

Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT

1960



PETER E. DAVIS

Warden

PRICE 5/-

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

Trustees

Dr James W. Campbell; Dr John Berry; Mr A. G. S. Bryson; Dr F. Fraser Darling; Mr James Fisher; Col. W. M. Logan Home; Cmdr. Sir G. Hughes-Onslow, R.N.; Mr G. T. Kay; Professor M. F. M. Meiklejohn; Col. R. Meinertzhagen; Mr E. M. Nicholson; Mr Peter Scott; Dr A. C. Stephen; Sir A. Landsborough Thomson; Professor V. C. Wynne-Edwards.

Chairman :—Sir Arthur B. Duncan.

Hon. Secretary :—Mr George Waterston, 21 Regent Terr., Edinburgh 7.

Hon. Treasurer :—Mr Ian R. Pitman, 48 Castle Street, Edinburgh 2.

Warden :—Mr Peter E. Davis, The Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland.
(Tel. : Fair Isle 8).

Solicitors :—J. & F. Anderson, W.S., 48 Castle Street, Edinburgh 2.

Auditors :—Lindsay, Jamieson and Haldane, C.A., 24 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh.

Bankers :—The Bank of Scotland, 64 George Street, Edinburgh, 2.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION — “*Friend of Fair Isle*” — ONE GUINEA.

Please support by Donation or Legacy—

THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY ENDOWMENT FUND.

With the generous help of the Pilgrim Trust, the Observatory Trustees have established an Endowment Fund for Ornithology and Bird Preservation in Scotland. The objects are :—To establish the Fair Isle Bird Observatory on a permanent financial basis; to extend Fair Isle research methods to other stations in Scotland; and finally to develop Bird Sanctuaries and Bird Protection in general.

Capital subscribed to the Fund will be held as a permanent Endowment by the Trustees and cannot be spent. Income from the Fund will be carefully used by the Bird Observatory Executive Committee in keeping with the above objects.

Please write to the Hon. Secretary for particulars.

GEORGE WATERSTON,
Hon. Secretary.

21 Regent Terrace, EDINBURGH 7.

*FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST***Annual Report for 1960**FOREWORD

ONCE again we present an annual report for your consideration. You will see that 1960 has been an eventful year—the highlight being the Royal Visit on 11th August, a great occasion for the island.

The work at the Bird Observatory continues under the excellent supervision of Peter and Angela Davis; and I would like to emphasise the importance of the expert tuition which is being given to so many learners in the correct trapping, handling, and ringing of migratory birds. There must be few stations where so great a variety of birds can be found to work with. Every year an increasing number of youngsters gain much useful knowledge during their visits.

“Friends of Fair Isle” will share our anxiety at the continuing decrease in the island population—a trend which the owners, the National Trust for Scotland, are doing their best to reverse by the improvement of dwellings and the introduction of light industries. It is hoped to settle a crofter-weaver family at the Haa House early next year.

You will see from our Hon. Treasurer’s Report that our income from subscribers is dwindling. The Trustees intend to make a strong drive for increased support for our work on the island, and I would like to appeal to you strongly to continue your vital support as an annual subscriber, and to enlist your aid in persuading others to subscribe or make donations.

ARTHUR B. DUNCAN,

Chairman.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

TREASURER'S REPORT

As Treasurer my main duty this year is to point out that our income from subscriptions is falling steadily. In 1958 £612: in 1959 £583: in 1960 £467. People die and people lose interest, and there are only two remedies. Either we must recruit new Friends or we must build up the Endowment Fund to a much bigger capital figure, sufficient to produce an income to run the Observatory without having to depend on subscriptions.

From the Revenue Accounts you will see that it requires an income of at least £1,100 a year to run the Observatory, and that, if you take away Legacies of £310 and donations of £100, which should properly be treated as capital, we should have shown a small loss on the year in spite of the Hostel profit.

In the twelve years or more since the Observatory started we have overcome many difficulties and established what is, I think, recognised as the leading Bird Observatory in Britain. We have, largely through the keenness of George Waterston, and the generosity of a private donor, a permanent Headquarters in Edinburgh where the activities of the Royal Society for Protection of Birds, the Scottish Ornithologists Club and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust can be efficiently run from one centre. We have ourselves a direct interest in Bird Protection through the medium of the Helena Howden Trust, and we are keeping well abreast of modern scientific techniques in the field of research.

It would be sad if lack of funds were to hamper or even nullify such a record of progress.

I ask you all to help in any way possible, either by recruiting more subscribers or by way of legacy or donation to the Endowment Fund.

If I may deal briefly with the figures for 1960, you will see, from the Hostel Revenue Account, that once again Peter and Angela Davis have shown a profit. I can safely say that but for their successful management we would have had difficulty in carrying on. We owe them a lot.

Turning to the Trust Revenue Account, you will see, as I have said, that on the income side subscriptions are down by over £100 on last year and there is a small drop in tax

recovered. Against this, on the expenditure side, we have cut down on printing and stationery. Otherwise there is not much change. We can do little, if anything, to reduce expenditure further so that everything depends on keeping the income steady or moving upward.

The balance sheet position is satisfactory. The savings bonds are held as a buffer against any possible future loss. The cash in the Hostel Bank Account is always held to cover purchase of supplies for the next season.

The Helena Howden Trust monies are held by the Bank of Scotland, as Trustees, for the establishment of a bird sanctuary or sanctuaries in Scotland. Income and capital can be used at the discretion of the Fair Isle Trustees. Payments have been made to the Isle of May, to the St Kilda Fund and to the Hostel for equipment. The capital of the fund has an approximate value of £7,000.

The Endowment Fund has a present value of £6,862 inclusive of the Regent Terrace property. I should like to see it stand nearer the Thirty-thousand mark. Then we could really feel safe.

YEAR TO 31st DECEMBER, 1960

1.—Hostel Revenue Account.

	<i>Expenditure</i>		1959		1960	
Stores at 31st December	£100	0 0	£90	0 0		
Food Stuffs, Supplies, etc.	635	15 6	612	11 11		
Telephone	25	12 8	36	17 6		
Wages and National Insurance	213	11 6	184	6 3		
Sundry Payments	17	3 1	59	8 2		
Bird Ringing and Trap Repairs	29	5 6	70	5 9		
Insurance of Huts	68	10 0	68	10 0		
Fuel, etc.	116	13 8	116	2 5		
Profit as at 31st December	208	11 7	127	18 6		
			<u>£1415</u>	<u>3 6</u>	<u>£1366</u>	<u>0 6</u>
	<i>Income</i>		1959		1960	
Board and Booking Fees	£1308	17 9	£1195	7 10		
Miscellaneous Receipts	16	5 9	32	3 8		
Donations towards Repairs to Traps damaged by Winter Gales	0	0 0	45	9 0		
Stores as at 31st December	90	0 0	93	0 0		
			<u>£1415</u>	<u>3 6</u>	<u>£1366</u>	<u>0 6</u>

2.—Trust Revenue Account.

	<i>Expenditure</i>	1959	1960
Wages and National Insurance ...	£552	7 6	£521 9 0
Rents, Rates, Taxes, Insurance, etc. ...	11	4 0	6 6 0
Printing, Stationery, etc. ...	247	18 8	172 0 1
Interest Paid ...	45	10 8	33 3 10
Travelling Expenses—Hostel ...	120	9 0	156 4 0
Repairs and Renewals—Hostel ...	118	12 8	117 8 4
Expenses of Administration ...	78	14 0	79 1 6
Profit carried to Balance Sheet ...	199	16 2	399 4 7
	£1374	12 8	£1484 17 4
			<u> </u>
	<i>Income</i>	1959	1960
Subscriptions, etc. ...	£583	18 0	£467 4 1
Income Tax Recovered ...	583	18 0	467 4 1
Interest on Savings Bonds ...	11	8 9	11 16 0
Income from Endowment Fund ...	142	7 3	130 3 6
Legacies Received ...	0	0 0	310 0 0
Profit on Hostel ...	208	11 7	127 18 6
Donations Received ...	25	0 0	100 0 0
Lecture ...	45	15 0	0 0 0
	£1374	12 8	£1484 17 4
			<u> </u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st December, 1960.

Liabilities

Capital Account—Balance per last Balance Sheet	£1066	15 3
Profit from Trust Revenue Account	399	4 7
		<u> </u>
		£1465 19 10
Miss Helena Howden's Trust—		
Balance in hand	£600	0 0
Less Payments made as per		
Statement annexed	477	10 6
		<u> </u>
		122 9 6
Sundry Creditors—Endowment Fund:		
Donation Received	£2	0 0
Sum due at 31st December, 1959	6	6 11
		<u> </u>
		8 6 11
Balance due to Messrs J. & F. Anderson, W.S., at 31st December, 1960		<u> </u>
		279 15 10
		<u> </u>
		£1876 12 1
		<u> </u>

Assets

Buildings, Traps, etc., as written down	...	£200	0	0
Furniture, Furnishings, etc., at Fair Isle as written down	485	0	0
Scientific Equipment, as written down	150	0	0
Investment—£642, 3% Savings Bonds, 1960/70	619	1	3
(Note: Market Value at 31/12/60 £504)				
Consumable Stores—				
Food Stuffs	£13	0	0
Live Stock	40	0	0
Fuel	40	0	0
			93	0
Cash in Bank—				
Trust Account	£32	7	0
Hostel Account	291	15	3
		£324	2	3
Cash in Hand	5	8	7
			329	10
			£1876	12
				1

EDINBURGH, 29th March, 1961.—Examined and found correct.

(Sgd.) LINDSAY JAMIESON & HALDANE, C.A.

Miss Helena Howden's Trust.*Payments Made*

Per Messrs J. & F. ANDERSON, W.S.

1960

Mar. 1	Paid National Trust for Scotland for St Kilda Fund for preservation of Birds and Wild Life	£100	0	0
July 22	Paid Isle of May Bird Observatory in payment of Account for repairs to renewing roof of Low Light Head- quarters of Bird Observatory	227	6	6
			£327	6	6
Per HOSTEL ACCOUNT					
	Payments made for equipment	150	4	0
			£477	10	6

Fair Isle Endowment Fund

PROPERTY and INVESTMENTS held as at 30th June, 1960.

1.	21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh—at cost	... £3050	0	0
2.	£4,300 3% Savings Bonds 1960/70	3397	0 0
3.	£70 Whitbread & Co. "A" Ordinary Stock	415	12 6
			TOTAL	£6862 12 6

Note.—The Regent Terrace Property is the Headquarters of the Scottish Ornithologists Club, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (Scottish Office) and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust. As such it is non revenue producing, but all expenses and outgoings are borne by the first named body to whom it is leased. The annual income from the Fund is paid to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trustees.

WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1960

In 1960 the Observatory was open from 13th February until 6th December. A hundred and fifty people stayed at the Hostel for a total of 180 weeks; a decrease of four people and 19 weeks compared with 1959. This fall was not unexpected, because for some obscure reason our accommodation-record has shown regular alternation of peaks and dips in successive years. Fortunately the peaks are getting higher and the dips shallower, and it is already evident that 1961 should break our previous record. The bulk of our new visitors are coming by recommendation, rather than through our advertisements; and the "recapture-rate" remains extremely high.

Miss Pat Adams continued her excellent work in the Hostel kitchen, and my wife continued to cope with the housework and secretarial duties, in addition to rearing a family. The new assistant, Gordon Barnes, worked very willingly and well, and is returning to us in 1961.

Island Events

The outstanding event of the island's year was undoubtedly the Royal Visit of 11th August, when our Chairman, Hon. Secretary, and the Warden, with their wives, shared with many of the islanders the honour of being presented to Her Majesty the Queen. Also in the Royal party were Prince

Philip, Princess Alexandra and Prince Michael of Kent. A fresh breeze obliged the party to land at South Harbour, and this, coupled with the lateness of the hour, prevented a call at the Observatory. The visitors enjoyed tea at Taft, and were given presents of knitwear and weaving at the Village Hall. The Press concentrated on obtaining photographs of the Royal party riding in the island lorry, which had been transformed for the occasion!

The 150 members of the Islands Cruise, aboard M.V. *Meteor*, landed for a few hours on 24th May, and for the third successive year they struck a day of splendid weather. The passengers and our visitors, between them, gave the local knitters a full year's work, and the weavers also found a ready market for their winter's output.

Three boats again fished the lobsters during the summer. It was not so good a season as in 1959, but this, it was hoped, was only a temporary recession, resulting from the impact of a stormy winter on the inshore life. Haddocks were extremely scarce, and for the first time in memory there were none drying for winter use in the crofts.

The island's population declined further, with the emigration of the Johnson family from the Haa. They had immigrated in 1957, but had not thrived. This brought the community to a lower level than ever before; at the end of 1961 there were only 43 people in the crofts, and five of these are away at school in term-time. Any further significant decrease would almost certainly mean evacuation.

The new Missionary and Schoolteacher, Mr and Mrs Gordon Cornish, arrived on the isle in March. Nurse Cairns, who had been resident for some 13 years, retired in August, and is now living in the United States. She was replaced in December by Nurse Duncan.

Acknowledgments

We again express our perennial thanks to all the islanders for their ready help and co-operation in our work, and for their forbearance in the few cases of damage and disturbance caused by over-enthusiastic bird-hunters.

We are most grateful to the Countess of Wemyss, Mrs K. C. Elder, Miss Isobel Hogg, Mrs K. M. Mylne, Messrs H. G. Brownlow, H. Heaton and T. Salusbury Jones, for their kindly gifts of bicycles for the hostel "fleet"; and to the Royal Scottish Museum for the continued loan of a most useful collection of bird-skins.

Co-operation

The Observatory continued to work closely with the Migration Research Officer, who visited the isle in September; and with the Edward Grey Institute's radar observers in Scotland, Drs W. R. P. Bourne and T. M. Myres. We also provided regular information on the migrants to *British Birds*, and passed details of 42 rarities to the Rarity Records Committee. In addition we corresponded with several non-ornithological specialists on subjects ranging from Grey Seals and Field-Mice to freshwater molluscs.

Breeding Birds

ARCTIC SKUA. The population study continued along the same lines as in earlier seasons. The colony remained at 65 pairs, the same as in 1959. This was doubtless only a temporary halt in the recent increase, for the increment of new breeders was rather smaller than in 1959, and there was an abnormal loss of older birds over the winter.

The newcomers included nine birds ringed as chicks on the isle, bringing the total of local chicks recovered as breeders to 38 over the past six years. They included one nesting for the first time at six years of age, the oldest to join so far.

Breeding-success, at 57.1%, was almost as low as in 1959, but for a different reason. Last year the losses were mainly in the egg stage, and caused by predation and disturbance; this year they were nearly all in the chick stage and due to food-shortage. Most other sea-birds suffered in the same way, and the exceptionally stormy winter may have been responsible for the poor results.

The female which laid a clutch of three eggs each year between 1956 and 1959, and never succeeded in hatching any of them, failed to reappear in 1960, but was replaced by another with the same unfortunate predeliction. This was equally unsuccessful.

Mr Peter O'Donald of Cambridge University again helped for five weeks with the collection of data for his work on skua genetics.

BONXIE. The colony increased by only one pair to twenty breeding in 1960, a lower figure than anticipated after the large influx of non-breeders in 1959. There were indications, both from the number of vacant 1959 territories, and from late laying-dates at other sites, that as with the Arctic Skua,

a high proportion of the established breeders had not come back. The vacancies presumably absorbed most of the birds reaching maturity in 1960. There was no large gathering of non-breeders this year, and the Arctics were able to regain much of the ground near the airstrip that they had lost in 1959.

The Bonxies' breeding-success was extremely low despite a good hatching-rate, only some thirteen young being reared from 37 eggs. The islanders are known to have destroyed several of the chicks.

OTHER BREEDERS. As already mentioned, the sea-birds in general had a poor year, and many fewer young were available for ringing in the colonies we habitually visit. This was particularly true of the Shag, the Kittiwake, and the auks. Many young Shags, and especially the later ones, were affected by a disease with similar symptoms to the endemic virus infection Puffinosis, of shearwaters. Such epidemics seem to occur when malnutrition lowers the resistance of the subjects.

In contrast, the passerines and other terrestrial species benefitted from the unusually fine summer, and had very high breeding-success.

Among the less common breeders, a pair of Peregrines reared one or two young, and one, probably two, pairs of Corncrakes again nested. So far as is known, there were no breeding Blackbirds, although two or three individuals summered. The Lapwing colony totalled ten or eleven pairs, and at least one pair of Snipe nested successfully.

Migration

The Bird Observatory re-opened on 13th February, but we were almost immediately engulfed by one of the heaviest snowfalls for many years, and the movements of birds (and bird-watchers) were very restricted until late in the month. The first passerine species to appear in any numbers was the Skylark, with diurnal arrivals in fine weather on 28th February and 1st March, and again on 15th March. Lapwings began to arrive on 29th February and over 100 were present by 6th March. A Stonechat on 1st was followed by two others 2nd, and there were four by the 6th; a similar movement came between 21st and 26th. Several Pied Wagtail were seen after the 7th, but the first White Wagtail was delayed until the 29th. The only significant fall of night-migrants during March involved many Starlings, over 250 Blackbirds, and a few Woodcock on 23rd, and Twite on the 24th.

South-east winds in early April produced big falls of Blackbirds on the 1st, 6th, and (with Fieldfares and Redwings) on the 8th; and a sprinkling of Robins, late on the 4th, was followed by over 80 Chaffinches next day, when Jackdaws reached an unprecedented total of 56. The first Ring Ouzel came on the 6th, a Black-bellied Dipper on the 7th, and two Chiffchaffs on the 8th. The wind was north-west for the rest of April, and the only notable movements involved the local-breeding passerines, on the 17th, and Icelandic ones on the 23rd. Upt to four Greenland Redpolls occurred between 17th and 19th, and two Lapland Buntings on the 19th were followed by five or six others during the next two weeks. The island's first Collared Dove turned up on 18th April, and a Waxwing was found freshly-dead on the 22nd. The first Whimbrel passed on the 24th, a Redstart 25th, Grey Lag Goose and Swallow 27th, and two Willow Warblers 29th.

The wind was a little more variable in early May, and though there were still no large falls we added new summer-migrants on most days. Common Sandpiper reached us on the 3rd, Corncrake, Sand Martin, Tree Pipit, and Tree Sparrow on 4th, House Martin 5th, Whinchats and Greenfinch 6th, Sedge Warblers 7th, Grasshopper Warbler and Lesser White-throat 8th, Black Redstart 9th, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike 10th; and there was a late Stonechat on the 11th.

The breeze set south-easterly on 11th May, and the next five days saw the biggest May migration in the Observatory's time. Birds avalanched shortly before nightfall on the 11th, and next day the island was alive with Willow Warblers, Redstarts, and other small birds. Most species peaked on the 13th, when we counted 120 Redstarts, 50 Robins, 250 Willow Warblers, 40 Pied Flycatchers, 100 Tree Pipits, and 30 Reed Buntings; but after a decrease on the 14th, another overnight fall gave us 25 Fieldfares, 30 Ring Ouzels, 50 Whinchats, over 300 Willow Warblers, many hirundines and the first Swifts, on the 15th. Whitethroats reached a delayed peak of over 60 on the 16th. These common birds were accompanied by a splendid variety of less-familiar ones. Apart from a scattering of Wrynecks, Black Redstarts, Bluethroats, Lesser White-throats, Red-backed Shrikes, and Ortolans, we may mention four male Grey-headed Wagtails, a male Woodchat, and a male Red-tailed or Isabelline Shrike (the third British record), all on the 12th, Little Bunting 13th, and a southern Short-toed Lark on the 14th.

The rest of the spring was bound to be an anti-climax. The invaders soon passed on, and there were no further arrivals of any size. One curious absentee from the big rush, the Garden Warbler, was not seen until the 21st, and the Cuckoo

not until the 22nd. Greater Wheatears passed again on the 24th-25th, with a further wave of hirundines. In June the only noteworthy birds were a male Lesser Grey Shrike on the 5th, Red-backed Shrikes on the 3rd and 10th, a Marsh Warbler 8th, and another Collared Dove on the 18th.

The midsummer wader passage was very thin, and in the absence of Crossbills there were few passerines, a Hawfinch on the 22nd July, and a Mealy Redpoll on the 24th, were both unique at this time, and the odd arrivals in early August included a fine male Red-headed Bunting from the 8th, a Wood Warbler 10th, and an adult Rose-coloured Starling on the 12th.

Waders provided most of the interest in late July and early August. Redshanks totalled over 100 on 27th July, and there were several Greenshanks, Green Sandpipers, and Ruffs about this time, whilst other species included Turnstone, Whimbrel, Dunlin, and Knot, came in fair numbers on 9th and 16th August. A Buzzard occurred on the 16th, and a Turtle Dove on the 20th.

The serious business of the autumn began with moderate falls of the north-western passerines, Wheatears, Meadow Pipits, and White Wagtails, on the 20th and 21st. After 300 Common Gulls on the 22nd, another small Wheatear and pipit arrival coincided with a few warblers and other continentals on the 23rd, and on the 24th we caught the first two Little Stints, forerunners of an exceptional passage in late September. On 25th August, with the wind backing north of east overnight, we again had a simultaneous fall of birds from the north-west and from Europe, but on a much larger scale. Icelandic Wheatears came in considerable numbers, with over 50 Willow Warblers, 8 Barred Warblers, and a variety of other small birds including Whinchats, Garden Warblers, Spotted and Pied Flycatchers, Tree Pipits, an Icterine and a Wood Warbler, and an Ortolan. The Wheatears increased further on the 26th, with Meadow Pipits, and though the continentals were reduced, we added a Wryneck. A renewed influx of continental birds lasted from the 27th until the easterly wind ceased on the 29th; over 70 Willow Warblers, three Wrynecks, and three Wood Warblers on 27th, eight or nine Barred Warblers, three Ortolans, and a Reed Warbler 28th, over 20 Redstarts, Turtle Dove, and a juvenile Woodchat on the 29th. A Black-tailed Godwit, and two or three more Barred Warblers, arrived on the 31st. These August Barred Warbler arrivals were among the largest we have known, and odd birds continued to pass, through most of September.

Although the wind was north-west for the first five days of

September, the new arrivals were almost all continental birds. A second Icterine came on the 1st, Jack Snipe and Bar-tailed Godwit 2nd, a Scarlet Grosbeak 4th, and another, with three Tree Sparrows, on the 5th. On the morning of the 6th we saw Great Northern Diver, Grey Lag Goose, 2 Little Stints, and the first Lapland Bunting, and with the wind shifting south-east in the afternoon, various warblers arrived. This afternoon fall was repeated on the 7th, bringing Whinchats and Pied Flycatchers, but also a Greenish Warbler, a Chiffchaff, and a Little Bunting. Skylark immigration was observed early on the 7th and 8th, and on 9th Greenland Wheatears and Meadow Pipits arrived in some quantity, with at least 18 Lapland Buntings and two Red-backed Shrikes. On the 11th we located over fifty Lapland Buntings, and a detailed search of the moorland improved this total to over 90 on the 13th, most of them probably already present for some days. This was the largest arrival of this species we have known, but the only one of the autumn, though a few birds were resident until early November. The last major fall of Greenland Wheatears, together with White Wagtails and the only Greenland Redpoll of the autumn, came on 12th September.

The wind backed south-east on the afternoon of the 12th, and it was to remain easterly, with breaks of no more than two or three days, until late November. It deprived us, almost completely, of our normal late migrants from Iceland and Greenland, but brought a wealth of eastern birds. Already, on the evening of the 12th, a new Scarlet Grosbeak and the first Fieldfare and Redwing had come in, but a much greater movement commenced on the 14th, and a build-up continued until the 20th. On 14th there were 80 Common Gulls, a dozen Pied Flycatchers, a few Garden Warblers, an Aquatic Warbler, and one or two Little Buntings; on the 15th more Willow Warblers, Whinchats, and Whitethroats, a Bluethroat, and various waders including 30 Ringed Plovers, 10 Dunlins, and seven Little Stints. By the 16th there were 25 Garden Warblers, almost as many Willows, Whinchats, Redstarts, and Tree Pipits, 3 Bluethroats, 5 Blackcaps, several Barred Warblers, Goldcrests, Spotted Flycatchers, Hedge Sparrows, one or two Red-throated Pipits, 10 Siskins, the first Snow Bunting, and the observatory's first record of a Little Grebe. On the 17th we saw over 40 Garden Warblers, 21 Siskins, 17 Little Stints, 6 Bluethroats, a Curlew-Sandpiper, Pied Woodpecker, two or three Reed Warblers, Red-breasted Flycatcher, and two Ortolans. The 18th brought at least fifteen Kestrels, 3 Sparrowhawks, Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike, 15 Chaffinches, and more Wheatears and Meadow Pipits. At least ten Bluethroats were present by the 19th, and on the 20th over 40 Siskins, 60 Snow Buntings, and a "ring-tail" harrier. Most had

passed on by the 21st, when an Arctic Warbler occurred, but the passage quickly revived and on 22nd September we saw over 85 Siskins, 8 or 9 Blackcaps, a Yellow-browed Warbler, a new Grosbeak, and a Rustic Bunting. Small Wheatears and several warbler species increased on the 23rd, with a last Barred Warbler, another Red-breasted Flycatcher, and a new Ortolan, and there were probably two Rustic Buntings.

After three quiet days, the 27th September saw over 75 Redwings, several Fieldfares and Song Thrushes, and a quantity of smaller migrants including no less than six Yellow-browed Warblers, a few Bramblings, and another Rustic Bunting, two more Little Buntings, and a Reed Bunting. Redwings had increased to over 200 on the 28th, and a Barnacle Goose came in. This was joined by 12 Greenland Whitefronts next days, and the party remained for over a fortnight. On the 30th, a visitor saw a small dark *Locustella* which subsequently proved to be a Lanceolated Warbler.

The first week of October was no less stimulating than late September. Apart from Redwings, which increased again on the 1st, the common species were Blackcaps, with peak numbers of over 30 on the 4th and 6th; Bramblings, with over 40 by the 5th, and lesser numbers of Redstarts, Garden and Willow Warblers, Northern Chiffchaffs, Goldcrests, and Ring Ouzels. The more exciting migrants were a southern Short-toed Lark from the 1st, a Red-throated Pipit from 2nd to 10th, a Great Grey Shrike 2nd, and another 4th, Slavonian Grebe, Great Snipe, the Lanceolated Warbler, late Reed and Sedge Warblers on the 4th, Red-breasted Flycatcher 5th and 7th, and Yellow-browed Warbler 6th.

In the second week of October the winds were well north of east, and no large movements developed, but records included three additional Barnacle Geese, a late Wryneck, and 27 Tree Sparrows on the 8th, an eastern Short-toed Lark 9th, the first Long-tailed Duck and three Merlins 10th, and six Whooper Swans on the 12th. By the 13th there were ten Long-tails, a Ruff, and a few thrushes and other passerines. These heralded a new passage of continentals, which reached its peak on the 15th and 16th, with up to 250 Redwings, 120 Fieldfares, 60 Blackbirds, and 80 Snow Buntings, besides a score of Chiffchaffs and several Robins, Song Thrushes, and Blackcaps. A Little Bunting and a Waxwing occurred on the 14th, and five Grey Lags; two Yellow-browed Warblers and another grey Short-toed Lark were seen on the 15th, and 8 Whoopers passed; and on the 16th there was a Mealy Redpoll. An immature Yellow-headed Wagtail, the third for Fair Isle and Britain, was present from the 17th to the 22nd.

After another small arrival of thrushes on the 18th, with a last Red-breasted Flycatcher, there was a much larger movement next day, bringing over 150 Blackbirds, a dozen Robins, and Goldcrests, three Greenfinches, a Great Snipe, and two Short-eared Owls, as well as 18 Grey Lags. There were five Greenfinches on the 20th (more than for many years), and over 30 Woodcocks.

On 21st October, Skylarks and Starlings increased and there were 43 Bramblings, a Richard's Pipit (which stayed until the 23rd), and a magnificent adult Rough-legged Buzzard was found injured. It died that night, but an immature was well-seen next morning, and we also found another Short-toed Lark, another Red-throated Pipit (present until the 27th) and a Great Grey Shrike. A Shorelark and two Waxwings were seen on 23rd, also a Long-eared and 4 Short-eared Owls; Short-eareds must have been in exceptional numbers at this time, and on the 27th I flushed a Long-eared and 7 Short-eareds simultaneously! Blackbirds peaked again on the 24th, with over 30 Robins, a dozen Chiffchaffs, a Black Redstart, and an extremely late Reed Warbler.

The Grey Lag supplanted the Pink-foot as our commonest goose this year. Twenty-one on the 25th were joined by twenty more next day. This goose always seems suicidally inclined at Fair Isle, and as usual the flock settled in for up to a fortnight, though constantly harried by the islanders. A White-front accompanied them on the 26th.

During the night of 26th-27th October, large numbers of Redwings and Starlings came to the South Lighthouse, and in the morning there were over 500 Fieldfares, 200 Redwings, 250 Blackbirds, 60 Robins, 50 Woodcocks, 9 Blackcaps, a Black Redstart and two Slavonian Grebes present, and the autumn's biggest Common Gull arrival—over 400 birds—took place. Not one Common Gull was found on the 28th, but over 200 Snow Buntings, 7 Jackdaws, and another Waxwing were seen. Robins increased to over 85 on the 29th, and 2 Tree Sparrows and 8 White-fronts were new. Four Yellowhammers were present on the 31st.

The easterly weather continued for the first three weeks of November, but the migration seemed to be "played out," and we had neither the big thrush falls nor the heavy Snow Bunting passage of earlier years. The highlight of the month was a second Lanceolated Warbler on the 1st. A last solitary Wheatear appeared on the 2nd, and on the 3rd there were about 50 Woodcocks, 4 Blackcaps, and 4 Whooper Swans—our third and last party of swans this autumn, though the winter herd at Spiggie, only 30 miles away, reached the high total of

116 birds at this period. The 4th November had the most varied list of migrants during the month, with several Redstarts, Robins, Blackcaps, Chiffchaffs, and Goldcrests, a Blue-throat, a late Garden Warbler, a Waxwing, a Grey Plover, and 12 Tree Sparrows (which were to winter in the isle). Two Pink-feet passed on 5th, and on 6th a Black Redstart, several Chiffchaffs, and Hedge Sparrows arrived. Snow Buntings numbered 200 again on the 7th.

Token arrivals of the common thrushes and Woodcocks followed on the 10th, 13th, 15th, 18th, 22nd, and 25th. They were joined by a few Blackcaps on all these dates, and when the last was trapped on the 25th we had ringed 102 in 1960, compared with our previous record of 36 in 1959! Other noteworthy migrants in November were a Slavonian Grebe and a Great Grey Shrike on 10th, when the first Glaucous Gull was also seen and caught; a late Dotterel and a Velvet Scoter 14th, two Corn Buntings 18th, a Coot on the 20th, a Woodlark 25th to 30th, and yet another eastern Short-toed Lark from the 28th to at least 4th December. Observations ceased on 6th December.

Birds of 178 species were identified on the island during the year.

The Traps

Many of the permanent traps were badly torn in the hurricanes of October and December 1959, and heavy snow in February 1960 added greatly to the damage. We were able to do most of the major repairs during March and April, and the minor ones later in the spring; and in August and September the Haa trap was radically altered and rewired, and should perform much better, especially if we can establish some cover inside it. Mist-nets were again widely used, and the dazzle-netting technique gave us some valuable captures.

Ringing in 1960

5109 birds of 112 species were ringed during the year, 5071 on Fair Isle, and 38 by Magnus Sinclair in Unst. The grand total was an increase of some 350 over that of 1959.

The leading individual scores were Blackbird 719, Wheatear 511, Shag 505, Starling 415, Puffin 403, Meadow Pipit 352, Rock Pipit 216, Robin 180, Twite 147, Redwing 130, Willow Warbler 128, Fulmar 116, and Blackcap 102. Four species, Little Grebe, Mallard, Velvet Scoter, and Red-throated Pipit, were ringed for the first time, and one very distinctive subspecies, the Red-tailed Shrike, had not previously been captured in

Britain. Other unusual captures included a Coot, a Whimbrel, Green Sandpiper, 5 Little Stints, a Glaucous Gull, a Little Auk, 3 Wrynecks, a Black-bellied Dipper, Lanceolated, Marsh, Aquatic, 2 Icterine, a Greenish, and 4 Yellow-browed Warblers, 2 Red-breasted Flycatchers, Woodchat Shrike, 3 Scarlet Grosbeaks, 2 Little Buntings, and 7 Lapland Buntings.

The annual ringing-totals in the years since 1948 have been as below:

Season	Total	Number of Species
1948	288	38
1949	1505	63
1950	2366	74
1951	2236	77
1952	1933	74
1953	2552	80
1954	2367	75
1955	2478	82
1956	3313	81
1957	2925	87
1958	4579	101
1959	4761	116
1960	5109	112

GRAND TOTAL: 36412 birds of 166 species.

Recoveries 1960

Sixty-five recoveries of birds ringed at Fair Isle were reported during the year. They included our first overseas reports of Ruff, Ring Ouzel, Robin, Blackcap, Spotted and Pied Flycatcher, the first foreign recovery of a British-ringed Reed Bunting, and the first recovery of a British-ringed passerine in America, a Snow Bunting. Full details will appear in the *Bulletin*.

Nineteen reports of Shags came chiefly from Shetland, Orkney, and North Scotland, but was in Holland in March, and another in Northumberland in November.

The Ruff, one of only three ringed on the isle, was a juvenile caught on 11th September 1958, and shot in the Marismas, S.W. Spain, in early November 1959.

Two Arctic Skua chicks of 1960 were recovered during August, one in the Forth and the other at Algiers.

Three young Great Black-backs ringed on the Sheep Craig in July 1959 were reported from Aberdeenshire in January, Banffshire in March, and Holland in September 1960. A first-

winter bird dazled on Bunes in November 1959 was on the island of Skomer, Pembrokeshire, in July 1960.

Four Razorbills were reported: an adult of May 1959 in S. Norway in January, a 1959 chick in Denmark in October, and two 1960 chicks in S.W. Norway in October.

A young Guillemot of 1959 was near Trondheim, central Norway, in February, and a 1960 chick in S.W. Norway in October.

A Redwing ringed in October 1954 was found at Meleski, Estonia, in April 1960, and one marked in October 1959 was wintering in the Gironde, S.W. France, in February.

Eight of the nine Blackbird recoveries followed the normal pattern of winter records from Scotland and Ireland and summer reports from Norway; the ninth, a bird from the avalanche of 31st March 1958, was near Quintin, Cotes du Nord, in January 1960.

The Ring Ouzel was a female ringed 22nd May 1960, and killed in the Haute Garonne department of S.W. France in late October.

Three Wheatears were recovered. One had been ringed in September 1955, and caught on a Russian vessel off Shetland in the following May, but not reported till now. Another marked in September 1959 was in the Dordogne, S.W. France, in early May 1960, and a 1960 nestling was in the Toledo province of central Spain in late September.

No fewer than five Robins were recovered, although we had had none in earlier years. One ringed in April 1958 was killed near Papenburg in N.W. Germany in late March 1960; two captures of October 1959 were respectively near Cantanhede in Portugal in mid-January and near Oslo in late May. Another, ringed in late November 1959, was caught at the Bressay lighthouse in Shetland in mid-February 1960; and one caught on 18th May 1960 was retrapped on Trischen Island in the Heligoland Bight only twelve days later. In addition, we trapped on 5th April 1960 a migrant ringed at Minsmere, Suffolk, on 11th October 1959.

A Blackcap ringed 19th October 1959 was killed at Elche, Alicante province, Spain, on 26th April 1960.

A Spotted Flycatcher caught on 27th August 1960 was killed at Valdagno, N. Italy, on 27th October, and a Pied Flycatcher ringed 29th September 1960 was shot at Zarauz, Guipuzcoa, N. Spain, in the third week of October.

Three juvenile Meadow Pipits of July 1960 were reported

from Portugal and S.W. Spain in October and November.

A juvenile Rock Pipit of August 1957 was found injured at Macduff, Banffshire, in January 1960, and another, ringed in July 1960, died in Sanday, Orkney, in December.

Two local-born Starlings were reported from Orkney, and two others from Angus, during their first autumn and winter, whilst a migrant caught in November 1959 was near Copenhagen in July 1960.

A Reed Bunting trapped on 6th October 1959 was found dead in severe weather at Ste. Eulalie-en-Born, Landes, S.W. France, on 16th January 1960.

An adult male Snow Bunting ringed 7th April 1959 was caught at Tilting, Fogo Island, Newfoundland, on 1st May 1960. It had probably wintered in the Old World one year and in America in the next.

Publications

The *Bulletin* Vol. 4 No. 4 appeared promptly in June 1960, and No. 5, due in December, made a delayed appearance early in 1961. The Annual Report for 1959 slightly bettered the performance of its predecessor by being published before the end of the year!

The following notes and papers relating to work done at Fair Isle were published in other journals during 1960.

DAVIS, PETER. Booted Warbler at Fair Isle: the Problem of Identification. *Brit. Birds* 53: 123-5.

How a British Bird Observatory Works. *E.B.B.A. News* 22: 99-102.

(Spring Migration 1960 at) Fair Isle. *Bird Migration* 1: 187-8.

LACK, DAVID. A Comparison of "Drift-Migration" at Fair Isle, the Isle of May, and Spurn Point. *Scot. Birds* 1: 295-327.

PENNYCUICK, COLIN. Gliding Flight of the Fulmar Petrel. *J.Exp. Biol.* 37: 330 *et seq.*

The following paper was unfortunately omitted from the 1958 list:

WILLIAMSON, KENNETH. Population and Breeding Environment of the St Kilda and Fair Isle Wrens. *Brit. Birds.* 51: 369-393.

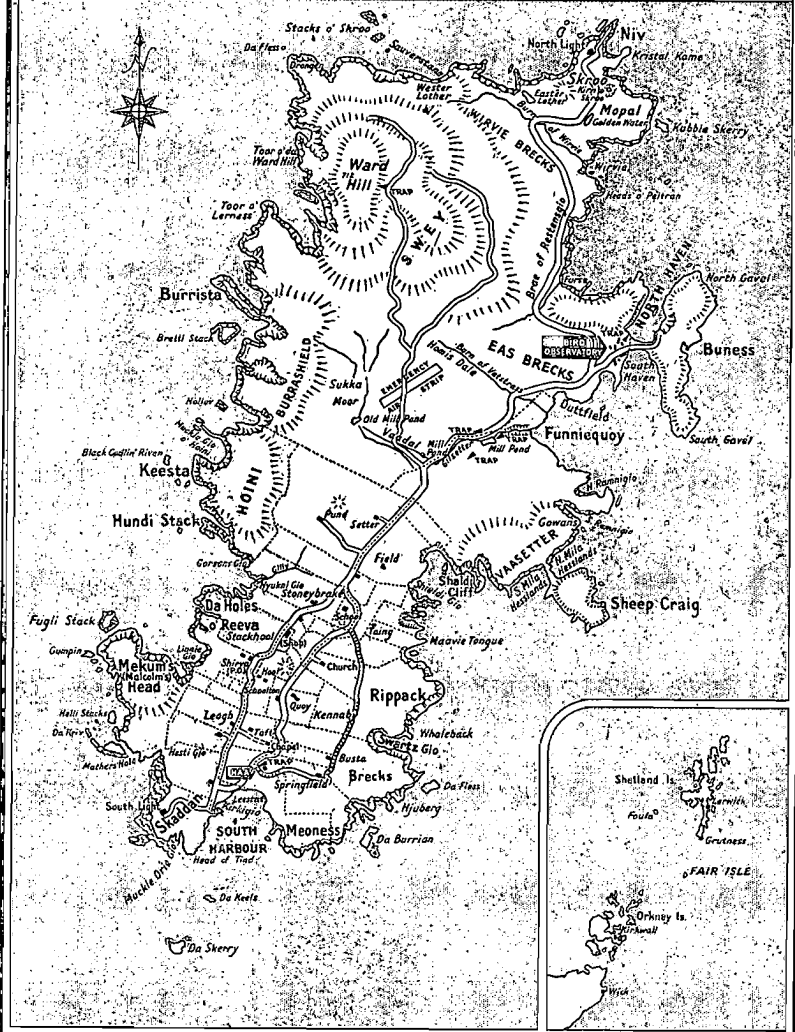
A paper on the ecology of the Fair Isle Field Mouse, by M. J. Delany and the Warden, was accepted for publication by *Proc. Zool. Soc. Lond.*

The Hon. Secretary, George Waterston, and the Warden, together with James Fisher, Kenneth Williamson, George Stout of Field, and James A. Stout, took part in a broadcast account of bird-observation at Fair Isle, "The Fair Isle Story," put out by the B.B.C. Home Services on 9th October 1960.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

0 160yds. 440yds. 880yds. 1 mile

Roads ———— Bird Trap — TRAP ——— Boundaries



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