SW (SE)	SE	+	+
{ 6. 5. 52	127	152	D	SW	SE	SE	.	+
8. 5. 53	54	1	T	E	SE	NE	+	+
21. 5. 53	54	3	T	SE	SE	SE	+	+
2. 5. 54	50	0	D	SW	E	NE	+	+
5. 5. 54	116	72	T	NW	SE	(SE)	+	+
4. 5. 55	(-)	86	T	SW	SW	SW, SE	+	+
28. 5. 55	6	61	D	SE	SE	E	.	.
5. 5. 56	65	1	A	SW	SW	SW	+(F)	.
29. 5. 58	0	55	T	SW	SW (SE)	SW, SE	.	+
9. 5. 59	80	0	T	SE	SE	SE	.	+
13. 5. 59	58	7	A	E	SE	SW	.	+
25. 5. 59	50	6	A	NE	E	v. (NW)	+	+
{ 11. 5. 60	2	67	T	SE	SE	SE	.	.
{ 12. 5. 60	7	330	T	SE	SE	SE	.	.
{ 13. 5. 60	2	157	T	SE	SE	SE	+	+
{ 14. 5. 60	88	0	A	SW	SE	SE	+	+
{ 15. 5. 60	20	86	A	E	SE	SE	.	+

NOTES: (i) The methods of assessment and abbreviations used were the same as for Table 3, except that + was recorded for full overcast at one of three times each day, 06.00, 12.00 and 18.00 hours.

(ii) The only other big arrival so far recorded on Fair I. in spring was of 500 Robins on 30 March 1958, with disturbed weather in the Channel, strong S.E. winds off E. Anglia, Isle of May and Fair I. and rain at Leuchars and Lerwick.

(iii) Arrivals of 30-49 birds in May 1950-60 were recorded 5 times on Fair I. (once when the Isle of May was not manned) and 8 other times on the Isle of May (i.e. in addition to 20 May 1951 in Table 8). For these 13 days, the weather situation in the Channel was A for 1, T for 11 and D for 1. The wind off the Isle of May was S.E. for at least part of the day for all 8 arrivals there (but westerly for part of 4 of these). The wind south of Fair Isle for the 5 arrivals there was S.E. for 4 and N.E. for 1. Full overcast was recorded at Leuchars for 5 of the 8 arrivals on the Isle of May, and at Lerwick for 2 of the 5 arrivals on Fair I.

(iv) At Spurn Point in May 1950-60 there was only one arrival of over 50 birds (omitting Wheatears), namely on 10th May 1958, and 3 more

of 30-49 birds on 5th May 1951, 1st May 1954 and 8th May 1959, but the record was incomplete. On all four days there was full overcast, on one an east wind and on the other three a S.E. wind for part of the day due to a depression to the southwest moving northeast.

TABLE 9.—Influence of wind-direction on arrivals at Fair Isle in May 1950-60.

Wind-direction at 12.00 hrs off Isle of May and Fair I.	of Total No. Days	Number of days with arrival of					Mean No. of arrivals per day
		50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	0-2	
(i) NE off both	48	.	1	1	9	37	2
(ii) SE off both	62	8	9	5	20	20	26
(iii) easterly, SE off one	8	1	2	2	2	1	16
(iv) easterly, SE off neither	21	1	3	0	3	14	7
(v) westerly off May, SE off Fair I.	18	2	2	5	3	6	17
(vi) other mixed	54	.	.	2	14	38	2
(vii) westerly off both	129	.	.	1	20	108	1
TOTAL	340	12	17	16	71	224	8

NOTE: In May 1949, omitted from the above analysis, there was one arrival of 38 birds, 7 arrivals of 3-9 birds, and 23 arrivals of 0-2 birds.

TABLE 10.—Influence of wind-speed on arrivals at Fair Isle in May, for all days with a S.E. wind off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May.

Speed of SE wind in knots	Total No. of days	No. of days with arrival of				
		50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	0-2
1-12	21	(1)	2	2	6	10
13-20	21	5	5	1	6	4
21-35	20	2	2	2	8	6
TOTAL	62	8	9	5	20	20

NOTES: (i) The wind-speed in knots was that at 900 m. above Lerwick, at the time nearest to midday each day, for all days on which the wind was S.E. at midday off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May.

(ii) For convenience, the wind-speeds were grouped so as to give an almost equal number of days in each group. Had the last group been for winds of 25-35 knots, the only two 50+ arrivals, also two 0-2 arrivals, would have been excluded.

(iii) The only big arrival with a wind of 1-12 knots was bracketed, because though the wind was S.E. south of Fair Isle as judged from the isobars, it was N.W. at 2 knots above Lerwick (on 5th May 1954).

(iv) The average number of arrivals for different wind-speeds depends too greatly on the few big arrivals to be of significance. The mean figures for winds of 1-12, 13-20 and 21-35 knots respectively were 8, 39 and 31 birds, for winds of 1-12 knots omitting 5th May 1954 5 birds, and for winds of 25-35 knots 7 birds. It should be added that 500 arrived with a 48-knot S.E. wind above Lerwick on 30th March 1958.

APPENDIX TABLE 1.—More detailed analysis of influence of weather in autumn of types 1, 2, 4 and 7 (as defined in Table 4) on arrivals on Fair Isle.

	No. of days of each type with arrival on Fair I. of					
	50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	1-2	0
	Weather in Mid-Norway at midnight					
Wind						
NE	2	4	3	7	10	8
E	.	2	1	3	1	2
SE	3	6	9	9	6	5
S	.	.	1	.	.	1
SW	4	4	1	4	2	.
W	.	1	2	.	2	2
NW	.	1	.	3	1	.
v.	.	5	.	.	1	.
Full overcast						
Recorded	6	15	6	9	12	11
Not recorded	3	8	12	17	11	7
	Weather near Fair I. at 06.00 hours.					
Wind						
NE	1	6	3	6	9	10
E	.	2	1	2	1	.
SE	8	15	14	18	13	8
Full overcast						
Recorded	7	15	12	18	17	9
Not recorded	2	8	6	8	6	9
Mean speed in knots of E-SSE winds	27	22	22	22	21	25

NOTES: (i) This table is based on 9 days with arrivals of 50+ birds, 22 of 20-49, 18 of 10-19, 26 of 3-9, 23 of 1-2 and 18 of 0, but for the mean speed of E-SSE winds at 900 m. above Lerwick, the corresponding numbers of days were 8, 17, 15, 20, 14 and 8 respectively.

(ii) For the 4 arrivals of 50+ birds with a S.W. wind in mid-Norway the wind was S.E. rather further south.

APPENDIX TABLE 2.—Influence of full overcast and general situation on arrivals at Fair Isle in May, for all days with a S.E. wind off both Fair Isle and the Isle of May.

	Total No. of days	No. of days with arrival of				0-2
		50+	20-49	10-19	3-9	
Full overcast at Lerwick						
recorded	39	6	7	2	15	9
not recorded	23	2	2	3	5	11
General situation in Channel						
anticyclonic	9	1	1	0	2	5
transitional	37	5	6	3	13	10
disturbed	16	2	2	2	5	5

- NOTES: (i) Full overcast was considered as present when recorded at Lerwick at 06.00, 12.00 or 18.00 hours on the day in question.
- (ii) The general weather situation was that on the eastern side of the English Channel at midnight.
- (iii) The mean number of arrivals in each type of weather is too greatly affected by the few big arrivals to be of significance, but it was 28 when full overcast was recorded, 23 when it was not, and 13 with anti-cyclonic, 37 with transitional and 15 with disturbed weather.

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**It is regretted that our illustrations have had to be omitted in this number owing to pressure of space.**

## SHORT NOTES

## ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD IN EAST LOTHIAN

At 10.30 a.m. on 2nd October 1960 we raised a large bird from the edge of a stubble field by the R. Tyne below East Linton. In size and appearance it was clearly a buzzard, and, as it rose 15 yards ahead and flapped heavily into a near-by willow, we saw that it had a conspicuous white tail with a dark terminal band. The general colour was brown above and very pale below. Mobbed by Rooks it soon moved to another tree, and we noted the dark primaries and black carpal patches on the underside of the wings. We deduced that it was a Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*.

In the late afternoon we returned with T. Boyd and R. W. J. Smith and flushed the bird from the edge of a patch of scrub where it was feeding on a dead rabbit. It landed again behind a bank of trees where we found it with another rabbit, freshly killed. This time, as it flew past only eight yards away, we saw the dark belly and the feathered legs.

There are many rabbits in the field, some with myxomatosis, and both the dead ones had the skin ripped off round the nape.

IAIN B. ROY.

WILLIAM M. SKENE.

(We have received a very detailed description from Alastair Macdonald, who saw the bird at the same place on 3rd October. He mentions the pale creamy buff head and neck streaked with brown, the streaks getting thicker towards the dark brown waistcoat; orange yellow legs feathered to the feet; flight heavy and leisured. It seemed to like perching on straw bales, which made it easy to watch, especially when it was so relatively approachable. R.W.J.S. describes the wings as roughly the same colour as a Short-eared Owl's, with alternate dark and buff patches, but with a white crescent near the tips caused by the whitish bases of the primaries: wings very "fingered."

The bird was seen again early on 4th October by Andrew T. Macmillan when it was feeding on a dead rabbit in the same corner of the field close to the scrub and willowherb. Excellent views were had as it flapped and glided from bale to bale—a just reward for rising two successive mornings at 6 a.m.! It was quite unlike the Rough-legged Buzzards illustrated in



*The Handbook*, but there is a good likeness in the *Field Guide*, except for the tail, which was not so clearly black and white as shown.

The bird was seen again in the area on 6th, 15th and 22nd, and on 29th and 30th October by various people attending the S.O.C. Annual Conference at North Berwick.—Ed.).

### GOSHAWK IN EAST STIRLING

Near Skinflats, on the upper Firth of Forth, on the afternoon of 21st August 1960 we saw a Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* chase and strike a Herring Gull, then break off the attack after the gull had lost a handful of feathers.

In size the Goshawk was about the same as the Herring Gull, but appeared the longer bird. As it circled the immediate area, its flight, resembling that of a large Sparrowhawk, seemed almost leisurely compared with the speed and ease with which it had closed with its quarry a few moments before. The bird was dark brown above with a paler underside heavily streaked with brown, with dark bars under the wings. The tail, fanned out in several quick turns, had three dark bars on a creamy buff ground, the last of these forming a distinct terminal band. The under tail-coverts were pale, but in this individual not a particularly noticeable diagnostic feature. We both saw a pale patch on the side of the head, but cannot be certain whether it was an eyestripe or simply a pale area on the cheek.

We assumed the bird to be an immature female from its size and breast markings.

G. DICK.  
J. POTTER.

### RED GROUSE AT ST KILDA

On 5th December 1959, together with five other men, I flushed a cock Red Grouse *Lagopus scoticus* near the top of Gleann Mor, St Kilda. This is a bird with which I have long been familiar, having been employed as a grouse-beater on several occasions. The bird was observed twice that afternoon and not seen again. On both occasions we were close enough to observe its chestnut colouring and red wattles over the eyes. It rose with the familiar call and whirring wing-beat of the Grouse. During the previous week there were easterly gales, with wind speeds of up to 90 m.p.h. at sea level. This is the first record of a Red Grouse at St Kilda, though a Ptarmigan *Lagopus mutus* was recorded in winter by the Rev. Neil Mac Kenzie who lived there from 1829 to 1843.

J. A. MacKAY.

## DOWITCHERS IN EAST LOTHIAN AND LANARKSHIRE

On 29th September 1960, at the west side of Gullane Point, East Lothian, my wife and I saw a wader alight on some seaweed about 25 yards away. Although at close range, I realised that I had not seen its like before.

The bird was about Redshank size, and portly. The most striking features were its very long, straight, snipe-like bill, and its method of feeding. It repeatedly jabbed its bill into the weed with a rapid piston motion like a steam hammer. The general colour was grey, with legs clearly olive-green and shorter than a Redshank's. The crown, nape and mantle were light grey with no apparent markings; very pale eyestripe; underparts whitish, the breast very faintly streaked with grey on a lighter grey ground; rump very noticeably white extending well up the back and as prominent as a Greenshank's. We had an excellent view of this as the bird flew ten yards to land on a rock, and we also saw that the tail was white, though not so obviously white as the rump. I took particular note of a faint white stripe or pattern on the after edge of the wing.

After a few minutes the bird took off and flew eastwards round the point. It did not call and we could not find it again. I feel certain we were watching a Dowitcher *Limnodromus* sp. in winter plumage. The picture of a Dowitcher in "fall" plumage in Peterson's *Field Guide to the Birds* fits our bird perfectly.

A. ABLETT.

A Dowitcher *Limnodromus* sp. was seen in the Low Parks, Hamilton, by W.K.R. on 8th, 10th and 11th October 1960, and by M.F. and D.S. on the 12th, when it was observed from about 25 yards.

The following description is compiled from notes by the three observers. *Size*, smaller than Redshank, but larger than Dunlin. *General appearance*, plumage very dark; at times and in certain lights a purplish effect was given. When alarmed, with head and neck stretched out, looked very Reeve-like. *Head*, head and crown dark brown, pale eyestripe not very conspicuous and not very obvious at a distance. *Back*, general colour dark brown but with lighter edgings to some feathers ("mouse-brown" W.K.R.); long narrow white patch extending from rump well up on to back, contrasting with rest of plumage. Trailing edges of wings markedly whitish. *Underparts*, white, with occasional dark mottling: this was noted on the flanks by W.K.R., while D.S. says it was more obvious in front of neck, giving slight "apron" effect when bird facing. No suggestion of chestnut on breast. *Bill*, extremely long, snipe-like,

appeared black. *Legs*, very dark, but not black: rather short compared with Redshank's. *Call-note*, constantly repeated. "A weak, shrill *cheet . . . cheet*" (W.K.R.): "*tleet*—softer and more liquid than that of the Redshanks" (D.S.). *Flight*, straight, fast, and without any of the twists and turns of the Common Snipe. *Feeding*, Fed quickly, probing in the mud and sometimes immersing whole head; "energetic pumping motion" (W.K.R.); feeding mostly in water, with graceful gait, always in the open.

W.K.R. considers the bird to have been a Long-billed Dowitcher *L. scolopaceus*, adding: "Though I have seen and heard Eastern Dowitchers *L. griseus* on autumn passage in Canada and New York State, the call-notes of this individual at once struck me as entirely unfamiliar. Outside the breeding season the Eastern Dowitcher's callnote is a threefold whistle, often compared with that of the Yellowlegs, and not unlike a Greenshank's. Peterson (*A Field Guide to the Birds*) describes that of the Long-billed as "a single, thin *keek*, occasionally trebled." In view of the distinctive quality of the call-notes I now feel that the field identification of the two is relatively simple. Length of bill is not a reliable characteristic, certainly, but this particular bird's was quite as long as a common Snipe's. I was also struck by the darkness of its plumage: all the Eastern Dowitchers I have seen were rather paler, besides being less vocal. The lateness of the date also points to the probability of this vagrant being a 'Long-bill'."

M. FORRESTER.

W. K. RICHMOND.

D. STALKER.

(These seem to be the fifth and sixth records of Dowitchers in Scotland, being respectively the first for Forth and East Lothian, and the second for Clyde and Lanark.—Ed.)

#### WOOD SANDPIPER BREEDING IN WEST INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 10th June 1960 my wife and I, accompanied by a friend, Mr Roderick Cameron, were watching a pair of Greenshanks *Tringa nebularia* on the shore of a large loch in a desolate glen in West Inverness-shire. As they seemed to have young in the vicinity we spread out to search for them. The terrain was rough peat hagg, divided by boggy channels, with firm patches of heathery ground amongst which grew bog myrtle *Myrica gale*. After about twenty minutes searching my wife noticed a small long-legged wader standing on top of a heathery hillock about fifty yards away from the loch. She called me over and, as I approached, the bird rose into the air and flew around in an agitated way, very like the flight of a Redshank when its young are in danger. The wings were

arched and pointing downward: it hung in the air and moved from one position to another with quick erratic beats of the wing, and vibrating primaries.

It was at once joined by a second bird which acted in a similar manner, both birds all the while calling a constant, loud "Kleep—kelep—kelep—kelep..." Sometimes one bird or the other would alight on a small knoll in the heather and, with drooped wings, continue to call loudly.

As they allowed close approach, I was able to view them at close range with 8x binoculars and, even with the naked eye, I could see the white rump, barred tail, brown speckled back and feet projecting beyond the end of the tail in flight. They were easily identified as Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola*. On the ground the bird had a long-legged appearance, with greyish underparts, buff toward the flanks and pale buff line over the eye.

As I was sure they had eggs or young in the vicinity, we retired some distance, dropped into the heather and watched them with binoculars. One bird settled on a small knoll, the second alighted on the heather, both still calling. After a minute or so, both birds were silent and standing motionless. We watched them for a further ten minutes but, as they did not move, we decided to go into cover behind the hillock on which my wife had first seen the bird. There we waited for about ten minutes, crept over the top of the hillock and shouted. At once both birds were in the air again calling their "Kleep—kelep—kelep..." One bird rose from the direction of the small knoll and the second appeared from a point somewhere between us and the edge of the loch about fifty yards away, but we did not see exactly where it rose. We made a short search but found nothing.

I then went into hiding behind a large boulder at the foot of the hillock and asked my wife and our friend to walk away from the spot. After about three minutes all was quiet. I gave the birds a further eight or nine minutes to settle down, and rushed out and over the top of the hillock and down the other side. As I went over I saw one of the birds rise quickly out of the heather about twenty yards from the base of the hillock. I went straight to the spot and there was the nest containing four eggs. The time was 4.45 p.m.

The eggs were lying point to point. They varied in size and marking, two of them being noticeably larger. They were pyriform in shape, with slight gloss. The ground colour was of light stone slightly inclined to green. Two of the eggs were heavily spotted and blotched with dark brown and greyish purple, the brown being slightly more concentrated toward the rounded end. The remaining two eggs were similarly coloured, but with speckled markings rather than blotches.

The nest was sited among sparse heather and bog myrtle. It was a slight depression in the ground lined with a few broad blades of dead grass and near a small surface pool.

On the following day, in overcast, rainy weather, we returned to the nest, and I photographed both the site and the nest in the poor natural light, and again with flash bulb.

We then measured the eggs and nest with Vernier calipers before leaving. The egg measurements were as follows: 1. 40.2 x 27.6 mm. 2. 38.5 x 27.4 m.m. 3. 37.4 x 27.3 mm. 4. 37.3 x 26.8 mm. Average 38.35 x 27.27 mm. The nest measurement was 80 mm. across the cup.

RONALD COOK.

### EXCEPTIONAL NUMBERS OF LITTLE STINTS IN MORAYSHIRE

At Findhorn Bay, Morayshire, on 18th September 1960, on a large stretch of mud and sand, I picked up several hundreds of small waders at about half a mile range. I noticed immediately that many were much smaller than Dunlin *Calidris alpina*, which were in the majority. I got to within twenty yards of the outermost birds and worked along the line with the setting sun behind me. I found two Curlew Sandpipers *C. testacea* and then a Little Stint *C. minuta*. The latter was a little wild: it worked rapidly along the line of Dunlin and eventually flew to join another group of waders nearer the shore. I examined this group, but could not find any smaller bird among them. To my amazement every bird was a Little Stint. I examined size and bill and counted 106. A group of 106 birds every one of which was a Little Stint!

On 20th September counts made by A. Pringle and A. Raffan showed that about the same number were still present, and the same is probably true of the 21st when, however, the birds had broken up into smaller parties and were less easy to count.

W. CRAWFORD.

### PECTORAL SANDPIPER IN EAST STIRLING

On 19th September 1960, near Grangemouth, we found a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* resting on the mud of a recently flooded field, so tame that we were able to observe it from several angles at 30 feet using a 25x telescope on a tripod.

Its most noticeable features were the yellowish green legs, brown bill shorter than Dunlin's and very slightly decurved, and the warm brown bib with dark markings running like dotted lines to the point where the bib ended and the pale underside began: the underside shaded from pale grey on the breast to white on the under tail-coverts.

The dark eye seemed large and had a prominent orbital ring. The bird had a small brown cap. The pattern of markings on the neck, nape and mantle were not so clear as on the bib; they began small and faint on the neck and became progressively larger and darker in the regular pattern towards the mantle. The wing-coverts were dark-centred, edged with buff, so arranged that the bird appeared to have a body stripe like a Snipe. This feature was not prominent in flight, when, however, the bird showed a tail pattern like a Dunlin's. The call-note suggested that of the Dunlin, but was harsher: it was repeated at short intervals.

G. DICK.  
J. POTTER.

(Mr Dick has submitted sketches of the bird which confirm its identity.—Ed.).

#### BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS IN EAST LoTHIAN AND SUTHERLAND

While we were playing golf on Gullane No. 3 course on 18th September 1960, my wife drew my attention to a small wader in the middle of the fairway. It was immediately obvious to me that I had never seen a bird of this sort before. I noted details at once of what I thought to be the diagnostic features and, while playing the next hole, went back to see it again and then wrote on a slip of paper exactly what I had observed.

At first sight the outstanding feature was its trim, neat appearance, with slender neck and short head. It was entirely buff underneath with a light head and short black bill about an inch long; its legs were unmistakably yellow and its back had clear-cut markings in black and buff. In a closer view I saw that the eye was black and that there was the slightest suspicion of a light mark above and round the eye, not amounting to an eyestripe, perhaps a facial disc slightly lighter than the top of the head and the neck.

The bird was exceptionally tame, quite unworried by our nearness to it, but tended, when we got very near, to hold itself more horizontally, with its neck stretched out. I would have liked to hear its alarm note, but had no wish to flush it. It was feeding throughout on the short grass of the fairway and seemed to be taking flies as part of its food.

On looking at the *Field Guide* my wife, a friend who was with us and myself all, without consultation, decided that the bird we had seen was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*.

J. E. KING.

While crossing the saltmarsh adjoining Dornoch Point on

25th September 1960, I saw a small wader which I did not recognise. Throughout the fifteen to twenty minutes that I watched the bird it remained in company with a small flock of Grey Plover and for a short period I was able to view it through binoculars at a range of about 25 yards. From the following details, which were noted while the bird was still under observation, I later identified it as a Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*. *Size*, slightly more than half that of a Grey Plover and slightly larger than a Dunlin. *General impression*, a slim wader with a noticeably rounded head, slender neck, short thinnish bill and scaly pattern of plumage on mantle. *Crown*, dark. *Mantle and back*, dark feathers with pale edgings similar to Ruff. *Wing*, sharply pointed: no wing bar visible in flight. *Rump*, dark; no light colour visible in flight. *Face, neck, throat and upper breast*, brownish buff, no eyestripe. *Lower breast and underparts*, paler; whitish beneath; no visible line separating the buff higher up from the paler colour below. *Underwing*, glimpse of white in flight. *Eye*, dark. *Bill*, black. *Legs*, not too clearly seen but appeared to be pale brown, certainly not dark.

During most of the time the bird was very active and progressed by a fairly quick walk with legs slightly bent. At no time was it seen to run. A noticeable feature was the rapid motion with which it turned its head in various directions as it probed the short grass in search of food. No call-note was heard.

D. MACDONALD.

(These are the third and fourth records of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper in Scotland.—Ed.)

#### AVOCET IN EAST LoTHIAN

On 9th April 1960 I had a good view of an Avocet *Recurvirostra avosetta* at Tynninghame. As I watched from the embankment it circled overhead calling and then landed further along at the mouth of the River Tyne. I saw the bold black and white pattern and the slender upturned bill.

This is the third record for Forth and the second for East Lothian, a party of up to five having been seen at Aberlady from 6th to 11th April 1958 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8: 85).

T. BOYD.

#### GULL-BILLED TERN IN EAST LoTHIAN

On the morning of 11th September 1960 I was at the extreme north-east corner of Aberlady Bay, walking along the shore towards Gullane Point, when I walked into a mixed party of Common, Arctic and Sandwich Terns that flew up around me. Among them was a bird I identified as an adult

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* moulting out of summer plumage. The bird in general size, shape, speed of wing-beats and carriage in the air resembled a Sandwich Tern, with the exception that, in flying diagonally overhead, it was appreciably shorter—a difference that was no longer discernible when it was flying away from me. The character that struck me immediately was the bill—short, thick, with a bump on the lower mandible, and uniformly coloured to the tip: it was not, however, quite pitch black, or at least not so glossy black as that of Sandwich Terns. The shape of the bill was totally unlike that of the other terns, being much thicker and more angled in proportion to its length. The crown and nape were black, but not shaggy: the forehead was white. The mantle looked just appreciably darker than that of the Sandwich Terns: owing to the angle of flight, I never saw the rump. The tail was also hard to see closely, as the bird was keeping it closed, but it did seem less deeply forked, as well as shorter, than the Sandwich Tern's. I saw it in excellent light and at one time it must have been no more than 20 yards away: I had binoculars.

T. C. SMOUT.

#### “BLACK-BELLIED” DIPPER IN ANGUS

On 13th September 1960 I was walking along the banks of the Esk, at The Burn, Edzell, when I saw a Dipper on a rock in midstream. I was at once struck by the absence of chestnut on the underparts and by a distinct demarcation between the white breast and the black belly, without the least suggestion of intervening brown. I was so surprised by this feature that I kept the bird under view for at least five minutes, observing it from several angles in the finest light at ranges down to thirty yards, until it grew tired of this unwonted attention and flew out of sight downstream: there was no possibility of having overlooked a trace of chestnut anywhere on the underparts. The upperparts appeared identical to those of the British Dipper *Cinclus c. gularis*.

I concluded that it must be a Black-bellied Dipper *C. c. cinclus*, without knowing how it came to be on the Esk in September. Since, however, it is unlikely to have been a recently arrived migrant at such a date, it is possible that it had either arrived in the glen in some previous winter, or that it was a freak thrown up by a population of British Dippers.

T. C. SMOUT.

(Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards comments on this record: “The question is to account for the presence of this bird in Glen Esk in mid September. It could either be (a) an early immigrant from Scandinavia or somewhere else where this



colour type is plentiful, or (b) an unusual member of the local population—a mutant if you like—belonging automatically to the British race if it breeds in Scotland. A geographical race consists of many individuals, often with considerable variability comprised among them, inhabiting an *area*, and its sub-specific name does not apply to any individual, no matter what its colour and measurements, if it breeds outside that area. Evidently the amount of chestnut on the Dipper's breast varies from one individual to another almost everywhere. Thus *The Handbook* says that the typical race *usually* has a tinge of chestnut brown, very rarely as much as in *some examples* of the Irish form, implying variation in both these areas. Under the British race it refers to feathers marked with a *varying amount* of rufous brown.

My guess would be that this bird was a black-bellied example of the British Dipper. If so, it would be interesting to know how numerous and widespread such individuals are in Scotland. The condition is most likely to be hereditary and locally self-perpetuating. It is not more extraordinary than having chestnut-banded birds breeding in Norway, for example, where we know they occur: only black-bellied birds must be pretty scarce here or we would know more about them.")

#### RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHERS IN FIFE AND ABERDEENSHIRE

On the afternoon of 18th September 1960 in the dilapidated garden between the farmhouse and the cottages at Fife Ness my wife and I had the experience of seeing three species of flycatchers—two Spotted, two or three Pied, and two Red-breasted *Muscicapa parva*.

We were watching the Spotted and Pied when a small, plump, pale bird came out of the thick foliage near the base of a tree and perched on one of the lower branches. It was a Red-breasted Flycatcher and, from its orange-red throat and upper breast, a male. A few minutes later we found another similar bird flitting about in the thick foliage at the base of the trees. It was very shy and secretive, darting from one tree to another and only occasionally perching in the open—then only momentarily. In this bird the throat and upper breast were buff.

We saw a third Red-breasted Flycatcher at Fife Ness on 30th September—a buff-breasted bird. This was also seen by Miss P. G. Baxter on 1st October.

R. S. WEIR.

On 17th October 1960 I saw a Red-breasted Flycatcher at Fife Ness, a little plump bird being chased by Stonechats

which were a little larger than it. The throat was off-white. It was very active, flying from one perch to another, catching flies and flicking its tail in the flycatcher manner. It was very tame and I was able to approach within a few feet. Its call was a brisk *chick chick*.

PATRICIA G. BAXTER.

(Dr Weir has appended detailed descriptions of his first two Red-breasted Flycatchers, and Miss Baxter of hers.—Ed.).

On 18th September 1960 in the garden of the Ythan Hotel at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, I saw a Red-breasted Flycatcher, my identification of which was confirmed by Mr R. W. J. Smith and members of the Edinburgh Natural History Society.

E. A. GARDEN.

(It should be noted that the absence of an orange breast in this species does not necessarily imply that the bird is not a male, since Mr K. Williamson informs us that he has seen a male on its breeding territory without this colouration. First winter birds may be recognised by buff spots at the tips of the innermost secondaries and greater wing-coverts, a conspicuous field characteristic.—Ed.).

## CURRENT NOTES

(The following observers have contributed to this section: A. Ablett, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, W. Bain (W. Ba.), J. Baird (J. Bd.), J. Ballantyne (J. Bal.), P. G. R. Barbier, Miss K. H. Barr, Miss P. G. Baxter, G. Bennett, W. Birrell (W. B.), T. Boyd, N. Campbell, A. L. Carmichael, C. N. L. Cowper, W. Crawford, Mrs B. A. H. Cunningham, Major P. Deas, G. Dick, D. Donald, Dr W. J. Eggeling, D. Farquharson, M. Forrester, F. W. Gairns, Miss E. A. Garden, D. Grant, J. Grierson, Mrs M. Hill, D. Hope, J. Hoy, Dr D. Jenkins, D. Lawson, A. Macdonald, M. Mc Gechie (M. McG.), A. T. Macmillan, J. Maxwell, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, R. I. Milne (R. I. M.), Rev. R. I. Mitchell (Rev. R. I. M.), M. Mowat (M. M.), W. Murray, B. Neath, C. E. Palmar, J. Potter, A. Pringle, Mrs I. Rainier, W. K. Richmond, E. L. Roberts, Dr M. Rusk, G. L. Sandeman, R. J. W. Shaw, W. Skene (W. Sk.), R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, D. Stalker, W. Stein (W. St.), J. A. Stewart, R. Stokoe, G. Waterston, Dr R. S. Weir and P. Wormell. All notes below are considered reliable by the Editors, and, unless otherwise stated, all apply to 1960).

### *Breeding and distribution*

In 1960 four pairs of **Great Crested Grebes** bred on Duddingston Loch—a considerable improvement on recent years (D.R.A.). On the rubbish dump pool at Hamilton there was a **Black-necked Grebe** (not in breeding plumage) on 17th July: a previous record of this species from the same pool was on 16th, 17th and 19th August 1958 (D.S.).

A **Fulmar** flew south-west over Braid Hills Avenue, Edinburgh, on 16th June (G.L.S.).

In mid-August Mr D. W. Nickson of Buchlyvie found a dead adult **Gannet** on the moors about a mile north of Criannlarich. It looked quite fresh but was already smelly (K.H.B.).

A pair of **Garganey** were seen on Gladhouse Reservoir on 24th July (D.G.A.). A pair of **Gadwall** were on Quarryford Pond, Gifford, on 14th May (A.M.), and a single female of this species on Loch Spiggie, Shetland, on 22nd July (W.St.).

A **Canada Goose**, in moult, was observed at Gladhouse from 18th June to 9th August (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

A **Golden Eagle**, mobbed by a **Merlin**, is reported from the Isle of Barra on 4th July 1957 (D.L.).

On 29th June a **Black-tailed Godwit** was seen at Loch Insh (B.A.H.C.).

Summer records of **Arctic Skuas** outside their nesting places seem to be on the increase and are of interest in view of possible extension of range. In Tay: one off Tentsmuir Point on 8th June; two off Monifieth on the 29th; and at least six in the Tay estuary between 29th June and 1st July (B.N.). In Forth: one at Aberlady on 16th June (D.H.) and two there on 8th July (T.B.).

Two immature **Little Gulls** were seen at Aberlady on 12th and 19th June (J.Bd.) and at Lundin Links there were six adults on the shore on 1st August (R.S.W.).

A pair of **Turtle Doves** again reared two young at Longniddry (W.B.).

A pair of **Barn Owls**, a scarce species in East Lothian, reared a chick in a tree near Gullane (W.B.) and a brood of three **Little Owls** were raised from the usual nest near Duns (W.M.).

The following records of the **Kingfisher** have recently been made in mid Argyll: one at the head of Loch Sween seen by a forestry keeper in March 1955; one seen at Ardrishaig by Miss Maureen MacIver in December 1959; and one seen by John MacCallum on the River Add under Kilmichael Bridge on 24th August 1960 (I.R.).

A **Carrion Crow** was shot near its nest in Strathcarron, Wester Ross, in May 1957 (P.D.).

It is now known that four pairs of **Stonechats** nested at Tullieallan, Fife, in 1960: cf. *antea* 1: 281 (J.H.).

Two **Grasshopper Warblers** were heard singing at Petersmuir, near Pencaitland, East Lothian, from 11th May to 14th June and in early July (A.M.). This summer there were no fewer than six male **Blackcaps** heard singing in various parts of West Fife (J.H.): cf. *antea* 1: 281.

Singing **Chiffchaffs** are reported from Orton, Morayshire, on

26th May and 2nd June (W.C., A.P.), and from the Falls of Forn in North Caithness—about as far north as it could get on the mainland of Scotland (M.M.). Chiffchaffs have been at Ardnashellach, W. Ross, since 1958 (P.D.). In Rhum the Chiffchaff has been seen and heard regularly in the springs of 1958, 1959 and 1960. Probably most pass further on, but in 1958 one remained singing until 18th May and in 1960 song was heard as late as 20th and 29th May, from two different birds. In 1959 breeding was proved when a Chiffchaff was seen feeding four fledged young behind the White House, Kinloch, on 30th June (P.W.).

A pair of **Pied Flycatchers** were regularly seen at Broughton, Peebles-shire, from 22nd May to the end of June (D.D.), while a nest with three or four newly hatched young was found in a hole in a silver birch tree at Rothiemurchus, Inverness-shire, on 19th June: the young were successfully reared (J.G.).

In July a pair of **White Wagtails** were seen feeding four juveniles in front of the Castle on Rhum, both on the 18th and the 20th: the mantle and rump of both parents was pale grey (P.W.). On 22nd July at Scalloway, Shetland, a **Pied Wagtail** was identified (W.St.).

A **Hawfinch** was seen sitting on a roadway at Carronbridge, Dumfries-shire, on 17th August (J.M.).

#### *Autumn Migration, 1960*

A **Red-necked Grebe** (in summer plumage) was at Aberlady on 27th August (T.B., R.W.J.S.), and another on the Sand Loch, Collieston, Aberdeenshire, on 17th September (E.A.G., R.W.J.S.). Two **Slavonian Grebes**, which may be the first for Clackmannan, were on the River Devon below Dollar on 24th September (R.J.W.S.) and single **Black-necked Grebes** were seen at Gladhouse from 14th to 28th August (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.), and at Cameron Reservoir, Fife, on 4th and 5th September (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

Unusually large numbers of **Red-breasted Mergansers** have been seen in the Forth in late summer and autumn: at Aberlady, 250+ on 8th July and over 300 on 20th August (A.M.); at Musselburgh, 100 on 16th July, 200 on 18th September, and 400 by 2nd October (J.Bal.); at Skinflats, E. Stirling, over 250 in the first few days of October (J.H.).

Records of single **Scaup** inland come from Craigmaddie Reservoir, W. Stirling, on 18th September (P.G.R.B.) and on the 24th from Gladhouse (R.W.J.S.), where immature **Shelduck** have also been seen, two from 6th to 14th August, and six from 24th to 28th August (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Two early **Pink-footed Geese** were flying south over Loch Leven on 3rd September (T.B., R.W.J.S.) and two, possibly the

same, were seen at Aberlady the same day (W.B., A.M.): also on the same day a **Whooper Swan** was seen on Loch Leven (T.B., R.W.J.S.).

**Marsh Harriers** seem to be becoming almost regular in Scotland, and it is to be hoped that they may establish themselves in some area where game is not preserved: one, a bird with a creamy head, was seen at Aberlady on 11th September (G.B., D.F.). Three **Hen Harriers**, all of them in brown plumage, have been reported from unfamiliar areas: on 19th September from the Moorfoots, Midlothian boundary (C.N.L.C.), from Fife Ness on 20th and 22nd September and 7th October (P.G.B., R.S.W.), and from Forrestfield, near Airdrie, on 16th October (W.St.).

Numbers of **Grey Plovers** between Grangemouth and Kincardine gradually built up until they reached about 100 on 3rd October (G.D., J.H., J.P.). Inland there were 4 at Gladhouse on 1st October (R.W.J.S.).

**Whimbrel** that were presumably summering were one at Barnes Ness, East Lothian, on 2nd July (R.W.J.S.) and three that passed July with Curlews at Musselburgh (J.Bal.). At Peppermill Dam, Fife, there were single birds on 8th, 9th and 11th September, and two on the 12th: the observers had not seen Whimbrel there before (G.D., J.P.).

Wading birds have been particularly numerous on passage this autumn, as the records below will show.

**Green Sandpiper.** Single birds at

Lossie Estuary, Moray, on 23rd July (W.C.).

Cameron Reservoir, Fife, on 14th August, and two on the 15th (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

Gladhouse Reservoir, on 6th and 20th August (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Rosebery Pool, Midlothian, on 28th August (R.W.J.S.).

**Wood Sandpiper.** Single birds at

Tynningame on 24th July and 13th August (T.B., R.W.J.S.).

Gladhouse on 6th August (D.G.A.).

**Spotted Redshank** at

Findhorn Bay, Moray, two on 10th September, three on the 11th, heard calling on the 14th (W.C.).

Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen, five on 18th September, single birds on the 23rd and 30th, and the 3rd, 8th and 14th October (E.A.G., R.W.J.S.).

Cameron Reservoir, three on 4th, two on 5th September (R.S.W.).

Cult Ness, Fife, one on 19th and 25th August, two on the 27th (G.D., J.P.).

Longannet, Fife, one on 21st September (J.H.).

Skinflats, E. Stirling, two on 29th August, four on 18th September, two on the 19th, one on the 25th, and 2nd October, two on 3rd October (G.D., J.H., J.P.).

Gladhouse, one on 10th September (R.W.J.S.).

Records of the **Knot** inland come from Kinlochbervie, Sutherland, where one was seen on a loch two miles inland on 22nd August (J.Bal.) and from Gladhouse, where there were ten

on 24th July, four on 17th August, nine on the 20th, two on the 21st, one on the 24th and seven on the 28th, two on 10th September and six on 1st October—a late date for Gladhouse (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

As indicated in W. Crawford's note in this issue, numbers of **Little Stints** this autumn have been exceptional. The first recorded was at Skinflats, near Grangemouth, on 15th August, but peak numbers came suddenly on 18th September. The table of dates suggests no big influx after this.

Findhorn Bay, Moray, one on 14th September and about 106 (one hundred and six) on the 18th, 20th and 21st (W.C., A.P.).

Ythan district, Aberdeenshire: four on Forvie Moor on 17th September, two on Meikle Loch on the 18th, one on the estuary on the 21st and one on the Meikle Loch on the 25th (E.A.G., R.W.J.S.).

Fife Ness, single birds on 25th and 27th September (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

Cameron Reservoir, two on 20th September (Rev.R.I.M.).

Cult Ness, two on 27th August and 11th September, six on 20th September (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats, one on 15th, 21st and 22nd August, five on the 29th, three on 3rd September, 18 on the 18th, 30+ on the 19th, 25th, 26th and 2nd October (G.D., J.P.). Maximum count 36 (J.H.).

Seafield, Leith, one on 18th September (A.T.M.).

Gladhouse, seven on 28th August, one on 10th September, nine on the 24th and three on 1st October (R.W.J.S.).

Musselburgh, two on 25th September (R.I.M.).

Aberlady, six on 3rd September, two on the 6th, 40 on the 18th, nine on the 21st, four on the 22nd, two on the 24th, 14 on the 25th, two on 1st October. The previous record number from Aberlady was thirteen (A.A., J.Bd., G.B., W.B., D.G., D.H., A.M., T.C.S.).

Tynninghame, one on 4th September, three on the 11th, 14+ on the 18th, 18 on the 25th, and six on 2nd October (T.B., R.W.J.S.).

Barnes Ness, twelve on 19th September (T.B.).

The numbers of **Curlew Sandpipers** recorded are not large, except at Skinflats where, it will be noted, the highest number (29) occurred on 18th September, as with the Little Stints.

Findhorn Bay, two on 10th September, five on the 11th, four on the 14th and two on the 18th (W.C.).

Ythan Estuary, one on 20th September (E.A.G.).

Cult Ness, one on 25th and 27th August and 11th September (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats: numbers built up from one on 21st August to 14+ on 5th September and 29 on the 18th, then declining to 12 on the 25th and one on 3rd October (G.D., J.P.).

Gladhouse, one on 21st and 24th August, two on 10th September, one on the 14th and 24th (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Aberlady, single birds on 10th August, 3rd, 21st and 24th September, two on the 25th and 1st October (A.A., J.Bd., W.B., D.H., T.C.S.).

Tynninghame, one on 21st August, the same day as first noticed at Skinflats and Gladhouse, one on 4th September, two on the 18th and one on the 25th (T.B., W.Sk., R.W.J.S.).

Three inland records of single **Sanderling** come from Gladhouse: juvenile on the 21st, and adults on 24th and 28th August (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Records of the **Ruff** are also numerous this autumn:

Findhorn Bay, two on 21st August and four on 18th September (W.C.).  
Ythan district, one on Meikle Loch on 17th September (R.W.J.S.).

Fife Ness, four on 20th September (R.S.W.).

L. Leven, one on 23rd July—the earliest of these records (T.B., G.D., R.W.J.S.).

Cult Ness, two on 4th August, one on the 7th and two on the 19th (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats, two on 8th August, four on the 15th, three on the 21st, five on the 22nd and seven on the 29th, one on 5th September, four on the 18th, one on the 19th, three on the 25th, and one on the 26th, four on 2nd October and three on the 3rd (G.D., J.P.).

Gladhouse, three on 6th August, then on the 9th (7), 14th (13), 17th (10), 20th (5), 21st (4), 24th (9), 26th (7), 28th (10), and 10th September (3), 14th (4), 24th (5), and on 1st October, two (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Aberlady, single birds on 18th, 21st and 25th September (J.Bd., J.Bal., G.B.).

Tynningame, one on 13th August (R.W.J.S.).

On 8th July a **Grey Phalarope** in full breeding plumage was discovered at Aberlady, where it was also seen on the 14th and 17th. On each occasion it was with flocks of terns. As one approached, the terns would fly off and land further away, and then the phalarope would fly off and land beside them again (T.B., R.W.J.S.). What may very likely have been the same Grey Phalarope, but in winter plumage, was seen at Aberlady on 14th August: it associated with terns in precisely the same manner as the earlier bird (A.T.M.). A third Grey Phalarope was swimming on the Rubbish Dump Pool at Hamilton on 23rd October: it emerged on to dry land twice in about an hour's watching (D.S. and other members of S.O.C.).

An adult **Long-tailed Skua** was seen at Aberlady on 20th August by members of the S.O.C. excursion: the bird was on the ground and only fifteen yards off (R.W.J.S.): it was again seen on 21st and 23rd August and 3rd September (W.B., A.M.).

An adult **Black Tern** in moult was seen on 4th August at Lundin Links and Earlsferry (P.G.B., R.S.W.); two at Gladhouse on 24th August (R.W.J.S.); and an immature at Longanet, Fife, from 1st to 4th September (J.H., J.P.).

A party of 24 terns, mostly thought to be **Common Terns**, went over Gladhouse on 24th August and on the 28th there were 15+, mostly certainly Common (R.W.J.S.). There were up to twenty **Roseate Terns** at Longanet in the last week of August and first of September (J.H.), and a **Little Tern** at Gosford on 8th October is unusually late for the species (M.F.M.M.).

Gales brought many sea birds well up the Forth in early October and six **Razorbills** were seen at Longanet on the 4th (J.H.). A **Black Guillemot** (or Tystie) at Gullane Point on 17th and 18th September is the first recorded for Aberlady Bay (W.B., W.M.).

Three records of the **Hoopoe** in autumn have been received: the first from Edinburgh where one was seen on the hill at the top of the Zoo on 4th, 5th and 7th September (M.H.); G.W. informs us that there are no Hoopoes kept at the Zoo. The second was seen at Sanna, Ardnamurchan, on 25th September: it was grubbing about in the roots of marram grass on the sandhills (C.E.P.). The third is reported from Pitlochry at the end of September (A.L.C.). Descriptions have been received of these birds.

A **Wryneck**, the second for the reserve, was picked up at Aberlady on 28th August by Mr A. Campbell (N.C.).

A female **Blackcap** was seen at the Sand Loch, Ythan area, on 17th September (E.A.G.) and another female, perhaps a migrant, was trapped near Braid Valley Public Park, Edinburgh, on the 18th (J.A.S.).

A **Pied Flycatcher** was at the Sand Loch, Ythan area, on 17th September (E.A.G.).

The only reports of **Waxwings** so far come from Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, where small numbers were seen daily from 30th October until at least 11th November (W.Ba.) and Corpach, Inverness-shire, in the fourth week of October, when a party were seen (*per* M.R.).

It appears to be a "good year" for the **Great Grey Shrike**. There was one at Anstruther on 2nd Oct. (W.J.E., J.H.). One was seen on 16th October to the south-west of the Lake of Menteith: it moved in a series of flights towards the south-west and appeared to be a "bird on the move" (M.F., D.S.). At Fife Ness there was one on 25th October (R.S.). There was one at Whitekirk, East Lothian, on 30th October, seen by many members from the S.O.C. conference. It remained until at least 10th November (A.M., E.L.R.). And on 6th November one was seen at Cairnoch, Carron Valley, feeding on beetles which it picked off the ground, and a second (perhaps the same as that recorded on 16th October) near Wood End Farm, Flanders Moss. This bird, perched on posts beside the disused railway track, made several attempts to pounce on a Robin and a Reed Bunting, and the feathers and legs of another Robin which it had just eaten, were found on the ground close by. When its intended prey lay low under cover it hovered over the spot, then plunged vertically, head first, to drive out the fugitive. Both these shrikes were photographed (W.K.R.). Good views were had of a **Red-backed Shrike** at Tynninghame on 18th September (T.B., W.Sk.).

A **Siskin** was seen at Barnes Ness on 19th September and over twenty in the Ythan estuary area on the 18th (R.W.J.S.). On 1st October two big parties of **Redpolls**, totalling over 200,



were found a mile north-west of Gladhouse, filling a strip of young conifers and apparently feeding on seeds of rose-bay willowherb, heather and meadowsweet (R.W.J.S.).

Five **Lapland Buntings** were on the Aberlady saltings on 21st September and one was heard as it flew in from the north at Gullane Point on the 25th (J.Bal.).

### *Behaviour and Habits*

1960 has been a season of exceptional abundance of **Partridges** in Glen Esk, after the favourable summer of 1959. The highest record of breeding reported was near the Wester Cairn on Mount Battock, at about 2,000 feet above sea level. Here a pair, with eight or ten young, was seen in July and September by two Millden gamekeepers, W. Potts and W. A. Stewart. This is probably the highest that Partridges have been recorded nesting in Scotland (cf. Watson, *antea*: 1:186-7) and in September 1960 broods of Partridge and Ptarmigan could be seen on Battock within a few hundred feet of each other (D.J.).

On 14th May at Kelso a hen **Pheasant** was disturbed when sitting on eggs. The observer left the place in order to allow the bird to return to the nest but, on returning five minutes later, found that the eggs, fifteen in all, had been shifted about a foot further into the undergrowth and that the bird was sitting. The following morning the eggs were back in the original nest (M.McG.). In April 1960, between Peebles and Innerleithen, a cock Pheasant was several times seen to tread, or attempt to tread, domestic fowls in a hen-run (F.W.G.).

### *Earlier records*

On 17th October 1959 a very tired **Water Rail** was seen on the saltings at Aberlady—only the third recent record for the reserve (J.Bal.).

A **Wood Sandpiper** was seen at Aberlady on 14th and 15th May 1960 (J.Bd., A.M.).

On 20th April 1958 a **Spotted Redshank** in full summer plumage was seen feeding in a flooded field near the village of Lunan, Angus. This seems to be the first spring record for Angus and the third for the county (J.G.).

Two **Curlew Sandpipers** were at Aberlady on 12th June 1960 (J.Bd.).

A **Hoopoe** remained in a garden near Thornhill, Dumfries, for the whole of 10th May 1960 and was seen by a large number of local ornithologists (J.M.).

## The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

### REPORT OF COUNCIL — SESSION XXIV 1959 - 1960

The Council have the honour to submit the following Report for the past year:—

**DEATH OF DR E. V. BAXTER** and **MR T. LESLIE SMITH**: During the Session the Club suffered the loss of Dr E. V. Baxter, Honorary Vice-President of the Club, and of Mr T. Leslie Smith, representative Member on the Council for Dundee. The Council records with gratitude the generous legacy of £1,000 received by the Club from Miss Baxter's estate, the interest to be used for the promotion of Ornithology in Scotland; and also the gift of a large number of books from the Library of Mr Smith.

**MEMBERSHIP**: It is satisfactory to be able to report an increase in the Club Membership this year. 159 Members were lost this Session due to resignation or unpaid subscriptions, while 192 new Members were enrolled. Comparative figures are as follows:—

	31/8/56	31/8/57	31/8/58	31/8/59	31/8/60
Ordinary	755	723	738	747	781
Junior	132	132	148	140	141
Honorary	11	11	11	7	5
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	898	866	897	894	927

**COUNCIL MEETINGS**: Four Meetings of Council were held during the Session.

**GENERAL MEETINGS**: A full programme of Lectures was carried out during the winter in five Branches. The Council wishes to express its thanks to all the Lecturers who gave so freely of their services, and would also like to thank Branch Officials for arrangements and hospitality.

**EXCURSIONS**: Apart from Excursions organised by the Branches to various places of interest during the summer months, the Club also organised weekend Excursions to Dumfries in February and to Aviemore in May.

**CONFERENCE**: A very successful Annual Conference and Annual Dinner were held in October in Stirling, when a record number of Members and Guests attended.

**"SCOTTISH BIRDS"**: Four numbers of the Club Journal were published during the Session, including one double number. Copies of the Journal were sent to a number of Libraries, Museums and Ornithological Societies not only in Britain but also in America, Australia, Belgium, China, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Norway and Poland. Exchanges arranged with British and Overseas Journals have added to the number of up-to-date scientific Journals in the Club Library.

**SCOTTISH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE**: The Council appointed Dr James W. Campbell to replace the late Dr E. V. Baxter as Convenor. The Committee met during the Session to adjudicate on records published during the year, and the Review for 1959 is published in "Scottish Birds."

**SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR ORNITHOLOGY AND BIRD PROTECTION**: The establishment of the Scottish Centre was made possible by a grant of £4,000 to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust by an anonymous donor. The premises were purchased by the Trust and various alterations were carried out in order to provide accommodation for the S.O.C. and the R.S.P.B. on the ground floor, with private living quarters for the Water-

stones above the offices. The balance of cash following the purchase of the premises was used to cover the cost of alterations. It has been agreed between the Trust and the Club that, after meeting all annual charges and maintenance out of rents received, any surplus will be credited to a "House Fabric Fund" as a reserve for contingencies in connection with the property. Until this Fund reaches £1,000 the Club will contribute to it the sum of £50 a year. The state of this Fund is shown with the Club Accounts. The Trust have granted a full repairing lease to the S.O.C. at a nominal rent, and the S.O.C. after taking independent advice, have granted sub-leases to the R.S.P.B. for their Offices and to the Waterstons for their private quarters at an annual rent of £100 in each case, the S.O.C. being responsible for paying the whole rates and other outgoings.

The Council have pleasure in reporting a successful first year at the new Centre, which was officially opened in October 1959 by the Earl of Wemyss and March in the presence of a gathering of representatives of ornithological organisations in Scotland, England and Ireland. A large number of people, including visitors from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Rhodesia, Sweden and the West Indies, have visited the Centre during the Session, and the office has dealt with numerous enquiries about bird-watching holidays and other facilities. Informal meetings for Juniors and others were held in the Library during the winter, and a week-end Conference of the Junior Bird Recorders' Club was held at the Centre in April.

**CLUB LIBRARY:** During the year a large number of books and Journals were received in addition to the 200 volumes from the Library of the late Mr T. Leslie Smith. Both Reference and Lending sections have thus been extended, and the Council records its thanks to all those who have presented both old and new books to the Library. A Library Fund has been established for the purchase of new books and Journals.

**PUBLICATION:** During the Session the Club sponsored the publication of "The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve," by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor, as a reprint from the "Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society." This publication, which is on sale to Members and others, will be of considerable value to ornithologists who visit the Reserve.

**REPRESENTATION:** Dr Berry officially represented the Club at the Conference of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature held in Poland in June. Mr George Waterston continues to represent the Club on the Council and Scientific Advisory Committee of the British Trust for Ornithology.

For the Council,

CHARLES G. CONNELL,  
President.

## TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twenty-Fourth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Marine Hotel, North Berwick, on Saturday, 29th October 1960. An attendance of over a hundred Members was presided over by Sir Charles G. Connell, President of the Club.

**MINUTES:** The Minutes of the Twenty-third Annual General Meeting, held at Stirling on 24th October 1959, were read and approved.

**REPORT OF COUNCIL:** (See preceding page). This was submitted by the Chairman. In moving the adoption of the Report, the Chairman said that the Council hoped to publish shortly a "Check-list of the Birds of Duddingston Loch Bird Sanctuary" which would be issued free to Members as a special supplement to "Scottish Birds." Arrangements would also

be made in the near future for indexing the Journal, and for making binding facilities available. He also drew the attention of the Meeting to the recent award of the Silver Medal of the R.S.P.B. to Lt. Col. J. P. Grant, Member of Council, for outstanding services to bird protection. The Report was adopted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** In presenting the Accounts, the Hon. Treasurer pointed out that the reduction in the overall surplus of the Revenue Account this year was due to extraordinary expenditure in connection with the completion of the move to 21 Regent Terrace, the publication of "The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve," and also to a larger allocation of funds for "Scottish Birds." Deeds of Covenant for subscriptions to the Club had now been approved by Inland Revenue, and he stressed the advantage to the Club of this form of subscription. Already over 60 Deeds of Covenant had been signed, bringing in additional revenue of over £45. Interest from the late Dr E. V. Baxter's Endowment, which had been invested in The Equities Investment Fund for Charities, would be available in the coming year. A sum of £500 from the accumulated overall surplus of £818 shown in the Balance Sheet at present in the Edinburgh Savings Bank at 3% interest would be transferred to Defence Bonds at 5% interest.

Mr D. G. Andrew, Hon. Treasurer of the House Fabric Fund, presented the first accounts of this Fund, and pointed out that of the £4,000 received by the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, £3,000 had been applied to the purchase of the premises, and of the remaining £1,000, the sum of £944 had been used in alterations. The Accounts showed a healthy position; but the decision of Council to re-wire part of the electrical installation of the premises would reduce the surplus in the coming year. Both these Accounts were approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR:** Mr Arthur Walker, C.A., was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing Session.

**ELECTION OF PRESIDENT:** The Council's recommendation that Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn be elected President of the Club to replace Sir Charles G. Connell, who had completed his term of office, was approved.

**ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT:** The Council's recommendation that Dr Ian D. Pennie be elected Vice-President of the Club in succession to Professor Meiklejohn was approved.

**ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS:** The Council's recommendation that Dr James W. Campbell and Dr W. J. Eggeling be elected to Council to replace Dr Ian D. Pennie on his election as Vice-President, and Dr John Berry, who was due to retire by rotation, was approved.

**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION:** The following alteration to the Club Constitution was unanimously approved:— Add to 3. MEMBERSHIP (e): "Married couples shall be eligible for joint Membership at an annual subscription of 40s and shall enjoy all the usual privileges of Membership with the exception that they shall be entitled to receive only one copy of "Scottish Birds" (Club Journal), and any other literature circulated by the Club between them."

**MIGRATION RESEARCH BY RADAR:** At the invitation of the Chairman, Dr W. R. P. Bourne of the Edward Grey Institute, Oxford, asked Members to send him any observations on movements of migrants or sudden influxes of birds which might assist him in the interpretation of migration movements seen on the radar screen.

**WHOOPEER SWAN ENQUIRY:** Miss Betty Garden spoke briefly about the Whooper Swan Enquiry sponsored by the B.T.O. and the Wildfowl Trust.

**PEREGRINE ENQUIRY:** Dr R. A. Ratcliffe of the Nature Conservancy

appealed for the support of Members in the B.T.O. Peregrine Census Enquiry.

"THE ISLE OF MAY": The Chairman drew Members' attention to the advance copy of a new book on "The Isle of May" by Dr W. J. Eggeling, which would be published on 9th November. The publication of this book has been very much an act of faith on the part of the publishers as the sales of a specialised work of this kind are bound to be small. He hoped that if Members felt that the publication of excellent works of reference of this kind was something really worthwhile, they would support it by purchasing copies.

VOTES OF THANKS: The Chairman asked the meeting to accord a hearty vote of thanks to the Secretary for her organisation of the Conference, and to those who had been responsible for the various Exhibitions on view—to Dr David Jenkins and Dr Adam Watson for the Exhibit of the Red Grouse in Scotland Enquiry; to Dr George Dunnet and his assistants for the Fulmar Exhibit; and to Mr T. Scott Kelly, Mr Quintin Mitchell, Mr Ritchie Seath, and Mr Arthur Ablett for loaning the fine original paintings by Archibald Thorburn, Philip Rickman, and Edwin Alexander. This was warmly accorded.

Professor Meiklejohn asked the Meeting to accord a special vote of thanks to the retiring President, Sir Charles G. Connell, for the immense amount of work and interest he had taken in Club affairs during his term of office, particularly in connection with the establishment of the new Centre which owed so much to his inspiration and help; and also to Lady Connell for her hospitality and interest. This was very warmly accorded.

#### Revenue Account for the year ended 31st August 1960

	Year to 31/8/60	Year to 31/8/59
<b>INCOME:—</b>		
Subscriptions received during year ... ..	£1014 12 6	£1011
Income from Miss L. J. Rintoul's and Dr E. V. Baxter's Endowments ... ..	65 17 11	40
Savings Bank interest ... ..	16 3 9	13
Sale of Badges and Field Lists ... ..	10 12 10	6
	<u>£1107 7 0</u>	<u>£1070</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE:—</b>		
Hire of Lecture Halls and equipment ... ..	£96 17 7	89
Lecturers' expenses ... ..	76 8 9	53
Postages, printing, stationery and sundry expenses	115 11 2	102
Secretarial services ... ..	338 7 8	353
Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection—		
Opening Ceremony expenses less donations £12	3 0 4	—
Furniture and equipment including telephone installation, curtain material, paraffin heater, fire extinguishers, light fittings and film screen	73 8 9	116
Annual contribution to House Fabric Fund ...	50 0 0	—
Heating and lighting, telephone and cleaning attributable to the Club ... ..	43 13 5	—
Production and distribution of Scottish Birds Vol. I Nos. 5-8 Cost ... ..	£335 12 10	
Less—Sales to non-members £54; receipts from advertisements £84, 9/6	138 9 6	171

Subscriptions to Council for Nature, B.T.O., R.S.P.B. and I.C.P.B. ... ..	5 2 0	10
Conference net cost ... ..	16 15 4	40
Contribution to Library Fund ... ..	10 0 0	—
Purchase of Field Lists ... ..	4 7 4	—
Publication of Birds of Aberlady Bay Report Cost ... .. £86 18 4		
Less—Contribution from The Edinburgh Bird Bulletin £30 and sales £10, 10s 40 10 0	46 8 4	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1077 4 0	£934
<b>Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet</b> ...	30 3 0	136
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£1107 7 0	£1070
	<hr/>	<hr/>

#### Library Fund Account for the year ended 31st August 1960

	As at 31/8/60	As at 31/8/59
Donations received ... ..	£16 10 6	—
Sale of duplicate copies ... ..	12 15 0	—
Contribution from Revenue Account ... ..	10 0 0	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£39 5 6	—
Less—Purchases ... ..	4 19 2	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet</b> ...	£34 6 4	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st August 1960

	1960	1959
Surplus at 31st August 1959 ... ..	£818 3 4	682
Add—Surplus for year per Revenue Account ...	30 3 0	136
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£848 6 4	818
Library Fund—Surplus for year per Account ...	34 6 4	—
Endowments (the free annual income of which is available for the advancement of ornithology)		
Miss L. J. Rintoul's Endowment ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
Dr E. V. Baxter's Endowment ... ..	1000 0 0	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£2882 12 8	1818
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash in Edinburgh Savings Bank ... ..	£859 9 10	693
Cash in Royal Bank of Scotland Current Account	23 2 10	101
Cash in hand ... ..	0 0 0	6
Debt due to the Club for advertisements in Scottish Birds ... ..	0 0 0	18
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£882 12 8	818
£1151 3½% War Stock at cost ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
976 units The Equities Investment Fund for Charities at cost ... ..	1000 0 0	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£2882 12 8	1818
	<hr/>	<hr/>

EDINBURGH, 25th September 1960.—I have examined the foregoing Revenue Account and Balance Sheet of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the year ended 31st August 1960, and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

(Signed) ARTHUR WALKER, C.A.

**House Fabric Fund — Summary of Accounts for period  
29th June 1959 to 31st August 1960**

RECEIPTS

Grant from anonymous donor—£4000 whereof £3000 applied towards purchase of 21 Regent Terrace, and balance, after deduction of purchase expenses, received from Messrs J. & F. Anderson for credit of this Fund ... ..	£950	0	0
Rent from Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at £100 p.a. for period 1 Oct. 59 to 11 Nov. 60 ... ..	111	4	8
Rent from Mr and Mrs Waterston at £100 p.a. for period 15 Aug. 59 to 11 Nov. 60 ... ..	125	0	0
Annual contribution from S.O.C. Revenue Account ... ..	50	0	0
Miscellaneous interests ... ..	5	13	6
			<hr/>
	£1241	18	2

EXPENDITURE

Repairs and alterations ... ..	£944	12	11
Property burdens—			
Rates ... ..	£75	10	11
Feuduty ... ..	10	2	10
Gardens Assessment (2 yrs.) ... ..	16	0	0
Schedule "A" Tax on feuduty ... ..	6	7	10
Insurance ... ..	13	14	6
			<hr/>
Miscellaneous payments ... ..		121	16
On deposit with Edinburgh Mutual & Dunedin Building Society ... ..	£238	9	4
Less balance due to Messrs Fraser, Stodart & Ballingall, W.S. ... ..	65	17	8
			<hr/>
		1069	6
			<hr/>
		£172	11
			<hr/>
		8	

5th October 1960.—I have examined the foregoing Accounts of the House Fabric Fund of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the period from 29th June 1959 to 31st August 1960 and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

(Signed) ANDREW T. MACMILLAN, C.A.

**DEEDS OF COVENANT**

The Club has now been recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue. This means that Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate on some part of their income can greatly benefit Club funds at no extra cost or inconvenience to themselves by taking out seven-year Deeds of Covenant in respect of their subscriptions. The reclaim of tax is carried out by the Club office and the Secretary will ask Members each year to sign and return a completed Certificate for Deduction of Tax. This reclaim on a subscription of twenty-five shillings will bring in over fifteen shillings per annum as additional income to the Club.

Members who have not already paid their subscriptions for the current year and also those who have already done so are urged if possible to sign a Deed of Covenant for their subscription, for which an appropriate form may be obtained from the Secretary. There has already been an encouraging response and Members who have signed Covenants are warmly thanked for their help.

### FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Members are asked to note, in the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Club held on 29th October 1960 which are published in this issue, that an alteration to the Club Constitution under MEMBERSHIP (c), to include a Family Membership subscription, is now effective and is available to Members who wish to take advantage of this type of subscription.

### WEEK-END EXCURSION TO DUMFRIES

Arrangements have again been made this year with the County Hotel, Dumfries, for a weekend Excursion to the Solway to see the geese.

Accommodation has been arranged for the weekend 17th to 19th February 1961 at inclusive terms of £4 per person as follows: Bed on Friday night 17th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday 18th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 19th.

Members wishing to come on this Excursion should book direct with the Manager, The County Hotel, Dumfries (Tel. 146) mentioning that they are Members of the Club; they may also bring guests. Arrangements for transport by private cars to Dumfries should be made with Branch Secretaries. It is advisable to bring warm clothing and thermos flasks, and if possible, gum boots.

It is regretted that owing to the difficulty of obtaining suitable dates for this Excursion it has been impossible to avoid coinciding with the date of the St Andrews Branch Meeting.

### SPECIAL MEETING FOR JUNIOR MEMBERS

A special combined Meeting for Junior Members of the Club and Members of the Junior Bird Recorders' Club for the R.S.P.B. will be held in the Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, on Wednesday, 28th December, 1960, at 7 p.m.

The programme will include special exhibitions, a Bird Quiz, films and refreshments. Junior Members must inform the Secretary not later than 26th December if they intend to be present and whether they would like to exhibit anything.

### "THE BIRDS OF ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE"

Members are reminded that this publication, by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor, is on sale in the Club Office, price 5s (5s 4d post free). This is an invaluable work of reference for anyone who is interested in the Reserve, and by supporting it Members will enable the Club to provide similar useful publications in the future.

### OPERATION OSPREY, 1961

The R.S.P.B. will once again require the assistance of volunteer wardens between 1st April and mid-August to guard the Ospreys at Loch Garten and to act as Guides to the public visiting the Observation Post in the Sanctuary area. Wardens will be accommodated at a Base Camp where food, tents and camp equipment will be provided free. Each person is however expected to bring his own sleeping bag and pillow slip. Provided a sufficient number of Wardens are available, preferably for periods of not less than a week at a time, each one will have every third day free of duties. A succession of female cook-caterers will also be required for the period.

Anyone wishing to assist should send full details and references as soon as possible to Mr George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.



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Although Iceland is not an arctic country, some true arctic birds can be studied there such as the Little Auk, the Purple Sandpiper, the Grey Phalarope, Brunnich's Guillemot and the long-tailed duck. The Sea-eagle is still found there and the famous Iceland Gyr-falcon is not uncommon. A Snowy Owl flapping over a pitch black lava stream is an impressive sight. Even the capital, Reykjavik, has some interesting bird inhabitants. On an islet in the Lake Tjornin, the Arctic Tern breeds in great numbers. Red-necked Phalaropes often flock on the lake which is also alive with ducks of many species. An hour's drive from Reykjavik to the old seat of the Icelandic Parliament at Thingvellir may result in the thrilling sight of the Great Northern Diver which breeds nowhere else in Europe. A flight of half an hour brings the ornithologist to the rich bird cliffs of the Westman Islands. The rocky island, Eldey, off the Reykjavik peninsula, is occupied by about 15,000 pairs of North Atlantic Gannet, the largest single colony of this species in the world. On the oases south of Hofsjokull, is the world's largest breeding colony of the Pinkfooted Goose.

Lake Myvatn in northern Iceland has been called the Mecca of bird watchers. This five mile by eight mile lake, which is also renowned for its unrivalled scenic beauty, has the largest concentration in Europe of breeding ducks. Fifteen species nest there; two of them, the Barrow's Goldeneye and the Harlequin Duck, nest nowhere else in Europe outside Iceland.

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W. J. EGGELING

*Foreword by* V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS

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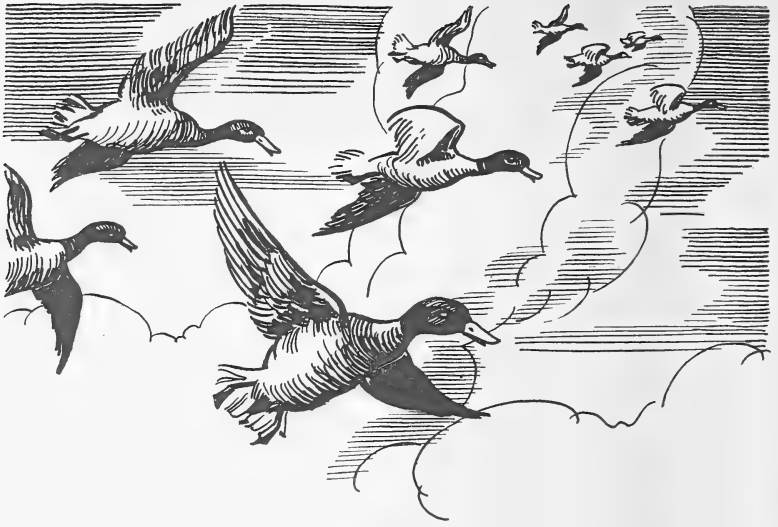


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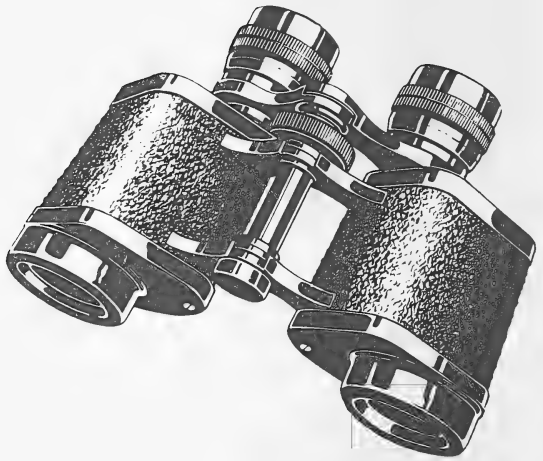


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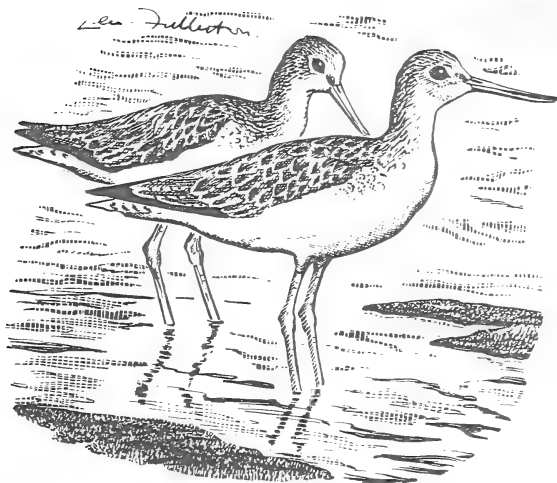


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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. I No. 11

Spring 1961

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

Full details are given in the Syllabus of Lectures Card of the names of the present Office-bearers of the Club.

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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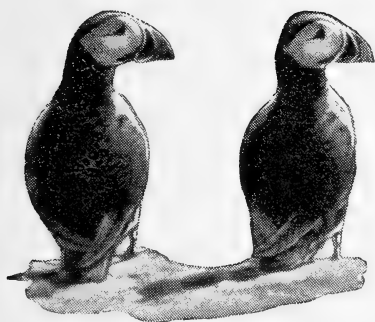
### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.



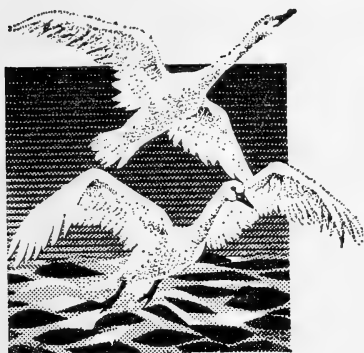
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS

THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB



Vol. I No. 11

Spring 1961

Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Greenshanks) by LEN FULLERTON.

Published quarterly.

## Editorial

**T**HIS might be said to be a Review Number of *Scottish Birds*, in that it contains more reviews than this journal has ever had before, and it is gratifying to see that three of the books concerned are by members of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. From the editorial point of view the purpose of such accounts is to help bird-watchers, especially the less expert, to choose what books they wish to purchase. It is beyond the means of most of us to get all the bird books published in Britain, and so a selective approach must be made. It is not difficult, even for the poorest of us, to collect books on one aspect of ornithology, whether it be migration, behaviour, distribution or systematics. Much of contemporary ornithology is bedevilled by the problems of identification, which is really only the ABC of the subject and, while difficulties will always exist here, it is best to have an interest outside it. We are in danger sometimes of doing too much "Bird-spotting" and too little reading and, even if you cannot afford all the books you would like to have, please remember that the Club now has an excellent library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

### SPECIAL JUNIOR MEETING

A special meeting for Junior members of the Club and members of the J.B.R.C. has been arranged for Saturday, 15th April, 1961. This will take the form of a conducted Excursion by private bus, possibly to Linlithgow Loch, leaving 21 Regent Terrace at 2.30 p.m. If the weather is unsuitable other arrangements will be made. Refreshments will be provided, but a small charge will be made to cover the cost of the bus hire. Junior members wishing to attend this Excursion must inform the Club Secretary not later than 1st April.

### CLUB LIBRARY

Miss Rona Hunter has very kindly prepared a typewritten list of all the books in the Club's Lending Library. This list is available on loan.

## ISLE OF MAY BIRD OBSERVATORY AND FIELD STATION REPORT FOR 1960

*Prepared for the Observatory Committee  
by W. J. EGGELING, Hon. Secretary.*

An island field station depending for its records exclusively on volunteer observers cannot expect to maintain a continuous cover throughout every migration season. In 1960 the May was manned for most of April-May and for the greater part of August and September, but October went almost entirely unreported. June and July, also, were poorly covered, so that little new was recorded of the breeding populations and very few nestlings were ringed. This is a position which could easily be rectified by ornithologists seeking a cheap and pleasant summer holiday for their families.

Highlights of 1960 were the first recorded occurrences of Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Pelican *Pelecanus* sp., Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps* and Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis*. The first three must all be suspect as possible escapes from captivity.

### *Migration*

*Spring.* As in 1959, the spring was mostly warm and dry with relatively little rain, drizzle, fog or "haar." There were no particularly large arrivals although the ringing total was higher than for several years, due mainly to periods of easterly weather in the first week of April and in the first and second weeks of May. There were observational gaps on 27th-28th April, 16th-20th May and 31st May.

An east wind (force 2-4) on 1st April, which increased to force 5 after dark, was succeeded on 2nd by a south-east wind (force 6-7) accompanied by poor visibility, bringing in 5 Lapwings, over 80 Blackbirds, 10 Song Thrushes, 30 Skylarks, 15 male Wheatears, over 20 Meadow Pipits, 7 Robins, 15 Chaffinches and the first Chiffchaff. One of the 6 Robins trapped was undoubtedly Continental and another probably so; the remainder appeared to be British. In similar weather on 3rd April more Lapwings arrived and although many Blackbirds and all but the wintering Robins had departed these were replaced by about 25 Redwings, several Song Thrushes, 4 Fieldfares and a Missel Thrush. More Meadow Pipits (over 100) were recorded but noticeably fewer Wheatears.

South-east and south-south-east winds (force 2-3) on 4th, with mixed visibility, resulted in considerable Blackbird movement, some birds departing but many others coming in.

Meadow Pipit and Lapwing passage continued and a few Continental Song Thrushes and Robins arrived. A party of 5 Continental Great Tits joined 3 that had over-wintered, all 8 being trapped together. The 5th saw the end of the easterly weather, the wind going south to south-west and temporarily increasing in strength to force 5 with good visibility. Unexpectedly, Blackbird numbers remained high, 200 birds arriving to replace about 100 which had departed the previous night: 50 were ringed compared with 30 on 4th, 13 on 3rd and 16 on 2nd. Starling numbers almost doubled from 80 to 150, and a Ring Ouzel and 2 Woodcocks were newcomers. Apart from a sustained trickle of Goldcrests and Wrens there was a steady decrease in passage between 6th and 10th April, but a female Black Redstart turned up on 11th and a party of about 40 *alba* wagtails looked in fleetingly on 12th. The first Willow Warbler appeared on 17th, first Redstart on 19th, Sandwich Tern on 25th and Swallow next day.

From 1st to 7th May winds were variable and light; from 8th to 14th they were east, force 2-6. On the 3rd, some Swallows, the first Swift and House Martin, 2 Ring Ouzels, the first Sedge Warbler, the first Whinchat, 3 Redstarts and a considerable increase in Wheatears were recorded. The first Sand Martin was seen on 4th. From 3rd May until at least the middle of the month, Whinchats (1-8 daily), Redstarts (1-18 daily) and Wheatears (mostly 12-20 daily) were on the move, with Willow Warblers and Whitethroats (up to 40 of each) passing most days. There was a Goldfinch on 6th (only the ninth occurrence), and a Lesser Redpoll and the first "comic" Tern on 7th. Two Yellow Wagtails were seen on 6th, with single birds on 7th and 12th. A Tree Pipit, a Turtle Dove and 10 Tree Sparrows (all trapped) turned up on 9th, and there were single Corncrakes on 9th and 14th. Single Lesser Whitethroats were recorded on 7th and 11th, single Grasshopper Warblers on 9th and 10th, and the first Garden Warbler and Blackcap on 13th.

The only considerable influxes were those which included 40 Willow Warblers on the 7th, and about 40 Whitethroats and 40 Willow Warblers on the 14th. The latter was easily the most exciting day of spring, and the only one when more than single Spotted and Pied Flycatchers were reported (12 and 3 respectively). The movement followed south-east wind, force 6, and heavy rain the previous day: the 81 birds ringed included 10 Redstarts, 4 Whinchats, 6 Spotted Flycatchers, 20 Willow Warblers, 29 Whitethroats, 3 Garden Warblers and 6 more Grasshopper Warblers. A Night Heron appeared at the East Landing (first record for the island) and a Siskin was seen.

*Autumn.* The island was manned from 4th to 10th and 17th to 31st August, throughout September and on 1st-3rd October.

From light-keeper information, and also from observations at Fife Ness, it is clear that much migration was missed in October.

Winds throughout August were light and very variable, scarcely ever south-east. Normal autumn coasting in small numbers was recorded: Wheatears logged between 15 and 30, and Swallows mostly at between 10 and 25, daily. In the evening of 24th August the wind was fresh north-east and the island enveloped in fog; next morning it was strong north-east with visibility down to 100 yards. In the afternoon of 25th the wind went south-east but on 26th August and also on 27th and 28th it was back in the north or north-east. A single Pied Flycatcher was seen on 24th August but both next day and on 26th 35 were recorded, numbers dropping gradually thereafter. Garden Warbler numbers rose from 1 on 24th to 10 on 25th, fell to 6 on 26th and rose again to 25 on 27th and 28th. Willow Warblers (and Whitethroats) showed the same pattern: 4 (0) on 24th, 40 (0) on 25th, 50 (2) on 26th, 80 (20) on 27th, 50 (15) on 28th, with numbers declining thereafter. Much the same was true of Whinchats, Redstarts and Spotted Flycatchers: 1, 0, 0, respectively on 24th; 3, 2, 1, on 25th; 10, 6, 1, on 26th; 30, 15, 8, on 27th; 25, 15, 1 on 28th, with generally smaller numbers on following days.

Other records for August included the inexplicable Pelican on 4th; a Sooty Shearwater on 5th; an early Great Skua on 7th; single Wood Warblers on 8th-10th and 31st; 1-5 Knots on five days between 20th and 26th; the island's first Arctic Warbler on 26th; an Aquatic Warbler on 27th; 4 if not 5 Wrynecks on 27th-28th; a Little Stint, 2 Barred Warblers, a pair of Stonechats, 2 Ortolans and a quite exceptionally early Fieldfare on 28th; and 2 Icterine Warblers on the 29th. A Wren and 2 Blackbirds on 21st August and another Blackbird on 28th were also unusual dates. A trickle of Tree Pipits passed through between 26th August and 2nd September.

The wind in the first two weeks of September was variable but on 6th, when it moved light south-east, there was markedly increased Swallow (320) and Meadow Pipit (1,100) movement, these numbers comparing with only 35 and 400, respectively the day before. Pipits were also numerous on 8th (500) and from 9th-11th (200, 200, 150). During the night of 15th-16th the wind again went south-east, backing east to north-east in the afternoon of 16th and veering to south-east gale (with a tendency to back east) towards dusk: the day was thickly overcast, with heavy showers. On 17th the wind was due east, force 3-5, with fog or thick fog all day, but by 18th, abated to force 1-3 with improved visibility, it was moving erratically between south-west and south-east. In the four days 16th-19th, 231 birds were trapped. Small-scale Meadow Pipit and Swal-

low passage continued throughout most of the second fortnight of the month with a jump in Pipit numbers from 50 to 300 on 18th and of Swallows from 10 to 300 on 19th. There was another productive spell of weather at the end of September. The wind went south-east in the evening of 26th and stayed in that quarter until mid-day 30th, when it backed to east, remaining there until noon on 3rd October.

Although September had opened auspiciously with a Scarlet Grosbeak on the 1st it was not until the wind went south-east on the 16th that there was any sizeable arrival of overseas migrants. That afternoon 5 Redstarts, 2 Whinchats, 3 Garden Warblers, 4 Pied Flycatchers and a Red-breasted Flycatcher were seen, and the first Tree Pipit for 2 weeks. Next day (17th), 4 Kestrels, 25 Wheatears, 50 Redstarts, 10 Whinchats, 7 Blue-throats, 10 Robins, 6 Blackcaps, 50 Garden Warblers (a high count), 6 Whitethroats, 5 Lesser Whitethroats, 15 Willow Warblers, 5 Chiffchaffs, 10 Pied Flycatchers, a Spotted Flycatcher, 15 Tree Pipits, a Wryneck, 10 Song Thrushes, 2 Redwings, 45 Siskins and 4 Chaffinches were recorded. The next few days were equally productive, although overall numbers fell: there was another Red-breasted Flycatcher on 18th September and 2 Lapland Buntings were present on 18th-19th. A second Aquatic Warbler was identified on 19th.

After a lull, a Turtle Dove appeared on 27th September, and the first major autumn arrival of Thrushes took place on 28th, when 75 Song Thrushes, 175 Redwings, 2 Ring Ouzels and 6 Blackbirds (but no Fieldfares) were recorded and 6 Pied Flycatchers and another Ortolan were seen. There were further falls of Turdidæ during the next five days. A Yellow-browed Warbler was present from 28th-30th September and a Rustic Bunting from 29th September to 2nd October.

Other noteworthy autumn occurrences not mentioned above included a Sooty Shearwater on 1st September, 2 Ruffs on 13th, the island's second Firecrest on 22nd, 10 Whimbrel (a large number for the May) on 24th, a Redpoll on 25th, a Goldeneye on 28th, and a phenomenal movement of at least 10,000 "comic" Terns observed at about 11 a.m. on 30th September moving steadily south-east (none the day before, only 400 on 1st October and again none on 2nd). Little Stints were reported on 16th September (2), 20th-21st (1), 24th (1), 25th (2) and 26th-27th September (1).

Except for the first three days of the month, only occasional notes from the Principal Keeper are available for October. Four Blackcaps were present on 1st-2nd, 10 on 3rd, 1 on 23rd, 6 on 24th, 1 on 29th-30th (and one on 8th November). Chiffchaff numbers built up from 1 on 29th September to 15 on 2nd October and 40 on 3rd—a large number for the island; a single bird was seen on 27th. A third Red-breasted Flycatcher appear-

ed on 2nd October and was ringed next day. Goldcrests were estimated at 50 on 2nd October, the highest number of the autumn. A Great Grey Shrike came in the same day and there were others (at least 3 birds involved) on 21st-22nd, 25th and 30th. There was a Bluethroat on 3rd October, when 70 Skylarks (compared with 10 on 2nd) were recorded, as well as 2 Bar-tailed Godwits (first October occurrence). The lighthouse staff reported a big fall of Fieldfares, Redwings, Song Thrushes and Blackbirds on 21st October and subsequent days, but most of the birds had moved on by 26th. A pair of Bullfinches visited the island briefly on 28th October, the first record of this species since 1910, and a late Great Skua was seen on 9th November.

### *Breeding Populations*

A pair of Teal *Anas crecca* nested for the first time on record. On 15th May a light-keeper flushed the duck from a nestful of eggs under the end of an uptilted plank on the North Ness. The eggs vanished later, probably taken by gulls. Down and feathers from the nest confirmed the identification.

On 28th May, the breeding burrow of a pair of Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna* was discovered on the North Plateau and on 12th June the parent birds were encountered escorting 8 ducklings to the sea near Burnett's Leap. This is only the second recorded instance of this species breeding on the May: the first occasion was in 1936.

From 1956 to 1959 a pair of Swallows had nested in the Old Naval buildings. In 1960 two pairs bred, one in the same place, raising two broods, the other in the Tractor House, raising certainly one. Again only one pair of Pied Wagtails nested, and there was a big and quite unexpected drop in the number of nesting Linnets. Since 1953, when 3 pairs nested, the breeding population had built up to at least 10 pairs in 1959, but in 1960 only two pairs turned up, 3 of the birds involved having been ringed in previous years. One of the pairs certainly nested and possibly both, but it is improbable that more than two broods of young flew.

The daily census records for Teal and Linnet deserve mention. Between April 14th, when a pair of Teal were noted, and May 15th, when their nest was found, no Teal at all were recorded. Similarly, on many days in the weeks preceding 10th June no Linnets at all were entered, yet on that date a brood of young just out of the nest and three adults were seen in one of the traps. One is left with the impression that observers cannot have covered the island fully, otherwise surely at least the off-duty Linnets should have been noted.

No detailed counts were made of breeding sea-birds but the indications are that the Shag colony maintained itself at about

400 pairs and that the Fulmars had as successful a breeding season as they have ever had, for at least a dozen chicks hatched. For the first time Fulmars were recorded in November, when six birds were seen on and around the cliffs on 22nd and 23rd. Fulmars have now been noted on the island in every month of the year.

The two Kittiwake colonies established at East Tarbet and on the cliffs at the South End in 1956 continue to expand. The former has grown from 10 to 25 pairs, the latter from 2 to about 14.

### *Ringling*

The ringling total for 1960—1,685 birds of 60 species—was higher than for several years past but only 18 nestlings were included in the total. This is greatly to be deplored because it is from birds ringling as young that much of the most valuable recovery and retrap information accrues. Too many visitors seem interested only in rare migrants and dismiss the local birds as beneath notice, yet the changing pattern of breeding populations, and the movements of the individuals concerned, are at least of equal fascination and offer in many cases a largely unexplored field. Rock and Meadow Pipits, Wheatears, Shags and the Auks are all species where nestling ringling could pay handsome dividends.

Two birds, Red-headed Bunting and Jack Snipe, were ringling on the island for the first time. The ringling totals for Turtle Dove (2), Swallow (10), Great Tit (5), Whinchat (32), Redstart (105), Grasshopper Warbler (8), Blackcap (30), Chiffchaff (30) and Tree Sparrow (10) were the highest ever. Those for Blue-throat (5), Wryneck (5), Garden Warbler (89) and Wren (34) were the second highest so far recorded. Exceptionally low totals were Linnet (8) and Shag (9).

### *Recoveries*

A Fulmar ringling as a chick early in August 1960 was reported from the sea area north-west of Ireland (about 240 miles west of the May) at the end of October; this is the first recovery of a bird of this species hatched on the island. A Greater Black-backed Gull ringling as a youngster at Lake Orrevann, Rogaland, Norway, in June 1959, was picked up dead on the South Plateau in April 1960, whilst one ringling on the May in its first year in April 1956 was recovered in Jutland in November 1959.

There was one Cuckoo recovery—a bird ringling on the May in July 1958 when only a couple of months old which was picked up dead near Cluanie in Glenmoriston, Inverness-shire, in June 1960 after striking a telephone wire.

Blackbirds, as so often, provided a number of interesting

records. The most notable were those involving an adult male ringed at the Copeland Bird Observatory in County Down on 17th March 1960, which was trapped on the May on 5th April 1960 on its way back to its breeding quarters in Scandinavia, and a full-grown female ringed on the May in April 1960, caught as a breeding bird in Finland in July 1960—the first instance of a Blackbird ringed on the May being reported from that country. Two other Blackbird recoveries deserve mention. The first was a first winter bird ringed in October 1959, killed by a cat in July 1960 in Westphalia, Germany (presumably its breeding locality). The second was a bird ringed as a juvenile in July 1951, possibly but not certainly bred on the island; it was picked up exhausted at Galashiels, Selkirkshire, in October 1960, being then 9 years old. It was released next day, when it had recuperated.

In 1960 Blackcaps figured for the first time in the list of recoveries. Two birds were involved, and the movement of one of these, a full grown female ringed on the May in September 1956 and shot in the Lebanon in April 1960 is without precedent, for never before has a British-ringed Blackcap been recovered from anywhere near this area. The second bird, another full grown female, ringed in October 1960, was netted at San Rafael del Rio, Spain, on the 22nd of the same month.

There were few retrappings of note. The two Fulmars "Joe" and "Jessie" bred successfully. They have been mated since at least 1952 and "Joe" is known to have occupied the same nest site for at least 12 years.

### *Miscellaneous Observations*

The two Blackcaps which it was hoped might stay on the island through the winter of 1959-60 did not in fact do so. They were seen together at the bird-table on 4th December 1959 and a single bird appeared there for the last time on the 16th.

The Rabbit colony remained free from a recurrence of myxomatosis but numbers were lower than in 1959. Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food who visited the May in June in connection with trials of humane traps estimated the population at about 800 animals and certainly not more than 1,000. They noted that the Rabbits, although fairly well distributed, preferred the east side of the island, the highest concentrations being around Nettle Hollow but with fair numbers in the Ruff Green-St Andrew's Well area, and just north of the Tower. At that season they appeared to have evacuated the main gull colonies and there were thus very few indeed on Rona and the North Ness.

At the end of the year the Principal Keeper disposed of his sheep stock in anticipation of his retirement in the Spring of



1960. It will be interesting to observe how the Rabbit population reacts to the increased amount of grazing available to them, and to reduced trapping.

Grey Seal numbers remained much as in 1959 although a count of at least 60 animals towards the end of May is the highest yet recorded so early in the year. Two more animals marked on the Farne Islands the previous autumn were identified in February and March. No pups were dropped in 1960.

Six plants new to the island were reported and the unconfirmed identification of another (the moss *Bryum intermedium*) was upheld. The new records were the moss *Pohlia delicatula*, the lichen *Peltigera spuria*, the subspecies *inodora* of Scentsless Mayweed (*Matricaria maritima*), Aaron's Rod (*Verbascum thapsus*), Musk (*Mimulus moschatus*) and a species of Mallow (*Malva* sp. near *nicaeensis*). The last three all turned up in or around Lachie's Garden and fall into the category of casuals or escapes.

During the Summer, the Low Light was completely re-roofed. This work was quite beyond the Observatory's financial resources and was only made possible by a generous grant from the Helena Howden Endowment Trust, which the Committee acknowledges with gratitude. The next major repair, to be tackled in 1961, is the complete re-decoration of the living room.

Two parties sponsored by the Conservation Corps of the Council for Nature did excellent jobs in April and June, completely restoring the Gully Trap, repairing the Bain and Low Traps, making new wall-scaling ladders, erecting artificial cover, screening live cover and removing a great deal of unsightly war-time rubbish. It is greatly to be hoped that these very productive visits will become annual events.

Lastly, it should be recorded that during the Summer of 1960 visitors to the island included a party from St Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, with Fr. Paul Browne, O.S.B., one of its members. They brought with them a consecrated altar stone and on the afternoon of their arrival, 11th August, after it had been set in place, and the appropriate altar cloths and hangings erected, Compline (in English) was recited in the Chapel, perhaps the first public act of worship there for four centuries. Next morning, 12th August, Mass was offered—a Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart to the Glory of God and in memory of the Apostle St Adrian and his martyred companions. As one of the participants recorded in the log, "the ruined oratory, which to many a visitor must seem (as Columba said of his own Iona) 'mean and narrow' was transformed by sunshine and the colour of the vestments into a place of unique but austere loveliness—a beauty in no way alien to the character of the May."

## Publications—

- EGGELING, W. J., *The Isle of May*. Edinburgh. 1960.
- LACK, D. A comparison of "drift-migration" at Fair Isle, the Isle of May and Spurn Point. *Scot. Birds*, 1: 295. 1960.
- WATSON, E. V. Further observations on the bryophyte flora of the Isle of May. II. Rate of succession in selected communities involving bryophytes. *Trans. Bot. Soc. Edinb.*, 39: 85. 1960.

## LITTLE GULLS IN ANGUS AND FIFE

J. GRIERSON

(EDITOR'S NOTE. As will be seen, Mr Grierson's data do not go beyond the beginning of 1956, when he left Dundee, but it has been thought advisable to publish now this valuable account of the increase of the Little Gull in the Tay and Forth estuaries. Meanwhile Mr Brian Neath (1, Newearth Road, Walkden, Manchester) is collecting information on records of the Little Gull from all over Britain. From the Tay and Forth he is particularly anxious to receive records from between 1956 and 1958. For other records of this species in Scotland readers are referred to *Scottish Birds* I: 37, 118, 129, 133-4, 199, 202-3, 252, 279-80, and 339).

In a note to *British Birds* (vol. xlvii, pp. 170/172) Henry Boase described the substantial increase in numbers of Little Gull *Larus minutus* on the Angus and Fife coasts, and also drew attention to the marked separation in location of spring and autumn numbers. These annual visitations continue to take place and the object of this report is to give details of records obtained since Boase's note was published.

The Angus coast from Broughty Ferry to Easthaven was visited regularly by the writer, and other observers, from about mid-1953 to January 1956 and records obtained of the Little Gull are shown in Table I. Also shown are records from Largo Bay, Fife, for the same period. These records show that in 1954 the pattern followed that shown by Boase for previous years, with Angus receiving all the spring numbers, while the bulk of the autumn visitors were found at Largo Bay. The flocks of 19 on 23rd December 1953, and 29 on 24th October 1954, both at Monifieth, were considered unusual, though it should be noted that this gull is becoming more frequent as a winter visitor to Angus. In the spring of 1955 Little Gulls were once again absent from Largo Bay, while the total of 135 at Monifieth on 11th April was the highest on record. Fewer visits were made to this area during this period, which possibly accounts for the smaller number of records. In the autumn, the pattern



(Photograph by G. W. Day & Sons)

S.O.C. ANNUAL DINNER — North Berwick, 29th October, 1960

Top Table (left to right): Col. R. Meinertzhagen, Mr C. K. Mylne, Lady Haddington, Mr E. M. Nicholson, Sir Charles G. Connell (Chairman), Dr I. C. T. Nisbet, Lady Connell, Mr A. B. Duncan, Mrs David Bannerman, Lord Haddington and Miss W. U. Flower.



Aquatic Warbler. Isle of May, 27th August 1960.

(Photo: J. M. S. Arnott)



Wrynecks. Isle of May, 27th August 1960.

(Photo: J. M. S. Arnott)

to the end of October was as in previous years with most records for Fife, though the numbers involved were perhaps smaller than usual. The party of 22 at Carnoustie on 13th July was unusual enough, but the surprisingly large numbers at Monifieth on 5th/6th November are unprecedented during autumn. These numbers may be at least partly accounted for by the fact that during the preceding week, strong to gale force south-easterly winds prevailed over the North Sea.

In addition to the coastal records, Little Gulls were found at Morton Lochs, Fife, from mid-May to early June 1955, and again in the same period of 1956. These freshwater lochs lie about a mile south of Tayport and the same distance inland from the sea. In 1955, five were first noted there on 16th May, increasing to 18 or 19 on the 18th, about 30 on 23rd, and about 10 on 31st May, while the last record was for 17 on 5th June. All birds seen were immature. There is also one inland record for Angus, an immature bird at Lintrathen Reservoir on 28th August 1955.

As well as total counts, attempts were made whenever possible to assess the proportion of immature to adult birds on the Angus coast. At the best of times this was a difficult task for the flocks were usually found by the edge of the water and had to be approached across open shore. It was found that isolated flocks of Little Gulls were comparatively tame and on occasions it was possible to approach to within 25 yards or so. Generally, however, larger gulls were also present and being more wary, precluded a close approach. High winds and poor visibility also prevented other than total counts on occasions. The results of these counts are shown in Table II where it will be seen that, as a rule, immatures are in the majority in spring, with adults predominating in autumn. Comparable figures for Largo Bay are not available, though the late Miss Baxter informed me that she found the proportions to vary.

One feature of these visits was that the Little Gull showed a decided preference for a shore of fine sand, which exists at both Monifieth and Largo Bay. Also common to both areas is that a freshwater burn flows out over the sands into the sea, and it was around the mouths of these burns that the flocks were generally found. At Tayport on the south shore of the Tay, the shore is very muddy and though larger gulls are found there in large numbers, it is only rarely that the Little Gull is seen. In fact, there is only one record during the period, for a single bird on the shore at Tayport during 1954.

At Monifieth, the Little Gull uses the shore only as a resting ground where it comes to bathe and preen. It has never been noted as feeding when on the shore, or by the water's edge, though on four occasions numbers have been watched hawking for insects over the sands and adjacent moorland. (The birds

at Morton Lochs seemed to feed mainly in this way). Generally, feeding took place over the sea, the birds swinging back and forth low over the water, frequently dropping to pick from the surface. On occasions they were seen to hover in tern-like fashion about twelve feet up then drop lightly to pick from the surface. On one occasion, three adults were watched for some minutes diving from flight. Generally, the dives ended in partial submergence only but on three occasions complete submergence was noted. The search for food was not confined to close inshore, but the flocks dispersed over a large sea area from a few yards out to about a mile or more offshore. It is perhaps worth recording that the Little Gull was never seen to join other gulls in feeding at the sewer outfalls in the river.

Despite the large numbers seen at Monifieth in November 1955, the marked separation of spring and autumn numbers remained a feature of the Little Gull visits to these areas, though there would seem to be no apparent reason for this. It may be that food supply is at least partly responsible.

Owing to other commitments, it was impossible for me to continue my investigations into this problem, but I hope that these notes will stimulate others into taking up what promises to be a very rewarding study.

I am indebted to the late Miss E. V. Baxter for records for Largo Bay, and to John Berry and W. J. Eggeling for notes from Morton Lochs. Information relating to the Angus coast is gratefully acknowledged from Henry Boase, Gordon B. Corbet, Alexander Cross, John Gordon and Wallace Wild.

TABLE I.

*Total Counts of Little Gulls on Angus and Fife Coasts.*

Date	Angus	Fife	Date	Angus	Fife	Date	Angus	Fife
1953			28/2	23		1954		
23/8	6		6/3	3		8/5	13	
27/8		5	7/3	32		16/5	1	
6/10	6		14/3	2		17/5	1	
7/10		22	17/3	17		2/7	3	
16/10		3	21/3	60		27/8		3
20/12	19		28/3	19		30/8		14
1954			3/4	73		3/9		21
24/1	10		6/4	25		14/9		6
31/1	13		7/4	95		18/9		13
7/2	1		15/4	60		20/9		6
12/2	9		16/4	76		23/9		14
13/2	6		18/4	c. 60		1/10		8
20/2	1		19/4	13		4/10		c. 60
21/2	3		21/4	23		7/10		20
25/2	3		1/5	13		12/10		15

Date	Angus	Fife	Date	Angus	Fife	Date	Angus	Fife
1954			1955			1955		
14/10		50/60	17/2	1		1/10		30/40
16/10	6		20/3	3		3/10		2
20/10	3		26/3	6		6/10		1
23/10	1		11/4	135*		7/10		3
24/10	29		13/4	12		29/10	3	
28/10		12	14/4	14		5/11	70	
1/11		7	15/4	9		6/11	116	
4/11		7	17/4	2		12/11	39	
20/11	3		1/5	1		20/11	45	
3/12		19	8/5	2		26/11	11	
4/12	present		13/7	22		11/12	11	
5/12	present		17/8		17	18/12	5	
1955			4/9	7		1956		
23/1	3		9/9		6	8/1	4	
2/2	1		24/9		1	26/2	1	

\*11th April 1955: In addition to this number a further 50 were seen about a mile further east and may have been different birds.

TABLE II. *Adult/Immature Proportions—Angus Only.*

Date	Total	Adult	Immat.	Date	Total	Adult	Immat.
1953				1955			
23/8	6	6		23/1	3	3	
6/10	6	4	2	17/2	1	1	
20/12	19	10	9	20/3	3	2	1
1954				26/3	6	6	
24/1	10	5	5	11/4	135	c. 35	c. 100
31/1	13	10	3	15/4	9	6	3
7/2	1		1	1/5	1		1
12/2	9	2	7	8/5	2	2	
13/2	6	2	4	4/9	7	7	
20/2	1	1		29/10	3	3	
21/2	3	1	2	5/11	70	33	37
25/2	3	2	1	6/11	116	82	34
28/2	23	17	6	12/11	39	36	3
7/3	32	9	23	20/11	45	36	9
17/3	17	3	14	11/12	11	9	2
7/4	95	20	75	1956			
16/4	76	10	66	8/1	4	4	
8/5	13	11	2				
17/5	1		1				
2/7	3		3				
16/10	6	3	3				
20/10	3	3					
23/10	1	1					
24/10	29	21	8				
20/11	3		3				

## REVIEWS

THE BIRDS OF THE BRITISH ISLES. Vol. IX. David Armitage Bannerman. Illustrated by G. E. Lodge. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1961. Pp. xii + 398; 26 col. plates. Price £3, 3s.

The previous volumes of Dr Bannerman's great work are by now so familiar that it seems unnecessary to comment on their scope, style and presentation, and the eagerly awaited ninth volume, which deals with about half the waders—from Godwits to Buff-breasted Sandpiper, in Hartert-Handbook order—is a worthy successor which can only be described as magnificent.

Dr Bannerman acts more in the capacity of compiler and editor than author, making full use of his astonishing familiarity with ornithological literature, but interspersing the text throughout with expressions of opinion in his own characteristically charming but forthright manner. Summary castigation is meted out both to egg collectors and to selfish and thoughtless photographers. He upholds, with clearly stated reasons, all the Hastings-Romney Marsh records, upon which an "official" pronouncement is still awaited. He believes in the Faeroe Snipe, and sympathises with Jourdain's battle for the substantiation of the Spitsbergen Phalarope. He believes that the Eskimo Curlew is not extinct but does not think that the Red-necked Phalarope is ever likely to attempt to breed anywhere in Scotland other than in the well known places: let us hope that the former be correct, but that in the latter he may yet be proved wrong.

The customary practice is followed of having large sections specially written by acknowledged authorities on individual species or areas, those most called upon in this volume being Dr G. M. Sutton of Oklahoma University and Dr H. M. S. Blair, who has placed his wide knowledge and experience of Scandinavian birds unreservedly at Dr Bannerman's disposal. Dr Sutton writes on the American species as a sensitive and observant field naturalist frequently gracing his articles with some engaging personal reminiscence of the bird described, while to those who are fortunate enough to have opportunities of being confounded by unidentifiable stints his discussions should prove a revelation. With regard to Dr Blair's contribution, it is not too much to say that we are as deeply indebted to Dr Bannerman for bringing forward some of Dr Blair's work, of which only too little has hitherto been published, as Dr Bannerman is to Dr Blair for his generous assistance.

It is not impossible to find minor faults on careful scrutiny. For instance, one could dispute the presumption (shared by the Editors of *British Birds*) that the Black-tailed Godwits re-



cently breeding in Caithness and Shetland have been of the nominate race, when all specimens from Faeroe or Norway ever examined have proved to be *islandica*. It is stated also that satisfactory evidence is still lacking of the breeding of the Red-necked Phalarope in Spitsbergen although Dr Lovenskiold proved this in 1949, but the slight imperfections in the Spitsbergen records are a reflection not of any shortcoming on the part of Dr Bannerman so much as of the serious want of an up to date book on the birds of Spitsbergen.

The plates by George Lodge vary a bit in quality, but although one or two are rather disappointing, others are very fine indeed, both pictorially and as bird portraits. It becomes increasingly evident as the book progresses that no serious bird library is going to be complete without it, and while congratulating Dr Bannerman on his achievement we look forward to further volumes not without some slight feeling of relief that the winning post is now almost within sight.

I. D. P.

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR. J. L. Cloudsley-Thompson. Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd. 1960. 15s.

"An eminent botanist relates that on a collecting expedition in tropical forest he employed a tame monkey to gather epiphytic orchids from the upper branches of the trees. One day he saw some magnificent orchids growing on some lianas that hung down a vertical cliff. He told the monkey to climb down for them, but it refused and neither bribe nor entreaty would persuade it to go. The poor botanist was feeling quite desperate when at last the monkey relented, shrugged its shoulders, and began to pull up the lianas hand over fist."

Professor Cloudsley-Thompson's new book is one which anyone interested in animal behaviour—and that ought to mean every field naturalist—should read. His information has been obtained either at first hand or has been checked by himself, and he never makes the mistake of the orchid-seeking botanist of failing to keep a clear mind on the immediate objective.

The book sprang from a series of London University Extra-Mural lectures: it explains simply and very readably the modern approach to the study of animal behaviour, and analyses the complex interactions between physiology and environment that form the basis of behaviour in higher forms, illustrating them by comparison between the simple reactions of lower animals, the rigid instincts of insects, fishes and birds (in which learning is comparatively unimportant) and the more plastic type of behaviour found in mammals, which culminates in human insight. Although the book is easy for the non-specialist to follow, serious students of animal behaviour will also

learn much from it, for it contains accounts of experiments and observations from an unusually wide field.

As Dr Kenneth Mellanby points out in his foreword, the author shows very clearly that the amateur who is willing to accept the standards and discipline of the professional can contribute observations which may advance the frontiers of knowledge, and thus help to solve some of the problems raised in his book. This matter of standards and discipline is important: it is something which all amateur naturalists, including many ornithologists, should constantly bear in mind.

It is difficult to understand how a book so beautifully presented as this, with a wealth of photographs and line drawings, can be produced so cheaply. It is undoubtedly a bargain. Your reviewer appreciated especially the two superb photographs of owls; the photograph of grunion spawning; the drawing of a female shrew with her "caravan" of young (which have an innate tendency to hold the tail of the one in front during the first three weeks after birth); the diagram of hippopotamus territories furrowed with trails and landmarked with lavatories—because he had never appreciated that such territories existed; and all the pictures which illustrate the chapter on courtship and mating.

This is a book to excite interest and stimulate observation; it deserves a wide sale.

W. J. E.

IDENTIFICATION FOR RINGERS No. 1: The Genera *Locustella*, *Luscinia*, *Acrocephalus* and *Hippolais*. Kenneth Williamson. Oxford, British Trust for Ornithology. 1960. Pp. 56, 4 plates. 3s 6d.

As more observatories are manned, more independent ringing is carried on, and mist-nets become widespread, an increasing number of rarities is recorded. Better aids to identification are therefore required, and here is the first of them, an excellent beginning to a planned series of booklets.

The rarer warblers include some of the hardest migrants to identify. Guide No. 1 deals not only with those members of the four genera concerned which have occurred in Britain, but with all their races in the Palaearctic which "have even an outside chance of drifting to the British Isles." Each account, of the 26 species accepted, begins with a minimum description of plumage, since details and illustrations can be found in the usual reference books. More space is given to the differentiation of allied races, and to cases where confusion with a commoner species could occur. The author stresses those points which help identification in the hand. Field characters are therefore included only in certain cases, though references to journals are given. Ageing, colours of soft parts, measurements, weight (if known), wing formula, moult (if information

is sufficient) and distribution are the other headings in each section. Valuable "CAUTIONS" stress points where misidentification might arise. The parts on separation of first winter birds from adults will be specially welcomed by those who have found available information inadequate. So will the descriptions of soft parts, taken from a wide range of living or freshly killed material. Moult is considered in relative detail, providing a stimulus to this little studied facet of the ringer's work. Its importance is shown in the same author's paper in *Bird Migration I*: No. 4, of August 1960. Tables at the end show Mr T. Bagenal's statistical analysis of the measurements of long series for each race.

It is hoped that further numbers in this series are speeding along the assembly line. Guide No. 1, with the Migration Research Officer's clear, succinct text, the effectively illustrative photographs by Eric Hosking and C. C. Doncaster, and the well designed cover by Robert Gillmor, begins to fill the gap.

W. U. F.

THE ISLE OF MAY. By W. J. Eggeling. Edinburgh 1960. Oliver & Boyd. pp. xiv + 280. Photographs and line drawings. 30s.

Islands, lighthouses, sea birds; all are associated in our minds. The birds came first and in our seas one can imagine with what eagerness island after island was occupied, or re-occupied, as the ice moved towards the pole. Perhaps man followed early, sometimes in monastic settlements seeking refuge from the temptations of this earthly life. Lighthouses came much later and to all manner of islands, and this reviewer has observed the breeding of sooty and noddy terns from lighthouse islands in the coral seas of two oceans.

Those islands have no history whereas the Isle of May, which lies across the entrance to the Firth of Forth and so to Scotland, has everything—breeding birds, occasional seals, a ruined chapel as evidence of monastic settlement and a lighthouse with an earlier beacon erected in 1636. On this a ton of coal, rising to three times that amount when fanned by winter gales, was burnt nightly for almost two centuries. The island is a narrow mile long strip of olivine-dolerite and is the property of the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses who in 1956 entered into a 99-year Nature Reserve Agreement with the Nature Conservancy so that it is now a National Nature Reserve.

All springs initially from the activities of the Midlothian Ornithological Club which in 1934 established the Isle of May Bird Observatory which was the first co-operatively managed migration study-centre in Great Britain. After the war, with interest including financial help happily secured from the

Scottish Universities, the range of activities enlarged to include every aspect of life upon the island.

Apart from its resident breeding population, essentially of sea birds, the Isle of May is admirably placed, should the wind be from the east, to catch north or south bound migrants flying along the continental coast. From the headquarters of the Observatory, in the now disused Low Light, watch is kept on the four Heligoland traps where intercepted migrants are identified, ringed and released so that gradually, from later identifications elsewhere, the pattern of bird migration becomes revealed.

Dr Eggeling, introduced far too late into the review, gives us what is clearly a labour of love, a delightfully written and beautifully illustrated book which tells us all that is known about the history of this notable Scottish island and about its animals and plants and the activities of the Observatory. The human element is not forgotten. In extracts from the daily log are recorded, in what one may hope represents some degree of immortality, the triumphs and exasperations of the watchers culminating in the poet's cry,

Oh, for a week of south-east rains,  
When Scarlet Grosbeaks are a pest!  
Ah! vain is hope! The wind remains  
Unalterably West.

Because the Isle of May is distinguished by its bird watchers no less than by its birds.

An altogether admirable book which even a zoologist, let alone a true ornithologist, delights to possess.

C. M. Y.

ATLAS OF EUROPEAN BIRDS. K. H. VOOUS. pp. 284. 419 maps. 355 photographs. London and Edinburgh, Nelson. 1960. 70s.

This sumptuous and fascinating book is one that the ornithologist will always be taking from the shelf and looking into, whether to find some new fact, to admire the illustrations or simply for the plebeian pastime of discovering what percentage of European breeding birds he himself has seen. Like Gaul, it has three parts, text, maps and photographs. The last are of varying quality, but there are masterpieces in the pictures, for example, of the Black Stork, Capercaillie and Robin. It is encouraging to see the overall excellence of British bird photography: most of our masters (Hosking, Yeates, Markham) are here, although it is a pity that C. C. Doncaster is not represented. The "Old Masters" are worthily represented by Arthur Brook. Many eastern European species are not figured, pictures of which are especially useful to the western naturalist and, while realising that of some of these no photographs exist, it would make the book more complete if at least

there were line drawings of them. Some, like that of Harlequin Duck and Kentish Plover, are most useful for identification, but No. 320, labelled as "Snow Bunting," is surely a picture of a Redpoll.

The maps are the essential part of this book. Britain occupies such a small part of the earth that the red spots on her surface are sometimes difficult to see and, from a solely insular point of view, larger scale maps might have been possible, especially when a species' breeding range is confined to Europe. Rightly, the species here is the unit: there is a certain tendency towards "lumping"; the Bean and Pink-footed Geese remain together, our Gannet (somewhat hesitantly) is fused with the Australian and African Gannets and, rather daringly, the Pine Bunting with the Yellow, but, for reasons well explained, Professor Voous has not gone so far as to "lump" the Gyr, Saker and Lanner Falcons. To stimulate the mind on the subject of the origins of present distribution the maps of the Black-winged Kite, and of the Hen, Pallid and Montagu's Harrier can be recommended. Sometimes there are answers to the question marks that appear here and there; if, for example, the author were to visit the episcopal palace at Oristano he would discover whether the Tree Sparrow breeds in Sardinia or no.

The text is the complement to the maps: here are described the geographical faunal type of each species, its range in relation to isotherms, its necessary habitat, food and nesting requirements, and the possibility of competition with other species: "all these," says Sir Landsborough Thomson in his preface, "are limiting factors on distribution." The material is well up to date and there are excellent accounts of the recent spread of the Collared Dove, Syrian Woodpecker, Cattle Egret and Fieldfare. The nesting of the Dotterel and White-backed Woodpecker in Italy are mentioned, though perhaps that of the Wood Sandpiper in Scotland and the White Stork in Italy are too recent.

In spite of its price this book will well repay purchase, as the buyer can look forward to many happy hours of interest and entertainment. The author himself appears as a delightful character in the modesty of his introduction and the generosity of his dedication to all his helpers: they could not have wanted a better return for their help.

M. F. M. M.

SEA BIRDS, Charles Vaucher. Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd. 1960. £5, 5s 0d.

A sea-bird colony, with its never-ending merry-go-round of action and its never-silent babel of voices, is a magnet which attracts every bird-lover.

In Scotland we take our sea-birds for granted. On sand-dune

and shore, on headland and stack, on islet and pinnacle, the birds, like the pounding sea itself, are there as a matter of course. Observation and photography of our native species have reached very high standards, and it is not surprising that, from time to time, guests from other lands come to visit our sea-bird sanctuaries.

One such is Charles Vaucher, whose "Sea Birds" results from visits to, among other places, the Bass Rock, Tentsmuir, and the Farnes, as well as to islands near Stockholm, and those near Tvarminne in Finland. The book has been translated from the French, and has been admirably produced by Messrs. Oliver and Boyd, who have maintained the high standards to which we are accustomed.

British readers will be particularly interested in the Gull-billed and Caspian Terns, and the Little Gull. The other species dealt with are familiar enough to us all—the Fulmar, Shag, Gannet, Cormorant, Eider, Shelduck, Arctic Skua and the commoner Gulls, Terns and Auks.

The text makes pleasant, though brief reading. The author's love of the sea is clear throughout. In the main text the birds are described as he saw them in the various places he visited. At the end of the book the salient characteristics of each species are summarised on text-book lines.

The 252 plates (of which 15 are in colour) dominate the text, and must therefore primarily concern us here. In many of them, the author displays the originality and taste of his race; they are the work of an individual who upon occasion is also a master craftsman. Such pictures are the Shelduck flying on page 123, or walking on wet sand, as on the next two pages. Similar masterpieces are the Eiders in flight on page 104; the Eider group on page 110; the Sandwich Terns flying over Tentsmuir on page 176; the Puffins on page 236; the Rock Pipit on page 245, and the study of Terns flying, on page 248. All these are exhilarating and refreshing pictures which epitomise the animation of the birds. With a few exceptions, British workers have tended to fight shy of such subjects. One could scarcely see too many of these splendid away-from-the-nest studies.

The seascapes, too, are quite sublime; Vaucher has a soul as well as a camera. As with his best descriptive passages in the text, he has the power to raise a spirit of elation in the reader, as though one were there on the headland or in the ternery.

Nevertheless, as one turns the pages of the book, this initial feeling of elation begins to pass. A feeling of uneasiness creeps in. The price of the book is five guineas and one is entitled to take a closer look at it. A continental photographer who

publishes a book of seabird pictures in Britain is, after all, entering the lion's den.

There seem to be too many pictures of some species; sometimes the bird looks ill at ease, so that one wishes the picture were not there, as with the Fulmar on page 34, and that on page 45.

At other times, over-enlargement and too close a trim, combined with the fact that the bird is looking out of the picture, give a "gross" result. The Shag on page 56, the Gannet on page 79, the Sandwich Tern on page 180, the Razorbill on page 198, the Guillemot on page 213 and the Puffin on page 222 are positively overwhelming. The actors lack elbow-room.

As against this, the "big-head" of the Eider on page 102 is most successful; it conveys all the intimacy of a close-up view, without overpowering the observer.

At times, the photographs have technical imperfections which ought to have excluded them: examples are the Shag on page 59 and the two Eiders and chicks on page 109, all of which have excessive contrast, while the Shag on page 74, the standing Arctic Skua on page 127 and the Puffins on page 220 have ugly out-of-focus foregrounds. Worst of all is the picture of Black-backed Gulls mating, on page 133, the foreground of which is reminiscent of the tangled girder-work of a dive-bombed aircraft hanger. This photograph should certainly have been taken, but only for showing say, to Dr Tinbergen. It may well merit publication in a book on behaviour, but hardly in its present context.

Incidentally, if the coloured plate on page 117 shows the Lesser Black-back, surely the bird on the same nest shown on page 132 is not the Greater Black-back? And what of those on page 133?

The "gardening" is often bad, and fuzzy foregrounds, due partly to too low a viewpoint, and to lack of a swing back, all too frequently take the gilt from the gingerbread, as in the Turnstones on page 244 and 245. Otherwise, these two pictures are better than most as they show a more pleasing ratio of surrounding to bird.

On the other hand, the nest and egg studies tend to suffer from too high a viewpoint, giving a dull, plan-like result.

It is in regard to such considerations that most Continental and American bird-photographers are a long way behind the standards set by such men as Chislett, Hosking, Barlee, Lowes and Higham in this country. Nor may such points (though remaining entirely valid) matter quite so much in a cheap book. In a five guinea volume, however, we are entitled to expect uniformly high standards.

Summarising, Mr Vaucher has produced an invigorating

book about a dynamic group of birds. His pictures are a mixed bag, the best being second to none. One is left with a feeling of real regret that a more critical selection was not made, as a book containing only two-thirds of the plates would not only have been smaller and cheaper: it would have been much better.

C. E. P.

## REV. JOHN LEES, OF AVOCH, ROSS-SHIRE

One of the outstanding ornithologists of the north of Scotland passed away in the Royal Northern Infirmary, Inverness, on 7th February 1961.

Apart from his pastoral work his lifelong interest was in natural history. He often said that his degree should have been a B.Sc. and not a M.A. It was fortunate that he was called to a parish which was as favourably situated as Avoch, on the north side of the Moray Firth, where rare as well as common migrants congregate; it has even been suggested as a possible site for another bird observatory. His years of patient and detailed observation from day to day, and extensive ringing on a scale open to few amateur ornithologists gave him an intimate knowledge of the birds of the area, which he was ever ready to share with others. He was a pillar of strength to the Inverness Bird Watching Group as well as a supporter of various national ornithological bodies. His major contributions to the literature were on the Robin, the early breeding of the Rock Dove and wintering Blackcaps. He was the first to record the Nightingale on the Scottish mainland, and among recent species reported by him is the White-billed Diver. His name will always be associated with the birds of Easter Ross.

M. R.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### SISKINS USING FEET AS FEEDING AIDS

In an earlier number (*antea*, p. 205), I. F. Stewart records watching a Twite *Carduelis flavirostris* using a foot as an aid to feeding, and remarks that this is the first time he has seen a bird of this family "apparently steadying a food plant in this way to facilitate its nibbling at it." It may therefore be of interest to record similar behaviour on the part of Siskins *C. spinus*.

On 6th January 1961 at Glassel, Aberdeenshire, I had an excellent opportunity of watching a small flock of these birds at a range of only a few feet as they fed on the small cones of the Alder *Alnus glutinosa*. These cones are arranged later-



ally along the branches on stalks between 1 and 2 inches long and they tend to droop below the level of the branches. To get at them, a Siskin would sometimes adopt the familiar inverted position, but much more frequently it would reach out to pull in the cone with its beak, at the same time extending its front toes so as to clamp the cone in against the branch on which the bird was perched. Several attempts were sometimes needed to achieve this position, but the bird was then able to work over the cone thoroughly. I should stress that the feet were merely used as a clamp, and that I never saw a bird make any attempt to lift a foot off the branch to assist in pulling in a cone. In this respect the Siskin's use of its feet was much more restricted than is the case, for instance, in the tit family.

D. G. ANDREW.

## THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE, NORTH BERWICK, 1960

Why a Sassenach, and particularly one suffering from amnesia, should have been ordered to report the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Club is far from clear. Suffice it that George Waterston's Annual Circus, as it is now widely known, came to North Berwick on 28th October 1960 for three days and the secretary of the Club, whether it be George or his able successor (Mrs Waterston), is fast becoming as notable an impresario with his performing ornithologists as Bertram Mills is with his clowns and walruses and acrobats. Whether his troupe is balancing on some tightrope of avian controversy, or making witty after-dinner speeches, all air and fire, they are all well worth watching and listening to.

True, the weather was not at its best and a Dr Johnson, watching the rain-soaked gaggles of excursionists homing to the Marine Hotel out of the mist on Saturday, would have observed that "it is very strange, and also very melancholy, that the paucity of human pleasures should persuade us even to call bird-watching one of them." It is true, too, that the lounge, so long sacred to solemn golfing shop, and reserved, in the words of the programme, "for informal refreshments", resounded later that night with some of the most unornithological anecdotes to which we have ever lent our ears, but everybody seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. Nor did any ill-mannered Hoodwink turn up on the greens or foreshore of North Berwick to embitter rival identifiers. In fact the only *contretemps* caused by a live bird was when a Hawfinch crossed the bow of the leading car of one excursion and nearly caused a classic pile-up while the leader was braking hurriedly to watch it.

Everyone was sorry to say goodbye to Sir Charles Connell who, after presiding over the Club for three busy and prosperous years, is vacating the office he has notably adorned. He will not be forgotten, but his successor is that redoubtable figure, Professor Maury Meiklejohn, from whom no bird, however improbable, dares to hide its identity. For once our new President looked naked without Excalibur, his great binocular, which he had sheathed and left in the cloakroom, but all wish well to him and his new Vice-President, Dr Ian Pennie of Golspie.

The various meetings ran without a hitch. Mr James Wishart, the Provost, welcomed us to North Berwick and made us free of the Burgh Museum. The huge crowd which came to the papers on Saturday taxed the acoustics and space of the Royal Hotel dining-room badly, but all three of the speakers, Sir Charles himself on *Birds in Literature*, and E. M. Nicholson and I. C. T. Nisbet on *Ornithology in Europe and America* gave us much to think about.

A vast concourse of members and guests sat down to the Annual Dinner and it was followed by some quite brilliant speeches, notably those of Arthur Duncan and Christopher Mylne, unexpected by those who had met them an hour or two before, looking broody and preoccupied like a Cuckoo about to lay. There were sideshows too, some fine films of birds, Dr Jenkins' grouse exhibit from Glen Esk, and a magnificent set of original paintings by Archibald Thorburn. The organisers can rest assured that the Conference was from every point of view a success, and that the Club in these matters can give a useful lead to other clubs in less favoured portions of the British Isles.

J. K. S.

## SHORT NOTES

### GYR FALCON IN WEST STIRLING/DUNBARTONSHIRE

On 5th November 1960, while I was watching Grey-lags near Wards Farm near the mouth of the River Endrick my attention was drawn to a general uprising of duck and Lapwings on the marsh as a big, nearly buzzard-sized predator made a pass at them. My first impression was of an outsized Peregrine, but the method of attack was unlike that bird's, not so steeply angled and more laboured. The outline was altogether heavier, with the wings broader and not so clean-cut. The bird was dark grey above, whitish below. As the Lapwings rose to the height of several hundred feet, it circled slowly and made repeated attempts to knock one of them down, never stooping but always coming in on a level trajectory. Though the precise race must be left in doubt, a touch of white on the nape as the bird swung round into the sun strongly suggested an Ice-

land Gyr Falcon *Falco rusticolus islandus*. These manoeuvrings continued until the falcon and Lapwings were well over 1,000 feet above Loch Lomond, when the former gave up the chase and flew off up the loch.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

### COLLARED DOVES IN RHUM AND LEWIS

On 5th May 1960 I saw a Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* on the Castle greens at Kinloch on the Isle of Rhum. It was feeding on mash which was put out daily in buckets for two ponies on the greens. Because of its tameness I thought on this occasion that it might have been a Barbary Dove *S. risoria* but the following morning was able to watch the bird again at close quarters feeding with the ponies and could confirm it as the Collared Dove. It had a clear black half ring on the back of the neck. The primaries appeared black, contrasting strongly with the otherwise dusty brown colour. The underparts were paler and there was a pinkish tinge on the breast. When the bird took flight the tail revealed much white. It returned at feeding-time on the morning of 7th May, but I did not see it afterwards.

P. WORMELL.

On 2nd June 1960 a Collared Dove flew across the road at Stornoway, near the County Hospital, and settled in a tree above me, where I had good views of it at about 25 yards through my field-glasses. Its most unusual pinkish grey plumage was conspicuous, as was the black stripe on the back of its neck. As it flew away I seemed to notice that its outer tail-feathers were white in colour. It seemed very tired.

W. A. J. CUNNINGHAM.

(Mr William Crawford informs us that at the Morayshire colony of the Collared Dove on 1st September 1960 he saw seventeen birds, eleven of which were perched on one television aerial!—Ed.).

### GREEN WOODPECKER BREEDING IN DUMFRIES-SHIRE

On 6th May 1960 Mr R. Adamson and myself found the newly excavated nesting hole of a pair of Green Woodpeckers *Picus viridis* in a deciduous wood in Dumfries-shire. We were attracted to the tree by the amount of wood chips lying on the ground at the base of the trunk, and the nest-hole was about eight feet from the ground. The nest contained no eggs, but caught on the bark at the edge of the hole I found a small green feather.

On 19th May we revisited the site and were both thrilled and relieved when we saw, with the help of a small torch and

mirror, a Green Woodpecker brooding. On flushing the bird we saw at least four eggs. On the evening of 6th June the bird was very reluctant to leave so, assuming that the eggs had hatched or were very near hatching, we let her brood undisturbed.

On none of our visits to the nest did we ever see a mate but twice in April we had seen a pair of Green Woodpeckers about a quarter of a mile from the nest site.

E. DICERBO.

#### BARRED WARBLER IN LEWIS

A juvenile Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria* was picked up dead by Mr A. MacEachern on 20th September 1960. It was sent by Mr W. A. J. Cunningham to the Kelvingrove Museum, Glasgow, where its identity was confirmed by Mr C. E. Palmar and Miss W. U. Flower.

#### YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER IN STIRLINGSHIRE

While stalking a Great Grey Shrike along the disused railway line near Buchlyvie on 6th November 1960 I noticed what at first I took to be a small pale Chiffchaff. Its call-note, however, was unfamiliar, and Dr and Mrs Scobie (who were with me) described it as a clear ringing *tseet tseet*. The bird was retiring and elusive, slipping from branch to branch in the willows in company with Long-tailed Tits. Its short-tailed appearance made me curious and, when eventually it emerged, it showed a yellowish eye-stripe and a double wing-bar (the one on the upper wing-coverts being slightly obscured) with lighter edgings to the secondaries, and underparts appearing silvery white. Superficially it resembled a Goldcrest, but the call-note was most distinctive. The bird was undoubtedly a Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. The latest Scottish date for this species mentioned in *The Handbook* is also 6th November.

W. KENNETH RICHMOND.

#### ROSE-COLOURED STARLING IN SHETLAND

Mr George Waterston informs us that a Rose-coloured Starling *Pastor roseus* was picked up exhausted on Foula by Mrs J. A. Gear on 13th Aug. 1960. It died a short time later and was sent to the Royal Scottish Museum for preservation, where it was sexed as female. Mr A. T. Macmillan has examined the skin and says that it is "nicely pink and therefore apparently adult."

#### CORRIGENDUM

*Antea* 1: 345. The observer of Lapland Buntings at Aberlady was J. Baird, not J. Ballantyne, as stated.



PAIR OF PIED FLYCATCHERS

(Photograph by J. E. Ruxton)



WHIMBREL AND CHICK, SHETLAND

(Photograph by Rosemary Upton)

## CURRENT NOTES

(The observers whose initials are given below are: A. Ablett, G. R. Acklam, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, J. Baird (J. Bd.), J. Ballantyne (J. Bal.), Miss P. G. Baxter, D. Bell, H. B. Bell, Dr J. Berry (J. By.), W. Birrell (W. Bi.), R. O. Blyth, H. Boase, T. Boyd, W. Brotherston (W. Br.), W. S. Caie, N. Campbell, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, C. Dunlop, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Sir R. Erskine-Hill, G. Fraser, Seton Gordon, D. Knowlson, D. Lawson, Lt-Col. W. M. Logan Home, J. Hoy, Miss R. S. Hunter, G. Kerr, A. J. B. Loudon, A. Macdonald, Miss G. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Mrs D. MacRobert, W. Marshall, R. K. Martin, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, D. Mills, Miss M. Mowat, Mrs D. A. Murray, B. S. Nau, J. Oliver, Dr I. D. Pennie, Mrs I. Rainier, W. K. Richmond, E. L. Roberts, I. B. Roy, Dr M. Rusk, J. Shanks, W. Skene, P. Slater, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, R. P. Snodgrass, T. Speed, L. A. Urquhart, Dr R. S. Weir and G. E. R. Young. All dates, unless otherwise stated, apply to 1960 or early 1961).

### *Breeding and Distribution*

A late brood of six **Teal**, fully feathered but still not in flight, was seen at Gladhouse on 28th August (R.W.J.S.).

Four **Grey Lag Geese** were seen at Marlee Loch, near Blairgowrie, Perthshire, on 16th July (H.B.) and one at Gladhouse on 20th August (R.W.J.S.). These birds are included in this section in view of the possibility of their having summered. (Ed.).

A **Green Woodpecker** flew across the road near Lochgilphead, Argyll, on 13th November (I.R.) and another was heard calling on 3rd February near Killearn, W. Stirling, the first the observer has recorded from the district (A.J.B.L.). One was also observed in a small deciduous wood on the N.E. side of Dalmahoy Hill, Balerno, S.W. of Edinburgh, on 10th, 17th and 24th May 1959 (D.B.), while another was seen clinging to the concrete blocks at Aberlady Bay on 27th December (G.M., J.S.).

A **Marsh or Willow Tit** was briefly seen on 12th August in the marshy surroundings of a small pool with scattered willow-trees at Valleyfield, Fife (J.H.).

A **Chiffchaff** was heard singing on the Isle of Eigg on 15th June (D.K.).

At Ormiston, East Lothian, fifteen **Crossbills**, including several juveniles and three males were observed on 15th May: only one remained on 24th May (J.Bd.).

Several **Tree Sparrows** were found in a thick hawthorn hedge at Dundonald, Ayrshire, on 27th October (L.A.U.).

### *Autumn Migration, 1960*

On 21st August there was a **Red-necked Grebe** off the rocks at Barassie, Ayrshire (L.A.U.).

On 13th September at Montrose Basin what were first thought to be posts turned out to be 34 **Heron**s, and six more were found elsewhere in the Basin (H.B.).

Twenty-seven **Shoveler** on 23rd September at Duddingston Loch is a record number for the locality (D.R.A.).

An **Osprey** is recorded from Trotternish, Skye, on 20th September (Miss J. Brownlow *per* S.G.).

Several observers have commented on large numbers of **Kestrels** in November and early December, in the Central Highlands (R.P., *Scotsman*, 10th December), East Lothian (A.M.), Glenshee (A.T.M.) and Drumochter (W.J.E.).

Three **Grey Plover** were at Gladhouse on 22nd October (R.W.J.S.).

A **Black-tailed Godwit** was at Longannet, Fife, on 22nd August (J.H.) and one at Red Point, Wester Ross, on 26th August (R.O.B.). This species is unusual in the N.W. Highlands, but compare *antea* 1: 339 (Ed.).

**Green Sandpipers** are reported from Craigmendunton Reservoir Ayrshire, (two) on 20th August (I.A.U.) and one from a pool near Killearn on the 28th (A.J.B.L.).

A dead **Redshank**, recently shot, was picked up at Tynninghame on 16th October: it had wings of 170 and 171 mm. and bill from feathers to tip 46 mm., thus coming well within the measurement range of the Icelandic race (R.W.J.S.).

A **Spotted Redshank** was on Dunwan Dam, Renfrewshire, on 14th August (L.A.U.).

Further records of the large number of **Little Stints** last autumn are three at Invergowrie Bay on 26th September, which appear to be the first Perthshire record (H.B.); one at Aberlady on 8th October (D.B.); and single birds at Tynninghame on 30th October (R.W.J.S.), 6th November (I.B.R., W.S.) and 11th December (T.B., I.B.R., W.S. and R.W.J.S.): the first of these three had only one leg.

At Barassie, Ayrshire, there were three **Curlew Sandpipers** on 4th September (L.A.U.) and one at Invergowrie Bay on the 26th (H.B.), while single **Ruffs** are reported from Craigmendunton Reservoir, Ayrshire, on 20th August, and from Barassie on the 21st (L.A.U.), two being seen on the Endrick bank near Drymen on the 27th (A.J.B.L.).

On 29th August a **Grey Phalarope** was resting on the sand near the mouth of the Don, Aberdeen, in company with terns (B.S.N.).

Two **Little Gulls** flew south at Easthaven, Angus, on 13th August and an immature bird was seen in Lunan Bay, Angus, on 9th September (H.B.).

Two late **Swallows** were at Culross, Fife, on 31st October



(J.H.) and a late **House Martin** at Lundin Links on 23rd November (R.S.W.).

Single **Ring Ouzels** on passage are reported from near the top of Arthur's Seat on 2nd October (T.C.S.), from Aberlady on the 16th (J.O.) and from Pittenweem (where it was eating cotoneaster berries) on the 24th (per T.S.).

Late **Redstarts** occurred at Tynninghame on 29th and 30th October (R.W.J.S.) and at Gullane on the 29th (G.R.A., M.F.M.M.). There were "dozens" of **Robins**, considered not to be local birds, at Whitekirk, East Lothian, on 3rd November (A.M.).

A **Lesser Whitethroat** (of which a description has been sent) occurred at Fife Ness on 16th and 17th October (P.G.B., R.S.W.).

There was a considerable fall of passerines on the East Lothian coast between Tynninghame and Barnes Ness on 29th and 30th October, including four species of thrush, Robins, Wrens and Goldcrests (R.W.J.S.).

#### *Winter Visitors 1960-61*

A **Black-throated Diver** was seen at close range on Loch Tay on 5th October (H.B.). Three hundred **Great Crested Grebes** on the sea at Seafield, Leith, on 31st December, is a very high count even for there (R.W.J.S.).

A pair of **Gadwall** were at Lochgoin, Renfrewshire, on 4th November (L.A.U.) and on Dunsappie Loch, Edinburgh, four were noted on 26th November and six on 1st December (A.A., J.Bal.).

Numbers of **Goldeneye** at Seafield, Leith, are at record level, about twice the previous maximum, with just over 1,000 counted on 30th December (A.T.M.) and 1,800 the next day (R.W.J.S.). There is an inland record of an adult female **Long-tailed Duck** at Gladhouse on 20th and 27th November (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

Numbers of **Eider** at Seafield, Leith, appear to increase every year and between three and four hundred on 21st December is a record for the locality (N.C., P.S.).

Single red-headed **Smews** are reported from Loch Leven, Kinross, on 17th October (R.W.J.S.), Cobbinshaw, Midlothian, on 6th November (T.B., R.W.J.S.) and Camphill Reservoir, Ayrshire, on 27th November (D.L.), and a pair were seen on Loch Flemington, E. Inverness, on 14th and 15th January (C.D.).

A **Shelduck** turned up inland at Duddingston on 9th December (D.R.A.).

Two **White-fronted Geese** of the Eastern race *albifrons* were at the mouth of the R. Endrick, Dunbartonshire, in November

in company with Grey Lags; they had small pink bills, hardly any barrings and "were petite" (W.K.R.). A white **Snow Goose** thought to be a Greater, was at Fala between 15th and 23rd October (W.Br., M.M.) and what must have been the same bird was at Hule Moss on 13th November (W.Br., W.M.L.H.): in each case the Snow Goose was with Pink-feet. The white Snow Goose did not return to Libberton this year (R.E.-H.), but an adult **Blue Goose** was seen there from at least the second half of October (R.E.-H., R.S.H.). Plumage details of neither of these birds have so far been received (Ed.).

Two **Barnacle Geese** were seen on Hunterston Shore, Ayrshire, on 16th October and 13th November (G.K.) and three at Aberlady on 30th October (J.Bal.).

Six **Bewick's Swans** frequented the High Dam, Eaglesham, between 12th and 26th November (L.A.U.) and five were on Gartmorn Loch, Clackmannan, on 7th February (J.By.).

Single **Water Rails** are reported from Tynninghame on 29th and 30th October (*per* R.W.J.S.) and Aberlady on 4th December (W.Bi.). Over 300 **Coot** were counted on Forfar Loch on 24th August (H.B.).

Late records of the **Whimbrel** from Longannet, Fife, are of two on 16th and 17th October, and single birds on 13th November and 20th December (J.H.).

A wintering **Greenshank** was found on 28th December in the estuary of the R. Conon, Ross-shire—very far north (D.M.): three were seen in Cardross Bay, Dunbartonshire, on 30th December and one there on 1st January (R.P.S.); one, or two, winter at Tynninghame, but four seen there on 1st January is a winter record (W.S., R.W.J.S.).

The only **Little Auk** so far reported was picked up newly dead near Tayport on 4th January (*per* R.W.J.S.).

A single adult **Shore Lark** occurred at Tynninghame on 27th November (T.B., W.S., R.W.J.S.).

A **Coal Tit** with the characters of the typical race *ater* frequented a bird-table at Kilmacolm at the end of December: compared with resident Coal Tits it was much more spruce and well-groomed, with a very large white patch on the back of its head: it was also altogether brighter in colour, and larger (D.MacR.).

A male **Blackcap** was seen at Longannet on 4th November (J.H.) and single females frequented two gardens in Edinburgh between 17th and 21st December (R.K.M.) and between 8th and 12th January (D.A.M.). A male was seen at Kirkcaldy on 5th January (H.B.B.). A **Chiffchaff** was seen at Bearsden on 17th November (G.E.R.Y.).

Several **Waxwings** have again been reported this winter: five at Golspie, Sutherland, on 2nd November (I.D.P.); one at

Ullapool between 16th and 28th November, which ate not only berries at *Cotoneaster horizontalis* but also bread and cheese (W.S.C.); one at St Andrews on 18th November (M.H.E.C.); two at Gullane on the 17th (A.A.); at Longniddry there was a flock of forty just before 16th November, over forty on 21st and 22nd, seven or eight on 25th-27th, and over 100 in a different neighbouring area on the 28th (W.Bi.); in the Inverness neighbourhood three were seen on 27th December (Miss Munro *per* M.R.) and one on 18th January (M.R.).

Unusual numbers of **Great Grey Shrikes** have been reported this year: six have already been published (*antea* 1: 344) and we have heard of several of which details have so far not been received. Verified records of single birds come from Crinan Moss, Argyll, on 4th November (I.R.), Skye in mid-November (S.G., *Scotsman* 31st December), Strathbrora, Sutherland, on 16th and 27th November (I.D.P.), Pitgaveny, near Elgin, on the 24th (W.M.), Caerlaverock, Dumfries, on the 26th (E.L.R.) and Muirhead Reservoir, Ayrshire, on 4th January (G.F.).

### Back Notes

A record of three **Sanderling** from Kingoodie on 12th May 1957 seems to be the first for Perthshire (H.B.).

The following records are all from G.R.A.: a drake **Garganey** among a flock of Mallard at Barr Loch, Renfrewshire, on 26th May 1959; a **Turnstone** in summer plumage at the west end of the Lake of Menteith, on 21st May 1960; two **Whimbrel** at the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton and Stirling, on 23rd May 1959 and two at the Low Parks, Hamilton, on 8th August 1959; a **Black-tailed Godwit** at Bothwell Bridge on 17th May 1958 and two near Erskine Ferry, Renfrewshire, on 3rd October 1959. On the same date, in the same area, a **Ruff**. Two **Common Terns** on 28th June 1959 appeared to be nesting, with one bird incubating, on Barr Loch, Renfrewshire.

### General Notes

(These observations cover a number of aspects—behaviour, plumage variation and so on. They are given in the observers' own words.—Ed.)

"On 21st October I was looking at a Greater Black-backed Gull perched on a rock in the sea at Dunbar. Suddenly a **Cormorant** flew up and knocked the gull off what was perhaps its favourite stance. Immediately on gaining its place the Cormorant spread out its wings, in the heraldic position. This seems to be further evidence that this action is caused by a wish to keep other birds away." (M.F.M.M.).

"On 20th October 1960 we saw a leucistic variety of the

**Pochard** *Nyroca ferina* on a small roadside loch near Achanish, Caithness. It was swimming with many other Pochard and was the same size and shape. Its head was a warm buff-brown, almost as dark as the head of a duck Merganser. The breast was light buff, the forepart of the wing light greyish brown, and the rest of the plumage creamy white, some parts being lighter than others." (A. Anderson, A. Watson).

"During the past winter, 1959-60, I saw six **Whooper Swans**, four in adult plumage and two immatures, on agricultural land at Fordoun, Kincardineshire, nearly every week. Local farm-workers assured me that the swans were regularly seen soon after dawn and in the gloaming. Presumably they roosted in the fields. The Water of Bervie, a small stream, runs about half a mile away, but it is probable that the birds spent the entire winter from mid-October to the last week in March on the fields and runways: in January and February they were seen during periods of snow. Their food apparently was mainly potatoes, grass and winter wheat, and there was usually some water in rain puddles on the runways." (D. Jenkins).

"On 2nd June 1960 in the Isle of Lewis I noticed from my car two **Golden Eagles** close to the road. One flew off, but the other stood on the top of a peat-cutting right beside a fully grown sheep in the cutting. The bird followed the sheep back and fore along the cutting, keeping within about a yard of it. I thought that perhaps there was an injured lamb hidden from me in the rushes but, when the sheep stopped to scratch itself on the bank, with the massive bird alongside it, I began to have my doubts, as this seemed to be carrying sangfroid too far, even for a sheep! Then, to my amazement, when the sheep wasn't looking, the eagle hopped on to its back, or tried to. This was too much for the sheep, which jumped round and squared up to the bird, and for a moment beak (and what a beak!) and nose were only a few inches apart. Eventually the eagle grew bored or something and flew off. Judging from its plumage I should say it was a young bird, perhaps playing." (W. A. J. Cunningham).

"On 12th December 1960 an acquaintance who breeds minks at Steinish, near Stornoway, came to me with an adult **Black-headed Gull**, though it was without any kind of head at all. The poor thing had tried to steal the minks' dinner and had its head bitten off. The point of the story, poignant as it is, is that one leg was missing, but on the other was a ring marked Stavanger Museum 629045. I have since learned that it was ringed by Holger Hølgersen about fifteen miles south of Stavanger (Norway) on 26th June 1958." (W.A.J.C., see also *Scotsman* 28th January 1961).

"On the overcast and drizzling afternoon of 3rd January 1960

I was standing on the south side of Gloucester Cathedral, England, watching small parties of **Black-headed Gulls**, with a few **Common Gulls**, flying down from inland to roost on the Severn. I counted over 200 of these and all without exception passed a few yards to the west of the cathedral tower. It seemed clear that they used it as a guiding mark in bad weather. Indeed, one party of ten gulls, seen approaching about 200 yards west of the tower, altered course to fly in close to the tower before continuing their flight." (M.F.M.M.).

"On 7th February 1960 at Lochgoon, Renfrewshire, my attention was attracted by a small and noisy flock of about forty **Black-headed Gulls** swooping low over the surface, and I found they were pursuing and mobbing a **Short-eared Owl** which was crossing the loch. In spite of the gulls' harrying tactics, the owl was making steady progress and was only 100 yards from the shore when the gulls suddenly drove it down on to the water. The owl floated there buoyantly enough, as the loch was flat calm, and glared up at its tormentors. For perhaps threequarters of a minute it remained on the loch surface; then, without any apparent difficulty, it rose, shaking the water from its plumage, and continued its flight, landing on the bank within fifteen yards of me. Having shaken itself it flew away across the moor." (L.A.U.).

"On 25th October 1960 the King of Nepal was being banqueted in Edinburgh Castle, which was floodlit for the occasion. The night was very misty and clouds swirling into the beams gave to the castle a look of an ingenious backcloth to *Macbeth*. I walked for half an hour in the centre of the town and heard countless **Redwings**, several **Blackbirds** and **Song Thrushes**, a **Fieldfare**, a **Black-headed Gull** and a **Snipe**. Perhaps the castle could be used as a bait on every misty autumn evening." (T.C.S.).

"On 28th May 1960 a **Spotted Flycatcher** took up a hunting position on a rain-gutter directly outside a window of the Manse of Ranfurly, about a foot from the window, where it remained for six days. The perch provided a very favourable position for the closest observation and, by pasting brown paper with observation holes on the window, I made the bird unaware of my presence. Quite frequently the bird seemed to retch, and then disgorged a small pellet about the size of lead shot, once or twice with sufficient force to hit the glass of the window with a distinct *pop*. Another interesting feature was that it frequently caught insects on the glass of the window, when the succession of taps resounded curiously through the house." (E. T. Vernon).

## SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

## SUMMER EXCURSIONS

## ABERDEEN

Application for all Excursions to be made to Miss E. A. Garden, Eider Cottage, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire (Tel. Newburgh 615) one week in advance. Transport will be by private cars, and members having spare seats should inform Miss Garden.

**Sunday, 7th May**

LOCH OF STRATHBEG—Leader: Miss E. A. Garden. Meet at St Mary's Chapel at south end of Loch at 10.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Sunday, 28th May**

BLACKHALL FOREST (by kind permission of the Forestry Commission)—Leader: Mr C. Murray. Meet at Blackhall main gate at 10.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Sunday, 27th August**

YTHAN ESTUARY AND LOCHS—Leader: Miss E. A. Garden. Meet at Ythan Hotel 10.30 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

## DUNDEE

Where private cars are to be used, applications for all Excursions should be made to Mr Jack Scobie, 3 Constitution Road, Dundee (Office Tel. 22741) one week in advance.

**Sunday, 21st May**

NORTH ESK ESTUARY AND AUCHMITHIE—Meet City Square 10 a.m. Transport by private cars. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Sunday, 18th June**

CAIRNGORMS (FOR DOTTEREL HUNT)—This may be a week-end Excursion. Numbers will be restricted to cars available. Arrangements will be made known later.

**Sunday, 25th June**

TENTSMUIR AND SHELLY POINT—Meet Tay Ferries 9.45 a.m. Transport by private cars. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Sunday, 9th July**

BASS ROCK (by kind permission of Sir Hew Hamilton-Dalrymple, Bart.)—This may be a week-end Excursion. Numbers will be restricted to cars available. Arrangements will be made known later.

**Sunday, 17th September**

EDEN ESTUARY (Guardbridge to St Andrews)—Meet Tay Ferries 9.45 a.m. Transport by bus. Bring picnic lunch.

## EDINBURGH

Times of buses and trains should be checked with Summer Timetables. Costs may also be subject to alteration. Private hire buses will only be provided at the charges shown on condition that a minimum of 30 attend. Any one unable to attend, and having booked a seat, may be required to pay the fare unless one week's notice is given.

**Saturday, 13th May**

ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE (Spring Migrants)—Leader: Mr W. K. Birrell. Meet Timber Bridge 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at approx. 1.40 p.m.).

**Saturday, 20th May**

**PENICUIK HOUSE GROUNDS** (by kind permission of Sir John D. Clerk, Bart.)—Leader, Mr R. W. J. Smith. Meet outside Penicuik Post Office 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea. (S.M.T. bus leaves Edinburgh Bus Station at 1.30 p.m.).

**Sunday, 28th May**

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM** (by kind permission of the Earl of Home)—Limited number. Applications by 20th May to Mr A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. Leader at the Hirsell: Major The Hon. Henry Douglas Home. Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge 11 a.m. returning approx. 7 p.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost: bus approx. 8s per person.

**Saturday, 24th June**

**ISLE OF MAY**—Number limited to 12. Applications by 17th June to Mr Alastair Macdonald, Hadley Court, Haddington (Tel. 3204). Train to Anstruther leaves Waverley Station 9.10 a.m. Boat leaves Harbour 11.40 a.m. prompt. Return train leaves Anstruther 6 p.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Cost: Day Return rail ticket 8s 11d; boat approx. 9s.

**Sunday, 2nd July**

**FARNE ISLANDS**—Limited number. Applications by 24th June to Mr A. G. Ablett, 7 Craigmount Gardens, Edinburgh 12 (Tel. COR 4258). Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge 9 a.m. arriving Seahouses 12.30 p.m. Boats leave Harbour on arrival. Bring picnic lunch. Cost: bus 11s; boat 11s. High Tea will be arranged for those who apply for it. (It is regretted that as places in the boats are limited to the number of seats in the bus, applications from those wishing to travel by private car cannot be accepted).

**Sunday, 9th July**

**BEN LAWERS, PERTSHIRE** (Mountain birds and flowers)—Excursion by private cars. Numbers limited to seats available. Applications by 2nd July to Mr Michael Robson, Little Bellwood, Glencorse, Penicuik (Tel. Penicuik 386). Meet at Lawers Car Park at 11 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea. Petrol expenses should be shared.

**Saturday, 29th July**

**BASS ROCK** (by kind permission of Sir Hew Hamilton-Dalrymple, Bart.)—Applications by 22nd July to Mr John King, 103 Marchmont Road, Edinburgh 9 (Tel. MOR 2671). Boats leave North Berwick Harbour 2.30 p.m. and return approx. 7 p.m. Bring picnic tea. Cost: boat 7s 6d. (If the weather is uncertain, it is advisable to check with the Leader on the morning of the Excursion in case landing is impossible).

**Saturday, 9th September**

**ABERLADY BAY NATURE RESERVE** (Autumn Migrants)—Leader, Mr W. K. Birrell. Arrangements as for 13th May.

**GLASGOW****Sunday, 30th April**

**HAMILTON BIRD SANCTUARY** (by kind permission of the Town Council of the Burgh of Hamilton)—Leader, Mr D. Stalker. Meet at gates to Municipal Golf Course at 2 p.m.

**Sunday, 28th May**

**THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM** (by kind permission of the Earl of Home)—Limited number. Joint Excursion with Edinburgh Branch. Train leaves Queen Street Station at 9.40 a.m. and arrives Waverley 10.54 a.m. Private bus leaves Waverley Bridge 11 a.m. Applications by 20th May to Mr A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh 13. For arrangements and costs see under Edinburgh Excursions.

**Saturday, 10th June**

**LUSS ISLANDS, LOCH LOMOND** (by kind permission of Sir Ivor Colquhoun, Bart.)—Applications by 27th May to Mr George Kerr, 166 Old Castle Road, Cathcart, Glasgow S4. Service bus via Balloch to Luss; alight at Bandry Bay, half-mile south of Luss. Ferry boat leaves 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., returning 5.30 p.m. Fare approx. 3s. Bring picnic tea.

**Sunday, 18th June**

**LITTLE CUMBRAE** (by kind permission of Highland Engineering Ltd.)—Applications by 6th June to Mr George Patrick, 11 Knollpark Road, Clarkston, Glasgow. Boat leaves Fairlie 11.30 a.m. Fare 3s 6d. Bring picnic lunch and tea. N.B.: **This Excursion will take place subject to permission being granted.**

**Saturday, 24th June**

**HORSE ISLAND** (by kind permission of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)—Applications by 10th June to Mr George Patrick, 11 Knollpark Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow. Boat leaves Ardrossan Harbour 2.30 p.m. Fare approx. 3s 6d. Bring picnic tea.

**Sunday, 17th September**

**HAMILTON BIRD SANCTUARY** (by kind permission of the Town Council of the Burgh of Hamilton)—Leader, Mr M. Forrester. Meet at gates leading to Municipal Golf Course at 2 p.m.

**ST ANDREWS**

Applications for all Excursions should be made to Miss M. M. Spire, 2 Howard Place, St Andrews (Tel. 852) not later than ten days before each Excursion. Transport will then be arranged.

**Saturday, 27th May**

**KILCONQUHAR LOCH** (by kind permission of Nairn Estates)—Enter by North Lodge at 2.30 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

**Sunday, 18th June**

**LOCH LEVEN** (by kind permission of Kinross Estates)—Boats leave from the Sluices, Scotlandwell, for St Serf's Island at 11 a.m. Bring picnic lunch and tea.

**Saturday, 8th July**

**TENTSMUIR** (by kind permission of Mrs Purvis)—Leave St Andrews Bus Station 2 p.m. Bring picnic tea.

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**WEEK-END EXCURSION TO AVIEMORE**

Arrangements have again been made with Mrs Grant, The Dell Hotel, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore (Tel. Aviemore 216) for a week-end Excursion to Speyside.

Accommodation for up to twenty members has been reserved for the week-end 12th to 14th May at inclusive terms of 45s per person, as follows: bed on Friday night, 12th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday, 13th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday, 14th.

Members wishing to come on this Excursion should book direct with Mrs Grant, mentioning that they are members of the Club, and are asked to send her confirmation of their booking once it is made, and also to inform her if they require dinner on Friday evening (extra). Members may bring guests. Arrangements for transport by private cars should be made through Branch Secretaries.



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## Applications for Bookings

should be made to Mr Peter Davis, Warden, Fair Isle Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland. (Telephone Fair Isle 8).

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## SAMPLE CENSUS OF MUTE SWANS

1961

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**M**EMBERS are asked to co-operate once again in a sample census of Mute Swans in the Forth area during 1961. This Census, which is sponsored by the B.T.O. and the Wildfowl Trust, is being organised by Mr C. P. Rawcliffe, 35 Comely Bank Road, Edinburgh 4, to whom all records should be sent.

*Information is required on the number of nests seen, the hatching success, and counts of any non-breeding birds in the area, which covers the Lothians, Stirlingshire, Clackmannan, Fife and Kinross.*

# The Scottish Ornithologists' Club Tie

Illustrated is the Official Club Tie, of which R. W. Forsyth's are the sole suppliers. The tie is made from Terylene with a blue or green background, and the bird motif in silver. 16/9.

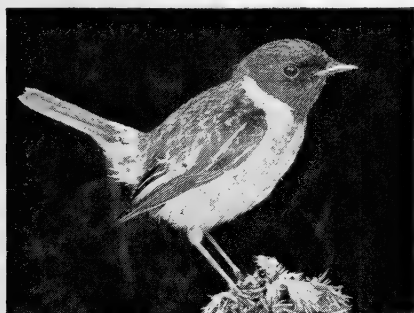


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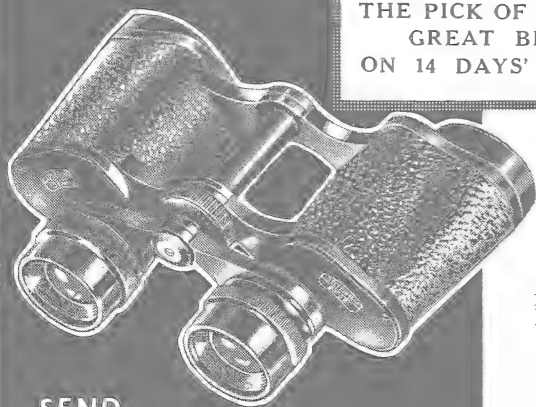
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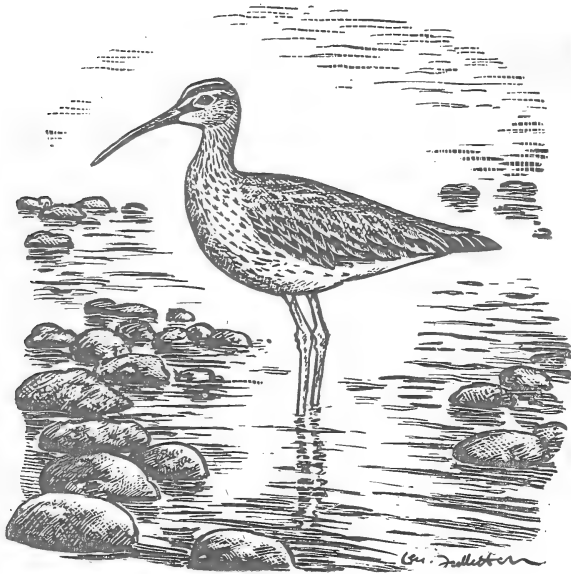
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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Vol. I No. 12

Summer 1961

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year.

Joint membership is available to married couples at an annual subscription of 40/-. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members, but Joint members will receive only one copy between them.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. I. No. 12

Summer 1961

Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON.

Published quarterly.

## Editorial

**T**HIS number of *Scottish Birds* breaks new ground by publishing an article by General Sir Philip Christison Bart. on birds in Gaelic proverbs. This branch of ornithology (folklore and so on) has been much neglected since Victorian times, and we feel that it is very desirable that it should be revived.

Good news for all Scottish ornithologists is the announcement by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds of no fewer than five new bird sanctuaries in Scotland, by agreement with the owners: these are Horse Island in the Firth of Clyde, and Inchmickery, Eyebroughty, Fidra and the Lamb in the Firth of Forth. Mr George Waterston, the R.S.P.B.'s Scottish Secretary tells us: "Horse Island lies only half a mile out from Ardrrossan Harbour and contains a large Black-headed gullery, possibly four species of terns, other gulls, Oystercatchers, Ringed Plover and Waterhens. Eiders and Shelduck also breed. Anyone wishing to land on Horse Island must obtain a permit from the R.S.P.B. Scottish Office, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

"At Fidra there are large colonies of four species of tern; these birds were formerly menaced by rats, but as a result of action taken by the Society in the spring of 1959, the rats have been exterminated and the terns had a successful breeding season in 1960. Care will be taken by the Society to ensure that gulls do not encroach into the breeding area of the terns and, during the nesting season, the terns' breeding colony will be cordoned off (as on the Farne Islands) to prevent visitors from inadvertently trampling on eggs. The small rocky islet of the Lamb has a recently established colony of Cormorants, the only one in the Forth area, and Eyebroughty is a tidal island off the East Lothian coast near Dirleton and is a well known haunt of Eiders. Terns formerly bred but have not done so since the war owing to the large number of rats; the Society intends to take steps to eliminate these.

There are no restrictions on public access to these islands, but visitors are asked not to disturb the breeding birds.

“Finally, Inchmickery lies almost midway between Cramond and Aberdour and has large tern colonies. Since terns have been squeezed out of the Isle of May and the Carr Craig by invasions of Herring Gulls, the Society intends to control the gull population on these islands.”

We feel that bird protection in Scotland, under Mr Waterston's guidance, is in a very healthy state; but we must not forget also the long-established sanctuaries. One of these is Duddingston Loch, in Edinburgh, and members of the S.O.C. will receive as a special supplement to this number of *Scottish Birds* a paper on the birds of this sanctuary—gratis and for nothing.

## BIRD NAMES IN GAELIC FOLKLORE AND PROVERBS

by

GENERAL SIR PHILIP CHRISTISON BT.

The Celtic people of Scotland put much store on the interpretations given by their wise men to the actions and songs of birds. Many superstitions and proverbs concerning birds have come down to us, and some are observed and used to-day.

The Celtic Patron Saint of birds is St Bride, and her particular bird is *Gille Bhrìde*, servant of Bride, the Oystercatcher. An old saying runs *Bha Gàidhlig aig na h-eoin uair, agus Thuigeadh iad glòir nan dan* (The birds once spoke Gaelic and understood the speech of song). Mention, however, of birds in ancient Celtic literature is sparse: in the Ossianic epics only the eagle and falcon are noticed, though night birds are startled by the noise of Fingal's shield, and a flight of sea birds observed. It is not until the sixteenth century that we have records of the Gaelic poets singing of birds.

A study of Gaelic proverbs is useful in showing that the old Highlanders knew the birds around them, and used this knowledge. It also shows that certain birds now rare or unknown in Scotland were sufficiently common at one time to be used in proverbs, such as the Kite, Rough-legged Buzzard, Crane, Black-throated Diver, Wryneck and Water Rail.

All birds were originally sacred to the Gaels; migrants were fairy birds, the Cuckoo, Corncrake and Wheatear inspiring





SHAG AT NEST

(Photograph by A. J. M. Smith)

particular superstition. The Cuckoo turned into a hawk for more than half the year, the Corncrake sang on its back with feet in the air to keep the heavens from falling, and the Wheatear was known as the Grandson of the Toad. The death-feigning posture of the Corncrake at harvest, and the burrow-nesting habit of the Wheatear were no doubt responsible.

A bird flying into a house over a person's head is a bad sign, but it is lucky if one sees a bird, other than a sparrow, as the first living thing seen on looking out in the morning. A sparrow seen first means the death of a child. If the bird is flying towards one it means a letter. Specially lucky birds to see first are a cock grouse, Mallard or pigeon, but on going a journey, the Raven, crow and Wheatear are unlucky if the first birds seen. The first arrival of the geese is watched with care; if they fly seawards it means a good spell of weather, if to the mountains, bad.

To hear the Cuckoo on an empty stomach means a year's bad luck, and a Ring Ouzel seen near a house signifies the death of an inmate. A Robin singing cheerily on summer evenings means good weather, even if it is raining at the time, but, if it is singing dismally from inside a hedge, it will be wet, even if fair at the time. A Twite perching on a house or nearby wall, and singing, indicates a sudden cold spell, with snow perhaps, in spring or early summer.

The Magpie is always lucky for a Campbell. Otherwise one seen on the right was lucky, on the left unlucky; if seen ahead the luck will be only fair. Hopping near a house means good news; seen before breakfast it is a bad omen. If a Magpie hops on the road before a traveller, he will have a good journey. To cure the bewitched the leg of a Magpie had to be eaten; for malaria or dysentery a pigeon had to have its back skin removed, and the patient had to place his feet on the still living bird's warm back. For colic the skin of an Osprey, with feathers on, was kept; this was warmed and applied to the patient's stomach when required.

It is unlucky to stuff a mattress or pillow with pigeon's feathers.

The following proverbs give some idea of how frequently the Highlanders used, and in many cases still use, bird names with proverbial significance.

RAVEN. *Mas olc am fitheach, chan fheàrr a chomunn.* Bad as the Raven is his company is no better.

*Tha fios fithich agad.* You have a Raven's wisdom.

*Bàs fithich ort!* A Raven's death on you! (It was thought the young kill the old Raven in the end).

*Feumaidh na fithich fréin a bhith beò.* Even Ravens must live.

*Ge duch am fitheach, is geal leis 'isean.* Though the Raven is black his young are white to him.

*Nead air Brìghde, ugh air Inid, eun air Chàisg: mur bi sin aig an fhiteach, bithidh am màs.* Nest at Candlemas, eggs at Shrovetide, young by Easter; unless the Raven does this there will be death.

*Ciod a b' àill leat fhaighinn an nead an fhithich ach am fithich fein?* What can you expect in a Raven's nest but the Raven himself.

*Am fitheach a dh' éireas moch 's ann leis a bhios sùil a' bheathaich a tha 's a' pholl.* It's the early Raven that gets the eye of the beast that's in the bog.

*Cha toir am fitheach an t-sùil dha isean fhéin.* The Raven won't give the eye to his own chick. (Too great a delicacy).

*Fitheach dubh air an taigh, fios gu nighean an dathadair.* A black Raven on the house is a warning to the dyer's daughter. (Notice of death: the dyer's daughter had to dye dresses black for mourning).

*Gaol an fhithich air a' chnàimh.* A Raven's love for the crow (great love)

*Fitheach dubh as tFhogar agus feannag as tEarrach.* Raven in autumn, crow in spring (signs of good weather).

*Crow. An taobh a théid an fheannag bheir i a feumainn leatha.* Whichever way the crow come, she brings her filth with her. (Nicolson's *Gaelic Proverbs* has: *An taobh a théid an fheannag bheir i' feaman leatha.* When the crow flees her tail follows).

*Is toigh leis an fheannaig a (h-isean) gorm garrach fhéin.* The crow likes its greedy blue nestlings.

*Bheireadh e a sùilean nam feannag e.* He'd take it in front of a crow's eyes.

*Foighnich sin dha na feannagan.* Ask that of the crow (the impossible).

**GOLDEN EAGLE.** *Trì aois féidh sois firein, trì aois firein aois craoibh-dharaich.* Three times the age of a deer is the age of an eagle; three times the age of an eagle is the age of an oak tree.

**FALCON.** *Cha dèanar seabhag de'n chlamhan.* You can't make a falcon out of a buzzard. (Cf. silk purse from a sow's ear).

*Mar as àirde théid an calman 's ann as dòcha an t-seabhag breith air.* The higher the pigeon flies, the easier for the falcon to reach it. (One can't escape one's responsibilities).

*Is beò na h-eòin, ged nach seabhagan uile iad.* The birds survive though they are not all falcons.

**KESTREL.** *Abhsadh a' chromain-luch.* Shortening sail ke-rel-fashion (i.e. letting it drop too suddenly).

**KITE.** *Cha tàinig eun glan riamh a nead a' chlamhain-gobhlach.* A clean bird never came out of a Kite's nest.

*Tha 'n clamhan-gobhlach 'nam measg.* The Kite's among them (panic).

**BUZZARD.** *Chan ann gun fhios car son a ni an clamhan fead.* It is not for nothing the Buzzard whistles.

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.** *Namh e am bleidire-tònach e?* Isn't he a Rough-legged Buzzard? (i.e. uncouth, clumsy, hairy-heeled).

**TAWNY OWL.** *Tha a' chomhachag ri bròn, thig tuiltean òirnn.* The owl is mourning, we shall have a flood.

**THRUSH.** *Cha dean aon smeòrach samhradh.* One thrush doesn't make a summer.

*An smeòrach ri fàilte 's an lon-dubh ri cumha.* The thrush for welcome, the Blackbird for lament.

*Cho binn ri smeòrach air géig.* As sweet as a thrush on a branch.

*Chan 'eil port a sheinneas an smeòrach 'san Fhaoilleach nach caoin i mun ruith an t-Earrach.* There is no time the thrush sings in the last weeks of winter that she will not lament before the passing of spring.

**MAGPIE.** *A h-aon aig, breith, a dhà aig bròn, trì aig banais, ceithir aig bàs.* One for a birth, two for sorrow, three for a wedding, four for a death. (This is contrary to the English and Scots proverb).

**SKYLARK.** *Chan 'eil deathach an taigh na h-uisseige.* There's no smoke in the lark's house.

**WHEATEAR.** *Cloicheran-spàgach, ogha na muile-màig.* The wide-footed Wheatear, he's just the grandson of the toad. (It was believed that the toad looks after the Wheatear's eggs when he bird flies out to feed).

*Trì latha sgathaidh an chloichearain.* Three days of Wheatear's punishment (April days for borrowing).

**STONECHAT.** *Chunnaic mi cloichearan air creag lom, 's dh' aithnich mi nach rachadh a' bhliadhna liom.* I saw a Stonechat on a bare rock and knew I'd have bad luck that year.

**WREN.** *Is bigid e siod, is bigid e siod, mar a thuirt an an dreathan-donn 'nuair a thug e làn a ghuib as a' mhuir. Is mothaid e siod, is mothaid e siod, 'nuair a rinn e a dhileag 's a' mhuir mhóir.* It's the less for that, said the Wren as he filled his beak from the sea. It's the bigger for that, as he passed his droppings into the ocean.

*Cha tàinig ugh mór riamh bho nead an dreathan-donn.* A big egg never came from a Wren's nest.

*Is farsainn a sgaoileas an dreathan-donn a chasan 'na thaigh fhéin.* The Wren spreads his feet wide in his own house.

*Ged 's beag an dreathan-donn, is mór a theaghlach.* Though tiny the Wren, his family is large.

WRYNECK. *Le teanga fhada bhiorach thug gille-na-cuthaige smugaid-na-cuthaige a beul na cuthaige gu bròg-na-cuthaige.* With his long pointed tongue the Wryneck takes the cuckoo-spit from the Cuckoo's mouth and places it on the Cuckoo's shoe.

CUCKOO. *"Gug, gùg" arsa a' chuthag latha buidhe Bealltainn. Latha Fhéill-Eòin théid a' chuthag gu taigh-geamhraidh.* "Cuckoo" says the Cuckoo at Beltane (1st May); on St John's Day (24th June) he starts for his winter home.

*Luath no mall 'gan tig am Màigh, thig a' chuthag.* Late or early comes May, the Cuckoo will come.

*Chuala mi a' chuthag gun bhiadh 'nam bhroinn.* I heard the Cuckoo without food in my belly. (Unlucky).

*A chur a ruith na cuthaige.* Hunt the gowk.

*'Nuair a ghairmeas a' chuthag air an sgitheach lom, reic do bhó is ceannaich arbhar.* When Cuckoo sings on bare thorn, sell your cow and buy corn.

SWALLOW. *Cha dean aon ghobhlan-gaoithe samradh.* One Swallow will not make a summer.

SWIFT. *Cho luath ri aigne, aigne nam ban baoth.* As fast as a Swift the thoughts of foolish women.

PIGEON. *Gob a' chalmain-chàthaidh, bidh tu slàn mu'm pòs thu.* By the beak of moulting pigeon you'll be well before you marry (encouragement to a sick child).

BLACKCOCK. *Is duilich an coileach-dubh a ghleidheadh bhò 'n fhraoch.* It's hard to keep the Blackcock from the heather.

*Rinn e coileach-dubh dheth.* He made a Blackcock of him (i.e. shot him). This expression is found in the evidence of the trial of James of the Glens: Duncan Campbell, change-keeper at Annat, deponed that Allan Breck had said that "if the deponent had any respect for his friends he would tell them, that if they offered to turn out the possessors of Ardshiels estate, he would make blackcocks of them before they entered into possession, by which the deponent understood shooting them, it being a common phrase in the country." (*The Trial of James Stewart*, ed. David N. Mackay; 2nd Ed. 1931, p. 139).

RED GROUSE. *An coileach-fraoich as moiche a ghoireadh 's a' bhruaich.* It's the grouse that calls first from the hill.

PTARMIGAN. *Gus an tig an tarmachan gu taigh-nan-cearc.* Until the Ptarmigan comes to the hen-house.

*Cha chuir fuachd no acras an tarmachan gu srath.* Neither

cold nor hunger will make the Ptarmigan descend to the valley.

GOLDEN PLOVER. *Cho luath ris na feadagan-firich.* As swift as the Golden Plover.

WOODCOCK. *Cha dean aon choileach-craobhach geamhradh.* One Woodcock doesn't make a winter.

CURLEW, HERON and GOOSE. *Is sealgair math a mharbhas gèadh is còrr is guilbneach.* He's a fine hunter who can kill a goose, a heron and a curlew.

GOOSE. *Innsidh na geòddh as t-Foghar.* The geese will tell it in autumn.

*Chan fhaide gob an gèadh no gob ganrail.* The goose's beak is no longer than the gander's (cf. sauce for the goose).

*Suidhe a' gheòidh an dorus taigh an t-sionnaich.* A goose sitting at the mouth of the fox's den (cf. a sitting duck).

CRANE. *Cha chluinn e glaothaich nan còrr.* He cannot even hear the Crane's creaking cry.

*Ghoideadh e an t-ugh bho 'n chòrr 's a' chòrr fhéin 'na dheireadh.* He'd steal a Crane's egg from the Crane, and the Crane herself at his heels.

*"Fhuair mi nead na corra-dubh ann an cùil no mòna."* So runs an old verse of *Port-a-beul* (mouth music): "I found a Crane's nest in a hollow in the moor."

OYSTERCATCHER. *Cho eòlach 's a tha am bridean 'san tràigh.* To know something as well as the Oystercatcher knows the shore.

HERRING GULL and KITTIWAKE. *Guth na faoileige am beul na sgàireige.* A Herring Gull's voice in the mouth of a Kittiwake (i.e. poor imitation by an inferior.).

*Faoileagan manadh an t-sneachda, sgàireagan an uisge.* Herring Gulls foretell snow, Kittiwakes rain (when they appear in cultivated areas).

BLACK-THROATED DIVER is said to say "*Deoch! deoch! tha an loch a' traoghadh.*" Drink, drink, the loch's drying up!

CORMORANT. *Trod nam ban mu'n sgarbh, 's an sgarbh a muigh air an loch.* The scolding of women about a Cormorant and the Cormorant away out on the loch (idle gossip, or female lack of reasoning).

SHAG. *Bioddh gach fear a' toirt sgairbh a creagan dha fhéin.* Let every man take Shags off the rocks for himself (i.e. mind your own business).

WATER RAIL. *Buachailleachd nan snagan-dubh 'san luachair.* Shepherding by Water Rails in the rushes (i.e. poor leadership, or failure to keep beasts together).

(The author and editor are indebted to Professor Angus Matheson for assistance and the addition of several notes).

## SHORT NOTES

SNOW GEESE IN MIDLOTHIAN, BERWICKSHIRE  
AND NORTH UIST

At Fala Moss on 15th October 1960 I was thrilled to see a large white goose fly in with one of the major flights from Cowberry, and to make out black wing-ends before it settled. On the ground it stood like a lighthouse, whilst the Pinkfeet around blended with the moor and were barely visible in the fading light. It was clearly as big in size as the very largest Pink-feet (much bigger than most) and bulkier, with slightly broader wings and heavier neck. In my opinion it was a greater Snow Goose *Anser caerulescens atlanticus*. I thought I saw a very slight tinting of the head area—not quite the same incandescent white.

On the following day I confirmed all the points mentioned above, except that I could see no sign of staining on the head and neck. I also saw that the eye was dark, and the bill dull flesh-coloured. I saw the bird again on 4th and 5th February 1961, succeeding in photographing it on the 4th. It stayed until at least 4th March. What was almost certainly the same bird was seen at Hule Moss, Berwickshire, on 9th November by Lt.-Col. W. M. Logan Home.

W. BROTHERSTON.

(Mr Brotherston informs us also of the following as yet unconfirmed reports of Snow Geese: from the mouth of the R. Urr, Kirkcudbrightshire, in December 1960, from the R. Earn and R. Tay in January, and from Loch Spynie, near Elgin on 27th March. It will be observed that these dates are not inconsistent with the occurrences all referring to the same Snow Goose.—Ed.).

When the Grey Lags appeared in great numbers this winter on the machair at the back of Bernera, North Uist, the young lads were surprised to see what they thought was a "Gannet" in their company. They tried their best to get this mysterious bird, but so far haven't succeeded in getting it, dead or alive. So far as I know it is still (3rd March) with our friends the Grey Lags. The white goose has black tips to its wings and so cannot be an albino.

WILLIAM MACKENZIE.

(This note has been kindly passed to us by Miss M. Cunningham.—Ed.).

## ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARDS IN INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 12th January 1961, near the Caledonian Canal at Kytra, Fort Augustus, I saw a Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus* quartering systematically over a stubble field, very low, at two or three feet. My attention was first drawn by this, to me, un-buzzard-like system of working, then, as it worked full away from me, by the large white area in the tail. This was clearly obvious although the bird was about 600 yards away, on a dull drizzly day. I focussed my stalking telescope on it as it flew away: it appeared dark brown with the very distinct, almost white-looking tail ending in a dark terminal band. It alighted once or twice on the stubble, taking wing low over the field as before, never rising high or soaring like a Common Buzzard hunting. I saw the bird again in the same field on 20th January.

L. MACNALLY.

On the morning of 7th March 1961, Wing-Commander and Mrs R. J. Fursman and I saw four buzzards soaring over Ord Ban, Rothiemurchus. On examination, when they circled over Loch an Eilean, I identified one of them as a Rough-legged Buzzard *Buteo lagopus*. The white tail with a thick black terminal band was obvious from above and below as the bird soared. The underwing was white, contrasting with the dark body and black carpal patches; the upperparts were brown with a paler head. In flight the bird was larger than nearby Buzzards *Buteo buteo* and the wings appeared longer. Finally they drifted away over the moor beyond the loch.

Several days later Col. J. P. Grant saw it in the same area.

R. H. DENNIS.

## MARSH HARRIER IN CAITHNESS

On 5th March 1961, on a marsh about seven miles from Thurso, I saw a male Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. The bird flew over a small lochan on the edge of the marsh and, in perfect light at a range of about thirty yards, I had no difficulty in identification.

It was noticeably larger and heavier in build and flight than the Hen Harrier, a fairly common bird hereabouts, and the contrasting grey secondaries and dark primaries were particularly striking. The head was a little paler than the back and somewhat streaked, and the rump a slightly paler grey than the tail. The underparts were richly coloured chestnut brown in the bright afternoon sun.

The bird flew over the lochan twice and settled on the



raised bank where it stayed for about ten minutes. It then flew off south-west, being continually mobbed in flight by Lapwings. I am fairly familiar with Marsh Harriers in Norfolk.

PAMELA McMORRAN.

### OSPREY AT ABERLADY, EAST LOTHIAN

On 23rd April 1961, with Alistair Inglis and David Merrie, I saw an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* at Aberlady. It was first seen at a height of about 200 feet off Gullane Point. It was surrounded by several Herring Gulls from which it was easily picked out by its size and heavy flight. The dark brown plumage above and the pale underparts were characteristic and at that range the facial markings could be made out. Soaring in tight circles it rapidly gained height and moved away northwards across the Forth; it was eventually lost after five minutes view.

This is, I believe, the first Aberlady record.

JOHN BAIRD.

### WHIMBREL BREEDING IN SUTHERLAND

In Sutherland, at the end of July 1960, I was attracted by a Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, which, from its calls and behaviour, I thought must have a nest or young. I watched it for about half an hour as it moved about the hillside, with a soft call *wheoo wheoo*, and eventually I distinctly saw a young one, being able to distinguish its head-pattern, straight bill, and greenish grey legs, from a distance of between 50 and 100 yards.

The birds were not seen when we passed the place on three later occasions.

MARY HENDERSON.

### HOOPOE IN SELKIRKSHIRE

On 17th April 1961 the local water-bailiff identified a Hoopoe *Upupa epops* at Howden Haugh, Selkirk. He saw it also the next day, watching it feed on the grass between the whins within five yards of his car. My fourth visit was successful and I had an excellent view. Selkirk is one of the three Scottish counties for which there is no previous record.

ARTHUR J. SMITH,

## WEEK-END AT DUMFRIES

*17th to 19th February 1961*

The Dumfries week-end's success was repeated. Once more, from the sleet, gales, murk and other ills of February weather, it provided two days when birds and bird-watchers enjoyed brilliant sun. Speculum of distant duck and nail of far-off geese gleamed through the objectives of all the elaborate optical equipment focussed on them.

Once more Willie Austin, Langley Roberts and Donald Watson, helped by other residents, effectively briefed and led a group which totalled ninety, though not all were present all the time. And again we welcomed contingents from Edinburgh and Glasgow, many others from north and south of the Border, from places as distant as Rothes and Limpsfield, Newcastle, Oxford and Belfast, both old members and new.

As before, the convoy assembled on Saturday morning by the river, and this year the queue entertainers were leaping salmon, while Lesser Black-back was ticked off on a number of 1961 lists. Two years ago the Caerlaverock Barnacle Geese were massed in a field, stalked by hordes of bird-watchers, last year they used evasive tactics, crossing the Solway, but this time we saw about a thousand in distant flight, and later another four hundred or so at close range. On the way to Glencaple, where we lunched (in bright sun) Grey Lags were feeding in fields sloping up from the road. Pinkfeet beside them provided such text book comparison that the Petersonic lines were almost visible.

The first main stop of the afternoon was at Loch Arthur, which showed a variety of duck, but no Smew this year. Its great attraction was a mixed flock of small stuff drifting along the alders, and most bird-watchers drifted along the road, getting excellent views of Willow and Long-tailed Tits, Treecreepers, Siskins and Redpolls. Later on, some car-loads watched a few waders and duck at Southernness, at nearly high tide, while others had tea. At Carsethorn there were Scaup and Pintail, Knot and Dunlin to watch at close range before the light weakened. As darkness fell, homing cars disturbed Barn Owls hunting along the roadside.

On Friday and Saturday evenings there were shows of slides: some excellent local views by Jim Young, a set illustrating an interesting talk by Peter Slater on migration in North Ronaldshay, tantalisingly lovely and few African ones

by Ted Skinner, and a fine full series of nesting moorland birds by Willie Brotherston.

As usual Sunday was the Carlingwark and Loch Ken day, and the full convoy of thirty-four cars which started off evoked the usual looks of curiosity, unbelief, amusement or frustration. Donald Watson had spoken of the gradual diminution of the Bean Geese in recent years, and it was remarkably lucky for us that he had found the small flock near Carlingwark Loch that morning. We watched about twenty feed over the ridge and out of sight. Some people saw the Smew and a rather dim little female Long-tailed Duck on the loch.

West of the Loch Ken road all the telescopes came out to examine three Greenland Whitefronts and one Pinkfoot in a flock of Grey Lag. Many more Whitefronts and Grey Lag were seen later, and a fine selection of duck, including a pair of Gadwall, with Wigeon, Pintail and Shoveler. Woodhall Loch provided little, but small birds were thick in the trees and bushes bordering the loch by Cairn Edward forest. Willow Tits, Redpolls and Long-tailed Tits ignored the constant arriving or starting of cars, were unperturbed by banging of doors, but flitted accommodatingly about at close range and eye level.

The Ken Bridge Hotel provided relays of teas, before cars dispersed in various directions. The two-day tally was about ninety-four species. A remarkable thing is that about seventy-five of these were, or could have been, seen without getting out of a car in a long convoy, and for few of them was a walk of more than a few yards necessary.

W. U. F.

## WITHOUT COMMENT

From *The Haddingtonshire Courier*, 24th February 1911:

There have been many complaints concerning the damage that is being done by solan geese on East Lothian farms, and this season their depredations have been more than usually severe. They come from the Bass Rock and other natural habitats and settle in large flocks on the fields of winter wheat...

## CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers: A. G. Ablett, A. F. Airey, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, J. Ballantyne, I. V. Balfour-Paul, P. G. R. Barbier, Miss P. G. Baxter, J. A. Begg, W. K. Birrell, E. Boase, H. Boyd, Rev. G. Carse, C. N. L. Cowper, R. H. Dennis, E. Dicerbo, G. Dick (G. Di.), Dr G. Dunnet (G. Du.), W. Edwards, Miss W. U. Flower, M. Forrester, Miss E. A. Garden, Mrs E. Hamilton, W. Handyside, Dr G. H. G. Hope, J. Hoy, Miss R. S. Hunter, Miss D. A. Lunt, A. Macdonald (A. M.), K. S. Macgregor, H. N. Maclachlan, A. T. Macmillan, A. MacRae (A. MacR.), W. Marshall, Mrs V. Meadows, M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Mrs M. Meyer, J. Milne, K. Murdoch, Mrs D. A. Murray, C. K. Mylne, Mrs M. J. Nisbet, J. Potter (J. P.), J. Peterson (J. Pet), G. A. Richards, I. B. Roy, A. Shepherd, A. J. Smith, D. Stalker, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, W. Stein, R. Stokoe, R. G. Thin, A. Tod, Viscount Traprain, L. A. Urquhart, G. Waterston, Mrs M. I. Waterston, A. D. Watson, T. Weir and R. D. Wilson. N.B.—Unless otherwise stated dates refer to 1961)

### *Breeding and Distribution*

**Fulmars** bred at the Heads of Ayr in 1960, probably for the first time; in March 1961 there were about six pairs present (G.A.R.).

The **Cormorant** has hitherto been a rare visitor to Duddingston Loch, but on 10th January one was there, and one or two were frequent visitors throughout the month and by 3rd February the observer was referring to their "almost daily visits." One was on the nearby St Margaret's Loch on 28th January (D.R.A.). H.B., commenting on this record, says that Cormorants seem to be coming inland more often: he recently counted eleven on burnt trees on one of the islands in Loch Leven, and reports a group roosting by the Tay at Kinclaven, nine and a half miles to the north of Perth. In this connection the presence of one at the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, on 21st September 1960, is of interest (J.A.B.).

An immature **Shelduck** was on a pond at New Cumnock from 14th to 16th August 1960 (J.A.B.).

In 1960, for the second successive year, a pair of **Hen Harriers** reared young in a county in which they had not been reported breeding since the last century. Another pair bred successfully apparently for the first time this century, in a different county. The male of the first pair, which reared three young, was in brown plumage, lacking any noticeable grey until beginning to moult in July. It was almost certainly a first year bird. E. Balfour states that he has known males to breed in their first year, in Orkney, but it does not seem to have been often recorded. The young did not fly from this nest till 10th to 16th August and there is reason to suspect that the clutch of five eggs, laid in mid June, were a repeat after the

first clutch had been robbed. Another feature was the building of a rough platform of large heather twigs, only about 12 feet from the nest, not long before the young were fledged. At a late stage food remains were found here and in the nest itself. (For the sake of security the name of the above observer has been suppressed: we are sure he will have no objection.—Ed.). Two records of Hen Harriers from unusual areas are of a "ringtail" in west Fife on 6th March (G.Di., J.P.) and a male at Delnies, Moss, Niarn, on 16th March (M.J.N.).

An unusual date for the **Jack Snipe** was 27th June 1960, when one was flushed at Peppermill Dam, west Fife (G.Di., J.P.). The observers have sent a description of the bird. One by Loch Leven on 7th February may be the first record for Kinross (M.F.M.M.).

On 17th September 1960 two **Ruffs** were seen on the estuary of the Dee, at Manxman's Lake, near Kirkcudbright: the observer knows of only three previous records for the county (A.D.W.).

The first **Little Gull** to be seen at Duddingston Loch turned up on 8th April: it was in summer plumage (D.R.A.).

Mr Brown, a postman in Kirkcudbright, has sent full details of a pair of **Turtle Doves** which he repeatedly observed on a farm road near that town in June and July 1960: there was no proof of breeding (A.D.W.).

A **Barn Owl** seen at Keith Bridge, East Lothian, on 5th February, is the observers' first for the locality (G.W., M.I.W.). The **Long-eared Owl** appears to be much less common in Kirkcudbrightshire than formerly: it is therefore of interest that an adult together with a brood of recently fledged young were found in a small wood of spruce and pine at about 800 feet on the slopes of the Kells range on 8th July 1960 (A.D.W.).

Two pairs of **Stonechats** were seen at Longannet, Fife, on 28th January, a female on 4th January (P.G.R.B., J.H.) and an immature bird on 5th March (J.B.). A male was at Dirlerton, East Lothian, on 2nd January (R.G.T.), a male at Aberlady on 19th January, and a male at Gullane Point on 16th February (A.G.A.) and a male and female on Braid Hills, Edinburgh, on 29th March (R.G.T.).

A **Blackcap** was recorded singing on 26th May 1960 near the head of Loch Lubnaig, Perthshire (L.A.U.).

Seven **Goldfinches** near Killearn, W. Stirling, on 16th April, are a large number for that area (W.U.F.).

*The Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* (4:20) gives only one record of the **Tree Sparrow** for Kinross, claiming it as the first for

that county: it is therefore of interest that one was seen in a rick-yard on the south shore of Loch Leven on 7th February, while two roosts, of about ten birds each, were found in conifers to the north of the loch (M.F.M.M.).

#### *Winter 1960-61*

The first **Black-throated Diver** to appear on Duddingston Loch since 1937 was present from 10th to 21st January and was seen by many people: it remained swimming on the loch even when only a small area, teeming with duck, was left unfrozen (D.R.A.). Inland records of the **Red-throated Diver** come from Drumpellier Loch, near Coatbridge, Lanark, on 11th March (W.S.) and from Gladhouse, 2nd April (R.W.J.S.).

A **Red-necked Grebe** was identified at Gullane on 5th March (T.C.S.). The first **Slavonian Grebe** for Duddingston since 1937 occurred on 28th January (D.R.A.): the high number of 28 Slavonian Grebes (beating Aberlady's best total by twenty) was seen in the bay at Gullane on 30th March (T.C.S.) while, on the same day, thirteen were on Loch Ewe, Wester Ross (R.D.W.). It is perhaps not generally realised how common this species is in winter off the west coast.

On 4th November 1960, after strong southerly winds and heavy rain, a **Storm Petrel** was found dead in a burn at Lennox Plunton near Gatehouse of Fleet. A farm worker told Mr and Mrs J. Skinner, who showed the bird to the recorder (A.D.W.).

At Dunsappie Loch, Edinburgh, there were three **Gadwall** on 11th February, two pairs on 8th March and six on 23rd March (J.B., A.M.). At Edgelaw, Midlothian, there was a drake on 25th March and 2nd April (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.) and at Tynningame there was a pair on 26th March, the observers' first record for the area (T.B., I.B.R., R.W.J.S.).

Fifteen **Scaup** were at Duddingston on 2nd February, but they left for the sea (D.R.A.). There were high numbers, about six thousand, at Seafield, Leith, on 19th February (A.T.M.). Eight hundred **Tufted Duck** and 1,450 **Pochard** at Duddingston on 3rd February are exceptional counts (D.R.A.).

An inland **Long-tailed Duck** was seen at Merryton, near Hamilton, on 1st January: it was associating with a party of eight Dabchicks (L.A.U.). This is not a common species in the Clyde and Solway and it is therefore worth recording that one was at the Prestwick sewage outlet between 12th and 18th March (G.A.R.) and another off the Kirkcudbright coast near Abbey Head on 22nd April (R.S.).

In the Forth large numbers of **Common Scoters** were noted

on spring passage, 1,500 at Seafield, Leith, on 18th and 27th March (J.B.) and about 1,000 off Gullane Point on 9th April, the biggest count there for some years (W.K.B., C.N.L.C., K.S.M.). It is interesting that counts at Seafield can vary much though made only a few hours apart: on 27th March most of the birds were far out, but flew in when disturbed by a passing ship. Two **Velvet Scoters**, an uncommon species in the Clyde, were at Prestwick on 16th March (G.A.R.) and ten in Loch Ewe, Wester Ross, on the 30th (R.D.W.).

Red-headed **Smews** have been recorded from Sand Loch, Collieston, Aberdeenshire, between 12th December 1960 and 25th March (G.Du., E.A.G.); from Forfar Loch, Angus, on 12th and 17th February (H.B., A.S.) and what may have been the same bird was on Rescobie Loch on 5th and 12th March (A.S.); from Duddingston from 31st January till 12th February (D.R.A., G.W., M.I.W.); from Yetholm and Hoselaw Lochs, Roxburgh, on 22nd January (A.J.S.). A drake Smew flew in to Loch Fitty, Fife, on 16th February and was also noted there on 12th March (G.Di.).

Four **White-fronted Geese** frequented Creoch Loch, New Cumnock, from 7th to 11th March 1960, the observer being unable to approach close enough for subspecific identification (J.A.B.). A pair of **Barnacle Geese** flew up from the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, on 5th October 1960: this is only the second time that the observer has seen this species in the neighbourhood (J.A.B.). A single Barnacle Goose was seen on Horse Island, off Troon, on 20th April (G.W., M.I.W.). On 24th March a single Barnacle was seen in a field with thirteen Oystercatchers at Cromdale, Morayshire: it did not seem to be injured and the observer thought it might have joined these similarly black and white birds for the sake of companionship (W.M.).

An immature **Whooper Swan** frequented the Tweed between Walkerburn and Innerleithen, Peebles-shire, from mid January till 28th March (J.B.): this apparently ordinary record is included since Peebles is a sparsely watched county and Baxter and Rintoul, *Geographical Distribution of Birds in Scotland*, give no record. It is not however the first record as one was seen at Portmore in 1958 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 8:64).

A single **Grey Plover**, unusual in the area in winter, was seen on 10th December 1960 on the coast at Forvie Moor, Aberdeenshire (E.A.G.).

Single wintering **Black-tailed Godwits** are reported from Aberlady on 19th January and Seafield, Leith, on 10th Feb-

ruary (A.G.A.), while a pair of wintering **Greenshank** were seen at the Loch o' the Lowes, New Cumnock, on 20th and 21st February (J.A.B.) and five together on Prestwick Beach on 17th March (G.A.R.).

Two **Grey Phalaropes**, of which a full and accurate description has been given, were with a group of Dunlin, Sanderling and Ringed Plover at Aberlady on 19th November 1960 (E.H.).

A late **Arctic Skua** was harrying gulls at Longannet, Fife, on 21st November 1960 (G.Di., J.P.).

An immature **Glaucous Gull** was in Ayr Harbour on 5th March; it had probably been there some time, as it was very tame, coming to be fed with the other gulls (M.F.M.M.). Another immature was at Barnes Ness, East Lothian, on 19th March (T.B.).

At Seafield, Leith, an immature **Iceland Gull** was seen on 15th January (A.T.M.) and again on 3rd February (A.G.A.).

**Little Auks** have not been frequent, but three are recorded from Joppa, Edinburgh, on 25th January (J.M.) and one, picked up dead, from Lundin Links, Fife, on 23rd February (P.G.B.).

A spectacular weather movement of **Skylarks** was watched at Longannet, Fife, on 4th February, when there was an inch of snow on the ground: in the two and a half hours before midday thirty flocks were noted, totalling nearly 4,500 birds. The largest flock totalled nearly 500 birds; they were swarming westwards along the north shore of the Forth with smaller flocks coming across the water from the Grangemouth side (J.H.).

A very late **Redstart** was seen at Biggar on 3rd November 1960 (R.S.H.) and several late and wintering **Blackcaps** have been seen: at Dalry, Kirkcudbrightshire, single male and female Blackcaps visited a garden between 6th and 31st October, there was again a male present on 22nd November and a female on the 23rd (A.D.W.). At Brightons, near Falkirk, a female came daily to eat on a window-sill between 20th January and 1st February: as often with this species, it behaved aggressively towards other birds, in this case tits (V.M.). The bird already reported (*antea* 1:386) from Colinton on 8th January was still present at the end of March; a male Blackcap came to the same garden on 25th January and, though a much rarer visitor, was still about in the middle of March (D.A.M.). Another observer, who did not know about these two birds, was astonished to catch the female on 18th February, when bat-fowling nearby, and even more so to catch



the male the following evening (I.V.B.P.). Finally a male Blackcap came to a window to be fed at Whittingehame, East Lothian on 24th February and for about a week before that (Vct.T.).

A small leaf-warbler, almost certainly a **Chiffchaff** frequented a garden at Liberton, Edinburgh, between 23rd December 1960 and 1st January (G.C., C.K.M.).

**Great Grey Shrikes**, as already reported (*antea* 1:387), were unusually numerous this winter; twelve records have already appeared in *Scottish Birds. Moray*: one was seen on 24th November 1960 at Nethybridge, where it remained the whole winter until 6th March at least. It fed beside a burn and among farm buildings. On 2nd December it was seen to catch a short-tailed vole (W.M., R.H.D.). On 16th January one struck a window at Forres and was seen to capture a Hedge Sparrow (*Scotsman* 28.1.61). On 5th April one was seen on roadside wires at Boat of Garten, and another by Loch Inch, near Kingussie (C.K.M.). *Dee*: on 1st November 1960 one was caught at Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, in a farm out-building, ringed and released (E.A.G.). *Tay*: one picked up dead near Amulree, Perthshire, on 15th December 1960, and another was seen in the same area on four occasions between 7th and 12th January (W.E.). One was at Killin on 14th January (A.T.), and another two miles north of Blair Atholl on 12th March (G.H.G.H.). *Forth*: one was seen at Peppermill, Fife, on 16th January; it unsuccessfully pursued two Pied Wagtails (G.Di., J.P.). One was seen near Penicuik, Midlothian, on 22nd January and what was perhaps the same bird was seen twice during December 1960 in policies of Penicuik House, (W.H.). *Clyde*: one was seen in the Carrick Hills on 4th March (A.MacR.) and one at Biggar on 30th March (R. S.H.). *Tweed*: one was seen at Thirlestane, Ettrick, on 29th March (H.N.M.). *Solway*: one was seen in the Dundeugh forest, near Carsphairn, Kirkcudbright, on 24th October 1960 by Dr and Major Ross of Dalry. Between then and mid January single birds were seen by A.D.W. and others in scattered localities near Dalry and New Galloway, there being at least two, and probably more individuals. One bird seen on 21st November 1960 was pinkish cream on the underparts, showed little graduation in the tail, had a single white wing-patch and no white superciliary. In contrast to an obvious Great Grey seen later this bird might almost have passed for a Lesser Grey, but the rather prominent white fringes to the scapulars, proportion of wings to tail, and the bill shape seemed to us to mark it as a Great Grey. This and the later bird both showed faint barrings on the underparts and appeared to be in first winter plumage. The second bird was also "single barred" on the wing. The only prey noted was a Long-tailed Tit (L.A.U.,

A.D.W.). (Mr Watson painted a picture of the unusual shrike and it is certainly very like a Lesser Grey in general appearance. We feel that, since the breeding ranges of the two species overlap very considerably, the possibility of hybridisation should not be excluded.—Ed.). One was seen at East Park, Dumfries-shire, on 5th February and its persistent pursuit of a Hedge Sparrow is described in *British Birds* (54: 163-4). Finally one on 12th April, near Beattock, was seen to capture a small mammal (E.D.).

A flock of over 6,000 **Starlings** are reported roosting in reeds at Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, on 8th August 1960 (A.F.A.). Near Humberie and just in East Lothian there was a big roost and on 31st January 1960 quite a number were caught: their numbers were in the order of 100,000 birds. On 15th January 1961 plans were made for further trapping, but the birds did not arrive, going elsewhere. The interest of this is that the change had taken place very recently because substantial numbers had been going there only ten days earlier (A.T.M.).

The largest number of wintering **Twites** at Aberlady was twenty-three on 14th February (A.M.).

A party of seven **Crossbills** were watched closely on some Scots pines, by Dr and Major Ross, and A.D.W. on 8th February 1960 in the Bennan forest, New Galloway. These birds had distinctly heavier bills than others the observer has seen closely in the district. The call-notes, too, seemed softer, lacking the very sharp metallic notes heard commonly from immigrant birds. It is likely that these were Scottish, or possibly true Parrot Crossbills. In the present winter Crossbills seem to be absent from local haunts where they were often to be seen in the previous two seasons, and in 1956-57 (A.D.W.).

A **Lapland Bunting** was seen at Aberlady on 9th April (W.K.B., C.N.L.C., K.S.M.).

#### *Spring Passage 1961*

Little information has so far been received on this, but the following records are worth publishing separately.

A **Black-necked Grebe** was on the R. Endrick on 16th April (M.F., D.S., T.W.), on the Stirling-Dunbarton boundary.

Two **Black-tailed Godwit** and a **Knot** were at the mouth of the R. Endrick on 20th April (W.U.F.). Single **Spotted Redshanks** each in dark summer plumage, were seen at Tingwall Loch, Shetland, on 5th March and 7th May (J.Pet.). An early

arrival of eleven **Ruffs** was observed at Cotehill Loch, Collieston, Aberdeenshire, on 19th February; eight of these birds remained until at least 11th April (E.A.G.). A new locality for the **Chiffchaff** is Gordonstoun, near Elgin; one was singing there on 5th May (K.M.).

*Behaviour, Habits, etc.*

A pair of **Mallard** nested at Duddingston fifteen feet up in a tree, in a box intended for owls (D.R.A.).

On 25th April a **Tawny Owl's** nest in a rabbit burrow on the floor of a spruce wood was visited near Dalry, Kirkcudbright. It contained three young owls and two addled eggs, 37 field voles, six bank voles, two long-tailed field mice and the feet and tail of a male Yellowhammer. About a third of the prey had been partly eaten (A.D.W.).

A **Coal Tit** was seen on 9th February at North Berwick which had a long decurved beak; it seemed as though both mandibles were overgrown and the bill was twice as long as normal. The bird seemed in good health (M.M.).

An unusual **Starling** was seen at Lenzie on 21st January; it was uniformly light grey, except the head which was a little darker. It had no iridescence. With binoculars the light spots could be made out, but at a distance they merged into the grey background of the plumage. Beak and legs were the usual colour (D.A.L.).

CORRIGENDA

*Antea* 1:343. The Ruff at Meikle Loch was seen on 18th September, not the 17th.

*Antea* 1:385. The Smew at Loch Leven on 17th October was seen by Dr R. S. Weir, not R. W. J. Smith.

*Antea* 1:386. The Greenshank on 1st January reported as from Cardross was seen at the mouth of the R. Endrick.



ARCTIC TERN (Photograph by R. Roddam)

This shows one of the best methods of distinguishing the Arctic Tern from the Common, by the very large transparent area in the wing. In the Common Tern, there is only one small transparent patch at the inner side of the bend in the wing.

## OFFICIAL SECTION

SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The fourteenth Annual Conference and twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held in the Dunblane Hotel Hydro, Dunblane, Perthshire, from 27th to 29th October 1961. The Conference Programme will be printed in the next issue of "Scottish Birds," and this intimation is given in order that members may make their Hotel reservations in good time. All bookings, including those at the Hotel Hydro, should be made direct with the Hotels. The Secretary is not arranging reservations in the Conference Hotel this year.

#### Hotel Accommodation in Dunblane

DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO (Tel. 3161). Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday 27th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday 28th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday 29th—£4, 5s 0d. (A 10% gratuity charge will be added to all bills).

STIRLING ARMS HOTEL (Tel. 2156). Bed and breakfast from 22s 6d.

\*THE NEUK PRIVATE HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 2150). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

\*SCHIEHALLION HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 3141). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

BLAIRALAN, Dargie Terrace (Tel. 3196). Bed and breakfast from 16s 6d.

¶DUNDELEIGHTON HOTEL (Tel. 2773). Bed and breakfast from 15s.

\*These Hotels are some distance from the Conference Hotel.

¶Situating near the Hotel Hydro gates.

#### Hotel Accommodation in Bridge of Allan

ALLAN WATER HOTEL (Tel. B. of Allan 2293). Bed and breakfast from 27s 6d.

ROYAL HOTEL (Tel. B. of Allan 2284). Bed and breakfast from 27s.

Members with cars who have difficulty in obtaining single rooms in Dunblane should find that the above two Hotels in Bridge of Allan have ample single accommodation. The distance from Dunblane is approx. 3 miles.

The above terms for Hotels other than the Conference Hotel are quoted as a guide only, and prices should be confirmed.

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Owing to increased costs, the Conference registration fee will be 8s 6d.

The cost of the Annual Dinner to members not staying in the Hotel Hydro will be 15s.

Members travelling from the south by night train arriving early on Saturday morning are asked to inform the Secretary, giving details of their trains, as it may be possible to arrange for trains to be specially stopped at Dunblane if a sufficient number require this facility.

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#### ENQUIRIES

Members are reminded that the British Trust for Ornithology are organising Enquiries into the status of the Peregrine falcon and the

Stonechat during 1961, and are urged to send any records to the Organisers.

Records of occurrences of Peregrines, their numbers, distribution, and feeding habits, should be sent to Dr D. A. Ratcliffe, c/o B.T.O., 2 King Edward Street, Oxford. Records of the Stonechat (including negative reports and casual occurrences) should be sent to Mr J. D. Magee, 68 Bushey Mill Lane, Watford, Herts. Copies of a Questionnaire for Stonechat records are available on request in the Club office.

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### DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY BRANCH

The Council have agreed to establish a new Branch of the Club in Dumfries and a Meeting will be held in the County Hotel, Dumfries on **Monday, 26th June, at 8 p.m.** to inaugurate the new Branch and to elect Office-bearers. A general discussion will be held. It is hoped that all members in the Dumfries and Galloway area will be able to attend.

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### "BRITISH BIRDS"

If any member has a spare copy of "British Birds" for March 1957 (Vol. 50 No. 3), Mr C. K. Mylne, 4 Milton Mill, Milton Bridge, Midlothian, will be very glad to purchase this in order to complete his set for binding.

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### MISSING LIBRARY BOOKS

The following books have been borrowed from the Club Library in the past, and have not been returned. If any member can help to trace the whereabouts of these books, will they kindly inform the Secretary.

ANNALS OF SCOTTISH NATURAL HISTORY: 1908 (Bound volume).

BRUCE, George: "The Land Birds in and around St Andrews."

DICKSON, John: "Emeralds Chased in Gold, or The Islands of the Forth."

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### S.O.C. PUBLICATION

"**The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve**", by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor. This article, which has been reprinted in booklet form by the Club from the "Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian and Field Naturalists' Society", Vol. VIII, is now available to Members for 5s (postage 4d extra) and may be obtained from the Club Secretary or from Branch Secretaries.

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### DEEDS OF COVENANT

The Club has now obtained permission from H.M. Inspector of Taxes to reclaim Income Tax on subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant. This will be of great benefit to the Club as it will almost double subscriptions paid in this way. The Council therefore invites Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate to undertake a seven-year Deed of Covenant for their subscriptions (this does not apply to subscriptions to the Journal only). Full details, with a suitable form, are available from the Secretary. Completed forms should be returned to the Secretary, who will forward a Certificate for the Deduction of Tax for signature each year.

# The Scottish Ornithologists' Club Tie

Illustrated is the Official Club Tie, of which R. W. Forsyth's are the sole suppliers. The tie is made from Terylene with a blue or green background, and the bird motif in silver. 16/9.

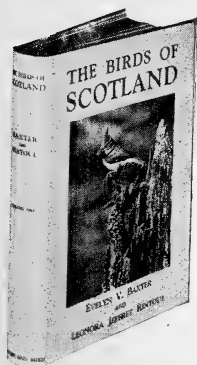


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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

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*Vol. I No. 13*

*Autumn 1961*

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FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. Joint membership is available to married couples at an annual subscription of 40/-. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members, but Joint members will receive only one copy between them.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to Members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and Members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# THE LONDON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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The Society studies the area within twenty miles of St Paul's Cathedral. There are sections for Archaeology, Botany, Ecology, Entomology, Geology, Mammals, Ornithology, Ramblers and Young Naturalists.

There is a comprehensive programme of indoor and field meetings and the Society in addition to arranging its own investigations takes part in national enquiries. A lending library and reference collections are available for members.

The annual subscription is £1, 10s and there are reduced subscriptions for juniors, students, family members and those residing outside the area. Entrance fee 5s.

The Society's journals, published yearly and containing many original papers are free to members but may be purchased.

*THE LONDON NATURALIST*, 13s 6d post free.

*THE LONDON BIRD REPORT*, 5s 9d post free.

Enquiries about membership and publications will be welcomed by the General Secretary, Mrs L. M. P. Small, 13 Woodfield Crescent, Ealing, W.5.

## Bird Watchers



Once again, the Ospreys at Loch Garten have succeeded in rearing three young, under careful protection organised by the R.S.P.B.

During the past year, the Society has established Bird Sanctuaries at Horse Island (off Ardrossan); and at Inchmickery, Fidra, Lamb, and Eyebroughy in the Firth of Forth.

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# SCOTTISH BIRDS

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Leach's Petrel) by LEN FULLERTON. Published quarterly.

## Editorial

**M**EMBERS of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club may have wondered at receiving details of the Annual Conference and the Winter Syllabus Card some time ago, but no copy of *Scottish Birds*. We apologise for the delay. It has been due, in part at least, to the illness of the Editor, to whom we send our best wishes for a speedy recovery. We feel sure that contributors will understand if their letters have not been promptly dealt with, or if their notes have been held over for the next number, as this number has been compiled largely by his assistants. By the time you receive your copy it will be time to start on the next one—such is the editorial schedule—and we would be glad to have your notes now.

From the 1960 Review of Ornithological Changes in Scotland, published in this number, it will be seen that the Scottish Bird Records Committee has rejected certain records which appeared in *Scottish Birds*. Likewise, the Rarity Records Committee of *British Birds* has rejected certain of our records which came within its scope. Some of the records were felt to be "not proven" rather than actually wrong, but today so many observations are available that it is clearly possible and desirable to accept only those about which there can be no doubts. We have therefore felt it desirable to withdraw all these unaccepted records, as it is obvious that any careful worker must reject records upon which valid doubts have been cast. We would emphasise that the responsibility for publishing these records in the first place was ours—and not that of the contributors.

Every ornithologist, if he is honest, will admit that at one time or another he has been taken in: nowadays there are so many active bird-watchers, and the very excellence of the modern text-books carries its own danger in making the game seem too easy. One may regret the possible loss of a good record, but it is nothing to the muddle that may be caused by the acceptance of an erroneous one—think of the Piltown skull.

We intend to see that our standards are as high as any, and

we hope that our contributors will not feel hurt if their records are sometimes not published. We can assure them that we will be applying the same objective standards to our own (or at least to each other's) records!

Finally, we should like to stress the importance of making every effort to call in a second opinion on the identification of any rare bird. This makes the task of adjudication very much easier.

### CORRECTIONS OF PREVIOUS RECORDS

In an earlier issue (*antea* 1:235) we published a record of a Slender-billed Curlew *Numenius tenuirostris* at Avoch, Ross-shire, on 25th February 1960. The identification was based upon measurements, lack of head markings, pale colouring, slender bill and a feather from the underparts, the markings of which of which could be matched by the breast-feathers of specimens of *tenuirostris* in the Royal Scottish Museum.

This record has been considered and rejected by the *British Birds* Rarity Records Committee, and on reconsideration we must agree with this decision. The specimen feathers must, on size and shape, be from the flanks and not the breast, and the pattern can be matched by flank-feathers of the Curlew *N. arquata*, but not by those of *tenuirostris*. Moreover, although *tenuirostris* is paler on the upper-parts than the other curlews, the ground colour is not nearly as white or the pattern as sharply contrasted as is suggested by the description of the Avoch bird.

The suggestion has been made that the Avoch bird was a "runt" Curlew. We are not wholly convinced that this is the solution. The odds seem heavily against the production of a bird with both size and plumage abnormalities, although there have been recent cases of multiple abnormalities in animals exposed to radiation. In any event, in view of the valid doubts which have been cast on what otherwise would be a first British record (the records given for the Slender-billed Curlew in the *Handbook* are no longer regarded as acceptable, and the species has now become extremely rare everywhere) we feel ourselves compelled, though with regret, to withdraw it.

For the sake of completeness we also list here certain other records which have been published in these pages but which have not passed higher scrutiny and must also be withdrawn. These are:

White Storks, Fife, 2nd October 1959 (*antea* 1:145).

Ivory Gull, Fife, 4th October 1959 (*antea* 1:151).

Lesser Yellowlegs, Aberdeenshire, 15th September 1959 (*antea* 1:188).

Dusky Thrush, Argyllshire, late 1959 (*antea* 1:238).

## REVIEW OF ORNITHOLOGICAL CHANGES IN SCOTLAND IN 1960

JAMES W. CAMPBELL

### *Introduction*

This, the eighth report of the Scottish Bird Records Committee, deals with the records published during 1960. As in the past, the following Journals have been searched: *Scottish Birds* (S.B.); *British Birds* (B.B.); *Bird Migration* (B.M.); *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Bulletin* (F.I.B.O.B.); *Ibis*; *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club*; *Scottish Field*; *Country Life*; *The Field*; and *Bird Notes*. The abbreviations used here are shown in brackets.

There have been no changes in the membership of the Committee since the publication of our last report, in which its constitution was detailed. Previous reports were published in *The Scottish Naturalist* 1955:98; 1956:1; 1957:37; 1957:170; and *Scottish Birds* 1958:30; 1959:117; 1960:253.

As on previous occasions, some records have been held over for further consideration.

### BIRDS NEW TO AREAS AND COUNTIES

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*. Two on River Devon, near Dollar, 24th September 1960 (S.B. 1:340); first for Clackmannan.

**NIGHT HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*. One at Isle of May, 14th May 1960 (B.M. 1:162); first for island. The possibility that this bird was an escape from captivity cannot be excluded.

**LITTLE BITTERN** *Ixobrychus minutus*. One near Balgavies Loch, Forfar, 12th July 1958 (S.B. 1:183); first for Angus.

**AMERICAN WIGEON** *Anas americana*. One, Beaully Firth, 9th October 1958 (S.B. 1:183); first for Moray and East Inverness.

**STELLER'S EIDER** *Polysticta stelleri*. One on Loch Fleet, Sutherland, 22nd September 1959 (S.B. 1:234); first for Moray and South-East Sutherland.

**EUROPEAN WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons albifrons*. One at Bonnybridge, 1st November 1959 (S.B. 1:211); first record of the eastern race for East Stirling.

**LESSER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser erythropus*. One shot at Cambus, 20th January 1960 (S.B. 1:272); first for Forth and Clackmannan. One seen at Wigtown, 27th March 1960 (S.B. 1:271); first for Wigtown.

**DARK-BREASTED BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla bernicla*. One at Isle of May, 30th July 1959 (S.B. 1:174); there are two pre-

vicious occurrences of Brent Geese for the island, but this is the first example to be determined racially.

**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*. One at Loch Ballygrant, Islay, 28th April 1959 (S.B. 1:186); first for the Inner Hebrides. One near Skinflats, 21st August 1960 (S.B. 1:329) is the first to be recorded for East Stirling since 1795.

**HOBBY** *Falco subbuteo*. One near Loch Garten, 15th May 1960 (S.B. 1:275); first for East Inverness.

**RED GROUSE** *Lagopus lagopus*. One in Gleann Mor, St Kilda, 5th December 1959 (S.B. 1:329); first for island. Presumably as showing no white one of the British races.

**CRANE** *Megalornis grus*. One near Lothbeg Point, Helmsdale, 6th August 1958 (S.B. 1:187); first for South-East Sutherland.

**LITTLE CRAKE** *Porzana parva*. One found dead in Unst, during April 1959, and now preserved at Royal Scottish Museum (S.B. 1:235); first for Shetland.

**GREY PLOVER** *Charadrius squatarola*. Two at Ardmore, 28th September 1959 (S.B. 1:200); first for Dunbarton.

**DOWITCHER** *Limnodromus* sp. One at Gullane Point, 29th September 1960 (S.B. 1:330); first for Forth and East Lothian.

**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*. Nine at Loch Leven, 5th September 1959 (S.B. 1:200); first for Kinross.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*. One north of Grange-mouth, 5th September 1959 (S.B. 1:200); first for East Stirling.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*. Two at Loch Leven, 21st September 1959 (S.B. 1:231); first for Kinross.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*. One at Loch Leven, 21st September 1959 (S.B. 1:201); first for Kinross.

**PECTORAL SANDPIPER** *Calidris melanotos*. One near Grange-mouth, 19th September 1960 (S.B. 1:333); first for East Stirling.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris testacea*. Three at Loch Leven, 21st September 1959 (S.B. 1:202); first for Kinross.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** *Tringites subruficollis*. One at Gullane, 18th September 1960 (S.B. 1:334); first for Forth and East Lothian. One near Dornoch Point, 25th September 1960 (S.B. 1:334); first for Moray and South-East Sutherland.

**GREY PHALAROPE** *Phalaropus fulicarius*. Two at Fife Ness, 28th October 1959 (S.B. 1:208); first for South Fife. One on Rubbish Dump Pool, Hamilton, 23rd October 1960 (S.B. 1:343); first for Lanark.

**GREAT SKUA** *Catharacta skua*. One at Handa, 6th July 1959 (F.I.B.O.B. 4:121); first for West Sutherland.

**LITTLE GULL** *Larus minutus*. One at Endrick Mouth, 29th May 1960 (S.B. 1:279); first for West Stirling.

**GULL-BILLED TERN** *Gelochelidon nilotica*. One at Aberlady



Bay, 11th September 1960 (S.B. 1:335); this, the second Scottish record, is the first for Forth and East Lothian.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna macrura*. One at Endrick Mouth, 29th May 1960 (S.B. 1:280); first for West Stirling.

LITTLE TERN *Sterna albifrons*. One at Endrick Mouth, 5th June 1960 (S.B. 1:280); first for West Stirling.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. One at Dunfermline, 23rd August 1959 (S.B. 1:189); first for Forth and South Fife. One near Faskally, Pitlochry, 16th February 1960 (S.B. 1:237); first for Tay and North Perth. One at Fair Isle, 18th April 1960 (B.M. 1:187); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. One near Riccarton Junction, 17th May 1960 (S.B. 1:276); first for Roxburgh.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One at Butt of Lewis, 10th November 1959 (S.B. 1:239); first for Outer Hebrides other than St Kilda.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa parva*. One at Newburgh, 12th October 1959 (S.B. 1:192); first for Dee and Aberdeen. Two at Fife Ness, 18th September 1960 (S.B. 1:337); first for South Fife.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. A party at Milnathort, 12th November 1959 (S.B. 1:248); first for Kinross.

RED-TAILED SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus*. One, thought to be of the race *Phoenicuroides*, trapped at Fair Isle, 12th May 1960 (B.M. 1:162); first for Shetland and Fair Isle.

#### FIRST BREEDING RECORDS FOR AREAS AND COUNTIES

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. A pair with nest and eggs found "West Inverness-shire," 10th June 1960 (S.B. 1:331); first breeding for North-West Highlands and West Inverness.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. Nest with eggs at Houndslow, near Greenlaw, 29th May 1960 (S.B. 1:280); first breeding for Tweed and Berwick.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. Adult feeding four fledged young at Kinloch, Rhum, 30th June 1959 (S.B. 1:340); first breeding for Inner Hebrides.

The following have not been included, but are listed here for general information:

Small race of CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*. One seen at Laggan Point, Islay, 5th April 1958 (S.B. 1:274); this has been accepted by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds* as belonging to "one of the small races of Canada Goose from the North American Arctic," but as its identity has not been established beyond all doubts it cannot be included in the Review as a race new to Scotland.

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus*. One seen at Bonnybridge, Stirling, 9th November 1959 resembled the Northern race *Aegithalos c. caudatus* (S.B. 1:212). If accepted, this would be the first definite Scottish record; there is, however, the observation by Dr F. Darling (see *Birds of Scotland* 139-140) that white-headed birds occur in West Sutherland and Loch Broom area, and intermediate forms as far south as Sunart, North Argyll, in the breeding season.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*. One "black-bellied" near Edzell, Angus, 13th September 1960. See remarks by Professor Wynne-Edwards (S.B. 1:336).

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The following have been added to the British List on the recommendation of the B.O.U. British Records Committee. (See *Ibis* 102:629-630).

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER *Mniotilta varia*. One found dead Scalloway, Shetland, mid-October 1936 (*Scot. Nat.* 1937:46 and 69:38).

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW *Zonotrichia albicollis*. One shot Flannans, Outer Hebrides, 18th May 1909 (See *Annals Scot. Nat. Hist.* 1909:246 and *Scot. Nat.* 69:39).

SONG SPARROW *Melospiza melodia*. One trapped Fair Isle, Shetland, 27th April 1959 (*B.B.* 52:419-421 and *S.B.* 1:254).

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After careful consideration of all the evidence the Committee have been unable to accept the following records:

WHITE STORK *Ciconia ciconia*. Two near Cameron Reservoir, Fife, 2nd October 1959 (*S.B.* 1:145).

SLENDER-BILLED CURLEW *Numenius tenuirostris*. One found exhausted at Avoch, Easter Ross, 25th February 1960; examined and released (*S.B.* 1:235).

LESSER YELLOWLEGS *Tringa flavipes*. One at Cotehill Loch, Collieston, 15th September 1959 (*S.B.* 1:188).

SCANDINAVIAN HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus omissus*. One at Figgate Pond, Edinburgh, 22nd October 1959 (*S.B.* 1:198).

DUSKY THRUSH *Turdus eunomus*. One seen at Port Appin, Argyll, "end of 1959." (*S.B.* 1:238).

We understand that these records have also been rejected by the Rarities Committee of *British Birds*—although the findings have not yet been published—not necessarily because the identifications were wrong, but because "the evidence was insufficient or the conditions of observation too unsatisfactory for unqualified acceptance as fully authenticated records." We also wish to emphasise their view that published rejection of these records is not a slur on the ability of the observer. (See *B.B.* 54:199).



HERON coming down to nest, Wester Ross, June 1939.

(Photograph by J. E. Ruxton)

## VISIT OF AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS TO THE SCOTTISH CENTRE

The first organised party of American ornithologists to come to this country arrived in Scotland on Friday, 7th July. This very brief visit, from 3 p.m. on Friday to 9 a.m. on Saturday, was part of a "Birds of Europe" tour, and the party consisted of twenty-eight bird-watchers from all parts of the States, led by Mr Orville W. Crowder.

As this was the first occasion of its kind and might mark the beginning of many contacts between ornithologists of our two countries, Dr John Berry of the Nature Conservancy, and the Council of the Club, felt that the party should be our guests at a special reception in the Scottish Centre.

Such a tight schedule was bound to meet unforeseen hitches, and we were not surprised when holiday traffic jams prevented our guests from arriving in Edinburgh from the Lake District until after 4 p.m. This meant some last-minute reorganisation of our plans to take them for a sail round the Bass Rock; instead, after being welcomed at their hotel by Dr Berry, Andrew Macmillan and George Waterston, they were taken on a conducted tour of the city in their private bus, and a visit to the Queen's Park where among the duck at Duddingston Loch several were able to add "Lifers" to their lists of birds.

After a hasty dinner at their hotel, the party arrived at Regent Terrace where a reception party of Members of Council and of the Edinburgh Branch Committee were waiting. As we felt that a Scottish welcome would be appropriate, Pat Sandeman, complete with kilt, piped our guests into the house, to their great delight. "You sure think of everything," said Mr Crowder as he led his party in. They were then shown part of the R.S.P.B. film, "Highland Birds," which was some compensation for seeing so few Scottish species; this was given a very enthusiastic reception and quite a few decided there and then to come back for a stay in Speyside another year. After this, the whole party adjourned upstairs for refreshments and general conversation; this rose in crescendo and enthusiasm until they left us at 11 p.m., full of gratitude to the Club for what they said was "the highlight of our tour."

The value of such contacts cannot be readily assessed but they are obviously of great importance. Some of the party were members of local Audubon Societies and we were able to exchange ideas and information on the organisation of our respective Clubs and Societies. Many of them, we are sure, will come back to Scotland for a longer visit, while any members of the Club who visit the States may be sure of a warm welcome and every possible assistance to see American birds.

M. I. W.

## INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE DUMFRIES BRANCH

In view of the keen interest in ornithology in the South-west of Scotland, members of the S.O.C. felt that a Branch of the Club, centred in Dumfries, would provide opportunities for members to meet for their personal pleasure and to forward the objects of the Club. Accordingly a meeting was convened on 26th June 1961 in the County Hotel, Dumfries, when approximately forty members attended.

The Chair was taken by Mr William Austin, supported by Mr A. Donald Watson and by Mrs George Waterston, Secretary of the Club. Mr Austin introduced Mrs Waterston who then explained the advantages of a separate Branch, and promised lectures by well-known speakers, some of whom had been provisionally booked already.

It was decided unanimously to inaugurate the Branch, and Officers were appointed as follows: Chairman, Sir Arthur B. Duncan; Vice-Chairman, Mr William Austin; Hon. Secretary, Mr H. M. Russell; Committee, Mr Langley Roberts, Mr R. T. Smith and Mr Donald Watson, and the above Officers ex officio. Mr William Austin was elected Branch Representative to the Council. (All Treasurership functions are exercised in Edinburgh).

In the discussion which followed, special attention was drawn to the point that, although the activities of the Branch would be centred in Dumfries, which greatly helped arrangements for speakers, the Branch hoped to be a focal point for the whole of the South-west of Scotland. Colleagues from Wig-townshire would be most welcome at all Branch meetings, and the possibility of a get-together in Newton Stewart or Castle Douglas at least once a year would be examined.

The meeting was then addressed by Mr George Waterston who outlined the special interests of the S.O.C., the R.S.P.B. and the B.T.O. and urged support for the latter two bodies in any way possible. He reminded members of the special work being done on the status of the Heron, the Stonechat and the Peregrine. He also appealed for voluntary wardens in July for the nesting Ospreys.

H. M. R.

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Ornithological Club of Uppsala, Sweden, is conducting a special investigation into the migration of the Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. All Dunlin trapped during the 1961 autumn migration season will be ringed with a numbered ring on one leg and a coloured ring on the other. Observers are asked to look closely at all Dunlin seen during this autumn and winter

and, if any ringed birds are seen, to send a note of their observations to Sven Uhlin, Gnejsvägen 3B, Uppsala, Sweden. The information required is: date, time and place of observation; colour of ring and leg on which placed; numbers of ringed and unringed Dunlin present at the time; and length of stay.

## OBITUARY: THE LATE JOHN BAIN

His many friends among ornithologists—and the Scottish lighthouse personnel who co-operate so wholeheartedly with them—will learn with deep regret of the passing of Mr John Bain, who had been ill for a lengthy period at the home of one of his daughters at Rothesay after returning from a visit to Nyasaland.

Fostered during his service with the Northern Lighthouses at many Scottish stations, his interest in birds became an abiding one. He had been associated with the Royal Scottish Museum in the obtaining of skins and specimens of birds killed at the lighthouses; had a close connection over many years with the Isle of May Observatory, where he carried out much highly-skilled maintenance work and single-handedly built the Heligoland Trap which now bears his name; and, while serving on the Bass Rock, made one of the earliest "scientific" counts of the Rock's nesting Gannets. His fund of bird-lore was equalled only by his knowledge of the coasts and islands and his tales of "characters" and incidents in the lighthouse service, in which he had continued beyond retirement age as relief officer after the Second World War.

This doyen of bird-watchers was in his seventy-eighth year.

R. A. C.

## SHORT NOTES

### MANX SHEARWATER INLAND IN PERTHSHIRE

On 23rd July 1961, when sailing on Loch Tay, I was astonished to see a Manx Shearwater *Procellaria puffinus*. The bird was on the water when first noticed and it allowed the dinghy to approach within 30 yards before taking wing. In flight the contrasting black upperparts and white underparts and the typical stiff-winged, tilting flight confirmed the identification. The bird circled near the boat several times before disappearing in the direction of Killin.

V. M. THOM.

## EARLY SOOTY SHEARWATER

A Sooty Shearwater *Procellaria grisea* was seen in the northern waters of the North Minch on 7th May 1961. It was watched by several internationally-known ornithologists on a cruise organised by the National Trust for Scotland and it remained for about half an hour in the vicinity of the ship.

W. J. EGGELING.

(This is a very remarkable date and is two weeks earlier than any other record we can find for British waters.—Ed.).

## WHITE STORK IN DUMFRIESSHIRE

On the afternoon of 17th April 1961 a White Stork *C. ciconia* was seen by Mr Stewart Nairn on his farm at Hazliebrae, Lochmaben. He telephoned Robert Smith, who was able to come over the following morning and confirm the identification. On the evening of the same day I found the bird still present and was able to get the photograph reproduced elsewhere in this number, as the bird was perched on a telegraph pole with the sun just beginning to set. On the morning of the 19th E. L. Roberts was on the scene about 11 a.m., just in time to see the bird get up and fly off to the south. It was not seen again.

WILLIAM AUSTIN.

(This is presumably the same bird as was first seen at Southport, Lancashire, on 4th April and thereafter at half a dozen different places progressively further north until the last English sighting at Maryport on the 16th—the day before its appearance at Lochmaben. This would be the first record for Dumfriesshire and the Solway area, but the bird's tameness and its predilection for settling in areas of considerable human activity suggest that it may have been an escape from captivity, although the species may at times be quite approachable in the wild. The acceptance of this as a genuine record must therefore depend on enquiries at present being made by the *British Birds* Rarity Records Committee, to whose Secretary we are indebted for the information about the bird's wanderings in England.—Ed.).

## RED-FOOTED FALCON IN INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 15th May 1961 I was motoring along the road that crosses Tulloch Moor, near Boat of Garten, when a small raptor flew out of a tree and landed on a large rock 30 yards from the car. It was late in the evening and the light was poor, but even so the bird struck me as something unusual because of its size and flight. From the rear it showed a grey back and tail barred with black, a light crown and a whitish collar. I moved round to get a front view of the bird but it flew off to the top of a

pine about 500 yards away. I did, however, see the bird well enough in flight to identify it as a Red-footed Falcon *Falco vespertinus*. I followed it and managed to get close again. This time I thought I could see the red legs, but it flew off again and I decided to leave it and hope that it would roost in the area.

The following morning at 0530 hours G.M.T., Dick Clark, Adrian Sudbury and I were at the moor. It had been a very cold night with several degrees of frost and a raw mist. An hour later we flushed the bird from its roost in a Scots pine. It flew to the top of a dead tree, and before it departed we were able to make out the orange feet and rufous underparts. It flew across the valley to a dead tree, where it was watched by George Dick, Guy Brownlow, George Patrick, Penny Whitehead and Jenny Buxton. At 0945 hours it flew away north-east into the wind and was last seen over Boat of Garten golf-course.

From the following description collected in the field I identified it as a female Red-footed Falcon:

Forehead pale creamy-buff; crown light chestnut-buff shading to a distinct collar of creamy-buff; ear-coverts sandy-brown; nape streak from crown, chestnut-buff; mantle, back, scapulars, coverts and rump slate-grey, faintly (but obviously at close range) barred black-brown; tail slate-grey, barred black with pale buff tip to each feather; flight-feathers dark brown, almost black outer webs, inner webs dark brown, shafts paler.

Cheeks creamy-buff; blackish moustachial streak, rather ill-defined; chin cream-off-white shading to rufous buff on belly, faint streaks of dark chestnut on sides of breast; under tail-coverts whitish-buff; feathered thighs shading from rufous to creamy-buff; axillaries rusty; under flight-feathers pale rufous-buff, heavily barred black-brown.

Bill yellowish-horn, shading to blackish tip and with a small red area at the gape. Eye dark broken with orange orbital ring. Legs and feet orange.

The flight was distinctive—leisurely, with several deep wing-beats followed by a glide—a cross between Hobby and Kestrel. The tail looked rather long and the wings decidedly long in flight. At rest the wings were just longer than the tail.

After being disturbed from its roost, the bird flew to a dead tree where it remained, preening and surveying the moor. At 0740 hours it flew to the ground and caught a green caterpillar, returning to its perch to eat it. During the next hour it made six similar feeding sallies. Twice the prey was again a green caterpillar; on the other occasions it was an unidentified insect. In between these sallies the bird dozed and preened. The method of hunting was to perch on the top of a dead tree and watch the ground directly underneath. There was much head-shaking, vertically and laterally, when the bird sighted an insect. It would then drop to the ground, catch the insect and always return to the perch to eat it. The large caterpillars were held in one talon and usually took four bites to finish off. The bird never moved more than ten yards from the tree when



hunting and was very good at running through long heather. When a Cuckoo landed in the tree, the falcon took off immediately and flew around before returning, when the Cuckoo departed. On two occasions the falcon was mobbed by Black-headed Gulls and took evasive action. Meadow Pipits also mobbed it on several occasions, though not forcefully, and I got the impression that it was a very timid bird.

R. H. DENNIS

(This is the first record for Inverness-shire and the Moray area.—Ed.).

### LITTLE OWL IN MIDLOTHIAN

On 17th March 1961 a freshly-dead Little Owl *Athene noctua* was picked up in Leith. It was sent to the Royal Scottish Museum for identification where it was found to be a male. It showed no signs of having been kept in captivity. This is the first record of the species in Midlothian.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

### TENGMALM'S OWLS IN ORKNEY

On 26th December 1959 I was told of a strange owl in a small plantation of deciduous trees, not exceeding 20 feet in height, in a disused quarry at Cruan, Firth. Mr J. Wood and I saw the bird the same day. Noticeably smaller than our familiar Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*, it looked stocky and had a large head. Perched about 12 feet up, it kept its eyes shut and only opened them for a moment when we made a considerable commotion. We got the impression that the bird was pretty exhausted.

The upperparts were of a reddish chocolate-brown colour with white spots—small on the primaries and secondaries but much larger on the back. There was a conspicuous row of large spots on the wing-coverts and very fine spots on the forepart of the crown. The facial discs were complete and whitish with a dark chocolate border. The underparts were whitish or creamy, marked with streaks of pale reddish-chocolate and there was a narrow band of chocolate round the throat. The iris was yellow and the beak pale yellowish. The legs were hidden by the body plumage when the bird was perched, but when we induced it to fly, we could see that they were thickly covered with whitish or creamy feathers right over the toes, flecked with a little pale brown. The claws were blackish. The flight from tree to tree resembled that of the Long-eared Owl *A. otus*. It would drop downwards from its perch, fly quickly to another tree and sweep up to alight on the chosen branch. We concluded that the bird was a Tengmalm's Owl *Aegolius funereus*.

This bird stayed in the plantation during 26th December and the following day. It perched in an upright position with its eyes closed most of the time. When dusk began to fall it became more awake and alert and began to move about. It disappeared after 27th December and we thought it had gone for good, but it turned up again on 1st January 1960, after which it was never seen again. A pellet measuring about 45 x 14 mm was found beneath its usual perch, but owing to the presence of Kestrels in the area, it was impossible to be certain that this came from the owl.

On 1st May 1961 I again had the opportunity of observing a Tengmalm's Owl—this time in a garden in Stromness. The weather was dull and misty at the time with a fresh south-east wind. The owl was sitting at about eye-level in a small tree, backed by a high wall, where it was being furiously mobbed by a Blackbird. It appeared little more than half the size of a Short-eared Owl and looked very big-headed, giving the impression of tapering away very sharply to the tail. In plumage it closely resembled the previous bird except that it was rather more heavily marked on the underparts.

E. BALFOUR.

(These are the first acceptable records of the species in Orkney.—Ed.).

#### GREEN WOODPECKER BREEDING IN LANARKSHIRE

In October 1960 the Forestry Officer in East Kilbride told us that he had seen a bright green bird about the size of a small Woodpigeon in a wood near the town. It was not until February and March 1961 that one of us (A.W.) saw the bird and easily identified it as a Green Woodpecker *Picus viridis*. We saw it on three occasions during these months and we again saw the bird in the same wood on 28th May and later found the nest 28-30 feet up a tree. The nest was not accessible, but on many subsequent visits we saw both adult birds at the nest feeding young.

DAVID LAWSON.  
ALEC McCONNELL.  
A. WILSON.

(This is the first breeding record for Lanarkshire and the most northerly breeding record so far for the western half of Scotland. For other recent records of the species in Lanarkshire see *antea* 1:73 and 132, and 1939 *Scot. Nat.* p. 49, which is apparently the first record for the county.—Ed.).

#### REDWING BREEDING IN ROSS-SHIRE

When walking by a Ross-shire river on 6th June 1961, M.H.M. saw a Redwing *Turdus musicus* fly into a birch copse

on the opposite side of the river. Later, she discovered that there were two Redwings present, and on several occasions she saw the birds enter the copse carrying food in their bills. Circumstances prevented her from making a search that day, but on 7th June she and D.M. visited the locality together. On arrival at the spot where M.H.M. had seen the birds the previous day, we were greeted by a medley of harsh alarm-notes and soon two adult Redwings appeared on the topmost branches of a birch tree. From their agitated behaviour we concluded that they had fledged young nearby, but a search of the area proved unrewarding and we withdrew from the vicinity to keep watch a short distance away. Several minutes later a Redwing with food in its bill alighted on a tree-stump and, after a few seconds, flew into a thick cluster of twigs which grew on the trunk of a large birch tree. Going to the spot, we discovered a nest containing three young Redwings which were fully feathered and almost ready to fly. The nest, which looked a rather flimsy structure, was built in the junction between the tree trunk and the mass of twigs at a height of 4½ feet from the ground. Recent records of the Redwing breeding in Ross-shire may be found in *British Birds* 52:315 and 53:358.

D. MACDONALD.

MARGARET H. MITCHELL.

### STONECHAT BREEDING IN SHETLAND

On 10th May 1961 Mr Christopher Booth, motoring past the Loch of Voe, Parish of Delting, Shetland, spotted a pair of Stonechats *Saxicola torquata* behaving as if nesting. On observation the birds were seen to be feeding young. The nest, when located, contained five fully-grown young, all of which were ringed by Mr Booth. On the following day I saw both adult birds and two nestlings which were being fed in the vicinity of the now-empty nest, which was situated under a thick tuft of heather. This is the first recorded breeding of the species in Shetland.

J. PETERSON.

### LESSER GREY SHRIKE IN AYRSHIRE

On the evening of 15th June 1961, while driving between Crosshill and Dalrymple, I had a brief glimpse of an unfamiliar bird on the roadside telegraph wires near Blairbowie Farm. I could not find it the following evening, but on the 17th my wife and I had perfect views of it at very close range as it moved in leisurely short flights along the low roadside hedge in front of the car. Viewed at ranges of 25 yards or less we had no difficulty in identifying it as a Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*. The breast was strikingly pink (more so than in the *Handbook* illustration) and the black eye-stripe was so broad that, when viewed from below, the bird appeared to

have a completely black cap. The bird was again seen on the 18th by Arthur Duncan and Donald Watson and, after an interval during which it could not be located, it was found in the same area by Donald Cross and David Reid on 24th June, after which it was seen no more. On every occasion it was seen perched on overhead wires or low hedgerows and it seemed to have no desire to seek the shelter of overgrown hedges or the adjacent woodlands.

G. HUGHES ONSLOW.

(Mr Donald Watson, who also made sketches of the bird, has sent us the following detailed description:

A fine bird with striking black mask over front of crown almost, if not quite, as far back as the eyes, with the black continuing as a broad streak through and behind the eyes; sides of face and throat white or nearly so, becoming pale salmon-pink on the breast and rest of underparts; wings wholly black except for rectangular white patch at the base of the primaries, showing clearly in flight as a short broad bar not extending on to the secondaries. The tail was rather long and black with white edges to the outer feathers, scarcely graduated; relative to the wings the tail seemed longer than in some descriptions. The whole bird was rather slight in build, lacking the formidable look and bold upright stance of the typical Great Grey Shrike, but the strong wind kept the bird sitting low—almost horizontally—head to wind. It fed by short flights and pounces to the ground, chiefly close to the low hawthorn hedge on which it perched. Occasional longer sallies took it to a fence across a grass field. From the head pattern of pure jet-black on the fore-crown it appeared to be a male in very smart plumage.

This would seem to be the first record for Ayrshire and Clyde.—Ed.).

#### RED-BACKED SHRIKE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

In the late afternoon of 19th May 1961 I was driving with a friend down the narrow road that leads from the south end of Loch of Strathbeg when we saw an unmistakable male Red-backed Shrike perched at the side of the road. We were able to watch it at very close quarters and could clearly see the red-brown back and grey head, the heavy black mark through the eye and the typical shrike bill. In flight the black tail with white at the sides was plainly visible.

PAMELA FURNESS.

#### ROSE-COLOURED STARLING IN DUNBARTONSHIRE

On 12th May 1961 a flock of Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* flew up from the lawn at my house in Bearsden. Amongst them was one bird of the same size and general appearance as the others but having a black head or "cowl," black wings and tail and a pink breast. I suspected at once that this must be a Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* and I was able to confirm this by reference to the *Field Guide*.

R. W. PICKFORD.

(This would be the first record for Dunbartonshire, but the date and the locality combine to make it most unlikely that this was a genuine wild bird and we feel that it should be treated as a probable escape from captivity.—Ed.)

### SCOTTISH CROSSBILL IN WESTER ROSS

In *The Birds of Scotland* (Vol. 1:70-71), Baxter & Rintoul are vague about the present status of the Scottish Crossbill *Loxia sp. scotica* in Ross-shire.

On 21st May 1961 Dr T. C. Smout saw a small flock of Crossbills in a pine-wood at Shieldaig, Wester Ross. Next day I had close views of an adult male in the same wood, and I was able to compare it with some Scottish Crossbills which I saw later on the same day in Speyside. Its bill appeared very similar in size and shape to those of the Speyside birds, and struck me as noticeably heavier than those of some continental birds *L. c. curvirostra* which I had watched only a fortnight earlier in Suffolk. Its call—a low-pitched “choop-choop-choop” or “klomp-klomp-klomp”—was quite different from any notes I have heard from continental Crossbills, although both it and the Speyside birds occasionally gave a higher-pitched “yip” call in addition.

I. C. T. NISBET.

(In fairness to the authors of *The Birds of Scotland*, it should be pointed out that they state quite specifically that Ross was one of the Counties in which the Scottish Crossbill was then (1950) breeding. We would, however, welcome more notes of this kind on the distribution of Crossbills outside their headquarters in Speyside, and the notes on racial field identification are particularly valuable coming from an observer of Dr Nisbet's experience.—Ed.).

### CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers: A. G. Ablett, G. H. Acklam, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, Miss V. E. C. Balfour-Browne, I. V. Balfour-Paul, J. Ballantyne, Miss K. H. Barr, Miss P. G. Baxter, J. A. Begg, W. K. Birrell, T. Boyd, Dr B. Campbell, J. W. Campbell, C. N. L. Cowper, W. A. Craw, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, W. A. J. Cunningham, R. H. Dennis, G. Dick, Dr G. M. Dunnet, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Sir R. Erskine-Hill, M. Everett, M. Forrester, E. M. Gall, Miss E. A. Garden, P. Holt, J. Hoy, E. N. Hunter, Miss R. S. Hunter, Rev. G. T. Jamieson, Dr D. Jenkins, J. H. Lawton, Lt.-Col. W. M. Logan-Home, A. J. B. Loudon, P. V. W. Lowe, A. Macdonald, K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, R. I. Milne, Mrs E. A. Munro, J. Oliver, G. Patrick, J. Potter, W. Pryde, I. B. Roy, Dr M. Rusk, C. Sanderson, W. M. Skene, R. W. J. Smith, T. C. Smout, I. S. Suttie, J. H. Swan, Miss V. M. Thom, L. A. Urquhart, G. Waterston, Mrs M. I. Waterston, Dr A. Watson, A. D. Watson, Dr R. S. Weir, J. W. Wightman, K. Williamson. Unless otherwise stated dates refer to late 1960 or to 1961).

#### *Breeding and Distribution*

The free flying **Night Herons** from Edinburgh Zoo continue

to appear in odd places to the confusion of the public. On 24th August an adult was preening itself in the Royal Botanic Garden where it was sitting by the pond on top of *Salix babylonica ranulis-aureis*. As the observer strolled in the sun he heard many suggestions as to what this strange bird might be—including one very positive theory that it was a Kittiwake (A.T.M.). On 6th June a strange brown bird was wading about a pond in Dunfermline spearing fish before admiring onlookers. It then sat in a tree. This bird was featured in the press and on television, and generally noted as a Bittern. We have seen an excellent photograph of it, proving, as we guessed, that it was an immature Night Heron (G.D.). Less precise reports which we have heard recently of this species indicate that, in Edinburgh, it has been seen by the canal at Sighthill, noted flying over Corstorphine regularly at dusk from the Zoo, and comes regularly at dusk to the mud at the mouth of the R. Almond when the tide is right (Ep.).

In 1960, for the first time, a pair of **Gadwall** spent most of the spring and early summer at Gladhouse, and breeding was suspected. In 1961 a drake and two ducks appeared in the spring, and breeding was later proved when one of the ducks was seen on 2nd July with two small ducklings. The only breeding previously recorded in Midlothian was at Threipmuir in 1933 and 1934 (D.G.A.).

A pair of **Pintail** was at Tynninghame, East Lothian, on 9th and 16th April. They are unusual there (T.B.).

Inland records of **Scaup** come from the Loch o' the Lowes. New Cumnock, Ayr, where there was a drake with a flock of Tufted Ducks from 3rd to 7th April (J.A.B.); from Duddingston, Edinburgh, where a drake was noted on 19th April (B.C.) and a pair on 13th July (D.R.A.); and from Biggar boating pond where another drake was seen on 26th April (R.S.H.). Some 1,400 **Common Scoter** milling about at Gullane Point on 19th April were even more than the exceptional count of 1,000 already noted ten days earlier (*antea* 1:433) (B.C.). Fourteen **Red-breasted Mergansers** at Longannet, Fife, on 11th July may have been summering birds, such as occur further down the Forth, rather than early arrivals from fresh water (J.H.).

A pair of **Mute Swans** sitting on six eggs at Kilfinan, Argyll, on the shore of L. Fyne, with a nest in rough grass just above high water mark, are the first to breed there (D.R.A.). A single **Whooper Swan** was seen on two different lochs in N.E. Caithness on 22nd and 23rd May (per D.G.A.) and one spent the summer, until at least 16th July, on L. Insh, near Kincaig, Inverness (R.H.D.).

A **Buzzard** was seen on 5th March at Polnoon, an unusual place for one, near Eaglesham, Lanark. It flew off south-east at a great height (L.A.U.).

Two **Rough-legged Buzzards** were seen for at least two weeks

during November near Tarfside, Glen Esk, Angus. A buzzard seen in September may have been of this species, and a bird seen twice in October probably was (D.J., A.W.).

On several days between 5th and 22nd April an **Osprey** was seen fishing at Upper Rhynd Loch near Braco, Perth. It would sit on the roadside telegraph poles (G.T.J.). On 8th June another Osprey was seen soaring in wide circles high over the summit of Rueval in Benbecula until it drifted out of sight in the direction of the Monach Islands (G.W., M.I.W.). A third one was watched catching a fish on 13th August from Pitfour Loch, near Mintlaw, Aberdeen (E.A.G.). The Ospreys at L. Garten, Inverness, were successful for the third successive year, and reared three chicks, bringing their total to seven (M.I.W.).

Very few notes are sent in about **Quail**, but one suspects that a thorough investigation of the cornfields in East Lothian and Berwickshire might reveal a rather different picture. Near Gifford, East Lothian, they evidently breed, having been heard in 1960 and again during June 1961. In this locality they are said to have occurred for a number of years, so that they are free from the doubts about some East Lothian records which follow the rearing of Quail from eggs at Archerfield, Dirleton, in 1959 (A.M.).

**Ringed Plover** bred at Gladhouse for the third year running (D.G.A.).

A **Herring Gull** was seen at Seafield, Leith, on 10th April, with bright yellow legs. Its size and pale silver mantle were the same as ordinary Herring Gulls with it and its race remains indeterminate (A.G.A.). There were two pairs on St Serf's Island in L. Leven on 28th May, when a nest with three eggs was found—the first breeding record for Kinross (T.B., R.W.J.S.). A clutch of two eggs at Tynninghame at 4th June is the first to be found there (I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.). *The Birds of Scotland* notes that **Black-headed Gulls** have not been recorded breeding in West Sutherland. Up to 1939, in fact, the annual additions to the *Geographical Distribution and Status of Birds in Scotland*, which then ceased, did not even record the species in West Sutherland. The only published record which we have been able to trace of the species having been seen in the area is one at Handa on 11th July 1959 (*Fair Isle Bird Bulletin* 4: 121). It is therefore probably worth noting mainland records of two Black-headed Gulls at Oldshore More, and single birds at Kinloch Bervie and Rhiconich, on 27th June (J.B.). On 11th June there was a spectacular invasion of **Kittiwakes** in the upper Forth at Longannet, Fife, when 87—nearly all in adult plumage—were flying about calling noisily and displaying in the air (J.H.).

**Black Guillemots** still nest at Portpatrick, Wigtown, in the harbour wall, and three were back there on 12th April (W.A.C.). A pair were on the sea off Benane Head, Girvan,

Ayr, on 14th May, but at Portencross, Ayr, two seen on 15th January could not be found on later visits (G.H.A.).

On 29th May a **Turtle Dove** was briefly glimpsed as it flew from typical shrub habitat at Dalhousie, Midlothian. R.W.J.S. tells us that the keeper had heard birds in past years which he thought must be Turtle Doves (A.T.M.). One at Garleton, near Haddington, on 5th August, may have derived from the colony established recently in the Longniddry area (W.K.B.).

In East Lothian, the **Barn Owls** which nested last year (*antea* 1:339) again reared young at Gullane, and two pairs of **Long-eared Owls** nested at Aberlady, though only one reared any chicks (W.K.B.).

On 27th April a **Green Woodpecker** was right out on the saltings at Aberlady (A.G.A.). At Blanesfield, West Stirling, where one was heard in 1959 (*antea* 1:132) the striking call was again noted, between 2nd and 28th April. As it came from private ground it was not possible to look for a nest (K.H.B.). In the south-west suburbs of Edinburgh one was seen in the grounds of Merchiston Castle School on 1st and 12th July. A mile north-east of Carnwath, Lanark, there was one on 9th July (I.V.B-P.).

A **Magpie** in the grounds of George Heriot's School on 20th March was in a very central and built-up part of Edinburgh (T.C.S.). A **Jay** was seen in Glen Dye, Kincardine, on 15th June. In Angus Jays may be seen infrequently in Glen Esk, and the observer has one record for Glen Clova. They are always in or near conifers (D.J.).

The **Treecreeper** is not known to breed in the Outer Hebrides, so that it is of interest to record one seen on 16th June in a Force 8 gale and lashing rain in the woods at Stornoway Castle. Unfortunately there was no time to look for a nest (G.W., M.I.W.).

A number of reports of **Stonechats** have been received in connection with the enquiry into their numbers, and there are indications that in some areas, such as Forth, numbers are very slowly increasing. A pair bred in Shetland for the first time, as recorded on another page. One pair bred successfully in Speyside (R.H.D.), and another was seen feeding fledged young above L. Chon, Perth (G.H.A.). Along the coast of Fife, where the revival seems to have started earlier than elsewhere, numbers have been ringed (W.J.E.), and in East Lothian young were fledged between Aberlady and Gullane (W.K.B., A.M.). A pair with fledged young at Pease Bay, Berwickshire, were the first to nest there since 1938, we learn from C.S. (A.M.). In Midlothian a female was seen at Rosebery on 5th March (D.G.A.), and at Threipmuir a male was seen on 9th March (A.G.A.), and a pair on 15th and 16th April (T.B., P.H.). In Edinburgh there was a pair on the Braid Hills on 5th May, where they had earlier been seen on 29th March (*antea* 1:431) (V.E.C.B-B.).



A pair of **Grasshopper Warblers** spent the summer from 28th April 1959 in deep heather a mile south of Forres and evidently bred, although this was not proved (I.S.S.). In West Lothian there were two singing on 31st May in a plantation at Starlaw Farm, near Bathgate (W.K.B.). In Midlothian one was heard a mile north-west of Gladhouse on 10th May in the same place as in 1960 (*antea* 1:281) (A.T.M.), and on 16th July one was singing at Gladhouse itself (R.W.J.S.). In East Lothian one was singing at Aberlady on 30th April (E.M.G., R.W.J.S.), and another sang near Gifford during May and June (A.M.).

On May 14th a **Sedge Warbler** was singing in the very heart of Edinburgh on the Castle Rock (T.C.S.). **Blackcaps** almost certainly bred at Longannet, Fife, and were present at two localities at Valleyfield. At one of these a brood—the observer's first record there—hatched on 14th July, which indicates a very late laying date (J.H.). Throughout the breeding season one sang at L. an Eilean, Inverness, without attracting a mate (R.H.D.), and at Glassel, Aberdeen, a pair was noted on 29th May (D.G.A.). A **Garden Warbler** was seen at Feshie Bridge, Inverness, on 23rd May (R.H.D.). A pair bred successfully at Valleyfield, Fife, in which county it is a scarce bird (J.H.). A **Whitethroat** was heard singing in suitable breeding habitat below the church at L. Innis, Kinloch Bervie, on 26th June. Breeding has not been proved so far north, the only published record for West Sutherland coming from much further south (J.B.).

In Ross there is not much evidence of the **Chiffchaff** in the Gairloch district, but one was heard at the Maree Hotel in a snowstorm on 1st April, and again on 15th June (E.N.H.), while further south one was in full song on 16th April on the north side of L. Duich between Dornie and Eilean Donan Castle (J.B.). On Speyside singing birds were located at Nethybridge and Aviemore in late April (R.H.D.). In West Fife a single bird only was present at High Valleyfield throughout the season (J.H.). In Midlothian there was one singing at Penicuik on 12th May (R.W.J.S.).

Yet another central Edinburgh bird was a **Spotted Flycatcher**, also on the Castle Rock, on 15th, 16th and 17th May (T.C.S.). A pair of **Pied Flycatchers** bred in Rothiemurchus, Inverness (R.H.D.), and a cock was noted early in June on the south side of L. Earn near St Fillans (R.S.W.).

Two pairs of **Grey Wagtails** fledged young in the Outer Hebrides where they first bred as recently as 1957 (*antea* 1:120). They had their nests not very far apart on the Bayhead Burn in the woods at Stornoway Castle (W.A.J.C., M.F.M.M., G.W., M.I.W.). A pair of **Yellow Wagtails**—both *flavissima*—hatched six young in a nest in East Stirling. This is the first breeding record for Stirling. Unfortunately the nest was deserted after the ground about it had been criss-crossed by the tracks of a

tractor which may well have kept the adult birds away for a fatal length of time (G.D., J.P.).

On 3rd June a **Hawfinch** was briefly seen carrying food on the south side of L. Earn at St Fillans, but it could not be found again (R.S.W.). Six **Crossbills** were seen at Edgelaw, Midlothian, on 30th April, in larches. Though the last definite record was on 5th April 1959 (*antea* 1:133) the observer has thought he heard them on several occasions since then. The flock included at least three red males so it was not a 1961 family party (D.G.A.).

#### *Winter 1960-61*

A **Great Northern Diver** was noted inland at Gladhouse, Midlothian, on 13th November (D.G.A.). The relative abundance of this species on spring passage on the west coast is illustrated by typical counts of eleven on a crossing of the Sound of Rhum on 15th May (B.C., W.J.E., K.W.) and seven in the Sound of Mull on the 26th (J.H.L.). An inland record of a **Red-throated Diver** comes from L. Ken, Kirkcudbright, where one on 1st January had probably been there for some time (A.D.W.). An interesting series of counts at Gullane, East Lothian, was made on calm days, from the Car Park and westwards to the Point, where Red-throated Divers may be seen in numbers. Totals were: 18th February (9), 5th March (11), 16th (23), 30th (25), and 7th April (35). An addition to the observer's family regrettably put a stop to observations at this point (T.C.S.).

There was a **Red-necked Grebe** just west of Gullane Point on 2nd April (J.O.), and two **Black-necked Grebes** just east of the Point on 5th March (T.C.S.). A pair of the latter on Kilconquhar Loch, Fife, on 8th April, were displaying mildly, rising slightly in the water with breasts and bills touching. They were not seen again (R.S.W.).

A **Long-tailed Duck** was seen on Carlingwark Loch, Kirkcudbright, for three weeks from 5th February (A.D.W.). "Red-head" **Smews** were noted at Barr Loch, Renfrew, on 3rd and 8th April (G.H.A., L.A.U.), and at the Endrick mouth, Dunbarton, on the 16th (M.E. per G.H.A.).

In Strathtay more **Grey Lag Geese** were noted passing south than in any autumn since the observer went there fifteen years ago. Many skeins, totalling some 400 birds, were noted going south or south-east from 28th to 31st October, and a similar pattern was reported from Pitlochry. During the winter there were more Grey Lag in the Strathtay and Tummel area than usual (J.W.C.). They were also much more abundant than usual in the Carnwath area, Lanark, where the highest count was just over 100 on 4th March (R.E.H.). By contrast there were never more than 100 counted at Gladhouse where in recent years between 500 and 800 have appeared every autumn (D.G.A.). In Kirkcudbrightshire the numbers of

**Bean Geese** were the lowest in recent years. A single one was seen with **Grey Lags** on 20th November, and 20 to 25 appeared on 19th February, increasing to 56 on the 21st, and a maximum of 68 early in March (A.D.W.). Eight were seen in a field in front of Quothquan Lodge, near Carnwath, Lanark, on 16th April, but were evidently on passage as they were not seen again (R.E-H.). In the same area **Pink-footed Geese** arrived on 26th September and left about a week or ten days earlier than usual on 20th April. The largest count was of at least 2,500 on 2nd April (R.E-H.).

The **Blue Goose** at Libberton (see *antea* 1:272, 386) was first seen this winter on 16th October, and after that more or less regularly until 9th April. There can be little doubt that it was the same bird that frequented the area during the previous winter. The only difference in plumage that could be detected was that in flight the area of white on the back and rump seemed more extensive this winter (R.E-H.).

The only report of **Brent Geese** in the Forth this winter is of five Dark-breasted birds at Tynninghame on 29th January (T.B., W.M.S.). Single **Barnacle Geese** were seen at Cromdale, Moray, from 23rd to 27th April (R.H.D.), with **Grey Lag** at Kirriemuir, Angus, on 3rd April (D.G.A.), and with **Pinkfeet** near Carnwath on 16th October, 18th December, 29th January, 31st March, and 2nd April (R.E.-H., L.A.U.), and there were three over Edgelaw Reservoir, Midlothian, on 22nd April (R.W.J.S.).

At Gladhouse, Midlothian, a female **Hen Harrier** was seen on 18th December and 15th January (D.G.A.).

On 17th April the wintering flock of **Black-tailed Godwits** on the Eden Estuary, Fife, numbered nearly 50 birds in their gorgeous breeding plumage (A.T.M.). Winter records of single **Spotted Redshanks** come from the Low Parks, Hamilton, Lanark, on 28th January, and from the Clyde below Erskine Ferry, Renfrew, on 25th March (G.H.A.).

The immature **Glaucous Gull** previously noted in Ayr Harbour on 5th March (*antea* 1:434) was seen again on 26th March and 14th May, and what was evidently the same bird was at the mouth of the R. Doon on 26th March and 8th July (G.H.A.). A second-winter bird flew along the shore at Carsethorn, Kirkcudbright, on 26th February (L.A.U., A.D.W.).

A very late **Little Auk** was seen on the pier at St Andrew: Fife, on 22nd April (J.W.W.).

A very large flock of probably more than 1,000 **Fieldfares** was resting at Amulree, Perth, on 22nd October (J.W.C.).

In Inverness a single **Waxwing** was seen by various people between 18th March and 8th April (M.R.).

The spate of records of **Great Grey Shrikes** continues (see *antea* 1:387, 435). *Moray*: the bird at Nethybridge remained

until the beginning of April. One stayed two weeks in the Osprey reserve at L. Garten from 24th March, and another was seen during March in Rothiemurchus (R.H.D.). *Argyll*: one was feeding on a Robin on 26th March 8½ miles along the road from Fort William to Spean Bridge (P.V.W.L. per W.J.E.). *Tay*: one was seen at Ardrennich, Strathtay, on 13th and 16th November (J.W.C., M.E.C.), and one near Tarfside, Angus, on three occasions during November, and many times throughout March (G.M.D., D.J., A.W.). *Tweed*: one was watched on top of a large shrub beside the R. Tweed at Neidpath Castle, Peebles, on 6th April (A.G.A.). *Solway*: a further note from near New Galloway, Kirkcudbright, is of one at L. Stroan on 25th March (L.A.U.). At Thornhill, Dumfries, one was seen from 28th March to 14th April (J.H.S.). In Wigtown single birds were seen near Barhapple Loch, 4 miles north-east of Glenluce, on 2nd April (A.D.W.), and a few miles away, on the hill road from Glenluce to Glassock, on the 12th (G.T.J.).

#### *Spring Migration 1961*

A drake **Garganey** was at Hamilton, Lanark, on 27th May (M.F.).

A **Grey Plover** was seen inland at L. Leven, Kinross, on 29th April, in summer plumage (R.W.J.S.). A **Black-tailed Godwit** has already been noted at the mouth of the R. Endrick on 20th April (*antea* 1:436). Two days later there were three on the Stirling bank, as well as a **Bar-tailed Godwit** seen also in Dunbarton (G.H.A., A.J.B.L.). An early **Common Sandpiper** had reached Strathtay on 12th April (J.W.C.). At Aberlady, East Lothian, there was a **Little Stint** with the Dunlin on 14th May (J.B.). There were two **Ruff** there on 16th March (A.G.A.), and a single one in breeding plumage at Longannet, Fife, on 27th May (J.H.).

The **Pomarine Skua** is rare on spring passage and most of the records are from the Western Isles. On 7th May one was seen in the northern waters of the North Minch, and on the 9th there was another off the east side of Rhum near L. Scresort (W.J.E.).

Twelve **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Seafield, Leith, on 24th February, are distinctly early for the east coast (A.G.A.). Single **Little Gulls** are reported in the West, just south of Soay, off the south-east corner of Skye, on 9th May (per W.J.E.), and at Barr Loch, Renfrew, on 7th May—a 1st summer bird, the first summer bird for the county (L.A.U.). In Fife there were five at the mouth of the Eden Estuary on 17th April (T.B.), eleven 1st summer birds at the Morton Lochs on 15th May, and two on the shore at Tayport on 22nd May (R.I.M.).

At least two **Sandwich Terns** were heard calling as they flew over Loanhead, Midlothian, at 2230 hours on 10th May. It was

a dark night and they came in from the north and went over towards the south-east. The observer is very familiar with the call of this species which is seldom seen away from the sea (R.W.J.S.).

For the third successive year **Swifts** were noted in April. The first records were on the 29th when single birds were seen in Edinburgh over the Water of Leith (W.A.C.) and over Morningside (D.G.A.). On the following day three were seen on Little Cumbrae, Bute (G.W., M.I.W.), and eight were over Portmore Loch, Peebles (D.G.A.). On 1st May they had reached St Andrews (M.H.E.C.), two were back at their breeding holes in Haddington (A.M.), and one was seen near Winchburgh, West Lothian (E.A.M.). Single **House Martins** at Ruchlaw Mains, East Lothian, on 18th April, and at Tynninghame on the 19th, are a day or two earlier than any noted in the area during the previous seven years (I.B.R., W.M.S.). **Sand Martins** had reached Speyside by 3rd April (R.H.D.). There was an early cock **Whinchat** at Aberlady on 16th April, and also an early **Sedge Warbler** (W.K.B., K.S.M.). An early cock **Blackcap** was singing in Baro Wood, East Lothian, also on 16th April (K.S.M.). On the same day one was heard, for the first time in four years, singing in a wood near Kenmore, Perth (V.M.T.). At Valleyfield, Fife, the first birds arrived on 21st April (J.H.). Two **Whitethroats** at Gullane on 12th April were very early arrivals (W.K.B.), and a fairly early **Chiffchaff** was singing in Colinton Dell, Edinburgh, on 19th and 21st March (I.V.B-P., W.P.).

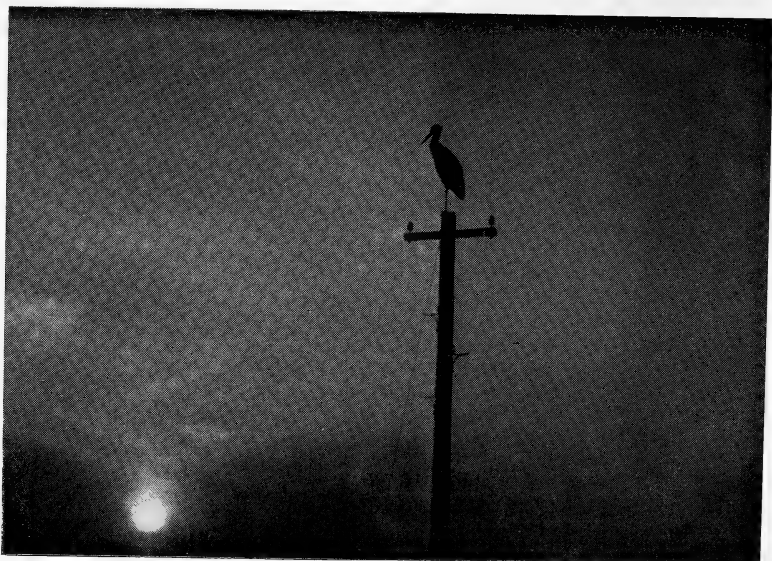
A very pale **Redpoll** at Tolsta, Lewis, on 26th May, with much white on the wings, and feeding among stones by the roadside, was evidently a **Mealy Redpoll** (M.F.M.M.).

#### *Autumn Migration 1961*

By no means all notes are yet in on this subject, but delay in publication of this number allows us to include what has been received.

Four **Shelduck** were seen high over the Low Parks, Hamilton, Lanark, on 13th July. They circled and then flew steadily away south-east. The observer suggests that this perhaps marks the start of the autumn moult migration (G.H.A.).

The first **Whimbrel** of the autumn was heard over St Andrews on 15th July (M.H.E.C.), and there were two at Gladhouse on the 16th, and one in the Firth of Forth at Fidra on the 17th (R.W.J.S.). A **Green Sandpiper** was seen at the Low Parks, Hamilton, on 13th July (G.H.A.), and four **Wood Sandpipers** at Aberlady on 13th August (W.K.B., C.N.L.C., K.S.M.). Sixteen **Common Sandpipers** at the Low Parks, Hamilton, on 13th July, rose high into the air at 2200 hours and flew off, calling continuously, towards the south-east, as though setting off on



WHITE STORK, Lochmaben, 18th April 1961 (see Short Notes).

(Photograph by William Austin)

migration (G.H.A.). A **Greenshank** was seen at Longannet, Fife, on the early date of 2nd July (J.H.), and one was recorded at Rosebery Reservoir, Midlothian, on 27th August (D.G.A.). At least one **Little Stint** at Cambus, Clackmannan, on 28th August seems to be the first published record for the county (D.G.A.). Another was at Aberlady on 13th August, when a **Ruff** was also present (W.K.B., C.N.L.C., K.S.M.).

On 9th July an **Arctic Skua** was harrying the terns at Aberlady Bay, but the warden reported that five or six—the first of the autumn—had been there the previous day. By the 30th there were at least twelve, and possibly sixteen—high numbers for the area (W.K.B., C.N.L.C., K.S.M.).

A **Little Gull** was watched taking food from the surface of the water and sand at the mouth of the R. Doon, Ayr, on 8th July. It was in 1st summer plumage. As the Glaucous Gull mentioned earlier was at the same place, the observers became intrigued with the possibility of seeing eight species of gull from the same spot. This they succeeded in doing, but only after having to search for ten minutes for the bird which belied its name—the Common Gull (G.H.A., G.P.).

A **Black Tern**, just beginning to lose its summer plumage, was seen near Earlsferry, Fife, on 12th August (P.G.B.).

### *Behaviour and Habits*

When danger threatens, the chicks of nidifugous birds crouch motionless on the ground, encouraged by the screams of the parent birds swooping over them if they should move. This behaviour has survival value as the chicks are not so easily spotted by predators, and one can readily observe it with such birds as Lapwings or **Black-headed Gulls**. On 25th June there were some 1,500 to 2,000 pairs of the latter at a colony in Perthshire but, possibly because of human interference, very few young birds. Most of the chicks were well developed, and the largest were just beginning to fly. At least two of them, however, could fly quite strongly, but the adults seemed to resent this. They immediately flew down at them, screaming, and knocked them out of the sky, so that they tumbled to the ground and crouched like unfledged chicks. The adults were evidently unable to accept the fact that, now that they could fly, these immature brown chicks would be safer off the ground. It was possible to pick them up, ring them, and watch them fly away when they were tossed into the air again (A.T.M.).

On 13th July a **Willow Warbler** at Duns, Berwick, was watched eating the berries of *Daphne mezereum*. The *Handbook* mentions elder berries and currants in autumn, but not *Daphne* berries (W.H.L.H.).

**The Scottish  
Ornithologists' Club**

**FOURTEENTH ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE**

**DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO**  
**Perthshire**

**27th to 29th OCTOBER 1961**

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PROGRAMME

**Friday, 27th October :**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5 to 7.30 p.m. and<br>8.30 to 9.30 p.m. | Conference Office in the Hotel Hydro opens for Members and Guests to register (8s 6d each). Collect Name Cards and Annual Dinner tickets (16s 6d each).   |
| 6.15 p.m.                               | Meeting of Council.   |
| 6.30 p.m. to midnight                   | Lounges reserved for informal discussions and refreshments. Ballroom reserved for showing slides and films. (Members <b>must</b> inform Mr C. E. Palmar, 5 University Avenue, Glasgow W.2 in advance if they wish to exhibit 2" x 2" slides or 16 mm. films). |
| 9.30 p.m.                               | Excursion Leaders will describe the places to be visited on Saturday and Sunday afternoons; in the Ballroom.  |

**Saturday, 28th October :**

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 8.45 to 9.15 a.m. | Conference Office opens for registrations.   |
| 9.20 a.m.         | Official Opening of the Conference in the Ballroom of the Hotel Hydro.<br>ADDRESS OF WELCOME by Archibald M'Lellan, Esq., Provost of Dunblane. |
| 9.30 a.m.         | LECTURE AND FILM on "Bird movements observed on Micro-wave Radar," by Dr W. R. P. Bourne (Edward Grey Institute, Oxford).                      |
| 10.45 a.m.        | INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.  |
| 11.15 a.m.        | DISCUSSION on Dr Bourne's paper, introduced and led by Dr W. J. Eggeling.  |
| 12.30 p.m.        | CONFERENCE GROUP PHOTOGRAPH outside the Hotel Hydro.   |
| 1 to 2 p.m.       | INTERVAL for informal lunches (Hotels must be informed).   |



2 to 5.45 p.m.

EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Hotel Hydro Car Park. Details of the Excursions will be posted on the Conference Notice Board.

6.15 p.m.

25th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CLUB in the Ballroom of the Hotel Hydro.

BUSINESS:—

- (1) Apologies for absence.
- (2) Approval of Minutes of 24th Annual General Meeting held in North Berwick on 29th October, 1960.
- (3) Report of Council for Session 24.
- (4) Approval of Accounts for Session 24.
- (5) Appointment of Auditor.
- (6) Consideration of the following proposed amendment to the Constitution:—  
That the words "the Editor and Business Editor of "Scottish Birds," the Hon. Treasurer of the House Fabric Fund," be added to read immediately after the words "the Hon. Treasurer," occurring in the second line of Paragraph 4(b) (Council).
- (7) Election of Hon. President. (The Council recommend the election of Sir Charles G. Connell as an Hon. President in recognition of his outstanding services to the Club and in establishing the Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection).
- (8) Election of two new Members of Council. (The Council recommend the election of Mr Alastair Macdonald and Mr A. T. Macmillan to replace Mr D. G. Andrew and Mr A. J. Smith who retire by rotation).
- (9) Any other competent business.

7.30 for 8 p.m.

ANNUAL DINNER in the Diningroom of the Hotel Hydro (Dress Informal).

### Sunday, 29th October :

9.30 a.m.

EXHIBITION OF FILM, "European Terns," by Mr F. Gordon Hollands, in the Ballroom of the Hotel Hydro.

10.45 a.m.

INTERVAL for coffee and biscuits.

11.15 a.m.

LECTURE on "Recent Ringing Discoveries" by Mr Robert Spencer, Ringing Officer of the B.T.O. Bird Ringing Committee.

11.45 a.m.

EXHIBITION OF FILM, "The Life History of the Alder Woodwasp and its Insect Enemies." (The Council for Nature prize-winning film).

1 to 2 p.m.

INTERVAL for informal lunches.

2 p.m.

EXCURSIONS by private cars leaving the Hotel Hydro Car Park.

### INFORMATION

(1) **Conference Post Card.** In order to simplify arrangements, it is **essential** that Members intending to be present should complete the enclosed printed post card and send it to the Club Secretary **not later than 23rd October**. Members may invite Guests.

(2) **Excursions.** Members are asked to provide private cars where possible for the Excursions; petrol expenses should be shared. Maps of the area should be brought (Ordnance Survey 1" maps: old Edition Nos. 62, 63, 66, 67; new Edition Nos. 53, 54, 55, 60, 61). Members who wish to go out on their own are particularly asked not to go in advance of led Excursions to avoid disturbing the birds.

(3) **Registration.** Everyone attending the Conference must register (8s 6d each) at the Conference Office on arrival (opening times—see Programme). Members wishing to attend the Annual General Meeting **only** do not require to pay the registration fee, which covers incidental expenses—hire of films, projection equipment, mid-morning coffee, etc.

(4) **Annual Dinner.** Tickets for the Annual Dinner (price 16/6 inclusive of tips) should be purchased when registering on arrival. Members and Guests staying in Dunblane Hotel Hydro will be charged for the Annual Dinner in their inclusive Hotel bill, but **must** obtain a ticket from the Conference Office. All tickets will be collected at the Dinner. **NO PAYMENTS SHOULD BE MADE IN ADVANCE TO THE OFFICE IN EDINBURGH.**

(5) **Hotel Bookings.** All Hotel bookings must be made direct with the Hotel in which you wish to stay. Owing to the shortage of single rooms, Members are urged to make arrangements to share a room with a friend. Private arrangements must be made with your Hotel for lunches each day.

(6) **Swimming Pool.** The indoor swimming pool in the Dunblane Hotel Hydro will be available to residents during the weekend at no extra charge.

(7) **Travel.** Members travelling from the south by night train arriving early on Saturday morning are asked to inform the Secretary, giving details of their trains, as it may be possible to arrange for trains to be specially stopped at Dunblane if a sufficient number require this facility and adequate warning is given.

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### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN DUNBLANE

DUNBLANE HOTEL HYDRO (Tel. 3161). Special Conference charge: Dinner and bed on Friday 27th; breakfast, lunch, Annual Dinner and bed on Saturday 28th; breakfast and lunch on Sunday 29th—£4, 5s 0d. (A 10% gratuity charge will be added to all bills).

STIRLING ARMS HOTEL (Tel. 2156). Bed and breakfast from 22s 6d.

\*THE NEUK PRIVATE HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 2150). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

\*SCHIEHALLION HOTEL, Doune Road (Tel. 3141). Bed and breakfast from 17s 6d.

BLAIRALAN, Dargie Terrace (Tel. 3196). Bed and breakfast from 16s 6d.

¶ARDLEIGHTON HOTEL (Tel. 2773). Bed and breakfast from 15s.

\*These Hotels are some distance from the Conference Hotel.

¶Situating near the Hotel Hydro gates.

## HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN BRIDGE OF ALLAN

ALLAN WATER HOTEL (Tel. B. of Allan 2293). Bed and breakfast from 27s 6d.

ROYAL HOTEL (Tel. B. of Allan 2284). Bed and breakfast from 27s.

Members with cars who have difficulty in obtaining single rooms in Dunblane should find that the above two Hotels in Bridge of Allan have ample single accommodation. The distance from Dunblane is approx. 3 miles.

The above terms for all Hotels other than the Conference Hotel are quoted as a guide **only**, and prices should be confirmed.

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS, DEEDS OF COVENANT AND BANKERS' ORDERS

Subscriptions for the new Session are now due, and should be sent with the enclosed form to the Club Secretary. It is regretted that owing to costs of sending out copies of the Journal, the Winter number cannot be sent until subscriptions have been received.

Members are reminded that the Club is now able to reclaim Income Tax on subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant, which greatly benefits Club Funds by almost doubling subscriptions paid in this way. The Council therefore invites Members who pay Income Tax at the full rate to undertake a seven-year Deed of Covenant for their subscriptions by using the form enclosed. Completed forms should be returned to the Secretary, who will forward a Certificate of Deduction of Tax for signature each year.

A Banker's Order form is also enclosed for the use of Members who find this a more convenient way of paying their subscriptions; this should be returned to the Secretary and not to the Bank.

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## BRANCH LECTURES

Members are asked to note that during the coming winter each Branch will hold their meetings on a different day of the week from previous years, with the exception of the Dundee Branch whose Members will continue to meet on Thursdays but have changed their meeting place.

Aberdeen Members should note that, owing to the Annual Conference weekend, the October meeting will be held on the following Monday.

Edinburgh Members should note that the March and April meetings will be held at a later hour to enable country Members to attend.

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## CLUB LIBRARY

A list of all books in the Lending Library of the Club is now available on loan.

**S.O.C. PUBLICATIONS**

"The Birds of Aberlady Bay Nature Reserve," by F. D. Hamilton and K. S. Macgregor. Copies still available at 5s each (postage 4d extra).

"The Birds of Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh," "Scottish Birds" Special Supplement. Copies available at 5s each (postage 2d extra).

Both these publications may be obtained from the Club Office.

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**BIRD BOOKS ON SALE IN THE SCOTTISH CENTRE**

Copies of the following books are now on sale at retail prices at the Scottish Centre and can be obtained post free on application to the Secretary.

**The Birds of the British Isles.** D. A. Bannerman (1953-1960) Vols. 1 to 9, price 63s per volume, sold separately.

**Birds of West and Equatorial Africa.** D. A. Bannerman (1953), in 2 volumes, price 6 gns.

**Birds of Cyprus.** D. A. and W. M. Bannerman (1958), price 63s.

**The Birds of Scotland.** E. V. Baxter and L. J. Rintoul (1953), in 2 volumes, price 63s.

**Birds of the Sudan.** F. O. Cave and J. D. Macdonald (1955), price 45s.

**The Isle of May.** W. J. Eggeling (1960), price 30s.

**Birds of Ireland.** P. G. Kennedy, R. F. Rutledge, C. F. Scroope and G. R. Humphreys (1954), price 42s.

**Pirates and Predators.** R. Meinertzhagen (1959), price 70s.

**Birds of Arabia.** R. Meinertzhagen (1954), price 84s.

**The Birds of Lancashire.** Clifford Oakes (1953), price 21s.

**Birds of Burma.** B. E. Smythies (2nd Ed. 1953), price 84s.

**Birds of Borneo.** B. E. Smythies (1960), price 84s.

**A Bird Watcher in Kenya.** Vernon van Someren (1958), price 30s.

**Birds and Mammals of Shetland.** L. S. V. and U. M. Venables (1959), price 30s.

The arrangement to sell these books through the Scottish Centre has been made by the kindness of the publisher and all trade profits will be credited to the Club Library Fund, which will enable us to purchase more books for the Club Library. The Council therefore invites Members who wish to purchase any of the above books to obtain them through the Club.

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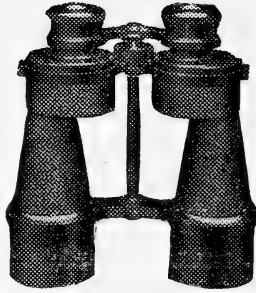
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**Family Membership Subscription**

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**M**EMBERS are reminded that the new Family, or Joint Membership subscription is available to married couples at 40s per annum. It carries all the benefits of full Membership with the exception that they receive only one copy of the Journal, and other Club publications, between them.

The Joint subscription does not however include children, as it is felt that they would prefer, and should be encouraged to receive their own copies of the Club literature.



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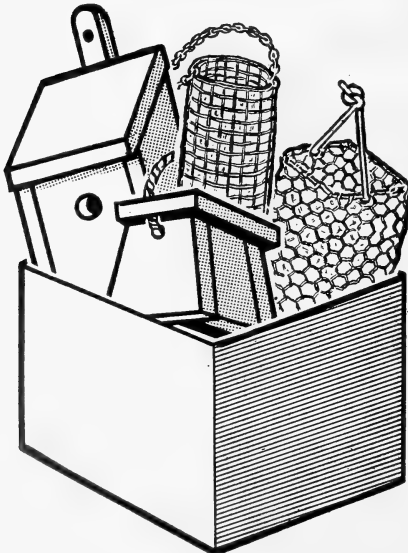
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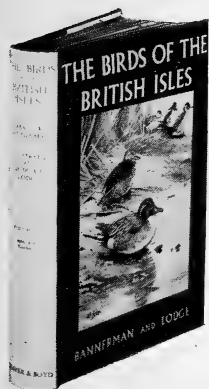
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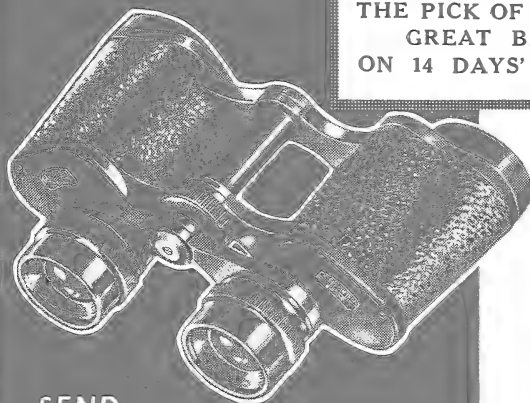
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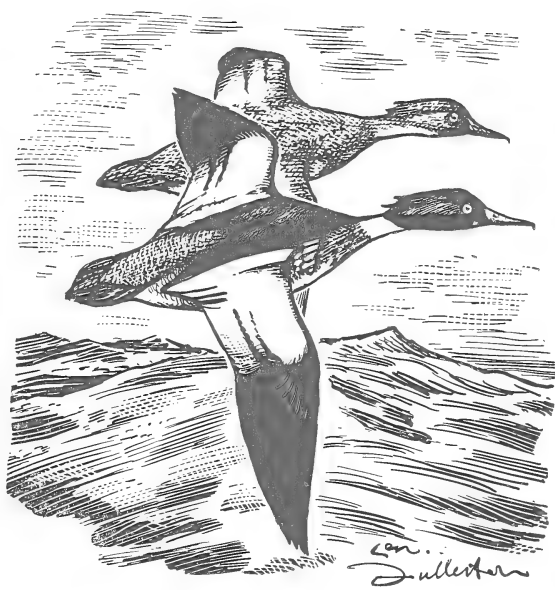
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. I No. 14

Winter 1961

FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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**T**HE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year. Joint membership is available to married couples at an annual subscription of 40/-. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members, but Joint members will receive only one copy between them.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, the Editor and Business Editor of "Scottish Birds," the Hon. Treasurer of the House Fabric Fund, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to Members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and Members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Red-breasted Mergansers) by LEN FULLERTON. *Published quarterly*

## Editorial

**F**EW of us enjoy parting with our money so much that we are prepared to pay more than the normal price for things. On the other hand, a society such as the Scottish Ornithologists' Club needs a substantial income if it is to pay its way and finance the free distribution of its own journal.

Reading this, you may imagine that it is the preamble to an announcement of increased subscriptions or of an appeal for funds, such as one receives almost every day. Instead, we commend to you two simple ways in which you can contribute painlessly to the funds of the Club at no cost to yourself, thereby warding off the probably inevitable day when subscriptions have to be looked at again!

The first is by paying your annual subscription under Deed of Covenant if you are a taxpayer bearing Income Tax at the Standard Rate. All you have to do is to sign a simple form agreeing to continue your subscription for seven years, and to sign a tax deduction slip which the Club Secretary will send you each year when you pay your subscription. The Club can then recover Tax on your subscription, so that the 25/- which you have paid brings in a total of 40/10d. There is no tax wangle about this; it is possible because of the scientific and educational nature of the Club and is specifically provided for by the Income Tax Acts. A Deed of Covenant is of great value to the S.O.C. and we most earnestly appeal to all who pay Income Tax at the Standard Rate to help in this way.

The second way in which you can benefit the Club is by buying certain bird books through the S.O.C. Oliver & Boyd Ltd. publish some of the finest and most attractive bird books, and they have given us an agency for them. This means that you can buy these books through the Club at the normal prices and the S.O.C. receives a substantial discount which it can use to buy other books needed for the Library. Oliver & Boyd have installed a fine display of their books which may be inspected at 21 Regent Terrace, and Mrs M. I. Waterston will be very glad to send an illustrated leaflet with details of

the books available. We might mention specially Bannerman & Lodge's monumental *Birds of the British Isles* (3 gns. per volume), Baxter & Rintoul's standard work on *The Birds of Scotland* (2 volumes for 3 gns.), Venables & Venables account of *Birds and Mammals of Shetland* (30/-), and Eggeling's fascinating book on *The Isle of May* (30/-).

## THE BIRDS OF DUDDINGSTON LOCH: CORRECTIONS

We now consider that certain records in our *Check-List of the Birds of Duddingston Loch* (*antea* 1: 400) are not sufficiently authenticated and recommend that the following species be placed within square-brackets:

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD.** Although it is probable that the bird seen on 2nd October 1954 was of this species we feel that there is insufficient evidence to make identification positive.

**RED GROUSE.** This record refers to an area outwith the boundaries of the Bird Sanctuary; and in any event is of somewhat dubious origin.

**QUAIL.** Speedy (Baird 1898) does not specifically mention Duddingston Loch in his reference; we feel it is more likely to have occurred "in the neighbourhood."

**SPOTTED CRAKE.** Speedy (1892) is vague about specific locality.

**LITTLE CRAKE.** This record had already been rejected by the Scottish Bird Records Committee (*Scot. Nat.* 67: 101), and we apologise for having overlooked this fact.

**CHIFFCHAFF.** Speedy (Baird 1898) is vague about specific locality.

It should perhaps be noted that J. Kirke Nash (1935) *The Birds of Midlothian* lists neither William Baird (1898) nor Tom Speedy (1892) in the Bibliography of his book.

D. R. ANDERSON.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

### CORRIGENDA

*Antea* 1: 459. The total of Osprey chicks reared should be eight, not seven.

*Antea* 1: 462. The record of Black-necked Grebes at Gullane really is of Black-throated Divers.

## THE SPREAD OF SOME SEA-BIRD COLONIES IN THE FORTH

R. W. J. SMITH

During the three summers of 1959-61 many of the small islands in the Firth of Forth have been visited (mainly through the excursions of the Edinburgh Natural History Society) to examine the possibilities of counting some of the sea-bird colonies. The two major islands of the May and the Bass were generally not included and, as these hold the main colonies of Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*, Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* and Razorbill *Alca torda*, the counts show only the spread, rather than any percentage increase, of those species.

It seems obvious that many of the breeding sea-birds in Forth are undergoing a period of expansion, and an extension of these counts (even at five year intervals) to cover the May and the Bass would be of immense interest. The data acquired might even prove as valuable as a series of "check-lists" totalling up the number of unfortunate stragglers which have been drifted to each island.

Some of the details of counts are given below under species. An interesting paper by W. A. Cameron on Inchkeith (*in press*) gives much greater detail of the breeding birds there. I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the many individuals who have helped with the counts.

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*. The main breeding colony in the Forth is on Inchkeith where apparently they have only bred since after the last war. On 3rd June 1959 there were a minimum of 105 sites, on 15th June 1960 there were about 145, and on 14th June 1961 about 142 were counted. On this last visit a bird was flushed off two eggs both of which were warm, from a site to which one of them could not have rolled accidentally. Another bird was sitting on the nest of a Herring Gull *Larus argentatus* which contained two gull's eggs and one Fulmar's. Less than a foot from this nest were two more Fulmar's eggs under a ledge and these could only have rolled there—or been ejected—from this nest. The two eggs were 61 mm and 74 mm long and the one in the nest 78 mm. *The Handbook of British Birds* gives an average of 100 eggs as 74 mm with a minimum length of 65.5 mm. It is possible that there is intense competition for nest-sites with a rising population.

On Fidra there were seven sites on 20th June 1959—four below the Lighthouse and three non-breeding on the South Stack. They have bred for many years below the Light but

were first found breeding on the South Stack by G. Waterston in 1961. Craigeith had 23 sites on 27th June 1959 and had increased to 36 (practically all on eggs) by 10th June 1961. The Fulmar does not breed on the Lamb and there are only a few pairs on the Bass (seven sites on 5th July 1959 and possibly fewer in 1961). Inchgarvie is being prospected and, although there is no proof of breeding yet, there were 11 sites in 1961.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. There has been a spectacular increase in the Cormorant colony since Freddie Marr first reported them breeding on the Lamb in 1957. In that year five nests were seen (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 7: 78) and "about eight" were reported the following year (F. Marr). Counts since then are 44 nests in 1959, 65 in 1960 and 108 in 1961. This increase averages over 50% per annum and, since Cormorants do not breed until at least their third or fourth year, bears no relation to the number of young reared in the colony.

It is obvious that most of these birds were bred outwith the Forth area. The nearest large colonies appear to be those at Mochrum and the Farne Islands—each holding over 200 pairs—but while recoveries of Mochrum birds in Forth are few (D. Stuart, *British Birds* 41: 198) there is evidence from ringing that big numbers of Cormorants from the Farnes occur in the Firth of Forth (J. C. Coulson, *British Birds* 54: 225-235). Dr Coulson informs me (*pers. comm.*) that there is a small new colony of Cormorants in Co. Durham, and it seems that the Farnes population is either expanding or is suffering enough persecution to make the birds quit the area to some extent.

TABLE 1: NUMBERS OF EGGS/YOUNG OF CORMORANTS  
ON THE LAMB

Date	Nests with eggs/young	Number of eggs/young	Eggs/young per nest
21/6/1959	44	99	2.25
11/6/1960	56	142	2.54
10/6/1961	96	263	2.74

Table 1 shows the average number of eggs/young per pair of Cormorants for the three years when counts were made. The 1959 visit was some ten days later in the year than the other two and there were no nests without eggs. In 1960 and 1961 there were 9 and 12 empty nests respectively and these have been omitted from the calculations. These birds would eventually lay as was shown by a visit five weeks later on 17th July 1961 when several clutches of eggs and newly

hatched young were seen. There is a small bias in the calculations as those late birds would probably have smaller clutches but this would be balanced by the increase in size of the smaller, incomplete, clutches and would not affect the general conclusion that the birds had an average of roughly 0.50 eggs more in 1961 than in 1959. This increase in the clutch size is undoubtedly related to the age of the birds. If, as one would expect, the colonisation is by young birds, then the percentage of mature birds would rise rapidly in the first few years till the colony had become established.

It has always seemed rather curious that, although Cormorants were numerous in the Forth, there was, until recently, no breeding colony (the old records of breeding have not been fully authenticated). Obviously there is no scarcity of food, and the main barrier has probably been a psychological one—that there was no established colony. Once this obstacle had been overcome by the pressures of an increased population there has been this remarkable upsurge in the numbers breeding in the new colony. The present rate of increase suggests that it will continue for a time yet, and so far there has been very little disturbance of the colony.

There is some evidence that few of the British Cormorant colonies exceed 200-250 pairs and it seems possible that there may be some factor (other than food) which limits the size of the colony. It will be very interesting to continue the annual counts and to find out how the eventual stabilisation of numbers is achieved.

**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Less data is available for this species. It breeds mainly on the May, the Bass and Craighleith and has recently started breeding inland on the latter island. On 10th June 1961 there were three nests under large boulders with adjacent thick Elder *Sambucus nigra*. Counts on the Lamb gave about 35 nests on 21st June 1959, 53 on 11th June 1960 and 87 on 10th June 1961. An increase on this scale has possibly been taking place on the larger islands for a number of years. On Fidra one of the Lighthouse Keepers reported to F. Marr that a pair had bred in 1960 and two pairs in 1961. Although a single bird was flushed off a suitable ledge on 5th May 1961 no nest could be found either then or on a later visit on 17th July. Numbers of Shags (mainly immature) regularly roost on the cliff opposite the pier on Inchkeith (W. A. Cameron) but there has been no record of breeding in Upper Forth.

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*. A count of the Craighleith colony on 27th June 1959 gave a total of some 415 sites—about 385 on the main cliffs and 29 at the north end. On 11th June 1960 there were about 370 and 35 respectively but this was over two weeks earlier in the year than the previous count. On 10th June 1961 a pair of birds had a nest with one egg at a tech-

nically "new colony" between these two groups and three other birds were present—almost certainly an indication of an increase in numbers. A new colony on the Lamb on 21st June 1959 had 16 nests, increasing to 38 on 11th June 1960 and 53 on 10th June 1961. One of these 1961 nests was on a less suitable ledge round from the "good" cliff and a further large expansion seems unlikely. The sheer cliff on Fidra had its first Kittiwake records on 5th May 1961 when an adult and an immature were seen on separate ledges. On 17th July an untenanted platform was seen with an adult still present on another part of the cliff.

In Upper Forth Kittiwakes have been seen round Inchkeith for several years and a nest was built (but no eggs laid) in 1960 (W. A. Cameron). On 14th June 1961 a clutch of two eggs and an empty nest was found, with a total of nine birds present (including two immatures) on the North Horn cliff, and a much bigger flock offshore. This is the first breeding record for the island. The Kittiwake is increasing in many of its colonies in the Forth and, to keep these details of the spread in proper perspective, it should be realised that something approaching 4000 pairs breed in the Firth.

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*. This species breeds only on Inchmickery and Fidra, and counts of nests on these islands in 1959 were 630 on 24th June and 70 on 20th June respectively. 300 pairs bred on Inchmickery in 1960 (246 nests on 8th June, and 298 on 22nd June) and 350 nests there on 31st May 1961 were a minimum—we guessed that probably 400 pairs would eventually nest. On 17th July 1961 an estimate of 300+ pairs was made on Fidra, and it seems that the present population in the Forth may fluctuate around this 700 pairs—it seems wise to emphasize the instability of Sandwich Tern numbers as this may be very far from the "normal" position.

**SMALL TERNS** *Sterna* spp. The small terns we found difficult to count specifically. On Fidra on 20th June 1959 some 300-350 pairs were probably mainly Common Terns *S. hirundo*, while a separate colony of 50 pairs of Arctic Terns *S. macrura* may not have been the total of this species on the island. Inchmickery is even more difficult, and probably 750-1000 (or more?) pairs of the smaller terns breed every year.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*. We have made little attempt to count this bird although so few breed on the small islands. On Craigeith about 20 birds were seen on 11th June 1960 and "exceptional numbers" (possibly up to 100 or more) on 10th June 1961. Our first record for the Lamb was in 1961 when one was ashore on 10th June and 17th July with three more flying round—but no proof of breeding was obtained.

**PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica*. The main colony in Forth is on Craigeith where 70 were seen in one offshore flock on 27th



June 1959 and a total of about 110 offshore on 10th June 1961. On 3rd June 1961 25-30 were seen on the Bass where there cannot be more than a maximum of 20-25 pairs breeding. We saw them several times in Upper Forth. Three were close inshore at Inchmickery on 22nd June 1960, and about six on 14th June 1961 at Inchkeith where a single bird was on the grass and rocks at the North Horn. When flushed this bird kept trying to come in to land. The habitat seems quite suitable for breeding Puffins and a watch should be kept here, and at islands such as Fidra (where we saw birds offshore in 1961) for an extension of breeding range.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

1. As part of a population study, 111 Eiders have been marked with coloured plastic tags on the wings. These markers can easily be seen on floating birds. In addition, 400 Eiders have been ringed with white or red plastic rings. Anyone seeing, or finding such marked birds, particularly in the Tay area, is requested to contact Mr H. Milne, Culterty Field Station, Newburgh, Aberdeenshire, giving details of location and date.

2. In this number of *Scottish Birds* it will be seen that large flocks of Siskins have been reported in October from different areas. The invasion seems to have been widespread and we would welcome additional information.—Ed.

## OPERATION OSPREY 1962

The R.S.P.B. will once again require the assistance of volunteer wardens between 1st April and mid-August to guard the Ospreys at Loch Garten and to act as Guides to the public visiting the Observation Post in the Sanctuary area. Wardens will be accommodated at a Base Camp where food, tents and camp equipment will be provided free. Each person is however expected to bring his own sleeping bag and pillow slip. Provided a sufficient number of Wardens are available, preferably for periods of not less than a week at a time, each one will have every third day free of duties. A succession of female cook-caterers will also be required for the period.

Anyone wishing to assist should send full details and references as soon as possible to Mr George Waterston, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

## FAMILY OR JOINT MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Members are reminded that the new Family, or Joint Membership subscription is available to married couples at 40s per annum. It carries all the benefits of full Membership with the exception that they receive only one copy of the Journal, and other Club publications, between them.

The Joint subscription does not however include children, as it is felt that they would prefer, and should be encouraged to receive their own copies of the Club literature.

## THE COLLARED DOVE IN SCOTLAND

ANDREW T. MACMILLAN

During 1961 the Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* has turned up in a number of new localities in Scotland. This therefore seems a good opportunity to summarise the progress it has made in colonising Scotland in the past five years. If past experience in other countries is any guide one may expect it to become widespread within the next decade.

James Fisher writing about *The Collared Turtle Dove in Europe* (*Brit. Birds* 46: 153) has described the spread of the species in detail—1,200 miles north-west across Europe from the Balkans in twenty years—a colonisation more spectacular than that of any other known land-bird, and more rapid even than that of the Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. The breeding range of the Collared Dove reaches eastward across India and China, and as far as Japan, and several subspecies have been described from parts of this range. Anyone seeking fuller information cannot do better than start by reading Fisher's paper.

The first Collared Dove in England was found in Lincolnshire in July 1952. Although its behaviour was consistent with it being a wild bird it was not possible to be certain that it was not one of a number sold by a local dealer in the previous few years (*Brit. Birds* 46: 51). The first fully acceptable records were from Norfolk where at least two pairs were present in 1955, and one of them bred (*Brit. Birds* 50: 239). Since then the species has been noted in more and more places, especially along the east coast.

In Scotland the story begins in 1957 when Alistair Adam found a pair breeding at a farm at Covesea, Morayshire. The call first attracted his attention, reminding him of the notes of the similar species he had known in Africa (*Scot. Nat.* 69: 188). In 1958 four young were reared here, bringing the population to seven (*antea* 1: 37). Two years later, after the 1960 breeding season, there were seventeen (*antea* 1: 379), and in 1961 up to thirty-five were counted around the small wood and farm where they live (R.H.D(ennis) in *The Scotsman* 14th October 1961). The birds may be seen in large numbers on the television aerial and seem very attached to the farm.

There is strong evidence that in 1957 Collared Doves were present also at Girvan in Ayrshire, and again in 1958, but breeding was not proved until 1959 (*antea* 1: 125). At least eight or ten birds were present at this site in 1961 (Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn *pers. comm.*).

After the 1959 breeding season single birds were recorded in Fife at Methil and Dunfermline. The former arrived in

rather mysterious circumstances, being found under a bush in a private garden, minus its tail (*antea* 1: 189). Like most first records of Collared Doves it is not entirely above suspicion. One should not however assume that a Collared Dove is an escape merely because it seems to be rather tame. It is typical of the species that it often turns up at new localities in hen runs, and it is a bird which associates closely with man. After reading through the present paper and the notes that follow it one might be forgiven for thinking that the bird's favourite perch is the crosspiece of a television aerial!

On 16th February 1960 a Collared Dove entered the loft of a pigeon fancier near Pitlochry, Perthshire. This bird then moulted its entire tail, and had to be kept for nearly six weeks before it could be released. In spite of its peculiar behaviour its identity is not in doubt (*antea* 1: 237). In 1960 Collared Doves were also noted in three remote areas in the north and west of Scotland: at Fair Isle single birds were recorded on 18th April and 18th June, and a third dove on 2nd June was more probably *S. decaocto* than *S. risoria*, the Barbary Dove (*Bird Migration* 1: 166); on Rhum one was seen on 5th and 7th May on the Castle greens at Kinloch, and in Lewis there was one at Stornoway on 2nd June (*antea* 1: 379). Three days later a Collared Dove was heard in Old Aberdeen by Prof. V. C. Wynne-Edwards, and in the autumn they were noted in Midlothian (see below).

During 1961 the number of reports increased spectacularly. The established breeding colonies in Morayshire and Ayrshire continued to flourish, but Collared Doves were also noted in many other parts of the country, especially during May and June. The first indication of any obvious local spread from the original colony at Covesea, Morayshire, is provided by a record of breeding, and the subsequent build-up of numbers, at a site some twelve miles away near Forres. In Berwickshire there were two unsuccessful attempts at breeding near Coldingham, while in Midlothian young were reared at one site at least. The records printed below include first occurrences for Solway (Dumfriesshire), Tweed (Berwickshire), Midlothian (1960), North Fife, Aberdeenshire (1960), Inverness-shire, and Shetland other than Fair Isle. It will also be seen that there are further new localities to be mentioned in Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Midlothian, Fife, and Morayshire, and that the birds have again been noted in Lewis and Fair Isle.

In addition to these acceptable records we have received reports of birds at Haddington and Hailes Castle, East Lothian, and elsewhere, which on investigation have turned out to be escaped domestic Barbary Doves *S. risoria*. This species is known only in captivity and is readily distinguished by its paler, more creamy plumage, *the absence of black on the pri-*

*maries*, and by its different call-notes. Like a number of other species, however, it has a collar, so that it may be confused with our Collared Dove *S. decaocto* by the unwary and those with the wrong bird book. Not all the identification books are equally clear on the separation of Collared and Barbary Doves, but *The Popular Handbook of Rarer British Birds* (1960) by P. A. D. Hollom is helpful.

It is most striking how often Collared Doves in Scotland have been recorded in the gardens and hen runs of ornithologists or those with an interest in birds. The cynic might say that this is one of the species whose known distribution is closely related to the distribution of bird-watchers. When one considers the small proportion of gardens which fall into the two categories mentioned, the suggestion is that there are a lot of Collared Doves waiting to be discovered. They are birds which can remain quite unobtrusive, keeping within a relatively restricted area. The way to locate them is to listen for the characteristic "coo-COO-coo" call with the emphasis on the second note.

To bring the picture up to date the 1961 records so far as they are not covered above are given below over the names of the observers.

### Dumfriesshire

On 31st May 1961 on the outskirts of Dumfries I saw a Collared Dove. My attention was first attracted by the distinctive three-noted song, and thereafter the bird was seen perched on a nearby television aerial. I am familiar with the species in Norfolk and eastern Austria. This is the first record for the Solway Faunal Area and for Dumfriesshire.

WILLIAM AUSTIN.

### Ayrshire

On 20th June 1961 at Laigh Woodston Farm, west of Maybole, we had brief views of a single Collared Dove. First seen on overhead wires at the farm, it came down to drink at a trough and then flew off south-west. L.A.U. had excellent views and, although A.D.W. was rather further away, we independently identified it as a Collared Dove.

L. A. URQUHART.

A. D. WATSON

### Berwickshire

In May 1961 James Robertson told me that a pair of birds which he suspected were Collared Doves had been about a nursery garden in Coldingham since early in the month. They could be watched chasing and settling in the trees, and Mr Robertson had also been struck by their unusual call note—

quite different from that of the Woodpigeon. I visited the nursery in the evening and had good views of the birds, noting the greyish appearance, dark primaries, white tips and black bases to the underside of the tail feathers, but I did not hear the call in good conditions. Mr Robertson watched the birds carrying material to a nest which they built in a tree overhanging the nursery. It resembled a flimsy Woodpigeon's nest. Two eggs were laid early in June but disappeared a day or two later—possibly taken by Jackdaws. After this the birds were seen less often and may have moved away, as Collared Doves were noted elsewhere more often about this time (see below). This is the first occurrence and first breeding record for Tweed and Berwickshire.

WILLIAM MURRAY.

On 25th May 1961 I learned that Collared Doves were frequenting Silverwells, a mile west of Coldingham. I first saw them on the 27th when three flew past within fifty yards calling. Three days later there were four feeding in a recently sown field of barley near the hen runs. On 4th June four were chasing each other about and landing in two Scots pines. One eventually settled on a flimsy nest about forty feet up in the thick part of the foliage and remained there until I left an hour later. No eggs could be seen. A lot of calling went on all the time—"coo-COO-coo." The birds were small—about the size of Turtle Doves—and had longish tails. They were fawn coloured with dark primaries and a black ring on the back of the neck. After the weather broke on 7th June the nest disappeared and the birds were not seen again at Silverwells except for one on the 12th. Local people told me that they frequented North Falaknowe, half a mile west, from 10th to 15th June, and were last seen there on the 23rd, but I did not see them myself. Personally I think that the four birds at Silverwells were different from the pair in Coldingham, but as they frequently disappeared from both places for days on end and were seen at farms such as Lumsden (2½ miles NW of Coldingham) and Crosshill (between Silverwells and Lumsden) one cannot be sure.

W. M. LOGAN HOME.

During October 1961 I learned that there were Collared Doves at Cockburnspath. I was unable to see them myself but learned that up to twelve had been seen. They arrived at Pathhead Farm in the middle of May, and were most recently noted about 25th October. Small brown doves with black rings on their necks, they fed in the farmyard among the poultry and were very tame, allowing approach to within ten yards.

W. M. LOGAN HOME.

(While the description of these birds is incomplete there

can be no real doubt that they were Collared Doves in view of their numbers, their association with poultry, their tameness, and the fact that they arrived at the same time and in the same area as other Collared Doves described in the two previous notes. Though this is a Berwickshire record it actually refers to the small part of the county which lies within the Faunal Area of Forth and which, like many similar areas, is not allowed for in the divisions of the Faunal Areas given in *The Geographical Distribution*. It is perhaps relevant also to point out that the two previous records would not qualify for inclusion in Tweed on the basis of the map in *The Birds of Scotland*. It seems more sensible, however, to follow the boundary as carefully defined and mapped in *A Vertebrate Fauna of Forth*. This starts at St Abbs Head which seems a better division than the river at Eyemouth.—A.T.M.).

### Midlothian

In October 1961 we were told of Collared Doves which the farmer, Mr R. C. Stewart, had seen at Edmonstone, just inside the south-east boundary of Edinburgh. He had regularly seen a pair during the autumn of 1960 and believed that the birds had been there for some time. In the spring of 1961 a pair was several times seen flying towards Craigmillar Woods, but the breeding place was not found as this was not followed up. In the early summer, however, a young bird still with some down in its plumage was shot in error by a man who was after Woodpigeons. After that, a party of six was seen often, some of the birds being evidently young ones without obvious collars, and up to eight were counted in late summer. On 12th November D.E.B. and A. T. Macmillan saw a pair at Edmonstone and were able to check all the points of plumage including the black primaries. On the 19th we visited the area with various members of the S.O.C. and counted as many as nine birds together in one tree or feeding on the ground. This is the first occurrence and first breeding record for Midlothian.

DAVID E. BRADLEY.  
C. K. MYLNE.

On 11th June 1961 two doves were seen together in a pine tree in the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. At the time it was not possible to see all the identification features, but the call notes and the black base to the underside of the tail indicated that they were Collared Doves. Having previously watched the species in Norfolk and Morayshire I am familiar with the distinctive "coo-COO-coo" song. Subsequently, at the same place on 28th July, I saw a single Collared Dove perched in a conifer near the rock garden. Again the song was distinctive but I was unable to see the dark primaries. Finally, on



FIDRA from the shore near Dirleton. (See page 475).

—Scotsman photograph.

30th August, by the nearby Rocheid Path I once more heard the bird singing. This time I waited, and a Collared Dove which was perched low over the Water of Leith in a big ash tree came down to drink only a few yards away, so that its black primaries were plainly visible. A blind man was passing and I called his attention to the song. He had heard it at that place during the summer, and also on the Inverleith Terrace side of the Royal Botanic Garden—neatly corroborating the earlier records.

C. P. RAWCLIFFE.

On 21st Oct. 1961, as a result of a telephone call from Mrs Archibald Campbell, I called at her house at 40 Dick Place, Edinburgh, and had good views of a pair of Collared Doves in the garden. As I entered, one was flushed from the grass where it had come down for bread crumbs. The two birds sat together about twenty feet up in a tall tree. I was unable to see the black on the primaries, but they had all the other characteristics of the species, which I had previously seen in Morayshire. From the front they were small vinous-coloured doves, and when they flew I also saw the black half-collar and the underside of the tail with its black base and broad white tip. Mrs Campbell confirmed that one bird had noticeable black primaries, though the other's were not so distinct. They had not been calling for some time. These Collared Doves were first noticed in August, and appeared to be attracted to a hen run at 36 Dick Place. At times one or even two extra birds were present. It was thought that these were young birds, as one begged and was fed by an adult bird, but breeding was not proved.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

## Fife

In mid-May 1961 M.H.E.C. heard a bird calling in St Andrews and recognised it as a Collared Dove, a species she had previously heard on a gramophone record. It was in a thick clump of firs, and it was not possible to get a good view of it until the 30th when two local members of the S.O.C. both heard and saw it. Next morning at 4.15 a.m. B.S.T. J.M. had perfect views of it as it perched on a television aerial in the full blaze of the early morning sunshine. Having previously seen a film of the Ayrshire birds and listened to recordings of the characteristic song she immediately recognised the triple "coo-COO-coo" call. Every detail of the plumage could be seen including the pinkish head and breast, the greyer back, black collar, black primaries, white at the end of the underside of the tail, dark bill, red legs, and red eye. The bird was not seen after the first week in June. It is the first to be recorded in North Fife.

M. H. E. CUNINGHAME.  
JESSIE MCFARLANE.



For more than a week in May 1961 there was a Collared Dove at Dunbog, 4 miles east of Newburgh. It consorted with the Barbary Doves in a very half-hearted way even though, from its calling, it was a male and there was an excess of unmated female Barbary Doves.

TOM SPENCE.

(While we have not seen a description of this bird the observer is very familiar with the various species of *Streptopelia* in captivity, in the wild, and in the museum.—Ed.).

A pair of Collared Doves arrived in the policies of my house at Leslie in the late spring or early summer of 1961. At the time of writing in mid October they are still here. They are not very wild and seem to enjoy eating the hens' food when it is available in the poultry yard. We were unable to find a nest in the thick evergreens round the house and no young birds have been seen. I have studied the call quite a lot and would write it "coo-COO-cook" rather than "coo-COO-coo." The emphasis is on the middle note, but the call ends very abruptly as if cut short. The primaries are darker than the rest of the plumage. The tail is relatively much longer than a Woodpigeon's, and the underside is dark with a broad white tip. The pinkish flush on the breast, greyish back, and black collar have also been noted.

E. VERDEN ANDERSON.

## Aberdeenshire

On 5th June 1960 in Old Aberdeen I awoke very early to hear a strange dove calling, which I immediately suspected of being a Collared Dove. The song is very distinctive—"coo, coooo, coo"—and its identity was easily confirmed by reference to the *Field Guide*. I could not see or find the bird then or afterwards however, and about a month later decided I might have been mistaken and had better say nothing about it.

On 19th June 1961 the bird reappeared, in company with a female, and I had completely satisfactory views of them both at close quarters. After that they disappeared until 12th August, when the male reappeared and was seen and heard singing repeatedly until the 18th, when it disappeared until the 30th, remaining then until 7th September. It reappeared on the 12th, but has been absent from then until the time of writing, 16th September. It has been heard singing also in another part of Old Aberdeen, but I have not discovered its customary alternative habitat. This is the first record for Dee and Aberdeenshire.

V. C. WYNNE-EDWARDS.

## Inverness-shire

On 2nd July 1961 at the Dell Hotel, Rothiemurchus, Aviemore, I watched for two hours at ranges down to ten yards as an adult Collared Dove fed with chickens or perched on the television aerial and elsewhere. I have previous experience of Collared Doves in Norfolk and Kent. From above I noted brownish-grey wings and back, dark primaries, dark collar at the back of the neck, and white corners showing on the tail; head, breast and belly slightly pink; underside of tail with black base and white distal section—very conspicuous when the bird was landing with tail down and facing the observer; pale underwing; red eye; small dark bill; flesh pink legs and feet. The bird had gone next day. It is the first to be recorded in Inverness-shire.

S. GREENWOOD.

## Morayshire

A pair of Collared Doves came to my garden at Cluny, near Forres, last autumn, making their abode in a cedar tree. They remained through the winter, and nested in 1961, bringing off two lots of young. By the middle of October they had increased to eighteen in number, pointing to the fact that others had arrived. On 24th October no fewer than twenty-seven came to feed on the lawns. I have checked details of Collared Dove plumage against these birds and all tally—small size, pinkish on breast and greyer on the back, dark primaries, broad white tip and dark base under the tail, and black half-collar. The call is as described, even to the absence of the rolling "r" which is mentioned as a feature of the call of the Barbary Dove. The birds are a source of pleasure and interest, and are fed daily on kibbled maize. They are becoming very tame, allowing one to approach close to them without alarm.

DOUGLAS B. COWIE.

## Lewis

On 28th May 1961 at Steinish, near Stornoway, a Collared Dove was seen in company with a Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, and may possibly have been mated to it since they alighted in the field, fed together, and flew off together. This is probably the same bird as that seen by W. A. J. Cunningham in June 1960 (*antea* 1: 379).

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN.

## Shetland

On the evening of 31st May 1961, returning from Foula, we touched in at Hamnavoe, West Burra, and just as we did so a Collared Dove landed on top of the flagpole at the quay. It flew off again almost immediately and disappeared round

a nearby point, but I was able to see the black neck mark clearly and to check the pinkish-brown upperparts with wings grey on the shoulders and dark at the tips. It was not possible to see the undertail. The bird was also seen by Wing Comdr. Eric Goose who is not familiar with the Collared Dove but at once confirmed that it was not a Turtle Dove *S. turtur*. This is the first record for Shetland other than Fair Isle.

L. A. URQUHART.

(Collared Doves were noted at Fair Isle on 12th and 24th May 1961 (*Bird Migration* 2: 53)—A.T.M.).

## SHORT NOTES

### RECORDS FROM SHETLAND, SUMMER 1961

**SMEW** *Mergus albellus*. On 25th May, at Loch of Grista, Tingwall, Mainland, a drake. A very late date, well outwith the "mid-March" spring limit given by Venables and Venables (1955): *Birds and Mammals of Shetland*.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*. On 28th May, at the head of Lax Firth, Tingwall, a Redshank was seen leading four small young, still in down, across a field and in and out of several ditches. The Venables record regular breeding in Mainland until at least 1887. They state that casual nesting still occurs, but give only one instance known to them, in 1934.

**COLLARED DOVE** (see detailed article in this issue).

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*. On 31st May at Ham Voe, Foula, one.

**SONG THRUSH** *T. ericetorum*. On 31st May at Ham Voe, Foula, one.

**REDWING** *Turdus pilaris*. On 2nd and 3rd June a male was singing in Mainland. I thought it possible it had a mate sitting.

**WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*. On 3rd June at Kergord, one. Apart from records of two birds which may have summered, the Venables only give one other June occurrence.

**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa grisea*. On 1st June at Pool of Virkie shore, a pair. The Venables give only two other June occurrences, neither on Mainland.

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *M. hypoleuca*. On 3rd June at Kergord, a female. The Venables' latest spring date is 29th May.

**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** *Lanius collurio*. On 31st May 1961, at Ham Voe, Foula, a female.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*. On 3rd June at Kergord,

several pairs, probably at least six, at the plantation known as Lindsay Lee. One was carrying nesting material. The Venables call it extinct as a breeding species with no recent records of migrants, also stating that "small breeding colonies were briefly established in various places after 1898." They were unable to find any detailed records of Mainland breeding.

L. A. URQUHART.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. From 6th to 13th June, one on Loch Spiggie.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. On 9th June at Scalloway, one immature.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. On 6th June at Sumburgh Head, one

R. J. SMITH.

JOHN SWAN.

JAMES YOUNG.

#### GREEN-WINGED TEAL IN MIDLOTHIAN

At about 4.40 p.m. on 21st October 1961 we parked our car opposite a small party of Teal *Anas crecca* feeding in the shallows at the north end of Gladhouse Reservoir, Midlothian. Almost the first bird examined proved to be an adult drake Green-winged Teal *A. c. carolinensis* in full plumage. The most obvious field-mark was a distinct vertical off-white line on either side of the breast, dividing that area from the flanks. It was prominent on both sides but perhaps a little wider and better defined on the right. There was no horizontal white line on the scapulars such as is present in the European Teal *A. c. crecca*. The head pattern also differed from that of the European race in that the green eye-patch was not outlined with buff except for a very ill-defined line immediately below the eye and there was no buff line between the front of the eye-patch and the bill. The eye-patch itself appeared broader and blunter than in the European Teal—more like a highwayman's mask—and we see that this difference is suggested in the *Handbook* plates of the two races although it is not mentioned at all in the text. Another apparent difference not mentioned in the *Handbook* is that this bird seemed to have much more conspicuous black and creamy-yellow under tail-coverts than any of its companions. This may simply have been due to the fact that none of the drakes immediately available for comparison were in full adult plumage, but we observe that the same difference was noted in the case of a Green-winged Teal recently seen in Aberdeenshire (*antea* 1: 10).

The bird was watched with field-glasses and telescope at a

range of about 50 yards for several minutes until it and the other Teal were scared by a passing vehicle and flew out of sight down the reservoir. This is the fourth recorded occurrence of this American race in Scotland and the first for the Forth area and Midlothian.

D. G. ANDREW.  
T. C. SMOUT.

### UNUSUAL DUCKS ON ST KILDA

On the evening of 27th July 1961 I saw a drake Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca* in Village Bay, St Kilda. It stayed until 1st August. This is the first record of this species for St Kilda.

On 16th July 1961 a drake Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* turned up in Village Bay, remaining until the 22nd. It was once seen on the small tarn on the west side of Gleann Mor. It is the second record for St Kilda.

W. E. WATERS.

### EIDERS BREEDING IN MORAYSHIRE

The spread of the Eider *Somateria mollissima* along the shores of the Moray Firth has been described by Harvie-Brown (*A Vertebrate Fauna of the Moray Basin* Vol. II), A. Watson (*Scot. Nat.* 60: 53, and 63: 178), Baxter and Rintoul (*Birds of Scotland*, 1953) and R. Richter (*Scot. Nat.* 66: 39-40). The facts have been summarised by Dr I. D. Pennie (*antea* 1: 66-67).

A recent occurrence of Eiders breeding in the Moray Firth was at the Bar, Culbin Sands, where several broods were reared this summer. In 1913 Millais recorded seeing an Eider duck with young in this region, but no Eiders have been known to breed there during the past fifteen years, and possibly for a much longer period than this.

On 7th August 1961, Mr W. G. Milne, head forester at Culbin, and the author saw three groups of Eiders on the tidal backwater at the Bar. The first group consisted of twelve females, the second of one female with seven chicks, and the third of one female with five chicks. The last group were feeding on the mud flats, and these birds were easily caught and identified.

Nine of the twelve chicks were subsequently caught and ringed on the 9th and 13th August. The feathering, and condition of the down, suggested that the young were about eight weeks old at the time. The possibility that these broods had come in from some other breeding area is considered unlikely, since the conditions for breeding are better at Culbin

than in any other area within ten miles. No drakes have yet been seen near this part of the coast, but it was assumed that they would then be in eclipse plumage and likely to be at sea.

H. MILNE.

### RED-FOOTED FALCON IN BERWICKSHIRE

On 8th October 1961 a strange bird flew past our observation hut at Hule Moss, but at the time we did not have good enough views to identify it. A week later, on the 15th, we found the body of a female Red-footed Falcon *Falco vesperinus* underneath the hut. S.J.C. and M.J.H. who saw the bird on the morning of the 8th are certain that it was the same one. We believe that it flew against the hut and was just able to crawl under it. S.J.C. took two photographs which are reproduced on another page. The bird weighed 97 grams and the wing length was 229 mm. It is now in the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh.

S. J. CLARKE.

M. J. HENDERSON.

D. G. LONG.

(This is the first record of a Red-footed Falcon in Berwickshire. We learn from the Royal Scottish Museum that the bird was very emaciated. It seems possible that it may have died of starvation as there was no sign of bleeding or broken bones when it was skinned. It was an adult female with well developed ovaries—rather surprising so late in the year. The greyness of the back, and the light streaking of the underparts, confirmed that it was an adult. Fortunately it was just possible to preserve the skin, and it has been attractively mounted. Already it has been seen by various members of the S.O.C., and it is to be put on display in the Bird Hall as it is in better condition than the existing specimen.—Ed.)

### KESTREL KILLING TREECREEPER

On 3rd May 1961 I was walking along the side of the railway wall in the bird sanctuary at Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh, when a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* flew out from the trees and pounced on something on the face of the wall about 18 inches from the top. It was pecking vigorously on a small tuft of grass on the stonework, and as I approached hurriedly it flew off. When I examined the wall I found a dead Treecreeper *Certhia familiaris*, still warm, with its head off. The wall is old with a fair amount of crumbling stonework and is a favourite feeding place for Treecreepers. The *Handbook* does not mention this species as prey of the Kestrel, nor does it mention the Kestrel taking prey from the face of a wall.

D. R. ANDERSON.

## WHITE WOODCOCK IN EAST SUTHERLAND

In a brood of Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* which hatched out at Suisgill, Kildonan, two of the four chicks were pure white. I was unable to visit the area until 27th May 1961, by which time the young were fully fledged and the brood dispersed. Fortunately, however, Mr Nicolson, the head gamekeeper, found one of the white birds after an extensive search. It was sitting among some dead branches beneath a birch tree and from a distance of about twenty yards it looked very conspicuous. Its entire plumage was pure white, the iris and bill being of normal colouration. I failed to get a glimpse of the bird's legs as it flew away but Mr Nicolson informed me that they too were the normal colour. The *Handbook* (4: 188) mentions "a pure white variety unmarked," and Bannerman (*The Birds of the British Isles* 9:97) refers to pied, buff, fulvous, melanistic and pure white varieties.

D. MACDONALD.

## PECTORAL SANDPIPER IN EAST LoTHIAN

On 10th September 1961 an unusual wader was noted among the Dunlin *Calidris alpina* at Tynninghame estuary feeding at high tide among the short grass and thin mud. It was first picked out by its dull yellow legs—which appeared longer in proportion than those of the Dunlin but shorter than those of a Redshank *Tringa totanus*. It was conspicuously larger than the Dunlin, especially in flight, and at times resembled a small Reeve *Philomachus pugnax*, especially when it stretched its thin neck on landing. The head and mantle were dark brown, the latter being "scaly" like that of a Ruff. I.B.R. thought that the closed primaries were darker than the secondaries and mantle above. The cheeks, eyestripe and throat were pale, the long eye-stripes seeming to touch at the forehead. The throat and breast were lightly but firmly streaked brown ending in an abrupt line on the breast which contrasted strongly with the whitish belly. Dark bill not so long in proportion as Dunlin.

In flight the rather long wings (with no noticeable wing-bar) and mantle showed very dark with a dark line extending from the mantle through the tail, the sides of which were pale though not so white as the sides of the rump. The bird was under observation from about 30 yards for only some two minutes during which time it flew off and came in again before disappearing seawards with a mass of Dunlin. No

definite call-notes were heard. We identified the bird as a Pectoral Sandpiper *C. melanotos*.

T. BOYD.  
I. B. ROY.  
W. M. SKENE.  
R. W. J. SMITH.

### SANDWICH TERNS BREEDING IN SHETLAND

In 1955 a pair of Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis* began to nest on the Inner holm of Skaw on Whalsay and the number increased to six pairs in 1960. This summer, the birds were around but did not nest.

TOM BRUCE.

(This is the first satisfactory breeding record for Shetland.—Ed.).

### WRYNECKS IN INVERNESS-SHIRE

On 3rd June 1961 at 6.30 a.m. I saw and heard at close quarters a Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* singing on a barbed wire fence close to the R.S.P.B. camp at Inchdryne. It sang repeatedly for about an hour and was observed by several watchers as it moved about near the camp. Mr Walter Flesher, who was with me when I first heard the bird, told me that he had heard the same song on at least two previous days but had not realised what bird it was.

J. K. STANFORD.

A Wryneck was heard singing at Carrbridge on 10th June 1961.

R. H. DENNIS.

(It is curious that all the recent summer records of Wrynecks in Scotland should have come from this area—1952 *Scot. Nat.* p. 57 (Strathfarrar) and p. 117 (Urquhart Bay, Loch Ness), and 1953 *Scot. Nat.* p. 57 (Glenmore Lodge).—Ed.).

### RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHERS IN ABERDEENSHIRE

On 22nd September 1961 Charles Ogston asked me to confirm his identification of a Red-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa parva* on Forvie Moor, Aberdeenshire. We found the bird still in the same bush and I was able to confirm it as a female. Mr Ogston said he had also seen a male in the same area on the same day.

ELIZABETH A. GARDEN.



On 4th October 1961 I saw a Red-breasted Flycatcher in our garden at Peterhead. There was a lot of fog hanging about at the time.

DOUGLAS P. WILLIS.

(Mr Willis has submitted a detailed and unmistakable description of the bird.—Ed.).

### PROLONGED NESTLING PERIOD OF CORN BUNTINGS

At about 1900 hours G.M.T. on 26th June 1961 I found the nest of a Corn Bunting *Emberiza calandra* with three young in a corn crop near Dornoch. By the naked and helpless condition of the nestlings it was almost certain that they had hatched out earlier that day. Subsequent visits to the nest showed that the growth and development of the young appeared to be quite normal. Nevertheless, they were still in the nest at a late hour on 9th July, but by 0800 hours G.M.T. the following morning only one nestling remained. In this instance the young did not leave the nest until the fourteenth day after hatching. Both the *Handbook* (1: 112) and Ryves (*British Birds* 28: 2-26) record the nestling period as nine to eleven days with sometimes twelve days.

D. MACDONALD.

## CURRENT NOTES

(Key to initials of observers: A. Anderson, D. R. Anderson, D. G. Andrew, Mrs G. Andrew, W. Austin, J. Ballantyne, Miss P. G. Baxter, G. Bennett, H. Boase, T. Boyd, D. E. Bradley, W. Brotherston, Miss K. M. Calver, S. J. Clarke, M. Cody, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, W. A. J. Cunningham, R. H. Dennis, G. Dick, V. H. Divers, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Sir R. Erskine-Hill, M. Forrester, G. Fraser, E. M. Gall, Miss E. A. Garden, J. Grierson, J. M. Harrop, M. J. Henderson, Lt-Col. W. M. Logan Home, J. Hoy, Miss R. S. Hunter, Dr D. Jenkins, W. M. Lennox, A. G. Long, D. G. Long, A. Macdonald, D. Macdonald, K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, Miss M. M. Mathisen, Prof. M. F. M. Meiklejohn, R. I. Milne, Mrs E. A. Munro, J. Murray, C. K. Mylne, B. Neath, J. Oliver, R. M. Palmer, J. Potter, W. K. Richmond, I. B. Roy, W. A. Sinclair, W. M. Skene, R. W. I. Smith, Dr T. C. Smout, T. Spence, D. Stalker, W. Stein, I. F. Stewart, J. H. Swan, C. Tait, Miss V. M. Thom, B. R. Thomson, A. Tod, D. I. M. Wallace, Mrs K. Wallace, R. F. Waterston, A. D. Watson, T. Weir, Dr R. S. Weir, D. P. Willis, D. R. Wise, Prof. V. C. Wynne-Edwards. Dates refer to 1961 unless otherwise stated).

### *Breeding and Distribution*

A **Manx Shearwater** was blown inland to Dalry, Kirkcudbright, on 16th September by the gale, which reached over 90 m.p.h. in the Solway. It was released next day on the coast

(W.A., A.D.W.). One was seen on the 18th at Elie, Fife (D.G.A.).

An immature **Night Heron** visited Duddingston on 9th and 10th October—no doubt from the Edinburgh Zoo (D.R.A.). Another immature bird turned up in Kirkcaldy on 30th October for a few days, and roosted at the bus stop in Townsend Place where one could almost touch it with a walking stick (R.F.W.). Further details of the nightly excursions of this species have now been received from an observer living in Old Kirk Road, just 100 yards west of a side entrance to the Zoo (see *antea* 1: 457). He has lived there for three years and noted the birds each year, but more often this year, when he was more regularly at home in the garden in the evening. Each evening, probably every evening, as it gets dark, the birds fly west along Old Kirk Road and then swing north-west round Corstorphine Hill towards Cramond. Only adults have been seen and it is nearly always two birds, evidently a pair, that come. They can be heard giving a noise like the croak of a frog. In May they would fly apart and then towards each other again in a form of display, flapping about like enormous bats. During 1961 they were first seen passing the house in early or mid-May, and continued to do so until at least 25th August (G.B.).

A pair of **Garganey** frequented the Dunbarton bank of the R. Endrick mouth during May, being seen by various people (M.F.M.M.).

A drake **Scaup** in perfect plumage was in Plockton harbour, Ross, on 23rd May (M.F.M.M.), and another, in Lewis, seemed very attached to a small loch near East Loch Roag on the 28th (J.M.H.). A drake at the Morton Lochs, Fife, on 15th July (W.J.E., A.M.), two birds at Longannet, Fife, on 31st July (J.H.), and two drakes at Montrose Basin from 14th August, when at least one was flightless (H.B.), may have summered in Scotland. Inland records come from Cameron Reservoir, Fife, where there was a drake on 14th September (D.G.A.), and Portmore, Peebles, where there was a duck on the 30th (A.T.). Scaup have been more numerous at Duddingston than for a number of years. There were fourteen on 25th October, twelve on the 29th, and eight on the 31st (D.R.A.). A duck **Goldeneye** summered at Montrose Basin, and an immature **Long-tailed Duck** was noted at Forfar Loch on 13th June (H.B.). At Loch Leven, Kinross, the species is almost regular, and one was seen on 28th October (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.). Off the docks at Leith **Shelduck** are seldom seen, but there was one at Seafield, on the mud, on 20th September (J.B.).

There were four **Canada Geese** at Marlee Loch near Blairgowrie, Perth, on 11th September. Two were noted there previously on 23rd April 1960 (*antea* 1: 280) (H.B.).

A **Whooper Swan** was on L. Hosta, North Uist, on 4th June, with six Mute Swans (J.M.H.).

Two **Buzzards** remained throughout the summer in the Longformacus area of Berwick (per W.M.L.H.).

Rumours of **Quail** in North Fife have reached us in the past but we have been unable to get anywhere with them. This year on 1st September at Dunbog, Newburgh, seven Quail—evidently a family party as two were larger than the rest—were flushed by the combine harvester. They probably bred there. Two years ago a pair was seen near the spot for over a week (T.S.). At Kildary, East Ross, Quail were heard continuously in a barley field, especially in the early morning and late evening, from 27th June to 21st August, when the field was cut (per D.M.). On Barra in the Eoligaray area as many as seven **Corncrakes** could be heard calling at one time in the middle of the day on 6th June (J.M.H.).

An immature **Iceland Gull** was at the sewage outlet near Fort William on 29th May. This may be the first published record for South Inverness, although the authors of *The Birds of Scotland* say that on the west coast the species has occurred in every sea-board county up to Ross. It is not clear, however, whether they have considered South Inverness separately from West Inverness (M.F.M.M.). The comments in the last number about the rarity of the **Black-headed Gull** in West Sutherland (*antea* 1: 459) have resulted in us receiving details of a small colony which has apparently existed for some years. It is on a small island on Loch a'Mhi on the Stoer peninsula near Lochinver. About 25 pairs of Black-headed Gulls and 12 pairs of Common Gulls were breeding there on 25th June when 53 nestlings of the former were ringed and 28 of the latter. This seems to be the first breeding record for the area (D.E.B., M.C.).

A **Turtle Dove** was recorded in Craiglockhart Dell, Edinburgh, on 20th June. In the same area a **Kingfisher** was seen on the Water of Leith above Slateford on 15th August. The species is seldom seen in Edinburgh now (J.H.S.). A **Great Spotted Woodpecker** at Loch Leven on 28th October appears to be the first recorded in Kinross (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.).

Two **Magpies** at Gleneagles Golf Course on 4th October are of interest since *The Birds of Scotland* describes them as rare in Perth (H.B.).

A **Crested Tit** was in a plantation of conifers near Dornoch on 22nd June. The species was first recorded in Sutherland in the same area as recently as October 1956 (*Scottish Naturalist* 69: 57) (D.M.).

A cock **Redwing** sang in Unst during June but there was no second bird (E.A.M.). A pair of **Stonechats** nested successfully at North Queensferry, Fife (G.D.).

Further to the record of a **Garden Warbler** breeding at Valleyfield (*antea* 1: 461), J.H. comments that the scarcity of the species in Fife applies to most of the county but not to West Fife. The best place for them is in Valleyfield, where at least ten singing males can be found each year. They are also reasonably common at the east end of Gartmorn Dam and towards Dollar and Tillicoultry, though these areas are over the county boundary in Clackmannan. We can trace no previous record for that county.

On 14th May a Garden Warbler was found singing in Dinnet Oak Wood, Aberdeen, 200 yards from the south bank of the R. Dee, and on 4th June it was singing persistently in the same area. The species has not been recorded in recent years as a spring visitor to the area. On 28th May two were heard and seen about half a mile apart near the Dee at Blackhall, near Banchory, and a third heard singing on the opposite bank of the river at Invercannie (V.C.W-E.). We cannot trace any previous record of Garden Warblers in North Kincardine.

On 6th and 30th May a **Chiffchaff** was heard singing in various places in Old Aberdeen. The species has not been noted in the area in recent springs. On 28th May one was heard at Blackhall, near Banchory, in trees with an undergrowth of rhododendrons—the same sort of site as the Garden Warbler at Dinnet. It was still there when D.J. stopped to listen to it a few days later (V.C.W-E.). Like the Garden Warblers in the same area this seems to be the first published record of the species in North Kincardine.

In South-east Sutherland the **Spotted Flycatcher** was an exceptionally scarce breeding bird this year (D.M.).

*The Birds of Scotland* is very vague about the present distribution of the **Tree Sparrow** in Angus. About ten were counted in conifers near Carnoustie on 11th August (R.M.P.), and two at Red Castle, Lunan Bay, on the 22nd (H.B.).

#### *Spring Migration 1961*

From a few days before 10th May there were five **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** at Broad Bay, Stornoway. They were unusually approachable, taking wing only when the observers were within 50 yards, and returning to feed 100 yards away. They stayed for a few days and were joined by a sixth bird (W.A.J.C., V.H.D.).

An exceptionally early **Dotterel** was seen on the breeding grounds in the central Highlands on 12th March. The observer, who knows the species well, was able to approach within ten yards (W.A.S.).

At Kingoodie, Perth, there were 11 **Black-tailed Godwits** on 20th April, and 18 on 2nd May (H.B.). A **Wood Sandpiper** at

the mouth of the R. Endrick on 21st May is the first recorded in West Stirling (M.F.M.M.).

On 7th April 300 **Common Gulls** were noted moving north-east in the space of 30 minutes at Invergowrie, Perth. At Kingoodie, in the same area, there were two immature **Little Gulls** on 4th May (H.B.).

A late **Fieldfare** flew past the Osprey Observation Post at L. Garten, Inverness, on 7th June and was seen by various people (per R.H.D.).

At Stornoway aerodrome a female **Yellow Wagtail** was seen on 28th May. The observer was inclined to think it was *thunbergi* not only because of the geographical position but also on account of its loud penetrating call (M.F.M.M.).

#### *Autumn Migration 1961, and Winter Visitors*

The suggestion has been made that the sections on migration might start with a chronological summary of what has been happening, as an introduction to the details given for individual species. While this is an ideal to aim for, it is usually impossible because we receive relatively little information about the common birds, and because we are writing too soon after the event. We can, however, hope that the facts which we do assemble may be of value to students of migration who can consider them in relation to the weather maps or the movements which they detect on their radar screens. Any summary which we might publish would be a poor thing by comparison with what is possible for more specialist publications such as *Bird Migration*, with access to the detailed daily records of a network of Bird Observatories. Just because so much of the information does come from the Observatories, however, there is considerable value in observations from more ordinary parts of the country; not enough of such observations have been published recently, so that there is little with which to compare Observatory records.

Notes received from various parts of the country indicate widespread movements on 12th October. This was a Thursday, so that it is free from the bias associated with week-end observations, and we comment on it to show the possibilities for collating a series of ordinary observations when enough information about the movement of common birds is sent in. The pattern of migration involved both Pink-footed Geese with, presumably, a north-west origin from Iceland, and a movement of typical Scandinavian species. Details of the considerable movement of Pinkfeet, especially in the Lothians, on 12th, 13th and 14th October are given under that species. The Blue Goose, significantly, returned to Libberton on the 13th.

On the 12th at Longannet, Fife, there was a continuous

westward movement of various species until 1 p.m. BST. The sky was never clear of birds on the move, and birds noted included 9 Golden Plovers, Skylarks, 2 Swallows, 38 Mistle Thrushes, Song Thrushes, Redwings, a Goldcrest, Meadow Pipits, Chaffinches and Starlings (J.H.). In East Lothian there were Kestrels, Redwings, Blackbirds, and Chaffinches moving in the area between North Berwick and Dunbar (A.M.). At Kingoodie, Perth, small parties of birds were passing westwards in the morning—Greenfinches, possibly Linnets, Chaffinches, and some Reed Buntings (H.B.). The first Redwings were heard over Edinburgh and Glasgow that day, and at Castle Douglas on the 13th. Siskins arrived in force about this time, and were recorded at Longannet on the 12th, in various places near L. Ken, Kirkcudbright, on the 14th and 15th, and in the Moorfoots and at Tynninghame on the 15th. Others were located later but may well have come in at this time. Details of these records are given under the species. Finally, a flock of Redpolls was noted at Longannet on the 12th. Compared with the number of records we can normally assemble for any one day this is quite an impressive catalogue.

A **Sooty Shearwater** was seen off Fair Isle on 1st August (I.F.S.).

In Angus, 150 **Wigeon** at Lintrathen on 8th September, and 1,000 at Montrose Basin on the 21st, are early for such numbers (H.B.). Exceptional numbers of **Shovelers** were counted on L. Leven at the end of October; at least 300, and probably 500, on the 21st (H.B.), and a flock of 250 on the 28th (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.).

As in past autumns (*antea* 1: 340) large numbers of **Red-breasted Mergansers** were seen at Musselburgh, and at least 200 were counted on 19th September (J.B.). The small party recorded at Longannet on 11th July (*antea* 1: 458) built up to 320 birds by 29th September, and the observer suggests that this is a moulting area (J.H.). At Barnbougle, West Lothian, there were 300 on 14th October, and 350 on the 22nd (T.C.S.).

There were two **Grey Lag Geese** at Machrie, Arran, on 11th August (possibly crippled birds) (W.M.L.), two at Hule Moss, Berwick, on 10th September (S.J.C., M.J.H., D.G.L.), but the first flock reported was of fifteen birds at Longannet on the 20th (J.H.). Until the night of 11th October, there was only a limited advance-guard population of under 1,000 **Pink-footed Geese** in the Fala/Gladhouse area. From early on the 12th, a Thursday, throughout that day and Friday the 13th, and into the morning of the 14th, there was a great flight of these birds through the Moorfoot area to the south, and at the same time a great arrival in the area. A fairly accurate count of these birds gave a total of 10,000, some 2,000 more than ever before, in the Fala/Gladhouse area. The other local

roosts held a further 3,000 (W.B.). A skein of 80 passed south-south-east over the Morningside district of Edinburgh at 9 a.m. B.S.F. on the 13th, and a further six skeins went over during the morning (D.G.A., G.A.). On 12th October there were 1,700 on the mud banks off Birkhill, Dundee, and more birds were coming in all day from the north to the Tay Estuary, over 1,000 being seen arriving (H.B.). It is clear that this arrival of Pinkfeet was on a very large scale.

The **Blue Goose** returned to Libberton on 13th October. It looks very much whiter in the air this year and can be picked out with the naked eye at a range of at least a mile (see *antea* 1: 463) (R.E.H.). Though it is probably unconnected with previous records from Libberton it is perhaps worth mentioning an adult Snow Goose which was seen in Yorkshire from 12th July for some weeks (*British Birds* 54: 335). It is possible that the Libberton birds could summer in Britain, but the evidence suggests that it is more likely that they travel north with the Pinkfeet.

Three **Pale-bellied Brent Geese** were at Aberlady on 21st October (K.S.M.), and one **Dark-breasted** on Loch Ryan on the 28th (J.M.). An early **Barnacle Goose** was seen on Islay on 17th September (E.M.G., R.W.J.S., C.T.), and there were two at Gladhouse on 21st October (D.G.A., T.C.S.).

The first **Whooper Swans** of the winter were five on 20th September. They flew into Pease Bay, Berwick, and turned west along the coast (W.M.L.H.). One at Duddingston on 28th October is only the third report there since the second world war (D.R.A.). Counts at L. Leven gave totals of at least 220 on 21st October (H.B.), and approximately 300 on the 27th (G.D.).

There are a number of autumn reports of **Buzzards** in the eastern part of Berwick. At Hule Moss single birds were seen on 9th September and 15th October, and two on 1st and 22nd October (S.J.C., M.J.H., D.G.L.). On 24th September at the Langton Burn, near Duns, a Buzzard came sailing down the glen and settled in the tree where the observer was standing, before sailing away to the south-east (A.G.L.). One was reported in the woods at Ayton Castle during September, and on 23rd October one flew south-east over Edrom, mobbed by a dozen Carrion Crows and Jackdaws (W.M.L.H.).

On 28th October a **Rough-legged Buzzard** was seen between Callander and L. Ruskie. The buzzard shape, white base to the tail, and pale underwings were all seen though the view was a rather distant one (J.G.). What was presumably the same bird was seen at the Lake of Menteith next day (M.F.). One 28th October a male **Hen Harrier** was seen near Glenluce, the first the observer has seen in Wigtown (J.M.).

On 12th August an **Osprey** was watched at the Loch of Pit-

four, Aberdeen, by Mr R. Malvenan. It circled the loch, calling, and then dropped into the water to catch a trout, with which it flew off. The following afternoon various people watched it catch another trout at the second attempt in heavy rain. It flew to a dead pine and ate part of the fish before flying off with the rest of it. The operculum of a 1½ lb. brown trout was found below the tree. The loch is well stocked with brown trout (A.A., E.A.G., V.M.T.).

A juvenile **Peregrine** was seen at Fife Ness on 13th August. The species is not usually seen there and it was presumably a migrant (R.S.W.). Single **Merlins** were noted at Barns Ness, East Lothian, on 8th October (K.S.M.), and at Gladhouse on the 14th (D.G.A.). On 12th October there was an influx of **Kestrels** to East Lothian. In the morning five were noted between North Berwick and Dunbar, and in the afternoon single birds were present in two places in the Lammermuirs where they are not usually seen (A.M.).

When the Editor (in the south) opened a small parcel he discovered a very smelly **Water Rail**. It had been found at Steinish, near Stornoway, on 20th September—very dead, having been stood on, probably by a cow (W.A.J.C.).

Numbers of **Coot** are most unpredictable and we therefore offer no comment on counts of over 500 at Forfar Loch on 16th October, over 750 in three groups at L. Leven, Kinross, on the 21st (H.B.), and 1,200 there on the 28th (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.).

Substantial counts of **Grey Plovers** come from Longannet where there were about 40 on 29th September and fully 110 on 7th October and later (J.H.), and from the other side of the Forth at Skinflats, Stirling, where there were only eight seen on 7th October, but 95 on the 14th, 143 on the 23rd, and about 200 on the 29th (G.D., J.P.). The counts in these two places almost certainly refer to the same birds, which move with the tides. Inland, two were at Gladhouse on the 29th (D.G.A., D.I.M.W., K.W.). At Hule Moss, Berwick, there were about 600 **Curlews** on 22nd August (S.J.C., M.J.H., D.G.L.).

**Black-tailed Godwits** are reported from the following places:

Ythan Estuary, Aberdeen—1 from 30th August until at least 22nd September (E.A.G.).

Invergowrie Bay—2 on 29th August and frequently thereafter (H.B.).

Eden Estuary, Fife—3 on 4th September, and 20 on the 8th (R.I.M.), and at least 20 on the 21st (B.N.).

Cult Ness, Fife—2 on 28th July and 3 on 1st September (G.D., J.P.).

Longannet, Fife—1 from 10th September until 8th October, (J.H. W.K.R.), with 2 on 23rd September and 11 on 22nd October (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats, Stirling—2 on 6th August, 13 on the 20th, 1 on the 27th, 1 on 3rd September, and 9 on 23rd October (G.D., J.P.).

Seafield, Leith—1 on 17th September (A.T.M.).

Aberlady, East Lothian—2 on 8th October (K.S.M., A.T.M., C.K.M.).

Tynninghame, East Lothian—1 on 27th August (T.B., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.).



During the past twelve years not more than 25 **Bar-tailed Godwits** have been seen together on the south side of L. Fleet, Sutherland, but this autumn from mid-September until the end of October numbers gradually built up to between 75 and 100 (J.O.).

The following **Green Sandpipers** are reported:

Near Dornoch, Sutherland—1 on 18th July (D.M.).

Longannet—1 on 29th September (J.H.).

Kincardine Bridge—1 on 21st and 27th August (G.D., J.P.).

Tynninghame—1 or more from 13th August to 8th October, with peaks of 3 on 17th August and 17th September (T.B., I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.).

Hule Moss—1 on 11th and 22nd August (S.J.C., M.J.H., D.G.L.).

Hamilton—1 on 29th August (D.R.W.).

Quothquan, Thankerton, Lanark—1 on 18th September (R.E.H.).

The only report of **Wood Sandpipers** comes from Aberlady, where the species is not rare in autumn, and is of four birds on 13th August (K.S.M.).

A fair number of **Spotted Redshanks** occurred:

Dornoch—1 on mudflats on 13th October (D.M.).

Ugie Estuary, Peterhead—1 on 29th September (D.P.W.).

Ythan Estuary—1 on 30th August, and 11th and 14th September (E.A.G.).

Skinflats—1 on 10th and 24th September, 7th and 14th October, and 2 on 23rd October (G.D., J.P.).

Gladhouse, Midlothian—1 on 1st October (R.W.J.S.).

Tynninghame—1 from 13th August to 10th September (T.B., I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S., T.C.S.).

Airdrie—1 on 10th September at Roughrigg Reservoir (W.S.).

Inland records of **Greenshank** this autumn come from:

Lintrathen, Angus—2 on 19th August and 1 on 8th September (H.B.).

L. Leven, Kinross—1 on 14th September and 28th October (D.G.A.).

Peppermill Dam, Tulliallan, Fife—2 on 1st August, and 1 on 11th September (G.D., J.P.).

Cambus, Clackmannan—1 on 28th October (D.G.A.).

Central Edinburgh—1 flew over at 9.45 a.m. BST on 30th August (T.C.S.).

Gladhouse—1 on 24th September (D.G.A.).

Hamilton—1 on 29th September (D.R.W.).

Hule Moss—noted on August 7th (1), 19th (2), September 2nd (2), 9th (3), 13th (1), 16th (2), 17th (2), 19th (1), and on October 8th (1), (S.J.C., M.J.H., D.G.L.).

Scotland seems to have missed the early arrival of large numbers of **Little Stints** and **Curlew Sandpipers** mentioned in *British Birds* (54: 333), but the following **Little Stints** are reported:

Carnoustie, Angus—1 injured bird on 12th August (R.M.P.), and 1 at the Buddon Burn on 22nd September (B.N.).

Elie, Fife—1 on 13th September (D.G.A.).

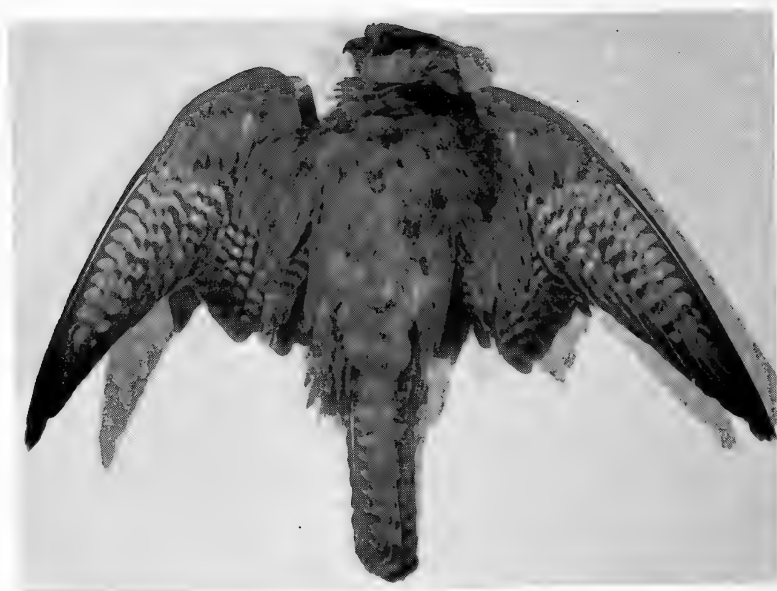
Cult Ness—1 on 6th October (G.D., J.P.).

Longannet—1 on 28th October (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats—noted on July 29th (1), August 6th (1), 20th (1), September 2nd (3), 9th (2), 10th (2), 17th (2), and 24th (4) (G.D., J.P.).

Gladhouse—1 on 14th October (D.G.A.).

Aberlady—2 on 24th September (R.W.J.S.).



RED-FOOTED FALCON, adult female, Berwickshire, October 1961.  
Note the dark barring on slate-grey upper-parts, and only a few small  
streaks on breast and flanks.  
(See page 492).

—Photographs by S. J. Clarke.

Tynninghame—4 on 3rd September and 1 on the 10th (T.B., I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.).

Dunbar—3 on 8th October (M.F.M.M.).

#### Reports of Curlew Sandpipers come from:

Ythan Estuary—1 on 3rd September (E.A.G.).

Longannet—2 on 8th October (G.D., J.P.).

Skinflats—4 on 24th September and 7th October (G.D., J.P.).

Aberlady—3 on 3rd August (D.E.B.).

Tynninghame—1 on 24th September (I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.).

Dunbar—1 on 8th October (M.F.M.M.).

A **Ruff** and two **Reeves** were on the mud at Dornoch on 19th August (D.M.). One was on the Ugie Estuary, Peterhead, from 21st September until 4th October. Though they are regular at Newburgh, Aberdeen, this was the first that the observer had seen near Peterhead (D.P.W.). Seven Ruffs and two Reeves were in a field near Crail, Fife, on 5th September (P.G.B.). At Cult Ness there was one on 16th and 19th August, and at Skinflats there were four on 6th August, 1 on the 13th, 3 on the 26th, 2 on 9th September, and 1 on the 17th (G.D., J.P.). Two at Aberlady on 3rd and 24th September are hardly noteworthy (J.B., R.W.J.S.), but they are scarcer at Tynninghame, where one was seen on 13th August and 3rd September (T.B., I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.). Single birds were at Gladhouse on 2nd September, 1st, 14th, and 21st October (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.).

High numbers of **Arctic Skuas** have already been reported from Aberlady (*antea* 1: 467). On 27th August between 40 and 50 were working the upper Forth estuary from Kincardine to Grangemouth. At high tide eight of them rested with the waders at Skinflats and continually molested the Dunlin (G.D., J.P.). On the Ythan Estuary they were more numerous than ever before, and eleven were seen from the observer's house one day in August (E.A.G.). An observer reported large numbers present in the Tay from 16th to 21st September (B.N.).

There are few records of **Little Gulls** in Angus during September in spite of their abundance at other times. A visit to the area to find out whether this reflected the habits of the birds or of the bird-watchers produced a number of records in just over a week of watching. At the Buddon Burn near Carnoustie there were five adults on the 16th and 19th September, and an immature on the 22nd. At Carnoustie there were seven adults and one immature on the 17th, and about 30 on the 22nd. Bad weather made it impossible to count these accurately, but at least 20 were adult. Quite a few of the adults were moulting into the full adult (i.e. 2nd winter) plumage (B.N.). An immature was seen on the Ythan Estuary on 14th September (E.A.G.), and one at Girdleness, Aberdeen, on 10th September (W.A.C.). At Elie, Fife, there was one adult and one immature on 14th September, one im-

mature on the 17th, and six adults and an immature on the 18th (D.G.A.). At Longannet a juvenile was watched for a few minutes on 1st October (K.M.C., J.H., M.M.M.). It will be seen that many observers refer to "immatures" without indicating whether these are juvenile birds of the year or 1st summer birds, which arrive earlier as a rule. A glance at the *Handbook* will show the striking difference, and the distinction is well worth making because the early arrival of juveniles might well indicate that the species was breeding in Scotland.

At Aberlady, not a single **Black Tern** has been seen this autumn. One was seen in the distance at L. Leven, Kinross, on 16th September (H.B.), and three days later there were three rather mottled birds round a boat on the loch (J.G.). On the 16th also there was one over the sea at Fairlie, Ayrshire (G.F.).

Various records of movements of **Swallows**, **House Martins** and **Sand Martins** have been received but are difficult to fit into any pattern. A large gathering of 300 or 400 Sand Martins feeding over L. Fitty, Dunfermline, in calm weather on 21st August was too big to be local birds (G.D.). On 7th September hundreds of Swallows and Sand Martins were flying about over Haddington for an hour from 7.15 a.m. BST. On the 10th some hundreds passed south over Haddington in the afternoon after stormy weather (A.M.), and well over 100 Swallows were seen at Gullane Point where such numbers are exceptional (K.S.M., A.T.M.). On the same day there was a great influx of Swallows and martins which blackened the roofs at St Andrews. On the 17th there were many on Rhum at 7 a.m. (M.H.E.C.), and on the 19th many were seen just south of Haddington in the morning but had gone later (A.M.). For a few days to the 24th unusual numbers of Swallows and House Martins were seen in Stornoway—probably as a result of the strong winds (W.A.J.C.). 50 Swallows at Culross on 8th October were the first for a week (J.H.), and a late flock of 20 was seen near Invergowrie on 25th October. Six more were at Broughty Ferry on the 31st and final stragglers at Kingoodie on 1st November (H.B.), and Portencross, Ayrshire, on the 4th (G.F.).

Some evidence for an autumn movement of **Long-tailed Tits**, mainly in October, is given in the *Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* (8: 14), and the same sort of rather slight evidence is provided this year by a dozen non-local birds at Trinity, Edinburgh, on 28th September (B.R.T.), eleven which appeared at Longannet on 6th October (they left again a few days later after seven were caught and ringed) (J.H.), and seven at Aberlady on 7th and 8th October (K.S.M.). Possibly this is simply a post breeding dispersal. There were great numbers in Wigtownshire at the end of October (J.W.).

On 12th October, the day of the extensive movements described earlier, a passage of **Mistle Thrushes** was recorded at Longannet. The observer had never seen such a thing before, and counted 38 birds that day in nine parties. Subsequently more were seen on the 13th (2), 15th (3), 16th (11), and 18th (21) (J.H.). Two **Song Thrushes** watched at close range at Gladhouse on 29th October were identified as the Continental race *T.e. philomelos*. No local birds remained at Gladhouse, and the fact that the birds were with a loose flock of Redwings and Fieldfares helped to confirm the identification as much as the grey back and pure white underparts (D.I.M.W.). **Redwings** were heard over Kincardine on 20th September, and seen at Bordie, Fife, on the 22nd (G.D., J.P.). At Longannet they were first heard on 9th October, and 55, 143, and 80 were seen on the next three days, and over 250 on the 18th when 400 were seen passing west over High Valleyfield in ten minutes (J.H.). A big passage of Fieldfares and Redwings was noted in the Spey valley on 28th October (T.W.). The first Redwings were heard over Edinburgh on 12th October (T.C.S.), and the same night they were heard flying in over Glasgow. The following night they were heard over Castle Douglas (M.F.M.M.). An invasion of **Blackbirds** was noted in East Lothian on 3rd October, with birds at all the farms near the shore, later moving inland in the afternoon (A.M.).

Records of **Stonechats** suggest a small influx during October. On 22nd September there was a pair on the shore at Broughty Ferry (B.N.), and next day a cock was moving west at Biggar, where the observer has seen none before (R.S.H.). On 14th October a pair was in a field near Thankerton, Lanark (R.E.H.), an adult male was at Gladhouse (D.G.A.), and another male at the head of White Cleuch, near Wull Muir, Midlothian. Next day an adult male, an immature male, and a female were seen at Garvald Farm, not far away, and a pair was still there a week later. On the 28th at Third Reservoir, south-east of Stirling, there was an immature male, and the next day an adult male (W.B.).

8th October, a Sunday, was a good day for migrants in East Lothian. At least two **Wheatears** were seen at Aberlady, and five at Barns Ness. Migrant **Robins** were at Aberlady (1), Barns Ness (5) (K.S.M.), and Dunbar, where there were several on the beach, the yellowish colour of the breast denoting the typical race (M.F.M.M.). A **Blackcap** was at Loch Garry, Inverness, on 7th October (J.M.). **Goldcrests** were also moving at this time, being reported at Aberlady on the 7th, and no fewer than eight were at Barns Ness on the 8th (K.S.M.).

A **Yellow Wagtail** *M.f. flavissima* was seen on the banks of the R. Clyde at Quothquhan, Thankerton, on 27th August (R.E.H.).

By An Teallach, Dundonnell, Ross, a **Great Grey Shrike** was

seen killing a Wren on 29th October. It was promptly chivvied by a host of Chaffinches, but flew off carrying the Wren easily in its bill like a bit of fluff (T.W.).

On 29th October a flock of no fewer than 60 **Bullfinches** was feeding on the heather at Gladhouse (D.G.A., D.I.M.W., K.W.).

Exceptional numbers of **Siskins** are reported. At Gladhouse there were two on 22nd July and one on the 29th. These were probably not immigrants from abroad. At Edgelaw, Midlothian, there were ten on 2nd September (D.G.A., R.W.J.S.), and at Longannet there were six on the 20th (J.H.). On 1st October a party of eight, with two Redpolls, was seen near Heriot, Midlothian (W.B.). A big movement probably took place starting on 12th October. That day, a Thursday, parties of 30 and 20 passed west or south-west over Longannet (J.H.), and by the 14th and 15th parties of 100, 50, 50 and 20 could be found in the L. Ken district of Kirkcudbright. The tameness of these birds, and the absence of Redpolls with them, suggested a Continental origin (M.F.M.M.). About 12 flew south past Garvald Farm in the Moorfoots on the 15th (W.B.), 15 flew north-west up the coast at Tynninghame on the same day (R.W.J.S.), and about this time three were seen at Aberlady (D.S.). On the 28th there was a flock of over 100 Siskins in the Spey valley (T.W.). Unusual numbers were also noted in Orkney and Aberdeenshire but we have not received details yet. Four at L. Leven on the 28th are the first to be recorded in Kinross (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.).

A flock of about 100 **Redpolls** was seen at Binning Wood, Tynninghame, on 10th September (T.C.S.). 21 flew over Longannet on 12th October (J.H.). Redpolls were heard at L. Leven on the 28th (D.G.A., T.C.S., D.I.M.W.). We can trace no other published record for Kinross, but D.G.A. saw six in the same place on 6th February 1954.

An early **Snow Bunting** was at Tynninghame on 24th September (I.B.R., W.M.S., R.W.J.S.), and a cock at Longannet on 6th October was early for that locality (J.H.).

#### *General notes on Behaviour, Habits, etc.*

Three immature **Gannets** feeding over the river channel at Grangemouth during September were not diving in the usual way but scooping up food of some kind from the surface (G.D., J.P.).

An **Oystercatcher** at Longannet in September was all white except for black on the primaries and at the end of the tail. It was in a small flock and is similar to one seen in the Crombie and Torryburn area in January 1957 (*Edinburgh Bird Bulletin* 7: 45) and September 1958 (G.D., J.P.). Another white Oystercatcher at South Queensferry on 25th Septem-

ber had a few small patches of black on head and upperparts (W.S.).

A **Greenshank** at Cramond on 1st October was unnerving in various ways, but especially because it had *yellow legs*. It was seen well enough to convince the observer that it was no rare American vagrant, and perhaps serves as a warning to the unwary (T.C.S.).

A **Swallow** feeding with 20 others on 9th September over flood water at Skinflats had a white head (G.D., J.P.).

A **Robin** which built in a roll of wire netting hanging in a garden toolshed at Dornoch took 16 days to complete the nest. It started on 1st April and the first egg was not laid until the 17th. Throughout this period the bird was seen carrying material to the nest (D.M.).

An addled egg remained in the nest of a pair of **Pied Wag-tails** at Dornoch after the three young fledged on 9th June. On 4th July the bird was incubating a clutch of five eggs in the same nest, and again three young fledged. The addled egg of the first clutch was woven into the foundation of the nest when it was relined for the second clutch. (D.M.).

#### THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

### REPORT OF COUNCIL, Session 24, 1960/61

The Council have the honour to submit the following Report for the past year:—

*Membership.* At the end of the Session the Club attained for the first time a total membership of over 1,000, representing a considerable increase over last year's figures. During the Session, 182 new Members were enrolled, while 74 did not renew their subscriptions. 30 married couples took advantage of the new Joint Membership subscription. Comparative figures are shown in the following tables:

	31/8/57	31/8/58	31/8/59	31/8/60	31/8/61
Ordinary	723	738	747	781	852
Junior	132	148	140	141	177
Honorary	11	11	7	5	6
	<hr/> 866	<hr/> 897	<hr/> 894	<hr/> 927	<hr/> 1035

*Council Meetings.* Five Meetings of Council were held during the Session.

*General Meetings.* A full programme of lectures was carried out during the winter in five Branches. The Council wishes to

thank all the lecturers who gave so freely of their services, and also the Branch Officials for arrangements and hospitality.

*Dumfries Branch.* A new Branch of the Club, under the Chairmanship of Sir Arthur Duncan, was formed in Dumfries at a special Meeting held in the County Hotel on 26th June at the request of local Members. A number of new Members have been enrolled already as a result, and the Council expresses its good wishes for the future success of the Branch.

*Excursions.* In addition to the summer excursions arranged by the Branches, the Club also organised weekend excursions to Dumfries in February and to Aviemore in May. These were well attended and a record number of over 80 Members and friends were present at Dumfries.

*Conference.* The Annual Conference and Annual Dinner were held in North Berwick in October when over 200 Members and Guests attended.

*"Scottish Birds."* Four numbers of the Club Journal, and a Special Supplement on "The Birds of Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh" were published during the Session.

*Scottish Bird Records Committee.* The Committee met twice during the Session under the Chairmanship of Dr J. W. Campbell; the Review for 1960 is published in "Scottish Birds" (1: 443-446).

*Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection.* In its second year the Scottish Centre has been widely used both by Members and by visitors from all parts of Britain and Overseas, and much information has been given on bird-watching facilities in Scotland. A special meeting arranged for Junior Members and members of the J.B.R.C. in the Christmas holidays was well attended, and an excursion to Linlithgow Loch was also arranged for them in April. On 7th July Members of Council and of the Edinburgh Branch Committee entertained a group of thirty American ornithologists visiting Scotland under the leadership of Mr Orville Crowder on the first organised American bird-watching tour of Europe.

*Club Library.* A number of books and Journals have been presented to the Library during the year and the Council records its thanks to all the donors. Purchases of both new and scarce reference books were also made. During the summer an arrangement was concluded whereby certain bird books could be purchased through the Scottish Centre, the publisher generously presenting a handsome display case for the purpose and allowing the Club Library Fund the benefit of the trade discount. Sales of these books to the end of the Session have been satisfactory, one purchaser from overseas spending over £50 in order to stock his library with reference books.

*Deeds of Covenant.* During the Session the Club obtained



permission from H.M. Inspector of Taxes to reclaim income tax on subscriptions paid under Deed of Covenant. The Council wishes to thank the 74 Members who signed Covenants and thereby enabled the General Funds of the Club to benefit by over £60.

For the Council,

M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN,  
*President.*

## TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Twenty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Club was held in the Dunblane Hydro Hotel, Perthshire, on Saturday, 28th October, 1961, at 6.15 p.m. Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn, President of the Club, presided over an attendance of about a hundred Members.

*Col. Guy Brownlow.* The Chairman paid tribute to the late Col. Guy Brownlow, who had done so much for bird protection and for ornithology in general.

*Col. R. Meinertzhagen.* The Chairman also asked Members to join with him in sending the good wishes of the Club to Col. Richard Meinertzhagen, who was seriously ill.

*Apologies.* Apologies for absence were received from Dr David Boddington, Dr James W. Campbell, Sir Arthur Duncan and Lt. Col. W. M. Logan Home, all of whom were prevented from being present.

*Minutes.* The Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Annual General Meeting, held in North Berwick on 27th October 1960, were read and approved.

*Report of Council.* In presenting the Report of Council for the past Session (see preceding page) the Chairman announced that the Council had approved a proposal by the Scottish Bird Records Committee that a "Check List of the Birds of Scotland" should be published by the Club. The present Annual Review of Ornithological Changes in Scotland was only a partial fulfilment of the task of the Committee and it was hoped that the proposed Check List would be a basis for showing trends of increase and decrease in the distribution of birds in Scotland. The help of local advisors would be enlisted by means of a draft which would be circulated to them. The Club was indebted to Mr D. G. Andrew (who spoke briefly on the form of the Check List) and to Mr A. T. Macmillan, who would prepare the draft between them.

The Chairman also urged Members to purchase their bird books through the new Club Book Agency and thus benefit the Club Library Fund.

*Accounts.* The Accounts, which had been previously circulated, were considered and approved. Mr J. Eunson asked if he might stress the advantages to the Club of Members signing Deeds of Covenant for their subscriptions, and urged Members present to do so.

*Election of Auditor.* Mr Arthur Walker, C.A., was re-elected Auditor for the ensuing Session.

*Amendment to Constitution.* The following amendment to the Constitution was approved: "That the words 'The Editor and Business Editor of Scottish Birds, the Hon. Treasurer of the House Fabric Fund' be added to read immediately after the words 'the Hon. Treasurer' occurring in the second line of paragraph 4(b) (Council)."

*Election of Hon. President.* In moving the election of Sir Charles G. Connell as an Hon. President of the Club, the Chairman spoke of the debt owed to Sir Charles both as a Founder-Member and past-President of the Club, and for his work in establishing the new Scottish Centre. His election was unanimously approved.

*Election of New Members of Council.* The Council's recommendation that Mr Alastair Macdonald and Mr A. T. Macmillan be elected to Council to replace Mr D. G. Andrew and Mr Arthur J. Smith, who retired by rotation, was approved.

*Mr R. S. R. Fitter.* At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr R. S. R. Fitter, Director of the Intelligence Unit of the Council for Nature, spoke of the proposed National Nature Week to be held in the third week in May, 1963, which was intended to stimulate interest in natural history by means of exhibitions, nature trails and other organised activities. The Chairman said that the Council of the Club had already agreed to assist in any proposals for a Scottish contribution to the Nature Week.

*Vote of Thanks.* The Meeting closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman on the motion of Dr Ian D. Pennie, Vice-President of the Club.

#### THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

##### Revenue Account for the year ended 31st August 1961

	Year to 31/8/61	Year to 31/8/60
INCOME:—		
Subscriptions received for year ... ..	£1111 14 6	£1015
Income Tax recovered on covenanted subscriptions	62 2 11	0
Income from Endowments ... ..	77 5 11	66
Savings Bank and Defence Bond interest ... ..	36 18 5	16
Sales of Club badges and field lists less purchases ...	7 11 2	6
Sales of Birds of Aberlady Bay Report ... ..	51 10 0	0
(see below for net expenditure borne in year to 31/8/60)	£1347 2 11	£1103

## EXPENDITURE:—

Hire of lecture halls and equipment	... ..	£74 0 2	£97
Lecturers' expenses	... ..	67 15 1	77
Secretarial services	... ..	394 4 4	338
Postages, printing and stationery	... ..	138 0 8	93
Subscriptions to Council for Nature, B.T.O., R.S.P.B., and I.C.P.B.	... ..	5 2 0	5
Net cost of Conference	... ..	36 5 10	17
Contribution to Library Fund	... ..	10 0 0	10
Sundry administration expenses	... ..	36 13 7	23
Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection—			
Opening ceremony expenses less donations	... ..	0 0 0	3
Furniture and equipment including duplicator, filing cabinet, library shelving and electric fire and power points	... ..	89 3 9	73
Annual contribution to House Fabric Fund	... ..	50 0 0	50
Heating and lighting, insurance, cleaning and telephone attributable to Club	... ..	95 19 4	44
Production and distribution of Scottish Birds, Vol. I. Nos. 9-12 and Supplement—			
Costs	... .. £453 13 0		
Less—Sales to non-members and surcharge on reprints £58, 16s 4d, receipts from advertisements £144, 12s 0d, and grant from Ministry of Works towards Supplement £55	... .. 258 8 4		
		195 4 8	197
Publication of Birds of Aberlady Bay Report (Costs less grant £30 and sales £10, 10s 0d)	... ..	0 0 0	46
		£1192 9 5	1073
<b>Surplus for year carried to Balance Sheet</b>	... ..	154 13 6	30
		£1347 2 11	1103

## Library Fund Account for the year ended 31st August 1961

	Year to 31/8/61	Year to 31/8/60
Balance brought forward from previous year	£34 6 4	0
Add—Donations received	2 15 0	16
Sale of duplicate copies	3 17 0	13
Contribution from Revenue Account	10 0 0	10
Commission on Book Agency	20 1 2	0
	£70 19 6	39
Less—Purchases	39 17 11	5
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	£31 1 7	34

**Balance Sheet as at 31st August, 1961**

	Year to 31/8/61	Year to 31/8/60
<b>Accumulated surplus</b> at 31st August, 1960 ... ..	£848 6 4	818
Add—Surplus for year per Revenue Account ... ..	154 13 6	30
<b>Library Fund</b> —Balance per Account ... ..	31 1 7	34
<b>Endowments</b> —the free annual income of which is available for the advancement of ornithology		
Miss L. J. Rintoul ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
Dr E. V. Baxter ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
	<u>£3034 1 5</u>	<u>2882</u>
<b>Cash</b>		
In Edinburgh Savings Bank ... ..	£479 13 4	859
In Royal Bank of Scotland Current Account ... ..	55 7 11	23
<b>5% Defence Bonds</b> ... ..	500 0 0	0
<b>Debts due</b> to the Club in respect of advertisements in Scottish Birds and commission on Book Agency	24 5 2	0
	<u>£1059 6 5</u>	<u>882</u>
<b>Less</b> —Subscriptions for 1961/62 paid in advance	25 5 0	0
	<u>£1034 1 5</u>	<u>882</u>
<b>Endowment Investments</b>		
£1151 3½% War Stock at cost ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
976 units The Equities Investment Fund for Charities at cost ... ..	1000 0 0	1000
	<u>£3034 1 5</u>	<u>2882</u>

EDINBURGH, 10th October, 1961.—I have audited the foregoing revenue account for the year to 31st August 1961 and the Balance Sheet as at that date. I have accepted as correct the subscriptions shown as received in the Books and certify that in my opinion the foregoing accounts are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

(Signed) ARTHUR WALKER,  
Chartered Accountants.

**House Fabric Fund — Summary of Accounts for year ended 31st Aug. 1961**

	Year to 31/8/61	Period to 31/8/60
<b>RECEIPTS</b> —		
Balance of grant from anonymous donor ... ..	£0 0 0	£950 0 0
Balance as at 31st August 1960 ... ..	172 11 8	0 0 0
Rent from Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at £100 per annum for year to 11th November 1961 ... ..	100 0 0	111 4 8
Rent from Mr and Mrs Waterston at £100 per annum for year to 11th November 1961	100 0 0	125 0 0
Annual contribution from S.O.C. Revenue Account	50 0 0	50 0 0
Miscellaneous interests ... ..	4 2 11	5 13 6
	<u>£426 14 7</u>	<u>£1241 18 2</u>

## EXPENDITURE—

Repairs and maintenance (including electrical rewiring, £222, 18/-)	£252 7 0	£944 12 11
Property burdens ... ..	100 5 3	108 1 7
Insurance ... ..	2 2 9	13 14 6
Miscellaneous payments ... ..	0 0 0	2 17 6
	<u>£354 15 0</u>	<u>£1069 6 6</u>
On deposit with Edinburgh Mutual & Dunedin Building Society	£14 2 11	
At credit of Account with Messrs Fraser, Stodart & Ballingall, W.S. ... ..	57 16 8	
	<u>£71 19 7</u>	<u>£172 11 8</u>

5th October 1961.—I have examined the foregoing Accounts of the House Fabric Fund of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club for the year to 31st August 1961, and certify that in my opinion they are correctly stated and sufficiently vouched.

(Signed) ANDREW T. MACMILLAN, C.A.

## Council and Office-Bearers of the Club for Session 25

**Hon. Presidents :** Dr D. A. Bannerman, O.B.E.; Sir Charles G. Connell; Rev. J. M. McWilliam.

**President :** Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.

**Vice-President :** Dr I. D. Pennie.

**Hon. Treasurer :** Robert Hillcoat, C.A.

**Hon. Treasurer of House Fabric Fund :** D. G. Andrew.

**Secretary and Treasurer :** Mrs George Waterston.

**Editor of "Scottish Birds" :** Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn.

**Assistant Editors of "Scottish Birds" :** D. G. Andrew, A. T. Macmillan.

**Business Editor of "Scottish Birds" :** A. J. Smith.

**Council :** A. G. S. Bryson, Dr J. W. Campbell, Dr W. J. Eggeling, Lt. Col. J. P. Grant, Alastair Macdonald, K. S. Macgregor, A. T. Macmillan, George Waterston, A. D. Watson, Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards.

**Branch Representatives to Council :** William Austin (Dumfries); Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame (St Andrews); Miss E. A. Garden (Aberdeen); Mrs E. Leitch (Dundee); C. E. Palmar (Glasgow); Miss Olive Thompson (Edinburgh).

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**Dumfries :** Chairman, Sir Arthur Duncan; Vice-Chairman, William Austin; Secretary, H. M. Russell; Committee, E. L. Roberts, R. T. Smith, A. D. Watson.

- Dundee** : Chairman, F. D. Graham; Vice-Chairman, J. Hunter Sutherland; Secretary, Jack Scobie; Committee, J. E. Forrest, A. H. Shepherd.
- Edinburgh** : Chairman, D. G. Andrew; Vice-Chairman, A. T. Macmillan; Secretary, Miss Olive Thompson; Committee, D. R. Anderson, Alastair Macdonald, M. J. H. Robson, R. W. J. Smith.
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- St Andrews** : Chairman, Miss J. McFarlane; Vice-Chairman, Miss Doris Wilson; Secretary, Miss Margaret Spires; Committee, Miss M. H. E. Cuninghame, Miss M. Haig, Julian Holdroyd.

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**Committee** : D. G. Andrew, A. G. S. Bryson, Sir Arthur Duncan, Dr W. J. Eggeling, A. T. Macmillan, Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn, Dr I. D. Pennie, Kenneth Williamson, George Waterston, Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards.

### DUNDEE BRANCH SECRETARY

Mr Jack Scobie, Secretary of the Dundee Branch, has removed to 11 Nevill Street, Dundee. Dundee members are asked to note his new address.

### WEEK-END EXCURSION TO DUMFRIES

Arrangements have again been made this year with the County Hotel, Dumfries, for a week-end Excursion to the Solway to see the geese.

Accommodation has been arranged for the week-end 16th to 18th February 1962, at inclusive terms of £4 per person as follows: Bed on Friday night 16th; breakfast, packed lunch, dinner and bed on Saturday 17th; breakfast and packed lunch on Sunday 18th.

Members wishing to come on this Excursion should book direct with the Manager, the County Hotel, Dumfries (Tel. 146) mentioning that they are Members of the Club; they may also bring guests. Arrangements for transport by private cars to Dumfries should be made with Branch Secretaries. It is advisable to bring warm clothing and thermos flasks, and if possible, gum boots.

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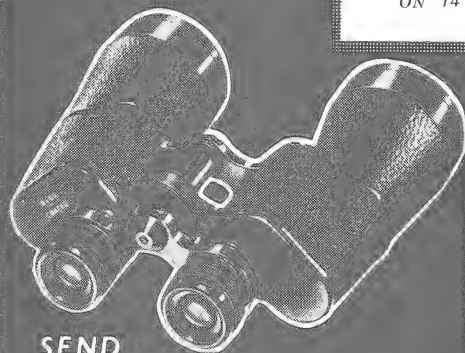
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# SCOTTISH BIRDS

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**Volume 1**

*1958 - 1961*

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Arrangements have been made for binding Volume 1 of "Scottish Birds." The charge is 14/6d for binding in red buckram, or 17/6d for binding in red quarter leather, both prices including return postage. The parts to be bound (Nos. 1 to 14, Duddingston Supplement, and Index) should be sent direct to the binders together **with your remittance to cover the cost of binding.** Back numbers (except No. 1 and No. 5) may be purchased from the Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, at 5/- each, but **not** from the binders. **Please be sure to complete the binding form on the back cover** (with details of your name and address, remittance, and style of binding required) before sending the parts to:

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The index is in three parts. The first is a general index to the various sections of the journal; the second is a list of all papers and short articles; and the third is an index of all significant mentions of each species. English names are used throughout, but a key to scientific names is given at the end. Except in the index of papers and short articles, only the first page of each reference is given.

John M. S. Arnott very kindly undertook the extremely tedious work of compiling the index to species. This index is selective, not comprehensive. Titles of papers and short notes which deal with particular species are included in abbreviated form. Otherwise only page numbers are given. All references have been indexed from current notes, reviews of changes in status, local status lists, and lists of unusual occurrences in the Isle of May reports. The following have usually been omitted:

- (a) passing and comparative references ("the size of a Blackbird", "dead as the Dodo");
- (b) references within the body of papers, reviews, obituaries, and other contributions, unless these are status reports or considered of special interest apart from the context in which they are mentioned.

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## SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES INCLUDED IN INDEX

Species not included in the index are not included here. Some obsolete scientific names, and a few Scottish vernacular names, are used in the text. These are not included here, but the identity is usually clear from the text, or from the use of scientific and vernacular names together.

Except for the order of species within certain genera, scientific nomenclature follows the 1952 B.O.U. *Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland* with the changes recommended in 1956 by the Taxonomic Sub-Committee (*Ibis* 98: 158-168), and the 1957 decisions of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (*Ibis* 99: 369).

English names follow *The Handbook of British Birds* with the alterations detailed in *British Birds* in January 1953 (46: 2-3) and January 1956 (49: 5).

- Gavia immer* Great Northern Diver  
*Gavia adamsii* White-billed Diver  
*Gavia arctica* Black-throated Diver  
*Gavia stellata* Red-throated Diver  
*Podiceps cristatus* Great Crested Grebe  
*Podiceps griseigena* Red-necked Grebe  
*Podiceps auritus* Slavonian Grebe  
*Podiceps nigricollis* Black-necked Grebe  
*Podiceps ruficollis* Little Grebe  
*Oceanodroma leucorhoa* Leach's Petrel  
*Hydrobates pelagicus* Storm Petrel  
*Procellaria puffinus* Manx Shearwater  
*Procellaria diomedea* Cory's Shearwater  
*Procellaria grisea* Sooty Shearwater  
*Fulmarus glacialis* Fulmar  
*Sula bassana* Gannet  
*Phalacrocorax carbo* Cormorant  
*Phalacrocorax aristotelis* Shag  
*Pelecanus* sp. Pelican  
*Ardea cinerea* Heron  
*Nycticorax nycticorax* Night Heron  
*Ixobrychus minutus* Little Bittern  
*Botaurus stellaris* Bittern  
*Ciconia ciconia* White Stork  
*Platalea leucorodia* Spoonbill  
*Plegadis falcinellus* Glossy Ibis  
*Anas platyrhynchos* Mallard  
*Anas crecca* Teal  
*Anas crecca carolinensis* Green-winged Teal  
*Anas querquedula* Garganey  
*Anas strepera* Gadwall  
*Anas penelope* Wigeon  
*Anas americana* Baldpate  
*Anas acuta* Pintail  
*Spatula clypeata* Shoveler  
*Netta rufina* Red-crested Pochard  
*Aythya marila* Scaup  
*Aythya fuligula* Tufted Duck  
*Aythya ferina* Pochard  
*Bucephala clangula* Goldeneye  
*Clangula hyemalis* Long-tailed Duck  
*Melanitta fusca* Velvet Scoter  
*Melanitta perspicillata* Surf Scoter  
*Melanitta nigra* Common Scoter  
*Polysticta stelleri* Steller's Eider  
*Somateria mollissima* Eider  
*Somateria spectabilis* King Eider  
*Mergus merganser* Goosander  
*Mergus serrator* Red-breasted Merganser  
*Mergus albellus* Smew  
*Tadorna tadorna* Shelduck  
*Casarca ferruginea* Ruddy Shelduck  
*Anser anser* Grey Lag Goose  
*Anser albifrons* White-fronted Goose  
*Anser erythropus* Lesser White-fronted Goose  
*Anser arvensis arvensis* Bean Goose  
*Anser arvensis brachyrhynchus* Pink-footed Goose  
*Anser caerulescens* Snow Goose  
*Branta bernicla* Brent Goose  
*Branta leucopsis* Barnacle Goose  
*Branta canadensis* Canada Goose  
*Branta ruficollis* Red-breasted Goose  
*Cygnus olor* Mute Swan  
*Cygnus cygnus* Whooper Swan  
*Cygnus columbianus* Bewick's Swan  
*Aquila chrysaetos* Golden Eagle  
*Buteo buteo* Buzzard  
*Buteo lagopus* Rough-legged Buzzard  
*Accipiter nisus* Sparrowhawk  
*Accipiter gentilis* Goshawk  
*Milvus milvus* Kite  
*Pernis apivorus* Honey Buzzard  
*Circus aeruginosus* Marsh Harrier  
*Circus cyaneus* Hen Harrier  
*Pandion haliaetus* Osprey  
*Falco subbuteo* Hobby  
*Falco peregrinus* Peregrine  
*Falco rusticolus* Gyr Falcon  
*Falco rusticolus candicans* Greenland Falcon  
*Falco columbarius* Merlin  
*Falco vespertinus* Red-footed Falcon  
*Falco tinnunculus* Kestrel  
*Lagopus lagopus* Red Grouse  
*Lagopus mutus* Ptarmigan  
*Tetrao urogallus* Capercaillie  
*Alectoris rufa* Red-legged Partridge  
*Perdix perdix* Partridge  
*Coturnix coturnix* Quail  
*Phasianus colchicus* Pheasant  
*Megalornis grus* Crane  
*Rallus aquaticus* Water Rail  
*Porzana porzana* Spotted Crane  
*Porzana parva* Little Crane  
*Crex crex* Corncrake  
*Gallinula chloropus* Moorhen  
*Fulica atra* Coot  
*Haematopus ostralegus* Oystercatcher  
*Vanellus vanellus* Lapwing  
*Charadrius hiaticula* Ringed Plover  
*Charadrius squatarola* Grey Plover  
*Charadrius apricarius* Golden Plover  
*Charadrius dominicus* American/Asiatic Golden Plover  
*Charadrius morinellus* Dotterel

- Arenaria interpres* Turnstone  
*Limnodromus* sp. Dowitcher  
*Gallinago gallinago* Snipe  
*Limnocyptes minimus* Jack Snipe.  
*Scolopax rusticola* Woodcock  
*Numenius arquata* Curlew  
*Numenius phaeopus* Whimbrel  
*Numenius tenuirostris* Slender-billed Curlew  
*Limosa limosa* Black-tailed Godwit  
*Limosa lapponica* Bar-tailed Godwit  
*Tringa ochropus* Green Sandpiper  
*Tringa glareola* Wood Sandpiper  
*Tringa hypoleucos* Common Sandpiper  
*Tringa totanus* Redshank  
*Tringa erythropus* Spotted Redshank  
*Tringa melanoleuca* Greater Yellowlegs  
*Tringa flavipes* Lesser Yellowlegs  
*Tringa nebularia* Greenshank  
*Tringa stagnatilis* Marsh Sandpiper  
*Calidris canutus* Knot  
*Calidris maritima* Purple Sandpiper  
*Calidris minuta* Little Stint  
*Calidris temminckii* Temminck's Stint  
*Calidris fuscicollis* White-rumped Sandpiper  
*Calidris melanotos* Pectoral Sandpiper  
*Calidris acuminata* Sharp-tailed Sandpiper  
*Calidris alpina* Dunlin  
*Calidris testacea* Curlew Sandpiper  
*Calidris pusilla* Semi-palmated Sandpiper  
*Crocethia alba* Sanderling  
*Tryngites subruficollis* Buff-breasted Sandpiper  
*Philomachus pugnax* Ruff  
*Recurvirostra avosetta* Avocet  
*Himantopus himantopus* Black-winged Stilt  
*Phalaropus fulicarius* Grey Phalarope  
*Phalaropus lobatus* Red-necked Phalarope  
*Catharacta skua* Great Skua  
*Stercorarius pomarinus* Pomarine Skua  
*Stercorarius parasiticus* Arctic Skua  
*Stercorarius longicaudus* Long-tailed Skua  
*Pagophila eburnea* Ivory Gull  
*Larus marinus* Greater Black-backed Gull  
*Larus fuscus* Lesser Black-backed Gull  
*Larus argentatus* Herring Gull  
*Larus canus* Common Gull  
*Larus hyperboreus* Glaucous Gull  
*Larus glaucooides* Iceland Gull  
*Larus melanocephalus* Mediterranean Black-headed Gull  
*Larus minutus* Little Gull  
*Larus ridibundus* Black-headed Gull  
*Rissa tridactyla* Kittiwake  
*Chlidonias niger* Black Tern  
*Gelochelidon nilotica* Gull-billed Tern  
*Sterna hirundo* Common Tern  
*Sterna macrura* Arctic Tern  
*Sterna dougallii* Roseate Tern  
*Sterna albifrons* Little Tern  
*Sterna sandvicensis* Sandwich Tern  
*Alca torda* Razorbill  
*Plautus alle* Little Auk  
*Uria aalge* Guillemot  
*Cepphus grylle* Black Guillemot  
*Fratercula arctica* Puffin  
*Columba oenas* Stock Dove  
*Columba livia* Rock Dove  
*Columba palumbus* Woodpigeon  
*Streptopelia turtur* Turtle Dove  
*Streptopelia decaocto* Collared Dove  
*Streptopelia risoria* Barbary Dove  
*Cuculus canorus* Cuckoo  
*Clamator glandarius* Great Spotted Cuckoo  
*Tyto alba* Barn Owl  
*Nyctea scandiaca* Snowy Owl  
*Athene noctua* Little Owl  
*Strix aluco* Tawny Owl  
*Asio otus* Long-eared Owl  
*Asio flammeus* Short-eared Owl  
*Aegolius funereus* Tengmalm's Owl  
*Caprimulgus europaeus* Nightjar  
*Apus apus* Swift  
*Apus melba* Alpine Swift  
*Alcedo atthis* Kingfisher  
*Merops apiaster* Bee-eater  
*Coracias garrulus* Roller  
*Upupa epops* Hoopoe  
*Picus viridis* Green Woodpecker  
*Dendrocopos major* Great Spotted Woodpecker  
*Jynx torquilla* Wryneck  
*Calandrella cinerea* Short-toed Lark  
*Alauda arvensis* Skylark  
*Eremophila alpestris* Shore Lark  
*Hirundo rustica* Swallow  
*Delichon urbica* House Martin  
*Riparia riparia* Sand Martin  
*Corvus corax* Raven  
*Corvus corone corone* Carrion Crow  
*Corvus corone cornix* Hooded Crow  
*Corvus frugilegus* Rook  
*Corvus monedula* Jackdaw  
*Pica ca* Magpie  
*Garullus glandarius* Jay  
*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* Chough  
*Parus major* Great Tit  
*Parus caeruleus* Blue Tit  
*Parus ater* Coal Tit  
*Parus cristatus* Crested Tit  
*Parus palustris* Marsh Tit  
*Parus montanus* Willow Tit  
*Aegithalos caudatus* Long-tailed Tit  
*Certhia familiaris* Treecreeper  
*Troglodytes troglodytes* Wren  
*Cinclus cinclus* Dipper  
*Turdus viscivorus* Mistle Thrush  
*Turdus pilaris* Fieldfare  
*Turdus philomelos* Song Thrush  
*Turdus musicus* Redwing  
*Turdus eunomus* Dusky Thrush  
*Turdus ruficollis* Black-throated Thrush  
*Turdus torquatus* Ring Ouzel  
*Turdus merula* Blackbird  
*Oenanthe oenanthe* Wheatear  
*Oenanthe oenanthe leucorrhoa* "Green-land" Wheatear  
*Oenanthe leucomela* Pied Wheatear

- Saxicola torquata* Stonechat  
*Saxicola rubetra* Whinchat  
*Phoenicurus phoenicurus* Redstart  
*Phoenicurus ochruros* Black Redstart  
*Luscinia megarhynchos* Nightingale  
*Cyanosylvia svecica* Bluethroat  
*Erithacus rubecula* Robin  
*Locustella naevia* Grasshopper Warbler  
*Acrocephalus arundinaceus* Great Reed Warbler  
*Acrocephalus scirpaceus* Reed Warbler  
*Acrocephalus palustris* Marsh Warbler  
*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* Sedge Warbler  
*Acrocephalus paludicola* Aquatic Warbler  
*Hippolais icterina* Icterine Warbler  
*Sylvia atricapilla* Blackcap  
*Sylvia nisoria* Barred Warbler  
*Sylvia borin* Garden Warbler  
*Sylvia communis* Whitethroat  
*Sylvia curruca* Lesser Whitethroat  
*Sylvia cantillans* Subalpine Warbler  
*Phylloscopus trochilus* Willow Warbler  
*Phylloscopus collybita* Chiffchaff  
*Phylloscopus sibilatrix* Wood Warbler  
*Phylloscopus borealis* Arctic Warbler  
*Phylloscopus inornatus* Yellow-browed Warbler  
*Regulus regulus* Goldcrest  
*Regulus ignicapillus* Firecrest  
*Muscicapa striata* Spotted Flycatcher  
*Muscicapa hypoleuca* Pied Flycatcher  
*Muscicapa parva* Red-breasted Flycatcher  
*Prunella modularis* Hedge Sparrow or Dunnock  
*Anthus trivialis* Tree Pipit  
*Anthus pratensis* Meadow Pipit  
*Anthus spinoletta* Rock Pipit  
*Motacilla alba yarrelli* Pied Wagtail  
*Motacilla alba alba* White Wagtail  
*Motacilla cinerea* Grey Wagtail  
*Motacilla flava* "Yellow" Wagtails  
*Motacilla flava flava* Blue-headed Wagtail  
*Motacilla flava thunbergi* Grey-headed Wagtail  
*Bombycilla garrulus* Waxwing  
*Lanius excubitor* Great Grey Shrike  
*Lanius minor* Lesser Grey Shrike  
*Lanius cristatus* ssp. Red-tailed Shrike  
*Lanius cristatus collurio* Red-backed Shrike  
*Sturnus vulgaris* Starling  
*Sturnus roseus* Rose-coloured Starling  
*Mniotilta varia* Black-and-White Warbler  
*Coccothraustes coccothraustes* Hawfinch  
*Chloris chloris* Greenfinch  
*Carduelis carduelis* Goldfinch  
*Carduelis spinus* Siskin  
*Carduelis cannabina* Linnet  
*Carduelis flavirostris* Twite  
*Carduelis flammae* Redpoll  
*Pyrhula pyrrhula* Bullfinch  
*Carpodacus erythrinus* Scarlet Grosbeak  
*Loxia curvirostra* Crossbill (N.B. Some notes on "Crossbills" refer to Scottish Crossbills).  
*Loxia pityopsittacus scotica* Scottish Crossbill  
*Loxia leucoptera* Two-barred Crossbill  
*Fringilla coelebs* Chaffinch  
*Fringilla montifringilla* Brambling  
*Zonotrichia albicollis* White-throated Sparrow  
*Melospiza melodia* Song Sparrow  
*Emberiza calandra* Corn Bunting  
*Emberiza citrinella* Yellowhammer  
*Emberiza bruniceps* Red-headed Bunting  
*Emberiza aureola* Yellow-breasted Bunting  
*Emberiza hortulana* Ortolan Bunting  
*Emberiza rustica* Rustic Bunting  
*Emberiza pusilla* Little Bunting  
*Emberiza schoeniclus* Reed Bunting  
*Calcarius lapponicus* Lapland Bunting  
*Plectrophenax nivalis* Snow Bunting  
*Passer domesticus* House Sparrow  
*Passer montanus* Tree Sparrow

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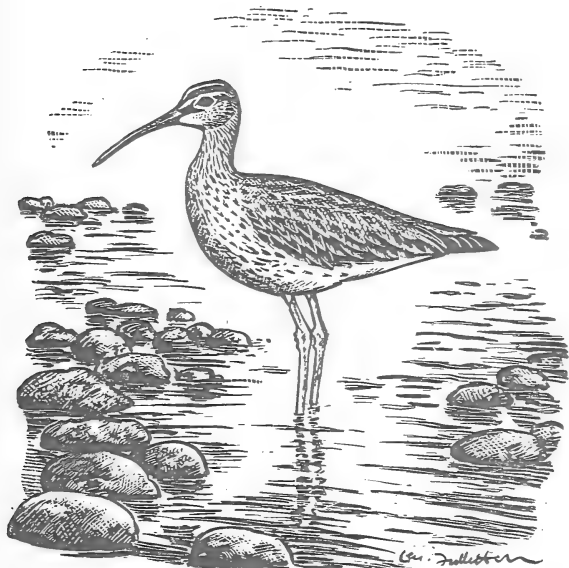






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# SCOTTISH BIRDS



The Journal of  
The Scottish Ornithologists' Club

Vol. I

Special Supplement

Summer 1961

THE BIRDS OF DUDDINGSTON LOCH  
EDINBURGH

FIVE SHILLINGS

## THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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THE Scottish Ornithologists' Club was founded in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews, at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Excursions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims and objects of the Club are to (a) encourage and direct the study of Scottish Ornithology in all its branches; (b) co-ordinate the efforts of Scottish Ornithologists and encourage co-operation between field and indoor worker; (c) encourage ornithological research in Scotland in co-operation with other organisations; (d) hold meetings at centres to be arranged at which Lectures are given, films exhibited, and discussions held; and (e) publish or arrange for the publication of statistics and information with regard to Scottish ornithology.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is 25/-; or 7/6 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or in the case of University undergraduates who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the time at which their subscriptions fall due in any year.

Joint membership is available to married couples at an annual subscription of 40/-. "Scottish Birds" is issued free to members, but Joint members will receive only one copy between them.

The affairs of the Club are controlled by a Council composed of the Hon. Presidents, the President, the Vice-President, the Hon. Treasurer, one Representative of each Branch Committee appointed annually by the Branch, and ten other Members of the Club elected at an Annual General Meeting. Two of the last named retire annually by rotation and shall not be eligible for re-election for one year.

A Scottish Bird Records' Committee, appointed by the Council, produce an annual Report on "Ornithological Changes in Scotland."

An official tie with small white Crested Tits embroidered on it can be obtained in dark green or in navy blue by Members only from Messrs R. W. Forsyth Ltd., Princes Street, Edinburgh, or 5 Renfield Street, Glasgow, C.2 at a cost of 16s 9d post extra. A small brooch in silver and blue can be obtained for the use of Members of the Club. Price 2s 6d each from the Secretary, or from Hon. Branch Secretaries.

Forms of application for Membership, copy of the Club Constitution, and other literature is obtainable from the Club Secretary, Mrs George Waterston, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. (Tel. Waverley 6042).

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### CLUB-ROOM AND LIBRARY

The Club-room and Library at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7, will be available to members during office hours, and on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 10 p.m. (except the Wednesdays of Branch Meetings). Members may use the Reference Library and borrow books from the Duplicate Section. Facilities for making tea or coffee are available at a nominal charge and members may bring guests by arrangement. The Aldis 2" x 2" slide projector and screen may be used for the informal showing of slides at a charge of 2s 6d per night to cover the replacement of bulbs.

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### NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

All notes dealing with birds in the eastern Lowlands, from Berwick-on-Tweed to Dundee, should be submitted to A. T. Macmillan, 66 Spylaw Bank Road, Edinburgh, 13; all other contributions to M. F. M. Meiklejohn, 16 Athole Gardens, Glasgow, W.2. It would be helpful if notes were typewritten, if possible, and double spaced.

# SCOTTISH BIRDS



THE JOURNAL OF THE SCOTTISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Vol. I.

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Summer 1961

Edited by M. F. M. MEIKLEJOHN, with the assistance of D. G. ANDREW and A. T. MACMILLAN. Business Editor, ARTHUR J. SMITH. Cover design (Whimbrel) by LEN FULLERTON. Published quarterly.

## THE BIRDS OF DUDDINGSTON LOCH, EDINBURGH

### Foreword

by SIR CHARLES G. CONNELL

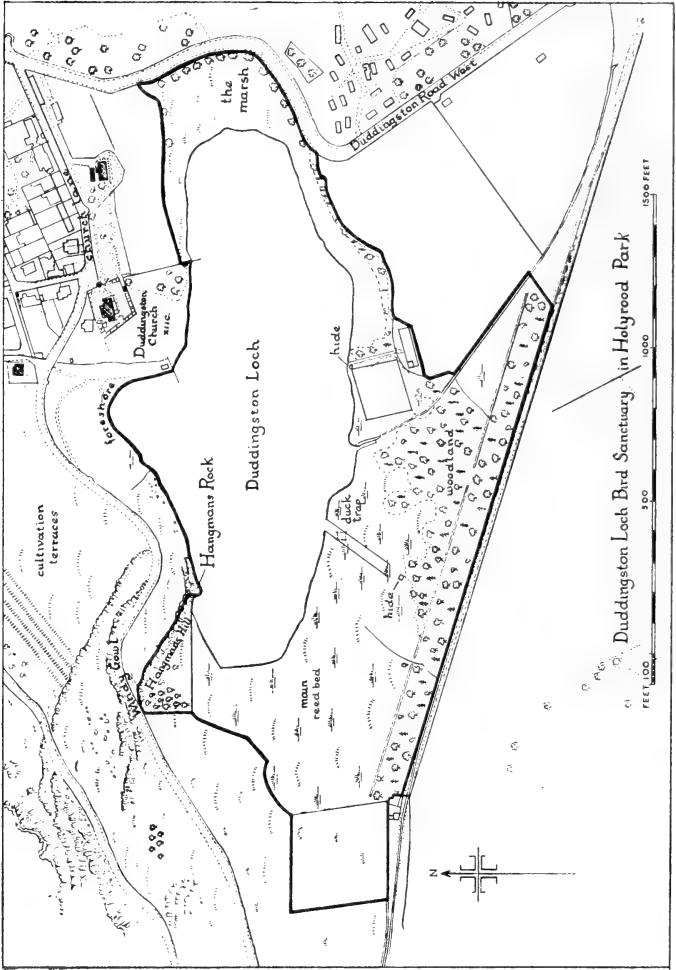
Chairman, The Committee on Bird Sanctuaries in the Royal Parks (Scotland)

I WELCOME the invitation to write a short foreword to this publication. When the Sanctuary was established by H.M. Office (now Ministry) of Works in 1925 notes were kept on the birds by a number of observers and this practice has continued ever since. For some years an annual report containing a record of these observations was published, but as it had a small circulation and a limited value it was discontinued. The Committee has now decided that a Check-List, which it is hoped may be brought up to date from time to time, will be more useful as a record of what can be seen at Duddingston and how the Sanctuary has succeeded in its purpose.

The description of the Sanctuary written by the late Professor James Ritchie of Edinburgh University is of great interest, and this gives me the opportunity of paying tribute to his outstanding work for Natural History in Scotland. He was Chairman of the Committee from 1955 until 1958 and was largely responsible for the developments which have made the Sanctuary so successful. In addition to Professor Ritchie's contribution there is the Check-List of the birds prepared by Mr Duncan R. Anderson and Mr George Waterston which consists of a summary of the published records of birds seen within the Sanctuary area at the Loch and includes all records up to the end of 1960. It is hoped that this will form the basis for further observation and study of the birds of the Loch and its surroundings. The illustrations are designed to show the types of habitat found in the Sanctuary area.

I wish to record here the Committee's appreciation of the grant made available by The Ministry of Works which has enabled the Scottish Ornithologists' Club to publish this Supplement to their journal, "Scottish Birds." Copies may be obtained at a cost of 5s (postage 2d extra) from The Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

CHARLES G. CONNELL.



## DUDDINGSTON LOCH BIRD SANCTUARY

### in the Royal Park of Holyrood, Edinburgh

By the late Professor JAMES RITCHIE, C.B.E., M.A., D.SC.

#### *Introduction*

Duddingston Loch and its surroundings, in the Royal Park of Holyrood, has many claims to interest. It is relatively secluded, in spite of its proximity to Edinburgh, within the municipal boundaries of which it lies. Its situation is impressive, at the foot of Arthur's Seat, the relic of a volcano of palaeozoic times, and in view of signs of earlier volcanic activity like the basalt columns of Samson's Ribs and the eminences of the Hangman's Hill and the Lion's Haunch. For the historian it has its own particular interest and for the naturalist the variety of its haunts and of their vegetable and animal inhabitants, and its place as a refuge for summer nesting birds and for great congregations of autumn migrants from the far north, make it a source of unending surprise and pleasure.

The purpose of this account of the Sanctuary is to indicate some of its outstanding interests, for the benefit of the visitor to Edinburgh who might be unaware of its existence, of the youthful naturalist who would find variety and exercise in identifying birds and observing their habits, of the teacher who could find no better place for introducing his pupils to nature's diversity and the seasonal changes in plant and bird life, and of the expert naturalist on the look-out for fresh experience and new knowledge. The "Check-List" also aims at putting on record details of the birds observed within the Sanctuary, in order to aid visitors in the identification of species and to fix a base-line from which future changes in population may be gauged; for we know that in this limited area alterations in the bird population take place with remarkable rapidity whenever a fluctuating water level affects the surroundings of the Loch.

#### *Duddingston Loch*

Duddingston Loch is a natural lake formed after the recession of the glaciers of the Ice Age, which have left the marks of their passage, grooves and scratches running west and east, upon a glaciated rock bordering the Queen's Drive nearby. The present Loch is fed by spring water from the Wells o' Wearie near the base of the basalt pillars known as Samson's Ribs, and its outlet flows south-eastward into the Braid Burn near Duddingston Station. Contracted by drainage of the surrounding land and by accumulations of silt from the

hill and organic debris from its own plant life, the Loch is now reduced to some 30 acres, including its reed-bed. Its maximum depth is 10 feet and its average depth slightly over 5 feet. Perhaps the nearest recorded approach to its prehistoric dimensions occurred on September 13th, 1744, when a "water-spout" broke upon the top of Arthur's Seat with such force and volume that one branch of the deluge carried away the gable of the most western cottage in Duddingston village, "flooded the Loch over the adjacent meadows," and contributed to the silting up of the Loch, while the other branch tore out a rocky channel to the south of the summit, known as the "Gutted Haddie" (Scots for 'disembowelled haddock').

Even a couple of centuries ago the Loch must still have considerably exceeded its present area, for in his mature years Lord Henry Cockburn (1779-1854) recorded that when he was a boy "the reeds were then regularly cut over, by means of short scythes, with very long handles, close to the ground, and this made Duddingston Loch nearly twice its present size. All between the loch and the house (of Prestonfield) was a sort of Dutch garden, admirably kept."

What the Loch looked like in the days before Scottish history began we do not know, but we know that prehistoric peoples lived in its neighbourhood and may have fished in its waters. When the Queen's Drive was being constructed in 1846 a Bronze Age burial with cinerary urn was unearthed just above Samson's Ribs (that would carry us back some 3,000 years), and almost directly above the Loch bronze swords were found. But the most exciting discovery was made in an odd way in the Loch itself. In 1772 Sir Alexander Dick of Prestonfield, in order to increase the fertility of his fields, commenced to dredge a deposit of marl clay from the bed of the Loch. He used a flat-bottomed boat which dragged after it a weighted leather bag in which the calcareous mud collected. This is how he described the discovery of August 9th, 1775: "In the third year of my progress, in dragging successfully great quantities of marl, now and then I met, in the middle of the Loch, with large fragments of deer's horns of an uncommon magnitude. As my operations were proceeding northward, about 150 yards from the verge of the lake, next to the King's Park, the people employed in dredging in places deeper than usual after having removed the first surfaces of fat blackish mould, got into a bed of shell marl from five to seven feet deep, from which they brought up in the collecting bag a very weighty substance, which when examined, as it was thrown into the marl boat, was found to be a heap of swords, spears, and other lumps of brass, mixed with the purest shell marl."

The greater part of this discovery was presented, along with the letter quoted above, to the newly founded Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1780; it was their first donation of



relics and it remains "the largest hoard of bronze implements recorded from Scotland." The 49 items still extant were described by Dr J. G. Callander and identified as of late Bronze Age, that is about 2,700 years ago.

Does this remarkable find of broken and battered swords and spear-heads suggest a votive offering to the deities of the Loch or, perhaps more likely, the scrap collected by a pre-historic bronze founder for recasting? Sir Daniel Wilson thought they might indicate the position of a lake-dwelling or crannog, a house or houses raised above the water surface on wooden piles, and built away from the shore for safety. His idea is supported by the fact that at one time piles of some sort projected from the bed of the Loch, for the Rev. John Thomson, the famous Scottish landscape painter, incumbent of the loch-side manse of Duddingston from 1805 to 1840, was accustomed to attach his boat to wooden piles when he was fishing or sketching in the Loch. But if a crannog existed there in the late Bronze Age it would be unique in Scotland because of its early date and in its construction on unusually long piles.

A glimpse of the prehistoric natural history of the loch-side is also given by these marl dredgings. They contained human skulls and "large fragments of deer's horns of an uncommon magnitude." The human skulls were never examined and have disappeared and so have the horns; but we can conclude that large Red Deer (comparable with the great stag whose antlers were found in the Meadows in Edinburgh in a similar bed of marl in 1781) roamed about the Loch in a forest of oak trees and hazel scrub, remains of which were found under deposits of peat and gravel during ditching and draining in the neighbouring fields in the eighteenth century). As well as those of Red Deer the antlers included, according to a contemporary note by Alexander Smellie, a well known Edinburgh naturalist, antlers of the Elk, an imposing deer now confined to northern Europe and Asia, but up to Roman times a native of the Scottish lowlands.

The Loch itself has yielded evidence of the Roman occupation for a copper coin reported as of the Emperor Tacitus (275-276 A.D.) was dredged from marl the year after the bronze hoard was discovered.

This is not the place for tracing the history of the locality, but visitors to the Sanctuary cannot fail to notice the church of Norman architecture, still used as the parish church, which dominates the north-east bank of the Loch. Its main structure dates back to the twelfth century and is modified only by an aisle on the north side added in 1631. Until the Reformation this church was under the patronage of the Abbey of Kelso. Two relics of its more recent past exist at the church gate—an

iron collar (the "jougs") for the church's punishment of misbehaviour, and a "loupin-on-stane" for the convenience, in days before roads and carriages, of the farmer's wife when she rode on horseback behind her husband.

It may also be recalled that on the slope of Arthur's Seat overlooking Duddingston Loch, on September 19th, 1745, part of the army of Prince Charles Edward was encamped before marching to defeat General Cope at the Battle of Prestonpans. Nearly two centuries earlier, on May 10th, 1572, the Windy Gowl was the scene of a battle between the forces of the Earl of Huntly (Queen Mary's men) and those of the Regent, the Earl of Morton.

### *Duddingston Loch Bird Sanctuary*

Duddingston Loch must long have been regarded as a private bird reserve, for as early as 1680 the Duke of Lauderdale placed swans in it, but it was not until December 1923, when W. K. Askew, Esq., of Ladykirk presented the Loch and the land immediately surrounding it to the nation, that the idea of a national sanctuary became practicable. By this gift the area became part of the Royal Park of Holyrood and the then First Commissioner of Works, Viscount Peel, impressed by the success of Bird Sanctuaries established in the Royal Parks in England, decided to set up in Scotland a Committee to consider similar action. This Committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Elphinstone, was formed in 1925, and after examining the two Royal Parks in Scotland considered that while Linlithgow Loch, for several reasons, was unsuitable, Duddingston Loch would make an interesting and attractive Bird Sanctuary. Its merit lay in its considerable extent of fresh water, the richness of its food supply of aquatic vegetation and animals, the variety of its surroundings, its relative shelter from wind, and its proximity to the Firth of Forth, a noted area for winter immigrants.

The Sanctuary having been constituted, steps were at once taken to improve it. A strip of ground  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres in extent, generously given to the nation by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn, was incorporated to give access to the surroundings. Additional cover and nesting sites were provided by the planting of shrubs and trees, berry-bearing shrubs and trees designed to attract winter migrants, and conifers, low willows, alders, poplars and white beam were placed alongside the adjoining railway line partly for shelter and partly to check the damage from live cinders ejected by engines climbing the up-grade, which had previously started considerable fires in the Sanctuary area. A small group of voluntary bird-observers was appointed, to whose expert records made throughout the years is due most of the information in the Bird List which follows. Lastly a Warden was employed during the nesting

season to protect the birds and their eggs from trespassers, and a fence was erected at vulnerable boundaries.

The level of the Loch which lies just below the 150' contour line above sea-level, was subject to changes which affected the surrounding areas, but this has been corrected by the clearing of channels and ditches, and particularly by the construction of a control on the outlet to the Braid burn. Observation of the birds themselves by the official observers has been improved by the erection of "hides" on the border of the reeds, and by the cutting of wide swathes through the reed-bed, which at the same time are potential fire-breaks. Nesting boxes have been placed on some of the trees for the smaller birds.

The Sanctuary falls into several natural or ecological areas, each serving its own particular purposes:—

(1) *The Loch* has now about 19 acres of water surface. It contains a food supply of aquatic vegetation and invertebrate animals and fishes which attract surface feeding and diving birds; it offers safe shelter and a resting place; and it is the winter resort of large numbers of winter immigrants, close on 2,000 duck, including 1,550 Pochard, having been counted on a single day.

(2) *The Reed-bed*,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  acres in area, almost surrounds the water surface but is best developed at the western end. Here in former days it used to be cut regularly for thatching cottage roofs and about 1750 "it supplied about 30 weavers' looms. They were chiefly employed in manufacturing a coarse flaxen stuff, then known by the name of Duddingston hardings, which generally sold for  $3\frac{1}{2}d$  to  $4d$  a yard." Now the value of the reed-bed lies in the shelter it gives from the prevailing winds, and in its suitability and safety as a nesting place either for birds nesting practically on the water surface or for those which suspend their nests amongst the reeds.

(3) *The Meadow*. Continuous with the reed-bed on the west and south-west, but drier, is an area of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres covered with rough tussocky grass. It is a feeding ground and a nesting place for a variety of ground nesting birds.

(4) *The Marsh*. A marshy area of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres borders the eastern end of the Loch and is a much frequented feeding ground.

(5) *Scrub and Trees*. These occur rather sparsely on the southern border of the Sanctuary and on Hangman's Hill. They offer shelter and nesting sites to an assortment of birds different from the aquatic inhabitants of the Sanctuary.

When the Sanctuary was established in 1925 a survey of the birds within it, made during the first year, showed that it possessed seventeen resident and breeding species, forty reg-

ular visitors and sixteen casual or occasional visitors. As four of these occur both as nesting birds and as regular winter immigrants the total number of different species of birds then recorded from the Sanctuary was sixty-nine—a contrast with the list of birds now recorded in these pages.

Finally it may be said that, although the public are excluded from the Sanctuary itself and trespassing is strictly prohibited, excellent prospects of the Sanctuary may be obtained from many points on the roads in Holyrood Park, and closer inspection of the birds on the Loch may be made from Duddingston Foreshore, where the Loch merges on the Park close to Duddingston Road. Here also occasional anglers may be seen testing their luck in the Loch.

## CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF DUDDINGSTON LOCH

By D. R. ANDERSON and GEORGE WATERSTON

Arrangement and nomenclature follow the B.O.U. *Check-List of the Birds of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1952. For References and Contractions see end of List. All notes up to the end of 1960 have been included.

### DIVERS AND GREBES

**BLACK-THROATED DIVER** *Colymbus arcticus* L. Rare. The only record is of a single bird seen from 9 to 27 February 1937. (S.N. 1937: 72).

**RED-THROATED DIVER** *Colymbus stellatus* Pontopp. Rare. Two records of single birds seen in March and July 1928 (S.N. 1937: 45); and one record of a single bird seen between 26 September and 15 October 1951 (E.B.B. 2:2).

**GREAT CRESTED GREBE** *Podiceps cristatus* (L.). Breeds. Originally an occasional winter visitor, but first bred in 1937. Although one or two pairs visit the loch every summer no young were reared between 1953 and 1959. In 1960 however four pairs bred, but between them only reared four young.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus* (L.). Rare. Three records of single birds—one on 26 December 1927 (S.N. 1928: 27); one in February 1929 (S.N. 1937: 45); and one between 31 January and 4 February 1937 (S.N. 1937: 56).

**BLACK-NECKED GREBE** *Podiceps caspicus* Hablizl. Rare. The only record is of two seen between 31 January and 4 February 1937 (S.N. 1937: 56). [Stated to have bred successfully in 1943. *Edinburgh To-day*].

**LITTLE GREBE** *Podiceps ruficollis* (Pallas). Breeds annually—



PLATE 1  
Duddingston Loch from the Queen's Drive (looking east) showing the  
extensive reed-bed.



PLATE 2  
Looking east at a lower level showing Hangman's Rock (left) and  
reed-bed behind Sanctuary boundary wall.

usually up to five or six pairs. Less common in winter. Occasional passage migrant.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo* (L.). Occasional winter visitor. One or more visited and fished on the loch from February to May 1933 and from February to March 1935 and one bird was seen in March 1934. Since then it has apparently been recorded only in January 1948 and October 1949; but in 1959 and 1960 was becoming more frequent.

**HERON** *Ardea cinerea* L. Occasional visitor. Has decreased in numbers during the last ten years. During the great frost in 1947 four frequented the outlet burn for several weeks—two eventually dying of starvation.

**BITTERN** *Botaurus stellaris* (L.). Rare. Four records; one remained for three weeks in February 1947 (*E.B.B.* 3: 56), one seen in August 1953 (*E.B.B.* 3: 66), one on 24 February 1955 (*E.B.B.* 5: 46), and one between 2 and 10 October 1955 (*E.B.B.* 6: 8). The extensive reed beds which are the typical habitat for this species no doubt provided the attraction.

#### DUCKS, GEESE AND SWANS

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos* L. Common throughout the year; breeds. 1937—about 25 pairs bred; in 1960—about 30 pairs bred. In winter as many as 300 may be seen (Baxter & Rintoul, 1953, 2: 393).

**TEAL** *Anas crecca* L. Increasing in numbers as an autumn and winter visitor. Pair bred in 1955 and 1959. In October 1959 89 were seen—the highest number recorded.

**GARGANEY** *Anas querquedula* L. Rare. Three records; one in July 1950 (*E.B.B.* 3: 56), one between 11 and 15 October 1952 (*E.B.B.* 3: 3), and one between 22 and 31 March 1953 (*E.B.B.* 3: 48).

**GADWALL** *Anas strepera* L. Rare. Three records; a pair on the loch between 6 and 17 April 1951 (*E.B.B.* 1: 52); a single drake present between 22 March and 3 April 1954 (*E.B.B.* 4: 51) and a pair on 22 October 1956 (*E.B.B.* 7: 11). (Recently fairly regular winter visitor to Dunsappie Loch on Arthur's Seat).

**WIGEON** *Anas penelope* L. Regular winter visitor—52 being the highest number seen at one time. The only summer record is of a drake on 10 July 1960.

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta* L. Occasional winter visitor; seven records since 1928 (two in April 1944).

**SHOVELER** *Spatula clypeata* (L.). Seen in small numbers in

autumn and winter; maximum 27 on 25 September 1960. Does not breed.

- RED-CRESTED POCHARD *Netta rufina* (Pallas.). Two records; a male was seen on 21 December 1924 which remained until 17 February 1925 (S.N. 1925: 21) and a duck was present between 28 October and 3 November 1957 (E.B.B. 8:5).
- SCAUP *Aythya marila* (L.). Occasional winter visitor in small numbers—usually after rough weather. (This species is abundant in winter on the sea between Leith and Portobello).
- TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula* (L.). Present throughout the year. First bred in 1918 and has bred in small numbers every year. A common winter visitor; maximum numbers 636 on 17 January 1960.
- POCHARD *Aythya ferina* (L.). Present throughout the year. Eight to ten pairs breed annually. In winter is the most numerous duck on the loch—averaging between 600 and 700. A peak of 1,560 was recorded on 12 December 1936 (Baxter & Rintoul, 1953, 2:412).
- GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula* (L.). Now a regular winter visitor in small numbers. Between 1927 and 1931 it was rarely recorded.
- LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis* (L.). Rare. One record of a female shot on 15 November 1886 (Nash, 1935, 174), probably the bird referred to by Speedy (1892, 82). One immature bird seen on 28 October 1938 (S.N. 1939: 28).
- VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca* (L.). Rare. A female was recorded on the loch on 24 March 1956 (E.B.B. 6: 38).
- COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra* L. One record of a male on 5 May 1919 (S.N. 1919: 197).
- RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator* L. Rare. Six were seen in November 1914 (Baxter & Rintoul, 1953, 240); and Kirke Nash records five on another occasion (Nash, 1935, 181).
- GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser* L. Occasional winter visitor; formerly (1933) appeared more frequently. Only recent records are one on 31 May 1951 (E.B.B. 1: 62) and one on 26 November 1953 (E.B.B. 4: 27). Maximum number of 20 seen on 12 January 1934.
- SMEW *Mergus albellus* L. Rare. One female was on the loch between 3 February and 24 April 1929 (S.N. 1929: 28); one female was present on 4 January and between 17 and 24 February 1930 (S.N. 1930: 26 and 1937: 40); and one female was seen between 11 February and 25 March 1956 (E.B.B. 6: 26 and 38).



**SHELD-DUCK** *Tadorna tadorna* (L.). Rare. Three records. On 29 September 1929 a flock of eleven was seen flying westwards overhead (S.N. 1937: 37). One visited the loch for ten minutes on 9 May 1953 (E.B.B. 3: 56); and one was seen on 9 December 1960 (D.R.A.).

**RUDDY SHELD-DUCK** *Casarca ferruginea* (Pallas.). Rare. One record of a female on the loch from October 1923 to 29 March 1924 (S.N. 1925: 68).

**GREY LAG GOOSE** *Anser anser* (L.). Rare. Writing in 1775, Sir Alexander Dick wrote "woodcock have appeared and wild geese in large numbers" (Baird, 1898, 260). The species however is not defined. The only record of a bird within the sanctuary is of one on 15 December 1955 which was shot in an adjoining field (D.R.A.). (A flock of thirteen birds was introduced to the loch early in 1961).

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser arvensis brachyrhynchus* Baillon. Flocks frequently pass over the loch in winter.

**BARNACLE-GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis* (Bechstein). Rare. One was on the loch on 29 April 1956 (E.B.B. 6: 50).

**CANADA GOOSE** *Branta canadensis* (L.). Rare. Used to breed in 1913 and prior to that (Nash, 1935, 154). The only recent record is of two on 13 May 1953 (E.B.B. 3: 56).

**MUTE SWAN** *Cygnus olor* (Gmelin). Introduced by the Duke of Lauderdale about 1678 (Baird, 1898, 259). One to two pairs resident throughout the year; breeds. In 1933 it is recorded (Report 1933) that the cygnets hatched at Duddingston walked up the hill to Dunsappie Loch in September and did not return. It is of interest to record that in 1953 there was the same form of behaviour, but on this occasion three cygnets were lost—probably killed by Carrion Crows as the family walked up to Dunsappie (E.B.B. 4: 70). The movement of the Swan family to Dunsappie is now an annual event.

**WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus* (L.). Irregular winter visitor. The only post-war records are of one in January 1949 (D.R.A.) and twelve on 15 November 1953 (R.S.).

## HAWKS

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo* (L.). Rare. Baird (1898, 508) described the Buzzard as "occasional." A bird thought to be this species was seen over the loch on 12 September 1955 (R.S.).

**ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD** *Buteo lagopus* (Pontopp). One seen on 2 October 1954 (E.B.B. 5: 8).

**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus* (L.). Speedy (1892, 104) describ-

ed it as "frequently seen." It is now rare and does not breed.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus* (L.). One record of an Osprey "noticed one Sunday evening in the Spring of 1890 circling round Duddingston Loch" (Speedy, 1892, 104).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus* Tunstall. One record of a Peregrine seen over the loch on 19 January 1956 (*E.B.B.* 6: 26).

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus* L. Usually a pair resident throughout the year; occasionally breeding. In 1955 four pairs bred in Holyrood Park, including one brood on Hangman's Rock (*E.B.B.* 5: 66).

### GAME BIRDS

RED GROUSE *Lagopus scoticus* (Latham). Speedy (1892, 109) states "several gentlemen of our acquaintance have seen them on Arthur's Seat." There are no other records.

PARTRIDGE *Perdix perdix* (L.). Present throughout the year and frequently seen in the Sanctuary where a pair bred in 1960; also breeds in the vicinity.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix* (L.). Speedy is quoted as stating that "the Quail is occasionally found in the district" (Baird, 1898). There is no other record.

PHEASANT *Phasianus colchicus* L. Seen throughout the year; breeds. The present population in the Sanctuary is believed to be about twenty.

### RAILS AND CRAKES

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus* L. Speedy (1892, 103) stated that it is "frequently seen at Duddingston Loch." It is a regular winter visitor (fifteen trapped and ringed to date), and one pair bred in 1951 (*E.B.B.* 1: 62).

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana* (L.). Speedy (1892, 103) stated that "the Spotted Crake is a rare visitor." No other record.

LITTLE CRAKE *Porzana parva* (Scopoli). One seen 30 November 1952 (*E.B.B.* 3: 19).

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex* L. Rare summer visitor. Once recorded calling in the Sanctuary for some days in May 1932 (*S.N.* 1937: 45). Up to 1953 was a regular summer visitor to the fields on the north side of Duddingston village.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus* (L.). Seen throughout the year in varying numbers subject to weather conditions; breeds. Birds ringed at the loch have been recovered at Lochgelly, Gullane and in Northumberland.

COOT *Fulica atra* L. Numerous and breeds. Numbers increase



PLATE 3  
View from Sanctuary looking north, with Hilde (partially screened  
by reeds) and Duddingston Kirk.



PLATE 4  
The Loch in winter with large concentrations of waterfowl  
at pools in the ice.

in winter. Maximum number of 300 recorded in February 1956 (*E.B.B.* 6: 26).

## WADERS

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus* L. Regular passage migrant in small numbers. Does not breed.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus* (L.). Occasionally seen at loch-side and formerly bred in vicinity. Bred in Holyrood Park, 1960.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius apricarius* L. Apparently only two records: seen on 24 September 1933 and a flock of 40 on 27 October 1936 (*S.N.* 1937: 44).

COMMON SNIPE *Capella gallinago* (L.). A regular winter visitor in small numbers. D.R.A. was informed by a local shepherd that it once bred in the marshy ground near the Wells o' Wearie. In 1935 two birds were observed at the breeding season and one of them was drumming over the loch (*S.N.* 1937: 44).

JACK SNIPE *Lymnocyptes minimus* (Brünn.). Frequents the ditches and marshy ground every winter. Up to three have been seen at one time.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola* L. Regular winter visitor; does not breed.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata* (L.). Regular passage migrant over the loch, and has been seen on the ditches in hard weather.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus* (L.). Occasionally heard or seen passing over on migration (*S.N.* 1937: 44).

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus* L. Only one record of one seen on 5 August 1933 (*Report* 1933).

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos* L. Regular passage migrant in small numbers.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus* (L.). Seen occasionally at the loch on passage. Does not breed.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta* (Leisler). Only one record of a bird seen on 2 May 1935 (*Report* 1935).

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina* (L.). Only three records. Recorded for the first time in 1930 (no date) (*Report* 1930); on 8 December 1934 a flock of ten flew up the loch low over the water (*Report* 1935); and one seen on north side of loch on 11 February 1956 (*E.B.B.* 6: 26).

PHALAROPE *Phalaropus* sp?. One record of a Phalarope (? species) seen on 20 October 1951 (*E.B.B.* 2: 2).

## GULLS AND TERNS

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus* L. Seen throughout the year. Increased numbers in winter.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus* L. Passage migrant and occasional summer visitor. Has been recorded in every month in winter.

SCANDINAVIAN LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. *Larus f. fuscus* L. One record of two seen standing on the ice on 7 December 1950 (*E.B.B.* 1: 43).

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus* Pontopp. Large numbers frequent the loch at all seasons; more numerous in winter.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus* L. As Herring Gull.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus* Gunnerus. One seen on loch on 7 May 1960 (D.R.A.).

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides* Meyer. One seen on the loch on 3 May 1949, remained for three days (*E.B.B.* 3: 57).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus* L. Large numbers frequent the loch in autumn and winter.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo* L. Occasional passage migrant.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna macrura* Naumann. One record of a bird identified on 1 June 1952 (*E.B.B.* 2: 60).

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis* Latham. Only two records—one seen diving in the loch on 30 May 1931 (*Report* 1931); and in the summer of 1936 (*S.N.* 1937: 44).

LITTLE AUK *Plautus alle* (L.). One record of one on 17 February 1904 (*A.S.N.H.* 1904: 127).

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge* (Pontopp). One oiled bird on the loch on 15 August 1947 (D.R.A.).

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas* L. Never at any time numerous, but breeds in the vicinity.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus* L. Present throughout the year; several pairs breed.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus* L. A regular summer visitor; usually single birds. Not known to breed.

BARN OWL *Tyto alba* (Scopoli). Occasionally seen; said to have nested near the Sanctuary in 1936. One roosted in conifers in the Sanctuary in October and November 1945 (*B.B.* 39: 90).

TAWNY OWL *Strix aluco* L. Present throughout the year. Has

bred every year since 1956 in an artificial nestbox.

**LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus* (L.). Baird (1898, 508) described this bird as rare, but it is now a regular frequenter of the Sanctuary and breeds in the vicinity. Eight seen roosting in small tree in reed bed on 21 January 1946 (D.R.A.).

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus* (Pontopp). Three frequented the fields on the north side of Duddingston Village in the winter 1955-56; and two were recorded on various dates in October and November 1958 hunting in the marsh (D.R.A.).

**NIGHTJAR** *Caprimulgus europaeus* L. One was seen near Samson's Ribs in Holyrood Park on 2 June 1913 (S.N. 1913: 234).

**SWIFT** *Apus apus* (L.). In summer appears over the loch in large numbers.

**KINGFISHER** *Alcedo atthis* (L.). Recorded regularly at the loch up to 1935. Has now become scarce. Last seen on 26 August 1950 when two birds were present (D.R.A.).

**GREEN WOODPECKER** *Picus viridis* L. A recent arrival in the district. First recorded on 5 January 1956 (E.B.B. 6: 24) and seen on several subsequent occasions. Bred in 1959.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopos major* (L.). First recorded on 24 July 1946 when two were seen. Is now a regular visitor. In 1954 a nesting hole was excavated but was later abandoned.

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis* L. Breeds in the vicinity.

**SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica* L. Summer visitor; does not breed. Large numbers feed over the loch.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica* (L.). Summer visitor; does not breed.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia* (L.). Summer visitor; does not breed.

**RAVEN** *Corvus Corax* L. Macgillivray (1837 1: 510) stated that Ravens formerly bred on Arthur's Seat. The species is now rare and the only recent record is of two flying over the Giral Craig on 15 February 1947 (S.N. 1948: 50).

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone* L. Baird (1898, 508) quotes Speedy as stating "Rare." It has increased greatly in recent years and breeds annually.

**HOODED CROW** *Corvus cornix* L. Occasional winter visitor—mainly hybrid birds.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus* L. Seen throughout the year; breeds in the vicinity.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula* L. Numerous throughout the year. At least one pair breeds in the Sanctuary.

MAGPIE *Pica pica* (L.). Baird (1898, 508) quotes Speedy as stating "plentiful." Magpies are not so common on the eastern fringes of the City as they are on the west side. It is normally only an occasional visitor; but in 1960 a pair bred in a garden in Duddingston village and six were seen in the Sanctuary on various dates in September that year.

GREAT TIT *Parus major* L. Common throughout the year; breeds.

BLUE TIT *Parus caeruleus* L. Common throughout the year; numbers increase in winter; breeds.

COAL TIT *Parus ater* L. A fairly regular winter visitor; does not breed.

WILLOW OR MARSH TIT *Parus sp?*. A party of four was seen on 10 October 1957 (*E.B.B.* 8: 5).

LONG-TAILED TIT *Aegithalos caudatus* (L.). A fairly regular winter visitor; does not breed.

TREECREEPER *Certhia familiaris* L. Present throughout the year; bred 1957.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes* (L.). Common throughout the year; breeds.

DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus* (L.). One was seen on 18 October 1933 (*Report* 1934).

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus* L. Seen throughout the year; occasionally breeds.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris* L. Regular winter visitor—sometimes in large numbers.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus ericetorum* Turton. Seen throughout the year; breeds. Numbers decrease in winter.

REDWING *Turdus musicus* L. Regular winter visitor, appearing in October and November to feed on haws. Latest spring record—one on 6 May 1955 (*E.B.B.* 5: 55).

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus* L. Occasional autumn passage migrant.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula* L. Common throughout the year; breeds. Big influx of winter immigrants.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe* (L.). Regular summer visitor and the first migrant to arrive in spring. Breeds in the vicinity.



- STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata* (L.). Formerly resident; bred in the Sanctuary in 1932 (*Report* 1932). After being scarce for a number of years, is beginning to re-establish itself and bred near Dunsappie Loch in 1954 (*E.B.B.* 4: 68).
- WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra* (L.). Occasional summer visitor; breeds in the vicinity.
- REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (L.). Occasional passage migrant.
- ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula* (L.). Seen throughout the year; breeds. Numbers increase in winter.
- GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia* (Bodd.). One record of a bird seen on 11 May 1957 (*E.B.B.* 7: 71).
- SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (L.). Summer visitor; many pairs breed in the reed bed.
- BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla* (L.). Rare. One at Curling Pond on 10 May 1925 (*Report* 1926); one from 1 to 7 July 1952 (*E.B.B.* 3: 3) and one singing 19 June, 16 to 18 July 1953 (*E.B.B.* 3: 66).
- GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin* (Bodd.). Rare. One on 12 May 1947 (D.R.A.); and one on 26 May 1951 (*E.B.B.* 1: 62).
- WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis* Latham. Regular summer visitor; several pairs breed.
- LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca* (L.). Rare. One on 10 May 1930 (*Report* 1930).
- WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus* (L.). Common summer visitor; many pairs breed. Earliest arrival date—8 April.
- CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita* (Vieillot). Baird (1898) quotes Speedy as stating "occasionally seen." There is no recent record.
- WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* (Bechstein). Baird (1898, 509) quotes Speedy as stating "fairly plentiful." We know of only one definite record—a male on 7 May 1955 (*E.B.B.* 5: 54).
- GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus* (L.). Occasional winter visitor in small numbers.
- SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata* (Pallas). Common summer visitor; four or five pairs breed every year.
- HEDGE SPARROW *Prunella modularis* (L.). Seen throughout the year; breeds.

- MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis* (L.). Common summer visitor and occasionally seen in winter; breeds.
- TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis* (L.). Rare. Four were seen on 23 April 1953 (*E.B.B.* 3: 67).
- PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrelli* Gould. Seen throughout the year. Occasionally roosts in large numbers in the reed bed (300 counted in October 1936, *S.N.* 1937: 41). Breeds in the vicinity.
- WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla a. alba* L. Eight or nine were identified on 6 May 1927 (*Report* 1928).
- GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea* Tunstall. Regular passage migrant.
- YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava* L. Evans (*A.S.N.H.* 1896: 252) stated "seen about Duddingston now and then." The last record was of a female seen from 26 April to 4 May 1924 (*Report* 1924).
- BLUE-HEADED WAGTAIL *Motacilla f. flava* L. Rare. A male was seen on 14 May 1955 (*E.B.B.* 5: 54).
- WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus* (L.). Rare. One seen on 11 April 1937 (*Report* 1937); and three seen on 11 November 1946 (*D.R.A.*).
- GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor* L. Rare. One on 29 January 1954 which remained two days (*E.B.B.* 4: 36) and another, possibly the same bird, arrived on 11 January 1955. It was caught and ringed on 30 March and was last seen on 2 April (*E.B.B.* 5: 30 and 46).
- STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris* L. Seen throughout the year; breeds. Occasionally very large numbers roost in the reed beds and up to 10,000 have been recorded (*E.B.B.* 2: 2).
- HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes* (L.). Rare. One was seen on 29 April 1953 which remained for three weeks in the Sanctuary (*E.B.B.* 3: 58); also two on 29 to 30 April 1955 (*E.B.B.* 5: 55).
- GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris* (L.). Seen throughout the year; breeds. Flocks of up to 50 have been seen.
- GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis* (L.). Occasional winter visitor. Fourteen seen on 23 November 1950 (*D.R.A.*).
- SISKIN *Carduelis spinus* (L.). Rare. Four seen on 19 November 1949 (*E.B.B.* 3: 45); three on 27 October 1950 (*D.R.A.*); and

three on 19 January 1960 (D.R.A.).

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina* (L.). Seen throughout the year; breeds. Flocks of up to 200 have been seen in winter.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea cabaret* (P. L. S. Muller). Formerly uncommon. Now a regular winter visitor; first bred in 1935. Flock of sixteen seen on 22 November 1955 (*E.B.B.* 6: 8).

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (L.). Seen throughout the year; more frequent in winter. Not known to breed.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs* L. Common throughout the year; breeds.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla* L. Occasional winter visitor.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella* L. Seen throughout the year; breeds. Up to 75 have been recorded roosting in the reeds.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra* L. This species breeds in the vicinity and large numbers roost in the reeds in winter—up to 300 being counted on one occasion (*E.B.B.* 6: 26).

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus* (L.). Although described by Speedy (1898) as "not numerous," it is now a common breeding bird and flocks in the adjoining fields in winter.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis* (L.). Regular winter visitor to Holyrood Park. Notably abundant in 1929 and 1932.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus* (L.). Common resident bird; breeds.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus* (L.). Seen throughout the year. Has bred in the vicinity. Flocks of between 20 and 50 have been seen in winter (*E.B.B.* 7: 18).

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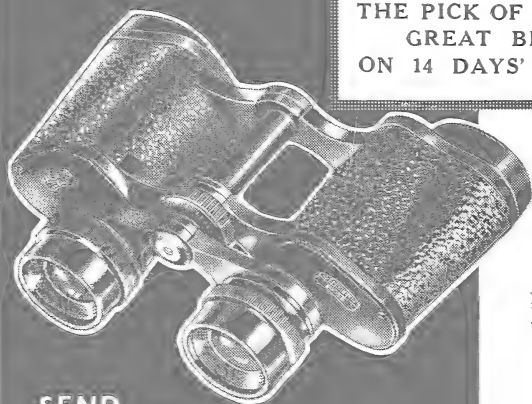
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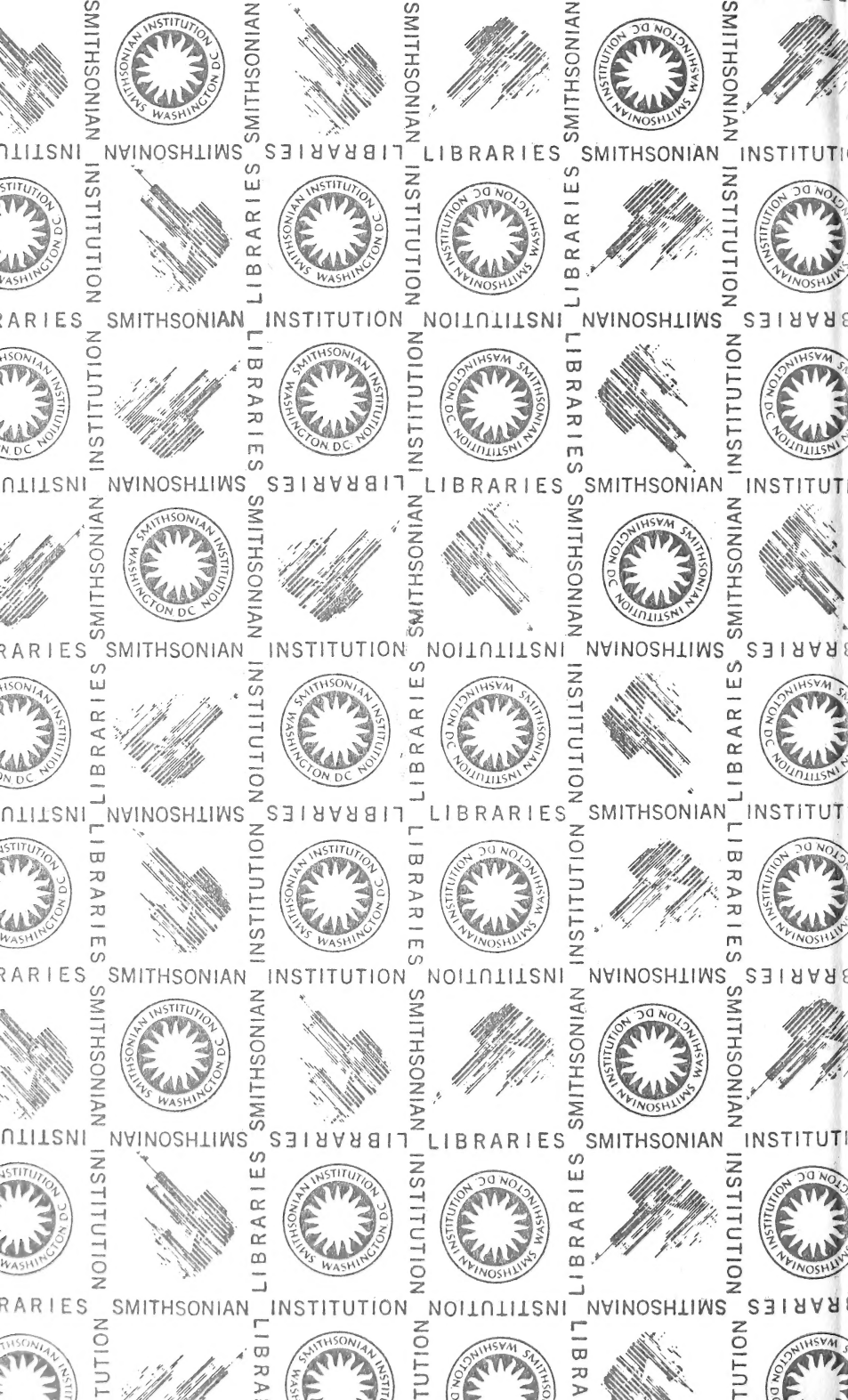


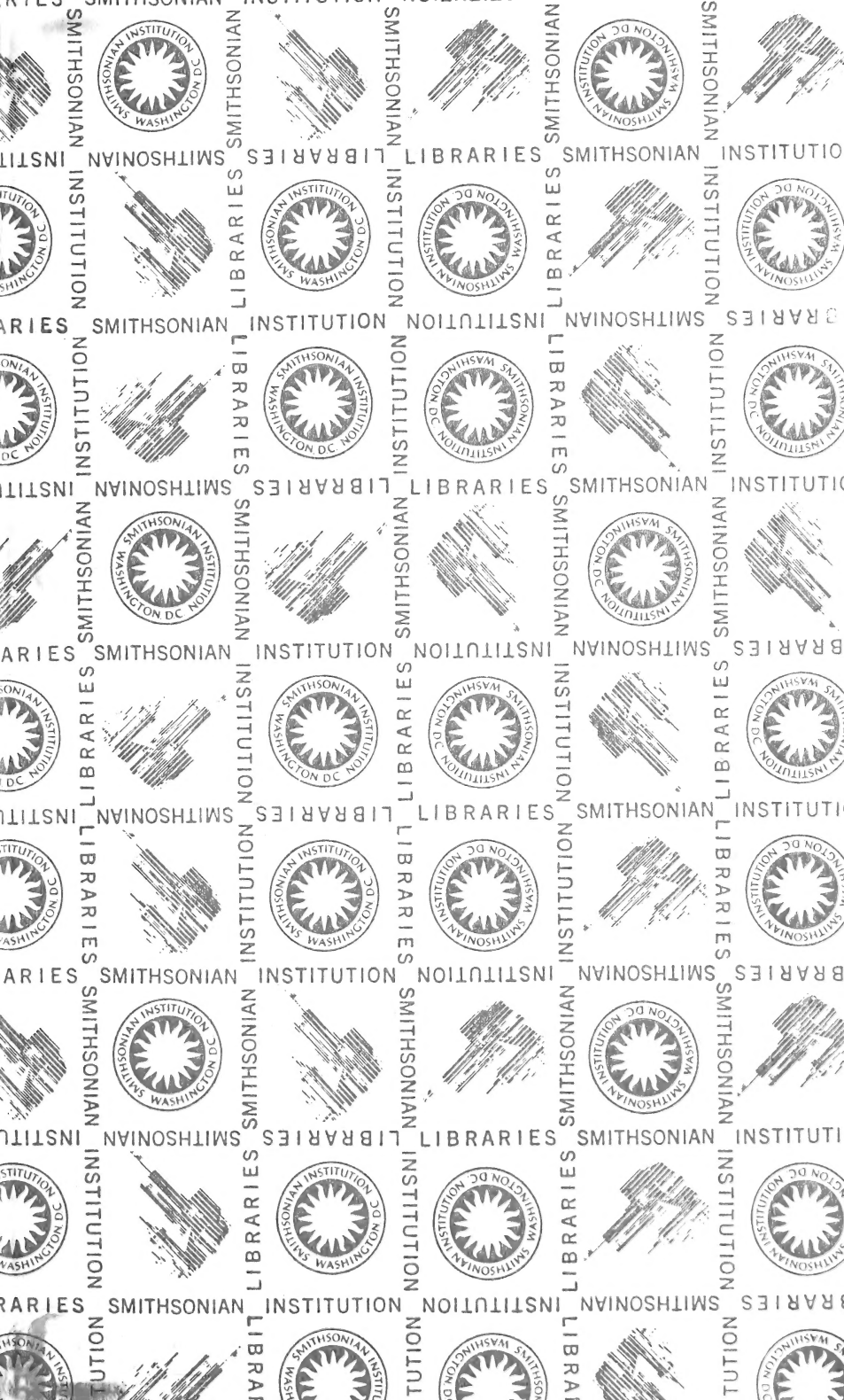












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