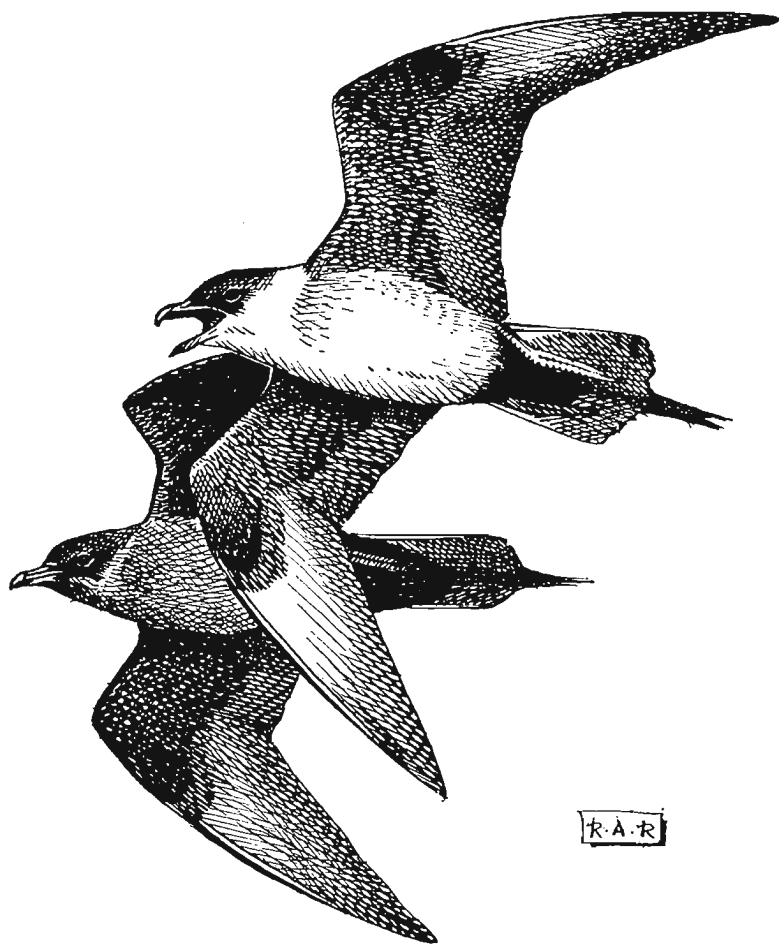


Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT FOR 1969



R.A.R.

PUBLISHED BY THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST
21 REGENT TERRACE, EDINBURGH 7
for "Friends of Fair Isle"



PLATE 1 (above). The north coast and Stacks of Skroo.
PLATE 2 (below). The crofts of Leogh to the south.

Photographs by John Topham Ltd.



Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT No. 22

1969

Edited by the Warden, ROY H. DENNIS

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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 EH7 5BT.

Foreword

1969 was the most important for FIBOT since its inception in 1948. This year marked our 21st birthday and our passing into what used to be called man's estate before technological advances knocked three years off the happy and irresponsible years of our youth.

It is customary to celebrate a coming of age with rejoicings and gifts. FIBOT certainly followed this excellent custom. We have received many and most handsome gifts. From the Highlands and Islands Development Board assistance without which we could not have proceeded: from the four Trusts—National of Scotland, Carnegie, Dulverton and Pilgrim—most generous grants. We were very happy that these organisations were so well represented at the hostel opening. From private persons we have received many and varying gifts and I hope that in mentioning three especially I do not appear that I value the unmentioned less. Firstly Mrs Ruth Buller's organisation, through the World Wildlife Fund, of a most successful garden fete at St Boswells; secondly Richard Richardson's charming gift of framed bird pictures which decorate the hostel; and thirdly the great help of Leslie Maclean who supervised the building, but whose help far outstripped the bounds of duty.

The completion of the hostel will enable more people to enjoy Fair Isle more comfortably and by the arrangements with Loganair more easily. From this increase of visitors the Isle as a whole will benefit economically and yet without changing the traditional way of life, which for many of us is its greatest charm.

I have been particularly conscious of the amount of time and thought that the executive committee has given to bring this project to fruition—it didn't just happen—and I hope I may be allowed to end this foreword by paying a special tribute to the enthusiasm and determination of Ian Pitman and George Waterston. They conceived FIBO in a German prison, attended to its birth in 1948, and have brought it up in the way it should go through the formative years. They can look back in pride and forward in hope.

ARTHUR B. DUNCAN, *Chairman.*

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Treasurer's Report

The year 1969 has been remarkable in that it has seen the successful outcome of the Appeal Fund for the new Hostel building on Fair Isle and the final completion and opening of the new building itself.

Public response to the Appeal was good and in addition generous grants were received from the National Trust for Scotland Wildlife Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Carnegie U.K. Trust and the Dulverton Trust. These latter grants appear in the Balance Sheet under the heading *Capital Account*. The Highlands and Islands Board gave us a special grant and a buildings grant, together with a loan of £9,500 to enable us to go ahead with the work. This loan will have to be repaid over 20 years or earlier and it is hoped that further subscriptions to the Appeal Fund may make this possible.

The above Grants, the loan from the Highlands and Islands Board and the expenditure of the monies on the building and equipment of the new Hostel have necessitated the complete recasting of our accounts and further alterations will be required before the accounts for 1970 are audited. I have, therefore, for 1969 dispensed with comparative figures for 1968 and will probably do the same in 1970. Such comparative figures would be difficult to produce accurately and might indeed be misleading.

For information the costs of the Appeal were as follows:

Appeal Fund Organiser	...	£400
Printing and Stationery	...	272
Travelling Expenses	...	111
Overdraft Interest	...	43
Legal Expenses	...	92
Miscellaneous Expenses		112
		<hr/>
		£1030

The following comments on the Accounts may be of interest:

1. *Hostel Revenue Account*

1969 has again been a very satisfactory year thanks to the hard work put in by Roy and Marina Dennis. For your information, board and booking fees were up by £450 to the figure of £3157 shown in the Accounts. On the expenditure side wages and National Insurance were up by £90. Fuel and power up by £30 and repairs and renewals up by £200. Some of the latter renewals will be used in the new building. The result was a surplus for the year of £759.

2. *Trust Revenue Account*

The headings on the income side of this Account have been slightly varied and there is a new figure for interest received on temporary loan as a result of investing monies received by way of Grant on Corporation Loan until required to meet expenditure on the new building. On the debit side wages and National Insurance were up by £120, travelling by £90 and bird rings, etc., by £80 whereas printing and stationery was reduced by £40. The figure for printing is the cost of the Annual Report and does not include the cost of the Appeal, shown separately above. We show at the end of the year a surplus of £861 but we should of course have been in the red if it had not been for the Hostel takings and the interest on temporary loans. The latter item will disappear in the event of all the funds subscribed being utilised to the full on the Hostel and equipment.

3. *Balance Sheet*

The main differences in this show the cost to date of the Hostel on the assets side at £42,225 and on the liabilities side the various grants, loans etc. which made this expenditure possible, including the figure of £685 which was the proceeds of the Fete referred to by the Chairman. The figure of £17,100 under *Capital Account* is made up of the grants from the National Trust for Scotland, the Carnegie U.K. Trust, the Pilgrim Trust and the Dulverton Trust, to all of whom we are extremely grateful. The two notes at the foot of the Balance Sheet are self-explanatory, the first showing Capital Expenditure to which we are already committed and the second giving details of the loan of £9,500 from the Highlands and Islands Development Board. You will see that this loan has to be repaid with annual interest over a period of years and we hope that this may be made possible by obtaining increased Revenue from the new Hostel to cover the interest and further subscriptions to the Appeal Fund to repay the capital.

4. *The Endowment Fund*

This is shown separately and I have no comment. The income is as usual collected by the Bank of Scotland as Trustees and remitted to us, less their charge.

Finally, I would like to thank everybody concerned for the successful outcome of the Appeal and the equally successful opening of the new building. We are still dependant on support from the public and I should myself like to see the Endowment Funds increased by donations or legacies to an amount which would enable us to carry on our work successfully without relying too much on surpluses from the Hostel.

IAN R .PITMAN.

Accounts are shown on pp. 72-75

WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1969

ROY H. DENNIS

The Bird Observatory was occupied throughout the winter of 1968/69 by my assistant, Tony Mainwood, who stayed on the isle to keep a day to day record of the Sea Eagle experiment during my winter absence and to put out carrion food for the eagles during the winter months. My family and I returned to Fair Isle by Islander aircraft on 24th February and as we came in to land we saw, from the plane, all three eagles soaring over Vaassetter.

Between 11th March and 9th November 318 visitors stayed at the Bird Observatory for a total of 359 visitor-weeks; this included the workmen building the new observatory. Even so it is encouraging to report both an increase in visitors and visitor-weeks and this continued upward trend (reflected in the totals below) augurs well for the success of the new Bird Observatory. The annual totals for the last five years have been:

Year	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
No. of visitors	138	154	203	272	318
No. of visitor-weeks	173	190	252	310	359

As well as trustees and representatives invited to the official opening in October (see separate account) the following F.I.B.O.T. trustees stayed at the observatory: Peter Slater in August and George Waterston in September, while Ian Pennie visited us when he stayed with his daughter on the isle. A group from the Highlands and Islands Development Board, including Professor Sir Robert Grieve and Messrs Fasken, Skewis and MacAskill, visited the island on 4th August to see progress on the construction of the new building. Visitors from overseas included 17 from Germany (the result of our advertisement in a German bird magazine), 6 from Holland, 4 from Belgium, 2 each from Sweden and Australia, and one from the U.S.A.

1969 was a difficult year for running the observatory as we were very much in a transitional period, with a continual flow of workmen and their materials and the move into the new premises in the autumn. Kevin Armstrong (assistant warden), Miss Margaret Norris (cook), John Ginnever (assistant warden) and Rona Pennie (assistant) worked at the observatory during the year and we wish to thank them all for their good work and support in a hectic year. Marina and I would also like to thank very much those visitors who tackled manual tasks for us at the Bird Observatory; their voluntary help was invaluable. We would also like to apologise to those visitors from whom we

had to dash away, all too often, to attend to matters and problems concerning the new observatory. Finally our sincere thanks to islanders, visitors and trustees who helped to make the official opening run smoothly and on time.

The dominating and most exciting event of the year at Fair Isle was the building of the new Bird Observatory and all our activities revolved around it. It was a great experience for Marina and I to see it grow from the cutting of the first turf on 14th May to the official opening by the Earl of Wemyss on 18th October, and to be closely involved with the whole project on the island. Joe Eggeling has written an account of the official opening and the following report gives a brief outline of the progress during the five months of construction.

The site at Maver's Cup was cleared and the foundations laid by brick-workers who arrived by plane on 14th May; this was the day that Marina cut the first turf. All the workmen came from Dumfriesshire and were flown to the island by Loganair. The groundwork was completed in a month and by this time Leslie Maclean of Bush Properties (the main contractors) had assembled everything ready for shipment at Berwick-on-Tweed. On 22nd June the Orkney coaster 'Elwick Bay' arrived at North Haven on a beautiful calm evening and the boat was guided in by islanders and tied up at the pier. The complete observatory (in sections) and all the rest of the materials, fittings, furniture and equipment was on board and it was all unloaded in one and a half day's work, employing island labour for this task. The sections and the building materials were stacked on the site while all the fittings, furniture and equipment were stowed in every available storage space at the old observatory, mainly in Coronation Hall.

All the wall sections, floors and partitions were erected and completed by the end of the first week of July and the roof was asphalted in the second week. This stage of building was most exciting as it was easy to see changes every day as the wall sections were erected and completed. In the latter half of the month the drains, septic tank and chimneys were built, while in August the doors, windows and most of the interior work was completed, and the wall-papering and painting were started. The interior and exterior paint-work was completed in September and at the end of the month and in early October the fittings and furnishings were installed and the fireplaces and plumbing work completed.

Marina and I moved into our quarters on 15th October while the staff and a few visitors moved up on 17th just in time to welcome the guests to the official opening on 18th. At the end of the year the new Bird Observatory was granted a licence to sell beer to visitors.

Island Events. Seventy-six persons were resident on the island during the year including four youngsters attending school in Lerwick; thirty of this total were lighthouse keepers, bird observatory staff, school teacher and their dependants. Morale on the island is very high and it is good to see so many children on the isle; there are nine attending the Fair Isle school (our daughter, Rona, started school after the Easter holidays), and the average age on the island, excluding lighthouse-keepers and their families, is between 30 and 35 years.

It is very sad to record that Dodie Stout of Upper Stoneybreck (the old skipper of the Good Shepherd) died in September. Additions to the population were a daughter, Mairi, to Stewart and Triona Thomson, and a son, John, to Gordon and Perry Barnes. James Stout jun., his wife Florrie, and son Brian moved to the island in April and settled at the rebuilt Haa croft, now renamed Skerryholm.

The islanders used the Good Shepherd for lobstering as well as their small boats but they did not have a very good year, lobsters being scarce and the weather inclement. On the other hand it was a good lambing season and more than usual survived on the hill land. The Good Shepherd was taken to Scalloway in the spring and a new wheelhouse and cabin were fitted for the comfort of passengers. For some unknown reason one of the seats installed in the new cabin is numbered 13!

The International Voluntary Service workers returned to the island in the summer and their main task was to build an extension to the living quarters of the shop and some finishing-off work at Skerryholm. A National Trust for Scotland party stayed in the old fishstore in the summer and they spent some time rebuilding stone dykes. As usual, the influx of visitors in summer provided extra numbers for dances and socials in the village hall and also for football matches—although the last match of the summer on 2nd August ended with two players having to visit hospital in Lerwick, neither injury reflecting unfair play but resulting from the over-exuberance of the island team!

No cruises visited the island during 1969. There were plans for the Orcadia to make two trips from Kirkwall but the weather was against the visit on both occasions. Numerous day visitors came in by Loganair aircraft and most of them visited the Observatory. The Good Shepherd made two charter trips to Foula, which is becoming an annual event and very much to be encouraged. With 12 passengers the price is very reasonable and about five hours can be enjoyed ashore as well as a complete circumnavigation of Foula in the Good Shepherd. The Northern Lighthouse Board ship, the Pharos, visited the isle on 22nd July and the Commissioners of Northern Lights inspected the lighthouses. A BBC TV camera team visited the island

in September with Leslie Thomas and made a film which was shown on 'Nationwide.' John Arnott was on the isle twice recording material for 'Afield.'

Acknowledgments. As ever, we wish first of all to thank all our friends on the island for help given to us during the year and for allowing us to examine their crofts for migrants. We are very grateful to Tommy and Katie Russell for looking after our wader traps at the north end and to Gordon Barnes who gave us invaluable help with our ornithological work. I would like to record our thanks to the Royal Scottish Museum for the continued loan of bird-skins and to Richard Richardson for the vignettes in this report. Many people were very kind to us in 1969 and the Bird Observatory received some very nice gifts; we wish to thank the following: Dr and Mrs Bannerman—complete set of Bannerman's 'The Birds of the British Isles'; Dr G. Fisher—35mm telephoto lens; Lady McNeice—commercial potato peeler; Richard Richardson—books, pictures and a portable screen; Peter Slater—ornithological reference books; Valerie Thom—framed map of Fair Isle showing wrecks; Stewart Wilson—print framing and art-work; Elsie Worthington—bird bags (her total is now 164); Mrs Helen Stout—traditional Fair Isle scarf for display at Observatory; Willie Stout—Fair Isle spinning wheel; George Waterston—name plate of the old Good Shepherd.

Finally to everyone who has helped us in any way during the year or given anything towards the new Bird Observatory we extend our sincere thanks and a warm welcome to come and see us.

Requests

Friends of Fair Isle or past visitors may wish to donate something to the new Bird Observatory now that it is completed. As a suggestion, the items we most require are books and equipment. The Observatory lounge incorporates a very pleasant library alcove for the use of visitors and we are very keen to build up a comprehensive library. We have already received some very useful gifts of books and we will be most grateful for any further contributions. We are needing general reading books about birds, bird-watching expeditions, other branches of natural history, islands, Orkney and Shetland, and even paper-backs in good condition. We are also short of some ornithological journals and if anyone has any sets which they do not wish to keep we would be very pleased to hear from them. A new feature of the library is a separate reference section of more expensive ornithological works, and if anyone wishes to make a donation to this part of the library, the warden will be

very pleased to hear from them and suggest suitable reference books.

Finally, it would appear very worth while for the Observatory to maintain a collection of genuine hand-knitted Fair Isle garments. We are particularly keen to obtain old examples of knitting, so if anyone has any pullovers or other items purchased from the island which they no longer require we will be very pleased to receive them for display and study purposes. Condition is immaterial as long as they illustrate true Fair Isle patterns.

Ornithology

196 species were recorded on the island during the year; this is the highest number ever recorded at Fair Isle in one year. The only new species was, surprisingly, a Mute Swan at the end of the year. The monthly totals of species recorded on the island were:

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
No. of species	54	54	68	96	143	116	79	102	122	108	75	67

1969 was a good year for rarities and the more exciting species recorded were Purple Heron, 4 Honey Buzzards, 2 Marsh Harriers, 4 Ospreys, Rough-legged Buzzard, Hobby, Great Snipe, Little Ringed Plover, Long-tailed Skua, 2 Snowy Owls, 3 Bee-eaters, Golden Oriole, 2 Short-toed Larks, River Warbler, 5 Aquatic Warblers, Melodious Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Arctic Warbler, 6 Red-breasted Flycatchers, Citrine Wagtail, Rose-coloured Starling, 2 Yellow-breasted Buntings, Rustic Bunting and Little Bunting.

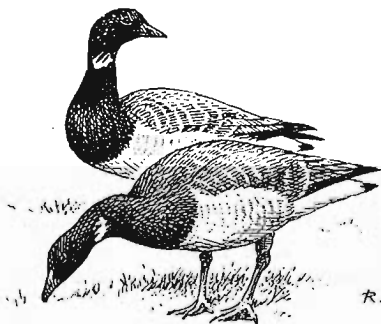
The spring passage was dominated by the 3rd May when we witnessed one of the largest falls of night-migrants ever to occur at Fair Isle in spring. The early spring was very quiet and Blackbirds were particularly scarce, while May was very good and no less than 143 species were observed on the island in the month. As in recent years, June was interesting for a scattering of rarities. The summer weather was very changeable and the rough seas gave us a rather poor sea bird season; counts were completed but no boats visited the west cliffs because of the swell. Nothing unusual bred on the isle—no Curlews, Quails or Corncrakes—but one pair of Peregrines was successful and reared one chick. During Storm Petrel netting operations we caught a single Leach's Petrel.

August was a good month for migrants; there were lots of waders and Common Gulls, more Knots than ever before and also more Barred and Icterine Warblers, 27 Barred Warblers being trapped and ringed. Early September was good for rarities, the best being a River Warbler, but the common night-

migrants such as chats and warblers were scarce. October was rather lacking in variety, rarities were scarce, but Redwings occurred in large numbers; two days with 6000 birds, and 9000+ on 23rd. November was colder and stormy, and little was seen apart from exceptional numbers of Glaucous Gulls which peaked at 300+ on 24th.

Spring Migration

Once again March was a disappointing month, being just an extension of the winter instead of the first month of the spring migration, as in some years. The weather was cold and very few birds were on the move. The Oystercatchers and Lapwings started to arrive as usual at the end of February and the numbers of Oystercatchers rose from 8 on 1st March to 30 on 5th and 50 on 11th, while Lapwings increased from 3 on 1st to 35 on 5th and 50 on 17th. There was a general lack of thrushes and the turdidae peak only reached 25 Song Thrushes, 20 Blackbirds and a Robin on 16th and 25 Blackbirds on 23rd, a day when there was also an increase of Skylarks, 500 being on the isle. Other March migrants included 2 Brent Geese on 16th, 2 Whoopers on 21st and 5 more on 25th, a Bar-tailed Godwit on 18th-21st, a few Wood Pigeons in mid-month, a Long-eared Owl on 4th, cock Stonechats on 24th and 28th, Pied Wagtails on 23rd, 24th, 26th (2) and 27th, and a Bullfinch on 23rd and 24th. The Woodlark which overwintered at Setter sang beautifully in fine weather on 3rd to 5th and departed on the last date; another was seen on 20th.



April came in cold and there was little of interest until 4th, when it was warm and sunny with hardly any wind. New arrivals included Long-eared Owl, Stonechat, Goldcrest and Little Gull, the latter an adult seen by Gordon Barnes flying north over Field. The wind was light south-westerly on 5th and 6th and on both days there were some new arrivals, more Skylarks on 5th and a Chiffchaff on 6th. It was foggy on 7th

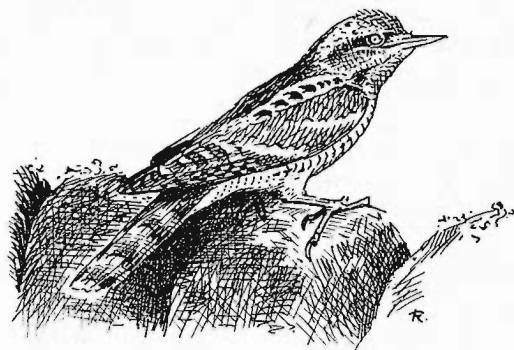
but when it cleared in the afternoon we found that there had been a small fall of Blackbirds (40) as well as 55 Lapwings and a single Sparrowhawk, Woodlark and Chiffchaff. Fog came again on 8th and the only new migrant was a Little Grebe on the pools at Vatnagard. On 9th the wind veered to south-west and we saw our first Wheatears of the year when the drizzle cleared at midday. Next day their numbers had swelled to 20 and we also recorded a Black Redstart (caught in the gully) and a Greenfinch. Unfortunately this promising trend did not mature and the next nine days were very quiet and rather cold with mainly northerly winds. Common and Black-headed Gulls were moving north to Shetland on 19th and there were more Wheatears as well as 2 Moorhens, Rook, Mistle Thrush, Black Redstart, Reed Bunting and 4 Bramblings.

On 20th the wind at last veered to the south-east but few birds arrived; Wheatears increased to 30 and there were 2 Robins. Next day was the first interesting day of the year for migration and it happened just as Marina and I had to go south for consultations on plans for the new Observatory. Before we left at midday we saw a Greylag and there were over 50 Wheatears, 3 Ring Ouzels and a Great Grey Shrike. Next day, with the wind still blowing from the south-east, there was a good fall of birds which included 50 Fieldfares, 100+ Song Thrushes, 30 Redwings, 150+ Wheatears, 150 Robins but few Blackbirds. Other newcomers included 3 Sparrowhawks, 4 Kestrels and a Merlin, 2 Siskins, 30 Chaffinches and 20 Bramblings, while the Great Grey Shrike was trapped. The weather remained the same on 23rd and most of the arrivals had stayed overnight. The most interesting new arrival was a Hawfinch which put in a brief appearance at North Haven just as the Good Shepherd arrived from Shetland. There was also an arrival of Willow Warblers (6), more Dunnocks (150) and Chaffinches (50+); a new Great Grey Shrike was trapped.

Most of these birds were still on the island next day with the wind in the same airt, and new species recorded were Swallow, Grasshopper Warbler and Bullfinch, and Ring Ouzels increased to 35. The large numbers of Robins and Dunnocks were still present when I arrived home on 25th and on this day there was a large arrival of 1200 Fieldfares and also 25 Woodcock. The Fieldfares did not linger and next day only 300 remained. There was also a decrease in other thrushes but the numbers of Robins and Dunnocks remained unchanged. On the credit side, there was an increase in Wheatears and new species included Shelduck, Shoveler, Glaucous Gull and Corn Bunting. Next day we observed Whimbrel and Grey Wagtail, and trapped Wood Pigeon and Greenfinch. The remaining days of the month were quiet with a general decrease in all species,

although we trapped a Grasshopper Warbler on 28th, saw a Whinchat on 29th and there was an increase in Fieldfares after midday on 29th.

May started off well with the wind in the south-east and on the first day we found a Corncrake at Shirva and a male Lapland Bunting at Taing. Next day there were some Ring Ouzels on the isle, a female Lapland Bunting and a spattering of Fieldfares, Bramblings and Chiffchaffs, but the most exciting arrival was a Purple Heron at Setter, seen later at Quoy. It was the forerunner of one of the most exciting day's migration ever known at Fair Isle.



3rd MAY 1969

The day started off quietly with only a Redwing and a Blackbird caught on the first round of the traps and I saw a few off-passage Robins, nothing to suggest that within a few hours we were to witness one of the most outstanding falls of migrants at Fair Isle. The wind was east to north-east, force 3-4, the skies were overcast all day but the drizzle cleared at midday. We visited the south end of the isle in the morning to look for the Purple Heron and could not find it, although it was seen later, but we saw 2 Grasshopper Warblers, while a few Tree Pipits and Pied Flycatchers were on the hill.

At midday six Tree Pipits arrived at the Observatory and very soon it was obvious that many migrants were coming in—a short walk to South Haven beach revealed 12 Tree Pipits, Black Redstart, 2 Whinchats and an Ortolan Bunting. After lunch we went round the traps and found that birds were streaming on to the isle, especially Tree Pipits, and Gilsetter was full of them. I walked up past Setter to Gunnawark and there were Tree Pipits everywhere, and they were very much in evidence along the west cliffs with flocks of up to 30 and 40 coming in from the north and coasting down the cliffs to the crofting land. The air was full of their cries and it was a most

thrilling spectacle. Small numbers of other species were mixed up in these flocks and they included Redstarts, Whinchats, Pied Flycatchers and Bramblings. In the sheltered hollows many very tired Willow Warblers were searching for insects, and in the wet hollow above Troila Geo it was the nearest I have seen to a moving carpet as the Willow Warblers flicked out of the way as I walked along. The north cliffs were not so full of birds but my colleagues saw very large numbers at the south end of the island.

I snatched the briefest of evening meals before going south to have a look at the crofting land, where Gordon joined me. We looked at the field of new-sown oats at Stackhoul and were amazed to see 4 Ortolans feeding together, but this record was short-lived because we found no less than 14 Ortolans feeding on the Shirva croft, most of them superbly-plumaged males. This spurred us on and before dusk we had searched every croft for migrants and tallied a great score of birds. We caught a good number of birds in the traps on the way home and the whole evening was taken up with compiling the daily census of migrants.

77 species were recorded on the island during the day, the numbers of Tree Pipits being outstanding and very difficult to estimate. The following migrants were observed (the numbers for the common species are certainly a minimum and the numbers actually present were probably a good bit higher): one Wood Sandpiper, 5 Common Sandpipers, Cuckoo, 45 Wrynecks, House Martin, 250 Fieldfares, 150 Song Thrushes, 300 Ring Ouzels, 35 Blackbirds, many Wheatears, 130 Whinchats, 75 Redstarts, Black Redstart, Bluethroat, 75 Robins, 2 Grasshopper Warblers, Blackcap, Whitethroat, 400 Willow Warblers, 6 Chiffchaffs, 25 Pied Flycatchers, 1500+ Tree Pipits, 3 male Grey-headed Wagtails, one male Yellow Wagtail, 2 Great Grey Shrikes, Siskin, 3 Bullfinches, 20 Chaffinches, 500 Bramblings, 32 Ortolan Buntings, 80 Reed Buntings and 2 Lapland Buntings.

This was the most spectacular day's migration I have ever witnessed at Fair Isle and must rank as one of the best days ever known at the island. The numbers of Wrynecks, Ring Ouzels, Tree Pipits and Ortolan Buntings are all record day-totals for Fair Isle.

* * *

The wind was still east on 4th, with anticyclonic gloom. An Osprey arrived over Vaadal before breakfast and later in the morning we saw it at close range near the airstrip as it perched on a small peat bank. During the day we found most of yesterday's migrants, but some species had decreased slightly. Numbers of Wrynecks were well down but we began to find some dead ones, and any decrease would have been due to deaths

rather than to emigration overnight. Common Sandpipers had increased and new species present were Turtle Dove and Sedge Warbler. A Honey Buzzard was a new bird on 5th and there were more House Martins, while Common Sandpipers increased to 25 and there was a fine male Ruff in breeding plumage at Skadan. The visibility was better on 6th and the east wind finally cleared away the overcast to reveal the sun. We saw more migrants, but this was probably because the fine weather brought some birds out of hiding. The larger species were more in evidence and, as well as a Rough-legged Buzzard and a Hobby, we recorded 5 Sparrowhawks, Merlin and 8 Kestrels. Other species included Corncrake, 6 Green Sandpipers, Wood Sandpiper, 10 Common Sandpipers (a decrease), 150 Common Gulls, 3 Cuckoos, 10 Wrynecks and 3 Mistle Thrushes; Ring Ouzels were down to 150, Willow Warblers to 250 and Tree Pipits to 400.

There had obviously been an exodus overnight in the clear conditions and on 7th we saw many less and few new birds except 5 Cuckoos and 2 Bluethroats. The excitement of the 8th was a handsome Great Crested Grebe in summer plumage swimming in Pylie which we trapped there in the evening, only the 3rd record for Fair Isle and the first since 1958. South-easterly winds and fine weather stayed with us during the next two weeks, most days being rather similar with migrants lingering from the big falls early in the month. There were no new falls but a few fresh sightings daily. The more interesting records were Great Northern Diver on 15th-21st, Little Grebe on 11th at Golden Water (trapped and ringed), 6 Teal on 9th, Tufted Duck on 21st and 22nd, 4 Shelducks on 10th, Water Rail on 13th, 3 Corncrakes on 11th, Jack Snipe on 10th, 6 Whimbrels on 12th, 2 Greenshanks on 11th, 3 Knots on 14th, Glaucous Gull on 22nd, Collared Dove on 12th, a male Snowy Owl over the hill and Setter on 20th, a Long-eared Owl on 11th, a Swift on 9th and 2 on 10th, 40 House Martins on 15th, 2 Tree Sparrows on 22nd and 9 on 23rd.

Although the weather was still fine and sunny on 24th with light south-east winds there was a resurgence of migration, and new arrivals that day included Merlin, Woodcock, 2 Wood Sandpipers, 50 Swallows, 4 Sedge Warblers, 3 Blackbirds, 12 Spotted and 6 Pied Flycatchers and a Red-backed Shrike, while the best bird of the day was a female Golden Oriole discovered in the cliffs at Hyukni Geo, a tired individual which we all saw well as it perched in the cliffs. Finally a Quail was found dead under overhead wires at Taing. There were more new arrivals next day, the rarest being a female Marsh Harrier seen at Malcolm's Head in the evening. This poor bird was in an exhausted condition and when it flew across Lunna Geo it was forced

into the sea by Great Black-backed Gulls and almost certainly perished. There were more migrants on 26th and more arrived after midday. Two Marsh Warblers appeared at the Observatory in the early afternoon and another was found at Hesswalls; other migrants included 5 Collared Doves, 8 Swifts, a Wry-neck, 75 Swallows, 50 House Martins, 8 Sand Martins, a Reed Warbler, 7 Blackcaps, 15 Whitethroats, 30 Willow Warblers and 5 Red-backed Shrikes. Numbers were down next day but a Honey Buzzard arrived in the afternoon and Tree Sparrows increased to 13.

The fine weather continued and there were fresh arrivals on 28th. We caught a Marsh Warbler and Bluethroat, and after lunch saw a Shorelark and Icterine Warbler; other birds included 2 Scoters, 23 Lapwings, 4 Cuckoos, 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 28 Sand Martins (a record for Fair Isle) and 20 Spotted Flycatchers. On 29th I caught a female Red-breasted Flycatcher in the Vaadal before breakfast and later we recorded Honey Buzzard, Black Redstart, Goosander and 8 Shelducks. Next day another Osprey arrived and on the last day of the month we saw the Purple Heron (which had been present all month) for the last time; it was now strong and fit, fishing for eels in the burn at the Haa. That day we also saw 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 3 Linnets and a Yellowhammer.

June started off well with a nice fall of migrants overnight; 40 Swallows, 60 House Martins and 6 Sand Martins were seen as well as a Bluethroat, 7 Red-backed Shrikes and a Honey Buzzard, but the excitement of the day was a female Snowy Owl on Bunes in the evening which everyone at the Observatory saw very well. Nothing much was observed on 2nd but next day there was a Short-toed Lark at Taing, also Marsh and Wood Warblers, but shrikes had decreased in number. A Red-headed Bunting arrived on 4th as well as a new Honey Buzzard, Glaucous Gull, Goldeneye and Chaffinch.

We had one of the best early summers for many years and the fine anticyclonic weather continued throughout the month although there was a slight deterioration at the end of June. Some nice bird migrants were seen in this period, including an adult Long-tailed Skua on the hill on 5th and an Icterine Warbler at Barkland the same day. Rather little was observed on the next two days but an Ortolan Bunting arrived on 7th and a Rustic Bunting on 8th, also 8 Turtle Doves, 11 Swifts, 2 Black Redstarts and a Marsh Warbler. A new Marsh Warbler arrived on 11th and another on 12th; a Nightjar (the only one for the year) was found in Maver's Geo on 12th. The 13th started off well with a female Subalpine Warbler which I found on the embankment at Wirvie before breakfast; later we found more migrants in the south including 18 House Martins, 5 Sand Mar-

tins, a new Marsh Warbler and a Red-backed Shrike. Next day there were 8 Collared Doves, and a Melodious Warbler was trapped in the plantation—only our 3rd record. A female Rose-coloured Starling was seen at the North Light on 15th, a female Marsh Harrier at Restensgeo on 16th, a Quail on 19th, a Grey Wagtail on 22nd, a Reed Warbler on 27th and another Quail on the last day of the month, while returning waders started moving through at the end of the month.

Summer

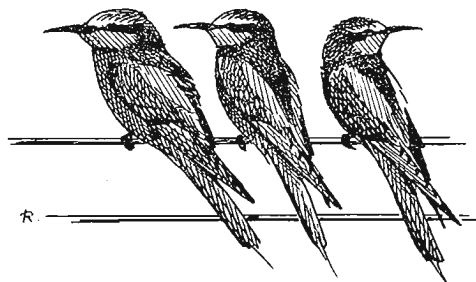
Although we enjoyed a really fine and sunny May and June, the rest of the summer was unsettled, more windy than usual with some rain on many days. From our point of view the worst feature of all was the ever present sea-swell which made it difficult to use the small boat to advantage and we were unable to get to the west cliffs by sea. In consequence our sea bird ringing totals were noticeably low.

No unusual species nested, and although a few Curlews sang on the hill in the spring, none bred. A few Quail were recorded but there was no evidence of nesting, and this was also the case with Corncrakes—one bird called from the rye-grass at the Haa for a week in early June but apparently failed to find a mate. There was an improvement in the numbers of Twites and House Sparrows, a reflection of the decreased use of toxic seed dressings in the spring, but we could not discover the reason for the rather low number of Starlings breeding on the isle.

One pair of Peregrines bred in a new site on the Vaasetter cliff above the South Mila Hesslands—the nest was discovered on 31st May when we could see at least one chick. It was a difficult ledge to view and too dangerous a place to visit so we were unable to be certain of the number of young. Only one juvenile was seen on the wing so it is likely that only one chick was reared, as in 1968. Another pair frequented the west cliffs but there was no evidence that they bred. Ravens were surprisingly unsuccessful and no chicks were reared from the four resident pairs.

With such changeable weather and rather rough seas, the sea birds did not have a particularly good year. Breeding numbers were high, as usual, and even increased in the case of Kittiwakes and Guillemots, but the number of chicks was low and this was noticeable with the later breeders such as Tysties. The fortunes of the skuas continued as in recent years, with the numbers of Great Skuas falling while the Arctic Skua colony thrived, the latter species obviously taking advantage of the continued growth of the Kittiwake population on the island. The windy weather was not good for catching Storm Petrels

on the cliffs at night and except for two good nights, when we mist-netted 94 on 31st July and 66 on 1st August, catching success was poor and only 224 birds were ringed on the isle. No nests were found. One Leach's Petrel was mist-netted at night at Gunnawark on 31st July.



The outstanding migrants of the summer were three superb Bee-eaters which arrived on 7th July in the evening and spent the next two days on the island. Their favourite haunt was the telephone lines at Boini Mire, from where they would swoop down to catch bees attracted by the fine display of wild flowers in the marsh. They departed, with much excited calling, at mid morning on 9th July and, almost certainly, the same three birds (a male and two females) were found at Stromfirth in Shetland that evening. A Crossbill flew over calling on 19th July but it was the only sighting of the year; a Little Ringed Plover was disturbed from Muckle Urie Geo on 20th and by the end of July Common Gulls and waders started to flood south. Finally, a Chiffchaff summered on the island, a most unusual summer abode for this woodland species.

Autumn Migration

The wader passage in late July reached its peak on 29th when there were 90 Knots at Skadan, a very high number for Fair Isle. Common Gulls were also plentiful with 700 on 26th, 300 on 27th, and 80 on 28th, and a great arrival of 2000 on the last day of the month. Both of these species were to appear prominently in August, but the month started with the arrival of the autumn's first Barred Warbler—the forerunner of the best migration of this species ever seen at Fair Isle. A Cuckoo and a Sedge Warbler also arrived on this day. The south-east wind was maintained during the next four days and some migrants arrived; they included Fieldfare on 2nd, Icterine Warbler, 16 Purple Sandpipers and 5 Common Sandpipers on 3rd, 2 Icterine Warblers and a Ruff on 5th. There were two new Barred Warblers and a Willow Warbler on 6th and a Black-tailed God-wit on 7th.

Knots reached a peak of 100 on 9th (a record for Fair Isle) and there were also a Grey Plover and a Barred Warbler. A few warblers arrived during the next two days and there was a terrific fall of Common Gulls on 12th—at least 4000 and an all-time record for the isle—and 8 Ruffs were seen. Next day an adult Red-backed Shrike, trapped before breakfast, heralded a nice fall of migrants including 120 Willow Warblers, 18 Garden Warblers, 8 Chiffchaffs, 7 Wood Warblers, 3 Icterine Warblers, Black Redstart and Scarlet Grosbeak (the latter being the earliest-ever autumn sighting).

Most of these birds had departed by next day but an Aquatic Warbler discovered at Pund was trapped and ringed. The easterly wind continued on 15th and two new Aquatic Warblers were trapped—at Schoolton and Upper Stoneybreck. 5 Reed Warblers, 5 Icterine Warblers and a Long-eared Owl were also seen during the day. Another new Aquatic Warbler was caught on 16th and, lastly, an unringed bird seen on 17th made our score 5 Aquatic Warblers in four days, an outstanding occurrence even for Fair Isle. Waders increased on 17th with 20 Dunlins, 20 Sanderlings and 8 Common Sandpipers. Gordon saw a very early Richard's Pipit on 19th at Setter.

It was very quiet during the next four days but the wind veered to south-east on 24th and there was a small arrival of continental migrants. The most surprising bird of the day was a male Black-headed Grosbeak perching in the oats at Setter. After a short chase we caught it in the Setter heligoland, the bird's condition indicating that it was an escaped cage-bird. Other arrivals included 3 Barred Warblers, 4 Garden Warblers, 14 Willow Warblers, a Wood Warbler and a phalarope, the latter seen briefly on the sea off Skadan. Another quiet spell followed which was broken on 29th by the arrival of a Greenish Warbler which was mistnetted near the Nurse's Cottage. Finally, a Lapland Bunting arrived on the last day of the month.

September came in with the wind in the west, and to the chagrin of our visitors it stayed there well into the month. A female Red-headed Bunting on 3rd, 2 Barred Warblers on 5th, 2 Ortolans and 6 Barred Warblers on 9th illustrate how quiet early September was. Fortunately a change of wind to north-east produced a few migrants on 10th and we recorded 12 Barred Warblers as well as an increase of White Wagtails. Our luck at last changed on 14th when the wind veered to the east and a Citrine Wagtail was found near Setter soon after breakfast, everybody having good views of it later as it caught flies on Hesswalls beach. A Yellow-breasted Bunting was discovered in the oats at Kennaby in the afternoon and there had also been an arrival of other continentals including 80 Willow Warblers, 40 Garden Warblers, 6 Blackcaps, and 10 Whinchats,

while Barred Warblers peaked at the record number of 14. A Red-breasted Flycatcher was a new bird on 15th. Next day there was another small fall of night migrants which included another Red-breasted Flycatcher and 2 Scarlet Grosbeaks, but the best bird of the day (and the autumn) was a River Warbler caught by Kevin in the plantation in the afternoon. This is the second record for Fair Isle and for Britain.

Another day of south-easterlies on 17th and again an interesting day; the River Warbler was not found but one of the Grosbeaks and two Red-breasted Flycatchers were seen, and other migrants included 13 Herons, Osprey, Grey Plover, 2 Little Stints, Pomarine Skua and 14 Goldcrests. With the weather still holding we expected some rarities but next day we only managed to find the Yellow-breasted Bunting again, although we did see 3 Bluethroats, 2 Barred Warblers, 2 Red-backed Shrikes and a Hen Harrier as well as more Willow Warblers and Blackcaps. There was a further small increase in most species on 19th—2 new Bluethroats, 2 Scarlet Grosbeaks, Wry-neck and Water Rail, and the Yellow-breasted Bunting was trapped at Shirva. Surprisingly, a new Yellow-breasted Bunting was trapped at Field on 20th—a day of westerly winds and drizzle. The weather deteriorated with westerly gales during the next three days and just one good bird was seen each day; an Arctic Warbler trapped in the plantation on 21st, a Red-throated Pipit on 22nd and a Great Snipe on 23rd. The latter was extremely obliging and everyone obtained excellent views during the day.

The weather went mad at the end of the month reaching a climax on 29th when the wind was well over storm force; some damage was done on the island and it was most disappointing to find in the morning that the whole Double Dyke trap was listing at 45°. Bird migrants were scarce in the last week of September, those of interest being a Great Grey Shrike on 25th, 2 Pinkfeet and Greenland Wheatears on 26th, 5 Merlins on 27th and a Short-toed Lark on 30th.

October was a poor month for variety of migrants but was noteworthy for the very strong passage of Redwings; very few rarities were seen and small birds, such as Chiffchaffs, were scarce. As the thrushes comprised much of the passage during the month I have presented the daily totals for these species in the following table.

October	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fieldfare				1						
Song Thrush						5	5	3	5	2
Redwing		3	5	1	25	100	150	100	75	50
Blackbird			1	1	1		1		1	3

October	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Fieldfare		8	25		3	6	6	15	40	150
Song Thrush	2	16	150	50	30	40	20	40	200	50
Redwing	600	6000	6000	2000	1000	500	500	500	6000	1000
Blackbird	3	8	300	250	300	200	200	300	1000	1000

October	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Fieldfare	100	500	600	300	200	150	150	150	150	120	100
Song Thrush	20	20	500	200	100	80	80	80	80	50	40
Redwing	500	3000	9000+	3000	1000	500	500	500	500	400	300
Blackbird	1000	500	3000	2000	1000	500	500	250	200	150	150

In the first week of the month the wind was mainly south-west, sometimes very strong, and the migrants were mostly of north-west origin; for instance, there were 100 Snow Buntings on 1st and 15 Pinkfeet on 2nd. A Short-eared Owl and a Wood Warbler were also found on 2nd. Very little was observed on the next two days but on 5th, with a strong southerly wind, two Yellow-browed Warblers were discovered at the north end—the only occurrence of the species this autumn. The weather improved on 6th but the wind remained south to south-west; even so there was quite a nice fall of continental night-migrants including Ring Ouzel, Barred Warbler, 2 Garden Warblers, 2 Lesser Whitethroats, 6 Siskins and 17 Bramblings. The 7th was a stormy day when we recorded a movement of Bonxies over the isle, while a Woodlark and a Sedge Warbler had probably arrived the previous day.

There was an adult Glaucous Gull on 8th and a change of wind on 10th produced a small fall of migrants including 5 Blackcaps, 9 Goldcrests and 2 Lapland Buntings. Next day we saw Little Stint, Rook, Barred Warbler and Scarlet Grosbeak—quite late in the autumn for the last two species. There was another Barred Warbler on 12th as well as 3 Ring Ouzels, Chiffchaff and 3 Redpolls. Bird-watching was more interesting on 13th when we found 75 Golden Plovers, 4 Dunlins, 13 Siskins, 40 Chaffinches, 150 Bramblings and 120 Snow Buntings. A Great Grey Shrike and House Martin were seen on 14th, a Richard's Pipit on 15th, Little Bunting on 16th and Grey Wag-tail and 3 Kestrels on 17th.

The wind was mainly south to south-west with broken clouds and some fog patches over the weekend when we had the official opening of the Observatory. Some interesting migrants were seen each day but there were no large falls although Greylags were plentiful on 20th. Bluethroat and Stonechat occurred on 18th, 4 Merlins, 90 Lapwings, 35 Golden Plovers, 200 Bramblings and 4 Yellowhammers on 19th, 100+ Greylags and 300 Bramblings on 20th and 40 Greylags and 9 Blackcaps on 21st. The wind backed to SSE on 22nd and it rained in the morning. There was a fresh arrival of migrants which

included 17 Mallard, 26 Wigeon, Shoveler, Glaucous Gull and 3 Greenfinches.

The 23rd was one of those exhilarating days when the island was absolutely moving with thrushes. Tony Mainwood, who was in charge of the Observatory during my short absence at the S.O.C. conference, estimated that there were over 9000 Redwings as well as 3000 Blackbirds and 1000 Starlings. No less than 335 birds were ringed during the day, which is an impressive score for Fair Isle, and it included 256 Blackbirds, 31 Redwings and 30 Song Thrushes. Most of the migrants arrived on the isle from 5 a.m. and the lighthouses reported large attractions before dawn, 56 Redwings being found dead at the North Light. Other migrants seen during the day included 15 Woodcock, 400 Common Gulls, 5 Short-eared Owls, 5 Jackdaws and 10 Siskins. There was a large exodus overnight and numbers were well down on 24th except for Common Gulls, while Jackdaws had increased to 12 and there were 7 Dunlins.

The rest of the month was rather quiet—strong winds in the first few days and rather few migrants. On 25th, 17 Greylags passed over and the Richard's Pipit was seen again; there was a Woodlark on 28th and a Corn Bunting on 30th.

November 1969 will be remembered for the amazing influx of Glaucous Gulls at Fair Isle and also in Shetland. Although single birds were seen on 4 days in October there were no sightings in November until 15th when at least 50 arrived on the isle along with 5000 Herring Gulls and 5000 Great Black-backed Gulls—these birds were sheltering on the land during a storm. Next day we recorded at least 75 Glaucous Gulls and we noted that there were more adults than juveniles. The weather then improved and numbers dropped to 20 on the next two days and to 6 on 20th. Another storm blew up on 24th when even more gulls from the offshore fishing fleets came to rest on the island than on 15th. We estimated at least 8000 Herring Gulls (the highest number ever at Fair Isle), 5000 Great Black-backed Gulls, and more than 300 Glaucous Gulls, and again we observed that two-thirds or more of these were adult birds. Numbers dropped to 100+ on 25th and there was a corresponding decrease in other gulls; thereafter numbers in the month did not reach more than 10. These are the highest numbers of Glaucous Gulls recorded at Fair Isle and the high proportion of adults was interesting.

Single Iceland Gulls were seen on 16th and 24th while Little Auks were more plentiful than usual at sea; other migrants included Velvet Scoter on 3rd, 6 Blackcaps on 11th, Greenfinch on 24th and 4 Long-eared Owls on 29th. During December there was a Black Redstart on 3rd, Gordon reported a Buzzard on 18th-24th, Waxwing on 20th and finally the year

ended with a Mute Swan on 28th. Surprisingly this was the first definite record for Fair Isle but unfortunately the bird was oiled and it died in the New Year.

SEA EAGLES

ROY H. DENNIS

In last year's Annual Report (pages 17-21) I described the experimental re-introduction of four young Sea Eagles to Fair Isle from Norway, and related how they fared during the rearing stage in the cages and the various events which occurred after they were released in the autumn. I reported that the male eagle, Johan, disappeared in October, although there was no evidence that he died on the isle, while the other three stayed on the island throughout the rest of 1968.

Tony Mainwood, my assistant, who overwintered at the Bird Observatory, maintained a daily watch for the eagles and provided carrion at food dumps on Ward Hill. During January and February, all three eagles were seen on 33 days, two of them on 9 days, only one eagle on 7 days, while on 10 days no eagles were seen but this was usually when it was raining, snowing or very windy. Food dumps on the Tour o'da Ward Hill and Erne's Brae were maintained throughout the two months and the following carrion was provided: 93 rabbits, 4 gulls, 3 lumps of mutton, most of a small Grey Seal carcase, a feral cat, 5 Guillemots, 5 Shags, one Fulmar and one Puffin. The rabbits were shot with a .22 rifle while most of the remainder were found washed up on the beaches and transported to the hill.

The eagles regularly visited the dumps for food but only when Tony had departed, and they usually carried food away before eating it. Nearly all the carrion supplied was eaten although some of it was taken by Ravens, Hooded Crows and large gulls. On some occasions the eagles were seen down on the beaches and it was considered that they were finding some of their own food.

In January, the eagles spent most of their time in the high north-west cliffs, especially the Erne's Brae region. In February they were seen together more often in the air and they developed a habit of flying down the west cliffs, across Meoness and up to Sheep Rock each morning, searching the beaches for carrion. In the third week of February they were seen regularly in the Sheep Rock area, in fact on several occasions perched on the highest point. In the last week of the month all three visited Hesswalls to feed on a large Grey Seal carcase washed up on the beach.

There was a great deal of aerial display during the month and the eagles appeared to revel in strong winds, even gliding

powerfully along the cliff tops on the stormiest days. The main display consisted of the male diving onto the female in mid air; the female would then turn on her back and present her outstretched talons to the diving bird. Occasionally they would touch talons and a few times they were seen to spiral down with linked talons for a short distance. Unlike Ravens, the female eagles invariably completed a full roll with outstretched wings instead of a half roll and back with closed wings. Once I saw the male eagle do a full forward roll with fully spread wings. During these displays, the eagles (probably just the females) gave a long squealing call rather like a young Razor-bill calling from its nest. This call was also heard from the birds when they were perched together on the ground.

Although the eagles came to the food dumps and carried away rabbit carcasses, some of which were placed in the position adopted by crouching live rabbits, there was no evidence that they attacked or attempted to take a live rabbit. The island rabbits still showed no fear of the eagles soaring overhead and did not hide or bolt down their burrows. The eagles did not attack any sheep although once on Malcolm's Head an eagle was seen to hover over a flock of sheep in an inquisitive manner, while Torvaldine (the least shy bird) would hover over any dog running about in the open on the hill. The eagles were no longer bothered by crows or Ravens, in fact they were dominant when all three species were at carrion. Peregrines attacked them when they flew through the eyrie area south of Sheep Rock.

Oiled sea birds, mainly Guillemots, came ashore dead or dying in early March with a south-east wind; for instance we found 25 Guillemots on the beaches on 1st March and another 25 on 2nd. At this time the eagles quartered the south-east facing geos and carried up sea-bird carcasses from the tide-line; on one occasion I saw an eagle eating the remains of a Guillemot as far inland as Sukka Mire. In March all three eagles continued their aerial displays of the previous month along with much calling, but after the first week we recorded a change in the situation. The female eagle, Ingrid, was not seen with the other two (a pair) after 6th March and from that date she led a rather solitary existence in the west cliffs and must have been finding all her own food. During the month, all three eagles were seen on 6 days, only Torvaldine and Jesper on 17 days, only one on one day and none on 7 days.

Torvaldine and Jesper visited the food dump at Erne's Brae throughout the month. I never actually saw Jesper take anything from the dump; instead he seemed to take over the remains of food carried from the dump by the female. In March the following carrion was provided at Erne's Brae : 15 rabbits,

11 sea birds, 2 fish and a small octopus, the latter washed up in a storm. I built a hide at Erne's Brae in the early part of the month and photographed eagles and Ravens from it. The eagles were observed feeding at other places on the island and I considered that they were finding half their own food in the form of carrion. On 27th March one eagle was seen hovering over a Kittiwake in the sea off Hesti Geo but did not pick it up.

On 12th and 20th March Torvaldine was seen hovering over sheep at Setter and Erne's Brae but made no attempt to attack them or land close to them. On 12th March she was perched on the cliff opposite Erne's Brae while I was in the hide. I saw one of the islanders driving his tractor across the airstrip, nearly half a mile away, and I could see his dog running around nearby. I noticed Torvaldine bobbing her head and looking inquisitively in that direction; almost immediately she took off and flew right over to the airstrip and hovered over the dog for a few minutes before returning to her perch on the cliff. The behaviour seemed to be purely inquisitive; she was not hungry as there was plenty of food available at the dump. On one occasion two eagles were seen washing in a fresh water pool on Sukka Mire.

In April all three eagles were seen on 5 days (although not all together), two were seen on 20 days, one on one day and on 5 days no eagles were observed. Torvaldine and Jesper were together all month, usually in the north-west cliffs where they roosted. Ingrid was last seen on 12th April at Lerness and Guidicum; she appeared to be in excellent condition and it is very likely that she strayed from the island soon after the 12th rather than died on the isle. Visibility was good at this time with both Orkney and Shetland clearly visible each day. Later in the month there were two unconfirmed reports of a large eagle in Shetland but neither was properly identified.

The first moulted feathers were found on Erne's Brae on 9th April and by the end of the month the two remaining eagles were in wing and tail moult as well as body moult. Dead rabbits and sea birds were provided at Erne's Brae throughout the month but we noticed that they were becoming less and less inclined to come for food during this time and they were obviously finding more of their own food. It was encouraging to record that during the lambing season there was not a single report of the eagles touching a lamb on the island, in fact there was not even one observation of them eating or carrying away a dead lamb. The observatory staff kept a careful watch on the hill at this time and crofters were frequently on the hill working with their sheep, so it is not likely that the eagles took a lamb without our knowledge. At the start of the lambing season the eagles were twice seen hovering over a ewe and her new

born lamb but on neither occasion was the lamb attacked. We thought that the eagles were puzzled by the small strange animal and were mobbing it inquisitively, just as we had seen them hovering over Gordon's dog when it had been running in the open. On 18th April we saw Bonxies and Oystercatchers mobbing the eagles as they flew across the island, but most of the time the eagles were not bothered by these attacks; sometimes the tables were turned and the eagles, especially the male, would drive off persistent gulls and crows.

In May both eagles were seen on 16 days, only one on 3 days and on the remaining 12 days no eagles were observed. This reflected the decreased amount of time spent in the air as a result of the summer moult. 12 rabbits and one gull were placed at the food dump on Erne's Brae in May but the eagles were not particularly keen to come for carrion. On 8th May we gathered the first evidence of an important step in our experiment when Mr and Mrs Lienart (two Belgian bird-watchers staying at the Bird Observatory) watched the two eagles soaring over the cliffs at Skinner's Glig and saw one of them catch a Fulmar in flight and then release it, apparently unharmed. A little later this episode was repeated; the eagle carried the struggling Fulmar for a few seconds and then released it. On 10th May I was at Erne's Brae and disturbed both eagles from Matchi Stack; as they flew across the geo to Lerness there was tremendous panic among the Fulmars and Kittiwakes, and to a lesser extent the Puffins. On 18th, I saw both eagles half-heartedly chasing Fulmars at Guidicum, but on the early morning of 20th I found the remains of two freshly killed Fulmars at one of their favourite perches on the high cliffs above South Felsigeo. Only the bill, legs and feathers were left and it was obvious that the young eagles had mastered the technique of catching adult Fulmars in flight, killing and eating them. There were two new Fulmar kills in the same area on 22nd May and another on 23rd.

Two other observations of interest during the month were both recorded on 20th May. Very early that morning I was walking towards Dronga from Wester Lother when I saw both eagles soaring over the cliffs; at times they were mobbed by a Hooded Crow and occasionally the male eagle chased the crow. With binoculars I could see that Torvaldine was carrying something in her talons and trying to peck at it with her bill. About fifteen minutes later when I reached the high cliffs above Felsigeo, I could see that she was carrying a clear glass bottle, about half pint size, by the neck. As I watched she flew high over Felsigeo still trying to peck at the bottle but lost her grip and the bottle dropped about 800 feet into the sea. I thought she had probably seen it glistening in the sea and had picked it out,

perhaps thinking it was a silvery fish. Torvaldine's moult was now advanced and only six old feathers remained in her tail.

Later that day, we saw an eagle fly past the observatory twice in the afternoon; it was repeatedly mobbed by gulls and crows over Bunness. It was reported later at the Sheep Rock and then flew across the hill to land in an exhausted state on the north shoulder of Burrashield. We could not get close enough to see the colour ring combination to identify the bird but we thought it was a female and from its exhausted condition we thought it may have been Ingrid. The weather on this day was very good with excellent visibility to Shetland and Orkney. We thought there was a chance she had returned to the isle but unfortunately this was never confirmed. On the following days only the usual pair could be found on the island so if Ingrid did visit the isle on 20th May she left again the same day.

June started off very well with both eagles seen on 1st and a freshly killed Fulmar found near Erne's Brae. When disturbed the two eagles were mobbed by Herring Gulls off the Tour o'da Ward Hill and then flew south to Troila Geo. The pair were seen in the north-west cliffs each day up to and including the 7th. None were seen in the following week even though the weather was fine with good visibility. Observations after this date suggest that Torvaldine left the island during this spell of good weather. Although none of the three missing eagles were seen leaving the isle it is worth mentioning that on occasions throughout the year, the eagles soared very high over the island, up to 2000 feet, and out over the sea, up to 2 or 3 miles, before returning to the cliffs.

On 14th June one eagle was seen briefly flying between Lerness and Dronga hotly pursued by Herring Gulls and on 16th, one (almost certainly the male, Jesper) was perched in the high cliffs at Wester Lother; he flew off low towards Dronga. Jesper was seen at Sauverstein in the north cliffs on 19th June and at Sheena Wheetha on 27th. He was in heavy moult and not flying particularly strongly; the gulls were mobbing him very badly and the eagle was obviously trying to seek solitude in the Wester Lother cliffs where nesting Herring Gulls are absent. On 29th June Jesper was seen at Easter Lother eating a Fulmar in the cliff; on 2nd July an eagle flew over the shoulder of Ward Hill, while on 3rd July Jesper was disturbed from the rock pile on the beach at Wester Lother and flew off towards Millens Houllan; two young Shags had been eaten on their nests in the colony.

Then followed nearly six weeks without a sighting but the male eagle had obviously led a secretive life in the north cliffs because on 13th August he was disturbed from the large sea

cave at Lericum, just west of the North Lighthouse. He was seen in the same place on 16th and 18th August, and fresh kills of young Fulmars, Shags and gulls were found on the beach.

On 19th August Gordon Barnes climbed down to Lericum beach and the eagle flew out of the cave. When it tried to land on an offshore skerry it fell into the sea. It flapped and struggled in the water but could not become airborne; instead it drifted ashore where it was caught and examined. It was Jesper, fat and well fed but his whole plumage soiled with oil, each feather being matted and smelling strongly of Fulmar oil. Unfortunately it appeared that each time the eagle had approached a young Fulmar on a nest ledge he had been spat at by the Fulmar before and during the struggle and in this way his plumage had become soiled while obtaining his food. The eagle was carried up the beach and left in the rocks. He was seen in the same geo on 20th, 21st and 22nd August but by 28th August he had moved round to Easter Lothar, where there was a dead gull on the beach. This was the last sighting of a Sea Eagle on the island.

In conclusion, I have to report that just over 14 months after the young Sea Eagles arrived on the island, the last of them disappeared. Even so the experiment was by no means a failure and many valuable results were learned from it. For instance on the credit side of the experiment we have the following results:

1. Young Sea Eagles can be safely transported from Norway to Scotland and successfully reared in cages without becoming tame or damaged.
2. They learn quickly to tear up their own food in captivity.
3. They can be successfully released on a small island without disappearing from it immediately.
4. They can be attracted to food dumps over long periods and so encouraged to overwinter in a particular area.
5. They quickly learn to find some of their own carrion food, the best beaches to scavenge as well as choice sites to roost and feed. It is interesting how the eagles frequented Erne's Brae so much, a place which, from its name, was obviously a favourite with Sea Eagles (or Ernes) when they bred on the island over a hundred years ago.
6. From their behaviour, it would appear that young Sea Eagles are much more carrion eaters than we expected; in fact they are expert scavengers.
7. The young eagles are able to hold their own against Ravens and large gulls already resident in winter quarters.
8. Agreeing with evidence collected in Norway, they are not

a hazard to sheep farming interests. The eagles on Fair Isle did not kill, attempt to kill or harass a single lamb and none were seen feeding on dead lambs.

9. Finally, and most important, the young eagles learnt to kill adult Fulmars in flight and obtain their own food. Also one bird learnt to find and take young sea birds before they had left their nests.

But on the debit side we have these facts :

1. The birds do wander from an isolated island like Fair Isle, even after nearly nine months of freedom on the island. Both Orkney and Shetland are visible from Fair Isle and it is impossible to keep contact with the birds when they go to the larger islands and groups.
2. Fair Isle has a very high sea bird population and there are scattered colonies of the bigger gulls along the whole coastline; in consequence, the eagles found it very difficult to find secluded places on the island where they could rest and moult away from the attentions of other species, especially Herring Gulls which never gave them peace in summer.
3. The last eagle, although able to kill adult Fulmars without becoming affected by the bird's oil, was unable to learn to kill young Fulmars without becoming oiled. It seemed unable to understand that this oil was bad for it and probably caused its death.

A table giving the dates of release, the last date of each bird definitely seen and what probably happened to them, is given below.

Eagle	Released	Last seen	Probable outcome
Ingrid	16/ 9/68	12/ 4/69	Probably left isle 3rd week April.
Jesper	2/10/68	28/ 8/69	Fulmar oil; probably died on isle in September or October.
Johan	4/10/68	18/10/68	Probably left isle late October 1968.
Torvaldine	20/10/68	7/ 6/69	Probably left isle 2nd week June 1969.

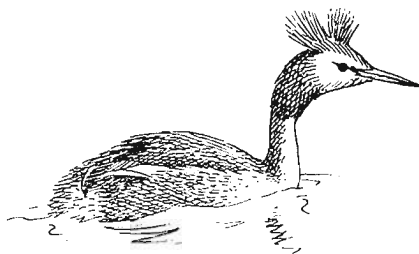
I am still optimistic that some of our eagles may still be alive in nearby islands or on mainland Scotland and it would be a great boost to us if one of them was seen. Even so I believe that it is well worth continuing the experiment by bringing in more birds but I am not sure that Fair Isle is the best choice for the next attempt. It has many advantages, as outlined in last year's report, but the lack of secluded cliffs where the eagles can peacefully roost, eat their food and moult without being continually disturbed and mobbed by gulls and other species may rule out all other advantages.

SYSTEMATIC LIST FOR 1969

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*. Singles on 15th-21st May, 6th June, 28th and 31st August; two on 14th November.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*. Seen on 13 days between 17th May and 7th August, all singles except for 2 on 17th and 29th May, 8th June and 26th July. Singles on 1st and 7th October.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*. One arrived on 8th May; it was trapped and ringed that day and stayed until 20th May. The first record since 1958 and probably 4th for Fair Isle.



SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*. One on 26th February.

LITTLE GREBE *Podiceps ruficollis*. Singles on 8th April and 11th May; the latter was trapped at Golden Water and ringed.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. One mist-netted at night at Gunnawark on 31st July; one seen on crossing 23rd September.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Observed on crossing between 27th May and 1st October; first noted ashore at night on 21st June and last on 9th September.

MANX SHEARWATER *Procellaria puffinus*. Singles offshore on 1st June, 5th and 24th August; seen on crossing on 30th May, 2 on 27th June and one on 15th July.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Procellaria grisea*. One on crossing on 2nd May is very early, the next was on 15th July; 159 were seen flying past island between 13th August and 26th September, the best days being 21 on 15th, 17 on 16th, 45 on 23rd, 25 on 24th and 13 on 28th August; rather few observed from Good Shepherd, singles on 4 days in same period but 5+ on 2nd September and a late bird on 21st October.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*. Ashore in good numbers all winter, except early January and in stormy weather 8th-19th March; numbers high after this date and pre-egg laying dispersal from 7th to 25th May. Average breeding season. Num-



PLATE 3 (above). The new Bird Observatory and Hostel.

PLATE 4 (below). The founders of the Bird Observatory (left to right), Ian Pitman, Sir Arthur Duncan, and George Waterston, still active in their original roles of treasurer, chairman and secretary, respectively.

Photographs by Dennis Coutts.

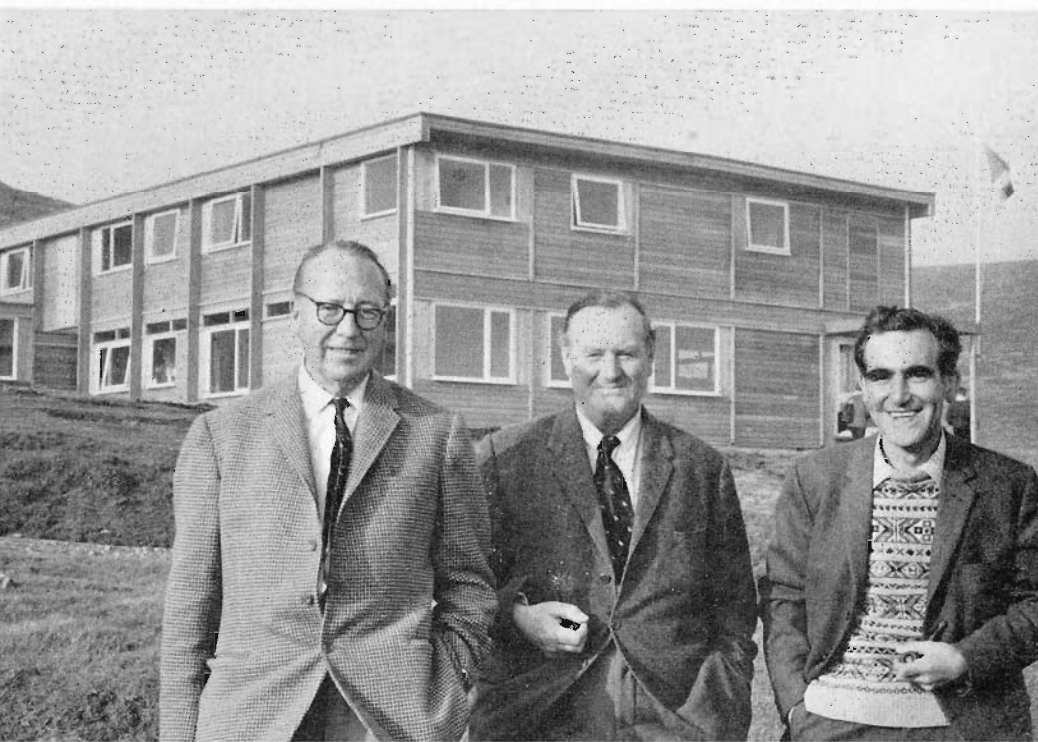




PLATE 5 (above). The lounge, with library alcove beyond.
 PLATE 6 (below). The dining-room.

Photographs by Dennis Coultts.



bers ashore rest of year except for brief absences during stormy weather.

GANNET *Sula bassana*. Very small numbers offshore in first six months; maximum 8 on 28th June. Slight increase in July but many more in August and September with peaks of 200 on 13th, 150+ on 24th August and 250 on 26th September; up to 40 in October but very few in November and December. Three ashore on Sheep Rock in late June and 4 sitting on a stack off Hoini on 1st July are the first healthy adults I have seen ashore.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Small numbers on northerly migration 25th March-8th May; singles on 31st May and 30th July, two on 18th June. Autumn passage from 3rd August to 25th October, mainly 31st August to 21st September when peak days were 21 on 31st August, 38 on 3rd, 40 on 10th, 35 on 11th, 40 on 13th, 35 on 14th and 24 on 21st September; few in October except 29 on 1st, 47 on 2nd and 14 on 11th; 3 on 10th December, 2 on 25th and one on 27th December.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Nest building from 21st March; average breeding season; emigration to Shetland from late August, especially 24th.

HERON *Ardea cinerea*. Singles on 15th-16th January, 24th-25th March, 6th, 10th and 25th April; 1-2 between 10th and 19th May. Return passage from 5th July, mainly from 23rd; peaks of 11 on 26th and 10 on 31st July, 11 on 5th and 10 on 29th August, 13 on 17th September and 10 on 2nd October; small numbers in rest of October and stragglers to 14th November; singles on 1st and 22nd-26th December.

PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*. A second-year bird arrived on 2nd May, first seen flying over Setter then frequenting Quoy/Schoolton ditches. It remained in this area on the next three days and was seen in rock pools at the south light on 7th and 8th. Next seen there on 15th when it was noted that it was ringed. It was mist-netted early next morning and found to have been ringed as a chick on 17th June 1967 in Holland. It was seen until 31st May and during its stay it was observed to catch and eat eels in the island ditches as well as small fish in the rock pools.

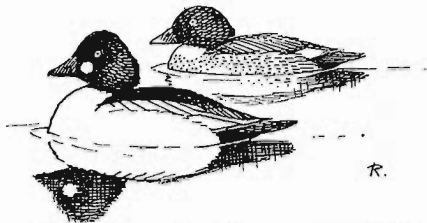
MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. 3 on 10th and one on 21st January. Spring movements from 28th February to 24th March; few except for 6 on 17th March. 1-2 birds on 7 days in April and May; one or two drakes summered, 3 on 27th July. Autumn migration from 4th September, mainly October and November, peaks of 5 on 29th September, 17 on 22nd and 10 on 25th October, and 10 on 25th November; one on 14th-20th December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*. Small spring passage 12th April-28th May; peaks of 4 on 20th April, 6 on 9th and 4 on 10th May. Summer single on 17th and 20th July. Autumn passage from 12th August to 5th November, peaks of 5 on 16th August, 11 on 20th September and 8 on 21st October.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*. Singles on 20th-21st January and 15th February; 1-4 between 16th and 27th March and 1-2 on 4 days between 30th April and 15th May. Autumn passage from 13th August to 25th November; rather sporadic, peaks of 4 on 16th and 18th August, 5 on 20th September, 26 on 22nd October, 4 on 19th and 27th October. One on 29th-31st December.

SHOVELER *Spatula clypeata*. Singles on 26th April and 22nd October.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. Singles on 27th January and 21st-22nd May; two on 17th December.



GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. 1-3 seen on 15 days in January, 20 days in February, 9 days in March and 6 days in April; also 4 on 13th February and 23 March; one on 2nd May and a drake on 4th-6th June. In autumn, one on 7th October, scarce passage from 23rd October with peaks of only 3 on 3rd, 14th and 25th November.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. Absent in winter; drake on 4th-9th May; one on 7th-8th, a pair on 16th and one on 21st and 30th June. Autumn arrivals from 2nd October; peaks of 4 on 13th and 25th October, 5th-6th November and 4th December.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. A drake 22nd-24th February (dead on last date) and a drake 3rd November.

SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. Singles on 7th-22nd February, 13th-24th March and 19th-20th April; a pair on 28th May.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. Normal numbers resident and average breeding season; display from end of March and first brood on sea on 15th June.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*. Two on 6th and one on 11th January, singles on 15th February, 23rd-26th April, 4th-14th May; 3 on 15th May, two on 22nd June, one

23rd-28th June and one 14th July. In autumn, one on 9 days between 7th October and 14th November; two on 12th, 3 on 21st and 4 on 22nd October.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*. A drake on 29th May.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. Two on 21st March, one 24th-26th April, one 3rd-4th, 4 on 10th, one on 21st, 8 on 29th and one on 31st May; one 1st-8th and 5 on 3rd June. One on 12th September and one on 20th December.

GREY-LAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. Singles on 26th February and 21st-23rd April. First heard passing over in autumn on night of 16th September; then small numbers, up to 3, in early October but heavy passage later in month when 100+ on 20th and 40+ on 21st with many seen on crossing on latter date; small numbers later and in early November, with 17 on 25th and 10 on 30th October, 9 on 2nd and 7 on 10th November; straggler on 18th-27th November.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. Four on 3rd and 6 on 4th February. In autumn, 2 on 26th, one 27th and 3 on 29th September; 15 on 2nd, 11 on 3rd and one 4th October; one on 2nd November.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*. Two adults on Meoness on 16th March; they were of the pale-breasted form *B.b. hrota*. The first records since October 1963.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. One on 22nd October.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*. One 26th January, 4 on 19th-20th February, 2 on 21st and 5 on 25th March, and 3 on 1st May. In autumn, 5 on 1st October; passage from 19th with 18 on 23rd, 10 on 26th-27th and 11 on 30th; parties of 3 or 4 seen on 8 days in November; 5 on 1st, 2 on 20th and 8 on 27th December. Of 35 birds aged on autumn passage, 18 were juveniles.

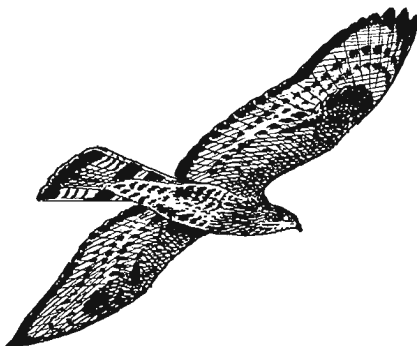
MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*. An adult, rather badly oiled, was found ashore in Hesti Geo on 28th December; it died on 1st January. This is the first definite dated record for Fair Isle.

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*. One from 18th to 24th December.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*. One soaring over air-strip and Burrashield on 6th May.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*. One 7th-10th April; 3 on 22nd April, singles on 23rd, 25th and 28th April; one 1st-5th, 5 on 6th, one 7th, 2 on 8th, singles on 13th, 18th-21st, 29th and 30th May, and 1st June. In autumn, one on 31st August, singles on 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 28th and 31st October, 3rd-4th, 5th-6th (different birds), 10th-11th and 28th-30th November.

HONEY BUZZARD *Pernis apivorus*. Singles on 5th, 27th and 29th May, 1st-2nd and 4th June; four individuals.



HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*. A young bird from 18th September to 6th October, mostly hunting over crops at south end of isle. One evening it flew into one of our mist-nets but escaped.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginous*. Females on 25th May at Malcolm's Head and 16th June over Restensgeo.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Singles on 4th-5th, 22nd and 30th May and 17th September; four individuals.

HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*. One on Burrashield on 6th May.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. Seen throughout the year; up to 3 a day seen in February, March and April. Two pairs again resident; an eyrie containing at least one chick was found on the face of Vaasetter overlooking South Mila Hesslands on 31st May. The nest was half way down the cliff among rather loose grass ledges so we did not attempt to climb down to it. An immature bird was seen flying in July. The other pair frequented the west cliffs, mainly behind Ward Hill, but they were not attached to any one place and there was no evidence of breeding. Up to 2 birds a day seen through rest of year but fewer sightings in last two months.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. One bird wintered to 5th March; further singles on 26th March, 9th-14th April (male), 15th (female) and 21st-23rd April, 6th, 24th and 27th May. Autumn passage from 22nd August with peaks of 4 on 11th September and 5 on 27th, 4 on 19th October, 4 on 5th, 10th and 20th November; a male throughout December.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. One bird wintered to 25th March; spring passage from 19th April to 5th June; 1-2 seen most days but 4 on 22nd April and 8 on 6th May. Summer singles on 5th-6th July. Autumn passage from 30th July to 19th October; 1-3 seen on most days but 4 on 17th-20th Septem-

ber; late singles on 8th, 11th and 17th November and 20th December.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*. One found dead on 24th May (under wires); one 19th and one in song 30th June; one 6th July and one found dead 28th July (cat).

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. Singles on 21st, 23rd and 28th March, 13th May, 13th, 19th and 22nd September; 1-2 seen on 11 days between 10th October and 11th November; one on 23rd December.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*. Spring arrivals from 1st May, with singles on 6 days in month and 2 on 7th and 3 on 11th. One called from the ryegrass at the Haa from 6th to 16th June but there was no proof of breeding, although singles were seen on 5th and 28th July, and a late bird called on 30th July. An autumn migrant on 22nd September.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*. 1-2 seen on 13 days between 17th April and 11th May but 3 on 2nd May. Small passage from 10th October to 7th November, mainly singles but 2 on 5 days and 3 on 28th October.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. Up to 6 seen in January; numbers increased to 12 on 11th February; main arrival of residents in early March with 15 on 3rd, 30 on 5th, 40 on 10th, 50 on 11th and whole population by 13th. Normal numbers bred but chicks seemed rather scarce. Emigration noted from 29th July, most left in early August; numbers low by end of month; down to 5 by 16th September (but 9 on 24th); similar numbers in October, 7 on 6th and 6 on 19th but only 1-2 after 20th; one injured bird stayed through November.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. Three on 21st, 5 on 24th-25th and one 28th January; singles on 1st and 4th, 15 on 11th February. Spring arrivals from 22nd February (2), then 7 on 25th and 35 on 5th March; peaks of 50 on 17th-18th and 60 on 22nd March; smaller numbers in April except 55 on 7th and 38 on 19th; small numbers (up to 13) in May but 23 on 28th. About 4 birds frequented the breeding grounds but there was no proof of breeding and no chicks were reared. Return passage started on 9th June with 12, then 14 on 22nd, 25 on 24th and 24 on 25th; stragglers on 7 days until start of main passage which began with 3 on 31st July and ended with 4 on 5th November; peak days were 32 on 13th and 25 on 14th August, 12 on 8th and 27th September, 30 on 6th, 90 on 19th, 50+ on 20th, 50 on 22nd and 30 on 23rd October; 1-3 on 5 days between 6th and 30th December.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. One of the local birds successfully overwintered at North Haven, joined by another

on 16th March and a third on 22nd March. Small party present through spring, maximum 4 in April but 12 on 14th and 8 on 17th May. Usual numbers (about three pairs) nested; brood of three found on Bunes 6th June. Return passage from 23rd July (14) to 1st October; peaks of 20 on 8th, 25 on 15th, 70 on 16th, 40 on 18th, 80 on 19th, 50 on 20th and 20 on 23rd August; 24 on 9th, 40 on 10th, 30 on 11th and 25 on 21st September. Two birds resident until 5th November while one stayed throughout December.

LITTLE RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius dubius*. One seen by John Ginnever and David Brooks at Muckle Urie Geo on 20th July (2nd record for Fair Isle).

GREY PLOVER *Charadrius squatarola*. Singles seen on 28th-30th July, 8th-9th and 25th August, and 17th September.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Charadrius apricarius*. Singles on 5 days in January and 4 days in February; spring passage from 9th to 28th March (maxima 15 on 16th and 20 on 17th) and 6th April to 7th June, scattered records and numbers small except 18 on 21st and 17 on 22nd April, 11 on 4th and 18 on 9th May. Return passage from 12th July to 24th October, mainly August and September; peaks of 50 on 8th, 47 on 11th and 36 on 18th August, 90 on 10th, 100 on 12th, 70-80 until 16th, 50 on 21st and 46 on 26th September; few in October except 22 on 1st, 75 on 13th and 35 on 19th. One 18th-23rd November.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Wintering flock maxima of 40 in January, 8 in February and 30 in March; passage until 22nd May, maxima 13 in April and 12 in May. One on 15th June and 1st July. Autumn passage from 18th July; monthly maxima being 12 in July, 40 in August, 44 in September, 40 in October, 55 in November and 26 in December.

SNIFE *Capella gallinago*. Winter maxima of 3 in January, 4 in February, 3 in March and 5 in April; six seen on 3rd May; 3-4 pairs bred. Autumn passage from early August, with peaks of 8 on 15th and 13 on 18th August, 16 on 17th September, 30 on 10th and 22nd October, up to 8 in November and 6 in December.

GREAT SNIFE *Capella media*. One seen very well on 23rd September, found near South Grind; we nearly caught it with a mist-net several times during the day in Gilsetter/Sukka Mire area; last seen in afternoon west of Barkland.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One on 4th January and one on 10th May. Small autumn passage between 15th September and 20th October, peaks of 3 on 5th and 6th and 8 on 8th October; late singles on 30th October and 13th November.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. 1-2 in January, one on 5 days in February, 1-2 on 9 days between 15th and 26th March; 7 on 7th, 8 on 8th, 25 on 25th and 6 on 26th April also 5 singles in month; singles on 5 days in May and 2 on 4th. Singles on 24th and 30th July, and 1st August. Autumn passage from 13th October (3) to 11th November; rather scarce; peaks of 15 on 23rd October, 50 on 3rd, 20 on 5th and 6th November; stragglers in late November and up to 3 in December.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. A party wintered, up to 12 in January, 14 in February and 18 in March; numbers less from mid-March; passage in April and May, with 15 on 13th and 27 on 19th April and 10 on 5th May. One or two 'singing' on moorland but none bred on the island although some present all summer. Return passage from 22nd June (6); peak numbers then 20 on 25th-26th June, 16 on 2nd, 40 on 14th, 50 on 24th and 25 on 26th July; 60 on 13th and 25 on 20th August, 16 on 3rd and 11 on 9th September; small numbers in last 3 months; maxima 5 in October, 2 in November and 4 in December.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Spring passage from 18th April, singles on 4 days in month; mainly from 10th May, maximum 8 on 15th; smaller numbers in June, maximum 6 on 19th. 1-2 seen on 14 days in July but 3 on 24th indicated start of return passage; main movements 2nd-20th August with 7 on 2nd-3rd, 9 on 5th and 5 on 20th; stragglers on 6 days in September, last on 26th.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. One on 7th to 10th August.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. Singles on 18th-21st March, 30th July and 13th September.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. One 23rd and 26th April, 4 on 4th and 5th May, 6 on 6th, 1-2 until 15th May; one on 4th June. Return passage of one on 28th and 5 on 31st July, 3 on 1st, 4 on 2nd and 3 on 13th August while singles on 11 days in month; one on 14th September.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. Singles on 27th and 29th April, 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th May, 2 on 24th-25th, 3 on 26th and 28th, one on 31st May. One on 16th and 17th August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*. Spring passage from 3rd to 31st May, peaks of 5 on 3rd, 10 on 4th, 25 on 5th (record day's total at Fair Isle), 10 on 6th, 12 on 8th-10th; singles on 5th, 8th, 9th and 16th June. Small autumn passage from 31st July to 20th August, peaks of 5 on 3rd, 9 on 17th and 5 on 18th; singles on 27th August and 16th September.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. Winter monthly maxima of 20 in January, 8 in February and 6 in March; small numbers in

April (up to 7) and May, 8 on 1st, 9th and 10th. Singles on 5 days in early June, but 4 on 26th and 5 on 28th were fore-runners of return passage. Autumn passage peaks of 6 on 7th, 12 on 24th, 50 on 29th and 25 on 30th July; 25 on 5th, 55 on 8th, 40 on 10th and 15th, 80+ on 18th, 60 on 20th and 50 on 29th August; 25 on 2nd, 28 on 6th and 26 on 11th September; up to 14 in October, 12 in November and 6 in December.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. Singles on 10 days between 30th April and 30th May but 2 on 11th May. In autumn, singles on 1st, 2nd, 6th, 8th and 29th August, 2 on 16th August; singles on 18th-19th, 26th and 28th September but 2 on 23rd-24th September.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. Three on 14th, one 15th and 19th May. Very strong autumn passage, especially of adult birds in summer plumage, from 21st July (1), then 14 on 23rd, 15 on 27th, 90 on 29th, 20 on 30th and 30 on 31st July; up to 20 1st-7th August, then 48 on 8th, 100 on 9th (record day's total), 80 on 10th, 70 on 11th and 25 on 12th; numbers lower to end of month but 28 on 18th and 23 on 29th; smaller numbers throughout September, maxima 11 on 3rd and 7 on 10th; finally, one 1st-3rd October.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*. Winter monthly maxima 16 in January, 14 in February and 15 in March. In April, 2 on 9th, one 12th and 13th; passage between 4th and 18th May, with 12 on 4th, 18 on 13th and 10 on 18th. Return passage from 18th July (6), numbers increasing to 10 on 21st and 26 on 5th August but scarcer than usual and monthly peaks only 25 on 11th August, 22 on 18th and 34 on 20th September, 20 on 24th and 29th October, 10 in November and few in December except 27 on 16th.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. One 29th-31st August; small numbers on 18 days in September, maxima 3 on 18th and 24th and 4 on 25th-26th; one on 11th-15th October.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*. Two on 18th and 7 on 23rd March; spring passage from 26th April to 31st May with peaks of 9 on 15th, 10 on 16th and 7 on 31st May; one on 9th June. Return passage from 27th June to 27th September, mainly from 15th July to end of August; peaks of 8 on 26th and 10 on 29th July, 45 on 19th and 40 on 20th August, up to 6 in September; 1-2 between 6th and 24th October but 4 on 13th, 6 on 23rd and 7 on 24th October; one on 2nd and 3rd November; one on 21st and 3 on 22nd December.

SANDERLING *Crocethia alba*. Autumn passage between 17th July and 24th September, mainly 30th July to 22nd August and 11th to 18th September; peaks of 7 on 30th July, 9 on

8th and 13th, 20 on 17th, 11 on 18th and 10 on 19th August, 5 on 11th and 4 on 13th September.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. A fine male in black breeding plumage at Skadan from 5th to 8th May. One 22nd July; 2 on 5th, singles on 6th, 8th, 10th, 8 on 12th, 4 on 13th, 3 on 14th, singles on 16th, 19th and 29th August; in September, one on 17th, 3 on 18th-19th, one 20th-21st and 27th September.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*. First bird arrived on 1st April, the next on 5th; seen on ground at Eas Brecks on 7th; build-up to 3 on 11th, 6 on 12th, 10 on 15th and 20 on 16th April. About eight pairs nested with about average breeding success. Emigration noted from 9th August; noticeable passage SE to NW over island on 15th September; numbers down to 4 by 22nd, influx to 20 on 25th and 26th, dropped to 6 by 30th September; 5-8 most days to 12th October, except 15 on 7th; stragglers to 31st October.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. One seen on 10th April; 4 arrived and called over Eas Brecks on 19th; 4 seen on 22nd; numbers increased from 8 on 26th to 25+ on 28th; reached full strength by first days of May. Population still probably increasing and about 180 pairs; good breeding success. Decrease noted from 16th August; numbers in September dropped from 20+ on 5th, 5 on 11th and 2 on 13th; singles on 15th, 17th and 19th September. Two on crossing on 2nd October.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*. One flying south over Setter on 17th September.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*. An adult in full breeding plumage on 5th June; first of all it was seen being attacked by two Arctic Skuas over the Tarryfield, then it flew to the airstrip where it was seen very well on the ground at about 40 yards range. After 15 minutes an Arctic Skua attacked it and the bird flew up and soared away high over Ward Hill.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. No very large concentrations ashore in early part of year; breeding birds on territory and displaying from 26th March; usual numbers bred. No large flocks ashore in summer but very large flocks came ashore in stormy weather in late autumn. There were 5000 on 15th November, 4000 on 16th and 1000 on 17th; then 5000 on 24th and 2000 on 25th; numbers lower in December but 2000 on 8th, 1000 on 9th and 10th, and 500 on 18th and 20th.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. 15 on 13th April were first of year; passage of 10 to north on 18th; island numbers up to 24 on 20th and 35 on 27th. A Scandinavian

bird from 30th April to 5th May. Breeding numbers rather low and below average success. Numbers low by 20th August, down to 7 by 22nd but 9 on 28th; few in 1st week of September; last singles on 9th, 15th and 20th September.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*. Rather scarce in early part of year with flock maximum of 100 on 20th January; increases noted on 15th, 16th and 18th March. Usual breeding strength and success. No large summer flocks but very large concentrations sheltering on island during storms at end of year. 5000 on 15th November, 4000 on 16th, 1000 on 17th, 8000 on 24th (largest flock recorded on island; even the islanders remarked on the huge flocks of gulls present that day, especially a very large flock on Svey) and 200 on 25th; December flocks of 4000 on 8th, 2000 on 9th and 10th, 1000 on 18th, 1500+ on 20th and 200+ on 21st and 22nd. All these birds were sheltering on the island during storms and came from the offshore fishing fleets; most of them were adults of a northern origin, being noticeably bigger than our local birds, in fact some being of Great Black-backed Gull size, as well as having dark grey mantles and very dusky heads.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. More than usual in January, with 20 on 11th and 15 on 21st; fewer in February, maximum 6 on 24th, and March. Spring passage from 15th March (20), peak of 30 on 19th; scarce in first 2 weeks of April, then 20 flying north on 18th, 500 on isle on 19th, 100 on 20th-21st, 300 on 22nd, 400+ on 23rd, 300+ on 24th and 200 on 25th; numbers between 10 and 50 until 6th May when 150, then 100 to 9th, up to 20 until end of month; stragglers through June except 24 on 24th and 30 on 28th. Small numbers in July but passage at end of month when 700 on 26th, 300 on 27th, 80 on 28th and 2000 on 31st; August peaks of 450 on 1st, 250 on 2nd, 3rd and 8th, 300 on 11th, 4000 on 12th (record day's total), 1000 on 13th and 200 on 14th. Numbers much lower in September with maximum of 180 on 12th; smaller numbers in October; peaks of 35 on 15th, 400 on 23rd and 24th. Up to 6 in early November and stragglers in December.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. 1-2 on 7 days in January; 3 on 8th and one on 13th February; singles 8th-10th March, 19th and 26th April, 22nd May, 4th June and 22nd July. In autumn, adults on 8th, 22nd and 27th October and a juvenile on 29th October were forerunners of an unprecedented influx of this species in November. About 10,000 Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls arrived on the island during a storm on 15th November and there were at least 50 Glaucous Gulls among them; next day there were at least 75+ although again it was difficult to pick them out in the dense flocks of other gulls and the weather did not help. There were more

adults than immatures. Numbers dropped to 20 on 17th and 18th, 2 on 19th and 6 on 20th as the weather improved and all the gulls returned to the offshore fishing fleets. On 24th, 300+ arrived on the island in a storm along with about 5000 Great Black-backed and 8000 Herring Gulls; two-thirds of them were adults and again it was difficult to pick them out, but 300 was certainly the minimum number present that day and the real total was higher. Next day the weather had eased but 100+ were recorded; there were only 10 on 26th, 2 on 27th-28th, 10 on 29th and 4 on 30th. December numbers were one on 2nd, 6 on 3rd, 2 on 4th, one on 6th, 10 on 7th, 50+ on 8th, 25 on 9th, 20 on 10th and 6 on 30th. These are the largest numbers ever recorded at Fair Isle (previous best being 100+ in December 1951) and the preponderance of adults is unusual.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. Single adults on 16th and 24th November.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. One on 11th and 15th January. Spring passage from 14th to 27th March (maximum 30 on 19th-20th) and from 5th April with peaks of 10 on 18th and 20 on 25th April, 25 on 4th, and 40 on 5th and 6th May. Fluctuating numbers through summer with maximum of 12 on 28th June. Return passage in July with first juvenile migrant on 14th; peaks of 25 on 21st July, 30 on 14th August, 15 on 11th September; few in October, maxima 7 on 1st and 6 on 22nd; 1-2 between 1st and 11th November and 1-3 on most days in December.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. A summer plumage bird flew north over Field on 4th April and one over Setter on 3rd December.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*. 30 on crossing on 15th January; 3 seen off isle on 26th and 25+ on 27th February; first ashore on 3rd March and regularly from 18th. Nest building from 8th May; continued increase in population noted; normal breeding success. Decrease noted from 22nd July and last seen ashore on 17th August except for 45 ashore on skerries on 3rd September; small numbers offshore in September; passage noted in first week of October; scarce in rest of month and November, although some offshore between 6th and 17th November.

COMMON and ARCTIC TERNS *Sterna hirundo* and *macrura*. Spring passage from 17th May (2 Arctics) through June; Arctics identified on 15 occasions and Common on one; Arctic Terns present throughout July with 10 on 20th, 14 on 26th and 20 on 29th; one Common Tern on 27th and 2 on 30th and 31st. Both species identified in August with Commons on 13 occasions and Arctics on 88; stragglers in Sep-

tember, maximum 6 on 20th and 25th, of those identified 4 were Commons and one Arctic; a late Common/Arctic Tern on 25th October.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*. One dead on 26th January; first ashore on 3rd March, regularly from 21st March and continuously from 2nd April. Numbers as usual and normal breeding season. Decrease noted from 12th July, only a few left by 24th and last ashore on 31st July; two offshore on 1st August and one on crossing on 26th August. Singles offshore on 4th, 5th and 31st October.

LITTLE AUK *Plautus alle*. 30 on crossing of 15th January and 50 on crossing of 22nd January; oiled bird dead on 2nd March. 20 on crossing of 4th November and large numbers (500) on 11th and 100 on 20th; one caught ashore at Houll on 25th, ringed and released on 26th; 3 off North Light on 3rd December and 100 just off Burian on 6th December; two oiled on 29th December. The numbers seen from the Good Shepherd in November and December on the crossing were much higher than usual and there were many more at the Fair Isle end of the journey than is usually the case.



GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*. One offshore on 4th and 4 oiled on 6th January; 50 on crossing of 15th and many ashore from 22nd to 28th January, also ashore on 5th, 26th and 27th February; some oiled during month but a bad oiling in first days of March when 25 found dead or dying on 1st and another 25 on 2nd; the birds were all in winter plumage and in an emaciated condition; it was considered that they did not belong to the local population which was ashore in good numbers from 3rd March and continuously ashore from 20th. Breeding population still increasing with colonies increasing and small new ones being established; eggs seen from 8th May; breeding success normal; very large concentrations of non-breeders on skerries in summer. Decrease from 12th July and only a few left by 28th; last ashore on 4th August; stragglers in late August and September. Many on crossing of 21st October and breeders returned to ledges on 8th, 12th and 26th November (many already in summer plumage); also ashore on 3rd, 24th-28th and 30th December.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cepphus grylle*. Numbers as usual; display from 26th March; rather low breeding success.

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*. One (dead) on 11th and 2 on crossing of 14th February; singles found dead (oiled) on 3rd and 4th March. 6+ on crossing of 22nd March; seen on water offshore on 2nd April and first ashore on 4th-7th April; larger numbers from 10th-11th, continuously from 14th and full numbers from 15th April. Numbers and breeding success normal. Decrease noted from 16th July; very few left on cliffs by 17th August, although one still bringing in fish for young on 26th August and last two on 28th; some offshore on 8th-9th September and one on crossing of 21st October.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*. Wintering flock up to 17 in January, 7 in February and 8 in March; spring and summer numbers down on recent years, reaching peaks of 20 on 22nd April (migrants?), 14 in May, 12 in June and 11 in July. No nests found and autumn flock smaller than usual reaching maxima of 11 in August, 34 on 30th September, 30 in October and 8 in December.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*. One or two between 9th January and 4th February; 1-3 between 14th and 16th March; spring passage from 9th April to 28th June; peaks of 16 on 25th and 7 on 26th April; up to 8 in early May and 5 later in month; stragglers (up to 3) through June; singles on 18th, 24th and 31st July and 4th August. Very scarce at end of year and one on 10th December was the only bird recorded.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. Spring passage from 4th May to 28th June; mainly 1-2, but 3 on 28th, 4 on 30th and 3 on 31st May; 8 on 8th, 6 on 9th and 3 on 7th and 10th-13th June. Autumn passage between 5th and 24th August; 2 on 17th and 18th, and singles on 8 days.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Spring passage from 12th May, singles on 3 days, then 2 on 22nd and 5 on 26th May, further peaks of 6 on 7th-8th and 8 on 14th June. A small party again summered on the isle but did not breed; the party peaked at 3 on 1st July and 4 on 24th July and 6th August. Last regularly seen on 7th August but a straggler on 19th August. No autumn records.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. Spring passage from 3rd May to 24th June, mainly 6th to 17th and 26th-30th May; when 5 on 7th, 6 on 8th and 4 on 28th May. Autumn records: one on 1st, 2 on 13th and one 16th August.

SNOWY OWL *Nyctea scandiaca*. A male over Burrashield and Setter on 20th May and a female on Bunes on 1st June.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. Singles on 4th January, 4th-5th,

8th-10th, 23rd and 24th-25th April, and 11th May. One on 15th August, probably same bird found dead on 17th; one 23rd September, 4 on 29th November and singles on 6th-7th, 26th, 29th and 30th December.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. One on 9th May, one on crossing of 13th May and one on 3rd June. Autumn passage between 2nd October and 30th December, when one on 2nd, 2 on 19th, one 21st-22nd, 5 on 23rd, singles on 24th, 29th and ber.

NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus europaeus*. A male disturbed from the beach at Mavers Geo on 12th June, flew back and forth along the cliff before it disappeared round the Landberg.

SWIFT *Apus apus*. One on 9th and 2 on 10th May; passage between 23rd May and 30th June; maxima of 8 on 26th and 9 on 30th May, 7 on 1st, 11 on 8th and 7 on 27th June. Summer movements throughout July but mainly after 14th, when 20; other peaks of 40 on 23rd and 13 on 31st; fewer in August with 1-3 on 6 days between 5th and 20th August; 3 on 10th and one 14th September.

BEE-EATER *Merops apiaster*. Three (a male and 2 females) stayed on island from 7th to 9th July. There is one previous record for island, on 13th June 1966.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. A massive arrival of 45 during the afternoon of 3rd May; since 1948 the previous highest day's total was 12 on 3rd September 1966. Numbers down to 25 on 4th, 15 on 5th and 10 on 6th; these decreases can be attributed to the birds dying rather than leaving the island and many were found dead; it is likely that the great majority of the 45 migrants of 3rd died on the isle. Stragglers to 9th May, then one on 21st, one on 26th-28th, 2 on 30th and one 31st May, and one on 6th June. Autumn singles on 4th, 14th-15th and 17th-18th September but 2 on 19th September.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*. 2 females on 28th May and 3 on 31st May reflect the strong autumn invasion of northern birds in 1968.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella cinerea*. Singles at Taing on 3rd June and Setter on 30th September.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*. The ringed bird from 11th November 1968 present at Setter until 5th March was heard singing on 23rd January, 16th and 26th February, 3rd, 4th and 5th March. Other singles on 20th March, 7th-13th April, 7th and 28th October.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. Winter flock up to 11 in January and 22 in February; first song on 23rd January. Arrivals of migrants from 26th February with spring peaks of 75 on 2nd, 40 on 4th, 50 on 20th, 80 on 21st, 500 on 22nd, 400 on 23rd,

300 on 24th, 200 on 25th-26th and 250 on 27th March; further increases on 1st and 5th April, and 3rd May. Normal breeding strength and success. Autumn movements from 14th September, through October, numbers low in November especially after third week; up to 12 in December.

SHORELARK *Eromophila alpestris*. One at Rippack on 28th May.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. Spring passage from 24th April to 27th June, mainly from 21st May with peaks of 25 on 22nd, 50 on 24th, 75 on 25th-26th, 50 on 28th-29th and 80 on 30th May; singles on 6 days in July and 3 on 20th, 1 on 4th, 2 on 5th, 2 on 27th and 29th and 6 on 28th August; passage from 18th to 29th September when maxima of 10 on 18th and 16 on 19th.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. Spring passage from 3rd May (1) to 2nd July (22), with peaks of 35 on 5th and 12th, 40 on 15th, 50 on 26th-27th, and 60 on 29th May, 60 on 1st, 40 on 2nd and 20 on 14th and 20th June. Stragglers (1-5) on 9 days in July and 4 days in August. One on 19th-20th September and one on 14th October.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. One on 13th May; passage from 24th May to 25th June; scattered records but 8 on 26th, 5 on 27th, 28 on 28th (record day's total) and 8 on 29th May, 6 on 1st and 5 on 13th June. Two on 28th August and singles on 29th and 30th August, 8th-9th, 19th and 21st September.

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*. A very tired female in the cliffs at Hykuni Geo on 24th May.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*. Usual wintering numbers, no noticeable spring influxes; about four pairs nested but no young reared.

HOODED CROW *Corvus coronae cornix*. Population as normal. A hybrid resident from 25th May to 26th September and another on 3rd August.

CARRION CROW *Corvus c. coronae*. One resident, probably nested; migrants 3 on 26th April and 6 on 2nd June.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*. One over-wintered; joined by another 2nd-22nd March; a few migrants from 6th April to 4th May, peaks of 5 on 25th and 6 on 28th April; one on 26th May. In autumn, one on 11th and 2 on 19th October; one from 6th November to 31st December joined by another 2nd-7th December.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. Singles on 30th March and 27th May. An autumn flock of 5 on 23rd October increased to 12 on 24th and 14 on 26th, dropped from 13 to 9 in early November and these stayed to end of year, although losing one bird in second week of December.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Numbers lower than in most

recent years; probably caused by severe winter.

BLACK-BELLIED DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*. One of the autumn 1968 birds stayed on isle until 10th February.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*. Small numbers between 26th February and 27th March and fewer between 18th April and 17th May; peaks of 4 on 16th and 22nd and 3 on 26th March, 23rd April and 6th May. Autumn singles on 19th and 20th October, 18th and 24th December.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*. Small numbers in January (maxima 31 on 25th and 21 on 27th); fewer in February, March and first half of April. Spring passage from 22nd April (50) to 22nd May, peaks of 200 on 24th, 1200 on 25th, 300 on 26th-27th and 400 on 29th April; high numbers (up to 300) until 9th May when 400, then decrease to 250 on 10th and 160 on 15th; fewer thereafter and stragglers to 9th June. First arrivals from 2nd August, maximum 4 on 19th; slightly higher numbers in September (maximum 11); near enough absent in first half of October; peaks later in month of 150 on 20th, 500 on 22nd, 600 on 23rd, 100-300 until 31st; numbers in November decreased from 200 in first week to 100 on 8th and 15-35 per day in rest of month. Few in first half of December; rather late passage peaks of 50 on 21st, 75 on 22nd, 150 on 29th and 200+ on 30th-31st December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*. Spring passage from 24th February to 30th May, mainly 15th-30th March (maximum 25 on 16th) and 22nd April to 13th May when peaks of 100+ on 22nd-23rd, 250+ on 24th April and 150 on 3rd and 4th May. Singles on 11 days in June and 3 days July but 2 on 24th July. Two on 19th-20th and one 21st August. Autumn passage from 14th September to 4th December, mainly 18th-27th September (maximum 20 on 19th and 21st) and 13th October to 3rd November (maxima of 150 on 13th, 200 on 19th, 500 on 23rd, 200 on 24th and 100 on 25th October).

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*. One on 4 days 15th-26th January; small spring passage between 16th March and 6th May, mainly 22nd-25th April when 30 on 22nd, 40 on 23rd, 75+ on 24th and 50 on 25th; singles on 21st, 27th and 30th May and 5th June. 3 on 19th and one 20th and 21st September; passage from 2nd October, mainly from 6th. In contrast to the scarcity of Fieldfares, this species was much more abundant than in recent years; the daily totals were 50 on 10th, 600 on 11th, 6000 on 12th, 6000 (many new) on 13th, 200 on 14th, 1000 on 15th, 500 on 16th-18th, 6000 on 19th, 1000+ on 20th, 500 on 21st, 3000 on 22nd, 9000+ on 23rd, 3000 on 24th, 1000 on 25th, 500 on 26th-29th, 400 on 30th and 300 on 31st October; much lower numbers in November, between



PLATE 7 (above). The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Wemyss and March, KT, LL.D., JP. (President of the National Trust for Scotland) speaks at the opening ceremony.

PLATE 8 (below). George Waterston cuts the 21st birthday cake, in the shape of the new buildings, with the warden Roy Dennis and his wife Marina, holding the inscribed tankards presented to them to mark the opening of the new observatory. *Photographs by Dennis Coult.*

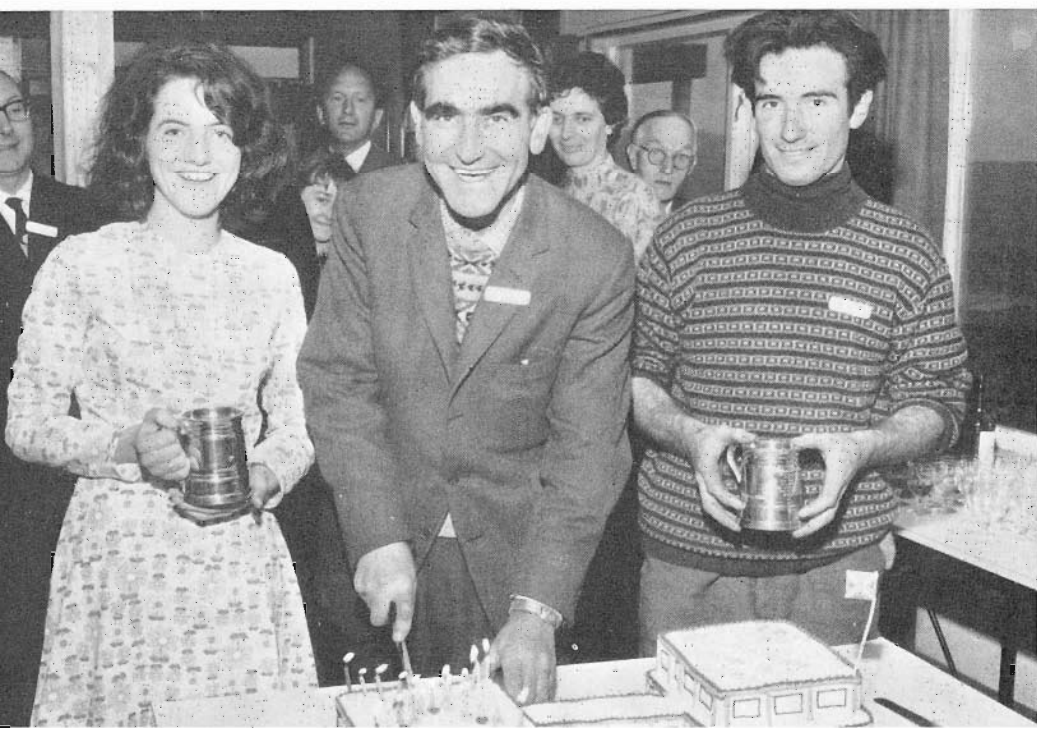




PLATE 9 (above). Group at opening of old observatory on 28th August 1948.

PLATE 10 (below). Group at opening of new observatory on 18th October 1969.

Photographs by Ian Pitman and Dennis Coultts.



200 in first week and 10-30 at end of month; stragglers (up to 11) in December.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*. Spring passage from 21st April to 4th June, mainly 24th April to 12th May, peak of 35 on 24th April; large arrival of 300 on 3rd May (record day's total), numbers dropping to 250 on 4th, 150 on 5th-6th and 75 on 7th and 8th. One on 26th June. Scarce in autumn with 3 on 18th and one on 21st September; small numbers between 5th and 26th October, maxima 15 on 19th, 30 on 23rd and 4 on 24th; one on 3rd November.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. Up to 30 in January, 12 in February, and 25 in March; scarce on spring passage, peaks of only 40 on 7th and 25th April and 35 on 3rd May; small numbers up to 4 in June; one or two birds summered but did not breed. Autumn passage from 10th October, mainly from 13th October to 9th November with peaks of 300 on 13th, 300+ on 15th, 300 on 18th, 1000 on 19th-21st, 500 on 22nd, 3000 on 23rd, 2000 on 24th, 1000 on 25th and 500 on 26th-27th October. Small numbers in early December but late passage of 100+ on 20th-21st, 150+ on 22nd and 100+ on 31st December.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. First 6 on 9th April, 20 on 11th, numbers lower 12th-17th, then increased from 15 on 18th to 25 on 19th, 30 on 20th, 50+ on 21st, 150+ on 22nd and 200+ on 26th April; further increases to end of month and 2nd-3rd May; Greenland migrants on 19th-21st May. Usual breeding numbers; Autumn movements noted from 16th August; numbers lower through September; migrants of north-west origin on 6th, 9th, 11th, 25th and 26th. Numbers in October decreased from 15 on 1st-7th to 3 on 11th; stragglers (1-2) until 21st; final 2 on 25th October.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*. Single males on 24th and 28th March, 2nd and 4th-5th April. One on 18th October.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. One on 29th April; spring passage from 2nd May to 9th June, mainly to 30th May, with peaks of 6 on 2nd, 130 on 3rd, 90 on 4th, 75 on 5th-6th, 50+ on 7th-8th and 35 on 9th; numbers between 2-15 until 30th; stragglers in June. Autumn passage between 6th August and 20th October, mainly small numbers but peaks of 20 on 13th and 18th August, 12 on 16th, 30 on 19th and 12 on 21st September, 4 on 5th October.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. Spring passage from 3rd May to 23rd June, mainly from 3rd to 31st May with peaks of 75 on 3rd, 50 on 4th, 40 on 5th-7th; numbers lower until 12 on 26th, 15 on 28th and 40 on 29th; stragglers (up to 5) in June. One on 14th August. Small autumn passage 12th to

30th September; maxima 13 on 17th, 20 on 18th-19th and 15 on 21st; stragglers up to 3 until 24th October.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Singles on 12 days between 10th April and 12th June but 2 on 5th and 30th May, and 8th June. Singles on 13th and 17th-23rd August, 8th, 11th, 16th-17th and 18th September, 2 on 14th September. Finally singles on 3rd October and 3rd December.

BLUETHROAT *Cyanosylvia svecica*. One on 3rd May, 2 on 7th, one to 10th, one 13th, male in song 16th-19th, a pair on 25th, 2 (one new) on 26th and 27th, singles on 28th and 31st May, 1st and 9th June. In autumn, 3 on 18th September, 3 (2 new) on 19th, one on 20th, 3 on 21st-22nd, 4 on 23rd, 2 on 24th, 4 on 25th, singles on 27th and 29th September, and 18th October.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*. One on 16th March; a few 5th-20th April, then 5 on 21st, 150 on 22nd, 150+ on 23rd-25th, 150 on 26th, 100 on 27th, 70 on 29th; decreased to 25 by 2nd May, 75 on 3rd-4th May, numbers high to 12th May; smaller numbers to end of month with stragglers to 13th June. One on 27th June. Autumn passage from 17th September to 11th December; rather scattered records with peaks of 11 on 18th and 25 on 19th September, and 10 on 23rd October.

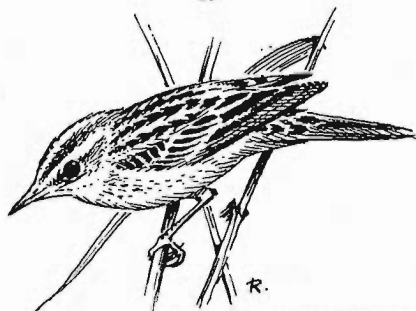
RIVER WARBLER *Locustella fluviatilis*. One trapped in plantation trap on 16th September; 2nd Fair Isle and British record.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*. Spring passage from 24th April to 30th May; singles on 13 days, also 2 on 2nd, 3rd and 9th May, and 4 on 4th May. Autumn singles on 15th and 22nd August.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. Singles on 26th, 27th and 28th May, 26th and 27th June. A good autumn migration, starting with 5 on 15th August, 5 on 16th, 3 on 17th, 6 on 18th, 3 on 19th, and 4 on 20th August; singles on 21st, 25th, 29th and 30th August, 3rd, 5th, 16th and 18th September, 2 on 20th September and one of these present to 30th of month.

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*. Three arrived on 26th May, one on 28th, one from 3rd to 9th June, joined by another on 9th, a new bird on 11th, 2 on 12th and another new bird on 13th. At least 9 individuals is the most in any year at Fair Isle.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Scattered records from 4th May (2) to 25th June (2), mainly end of May when 4 on 24th, and 28th, and 10 on 30th May. Autumn singles on 8 days between 1st and 20th August, 2 on 13th August; singles on 1st September and 8th-9th October.



AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*. One trapped at Pund on 14th August; singles trapped at Schoolton and Stoneybreck on 15th, two (one new bird trapped in Gully) on 16th; three (one unringed bird near Setter) on 17th; a total of 5 birds is quite outstanding for Fair Isle.

MELODIOUS WARBLER *Hippolais polyglotta*. One trapped on 14th June, retrapped (in song) on 20th June. Third record for Fair Isle.

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*. Different singles on 28th and 30th May, and 5th June. One on 3rd August, 2 on 5th, one on 6th, one on 12th, 3 on 13th, 2 on 14th, 5 on 15th, 7 on 16th, one on 17th, 5 on 18th, 4 on 19th, 2 on 20th and one on 31st August.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. Spring passage from 3rd May to 17th June, mainly from 24th May to 8th June with peaks of 7 on 26th May, 10 on 1st and 8 on 2nd June. A male on 4th and a female on 9th July. Autumn passage in three periods: 12th-28th September (peaks of 16 on 17th and 20 on 18th); 6th-31st October (peaks of 8 on 6th and 18th, 12 on 19th and 23rd) and 6th-14th November (maximum 6 on 11th).

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. Very strong passage between 1st August and 12th October; 1-3 on 30 days in the period as well as 6 on 9th September, 12 on 10th, 9 on 11th-12th, 4 on 13th, 14 on 14th (record day's total), 9 on 15th and 4 on 16th.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. Small spring passage from 23rd May to 24th June; maxima of 10 on 28th May and 6 on 1st-2nd June. Autumn passage from 3rd August to 22nd October, mainly 10th August to 20th September with peaks of 18 on 13th and 15 on 15th-19th August, 40 on 14th, 20 on 15th, 30 on 16th and 25 on 19th September. A leucistic bird trapped at Setter on 18th-19th August.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. Spring passage from 3rd May to 18th June, mainly late May and early June, with peaks of 15 on 26th and 20 on 28th May. Singles on 7th, 11th and 12th July. Autumn migration in two periods: 3rd-20th August

(maximum 5 on 15th) and 17th-27th September (maximum 3 on 18th-19th).

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. One on 13th May; spring passage from 22nd May to 6th June, maxima 4 on 24th and 6 on 25th; a straggler on 20th June. Autumn passage in two periods: 13th-19th September (maximum 3 on 16th) and 9th-24th September (maximum 4 on 18th); two late birds on 6th October.

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*. A female on the embankment at Wirvie, early morning on 13th June.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. 6 on 23rd April, 5 on 24th and one to 26th; one 2nd May was followed by a large fall of 400 on 3rd May (highest spring total); numbers dropped to 300 on 4th-5th, 250 on 6th, 200 on 7th-8th and down to 15 by 13th; small numbers through month until fall of 30 on 26th May, 35 on 28th, 40 on 29th, dropped to 25 on 30th and 3 on 31st May; stragglers on 6 days to 24th June. Autumn passage from 6th August to 11th October, mainly 13th August to 25th September with peaks of 120 on 13th (only 6 on 12th), 40 on 14th, 60 on 15th, 50 on 16th-17th, 70 on 18th and 40 on 19th; smaller numbers until fall of 80 on 14th, then 50 on 15th-16th; smaller numbers down to 15 by 25th; stragglers in October.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. Singles on 6th, 7th, 9th and 25th April, 4 on 26th April; scattered records 1st May-7th June; maxima 6 on 3rd May and 4 on 29th May. One re-trapped at Restensgeog on 2nd August had been ringed on the isle on 22nd May and the bird had summered in the cliffs. Sparse autumn passage between 10th August and 27th September; maxima of 8 on 13th and 3 on 15th August, 6 on 14th and 5 on 19th September; a straggler on 12th October.

GREENISH WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochiloides*. One trapped near Nurse's Cottage on 29th August; first since 1961.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Singles on 8th, 14th, 28th and 30th May, and 3rd June. Autumn passage from 13th to 31st August; 7 arrived on 13th, smaller numbers to 20th; singles on 4 days to 29th, 2 on 30th and 31st; one on 14th, 2 on 15th and one 19th September; finally one on 2nd October.

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*. One trapped in plantation on 21st September.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Two at north end on 5th October.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. Small passage between 4th and 30th April; peaks of 12 on 10th and 10 on 26th April; two stragglers on 6th and one on 15th May. In autumn, singles on 8th, 9th and 16th September; 14 on 17th, 4 on 18th, 4 on

20th, 7 on 21st, singles on 23rd and 25th September, and 6th-8th October, 9 on 10th and one to 21st October.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*. Spring passage from 5th May to 28th June, mainly 9th May (8) to 2nd June, with peaks of 12 on 14th and 20 on 28th May, and 10 on 1st June; stragglers in June except 4 on 9th. Scarce in autumn; singles on 13th-17th September, 2 on 18th, 4 on 19th, 2 on 20th, 3 on 21st and one on 27th September.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa hypoleuca*. Spring passage from 3rd to 26th May with peaks of 25 on 3rd and 6th May; one on 5th June. One on 2nd and 3rd August; a small influx 13th-18th August (maximum 4 on 13th) and sparse passage between 11th September and 20th October, stragglers except 6 on 16th-19th and 21st September.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa parva*. A female trapped in Vaadal on 29th May. Singles on 15th and 16th September, 2 on 17th and 18th and one on 20th September.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*. Singles on 4th January, 17th-26th March, 30th March-3rd April and 5th April, 5 on 6th and one 7th. Strong spring passage between 21st April and 28th May, with peaks of 30 on 23rd, 150 on 24th and 75+ on 25th, 40 on 26th and 27th, numbers lower until a secondary peak of 25 on 8th and 9th May; small numbers thereafter although 8 on 24th May. One on 25th July. Autumn passage from 17th September to 13th November, a steady but small trickle, maximum of 14 on 21st September; stragglers on 25th and 29th November and 1st December.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. One on 18th March, numbers from 29th with peaks of 20 on 30th March, 20+ on 6th, 60+ on 7th, 75+ on 14th and further increases on 21st-22nd April and 3rd May. Breeding numbers as usual. Autumn movements from 24th August but not very plentiful; few after 20th November and last on 5th December.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. An early migrant on 19th August and one from 15th to 25th October.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. First two on 2nd May and then an amazing avalanche during afternoon of 3rd May when 1500+ arrived; numbers dropped to 1000 on 4th, 250 on 5th, 400 on 6th, 200 on 7th-8th and 150 on 9th; down to 50 by 15th but increased to 100 on 16th, then 50 on 17th, 10-35 through rest of month; 10 on 1st June and stragglers to 12th; one on 28th June. Singles on 2nd, 3rd and 12th July, 12th, 16th, 24th and 25th August, and 3rd September; passage between 14th and 27th September with peaks of 12 on 18th, 25 on 19th, 20 on 20th and 8 on 24th.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*. One on 22nd September at Setter and Bull's Park.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*. Numbers as usual; song from 25th March. One seen at Furse on 13th June, with a local bird, had paler underparts and white outer tail feathers, while another at Erne's Brae had clear yellowish head and shoulders. Passage noted in autumn from 24th August.

WHITE WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba alba*. Spring passage from 6th April to 28th May, mainly 22nd April to 19th May, with peaks of 6 on 23rd April, 10 on 5th and 8 on 6th May. Single 'albas' on 19th June, 28th July and 6th-7th August. Autumn passage from 17th August to 30th September with peaks of 9 on 22nd, 11 on 27th and 30th August; 14 on 3rd and 8th, 25 on 10th and 12th September; stragglers through October to 20th.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba yarrelli*. Single males on 23rd and 24th March, 2 on 26th and one on 27th March; singles on 1st, 2nd, 6th, 11th, 23rd and 24th April; one on 9th June.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*. Singles on 27th April, 7th-10th May, 22nd-23rd June and 17th October.

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola*. One at Setter, Hesswalls and Double Dyke on 14th and 16th September; first at Fair Isle since 1964.

YELLOW WAGTAILS *Motacilla flava*. Blue-headed Wagtail *M. f. flava*: small passage from 7th May to 5th June, maximum 4 on 26th May. Autumn singles on 5th-11th August and on 8 days between 2nd and 21st September, probably all of this race. Grey-headed Wagtail *M. f. thunbergi*: 3 males on 3rd-5th May, 2 on 6th and singles on 9th, 21st, 22nd and 30th May. Yellow Wagtail *M. f. flavissima*. A male 3rd-6th May, 2 on 9th, 1 on 10th, 2 on 25th and 4 on 29th May; one on 16th June.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. One on 20th December.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*. Small numbers (1-2) on 14 days between 21st April and 6th May. Singles on 25th and 30th September and 14th-16th October.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus*. Another strong spring migration, between 24th May and 9th June, with peaks of 5 on 26th and 10 on 30th May, 7 on 1st and 2nd June; a late bird on 13th June. In autumn, a male on 13th-16th August, a juvenile 15th-18th and another juvenile 19th August; 1-2 on 9 days between 18th and 27th September.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Passage from 25th March through to 28th April and 2nd May; smaller numbers than usual bred; juveniles on wing from 13th June; a leucistic bird 3rd-6th August. Passage from 10th October to 2nd November; peaked at 1000+ on 23rd October.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*. An adult female from 15th to 30th June; first found at North Light, later at Setter.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. A female at North Haven on 23rd April.

GREENFINCH *Chloris chloris*. Singles on 12th, 15th, 16th, 27th and 28th April. One on 20th October, 3 on 22nd-25th and 2 on 26th-29th October; one on 24th November and 30th-31st December.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Small spring passage between 22nd April and 20th May, with peaks of 6 on 23rd and 7 on 24th April, and 8 on 12th May; one on 15th-18th June. 6 on 16th September; autumn passage from 6th (6) to 24th (2) October, peaks of 13 on 13th, 9 on 20th and 10 on 23rd.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*. 1-3 on 17 days between 25th April and 3rd July. One 3rd-8th August, 2 on 16th-17th August; autumn movements between 29th September and 28th October with peaks of 8 on 5th and 4 on 26th and 28th October; late singles on 14th and 25th November.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*. High winter numbers with maxima of 63 on 27th January and 42 on 26th February; numbers lower in March (maximum 25 on 5th), spring numbers rising to 40 on 21st April. Usual numbers bred. Autumn flock maxima of 140 on 26th September and 100+ on 18th October; numbers down to 22 in December.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*. One on 5th and 2 on 20th May; a Mealy Redpoll on 3rd June and a Lesser on 4th-7th June. Two Mealys on 25th September; small numbers between 4th and 25th October, with 3 on 5 days and 5 on 17th and 20th October; the majority were Greenland Redpolls although one Lesser on 18th-19th. Finally one on 20th and 2 on 25th November.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. One female on 23rd and 24th March; a male on 24th-29th April, a new male on 2nd May, 3 males on 3rd, 2 on 4th and one to 8th May.

SCARLET GROSBEEK *Carpodacus erythrinus*. One on 13th August (earliest autumn record for Fair Isle); 2 on 16th September, one on 17th, 2 on 19th and one 21st-26th September; one on 11th October.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*. One flying over on 19th July.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*. One on 6 days in January and 3 on 22nd; 1-2 between 22nd and 26th March; spring passage from 4th April to 22nd May, with peaks of 10 on 13th, 30 on 22nd, 50+ on 23rd, 75+ on 24th and 30 on 25th-26th April, and 20 on 3rd May; stragglers until 4th June. 2 from 25th to 31st July and one to 3rd August; autumn passage from

12th September to 18th November, mainly October and early November, with peaks of 40 on 13th-15th, 60 on 19th-20th and 40 on 28th-29th October, and 50 on 1st November. One on 16th-17th December.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. One on 15th January. Strong spring passage between 10th April and 29th May, mainly late April and early May, with peaks of 150 on 24th and 80 on 25th April, 35 on 2nd, 500 on 3rd and 300 on 5th May; stragglers to 20th June. A hybrid Brambling/Chaffinch seen on 25th and 26th May was suspected to be an escaped cage-bird as two of a small party of Bramblings with it showed signs of having been caged. 1-6 between 16th and 20th September; autumn passage between 2nd October and 18th November, with peaks of 150 on 13th, 200 on 19th, 300 on 20th and 200 on 22nd-25th October; 1-2 on 9 days between 11th and 26th December.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*. Singles on 26th January, 11th-13th and 31st May, 1st-7th and 14th June. In autumn, one on 10th and 13th October, 4 on 19th, 2 on 20th-21st and one 23rd and 31st October to 6th November when 2 present.

CORN BUNTING *Emberiza calandra*. Singles on 26th April, 18th, 19th and 30th October, 1st November and 25th-31st December.

[**RED-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza bruniceps*. A male 4th-5th June and a female (trapped) on 3rd to 19th September. Escaped cage-birds.]

[**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK** *Pheucticus melanocephalus*. A male in the oats at Setter on 24th August; proved to be an escaped cage-bird when examined in the hand. This species breeds in western North America and winters in Mexico.]

YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza aureola*. One at Kennaby on 14th September, present until 19th when trapped at Shirva; another trapped at Field on 20th September, present until 25th.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*. An unprecedented influx during the afternoon of 3rd May when 32 arrived on the isle (previous highest day's total being 16 on 9th May 1952). There were 32 on 4th, 18+ on 5th, 23 on 6th, 3+ on 7th and 8+ on 8th (low counts because of fog), 22 on 9th, 30 on 10th, 4 on 11th, 1-2 until 18th May, then singles on 23rd May and 7th-9th June. Two on 9th September, one until 13th.

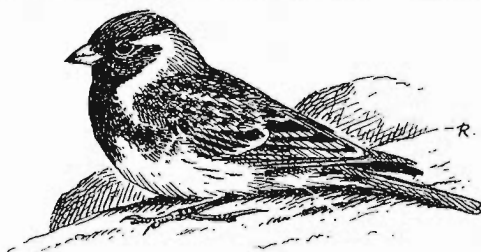
RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*. One at Pund and Taing on 8th and 9th June.

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*. One at Setter from 16th to 21st October.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. One on 17th and 2 on 30th

March; spring migration from 5th April to 23rd May, mainly 25th April to 23rd May with peaks of 11 on 26th April, 80 on 3rd May, 90 on 4th, 80 on 5th, 70 on 6th, numbers down to 15 by 16th; lower numbers thereafter except 15 on 23rd, one on 27th-28th June. Scattered autumn passage from 18th September to 29th October, with peaks of 4 on 10th, 11th and 19th and 6 on 20th October.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. One on 3rd-4th April, 2 on 22nd, and one on 23rd April, one on 1st, 2 on 2nd and 3rd, 3 on 5th, singles on 6th, 8th, 9th and 30th May. Scattered autumn records between 31st August and 26th October; singles on 16 days, 3 on 9th, 7 on 10th, 9 on 11th, 7 on 13th, 2 on 14th and 6 on 16th September, and 2 on 10th October.



SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Wintering flock maxima of 48 in January, 5 in February and 4 in March; up to 15 in April and up to 3 in first 10 days of May; one on 15th-16th May. Autumn passage from 10th September, with peaks of 35 on 16th and 19th and 45 on 27th and 29th September, 100 on 1st, 120 on 6th and 13th, 100+ on 20th October, 100 on 5th and 8th November, and 75 on 10th December.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. Breeding numbers slightly higher; some visited North Haven in spring but did not nest at Observatory.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. Two on 22nd, 9 on 23rd and 24th and 13 on 27th May; 8 on 2nd June, 7 on 7th and down to 4 on 13th and 3 on 17th; 2 until 5th July but did not nest. One from 7th August, joined by another on 30th and a third on 1st September to 3rd November. One overwintered.

RINGING 1969

1969 was not a remarkable year for ringing on the island. It has already been mentioned that much of my time was taken up by the new Observatory so less time could be devoted to ringing and added to this the summer was very changeable with

a westerly swell running most of the time. This made it impossible to use the boat for ringing seabirds to such an extent as in recent years and we were unable to go by boat to the west cliffs. For the second winter running we had heavy snow with drifting and both the Gully and Vaadal traps were again damaged by the weight of the snow, while the Double Dyke trap collapsed during a severe north-west storm in the autumn. On the credit side, a small new Heligoland trap was built in the corner of the garden at Setter and caught a good number of birds. The plantation trap continued to be successful but is still not catching as much as it should do, so we have plans to remove it and build a much larger trap to cover most of the plantation in 1970. The Double Dyke and Gully traps are also to be completely rebuilt and rewired in 1970. Wader traps were again in use at Easter Lothar water; dazzling-netting, mist-nets and clap-nets contributed to the catch as in other years.

4932 birds of 120 species were ringed with F.I.B.O. rings. These totals include 402 birds of 10 species ringed by Tony Mainwood at Fetlar (including 297 Storm Petrels, 2 Manx Shearwaters and 3 young Snowy Owls), and 13 birds of 2 species ringed by Magnus Sinclair in Unst.

The monthly totals of birds ringed at Fair Isle in 1969 were as follows:

	Feb/Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov/Dec
Number	31	265	576	287	966	867	617	766	142

The best day's ringing during the year was on 23rd October when 335 birds were ringed; the species that day were 256 Blackbirds, 31 Redwings, 30 Song Thrushes, 8 Ring Ouzels, 3 Bramblings, 2 Chaffinches, 2 Starlings and single Robin, Meadow Pipit and Greenfinch.

The totals of the ten leading species in 1969 were Fulmar 550, Storm Petrel 521, Shag 502, Blackbird 427, Wheatear 267, Robin 238, Redwing 228, Puffin 157, Rock Pipit 150 and Willow Warbler 149. Note that Starling at 116 dropped out of the top ten; the local population was very low. Great Crested Grebe and Jackdaw were the only species ringed for the first time on the island during the year. Other unusual species ringed were Little Grebe, Leach's Petrel, Goldeneye, Greenshank, Little Auk, River Warbler, Aquatic Warbler (4), Melodious Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Arctic Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Scarlet Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Bunting (2) and Ortolan (5).

The annual and cumulative totals are brought up to date in Table 1 which gives the ringing totals for the individual species, together with the number of recoveries of each species away from Fair Isle, or in a few cases from other ringing localities.



TABLE I

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-68	1969	Total	1948-68	1969	Total
Great Crested Grebe		1	1			
Slavonian Grebe	1		1			
Little Grebe	1	1	2			
Storm Petrel	3022	521	3543	6	9	15
Leach's Petrel	2	1	3			
Manx Shearwater	6	2	8			
Fulmar	3398	550	3948	18	1	19
Gannet	234	2	236	4		4
Cormorant	5		5			
Shag	6674	502	7176	148	8	156
Heron	8	1	9			
Mallard	7	1	8	2		2
Teal	19	4	23	2		2
Wigeon	7		7			
Scaup	2		2			
Tufted Duck	5		5			
Goldeneye	3	1	4			
Long-tailed Duck	5		5			
Velvet Scoter	2		2			
Eider	49		49			
Goosander	2		2			
Red-breasted Merganser	1		1			
Greylag Goose	4		4	1		1
White-front	1		1			
Pink-foot	1		1			
Barnacle Goose	1		1			
Whooper Swan	9		9	1		1
Sparrowhawk	58	7	65	9	1	10
Peregrine	6		6			
Merlin	122	7	129	13		13
Kestrel	22	1	23	4		4
Red-footed Falcon	1		1			
Quail	2		2			

	1948-68	1969	Total	1948-68	1969	Total
Water Rail	126	5	131	2		2
Spotted Crake	3		3			
Corncrake	24	3	27	2		2
Moorhen	38	4	42		1	1
Coot	6		6			
Oystercatcher	561	23	584	28	2	30
Lapwing	215	1	216	3		3
Ringed Plover	221	9	230	3		3
Little Ringed Plover	1		1			
Golden Plover	10	4	14			
Dotterel	2		2			
Turnstone	45		45			
Snipe	105	7	112	3		3
Jack Snipe	22		22			
Woodcock	115	4	119	6		6
Curlew	24	1	25	1		1
Whimbrel	12		12			
Black-tailed Godwit	1		1			
Bar-tailed Godwit	8		8	2		2
Green Sandpiper	15	1	16		1	1
Wood Sandpiper	8	1	9			
Redshank	106	4	110	2		2
Spotted Redshank	3		3			
Greenshank	4	1	5			
Knot	41	3	44			
Purple Sandpiper	78	4	82			
Little Stint	12	2	14			
Western Sandpiper	1		1			
Pectoral Sandpiper	3		3			
Dunlin	174	48	222	2	1	3
Curlew Sandpiper	1		1			
Sanderling	57	7	64			
Ruff	12	4	16	1		1
Red-necked Phalarope	3		3			
Bonxie	566	23	589	7	1	8
Arctic Skua	1105	10	1115	28		28
Pomarine Skua	1		1			
Great Black-back	428	71	499	21	3	24
Lesser Black-back	372	12	384	7	1	8
Herring Gull	764	35	799	22	2	24
Common Gull	86	4	90		1	1
Glaucous Gull	13	1	14	1		1
Iceland Gull	1		1			
Black-headed Gull	46	1	47	3		3
Kittiwake	867	27	894	3		3
Common Tern	16		16			

	1948-68	1969	Total	1948-68	1969	Total
Arctic Tern	114		114	1		1
Razorbill	650	34	684	24	4	28
Little Auk	4	1	5			
Guillemot	970	67	1037	26	6	32
Black Guillemot	528	40	568	6	1	7
Puffin	3960	157	4117	8		8
Wood Pigeon	22	3	25	2		2
Rock Dove	4		4			
Turtle Dove	14	1	15			
Collared Dove	10	1	11			
Cuckoo	39	6	45	1		1
Snowy Owl	7	3	10			
Long-eared Owl	43	3	46	2		2
Short-eared Owl	1		1			
Nightjar	3		3			
Swift	11		11	1		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	13		13			
Wryneck	53	15	68			
Short-toed Lark	3		3			
Shorelark	1		1			
Woodlark	2		2			
Skylark	398	10	408	2		2
Swallow	118	20	138	2		2
House Martin	58	1	59			
Sand Martin	4	1	5			
Raven	3		3			
Hooded Crow	27	2	29			
Rook	4		4			
Jackdaw		1	1			
Golden Oriole	1		1			
Great Tit	4		4			
Blue Tit	2		2			
Treecreeper	1		1			
Wren	397	5	402			
Dipper	8		8			
Mistle Thrush	10		10	1		1
Fieldfare	410	12	422			
Song Thrush	896	88	984	16		16
Redwing	3099	228	3327	39	4	43
Dusky Thrush	1		1			
Black-throated Thrush	1		1			
Ring Ouzel	150	32	182	2		2
Blackbird	10007	427	10434	189	13	202
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2		2			
Wheatear	9070	267	9337	46	2	48

	1948-68	1969	Total	1948-68	1969	Total
Black-eared Wheatear	2		2			
Stonechat	17		17			
Whinchat	280	14	294	2		2
Redstart	741	54	795			
Black Redstart	41	2	43			
Nightingale	7		7			
Thrush Nightingale	4		4			
Bluethroat	94	7	101	1		1
Robin	2408	238	2646	15	2	17
Grasshopper Warbler	28	4	32			
Lanceolated Warbler	3		3			
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	1		1			
River Warbler	1	1	2			
Great Reed Warbler	2		2			
Reed Warbler	50	10	60	1		1
Marsh Warbler	21	4	25			
Paddyfield Warbler	1		1			
Thick-billed Warbler	1		1			
Sedge Warbler	161	14	175			
Aquatic Warbler	6	4	10			
Melodious Warbler	2	1	3			
Icterine Warbler	35	6	41			
Booted Warbler	3		3			
Blackcap	727	60	787	4		4
Barred Warbler	123	27	150			
Garden Warbler	1009	91	1100			
Whitethroat	457	33	490			
Lesser Whitethroat	184	15	199			
Sardinian Warbler	1		1			
Subalpine Warbler	7		7			
Willow Warbler	1108	149	1257	1		1
Greenish Warbler	5	1	6			
Chiffchaff	200	16	216			
Wood Warbler	24	4	28			
Bonelli's Warbler	1		1			
Arctic Warbler	12	1	13			
Yellow-browed Warbler	34		34			
Dusky Warbler	1		1			
Goldcrest	476	13	489			
Spotted Flycatcher	229	13	242	1		1
Pied Flycatcher	392	11	403	3		3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	30	1	31			
Dunnock	544	72	616	4		4
Meadow Pipit	4582	118	4700	33		33
Tree Pipit	212	30	242			

	1948-68	1969	Total	1948-68	1969	Total
Olive-backed Pipit	2		2			
Pechora Pipit	2		2			
Red-throated Pipit	3		3			
Rock Pipit	3950	150	4100	11	1	12
Richard's Pipit	7		7			
Tawny Pipit	1		1			
Pied/White Wagtail	309	4	313	3		3
Grey Wagtail	6		6			
Yellow Wagtail spp.	9		9			
Citrine Wagtail	3		3			
Waxwing	19		19			
Great Grey Shrike	37	4	41			
Lesser Grey Shrike	5		5			
Woodchat Shrike	7		7			
Red-backed Shrike	55	12	67			
Starling	6376	116	6492	59	3	62
Rose-coloured Starling	2		2			
Greenfinch	18	7	25			
Goldfinch	3		3			
Siskin	126	4	130			
Linnet	29		29	1		1
Twite	1918	36	1954	3		3
Redpoll	135	2	137			
Arctic Redpoll	3		3			
Bullfinch	13	3	16			
Scarlet Grosbeak	21	1	22			
Crossbill	264		264	2		2
Parrot Crossbil	35		35			
Chaffinch	559	37	596		1	1
Brambling	490	56	546	1		1
Yellowhammer	22	2	24			
Corn Bunting	2		2			
Red-headed Bunting	5		5			
Black-headed Bunting	1		1			
Yellow-breasted Bunting	2	2	4			
Ortolan	9	5	14			
Cretzschmar's Bunting	1		1			
Rustic Bunting	4		4	1		1
Little Bunting	12		12			
Reed Bunting	105	18	123	1		1
Song Sparrow	1		1			
White-throated Sparrow	1		1			
Lapland Bunting	37		37			
Snow Bunting	183	3	186	2		2
House Sparrow	842	105	947			
Tree Sparrow	29	3	32			
GRAND TOTAL	81092	4932	86024	874	69	943

RECOVERIES 1969

69 recoveries of ringed birds were received in 1969 and full details of these are given below; the most exciting ones are displayed on the map. The international code of symbols for the method of recovery is employed:

v—caught or trapped and released with ring;

+—shot or killed by man;

x—found dead or dying;

xA—found long dead;

()—caught alive and not released, or released but with ring removed;

/?/—method of recovery unknown.

Where the exact date of recovery is unknown, the date of the finder's report is given in brackets. Ringing details of each bird (ringed at Fair Isle unless otherwise stated) are given on the first line and the recovery details on the second. The distance, given in miles, and the directions are approximate. The abbreviations indicating age are as follows: pull. (pullus)—nestling or chick, not yet flying; juv.—young; 1st Y.—first year; pj.—post-juvenile; f.g.—full grown, age uncertain; and ad.—adult.

The coordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N 1°37'W.

STORM PETREL

655041 pj. 27.8.67

v 23/24.7.69 Fetlar (Shetland), 80 miles NNE.

655148 pj. 10.8.65

v 16.8.69 Foula (Shetland), 45 miles NNW.

655149 pj. 10.8.65

v 7.8.66 Foula.

655263 pj. 8.7.66

v 8.8.66 Foula.

655577 pj. 8.7.65

v 9.8.66 Foula.

678403 pj. 27.7.68

v 15/16.8.69 Fetlar.

678475 pj. 2.8.68

v 15/16.8.69 Fetlar.

678724 pj. 28.7.68 Fetlar (Shetland).

v 25.7.69 Fair Isle.

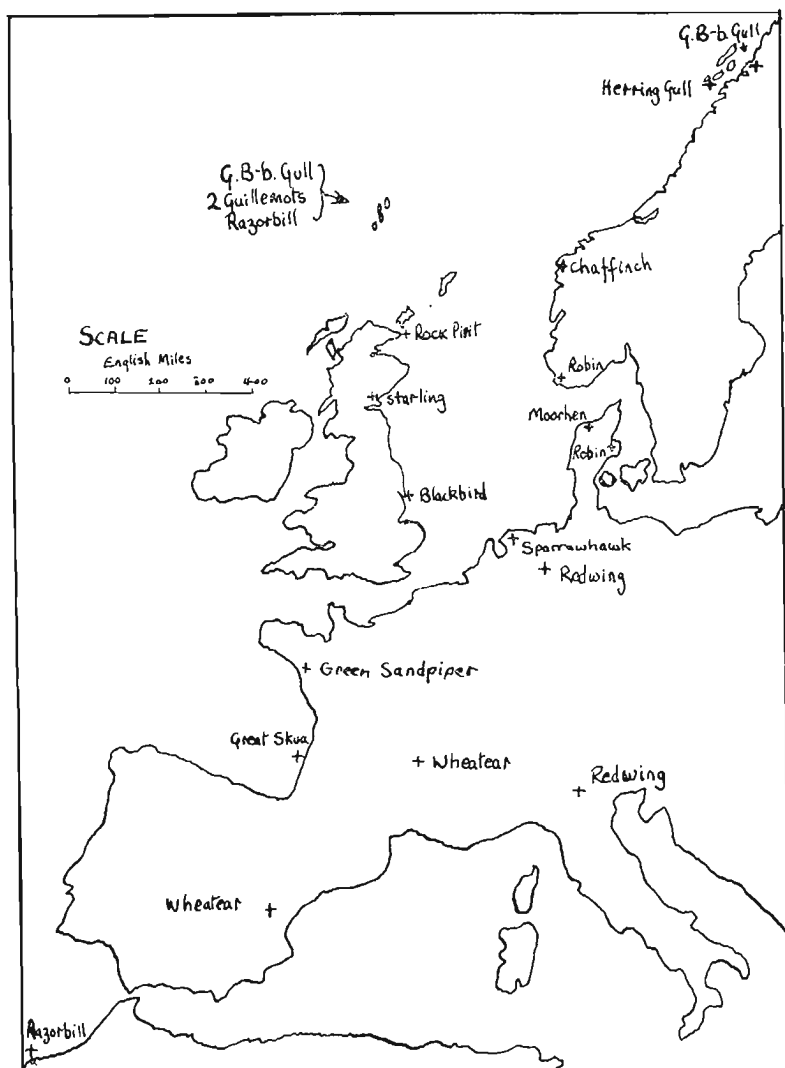
678479 pj. 2.8.68

v 12.8.69 Mousa (Shetland) 37 miles NNE.

FULMAR

AT 67463 pull. 1.8.60

x (4.7.69) Hamnavoe, Burra Isle (Shetland), 40 miles N.



Map showing some ringing recoveries in 1969

SHAG

- 1057511 pull. 12.7.66 Fetlar
- x 7.6.69 Baltasound, Unst (Shetland), 8 miles N.
- 1058068 pull. 27.7.68 Fetlar
- x 10.5.69 West Burra (Shetland), 40 miles SSW.
- 1068167 pull. 28.6.68
- x ca. 30.9.68 Scrabster (Caithness), 90 miles SW.

1068255 pull. 29.6.68
 x 22.3.69 Veness Point, Eday (Orkney), 50 miles WSW.
 1068491 pull. 25.7.68
 x-destroyed 14.1.69 Fraserburgh (Aberdeen), 125 miles S.
 1068615 pull. 21.6.69
 x (23.8.69) Weisdale Voe (Shetland), 50 miles N.
 1068634 pull. 21.6.69
 + fishing net 6.9.69 Skellister (Shetland), 60 miles NNE.
 1068720 pull. 30.6.69
 x? (21.9.69) Weisdale Voe (Shetland), 50 miles N.

SPARROWHAWK

ED 57487 Ad. ♀ 22.4.69
 x (3.11.69) Zwagerveen, Oudwoude (Friesland) Netherlands,
 53°16'N 6°07'E.
 This is our second Dutch recovery for this species.

MOORHEN

SS 84331 Ad. 2.5.69
 x 28.5.69 Klitmoller (Jylland) Denmark, 57°02'N 8°31'E.
 This is our first Moorhen recovery; note that both ringing
 and recovery dates were in same month.

OYSTERCATCHER

SS 50537 Ad. 26.3.68
 v. 23.11.69 Piel Island, Barrow-in-Furness (Lancs), 380 miles
 SSW.
 SS 61852 Ad. 5.4.67
 v 18.1.69 Piel Island.

GREEN SANDPIPER

CK 32918 Ad. 14.8.67
 /?/ 23.12.67 Venansault (Vendee) France, 46°41'N 1°31'W.

DUNLIN

BC 40009 Ad. 19.5.66
 v 10.9.69 Hoylake (Cheshire), 430 miles SSW.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

419381 pull. 20.7.65
 + 17.3.69 Hvitanes (Streymoy) Faeroes, 62°03'N 6°46'W.
 AJ 16279 Ad. 13.12.61
 x 10.7.69 Sundsvoll, Bjarkoy (Troms) Norway, 69°01'N
 16°30'E.
 HW 04902 4th Y. 11.11.66
 v 11.1.69 off West Burra Isle (Shetland), 45 miles NNE.
 This is our first recovery from Faeroes for this species.

HERRING GULL

AJ 24995 Ad. 13.12.61
 + 29.3.69 Svolvaer, Lofoten Islands (Nordland) Norway,
 68°15'N 14°40'E.

GM 35758 pull. 6.7.66

v 22.7.69 Blue Mull, Unst (Shetland), 90 miles NNE.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

AJ 24901 pull. 11.7.60

x (several weeks) 7.10.69 estuary river Welland (Lincs),
460 miles SSE.

COMMON GULL

3079260 pull. 22.6.65 Hascosay (Shetland)

x (1.8.69) Basta Voe, Yell (Shetland), 3 miles NW.

GREAT SKUA

HW 07418 pull. 23.7.66 Hermaness (Unst) Shetland.

x 24.1.69 Le Porge (Gironde) France, 44°53'N 1°10'W.

GUILLEMOT

GM 35748 pull. 5.7.66

() 27.3.69 Alnes (More & Romsdal) Norway, 62°30'N 5°58'E.

GM 63827 Ad. 18.6.68

x 25.3.69 Whitley Bay (Northumberland), 310 miles S.

SS 36085 pull. 3.7.65

x 21.2.69 North Roe (Shetland), 75 miles N.

SS 36113 Ad. 5.7.65

+ 30.5.69 Tindholm (Vagoy) Faeroes, 62°04'N 7°25'W.

SS 68596 pull. 18.6.68

+ (10.2.69) off Hordaland, Norway, 60°37'N 4°42'E.

SS 68676 Ad. 19.6.68

+ 23.6.69, Stora Dimun, south of Sandoy, Faeroes, 61°42'N
6°45'W.

SS 36113 and SS 68676 are our first Guillemot recoveries from Faeroes. It is interesting to note that both were ringed as adults at breeding colonies on Fair Isle in 1965 and 1968 and killed, presumably at colonies, in Faeroes; one bird was snared and was almost certainly ashore at capture. The Guillemot population at Fair Isle has risen rapidly during this decade and these two recoveries may indicate that it has reached saturation point with the surplus moving to Faeroes. It will be interesting if we get more summer recoveries from these islands.

RAZORBILL

3075666 pull. 6.7.67 Hermaness (Unst) Shetland.

x oiled 26.12.68 Hopton, nr. Lowestoft (Suffolk), 580 miles SSE.

SS 50666 ad. 10.7.66

+ 23.6.69 Sorvaag Fjord (Vagar) Faeroes, 62°05'N 7°23'W.

AT 67655 pull. 1.7.61

x salmon net (24.6.69) Flamborough Head (Yorks), 380 miles SSE.

SS 68690 pull. 22..6.68

() caught on baited fish-hook, 28.5.69 off Agadir, Morocco, ca 30°30'N 9°40'W.

SS 50666 is our first Razorbill recovery from Faeroes; compare it with previous species. Although Razorbills have not increased rapidly at Fair Isle in recent years, the previous species is now competing with them for nest sites. SS 68690 is our first recovery from Morocco, although we have had two Spanish recoveries in November; note also that this bird was still far south in May.

BLACK GUILLEMOT

ED 57467 pull. 3.8.68

x ca. 25.1.69 Hilton, Fearn (Ross-shire), 140 miles SW.

REDWING

CX 33764 fg. 11.10.64

+ 7.11.69 near Verona, Italy, 45°27'N 11°00'E.

CS 44032 1st Y. 29.6.67

xA 0.2.69 Westrauderfehn (Aurich) Germany, 53°07'N 7°35'E.

CS 44036 1st Y. 4.10.67

+ 14.1.68 Meyan (Gironde) France, 45°21'N 1°04'W.

CS 44116 Ad. 18.10.67

() 10.11.68 Kasterlee (Antwerpen) Belgium, 51°14'N 4°55'E.

BLACKBIRD

10 Blackbirds ringed at Fair Isle were recovered as follows:

Ringed		Recovered
CR 51546 ♀	8.11.68	x Feb. 69 Birsay (Orkney) 70 m. WSW.
CR 51682 ♂	7.4.69	x 18.5.69 Norway 60°21'N 5°22'E
CR 51802 ♂	11.5.69	+ 1.10.69 Sweden 58°39'N 13°30'E.
CS 43259*♂	9.11.67	x Nov. 67 Montrose (Angus) 200 m. SSW.
CV 90688 ♀	23.4.67	v 24.11.69 Spurn (Yorks) 415 m. SSE.
CV 98004 ♂	29.3.68	+ 3.11.69 Norway 58°31'N 6°10'E.
CV 98069*♀	29.3.68	+ 27.10.69 Norway 59°55'N 5°47'E.
CV 98086 ♀	29.3.68	+ (29.9.69) Norway 62°36'N 7°20'E.
CV 98110*♀	12.4.68	+ (21.11.69) Norway 58°21'N 6°17'E.
CX 03836*♂	20.3.63	x 8.3.69 Houston (Renfrew) 270 m. SSW.

* ringed as adult; the remainder ringed as first-year

CR 51066 1st Y. ♂ 14.10.68 North Ronaldsay (Orkney)

v 9.2.69 Curry (Sligo), 435 miles SW.

CR 51152 1st Y. ♀ 20.10.68 North Ronaldsay

x 9.2.69 Loughros Point, Ardara (Donegal), 385 miles SW.

CR 51179 1st Y. ♂ 21.10.68 North Ronaldsay

v reringed Stav. 7113638 4.4.68 Jossingham (Rogaland) Norway 58°21'N 6°20'E.

WHEATEAR

BC 40065 Ad. ♂ 1.5.66

x 31.8.69 Aras de Alpunte (Valencia) Spain, 39°55'N 1°08'W.

BH 53971 1st Y. 12.9.68

/?/ 9.10.68 St Jean Bonnefonds (Loire) France, 45°27'N
4°27'E.

ROBIN

HE 51338 1st Y. 7.10.66

v reringed Stav. 9181140, 8.5.69 Jossinghan (Rogoland), Norway, 58°21'N 6°20'E.

HR 74755 pj. 27.4.69

v (Copenhagen 922444 added) 22.5.69 Hesselo, Kattegat, Denmark, 56°12'N 11°43'E.

HR 74755 was ringed during a large fall of Robins in late April 1969; note that it was controlled less than a month later and on a more southerly latitude.

ROCK PIPIT

BC 14462 1st Y. 13.8.66

x 14.11.68 Nr. Thurso (Caithness), 95 miles SW.

STARLING

CR 51544 1st Y. 31.10.68

x (3.4.69) Lerwick (Shetland) 50 miles NNE.

CV 98261 1st Y. ♀ 8.1.68 Mid-Yell (Shetland)

x 16.3.69 Herra (Yell), local.

CX 60232 Ad. ♀ 6.4.64

x killed by cat 15.2.69 Cupar (Fife) 225 miles SSW.

CHAFFINCH

HR 74444 1st Y. ♂ 9.4.69

x (overhead wires) 15.10.69 Hareid (More & Romsdal) Norway 62°21'N 5°59'E.

Our first Chaffinch recovery.

RINGED STRANGERS IN 1969

One of the most exciting ringed strangers ever to occur at Fair Isle was a Purple Heron which arrived on 2nd May. It was captured in a mist-net at Pylie on 16th May and re-ringed, and was last seen on the island on 31st May. The full details are:

PURPLE HERON

Arnhem 8019764 pull. 17.6.67 Noorden (Zuid Holland) Netherlands 52°10'N 4°51'E.

v (re-ringed 1063071) 16.5.69 Fair Isle.

DUNNOCK

Helgoland 0260966 2.4.66 Spiekeroog, Ostfries, Insel Niedersachsen, Germany 53°46'N 7°44'E.

v 27.4.69 Fair Isle.

Note that a Robin, ringed on the same day as this Dunnock was controlled at Fair Isle, was controlled in May in Denmark at 56°12'N 11°43'E.

RECAPTURES IN 1969

During the year, many birds were retrapped which had been ringed at Fair Isle. Many were retrapped days or weeks after ringing but others had been ringed in previous years and these are presented in a simplified form in the following table. The full data is stored in the Observatory's retrap files.

BIRDS RINGED IN PREVIOUS YEARS RETRAPPED IN 1969

Species	1959	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68
Fulmar (ad)						1	1	2	1	1
Fulmar (pull)		1				1	2	4	1	
Storm Petrel								1		6
Shag (ad)			1	1		1	2	1		
Shag (pull)	1		1	2		2	6	5	5	
Purple Sandpiper										1
Arctic Skua	1 (pull)									1 (ad)
Kittiwake									2	
Razorbill (ad)				1		1				1
Guillemot (ad)	1	1	1	1	2	1		3	1	11
Black Guillemot							2			4
Puffin (ad)				1					2	1
Puffin (pull)		1	1							
Meadow Pipit									1	2
Rock Pipit						1			3	3
Starling					2	1		1		
House Sparrow									2	2

The well known Herring Gull ringed as an adult in 1952 bred again at Maver's Geo. There was also an interesting Chiffchaff retrap in 1969; it was ringed on 22nd May (weight 6.6 gms) and retrapped in the backen at Restensgeo on 2nd August (weight 7.6 gms); it was in very worn plumage and had not started its moult. This appears to be the first record of a Chiffchaff summing on the isle.

THE NEW OBSERVATORY

Few Friends of Fair Isle can be unaware that the new Observatory, decided upon in 1966, was formally opened on 18th October 1969, the year in which the Fair Isle Observatory came of age. The decision to build was made known in the Report for 1967 and further details were given in that for 1968, when it was announced that the necessary funds had been raised. The 1968 Report contained photographs of the site at Maver's Cup, of the cutting of the first sod by Mrs Marina Dennis on 14th May 1969, and of the progress that had been made

with the foundations by 2nd June. It included also a drawing by the architect of what the building would look like when finished, and a very good forecast this proved to be. The purpose of my note is not, however, to go over ground already covered, but rather to record a personal reaction to the new Observatory.

My baptismal visit to Fair Isle was made in September 1949, in the first full year of the Observatory's life, when I was on leave from Africa. I was back again during my next leave in the Spring of 1952 and once more immediately after retirement in the Autumn of 1954. And I've been back many times since.

What exactly has been the continuing attraction? Why has one gone; why, particularly, has one returned repeatedly? Not just for the birds, of that I am sure, although the thrills of migration—and particularly the hope of a plateful of the ornithological caviare of Fair Isle—were always the stated objective. Neither was it simply because of the varied attractions of the island—the grandeur of the cliff scenery or the contrast between the rugged coastline and empty moorlands with the peaceful, peopled croftlands of the village area. Nor because of the welcoming faces everywhere, from those of the Warden and his wife at the greeting on arrival to those of the individual islanders always ready with a smile for a chat. Not any one of these things, I think, called me back, but rather an amalgam of the lot, allied to the certain expectation, which never once let me down, of congenial company at the Hostel, of meeting with old friends, of a store of shared experiences to be lived over and re-savoured in the future, of the cosy warmth of the cluster around the ancient stove of an evening; in sum, the attraction of a unique atmosphere of friendship, camaraderie and togetherness.

For me, however—or so I thought until last October—the charm lay as much as anything in the return to 'weel kent' surroundings, epitomised by the old wooden buildings. Because of the perennial satisfaction of the past, and the association of that satisfaction with a particular situation, one somehow or other envisaged that this situation would endure unchanged for ever. One managed to ignore, without being deliberately conscious of so doing, the yearly increasing dilapidation of the naval huts; the never-ending making do in cramped surroundings; the frustrations being suffered by the Warden, his wife and the staff due to the lack of modern facilities for cooking, heating, laundrying and the rest. What did such things matter, weighed against the hourly-changing excitements of migration time; the happy weariness after days in the open; the gossip of the evenings; the feeling of being at home; the all-pervading friendliness? One looked with disapproval at change. What had happened to the bone-shaking rusty bicycles with their familiar

knobbly saddles and non-existent brake? The presence of a jeep, instead, was almost an insult!

And then, as a Trustee, I became involved—but let me admit—with a sinking heart, in the talk of a new Observatory. Obviously, when the situation was looked at dispassionately, the old hutments had reached the end of their lives. Something new must replace them. Inevitably, the discussions and decisions recorded in the 1967 and 1968 Reports had to come. Plans were drawn up, revised, and approved; the necessary monies were found; foundations were laid; the new Observatory took shape almost overnight. In no time at all it was ready to be opened. I was invited to attend, but I dreaded the occasion; the new could never be a patch on the old. How wrong can one be?

I flew in to Fair Isle on Friday, 17th October, the day before the opening, with George and Irene Waterston. We left Edinburgh after breakfast and were on Fair Isle for lunch. One regretted not having had a night at Spiggie, but—dare I say it?—had no regrets at having missed a *Good Shepherd* crossing. We had the usual warm welcome from the Warden, but this time on the airstrip instead of on the pier. And then off down the hill and along the road to turn the corner at Maver's Cup. I was scared of what we might see. The plans had seemed all right but—a two-storey building—surely it would stick out like a sore thumb? We were all quite quiet as we looked. Then, you could sense the relief. It was all right; it was just right; it fitted! The architect had done a grand job. No grating at all; no conflict with the surroundings. A big building, but—because of the incorporation of the Warden's house with the main block—one that had just the right length to offset its height, so that the whole construction fitted snugly into the hollow of the hillside without breaking the horizon. A quick glance, almost surreptitious, down towards the pier. How scruffy the old huts were; how messy and untidy! How fickle are one's affections!

There are some houses which no matter what one does to them never come alive. They don't feel 'lived in'; they are cold, unwelcoming, lack character. Would the new Observatory, despite this first favourable impression from the outside, be the same?

We entered by the back door, dumped our bags, hung up our coats, and went through into the main lounge. A big room with a superb view, facing the Sheep Rock. A lattice screen of bookshelves cordoned off one corner to form a tiny library; on the other side of a movable partition was the diningroom; there was a vast fireplace; and there were masses of comfortable chairs. We sat down and marvelled. How he had done it I have no idea, but somehow—to perfection—Douglas Hamilton the architect had captured an atmosphere—the atmosphere of all

my Fair Isle memories—in a brand new building. Imagination? Maybe; but I don't think so. Too many others felt the same, amongst them the Editor of the *Shetland Times*, who wrote, in the next edition of his paper: "Never have I seen a building that had acquired such character almost before the builders had moved out. The big common room with its huge stone fireplace and library alcove seemed 'lived in' although we were the among the first to arrive, and Roy and Marina Dennis had themselves moved in only two days earlier." Perhaps he was trying to explain what had created this atmosphere when he added: "Books made all the difference of course. And an open hearth with a blazing fire in the evenings." But I am sure myself there is much more to it than that.

Be all that as it may, the new Hostel is in every respect a very comfortable building indeed. By way of sleeping accommodation there are four single, four double and two 6-bedded bedrooms. I was in one of the 6-bedders; although full, it savoured scarcely more of a dormitory than does a twin-bedded room.

The opening ceremony took place in the presence of a hostful of invited guests and almost the entire population of Fair Isle, other than the light-keepers on watch. The Earl of Wemyss, President of the National Trust for Scotland, owners of the island, declared the new building open. He recalled how the Fair Isle Observatory had come into being through the vision and enterprise of two persons, George Waterston and Ian Pitman. Both were happily present on this great occasion. Sir Arthur Duncan, Chairman of the Fair Isle Observatory Trust, thanked Lord Wemyss for the felicity of his address. He recalled the great debt owed by the Observatory to the previous Wardens and their wives—Mr and Mrs Kenneth Williamson and Mr and Mrs Peter Davis—and to the present incumbents, Roy and Marina Dennis, to whom he handed over inscribed tankards as a memento of the occasion and with the thanks of the Trustees.

After these formalities—if one can call them that; they were so pleasantly informal—refreshments were served, the 21st birthday cake was cut and a memorable tea-party followed. When this was over, the children were taken home to be put to bed and the guests had dinner. Afterwards, when the islanders had returned, films and slides were shown. With the islanders providing music on violin and guitars, song and dance continued until midnight: it was an evening not easily to be forgotten.

Finally some credits. The architect of the new Observatory and Hostel was Mr Douglas Hamilton of Dundee. The building was supplied by Bush Properties Ltd. of Leith, the main con-

tractors were Timbaform Construction Company of Lockerbie, the builders were Messrs James Barr of Ecclefechan and the cedar units were manufactured by Devon Lady (Honiton) Ltd. of Devon. The entire Observatory, complete with all its equipment and furnishings, went by road to Berwick and was shipped to Fair Isle in June in the Orkney cargo boat *Elwick Bay* in one consignment. It arrived at Fair Isle without a single breakage and was unloaded in a day. Four months later the building had been completed and was occupied.

W. J. EGDELING.

ACCOUNTS

YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 1969

I. Hostel Revenue Account

To Livestock as at 1st November, 1968	...	...	...	£40	0	0
„ Foodstuffs, Supplies etc.	...	...	...	1329	9	11
„ Telephone	...	...	...	60	6	10
„ Wages and National Insurance	...	...	...	322	15	11
„ Sundry Payments	...	...	...	10	3	6
„ Insurance of Huts, Equipment etc.	...	...	...	62	15	0
„ Fuel and Power	...	...	...	191	6	7
„ Repairs and Renewals	...	...	...	307	2	9
„ Postages	...	...	...	23	19	10
„ Motor Expenses	...	...	...	99	6	0
„ Depreciation	...	...	...	20	0	0
„ Surplus for year	...	...	...	759	12	11
				<u>£3226</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>3</u>
By Board and Booking Fees	...	...	...	£3157	1	9
„ Miscellaneous	...	...	...	23	17	6
„ Sale of Lambs	...	...	...	6	0	0
„ Livestock at 31st October, 1969	...	...	...	40	0	0
				<u>£3226</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>3</u>

II. Trust Revenue Account

To Salary of Warden and National Insurance	...	...	£934	1	1
„ Rent and Insurance	...	...	12	0	0
„ Interest Paid	...	...	6	2	6
„ Travelling Expenses	...	...	271	18	11
„ Bird Rings, Nets etc.	...	...	139	16	6
„ Printing and Stationery	...	...	262	18	4
„ Freight	...	...	49	14	7
„ Subscriptions Paid	...	...	1	1	0
„ Expenses of Administration	...	...	229	19	2
„ Surplus for year	...	...	861	2	7
			<u>£2768</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>8</u>

By Subscriptions etc.	£871	15	9
„ Income Tax Recovered from Deeds of Covenant ...	285	14	4
„ Interest Received (Gross)			
On Savings Bonds ...	£19	5	2
On Temporary Loans ...	576	12	11
		595	18 1
„ Received from Fair Isle Endowment Trust to account of income ...		55	16 7
„ Received from Helena Howden Endowment Trust representing recovery of tax for 1968/69 ...		199	17 0
„ Surplus from Hostel Account ...		759	12 11
	£2768	14	8

Balance Sheet as at 31st October, 1969

Fixed Assets

Buildings, Traps, etc.	£371	1	3
New Hostel—cost to date ...	42225	9	0
Furniture, Furnishings etc.			
Per last Balance Sheet ...	£363	5	0
New Hostel additions ...	771	9	2
		1134	14 2
Scientific Photographic Equipment ...		237	19 0
Motor Car ...		60	0 0
	£44029	3	5

Investment

£642 3% Savings Bonds 1960/70 (M.V. £591, 3/-) ...	619	1	3
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Current Assets

Stocks ...	£122	8	6
Sundry Debtors ...	1670	0	0
Tax recoverable ...	400	14	9
Temporary Deposits ...	8917	11	7
Bank & Cash ...	750	3	8
		11860	18 6
	£56509	3	2

Capital Account

Balance at 31st October, 1968 ...	£3451	10	5
Appeal Fund Grants ...	17100	0	0
Proceeds of Fete ...	685	0	0
Surplus on Revenue Account for year ...	861	2	7
	£22097	13	0

Appeal Fund

Donations received ...	£2607	7	9
Less Expenditure to date ...	1029	11	9
		1577	16 0

Highlands & Islands Development Board

Building Loan (Secured) ...	£9500	0	0
Special Grant ...	10000	0	0
Building Grants received to date ...	12636	0	0
		32136	0 0

Current Liabilities

Sundry Creditors	£299	8	0	
Due to Messrs J. & F. Anderson, W.S.	398	6	2	
				697 14 2
				<u>£56509 3 2</u>

NOTES

1. Capital Commitments at 31st October, 1969, in relation to the new Hostel amounted to £7465. Of this Commitment £2364 will be met from the balance of the Building Grant receivable from the Highlands & Islands Development Board.

2. **Highlands & Islands Development Board**

The loan secured over specified Trust properties is repayable by 20 annual instalments of £475 commencing 17th July, 1970, and will bear interest at 5½% from that date.

The Grants are only repayable under special circumstances, such as Sale, Disposal, or discontinuance of the Observatory within the next five years.

EDINBURGH, 31st March, 1970.—Examined and found correct.

(Signed) HALDANE, BROWN & CO.,

Chartered Accountants.

Fair Isle Endowment Trust: Funds as at 31st October, 1969

	Book Value		Value as at 31st October 1969	
£4325 Grimsby Corporation 3½% Stock 1962-72	£3523	16 2	£3697	17 6
840 Whitbread & Co. Ltd.				
'A' Ordinary Shares of 5/- each	313	11 0	399	0 0
	£3837	7 2	£4096	17 6
Heritable Property—21 Regent Terr., Edinburgh	3050	0 0	3050	0 0
Sum at Credit of Bank Account	157	13 8	157	13 8
	£7045	0 10	£7304	11 2

Represented by :

Balance of Capital on hand	£7035	15 9
Add Balance of Revenue on hand	9	5 1
	£7045	0 10

The John Harrison Memorial Fund

Readers of the 1967 Report may remember that the F.I.B.O. Trustees are administering a Fund in memory of young John Harrison of Hunstanton, Norfolk, who died in September 1967 at the early age of 19.

This 'living memorial' was set up by his relatives and friends to help adventurous teenagers of slender means with their Hostel expenses should they choose to visit Fair Isle where John spent happy holidays in three successive years.

At the close of our financial year over £250 had been collected from generous donors, several of them subscribing more than once. Several young lads from Cheshire, Cambridgeshire and Surrey have already stayed at the Bird Observatory as a result of grants from the Fund. Others are booked in for 1970.

Eligible applicants for financial assistance from this Fund must be between the ages of 15 and 21, and should write to the Warden, enclosing letters of recommendation from two referees such as a school-teacher and a senior naturalist of their acquaintance.

Please publicise this scheme among your friends and enlist their support for this most worthy project. Donations to the Fund will be most gratefully received by the Hon. Treasurer of F.I.B.O.T., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7.

R. A. RICHARDSON (*Organiser*).

THE JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND

From 1st January 1968 to 31st October 1969

To Paid for accommodation at Hostel (Taylor, Howard and Jarman)	...	...	...	...	£20	0	0
„ Balance at 31st October 1969:							
Sum on temporary Loan	...	...	£150	0	0		
Due by J. & F. Anderson	...	...	85	1	11		
					<hr/>	£235	1 11
						<hr/>	£255 1 11
						<hr/>	
By Donations	...	...	...	...	...	£251	5 0
„ Interest on temporary loan—net	...	...	...	...	...	3	16 11
						<hr/>	£255 1 11
						<hr/>	

Note: A grant was also made to Richard Firmin in 1969, but details were received too late for inclusion in the financial year. This will be taken up in next year's accounts.

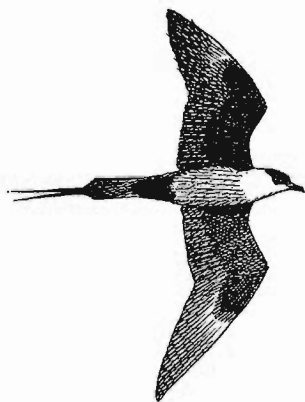




PLATE 11 (above). Part of a six-bed dormitory.

PLATE 12 (below). The dining-room and kitchen servery.

Photographs by Dennis Coutts.

