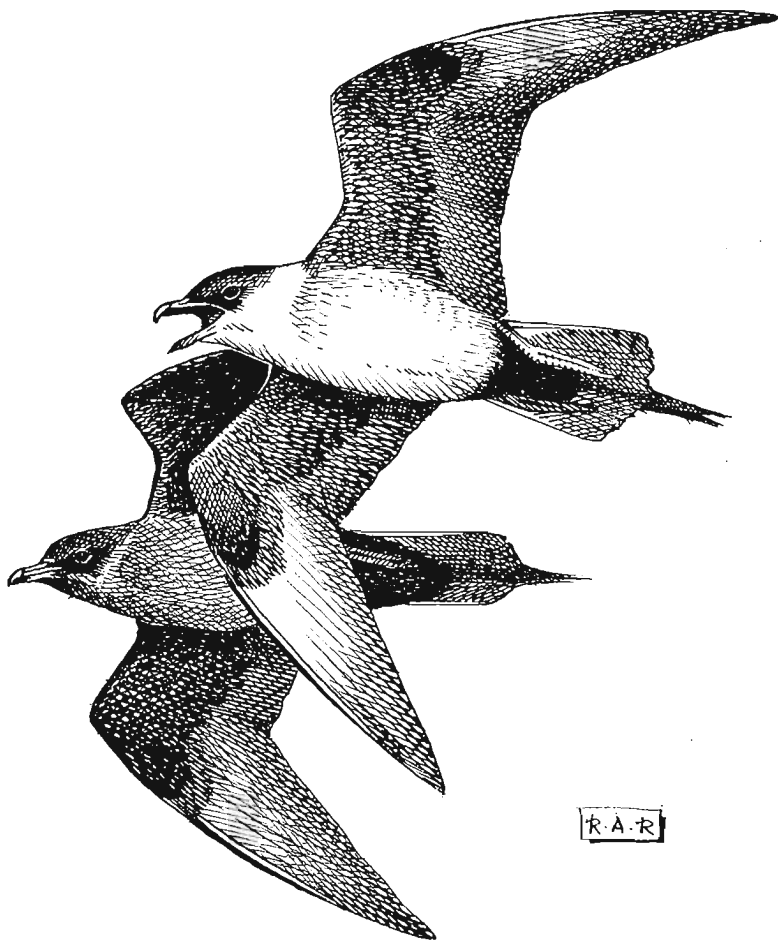


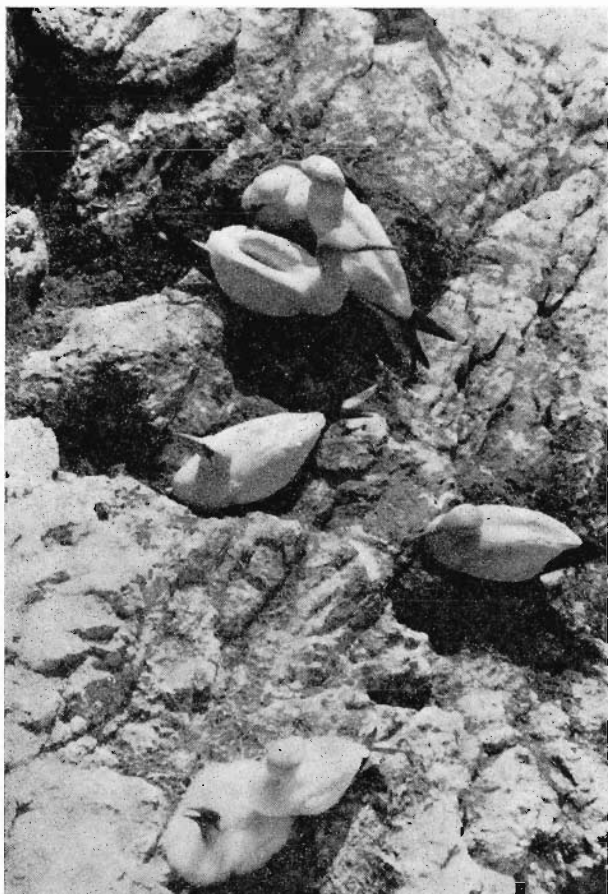
Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT FOR 1975



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

NEW BREEDING BIRD FOR FAIR ISLE



Photograph by Roger Broad

Gannets from the long-established colony on Noss, Shetland, were frequently seen off-shore at Fair Isle in summer. For the first time, however, between 10 and 30 were ashore in July 1972 on Da Fless and on S.E. corner of the Sheep Rock. In 1973, Gannets were again ashore in July on the lower slopes of the Sheep Rock, and up to mainly 2nd year birds on Da Fless. For the first time a few birds in adult plumage occupied a wide ledge in the N.W. corner of the island at Dronger. It was to this site that adult Gannets returned on 26th April 1974 and remained throughout the summer—the usual number being between 25 and 30. Three quite large nests were constructed—almost entirely of courlene and scraps of fishing net—but no eggs were laid.

In 1975, Gannets nested for the first time in history on Fair Isle (see p. 24). In foreground of photograph a young bird can be seen.

(Full particulars of the gradual colonisation of Fair Isle can be seen in our *Annual Reports*, 1972 - 1974).

Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT No. 28

1975

Edited by GEORGE WATERSTON

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

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THE FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY ENDOWMENT FUND

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

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

Please write to the Hon. Secretary for particulars.

GEORGE WATERSTON,
Hon. Secretary.

21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

Foreword

I CANNOT begin this foreword without first referring to the tragic death of David Frost, an Assistant Warden at the Observatory. I will not dwell further on this sad occurrence which is fully dealt with in the Report. We mourn the loss of a young and promising life, and I hope that the warning of the danger of clambering about the cliffs will be kept constantly before visitors. It is true that few worthwhile pursuits are without some element of danger, but the objective must ever be to minimise the dangers.

It is a strange reflection that the Scots, unlike King Naaman who you will recall preferred his own rivers to the river Jordan, form so small a proportion of our visitors. We Scots are often vociferous in the proclamation of our differences from others in the realm of Church and Law, Education and Accountancy and, on much less certain ground, even strident in our claims of superiority in these important fields of human endeavour. Yet I would guess that many more ornithologically orientated Scots sample the delights of the deltas of the Rhone or the Guadalquivir than know the beauty of the Gilsetter burn.

These thoughts are prompted as much by gratitude of the great support we get from furth of Scotland as by any feelings of disappointment from within our native land: especially I would mention our colleague R. A. Richardson whose vignettes add so greatly to the attractiveness of these *Annual Reports*, and whose tireless work for FIBOT, and especially the John Harrison Memorial Fund which has enabled so many young people to enjoy the delights and benefit from the experience of visiting Fair Isle.

Ornithologically this year was as exciting as usual, and perhaps the features that interest me most are the Skua work and the arrival of breeding Gannets—the second new northern colony founded in recent years though why the species should be spreading is a mystery so far not adequately explained.

A notable achievement during the year was the success of our own indomitable George Waterston's appeal for funds for the National Trust especially for Fair Isle which has now raised £3000 for the body that has been so helpful to FIBOT through the years of island ownership.

Our thanks again go to the Broads and their staff for their successful work in running the Observatory for another stimulating and happy year.

ARTHUR B. DUNCAN,
Chairman.

Fair Isle 1975 : The Continuing Progress

By DAVID MACLEHOSE

(N.T.S. Factor for Fair Isle)

1975 was a particularly significant year for Fair Isle. It was a happy and satisfying year in which the islanders and the Trust worked closely together to prepare for the future. In that confidence, the Trust is implementing long-term ideas for the welfare of the island and exciting and challenging plans are being conceived and implemented. The liaisons with the Shetland Islands Council, Statutory Bodies, and with Loganair are closer than they have been for some time. During this year two sons of island crofters came to settle on Fair Isle together with their newly-wedded brides. 1975 has quickened an enthusiasm to continue the challenging programme.

Since 1954 the Trust has implemented schemes to modernise croft houses as the opportunity arises. So far 12 houses have been provided with basic amenities—hot and cold running water, a flushing W.C., an improved kitchen, and bedroom accommodation. The modernisation of Lower Stoneybrake has just been completed at total gross cost of £4,750. It was a conventional building operation to demolish the low existing lean-to extension to the rear of the building, and erect a block wall building in its place. The house now contains three bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a living-room. That old stone building on the S bend a hundred yards to the North of Stackhoul Store is now clad with a white harling, making a good first home for Neil and Pat Thomson who settled on Fair Isle in August 1975. In 1976 we hope to renovate Busta, for so long the home of Helen Stout, who sadly died in April 1976.

The main project for 1975 was the reinforcement to the existing electricity scheme. It was particularly appropriate that in the 21st year that extra power should be provided on the island. Some readers may remember the installation of the original electricity network in 1962. It was a great step forward, and despite the fact that external funds were not available, the Trust realising the importance of such a power supply to the island community, provided and established this vital service. Three 7.5 Kw Lister powered generators have done sterling work, and given surprisingly little trouble during their 12 year life span. Inevitably they have become expensive to maintain, and a new power supply was required. A new 52 Kw generator, Lister powered again, is now in position in the generator station in Stackhoul quarry. A stand-

by generator has been purchased from Kirkwall Airport, and will be shipped to Fair Isle in June 1976. The new generator has been connected by new cable into the existing circuits that link each house in the crofting community. The redundant generators will be sold to help offset the cost of the new equipment. This enlightened scheme has enjoyed the financial support of both the North of Scotland Hydro Electricity Board and the Highlands and Islands Development Board who helped the Trust to meet a total estimated cost of £11,700.

Neither the modernisation of Lower Stoneybrake, nor the installation of the new electricity scheme, could have been completed so cheaply without the willing support of volunteers. Each year groups of young people from all over the world are attracted to Fair Isle. In 1975, 34 young people from eight countries helped with the projects. They sleep and eat in the 'Puff-Inn', just to the south of Melville House, on the road leading to the South Light. The reports of the visits testify to their success—the islanders appreciate outsiders being on the island and helping on the land and contributing to the social life of the community, and there is no doubt that few, if any, of the volunteers leave Fair Isle without a genuine attachment to the island and her people. Most return once, if not twice, and some more permanently if they marry island folk. Volunteer work has helped with all the major projects over the years—first through the International Voluntary Service, and now organised by Enterprise Youth in Edinburgh.

Visitors to Fair Isle during the past two years may have been alarmed at the construction work taking place on Ward Hill, in Bullock Holes Quarry and at the North Haven. It is hoped that any such fears may be allayed. The 150' mast, and the ancillary buildings, are part of the elaborate relay system that allows UHF television signals to be transmitted from the mainland to the Shetland Islands. The Post Office, in conjunction with the Independent Broadcasting Authority and the British Broadcasting Corporation, are improving telecommunications in the North of Scotland by installing new equipment on Fair Isle, which is now on Subscriber Trunk Dialling. While Fair Islanders may not benefit from improved television reception, limited employment is available for some islanders. The Trust took advantage of low-loading equipment brought on to the island for the Ward Hill project to order to transport the new generator. Agreement has also been reached with the Independent Broadcasting Authority to provide the islanders with bulk fuel storage facilities at the North Haven, and for the use of the pump and fuel pipe from the pier to the tanks.

The "Good Shepherd" mail boat is the best remembered

transport to Fair Isle, but even the most stoic sailor has momentary fears of loss of pride on the 25 nautical mile trip between Grutness and the North Haven. The devotion and service to Fair Isle of successive crews has been, and will remain, the backbone of the Island's supply line. Nevertheless, the importance of air transport between Fair Isle and the Mainlands of Orkney and Shetland increases each year. In anticipation of this demand the Trust, in 1972, with generous assistance from the Highlands and Islands Development Board, the Royal Bank of Scotland, and the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trustees and others, constructed the new airstrip. Fair Isle can now boast the finest airstrip of its type in the Shetlands. Doubts as to Loganair's future in Shetland have now been dispelled, at least for the time being, and an inter-island scheduled air-service is in operation. Plans to introduce a once-a-week scheduled return service to Fair Isle are in train, and in 1976 there should be more opportunities than hitherto to travel to Fair Isle at a reasonable cost.

The possible introduction of the scheduled air-service raised the question of providing fire-fighting equipment on Fair Isle. After consultation with the Northern Fire Brigade, Fair Islanders and their property will be given the extra protection of an island volunteer Fire Brigade. The mobile unit, to be manned by 12 people has been on call since March 1976.

Unfortunately the Civil Aviation Authority require more sophisticated fire-fighting equipment to be available at the airstrip. Loganair are generously providing that equipment on loan during 1976, while plans to acquire permanent equipment at the airstrip are implemented.

In 1975 the island welcomed many visitors—some of the more rare are recorded elsewhere in this journal. On May 27th visitors aboard *m.v. Regina Maris* on the National Trust for Scotland's Island Cruise spent three hours ashore. The Islanders and those helping at the Hostel provided a warm welcome to over 200 passengers and sold many island wool and tweed products. Later in the summer the Royal Naval Sub Aqua Club spent ten days furthering their exploration of the El Gran Grifon wreck. Both Vaasetter and Lower Stoneybrake were available for short lets before the houses were permanently occupied. (No houses are available for long or short term lets in 1976).

These successful and encouraging events during the last and preceding years are a strong spring-board for 1976. This year Busta croft house will be modernised, and possibly a new road constructed to draw Busta and Springfield closer to the other crofts. Signs are more hopeful that a Mains Water Supply will be laid this summer. After so much procrastination

it will be at once a relief and anti-climax, when the water first flows through the pipes.

Fair Isle is deprived of a suitable Social Community Hall. Stimulated by the Islanders' hyper-successful fund-raising efforts, the Shetland Islands Council have approached the Scottish Education Department for a substantial grant. Should funds be available, a new hall will be annexed to the school, together with a Museum, and modern services be installed for communal use. Discussions and consultations will inevitably continue through 1976, but building work may begin in 1977.

No history of 1976 on Fair Isle will be able to omit reference to the successful anniversary appeal launched by George Waterston, to bolster National Trust for Scotland Fair Isle funds. Many readers have contributed most generously, and donations from all over the world are still being received. To date over £3,000 has been credited to Fair Isle. This "boost to the island's economy" is most reassuring, and when coupled with the genuine and confident spirit of all those living on Fair Isle, hopes for the future prosperity of Fair Isle run high.

WARDEN'S REPORT FOR 1975

By ROGER A. BROAD

As in the last few years, we were away from the Island only for a short spell in the winter. During the period March to November our domestic staff were Miss Margaret Barnes (cook), Miss Ann Richardson (assistant cook) and Miss Alison Shearer gave additional help during the summer and autumn. The assistant wardens were Peter Roberts (all season) and David Frost, until his tragic death in May. Also during the year we were helped by friends from previous years including John and Fiona Davies, Keith Derrett and Miss Deirdre Yeoman. Once again bookings for accommodation exceeded all previous years. However, the total of 468 visitor-weeks was only reached with the presence of workmen staying for extended spells. Their beneficial presence, especially at off-peak times, must of course be considered as occasional. Among the visitors were an increasing number who are making return visits to the Observatory, which for us, is a very encouraging sign. Particular mention must be made of Roy Dennis, Pat Sellar and Richard Richardson, all members of the FIBOT executive committee, whose visits were thus doubly welcome. Six young ornithologists received grants from the John Harrison Memorial Fund.

Island Events

Changes during the year have resulted in a slight fall in the Island population. The most unexpected change was the de-

parture of Gordon and Perry Barnes and their two sons, Alan and John, from Setter. They left in the summer to take over a farm in South Wales. After a spell as assistant warden to Peter Davis, Gordon took the Setter Croft when it became vacant. Since then the hard work put in both by Gordon and Perry has been praised by all the other Islanders. To the Bird Observatory and all the bird watchers visiting the Island it was a very sad event, for they were good friends to us all. Although Setter is still empty at the end of the year it will soon be alive again. During the summer Andrew Stout (Midway) married Kathleen and in the coming spring they are returning to the croft at Setter. Preceding their Island reception by only a few days was that of Neil Thomson (Shirva) and Pat who have already moved into Lower Stoneybrake. The return of two young Fair Isle men and their wives to the Island is particularly encouraging. The most recent addition to the Fair Isle community came with the arrival in October of our own daughter, Jennifer. At the Lighthouses there was only one changeover. Kenny Clark, the principal keeper at the North Light, and his mother changed places with Bill Frazer, the principal keeper at the Mull of Galloway. At school, Mrs Shepherd had nine pupils at the end of the year, having lost both Alan and John Barnes and also Fiona Best (North Shirva), who has joined the two Barkland boys at school in Lerwick.

There seem to have been works and events which have changed Fair Isle in some major way in almost all the last few years. 1975 was no exception with much activity at the North Haven pier and frequent off-loadings of building materials and equipment. Most of this material was for the project begun last year to provide a tele-communications relay station between Orkney and Shetland. By the end of the year the 160 foot high mast had been erected at Lower Station on Ward Hill; the cable connecting it to the generator house at the Bullock Holes Quarry had been dug in and the three generators had been installed. A subsidiary fuel reservoir has been permanently housed at the North Haven, adjoining the old GPO hut and connected to the Bullock Holes building. Off-loading and delivery of fuel to the system is effected via a pipeline installed from the North Haven pier.

A great deal of work has also been carried out at the south of the Island, where, through the NTS, a central, large generator is being installed to replace the existing series of small generators at present supplying electricity, each to a few croft houses. The volunteer work camps during the summer helped to dig in the cables needed for the new scheme. Another group of boys from Trinity College, Glenalmond began the task of restoring the collapsed roof of the old store at the North Haven. The change from the manually operated telephone ex-

change at Shirva to an automatic exchange last year was only the prelude to the Island exchange going over to STD during 1975. Further GPO work entailed the burying of the two remaining overhead telephone lines (to the North Light and to the Malcolm's Head coastguard hut).

The NTS cruise ship, *Regina Maris*, called in May and landed its passengers at the North Haven. The call had a special significance in this, the 21st year that the NTS has owned the Island. Three beautifully decorated cakes, specially made on board the *Regina Maris*, were presented to the Island and ceremoniously cut by Mrs Aggie Stout (Leogh). In January, a fishing boat, the *Norseman's Bride*, was wrecked on the north coast at Kuthin but fortunately without injury to any of the crew. Similarly unfortunately was the crash during take-off of a light plane, privately owned by Pat Sellar and Brendan O'Brien. Happily both the owners, who were in the plane, were able to climb out unhurt. The plane, however, had to be dismantled and it left the Island by sea. A group of divers from the Naval Air Command Sub-aqua Club led by Lieutenant S. H. Brooks (RN) and Mr K. Muckelroy (St Andrews Institute of Maritime Archaeology) spent two weeks on the Island in the summer carrying out a wreck survey. They were diving mainly off the east side of the Island, south of Sheep Rock.

The Croft Museum at Setter, which was amassed and looked after by Gordon and Perry Barnes (see article in FIBO report for 1972) was given, on their departure, to the NTS. It is at present temporarily housed at the North Haven. In due course it is hoped that a permanent home for the collection will be found on the Island where the collection can be adequately displayed.

Acknowledgments

We are particularly grateful to all our staff who helped us with considerable efficiency and friendliness through the season and for the many kindnesses shown to us by our visitors. Our Island friends have continued to give us their support in many ways and it was with considerable sadness that we said goodbye to Gordon and Perry Barnes and their two sons, Alan and John. For many years they have been among the Observatory's strongest supporters and have helped us personally in innumerable ways. I know that there will be many friends who will want to join us in wishing them all the very best in their new venture.

Richard Richardson has again illustrated this report with his vignettes for which we are extremely grateful. Also the Royal Scottish Museum kindly continued its loan of bird skins. Dur-

ing their short stay, the naval divers gave us considerable help and assistance which was most appreciated.

Ornithology

1975 was an exceptional year, even by Fair Isle standards. A total of 202 species were recorded during the year including three species (Hermit Thrush, Tennessee Warbler and Siberian Rubythroat) new to the British Isles. A fourth species, Laughing Gull, was also an addition to the Fair Isle list. Apart from these species there was also an impressive series of lesser rarities. The common migrants also appeared in good numbers in both the spring and the autumn, contributing to some very good ringing totals and a very exciting year. Some of the highlights of the season were as follows :

- good early passage of Stonechats.
- large arrival of migrants, mainly Blackbirds, in third week of April.
- good series of rarities in spring including influx of Red-throated Pipits.
- successful breeding of Gannets at Dronger.
- early start to return passage of passerines at the beginning of August.
- excellent series of rarities in September including three American species.
- exceptional arrivals in October from the east, including fantastic variety of rarities of Siberian origin.
- massive influx of Mealy Redpolls and good passage of Northern Bullfinches in autumn.

A number of projects, carried out mainly in the summer received a great deal of our attention. These included the third year of research work on the Arctic Skua population by Dr Peter O'Donald and Dr John Davis. We also continued our complementary project on the Bonxies. Puffins were colour ringed for Dr Mike Harris of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology who was also sent information from the Burrista Puffin burrow transect. Similarly, data monitoring the populations of Guillemot, Razorbill, and Fulmar were forwarded to Miss Clare Lloyd of the RSPB. I continued to work on the Tysties and during the summer, at night, we concentrated on finding out more about the Storm Petrel, using tape-lures to trap the birds. The populations of Fulmar, Shag, Guillemot, Razorbill, Herring, Lesser Black-backed and Great Black-backed Gulls were accurately censused and an almost complete census of the Kittiwake was also undertaken.

January and February

The mild weather experienced at the end of 1974 continued in the early part of 1975. February was a particularly fine

month with more sun and less precipitation than usual. High pressure to the east of Britain in the last ten days of the month brought fine, sunny weather and with moderate southerly winds a number of the early migrants were pushing north. The number of birds overwintering on the Island was not high but the variety was larger than usual. A Goldeneye was present all January and February, a few grey geese were seen regularly and there were occasional sightings of Peregrine, Merlin and Kestrel. 1-2 Water Rails were present throughout, and, as in several recent winters, a Ringed Plover was present. A clear indication of the mild weather was the presence of more Snipe than usual and up to 11 Lapwings but numbers of Red-shanks and Purple Sandpipers were typical. Rock Doves overwintered in larger numbers than usual and so did Skylark, Fieldfare, Redwing, Blackbird, Twite and Snow Buntings. Glaucous Gulls were regular, a Rook remained for the whole period and at least 2 Robins were resident.

Less regular visitors during the winter included in January : Long-eared Owl on 2nd, Whooper Swan on 3rd, Woodpigeon on 4th and a Little Auk on 22nd (caught by the South Light cat). In February, there were sightings of Shelduck from 19th and 2 Common Scoters and a Mistle Thrush on 22nd. Oystercatchers, following the first record on 1st February, were one of the first species to appear in any strength. Their numbers were quite high by the third week of February when there was also an increase in Ringed Plovers and parties of Lapwings were moving through. At the same time Skylarks built up rapidly with a peak of 600+ on 22nd when the first Meadow Pipits and a Stonechat also appeared. The latter was the first of a strong passage that was to continue throughout March.

Spring Migration

Light and variable winds persisted for the first five days of March followed by strong SE winds on 6th which backed rapidly to SW with the passage of a depression. The associated showers died out from 9th in a more settled period. Wintry conditions returned on 15th-16th but quickly gave way to another settled period. On 21-22nd there were strong SW winds which were followed by a cold wintry period with strong N winds which persisted to the end of the month. Bird movements were few and the early spring migrants were poorly represented. A few Mallard were seen from 8th, parties of Lapwings continued to move throughout the month and Redshank numbers were a little higher. There were always a few Glaucous Gulls to be seen and small numbers of Common and Black-headed Gulls began to move north from 20-21st. There was only a small turnover in winter thrushes but the Stonechat movement gathered momentum to produce one of

the largest passages on record. Meadow Pipits remained scarce until the first real influx on 30th.

On 2nd Stonechats peaked at 15. A variety of waders was recorded over the next week and included Bar-tailed Godwit, Knot, Dunlin and Sanderling. There was an early Goldcrest on 6-7th but this was to be the only March record. An *alba* wagtail was seen on 9th, a Dunnock on 11th and a new smaller Stonechat peak recorded on 12th. A Scoter and 2 Whooper Swans were seen on 13th, Chaffinch on 19th and 3 more Whoopers on 21st. The following day a Heron, Pied Wagtail and the first Chiffchaff were seen. A Long-eared Owl was trapped on 27th and this heralded a number of new species in the last few days of the month. A Bean Goose, Bar-tailed Godwit and a Black Redstart were seen on 28th when the first Puffins were noticed. 3 Whoopers moved north on 29th, and on 30th 3 Herons, Jack Snipe and the first influx of Meadow Pipits (40) were recorded. On the last day of the month the first Bonxie and Lesser Black-back appeared.

The wintry weather and snow showers continued into the first 12 days of April with moderate to strong NE winds on 1-4th and mainly SW winds from 5-12th. Light to moderate, mainly SE winds persisted between 13-22nd with low cloud, poor visibility and drizzle on several days. The 23-30th were milder with predominantly SW winds and good visibility. With the continuing cold spell at the beginning of the month many of the early spring migrants were later than usual to appear and April will be remembered for the extended arrival of outgoing winter species in the middle of the month.

During the wintry spell a ♂ King Eider made a brief stop off Bunsess on 3rd when 3 Long-tailed Ducks and 3 Rooks were also recorded. 2 Pied Wagtails were present on 4th and Woodcock and Reed Bunting on 5th. A Goldcrest was seen on 6th and on 7th new arrivals included 3 Golden Plover, 7 Redwings and a Grey Wagtail. However, apart from a few more Woodcock on 8th virtually no more passage was seen until 12th when there was a small arrival of Common Gulls and both Mistle Thrush and the first Wheatear appeared. The arrival of 3 Chaffinches on 13th, when the cold snap broke and the wind became light SE, was the forerunner of an exciting 10 days. The weather was the same on 14th and after light rain in the morning, the first moderate arrival of the spring was recorded. Woodcock and Snipe increased, Common Gulls were plentiful and there was a selection of winter thrushes, 2 Jackdaws, a few Goldcrests, Siskin, Brambling and more Chaffinches. During 15-16th the weather remained much the same and with the arrival of more birds and generally poor visibility at night the number of grounded birds increased. Fieldfares (200), Blackbirds (450) and Starlings (2000+) were

the most numerous species present on 15th. On 16-17th Woodcock (25), Common Gull (350) and Fieldfares (380) all increased further. Additional species at this time included the first of a small passage of Wood pigeons, first sightings of Greenshank, Arctic Skua, Ring Ousel and Lapland Bunting. On 18th the pattern continued at an accelerated rate, a huge flock of Common Gulls (1500) had built up, Fieldfares, Blackbirds and Bramblings were much increased and other species included 2 Shorelarks, 2 Black Redstarts, 9 Robins, 2 Chiffchaffs, 2 Great Grey Shrikes and 4 Reed Buntings. Continuous heavy rain on 19th prevented an accurate census but there was certainly no sign of any exodus! A number of new species were seen including the first Redstart, Blackcap and Yellow Wagtail. The rain had stopped on 20th and a complete census recorded the peak of the arrival. Starlings (1200+), and winter thrushes still dominated the scene (Fieldfares 5000, Song Thrush 17, Redwing 100, Blackbird 1000) but other good totals included 3 Short-eared Owls, 40 Wheatears, 8 Black Redstarts, 50 Robins, 8 Dunnocks, 7 *alba* Wagtails, 120 Bramblings, 35 Chaffinches, 7 Linnets and 9 Reed Buntings. Common Sandpiper, Swallow, Willow Warbler, Collared Dove and Tree Pipit appeared for the first time and among the other new arrivals were Sparrowhawk, Short-toed Lark and the first record for many years of White-spotted Bluethroat. With a clearance in the weather on 21st there began a general exodus which continued over the next few days, and in the relative quiet we were able to take stock of the previous 10 days in which more than 800 birds had been ringed. In the last 10 days of the month there were no further large arrivals but the first Sand Martin was seen on 25th, Whimbrel on 26th and Whinchat on 29th. On 30th it continued to be the outgoing winter visitors that were most in evidence when 6 Pink-feet, 6 Barnacles, Sparrowhawk, 2 Merlins, 3 Dunlins and 8 Rooks were seen.

May was a rather unsettled month, wet and windy and at times seeming like an extension of the winter. Nevertheless, the changeable conditions gave a series of interesting short-lived arrivals especially on 6th, 8-9th, 16-18th and again on 25-26th.

On 1st there were 3 Scaup and on 2nd a tired Whitefront joined the tame geese at Field Croft. 2 Tufted Ducks and a Sparrowhawk were seen on 3rd but the 4th was a day of select species when Short-toed Lark, 2 Shorelarks and a very bright-plumaged Little Bunting were found. Wryneck was first recorded on 5th when a scattering of other summer migrants appeared including 5 Swallows, 3 Ring Ousels and a Black Redstart. The following day a wider selection of species was recorded: Corncrake, Jack Snipe, 5 Black-tailed Godwits, 2

Green Sandpipers, 6 Collared Doves, House and Sand Martins (4), 3 Lesser Whitethroats, a few Willow Warblers and Chiffchaffs and a Wood Warbler. On 7th Golden Plover peaked at 75 and Grey Plover and Greenshank were seen. As a high pressure system moved away E across the North Sea a depression moved up the North Sea and the resulting brief NE winds produced a good fall of birds in the late afternoon of 8th and again on 9th. Late in the day on 8th, 4 Wrynecks, 3 Whinchats, 12 Redstarts, Bluethroat, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, Pied Flycatcher and 10 Tree Pipits were found where earlier there had been none. The following day there was a good arrival of Song Thrushes (50) and Ring Ousels (17) and the species seen on 8th had all increased (6 Wrynecks, 30 Whinchats, 50 Redstarts, 17 Bluethroats, 15 Pied Flycatchers and 20 Tree Pipits). New warblers included Garden, a few Whitethroats and Lesser Whitethroats and a fine ♂ Subalpine Warbler which was trapped in the Plantation. Spotted Crake, Wood Sandpiper and 3 Common Sandpipers (the first of a small passage) were also recorded. Apart from birds remaining after the arrival of 8-9th, the 10-15th was generally quiet although 2 Shelducks were seen on 11th, Black Redstart and Ortolan on 14th and Corncrake on 15th. A filling depression over Shetland gave very strong NE winds on 15-16th which were followed by 2 calm sunny days as a ridge of high pressure became established nearby. These conditions gave another arrival on 16th when Reed Buntings (45) were most numerous among the new arrivals. There were several more Wrynecks as well as 6 Whitethroats, 20 Tree Pipits and an Island rarity—Hawfinch. The next day hirundines were much in evidence and Quail, Turtle Dove, 2 Black Redstarts and 15 Pied Flycatchers were added to the species recorded and a fine ♂ Red-breasted Flycatcher was found on the cliffs at Wyrvie. Nearby, at Easter Lothar, a Little Bunting was feeding on the short-cropped grass. Cuckoo, Swift, Sedge Warbler and Red-backed Shrike were all recorded for the first time on 18-19th. Unsettled, cooler weather with strong, mainly NW winds over the next few days prevented much more from arriving but there were 2 Dotterel on 21st, the first spring record of Pectoral Sandpiper on 23rd and 2 Red-throated Pipits on 24th. The last period of interest in May was during the 25-26th when with light NE winds a good variety of species were seen. Hirundines were again on the move on 25th when Great Northern Diver, 2 Shelducks, Garganey, 4 Cuckoos and a Wryneck were also recorded. Unfortunately, a White Stork seen high over the Island did not stop but drifted away east. On 26th Osprey, 3 Dotterel, 2 Wood Sandpipers, another Red-throated Pipit and a Rustic Bunting totalled up to a period of some quality! The month closed rather more quietly with

a return to colder N to NW winds. However, an Ortolan was seen on 27th, 5 Grey-headed Wagtails on 28th and a Rough-legged Buzzard on 31st.

Cold moderate to fresh with showers persisted into the first few days of June, thereafter lighter, variable but mainly SE winds and long sunny spells between 4-11th produced a fine ending to the spring migration. On 1st 3 Grey-headed Wagtails remained and a flight of 6 Mallard was large for late in the spring. 2 late Greylags and 2 Sandwich Terns were recorded on 2nd when a Marsh Warbler was trapped but it was the totally unexpected surprise of finding and identifying a Hermit Thrush (a species new to Britain and Ireland) on a newly-ploughed area at Field Croft that captured the attention of all observers, for much of the day. A Rustic Bunting was found on 3rd and another Red-throated Pipit on 4th when there was an increase in Swallows. Collared Doves, present in good numbers through May, increased to 24 on 5th when a Red-breasted Flycatcher was trapped and 2 Red-backed Shrikes were located. Hirundines were again in evidence on 6th when House Martin was the main species. There were also 3 Swifts, a few more Lesser Whitethroats and Spotted Flycatchers as well as a Wood Warbler. Swifts increased to 40 on 8th when Collared Doves peaked at 27 (the most recorded on the Island) and Turtle Doves increased to 4. There was also a last small arrival of warblers including both ♂ and ♀ Subalpine Warblers (♂ trapped in the Gully and ♀ trapped in the Observatory trap), and another sighting of Red-throated Pipit. There were two of the last species the next day when a Nightingale was also trapped. The final spring movement of any real note was on 11th when Rough-legged Buzzard and Icterine Warbler were seen and Swifts and hirundines were much in evidence on this the last day of the sunny spell.

Summer

The remainder of June was generally fine and overall it was a month with higher temperatures than average, despite showery weather between 12-15th, 18-19th and again on 24th. The wind was usually light to moderate. July was cooler with persistent fog and poor visibility between 10-15th but although unsettled there was little rain. A pair of Snow Buntings was seen at intervals through the summer usually amongst the rubble at the top of Ward Hill. Red-throated Divers were occasional visitors, usually singly, but there were 4 on 14th June. Other species recorded in June included Marsh Warbler on 16th and 18th and Wood Warbler on 17th, while on 21st Long-tailed Skua, Bluethroat and 4 Crossbills were seen. Unfortunately, the Crossbills were just an isolated record and

not the beginning of an irruption. A Black Redstart was seen on the late date of 29th.

The breeding season, by and large, was an average one for the seabirds, despite reports that in some Shetland colonies auks fared very poorly and raised few chicks. Following some very early nesting attempts Shags had a very long season, and clutches and broods were rather small. After the nest building and 'dry run' of 1974, the Gannets reoccupying the Dronger site were successful for the first time in 1975. They laid a number of eggs and fledged 3 chicks. It is hoped that over the next few years the population will increase and the species will be numbered among those that breed regularly on Fair Isle. Although it was only suspected in '74 that there were 2 pairs of Common Gulls breeding it was proved this year with reoccupation of the Vaasetter site and nesting also on Tarryfield. The Common Terns, after the initial increase over the last year or two, remained stable at the '74 level. Disappointingly, Whimbrel did not breed but Curlew bred at an undiscovered site on Burrashield/Hoini. Among the land-birds Starlings were particularly successful, as indicated by the very large flocks of juveniles in the summer.

The variety of species recorded in July was much increased by the return of early flocks of waders. Also both Common and Black-headed Gulls began to move south. Herons were seen at regular intervals and Swifts and hirundines were quite common. An adult Pomarine Skua was seen on 2nd and on 5th Common Gulls (30) and Black-headed Gulls (5) began to move south in earnest. A Turtle Dove and a Spotted Flycatcher were seen and the next day there were 2 of the former species. Also, an unusual sight in the summer was the presence of 2 Stonechats (an adult ♂ and a juvenile). The first flocks of Curlew (30) and Redshanks (36) were noticed on 8th and Dunlin (5) on 9th. A Whitethroat and 2 Chaffinches were seen on 15th and a Siskin the following day. A Sanderling was recorded on 22nd and on 23rd parties of 'comic' terns began to move through. Flocks of Lapwings, Turnstones and Purple Sandpipers appeared from 24-25th. A fine adult Rosy Starling was first seen on 28th but remained well into August.

Autumn Migration

After rather cloudy disturbed weather in the first few days of August, high pressure built up and as the anticyclone drifted east to Scandinavia it gave mainly light S to SE winds from 5-15th, temperatures were high but fog was rather persistent. It became cooler from 17th, as a depression passed north of Shetland, after which winds became generally light to mod-

erate NW to SW but a ridge of high pressure gave a fine warm day with light NE winds on 30th. August produced some small but varied arrivals of passerines from early in the month and good numbers of waders were recorded on several days. On many calm evenings we mist-netted for petrels with considerable success and 4 Leach's Petrels trapped during the month gave incentive to this activity.

On 3rd there was a Green Sandpiper and an adult Long-tailed Skua. The 4th brought a Kestrel (the first of a small passage), and Common Gulls and Dunlin both significantly increased on 5th when the first autumn Pied Flycatcher was also found. Fieldfare, Redstart, Garden Warbler and Willow Warbler all appeared in the next 2 days when a wider selection of waders included Knot, Ruff and the first of a small passage of Common Sandpipers (6). An unusual species to be seen in August was a Long-eared Owl (badly contaminated) on the 8th but the appearance of the first Barred Warbler was more typical. The latter species was to be common throughout the month. The 9th was a lively day; there was the first of a small passage of both Teal and Wigeon, Heron, Green Sandpiper, 3 Cuckoos, a few Pied Flycatchers and 2 Red-backed Shrikes were recorded, as well as both Icterine and Aquatic Warblers. Between 10-12th the variety was further increased and the 13th proved to be a day of considerable quality with an increase in Barred (3) and Willow Warblers (13) as well as 2 Icterine Warblers. A Scarlet Rosefinch was seen briefly and an immature Woodchat Shrike was found just south of Shirva. There were also 80 Redshanks, and waders in general continued to be more in evidence over the next few days when Knot and Dunlin both increased and the first of a small passage of Little Stints was seen. By the 16th, there was a party of Herons (7), Wood Sandpiper, another influx of Common Gulls and a Spotted Crake (trapped). The following day a Wood Warbler was seen and the first of a moderate passage of White Wagtails appeared, while at sea Sooty Shearwaters were seen for the first time. On 18th a moderate NW wind fell light in the afternoon as a depression passed by and there was a good arrival late in the day, which included more Barred Warblers (8), more Willow Warblers (35), 3 Wood Warblers and another Aquatic Warbler. White Wagtails were also more in evidence and, as well as another arrival of Redshanks, there was a very early Goldeneye. This arrival was the last of any size until the end of the month but variety in the intervening days was not lacking. 2 Red-backed Shrikes were found on 19th when the first of a small passage of Merlins was noted. A Spotted Crake was seen again on 20th, Knot increased to 40 on 21st and there was a Wood Warbler. This last species was seen again on 23rd when there were 2. A

'ring-tailed' Harrier and 3 Curlew Sandpipers were seen on 24th and Barred Warblers again reached 8. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was seen the next day. On 26th an Icterine Warbler was seen again and Sooty Shearwaters were seen in small numbers offshore on 20th. Waders were again to the fore on 28th when there were 3 Bar-tailed Godwits, Wood Sandpiper, 2 Little Stints and 25 Dunlin but there was also a Wryneck and a Sedge Warbler. On 30th, a fine calm day, there was a sizeable arrival of Willow Warblers (100) which were accompanied by little else, although Wood Warbler, Tree Pipit and Grey Wagtail were all seen. A Scarlet Rosefinch was seen on the last day of the month.

The prevailing winds during September were SW to NW with only short-lived respite on a few days. Rainfall during the month was also above average. As to be expected the numbers of common migrants of Continental origin, which so often arrive in good numbers in September, were generally low. The only 'fall' of any size commenced on the very last day of the month, when several species seemed to be making up for lost time and appeared in good numbers. The dearth of common migrants through the month was further accentuated by the presence of a number of sub-rarities and rarities which on occasion seemed to be the only species on the Island! The unusual species included 3 new to the Island and all, predictably, were from the New World. Throughout the month Sooty Shearwaters were seen in fair numbers, southward Cormorant passage continued and ducks were well represented, especially at the end of the month when westerlies also brought several early parties of geese. Waders remained much in evidence and both Lapland and Snow Buntings were common. Barred Warblers continued to be frequent with new birds apparently arriving against the prevailing winds.

Up to 2 Wrynecks were seen in the first few days of the month and on 3rd an Icterine Warbler was recorded and Pintail and Curlew Sandpiper arrived on 4th. The 6th was a fine but frustrating day, there were 6 Sanderling and an influx of Common Gulls, but a very bright green and yellow warbler seen briefly at Finnequoy, near the double dyke trap, disappeared leaving nothing but speculation as to its identity. It was relocated the following morning at Upper Stoneybrake and its identity confirmed as a Tennessee Warbler—the first British record. Its presence was to excite observers until the middle of the month. A fine selection of birds were recorded on 7th, far in excess of the brief SE spell which brought them. The first 2 Jack Snipe appeared (this species was to occur in good numbers in the rest of the autumn), 4 Scarlet Rosefinches and a Yellow-breasted Bunting were seen and some observers

had brief views of a Citrine Wagtail (which was to make a long stay). A ♂ King Eider (in full eclipse) was off Skaddan on the morning of 8th and a Red-throated Pipit was seen at Schoolton. The first of a number of sightings of Grey Plover occurred on 9th and on 11th Great Northern Diver and Greenland Redpoll were recorded. Another brief NE spell on 12-13th increased the Wryneck total to 3 and a stint seen briefly on 12th may well have been the Temminck's found the following morning at Easter Lother. Also sheltering at Easter Lother on the 13th was an adult Laughing Gull (another species new to the Island). It was seen later at several spots on the Island before returning to Easter Lother for most of the afternoon. 7 Pink-feet and a Glaucous Gull were seen on 15th and on 17th a Long-tailed Duck appeared as well as a second Yellow-breasted Bunting (the first still being present). On 18th, 3 Greenland Redpolls were seen, another Scarlet Rosefinch was found and our extensive field notes on the Tennessee Warbler were supplemented by a detailed plumage description in the hand after trapping the bird at Field Croft. No doubt the brief NE winds on 18th were responsible for 2 more Wrynecks on 19th and another influx of Common Gulls. The same day a Long-tailed Skua was seen on the crossing. The rapid passage of a depression caused strong SSE winds late on 19th to veer SW and increase to gale force on 20th when sea passage was interesting with sightings of 2 Great Northern Divers and a strong movement of Wigeon (90) and Teal (24). On land there was also considerable interest with Sparrowhawk, Water Rail, 2 Grey Plovers, Green Sandpipers and a large influx of Snipe (45) as well as another Red-throated Pipit and 2 Scarlet Rosefinches. Lapwings were much increased the next day when there was a Spotted Redshank in Gilsetter and a Short-toed Lark at the Bull's Park. Winter species were to the fore on 22-23rd with the arrival of Whooper Swans, geese and 5 Mergansers. On 24th the last species had doubled and both Great Northern Diver and Gadwall were seen, but most surprising was the finding and trapping of a second Tennessee Warbler at the Observatory which was followed the next day by an Upland Sandpiper which stayed all day, mainly in the Chat-ham's Land area, near the School. The same day another Red-throated Pipit was found. On 26th, 30 Redwings, 3 Bluethroats and 2 Mealy Redpolls gave a hint of what was yet to come from nearer at hand. The wind became established in the SSE late on 28th and the following day 3 Chaffinches, 2 Bramblings and a Little Bunting (in Gilsetter) were the fore-runners to the 'fall' on the 30th when many of the common Continental species hardly seen through the month appeared in strength. The winter finches represented on 29th both increased and were added to by 7 Greenfinches. However, it was

the Song Thrushes (400) that dominated the scene together with a modest number of Redwings and 3 Ring Ousels. Chats, starts and Pied Flycatchers were common (30 Whinchats, 35 Redstarts, 10 Robins and 25 Pied Flycatchers) and there was an increase in several warbler species with Blackcap (70) the most numerous. A few House Martins and Swallows were seen and specialities included 5 Yellow-browed Warblers, 2 Red-breasted Flycatchers and a Red-backed Shrike.

October was the converse of September in many ways with rather little rainfall and generally light winds blowing for considerable periods from the E. The SE winds of the 30th September became more S on 1st October; thereafter the next few days continued with mainly SW to NW winds before an anticyclone developed over the UK with a resulting light E airflow from 8-11th, which persisted and became more SE from 14-23rd as the high pressure system moved slowly E. Not until 24th did the wind move to SW but it continued light with mild weather to the end of the month. While September had been quite exceptional for its vagrants from North America and lack of species from an easterly direction, October was outstanding for correcting the balance and providing some of the most exciting birding, from the extreme NE, on record at Fair Isle. Similarly, the poor September ringing total was quickly readjusted in October. Ducks, geese and Whooper Swans continued to be seen in good numbers through the month. Water Rails were much in evidence from early in the month and owls (Long and Short-eared) were especially numerous in the second half of the month when there was also a large influx of Northern Bullfinches and a massive irruption of Mealy Redpolls.

The 1st saw a continuation of the 'fall' commenced on 30th September. Song Thrushes increased to 750 and there were 7 Ring Ousels. A small arrival of Wheatears occurred and Redstarts increased to 60. There were also a few more Robins, 4 Barred Warblers, another Red-breasted Flycatcher and a Red-backed Shrike. Although an Icterine Warbler on 2nd was the first October record it was really a day for rails and crakes, no less than 5 Water Rails (4 trapped) and a Spotted Crake (also trapped) were recorded. The Water Rails were the first of a good passage. On 3rd Sparrowhawks peaked at 3 and Lapwings at 120, while on 4th 2 Shelducks and 8 Greenland Whitefronts were seen. On 5th the latter species had increased to 11 and 150 Icelandic Redwings arrived during the day. 5 Ruffs on 6th was the largest number of the autumn and on the following day 9 Long-tailed Ducks, 4 Bean Geese, Black Redstart and another Icterine were all seen. 2 Short-toed Larks were seen on 8th at Stoneybrake when a Pochard (a local rarity) was also found. The light variable wind of 8th became

more E late in the day and persisted until 11th, during which time an incredible variety of species were recorded. On 9th Redwings (700) were the main species to arrive but also 2 Barred Warblers, 35 Goldcrests, 35 Bramblings and the first 4 Mealy Redpolls of the main irruption were logged. However, at lunchtime with the sighting at the Sheep Cru (and later trapping) of a Siberian Rubythroat, a third species seen on Fair Isle was added to the British List in the space of one year ! The origin of the bird was echoed on 10th which proved to be a fantastic day even by Fair Isle standards. A Pallas's Warbler was seen at Schoolton and only yards away was a Pechora Pipit at Quoy. Over at Shirva there was a Siberian Stonechat as well as a Rustic Bunting and 2 Little Buntings. The supporting species were impressive too—Redwings had increased to 2000 and Fieldfares reached 300. A small influx of Northern Chiffchaffs was accompanied by 4 Barred Warblers and 2 Yellow-browed Warblers as well as 2 Red-breasted Flycatchers, 60 Mealy Redpolls and a Scarlet Rosefinch. The following day all the rarities, with the exception of the Pechora Pipit, were relocated and unbelievably there was still more to be seen. Redwings peaked at 2500 and there was a modest arrival of Blackbirds. Chiffchaffs had increased to 30 and there was an additional Yellow-browed. Mealy Redpolls were still building up but despite all these birds, much of the time was spent creeping and peering into potato crops after the discovery and capture of a Lanceolated Warbler at North Shirva, and the subsequent discovery of another 2 at Skerryholm (one trapped). Turtle Dove, Waxwing and Great Grey Shrike seemed rather tame on 12th but the pace had to slacken as the majority of species had already reached their maximum. Nonetheless, the unringed Lanceolated Warbler was resighted on 13th and Brambling was one species still increasing, by 14th they had built up to 350 and 2 unringed Lanceolated Warblers were found, as well as the first of a strong passage of Northern Bullfinches. Mealy Redpolls peaked at 500 on 15th, when there was a renewed arrival of several species including 700 Fieldfare, 1000 Redwings and 200 Blackbirds. Owls were much in evidence (they were to continue to be a regular sight well into November) and a late Wryneck was trapped. On 16th Fieldfares peaked at 1500 and were accompanied by 200 Goldcrests, 25 Blackcaps and 10 Robins. There was time to recover our sense of proportion in the next few days as, with the exception of a Little Grebe on 19th and Scarlet Grosbeak on 20th, there were few arrivals until 21st. The wind in these last few days veered more SE and increased to strong. A renewed smaller movement of winter thrushes began on 21st and this time they were accompanied by a good arrival of Woodcock, a Richard's Pipit, Waxwing and a Yellowhammer.

On 22nd thrushes peaked again (Fieldfare 1500, Redwing 1200, Blackbird 500), and there were more Blackcaps (25), Waxwings (9) and Yellowhammers (6). The Bullfinch passage also reached its peak and 14 were counted. Additional species included 2 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, Black Redstart, Great Grey Shrike, Goldfinch (another rarity in the North) and a Crossbill. A gradual decline in numbers took place in most species from 23rd with the return of light SW winds but a Hoopoe was discovered on 24th. A Shorelark was seen on 25th and 27-28th Snow Buntings began to build up while also connected with the westerly winds was the arrival of ca 45 Whitefronts on 31st.

The first two weeks of November continued generally mild, with moderate to strong SSW-SW winds from 1-5th which became lighter on 7-9th. An anticyclone over the Azores and low pressure near Iceland established mainly light to moderate SE winds on 10-11th, which became slowly more SW by 14-15th. With the passage of eastward moving depressions in the second half of the month the weather became colder generally with moderate SW to NW winds, but with strong N winds especially on 16-17th and on 29-30th. Parties of Greylags and Barnacle Geese as well as Whooper Swans continued to stay on the Isle throughout November, while Water Rails, Jack Snipe and owls remained more common than usual. Small numbers of Waxwings were seen in the first two weeks when several quite typical late autumn arrivals occurred.

On 1st Whooper Swans were much in evidence and there was a small increase in Blackcaps. A Moorhen was recorded on 3rd, and on 4th, apart from another sighting of the Hoopoe, a King Eider was found at Hesswalls accompanied by 2 Velvet Scoters and Common Eiders. A Shelduck and Sparrowhawk were also recorded. An influx from the NW produced 600 Icelandic Redwings and 400 Snow Buntings on 5th, and the following day the latter species had swollen to 1200. The final good arrival of the month occurred between 8-12th, when, unlike the October arrivals Fieldfares outnumbered Redwings (1300 Fieldfares and 500 Redwings) but Blackbird numbers were generally small. A Sparrowhawk was seen on 8th and there were 3 more Bullfinches. A good number of Woodcock were seen throughout the period with at least 100+ on 10th, when there were also 13 owls and a small arrival of warblers comprising 10 Blackcaps, 5 Chiffchaffs and a Yellow-browed. On 11th a Little Bunting was at Houll and a Richard's Pipit at Kennaby, but totally unexpected was a very out of season Sedge Warbler in the Leogh ditch. The majority of the Mealy Redpolls had left at the end of October, but a few remained and accompanying one small party on 14th was an Arctic

Redpoll. There were no further significant movements during the rest of the autumn.

Throughout December there was a general decrease as the late migrants trickled away leaving only small numbers of those species which regular overwinter by the end of the year. The few Skylarks, winter thrushes, Robins, Twite and Snow Buntings were, however, joined by a number of less regular species for the time of year. The most surprising was a Chiffchaff which survived to the end of the year. A Heron was present in early December and 2 Whooper Swans remained to mid-month. A small party of Greylags and a single Barnacle Goose, Merlin and Kestrel were all present throughout December. Probably remaining from earlier strong autumn passages were several Water Rails, Jack Snipe, occasional Woodcocks, and both Long and Short-eared Owls, which were seen at intervals during the month. Small numbers of Glaucous Gulls were seen at times but there was a larger influx of 35+ on 27th, composed mainly of adults.

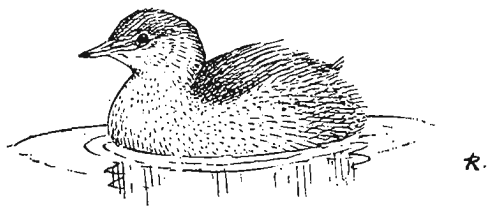
Systematic List

(The order followed is that given in 'A Species list of British and Irish Birds', BTO Guide No. 13)

Details of all birds preceded by * are still being considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*. A typical series of records although there have been few spring records in recent years. One in summer plumage on 25th May. One on 11th, 2 on 20th and singles on 24th and 26th September.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*. Passage birds seen as usual: one on 4th May. 1-2 on 11 days between 25th May-7th July, but 4 on 14th June. Singles on 29th July, 1st and 18th August and 1-2 on 7 days in September. Unidentified divers, probably of this species, were seen on several other dates in September.



LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. One on Golden Water on

19th and on the pool at Field, where it was trapped, on 20th October. (Last recorded 23-24th October 1970).

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*. Present ashore in all months, except in severe winter weather. A complete census revealed that expansion of the population is still continuing. A total of 25,648 occupied sites were recorded (cf. 16,264 occupied sites in 1969). Breeding data: season as usual with first eggs noted on 17th May and chicks 1-2 days old on 5th July. Blue phase birds were recorded on 6th February (2), 3rd and 7th May, 3rd June (2), 17-18th and 29th August, 4th, 13th and 21st September (2). The blue phase bird paired with a typical bird re-occupied a site at North Mila Hesslands used in '73 and '74. Another bird was seen ashore at Hesswalls and another at Restensgeo.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*. The records were rather less scattered than usual: singles on 12th and 16th, 2 on 17th and 7 on 18th August and 1 on 13th September.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*. Numbers a little above average. Recorded from the Island on many days between 17th August and 4th October. Largest movement was between 13th-16th September with 30 on 16th, otherwise highest numbers were 15 on 17th, 10 on 27th and 30th August, and 20 on 4th, 10 on 21st and 20 on 26th September. A few were seen from the Good Shepherd on 10th and one on 28th October.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*. First recorded on the crossing on 8th June. Ashore, birds were mist-netted at night between 9th July and 11th September and late birds (still with down attached) were caught at the South Light on 3rd, 12th and 14th October. The use of tape recordings greatly increased the catches of petrels at night and also stimulated 'churring' from birds in crevices at Gunnawark and Milens Houllan.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. One seen on the crossing on 20th June (K. Derrett). Singles were mist-netted ashore on 4th August (Milens Houllan), 9th and 11th August (Malcolm's Head) and 30th August (Milens Houllan). All were attracted by tape recordings at night and apart from the bird trapped on 9th August at Malcolm's Head there were at least 2 other birds circling above the recorder, one of which called a couple of times. Another, still with a little down adhering to its fresh plumage, was caught at the South Light on the night of 26th October. It is planned to follow up this interesting series of records next year. There had only been 4 birds trapped on the Island before this year.

GANNET *Sula bassana*. Recorded in all months but only occasionally in winter. Regular offshore sightings March-Octo-

ber with largest numbers, as usual, in autumn from mid-August to early October when up to 50 seen on most days and 100-200 on several days in mid-September. Breeding data: following the construction of 3 quite large nests at Dronger last year our hopes that they would breed successfully for the first time this year were fully realised. The first birds were noticed ashore on 11th April (10) and nest material was first seen on 16th April. On 12th May, 35 birds were ashore, occupying 8 large nests, in one of which the first egg was seen. A further 9 nests, less complete than the larger structures, were also being defended. The maximum number of birds seen ashore was 80 on 14th June. It is known that 5 nests definitely contained eggs at some time and from these there were 4 chicks, one of which had died before 5th August. The other 3 fledged successfully, the last still being present on 24th September.

CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Records followed normal pattern. Singles in March on 19th and 30th, on 6 days in April but 4 on 20th. 1-2 on many days in May and 3 on 11th and 14th. Autumn: one on 16th and 2 on 18th July. Small numbers almost daily 12th August-12th October with larger peaks as follows: 10 on 19th and 9 on 30th August-1st September, 30 on 6th, 35 on 11th, 40 on 15th, 30 on 19th and 50 on 27th September and 24 on 3rd October. Up to 4 birds seen at irregular intervals to 6th November and one on 19th December.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present all months of the year. Breeding data: first eggs seen on very early date of 19th March (usually first week of April); season very spread out with broods generally smaller than usual. Census 1491 nests (cf. 1530 nests in 1969).

HERON *Ardea cinerea*. A typical series of records. One on 22nd, 3 on 30th and 1 on 31st March. Singles on 19-20th April, 17th and 23-24th May. In autumn singles on several days from 8-30th July. Daily 9-19th August with maximum of 7 on 16th after which several small influxes to first week of October with peaks of 5 on 1st, 3 on 7th, 10 on 12-13th and 5 on 30th September. 1-2 seen almost daily to 10th November. One from 22nd November-28th December.

***WHITE STORK** *Ciconia ciconia*. One seen flying high over Setter, left the Island in an easterly direction on 25th May (G. J. Barnes). The 2nd Island record, previously recorded in April 1930.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*. Numbers and passage as usual. 2 on 21st, one remaining to 24th January. 1-3 on several days 8-28th March, and 13-19th April but 8 on 20th April. A pair on 1st and 1-2 on 20-27th May. 6 on 1st and 7 on 2nd June,

up to 5 between 12-21st June. 1-2 on several days 5-15th July. Recorded in autumn on most days 6th August-15th November with up to 5 on several days in August-September but 16 were seen on the crossing on 30th September. Numbers a little higher in October-November with maximum of 12 on 20th October. 3 on 22nd November and one on 12th December.

TEAL *Anas crecca*. Numbers and passage as usual. A pair was seen on 10th and 19th February, 3 on 3-4th and another pair on 22nd March. Recorded in spring on many dates 10th April-7th June with maximum of 7 on 22nd April and 5 on 30th May. One 16-18th July. In autumn, recorded in small numbers almost daily 9th August-26th October with maximum of 6 on 24th and 7 on 30th August. Numbers a little higher between 16-25th September with maximum of 24 on 20th and peak of 11 on 9th October. 1-3 on a number of days to 15th November.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*. A ♂ on 25th May. (The previous 5 birds seen on the Island were also in spring).

GADWALL *Anas strepera*. A ♀ stayed from 24th September-3rd October. (The 12th record for the Island, and 9th in the spring).

WIGEON *Anas penelope*. Records followed the normal pattern. 6 on 21st January. A ♂ from 7-12th and 2 on 23-26th February. 1-4 on scattered days between 15th April-27th May. A pair on 28th July. Autumn passage: seen almost daily 9th August-27th October with 10 on best days to mid-September. An exceptional number (90) were seen on 20th, the majority moving east over the sea, after which up to 10 on a number of days in rest of September and October and peaks of 15 on 24th September, 12 on 11th and 15 on 21st October. 2-3 on several days in November.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*. Three records is about the average number for a year. A ♀ on 4th September and single ♂♂ on 13th September and 10th November.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*. An average number of records. 3 ♀♀ on 1st, 2 remaining to 3rd and one to 13th May. A ♀ on 2-3rd October.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*. Number of records about average but July records are infrequent. A pair on 18-20th April and 3rd May. A ♂ 7-14th May. One ♂ on 23-30th July. A ♂ on 12-16th August, 2 on 20th, and single ♂♂ on 22nd September and 9-11th October.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*. Recorded in only 4 out of last 10 years. A ♂ on 8-16th October.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*. No spring records is unusual

and the August record is exceptionally early. One present at end of '74 remained to 6th March. One on 18th August. Up to 4 almost daily 10-30th October. 2 on 10th November. A ♀ on 2-3rd and 2 on 17-28th December.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*. Scarce in spring, good passage in October but few stayed on. 3 on 4th and 2 different birds on 10th and 11th April. One on 17th September. Recorded daily 7-31st October with maximum of 14 on 8th and 12 on 22nd. 1-3 on scattered dates to 17th November and 2 on 12th and 28th December.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*. Numbers of records about average. A ♂ on 20th May. A ♂ on 10-11th October and 2 on 4th November.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*. Rather more records than usual. A ♀ on 3rd January. A pair on 22nd February. A ♂ on 13-19th March. 2 ♂♂ on 8th and a ♀ on 9th May. Single ♂♂ on 5th July and 8-12th September. 4 (2 ♂♂ and 2 ♀♀) on 21st October.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*. Present in all months of the year with autumn build up to maximum of 904 on 6th November. Breeding data: pairs first seen walking on land on 5th May; first eggs seen on 16th May (c/3) and first chicks on sea on 14th June.

KING EIDER *Somateria spectabilis*. The recent increase in records has been continued this year (cf. 1 in '73 and 2 in '74). An adult ♂ on 3rd April stopped briefly off Buness. A ♂ in full eclipse was found off Skadan on 8th September and was last seen on 2nd October. An immature ♂ (probably first year) was seen in Hesswalls on 4th November.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*. Number of records about average but autumn peak higher than usual. A pair on 11th March. A ♀ on 15th-16th April. 1-2 were seen on several dates 16-29th May. One on 4th and 2 on 8th July. Almost daily 18-29th September with maximum of 10 on 24th. Up to 3 on scattered dates in October-19th November and 1-2 on 4 days in December.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*. Slightly more records than average. A ♂ stayed from 19th February-22nd March. A ♀ from 26th April-5th May. 2 on 11th, one on 13th and 2 on 25th May. 2 on 4th October and 1 on 4th November.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*. Spring records about average but autumn passage heavy with some large flocks making atypical protracted stays. 1-2 were present throughout January and on 7th there were 16. One on 12th April and 2 on 3-5th June. In autumn: one on 12th and 9 on 22nd September. Almost daily 30th September-31st December, with main

influxes on 30th September (8), in October on 2nd (15), 17th (26), 27th (24) and in November on 3rd (50) and 20th (11). Up to 8 throughout December.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE *Anser albifrons*. Records slightly above average, there having been about one record per year in recent years. A very tired Greenland bird stayed from 2-24th May. In autumn 8 arrived on 4th October and increased to 11 on 5th (all Greenland). On 31st October about 45 were with the Greylags.

BEAN GOOSE *Anser fabalis*. One between 28th March-3rd April. 4 seen on 7th October (A. Lowe). Only the 7th and 8th records for the Island.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*. More spring records than average. 4 on 30th April increased to 7 on 1st-6th May, 2 remained to 8th May. 19 on 20-23rd, 6 remaining to 24th and 16 on 26th May. In autumn: recorded on 9 days between 15th September-7th October, maximum of 14 except for 32 on 22nd September and 24 on 24th October. (See also Grey Goose sp.)

GREY GOOSE SP. *Anser sp.* Unidentified grey geese were recorded as follows: 1-2 from 8-27th January (probably Pink-foot), 8 on 20th and 15 on 26th May. 8 on 15th and 7 on 25th September and 5 on 11th October.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*. The number of records is fairly typical but it is unusual for this species to stay for any length of time. 6 on 30th April. 3 on 8th October. In November, 6 on 3rd increased to 19 on 5th, 13 remaining to 6th. 7 on 11th increased to 8 on 12th and further increased to 12 on 14-17th. 10 remained to 19th and one to 31st December.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*. A good number of records with larger numbers than average in autumn when several birds made unusually lengthy stays. One on 3rd January. In spring: 2 on 13th, 3 on 21st, 2 on 22nd and 8 on 29th March and 5 on 7th April. Autumn passage: 13 on 23rd and 2 on 25th September. Recorded on 8 days in October with maximum of 10 on 2nd and 6 on 6-7th. Daily in October with up to 7 regularly to 17th but larger numbers on 1st (23), 5th (15), 6th (20) and 7th (10). 3 stayed to 27th November and 2 to 15th December.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*. Recorded in 6 of the last 10 years. Singles on 31st May and 11th June.

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*. A fairly typical series of records. 4 spring records: ♀ on 20th and ♂ on 30th April. A ♂ on 3rd May and one on 4th June. Autumn records: ♀ on 20-23rd, one on 26th and a ♂ on 30th September. Recorded on 18 days from 1st October-14th November, generally

singles but 2 on 2nd, 3 on 3rd and 2 on 10th October.

HARRIER SP. *Circus* sp. A 'ring-tailed' bird was seen on 24th August.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Seen in all but 2 of the last 10 years. One on 26-27th May.

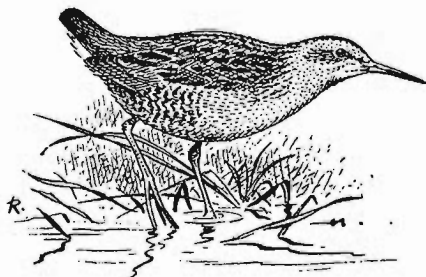
HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*. Recorded in all but 3 of the past 10 years. One on 9th June (B. Bland).

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*. Records typical of recent years, since breeding ceased. Both ♂ and ♀ were seen singly in January and February and both were seen with more regularity from mid-March to the end of May. Additional ♂♂ were seen on 11th April, 3rd and 18th May. Singles were recorded on 5 days in June to 19th. No birds were seen again until 12th August, after which 1-2 were seen on most days to 19th October and singles on a number of days in November and December. At least 4 individuals (2 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀) were seen in the first fortnight of October.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*. Perhaps a few more records than in recent years. One on 17-18th January. Singles on several days in February and 3 days in March. 1-2 on 12 days between 10th April-9th May and a ♀ on 7th June. In autumn: singles on 19th and 24th August. 1-2 daily 29th August-18th September but 3 on 1st September. 3 on 26th September after which 1-2 daily to 11th October. Apart from 2 on 21st October, singles were seen on most days 17th October-23rd November and many days in December.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*. A typical series of records. A ♀ overwintered and was still present in mid-April. A ♂ on 22nd April after which 1-2 were seen on a few days to 15th June. Autumn passage: recorded almost daily 30th July-11th September with 3 on many days and 4 on 20th August and 3rd September. 1-2 on most days 15th September-10th November but 3 on 22-24th October. A ♀ remained to the end of December.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*. Another poor year, only one seen on 17th May near Wester Lothar.



Water Rail

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*. Spring records about average but strong autumn passage. Singles on several days in January, 2 days in March, 3 days in April and 2 days in May. In autumn recorded on many days 20th September-16th November with majority 2-18th October when maximum seen was 5 on 2nd and 4 on 14th. Another smaller influx 8-16th November. Singles on several days 27th November to the end of the year but 3 on 6th December. In all 17 individuals were trapped and ringed in autumn and another 3 were found freshly killed, probably prey of Long-eared Owls, emphasising the secretive nature of the species.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*. Recorded for the 6th year in succession but 3 records, all in the Gilsetter area, is quite exceptional. One on 9th May. One on 16th-20th August. One on 2nd October. Both autumn birds were trapped and ringed.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*. Rather few records, in line with recent years. Singles on 6-7th May, another which had been dead for several days found on 8th. One caught by hand on 15th was apparently unable to fly and was seen at intervals in Gilsetter until 27th September after having been released there. A different bird was killed by a cat on 28th September.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*. A typical series of records. One on 2nd March. Recorded on 7 days 17th April-6th May. Singles in autumn on 3rd, 16th October and 3rd November.

COOT *Fulica atra*. The fifth year in the last 10 that this species has been recorded. All since 1970. One on 22-30th April.

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*. Records as usual. First recorded on 1st February, main arrivals end of February-mid March. Birds moving further north were especially noticeable in first 10 days of March eg. 60 left to the North on 4th). Numbers diminished from end of August but recorded daily to end of September when 1-2 remained, except for 25 on 28th. Seen irregularly in October to the last record on 25th. Breeding data: first eggs 3rd May (c/2), average success.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*. Recorded as usual, though rarely do birds stay long in winter. 8 present all January were joined by 3 others at the end of the month. Moderate numbers recorded on many days February-March as flocks moved north, with maxima of 47 on 22nd February, 40 in early March and 50 on 22nd March. Smaller numbers, usually less than 10, on many days to 25th June. Singles on 2 dates in July until first returning birds on 23rd (2) and 24th (15) July. Apart from 25 on 9-10th August numbers small until daily records established in September-October. Main move-

ments, 20-25th September with maximum 75; 30th September-6th October with maximum 120 and 21-25th October with maximum 45. Up to 5 on several days in November, and 3 on 3rd December had increased to 7 at the end of the year.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*. Recorded as usual. One on 2 dates in January and 2 in early February, but main arrivals from end of the month. Flocking in autumn first noticed from 2nd week of August, up to 30 between 28th August-13th September but 70 on 29th August. Only 2-3 recorded by early October and last bird recorded on 25th October. Breeding data: 8 territories occupied including new ones at Hoilie and above North Naaversgill.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*. Records about average for a year but length of stay of autumn birds is unusual. One on 7th May. One recorded on many days 9th September-26th October but 2 were present 20-27th September.

GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*. Reasonable numbers on both spring and autumn passage. Singles on several days in February-March. Spring passage 7th April-22nd June though few recorded until 21st April. Large arrival on 7th May (75) but regularly up to 30 birds on many days from end of April-May. 1-2 seen occasionally in July and one on 3rd August. Recorded daily 10th August-18th October with 20-35 on many days and larger numbers as follows: 56 on 3rd, 39 on 6th and 45 on 27th September and 40 on 7th October. Small numbers recorded less frequently to 12th November and one on 28th November.

DOTTEREL *Eudromias morinellus*. Recorded for the 6th year in the last 10. 2 on 21st May flying north over Setter. 3 (♂ and 2 ♀♀) on 26-31st May on Ward Hill.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*. Recorded as usual, in all months of the year. Maximum of 21 in January-February. In spring, peaks of 37 on 4th March and 25 on 20th May until the last spring record on 8th June. Return passage from 9th July with 25-35 on several days but larger arrivals in August on 15th (50), 27th (60), in September on 20-26th with peak of 43, in October on 5th (78) and in November on 5th-6th (45) and 26th (45). Maximum in December of 40.

SNIBE *Gallinago gallinago*. Present in all months, recorded with more regularity than usual in January-February when up to 4 seen daily. Numbers a little higher in March-April. Influxes noted in April on 5th (17), 14th (30) and 20th (28). In autumn, after initial increases, noted from mid-August, numbers remained high all autumn with peaks on 20th (45), 30th September (30), 8th (35) and 27th (40) October. At least 20 still present at the beginning of December. Breeding

data: nesting proved at Restensgeo, Swey and Gilsetter.

JACK SNIFE *Limnocryptes minimus*. The few spring records are typical but the autumn passage was stronger than usual. In spring, singles on 30th March and 6-7th May. Autumn passage recorded almost daily 7th September-end of November. No more than 3 seen on any day in early September. Main arrival from 26th September-10th October with up to 12 seen daily in first 3 days of October. Up to 6 seen in rest of October and 7 in November, one remained to 27th December, but probably much overlooked. Majority of high counts were by night as a favoured feeding area on Field Croft where the majority of the 25 birds ringed were dazzle-netted.



WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*. Numbers higher on spring and autumn passage than in many recent years. Singles on 5th and 7th, 4 on 8th and 1 on 12th April. Moderate sized arrival 14-20th with at least 25 on 17th. Singles on 19th and 28th May and 4th June. Recorded in autumn on most days 13th October-29th November with main arrivals 20-24th October with 50+ on 21-22nd, and 8-13th November with 100+ on 10th. A few stayed to the end of the year.

UPLAND SANDPIPER *Bartramia longicauda*. One first seen over Wester Lothar was seen by many observers at Meoness and Chatham's Land (where it spent most of the afternoon) on 25th September. 2nd Island record, previously recorded 5th October 1970.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*. Records very typical with poorly defined peaks of passage. Seen at intervals February-March. maximum of 4. Daily records through the spring from 29th March with up to 10 on several days, 30 on 15th April and 14 on 25th June. A few present all summer and first returning birds noticed on 8-9th July when 40 and 27 were seen respectively. Generally less than 10 in autumn but 25 on 28th August. Up to 4 seen at intervals in November and December. Breeding data: although the nest was undiscovered.

ered in the Hoini/Burrashield area a chick was ringed at Setter on 7th July. Only the 4th breeding record.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*. An average series of records. Spring passage: almost daily 26th April-20th June with 6-10 present on many days. Although up to 4 were seen in the rest of June-July there was no evidence of breeding. Autumn passage: mainly 22nd August-15th September with maximum of 7 on 31st August. One on 26th September.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*. One record is a little less than average for the past few years. 5 on 5th, one remaining to 7th May.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*. Autumn records a little below average. Singles on 9th and 28th March and 21st April. 2 on 3rd May. In autumn up to 3 between 26-30th August and one 4th October.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*. Rather few records. One 19-22nd April. 1-2 on 5-6th and one 16-18th May. In autumn singles on 15-16th, 28-30th July, 3rd and 9th August and 20th September.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*. Rather scarce. Singles on 9-12th May, 2 on 26th and singles on 28th May and 6th June. In autumn one on 16th and 28-29th August.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Tringa hypoleucos*. A typical series of records. In spring scattered singles from the very early date of 20th April, but 2-3 daily 9-16th May and 5 on 17th, and up to 3 between 25th May-6th June. One on 27th June. Autumn birds: 6 on 6th August otherwise only 1-2 on many days to 20th September.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*. Recorded as usual in all months. Generally less than 10 in January-February and numbers only a little higher until May when largest numbers were on 7th (30) and 15th (25). 1-2 at scattered intervals in June. Returning birds from 3rd July. The largest flocks in July were 36 on 8th and 25 on 14th and 29 on 30th. Numbers generally higher, often up to 30 in August-September but larger numbers on 13th (80), 18th (60) and 21st (50) August. Up to 25 seen October-early November after which about 15 seen to the end of December.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*. Recorded for the 6th year in the last 10. One on 21st September.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*. Scarce in spring and autumn. Singles on 16th April, 7th and 18th May. In autumn singles on 10-11th August and 11th and 15th September.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*. More numerous in autumn than in last few years. Singles on 10th March, 20th April and 7-8th May. Autumn birds: singles on 19th, 29-30th July and 6th Aug-

ust. Daily records 11th August-6th October with 15-20 on many days in August and peaks of 40 on 21st and 25th. Generally up to 5 in September, 3 in early October one remaining to 24th. One on 10-11th November.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*. Recorded in all months as usual. No more than 12 recorded in winter and spring until May when numbers up to 17 on best days. None seen in summer between 7th June-15th July. In autumn 8 on 16th July, small passage 25th July-3rd August with maximum of 33. Influx from 11-21st August with maximum of 55. Another arrival 27-30th August with maximum of 60. Up to 10 present in rest of autumn and early winter but 20-30 on a number of days.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*. Recorded in all but one of past 10 years. 1-2 on most days 15-30th August.

TEMMINCK'S STINT *Calidris temminckii*. One seen well on 13-16th September at Easter Lothar and Golden Water may have been present from 12th and also seen on 17th. Recorded in 6 previous years, only one of which is in the Observatory period—1964.

PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotos*. One on 23rd May at the Setter pool. Seen and photographed (Dr P. Munro). The first spring record.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*. Records as usual but autumn peaks smaller than '73 and '74. One on 4-13th March. Spring passage virtually daily 27th April-9th June with generally less than 10 but 16 on 20th May. Return passage from 9th July-26th October, records daily in August-7th October, when maxima of 26 on 15th and 25 on 28-29th August and 20 on 3rd September and 6th October. One 10-26th November.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*. Recorded for the 6th year in the last 10. 3 on 24th, 2 on 25th and 27th August and singles on 4th and 13th September.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*. A typical series of records. One on 9th March. One on 22nd July. 1-2 on several days 5-17th August. Almost daily 26th August-18th September with maximum of 6 on 6th September. One 23-29th September and one 13th October.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*. Following the strong movements in the '73 and '74 autumns this year's passage was on a much smaller scale. 2 ♂♂ on 27th May. Recorded on most days 7-28th August but maximum of only 4. Single ♂♂ on 13th and 25-28th September and 1st and 4-5th October. 5 on 6th, 4 remaining to 7th October.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*. Season as usual. First recorded on 31st March, daily records from 4th April with rapid build-

up to 30+ by the end of the month. A non-breeding flock of ca 35 was present during the summer from mid-June. Numbers decreased from September and last recorded ashore on 14th November. Last seen ashore later than usual probably due to the presence of one sick bird. Breeding data: 21 pairs attempted to breed. The programme of trapping the adults at their nests, begun in '74, was continued and a further 12 adults were trapped. Of these 6 were unringed and the others had all been ringed as chicks elsewhere in Shetland, notably on Foula (see Ringed Strangers for full details).

POMARINE SKUA *Stercorarius pomarinus*. One record per year is typical. An adult light phase bird seen over Gilsetter on a number of occasions on 2nd July.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Season as usual. The first bird arrived on 16th April and numbers built up to 63 on 2nd May and 200+ by mid-May. Numbers noticeably reduced in late August and last recorded on 30th September. Breeding data: 135 pairs bred and the first egg was noted on 16th May.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*. This species has been recorded in most of the last few years. A 2nd year bird over the airstrip on 21st June (G. J. Barnes), and adult on East Brecks on 3rd August (Mr and Mrs Blom) and an adult seen on the crossing on 19th September (B. Walker, P. Walton and D. Willis).

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*. Recorded in all months as usual, with influxes in winter during severe weather, especially in early November when 1000 present on several days. Breeding data: 141 pairs bred (cf. 55 in 1969).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*. Season as usual. First bird seen on 31st March after which slow build up to full strength in early May. Numbers decreased in August and last bird seen on 28th September. Breeding data: 46 pairs bred (cf. 30 pairs in 1969).

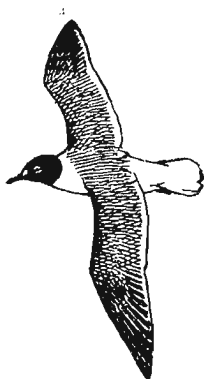
HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*. Present as usual in all months, with bad weather influxes particularly 2-5th November (3000+) and 16th (ca 8000) and in early December (ca 2000). Breeding data: 486 pairs bred (cf. 315 pairs in 1969). First eggs (c/2) on 9th May.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*. Records follow the usual pattern but one exceptionally large influx in spring. Only occasional sightings until 20th March, after which recorded almost daily through the year to early November. Spring movements stronger in April when influxes of 300 on 14th, 450 on 17th and exceptional arrival of 1500 on 18th, otherwise generally less than 30 seen daily. As many as 15 seen on some days in the summer. Returning birds noticed from 5th July with

generally less than 50 present but peaks of 300 on 5th, 250 on 9th and 130 on 16th August. 400 on 6th, 250 on 13th and 200 on 19th September and 100 on 20th October and 4th November. Occasional December sightings. Breeding data: 2 pairs nested, one on South Park (c/2 on 21st May, 2 chicks hatched but only one fledged) and one on Tarryfield (c/1 on 26th May, c/3 hatching on 24th June and 2 chicks fledged).

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*. Recorded more regularly in late winter than in many years. Up to 4 present on many days January-March. Similar numbers, but seen at less frequent intervals until 3rd June. 2 different birds in September on 15th and 21st, and singles 4-8th and 25-27th October. A number present during bad weather 3-20th November with maximum of 4 on 3rd and 10+ on 16th. Up to 4 on several days in December and 35+ on 27th. The majority of this last influx were adults, unlike the earlier, smaller arrivals.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*. Only 2 records is rather below average. An adult on 27th January and an immature on 20th May.



LAUGHING GULL *Larus atricapilla*. An adult beginning to lose its summer plumage on the forehead, was seen by many observers on 13th September. Originally seen on Easter Lother, it was later seen at South Light and the Airstrip before returning to spend the afternoon on Easter Lother. This is the first Island record of this species, which breeds mainly on the east coast of North America between 45°N and 12°N and winters into northern South America.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*. Recorded as usual. 1-2 on several days 20th February-4th March. Few from 21st March until recorded daily from 14th April-mid June, but largest numbers in late April when 10-15 on several days and 25 on 30th. 4-5 on several days in mid-summer, and first juveniles seen on 16th July. Trickle of southward moving

birds throughout the autumn until 12th November with larger numbers on 20th July (34), 29th August (20), 6th (25) and 26-27th October (50 and 26 respectively). One on 29th December.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*. Recorded as usual. Occasional records in January, few visiting breeding ledges in early February and most ashore regularly in fine weather from mid-month. Very few recorded ashore at the end of August but seen in some numbers offshore until mid-October after which smaller numbers until early November. 2 on 28th December. Breeding data: almost complete count puts population at 17,000+ nests (cf. 12,121 pairs in 1969). First egg seen on 3rd May.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*. Records as usual; daily after the first bird arrived on 16th May until 18th September. All breeders present by the end of May. Up to 15 seen regularly in summer, numbers a little higher in mid-August with arrival of passage birds. One on 21st September and a late bird on 18th October. Breeding data: population on the Stack 'O North Haven similar to last year—7 pairs raised 11 chicks to the flying stage.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*. Specifically identified on rather few occasions in spring. One on 24th May and 1-3 on several days in June and numbers only a little higher in July. Up to 22 seen on several dates in August to 26th. Singles on 14th and 23-24th September.

COMMON/ARCTIC TERN. 'Commic' terns not specifically identified were recorded as follows: 6 on the crossing on 6th May (early date). Up to 5 on several days in May and first half of June. Numbers higher from 16th July as family parties moved south. Maximum of 25 on 25th and 20 on 31st July. Up to 10 on most days in August and only occasional singles in September to 26th but 17 on 13th September. 8 on late date of 18th October.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*. Recorded for only the 4th year in the last 10. 2 seen on 2nd June (G. J. Barnes).

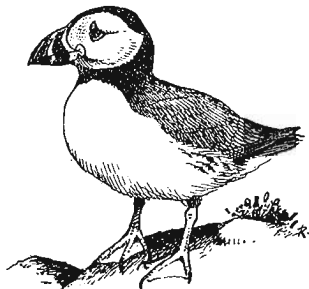
RAZORBILL *Alca torda*. Season as usual, with birds visiting ashore in good weather from early February, daily from mid-April. Last ashore on 5th August, but a few seen offshore until end of September. Breeding data: breeding season census recorded ca 2,500 birds which may, from comparison with study areas, approximate to the number of breeding pairs (cf. 1,100 pairs in 1969). First eggs noted on 30th April, first chicks (2-3 days old) seen on 29th May.

LITTLE AUK *Plautus alle*. One caught by a cat at the South Light on 28th died on 29th January. Very few seen on the

crossings in January-February. First seen on the crossing in autumn on 18th November (hundreds). One found dead on 19th December at Skerryholm.

GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*. Season as usual, recorded ashore in the early part of the year during fine weather and daily from mid-April. Last seen ashore, except for sick or oiled birds, on 6th August. A few offshore until early October. First birds returned to the cliffs at Sheep Rock by 18th October (ca 400). Breeding data: census during breeding season recorded 19,200 birds on breeding ledges (cf. 10,000 in 1969). First egg noticed on 30th April, success about average.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*. Recorded as usual in all months. First noticed in summer plumage from 4th February. Breeding as usual.



PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*. The season was much as usual with the first birds noted on 28th March (2 ashore) but no large arrival until 4th April. Last seen ashore on 25th August although small numbers seen offshore and on crossing to 30th September. Breeding data: eggs first seen from 30th April and fish being carried into burrows from 7th June.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*. This species is generally recorded 2-3 times a year. Only one record on 2nd October.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*. As usual, recorded in all months but with larger numbers than usual in winter (up to 40 in February). Up to 20-30 seen on occasions in all months except July. 40 in November and 60+ in December. Smaller numbers seen between mid-June and mid-August. Breeding data: population thought to be about same level as last few years.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*. Records follow the recent pattern in spring and autumn. Singles on 4th and 10th February. 1-2 on 6-12th March. Records in spring almost daily 17th April-29th May with peaks of 12 on 22nd April and 15 on 6th and 18th May. Up to 5 from 4-13th and one 19-22nd June. Autumn birds: 1-2 from 22-29th July. One 22-29th August and singles 10th and 13th September. Up to 3 seen

regularly 10th October-2nd November. 2 from 8-22nd November and one remaining into December.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*. A typical series of records. One on 17th and 2 on 19th May. 1-2 on several days 2-21st June but 4 on 8th June. 1-2 on 5-7th July and one 23rd July. Autumn singles on 11-13th and 18th September and 12th October.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*. In line with the last few years, this species continues to appear in increasing numbers. One 21-26th April. Maximum of 6 on 4-8th, and maximum of 3 on 12-14th May. Good numbers recorded almost daily 17th May-17th July with main influxes as follows: 15 on 18th and 18 on 26th May, 24 on 5th increasing to 27 on 8th (largest number recorded on the Island), 12 on 11th and 8 on 30th June and 6 on 16th July. Up to 5 recorded at less regular intervals 22 July-10th August and singles on 31st August-2nd September, several days 18-26th September, 2-3rd and 26th October. One on 20th September showed hybrid characters of Turtle x Collared Dove. 24 birds trapped and ringed far exceeds the previous years best ringing total.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*. Rather scarce in spring. 2 on 19th May. 4 on 25th after which 1-2 to 1st June. Autumn passage: one on 7-8th, 3 on 9th, 2 on 10th (plus one dead) and 1 on 12th August. One on 3-5th September.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*. Records in January, June and August are not frequent and the autumn passage was exceptionally heavy. One on 2nd January. In spring singles on 27th March and 6 days between 6th April-3rd May. One on 8-9th June. One seen on 8-12th August was badly contaminated, probably with fulmar oil. Autumn passage in two main periods; the first 9-26th October with almost daily records 15-26th when maximum of 4 on any one day and 9 different birds trapped during the period. Renewed passage almost daily 5-23rd November with maximum of 6 seen on 12th November and 10 individuals trapped during the period. Singles on 19th and 31st December. (See also Long/Short-eared Owls).

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*. Recorded as usual, perhaps a few more spring records than in some years. 1-2 on many days in spring from 11th April-20th June and 3 on 20th April and 13th May. Autumn singles on 20th, 28th and 30th September and several days between 9th October-16th November but up to 4 between 25-29th October. One 11-13th December.

LONG/SHORT-EARED OWLS. Additional, unidentified owls belonging to one of these species were recorded in spring on 21st (3) and 23rd April, and 19th June. In autumn recorded

on 5th September and frequently in October between 10-26th, mainly birds flushed on the hill. One on 10th, 6 on 15th, thought to be Long-eared as were 2 on 17th. 3 on 21st, 4 on 24th and 26th October, 6 on 12th (probably *A. otus*) and 2 on 16th November.

SWIFT *Apus apus*. A good run of records, especially during the summer. 2 on 19th and one on 21st May. Recorded on most days 5th June-4th August with up to 10 on several days and 40 on 8th June. Also recorded most days 14th August-18th September, but no more than 3 birds on any day. A very late bird on 25-26th October.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*. One found initially on the tumulus West of Setter on 24th October was probably the same bird seen again at Stoneybrake on 4th November. This is the latest record for the Island.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopus major*. A series of records indicative of a small-scale irruption. One on 25th August. One on 10th, 2 on 22nd, 2 on 26th and singles on 28-29th October and 1st, 3-4th November.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*. Moderate numbers both in spring and autumn. One on 5th May, 4 on 8th increased to 6 on 9th which dwindled to 1 by 15th. New arrival of 5 on 16th which decreased to last one on 19th. 1-2 daily 25-29th May. In autumn: one on 28th August. 1-2 on 1-6th, 3 on 12th and 2 on 18th one remaining on 19th September. A late one trapped on 15th October.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella cinerea*. 5 records in a year is more than average. In spring one on 20-26th April (equals earliest record) and probably another 4-9th May. 3 in autumn; one 21-27th September and 2 on 8-9th October one remaining to 14th October.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*. A few more than usual overwintered (15-20), otherwise season as usual. First migrants recorded from 10th February (60) with large passage 20-22nd February (600+ on 22nd). In autumn first increase noticed at end of August but influxes more noticeable in late September. Fewer birds remained in October and only 35-40 remained by early December. Breeding data: first eggs (c/2) seen 11th May.

SHORE LARK *Eremophila alpestris*. Recorded in almost all recent years. 2 on 18-20th April. 3 on 4th, 2 on 5th-10th and one on 11th May. One on 25th October.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*. As usual spring numbers far exceeded autumn records. Singles on several days 20-30th April and 3 on 26th. Up to 5 on 4-6th May, up to 4 on 12-14th, 7 on 16th peaked on 17th at 40 and 30 on 18th but had

all gone by 21st. 12 on 25th decreased to 4 on 28th May. Seen in small numbers on many days in June with most 4-8th when 10-20 daily and 10 on 11th and 7 on 22nd. 1-2 on several days in July but 6 on 14th. In autumn not more than 5 on any day, recorded on 6 days 24th August-11th September and daily 30th September-5th October and 13-18th October.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*. A typical series of records, seen on most days 6-28th May with main arrivals on 9th (7) 17th (10) and 25th (5). Larger numbers 2-17th June with 40-50 on 6-8th. New arrival on 11th (15). Singles on several scattered days to 22nd July. One on 1st August. Up to 5 on 30th September-5th October.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*. Recorded in small numbers, as usual with more spring than autumn records. One on 25-26th April. Seen on several days 1-18th May with maximum of 4 on 6 and 5 on 17th. One on 9th June. 1-2 on 31st July-4th August. Singles on 3rd and 11th September.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*. Resident in usual numbers but influx of roving birds confined to small numbers in second half of March when flocks of up to 13 seen. Breeding data: season and numbers as usual.

HOODED AND CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*. Hooded Crow *C. c. cornix*. Resident in usual numbers breeding season as usual (chicks in 2 nests hatched in 2nd and 3rd weeks of May). Carrion Crow *C. c. corone*. One on 12th March. Recorded on many days in May with up to 4 on several days but 17 on 12th and 13 on 13th. 1-2 daily 15-25th October and one 1-11th November.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*. One overwintered and was last seen on 6th March. Usual scatter of records, mainly in spring. Seen on many days 6th April-6th May with up to 6 on several days and 8 on 31st April and 10 on 2nd May. One on 2nd June. One 13-17th October.

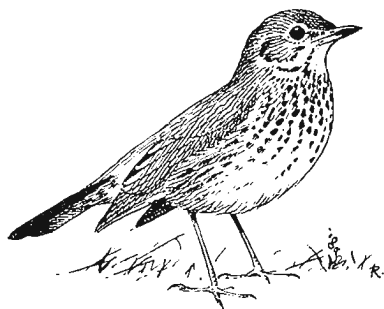
JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*. Rather few records. 2 on 14-15th and 1 on 24th April. One on 25th May and 3 on 3rd June.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Resident but migrants recorded on 11th and 17th May probably referable to Scandinavian form. Breeding data: complete census, using taped calls to stimulate song recorded 38 sites in May.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*. A typical small number of records. One 22nd February-3rd March. Singles on 13th and 19th March, 12th and 20th April and 18th May. Singles on 15-16th and 19th October.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*. An exceptionally strong spring passage in April was followed by an early return in the autumn

and high numbers in October and November. Up to 30 in January-February, rather more in early March but then rather infrequent until mid-April. 45 on 14th increased to 200 on 15th, 1300 on 18th and 5000+ on 20th, the majority of which had left by 24th. Thereafter maximum of 25 until last spring record on 5th June. Autumn records daily from 6th August-end of November. Maximum of 20 until early October, numbers higher 9th October-13th November with gradual build up from 50 on 9th to 1500+ on 16th. New arrivals 21-23rd with 1500+ at peak and 1300 on 8-9th November. Only 3-4 remaining through December.



SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*. Recorded in reasonable numbers in spring but very large arrival in autumn. Singles on 3-4th January and 1-2 on many days in February. Recorded on most days in March with 6 on best day. Scattered records on many days in April-May with stronger passage daily 14-22nd April with maximum of 17 on 20th and 30 on 22nd, and again 8-17th May with maximum of 50 on 9th May. A few birds also seen in June to 23rd. In autumn occasional records from 8th August. Large influx (ca 400) on 30th September increased to 750 on 1st October which slowly declined in the first fortnight. Another smaller arrival on 21-22nd (30) after which smaller numbers seen daily to 15th November.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*. Recorded in rather small numbers in spring but good numbers in autumn. Seen on most days January-March with maximum of 50 on any day. Rather scarce in second half of March to early April. Small numbers on spring passage 7th April-end of May; only 2 small arrivals of note: 14-17th with maximum of 50 and 20-22nd with maximum of 100. 1-2 on several days in June to 16th. In autumn 1 on 18th September then recorded daily from 25th September. First arrival of any size on 26th (30) after which less than 100 until 5th October when 150 arrived (Icelandic birds), then numbers remained high until mid-November

with main arrivals on 9th (700) increasing to 2500+ on 11th, 1000 on 15th and 700 on 21st increasing to 1200 on 22nd October, 600 on 5th (Icelandic birds) and 500 on 8th November. 20-40 seen regularly in rest of November and December.

RING OUSEL *Turdus torquatus*. First recorded in spring on rather late date of 15th April after which 1-3 seen on most days to 20th May, but 17 on 9th and 11 on 11th May. Singles on 4 days in June to 9th. In autumn 3 on 30th September, 7 on 1st decreasing to one on 8th and one on 23rd October.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*. Overwintering numbers a little higher than usual with probably up to 50 present in January-February. Several very small arrivals in March and early April. Large influx from 14th (100) increasing to 1000 on 20th but most had gone by 26th after which no more than 10 on any day in May and early June. Scattered singles in late June to 29th. A few in autumn from 18th August on scattered dates. Daily records from 28th September with main arrivals in October on 11th (150), 15th (200), 21st (200) increasing to 500 on 22nd-23rd and in November on 8th (100), 10th (150) and 12th (200). Up to 30 remained into December.

HERMIT THRUSH *Hylocichla guttata*. One well seen by many observers for most of the day at Field Croft on 2nd June. This is the first British record of this species which breeds widely in Canada and North America and winters south as far as Guatemala.

WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*. First birds not seen until late, often recorded in last week in March. Single ♂♂ on 12th and 15th April and then recorded daily from 17th until the end of the autumn. First sizeable arrival of 40 on 20th April. Passage in autumn noticed from second week in August. Local birds much reduced by late August when Greenland types frequently seen. Only 25 present by 1st September and numbers generally quite low, but fluctuating throughout the month with only sizeable arrivals on 3rd (150), 11th (60) and 18th (80). 25 recorded on 1st October but these decreased rapidly and only 1-3 were seen from 10-29th October. Breeding data: first young seen on the wing on 26th June.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*. Heavy and protracted spring passage with records on most days 22nd February-20th April. Maximum of 5 on 26th February followed by the largest arrival on record on 2nd March (15). Thereafter peaks of 5 on 7th and 7 on 12th March but only singles recorded in April. 1-2 on several days in May. 2 (♂ and a juvenile) appeared on the unusual date of 6th July. The ♂ remained to 11th. In autumn singles on 10th, 18-20th and 24th October.

*Another bird present 10-17th October was referable to one of the eastern forms.



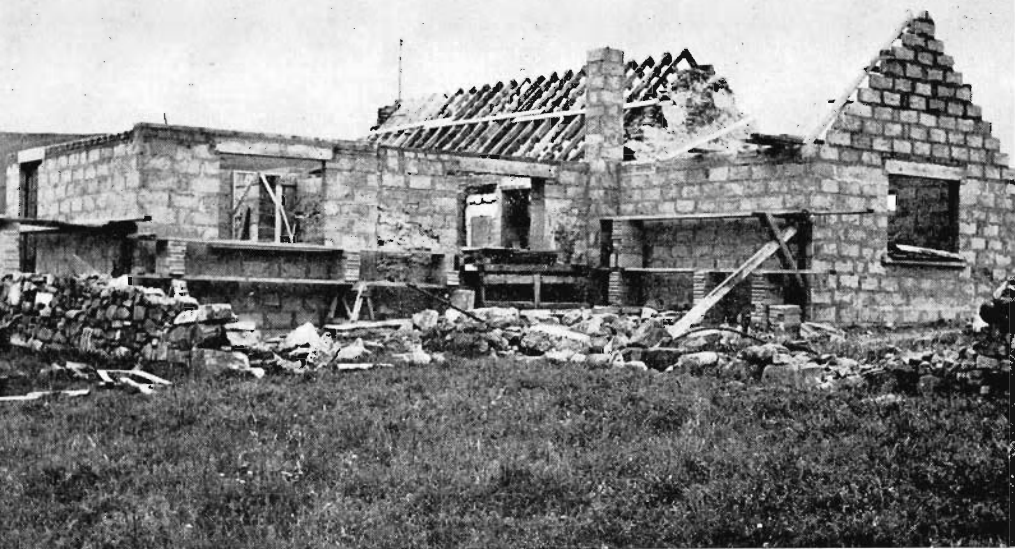
WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*. Records follow the usual pattern. 1-2 from 29th April-3rd May. 3 on 8th increased to 30 on 9th after which numbers remained high until 14th. New arrival of 11 on 16th, numbers then decreasing and remaining low until last spring record on 11th June. Return passage daily 10th August-18th October, generally less than 10 until arrival of 30 on 30th September-2nd October after which numbers smaller to the end of the period. 2 on 21st and singles on 22nd and 27th October.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. Good arrivals in spring and autumn produced numbers that were better than average. A ♂ on 19th and 2 ♂♂ on 20th April. Records daily from 2nd May with few until 8th (12) and 9th (50). Numbers gradually decreased to 20th after which maximum of 3 seen until 5th June. One on 11-12th June. In autumn one on 6th August and singles on 3rd and 6-7th September. Singles recorded daily 18-28th but 35 on 30th September increased to 60 on 1st October. Maximum of 5 seen from 4th to last record on 18th October.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Good numbers recorded in spring, and autumn records, as usual, very few. One on 28th March. 2 on 18th increased to 8 on 20-21st of which only 2 remained to 26th April. In May recorded daily 5-9th with peak of 4 on 8th and 1-2 on 14-19th and one on 26th. One was seen on the very late date of 29th June. Singles on 7th and 22nd October (the latter an adult ♂).

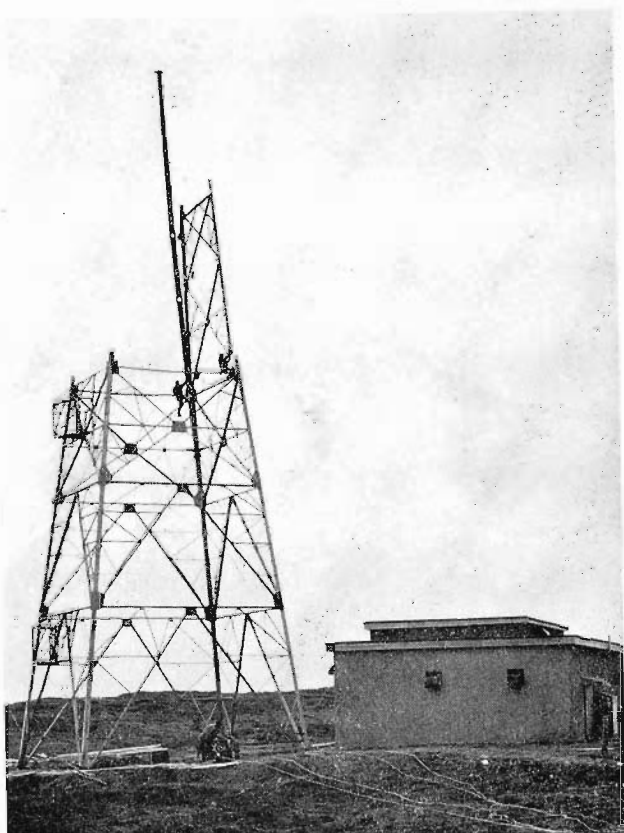
NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*. One found dead at Skerryholm on 16th May was thought to have been dead about 2 weeks. One trapped on 9th June. Last recorded in 1972.

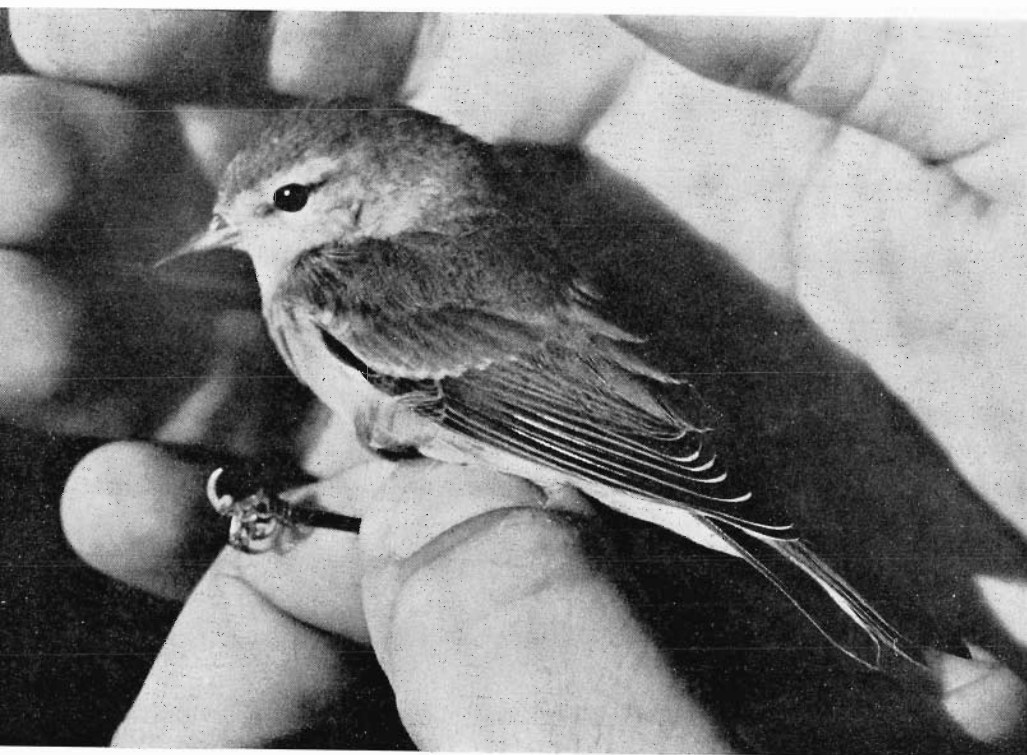
SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT *Luscinia calliope*. A first year ♂ seen at the Sheep Cru on 9th October was trapped at the Plantation a short while later. It was seen on 10th and 11th. The record is being considered by the BOU records committee and if



(Above) National Trust for Scotland reconstruction work in progress on Barkland, Fair Isle, 1968.
Photograph by National Trust for Scotland

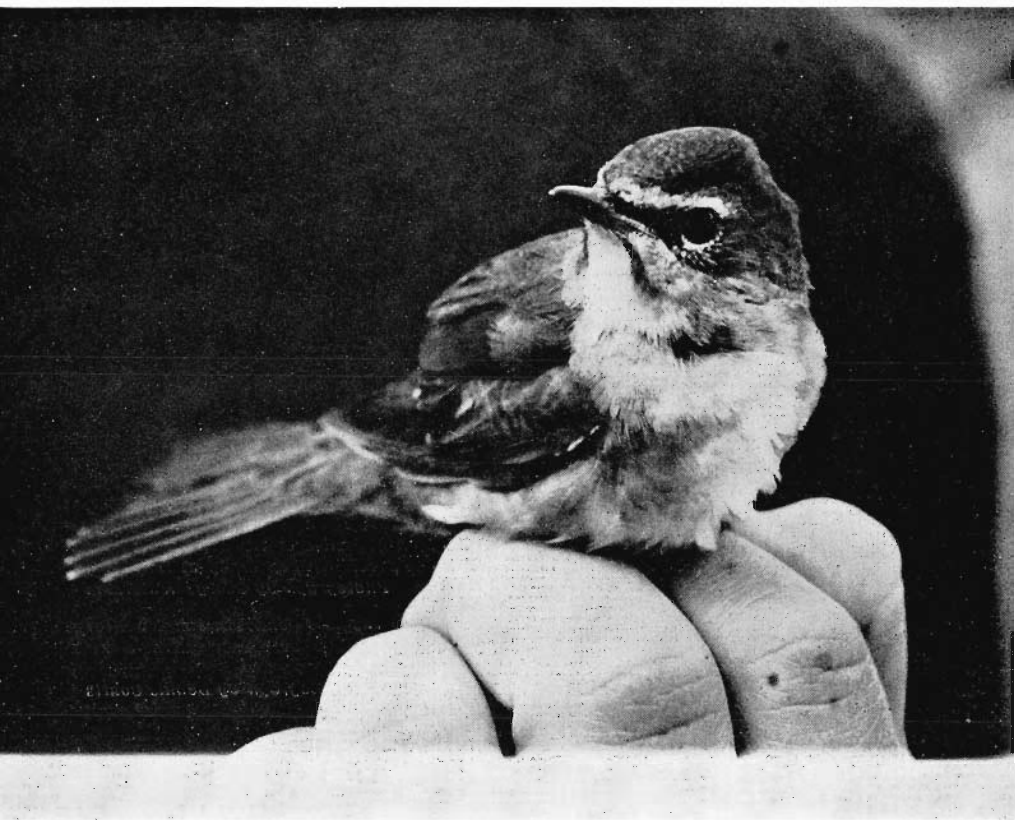
(Below) Erection of T.V. Telecommunications Mast at Lower Station, Ward Hill, Autumn 1975.
Photograph by Dave Wheeler





FIRST RECORDED SIBERIAN RUBYTHROAT *Luscinia calliope*. First year ♂ 9-11th October 1975. Trapped and ringed on 9th October 1975.

Photograph by Roger Broad



FIRST RECORDED TENNESSEE WARBLER *Vermivora peregrina*, First year 6-18th September 1975. Trapped and ringed on 18th September 1975. (Another was seen and ringed on 24th September 1975).

Photograph by Roger Broud



(Above) *Fair Isle Yoles at Kirkiegie, South Harbour, in 1936.* The winter noosts can be seen above the Yoles. The names and owners are listed left to right: 'Try' LK 369, (James A. Stout & Andrew Eunson); 'seagull' LK 74 (Springfield & Busta); 'Dolphin' LK 65 (The late Jerome, George and Sandy Stout); 'Zeal' LK 238 (Eunsons of Leogh); *Unnamed and unregistered.* (Late Jerome Stout of Melville House); 'Dolphin 2' LK 88 (Stouts of Taft), and a small boat unnamed (Jerry and Sandy Stout). The two boats in their noosts belonged to the late Tom Wilson (Shop at Leogh).

Photograph by George Waterston

(Below) *Model of Fair Isle Yole constructed by the late John Shewan for George Waterston and now deposited in Lerwick Museum. A similar model can be seen in the Lounge of the Bird Observatory.*

Photograph by Dennis Coultis



accepted will be the first British record of this species which breeds widely in Siberia and also at its nearest point to Britain just west of the Urals in the Kamal region. It winters in Northern India, Burma and the Philippines.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*. A ♂ of the white-spotted form was seen at Schoolton on 21-22nd April. This subspecies has not been recorded in the past 10 years. All other ♂♂ seen were of the red-spotted form which was recorded on a good number of days in the spring. A ♂ on 8th, 17 on 9th after which numbers remained high up to 17th May, then 1-2 each day to 4th June. A ♂ first seen on 21st June beside the Hill Dyke had a sprained wing but, as in a similar case in 1973, was able to survive for a long spell. It was last seen on 15th August. In autumn 3 on 26th September after which 1-2 daily to 4th October.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*. Records follow the usual pattern but, as in the past few years, numbers have been rather low in autumn. At least 2 overwintered and were seen until early April. A few new birds were recorded in March but main spring passage 16th April-28th May, when records almost daily. Except for arrival on 18-23rd April when maximum of 50 on 20-21st, not more than 6 on any day. Singles on several days in June to 17th. Autumn : singles on several days from 17th September. 10 on 30th September increased to 18 on 1st October after which up to 10 seen on several days to the end of the month, and up to 5 on many days in November, 2-3 remaining through December.

LANCEOLATED WARBLER *Locustella lanceolata*. A quite unprecedented arrival 11-14th October. On 11th one was seen and trapped at North Shirva and another was later trapped at Skerryholm where a third bird was also seen. This unringed bird was seen at the same spot again on 13th and 14th and on this last date another unringed bird was seen at North Shirva. These are the 13-16th records for the Island.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. No spring records and in autumn, although this species was not positively identified a number of sight records of unstreaked *Acrocephalus* warblers were thought to be most likely this species. They were recorded as follows: 5th, 11th, 14th, 16th, 2 on 18th and 23rd and on 24th August. Also singles on 5th and 7th September.

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*. Singles trapped on 2nd and 8th and another in song on 16-17th June.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Exceedingly scarce, only 3 in spring on 18-19th and 23rd May and 7-8th June. In autumn 1-2 on 28th August-5th September and an exceptionally late bird on 11th November.

AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*. Recorded for the 4th year in the last 10. One on 9-10th in the Schoolton Ditch (trapped) and another on 18th August trapped at North Shirva.

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*. A number of sightings including the first records of this species in October. One on 11th June. In autumn one on 9-10th, 2 on 13th and one on 26-27th August. One on 3-6th September and singles on 2-3rd and 8th October (different bird).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*. Small numbers as usual in spring but strong passage in autumn especially in October. One on 19th, 4 on 20th and one 22-23rd April. 1-3 on several days in May and 6 days in June to 21st. Recorded virtually daily 31st August-14th November, 5-6 on several days in September but 10 on 29th September increased to 70 on 30th. Numbers remained high to 3rd October. 20 arrived on 9th October after which up to 20-30 present on a number of days during the month. Up to 5 seen daily in November to 14th, except for 10 on 1st and 10th. A very late ♂ on 3rd December.

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*. In contrast to 1974 this species was recorded in good numbers this autumn. Immature birds almost daily 8th August-27th September with up to 8 on many days between 18th August-7th September. One on 30th September and 4 on 1st October. 2 on 9th increased to 4 on 10th, one remaining to 12th. A total of 25 birds were trapped and ringed.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*. Recorded in spring and autumn in typically small numbers. Singles on 9th and 11th, 2 on 25th, one remaining to 27th May. 1-2 on many days in June to 22nd but 5 on 8th. Small numbers, generally less than 10 on most days in autumn between 6th August-17th October with peaks of 12 on 18th August and 12th September and 10 on 30th September.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*. Numbers over the past few years have remained consistently low in spring and autumn. Recorded on most days 9th May-13th June, majority 9-20th May with 5 on 9th and 12th and 6 on 16th, and peak of 4 on 27th May. One trapped on 15th July. In autumn, one 10-13th August, one on 24th and 2 on 25th September. Daily 30th September-3rd October with peak of 4 on 1st October. Singles on 9th and 11th October.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*. Recorded in rather small numbers in spring and autumn. In spring daily 6-19th May with maximum of 7 on 9th, and up to 4 daily 26th May-6th June and 10-14th June. Autumn singles on several days 24th August-28th September but 4 on 30th September. 2 on 9th and 1 on 11th October.

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*. Recorded for the 6th year in the last 10 but 3 individuals in one year is the highest on record. A ♂ trapped in the Plantation on 9th May. A ♀ trapped at the Observatory in the morning on 8th June was followed by a ♂ trapped in the Gully in the afternoon. The latter remained until 10th June.

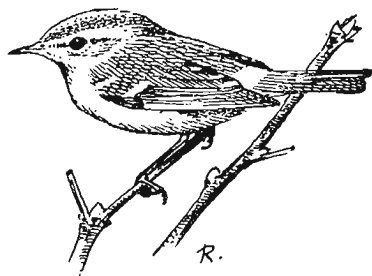
WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Rather scarce in spring; seen on many days between 20th April-21st June but maximum of only 10 recorded on 14th and 17th May. In autumn seen daily 7th August-3rd October with occasional birds to 17th October. Majority between 13th August-12th September when up to 25 on many days and peaks of 35 on 18th and 100 on 30th August.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*. Autumn numbers a little above average. In spring, one on the early date of 22nd March. Recorded on many days 18th April-18th May but numbers small; peaks of 6 on 6th, 8th and 12th. Singles on 26th May and 2nd June, 2 on 8th and one 16-17th June. In autumn: 1-2 on several days 18th August-15th September. Daily 27th September-3rd October with 7 on 30th September. Main movement 8-28th October when up to 15 on several days and 30 on 11th. One 9-12th but 5 on 10th November. One 18-26th November was seen again on several days to the end of December.

WILLOW/CHIFFS. Additional unidentified birds belonging to one of these species were recorded in small numbers on most days in May with 10-12 on 14-17th.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. The few records follow the usual pattern. One on 6th May and another 17th June. In autumn: one on 17th, 3 on 18th, one on 21-22nd and 2 on 23rd August. Singles on 30-31st August and 5th and 7th September.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*. A good series of records. 5 on 30th September, one remained to 4th October. 2 on 10th, 3 on 11th, 2 on 12-18th and one 21-22nd October. One on 10th November. About 10 individuals in all.



Pallas's Warbler

PALLAS'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*. One 10-11th October found originally in the reedy ditch at Schoolton. There is only one previous record on 11th October 1966.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*. Spring passage rather late in starting and there was only one March record a ♂ on 6-7th. One on 6-7th April then seen daily 10-30th April with majority between 15-22nd when generally up to 20 daily but 30 on 22nd. Recorded on many days 3-20th May with maximum of 5 on 12th. In autumn 2 on 4th September then small numbers daily 11th September-6th October with maximum of 5. Main passage 8th October-14th November with peaks of 35 on 9th, 30 on 14th and 200 on 16th October but no more than 6 daily after 22nd October. One on 19th November.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*. Recorded in small numbers in spring and autumn. Recorded most days 8-31st May with maximum of 5 on 17th. Another wave 4-14th June with peak of 7 on 6th. Singles on 20th June and 5th July. Singles on 4 days between 6-18th September. 2-3 on 30th September-3rd October. One on 9-11th October.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*. Recorded in rather average numbers in spring and autumn. Seen daily 8-19th with peaks of 15 on 9th, 10 on 14th and 15 on 17th May. 1-2 on several days in rest of May and June to 8th. In autumn: one on 5th August, daily 8-18th with maximum of 5 on 9-10th and 8 on 18th after which 1-2 on several days until 20th September. 5 on 29th increased to 25 on 30th September which had all gone by 4th October. Up to 6 between 9-11th October.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*. A good series of records in autumn and the two spring records are the first since 1961. A ♂ on 17th May on the cliffs at Wyrvie and another bird trapped on 5-6th June. In autumn: 2 on 30th September and a different bird on 1st October, one remained to 3rd. 2 on 10-11th October and one on 12th and 14th October.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*. Numbers rather low in spring and autumn. Singles on 11th March and 8th April. Recorded daily 15th April-9th May with peak of 8 on 20-22nd April. 2-3 on several days in May to 23rd and one on 8th and 16-17th June. In autumn, 6 on 30th September, a few remaining to 6th October and one on 13th October. One on 1-2nd November.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. There have been very few records of this species in any year since 1970. One seen on 21st October (A. Lowe) and one seen 11th-12th November (R. A. Broad).

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*. Records follow the usual pattern. 2 on 22nd February. Singles on 2nd and 12th March.

Small numbers most days from 19th but first real influx on 30th (40+). Numbers however remained low until mid-April. Influxes and passage noticed from the end of August. Considerable reduction in numbers during October and only about 12 seen in mid-November, 7 remaining in early December. Breeding data: first eggs (c/4) noted on 18th May.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*. Seen in average numbers in spring but scarce in autumn. One on 21-22nd and 26th April then daily 29th April-8th June, one remaining to 17th June. Largest numbers seen 10 on 8th, 20 on 9th and 16-19th and 10 on 22nd May. In autumn singles seen on 30th August and 4th September. 2 on 18th September, 4 on 1st and 1-2 on several dates in October to 26th.

PECHORA PIPIT *Anthus gustavi*. One well seen at Quoy and Kennaby on 10th October by several observers. This is only the third record in the last 10 years, last recorded in 1971.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*. A large number of records in spring and autumn. 2 on 24th, one on 25th, 2 on 26th-27th including a different bird, singles on 28th, 29th and 31st May. 3 different birds in June, one on 4th, *one 8-9th and *2 on 10th. A minimum of 6 birds in spring. In autumn one on 8th-12th and 16-17th, one on 20-24th and a 3rd bird on 25-26th September.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus spinoletta*. Present in all months in usual numbers but influx noticed in early February. Breeding data: season as usual.

WHITE AND PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*. Records of both subspecies fit in with the established pattern. White Wagtail *M.a. alba*. Spring records daily 15th April-23rd May with maximum of 9 on 21st April and 8 on 4th May. 1-2 recorded on several days in rest of May and June to 11th. Return passage daily 17th August-4th October with majority 17th August-11th September when 20-30 on many days and maximum of 40 on 23-25th and 45 on 29th August. 2 on 14th October. Pied Wagtail *M.a. yarrelli*. Identified in spring on 10-12th and 22-29th March and 1-2 on 18 days in April and May. Only one identified in autumn on 15th October. Additional unidentified *alba* wagtails were seen on 9th March, 4 days in April, 17th June, 4th July (2), 12th August and 11th October.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*. An average number of records although the 2 autumn birds were considerably earlier than most. One on 7th April. Singles on 30-31st April and 6th September.

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola*. Recorded for the 6th year in the last 10. An immature seen daily 7-18th September.

ber moved widely over the Island but late in its stay preferred Field Croft.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*. No autumn records. In spring recorded between 19th April-15th June. Single birds not specifically assigned to any race were seen on 26th May, 5-6th June and 15th June. Blue-headed Wagtail *M.f. flava*. A ♂ on 11th June. Yellow Wagtail *M.f. flavissima*. 1-2 ♂♂ on 19-24th, 1-2 daily 29th April-9th May (all ♂♂ except for single ♀♀ on 1st and 6-7th) and ♂ on 18-19th May and a ♂ on 5th June. Grey-headed Wagtail *M.f. thunbergi*. Single ♂♂ on 1st, 9th and 11th May. Daily 25th May-4th June with maximum of 5 on 28-29th (all ♂♂). One ♂ on 8th June.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*. A small influx following one on the early date of 12th October. 2 on 21st, 9 on 22nd and 1 on 24th. 1-3 on most days 1-14th November.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*. A reasonable number of records in spring and autumn. 2 on 18-20th, 1 on 21st (different bird) and 1 on 22nd, 2 on 23-24th and 1 on 26th April. One on 1-5th May. In autumn singles on 12th, 14-16th, 22nd and 28th October and 11-14th November.

WOODCHAT SHRIKE *Lanius senator*. Recorded for the 5th year in the last 10. An immature first seen just south of Shirva on 13-20th August.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*. Numbers rather low in spring. 2 ♂♂ on 18th joined by a ♀ on 19th, ♀ on 20th, ♂ on 21st, ♀ on 22nd and ♂ on 25th May, 2 ♀♀ on 5-6th and ♂ on 8th June. In autumn 1-2 daily 9-27th August and one on 30th September-1st October.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*. Recorded in all months of the year as usual, with passage evident in early March and mid-April when 2000+ on 14-15th and 1200 on 20th. Passage again noticed in autumn from the end of August but more noticeable in October and early November. Breeding data: First young seen on the wing on 7th June. High population and good breeding success combined to give some very large flocks of juveniles in June and July. The juveniles ringed in these two months contributed more than half of the total ringed during the year.

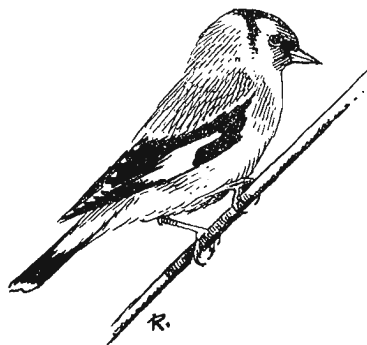
ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*. Recorded for the 4th year in the last 10. An adult first found at Houll on 28th July was seen daily until 16th August by which time it was looking rather weak and it probably did not leave the Island.

TENNESSEE WARBLER *Vermivora peregrina*. One first seen briefly near the Double Dyke on 6th September was relocated the next day at Upper Stoneybrake. It remained, visiting most of the crops in the south, until it was trapped on 18th

at Field Croft. Another found in the Observatory garden on 24th September was quickly trapped in the Observatory trap. Both were first year birds. The second bird was seen later in the day on Buness. If accepted by the BOU records committee these will be the first and second British records of this species which breeds widely in Canada and Northern United States and winters from South Mexico and Guatemala to Colombia and Venezuela.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. One on 16th May feeding on the ground at Stoneybrake. This is only the 4th record in the last 10 years.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*. A good series of records following 2 rather lean years. A ♀ on 18th, another on 19th and 3 ♀♀ on 20-21st and one on 24th April. Singles 5-6th and 17-18th May. In autumn, 7 on 30th September, 8 on 1st October all of which had gone by 6th October. One daily 13-20th and 1-2 daily 24-31st October. Singles on 10th, 15-18th November.



GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*. An adult 22-26th October, first seen at Lower Station was later seen or heard at many places on the Island. Only the 5th record, last recorded in 1968.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*. Only small numbers in spring and autumn. One on 14th April, 3 on 16th, 2 on 17th after which one seen daily to 30th April. Another 2-3rd May. A ♂ on 16-24th July. One on 11th August and 1-3 on many days 20th September-15th November. One on 26th November.

LINNET *Acanthis cannabina*. A good series of records in spring. 7 on 20th April after which recorded almost daily to 1st June with up to 6 on several days. Singles on 3rd, 7th, 9th and 19th June. In autumn singles on 5 days in first fortnight of October.

TWITE *Acanthis flavirostris*. Recorded as usual in all months.

Up to 9 in January-February until first influx on 22nd (19) February but numbers generally less than 20 until April, and full complement not present until May. Flocking in autumn first recorded from 22nd July (10) and sizeable flocks noted in September and early October when up to 300 seen together. Reduction in numbers during mid-October and only ca 20 remaining in November and 12 in December. Breeding data: season as usual.

REDPOLL *Acanthis flammea*. Redpolls not specifically assigned to any race were recorded on 3rd June (2) and 1-2 on 5 days between 6th August-3rd September. Mealy Redpolls *A.f. flammea*. One on 18th January, 2 on 30th April-6th May. 1-2 on 13-17th June and one 6-8th July. Up to 4 on 26th September-3rd October. Huge irruption from 9th October-21st November. 4 on 9th October increased rapidly to 350 on 12th and 500 on 15th after which 100-200 until 26th. Numbers decreased to 50 on 27-28th, 80 on 1st November were possibly a new arrival, thereafter numbers decreased to 21st November but 30-40 on 9-12th may have been another small influx. One on 26th November-10th December. Lesser Redpoll *A.f. cabaret/disruptis*. A ♂ on 25th May. One on 1-3rd October. Greenland Redpoll *A.f. rostrata*. Up to 3 seen 11th September-3rd October (2 trapped).

ARCTIC REDPOLL *Acanthis hornemanni*. As in the 1972 irruption of Mealy Redpolls a number of very white-rumped birds thought to be Arctic Redpolls were moving with them. Only one was trapped this year and confirmed as *A.h.exilipes* on 14-15th November. Sight records of equally white-rumped birds were as follows: 2 on 9-10th, 3 on 11-12th, one remaining to 18th October. Sight records of Arctic Redpolls are not considered as 100% by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Very strong autumn movement. ♀ on 14th and 2 (♂♀) on 15th October. Daily between 18-28th October, with up to 3 until 22nd when 14 (7 ♂♂, 7 ♀♀), 9 remained on 24th and last 3 seen on 28th October, 3 on 8th November. All birds critically examined were referable to the northern form.

SCARLET ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*. No spring records. The number seen in autumn is about the same as in the last 2 years, all birds were ♀♀/immatures. One on the early date of 13th August. One 31st August-6th September (trapped on 3rd), 4 on 7th, 3 remaining to 10th and one to 11th. One on 17-18th, 2 on 20th, one remaining to 24th (trapped on 20th), 2 on 25-27th, one remaining to 30th September. One on 10th and another 20-24th October. At least 13 individuals during the autumn.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*. 4 on 21st June (3 at Easter Lother and one over Hoini). The possibility that a green bird seen on 22nd October at Houll was a Parrot Crossbill *L. pityopsittacus* cannot be totally excluded. One had been picked up dead the day before at Dunrossness, Shetland.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*. Records follow the usual pattern, but as in the last few years the numbers have been rather low. ♀ on 19th March. Daily in spring 13th April-16th May, majority 14-23rd April with peaks of 35 on 15th and 20th otherwise generally less than 10 daily. One bird remained all summer and there was a pair on 15-21st July. In autumn 2 on 12th, 4 on 13th and 2 on 14th September. Almost daily in small numbers 29th September-15th November with peaks of 14 on 30th September and 15 on 1st November.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*. Good numbers seen in spring and autumn. One on 14th April increased steadily to 130 on 21st after which numbers gradually decreased to 28th April. Up to 4 on 2-5th May and up to 3 on several days 13-28th May. Autumn: ♀ on 20th September, 2 on 29th September increased to 30 on 2nd October, all departed by 7th. Larger arrival from 9th (13) increased steadily to 350 on 14-15th, numbers remained high with new arrival on 22nd (220) until the end of the month. 35 at beginning of November gradually decreased to 20th. Up to 3 on 26th November-3rd December and one 28-29th December.

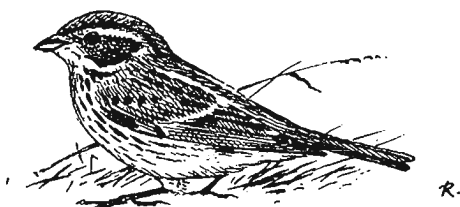
YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*. The autumn peak is the largest number recorded for a number of years. In spring singles on 16th and 20-22nd April, 2nd, 12th and 28th May. In autumn one on 21st October increased to 6 on 22nd some staying to 28th. Singles on 5th and 14-20th November.

YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza aureola*. Recorded for the 5th successive year. One on 7-16th and 2 on 17-18th September. The first bird was found at Kennaby and the second in the Shirva area.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*. Very scarce, only 2 records in spring and none in autumn. A ♂ on 14-20th May, and a ♀ on 27th was found dead on 29th May.

RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*. Another good year with 4 records. A ♂ found on Sukka Mire on 26th May settled between the Kirk and the School until 29th May. Another ♂ was first seen by the Gully Trap on 3rd June and it stayed until 6th June. An immature found at North Shirva on 10th October was trapped on 18th at the Gully Trap and it remained at Setter until 25th October. A ♂ was at North Shirva on 8th November (S. Thomson, J. and Mrs E. Watt).

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*. 5 records in one year is ex-



ceptional and these are the first 2 spring records in the last 10 years. One at Springfield on 4-5th May and another at Milens Houllan on 17th May. One on 29th September-1st October at Gilsetter, 2 on 10-16th October, one remaining to 25th October (mainly in the Shirva area) and a third at Houll on 11th November remained at North Shirva until 19th November.

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Recorded in usual small numbers in spring and autumn except for large spring arrival on 16th May. A ♂ on 5th April. Small passage with peak of 9 between 18-27th April. Small numbers, up to 5, on most days 1st May-8th June but 45 on 16th, 15 remaining to 17th May. Autumn passage: seen most days 30th September-28th October but maximum of 4 on any day. Singles on 1st, 7th and 15th November.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*. A good series of records in autumn. In spring singles on 17th and 26th April and single ♂♂ on 6th and 18-19th May. A ♀ on 8th June. Autumn birds almost daily 2nd September-10th October when 10-15 on a number of days and 20 on 24th September. Up to 3 seen daily 17-27th October.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Up to 25 seen daily in January-February, numbers a little lower in March and April and generally less than 15 in May and June to 5th. A pair (a ♀ with a deformed bill and a fine ♂) were seen at intervals through the summer on Ward Hill. Return passage and wintering birds seen daily from 6th September (20). Largest influxes as follows: 120 on 27th September, 100 on 27th increased to 300 on 28th October, 400 on 5th increased to 1200 on 6th November after which numbers remained high until mid-November. 200 remained in early December, but very few at end of year.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*. Resident, recorded as usual in all months. Breeding data: season as usual.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*. As in the past few years the largest arrivals have been during May. Singles on 7th March and 20-22nd April. Recorded on many days in May and June, generally less than 5 but up to 11 on 19-22nd May. Singles in

July on 9th and 27th. In August one on 6th, 3 on 14th and singles on several days 26th August-5th September. 1-2 between 11-20th November.

Presumed cage birds

RED-HEADED BUNTING *Emberiza bruniceps*. A ♂ on 5th August, 2 ♂♂ between 6-9th, one remaining on 10th August.

Corrections to the 1974 Annual Report

RUFIOUS TURTLE DOVE (page 32). A first year bird first seen at Setter on 31st October. Not on 30th October.

RED-THROATED PIPIT (page 42 and also mentioned in migration summary page 9). The record was not accepted by the British Birds Rarities Committee.

Ringling Details 1975

We were fortunate to start the year without the need for any major repairs to the Heligolands, and all functioned well, but the departure of Gordon Barnes and his family from Setter at the end of the spring undoubtedly reduced the catch from the Setter trap through the rest of the year. Even without Gordon's regular manning of this excellent trap, the year's ringing total of 7839 was again a record, exceeding the previous best year by more than 1100.

A very good spell in April assisted us towards this total when between 14-23rd more than 800 birds were ringed. The majority were Blackbirds which by the end of the year was by far the most numerous species ringed (1108). In the autumn, September was a poor month with both numbers and species well down on most years but October was exceptionally good with strong passages of Water Rails (18), Jack Snipe (25) and Long-eared Owls (21) which helped their totals to record numbers. Similarly, a massive influx of Mealy Redpolls in October helped their total (130) to top even the 1972 record. All year the Plantation trap has continued to be a very useful trap, and as the trees have grown apace in the last few years, so has their attractiveness for roosting finches and other species, especially Collared Doves.

The summer seabird ringing totals were also high with good totals for all the auks, specially Black Guillemot (83). Considerable use was made of taped calls to lure petrels at night and their success is reflected in the record totals for both Storm and Leach's Petrel—the latter exceeding the cumulative total for all previous years. Dazzle netting, especially on the dark autumn nights, added greatly to the variety of species examined

and was almost totally responsible for the high Jack Snipe, Snipe (31) and Redshank (19) totals.

Throughout the year 123 species were ringed of which two were new to Britain—Tennessee Warbler (2) and Siberian Rubythroat. Other unusual species ringed included Little Grebe, Whooper Swan (4), Spotted Crake (2), Curlew Sandpiper (2), Sand Martin, Nightingale, Lanceolated Warbler (2), Subalpine Warbler (3), Arctic Redpoll, Little Bunting and Rustic Bunting. As noteworthy, but for their absence, were Sedge Warbler of which only 2 were trapped, while both Grasshopper and Reed Warbler fail to appear in the following totals at all. The monthly ringing totals were as follows:

	Jan-Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov-Dec
No. of birds	154	941	347	1104	2348	1075	481	942	447
No. of species	15	34	46	45	31	38	41	61	40

The annual and accumulative ringing and recovery totals of birds ringed on Fair Isle are shown in the following table. Birds ringed away from Fair Isle with FIBO rings (32 Arctic Terns on Foula and 4 Snowy Owls on Fetlar in 1975) are excluded from the table but their recovery details are included in the recovery section following the totals list.

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
Great Crested Grebe	1		1			
Red-necked Grebe	1		1			
Slavonian Grebe	2		2			
Little Grebe	3	1	4			
Fulmar	6178	318	6496	35	8	43
Storm Petrel	2689	627	3316	25		25
Leach's Petrel	4	5	9			
Gannet	22		22	1		1
Cormorant	7		7			
Shag	9253	469	9722	201	11	212
Heron	9	1	10			
Mallard	6	1	7	1		1
Teal	29	1	30	2		2
Wigeon	8	1	9			
Scaup	2		2			
Tufted Duck	7		7			
Goldeneye	6	1	7			
Long-tailed Duck	6		6			
Velvet Scoter	2		2			
Eider	71	3	74			
Red-breasted Merganser	1		1			
Goosander	3		3	1		1
Greylag Goose	5	2	7	1		1

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
White-fronted Goose	1	1	2			
Pink-footed Goose	2		2			
Barnacle Goose	1		1			
Whooper Swan	12	4	16	1		1
Sparrowhawk	87	3	90	11		11
Goshawk	1		1			
Peregrine	6		6			
Merlin	123	5	128	11		11
Red-footed Falcon	1		1			
Kestrel	24	2	26	4		4
Quail	4		4			
Water Rail	158	18	176	2		2
Spotted Crake	8	2	10			
Little Crake	1		1			
Corncrake	26	1	27	2		2
Moorhen	50	1	51	2		2
Coot	7	1	8			
Great Bustard	1		1			
Oystercatcher	683	26	709	35		35
Lapwing	210	2	212	2		2
Ringed Plover	267	5	272	3		3
Little Ringed Plover	1		1			
Golden Plover	13	2	15			
Dotterel	3		3			
Turnstone	53	1	54			
Snipe	156	31	187	3*	1	4
Jack Snipe	37	25	62	1		1
Woodcock	148	9	157	7		7
Curlew	28	2	30	1		1
Whimbrel	12		12			
Black-tailed Godwit	1		1			
Bar-tailed Godwit	7		7	2		2
Green Sandpiper	21	1	22	1		1
Wood Sandpiper	10		10			
Common Sandpiper	34		34			
Redshank	139	19	158	2		2
Spotted Redshank	3		3			
Greenshank	5		5			
Knot	48	6	54			
Purple Sandpiper	109	6	115		1	1
Little Stint	27		27			
White-rumped Sandpiper	1		1			
Pectoral Sandpiper	5		5			
Dunlin	306	26	332	5		5
Curlew Sandpiper	2	2	4			
Western Sandpiper	1		1			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
Sanderling	68	2	70			
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1		1			
Ruff	28	1	29	1		1
Grey Phalarope	1		1			
Red-necked Phalarope	3		3			
Great Skua	332	23	355	4*		4
Pomarine Skua	1		1			
Arctic Skua	1681	210	1891	30	3	33
Great Black-back	947	115	1062	34	6	40
Lesser Black-back	629	37	666	12	3	15
Herring Gull	1549	268	1817	35	5	40
Common Gull	29	3	32	5		5
Glaucous Gull	27		27	1		1
Iceland Gull	1		1			
Black-headed Gull	15	2	17	2		2
Kittiwake	1542	115	1657	7	1	8
Common Tern	27	10	37	1		1
Arctic Tern	5		5	1		1
Razorbill	1334	206	1540	40*	2	42
Little Auk	5		5			
Guillemot	2484	438	2922	52	7	59
Black Guillemot	772	83	855	8	1	9
Puffin	5403	474	5877	11		11
Rock Dove	5		5			
Woodpigeon	27	1	28	2		2
Turtle Dove	26	4	30			
Collared Dove	33	24	57			
Cuckoo	63	1	64	1		1
Snowy Owl	1		1		1	1
Long-eared Owl	71	21	92	2		2
Short-eared Owl	1		1			
Nightjar	3		3			
Swift	15		15	1		1
Great Spotted Woodpecker	15	2	17			
Wryneck	117	5	122			
Short-toed Lark	5		5			
Woodlark	2		2			
Skylark	513	29	542	2		2
Shorelark	3		3			
Swallow	175	1	176	2		2
House Martin	115		115			
Sand Martin	6	1	7			
Golden Oriole	3		3			
Raven	6		6			
Hooded Crow	32	6	38			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
Rook	4		4			
Jackdaw	1		1			
Great Tit	4		4			
Blue Tit	2		2			
Treecreeper	1		1			
Wren	472	17	489			
Dipper	8		8			
Mistle Thrush	15		15	1		1
Fieldfare	469	10	479			
Song Thrush	1184	83	1267	20		20
Redwing	4197	158	4355	51	2	53
Dusky Thrush	1		1			
Black-throated Thrush	1		1			
Ring Ousel	239	9	248	4	1	5
Blackbird	12083	1108	13191	231	7	238
White's Thrush	1		1			
Grey-cheeked Thrush	2		2			
Rock Thrush	1		1			
Wheatear	10794	218	11012	51	1	52
Black-eared Wheatear	2		2			
Stonechat	28	3	31			
Whinchat	371	8	379	2		2
Redstart	1116	57	1173			
Black Redstart	61	10	71			
Nightingale	11	1	12			
Thrush Nightingale	11		11			
Siberian Rubythroat		1	1			
Bluethroat	135	7	142	2		2
Robin	3415	79	3494	22		22
Grasshopper Warbler	53		53			
Lanceolated Warbler	5	2	7			
River Warbler	2		2			
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	1		1			
Thick-billed Warbler	1		1			
Great Reed Warbler	3		3			
Reed Warbler	78		78	1		1
Marsh Warbler	33	2	35			
Reed/Marsh Warbler	1		1			
Paddyfield Warbler	1		1			
Sedge Warbler	227	2	229	1		1
Aquatic Warbler	14	2	16			
Melodious Warbler	6		6			
Icterine Warbler	50	2	52			
Booted Warbler	3		3			
Blackcap	1305	155	1460	6		6

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
Barred Warbler	231	25	256			
Garden Warbler	1503	51	1554			
Whitethroat	607	13	620			
Lesser Whitethroat	326	12	338			
Sardinian Warbler	1		1			
Subalpine Warbler	10	3	13			
Willow Warbler	1793	75	1868	1		1
Greenish Warbler	9		9			
Chiffchaff	347	32	379			
Wood Warbler	46	2	48			
Bonelli's Warbler	1		1			
Arctic Warbler	22		22			
Yellow-browed Warbler	61	2	63			
Dusky Warbler	2		2			
Goldcrest	752	74	826	1		1
Spotted Flycatcher	321	6	327	1		1
Pied Flycatcher	538	12	550	3		3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	33	1	34			
Dunnock	862	24	886	4		4
Richard's Pipit	7		7			
Tawny Pipit	2		2			
Meadow Pipit	5775	158	5933	34	1	35
Tree Pipit	358	15	373			
Olive-backed Pipit	3		3			
Pechora Pipit	3		3			
Red-throated Pipit	3		3			
Rock Pipit	5241	226	5467	16		16
Pied/White Wagtail	372	10	382	4		4
Grey Wagtail	9		9			
Citrine Wagtail	4		4			
Yellow Wagtail spp.	9		9			
Waxwing	32	1	33			
Great Grey Shrike	65	7	72	1		1
Lesser Grey Shrike	6		6			
Woodchat Shrike	9		9			
Red-backed Shrike	129	4	133			
Starling	9504	844	10348	81	1	82
Rose-coloured Starling	2		2			
Tennessee Warbler		2	2			
Hawfinch	2		2			
Greenfinch	45	8	53			
Goldfinch	3		3			
Siskin	178	5	183			
Linnet	73	5	78	1		1
Twite	2672*	191	2863	3		3
Redpoll	287	130	417			

	Numbers ringed			Numbers recovered		
	1948-74	1975	Total	1948-74	1975	Total
Arctic Redpoll	5	1	6			
Bullfinch	19	4	23			
Scarlet Rosefinch	44	2	46			
Crossbill	287		287	2		2
Parrot Crossbill	35		35			
Chaffinch	690	49	739	2		2
Brambling	831	93	924	2		2
Corn Bunting	3		3			
Yellowhammer	33		33			
Black-headed Bunting	2		2			
Red-headed Bunting	5		5			
Yellow-breasted Bunting	5		5			
Cretzschmar's Bunting	1		1			
Ortolan Bunting	17		17			
Rustic Bunting	6	1	7	1		1
Little Bunting	14	1	15			
Reed Bunting	209	10	219	1	1	2
Lapland Bunting	37		37			
Snow Bunting	395	86	481	2		2
Song Sparrow	1		1			
White-throated Sparrow	1		1			
House Sparrow	1002	1	1003	1		1
Tree Sparrow	66	6	72			
GRAND TOTAL	111657*	7839	119496	1169*	64	1233

Number of species ringed 1948-74 - 225

1975 - 123

Total - 227

(Species and recovery totals marked * have been corrected)

Recoveries in 1975

A total of 64 recoveries had been reported by the end of the year (plus an additional 6 recoveries of birds ringed with FIBO rings away from the Island). The details of the most interesting ones are given in full, but in the case of long sequences of similar recoveries, they have been summarised for convenience. 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.

/?/—method of recovery unknown.

Where the exact date of the 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 recovery details on the second line. The distance in kilometres and the direction are approximate. The international age classification has 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 (pull)—pullus or nestling.
- 2—age quite unknown, but fully grown.
- 3—hatched in the calendar year of ringing.
- 4—hatched before calendar year of ringing.
- 5—hatched in the last calendar year.
- 6—hatched before last calendar year.
- 7—hatched two years ago.
- 8—hatched three or more years ago.

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

FULMAR

- AT82492 pull 15.08.61 Fair Isle.
- v 28.07.75 Great Saltee, Wexford. 880 km SSW.
- SS39173 pull 04.08.65 Fair Isle.
- x 13.08.75 Sandsend, Whitby, Yorks. 565 km SSE.
- SS50707 pull 17.07.66 Fair Isle.
- x 08.02.75 Wexford Harbour. 850 km SSW.
- SS68349 pull 12.08.67 Fair Isle.
- xA (28.05.75) Skinningrove, Saltburn-by-Sea, Yorks. 555 km S.
- SS84215 pull 08.08.68 Fair Isle.
- xA 13.03.75 North Ronaldsay, Orkney. 50 km WSW.
- FS14103 pull 02.08.70 Fair Isle.
- x 21.06.75 Heligoland, West Germany. 54°11'N 7°55'E.
- FS14174 pull 05.08.70 Fair Isle.
- + 25.02.75 Nolsoy, Faeroe Islands. 61°59'N 6°38'W.
- SS84101 pull 05.08.68 Fair Isle.
- v 25.05.70 Barents Sea. 70°00'N 33°38'E.
- + 28.04.74 Fair Isle.

An informative series of recoveries illustrating the extensive wanderings of the species which are well summarised by the last incredible double recovery, which was omitted from the '74 report.

SHAG

A total of 8 Shags, ringed as pulli, were recovered in Britain; 5 in Shetland (ringed in '71, 2 in '73, '74 and '75) and 3 on the east coast of Scotland: Aberdeen and Fife (both ringed

in '74) and Moray (ringed in '75). Details of a pullus recovered in Norway (the 6th from that country) and the first two adults ringed at Fair Isle to be recovered away from the Island are given in full. There were also 2 recoveries of birds ringed in Shetland with FIBO rings on Fetlar and Unst and recovered in Shetland.

1088366 pull 05.07.73 Fair Isle.

+ 08.02.75 Marsteinen, Hordaland, Norway. 60°08'N 5°02'E.

1058970 8 16.07.67 Fair Isle.

x 10.04.75 Portknockie, Banff. 215 km SSW.

1111058 8 07.06.74 Fair Isle.

x 11.05.75 North Ronaldsay, Orkney. 50 km WSW.

SNIPE

CK97587 2 01.11.73 Fair Isle.

+ 02.11.74 Downpatrick, Down. 625 km SSW.

This is our 3rd recovery in Ireland, the previous two had been ringed in August and one had definitely been hatched on Fair Isle.

CURLEW

SS50534 2 31.08.67 Virkie, Sumburgh, Shetland.

x ca01.06.75 Kvista, Stora Skedvi, Sweden. 60°25'N 15°48'E.

PURPLE SANDPIPER

One colour-ringed either in October '72 or October-November '73 was sighted at Bressay, Shetland, in late January 1975.

ARCTIC SKUA

EF84540 6 02.06.73 Fair Isle.

x 04.09.75 South of Agadir, Morocco. 30°30'N 9°40'W.

EF84742 pull 09.07.73 Fair Isle.

/?/ (27.07.75) Heligoland, West Germany. 54°11'N 7°55'E.

EF85786 pull 21.07.75 Fair Isle.

x 15.09.75 Embleton, Northumberland. 450 km S.

The bird ringed EF84540 is the first of many adults ringed on the Island to be recovered beyond the North Sea area. EF84742 had been seen as a mounted skin on 27.07.75 and was reported as a juvenile so presumably died in 1973.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

A total of 4 recoveries of pulli were received; one ringed in '66 from Fife (leg only found), 2 ringed in '74 were found dead in Sussex in January and in Lancashire in June and one ringed in '75 was found dead in Shetland in September. 2 adults reported in summer from Norway, had been ringed at winter gull roosts: their details are given in full.

HW08156 8 15.11.69 Fair Isle.
 x 19.07.75 Reinoy, Norway. 69°55'N 19°40'E.
 HW26015 8 26.11.73 Fair Isle.
 + 15.07.75 Saupstad, Vestvagoy, Lofoten Islands, Norway. 68°20'N 14°10'E.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

GP79950 pull 16.07.73 Fair Isle.
 x (01.06.75) Catterick Camp, Yorks. 575 km S.
 GK06007 pull 25.07.74 Fair Isle.
 + ca05.12.74 Portimao, Algarve, Portugal. 37°08'N 8°32'W.

A third bird ringed as a pullus in 1963 was found dead in Shetland in early spring 1974.

HERRING GULL

There were 4 recoveries of pulli; one ringed in '68 was found dead in Northumberland (Sept), one ringed in '74 was found dead in Stirling (March) and of 2 ringed in '75 one was found dead in Caithness in August and the other landed on a boat in Kincardine in the same month. Details of an adult caught at a winter roost and recovered in Norway are shown in full.

GP97597 8 27.11.73 Fair Isle.
 (x) 21.07.75 Tonnes, Sorfjord, Norway. 66°31'N 13°01'E.

COMMON GULL

ED28532 pull 02.07.71 Fetlar, Shetland.
 (x) 26.12.74 Auchencairn, Kirkcudbrightshire. 660 km SSW.

KITTIWAKE

EB07360 4 28.07.74 At sea off East Coast Fair Isle.
 + (10.09.75) Narssaq, Greenland. 60°54'N 46°03'W.

This is our fifth Kittiwake recovery in Greenland.

RAZORBILL

SS61895 6 22.06.67 Fair Isle.
 xA 00.07.74 Oster Hurup, Aslborg Bugt, Jutland, Denmark. 56°48'N 10°17'E.
 M19184 pull 29.06.74 Fair Isle.
 (x) 14.12.74 Point of Air, Flints. 690 km S.

GUILLEMOT

Surprisingly there was only one report of a pullus in its first winter off southern Norway but 4 ringed as pulli were recovered in later years; 2 in their 2nd winters off S. Norway and one surprisingly far north (68°N off Norway) in August of its 7th year. The 4th, our first recovery from W. Germany, is shown in full as are all the recoveries of adults.

GP79469 pull 26.06.73 Fair Isle.

x 27.03.75 Insel Spiekeroog, Niedersachsen, W. Germany.
53°46'N 7°46'E.

GM63640 6 10.07.63 Fair Isle (retrapped in '65, '68 and '72).

+ (10.10.75) Off Orland, Sor Trondelag, Norway. 63°50'N 9°35'E.

GP18095 6 06.07.70 Fair Isle.

+ 24.08.75 Smelvaer, Askvoll, Sogn and Fjordane, Norway. 61°25'N 4°53'E.

GM40199 6 12.07.66 Sumburgh Head, Shetland.

x 25.07.75 20 nautical miles W. of Utsira, Rogaland, Norway. 59°20'N 4°30'E.

BLACK GUILLEMOT

EB07236 pull 27.07.74 Fair Isle.

x 02.07.75 Castlehill Harbour, Castleton, Caithness. 145 km SW.

SNOWY OWL

5028370 8♂ 09.06.72 Fair Isle.

xA ca01.02.75 Brue, Barvas, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides. 310 km WSW.

1972 was an exceptional year with 3 records of Snowy Owl and it is tempting to think that these may have been part of a general range extension westward from Fenno-Scandia which is known to occur in years when food is short. Certainly this bird seemed intent on following this general direction.

REDWING

BV24286 3 21.10.74 Fair Isle.

v 21.11.74 Ekeren, Belgium. 51°17'N 4°25'E. (reringed 2X96.664).

CN47453 5 24.04.72 Fair Isle.

v 18.04.75 Stodhvarfjordhur Sudur Mula, Iceland. 64°49'N 13°52'W.

This is the 4th recovery in Iceland; all had been recovered in March and April.

RING OUSEL

CJ47263 4♀ 01.05.73 Fair Isle.

+ 14.12.73 Ecurat, Saintes Charente Maritime, France. 45°47'N 0°40'W.

This is the 4th recovery in southern France.

BLACKBIRD

7 recoveries were reported: all had been ringed on passage through Fair Isle (6 in spring and 1 in autumn), 4 were subsequently reported (July-October) from Norway between

59°-60°N, 2 were controlled in N. England (October) and one ringed in April '74 was caught by a cat in Yell, Shetland in mid-July. This last bird could either have been a Scandinavian migrant which stayed on during the breeding season or one of the rather diffuse Shetland breeding population which had moved south for the winter.

WHEATEAR

BS23475 3 24.08.75 Fair Isle.

+ (11.09.75) Elgoibar, Guipuzcoa, Spain. 43°12'N 2°25'W.

MEADOW PIPIT

JJ38387 3 31.07.72 Fair Isle.

+ 26.10.75 Near Durango, Vizcaya, Spain. 43°10'N 2°38'W.

STARLING

XX65825 3♂ 30.10.72 Fair Isle.

x 11.05.75 Polvenkylä, Kurikka, Vaasa, Finland. 62°35'N 22°09'E.

This is our 3rd Finnish recovery of this species.

REED BUNTING

JR45715 5♀ 05.05.74 Fair Isle.

v 11.11.74 Le Mouet, St Viatre, Loir-et-Cher, France. 47°32'N 1°55'E. (Paris SA503411 added).

This is our 2nd recovery of this species. Like the first it was found in winter in France but the previous bird had been ringed in autumn. Both emphasise the migratory nature of the northern (Scandinavian) population.

Recaptures in 1975

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 are entered in the Observatory retrap files. All recaptures of birds ringed in previous years and those found dead on the Island are summarised in the following table.

Birds ringed in previous years and recaptured or found dead
in 1975

Species	1959	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Fulmar Ad			1				1	1		2	1	3	4	7	2	2
Fulmar Pull									3	2			2			
Storm Petrel												1	2	1	3	3
Shag Ad		1		1			1						6	2	3	1
Shag Pull	1		1	1	2	1	1			3	3	3	6	7	3	2
Eider								1							1	
Oystercatcher						2		1			1				1	

Species	1959	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74
Snipe																1
Great Skua Ad															3	
Great Skua Pull				1	2											
Arctic Skua Ad				1	2										3	
Arctic Skua Pull	3		2	1	1		1			1	1	2	2	2		
Great Black-back																1
Kittiwake										1		1				
Razorbill Ad				1					2	1	2	2	6	12	4	7
Razorbill Pull				1	1		1	1	1				1			
Guillemot Ad		1	1		1		4	2	7	9	7	14	2	18	14	15
Guillemot Pull								1	1	5		1			1	
Tystie Ad							1			1	1	1		2	1	7
Tystie Pull					1	1	1		1			1			2	
Puffin Ad					2					1		1		1	1	24
Puffin Pull				1										1		
Wren																1
Blackbird																4
Wheatear											1	1			1	4
Robin																2
Meadow Pipit														2	2	
Rock Pipit													2	4	1	3
Starling							1			2	1	6		4	8	23
Twite															6	15
Snow Bunting																1

One particularly long-lived Arctic Skua, ringed as an adult in 1956 during the first intensive skua study, was seen again in 1975. Allowing a previous 2 years of non-breeding this bird must now be a minimum of 21 years old.

In the above table, the Blackbirds, Robins and Snow Bunting are birds that overwintered. Included in the Storm Petrel total for 1973 is a first year bird, found grounded at Hesti Geo in October and retrapped in August this year. It is a particularly useful recapture, as it is the first Storm Petrel of known age to be retrapped at Fair Isle.

Ringed Strangers in 1975

STORM PETREL

A total of 8 controls in one season is more than usual and reflects the success of taped calls to attract the birds at night. The Shetland controls are summarised but the others, which include the first St Kilda ringed Storm Petrel to reach Fair Isle, are given in full.

2127169 ringed Fetlar 11.07.72 controlled Fair Isle 03.08.75.

2140025 ringed Foula 30.07.74 controlled Fair Isle 19.08.75.

691765 ringed Foula 18.07.75 controlled Fair Isle 30.08.75.

691881 ringed Foula 25.07.75 controlled Fair Isle 03.08.75.

691953 ringed Foula 30.07.75 controlled Fair Isle 03.08.75.

- 2150154 4 25.07.74 Holm of Faray, Orkney.
 v 08.08.75 Fair Isle, 75 km NE.
 2150926 4 16.07.75 Eynhallow, Orkney.
 v 04.08.75 Fair Isle. 95 km NE.
 2159503 4 27.06.75 Dun, St Kilda, Outer Hebrides.
 v 09.08.75 Fair Isle, 440 km ENE.

MERLIN

- EC98848 pull 16.06.75 Burn of Rusht, Mainland, Orkney.
 v 12.09.75 Fair Isle. 100 km NE (sexed ♀).

There have been 3 recoveries in their first autumn of pulli ringed in Shetland. This is the first, indicating post-juvenile dispersion, from Orkney.

GREAT SKUA

A programme of trapping the breeding adults commenced in 1974, was continued this year and is revealing the very high level of recruitment from other Shetland colonies. The controls, which had all been ringed as pulli are summarised below.

- HW01841 ringed Foula in 1966 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 HW16198 ringed Foula in 1969 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 HW19381 ringed Foula in 1969 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 HW23773 ringed Foula in 1969 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 HW23990 ringed Foula in 1970 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 HW22157 ringed Bressay 1970 controlled Fair Isle 1975.

ARCTIC SKUA

Details of the 2 birds ringed as pulli in Shetland and found breeding on Fair Isle are shown in brief.

- ED87924 ringed on Bressay in 1970 controlled Fair Isle 1975.
 ED19294 ringed on Foula in 1971 controlled Fair Isle 1975.

BLACKBIRD

- CH11596 3♀ 31.12.72 Wakefield, Yorks.
 v 19.04.75 Fair Isle. 655 km N.
 CJ37145 4♀ 23.10.73 Bamburgh, Northumberland.
 v 16.04.75 Fair Isle. 440 km N.

Both birds were trapped during the big 'rush' in April. The first was probably originally ringed in its wintering area and the second probably had just arrived in England in the autumn of 1973.

WHEATEAR

- BN22102 4♀ 30.04.72 Beddington, Croydon, Surrey.
 v 24.04.75 Fair Isle. 915 km NNW.

This bird was a rather small individual and probably of British stock and its ringing details fit in well with the idea that some of this population arrive through central, southern England.

ROBIN

9A89434 4 22.05.73 Wangerooge-Ost, East Friesian Islands, W. Germany. 53°47'N 7°58'E.

v 11.06.75 Fair Isle (retrapped 17.06.75).

JV18587 4 04.03.75 Llangerniew, Denbigh.

v 21.04.75 Fair Isle. 715 km NNE.

The bird originally ringed in Germany was presumably of Continental origin, ringed and controlled on migration. The Welsh control, unfortunately not assigned to any race, is the 2nd movement on the west of Britain. The first was in autumn from Fair Isle to the Calf of Man.

CHIFFCHAFF

859488 4 06.06.75 The Calf, Isle of Man.

v 15.06.75 Fair Isle. 635 km NE.

This is the first movement of a Chiffchaff to or from Fair Isle.

ISLAND EVENTS IN 1974

by ROGER A. BROAD

(We regret that this section was omitted from last year's Report)

The Observatory was only closed for three weeks in January while Judy, Adam and I were off the Island. Our seasonal staff were Ian Black, assistant warden; Linda Thorne, cook, and Jessamine Inkster, assistant cook. I was also helped for varying periods by Christopher Elliott, Keith Derrett and Peter Roberts. Extra domestic help was given by Bernadette Duffy for several weeks in the summer and by Mrs Helen Watson (Lower Stoneybrake) in the autumn. The number of visitors staying at the hostel was very similar to 1973 with 429 visitor-weeks booked by 390 people. Of these, 38 were attracted from the Continent or further afield. The John Harrison Memorial Fund helped six young ornithologists to visit the Island and stay at the Observatory during the year, and we were pleased to welcome Joe Eggeling, Richard Richardson, Pat Sellar and George and Irene Waterston—all members of our executive committee. May was again a very popular month with as many bookings as September, the peak autumn month. However, it was particularly encouraging to see more visitors staying in October at a time which is often undermanned when related to the volume of migration. Intending visitors should always book early to avoid disappointment, but this is particularly so for the peak periods May to early June and late August to September.

It may be of interest to Friends that two past assistant wardens at the Observatory are now wardening Observatories elsewhere. Iain Robertson (1970-71) and his wife Sally are now at Portland and Nick Riddiford (1973) started at Dungeness in 1974.

Island Events

The Island population had expanded to a very high figure by the late autumn when 81 were resident. This included the Lighthouse keepers and their families who themselves numbered 18. Also included are Kenneth

Stout (Barkland) who had joined his brother Michael at school in Lerwick. This increase is also reflected in the increased number of children at school on the Island and in December, 12 were in receipt of full-time education. The Old Haa, until recently rented out as a holiday house by the National Trust for Scotland, has become the home of a new couple Bill and Margo Murray and their young twins Ailsa and Roddy. For much of the year Peter and Helen Watson were resident at Lower Stoneybrake with their sons, Jerram and Tilden. Apart from the reoccupation of these two houses there were increases at Quoy and Houll. Inge was born to Stewart and Catriona Thomson and Paul to Brian and Mary Wilson. In the summer Gerald Wilson (from Schoolton) married Evelyn Flett and the couple are now living in Orkney. Sadly, Barbara Stout (known fondly as 'Auntie Babs' on the Island) formerly of Lower Stoneybrake, died in the Brevik Old People's Home at Lerwick during the summer. Also, Molly Stout of Taft (previously Molly Wilson of Springfield) died after an illness in the early part of the year. Molly is sadly missed on the Island and will also be remembered by many of the visitors. As Secretary of the knitting committee she was well-known by visitors to the Monday afternoon trademarking of knitwear in the Village Hall. She will be remembered not only for her superb, hand-knitted all-over jumpers, but also for her help and friendliness.

At the Lighthouses there were the usual comings and goings. At Skroo, Hugh and Ann Arthur and their family moved to Shetland after leaving the service and they were replaced by Sam and Isobel Aitken and their son for a short spell. They in turn were replaced by Robert and Elizabeth Hepburn and their son George. John Dunsmuir was posted to Duncansby Head and Tom Eunson filled his place at the North Light. At the Skaddan Light, Jimmy Meile was posted to Orkney and his place was taken by Jimmy and Elizabeth Watt and their three children.

The year was sunny, mild and pleasant, a fine contrast to 1973 with its fog and rain, and the excellent growing season was heralded as one of the best ever by many of the Islanders. These conditions produced good lambs and gave suitable weather for setting lobster creels which generally met with success. Gordon and Perry Barnes (Setter) reintroduced Shetland ponies to Fair Isle in the spring (two mares in foal and a stallion) and also with a view to improving their stock, brought a young Galloway bull to the Island. The tradition of keeping sheep on Sheep Rock, broken in 1972, has been revived. Barry Sinclair at Stackhoull Stores (which is on the site of Rock Cottage, so named after its right to croft the 11 acres of Sheep Rock) put up 11 sheep in the autumn. The waist-high grass will soon be returned to a close-cropped sward.

The *Orcadia* had fine weather for its annual trip to the Island and successfully landed its passengers at the North Haven. Other visitors during the summer included the members of three work camps who stayed at the "Puffin Hotel" and, under the supervision of Stewart Thomson (Shirva) finished the airstrip shelter and also helped to begin the rebuilding and modernisation of Lower Stoneybrake with Peter Watson. The Shetland firm of Hunter and Morrison were on site for much of the year carrying out initial work at Lower Station, Ward Hill and the Bullock Holes Quarry. When complete the project will provide a relay station for telephones and television between Orkney and Shetland. At the close of the year the structure of the generator house and the integral fuel reservoir in the quarry and the main building in the converted Crossleigh Hut at Lower Station were virtually completed. Part of the footings, which will carry a 160 foot mast, immediately to the east of the Crossleigh Hut have also been constructed. GPO workmen were responsible for the installation of an automatic exchange in the GPO hut at the North Haven. This long-awaited innovation has finally superseded

the old exchange at Shirva. A film sequence of Annie Thomson making a connection at the old exchange is just one of the sequences shown in the BBC (Scotland) "Breathing Space" film made on the Island in 1973. The film team have kindly given a copy of the film, in colour, to the Island. Another innovation was the installation of a tide gauge on the North Haven pier by the Institute of Oceanographical Sciences. The data from this will be collected for a twelve month period and should help with tide predictions, a detailed knowledge of which is essential in Shetland waters particularly with the increase in inshore and offshore activities nearby.

In contrast to the fine weather and the interest created by the new developments on the Island, 1974 closed with a sting in its tail. The children's Christmas party and the other seasonal festivities were postponed until the new year as an outbreak of flu reached epidemic proportions. More than one third of the Island suffered from it and 34 cases were reported. Fortunately, the speed with which it swept the Island was not matched by its severity and everyone was back on their feet to see 1974 in!

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful for the support and help we have received from our staff throughout the season but particularly during the hectic autumn period. The help, kindnesses and gifts given to us by many of the visitors is also much appreciated. Of particular value have been a number of additions to the library and we are indebted to Richard Richardson for his sizeable contributions. Also we are extremely lucky to have his delightful vignettes illustrating this report. John Lawton Roberts has given us a fine series of black and white photographs of many of our seabirds and the Royal Scottish Museum has continued to loan us a series of bird skins. Without the friendship of the Islanders our work would be very difficult and we are very conscious of their patience and co-operation particularly in our search for migrants. Gordon Barnes has, as usual, been invaluable, furnishing us with much useful information and assisting with our ringing.

Ornithology

Regular observations were carried out between March and November with less comprehensive cover during the rest of the year. It proved to be a rather mixed season with some of the more usual species appearing in smaller numbers than in recent years. This was particularly noticeable in the autumn when there was only a poor showing of winter thrushes. Among the less common, but nonetheless regular species Barred Warblers and Scarlet Rosefinches were more irregular than usual. Pied Flycatchers were scarce on both passages while Red-backed Shrikes and Wrynecks were particularly numerous on both passages. Robins were much in evidence in the spring following a classic 'rush' at the end of April and Snow Buntings presented a similarly exciting spectacle in the late autumn. A good series of rarities were recorded in spring and autumn, and these boosted our species total for 1974 to 194. These included two additions to the Island list, a Baltimore Oriole from the New World was the first Scottish record and a Rufous Turtle Dove from Asia was only the fifth record in Britain and Ireland.

The monthly species totals were as follows :

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
80	104	145	98	64	99	142	115	81

The success of the breeding birds was generally high and 29 species, excluding Storm Petrel, were proved to breed during the year. This total

included Whimbrel and Common Gull, and Common Terns increased their numbers. Gannets appear to be warming up to colonise Fair Isle. During the summer, seabird projects continue to take up a great deal of time. The Arctic Skua project has now run for two seasons and Peter O' Donald and John Davis are well pleased with the data collected. A complementary project has been begun on the Bonxies in an attempt to gain some information on the population structure of the colony. I have continued to assess the annual and seasonal fluctuations in several seabird populations while information has again been forwarded to Dr Mike Harris of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology from the Burrista Puffin transect. In order to carry out detailed observations on the Busta Geo Tystie colony a small hide has been erected and preliminary observations, linked to a colour ringing programme, have been carried out.

Obituary : David Frost

It is exceedingly distressing to report that David Frost died after a cliff accident, while ringing Fulmars on 23rd May. David had only been with us for a matter of weeks, having joined us as an assistant warden in mid-March. Previously, he had been an assistant keeper (Natural History) at the Ipswich Museum where he was able to maintain his association with the University of East Anglia.

Seabirds had been his particular interest, and such was his enthusiasm that he led two successful expeditions to Hermaness in recent years. As a follow up to his Hermaness studies he had already begun some work with the Fair Isle Bonxies.

During his short stay on Fair Isle he established a reputation as a very sociable person and he will be sadly missed by those that knew him. Our deepest sympathies go out to his relatives and especially his wife, Cynthia, for whom it must have been especially hard, so far away from the Island.

ROGER A. BROAD.

A Reminder . . .

. . . to those of you who have a complete 'run' of our Bulletins and Annual Reports and would like to have them bound.

As a result of a grant kindly donated to FIBOT by the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, an Index for Bulletins Vols 1-5, and Annual Reports 1949-1970 has been compiled by Roy Dennis and Roger A. Broad.

This has now been published (see *Report* for 1974 p. 66) and is available on application to the Hon. Secretary, FIBOT, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT. Please send 10p to cover packing and postage.

We are sorry we cannot provide facilities for binding, but can provide addresses of suitable bookbinders.

GEORGE WATERSTON.

The Arctic Skuas on Fair Isle : A Progress Report

By JOHN DAVIS and PETER O'DONALD

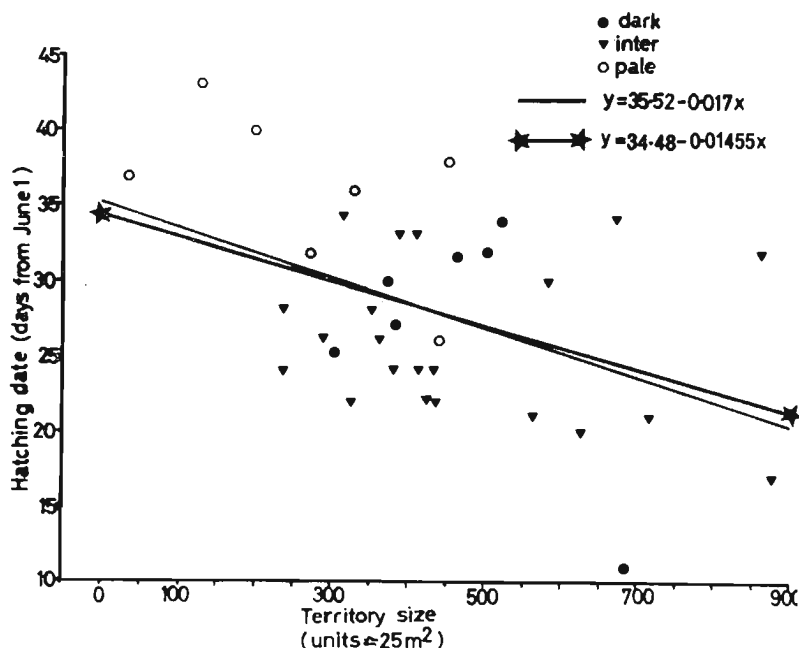
Department of Genetics, University of Cambridge, Milton Road,
Cambridge CB4 1XH

In the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Report for 1973, we described the basis of our research project on the Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. This is a polymorphic sea bird with three plumages, pale, intermediate and dark, which has a colony on Fair Isle. We wish to identify and measure the various selective forces acting to maintain the polymorphism in plumage.

In our previous report, we discussed the sexual selection in favour of intermediate and dark males. The data we have collected since 1973 have enabled us to improve our estimates of the female mating preferences for the different males. We estimate that 14 per cent of females prefer dark males and 29 per cent prefer intermediate males. The data now discriminate more clearly between the various computer models of the preferences. We have also found that the preference for intermediate males gives rise to assortative mating. Assortative mating is a special case of sexual selection that occurs when preferential matings take place between individuals with similar characteristics. On Fair Isle, the intermediates mate assortatively: there are more intermediate x intermediate matings than expected with random mating. The mating preference for intermediate males is apparently restricted to intermediate females. On Foula, we have found that pale phases mate assortatively as well as intermediates. This difference between the colonies raises an interesting problem. We know that birds reared on Foula breed on Fair Isle, so how can such a difference between the colonies be maintained? A possible explanation is that the movement of birds is not random between the colonies with respect to phase: at the moment this is quite speculative.

Assortative mating should give an advantage to the preferred males similar to the advantage given by sexual selection: in both sexual selection and assortative mating, the preferred males breed early in the season; they then produce more chicks because early breeding increases reproductive success.

Our recent observations on territory size have given very interesting results. We have found that among those males with previous breeding experience who are taking a new mate,



there is a highly significant correlation between territory size and breeding time. Males with larger territories breed earlier in the season, thus rearing more young on average. This effect is reduced and not quite significant if the males are breeding for the first time. On the other hand, the sexual selection is strongest when males are breeding for the first time. Behavioural observations suggest that the birds meet and form pairs in different ways depending on whether the males have bred previously or not. Experienced males who have lost their mates remain on their territories of the previous year and take their new mates there. The new mate is often a female who bred nearby in the previous year. Inexperienced birds collect in groups, or 'clubs', however, and apparently form pairs in these clubs. The sexual selection presumably takes place among the birds in the clubs. Future work on the Arctic Skuas of Fair Isle will produce original information on both the mechanism of sexual selection in a wild population and the evolution of territory.

The idea that territoriality may evolve by sexual selection is very exciting and completely novel. A very simple hypothesis would explain our observations on territory sizes and breeding dates. Suppose females land at random on the terri-

tories of unmated males. They will be more likely to land on the larger territories. Males who defend larger territories will thus find their mates sooner than those with smaller territories. Assuming that the probability of mating is proportional to the size of the territory and the probability that the male is unmated, we can compute the hypothetical relationship between territory size and breeding time using our data on the breeding dates of the females and the territory sizes of the males. The accompanying figure shows the correlation between territory size and breeding time that we have observed when an experienced male mates with a new male. The observed regression is $Y = 35.52 - 0.017x$ where Y is breeding time and x territory size. The hypothetical regression is $Y = 34.48 - 0.01455x$, which is a very close fit to that observed.

We know, of course, that females do not in fact land on territories to mate at random, since they often come from nearby territories. However, there must be a random element in their arrival on the territories, even though that element is relatively small. There must therefore accrue some advantage to a male who maintains a larger territory, since he will then advance his breeding time and increase his reproductive success. Territoriality will thus evolve by sexual selection.

Territory size may partly determine the sexual selection for the intermediate and dark phases. But given the rather small samples we have been able to collect so far, the differences between the phases in territory size are not statistically significant. By far the most important component of selection acting on the phases is a difference in the age of first breeding. Arctic Skuas breed for the first time at between three and six years of age. On average, pale birds are younger than dark and intermediate birds when they first breed. This gives a substantial advantage to pales (a) because the birds are at risk for fewer years before they breed and hence a greater proportion survive to breed, (b) because their generation time is reduced relative to that of the darks implying a greater rate of increase of the pale birds in the population. From the computed results of this selection, we now predict that the pale gene will increase in frequency in the Fair Isle population. In 50 generations (about 450 years), the dark gene should have become very rare. This is a prediction, alas, for later generations of ornithologists to test!

Unfortunately too, the immediate future of the project is uncertain. We have not yet been able to obtain more funds, although we still hope to get another research grant to continue the work for three more years. At the moment, we are continuing the project on a reduced scale, so that if funds become available, nothing will have been lost. The Arctic Skuas

on Fair Isle offer a unique opportunity to obtain empirical estimates of all components of selection acting on a wild population: such estimates have never been obtained for any species. We are determined therefore to continue the Arctic Skua project and realise its objectives.

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The Fair Isle Yole

BY ADRIAN OSLER

Keeper of Shipping, Science Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Over the past two hundred and fifty years few writers about Fair Isle have failed to mention the small boats employed by islanders. Even by Shetland standards these boats were held to be somewhat unusual and, although observations were sometimes inaccurate about details, the general impression of extremely light, fragile, but seaworthy craft requiring great skill to handle was largely correct. Tudor's description of the 1870's is a classic one. "These boats are peculiar to the island, and... seem awful cockleshells. They are however said to be very buoyant, though... very wet,... the natives refuse to change to larger boats, as they consider their own more adapted for the furious tide-ways. The crew consists of three men, who each pull a pair of short oars... The stroke is a very short, chopping one and, cutting an eddy or string of tide, they must pull quite forty-five a minute." As a sketch his description is excellent, but to the boat historian, living in an age when such craft have all but disappeared, many questions are left unanswered: Who were the boats' builders and from where did their designs come? What, in objective terms, were the performance and limitations of such boats? Have the skills required to handle these boats been lost? How well were they adapted to the needs of the islanders?

In many ways one can regard the question of the Fair Isle yoles' origins as easiest to answer, but the objective facts about their build, performance and usage are more difficult

to establish. The heyday of the yoles was at least one generation away from the present day and, for the layman, it is difficult even to visualise their exact form a century ago. Some open boats on Fair Isle still have yole-like lines, but it is not possible to class them as true yoles in the old sense; northwards, across the Sumburgh roost, one or two of their near cousins, the 'Ness yoles, still survive in turn of the century condition, but it is several decades since these were worked in the old ways.

However, the visitor to Fair Isle, or museums in Lerwick, Edinburgh, Liverpool or London does have the opportunity to look at a Fair Isle yole of the traditional pattern, albeit in miniature. Fortunately, Shetlanders have a fine record in the production of authentic and skilfully made boat models, and the example in the Fair Isle Bird Observatory, the BONXIE, is a fairly typical one. The DOLPHIN, 2567 LK. (now in Liverpool Museum) is another, and represents the type of Fair Isle yole common in the late nineteenth century. The slender, twenty two foot long hull, with narrow beam of five and a half feet, and depth of less than two feet amidships are all characteristics of the 'Shetland yole.' The main features that the Fair Isle yole shared with all its Shetland relations of this size were: the double-ended shape with similarly profiled stems fore and aft, an open hull made of a few broad overlapping planks, a light framing consisting of three frames spaced a 'yard' apart amidships and two acutely curved frames (stamperons) angled into the ends of the boat, iron nails or wooden peg (trenails) fastenings throughout, no physical connection between the frames and the keel, and complete dependence upon oars or a single 'square' sail for propulsion. To the novice's eye there is a pleasingly symmetrical, though unusually fragile look about the whole structure. But a structure it was, and an extremely clever and successful one.

In strict engineering terms the 'safety-factor' of the materials and construction may have been low, but the essence of the design was lightness and speed, qualities that in experienced hands spelt true safety.

The design of the yoles incorporated so much empirical knowledge that it could not have been arrived at overnight; in fact, to understand it, one needs to study their evolution over several centuries. Without going deeply into historical and technical detail the yole's story is a fairly simple one. The early Norse ('Viking') colonists introduced small 'shell-clinker' built boats to Shetland sometime before the tenth century. Indeed, the variously spelled name, yol, yoyal, jol and yole of later date are all derivatives of an old Norse term. From the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries trading activities between Norway and Shetland remained strong, despite the ceding of

the islands to Scotland in 1469. Even in earlier times the import of timber, and presumably boats, had been important to the inhabitants of Shetland, but accurate indications are not available till the seventeenth century, by which time there was a large export of 'unset-up' boats (i.e. boats shipped in pieces) from the fjord district south of Bergen. The exact nature of these boats is difficult to ascertain, they are frequently described as "6-oar boats" and "4-oared yools", but it seems likely that they were near identical with contemporary West Norwegian seksaerings and faerings. These West Norwegian boats were double-enders built of four, or even as few as three, broad planks a side, with lengths of from seventeen to twenty two feet and beams of five to five and a half feet. Imported "yools" of this kind must have been in use in Fair Isle during the eighteenth century, Brand for example noting in 1771 that "formerly there were 10-12 families but not enough now to manage the fishing boats." In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was a decrease in the reliance upon imported boats in mainland Shetland. The steadily gathering needs of the far 'haaf' fishery led to the evolution of the Shetland 'sixern' boat-type characterised by its six man crew, eight to eleven boards per side, large size, and use of the dipping square-sail. Even the smaller 'fourerns' were gradually affected by such trends, and it seems that only in Fair Isle and south mainland were the true features of the older imported Norwegian boats maintained or refined as Shetlanders took up building their boats on a large scale. In Fair Isle the reasons for the retention of the old design seems to be a combination of factors: geographical and cultural isolation, the suitability of the 'yole' type to the beaching problems and surrounding sea conditions, the continued success of the in-shore fishery, the unwillingness to experiment in a small community and, of course, the lack of capital to invest in larger boats. Thus, in the late nineteenth century the Fair Isle yole was little changed from its Norwegian predecessor of a hundred and fifty years earlier and, through this tradition, maintained a unique link with its 'Viking' ancestor of a thousand years ago. From keel skairs (old Norse skera, to cut) to the rakkie (old Norse rakki, the sail traveller) the Fair Isle yole's ancestry was clear in name and form, the remarkable parallels of the latter being illustrated by the accompanying quantitative table.

A feature of the old yoles was the standing square-sail, and they were the last craft in Britain to carry this rig in its simplest form. Even elsewhere in Shetland it had then disappeared, being replaced by the asymmetrical squaresail which was lowered when changing tacks. The speed of a nineteenth century yole manned by oarsmen with a lifetime's experience,

COMPARISON BETWEEN 'VIKING FAERING' AND FAIR ISLE YOKE

	'Faering' from the 9th century boat burial at Gokstad, Norway	Fair Isle Yole of the 19th century
Length between stems	20 ft. 0 in. [1.00]	21 ft. 3 in. [1.00]
Length of keel (between scarphs)	15 ft. 2 in. [0.728]	14 ft. 6 in. [0.701]
Maximum beam	4 ft. 6 in. [0.216]	5 ft. 5 in. [0.254]
Depth amidships	1 ft. 7 in. [0.076]	2 ft. 2 in. [0.101]
Length of fore-head	7 ft. 2 in. [0.344]	7 ft. 3 in. [0.341]
Length behind after thwart	7 ft. 6 in. [0.360]	7 ft. 10 in. [0.368]
Position of maximum beam (from fore-stem)	10 ft. 6 in. [0.504]	9 ft. 10 in. [0.501]
Depth at fore-stem	3 ft. 4 in. [0.160]	3 ft. 5 in. [0.160]
Depth at after-stem	3 ft. 4 in. [0.160]	3 ft. 0 in. [0.14 1]
Planking angles near mid-section and widths	Three planks only. app. 57deg. 0 ft. 7 in. app. 30 deg. 1 ft. 0 in. app. 22 deg. 1 ft. 3 in.	Five planks. app. 60 deg. 0 ft. 9 in. app. 48 deg. 0 ft. 10 in. app. 33 deg. 0 ft. 10 in. app. 25 deg. 0 ft. 10 in. app. 36 deg. 0 ft. 6 in.
Room spacing	3 ft. 1 in.	3 ft. 0 in. (± 1 in.)
Maximum depth of sheer	1 ft. 0 in.	1 ft. 0 in.
Position of rowers aft of fore-stem	7 ft. 2 in. [0.344] 10 ft. 3 in. [0.492]	7 ft. 3 in. [0.341] 10 ft. 3 in. [0.482] 13 ft. 3 in. [0.623]
Normal capacity	2 men rowing + 1 'passenger'	3 men rowing, or 2 + 1 'passenger'
Keel, rig, steering	Keel well rockered, probably no sail, side-rudder (?)	Keel flat (or slight variant), square-sail, median rudder.

NOTE

Figures in brackets indicate proportion of dimension to length between stems.

Dimensions for 'Faering' derived from plans published by the Universitets Oldskamling, Oslo.

Dimensions for Fair Isle Yole derived from model data and contemporary reports.

can only be estimated, but comparisons and calculations indicate 'cruising' speeds of three to five knots and occasional bursts of seven to eight knots. These last figures are well above the theoretical maximum speed of five and a half knots for a displacement craft of this size! The yoles, with their flat "V" section hulls and light displacement must often have reached a semi-planing attitude, skimming over the water rather than through it. Indeed, tales are told of waterlogged yoles sinking in strong winds when the sail was lowered, owing to the loss

of 'lift' both from the sail and the planing of the hull. It also appears that crews were able to exploit swell systems, using non-breaking crests to boost their speeds for considerable distances. To express the seaworthiness of the yoles in absolute forms is impossible, suffice it to say that their essential purpose was to pursue the fishing up to twenty miles offshore, and regular trading trips of twenty five to thirty miles were made to South Shetland and Orkney. All this amongst the most unpredictable of sea conditions, where the yole with its slack bilges, open ends and amazingly shallow depth would literally have been a death trap to the inexperienced. But its lively motion, quick acceleration, ability to 'run straight' or manoeuvre quickly under oars were all qualities required in the confused tidal waters around the islands; whilst for fishing, mainland visits and trade with passing ships the yole could normally be 'cruised' under sail or oar without unduly tiring the crew, a very important consideration if weather or sea conditions suddenly changed.

Inevitably there were fatal accidents, but no more than on other comparable coasts. John Shewan, the maker of the models of the BONXIE and DOLPHIN passed on his personal memory of one such sad event, "he (John) saw a disaster of boats coming from the Fair Isle in a south east storm, one boat appeared and he ran into the water to help pull her clear of the sea . . . when asked about the other boats the skipper said they'd gone." Shewan, (1865-1958) spent his youth in Scatness and remembered the visiting yoles well, drawing on these memories together with the advice of his Fair Isle friend Gerry Eunson when model-making. If indeed there is to be any criticism of his models it is that they were too good; as a skilled boatbuilder himself he could not resist the temptation to 'improve' the sheer-line of the Fair Isle yole, which was generally regarded as somewhat 'flat'. His models show the yole with five planks a side, one more than the original imported Norwegian boats, but one or two less than contemporary fourerns or yoles elsewhere in Shetland. Research indicates that the extra planks which were 'added' into the original Norwegian design were fitted next to the keel, not to the boat's top as the layman might expect. In this context the Fair Isle yole shows an important transitional stage, the 2nd bottom-most plank retaining the original 25° angle to give a very flat bilge, a characteristic of the Fair Isle boats.

What of the boatbuilders themselves? As with most of their Shetland counterparts boatbuilding was a part-time occupation, engaged in when the need arose for a new boat locally, and fitted in to existing seasonal activities. The number of boats in use was rarely more than two to three dozen (e.g. 24 in 1871), but the wastage rate was high. Boats lasted no more

than a few seasons before bottom planks became worn or split and fastenings loosened beyond repair, "condemned as unfit for fishing" was a too common customs register entry for Fair Isle boats. Much more than manual skill was required to build a good boat, the unwritten rules of several generations as to form and dimensions had to be adhered to, and above all the builder had to visualise the final intended form of each boat before commencing work. The cutting and laying of the garboard and hassins (i.e. the first two planks each side) was critical since they controlled the shape of the entire boat. It was especially so on fine-lined craft such as the yoles... "a proper yole which would neither 'take-off' nor 'strike' should be no more than half an inch wider under the fore-band (frame) than the aft one at the garboard stroke top" (i.e. at the top edge of the bottom plank). This was actually a Fair Isle variation of a commonly expressed boatbuilding 'rule' for craft of this kind in Shetland. This does not however imply that all boats were exactly the same; this would have been both impossible and undesirable. Larger boats than the standard type were built with four rowing positions, and later practice was to employ more than five planks a side. This latter change was probably due to a combination of design influence from the mainland and the difficulty of obtaining planks of adequate breadth for the five plank boats. Sawn driftwood was widely used in the construction of the yole, a practice common in other remote Shetland districts, but one apparently particularly important in Fair Isle.

It is an unfortunate fact that many of the details of the building and day-to-day usage of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century yoles has gone unrecorded. Those days and the yoles will not return, and that is as it should be, their use was a matter of hard reality not romanticism. But, the author believes that to gather together the remaining memories, skills and objects associated with these craft would still be worthwhile, and might in some little way pay tribute to those generations whose lives and livelihood were dependent upon their use.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

Treasurer's Report

I can only, this year, reiterate my thanks to Roger and Judy Broad for their very competent management and to John Mellalieu for his considerable personal efforts on the accounting side. The Accounts themselves only show a surplus of £46, but if you look a little deeper you will see that we have

been able, in addition, to make a cash provision of £800 towards inevitable alterations to the building, in order to comply with the new fire regulations for hotels, hostels and boarding houses. The extent to which these will be required we do not yet know. An Inspector will be visiting Fair Isle and we must await his report. But the new regulations are stringent and have to be complied with. We thought it wise to make the maximum provision possible against an unknown future liability. For the rest, I comment, as usual on the individual accounts.

I. Revenue Account

On the expenditure side everything is, not unnaturally under present conditions, up on the 1974 figures, except loan interest, which will continue to reduce as we repay the H.I.D.B. loan annually, and wages and N.H.I., chiefly because we are not paying Roger and Judy Broad enough. We have already taken steps on this for 1976. The main increase was, of course, on provisions, up by nearly £1,000 and in repairs and renewals, up £450, but we replaced a washing machine, a lot of crockery, glass and kitchenware, and spent £315 on repairing the boiler. The figure of £976 is therefore probably higher than the true annual average. We would like to thank the Scottish Ornithologists Club for their generous grant of £100 towards the cost of producing the Index to the Fair Isle Bulletins and Reports.

On the income side there is a slight fall in Subscriptions and Donations. As regards **Subscriptions or Covenants** this is inevitable unless we can bring in the young to replace the old. The Endowment Fund income figure has not really dropped as we did not receive from the Trustees the full income during our own financial year. The main, and you may think astonishing, increase is under the heading Board—an increase of £2,897. But I would like to sound a mild siren of warning. There was a lot of work being done on the Island during the winter months from November through to January, involving large numbers of visitors who would not normally, as bird observatory visitors, have been there. I cannot quantify exact figures of profit and loss but their presence undoubtedly gave us a boost in the off season, which will not recur indefinitely.

II. Appeal Fund (carried to Balance Sheet)

Little change except that donations exceeded those of 1974.

III. Capital Account (carried to Balance Sheet)

The £2,000 donation received in 1974 from the MacRobert Trustees was specifically directed towards reduction of the H.I.D.B. Loan and was so applied; any further help towards such reductions would be more than welcome.

IV. Balance Sheet

Little change again this year. The important figure is, I again emphasize, that of Net Current Assets, which has risen this year by £570. The H.I.D.B. Loan has been reduced by the normal annual repayment to £4,650.

As I said last year and suggested earlier in this report, any further donation toward repaying this balance would be of great help to the Trustees.

V. Endowment Fund

No comment. Income paid to Fair Isle Revenue Account—Capital cannot be encroached upon.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Year ended 31st October 1975

REVENUE ACCOUNT

REVENUE ACCOUNT					
1974					
£3142	Provisions	...	...	...	£4084
2466	Wages & National Insurance	...	...	...	2443
402	Insurances	...	...	...	415
844	Heat & Light	...	...	...	1000
515	Repairs & Renewals	...	...	...	976
418	Telephone, Postages & Stationery	...	...	...	602
217	Printing Annual Report and Index	...	...	...	352
309	Travelling Expenses	...	...	...	499
157	Motor Expenses	...	...	...	245
127	Freight Inward	...	...	...	120
75	Bird Rings & Nets	...	...	...	95
355	Administration Expenses	...	...	...	368
31	Audit & Legal Charges	...	...	...	92
378	Loan Interest	...	...	...	274
—	Provision for alterations re fire regulations	...	...	...	800
	Depreciation :				
180	Furnishings & Equipment	...	...	...	£180
60	Generator	...	...	...	60
21	Land Rover	...	...	...	127
6	Surplus for year	...	...	...	367
£9703					46
1974					
£8001	Board	...	...	...	£10898
—	Grant—National Trust for Scotland—Wildlife Fund	...	...	...	250
257	Fair Isle Endowment to account of Income	...	...	...	230
936	Subscriptions & Donations	...	...	...	857
142	Tax recovered from Deeds of Covenant	...	...	...	143
142	Sale of Publications	...	...	...	175
225	Interest received on Government Stock	...	...	...	225
£9703					

APPEAL FUND

1974					
24361	Balance carried to Balance Sheet	...	...	...	£25420
24361					£25420
23241	Balance at 31st October, 1974	...	...	...	£24361
370	Donations received during year	...	...	...	437
569	Interest from Temporary Deposits—Gross	...	...	...	408
181	Tax recovered from Covenants	...	...	...	214
24361					£25420

CAPITAL ACCOUNT

£6735	Balance carried to Balance Sheet	...	...	...	£6781
£6735					£6781
£4729	Balance at 31st October 1974	...	...	...	£6735
2000	Donation received	...	...	...	—
6	Surplus for year	...	...	...	46
£6735					£6781

BALANCE SHEET as at 31st October 1975

Fixed Assets	Cost or Val.	Deprec.	1974
Hostel	£51548	£—	£51548
Sheds and Traps	150	—	150
Furnishings and Equipment	1816	1028	788
Generator	592	352	240
Scientific and Photographic Equipment	160	—	160
Land Rover	427	127	300
Boat	107	107	—
	£54800	£1614	£53186
Investment			
£2642 8½% Treasury Stock 1980/82 (M.V. £2272)		2582	2582
Current Assets			
Stocks		£739	752
Sundry Debtors		664	357
Tax recoverable		54	51
Deposit at 10½% repayable 15/5/76		1000	1000
Temporary Deposits		6500	4600
Bank & Cash		202	211
		£9159	£6971

Less Sundry Creditors	...	...	£2276		1458
Provision for Alterations	...	...	800	3076	—
					<u> </u>
Net Current Assets	...	...	...	...	6083
					<u>£61851</u>
					<u>£61221</u>
Capital Account	...	...	...	...	£6781
Appeal Fund	...	...	...	...	25420
Grants Received from Highlands & Islands Development Board	...	...	...	...	25000
					<u>£57201</u>
					<u>£56096</u>
Secured Loan—Highlands & Islands Board	...	...	...	...	4650
					<u>£61851</u>
					<u>£61221</u>

Notes :

1. No Depreciation has been provided on the Hostel.
2. **Highlands & Islands Development Board** £9500 Loan at 5½%. The balance of the loan (£4650) secured over specified Trust Properties is repayable by 9 annual instalments of £475 and a final instalment of £375.

The above accounts are correctly stated in accordance with the books and records submitted to us.

ARTHUR YOUNG McCLELLAND MOORES & CO.,
Chartered Accountants.

13th February 1976.

FAIR ISLE ENDOWMENT TRUST

Summary of Account for the year ended 31st October 1975

			Capital	Revenue
Fund at 31st October 1974	...	...	£7987	£1
Income for year per Schedule	...	...		192
Income Tax Refund 1974/75	...	...		95
				<u>£288</u>
Trustees Fees & Outlays	...	...		£18
Remittances to F.I.B.O.T.	...	...		230
				<u>248</u>
Fund at 31st October 1975	...	...	<u>£7987</u>	<u>£40</u>

Schedule

	Capital		Revenue
	Market Value	Cost	
Lanarkshire Sub-Region			
£1000 5½% Stock 1977/79	£770	£896	£36
Treasury Loan £1000 8¼% Loan 1987/90 ...	690	996	54
British Investment Trust			
£1530 7½% Conv. Deb. Stock 1996	2104	2728	76
Whitbread Co. Ltd. 840 "A" Ord. 25p Shares	567	314	25
	<u>£4131</u>	<u>£4934</u>	
Heritable Property			
21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh		3050	
Cash Balance		3	1
		<u>£7987</u>	<u>£192</u>

THE JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND

YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER 1975

Balance of Funds at 31st October 1974	£507.26
Donations received during year	56.75
Interest received on temporary loan	38.80
	<u>£602.81</u>
Deduct :	
Four Grants paid for Accommodation at Hostel	29.00
Balance of Funds held at 31st October 1975	<u>£573.81</u>

This special Fund was instituted some years ago by R. A. Richardson in memory of a keen young birdwatcher—John Harrison of Hunstanton, Norfolk who died at the early age of 19. John spent three happy visits to Fair Isle.

The Fund was set up to help adventurous teenagers of slender means with their Hostel expenses should they choose to visit Fair Isle; and as the Fund builds up, more and more youngsters are being helped in this way.

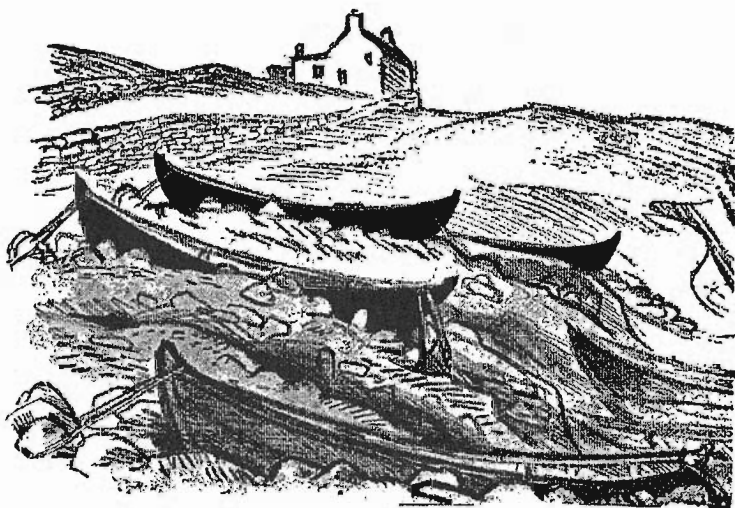
Eligible applicants for financial assistance must be between the ages of 15 and 21, and should write to the Warden enclosing letters of recommendation from two references such as a school-teacher and a senior naturalist of their acquaintance.

The Trustees 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 EH7 5BT.

With the now appalling costs of travel to Fair Isle—resulting this year (1976) in a noticeable decline in tourists to the Northern Isles—it is all the more important that this Fund should be increased.

If you cannot give us a donation now—why not bequeath something to us in your Will?



S.O.C.

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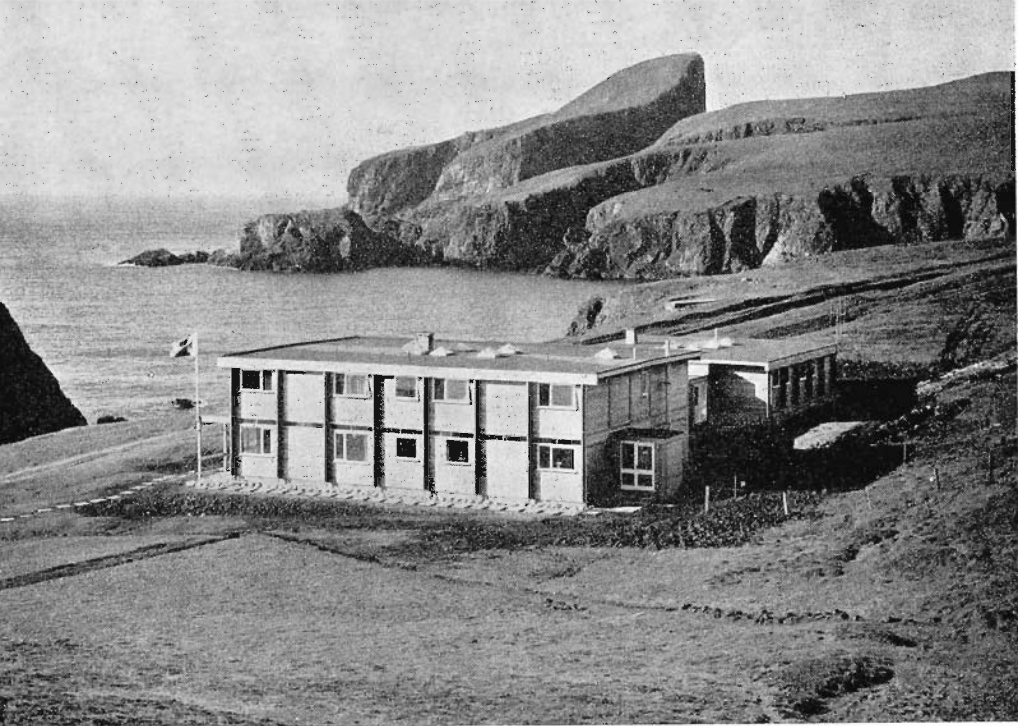
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Photograph by Dennis Coultis

If you would like to spend a birdwatching holiday on Fair Isle . . . write to the Warden, Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland, for a copy of our Prospectus.

Between May and September, the island mail-boat operates on Tuesdays and Fridays, leaving Fair Isle at 6 am, arriving at Grutness pier, Sumburgh, in the south of Shetland three hours later. It leaves Grutness on the return journey at midday. On Saturdays during the same period, the Bird Observatory operates a charter flight in and out of Fair Isle in a 7-seater 'Islander' aircraft operated by Loganair Ltd. All booking arrangements for these flights must be made through the F.I.B.O. Warden.

You can phone the Warden Fair Isle (STD) 258 at the cheap rate after 6 p.m. or at week-ends to discuss all booking arrangements.

MEMBERSHIP

We urgently require more 'Friends of Fair Isle'. Will you help please? Ask for Membership Form. Please persuade some of your friends to subscribe—preferably by Banker's Order and Deed of Covenant. A Subscription Form is enclosed.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

