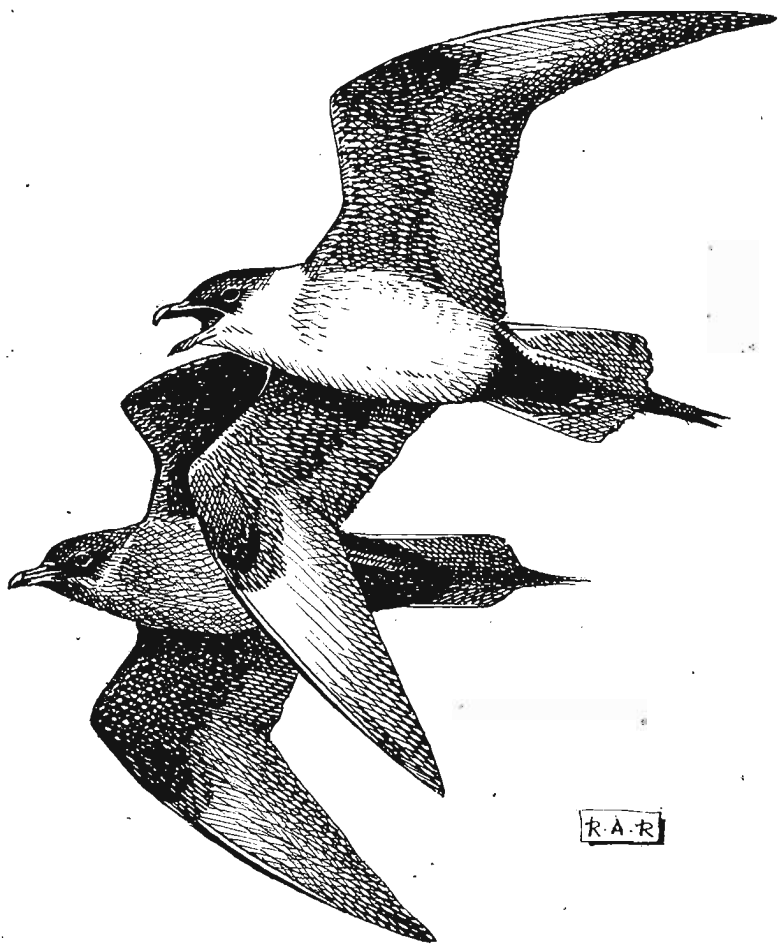


# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT FOR 1972



PUBLISHED BY THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST  
21 REGENT TERRACE, EDINBURGH, EH7 5BT  
for "Friends of Fair Isle"



North Haven and Sheep Rock.

*Photograph by Dennis Cout*

# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT No. 25

1972

Edited by GEORGE WATERSTON

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword ... ..	3
Treasurer's Report ... ..	4
Accounts ... ..	5
Warden's Report ... ..	9
Ringling Details ... ..	24
Recoveries ... ..	30
Ringed Strangers ... ..	35
Recaptures ... ..	36
Systematic List ... ..	37
An Irruptive Movement of Crossbills ...	68
An Irruptive Movement of Mealy Redpolls	68
Fair Isle Croft Museum ... ..	70
The Tysties at Busta Geo ... ..	71
Devonian Plants from Fair Isle ... ..	75

# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

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**Office Address**—21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT. Tel. 031 556 6042

**Warden**—Mr Roger A. Broad, The Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland.  
Tel. Fair Isle 8.

**Solicitors**—J. & F. Anderson, W.S., 48 Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3LX.

**Auditors**—Arthur Young McLelland Moores & Co. C.A., 16 Abercromby Place, Edinburgh 3.

**Bankers**—The Bank of Scotland Ltd., 64 George Street, Edinburgh.

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Please Support by Donation or Legacy—

## THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY ENDOWMENT FUND

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

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

Please write to the Hon. Secretary for particulars.

GEORGE WATERSTON,  
Hon. Secretary.

21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

## FOREWORD

ONE need not be a naturalist to marvel at the differences each year within the general pattern of the recurring seasons, though these differences are more apparent to the naturalist living in the country and particularly in the north than to the majority of people who have the misfortune to live in cities and towns.

In reading this report one is again impressed by the differences in the annual record against the background of the general similarity. This year the seabirds had a good breeding season generally, the pattern of the autumn Thrush migration was somewhat unusual, the lambing was a poor one due to rough weather at the critical time though like sheep farmers elsewhere the islanders, in so far as they are sheep owners, shared in the modicum of prosperity that had come to that sector of the farming scene that has so long wallowed in adversity.

It is in the garnering of annual information over a long time that is perhaps the most important work at Fair Isle and to this all visitors can and do contribute and I know that this fact adds spice to the other pleasures that our visitors enjoy.

It has been a happy and successful year on Fair Isle and we are all greatly indebted to Judy and Roger Broad for their major and indispensable work in so making it. I would especially like to felicitate them on the birth of their son Adam. What name could be more suitable for an inhabitant of so tempestuous, though snakeless Eden?

The Treasurer in his report has drawn attention to the need for continued support to the Appeal Fund. I would like to underline this. Those of us who have been associated with this happy and successful enterprise from the beginning are nearing the time when we will pass the Trust's management on to other younger hands. We are making a special attempt this year to raise funds to enable us at the appropriate time to be able to repay our loan: I know I can rely on you to help as you can in this way to ensure the continued success of this venture that has given so much happiness to all those who have been in any way associated with it.

ARTHUR B. DUNCAN,  
Chairman.

# Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

## *Treasurer's Report*

for year ended 31st October 1972

This year we have managed, thanks mainly to Roger and Judy Broad and their intelligent management, to show a surplus on the combined Revenue account, without, so I am told from various sources, any of our guests suffering from starvation. I would like to record my personal thanks to them both.

I will, as usual, comment on the individual accounts.

**I. Revenue Account** including as for last year the Hostel figures. If you look at the account you will see that the Board and Booking fees were up by almost £1,300, whereas provisions, wages and National Insurance rose by under £500. This enabled us to take care of rising costs in respect of Heating repairs, telephone, travelling etc. The figure for Bird Rings and Nets of £102 is more realistic than the 1971 figure of £10 because in that particular year we were using stock bought and paid for previously. The rest of the figures on either the debit or credit side of the Revenue Account call for little comment except to say that the drop on the credit side in subscriptions and donations merely reflects the fact that in 1971 we had a very generous donation of £200 from Mr William Watt to which I referred in my last report.

**II. The Appeal Fund** (carried to Balance Sheet). Donations at £445 were extremely welcome, the larger figure for 1971 reflecting the Colonial Research Institute of the Bahamas gift of \$3000 in that year.

**III. Capital Account** (carried to Balance Sheet) shows a slight increase from £4,446 to £4,726.

**IV. Balance Sheet.** Fixed assets show no change except for minor depreciations, no depreciation having been provided on the Hostel. The Net Current Assets, which is the really important figure, are up from £5,040 to £6,031. This is very satisfactory, but I would again remind you that there is still, after making this year's annual repayment of £475, a sum of £8,075 due to be repaid to the Highlands and Islands Development Board in respect of their loan.

**I should very much like to be in a position to repay that loan whenever I wanted to, so please keep on contributing to the Appeal Fund and encouraging others to do the same.**

**V. Endowment Trust.** The Grimsby Corporation stock was

sold and the proceeds reinvested in the three new stocks shown, i.e. Lanarkshire C.C.,  $8\frac{1}{2}\%$  Treasury Stock and British Investment Trust  $7\frac{1}{2}\%$  Convertible. We have not attempted to value 21 Regent Terrace which remains in at cost.

Finally I would like to mention that we have received a clearance from the Revenue that V.A.T. would not be chargeable on Subscriptions provided that friends of Fair Isle received an Annual Report only and no other direct benefit. V.A.T. will, of course, be chargeable in respect of the Hostel and Loganair.

## ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER, 1972

### Revenue Account

1971								
£1374	Provisions	...	...	...	...	...	£1654	
1653	Wages, National Insurance	...	...	...	...	...	1859	
344	Insurances	...	...	...	...	...	344	
416	Heat, Light	...	...	...	...	...	433	
411	Repairs, Renewals	...	...	...	...	...	683	
357	Telephone, Postages and Stationery	...	...	...	...	...	538	
184	Printing Annual Report	...	...	...	...	...	202	
184	Travelling Expenses	...	...	...	...	...	447	
98	Motor Expenses	...	...	...	...	...	59	
115	Freight Inward	...	...	...	...	...	100	
10	Bird Rings & Nets	...	...	...	...	...	102	
303	Administration Expenses	...	...	...	...	...	309	
28	Audit & Legal Charges	...	...	...	...	...	23	
488	Loan Interest	...	...	...	...	...	463	
	Depreciation—							
180	Furnishing & Equipment	...	...	...	...	£180		
60	Generator	...	...	...	...	60		
97	Land Rover & Boat	...	...	...	...	96		
							336	
299	Surplus for year	...	...	...	...	...	280	

£6531

£7832

£4959	Board & Booking Fees	...	...	...	...	£6250	
250	Annual Grant—National Trust for Scotland—Wildlife Fund	...	...	...	...	250	
101	Fair Isle Endowment Trust to account of Income	...	...	...	...	164	
947	Subscriptions & Donations	...	...	...	...	893	
133	Tax recovered from Deeds of Covenant	...	...	...	...	126	
87	Sale of Publications	...	...	...	...	95	
54	Interest received on Government Stock	...	...	...	...	54	

£6531

£7832

### Appeal Fund

£21647	Balance carried to Balance	...	...	...	...	£22497	
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£21647

£22497

£19694	Balance at 31st October 1971	...	...	...	...	£21647
1598	Donations received during year	...	...	...	...	445
164	Interest from Temporary Deposits—gross	...	...	...	...	209
191	Tax recovered from Covenants	...	...	...	...	196
<u>£21647</u>						<u>£22497</u>

### Capital Account

£4446	Balance carried to Balance Sheet	...	...	...	...	£4726
<u>£4446</u>						<u>£4726</u>
£4217	Balance at 31st October 1971	...	...	...	...	£4446
229	Surplus for year	...	...	...	...	280
<u>£4446</u>						<u>£4726</u>

### Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1972

Fixed Assets				Cost or Val.		Deprec.	1971
Hostel	...	...	...	£51548	£ —	£51548	£51548
Sheds and Traps	...	...	...	150	—	150	150
Furnishings & Equipment	...	...	...	1816	488	1328	1508
Generator	...	...	...	592	172	420	480
Scientific & Photographic Equip.	...	...	...	160	—	160	160
Land Rover	...	...	...	223	223	—	75
Boat	...	...	...	107	65	42	63
				<u>£54596</u>	<u>£948</u>	£53648	£53984
<b>Investment</b>							
£642	8½% Treasury Stock 1980/82 (M.V. £648)	...				619	619
<b>Current Assets</b>							
Stocks	...	...	...		£332		389
Sundry Debtors	...	...	...		752		332
Tax Recoverable	...	...	...		11		63
Temporary Deposits	...	...	...		5300		4600
Bank & Cash	...	...	...		420		651
					<u>£6815</u>		<u>£6035</u>
Less Sundry Creditors	...	...	...		784		995
						6031	5040
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	...	...	...			6031	5040
						<u>£60298</u>	<u>£59643</u>
<b>Capital Account</b>						£4726	£4446
<b>Appeal Fund</b>						22497	21647
<b>Grants Received from Highlands &amp; Islands Devt. Board</b>						25000	25000
						<u>£52225</u>	<u>£51093</u>
<b>Secured Loan—Highlands &amp; Islands Board</b>				...	...	8075	8550
						<u>£60298</u>	<u>£59643</u>



**Notes**

1. No Depreciation has been provided on the Hostel.

2. **Highlands & Islands Development Board**

The loan secured over specified Trust Properties is repayable by 17 annual instalments of £475.

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

EDINBURGH, 25th January, 1973.—Examined and found correct.

ARTHUR YOUNG McCLELLAND MOORES & CO.,  
Chartered Accountants.

## **THE JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND**

A special fund in memory of John Harrison of Hunstanton, Norfolk, who died in September 1967 at the early age of 19, was instituted by R. A. Richardson 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.

The Trustees wish to warmly commend this scheme to all readers of the Annual Report, and ask that all donations for this most worthy object be sent to the Hon. Treasurer of FIBOT, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh 7. Please continue to support and publicise the Fund to your friends.

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

### **The John Harrison Memorial Fund**

**Year ended 31st October 1972**

Balance of Funds at 31st October, 1971	...	...	...	£296.96
Donations received during year	...	...	...	78.00
Interest received on temporary loan	...	...	...	16.56
				<u>£391.52</u>
<b>Deduct:</b>				
Three Grants paid for Accommodation at Hotel	...	...		21.00
Balance of Funds held at 31st October, 1972	...	...	...	<u><u>£370.52</u></u>

# Fair Isle Endowment Trust

## Summary of Accounts for the year ended 31st October 1972

	Capital	Revenue
Fund at 31st October 1971 ... ..	£7238	£59
Gain on Realisation of Investment ... ..	772	
Income for year per Schedule ... ..		143
Income on Deposits for earlier year ... ..		6
Income Tax Refund—to follow ... ..		—
	<u>£8010</u>	<u>£208</u>
Remittances to FIBOT ... ..		£164
Expenses ... ..	23	9
		<u>173</u>
Fund at 31st October 1972 per Schedule ...	<u>£7987</u>	<u>£35</u>

### SCHEDULE

	Capital		Revenue
	Market Value	Cost	
Grimsby Corporation £4325 Stock (Sold) ...			£25
Lanarkshire County Council £1000 5½% Stock 1977/79 ... ..	£820	£896	23
Treasury Stock £1000 8¼% Stock 1987/90 ...	930	996	24
British Investment Trust £1530 7½% Conv. Deb. Stock 1996 ... ..	2869	2728	52
Whitbread & Co. Ltd. 840 'A' Ord 25p Shares ...	844	314	19
	<u>£5463</u>	<u>£4934</u>	
Heritable Property			
21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh ... ..		3050	
Cash Balance ... ..		3	
		<u>£7987</u>	<u>£143</u>

## WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1972

ROGER A. BROAD

Judy and I were resident on the island from 6 March - 7 December, arriving on the first date with Eric Meek, my assistant for the season. Digby Cyrus joined us for the summer and helped with the seabird ringing. Under Judy's supervision, the catering and domestic duties were carried out by Mary Marsh, Beatrice Porter, Debbie Spencer and Chris Meek (Eric's wife), who were resident at the hostel for varying lengths of time through the year. Jane Wheeler (Field) helped both in the kitchen and the hostel, giving us many hours of her time, which was particularly welcome during the busy spells. Stewart Thomson (Quoy) continued to carry out caretaking activities and was responsible for the premises in our absence during the winter. It has been a pleasure to work with all our staff and we are indebted to them for their efforts through the year. They contributed much to the running of the Observatory and the atmosphere of the hostel.

In the hostel the busiest times continue to be the Spring Bank Holiday period and September, but there was a welcome upsurge of visitors staying during the summer months of June and July. 352 visitors stayed at the Observatory between 23 March and 15 November for a total of 384 visitor weeks. This figure compares favourably with the first full year that the new building was in operation (1970 : 340 visitors, 416 visitor weeks). However, with transport available during the summer on three days a week, there is an increasing tendency for more short-term visitors to come to the island. Three young people benefited from the John Harrison Memorial Fund. Representatives of the FIBOT trustees and executive committee staying at the Observatory included George and Irene Waterston and the Rev. Charles Edie, while Dr Ian Pennie and Dr Peter Slater visited us while they were on the island.

### Island Events

The stability of the small community has been considerably strengthened by the occupation of three dwellings which stood empty at the end of last year. Tommy and Sheila Stout and their young son Alec moved into Springfield from Shetland. Tommy, a native of Fair Isle, is now on the crew of the Good Shepherd. Brian Wilson (Schoolton) and his bride Mary were married during the summer and moved into the completely reconstructed and modernised Houll. Dave and Jane Wheeler have made Fair Isle their new home, settling in at Field—another modernised croft home. Dave has already begun the task

of cultivating land that has not been tilled for several decades.

It is sad to record that 'Uncle' Willie Stout (Lower Stoneybrake) died on the island early in the year. Babs Stout, also of Lower Stoneybrake, has since moved to the Old Peoples' Home in Lerwick, and the house stands empty.

Three children were born during the year: a daughter, Kelda, to Noreen and Alistair Tait (South Light); a daughter, Lee, to Ann and Hugh Arthur (North Light); and our son, Adam. With these additions, the total number resident on the island in the autumn was 71, including Michael Stout (Barkland), now at school in Lerwick. Of these, 27 were Lighthouse keepers, Observatory staff, missionary, teacher, nurse and their dependants. There are still only 3 children receiving full-time education at the island school, but this figure should soon be increased, and Mary Wilson (Houll) is running a newly formed and well attended pre-school playgroup.

During the year, the island welcomed back several 'old faces'. For the second summer in succession the island was without its regular nurse, Mrs Sheena MacKinlay, who was recuperating after damaging a tendon. Mrs Pamela Gulland and Miss Helen Smart, who have both previously nursed on the island, returned to stand in for Sheena. Chris Oldfield and Simon Martin, who were on Fair Isle in 1970, diving on the wreck of the El Gran Grifon, returned with Alec Crawford and were again diving in Fair Isle waters. The Orcadia brought a party of 175 visitors to the island from Orkney on 29 July, but the National Trust cruise ship, Regina Maris, was less fortunate and had to miss its scheduled stop at Fair Isle owing to bad weather, disappointing both the party on board and the whole of the island.

For the islanders, the lambing season was not as good as it might have been, with losses of hill lambs, born during a period of cold, wet weather. For those that survived there was again a good market. The season saw the end of a long tradition, with the few remaining sheep being taken down from Sheep Rock. Two boats worked the lobsters and some good catches were taken; however, the weather prevented exploitation of much of the west side.

The International Voluntary Service again organised summer work camps on Fair Isle and their chief project was the construction of a large outhouse at Field. This was in use before the end of the year. Another change, which returning visitors will notice, is the absence of telegraph poles south of Ferny Cup—these were removed when the GPO put the lines underground. The change is most noticeable across the marsh at Gilsetter.

The most important event for the island during the year has

been the replacement of Good Shepherd II by Good Shepherd III. Before going out of service on the ferry and mail run to Grutness, the old boat was hired on two occasions by hostel visitors to go to Foula, and to circumnavigate Fair Isle. Immediately after her last return trip to Grutness on 10 August, she was taken south to the mainland of Scotland, where she was handed over to her new owners, to be taken to her new home in South Wales. The crew picked up the long-awaited Good Shepherd III at the shipyard at Gourrock and returned with her to Fair Isle on 20 August. She has an all steel hull and deck-house, and with her powerful engine and modern refinements, including radar, shows many advantages over the old boat. As predicted, the crossing to Sumburgh has been shortened by at least 30 minutes on the single trip. However, the increased size and weight have added their problems, especially at the home port when manoeuvring her onto the slipway.

Heavy contractors' vehicles were brought onto the island and work started on improving the old wartime airstrip. The old runway is being lengthened to the SW as far as the old Sukka Mire dam and widened along its whole length on the SE side. It is hoped that when the work is finished next year, not only will the existing safety margins be increased, but the Loganair pilots should have some choice in their approach and take-off directions.

### Acknowledgments

We are very grateful for the many kindnesses shown to us by the islanders and for their continued permission to search their crops for migrants. Gordon Barnes has again been a great help, and the records he has kept during the winter months are particularly valuable. Our thanks also go to the divers, who ferried us to and from the Holms, and to the Royal Scottish Museum for the continued loan of a collection of bird skins. Richard Richardson's fine vignettes illustrating this report are again very much appreciated and our thanks also go to those who have supplied photographs.

Through the year many people have helped us in some way or another, and for their help and advice, and for their gifts, donations and additions to the library we are most grateful.

### Ornithology

It was a very interesting year with a few small-moderate sized "falls" in both the spring and autumn, and, as can be seen from the following table, a wide variety of species were logged in all months of the season.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
No. of species	81	113	137	98	91	100	127	118	82

May again proved to be the best month of the year for variety but September was not far behind. During September an amazing run of rarities boosted the annual species, total which at the time of going to press was 198 (including a Phalarope spp not specifically identified). Three other records are still being considered. A minimum of 46 individual birds of 20 species have been accepted by the British Rarities Committee and amongst these, apart from a good number of almost regular species (Short-toed Lark, Arctic Warbler, Scarlet Rosefinch, Yellow-breasted, Rustic and Little Buntings) there were several that have been recorded less frequently including: Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Alpine Swift, Lanceolated and Aquatic Warblers, Lesser Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Rosy Starling, Arctic Redpoll, Two-barred Crossbill and one species which made its first appearance at Fair Isle—a White-rumped Sandpiper. An equally extensive list of reportable rarities and species of infrequent occurrence in Scotland has been omitted from the above synopsis but may be found in the systematic list.

The summer months provided a fair number of migrants and an interesting influx of Crossbills but our interests at this time continued to be with the breeding seabirds. Our concern for these vulnerable species is heightened by the growth of oil interests in the North Sea and in Shetland waters and it is pertinent that in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds we are making sample counts of particular seabird colonies to monitor seasonal and annual changes in population level. Similarly, the Nature Conservancy financed a pilot aerial photographic survey of selected seabird colonies and it is hoped that the preliminary results may be of use as a reference against which any long term population change could be quantified. In co-operation with Dr Mike Harris (Nature Conservancy) we have also set out two study areas specifically to monitor any change in the status of the Puffin at Fair Isle.

### **Spring Migration**

Returning on 6th March we found Oystercatchers were already well distributed and a good selection of migrants on the island. Fair numbers of Lapwing, Redwings, Blackbirds and Skylarks were noted and a pair of Pintail, single Common Scoter and a drake Goosander were also seen on our first day back. March continued in this vein and with light to moderate winds, between south and south west for much of the first three weeks, we recorded a good variety of species which were making the most of the mild weather to push north. Towards the end of the month we recorded some small but promising arrivals.

On 7th we counted 130 Lapwings and a single Stonechat was the first of a small passage during the month. By 9th Stonechats had increased to 5 and Long-eared Owl, Robin, Dunnock, Chaffinch and Reed Bunting all appeared. On 10th we logged 8 Mistle Thrushes—a particularly good number for Fair Isle. The first Meadow Pipit was seen on 12th, a drake Shoveler and Yellowhammer on 14th and the Goosander first seen on 6th was picked up dead on 16th. A Bar-tailed Godwit was present on 17th and a Goldcrest the next day. The 19th was quite promising with both Blackbirds and Meadow Pipits noticeably increased, Ringed Plovers were displaying on Buness and another drake Goosander, 2 Dunlin and a Pied Wagtail were recorded. When our first visitors arrived on 23rd we had little else to report but things improved rapidly. Goldcrests appeared on 25th (8 trapped), Lapwings, Meadow Pipits and *alba* Wagtails all increased and the first Lesser Black-backed Gull was seen. The 26th, a real Spring day, saw the first two Wheatears and a pair of Ring Ouzels. Goldcrests were also a little higher and a fine male Hen Harrier and a Grey Wagtail were seen on the first trap round. The following day was also interesting; the first Puffin was seen offshore and an early Chiffchaff was at Setter. A Woodlark was recorded and 2 Black Redstarts trapped. The first Bonxie was seen on 29th. Overnight rain on 30th cleared early in the morning and with the wind in the east, we noted small parties of Common and Black-headed Gulls moving north through the day. 3 first year Glaucous Gulls were ashore and 35 Curlew were also moving north. Other species recorded included 3 Herons, 2 Long-tailed Ducks, Woodcock and a Black Redstart, but the best bird of the day was undoubtedly a Slavonian Grebe in full breeding plumage in the North Haven.

On 1st April most of the northward movement seemed to have stopped but Chaffinches increased to 10, the first *iliacus* Redwing was trapped and a few Puffins were ashore in the early hours. The next week produced some new arrivals but no consolidated passage. 2 Yellowhammers and another Black Redstart on 2nd, 6 Whoopers, a roving party of 14 Ravens and a Woodlark on 6th, Merlin on 8th and a Green Sandpiper on 9th. This last date was also the first time that Puffins were ashore in strength.

The wind backed through south south east on 10th to north east on 11th and with rain on 10th several new arrivals were noted including Water Rail, 2 Willow/Chiffs, Mealy Redpoll and 3 Yellowhammers. These birds were further supplemented on 11th by a larger arrival. Common Gulls at 80 on 10th increased further to 150. A female Sparrowhawk was one of the 40 birds trapped, thrushes increased and Robins reached 25. A northern Bullfinch, 40 Bramblings and 5 Reed Buntings



were also noted. 38 birds were trapped on 12th and these included the first Hawfinch to be ringed on Fair Isle—it was trapped at Setter. Wheatears (20) and Robins (35) were the main species to show further increases. The following day many birds had moved on but a Merganser, a female Goosander and the first female Wheatears were recorded while the 5th Black Redstart was ringed. From 13th passerine movements were almost non-existent until the end of April, and passage was generally in low gear. A dark phase Arctic Skua was over Byerwall on 14th and a second summer plumaged Slavonian Grebe was at the North Haven where it was trapped the next day. The first Whimbrel and a Knot were also recorded on 15th, 2 Whoopers on 18th, Greenshank on 19th, 150 Curlew, again heading north, on 20th when 2 Greylag were also logged. A further 30 Grey Geese were too far away for identification. Corncrake, Moorhen, Stock Dove and the first Sand Martin appeared on 20th. 34 northern Golden Plover on 21st, a pair of Pintail on 23rd and on 24th when both Glaucous and Iceland Gulls were seen, small parties of Curlew arrived on the island during the day. On 25th a female Sparrowhawk was flushed from the corpse of the first Collared Dove of the year! 3 Pink-feet and a Barnacle Goose flew over. Jack Snipe and Grasshopper Warbler were new on 26th but most people were on Ward Hill watching a sub-adult Snowy Owl. A Black-tailed Godwit was located on 27th.

The 28th was wet and little was recorded but the wind backed to south east overnight and although rain persisted for most of 29th, for those who were prepared to get wet, there was plenty of interest. Fieldfares had increased to 80 but Bramblings were the most noticeable arrival—150 were logged. 2 Sparrowhawks, the first Redstarts, Grasshopper Warbler, Siskin, 7 Reed Buntings and 14 Wood Pigeons were also new but 2 Shore Larks found at Skerryholm were the cream of the day. Most of the common species increased further the next day when Robins were also important. Wood Pigeons increased to 31—an unusually good number for Fair Isle and this flock stayed for many days around Malcolm's Head. Additional species recorded included an Osprey, 4 Blackcaps, 2 Lesser Whitethroats and the first Tree Pipits and Yellow Wagtail of the Spring.

In the month of May some good arrivals were noted on several days but considering that the wind was in an easterly 'quarter for 23 days in the month, we might have hoped for more! The first four days opened the month quietly with most of the birds that had arrived during the previous two days trickling away. The 2 Shore Larks were refound on 1st and the first 2 Swallows were seen on 3rd when there was also a pair of Shoveler, 3 Black-tailed Godwits and 8 Rooks. A female



Sparrowhawk was trapped, and a male the next day when a small influx of Bramblings also occurred. A Hoopoe at the Observatory on 5th may have been seen at the North Light on 3rd May, but a Shore Lark was new as were the first Wryneck, a Black Redstart and a few more Bramblings. This was the beginning of a good spell which persisted until 8th, many species increasing a little each day. During this time the first House Martin, Whinchat, Bluethroat, Sedge Warbler, White-throat, Spotted Flycatcher and Ortolan were logged. Peaks recorded at this time were Wryneck 7, Ring Ousel 20, Whinchat 11, Black Redstart 4, Grasshopper Warbler 4, Lesser Whitethroat 9, while other species included Great Northern Diver, Honey Buzzard, Corncrake, Bullfinch and 5 Shelduck. Some species continued to trickle through until 12th when Swallows reached 20 and Tree Pipits 18, and the Wood Pigeon flock totalled 40. The first Turtle Dove was seen on 11th and the first Pied Flycatcher the next day. Quail and Marsh Harrier were recorded on 9th, 2 Shore Larks on 11th and a *flava* Wagtail on 13th was probably the Grey-headed Wagtail identified the next day when a second *flava* was also present. Gordon Barnes saw a Dotterel on 15th and on 16th Johnny Simpson found a female Snowy Owl on Ward Hill, which was well seen by everyone. The log on 17th was the leanest for several days and 7 Collared Doves were the only noticeable arrivals. Similarly, there were few signs of any change the next day until late in the afternoon as drizzle and low cloud spread across the island. Although the south of the island had been well covered in the morning, with the arrival of birds in the trapping area and along the West Cliffs after 1500 hours a rapid reassessment was made in the south after tea. This accounted for some good tallies including: 25 Whinchats, 40 Redstarts, 2 Black Redstarts, the first Garden Warbler, 50 Willow Warblers, 8 Chiffchaffs, Wood Warbler and 13 Tree Pipits. These figures were eclipsed the next day as most species increased further overnight and a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by everyone. The evening log records: 4 Turtle Doves, 8 Cuckoos, 4 Wrynecks, 14 Ring Ouzels, 100 Redstarts, 4 Bluethroats, 3 Sedge Warblers, 9 Blackcaps, 2 Garden Warblers, 10 White-throats and 6 Lesser Whitethroats, 120 Willow Warblers, 5 Spotted and 50 Pied Flycatchers, 25 Tree Pipits, and 4 Ortolans. Some birds had evidently moved out by the next day but fog on 20th hampered an accurate census and totals were generally lower. Spotted Flycatchers, however, did show a small increase and a Shore Lark and 2 Sanderlings were new arrivals. The following few days were quiet in comparison and the ringing total on the 21st reflects this—only one bird ringed. A Coot and a Honey Buzzard were seen on 21st, the first Swift on 22nd and a Quail on 24th-25th. On the latter date young Ravens were

on the wing and 12 Collared Doves, 10 Sedge Warblers and a new Wood Warbler indicated that passage was still under way.

On 26th, the early morning promised very little, but while I was going to the airstrip to meet the plane at 12.30 hours, a Bluethroat appeared outside the Observatory, several Garden Warblers were at the Plantation and Gordon found an Icterine at Setter. In the afternoon another 3 Icterines were located at Leogh, and a good selection of other species were seen around the south of the Island, including : 3 Reed, 30 Garden and 40 Willow Warblers, 2 Red-backed Shrikes and a Rustic Bunting. A Scaup, Wood Sandpiper and 4 Bluethroats were new on 27th but apart from these arrivals, most other species barely maintained their numbers, some even decreased. Thereafter the end of the month closed in low key although 30 House Martins were notable on 30th.

### Summer

June and July were not remarkably summery, but despite the entries in our weather book for overcast skies, light drizzle and fog, some of the crofters still ran out of water and had to carry it to their houses. However, on fine days the sun shone for hours—on 29th June we were experiencing the same fine weather as Lerwick where they recorded 17.1 hours of sunshine ! A moderate swell ran for much of the summer and our seabird ringing was confined to the east side and to the accessible geos but the ringing totals for June and July (1545 and 2161 respectively) reflect partly the success of our activities, and partly the success of the breeding seabirds. It is good to report that in general most seabirds had a good season, although mortality amongst recently-fledged Kittiwakes again resulted in many corpses being washed ashore on some of the west coast beaches. This year the deaths were apparently unconnected with inclement weather.

For the third year in succession Common Terns took up residence on the Stack O' North Haven, and through the summer a pair and at least one other bird were present. This year they succeeded in raising three chicks to the flying stage but one died shortly after fledging. Curlews nested for the second time on record. They made their nest in Gilsetter where they hatched all four eggs and reared two to the flying stage. Previously, although birds have been present in some summers, they have only bred in one other year—1968. Pied Wagtails nested for the first time on the island, making their nest on the Gully bank where they remained undiscovered, despite regular driving of the Gully trap, until the day before the young fledged. A second brood was raised nearby. A pair of Swallows also attempted to breed but got no further than sticking a narrow band of mud to a beam in the Observatory garage.

Swallows have bred successfully on the island. It is sad to include Peregrines amongst the unusual breeding species but despite four different birds on the island (one almost certainly an immature bird) during the breeding season there was no positive evidence of breeding. They last nested successfully in 1969.

Apart from the seabirds, which provided constant interest in the summer, there was still much to be seen ashore. A good series of oddities accounted for much of the interest as the last consolidated fall of any size in the Spring trickled away soon after it began on 26th May. A Red-backed Shrike was found on 2nd June, a new Icterine Warbler on 3rd when Spotted Flycatchers increased to 10 and Swallows were a little more abundant. Swallows featured again on 6th when hirundines showed a peak of activity, 50 Swallows, 40 House Martins and 4 Sand Martins were recorded and 15 Swifts, so there was plenty of company for the Alpine Swift that spent most of the day hawking insects at Troila Geo. On 7th a Red-backed Shrike and a Nightingale were trapped and the next day a male Rustic Bunting was at the Plantation. On the 9th a Reed Warbler was rapidly forgotten as the main excitement centred around the third Snowy Owl of the year—an adult male, found on Ward Hill where Eric was fortunate to catch it. The bird stayed on the island for several days and was feeding well on the plentiful rabbits. 2 Icterines were located on 10th and one again on 14th. A Scarlet Rosefinch was trapped on 19th but of more significance was a female Crossbill at the Gully, where it was trapped. This bird was the herald of a sizeable irruption on the Continent, and a good series of these confiding birds brightened the summer on Fair Isle. Parties could often be found feeding behind the Observatory or beside the North Light road at Wyrvie, where they appeared to be feeding first on the old heather seeds and later on drying thrift heads.

A Glaucous Gull was seen on 20th and the second Crossbill picked up dead on 21st but 4 more arrived next day. A Long-eared Owl trapped on 25th was lightly spattered with fulmar oil. A similar case was found last year during the summer but it was in a worse plight. The sheep cru was the centre of activity on 26th while the hill sheep were sheared and helpers from the hostel had a bonus for their efforts—a Subalpine Warbler taken in the Plantation. An early dispersal of Lapwings was noted on 26th and on 28th Curlew and Black-headed Gulls were also heading south.

The first two weeks of July proved to be the main period of Crossbill activity with up to 50 recorded on several days. A Nightingale was seen on 1st and a male Black-headed Bunting trapped on 4th and the following day the Subalpine Warbler was seen for the last time, but the 8th was the real red-

letter day of the summer. One of the hostel visitors found an adult male Two-barred Crossbill feeding with a small party of Common Crossbill just behind the Observatory early in the morning. Meanwhile another couple of visitors were watching an adult Rosy Starling at the Plantation and it was on our way to find this bird that Eric spotted an immature Long-tailed Skua over the airstrip. By the evening, when most people had caught up with all three rarities, the Lifer Fund did a particularly good trade !

On 16th, when the temperature soared to over 70°F, 40 Swifts were feeding over the island in the evening. The following evening while attempting to catch Storm Petrels at Sheena Wheetha we were tantalized by the sight of a Leach's Petrel clinging to the wrong side of the net, before it flew away. A few waders made early appearances, like the Lapwings and Curlews at the end of June, but generally speaking numbers were slow to build up and not until the very end of July could a good selection be found. The best place for the waders was around the rocks at the South Light and here comic tern family parties began to assemble from 21st July. This flock built up to 83 on 26th and the majority of those identified were Arctics. Common Gulls also increased on several days at the end of the month and on 31st 115 were counted.

### Autumn Migration

Waders and other non-passerines continued to provide the interest in early August with movements of passerines at a low level until the last week of the month. However, there was a brief period of activity, mid-month between 12th-14th. On 1st-2nd good numbers of returning waders included Green-shank, 8 Knot, 22 Dunlin, 10 Sanderling and a Reeve and although there was a good flock of Turnstones at this time they increased further to a high count of 77 on 9th. By this date, Reeves had also increased to 4 and a Shoveler and 3 Shelducks were recorded. An early Sparrowhawk was found on 7th and trapped on 10th and on 11th a Short-eared Owl was flushed at Wyrvie where the first autumn Fieldfare was also seen.

On 12th August, Gordon reported a Little Gull, and a Wry-neck and 12 *alba* Wagtails were seen during the day. In the evening, on the last trap round, Eric found an Aquatic Warbler in the Gully and this was trapped after a short drive. The following day a handful of new arrivals, including a Wood Warbler and, as to be expected, the first Barred Warbler, were recorded. 4 Herons and 3 Green Sandpipers were seen but by far the most numerous migrants were Common Gulls of which 500 arrived during the day. On 14th a few more warblers arrived including Wood Warbler and another Barred Warbler but Aquatic Warblers stole the day. The first was found in the mor-

ming in the reeds at Shirva, the second at Schoolton in the afternoon and the third at Field. All were trapped and ringed. Aquatics were seen on most days to 23rd August but it was difficult to determine whether these birds were ringed or not.

The number of Ruffs increased to 8 and Bar-tailed Godwit and 2 Short-eared Owls were recorded on 14th and a Merlin on 17th. The first small wave of Cormorants passed south on 18th after which flocks were seen on many days until mid-September, but until 26th Fair Isle was relatively quiet. A pair of Tufted Ducks, 2 Crossbills and a 'blue' Fulmar were probably the most interesting birds at this time, although on 23rd 3 Scarlet Rosefinches were found, one at Setter and the other two on the heather at Wyrvie. The next day, the two at Wyrvie had moved to the bottom of North Restensgeo where they were feeding on chickweed and a Black Redstart was seen nearby.

An amazing total of 6 Rosefinches were located on 26th when there were increases in several species. Between 26th-29th light South East winds prevailed and many of the common continental migrants appeared for the first time in any number this autumn. A few Barred Warblers arrived and this species was then recorded daily until early October. Species appearing on 26th increased daily to 29th when Willow Warblers (45) and Pied Flycatchers (60) were the commonest small migrants. Wood Warblers are generally scarce migrants and we were pleased to record a peak of 5 on 28th. White Wagtails were also passing through and although well-distributed on the island by day they made censusing easier by flocking to roost in the crops at Setter—where there was a peak count of 60 on 27th. Good numbers of Cormorants were noted through this period and another influx of Common Gulls was noted on 26th. A Wryneck was seen on 27th but it was on 29th that we recorded a good variety of the less usual species. A first year Reed/Marsh Warbler was found in the crops at Shirva and we put up a net to catch it. This we succeeded in doing and at the same time a previously unseen Hippolais warbler turned up in the bottom of the net. This proved to be a Melodious Warbler—only the fourth Fair Isle record. Later in the day we had a good comparison when an Icterine was taken in the Gully trap. Digby left us in the morning and missed our excitement, but he found his own by spotting an adult Long-tailed Skua on the crossing. A good selection of birds remained over the last two days of August and although the main arrival had ended on 29th several new birds were found. There were 2 Wrynecks seen on 30th when Garden Warblers did increase a little but a Yellow-breasted Bunting found at North Grind was the bird of the day. On 31st a Long-eared Owl was seen in the cliffs at Restensgeo and a Spotted Crake taken in the Vaadal.

September was a month in which the prevailing winds blew mainly from south west and north west and the infrequent easterlies were short-lived. Falls of returning continental migrants were thus generally small, but for the variety of rarities, often from widely separated origins, September '72 will long be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to witness them. The first few days of the month were slow to start although Scarlet Rosefinches continued to come and go and there were 5 present on 2nd. A young Red-backed Shrike was present on 3rd when a Jack Snipe put in an early appearance. There was an increased passage of Wheatears during the first week; a few Merlins were also moving and on 5th we controlled a Shetland-ringed bird of the year. A Curlew Sandpiper was with other waders in the South Harbour area on 5th and on 7th Gordon found an immature Citrine Wagtail by his pool at Setter. On 8th a Bluethroat appeared and the first mealy Redpoll of the autumn was seen.

Several species increased on 9th, the first Robin and Snow Buntings of the autumn appeared, both Rosefinches and Barred Warblers increased and a Wood Warbler was new. A Yellow-breasted Bunting was found at Kennaby and a party on their way back from watching this bird saw 3 Short-eared Owls at dusk by Field. A small, but noticeable influx of Snipe was recorded on 10th and on 11th the Citrine Wagtail was rediscovered on the beach at Finnikuoy. Flushed from its hiding place it gave itself up in the single dyke trap! A trickle of migrants occurred overnight on 12th and the next day several of the small migrants increased marginally. There were 2 Wry-necks, 6 Barred Warblers and another Wood Warbler on the island, and the following day 2 Jack Snipe, a Great Spotted Woodpecker, presumably of Scandinavian origin, Marsh Warbler and a Lapland Bunting. A Phalarope was seen on 15th when a pair of Pintail and Ruff and Reeve were also new. Numbers of passerines showed slight increases again on 10th when 8 Herons and a few duck were also noted and 2 more Great Spotted Woodpeckers arrived.

Eric and Chris caused great excitement and frantic activity on 17th when they located a Buff-breasted Sandpiper just short of the peak of Ward Hill. In very poor visibility the bird could not be relocated until dusk, when it was refound at the original spot. With an American wader newly arrived on the island it was somewhat of a surprise to find a young Woodchat Shrike outside the Observatory the next day. Its region of origin was likely to have been Southern Europe. Barred Warblers were still present in strength, Jack Snipe increased and 7 Greylags were seen. On 19th our fortunes continued, Barreds increased to 7 (3 new birds were ringed) and an Icterine Warbler was seen in the Shirva area. Nearby, the second Melodious Warbler



of the year was trapped during the morning. The real excitement of the day came in the afternoon with the discovery and trapping of a Lanceolated Warbler in the Hegri Burn at Leogh. This species breeds no closer than North East Russia, and this together with the Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Woodchat Shrike (both still on the island) gave us an enviable tally for the day. 9 Herons and 7 Wigeon were also seen on 19th and the following day a further 22 Wigeon and 29 Pink-feet were seen. Sea watchers were rewarded by a Great Northern Diver and 25 Sooty Shearwaters on 21st and the following day more grey geese were recorded.

Light to variable winds overnight on 23rd were responsible for another minor arrival on 24th. Barreds continued to be present in good numbers and 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers were seen. A few Chaffinches and Bramblings appeared and a particularly white-rumped bird, trapped from a newly arrived party of 8 mealy Redpolls proved to be an Arctic Redpoll. These mealies were the first batch from an irruptive movement that brought good numbers to Fair Isle in the remainder of September and October. An Arctic Warbler was found at the Houll and seen by many people by the end of the day. A Blue-throat was seen on 25th when 2 Rosefinches were probably new arrivals and Redwings increased to 40.

Early on 26th a Lesser Grey Shrike was trapped at Setter and when we had finished examining this fine bird we went out to find Goldcrests increased, Snipe much in evidence and 4 Great Spotted Woodpeckers. Yet another rarity was found in the afternoon when Brian Wilson reported a Golden Oriole at the Shop. Light South Easterly winds after a period of calm produced another exciting day on 27th. Many of the birds arrived during the day and by log call it was evident that Yellow-broweds were the commonest species of warbler on the island. An amazing influx brought a total of 12 onto the island. Mallard, Teal, 7 Jack Snipe, the first three-figure count of Redwings for the autumn, 2 Bluethroats and a Richard's Pipit all made for an exciting day. The next day a further 2 Bluethroats were located and Lapland Buntings increased to 6 while a late Corncrake was found at Quoy. The 29th brought 3 Barnacle Geese and the last rarity of the month was a Short-toed Lark—which made a protracted stay, being last reported on 27th October.

On the whole, October was a mild month and the first of the winter gales wasn't until 23rd after which they became more frequent. Visibility was good and rainfall below average until 23rd. October has always been the best month of the year for thrush movements and this year was true to form with several distinct influxes. Redwings outnumbered Fieldfares early in the month but the position was reversed later on. As in the

Spring, Blackbirds were noticeable by their absence. Small passerines had a good showing in association with the early October thrush movements.

A small increase in Song Thrushes (20) and Snow Buntings (30) was recorded on 1st when a very late Turtle Dove was seen but with the wind backing south east overnight a good number of birds were in the trapping area by first light on 2nd, after what must have been a quick passage. The main volume of birds seemed to arrive between 0900-1100 hours and thrushes were to the fore with 400 Redwings twice as numerous as Song Thrushes and 50 each of Fieldfare and Blackbird. We also found 18 Ring Ousels, most of which were in the cliffs. Associated with the thrushes was a good drift movement of small passerines with Blackcaps (75), Garden Warblers (40) and Goldcrests (50) showing impressive numbers for the autumn on Fair Isle. Smaller numbers of Redstarts and Robins were logged, 2 Barred Warblers, 12 Chiffchaffs and a second smaller wave of Yellow-broweds (5) were recorded together with 110 Bramblings, 45 mealy Redpolls, a Bluethroat, a Richard's Pipit and a Little Bunting for good measure. A steady trickle of birds through the trapping area in the morning gave us one of our most productive day's ringing. 90 new birds were handled and this figure included 25 Blackcaps and 10 Garden Warblers. On 3rd most species were much reduced but the Bramblings remained and as the flock of 110 came in to roost in the trapping area we netted a good sample.

A first-year Long-tailed Skua was on the sea at Duttfield on 4th but after a short while it took off and was last seen disappearing near Buness. A few geese were moving on 5th-6th when Greylag, Pink-foot and Barnacle were recorded. Goldcrests increased on 5th and thrushes showed increases on 6th but these were only the heralds of the Redwings that arrived the next day, when 2000 were seen. Another Little Bunting joined the first at Shirva and 2 Water Rails were also new finds. A male Crossbill was seen 9th. A smaller influx of finches occurred on 10th when Bramblings increased to 80 and there were 12 Chaffinches. A very late Swift and a Long-tailed Duck were recorded. The latter species increased to 14 on 12th when a late Arctic Skua was seen offshore, and 2 Barreds and a Yellow-browed Warbler were seen on the island.

With drizzle and low cloud early on 13th Redwings arrived in force accompanied by lesser numbers of Fieldfares. In the evening when the skies cleared the majority left and 9500 Redwings and 700 Fieldfares were seen to head out southwards. During the next week there was a trickle of Blackcaps and lingering Lesser Whitethroats, small parties of Whooper Swans, Greylags and Barnacle Geese, a Grey Plover on 15th, another male Crossbill on 17th and a second Arctic Redpoll on 19th.



Another influx of thrushes broke this quiet spell on 21st and by this date Fieldfares were almost as numerous as Redwings (400 and 600 respectively). Starlings were moving south all day and by evening we estimated that a total of 1000 must have moved through the island. Kestrel, Merlin and Sparrowhawk were recorded and Woodcock reached 20 on the hill. As with two of the previous thrush arrivals another Little Bunting was found.

The 22nd-27th was another slack period with heavy rain and gales preventing observations on some days, but another wave of thrushes arrived on 28th with Fieldfares as the dominant species. 3500 Fieldfares, 800 Redwings and 350 Blackbirds (the year's best Blackbird total) were accompanied by another diurnal passage of Starlings through the island. 5 Robins, 7 Goldcrests, 2 Yellow-hammers and the only autumn Great Grey Shrike were associated with this arrival. Mealy Redpolls reached 80 and 70 Lapwings was the largest flock to be recorded in the autumn. Most species decreased the next day although Redwings increased to 1500. A male Sparrowhawk was seen and a party of Hooded Crows was seen to leave the island in a northerly direction! Greenfinch and Siskin were new on 30th but the most surprising spectacle of the day was a young Arctic Tern looking for food in the North Haven. A small party of Greenfinches and 62 Snow Buntings reached the Isle on the last day of the month.

November and the few days of December that we remained on the island were not remarkable, there were the usual tail end thrush movements and small numbers of the typical winter visitors including Whooper Swan, Geese, Goldeneye, Long-tailed Duck, Snipe, Water Rail and Long-eared Owl. Glaucous Gulls were also quite regular and on 9th November when large numbers of gulls were sheltering ashore there was a minimum of 10 on the island. However Snow Buntings, the first small influx of which was recorded at the end of October, increased dramatically in the first week of November, there were 400 on 3rd and 2 days later there was a flock of 1000 at Setter where they were feeding mainly on the stubble. It is interesting to note that a very small proportion of these birds were adult males. On 6th a small influx of thrushes in the morning brought 550 Fieldfares onto the island and the same day a late Bonxie and a male Stonechat were seen. A male Pied Wagtail and 2 Whitefronted Geese were recorded on 10th and the only Waxwing of the year was seen on 11th when Lapwings and Turnstones were present in larger numbers than at any time since October. On 19th a few more Blackbirds were recorded and a Robin, while the following day 40 Woodcock were seen on the hill. An interesting selection of species was recorded

with a small influx on 21st. Blackbirds were much increased to 300 and Redwings and Fieldfares increased in smaller numbers. 6 Robins, Water Rail, Long-eared Owl, 3 Bramblings and 200 Snow Buntings were also freshly arrived. A female Sparrowhawk was also seen and she was joined by a male on 28th when both were flushed from the Plantation at dusk. These birds seemed content to linger and could be seen going to roost at the Plantation into the first week of December. An odd wader seen in poor visibility on 28th November outside the Observatory, was identified as a White-rumped Sandpiper—a species new to Fair Isle—and confirmation of its identity was obtained when it was caught and examined in the hand on 30th. It remained feeding on the stream on Landberg until 2nd December and this, the second American wader to be recorded during the year, was a fine bird on which to close the season.

## Ringling Details

At the beginning of the year the one remaining roadside trap was extensively rebuilt and major repairs, mainly rewiring, were carried out on the Hjon Dyke and the Axell traps. The remaining traps required little attention and a new small Heligoland was erected across the reedy burn at Quoy. Although the majority of birds were trapped in Heligolands, our catches were supplemented by the use of mist nets, which were particularly effective at the Gully and the Plantation for roosting finches. Dazzle netting added some very interesting species to our captures including Slavonian Grebe, Pink-foot and Glaucous Gulls, and drop traps were used with some effect on a number of occasions. The technique used for catching Jack Snipe—walking a horizontally held mist nest over a crouching bird—accounted for at least half our record total of this species (10) and this method was also found to be effective for Quail and Crossbills.

Our seabird ringing programme was highly fruitful, a large number of interesting recaptures were handled and just short of 1,000 auks were ringed, with record totals of Razorbills (225) and Guillemots (460).

Overall, a grand total of 6,638 birds of 117 species were ringed during the year and of these 2,421 were pulli (nestlings). The monthly ringing totals are shown below.

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov- Dec
No. of birds	123	292	473	1545	2161	527	436	729	353
No. of species	14	31	58	44	36	31	45	42	28

The high totals for June and July are due to the contribution of the seabird ringing programme.

Apart from the seabirds several species achieved good totals including Sparrowhawk (7), Collared Dove (7), Cuckoo (7), Long-eared Owl (8), Black Redstart (7), Wood Warbler (9), Yellow-browed Warbler (8) and Scarlet Rosefinch (8). Many of the birds contributing to the high totals of Redpolls (122) and Bramblings (123) were taken from roosting flocks.

White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Snowy Owl and Hawfinch were all species ringed for the first time on Fair Isle and a varied selection of other unusual species were handled, including Spotted Crake, Short-toed Lark, Nightingale, Lanceolated, Aquatic (4), Melodious, Subalpine and Arctic Warblers, Citrine Wagtail, Lesser Grey and Woodchat Shrikes, Arctic Redpoll (2), Black-headed, Rustic and Little Buntings.

Away from Fair Isle our rings were used by Dr B. Marshall on Shetland, who ringed 119 birds of 11 species. The total was composed mainly of pullus gulls and waders but included 6 young Merlins, 37 Storm Petrels, a Wryneck and a Wood Warbler.

The annual and accumulative ringing totals and recovery totals have been revised to give a more meaningful picture of the Fair Isle ringing progress and recoveries. Only birds actually ringed on Fair Isle are included in the following table although any rings issued to Fair Isle Bird Observatory but used away from the island will continue to be mentioned in the general text. Details of all distant recoveries of birds ringed away from the island with our rings will continue to be shown in full in the recovery section following the totals list, but will not be totalled in the list.

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Great Crested Grebe	1		1			
Red-necked Grebe	1		1			
Slavonian Grebe	1	1	2			
Little Grebe	3		3			
Fulmar	4656	626	5282	25	3	28
Storm Petrel	2033	223	2256	15	3	18
Leach's Petrel	4		4			
Gannet	17	1	18	1		1
Cormorant	7		7			
Shag	7770	649	8419	172	5	177
Heron	9		9			
Mallard	6		6	1		1
Teal	24		24	2		2
Wigeon	8		8			
Scaup	2		2			
Tufted Duck	7		7			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Goldeneye	5		5			
Long-tailed Duck	5		5			
Velvet Scoter	2		2			
Eider	57	9	66			
Red-breasted Merganser	1		1			
Goosander	3		3	1		1
Greylag Goose	4		4	1		1
White-front	1		1			
Pink-foot	1	1	2			
Barnacle Goose	1		1			
Whooper Swan	12		12	1		1
Sparrowhawk	70	7	77	11		11
Goshawk	1		1			
Peregrine	6		6			
Merlin	118		118	11		11
Red-footed Falcon	1		1			
Kestrel	24		24	4		4
Quail	2	2	4			
Water Rail	140	3	143	2		2
Spotted Crake	5	1	6			
Little Crake	1		1			
Corncrake	26		26	2		2
Moorhen	45		45	2		2
Coot	7		7			
Great Bustard	1		1			
Oystercatcher	586	20	606	33		33
Lapwing	209		209	2		2
Ringed Plover	232	6	238	3		3
Little Ringed Plover	1		1			
Golden Plover	12		12			
Dotterel	2		2			
Turnstone	49	1	50			
Snipe	120	9	129	6		6
Jack Snipe	25	10	35			
Woodcock	135	4	139	6		6
Curlew	19	4	23	1		1
Whimbrel	8		8			
Black-tailed Godwit	1		1			
Bar-tailed Godwit	6		6	2		2
Green Sandpiper	19		19	1		1
Wood Sandpiper	9		9			
Common Sandpiper	28	1	29			
Redshank	111	8	119	2		2
Spotted Redshank	3		3			
Greenshank	5		5			
Knot	45		45			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Purple Sandpiper	87	9	96			
Little Stint	24		24			
White-rumped Sandpiper		1	1			
Pectoral Sandpiper	3		3			
Dunlin	267	11	278	3	1	4
Curlew Sandpiper	2		2			
Western Sandpiper	1		1			
Sanderling	66		66			
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		1	1			
Ruff	17		17	1		1
Grey Phalarope	1		1			
Red-necked Phalarope	2		2			
Great Skua	271	10	281	4		4
Pomarine Skua	1		1			
Arctic Skua	1129	36	1165	30		30
Great Black-back	619	141	760	29	2	31
Lesser Black-back	465	76	541	10		10
Herring Gull	1060	114	1174	27	3	30
Common Gull	19		19	5		5
Glaucous Gull	20	2	22	1		1
Iceland Gull	1		1			
Black-headed Gull	12	2	14	2		2
Kittiwake	1029	275	1304	4	2	6
Common Tern	11	3	14			
Arctic Tern	5		5	1		1
Razorbill	830	225	1055	31	3	34
Little Auk	5		5			
Guillemot	1264	460	1724	30	6	36
Black Guillemot	632	34	666	8		8
Puffin	4178	276	4454	9	1	10
Rock Dove	4		4			
Wood Pigeon	26		26	2		2
Turtle Dove	19	3	22			
Collared Dove	17	7	24			
Cuckoo	49	7	56	1		1
Snowy Owl		1	1			
Long-eared Owl	56	8	64	2		2
Short-eared Owl	1		1			
Nightjar	3		3			
Swift	12	3	15	1		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	12	3	15			
Wryneck	84	4	88			
Short-toed Lark	3	1	4			
Woodlark	2		2			
Skylark	439	16	455	2		2

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Shorelark	2		2			
Swallow	150	5	155	2		2
House Martin	75	6	81			
Sand Martin	6		6			
Golden Oriole	2		2			
Raven	3		3			
Hooded Crow	25	4	29			
Rook	4		4			
Jackdaw	1		1			
Great Tit	2		2			
Blue Tit	2		2			
Treecreeper	1		1			
Wren	428	15	443			
Dipper	8		8			
Mistle Thrush	10	2	12	1		1
Fieldfare	431	16	447			
Song Thrush	1037	41	1078	18		18
Redwing	3639	190	3829	48		48
Dusky Thrush	1		1			
Black-throated Thrush	1		1			
Ring Ouzel	195	6	201	4		4
Blackbird	11055	336	11391	215	3	218
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2		2			
Rock Thrush	1		1			
Wheatear	9943	328	10271	49		49
Black-eared Wheatear	2		2			
Stonechat	18		18			
Whinchat	326	2	328	2		2
Redstart	991	25	1016			
Black Redstart	48	7	55			
Nightingale	10	1	11			
Thrush Nightingale	7		7			
Bluethroat	119	4	123	2		2
Robin	2876	84	2960	19	1	20
Grasshopper Warbler	47	3	50			
Lanceolated Warbler	3	1	4			
River Warbler	2		2			
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	1		1			
Thick-billed Warbler	1		1			
Great Reed Warbler	3		3			
Reed Warbler	64	5	69	1		1
Marsh Warbler	28	1	29			
Reed/Marsh Warbler		1	1			
Paddyfield Warbler	1		1			
Sedge Warbler	193	15	208		1	1

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Aquatic Warbler	10	4	14			
Melodious Warbler	3	2	5			
Icterine Warbler	41	6	47			
Booted Warbler	3		3			
Blackcap	962	76	1038	4		4
Barred Warbler	194	16	210			
Garden Warbler	1245	74	1319			
Whitethroat	560	17	577			
Lesser Whitethroat	253	20	273			
Sardinian Warbler	1		1			
Subalpine Warbler	8	1	9			
Willow Warbler	1545	95	1640	1		1
Greenish Warbler	6		6			
Chiffchaff	272	11	283			
Wood Warbler	35	9	44			
Bonelli's Warbler	1		1			
Arctic Warbler	19	1	20			
Yellow-browed Warbler	44	8	52			
Dusky Warbler	1		1			
Goldcrest	545	67	612			
Spotted Flycatcher	273	10	283	1		1
Pied Flycatcher	458	35	493	3		3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	32		32			
Dunnock	692	26	718	4		4
Richard's Pipit	7		7			
Tawny Pipit	2		2			
Meadow Pipit	5061	227	5288	34		34
Tree Pipit	276	4	280			
Olive-backed Pipit	2		2			
Pechora Pipit	3		3			
Red-throated Pipit	3		3			
Rock Pipit	4543	223	4766	12	3	15
Pied/White Wagtail	329	18	347	3	1	4
Grey Wagtail	7		7			
Citrine Wagtail	3	1	4			
Yellow Wagtail spp.	9		9			
Waxwing	28		28			
Great Grey Shrike	53	1	54		1	1
Lesser Grey Shrike	5	1	6			
Woodchat Shrike	7	1	8			
Red-backed Shrike	90	5	95			
Starling	7539	714	8253	69	1	70
Rose-coloured Starling	2		2			
Hawfinch		1	1			
Greenfinch	31	10	41			
Goldfinch	3		3			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-71	1972	Total	1948-71	1972	Total
Siskin	143	2	145			
Linnet	40	7	47	1		1
Twite	2139	194	2333	3		3
Redpoll	150	122	272			
Arctic Redpoll	3	2	5			
Bullfinch	18	1	19			
Scarlet Rosefinch	28	8	36			
Crossbill	264	23	287	2		2
Parrot Crossbill	35		35			
Chaffinch	619	24	643	1		1
Brambling	562	123	685	1		1
Corn Bunting	2		2			
Yellowhammer	30	3	33			
Black-headed Bunting	1	1	2			
Red-headed Bunting	5		5			
Yellow-breasted Bunting	5		5			
Cretzschmar's Bunting	1		1			
Ortolan Bunting	16		16			
Rustic Bunting	5	1	6	1		1
Little Bunting	13	1	14			
Reed Bunting	176	10	186	1		1
Lapland Bunting	37		37			
Snow Bunting	351	10	361	2		2
Song Sparrow	1		1			
White-throated Sparrow	1		1			
House Sparrow	999	1	1000		1	1
Tree Sparrow	56	8	64			
GRAND TOTAL	92053	6638	98694	1008	41	1049

Number of species ringed 1949-71 - 220

1972 - 117

Total - 224

## Recoveries 1972

41 recoveries of birds ringed on Fair Isle were reported in 1972 and a further 6 recoveries of birds bearing Fair Isle rings but which had been ringed elsewhere in Shetland were also received. The details of all these are given in full below. 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.





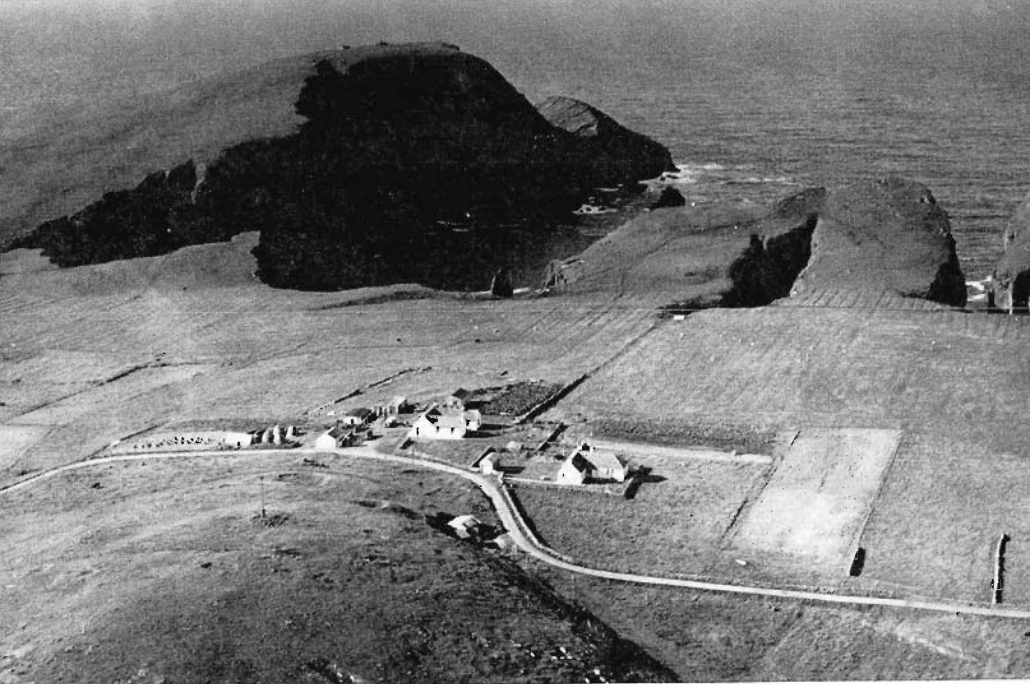
(Above) Reconstruction of Airstrip on Sukka Mire, October 1972.

*Photograph by George Waterston*

(Below) International Voluntary Service workers constructing new barn at Field, 1972

*Photograph by David Wheeler*





(Above) Malcolm's Head, Post Office and Nurse's house (Shirval) from air.

*Photograph by George Waterston*

(Below) Good Shepherd III on slipway cradle, North Haven. October 1972.

*Photograph by Dennis Coutts*



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

/?/—method or 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 are given on the first line and the recovery details on the second line. The distance, in kilometres, and the direction are approximate.

The international age classification has also been adopted throughout this section. In this system, the age is the 'age' when ringed. The age code will be found immediately following the ring number.

1—pullus or nestling.

2—age quite unknown (but fully grown).

3—hatched in calendar year of ringing.

4—hatched before calendar year of ringing.

5—hatched in last calendar year.

6—hatched before last calendar year.

7—hatched two years ago.

8—hatched three or more years ago but exact year unknown.

The co-ordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N 1°37'W.

### **Fulmar**

FS14575 Pull 19.07.71 Fair Isle

x 15.11.71 3 ml SSW of Cape Roseway Light, Shelburne, Nova Scotia 43°36'N 65°20'W.

SS68265 Pull 09.08.67 Fair Isle

+ 12.02.72 Koltur, Faeroe Islands 61°59'N 6°58'W.

SS68543 4 04.09.67 Fair Isle

x 23.10.72 Cockersand, Lancaster. 620 km S.

The pullus recovered in Nova Scotia covered a remarkable distance in a short time (it would have remained on Fair Isle at least a fortnight before fledging), but this movement is not atypical of the species.

### **Storm Petrel**

638532 4 25.06.64 Fair Isle

v 30.05.72 Eilean Nan Ron, Sutherland. 190 km SW. (re-ringed 2128644).

678494 4 03.08.68 Fair Isle

v 17.08.68 Foula, Shetland. 70 km NNW.

699485 4 02.08.69 Fair Isle

v 07.08.69 Foula, Shetland. 70 km NNW.

2104102 4 01.08.70 Brough of Coppister, Yell, Shetland

v 08.06.72 Grunigeo, Fetlar, Shetland. 10 km NE.

676640 4 22.07.68 Fetlar, Shetland

v 30.07.69 Foula, Shetland. 92 km SW.

The Sutherland control is the first Fair Isle ringed Stormie to be controlled off the coast of the Scottish mainland.

### **Shag**

1064246 Pull 12.06.72 Fair Isle

x(?) (28.08.72) Seli Voe, Sand, Shetland. 80 km NNE.

1076717 Pull 09.06.71 Fair Isle

x 04.06.72 Noss Shetland. 75 km NNE.

1079050 Pull 20.06.71 Fair Isle

x 07.06.72 Aberdour Bay, Rosehearty, Aberdeen. 210 km S.

1087586 Pull 04.08.71 Fair Isle

xA 28.08.72 Shapinsay, Orkney, 90 km SW.

1087598 Pull 04.08.71 Fair Isle

x (06.11.72) South Ronaldsay, Orkney. 110 km SW.

### **Oystercatcher**

FS14338 Pull 30.06.71 Dales Voe, Delting, Shetland

x 04.01.72 Silecroft, Millom, Cumberland. 700 km SSW.

SS50526 4 03.03.67 Pool of Virkie, Shetland

v 30.01.72 Southernness, Kirkcudbrightshire. 575 km SSW.  
(reringed SS 99538).

### **Dunlin**

BB13215 4 16.08.67 Fair Isle

v 29.01.72 Point of Air, Flints. 690 km S.

### **Great Black-backed Gull**

HW08175 8 15.11.69 Fair Isle

x 09.02.72 Boddam, Shetland. 44 km NNE.

HW08270 Pull 30.06.71 Fair Isle

x 28.12.71 Lossiemouth, Moray. 225 km SW.

### **Herring Gull**

GM63592 3 07.11.67 Fair Isle

+ 01.01.72 Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. 715 km S.

GP37632 Pull 19.07.71 Fair Isle

()? 05.03.72 Fraserburgh, Aberdeen. 205 km S.

GP79236 Pull 27.07.72 Fair Isle

xA 01.10.72 Hopeman, Elgin, Moray. 230 km SW.

### **Kittiwake**

ED29033 Pull 22.07.67 Fair Isle

/?/ 01.09.70 Sardloq, Greenland. 60°40'N 45°59'W.

EC45350 Pull 05.07.66 Fair Isle

/?/ 07.10.71 Sardloq, Greenland, 60°40'N 45°59'W.

### **Razorbill**

FS14482 6 07.07.71 Fair Isle

xA (28.04.72) Cranfield, Down. 665 km SSW.

M18207 Pull 29.06.72 Fair Isle  
+ 17.09.72 Stavfjord, south of Floro (Sogn & Fjordane), Norway. 61°30' N 5°00'E.

SS84959 6 04.07.70 Fair Isle  
+ 07.01.72 Faenokalv, Lillebaelt (Fyn), Denmark. 55°29'N 9°40'E.

SS68952 6 30.06.67 Hermaness, Unst, Shetland  
+ 26.02.72 Near Alesund, (More & Romsdal), Norway. 62°37'N 6°05'E.

### **Guillemot**

AT64248 6 08.07.59 Fair Isle  
+ 31.10.71 Kristiansund (More & Romsdal), Norway. 63°06'N 7°58'E.

GM55903 Pull 24.06.72 Fair Isle  
+ 09.10.72 Off Floro (Sogn & Fjordane), Norway. 61°36'N 5°00'E.

GP79155 Pull 16.07.72 Fair Isle  
+? 12.10.72 Off Floro (Sogn & Fjordane), Norway. 61°36'N 5°00'E.

SS22530 6 06.07.64 Fair Isle  
+ ?.11.71 Lista, Vest-Agder, Norway. 58°07'N 6°40'E.

SS68600 Pull 18.06.68 Fair Isle  
+ ?.10.71 Outer Oslofjord, Norway. 59°05'N 10°30'E.

SS84010 6 10.07.68 Fair Isle  
+ 18.07.72 Near Rivtangi, Eysturoy, Faeroe Islands. 62°13'N 6°52'W.

SS84010 is the third Guillemot ringed on Fair Isle to be recovered during a subsequent breeding season in the Faeroes.

### **Puffin**

ED57555 6 14.07.69 Fair Isle  
v 24.07.72 Isle of May, Fife. 375 km SSW.

The recovery rate for Puffins is extremely low and this is only the tenth to be recovered from over 4,400 ringed on Fair Isle. This is also the first evidence of movement from the Fair Isle breeding colony (where it was trapped during the breeding season but not actually proved to be breeding) to another breeding colony.

### **Snowy Owl**

5028367 Pull♀ 17.07.71 Fetlar, Shetland  
x 14.11.71 Near Burravoe, Yell, Shetland. 15 km SW.

### **Blackbird**

CN47553 3♀ 14.10.70 Fair Isle  
v 06.04.72 Heligoland, Germany. 54°11'N 7°55'E. (7495154 added).

CP65633 4♀ 24.10.69 Fair Isle  
x 07.04.72 Austrheim, Fosenoy (Hordoland), Norway. 60°46'  
N 4°55'E.

CR51854 4 14.05.69 Fair Isle  
x? 03.11.71 Sogndal (Rogaland), Norway. 58°20'N 6°18'E.

### **Robin**

HV67473 4 09.06.70 Fair Isle  
x 09.12.71 Saint-Laurent le Minier (Gard), France. 43°56'N  
3°39'E.

### **Sedge Warbler**

JJ38231 4 09.06.72 Fair Isle  
v 23.08.72 Long Rock, near Penzance, Cornwall. 1075 km  
SSW.

This movement, covering almost the whole length of the British Isles, is the first control of a Fair Isle ringed Sedge Warbler.

### **Rock Pipit**

BJ69840 3 19.07.71 Fair Isle  
x 25.10.72 Kinghornie, Inverbervie, Angus. 305 km S.

BN61044 2 23.08.71 Fair Isle  
x 13.09.71 Elliot, Arbroath, Angus. 340 km S.

BN61074 3 18.08.71 Fair Isle  
x (09.10.72) Peterhead, Aberdeen. 225 km S.

Three recoveries of this species in one year is exceptional.

### **White Wagtail**

HV67676 3 02.09.70 Fair Isle  
x 19.05.72 Holar (Eyjagfjordsysla), Iceland. 65°22'N  
18°15'W.

This is not the first recovery of a Fair Isle ringed White Wagtail to be recovered inland in Iceland during the breeding season.

### **Great Grey Shrike**

CN47531 3 16.11.70 Fair Isle  
v 08.04.72 Kjennetjernet, Fredrikstad (Ostfold), Norway.  
59°14'N 10°51'E. (Stavanger 7115171 added).

This is the first British ringed Great Grey Shrike to be recovered abroad.

### **Starling**

XX65154 3♂ 09.11.71 Fair Isle  
v 15.02.72 Browster, Walls, Shetland. 65 km N.

### **House Sparrow**

BH53220 4♂ 12.04.69 Fair Isle  
v 07.08.69 Foula, Shetland. 70 km NNW.

An amazing first recovery from our isolated island popula-

tion of which 1,000 have been ringed. It seems more likely that it went direct than indirectly via the mainland of Shetland.

## Ringed Strangers in 1972

### Storm Petrel

684346 4 25.08.68 Foula, Shetland

v 21.07.72 Fair Isle. 70 km SSE.

684845 4 31.07.71 Foula, Shetland

v 27.08.72 Fair Isle. 70 km SSE.

684878 4 03.08.71 Foula, Shetland

v 17.07.72 Fair Isle. 70 km SSE.

P. Skovgaard, Viborg Danmark

110164 4 11.07.72 Mykinesholmur, Faeroe Islands

62°06'N 7°40'W

v 22.07.72 Fair Isle. (reringed 699971).

Copenhagen

9300719 4 04.07.72 Mykines, Faeroe Islands 62°06'N

7°38'W.

v 08.07.72 Fair Isle.

The two Faeroese controls are the third and fourth recoveries of this species on Fair Isle. All have been recovered within days of ringing.

### Sparrowhawk

Helgoland

6229203 2♂ 24.04.72 Heligoland, Germany 54°11'N

7°55'E.

v 03.11.72 Fair Isle.

### Merlin

EF14319 Pull 29.06.72 Scalloway, Shetland

v 05.09.72 Fair Isle. 70 km SS. (sexed ♂).

### Collared Dove

A bird seen carrying a wing tag on 26.06.72 is believed to have been tagged in the Lancashire/Cheshire study area.

### Blackbird

Helgoland

7466379 3♂ 22.10.70 Heligoland, Germany 54°11'N

7°55'E.

v 21.11.70 Fair Isle (reringed CP65998).

()? (01.08.72) Near Northallerton, Yorks.

### Blackcap

Helgoland

0822457 2♀ 16.10.70 Wangerooge-West, East Friesian Islands, Germany 53°47'N 7°51'E.

v 01.11.70 Fair Isle (reringed HV67886)

v? (20.09.72) East Cowton, Northallerton, Yorks.

Both the Blackbird and the Blackcap recoveries show remarkable similarity in the details of their dates and double recoveries !

### Brambling

JJ61310 5♂ 13.02.72 Warsop, Mansfield, Notts

v 21.05.72 Fair Isle. 700 km N.

## Recaptures in 1972

During the season a considerable number of birds were recaptured which had been ringed previously on Fair Isle. The majority had been ringed earlier this year and the details of these have been entered in the Observatory retrap files. All recaptures which had originally been ringed in previous years are summarised in the following table (the figures include a few birds that were found dead on the island during the year).

### Birds ringed in previous years retrapped in 1972

Species	1959	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71
Fulmar (Ad)				1			4	3		2		6	14
Fulmar (Pull)			2		4		1	1					
Storm Petrel										3			3
Shag (Ad)				2	1	1	1	1			1		7
Shag (Pull)		1			1		4	6	4	4	2	3	2
Eider			1	5				1					
Oystercatcher						1					2		
Great Black-back													1
Herring Gull								1		1			1
Razorbill (Ad)				1	3	2		2	4	1	4	6	10
Razorbill (Pull)			1	1									
Guillemot (Ad)		3	5	2		4	3	5	9	11	12	19	27
Guillemot (Pull)								1	1	3			8
Tystie (Ad)		1				1		1	1	2			
Puffin (Ad)		1		1	2						1		1
Puffin (Pull)		3						1					
Wren													1
Wheatear										1		1	4
Meadow Pipit												2	1
Rock Pipit											2	1	9
Starling					1	1	2	1		3	5	18	28
Twite													7

Two interesting recaptures, which throw some light on the feeding habits of the local birds, were a Fulmar and a Herring Gull both fleyged from a fishing boat  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Fair Isle on the night of 24/7/71. The former was retrapped, nesting at Furse and the latter was found dead on the shore on 11/8/72. Another interesting retrap is that of the Curlew, which was originally trapped and ringed in mid-March 1963

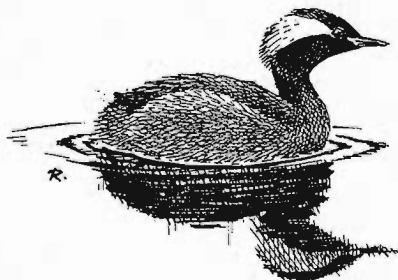


on Bunes and was recaptured on Easter Lothar Water in late-October this year. On each occasion the bird was trapped by dazzle netting.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*. Singles on 8th May, 21st September and 26th September. The last one was seen from the Good Shepherd.

**RED-THROATED DIVER** *Gavia stellata*. One on 5th April. 1-2 on 12 days from 18th May to 19th June. 2 seen on the crossing on 20th June. 5 scattered singles in July and one on 14th August. Unidentified divers, probably of this species, were reported as follows: 23rd April, 2nd May (crossing), 9th June (2), 28th August and 12th October.



**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*. One in the North Haven from 31st March to 5th April, in full summer plumage. A different bird, also in breeding plumage, was in the North Haven from 14th-19th March. It was dazzle netted beneath the pier on the 15th.

**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*. Birds were seen ashore on most days between January and mid-March with numbers approaching full complement on many days. Regular from mid March through the breeding season. The numbers recorded ashore between the North Light and South Ramnigeo were similar to last year. The first egg was noted on 14th May and the first chick was hatching on 1st July. Birds were seen ashore until the end of the year with absences during bad weather. Single blue phase birds were seen on 19th and 20th August, 20th September and four on 27th October.

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*. One was seen from the Good Shepherd on the early date of 30th March. Other sightings from the boat were 16th June (5), singles on 7th and 18th July, 2 on 21st July. Birds were recorded from the

island on 4 dates, 29th May (1), 21st July (3), 29th July (1), and 15th August (2).

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Puffinus griseus*. Seen from the shore on 12 days between 7th August and 9th October, never more than 4 on any day, except for 30 on 21st September. The only record from the crossing was 2 on 29th August.

**STORM PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Recorded from the boat between 30th May (3) and 5th September with up to 30 seen on any one trip. First noted ashore by night on 20th June. Birds were netted at Bunes, Ley of Milens Houllan, Sheena Wheetha and Gunnawark to the 28th August.

**LEACH'S PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. One on the night of 17th July, bounced from a mist net at Sheena Wheetha.

**GANNET** *Sula bassana*. Recorded offshore only once in January. No February records. Small numbers, generally less than 10, were seen offshore, from 8th March to the end of June. More frequent July to the first week of October, with up to 150 on best days. Then seen less frequently through October and scarce in November. On several days during the first fortnight of July, between 10-30 birds were ashore on Da Fless and on the lower slopes on the SE corner of the Sheep Rock.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Singles on 27th March, 6 days in April and 8th May. One on 13th June (crossing), 1-3 birds on 7 days between 21st July and 15th August. Then recorded almost daily during the main southerly movement from 18th August to 18th September with maxima in August of 50 on 26th, 60 on 29th and in September, of 40 on 1st, 4th, 8th and 12th. Then scattered records, of not more than 3 per day, until the end of the year, except for a small renewed movement 23rd September (9) and 24th September (15), and 20 on 10th and 10 on 12th October.

**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present throughout the year. Birds carrying nest material were seen from 24th February. The first egg was seen on 8th April (c/3) and the first chick on 16th May. A few young were fledged by 12th June. A nest at South Mila Hesslands contained one normal and one albino chick. The white bird was known to have fledged and was seen on a number of occasions around the shore during the summer.

**HERON** *Ardea cinerea*. Singles on 20th and 23rd January. Singles on 6 days in March, but 2 on 7th and 3 on 31st. 1-3 between 11th and 13th April and singles on 11th and 25th May. 1-2 on 8 days between 13th June and 9th July. Almost daily from 22nd July to 29th September, usually less than 4 but 8 on 16th and 9 on 19th September. Less frequent in October, numbers never more than 2. Singles on 3rd, 10th, 21st and 26th November.

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*. In January, a drake on 16th, duck on 17th and 5 on 19th were reduced to 3 by 21st. 1-3 on 7 days in March. 2 on 19th April. 1-3 during the first 13 days of May, one on 25th and 4 on 29th May. 1-2 on 8 days in June. 1-4 on 9 days in July. 2-6 birds between 13th-17th August then frequent sightings from 25th August to the end of October, generally less than 6, but 8 on 27th September and 7 on 21st and 25th October. 1-4 between 10th-20th November, and singles on 2 dates in December.

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*. One on 30th January. Singles on 4 days in March. 2-4 on 9 days in April. In May, 5 on 10th and 2 on 5 days. Singles on 8th and 11th June and 2 on 12th July. 4 on 30th and 8+ on 31st July. 1-5 on several days between 10th-15th August, then seen frequently from 23rd August to 10th October. Highest counts of 8 on 30th August, 16th September and 18 on 27th September and 8 on 2nd October. 2 on 15th and 4 on 25th October, and a ♀ 26th-27th November.

**WIGEON** *Anas penelope*. 2 on 19th January and one on 7th March. Single drakes on 12th-14th March and 23rd April. 6 on 8th May then a pair until the 14th. 3 on 17th-18th August. Almost daily in September, 1-2 between 2nd and 11th then numbers a little higher during the second half of the month with peak of 22 on 20th. Up to 10 during the first week of October. 3 on 25th and singles on 28th-29th October, 1st and 10th November, and 27th December.

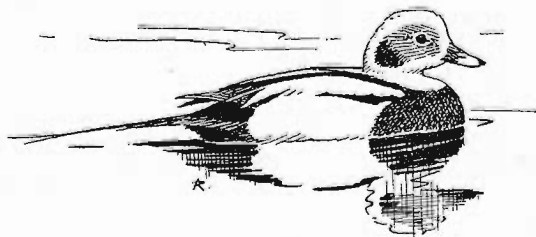
**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*. A pair from 6th-20th March, a pair on 23rd April and a drake on 15th September.

**SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*. A drake on 14th March and a pair on 3rd-4th May. One from 9th-14th August.

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila*. A duck from 27th May-12th June.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*. A pair on 11th and 18th May. A drake between 24th-29th May. 2 on 19th August and singles on 20th and 27th September and a drake on 6th October.

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*. One from 9th-12th January and one on 30th April, very few in autumn; 3 on 21st October, 2 on 13th, a drake on 17th, and one on 21st November.



**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*. 1-2 on 15 days between 27th March and 28th April. An oiled duck from 14th-19th and a ♂ on 28th May. Daily from 11th October to 3rd December, usually less than 5 birds, but 7 on 21st, 8 on 24th, 13 on 26th October decreasing to 7 the next day and 6 on 4th November.

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*. A drake from 24th February to 19th March. 3 on 21st April. A duck between 6th-8th July. Single ducks on 14th and 24th-26th October.

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*. Present throughout the year. The first egg was seen on 13th May (c/1) and the first chick seen on the sea on 9th June. A duck was still incubating (c/2) on 21st July. A complete count around the coast on 7th August gave a total of 785 birds excluding juveniles.

**RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus serrator*. One on 11th February. A drake on 13th and 2 on 15th April. Single drakes in May on 5th and 28th and a pair on 13th-14th. Single drakes on 5th and 8th July. 4 seen on 15th July. In the autumn: 1-4 on scattered dates from 17th September to 1st November. In November, a drake on 8th, duck on 9th, 2 on 11th then 3 on 12th-15th (2 drakes).

**GOOSANDER** *Mergus merganser*. Single drakes 16th-19th January, 6th-14th March (found dead on 16th), and 19th March. A duck from 26th March-1st April and 13th April.

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*. One on 7th January. 3 on 6th May, 5 the next day but down to 3 again by the 8th. One on 14th May. In the autumn, 3 immatures on 9th August and one on 11th August.

**GREY GOOSE** spp *Anser* spp. Unidentified grey geese were seen in spring on 20th April (30) and 24th April (27). In autumn: 14th September (3), 22nd September (14), 2nd (8), 5th (7) and 24th October (12) and 1st November (11).

**GREY LAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*. 7 on 29th January and 15th February. Very few spring records; identified on only four dates in April: 2 on 20th and 23rd, and singles on 24th and 26th. Autumn passage also relatively light. First records on 18th (7) and 22nd September (7) then one 27th-28th September. 4-5 on several days during the first week of October, then recorded almost daily between 13th-26th October with maximum of 17 on 15th and 18th. In November, one on 3rd, 3 on 10th and one on 11th.

**WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons*. An adult of the Greenland form on 10th November and an immature on the same day. Both were together at night on Sprittery Hole.

**BEAN GOOSE** *Anser fabalis*. One between 13th-15th February (G. J. Barnes).

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*. Only two spring

records; 3 on 25th-26th April and a single on 8th June. In autumn: 29 on 20th September. October: 7 on 2nd, 12 on 3rd, 18 on 6th, 4 arrived on 11th and one of these lingered until 19th. 6 others present on the 17th and 2 on 26th. 17 on 4th November.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*. One in spring on 25th April. Autumn records: 3 on 29th September, 2 on 5th and 26 on 18th October.

**WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*. 4 on 29th January. In spring 6 on 6th and 2 on 18th April. Return passage from 11th October (2), 5 on 15th and 6 on 17th, 3 on 25th October. 14 on 8th, 6 on 10th and 4 on 11th November.

**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*. In spring: singles on 11th-13th April (♀), 25th-26th (♀) and 2 on 29th-30th April ♂, ♀—the male remained on the 1st May, 2 on 3rd-4th (♂, ♀) and singles on 6th (♂), 8th (♀), 11th (♂) and 14th May (♀). 5 individuals in autumn: a very early ♀ on 7th-10th August; one on 21st and a ♂ 29th-30th October, another ♂ on 3rd and a ♀ 21st-28th November; 1-2 birds to 3rd December.

**GOSHAWK** *Accipiter gentilis*. The young male, first seen on 24th November 1971 was still present to the 5th January.

**HONEY BUZZARD** *Pernis apivorus*. One on 8th and 21st May (G. J. Barnes).

**MARSH HARRIER** *Circus aeruginosus*. A ♀ on 9th May near the North Grind.

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*. A ♂ at Homisdale on 26th March.

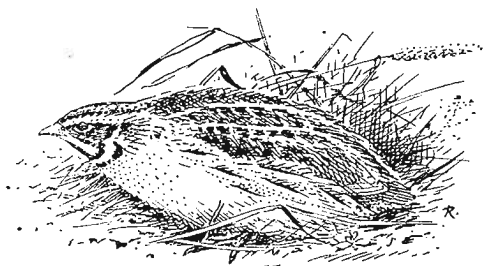
**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*. One on 30th April seen first over the Vaadal in the late morning then along the West Cliffs during the afternoon.

**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*. Recorded in all months of the year but seen less frequently during the winter months and in mid-summer (end of June-mid-August). Up to 3 birds seen on any one day but 2 pairs were on the island, one centred on Sheep Rock and the other on the West Cliffs (the male of the second pair was probably immature). However, for the third year in succession breeding was either not attempted or unsuccessful.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*. Only singles recorded in the spring on 9 scattered dates from 8th April to 23rd May. In the autumn, apart from one on 17th August, passage was between 28th August and 5th November, with records on 53 days. One was also seen on 14th and 29th November. The majority of records were concentrated in the first fortnight of September and the first ten days and the last week of October, with not more than 3 recorded on any day. The only Merlin trapped this year (young ♂) was a control and

had been ringed earlier this year as a nestling in Shetland (see Ringed Strangers).

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*. One bird wintered, being seen on several dates through January and February. Single birds were recorded on several days in March, involving different individuals and 2 were seen on 26th March. Spring passage was in 2 waves with records of up to 2 birds on most days between 7th-26th April and 8th-23rd May. A straggler on 29th May. Autumn passage: recorded almost daily from 25th July to 13th October with a maximum of 3 recorded on 10 days, then single birds recorded on many days to the end of the year.



**QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*. Singles on 4 dates in spring; 9th, 18th, 24th-25th May. Recorded on 6 days in summer, again all singles; 14th, 26th-27th June, 5th and 25th-26th July. No August records but recorded on 15 dates in September, all in the Busta/Springfield area, between 6th-25th. Generally singles but 2 on 14th-15th and 17th and 4 flushed together on 18th.

**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*. One on 19th January, singles in spring on 13th and 23rd March, 10th April and 30th May. 2 on 31st July and singles on the following two days (unusual dates). Autumn birds: one on 26th September, 1-2 between 7th-14th October then singles on 11 days from 26th October to 24th November, and 1 most days 30th November-20th December, with 2 on the 12th.

**SPOTTED CRAKE** *Porzana porzana*. One on 31st August, trapped in the Vaadal. 6th record for the Observatory and recorded for the second year in succession.

**CORNCRAKE** *Crex crex*. Singles on 20th April, 8th and 29th May and 5th June. One on 28th-29th September.

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*. Four records, two in spring; 20th April and 26th May and two in autumn; 20th November, and 30th November-3rd December.

COOT *Fulica atra*. One between 19th-23rd January, 2 on 6th-7th February and one 21st-25th February.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. One in winter on 19th January. First spring arrival on 9th February, 2 on 14th increased to a minimum of 50 by 6th March, then the population rapidly reached full strength. First egg noted on 5th May (c/2) and the first chicks were seen on 3rd June. Young were flying strongly by 26th June. During the breeding season a non-breeding flock fluctuated in numbers up to 66 birds. Emigration was noticed during August and numbers were down to 9 on 11th September—this number remained through September to 1st October but was reduced to 2 by the 7th October. 1-3 birds hung on until 3rd November—the last record except for 2 on 22nd November, and 3 on 27th December.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. Recorded all months of the year. 15 on 19th, 3 on 21st and 6 on 23rd January. Spring arrivals from 15th February but numbers less than 5 until 28th (44). Larger flocks through March with peaks of 130 on 7th and 100 on 12th. Regular through April but, apart from 13 on 1st April, numbers less than 10. Counts similar through May but recorded daily to the 10th June. Some display was noted but breeding probably not attempted. A few records in mid-June. Return passage from 24th June with frequent records to 17th November, numbers generally less than 20 but higher figures on 26th (42), and 28th June (73), 28th October (70), 11th (44) and 12th November (35). 2 on 2nd December.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. Singles from 11th and 2 from 28th February, increased to 8 by 7th March, then recorded regularly, numbers less than 10, until the breeding season. A minimum of 6 pairs bred; 3 pairs on Buness, 1 pair on Rippack, 1 pair Skadan and 1 pair North Light. Eggs first seen on 4th May (c/4) and the first chicks on 14th May. Numbers a little higher with returning migrants from 31st July (25). Generally less than 25 but peak of 32 on 17th and 30 on 23rd August. 28 on 1st September then numbers less than 20 through September and less than 6 through October. 1-3 to the 11th November then a ringed bird remaining on Buness until at least 30th November.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*. One on 15th October.

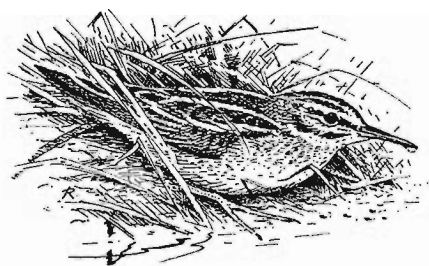
GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*. One on 15th January. 1-2 on 10th and 31st March, 3rd, 11th and 15th April. Influx noted between 21st-26th April with up to 47 on any day, up to 11 during first week of May, after which less than 5 on scattered dates through May, June and July. Autumn passage from 5th August (7) with daily records until 12th October. Numbers up to 40 in August and 22 in September.

Numbers higher at beginning of October with 70 on 2nd, 53 on 8th and 50 on 12th. Records less frequent during the rest of October with maximum of 20 till last record on 9th November, but single 19th-22nd December.

**DOTTEREL** *Eudromias morinellus*. One flying north over Setter on 15th May (G. J. Barnes).

**TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*. Up to 33 recorded in winter during January and February. Spring passage difficult to detect; recorded regularly from 6th March to 30th May with up to 25 daily in March and April and up to 12 in May. 6 on 21st June. Autumn passage from 9th July and recorded regularly from 19th July. Usually up to 40 birds in July and August but 55 on 31st July and 77 on 9th August. Numbers a little lower in September and first half of October with maximum of 25. Fluctuating numbers during second half of October and November with up to 30 on some days and influxes of 35 on 31st October and 55 on 11th November. Less than 10 recorded in December to 10th.

**SNIBE** *Gallinago gallinago*. Up to 4 in January and February. 1-6 recorded regularly through the spring on most days from 9th March, but 11 on 7th May. A few pairs present during the breeding season and breeding proved on Swey (almost fully-fledged young on 7th July). Numbers increased from the end of August with 10-15 on many days until mid-October. Numbers a little higher on best days, 20 on 10th September (including a flock of 12), 35 on 26th September with 20 present on the following 2 days and 20 on 9th October. Generally less than 10 from the end of October to November, but 18 on 3rd and 25 on 10th November. A few present throughout December.



**JACK SNIBE** *Lymnocryptes minimus*. One in spring on 26th April. Autumn passage: an early single on 3rd September then regularly from 14th September to mid-October. Up to 5 on best days in September but 7 on 27th. 6 on 2nd October, otherwise up to 4 until 15th October, then 1-2 recorded on



9 dates to 13th November, and 1 on 7th December. 10 individuals trapped and ringed.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. Singles in winter; 20th-21st January, 9th-12th February and 8th March. Spring records, 2-4 on 3 days between 26th March and 1st April and 1-2 birds on 9 dates in April-May. One on 17th June. First autumn bird seen on 15th October then recorded on several dates to 24th November, up to 12 on some days but 20+ on 21st October and influx of 40+ on 20th November.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. 3 on 19th January. Spring passage from 7th March, recorded regularly with up to 7 until the end of April, but influxes on 31st March (35), 20th April (150) and 24th April (94). 2-6 birds daily during May-June. One pair nested successfully in Gilsetter rearing 2 young to the flying stage (c/4 on 18th May; eggs hatching on 7th June). The only other breeding record for the island was a pair in 1968. Autumn passage from 27th June when 50 present, generally less than 20 present in July and August but 25 on 7th July, 25 on 14th and 20-30 between 25th-29th August. Up to 10 daily in September and October and 1-2 in November but 5 on 8th; 4 on 27th December. One bird trapped in October had been ringed on the island in March 1963.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. Spring passage between 15th April and mid-June. Daily records from 7th May with maxima as follows: 12 on 29th April, 11 on 17th, 12 on 21st and 10 on 28th May. During the summer 1-3 birds present between mid-June and the end of July and song flighting was observed but breeding not proven. In the autumn, present on 28 days to 21st September, generally single birds but 3-4 on 13th-14th and 18th, 6 on 29th August and 4 on 3rd September.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. One in breeding plumage 27th-29th April and 3 on 3rd and 1 on 4th May.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. 2 on 29th January. In spring: singles on 17th March and 28th May. 1 on 2nd July. In autumn: one on 14th and 2 on 24th August. Singles on 1st, 12th, 14th, 20th and 30th September.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. Singles in spring on 9th, 22nd and 29th-30th April and 18th May. In autumn: one on 24th July, 1-2 from 28th July-2nd August. Singles on 7th, 9th and 12th August with 3 on 13th and 2 the next day, and 1 on 20th-22nd September.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. Singles in spring 27th-28th May, and 7th-9th June. Only one autumn record on 11th July.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*. Spring records between

4th May and 14th June, majority between 8th-17th May with maximum of 7 on 10th, otherwise, outside this period less than 3 daily. Scattered records (1-2 birds) on 6 dates in July and August. Main autumn passage, 1-2 birds daily, between 6th-16th September. One on 21st September.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*. 1-4 in January and February with 9 on 19th January. Small numbers March to 21st May, usually less than 10 but 14 on 14th March, 16 on 4th, 18 on 11th and 15 on 23rd April. Less than 5 in May. Return passage from the 21st June, numbers reaching 20-25 on 4 days in July and 40-50 on several days in first fortnight of August, then less than 15 until the last week of the month when 20-45 present until 3rd September. Numbers fluctuated through September and October to November (5-30) decreasing to 11 or less by the third week of November. Then 2-6 until 1st week of December, after which 1-2 until end of month.

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*. One on 19th April, 3rd and 9th June. 1-2 recorded on 11 days in autumn from 1st-30th August.

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*. One on 15th April and small passage (1-5) 10th-16th May. Autumn records between 12th July and 18th September, majority in August when records almost daily, 1-4 most dates but 6 on 23rd July and 8 on 2nd August.

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*. Recorded in all months except June. Wintering maxima of 22 in January, 9 in February and 25 in March. Usually less than 10 in April but 40 on 29th. Maximum of 20 during the first fortnight of May then a decrease to the last spring record on 22nd May. Autumn birds from 12th July (10). Fluctuating numbers recorded in July and August but maximum of 40 on several scattered dates. Maxima of 23 in September, 20 in October (scarce in mid-month), 16 in November and 4 in December.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** *Calidris fuscicollis*. One stayed on Landberg from 28th November to 2nd December. It was trapped on 30th and retrapped on 2nd December when it was found to have gained 2.8g. This is the first record for the Island.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*. One on 19th January. 1-2 on 5 days between 7th-19th March. Spring passage between 26th April-30th May; recorded almost daily in small numbers with maximum of 9 on 12th May. Another small movement 8th-18th June (1-4). Autumn passage from 11th July; main movement 23rd July-15th September with 10-15 on several days and peaks of 16 on 24th July, 22 on 2nd and 19 on 17th August. 1-2 on 17th-20th September then another movement 27th September-21st October, 1-3 birds except for 8



(Above) Adult ♂ Snowy Owl. Trapped Fair Isle 1972.

*Photograph by Roger Broad*

(Below) Brood of young Shags—one albinistic and one normal, South Mila Hesseslands,  
Fair Isle 1972.

*Photograph by Roger Broad*





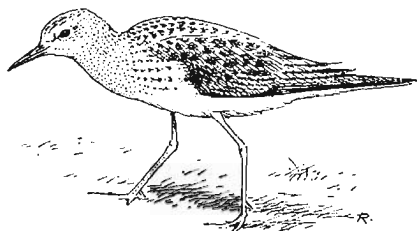
The Museum at Setter, Fair Isle.

Photograph by Dennis Coultis

on 27th September. One between 3rd-5th and 1-4 between 10th-13th November.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. One at South Harbour/Skadan 5th-7th September.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*. Spring: 2 between 20th-22nd, 3 on 25th and 1 on 26th May. Singles on 11th and 18th June. Autumn: recorded on many days 23rd July-30th September, usually 1-4 but 10 on 1st and 7 on 2nd August.



BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER *Tryngites subruficollis*. One on top of Ward Hill 17th-19th September, trapped on 18th. The second record for the island, previously recorded on the 18th September 1958.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. Single (reeve) 1st-2nd August, 4 (reeves) on 9th, then 1-2 daily to 16th except 14 when 8 were recorded. 1-3 between 27th-31st August. 2 on 15th September (♂, ♀) the ruff remaining until 1st October.

PHALAROPE spp. *Phalaropus* spp. One (probably Grey Phalarope) seen on 15th September was swimming on the fresh water pools on Bunes but did not stay long.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*. First single seen on 29th March, one also seen the following day on the crossing. A second bird arrived on 8th and from then on records were daily; 6 on 26th April and 10 in first week of May then quickly up to full strength. A minimum of 13 pairs bred; first egg (c/2) 16th May. A flock of 30 on 28th August and 20 the next day must have included migrants. Decrease noted from mid-September, less than 10 daily at the end of the month, 5 on 1st October then 1-4 regularly to 19th October. 1 on 24th, 2 on 28th and 1 on 30th October and the last record on the late date of 6th November.

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*. One on 30th July (G. J. Barnes).

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. First arrival on 14th April, a different bird the next day then daily records from 19th, with 6 on 23rd and 11 by the end of the month, 20 on 5th May and at least 40 on 11th from which date numbers

built up rapidly. A census gave a population of c.110 pairs. Decrease noted during August and only 8 remaining by the beginning of September—numbers then decreased quickly to the last record ashore on 13th September. A single was seen off the South Light on the late date of 12th October.

**LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicaudus*. An immature (3rd year) at the airstrip on 8th July, present for several hours and a first year bird on the sea at Duttfield on 4th October. An adult was seen from the Good Shepherd on 29th August (D. P. Cyrus).

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*. Present throughout the year; numbers swollen especially during bad weather in winter, but also during the rest of the year when boats fishing offshore at night, birds resting ashore during the day and flighting to the boats at night. High counts: 1000-2000 on 23rd-24th January, 500 on 4th February and 21st-22nd April, 600 on 14th May, 700 on 13th June, 600 on 13th July, 1000 on 7th August, 1000+ at end of October, 9th-10th and 21st-23rd November, and 1st week of December.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*. One 25th-26th March then daily records from 30th March to 6th September with one straggler on 18th September. Usual numbers breeding, all having arrived by the last week in May.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*. Present throughout the year and, as with Great Black-backed Gull, numbers considerably increased during bad weather in winter and to a lesser extent during the rest of the year when boats fishing offshore. High counts: 1000-1500 between 12th-15th and 1500-2000 on 23rd-24th January, 500 on 4th February, 450 on 6th August, 2000+ on 19th-20th and 5000+ on 23rd-25th November. 1000-3000 on many dates in December. Usual numbers bred and many were incubating full clutches by 12th May.

**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*. Small numbers, generally less than 20 between January-March but with maximum of 50 on 19th January, 70 on 6th February and 30 on 31st March. Larger influxes recorded in April on 10th (80), 11th (150) and 24th (165). Less than 25 daily in May and fewer records in June with maximum of 6 on any day. Influxes in autumn from 24th July (60), but larger influxes from 31st July (115) and in August; 300 on 9th, 500 on 13th-14th, 300 on 26th-27th. Maximum of 40 in September and October but influx of 70 on 30th October. Smaller numbers in November, only singles after 21st.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*. No records until 31st March when 3 first year birds seen. A first year bird on 3 days between 23rd-28th April. Recorded on 7 dates between 13th-23rd May involving a minimum of 3 different birds.

Immature birds seen on 3 dates in summer: 20th June, 7th and 21st July. Regular records in autumn from 18th October-26th November usually less than 5 birds but 10 on 9th and 6 on 12th November. 1 on 30th-31st December.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. One on 14th-15th January, first year birds on 24th April, 14th May, 22nd-24th May and a second year bird from 4th-19th June. An adult on 29th June and a single on 24th September.

LITTLE GULL *Larus minutus*. One on 12th August (G. J. Barnes).

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. Recorded in small numbers all months of the year although less frequent in winter. Monthly summary: January, occasional singles; February, 1-2; March, 1-4 but with northerly passage on 31st when 50 recorded; April, 1-6; May, 1-10; June 1-17 but 30 on 28th; July, 1-15 but southerly passage including juveniles of 70 on 9th, 25-30 on 12th-13th; August, 4-18; September, 1-7; October, records less frequent, 1-6; November and December, occasional 1-2.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*. Recorded in all months of the year although only small parties offshore during the winter months. Ashore in small numbers from second week in February and regularly from the beginning of March. The number of nests at many colonies still increasing, a good breeding season (first eggs noted on 29th May and first chicks seen on 16th June); however, there was a high mortality of young birds post-fledging. Marked decrease noted ashore end of July and through August.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*. 2 on 15th-16th, 1 on 23rd and 3 on 28th May. 2 arrived on 5th June and quickly established territory on the Stack 'O North Haven where they had eggs (c/2) on 12th June, 3 chicks were fledged although one died soon after fledging. The only previous breeding record for the island was in 1970 also on the Stack 'O North Haven. Another 1-2 birds were present in the same area for much of July. Last definite sightings of this species on 19th August.

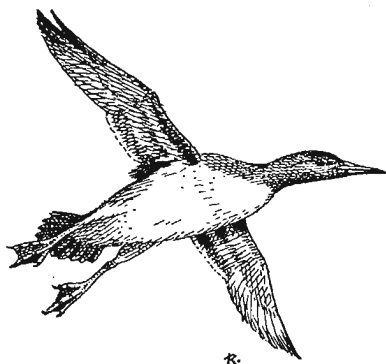
ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*. Specifically identified on 2nd (1), 6th (4), 19th-21st (2) and 28th June (1). 2 on 9th and in some numbers at the end of July and beginning of August (see Common/Arctic Tern). Also singles on 5 days in August to the 26th. A very late immature bird was in the North Haven for most of the day on 30th October.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN. First record of 17 on the crossing on 12th May, small numbers from the island from 17th May, generally less than 10 but 16 on 4th July. As in 1971 family parties gathered at the South Harbour/Skadan area from the end of July and the majority specifically identified were

Arctics. Flock build up: 15 on 21st, 50 on 22nd and 70 on 23rd, peak of 83 on 26th July, then decline from beginning of August to the 10th. Odd records to 1st September and 2 on 27th September.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*. Noted ashore during the second week of March with the first eggs seen on 3rd May, and hatching on 30th May. A fledged chick was seen halfway between Sumburgh and Fair Isle on 30th June. A good breeding season. Birds decreased ashore from July and only 6 were ashore on 1st August. A few were seen flying offshore to 13th August and in mid-September. One was seen on 22nd October. No overall change in population noted.

**LITTLE AUK** *Plautus alle*. One on 3rd January and 3 on 6th February seen from the island. Seen on the crossing in the winter months with several hundred on 22nd November.



**GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*. Ashore in some numbers on many days in January and February and regularly from March. First eggs seen on 22nd April and chicks newly hatched on 8th June. A newly-fledged chick was seen on the sea on 25th June. Emigration noted through July and very few ashore in first week of August. Seen offshore in small numbers on several dates through September and October and on the crossing. Several hundreds ashore on Sheep Rock and Shaldi Cliff 26th-29th October, 18th-22nd November (also ashore at Kristal Kame and Stacks 'O Skroo on the last date).

**BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cepphus grylle*. Status unchanged; resident breeding species, but a party of 60 birds going to roost on the Burrian and surrounding rocks in August (P. & E. Slater).

**PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctica*. Single birds picked up oiled on 19th and 29th February. One seen on crossing on 14th March. Singles offshore on 20th and 27th March. First noted ashore on 1st April (6), 15 seen on 5th but only 3 ashore. 100 ashore



on 6th then numbers onshore increasing through April. Breeding season as usual, birds first seen carrying fish to burrows on 6th June. Numbers decreasing ashore from the beginning of August but singles still seen offshore occasionally to 22nd September. One ashore, oiled on 27th and 2 others offshore on 28th October.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*. One 20th-23rd April and one from 18th May daily to 7th June and on 10th, 17th and 20th June.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*. Recorded in all months of the year except December with larger numbers in spring and autumn. One nest found at South Mila Hesslands. Monthly maxima: January 4, February 8, March 20, April 19, May 30, June 12, July 5, August 20, September 26, October 25, November 55.

WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*. One on 11th, 12th and 20th January. 1-2 on 11 days in February and 1-4 on 30 days in March-April. An exceptionally large arrival heralded by 14 on 30th April (1 also seen on crossing), 31 the next day after which numbers remained high until 17th May, peaking at 40 on 12th May. Apart from 11-13 on 24th-25th May, only 1-6 on most days to 12th June. One on 24th June. 1-2 between 6th-14th July. Singles on 3 days in second half of August and 7 days in October and on 22nd November.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. One on 11th May, main spring passage 17th May-13th June with 1-4 birds daily then 1-2 birds on 9 days to 12th July. Return passage: singles on 27th August, 21st, 24th and 28th September and 1st October.

COLLARED TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. Spring records from the 25th April (first record of year was one freshly killed by Sparrowhawk). The majority were in second half of May and June when records were daily; peaks of 7 on 17th-18th, 12 on 25th May, 9 on 6th June, 12 on 18th-20th and 8 on 30th June. Records less frequent in July with 1-5 on scattered dates. 1 on 9th August. 1 on 1st September and one on 8th October.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. Recorded most days in spring from 7th May to 13th June and singles on 25th and 27th June. The majority were between 7th-28th May when 1-4 present on many days but high total of 8 on 19th. 1 on 29th-31st July.

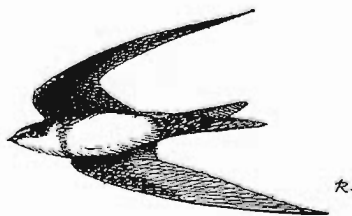
SNOWY OWL *Nyctea scandiaca*. A sub-adult ♂ on Ward Hill on 26th-27th April. A ♀ on 16th May was first seen on Ward Hill and Lerness but later in the day was over Meoness and Skadan. An adult ♂ on 9th June was found on Ward Hill where it was trapped the same day. After release it returned to the Hill which it frequented until 15th June. It was interesting that the trapped bird was not already ringed and

therefore did not come from the nearest source—Fetlar, where the young reared by the breeding pair have all been ringed (only the young from the earliest broods are likely to be in adult plumage).

**LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*. Singles on 27th February, 8th and 12th March, a minimum of three individuals between 11th-14th April, one on 30th April. Singles on 6 days between 18th-27th May, 5 days in June and 5 days in July. One on 31st August-1st September and 1-2 in November between 12th-21st. In all previous years the majority of records have been in the autumn (October-November) with a few in spring (March-May) and only rarely in summer. Since the Observatory began the number ringed in spring in any year has never exceeded 2 until this year when 7 were handled in spring. During the autumn of 1971 a record total of 8 birds were trapped and presumably the high numbers in spring this year reflect a return movement. It seems likely that the large number of records in June-July indicates that many young non-breeding birds were involved. A bird trapped on 25th June, although fit, was lightly spattered with fulmar oil.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*. One on 29th January, singles in April on 4 days and in May on 4 days with 2 singles in the first half of June. Autumn records fall between 11th August-15th October with records on 18 days, usually singles but 2 on 14th-15th August and 3rd September and 3 on 9th September.

**SWIFT** *Apus apus*. Singles in May on 22nd-23rd and 26th-27th. Small passage during first fortnight of June with peak of 15 on 6th. Singles on 18th-19th and 26th June. Small passage 28th June to 17th July, records almost daily with peaks of 10 on 28th June and 7th July, 12 on 13th and 40 on 16th July. 1-2 on 24th-25th, and 10 on 29th July. Singles in August on 14 days between 13th-28th and a single on the late date of 11th October.



**ALPINE SWIFT** *Apus melba*. One for most of the day on 6th June, feeding mainly up and down Troila Geo. Fourth record for the island.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. One from 3rd-10th May, first seen at the North Light then mainly on Bunes.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*. Singles on 14th-15th September, 2 on 16th. Small numbers from 24th September-6th October with 2-3 in September but 4 on 26th and 1-2 in October. All birds seen closely were birds of the year except for one on 2nd October.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. Spring passage almost daily from 5th-24th May with maximum of 7 on 7th, otherwise one on 5th, 3 from 6th-11th, then singles to the end of the period, except for 2 on 16th and 4 on 19th. Autumn: 1 on 27th, 2 on 30th and 1 on 31st August and 2 on 13th September.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella cinerea*. One present between 29th September and 27th October, trapped on 9th October resembled one of the reddish western races *C.c. brachydactyla*.

WOODLARK *Lullula arborea*. Singles on 27th March and 6th April (G. J. Barnes).

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. Recorded in all months except January. First date, 2nd February (2) with movement noted on 9th (16) and 10th (86). Larger influxes at the beginning of March; 200-300 on 6th, 500 on 12th and 14th, 300 on 19th. Bred in usual numbers. Autumn influxes noted from 10th September, but numbers difficult to ascertain; 300 flew south on 6th October. Numbers much reduced from the end of October with only 24 remaining on 21st November.

SHORELARK *Eremophila alpestris*. A good series of records in spring between 29th April and 20th May. 2 on 29th April and 1st May, singles on 5th-8th May and 2 on 11th, one on 13th-14th and one on 20th May. One in autumn on 6th October.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. Spring records, almost daily from 3rd May-13th July generally less than 15 per day but peaks of 20 on 12th and 24th-25th May, 45 on 3rd (30 the next day) 50 on 6th (40 remaining the next day) and 20 on 13th June. A pair prospected the garage at the Old Observatory and even began to build but they did not complete the nest. In autumn: 1-2 on 5 dates in August and 1-3 between 11th-19th September, 1-2 from 7th-9th October.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. Spring passage from the 6th May; daily between 6th May-21st June. Up to 6 daily to 22nd May then numbers higher with peaks of 20 on 26th, 15 on 28th-29th and 30 on 30th May, 15 on 4th, 40 on 6th-7th and 20 on 12th June. Another small passage 25th June-5th July (2-4 daily) then apart from 5 on 16th, only singles on 5 days to 21st July. One on 14th August.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. 1 on 20th April, main spring pas-

sage from 6th May. Recorded many days between 6th and 27th May, usually 1-3 daily but 5 on 6th and 4 on 7th May, then a second movement 3rd-12th June with 1-2 birds most days but 4 on 6th. 2 on 4th and singles on 12th and 15th July. In autumn one on 30th August and 2 on 1st-2nd September.

**GOLDEN ORIOLE** *Oriolus oriolus*. A first year bird was seen first near Stackhoull Stores on 26th September and then remained in the Quoy/Houll/Shirva area all afternoon. It was picked up in a very weak state on 27th and died overnight (♂ on dissection).

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*. Resident throughout the year, birds carrying nesting material from 11th February, eggs noted on 5th April. One pair raised two young—the family party being seen around the island from the 25th May. 14 birds together on the 6th April must have been migrants—this was the only flock seen that reached double figures.

**CARRION and HOODED CROW** *Corvus corone*. Carrion Crows *C. corone*: singles recorded on 5 days between 26th March-4th April, and on 17th-19th April. 12 on 20th April. One on 30th April and 14 on 1st May. One on 4th-7th, 5 on 8th and 7 on 9th-11th May and 1-2 on 16th-18th May. 3 between 3rd-5th and singles on 6th and 8th June.

Hooded Crow *C. cornix*: bred as usual with eggs at two sites in third week of April (c/4, c/2). Several large parties were seen in September with 18 as maximum. Out of a party of 25 on 29th October, 19 migrants left the island and headed north.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*. One on 1st January. 2 from 13th-29th February. 2-5 most days 6th-17th and a single on 27th March. Singles on 4 scattered dates in April and 5 on 30th. 2 on 1st and 8 on 3rd May. One most dates between 26th November-28th December but 2 between 12th-14th.

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*. Only recorded in spring; 1 on 22nd February, 5 on 6th March of which one was a very well-marked Scandinavian type *C.m. monedula*. 7 on 9th-11th and 15 on 14th, 2 on 17th. 2 on 11th-12th April, 1 on 20th and 2 on 21st-24th April. 1 on 8th May, 3 on 10th, 2 on 11th and one 20th-21st May and 2 on 1st June.

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Resident throughout the year. Song noted from 6th March. Singing recorded from a minimum of 29 territories during the breeding season.

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*. A good series of records in spring; one on 19th February and a discrete movement 6th-15th March with a build-up to a peak of 8 on 10th, 6 on 12th. Singles on 22nd March, 12th-16th May and 3rd and

7th June. In autumn singles on 8th-10th and 28th-29th October.

**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*. A maximum of 20 was recorded in winter through January to 24th February. Irregular in small numbers through March and April with a small influx on 11th April (29). The first large movement of the spring was on 29th April when 80 arrived and there were 200 the next day. A steady passage occurred during the first two weeks of May with 50-200 on many days and a peak of 400 on 10th. Less than 10 daily from 17th May to the end of the month. One on 3rd June. Return passage: singles on 11th, 15th-17th and 30th August-2nd September. Daily sightings from the 18th September but less than 10 until 1st October (12). Maximum of 50 (2nd) in the first ten days of October, 85 on 12th with a large arrival on 13th—most of these left the same evening and 750 were seen to depart south. The next arrival of note was 21st October (400) and the largest movement of the autumn brought 3500 on 28th, 2500 the next day. The last large influx was on 6th November (550) after which numbers dropped rapidly to c.10 with occasional influxes (less than 30) until the end of November. Less than 20 recorded in December.

**SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*. Singles in winter, 12th-22nd and 28th-29th February. Recorded in spring in small numbers regularly from 6th March to 29th May with maximum of 10 on 7th March, 8 on 11th-12th April and 9 on 30th, and 10 on 8th May. Singles were noted on 4 dates in June and on 4 days in the first week of July. Autumn passage; singles recorded on several days from 15th August-8th September. 1-3 daily from 20th-29th September, 6 on 30th, 25 on 1st and 200 on 2nd October. Smaller arrivals occurred in October on 6th (40), and 28th (25) otherwise less than 10 on most dates. 1-2 birds lingered until 13th November and 1 arrived on 23rd and was joined by another on 24th November. 1-2 recorded on scattered dates in December.

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*. A maximum of 10 in January, 2 in February and 20 in March. Main spring passage 25th March-20th May when records were daily in very small numbers, maximum of 30 on 9th May. Singles on 29th-30th May, 3rd, 5th, 6th and 19th June. Autumn passage from 19th September with numbers building up to 140 by the end of the month. Several large arrivals occurred during the main passage month of October; 400 on 2nd, peak of 2000 on 7th, very large arrival on 13th, most leaving the same evening when 9500 seen moving south, 600 on 21st, 800 on 28th and 1500 on 29th. Numbers between 70-150 until 8th November after which dropping to less than 20 to the end of the month except for 56 on 21st. A few remained through December.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*. Spring passage; 26th March-23rd June, 1-2 between 26th March-1st April, 1-4 many days between 10th-30th April. A single on 3rd May then almost daily between 6th-22nd May, usually less than 5 but peaks of 13 on 7th, 20 on 8th and 14 on 19th. Singles on 9 days in June to the 23rd. Autumn passage; singles on 8 days between 30th September and 8th October but 18 on 2nd October.

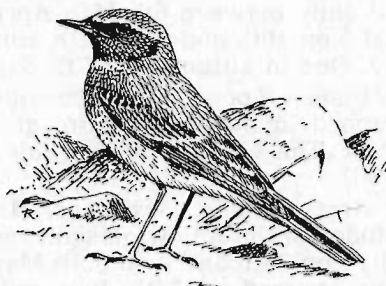
BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. A maximum of 10 in January-February, numbers a little higher in March, peaking at 100 on 9th, but no notable arrivals. Maximum of 21 in April and 6 in May. 1-2 from 20th May lingered until 8th June. Return passage; a first year ♂ on 17th July remained until 3rd August. Singles in September on 9th, 23rd and 27th then daily from 1st October to end of November. 6 on 1st October, 50 on 2nd and 21st were the largest numbers recorded until 350 arrived on 28th. A small changeover of birds occurred during October-November with up to 70 on some days but the only other moderate-sized arrival was 300 on 21st November. Up to 20 daily in December.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. 2 ♂♂ on 26th and 1 on 27th March were earliest spring records. 1 on 1st April and daily records from 4th (3, one ♀). Numbers fluctuated during the first three weeks of April as birds moved through. Up to 8 on 9th then 20 arrived on 12th, 25 on 13th after which smaller numbers until 19th (30), 60 on 26th then breeding population soon at full strength. First eggs seen on 20th May (c/2) and ♀ carrying food to nest burrow on 10th June. First fledged young seen on 20th June. Decrease noted from end of August and only 12 on 8th September but again small arrivals until 8th October. Up to 20 present on several days but 30 on 24th September and 2nd October. Very few to the 20th October and 2 on 28th October. Greenland type birds *O.o. leucorrhoa* were seen in spring between 30th April (3) to 14th June with main passage 13th-20th May peaking at 5 on 14th and between 29th May-4th June peaking at 10 on 30th May. In autumn records from 17th August to 19th October, up to 5 in first week of October and all birds trapped between 25th September-19th October (last) had wing lengths of 100 mm or larger.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*. Spring passage between 7th-17th March; 1 on 7th (♂), 3 on 8th and a good total of 5 on 9th (4 ♂♂), a ♀ on 10th. 3 on 14th and one on 17th. Only one autumn record; a ♂ on 6th November.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. Spring passage; small numbers daily between 6th-31st May with singles on 6th and 10th-11th June. Maximum of 10 on 8th, 12 on 13th, 25 on 18th-19th and 14 on 21st May. Small autumn passage; singles on 14th, 17th-20th then records daily from 23rd August (3) to

9th October with up to 5 on several days and maximum of 10 on 20th September. Very poor total of 2 ringed.



**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. Spring passage; 2 on 29th-30th April, one remained to 3rd May, then records daily from 7th-30th May. 1-3 daily until 17th then 40 on 18th and 100 on 19th of which only 25 remained the next day. 5-10 daily from 21st-30th May. In autumn; singles on 2nd and 5th-6th September then 1-6 birds recorded almost daily between 11th September and 11th October, but 20 on 2nd October.

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. 2 on 27th March, singles on 28th and 31st and 9 days between 2nd-13th April. 1-2 most days from 5th-18th May but 4 on 8th. A ♂ on 24th-25th August and one on 1st September.

**NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One trapped at Busta on 7th June stayed on to 9th June. One at Leogh on 1st July.

**BLUETHROAT** *Luscinia svecica*. Spring records; singles on 8th-11th and 14th-15th May. 4 on 19th and singles on 22nd (♂) and 26th (♀), 4 on 27th-28th and one on 29th May, a ♂ on 3rd June. Autumn: a ♀ on 8th September, one on 25th, 2 on 27th, 4 on 28th and 2 on 29th September. One on 2nd October.

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*. Spring records between 8th March and 27th May. Singles on 7th-8th, 15th (dead) and 19th March then 1-3 birds daily to 10th April, 25 on 11th, 35 on 12th, smaller numbers in the next few days decreasing to 1 on 22nd April. A second small wave from 29th April (2), 25 on 30th then 1-6 almost daily to last spring record on 27th May. Autumn: singles on 5 scattered dates in September, small passage from 1st-19th October with maximum of 15 on 2nd and 9 on 8th. 1-5 birds between 27th October and 2nd November with maximum on 28th October. Another small passage 19th November-3rd December with maximum

of 6 on 21st-22nd. 5 scattered singles in the remainder of December, but 2 on 23rd.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*. Singles on 26th and 29th April and daily between 6th-15th April with maximum of 4 on 7th and 5 on 10th and 4 on 12th. Singles on 18th and 26th-27th May. One in autumn on 27th September.

LANCEOLATED WARBLER *Locustella lanceolata*. One on 19th September trapped in the Hegri Burn at Leogh probably stayed until 21st. The 11th record for Fair Isle and the first record since 1961.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. Three trapped in spring are included in the following sight records: 3 on 26th, 2 on 27th-28th, 4 on 29th and 2 on 30th May. Singles on 9th-10th June. One trapped on 24th July and one trapped on 29th September remained until 3rd October.

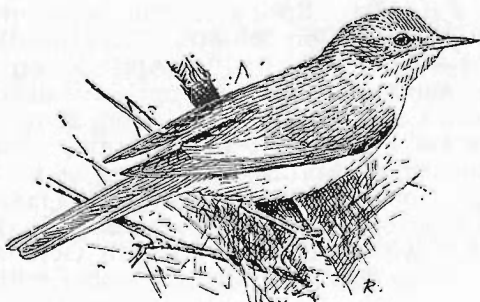
MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*. One trapped at Setter on 14th September remained until 19th.

REED/MARSH WARBLER. Single unstreaked *Acrocephalus* warblers referable to one or other of these species were recorded in autumn on 29th-31st August and 22nd-23rd September.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. 1-3 recorded almost daily in spring from 7th May-10th June but maxima of 4 on 10th, 10 on 25th and 4 on 27th May. Singles on 14th and 28th June. Singles in autumn on 13th July, 3rd-4th September and 4th October.

AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*. 4 individuals recorded in August; one on 12th-13th (trapped in the gully on 12th), 3 on 14th, all trapped (Field, Shirva and Quoy), then sight records presumably of these same birds until 23rd August.

MELODIOUS WARBLER *Hippolais polyglotta*. One trapped on 29th August at Shirva and another trapped at Nurse's on 19th September remained until 23rd September. The fourth and fifth records for Fair Isle. A *Hippolais* warbler almost certainly of this species was present between 4th-7th September.





ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*. 4 on 26th May, 2 on 27th (one new bird), 3 on 28th-29th May. One on 3rd-4th, 2 on 10th and 1 from 14th-19th June. In autumn one from 29th August to 4th September and one on 19th September.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. A ♂ on 11th-12th April. 4 on 30th April then recorded on many days until 7th June with maxima of 9 on 19th and 6 on 29th-30th. ♀♀ on 11th-12th, 17th-21st June and 5th-6th July. Autumn records: 1 on 14th, 2 on 29th and 1 on 30th August. 1-4 daily from 16th September-1st October. Very large arrival of 75 on 2nd October, 30 remaining to 3rd after which smaller numbers, generally less than 10 to the end of October but a late-October peak of 14 on 28th. 2 on 1st-2nd November then only singles on 9 dates to 26th November.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. 1-2 on 6 dates between 13th-21st August. Daily records from 26th August-5th October usually 1-4 but 6 on 13th and 18th and 7 on 19th and 24th September. 2 on 12th and singles on 16th and 18th October.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. Spring: 1 on 18th, 2 on 19th then daily records from 23rd May-24th June generally less than 10 but 30 arrived on 26th May. Singles in July on 10th and 28th. Autumn passage: 1-4 between 9th-18th August with maximum on 12th, then daily records from 26th August-5th October with numbers reaching double figures on only 30th August (12), 20th September (10) and on 2nd October when 40 arrived. 1-2 on several days from 7th-21st October.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. Spring records almost daily from 8th May-13th June with one on 3rd July. Numbers generally low, 1-3 between 8th-18th, 10 on 19th, 2-4 between 20th-25th, 10 on 26th then 3-8 until the end of the month. 1-2 from 3rd-13th June. Autumn records: singles on 14th August, 16th, 27th-28th and 30th September, 1st-4th October.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. Daily spring records from 30th April-30th May with up to 6 on several days and peak of 9 on 6th May. Fewer records in June, 1-2 between 3rd-10th and singles on 26th and 28th. 1 on 3rd July. Autumn passage in very small numbers, singles on 19th-21st and 31st August, 2 on 1st September, one from 16th-22nd then 1-4 daily to 20th October. One bird ringed on 2nd October, showing characteristics of the Siberian race *S.c. blythi*, lingered at the Observatory garden until 8th November.

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*. A ♂ trapped at the plantation on 26th June was last seen on 5th July. Recorded for the second year in succession.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Spring passage: 2

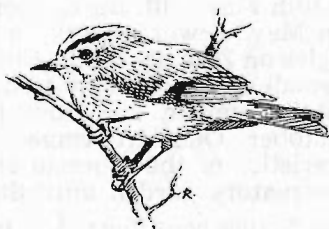
on 12th and singles on 20th-21st and 30th April. 2 on 1st May. Recorded daily from 6th May-11th June. Small numbers in May (peak of 13 on 8th) until arrival of 50 on 18th further increased to 120 on 19th, smaller numbers to the end of the month but with another arrival of 40 on 26th. Numbers decreasing during June with maximum of 7 on 3rd. Autumn passage between 13th August and 9th October in small numbers with arrivals in August on 26th (30) increased to 40 on 27th, 45 on 29th. Smaller numbers in September with peaks of 14 on 13th, 15 on 16th and 1-4 on 6 days from 1st-9th October.

**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*. One early arrival in spring on 27th March and 2 'Phylloscops' seen on 10th April were probably of this species. 3 on 11th then singles on 7 days in April. 1-5 between 1st-13th May with maximum figure recorded on 8th and 10th, 8 on 18th May, then 1-3 on several days to the end of the month and singles in June to 17th. Autumn: one on 28th-29th August but main passage between 13th September-10th October with singles until 21st October. Up to 6 in last week of September and maximum of 12 on 2nd October.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Spring singles on 18th-20th, 25th-26th, 28th-30th May and 3rd June. Autumn records: singles on 13th and 14th (different birds) and 19th, 2 on 26th, 3 on 27th and 5 on 28th-29th, 3 on 30th August, 1 on 2nd September, 2 on 9th and singles on 13th and 28th-29th September. A record total of 9 ringed during the year.

**ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*. One on 24th September at the Houll, trapped at Nurse's on 25th and remained until 29th.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*. An amazing arrival of 12 on 27th September, 8 on 28th and 6 on 29th. 5 on 2nd October and up to 4 until 5th then singles to the 8th October and one on 12th-14th October.



**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*. One on 18th March, 15 on 25th increasing to 20 on 26th. Up to 8 on several days to 21st April with higher numbers on 6th (14) and 11th April (12).

Singles on 24th-25th and 7 on 30th April then 1-4 in May to the 20th. Autumn: 1 on 3rd September, 1-4 from 13th-22nd, 9 on 24th, 13 on 26th and 35 on 27th and another arrival on 29th (20). A large influx on 2nd October (50) and 30 on 5th-6th then up to 6 daily until 19th. 1 on 27th and 7 on 28th October. One on 2nd November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*. 1-2 occasionally from 7th-15th May then daily records from 18th May-12th June, with maximum of 8 on 20th and 26th May, 10 on 3rd and 8 on 10th June. Singles on 15th and 30th June and 3rd July. In autumn: singles on 14th and 25th September and 1-2 between 2nd-7th October.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*. One on 12th-13th, 2 on 14th and singles on 15th and 17th May. 12 on 18th and 50 on 19th, 15-20 until 22nd after which smaller numbers to end of month and singles on 1st, 6th and 10th June. Autumn: one on 13th August and main passage 26th August-3rd September with 20 on 26th-27th, 30 on 28th and peak of 60 on 29th. Small numbers were recorded almost daily in September with small arrivals on 13th (15), 16th (18) and 24th (5). One on 1st October, 3 on 2nd and one on 6th.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*. 1-2 on many days in March from 6th. Small passage continued through April to 8th May with maximum of 5 on 12th and 19th April. 3 on 19th and one on 20th May. Small autumn passage; one on 27th-28th September. 1-6 between 2nd and 6th October with maximum on 4th. Singles on 16th and 28th October and 22nd November.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. One from 27th-29th September, 2nd October and 1st November.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. First noted in spring on 12th March; numbers built up steadily between 23rd-26th March with 50 on the last date. Arrivals occurred throughout April but numbers were very difficult to assess. Breeding season as normal, birds carrying nest material on 17th April, first eggs seen on 8th May and fledged young first on 3rd June. Autumn influxes began during mid-August. Numbers decreased in October although some small arrivals also occurred. Small numbers recorded in November, 3 on 21st, and 1-2 in first week of December.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. 4 on 30th April. Daily records from 6th May until 31st May with peaks of 11 on 8th, 18 on 12th, 25 on 19th and 15 on 26th. 1-2 between 6th-14th June. Few autumn records, one between 20th-25th August, 2 on 26th and singles on 27th and 29th August, 6th September and 8th-9th October.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*. Present all months of the year.

Breeding season as usual; first eggs seen on 20th May (c/5) and well-grown young in nest on 5th June.

**WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba*. White Wagtails *M.a. alba*: spring records, 2 on 24th March and small numbers between 8th April and 27th May with maximum of 6 on 30th April, 8th, 10th and 12th May. In autumn recorded between 12th August and 4th October, high counts on 12th (12), 17th (13) and 21st August (10) after which a roosting flock of *alba* wagtails built up in the crops at Setter (all closely examined were White Wagtails). This flock peaked at 60 on 27th-28th August. Pied Wagtail *M.a. yarelli*: singles on 19th-21st and 24th-25th March, 1-3 on several days in April and daily through May but 5 on 27th May. A pair nested in the gully, the nest being found on 23rd June; the four chicks flew the next day. A second brood was also raised and 2 are known to have flown. This is the first definite breeding record for the island of Pied Wagtails. The young birds and one of the parents stayed on through the autumn and records for Pied Wagtails were regular through August until 26th. 1-2 on most days between 8th-23rd September. A ♂ on 10th November.

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*. One on 26th March and one on 31st May-11th June.

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*. An immature was found at Setter on 7th September (probably also present on 6th) and relocated at Finniquoy on 11th. It was trapped on 11th at the single dyke and remained on the island until 13th September. The fourth year in succession that this species has been recorded.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*. Main spring passage between 13th May and 10th June with not more than 2 on any day. Those sub-specifically identified were as follows: Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*, singles on 19th May, 4th and 6th June. Yellow Wagtail *M.f. flavissima*, a ♂ on 30th April, singles on 14th and 18th May and 10th June. Grey-headed Wagtail *M.f. thunbergi*, singles on 13th-15th and 28th-29th May. Single Yellow Wagtail spp. were recorded on 16th, 18th-19th, 26th-27th May, 3rd and 7th June. Only one autumn record, an unidentified Yellow Wagtail spp. seen on 16th-17th was probably the same bird identified as Blue-headed on 18th-21st September.

**WAXWING** *Bombycilla garrulus*. One on 11th-12th November.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*. A very poor season with only one spring record on 1st April and one autumn record on 28th October.

**LESSER GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius minor*. A first year bird trapped

at Setter on 26th September stayed until 5th October. Last recorded in 1966.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*. An immature bird at the Observatory on 18th September was trapped later in the Hjon Dyke trap. It stayed until 20th September.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*. A ♂ on 19th May, 2 on 26th and 1 on 27th, single ♀♀ on 2nd-3rd and 5th-7th. A ♂ on 11th and single ♀♀ on 12th and 18th June. An immature trapped on 3rd September is the only autumn record.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Present all months of the year and bred in usual numbers. Noticed carrying nesting material from 4th April and young, c.1 week old on 21st May, fledged young first seen on 9th June. Migrant influxes were noted between 6th-9th March and 1st and 11th April in spring and in autumn on 12th and 21st October (1000+), 25th-29th October (birds passing south during the day), with 500+ on 28th).

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sternus roseus*. An adult ♂ first seen at the plantation on 8th July joined up with a roving flock of young Starlings and was seen mainly around Easter Lother until 10th July.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. A ♀ on 12th April at Setter where it was trapped. The first to be ringed on Fair Isle.

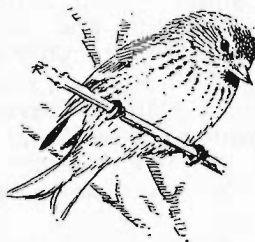
GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*. A ♂ on 25th, 28th-30th and a ♀ on 31st March, 1st and 4th-6th April. A ♂ on 11th and a ♀ on many days from 30th April-11th May. Singles in autumn on 12th, 16th and 30th October. 7 arrived on 31st and increased to 12 on 4th November. 8 were seen until 8th then 1-2 until 18th November. One on 2nd and 14th December.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Spring passage from 29th April-31st May, 1-3 on many days. Autumn passage: 2-3 between 2nd-10th October and a single ♂ 29th October-5th November. 1 on 19th-20th November, and 2nd-3rd December.

LINNET *Acanthis cannabina*. Spring records between 4th April and 12th July, with most in April-May. Recorded daily between 4th-25th April with maxima of 6 on 13th and 5 on 15th and 18th. 1-4 on several days to the end of the month. 1-3 on 12 days in May, daily between 5th-11th. 1 on 5th, 2 on 6th, 3 on 10th and 1 on 28th June. 2 on 10th and 1 on 11th-12th July. Singles in autumn on 12th-13th October and 5th November.

TWITE *Acanthis flavirostris*. Recorded in all months of the year, numbers much reduced in winter months. Maximum of 8 in January, 22 in February (11th), 13 in March. Slow increase through April and 60 present by the end of the month. Numbers increased further during the first week of May

with 120 by the 10th. Breeding season as usual and post-breeding flocks began to form from 21st July. Individual flocks in August up to 90 and totalling c. 160. The smaller flocks tended to join up in September-October to give one main flock of up to 150. Smaller numbers present from the end of October and figures less than 10 by mid-November.



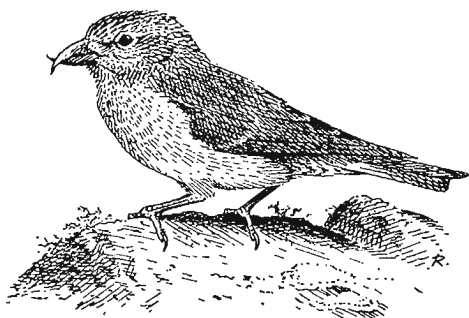
**REDPOLL** *Acanthis flammea*. Mealy Redpoll *A.f. flammea*, in spring 1 on 10th, 2 on 12th and 1 on 13th April. 1-3 between 5th-12th and a ♂ on 25th May. A sizeable irruption was recorded in the autumn with numbers unparalleled since 1965. Arrivals occurred from late September until November during which time a total of 116 were trapped and ringed (3 were also trapped in the spring). This figure far exceeds the previous years' best ringing total for Mealies of 27, Sight records: 1 from 8th-14th September, 8 on 24th, increasing to 40 on 27th and 50 on 28th, 45 were still present on the 2nd October but smaller numbers followed until the next arrival on 13th October (25), 46 on 18th-19th and 50 on 21st. Another arrival on 27th (40) increasing to 80 on 28th. Only 6 remained on 29th then 1-4 until 5th November except for 9 on 3rd. Another small influx from 21st November with 1-2 daily until 30th when 6 arrived, up to 5 until 11th, and 1-2 until 20th December. Lesser Redpoll, *A.f. cabaret/disruptis*, one from 2nd-6th October (trapped). *A.f. rostrata*, one on 14th December.

**ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*. During the large autumn movement of Mealy Redpolls several very pale birds with apparently unstreaked white rumps were seen. Two trapped and examined in the hand showed all the characteristics of Coue's Redpoll and these, considering the very large individual variation amongst Mealy Redpolls, must remain the only definite records. One on 24th-28th September and another 19th-26th October.

**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. One on 28th January, a ♀ between 11th-13th April, a ♀ on 6th May and singles from 10th-14th May, probably all refer to the same ♀.

**SCARLET ROSEFINCH** *Carpodacus erythrinus*. One spring record

between 19th-21st June (trapped on 19th—not adult male). A good series of records in autumn with a total of 7 trapped, sight records involve a minimum of 17 individuals. Seen daily between 23rd August and 14th September; 3 on 23rd increased to 6 on 26th-27th after which 3 daily until 2nd September (5) and 4 on 3rd, then singles to 14th September except for 3 on 9th. 1-3 daily between 16th-19th and 1-2 daily from 25th September to 1st October. All autumn birds were, as usual, brown birds and those trapped were birds of the year.



**CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*. An irruptive movement was recorded during the summer with the majority of records in July. The last strong invasion at Fair Isle was in 1966. A ♀ was seen on 19th-20th June and another picked up dead on 21st. 4 on 22nd, 8 on 25th (3 ♀♀) and 10 on 28th. Records were daily from 1st to 26th July, building up from 6 on 1st to 27 on 3rd, 50 on 6th and 9th—of these c.40 remained until 13th. Records then of small numbers until 26th, except for a flock of 54 on 21st which apparently did not stop on the island. 2 on 29th increased to 9 on 31st and 2 were seen to 2nd August. 2 on 19th August (♂♀) the ♀ remaining until 24th. A ♂ on 9th October joined by a second ♂ on 17th and one remained until 22nd October. 1 on 28th October (♀).

**TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL** *Loxia leucoptera*. An adult male on 8th July was feeding with a party of Common Crossbills just behind the Observatory. Later it was seen at Wyrvie and again at the Observatory briefly the next day. Last recorded on the island in 1962.

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*. Spring passage: 1-2 on many days between 9th-31st March but 4 on 17th. Recorded daily from 1st-17th April with peak of 10 on 1st and 4th and 15 on 12th. 1-3 on several days between 20th April-17th May but 7 on 30th April. In autumn from 24th September-9th November but in two periods. The first between 24th Sep-



tember-16th October with peaks of 12 on 8th and 11th. The second, smaller passage, between 28th October-9th November with 1-3 daily.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*. One between 25th-28th January. A ♂ from 27th-31st March. 1-3 between 1st-8th March increased to peak of 40 on 11th. Numbers gradually fell until next small arrival of 10 on 21st, then similar decrease to one on 26th. A large arrival of 150 on 29th increased further to 175 on 30th. Up to 25 in first 4 days of May then 50 on 5th after which numbers decreased to last spring record on 24th May. Autumn passage: 2 on 13th and 1 on 14th-15th September. Daily records with 3 main arrivals between 24th September-15th October; arrivals on 24th September (17), 2nd October (110) and 11th October (80). Few records from 18th October until renewed passage in last week of October with peak of 30 on 28th. 1-4 in first week of November and 2-3 from 19th-21st November.

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*. Single ♂♂ on 14th and 23rd-24th March. A pair on 2nd, the ♀ still present on 3rd, 3 on 10th, 2 on 11th-12th and one on 14th-15th April. A ♀ on 6th and a ♂ between 11th-14th May. In autumn 1-3 on most days 28th October-6th November and one 11th-12th November.

**BLACK-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza melanocephala*. A ♂ trapped in the gully on 4th July. Recorded for the second year in succession.

[**RED-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza bruniceps*. A ♂ from 26th-31st July first located near the Observatory later mainly on the cliff edge at Hesswalls.]

**YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING** *Emberiza aureola*. One on 30th August at the North Grind/Vaadal and another 9th-11th September at Kennaby (both were either immatures or females).

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** *Emberiza hortulana*. Recorded only in spring: one from 6th-10th May, 4 on 19th-20th, 2 on 21st and 1 on 22nd-23rd May.

**RUSTIC BUNTING** *Emberiza rustica*. A ♂ found on the cliff east of Hesti Geo on 26th May was at the Observatory on 27th-29th, on the latter date it flew into one of the Observatory windows seriously injuring itself and impairing its balance and flight. It was kept in captivity for several weeks before it died and during this time it showed little sign of improvement. A ♂ on 8th-10th June was trapped at the plantation on 8th.

**LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*. One at Setter on 2nd October was relocated at Shirva where it was trapped on 5th. A different bird was also at the Nurse's on 7th and one of the



two remained until 9th October. One on 21st October at Springfield remained until 26th.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Singles between 17th-23rd February. 1-2 between 9th-14th March. 1-2 from 27th March-13th April, except for 5 on 11th. Daily between 29th April and 24th May; 7 on 29th and 20 on 30th April then peaks of 30 on 10th and 14th May. 2 on 30th May and single males on 4th and 11th June. Autumn passage; singles in September from 24th, main passage 2nd-15th October when records were daily with peaks of 10 on 2nd-3rd and 14 on 8th October, 1-3 on scattered dates between 18th October and 6th November, and one on 6th December.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. No records in spring. 1-4 on most days from 14th September-8th October with peak of 6 on 28th September. Singles on 4 scattered dates to 5th November.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Present in variable numbers through the winter months with maxima of 70 on 12th and 50 on 28th January but generally 10-30 daily. Larger flocks during the second half of February with up to 180. Maximum of 120 in March on 12th but generally up to 50 daily. 20 on 4th April then less than 10 to last spring record on 19th May. Autumn records; 2 on 9th September increasing at the end of the month to 25-30 and up to 50 in the first ten days of October. Records then infrequent until 24th (36) increased to 62 on 31st October. Numbers higher during the first two weeks of November, 400 on 3rd, 1000+ on 5th, 8th and 11th after which numbers fell to 30 by the 20th. An arrival on 21st brought another 200 but these were gone by the next day. Up to 10 until 1st December, 75 on 2nd and 200 on 3rd, after which up to 50 present in the remainder of December.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. Present throughout the year with probably higher numbers than usual breeding successfully; very large flocks during the summer after the young had fledged.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. 1-3 from 17th-29th February and 1-4 on a few scattered dates in March and April. Numbers a little higher in May up to 6 on several days and 12 on 17th and 21st. Similar numbers in June with 12 on 7th-8th but sightings less frequent. A pair was seen carrying nesting material into South Reeva on 30th April and 2 juveniles were seen in the first week of July. Up to 4 birds seen on several days in July and a maximum of 8 in August on 12th, and 6 in September, October and November. Less regularly recorded after September.

## An Irruptive Movement of Crossbills

ROGER BROAD

During the summer a good series of Crossbills were recorded and, as in previous irruptions, the first birds reached us in June and the main movement was in July. Numbers built up steadily through June from 19th and reached peaks of 50 on 2 days in the first fortnight of July. Numbers decreased from 14th to 26th July, except for a flock of 54 that were observed flying over the island on 21st, which apparently did not stop. A smaller, secondary movement occurred between 29th July and 2nd August and 3 different birds were recorded between the less usual dates of 9th-28th October.

A total of 23 birds were trapped, including 2 of the October birds, and measurements of all birds were in close agreement with the figures given by Davis (1963) for a larger sample of Common Crossbills trapped on Fair Isle in previous irruptions.

	Wing (mm)	Length	Bill Depth	Tail	Weight (g)
♂ ♂ (7)	95-101	19.5-21.0	11-12.5	57-63	37.1-46.5
♀ ♀ (11)	93-99	18.5-20.0	11-12.0	54-62	28.5-42.1
Juveniles (5)	94-99	18.0-19.5	10-11.5	58-62	31.3-39.4

The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of birds.

Judging from the age composition of the flocks, some of the groups were thought to have stayed on the island for several days, favouring certain areas. The few ringed birds that were retrapped bear this out and the interval between trapping and recapture (often at the same place) varied from 2-10 days. In their favoured areas, the birds exploited the available food. At first, one of the main feeding areas was beside the North Light road at Furse and Wyrvie, where they appeared to be feeding mainly on the previous year's heather seeds. Later flocks fed behind the Observatory again concentrating on the heather. Some of the late July birds specialised on the drying thrift heads and the October birds concentrated mainly on the ripe thistle heads.

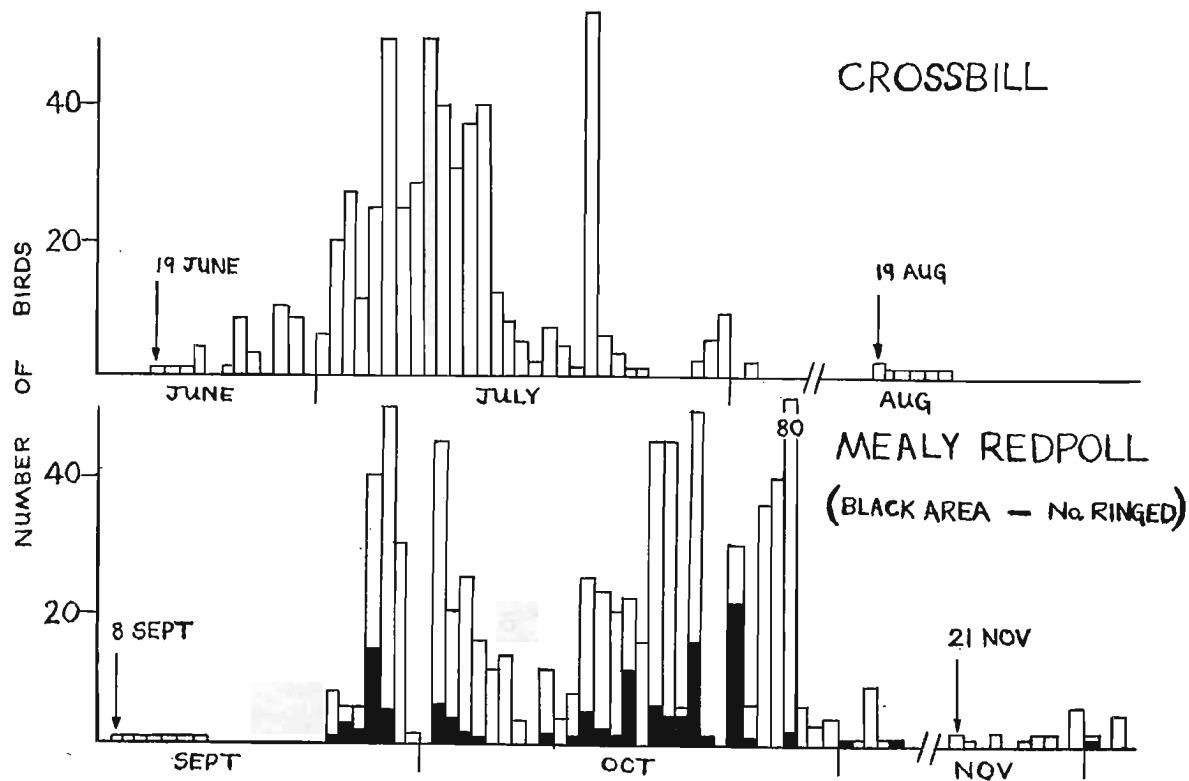
### Reference

Davis, P. (1963). The Parrot Crossbill Irruption at Fair Isle. *Bird Migration*, 2 : 260-264.

## An Irruptive Movement of Mealy Redpolls

ROGER BROAD

Small numbers of Mealy Redpolls are seen on Fair Isle quite regularly with records both in the autumn and the spring.



Larger movements take place at less frequent intervals, and generally during these irruptions the main movement is noted in late October and November. During this year a large-scale movement took place a little earlier than on previous occasions, with the first main influx from 24th September. Waves of new arrivals continued to pass through the island during October, and another very much smaller movement took place from 21st November and continued to 20th December.

During the main movement 30-50 birds were recorded at the peak of each wave except for the last influx when 80 were logged on 28th October. Many of the birds were either feeding in the trapping area or going to roost in the trees at the Plantation and the Gully and we were thus able to catch a good sample (121 Mealies ringed). Our daily ringing totals to some extent reflect the arrival of new migrants (see histogram). Despite having been trapped and handled once there was no indication that these birds became 'trap-shy' and ringed birds returned to the trapping area to feed and roost and were re-trapped on subsequent occasions. During the first two waves (24th-30th September and 2nd-8th October) no bird is known to have stayed longer than 2 days. In the rest of October and early November several fresh influxes occurred but some birds evidently stayed for considerably longer with several recaptures 5-6 days after ringing, one 9 days and another 10 days after ringing. Unfortunately, during the last and largest influx the majority of birds were feeding and roosting away from the trapping area.

As in previous irruptions there were a number of very pale birds with apparently clear white rumps, feeding and roosting with the Mealies. Two of these were trapped and showed all the plumage characters of Arctic Redpolls *Acanthis hornemanni exilipes*.

## Fair Isle Croft Museum

GORDON BARNES

When I moved to Setter in late autumn of 1961 one of my first jobs was to clear out the buildings of rubbish that had collected over the years. I found many interesting items and then decided it would be a great loss if they were thrown away. I had seen several items thrown out of other crofts when they were modernised.

It was not until 1970 that I was able to put all the things together in one room. One of the old huts from the Bird Observatory was removed to Setter and made an ideal museum, although now rather small. I was amazed how many things there were altogether, mostly hand-made from driftwood, rang-

ing from a netting needle to a child's rocking cradle with the initials J.A. carefully carved on the opening cover.

The flactor spade is one of the most interesting items. I am told this was used for cutting turf for the old turf roofed houses. One of the islanders has made us several things : clogs, rope-making machine and a dead-fall mouse trap, the latter still in use on many crofts.

We have been given several things but I am sure there must be lots of other useful museum items which their owners think of as rubbish.

My wife Perry has knitted a lot of the known Fair Isle patterns. These are displayed on the wall in two lengths, each with over sixty patterns.

The next step would be an old croft house, with the open hearth, box beds and narrow carved ship's doors. It would also be nice to have an old Fair Isle yoal with all its fittings and fishing gear. Another idea would be to have a collection of old photographs but they would be difficult to display owing to damp and lack of wall space.

(Gordon and Perry are anxious to expand their collection of genuine Fair Isle antiquities, and are only too pleased to show visitors the museum).

## **The Tysties at Busta Geo**

PETER & ELISABETH SLATER

Tystie is the name given to the Black Guillemot in Norway and in the Northern Isles : it is a name which is gaining popularity in the south too for several reasons, of which the main one is probably that it has more the ring of the bird about it than its coldly scientific English counterpart. Fair Isle is an ideal place to watch Tysties, for they nest in scattered groups under the rocks in geos all round the coast of the island. Sometimes only a single pair will be found with no others close to it, but in other places, where nesting sites are plentiful, several pairs may breed on a single beach. While Tysties are certainly sociable and spend considerable time in communal displays on the water, it seems possible that these nesting groups arise, not through birds actively seeking to nest close together as in truly colonial species, but just because suitable nesting places tend to be clumped. Busta Geo, on the south-east corner of Fair Isle (the inlet between Brecks and Meoness on the map on the back cover of this report), is a case in point. Here, some twenty years ago, a fall of rock from a neighbouring cliff left the beach beneath piled with large boulders, many of several tons in weight. From year to year these change their position

as they are slowly ground down by the winter storms, but beneath and around them are numerous crevices and in these each year at least a dozen Tysties lay their eggs. Their concentration in this place and the conspicuousness of their activities there have led to its local name of 'Tystie Stane'.

When we visited the island in 1970 we began to make casual observations on the Tysties at Busta Geo from the nearby cliff but, soon discovering the ease with which they could be observed, the interest became an addiction. We returned in 1972 to make further notes and have now spent some 80 hours in all watching their behaviour during August—the time of year when they are feeding their young. We have already published some of our observations from 1970 (*Bird Study*, 19: 105-113 (1972)) but here we would like to give a more general account of the behaviour of the Busta Geo Tysties and point to additional conclusions which our later observations allow.

The activities of the Tysties vary greatly with the time of day. As the sun rises (at around 5 a.m. in August) few are to be seen sitting on the rocks at the colony itself, but already individual birds are feeding their chicks. They fly in from the sea and usually land in the geo before walking slowly up the rocks to deposit their catch in the appropriate crevice. Thereafter they remain only briefly to preen before flying off once more to sea. As the morning proceeds, however, birds gather on the rocks and, while fishing continues unabated, up to 30 may be seen resting, preening and displaying on shore. As this number exceeds the number of known nesting adults (13 pairs in 1970 and 14 pairs in 1972), it is clear that some of these birds are non-breeders or those that have earlier lost their clutches. Further evidence for this is provided by two colour-ringed birds, often seen on the rocks in 1972, but not feeding young: as both adults take part in this, neither of these birds can have been breeding.

The peak time for social activity at the colony is 9-12 a.m. and thereafter the numbers of birds present decline once more. For the rest of the day few if any Tysties are in the area except for those briefly visiting with fish for their chicks. Although the rate of fishing is slightly lower in the afternoon than in the morning, the adults continue their feeding excursions without much decline until shortly after sunset. At this stage, while it is still quite light, they leave the colony but do not go out to sea again. Instead they swim to the rocks near the mouth of the geo where they flutter out of the water to roost. Unfortunately we did not discover this habit until recently and so have only counted the numbers roosting on one occasion. The fact that some 60 birds were seen on the rocks in the geo and on the large offshore stack known as the Burrian was, however, surprising for this is about twice the number nesting in the

immediate vicinity. Perhaps birds gather here from further afield or perhaps the figure is boosted by a large proportion of non-breeding birds.

By far the most striking behaviour shown by the Tysties at this time of year is the feeding of their young. The type of prey which they take to their chicks can be approximately identified because it is larger than that caught by other auks and each capture is carried singly to the nest, hanging out of one side of the beak or the other. Individual birds differ from each other quite strongly in their feeding habits: while most of the prey taken to the nest are butterfish some birds consistently take a high proportion of other species. Observations on the birds departing from the geo suggested that these differences might result from differences in the localities in which they fished. During the main part of the day most of them feed to the south, landing close to the Skerry about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile offshore. On the other hand one bird which fished near the end of the geo in 1970 caught almost entirely sandeels and another, also fishing close inshore, fed its young mainly on sea scorpions. Amongst other less common prey are flatfish, sillocks (mainly young piltock, but also small herring and haddock) and even, on one occasion, a crustacean (probably Norway lobster). This was the only prey seen which was not a fish in over 1000 feeding excursions. As well as differing in where they go to feed and the type of prey which they catch there is another, rather curious, difference between individual Tysties: the majority of birds have a strong preference for carrying their prey to the nest with its head pointing to a particular side of the beak. About half of them prefer the left side and half of them the right.

The following table shows the overall number of different types of fish taken to their chicks by the 13 pairs nesting at Busta Geo in 1970 (40 hours of observation) and by the 14 pairs in 1972 (34 hours of observation):

	Butterfish	Sillock	Sea- Scorpion	Sandeel	Flatfish	Other	Total
1970							
Number	255	100	44	95	38	12	544
Percent	46.9	18.4	8.1	17.4	7.0	2.2	100
1972							
Number	328	41	34	6	49	6	464
Percent	70.7	8.8	7.3	1.3	10.6	1.3	100

Two points are of interest here. Firstly, the proportion of butterfish taken in was much higher in 1972 than in 1970. This is largely for a rather surprising reason: in 1970 all our observations were between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., whereas in 1972 several hours of observation were carried out at dawn and dusk. At these times a much higher proportion of butterfish are taken than during the main part of the day. It may be that butterfish



are easier than other species to catch in the half-light, but some of our observations suggest that the birds also fish closer in shore at this time, where perhaps butterfish are commoner. Another difference between the two years is the marked decline in the proportion of sandeels caught. This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that sandeels are the major food of Puffins, and this species has fallen in numbers recently. Perhaps the decrease of Puffins is partly due to a shortage of sandeels.

The fact that Tysties bring food to the nest in their beaks calls for great circumspection, for other birds, including other Tysties, take every opportunity to steal their catch. Probably for this reason, adults with fish swim around a lot in the geo and usually move slowly up the rocks, keeping alert as they do so. They may pass close to a Grey Seal or an Eider without concern, yet fly off very easily should a Bonxie, a Heron or a gull appear. On several occasions we have seen a Tystie lose its catch to another species. Once, a Shag was seen to dive and approach a Tystie carrying its fish from underneath; the Tystie, seeing it coming, also dived and escaped with its characteristic zig-zag path beneath the water. Curiously, when the Shag repeated its attack a short time later, the Tystie failed to take evasive action and the Shag, neatly emerging from the water beneath its head, removed the fish from its beak. On other occasions the thief was a Herring Gull, which often sat on the rocks about the colony. Tysties could pass quite close to it without it showing any reaction, but they always appeared more cautious in its presence. It was once seen to employ rather subtle tactics to steal a fish. As an adult Tystie disappeared behind a rock with its fish, the gull took to the air and approached unseen to remove the fish before the Tystie was aware of its advance.

One important event late in the breeding season which we have so far failed to observe is fledging. We have seen chicks sitting at the entrance of their crevices and several in the geo, offshore and at the roosts, but we have never observed one to leave the colony. Just when they do so and whether the parents play a part in attracting them down to the sea remains a mystery. This is as well though, for it is just one amongst many questions about Tysties which we hope to be able to answer on future visits to Fair Isle.



## Devonian Plants from Fair Isle

In *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology* (1972), 14: 49-61, William Challoner of the Department of Botany and Microbiology, University College, London, has described two new species of fossil plants occurring as compression fossils from the Lower or Middle Devonian of Fair Isle. They are assigned as new species to the genera *Dawsonites* Halle and *Svalbardia* Hoeg.

*Svalbardia scotica* n.sp. has been found in South and North Gavel Beds on Bu Ness; and *Dawsonites roskilienses* n.sp. from two closely adjoining exposures at Ruska Lee (Roskilie) near Furse.

Although fossil plants have long been known from the Old Red Sandstone of the Scottish mainland and Orkney, these are the first records from Fair Isle. The above species are two of the better-defined entities among a small number of fossil plants collected on the island. Other less well-preserved specimens include a single impression of a fragment of an axis, cf., *Thursophyton milleri*, a coalified compression showing some evidence of microscopic tubular construction, cf., *Prototaxites*, and some *Hostimella*-like axes which resemble sterile material of the plant here assigned to *Dawsonites*.

The plant fossils were found in the course of the re-surveying of Fair Isle by Mr W. Mykura, and were collected in part by Mr P. J. Brand (Institute of Geological Sciences) and in part by Dr Charles Waterston (Royal Scottish Museum).

The paper gives full descriptions together with photographs. Specimens are on exhibition at the Bird Observatory.

G.W.

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