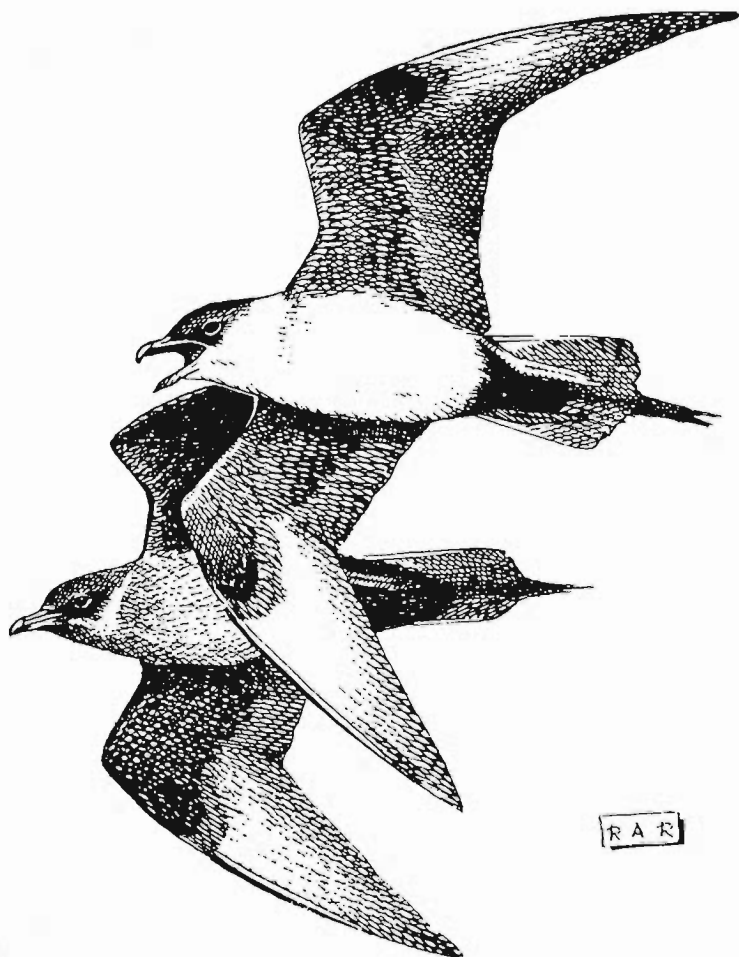


# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 1980



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





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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT No. 33  
1980

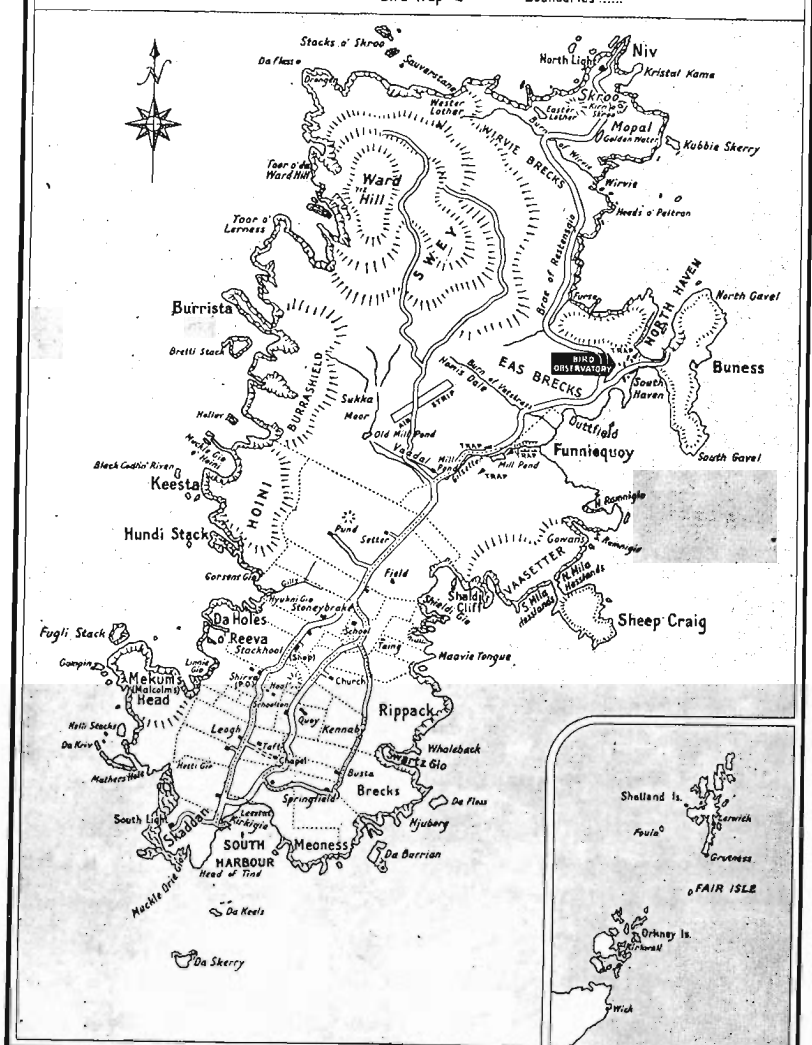
*Edited by JOHN ARNOTT*

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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

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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 subscription 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.

**IRENE WATERSTON,**  
*Hon. Secretary.*

21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

## **Notices**

**Deeds of Covenant:** We are dependent on donations and continued support from Friends of Fair Isle to enable us to purchase equipment for the Observatory and undertake projects. While some Friends covenant their annual subscription, there are many who do not and we would urge them to sign a Deed of Covenant in our favour. For each subscription of £2.50 the Trust can reclaim £1.05 at current income tax rates. Deeds of Covenant in favour of Charities are now allowable deductions from income for the higher tax rate.

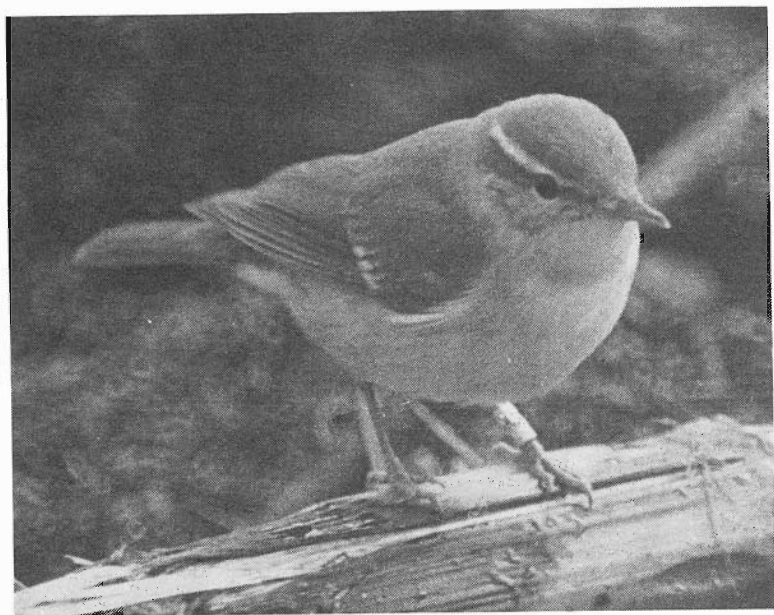
Please write to the Hon. Assistant Secretary, FIBOT, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT for a Covenant form. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

**Back numbers of the annual report:** Some of the earlier annual Reports are out of print and we regularly receive requests for them. If anyone has a copy of any of the following numbers which is no longer wanted we would be very pleased to have it back:

1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1962, and in particular 1975  
and 1976

Please send the copies to the Hon. Assistant Secretary, FIBOT, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.





*Two autumn vagrants in 1980: Arctic Warbler (above), Olive-backed Pipit (below).*



## George Waterston 1911 - 1980

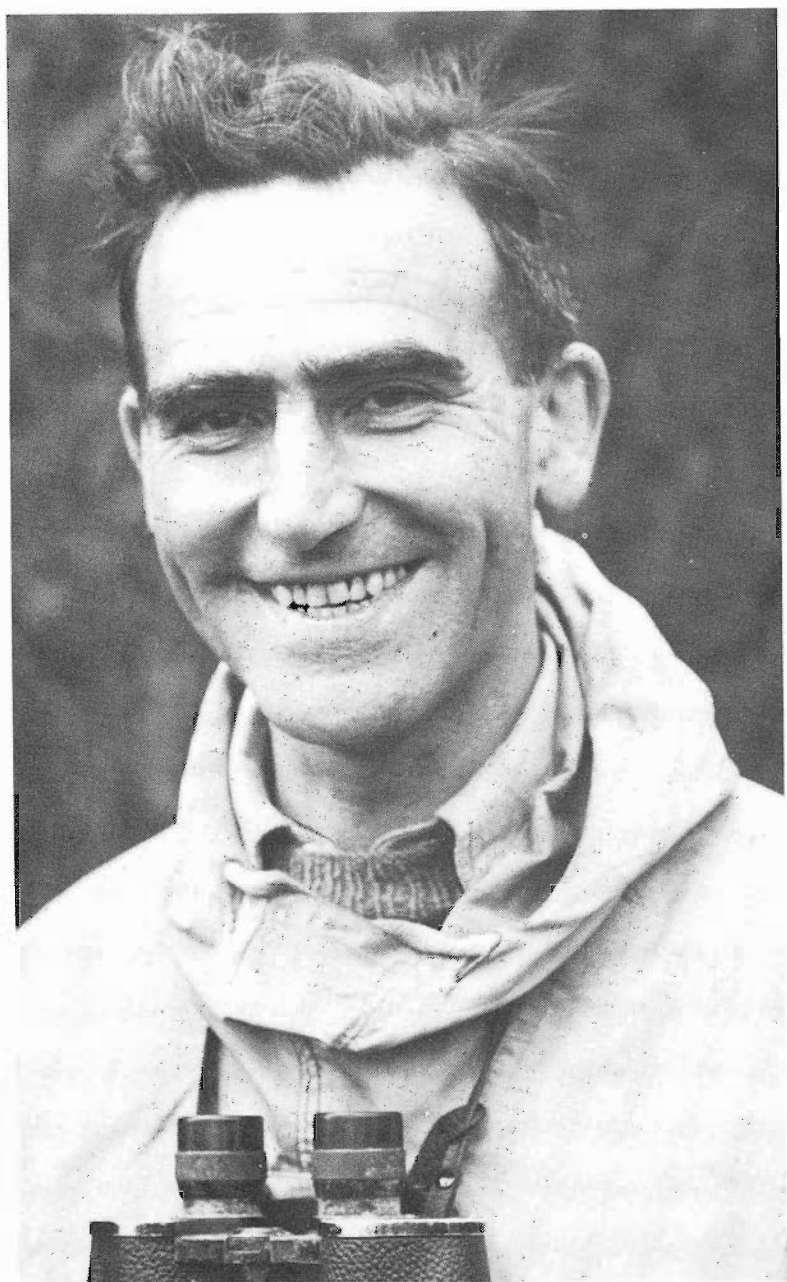
In a very real sense George was not only the instigator and creator of F.I.B.O.T., its guide and fundraiser through the years and its driving force but he *was* F.I.B.O.T. So it is surely fitting that in place of the usual 'Foreword' there should be a reasonably full account of this remarkable Scotsman.

His early interest in birds was first apparent during his schooldays at Edinburgh Academy where he was the leader of a group of boys who were to contribute so markedly to the growth of interest in birds in Scotland in the years that followed. His first foundation, the Inverleith Field Club, George felt leaned too heavily towards the social side and not sufficiently towards 'serious' bird study which was to be the basis of his next venture, the Midlothian Ornithological Club; it should however be said that one of the strengths of all the organisations which he founded was the judicious blend of social and serious.

To this pre-war period belongs the setting up under the umbrella of the M.O.C., of the Isle of May Observatory manned more or less continuously during the spring and autumn migrations and throughout the summer by volunteers mostly from the M.O.C. where the young were able to draw on the knowledge and experience of the Good Ladies, as Miss Baxter and Miss Rintoul were affectionately and almost universally known, and where so much guidance and wisdom flowed from W. B. Alexander, one of the great 'May' enthusiasts. This excellent observatory continues active and flourishing.

In 1936 the more ambitious foundation of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club took place with the Good Ladies as joint Presidents and George as Secretary. Until the club went into suspended animation for the duration of the war, we used to meet regularly in Edinburgh and occasionally in Glasgow and the comparatively small membership thought little of travelling 100 miles or more to attend these meetings, such was the enthusiasm with which George inspired in us all. Indeed more than once Miss Rintoul wrote me 'Mr Chairman can't you restrain *young* Mr Waterston a little.'

He first visited Fair Isle with Archie Bryson in 1935 and



thereafter more or less annually during the short years till the war. After his first visit he was utterly captivated by the island and its way of life, and this addiction grew rather than diminished with the years. War now appeared inevitable and though like virtually everyone in this country our generation rejoiced at its postponement at Munich, we knew in our bones that what would be must be. So like many of that generation George joined the T.A. and was in the war from the start.

In 1941 after the fall of Crete and a period of hide and seek with the victorious occupying German forces he was eventually taken prisoner and remained in a P.O.W. camp in Bavaria until 1943 when he was repatriated suffering from the kidney malfunction which was to dog him for the rest of his life. It was during this time as a prisoner that along with his fellow prisoner Ian Pitman he worked out the plans for the Observatory on Fair Isle. The remarkable and strange fact that the vessel bearing him back to this country made its landfall at Fair Isle and that his first glimpse of his native land was the Sheep Craig had a profound effect on him and certainly at that time, when he stayed with us for a period of recuperation, was a major factor in his determination to go on with the project as soon as conditions became possible, and possible conditions for George stretched further into the realm of improbability than for most of us. After his discharge from hospital he spent some time working on a Rook survey with James Fisher under the auspices of the Agricultural Research Council and based at Oxford, an experience which he greatly enjoyed though it convinced him that a career in research was not for him.

Shortly after his return to business life in the family firm he took Ian Pitman and myself to Fair Isle to look at the plans and possibilities of a Bird Observatory on the ground. We stayed at the house that had once been used as the base for the Duchess of Bedford's bird watching visits to Fair Isle and which she called Ortolan Cottage in memory of another well known visitor. By the time we left Ian had repaired the plumbing and George had convinced us both of the feasibility of the undertaking, or perhaps more truthfully of its desirability. It was one of George's many attributes that he did not differentiate between the two.

At this time George was somewhat unsettled and uncertain as to his future. It was clear that there was need of somebody who could help and guide the growing interest in birds, birdwatching and bird protection in Scotland and that it was increasingly unreasonable to expect this role to be filled by anyone on a part

time and unpaid basis. Fortunately the S.O.C. and the R.S.P.B. both realised this and so it came about that George was enabled to work whole time for these two bodies and their interests, which coincided with his own, although the financial rewards he received never then or later were in any way commensurate with the enthusiasm and dedication he brought to his work. It is perhaps as well that there are many things in life that are literally priceless.

Before this F.I.B.O.T.'s Observatory had been set up in the old naval buildings at the North Haven and Ken Williamson established there as warden. George had been the owner of Fair Isle for a period before passing it over to the National Trust for Scotland, a step of great benefit to the Island and the F.I.B.O.T. alike. The developments on Fair Isle are recorded annually in the Reports and it has been a remarkable success story. It was a great satisfaction to George that the Trust had not only managed, with great help from other bodies, to build new permanent and excellent buildings, but that before his death he was able to see the money borrowed for this purpose totally repaid.

After the collapse of his first marriage, George married Irene Kinnear in 1958 and she fully shared in all his interests and enthusiasms and sustained him so wonderfully through the long years of illness. Everyone connected with F.I.B.O.T. will rejoice that Irene has agreed to carry on in the position of Honorary Secretary which George filled from the founding of F.I.B.O.T. till his death.

His enormous contribution to the growth of interest in birds, their study and protection in Scotland was appropriately recognised publicly by the award of the O.B.E. (1954), his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1948) and the conferring of an L.L.D. by the University of Dundee (1974).

The mere recording of what seem to me to have been his major achievements, the founding and nurturing of the Scottish Ornithologists' Club, the founding of F.I.B.O.T. And raising it to the major observatory in the world for the study of bird migration, the raising of the R.S.P.B. in Scotland from a part time job for one to its present considerable position with Director for Scotland and full time officers covering most of the country, the bringing to fruition of a scheme to provide a base for ornithological interests in Scotland at Regent Terrace might lead one perhaps to think that his interests lay mainly in administration: nothing could be further from the truth. His main lifelong interests were in the field and it was this love of nature and especially of birds that drove him on to

all these achievements and his wide and deep knowledge of the birds, particularly those of his native land.

But of course the man was greater than the achievements. To me two particular attributes stand out, courage and constancy. Whatever may be the shortcomings, as a total political creed, of Carson's battle cry 'NO SURRENDER' it is an adequate retort to physical illness: of moral courage I recall his persuasion of the R.S.P.B. when the Ospreys returned to Scotland to risk all and put them on view to the public and so enlist public support. This was, as all know, a triumphant success; what we are apt to forget is the courage that it took to depart from the more generally sensible course of discretion and secrecy. And constancy always the same wide welcoming grin, wider perhaps when he was about to persuade one to what seemed some fresh folly, the same hearty laughter, the same charity to the tiresome and the foolish, the same helpfulness to the young and the inexperienced, the same willingness to take on some fresh chore, the same determination to carry it through, the same mirth with no bitter springs, the same kindness to all. George was not only the best known birdman in Scotland he was the best loved.

**Arthur B. Duncan**



*The Good Shepherd approaching the pier at North Haven.*

## Memorial Appeal

While George's accomplishments, the S.O.C., F.I.B.O.T., the Scottish Centre, the greatly enlarged R.S.P.B. in Scotland, stand as memorials to him it is surely important that there should be a special memorial to him on Fair Isle.

Over recent years he often spoke to me and others of the plans to make a museum showing the way of life on Fair Isle as it was and while it is still remembered and articles from the past are available. The islanders plan such a museum in the now replaced hall and they propose to call it after George — The George Waterston Museum. The F.I.B.O.T. trustees wish to co-operate with the National Trust for Scotland in a joint appeal to raise funds for this purpose and for other schemes on the island and at the Observatory that we know were in George's mind. I know that many of you will wish to help in this project. Please send your subscription to:

**Major A. D. Pierse-Duncombe,  
21 Regent Terrace,  
Edinburgh.**

**A.B.D.**

# Some Island Events in 1980

by DAVID MacLEHOSE  
(N.T.S. Factor for Fair Isle)

In common with all other parts of the United Kingdom Fair Isle has not escaped the unnerving effects of the current recession. The island is particularly vulnerable. All telephone calls off the island are long distance calls and charged accordingly. The ever increasing costs of postage and freight are unavoidable if constant links with the outside world are to be maintained. The ever rising domestic air fares have to be accepted. Against that background last year was the predicted encouraging start to the decade. The new community hall was opened, the prices for the Fair Isle lambs were higher than might have been expected, the circulation of the local 'Fair Isle Times', Shetland's second largest circulation newspaper, continued to rise. The number of visitors to the island increased over the previous year. The first island wedding for twenty years took place in April when Edith Ann from Midway married Dr Malcolm Sue Chiu at a particularly happy ceremony. Bill and Margo Murray forged ahead with plans to build the first new house on Fair Isle this century on their croft at Springfield.

Eight o'clock in the evening of Friday, 20th June, 1980 saw the culmination of many hours of planning, fund raising, cajoling and weeks of hard work, when the new hall was officially opened during a memorable dance held in true Fair Isle spirit. The hall committee deserved all the excellent press they received for their zeal in ensuring that the hall was completed on time and within the budgeted financial target. As planned the building is now in frequent use by day and night. Before the start of the Michaelmas term commences the hall and the school will be physically linked by a passage being erected this summer.

As this report goes to press the final details of the new slipway are being agreed. When it is constructed on the seaward side of the North Haven pier, we hope by October, the Good Shepherd will be hauled out of reach of the rolling storm waves that thunder North about Bunness. This is the first part of the two-phased development in the North Haven, aimed at making Fair Isle a safe refuge for small vessels. The second phase — the construction of the breakwater — is temporarily (but not too surprisingly) delayed by a shortage of funds.

Still in infancy, and no more than a cottage industry, the Fair Isle Crafts knitting co-operative is proving a source of extra income



to many families on the island. There is obviously a great potential for the sale of the genuine hand-knitted Fair Isle patterns. There is a healthy order book for jerseys, gloves, hats and leg warmers that are available directly from the island as advertised in this Report. The Fair Isle Electricity Council has been active too. Research into the viability of aerogenerators has been underway since August and may one day soon be the primary energy source for the island's electricity plant.

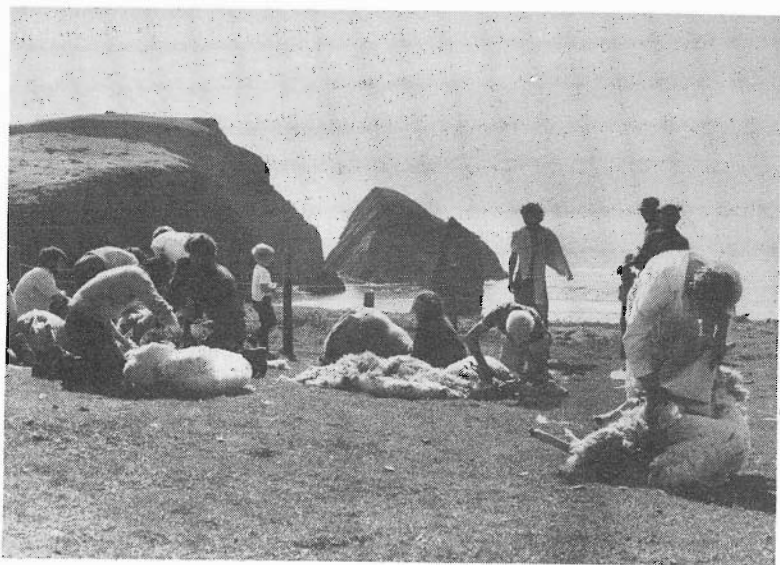
Following receipt of a generous anonymous donation the National Trust for Scotland has set up a Fair Isle Loan Development Fund. This fund will be used to provide short-term finance at very low rates of interest to enable community and individual projects to be initiated. The Trust hopes to be able to build up this Loan Fund so that it will play an important contribution in future developments on the island.

The first loan has already been made to the island's Grazing Committee to enable the planned improvements to the Common Grazings on Ward Hill to start this summer. The committee will be able to repay the loan on completion of the works with the receipt of promised grant assistance from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The first phase of the improvements is the re-seeding of the Eas Brecks to form a thirty five acre grass park. Once the park is established an electric fence will be erected to straddle the island enabling the shareholders to control the movement of the hill flocks. This will be particularly important at lambing time. Visitors would be advised to keep a wary eye for the electric fences when walking over the hill.

After months of procrastination and side-stepping the three smallest licensed airstrips in Shetland were weighed down by the might of the Civil Aviation Authority. Funded by the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Shetland Islands Council a new Fire and Rescue tender equipped with foam and water and BCF appliances, sirens and flashing lights is garaged in the enlarged airstrip terminal on Fair Isle. The tender is manned by two of the island's eleven CAA trained firemen every time a scheduled service plane arrives at the airstrip. Later this year the hard-core road to the airstrip will be tarmaced.

The volunteers' accommodation at the Puffinn at the South end was developed a stage further by the three work parties that once again visited the island last year. The dormitory accommodation is now complete and by June the final internal works should be finished.

The new garage/generator house/and store built for FIBOT by Northmen (Fair Isle) Ltd. on the site of the old garage and store, is



*Sheep shearing on a fine summer's day on the west side.*

*Cheerful faces in the class-room.*



now complete. But even with so many new developments to improve the standards of life on the island the past is not being neglected. The erstwhile hall originally built to further religious education on Fair Isle is to be the home of the Fair Isle Museum.

Fair Isle is rich in history — from well before the arrival of the ill-fated El Gran Griffon to the changing status of the North Light. If any reader knows of a piece of Fair Isle history that should be recorded photographically, in writing or on tape please do contact Ann Sinclair, the Chairman of the Fair Isle Museum Committee. As mentioned earlier in this Report, a George Waterston Memorial Appeal is being made by both the NTS and FIBOT to raise funds to assist with the establishment of the museum and the preservation of the interesting archaeological sites on the islands. George was always anxious to preserve the past but realised the demands of the present and immediate future had to take priority on the ever precious Fair Isle funds.

It was not all roses on Fair Isle in 1980. The long running rumours that the North Light would be converted to an automatic station were confirmed when the construction teams arrived to dismantle the paraffin lamp that had warned seafarers of the dangers close at hand since 1892. No longer will the familiar booming resound from the rust red fog horn for it has already been replaced by the modern version that issues an ear piercing screech. That apart the alterations to the building are being completed to the high standards demanded by the Commissioners. The South Light is about to be converted to automatic operation but unlike the North Light will be a manned station, albeit at the reduced status of a Rock Station. This means that no longer will the welcome lighthouse-keepers' families be on the island while the keepers are on duty for their four consecutive weeks. The economic effects of the loss of three families from the small island community is serious in the shop and at the school and in the important role that the keepers and their families traditionally played in island life. Although important for the island such considerations are not compatible with the financial operations of the lighthouses.

Loganair's vacillation in the preparation and initial operation of their summer schedule service to Fair Isle made journey-planning to the island a frustrating exercise. By mid-July the new link between Fair Isle and Kirkwall on Saturdays was in operation and proved popular. I can only hope that the airline's permanent presence in Shetland can be agreed shortly and an assurance given about future air links between Fair Isle and Shetland.

The loss of the three month old Shetland fishing boat

'Maverick' on a still September night was a sad reminder of the dangerous tides that sweep around the island. Fortunately all the crew were saved.

Hopes were raised and then dashed that two sheltered houses might be built with Housing Corporation funds. Frustratingly the government's financial axe cut too deep too soon. It is however a poor reflection on financial policy that relatively meagre funds cannot be found for two small houses to be constructed by island labour — especially when there are no council houses available on the island. Every effort is still being made to find funds for these two essential houses.

George's last visit to Fair Isle was for the opening of the new hall. With Irene and in the company of so many friends he enjoyed the evening and the week-end visit immensely. It must have been a particularly rewarding occasion for him. His influence over many years as a consultant to the National Trust for Scotland has created the strong links between the Fair Isle community and the Trust and FIBOT that allows us to review the successes of the past with satisfaction and look to the future with confidence. That is no mean achievement.

# Warden's Report for 1980

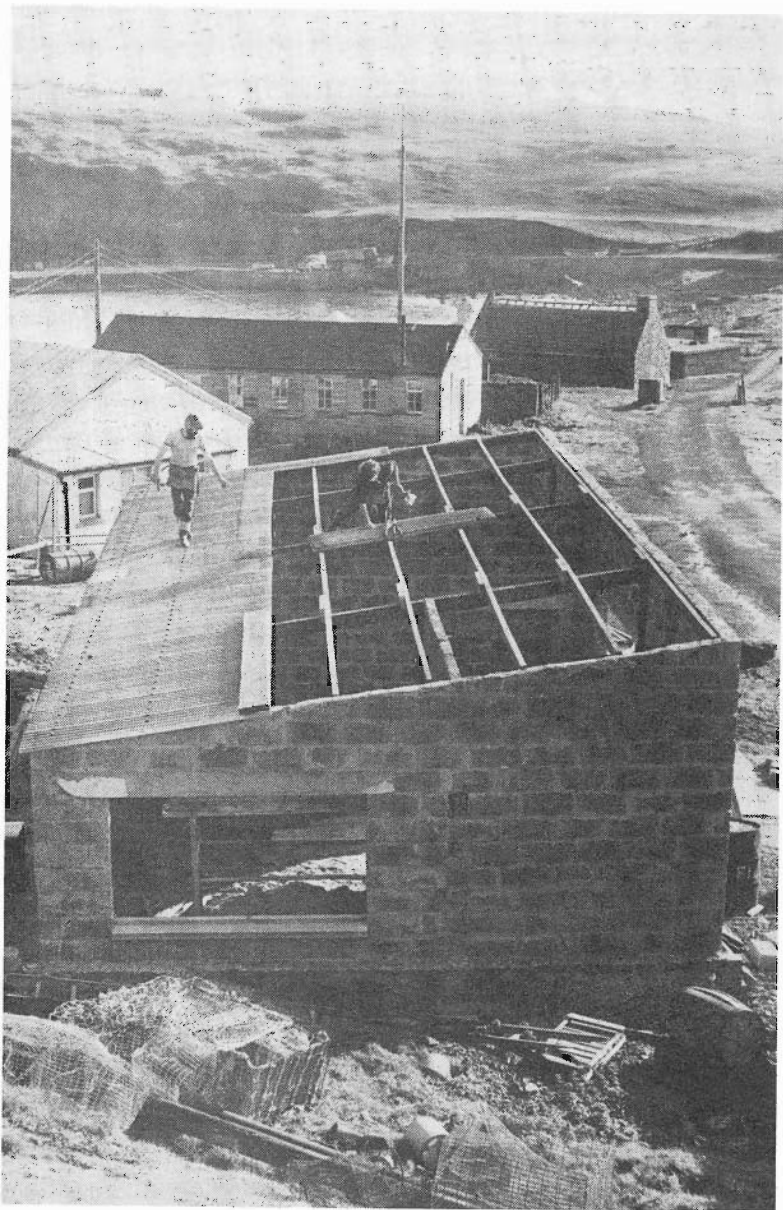
by Iain S. Robertson

Sally and I returned to the Isle in February after our winter break. My Assistants for the year were Peter Ewins, who returned for a second season, and Adrian del-Nevo. Frances White was our Seabird Assistant in June and July. Once again we were very fortunate to have two excellent cooks, Maggie Coombs and Jill Cundy who's efforts were well appreciated by all. Fiona Best helped with domestic work in the autumn and assisted Jill when Maggie left in September. Our grateful thanks are due to all our staff for their hard work and pleasant company.

Visitor weeks were up 3% on last year at 394. For the first time visitors were able to travel to the Isle from Kirkwall on a scheduled Loganair service during the summer months. As usual we had a large number of foreign visitors and several FIBOT Trustees stayed with us including Ian R. Pitman, Dr George and Irene Waterston and the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Wemyss and March. The John Harrison Memorial fund enabled three young ornithologists to visit the Isle.

A number of new projects were completed during the season. A new Tank House for storing diesel fuel was built at the rear of the Observatory and a new garage/workshop/generator building was erected on the site of the old garage and store sheds at North Haven. Both will make the smooth running and general maintenance of the Observatory much easier.

The Ornithological programme continues as usual, with particular emphasis on seabirds. We had the Seabirds at Sea Team of the NCC staying with us for much of the summer and we worked together on several aspects of seabird study. Jane French continued her study of Arctic Skua genetics and Douglas Paton completed his behavioural studies of Great Skuas. We continued our seabird monitoring, and supplied data on Puffins to Dr Mike Harris.



*New garage and workshop under construction at North Haven, October 1980.*

# Ornithology

195 species were recorded on the island during the year. Two of these, Yellow-browed Bunting and Brunnich's Guillemot were new to the island list, bringing the total to 327 species. The bunting was a new bird for Britain (subject to acceptance).

The monthly totals of species recorded on the Isle were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
44	48	86	93	131	106	76	102	135	129	77	—

The year was very mixed, the late March-early April falls produced some very high totals of birds and were the best for many years. The main spring migration was disappointing with low numbers of common birds and few rarities. The summer was one of the best for weather for many years in Shetland and the seabirds generally had an excellent breeding season, a fact reflected by our ringing totals for these species.

The autumn produced many surprises, firstly one of the strongest August migrations for many years. Then in September further big falls occurred and a good selection of rarities from all parts of the globe appeared. In late September further good falls took place with remarkable numbers of Siskins involved. October did not produce any massive thrush movements like 1979 but a run of vagrants made it an outstanding month even by Fair Isle standards. Passage migrants continued well into November as did the vagrants, making 1980 a memorable year indeed.

A new breeding species for the island was Arctic Tern which nested for the first time on the Stack O' North Haven. Swallows attempted to breed at Lower Stonybreck. The Gannet colony continues to expand and a number of new sites were occupied.

Among the more interesting birds recorded during the year were: Great Shearwater (2); Marsh Harrier, Osprey (2); Temminck's Stint (3); White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Long-tailed Skua, Brunnich's Guillemot, Snowy Owl, Hoopoe, Short-toed Lark (9); Woodlark, Richard's Pipit (4); Olive-backed Pipit, Red-throated Pipit, Nightingale (4); Eastern Stonechat (3); Melodious Warbler, Subalpine Warbler, Arctic Warbler (2); Treecreeper, Golden Oriole, Woodchat Shrike (2); Pine Bunting (2); Yellow-browed Bunting, Rustic Bunting (9); Little Bunting (5) and Yellow-breasted Bunting (7).

# Monthly Highlights

## January — February

The winter was quite mild compared to that of 1978-9 and there were few signs of hard-weather movements. Small numbers of thrushes overwintered as did 2-3 Rooks. An adult Iceland Gull was seen on 24th January, a Bean Goose on 26th and two more on 28th. 16 Bean Geese seen on 3rd February was an island record. The first signs of spring migration were 100 Skylarks on 11th February. The first Oystercatchers arrived on 14th and Ringed Plovers came in on 24th. At the end of the month there were more arrivals of Oystercatchers, Lapwings and Skylarks whilst the first Razorbills were seen inshore.

## March

The first Meadow Pipits of the year returned on 5th, a Mistle Thrush on 9th and a ♂ Goosander on 11th. Other waterfowl included Velvet Scoter and Slavonian Grebe. A S.E. wind brought a few Blackbirds, Lapwing, Robin, Chaffinch and Bar-tailed Godwit on 14th. The first Puffins were seen from the Good Shepherd on 19th. Easterly winds brought the best March migration for many years from 26th. Numbers peaked on 28th with a record 230 Dunnock, 220 Robin, 560 Chaffinch and smaller numbers of thrushes, including Mistle Thrushes, Black Redstart, Goldcrest and Wheatear. A Great Grey Shrike came in on 27th and a Hawfinch on 28th. The month ended with further arrivals of migrants including 14 Mistle Thrushes, a record total, 21 Woodpigeons, Stonechat and a few Chiffchaffs.

## April

April began with good numbers of migrants on the Isle, part of the late March movements. Puffins increased inshore and 200 were ashore on 3rd. The winds were predominately westerly and migration was slow with low numbers of birds. However, many summer visitors arrived and some good days were had. On 12th, 70 Wheatears, Swallow, Grey Wagtail and Short-eared Owl came in. The only Shore Lark of the year was found on 13th. On 14th 200 Wheatears, 110 Redwing and the first Willow Warblers arrived. Wintry weather held things up till a mild, sunny spell from 22nd with high pressure and clear skies. A ♂ Rustic Bunting was found on 25th, the earliest ever in the Isle. Swallows, Whimbrel, Blackcap and Lapland Bunting came in on 26th. On 27th Arctic Skuas increased to 40 and on 28th Stock Dove, Sand Martin and Yellow Wagtails arrived.



## May

A fine, sunny month with continuous high pressure and winds in the easterly quarter for much of the month. Conditions were a little too fine for the island based birder, with migrants crossing the North Sea unimpeded by rain or adverse winds. The first week saw the arrival of Tree Pipits, Pied Flycatchers, Common Terns and waders including Greenshank, Green and Common Sandpipers. An arrival of 26 Rooks on 9th was rather late in the season. More typical birds came in from 10th with Grey-headed Wagtail, Whinchat, Redstart, Bluethroat, Turtle Doves and Swift. A Little Bunting was found at Kennaby on 11th and on 12th three Dotterel were found on Ward Hill. The best fall of the month occurred on that date with 70 Willow Warblers, 21 Whinchat, and smaller numbers of Redstart, Cuckoo, Ring Ousel and Spotted Flycatchers. The next few days brought an exciting selection of birds including several Nightingales, a Corncrake, Subalpine Warbler, Marsh Harrier, Ortolan and Wryneck. A record total of 32 Sedge Warblers were found on 16th. On 17th Easter Lother produced a Temminck's Stint and more surprisingly for that location, a Short-toed Lark. Winds changed to North-west from 19th which held up migration though a Snowy Owl was seen on 21st and the 4th Nightingale of the month was trapped that day. A return to S.E. winds on 29th had immediate effect with Golden Oriole at Setter and an Osprey near Busta Geo. Spotted Flycatchers and Red-backed Shrikes came in and a Scarlet Rosefinch was found on 30th. Two pairs of Arctic Terns were found to be nesting with the Common Terns on the Stack O' North Haven, a new breeding bird for the Isle.

## June

The month got off to a good start with Scarlet Rosefinch and Short-toed Lark. On 4th a remarkably diverse assortment of birds included a Pectoral Sandpiper, Temminck's Stint, Icterine and Wood Warbler, Red-backed Shrikes and Grey-headed Wagtail. On 5th a sub-adult Long-tailed Skua was found near the airstrip. The Skua was seen again on 7th when both Wood and Green Sandpipers were found, and Swift passage began to increase. The first of several Quail was found on 9th. Small numbers of migrants continued to trickle through, though there were no Marsh, and very few Reed Warblers this year. Late arrivals included a Ring Ousel on 13th and a Snow Bunting on 19th. Seabirds were having an excellent breeding season and much of our time was taken up with seabird work from mid-month.

## **July**

Again, seabirds were the main priority and we made the most of the fine summer getting to as many colonies as we could. There were a few surprises in store, the first was a Yellow-breasted Bunting found on 4th, a most unusual date for this species. Then came an Icterine Warbler on 6th-7th and a Red-backed Shrike on 8th. Up to seven Quail were calling from the crofting area during the month. The return wader passage began in mid-month with Knot, Sanderling and Dunlin on 18th.

There were 25 Purple Sandpipers in the moulting flock on 22nd. Turtle Dove and Swifts appeared in the next few days. On 30th 150 Common Gulls came in and four Green Sandpipers, three Ruff and a Wood Sandpiper were found. The 31st brought a hint of the autumn to come with Icterine, and Wood Warbler, Spotted Redshank and a selection of Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers.

## **August**

Migration was slow in the early part of the month though there was a good selection of waders including a Temminck's Stint, and a few unseasonal visitors like Fieldfare and Redwing. A small fall of 30 Willow Warblers, 15 Garden Warblers, Tree Pipits and Whinchats took place on 16th and on 18th there were Icterine, Wood and Barred Warblers, Red-backed Shrike, and a Short-toed Lark. Sea-watching was not very productive with only small numbers of Sooty Shearwaters but two Great Shearwaters were seen on 23rd. The last week of the month brought a good variety of rarities and one of the biggest August falls for many years. The first Scarlet Rosefinch of the autumn arrived on 24th, a Woodchat Shrike turned up in the Obs. trap next day. Two Rosefinches appeared on 26th and on 27th a Yellow-breasted Bunting was found. Rosefinches increased to three on 29th and on 30th there were two Yellow-breasted Buntings, but it was the sheer numbers of common migrants that was impressive that day with 300 Willow Warblers, 80 Whinchats, seven Barred and three Icterine Warblers, Wrynecks, Tree Pipits, Pied Flycatchers and Redstarts.

## **September**

With many days of South-easterlies this September was the best for migration for over ten years. Fresh arrivals of birds came in almost daily and some large falls took place. The month began with 120 Willow Warblers, 30 Whinchats, Barred and Wood Warblers and Wryneck. Three Rosefinches came in on 2nd and on 3rd a

Yellow-breasted Bunting was found. A fine fall of 1500 Meadow Pipits, 100 "alba" Wagtails, and 100 Willow Warblers took place on 4th when the second Woodchat Shrike of the autumn was found. A Little Bunting was trapped on 6th and on 8th an Osprey was seen over Roskillie. Arrivals in the next few days included Lapland Buntings, Icterine and Barred Warblers and more Scarlet Rosefinches. A large fall on 11th brought 400 Willow Warblers, 40 Garden and six Barred Warblers and an Arctic Warbler was trapped at the Plantation. Another Yellow-breasted Bunting was found on 12th, four Rosefinches next day and the first of several Rustic Buntings came in on 14th. A Red-breasted Flycatcher was seen on 16th and on 17th a Buff-breasted Sandpiper was watched at Tarryfield, with the Golden Plovers. A Corncrake on 18th was followed by Red-backed Shrike and 40 Siskin on 19th. This species increased to 250 on 20th when a Red-throated Pipit was found near Shirva. A second Arctic Warbler was the main attraction on 21st though a Short-toed Lark at Busta provided some competition. The next two days saw a very strong movement of birds with totals of 300 Siskin, 400 Robin, 120 Ring Ousel and 1100 Song Thrush with hundreds of Brambling, Chaffinch and Dunnock. Rarities included Melodious Warbler, Little and no less than four Rustic Buntings. The end of the month brought in winter visitors like Pink-footed Geese, Jack Snipe, Lapland Bunting and Short-eared Owls. A late Yellow-breasted Bunting was seen on 29th at North Haven.

## **October**

This was another outstanding month for birds, Scarlet Rosefinch, Little and Rustic Buntings on 1st set the trend. 1000 Meadow Pipits came through on 2nd and 700 Redwings on 3rd. A Short-toed Lark was found on 4th and a strong passage of 260 Pink-feet was recorded next day. A White-rumped Sandpiper was found on 7th, 900 Redwing arrived that day, also Red-breasted Flycatcher and Little Bunting. A Hoopoe turned up on 9th and stayed for ten days. A Yellow-browed Warbler was seen on 10th and two more on 11th when Rustic Bunting, Rosefinch and Short-toed Lark were found. The 12th was an astonishing day even by Fair Isle standards; by lunch time we had found two Rustic and a Little Bunting, two Red-breasted Flycatchers, two Short-toed Larks and a Siberian Stonechat. Two more Siberian Stonechats were found in the afternoon and the bird of the day, a superb Yellow-browed Bunting was found in the Setter neeps — a new bird for the Isle and indeed, for Britain. The 13th was an anti-climax with Bluethroat the only arrival of note. Things improved greatly on 14th when after a gap of 69 years Fair Isle's second Pine Bunting was found at Upper

Stonybreck, a Rustic Bunting was seen at Field and a Richard's Pipit trapped in the Double Dyke that day. A severe northerly gale on 17th brought a most unexpected visitor, and a adult Brunnich's Guillemot to North Haven, another new bird for Fair Isle. The end of the month was rather quieter but some good arrivals of thrushes, Blackcaps, finches and Yellowhammers took place. Among the more interesting birds were Richard's Pipit on 22nd, Great-spotted Woodpecker on 23rd, a late Rosefinch on 26th and a Treecreeper found dead on 27th. Two very late migrants were a Sedge Warbler on 26th and a Reed Warbler on 31st.

### **November - December**

Early November was another excellent period for birds. A Richard's Pipit was present from 1st - 8th. On 3rd 40 Woodcock, five Rook, two Black Redstart and a Bullfinch came in but the best bird was a ♂ Pine Bunting at Quoy. The next day a late Bonxie and the only two Little Auks of the year were seen from the Good Shepherd. A Woodlark at Skerryholm on 5th came in with an arrival of 200 Fieldfare, 20 Chiffchaffs and four Bullfinches. On 6th the main attraction was an Olive-backed Pipit at Shirva. A very late Bluethroat was found on 7th and Bullfinches increased to six. A Short-toed Lark on 8th was the last rarity of a quite astonishing autumn. A few Bullfinches continued to be seen through the month and there was an arrival of 150 Blackbirds, 40 Woodcock and a Short-eared Owl on 21st. Small numbers of thrushes and the odd Robin were seen well into December and a Black Redstart was found on 4th December.

# Brunnich's Guillemot —

A new bird for Fair Isle



The morning of 16th October was not conducive to birdwatching; a Northerly gale was gusting force 9 at times and the rain was lashing down. My assistants and I were working in the Observatory when a lull in the gale enabled Peter Ewins and Adrian del-Nevo to drive down to the pier in North Haven to collect a couple of gas cylinders. Pete spotted a summer-plumage auk swimming in the Haven and though the conditions were very poor he suspected that it was a Brunnich's Guillemot. The assistants quickly returned to Observatory for a telescope and I accompanied them back to the pier. The wind was so strong that it was difficult to stand up outside the Land Rover, the air was filled with spray and huge breakers were crashing into the Haven. However, the bird was still there and we were able to confirm the initial identification.

The bird was generally similar to a Guillemot but the upperparts were darker looking as black as a Razorbill. The head was a quite different shape to that of Guillemot being bulky, more triangular with a higher crown. The bill was thicker and a little shorter than a Guillemot's with a conspicuous pale straw coloured line from the base of the upper mandible. The wings were noticeably long and projected beyond the tail, the flanks lacked the dark streaks which are prominent on Guillemot.

The bird eventually moved round into Furse and when the gale died down it was back in North Haven. It was pursued by a Grey Seal which obviously intended to eat it. It managed to avoid the seal, but though it was seen alive in Furse next day what was presumably the same bird was seen floating head down in the tide off Furse that afternoon.

This was the first record of this Arctic bird for Fair Isle and only the second seen alive in Britain.

## Systematic List

The list follows the sequence and nomenclature of *The 'British Birds' List of Birds of the Western Palearctic (1978)*. The symbol '♀' is used to indicate birds in what might be either female or immature plumage.

**Red-throated Diver** *Gavia stellata*. In spring single birds on 25-26th March, 1st April, 25-26th May, 6th and 12th June, with two on 9th June. Three summer records, 4th, 12th and 18th July. In autumn singles on 19th August, 10th September, three on 17th and two on 24th September with one on 25th.

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*. Single birds on the following dates: 10th June, 31st August, 25th September and 6th and 8th November.

**Diver spp.** *Gavia spp.* Single birds on 23rd and 25th May, the latter possibly White-billed, *G. adamsii*. Two on 29th May, singles on 10th June, 13th and 29th September, with three on 24th September.

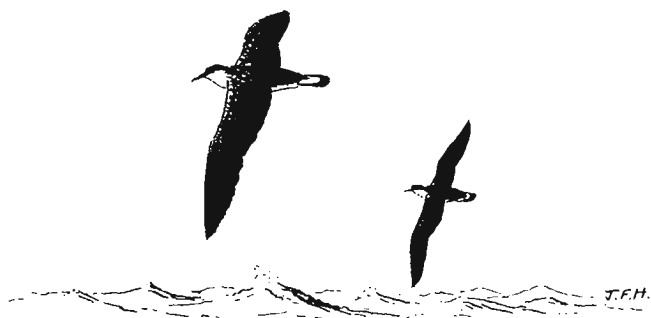
**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. One in South Haven on 5th November was the only record.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*. One on 14th March, a different individual on 20-21st March were the only records. A grebe spp. on 20th August may have been a Red-necked Grebe *P. grisegena*.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*. Resident and recorded throughout the year as usual, ashore throughout except during severe weather. Two Blue-phase birds were resident though a nest site was not found. Blue-phase birds on passage were noted, in April five records, May 15 records, and September 23 records with eight on 24th September. The species had a much better breeding season than in 1979 and first eggs were laid on 15th May.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*. A rather poor showing of this species. First seen on 28th July, there were 22 in August from 18th onwards with a maximum of four on any one day. 29 sightings in September with six on 7th, and three singles in October, the last on 12th.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*. Four birds seen on the crossing on 14th June with one on 19th and two on 5th July. Four seen from the Isle between 20-24th August, and two on the crossing on 9th September were the only records.



**Great Shearwater** *Puffinus gravis*. Two east on 23rd August. Distant large shearwaters either this sp. or Cory's Shearwater were seen on 1st September, a single bird and five on 24th September.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*. First seen from crossing on 6th June, a few calling at night from North Restensgeo on 9th June. Small numbers throughout the summer at the usual sites, bad weather hampered ringing effort this year. Noted offshore on several occasions with 40 off Bunes on 31st August. 56 were seen from the crossing on 5th September and the latest record was of an adult found dead on 3rd October.

**Leach's Petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. No records from the Isle but birds seen from the crossing as follows: two on 2nd August, one on 26th August and one on 5th September.

**Gannet** *Sula bassana*. First seen ashore on 11th March (35 birds), 52 ashore on 12th April and first egg laid 2nd May. 400 birds ashore on 26th June. The breeding colony continues to increase and there was further expansion to new sites, about 50 pairs nested at Dronger, six at Wester Lothar and two on the Inner Stack of Skroo. The birds had a successful season with most pairs bringing off young.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Records 50% down on 1979, bird days shown below. Peak counts of 20 on 10th September and 26 on 4th October.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1	3	1	3	24	8	4	45	74	40	—	—

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Resident and recorded throughout the year as usual. Nest-building from mid-March with first eggs about 21st April and young from 25th May. Birds had an excellent breeding season with a large number of chicks raised.

**Heron** *Ardea cinerea*. Bird days per month shown below. The peak count was of a flock of 18 on 23rd September. A Stavanger ringed bird was found in poor health in September and later died.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
2	—	—	4	—	—	10	17	78	30	3	—

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*. Four on 10th January and three on 31st, four on 20th and 29th February, one on 4th March and 18 on 4th April. In autumn six on 30th September were the first, small numbers were seen on passage, mostly in October with a peak of 12 on 6-8th October, occasional small parties seen during November.

A swan sp. seen on 6th June was probably of this species.

**Bean Goose** *Anser fabialis*. The pattern of increased occurrence continues, one on 26-27th January, two on 28-29th, 16 on 3rd February, the largest number ever recorded on the Isle, and a single on 8th February.

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*. No spring records. Recorded in autumn from 21st September, with main passage from 27th September to 13th October. Peak counts were 153 on 28th September (with 100 geese sp. that day, probably this species), 260 on 5th October and 80 on 7th October. One to two birds lingered till mid-November and a further two arrived on 4th December and remained for some weeks.

**White-fronted Goose** *Anser albifrons*. Three birds of the Greenland race, *flavirostris* on 11th and 13th October.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*. In spring, single birds on 21-29th April and 7th May, three on 12th May and five from 13-25th May. In autumn, recorded from 5th October, with peak counts of 50 on 5th October, 80 on 11th, 30 on 24th. Further arrivals in November with 19 on 12th and 30 on 26th. Eight came in on 4th December and remained for some weeks.

**Grey Goose sp.** *Anser sp.* 11 on 25th May were probably Greylags and 14 on 8th September were most likely Pink-feet.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*. All records were in autumn between 1st and 23rd October. Peak counts were of 13 on 1st, 18 on 8th, 32 on 10th and 14 on 20-21st. Rather fewer than in recent years.



**Barnacle X Greylag Goose.** *Branta leucopsis X Anser anser*. An apparent hybrid between these two species was seen on 11th and 14th October, mostly in company with Greylags. What was surely the same individual was seen at Sumburgh on 12th October.

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*. Six on 24th May was the only record, well below average for this species.

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*. One on 7th January, three on 27th March with one till 29th. One on 3rd April, and pairs seen on 4-7th May and 5th June. One on 28th July. In August, one on 7th and two on 29-30th, 26 were seen on 3rd September, an early date for such a number, with main passage from 21st September to 7th October. Peak counts were 23 on 24th September, 26 on 26th and 15 on 2nd and 5th October. The latest record was a ♂ on 6th November.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*. One on 26th March, ♂ ♀ on 27th to 1st April, then seven records of ♂ ♀ on a number of dates to 7th June and two on 17th June. One on 25th July, one to two on several dates from 1-12th August with main passage from 16th August to 21st September. Peak counts were 25 on 27th August, 15 on 4th September and nine on 21st September, up to eight on many dates in October, none November but two on 2nd December.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*. One on 26th January, three on 9th February. Spring passage from 8th March with ten on 30th March. One to three on several dates in April, ♂ 30th May to 2nd June, two ♂ on 7th June and a ♀ on 16th June. Summer records of single birds on 3rd and 11th July. Four on 7th August with one to two on several dates in August., Autumn passage slight, one to two most days from 15th September to 5th October, four on 8th October and two to six most days to 29th October with one to two lingering till mid-November.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*. No spring records, four autumn records all in September with one on 7-14th, two on 15th, one on 23rd and two on 24th.

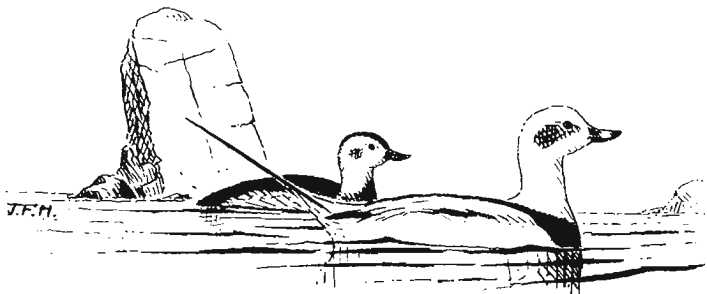
**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*. One on 3rd October was the only record.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*. A ♂ from 6-12th May when found dead. Four on 13-18th May increasing to six on 19th and 23-24th with two to three till 19th June. A ♂ on 26th July to 8th August. Light autumn passage with four on 21st September with two till

23rd. Singles on 4th, 7th and 9th October with three on 10th, and one on 24th November.

**Scaup** *Aythya marila*. A ♂ on 17th and 19th May, and a ♀ on 18th and 23rd. In autumn, one on 21st September, two on 22nd and one on 23rd.

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Breeding season a little earlier than 1979 with first eggs noted 8th May and chicks on 10th June. The highest count was of 800 on 14th November.



**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*. Two on 10th and 23rd February. One to three most days from 14-26th March. ♂ ♀ on 24th April and one from 27th April to 12th May. A ♂ on 7th June. In autumn, recorded from 2nd October, with peak counts of five on 16th and seven on 25th October, seen daily 11-31st October. Two on 12-14th November.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*. A ♀ on 24th March and two ♂♂ on 28th March. ♂ on 20th May, two on 25th and one on 28th May. In autumn, one on 17th October, five on 23rd increasing to 11 on 27th — an unusually high number for Fair Isle, the party stayed with the Eider flock off the South Light slowly decreasing to four on 14th November when last seen.

**Velvet Scoter** *Melanitta fusca*. Two records only, a ♀ on 13-26th March and one on 24th October.

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*. A ♂ found dead on 1st January. One on 10th February, one to two from 8-13th March, a ♂ on 18th March, two on 26th April and a ♀ on 14th May. Few autumn records, all between 16th October and 14th November. Three on 16th October, four on 23rd, singles on 28th October and 3rd November with two on 14th November.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*. Two on 21st April, a ♂ on 6th May, one to two from 14-20th May, one on 1-2nd June and singles on 15th and 17th June. Two on 2nd July, one on 21st August. 15 on 3rd September, a good number for the Isle, and one to four most days from 21st September to 21st October.

**Goosander** *Mergus merganser*. A ♂ on 11-15th March, a ♂ on 10th May and a ♀ on 23rd October were the only records.

**Marsh Harrier** *Circus aeruginosus*. A ♀ on 16th May, the fourteenth record for the Isle.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*. One on 18th March. Eight records of single birds in April between 2nd and 26th, with two on 18th. One to two daily from 10-16th May, a ♀ on 27th May and a ♂ on 30th May. Exceptionally scarce in autumn, one on 1st November and one from 4th to 13th November were the only records.

**Buzzard sp.** *Buteo/ernis*. One on 27th July, either Buzzard or Honey Buzzard.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*. One near Busta Geo on 29th May and one over Roskillie on 8th September, the latter being only the 7th autumn record.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*. Bird-days per month shown below. Main spring passage from 11-20th May with a maximum of two on any one date. Autumn passage from 30th August to 29th September with maximum of five on 25th September.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
2	—	6	2	7	2	—	4	38	6	—	—

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*. Bird-days per month shown below. Main autumn passage from 19th August to 12th November with maxima of ten on 1-2nd October and eight on 4th, 12th and 13th October. Passage significantly later than in 1979.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
3	6	5	13	2	—	—	30	92	157	13	2

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*. Recorded in all months except July. Most sightings in April with 11 records and in October with eight records. Autumn influx from 30th September to 12th October, no record of more than two birds in a day. No sign of displaying birds this year.



**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*. A good showing this year, a ♀ on 9th June then a ♂ on 24th, birds recorded daily from then onwards with up to seven birds calling in late July. No proof of breeding. Birds still present in August with singles on 10-11th, 19th and finally on 26th.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*. Two on 28th March was the only spring record. In autumn many sightings from 22nd September onwards, with 27 bird-days to 25th November. Mostly single birds but two on 28th September, four birds were found dead in this period indicating a greater change-over in birds than might be supposed from the records.

**Corncrake** *Crex crex*. Very poor showing this year, just one in spring on 13th May and one on 18-19th September.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*. One from 27th March to 1st April, one found dead on 25th May. Two on 28th September, and singles on 1st and 6-9th October.

**Coot** *Fulica atra*. One from 23-26th March and a different individual from 28th March to 13th April.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*. Two on 14th February were the first of the year, increased to seven by 17th February, 27 on 19th and 85 on 25th. The highest spring count was 120 on 12th March. About 90 pairs nested with first eggs noted on 4th May. 58 passed North on 13th April presumably heading for high latitudes. Summer flocks of 50 on 26th May, 75 on 9th June and 100 on 16th June. There was no large autumn passage, peak counts were 80 on 1st August, 60 on 18th August and on 1st September. Numbers had dwindled to 20 by 17th September, then to 11 on 2nd October and four on 26th October were the last of the year.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*. The first sighting was of seven on 24th February, but only one to four present till 21st March when 14. Nine pairs nested all successfully, first young seen 22nd May. Some passage in May between 13-21st with a maximum of five. Autumn passage poor, increase from 14th July with maximum of 40 on 20th August and 30 on 5th September. Up to seven most days till end September, six on 2nd-3rd October, one to two till 8th and last seen on 10th October.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*. Three summer-plumage birds on Ward Hill on 12-13th May.

**Golden Plover** *Charadrius apricaria*. No records in Jan.- Feb. One on 3rd March was the first, followed by six on 13th March. Very few in April, only four records with maximum of four birds. Seen regularly from 1st May to 1st June with one to nine most days and peaks of 16 on 3rd May and 20 on 6th May. Several "northern" birds were noted. Only one to two birds in June with the last record on 21st. In summer, singles on 15th and 21st July and two on 1st August. Regular from 10th August with peaks of 30 on 18th August, 57 on 4th September, and up to 30 most days till early October. 44 on 5th October and 57 on 8th, numbers decreasing to ten by 19th October, then 15 on 24th with small numbers lingering and singles on 3rd-8th November.

**Grey Plover** *Charadrius squatarola*. One on 26th March. In autumn, one on 16-24th September with two present on 20th, and one on 11th October.

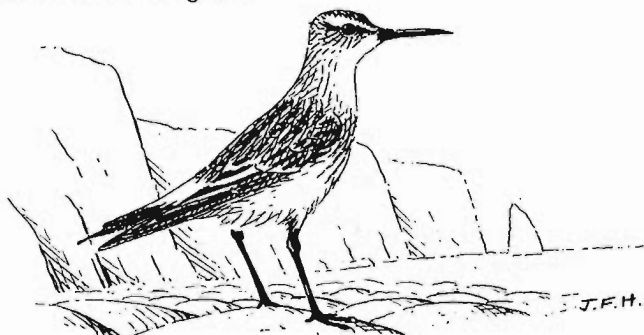
**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*. No January records. 45 on 25th February and ten to 20 on several dates that month due to hard-weather movements. Up to 18 in early March with 50 on 11th, 70 on 15th and 150 on 21st. Peak of 500 on 26th March, down to 100 by 1st April then small numbers seen daily to 16th June, maximum of 20. No breeding birds this year. One to two seen several dates in July, up to ten most days in August and early September, no influx till late September when 42 on 23rd, 59 on 26th, up to 30 most days till late October and six to 12 daily till 14th November.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*. No spring records. In autumn, from 18th July with five on 19th, 16 on 25th July then decrease to three by 30th July. 13 on 4th August and 17 on 13th August. Peak of 29 on 3rd September with up to seven most days to 23rd. Single birds on 24th and 27-29th September, two on 3-8th October with one till 11th.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*. Singles on 24-29th May and 4th June. Autumn passage began with five on 19th July increasing to 13 on 20th then four to eight till 23rd. 14 on 25th July dwindling to one by the end of the month. Six on 1st August with one to five daily till 7th, then none till a single on 15-16th, six on 20th August. Five on 2nd September with one to two on several dates to 17th September, last seen on 6th October.

**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*. Fewer than usual, all records given: two on 14th September, one 17-19th September, two 21-22nd, seven on 23rd and one 24-25th September.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*. Three records in a year is unprecedented, the 6-8th Observatory records. One at Golden Water from 17-18th May, one on 4th June flew over North, calling, and one on 12th August.



**White-rumped Sandpiper** *Calidris fuscicollis*. One in Leestat, South Harbour on 7-8th October, the second record for Fair Isle.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos*. One at North Park on 4th June, only the second spring record for the Isle.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*. Single birds on 9th, 21st and 23-24th September were the only records.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*. Recorded in every month except June. Maximum day totals for each month shown below. Good spring peak of 78 on 27th April and 55 on 11th May. Autumn numbers low, though 25 on 22nd July and 55 on 7th August. Moulting birds at South Light present late July to 13th August.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
3	2	80	78	55	—	25	55	4	15	15	—

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*. One on 8th February, small influx March with two on 12th, one to two on 19-21st, ten on 27th and 11 on 30th, none in April. One on 2nd May, three on 10th and 13 on 11th with two to eight daily till 5th June, one to two on several dates to 18th June and one on 24th June. First returning birds on 18th July (seven), small numbers, less than ten, most days in August, more regular in September with 12 on 6th and 14 on 23rd. Three to four till 28th September, a single on 30th, two on 2nd October and lastly, one on 3rd November.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis*. One at Byerwall and later Mioness from 17-20th September. The sixth Fair Isle record and a very typical date.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*. No spring records. In autumn, one on 29th July and four next day. One to two in early August then 19 on 12th August decreasing to two by 16th, but further influx of 14 on 18th and up to eight most days to 24th August. 17 on 27th August with one to three till 1st September, 12 on 14th September, one to two most days from 10-17th September then five on 18th and six on 20th, one to three till 26th. Three on 1st October and one on 2nd.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*. One on 3rd February, no spring records. First autumn bird on 6th September with singles on 10th and 12-18th. Three on 19th and one to two daily till 26th when five, and 12 on 27th. In October two to three most days with ten on 7th and seven on 13th October, one to two till 6th November.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Six to eight pairs nested. Up to six present in January, increase noted in late March with 14 on 26th and 20 on 28th, further passage in April with 20 on 13th and 15 on 18th. In autumn peak counts were 20 on 4th and 17th September and 50 on 3rd October.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*. Single birds noted on several dates in January - February. Influx in March with three on 15th, nine on 17th, 13 on 27th and 40+ on 28th. Eight on 1st April and several records of single birds in April and May with one on 5-6th June. In autumn, first recorded on 7th October, with nine on 13th October, then recorded most days to late November with peaks of 30 on 24th October, and 17th October, 40 on 3rd November and 21st November.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. One on 23rd May was the only record.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*. Two on 15-18th March with one to 21st, and a single on 3rd May were the only spring records. In autumn, one on 16th August, 12 on 18th decreasing to one by 22nd. 22 on 26th August and single birds on 30th August and 24th September to 7th October.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*. First spring record on 22nd April, two on 26th April and 17 on 5th May, then two to six most days till 18th June with nine on 19th May. Two on 7th July and singles on 8th, 10th and 22nd July. Up to five in early August, 18 on 27th August. One to four in early September and singles on 12th, 15th and lastly on 17th September.

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*. Single birds on 8th and 24th January, four on 7th February and one to two on several dates till 18th March. None till four on 26th March, then 22 on 27th and up to ten on most days in April with 55 on 24th. 35 on 5th May and up to 15 on many dates to end of month, some passage birds in June with up to ten on several dates to 15th. Four pairs bred though only one pair was successful, first eggs on 16th May. Autumn passage from 27th July (12), up to 20 most days in August with 30 on 11th and 50 on 21st. Fewer in September with maxima of 20 on 4th and 12 on 24th. Up to ten in early October decreasing to one to two by 14th. Small numbers, up to three on several dates to 29th November.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*. One on 16th June. In autumn, one on 31st July, one 18th August, two 30-31st August and one on 1st September.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*. 12 on 24th January, eight on 25th February, more regular in March with ten to 12 on most days from 9th. Few on spring passage, seen daily from 26th March to 5th May with maximum of 14 on 24th April. One to five on most days 18-28th May and singles on four dates in June. In autumn, recorded daily from 3rd July, numbers increasing to ten on 11th July. In August, 20 on 6th, 30 on 13th and up to 20 on most days to end of month. Increase in September with 45 on 3rd, 60 on 4th, and 30 on 7th with up to 15 daily till 28th when 26. Up to 20 most days in October and November with 25 on 7th October.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*. Only one spring record, a single on



5th May. Autumn passage from 30th July, very few birds involved. Singles on 30th July to 1st August, two on 12th August, one to two most days till 3rd September, two on 12th September and singles on 15th and 21st September.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*. Rather few in spring, single birds on 6-7th and 12th May, 3-4th, 7th and 18th June. In autumn, one on 20th July with three next day, then one to three daily till 28th August with four on 9th August. One on 7th to 10th September.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*. An above average showing of this species. In spring, single birds on 12-13th May, 16-17th May and 7-9th June with two on 14-15th May. First autumn bird on 30-31st July, two on 1st August, one on 2nd, two on 6th August, one on 9th, one 24-25th, one 7th September and a late bird on 22nd September.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleucos*. One on 6-7th May, two on 10th May. One to three most days from 12-23rd May with four on 13th. Two on 29-30th May and singles on four dates between 1st and 9th June, and one on 28th June. In autumn, one on 31st July, four on 1st August and six on 2nd. One to five most days through August and early September, recorded daily from 1st to 16th September. Single birds on 21-24th, 27th and 30th September.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*. Maximum day totals per month shown below. Highest spring count of 70 on 27th March, little evidence of spring passage. No records from 18th June to 8th July apart from one bird on 27th June. Autumn influx from 6th August.

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
10	30	70	45	30	20	20	50	60	80	60	80

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*. First recorded on 16th April, six on 23rd April, 20 on 25th and 40 on 27th. First egg on 16th May, a few days earlier than usual. About 120 pairs nested, with chicks from 9th June. Decrease from mid-August with only nine present by 4th September, four on 8th and single birds on 14th and 26th September.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*. A sub-adult bird present in the Arctic Skua "club" by the airstrip on 5th and 7th June.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*. First seen on 17th March but no more till two on 4th April, increasing to seven on 5th, 15 on 10th and 25 by 12th April. About 39 pairs bred with first eggs on 15th May and chicks from 1st June. 60+ birds in "clubs" on 14th June and an albinistic bird on 17th June. Main departures in September with six left on 12th October, two on 20th and 24th October and one seen on the crossing on 4th November.

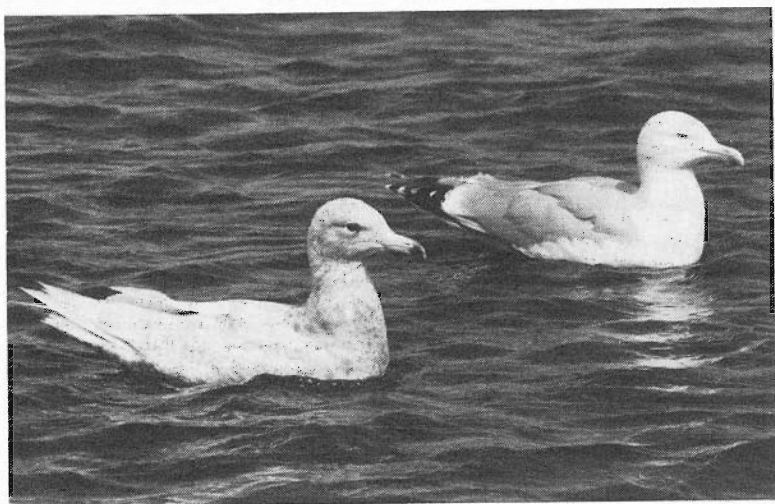
**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Up to three present in January and one in February. Main passage from 26th March to 5th April with peaks of 14 on 26th March and 51 on 27th March. One to five most days in April, more in May with 25 on 8th, 21 on 12th and 15 on 16th. One to five most days in June and July with 17 passing North on 13th June. First juvenile seen 8th July, 35 on 30th July and up to 15 most days in August. One to five on several dates in September with 13 on 1st, and 12 on 14th September. Similar numbers in October but influx of 30 on 7th October in severe weather. One to two birds on several dates in November and December.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*. Small numbers recorded in January and February, but none from 26th February to 20th March. Passage from late March with 26 on 27th and ten to 20 on most days in April. Further passage in May with 35 on 2nd, 70 on 5th and 40 on 13th. Five pairs bred, three of them successfully. Autumn passage from late July with 30 on 29th and 150 on 30th. Peak counts in August of 130 on 1st, 120 on 13th and 170 on 17th. High numbers in September with 160 on 17th, and numbers remaining high into October with 150 on 3rd and 105 on 22nd. Smaller numbers seen to end of year.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*. First seen on 23rd March, six on 26th, 18 on 27th and 34 on 7th April. Breeding as normal, good success rate. Decrease in late August and September with most away by 14th September. One to two till 28th September, one on 3rd October and two on 7th were the last of the year.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*. Resident and recorded throughout the year as usual. Large numbers of storm-driven birds were recorded on 22nd October, 6000, and 2000 on 1st November. Breeding season as usual with good success.

**Iceland Gull** *Larus glaucooides*. An adult bird on 23rd January and a first-year bird on 26th October were the only records.



**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*. An adult, third-year and several second-year birds recorded on several dates in January. 2nd year on 4th February, 1st year birds on 14th February and 23rd March. A 3rd year on 4th April, 1st year on 8th April and 2nd year birds on 14th and 26th May. No summer records. First autumn bird seen on 8th October. 43 bird-days in October with maximum of six on 18th. Mostly 1st year birds but several adults and 2nd year. Ten bird-days in November with no more than two birds on any one date. Odd birds seen to end of year.

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Good breeding success. Large flocks included 200 on 7th April, 800 on 14th July presumably associated with off-shore fishing boats. 1000 storm-driven on 22nd October.

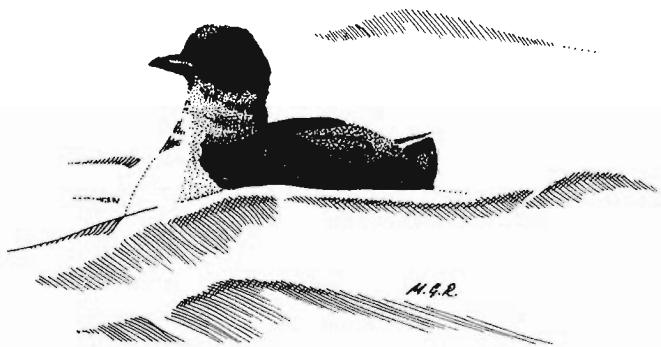
**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*. Recorded throughout the year. Good breeding season though fewer chicks ringed due to poor weather for ringing at crucial time. Chicks noted from 13th June. The population is apparently still on the increase with extensions to many colonies.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*. One on 16th May, two on 17th and one on 19th May. Five on 22nd May, two on 1st June and singles on 22nd June and 21st July, another good showing of this species.

**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*. Three on 6th May were the first of the year. Increase to 20 by 9th May, 45 on 17th, 70 on 22nd and 83 on 26th May. About 40 pairs nested on the Stack O' North Haven with good success rate. Some passage birds in late July with 35 on 27th. Most breeding birds departed by early August. Small numbers seen till 21st August.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisea*. Five on 18th May were the first of the spring. Two to five seen daily from then on with eight on 27th May. Two pairs nested on the Stack O' North Haven, the first time the species has bred on Fair Isle. One pair was successful and raised one chick. Passage in late July with 20+ on 30th and on 1st August. One to two on several dates to 24th August and single birds on 6th and 10th September. A late "comic tern" was seen on 24th September.

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*. Ashore on fine days in January and regularly from late February. First eggs noted 28th April with chicks leaving ledges from 30th June. A count of birds in off-shore rafts between 2-22nd June gave a figure of 15,270 birds suggesting a population of at least 30,000 birds. Few birds ashore by 20th July and none after 2nd August. Small numbers seen off-shore in August-September, rather more than usual noted with 50 on 24th September, 100 on 5th October and 21st October and 100's on the crossing on 4th November. None seen ashore till 14th November, much later than in recent years this perhaps due to rough weather.



**Brunnich's Guillemot** *Uria lomvia*. One in North Haven and Furse on 16th and 17th October, probably died on latter date. The bird was an adult in breeding plumage, the first record for Fair Isle and only the second "live" sighting of this species in Britain.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*. Two offshore on 25th February, many inshore from 2nd March with birds ashore on fine days. A number of young birds in winter plumage noticed offshore in late May. Breeding season as usual, good success with many chicks. Most birds gone by 1st August with a very few seen offshore on several dates in August-September. One on 2nd October and two on 21st October.

**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Display noted from 2nd March and fledged young from 8th August. A better breeding season than in last two years with good numbers of chicks raised though still cause for concern about breeding numbers.

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*. Two seen from the Good Shepherd off the North end of the Isle on 4th November was the only record.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*. Two on crossing on 19th March, four offshore on 29th March and 200 ashore on 3rd April. First seen carrying fish on 9th June. Very few birds left by mid-August and gone from cliffs by 23rd August. Small numbers seen offshore in September with maximum of 12 on 5th and seven on crossing that date. In October three on 2nd and on 21st.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*. Recorded throughout the year, small numbers only on January-February with increase in March. Three on 4th, ten on 12th, 20 on 18th and 30 on 1st April. Summer flocks of 24 on 29th June and 18 on 27th July. In autumn, peaks counts of 23 on 10th September and 15 on 13th October.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*. One on several dates from 18-23rd April. One on 28-29th April and one on 3rd May.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*. One on 1st February. One on several dates from 17th February to 15th March. Main passage from late March with six on 26th, nine on 27th, 21 on 30th and 12 on 1st April. Further arrivals of ten on 10th April and 16 on 13th. A few from 15th April to 3rd May then one to four daily till 9th June with five on 12th May, 7th and 9th June. In autumn, one on 23-27th September, one to two from 7-16th October, four on 22nd October increasing to seven on 25th, slowly dwindling to one or two to 9th November.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*. One on 25th April, two on 12th May and three on 14th May. Two to three most days till 28th, with 17 on 29th May. Up to four on several dates to mid-June, and one on 25-26th June. Four on 13th July and singles on 6-17th August, 2nd September and 27-28th September. A late bird on 13th October was the last of the year.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*. One on 11th May, two on 12th and six on 13th, then one to four daily to 23rd May. One on 31st, further arrival of three on 5th June with one to two till 10th June. Singles on 16-20th June, 24th and 30th July. In autumn, singles on 11 dates between 8th and 28th September with two on 23rd. Singles on 15 dates in October with last seen on 29th.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*. One on 12-13th May, two on 14th and one on 15-16th May. One on 4th June, two on 5th and singles on 10th and 14-15th June. In autumn, two records of juvenile birds on 6th and 24th August.

**Snowy Owl** *Nyctea scandiaca*. A second-year ♀ at Burrashield on 21st May, recorded for the second year in succession.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*. Very few sightings this year. Single birds on 29th March, 3-6th April, 10th May and 29-30th May. Only two in autumn, on 26th October and 4-5th November.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammeus*. Singles on 29th March to 1st April, 12th and 27th April, 3rd, 9th to 17th and 30-31st May and one on 2nd June. Autumn records from 15th August. Single birds on six dates in August, nine in September with two on 27th, three in October with two on 23rd and five dates in November to 21st.

**Swift** *Apus apus*. One on 11-12th May, two on 15th and on 21st May. Recorded daily from 31st May to 18th June with one to five most days and 17 on 7th June and 26 on 9th June. One to two on several dates in July with 35 on 24th. Few in early August but 20 on 18th decreasing to six by 23rd and one to two till end of month. Three on 10th September, four on 25th, three on 26th with one to 2nd October.

**Hoopoe** *Upupa epops*. One from 8th to 18th October, last recorded in 1977.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*. One on 16-17th May, six on 18th and two on 19th were the only Spring records. In Autumn, three on 30th August, singles on 1st, 11th, 13th and 15th September, five on 23rd, two on 24th and lastly, one on 25th September.

**Great Spotted Woodpecker** *Dendrocopus major*. An immature on 23rd October, last recorded 1977.



**Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella cinerea*. A remarkable series of records involving nine individuals. Single birds on 17th-18th May, 3rd June, 18th August, 21-23rd September, 4th October, 11th October, two on 12-14th October with one till 21st and a late bird on 8th November.

**Woodlark** *Lullula arborea*. One at Skerryholm on 5th November, recorded for the second year in succession.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*. One on 1st January, six on 7th and one on 13th. Two on 7th February, then regular from 10th with 100 on 11th and 110 on 25th. 180 on 12th March but main passage 1st March early April with 500 on 28th March, 350 on 1st April and 200 on 14th April. Breeding season as usual with fledged young from 2nd June. Autumn passage from mid-September, peak counts of 100+ on 18th September, 500 on 1st and 800 on 2nd October, 1100 on 7th and 1650 on 8th October. Up to 100 daily throughout October with 120 on 28th. Up to 60 in November with 45 still present on 14th.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*. One on 13th April was the only record.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*. Two on 28th April were the first but no further sightings till two on 9th May, ten on 10th May and 15 on 16th May. Very few after 18th May, three on 23rd, two on 30th and one to three on 11 dates from 1-25th June. In autumn, one to two

from 18-23rd August with four on 22nd. None till two on 6th September and singles on 8th and 10th. Two on 22nd with one to two till 25th September.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*. Singles on 12th, 13th and 17th April. Five on 26th and 29th April. Main passage from 8th May with 10-20 most days and peaks of 40 on 10th, 70 on 15th and 60 on 30-31st May. Up to 40 in early June and smaller numbers daily to 16th June. A pair attempted to breed at lower Stonybreck, nest-building on 18th June, first egg on 26th and c/4 on 30th but they deserted on 5th July. One to two birds present throughout late June to early August. Autumn passage from 18th August with eight on 18th and 13 on 23rd, one to four most days till 14th September. None till 22nd September then seven on 23rd, 17 on 25th and two to six daily till 9th October with nine on 2nd October.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*. Recorded in spring from 9th May to 23rd June daily. Arrivals of eight on 9th, 20 on 15th, 30 on 31st May, 20 on 3rd June, 25 on 6th and ten on 21st June. One summer record on 3rd July. In autumn, one on 17th and four on 18th August with one to two till 23rd August. Then none till two on 20th September, one on 23rd, two on 25th and one on 26th September.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaseelandiae*. Only four individuals this year. One on 14th October, one on 22-24th October with another found dead on 22nd — probably prey to Short-eared Owl, and one from 28th October to 8th November.

**Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*. One near Shirva from 6-8th November. The sixth Fair Isle record of this species, last recorded in 1976.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*. Rather few in spring. Three on 3rd May, singles on 6th, 11-13th, and 30th May. Four on 31st May, two on 1st June and 6th June. Autumn passage much stronger than in recent years. Two on 16th August were the first with one to two most days to 29th. Six on 30th, increasing to eight on 4th September, one to two daily from 10-21st September with four on 17th. Strong passage from 22nd with 12 on that date, 60 on 23rd, decreasing to 15 by 26th. Then 30 on 27th September decreasing to nine on 30th. One to five in first week of October and two on 10th October were the last seen.



**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*. Two on 5th March were the first of the year, 14 on 26th March and seen regularly from that date. Main passage late-March early-April with peaks of 53 on 27th March, 100 on 3rd and 150 on 5th April and 120 on 13th April. Birds had good breeding season with first eggs from 4th May and fledged young from 30th May. Influx from late August and strong passage in September with 1500 on 4th and 750 on 7th September. Further big arrivals in October with 750 on 1st, 1000 on 2nd, 450 on 7th and 250 on 11th. Up to 40 most days to 26th October decreasing to four by 31st. 12 on 8th November and last seen 14th November.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*. One on 20th and 23-24th September in the Shirva/Reeva areas.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus spinoletta*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. A bird of the Scandinavian race *A.s.littoralis* on 27th March.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*. Birds of Blue-headed race *M.f.flava* on 18th May (♀), 19th May (♂), 13th and 15th September and 18-20th September. Grey-headed birds, *M.f.thunbergi* ♂♂ on 10th, 15th, 18-19th, 23-25th May and 4-6th June. Birds of *M.f.flavissima*, Yellow Wagtail on 10th May, ♂ on 14-17th and 20th May. One on 19th September. A bird showing characters of Spanish race *M.f.iberiae* from 22-28th May. "Yellow" wagtails not specifically identified as follows: In spring singles on 27-28th April, 5-6th, 17th and 19th May and 10th June. In autumn one to two most days from 10-29th September with three on 25th. Singles on 2-4th October, 7-9th and 11th October. A bird present on 12-13th October had some characters of "yellow" wagtail and some of Citrine Wagtail *M.citreola*. It is under review at present.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*. Single birds on 1-2nd April, 12th and 14th April, mostly in Vaadal.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*. Birds of nominate race White Wagtail on 27th March (3), six on 28th and four on 1st April. One to three on several dates in April and daily from 1-22nd May with five on 9-10th May. One to two on 28-31st May and one on 9th June. Pied Wagtail *M.a.yarrelli*, one on 26th March, two on 28th and one 29-30th March. Five on 5th April and one to two on several dates in April, one on 6th May and one autumn sighting on 27th September. *Alba* wagtails not sub-specifically identified were recorded as follows: one on 18th March, three on 28th March and

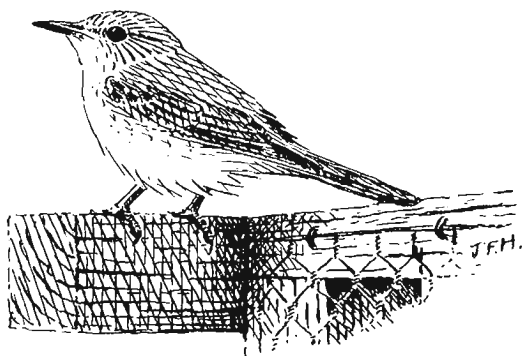
seven on 30th. Autumn passage (mostly of White Wagtails) from 8th August to 24th October, recorded almost daily. Peaks were ten on 19th August, 21 on 21st August and 100 on 4th September. Strong passage from 4-11th September with 20-50 most days. One to ten till 4th October decreasing to one to two on 6-9th, though six on 7th October. One to two on 11-16th and one on 19-24th October.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Breeding numbers still low, census revealed 16 singing ♂♂ round the cliffs. Breeding season thought to be better than in last few years with good numbers of birds seen in autumn. Singles of British race *T. t. troglodytes* recorded on 28th March and 18th October.

**Dunnock** *Prunella modularis*. Very strong passage this year. One on 12th March was the first, large fall of 230 on 27th March, the highest number ever recorded on the Isle, 130 on 30th March, 150 on 1st April and 23 on 5th April. One to ten most days till 18th April, then none till 14 on 17th April. Six to seven till 4th May then 15 on 5th, one to seven daily to 14th May and singles on 16th, and 24th May and 4-9th June. In autumn one on 22nd September, big fall of 120 on 23rd with 20-40 daily to 31st September with 60 on 27th. Smaller numbers (1-5) daily in October, though 14 on 2nd and 13 on 8th. One to three in early November last seen on 8th.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*. One on 21st January. First spring bird on 4th March with odd singles to 26th March. 160 on 27th and 220 on 28th March. 150 on 30th March to 1st April. 50 on 5th April and 36 on 10th. One to six most days to 20th April, with singles on 24-25th and 28th April. Recorded daily 3-31st May, mostly one to four birds but 12 on 10th May, eight on 17th and two on 4th June. In autumn, one on 21st September, 60 on 22nd, 550 on 23rd — a very high number for the Isle. 200 on 24th and 220 on 26th September decreasing to 60 by 29th and 20 on 1st October. 60 on 2nd October, 50 on 5th with one to ten till end of month. 12 on 2nd November and odd birds through to at least 21st December.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*. Two on 11th May, one on 13th, two on 14th and four 15-16th. Five on 17th, six on 18th, three 20-22nd and one on 30th May. ♀ on 1st June and ♂ on 6th. In autumn, one from 12-23rd October with another on 15th. A very late bird on 7-8th November.



**Nightingale** *Luscinia megarhynchos*. Four individuals, all in spring — the most ever on the Isle. Singles on 14th May, 15-16th May, 17-18th May and 21-27th May.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. Three on 28th March, one on 30th, two on 3rd April and one 10th April. Singles on four dates to 13th May with two on 14th, five on 17th decreasing to one on 20th May. Two on 10th June and one 17th June. In autumn, singles on 24th and 26th September, two on 12th October, two on 3rd November and singles on 5th November and 4th December.

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. First seen on 25th April, then none till 12th May when daily to 24th May, one to four most days but seven on 13th May. Two on 27th May and singles on 29-31st May, 13th, 15th and 18th June. In autumn two on 30th August, two on 13th September with one to three till 16th. Eight on 22nd September and a good fall of 70 on 23rd with numbers remaining high (20-30) till 27th. 16 on 28th September and two to three daily in October with five on 7th. Single on 19-20th, two on 21-28th and one on 29th October.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*. Two on 10th May, then daily to 19th with 21 on 12th and ten on 17th May. One to two from 21-27th May, three on 1st June and singles on four dates to 8th June with one on 17th June. First autumn bird on 13-14th August, one to three daily to 19th then start of main passage with nine on 18th, 12 on 29th and 80 on 30th August. Further arrivals in September with 30 on 1st down to 14 on 8th, then 25 on 20th, 40 on 24th and 22 on 28th. Nine on 1st October decreasing to one by 9th. Five on 11th October, down to one by 13th and last seen on 19th.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*. Two in spring a ♂ on 30th March and one on 5th April. In autumn, three birds of the eastern races on 12th October, a ♂ and ♀ trapped were both *S.t.maura*. The unringed bird remained to 15th October.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*. One on 27th March was the first of the spring. Increase to three on 28th and five on 30th March. Ten on 7th April, 70 on 12th and 200 on 13th April. Further arrivals of up to 130 on 23-25th April. Later passage with Greenland birds during 9-19th May with 190 on 12th May. Breeding season as usual. Autumn passage from end August. Peak counts of 320 on 4th September, 500 on 7th, 60 on 14th down to 14 by 22nd. Fresh influx of 200 on 25th September decreasing to 30 by 1st October. 10-20 most days to 13th October down to three by 18th and two on 19th then none till last seen on 28th October.

**Ring Ousel** *Turdus torquatus*. Light spring passage. One on 5th April and singles on 7th and 13th. Two on 14th and singles on 25th and 27th. Two on 19th April. One on 1st May, six on 7th with one to six daily to 11th May. Nine on 12th and one to two most days to 29th May. A late ♂ on 13th June. Good autumn passage with three on 16th September, 2 on 18th and fall of 120 on 23rd, down to 70 on 24th and to 16 by 28th. Four on 30th and one on 1-4th October. Three on 7th, one on 11th, two 24-25th with one till 28th October.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*. Up to 25 overwintered, 10-20 in early March then 100 on 15th March. 200 on 24th, 420 on 27th, 570 on 28th and 500 on 30th. 330 on 1st April then one to ten most days with 35 on 14th April. One to eight daily during May, one to three in June to 20th with six on 4th June. One injured bird summered. Two on 16th September were the first autumn arrivals. Two to four daily till 30th, increasing to seven in early October. 65 on 13th October, 85 on 14th, 500 on 22nd and 24th decreasing to 80 on 31st October. Further arrivals in November with 100 on 3rd and 150 on 21st with smaller numbers remaining into December.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*. Up to ten in January and small numbers in February with 28 on 26th February. Up to ten most days in March with passage from 26th. 82 on 27th March, 32 on 1st April down to one on 5th. None till 11th, then 11 on 14th, 24 on 27th. Daily 1-19th May with 13 on 5th, 70 on 7th and 35 on 9th. Two on 21st May, one on 30th and two on 5th June. Autumn passage began much earlier than usual, with one on 3rd August and numbers building up to 20

by 30th August. Up to ten in early September, then 23 on 10th, up to 20 daily to 28th when 40 arrived. Main passage October with 75 on 4th, 150 on 12th, 200 on 15th and 800 on 22-23rd. Further influx of 500 on 26th and 600 on 28th. Up to 200 in early November and small numbers into December.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*. Up to seven present in January and one to two in February and early March. Passage from 26th March with 75 on 27th, 58 on 30th and 35 on 1st April. Small number, under ten throughout April and one to five daily from 1-18th May. Single birds on 21st May, 4-9th June and 29-30th June. Autumn passage from 7th September with one to seven most days to 21st September. 50 on 22nd, 1100 on 23rd and 150 on 25th. Further passage with 300 on 26th decreasing to 45 by 30th. Fresh arrivals in October with 65 on 1st, 130 on 4th and 200 on 7th, up to 20 daily till 14th November with 25 on 26th October.

**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*. Up to 12 during January with 25 on 21st. None till two on 8th March and 20 on 15th March. Main passage late March with 85 on 27th, 110 on 28th and 50 on 1st April. 15 on 8th April were *coburni* and this race was involved in arrival of 110 on 14th April. Up to ten till end April, and up to six daily in May, one on several dates in June and one bird summered to at least 12th August. Autumn passage from 30th August with six on 6th September and 15 on 15th. Main passage from late September with 120 on 22nd, 400 on 23rd down to 50 on 1st October but 700 on 3rd. Peak count of 900 on 7th October much lower than usual. Further arrivals of 500 on 12th October, 700 on 22nd and 300 on 26th. 150 on 4th November and up to 25 for most of the month with a few lingering into December.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*. A very good showing in spring. One from 9-12th March, three on 27th, 11 on 28th and 14 on 30th — both record totals for the Isle. Down to four on 1st April and a single on 26th April. Only two records of single birds in autumn on 23rd and 25th September.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*. Two on 10th and three on 11th May with one to two till 14th and one on 19th May were the only spring records. In autumn, singles on 29-30th August, 4th, 21st and 23-24th September.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Very strong spring passage. Nine on 12th May were the first, then 17 on 14th

and 32 on 16th a record total for the Isle. Down to 13 on 18th and one on 24th May. One to two on several dates in June with five on 4th, two on 14th and lastly one on 23rd June. In autumn singles on 15th, 24th and 28th August with two on 16th and 18th August. Single birds on six dates in September to 27th and a very late bird found dead on 26th October.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. Two spring records of single birds on 30th May to 7th June and 22nd June. In autumn singles on 16-17th and 26-29th August with four on 30th. Singles on four dates in September to 20th, with two on 21st, six on 23rd and five on 24-25th, numbers dwindling to two on 27th September. One trapped on 31st October was the latest ever recorded on the Isle.

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*. One on 4th June, one on the unusual date of 6-7th July and one on 31st July. Quite a good showing in autumn with two on 18th August, one on 29th and three on 30th. Two on 10th September, one on 14-17th and two on 19th September. Singles on 23rd and 18th September.

**Melodious Warbler** *Hippolais polyglotta*. One at Midway on 22nd September, trapped. The eighth record for the Isle, this species last recorded in 1977.

**Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*. A ♀ trapped in the Gully on 16th May, the 21st record for the Isle.

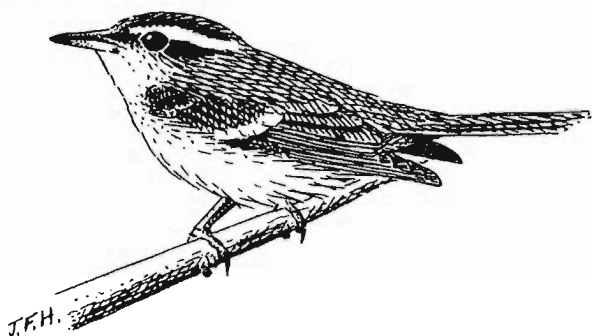
**Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*. One on 18th August, another 26th August, two on 27th and seven on 30th August. Three on 10th September, six on 11th and four on 15th. One on 27-28th September and a late bird on 12th October. Recorded most days from 26th August to 18th September.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*. Spring passage from 11th May to 5th June with one to six most days and eight on 12th and 13 on 17th May, four on 4th June and one on 14th June. In autumn, one on 18-19th August with one to three almost daily from 26th August to 30th September and four on 22nd September.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*. In spring one to five daily from 12-22nd May with three on 12th and eight on 18th May. Three on 30th May with one to two on several dates to 20th June and four on 14th June. In autumn, one on 1st September with singles on six dates to 13th. Two on 19th and eight on 23rd September with one to five till 27th, and one bird on 11th October.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*. One on 11th May was the first in spring. Three on 13th, six on 14th and eight on 16th May. None from 18-28th May but two on 29th and five on 30-31st. Up to four daily in June to 16th and singles on 21st June and 10th July. Singles on 6-7th and 10th August and recorded daily from 12th August to 1st October with 15 on 16th and 28 on 30th August, 25 on 8th September, 40 on 11th and 20 on 23rd. Three on 10th October, five on 12th, one on 14th and two on 22nd October were the last.

**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*. One on 26th April, then singles on 9th, 11th and 15th May when recorded daily till 20th June. Peak counts of nine on 18th and five on 22nd May. A ♂ on 22nd June and ♀ on 7th July. First autumn migrant on 9th September, one to four on most days to 18th September then 16 on 19th, 30 on 20th and 50 on 23rd September. Down to 20 on 24th but fresh arrival of 50 on 25th decreasing to three by 1st October. 50 on 11th October down to eight by 15th then none till 16 on 22nd, further arrival of 16 on 27th with two to three till 6th November and singles on 7-8th and 20-23rd November.



**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*. One trapped at Plantation and later at Quoy from 11-14th September, another at North Shirva on 21st September.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Very scarce this autumn, one on 10th and two on 11th October were the only records.

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. One on 4th June was the only spring record. Good showing in autumn with singles on 31st July to 1st August, 12th and 15-16th August, two on 18th August,

singles on 27th and 30th and two on 31st August to 1st September. One on 3rd September, two on 4th and singles on 5th and 9-10th September.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*. Two on 28-29th March were the first, one to two till 4th April then none till 12th when one to two till 15th when four, eight on 24th and five to six till 28th. One to two most days in May till 10th, five on 11th and seven on 18th May. One to four most days to end of month and one to two in June with one summering to at least 22nd July. Two on 22-23rd July, and one to two daily in August with five on 16th and four on 30th rather earlier than usual. One to three on most days in September with four on 15th, six on 23rd. None between 29th September and 6th October. Main passage October with three on 7th, 20 on 11th and 80 on 12th is the largest number ever recorded on the Isle. Numbers down to 18 on 14th but fresh arrival of 55 on 15th. Four to five till 27th October, two on 2nd November and 20 on 5th. 16 on 6-8th October and last one seen 14th. Mostly pale "northern" birds.

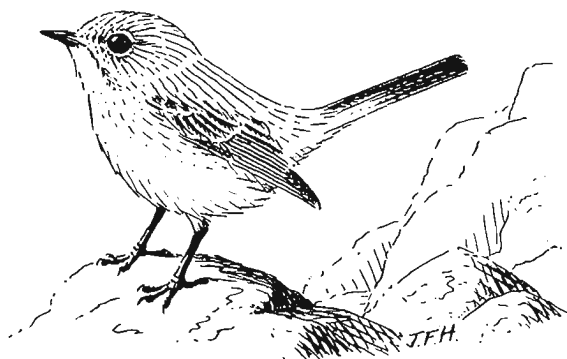
**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Two on 14th April, three on 15th and singles on five dates to 27th April. None till 6th May then seven on 10th, 70 on 12th and 35 on 16th decreasing to one to three by 20th. Nine on 31st May, five on 1st June with two to three on 4th and singles on 8-11th, 13th and from 30th June to 10th July. First autumn bird on 31st July, four on 1st August and singles on most days to 12th. Seven on 15th, 30 on 16th and 20 on 19th August. Smaller numbers to end of month then big fall of 350 on 30th August. 120 on 1st September, 100 on 4th and another big fall of 400 on 11th September. 20-40 daily till 23rd when 60, 40 on 27th decreasing to three by 30th. Five on 1st October, two to five daily till 7th and singles on 11th and 14th October.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*. One to two on several dates from 12-26th March, ten on 27th and 35 on 28th. Down to 13 on 1st April and one to two on several dates to 29th April. First autumn record on the early date of 27th August, with two on 28th and nine on 4th September. One to eight daily to 19th September then 16 on 20th, 40 on 22nd and 75 on 23rd decreasing to three by 26th. 16 on 27th down to two on 2nd October. Six on 3rd October, 28 on 7th and 16 on 13th. Singles on several dates to 31st October with four on 22nd.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*. Three on 12th May were the first, 14 on 15th May and 11 on 17th, then one to three daily to



26th May. Fresh arrivals of ten on 29th May and 14 on 30-31st May. May. One to five on most dates in June to 15th with one on 20-21st June. In autumn, singles on 31st August to 1st September, 6-7th September, two on 8th and 11th and one on several dates from 18-22nd. Four on 23rd September, two on 25th and one on 27-28th.



**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*. One at Funniquoy on 16th September, one on Bunes on 7th October and two on 12th October (Double Dyke and Hukni Geo) were the only records.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*. In spring, singles on 6th, 7th, 14th and 15th May, two on 18-19th and singles on eight dates to 2nd June. In autumn, one on 13-15th August, two on 16th and three on 18th. Fresh arrivals of four on 26th, seven on 30th and six on 4th September. One to two most days till six on 19th September, eight on 22nd and 15 on 23rd. Down to four by 27th and singles on 3rd and 7th October.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*. One found dead at Taing on 27th October had been dead for a few days. It appeared to be of the northern race *C.f. familiaris*. Only the fourth record for Fair Isle, the last being in 1959.

**Golden Oriole** *Oriolus oriolus*. An immature male at Setter on 29th May.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*. One on 17th May, five on 18th, six on 19th and one on 20th. One on 29th May, three on 30th, three on 4th June and one to two on several dates to 15th June

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*. Two on 8th May with one till 12th and one on 22nd June were the only spring records. In autumn, singles on 24th and 30th September to 3rd October. 11 on 8th October is the best ever autumn count, two on 9th and singles on 12th and 27th October.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*. Up to seven in January, three in February and 18 in March. Arrivals in late April with 80 on 27th. Breeding season as normal though few juveniles trapped. Autumn peak of 250 on 16th September, down to 25 by 30th October with six on 12th November and two to three till end of month.

**Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*. Three Mealy's on 27th April with two next day. Singles on 9-12th and 22-24th May were the only spring records. In autumn, very few, singles on 6-9th September, two on 10-17th with one 23rd. Two on 24-25th and one on 30th September. Three to four on several dates in October and early November were probably Icelandic birds. A bird seen on 12th November was almost certainly an Arctic Redpoll *C. hornemanni*.

**Crossbill sp.** *Loxia sp.* One flew over Homisdale on 5th April. P. J. Ewins.

**Scarlet Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*. In spring two records of immature males, both in brown plumage but both heard to sing. One from 30th May to 3rd June, another 4th to 6th June. A good series of records in autumn, 13 individuals involved, with first on 24-25th August, two on 26th, three 29-30th, three on 2nd September, three on 8-9th September, four on 10th, three 11-12th, four on 13-14th and two to three till 18th. One from 25th September to 2nd October, one 11-12th October and a late bird from 26-29th October. All  $\phi\phi$ 's.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. Birds of the nominate, northern race from 3rd to 25th November with two on 4th, four on 5th, six on 7th, three to four till 9th then two on 14th and singles on several dates to 25th.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. A fine  $\sigma$  from 28th to 31st March mostly at Stackhoull.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*. One on 16th March, singles on 1st, 14th and 23rd April. Three on 26-27th April with one till 29th. Singles on 5th, 12-13th, 20th and 29th May. In autumn,

recorded daily from 8th September to 2nd October. Three on 9th September, five on 10th and eight on 14-15th. Increase to 25 on 24th with 15 to 25 till 28th September. One to two many dates in October with seven on 2nd and 15th. Four on 23rd and one till 4th November.

**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*. 20 on 8th January, three singles in February and small numbers, 1-20 on many dates from 4-31st March with 50 on 23rd March. In April, 25 on 5th and 30 on 27th. One to four on nine dates in May to 15th, one on 28th and a ♂ on 18-20th June. First autumn sighting on 5th September, two on 13th and 16 on 14th. Up to 40 most days to early October with 60 on 7th October. 20-50 daily till 19th when 80. 220 on 26th October with 20-60 daily till 150 on 8th November. Up to 70 till 14th November and smaller numbers into December.



**Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*. A ♀ on 14-16th October mostly at Upper Stonybreck, and a ♂ on 3-6th and 8th November, found at Quoy, trapped at Plantation and seen at a number of sites. There is one previous record for the Isle on 30th October 1911.

with three on 18th. One on 8th July only the second July record for the Isle. In autumn, singles on 18-30th August, 19-20th September and 22-28th September.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*. Very few records this year. Single birds on 27-30th March, 26th, 28th and 31st October only.

**Woodchat Shrike** *Lanius senator*. A juvenile self-caught in the Obs. trap on 25th August was present on 26th also. A different juvenile was at Upper Stonybreck on 4-5th September. 17-18th records for the Isle, last recorded 1975.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*. Small influx in spring from 23rd March with five on 26th, 20 on 27-28th and five on 30th March. Nine on 1st April and 11 on 2nd April. One to two remained to 26th April with five on 10th and 13th. In autumn, one on 26-27th October was the only record.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*. Two to three present in January and two during February. Six on 11th March and eight on 26-27th March. One to six till 14th April. A flock of 26 on 9-10th May decreasing to three by 17th with two on 23-24th May. In autumn, five on 3rd November, seven on 5th and 7th with one to three till 11th November.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*. Singles on many dates from 1st April with two on 28-29th April, four on 10th May, the high total of 15 on 11-13th May with one to two till 20th June. One bird probably summered. Singles in autumn on 9th August, two on 16th August and one to two most days to 14th November with three on 1st and 13th September. Hybrid Hooded X Carrion Crows seen on several dates 14th May to 14th June and on 19th August. *C.c.cornix* Hooded Crow, bred as usual, some passage with 14 on 21st and ten on 27th March.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*. Resident as usual. Some passage in March with flocks of seven on 14th, and 20 on 18th and 28th March.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*. Recorded throughout the year as usual. Only 50 present in early February, then 200 on 10th February. Main spring passage in late March with 300 on 24th, 1000 on 27th and 29th and 400 on 5th April. Birds had good breeding season with eggs on 5th May and fledged young on 6th June. Autumn passage without obvious peaks or big falls, though increased numbers from 23rd September to late October.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*. Resident and recorded throughout the year. Fledged young noted from 2nd June. Hybrid House X Tree Sparrows were noted as follows: one from 12th May, two in mid-June and on several dates in September with up to five birds in October.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*. One on 28th March and 8th April, two on 10th and 26th April and one bird summered and was still present in late autumn. See above species.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*. One on 15th March was the first of the spring, main passage late March with 120 on 27th, 560 on 28th and 450 on 1st April, down to 100 by 5th and 90 by 10th April. Only 13 on 12th but 62 on 13th, 17 on 26th April and one to ten most days through to 13th May. Singles on 18-19th and 21-25th May. First autumn bird on 12th September with slow increase to seven on 16th and 18 on 19th September. 50 on 20th then 70 on 22nd and 350 on 23rd decreasing to 50 on 28th. Up to 40 in early October and up to 20 to end of month. One to three in early November to 7th.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*. One on 27th March, two on 28-30th and one on 14th April. Regular in late April with three on 25th, 12 on 27th increasing to 35 by 3rd May and peak of 66 on 4th May. Down to 12 by 10th May with one to two till 18th, two on 26-27th, one 28th and one 13th June. First autumn bird on 12th September, four on 16th then main passage with 70 on 22nd, 260 on 23rd, 70 on 26th and 100 on 17th September. Only four by 1st October then new arrival of 40 on 7th October down to five by 10th then 40 again on 12th. 50 on 22nd October with 20-40 till 28th. Up to ten most days in early November to about 7th.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*. No spring records. In autumn, one on 22nd October, two on 23-24th, one on 26th, two 27th, and three on 18th with one to two till 31st October.

**Siskin.** *Carduelis spinus*. In spring two on 27-28th May, one on 16th April, seven on 27th April. In autumn, first there were singles on 13th and 18th September, then a large influx with 40 on 19th, 250 on 20th down to 50 on 22nd. Fresh arrival of 300 on 23rd decreasing to 50 by 25th. 100 on 26th and one to ten daily to 7th October. Singles on 10th and 14th October. The numbers in September were the highest on record for the Isle, the previous best being 180 in 1974.

**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*. In spring, one on 28th March, two on 29th March to 1st April and singles on 7th, 14th and 16th May. A good series of autumn records with four on 22nd October, ten on 25th, and 15 on 27th October. Four to six daily till 2nd November then seven on 3-4th November with two to three till 9th and one on 12th.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*. Very scarce again. Two spring records of single birds on 16th May and 12th June were the only records.



**Yellow-browed Bunting** *Emberiza chrysophrys*. One, probably a ♂, at Setter from 12-23rd October. Trapped on 12th, seen at Field during last few days of its stay. This is the first record of this central Siberian species for Britain.

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*. One on 25th April. In autumn an extraordinary series of records produced the best ever year for this species. One on 14th September, another on 22nd September, three on 23rd, one on 24th, three on 25th and two on 26-27th September with one till 2nd October. One on 11th October, two on 12th and a different individual on 14th October, eight individuals involved in autumn.



**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*. One in spring on 11th May. Four in autumn on 6-7th September, 22nd September to 1st October, 7th October and 12th October.

**Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*. A ♀ on 4th July was only the second recorded in this month. Autumn birds as follows, one 27-28th August, two on 30-31st August, one 3-4th September, another 12-13th September and one on the late date of 29th September. Six individuals in autumn, all ♂♂ 's.

**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Two on 14th March, passage in late March with nine on 27th, ten on 28th and 12 on 1st April. One to nine on several dates to 14th April. Two on 27th April, two on 3rd May and one to four most days to 31st May, with 17 on 5th, 14 on 7th and on 10th May. In autumn, two on 15th September, 17 on 22nd September and 35 on 23rd. 20 to 30 till 28th September decreasing to five by 30th. Ten on 3rd October then one to three most days to 28th October with five on 26th. One on 3-8th November.

**Red-headed Bunting** *Emberiza bruniceps*. This species is in category 'D' of the British List. A ♂ in song at Midway and Shirva from 17-26th May.

*All records of rare birds submitted to the British Birds Rarities Committee in 1979 were accepted with the exceptions of Long-tailed Skua on 6th June, Arctic Warbler on 30th September and Black-headed Bunting on 10th August.*

## Seabird ringing on Fair Isle

During the period mid June to the end of July the Observatory staff spend every suitable opportunity scaling cliffs or using our boat to gain access to the seabird colonies.

In the last two years a total of 5,921 seabirds have been ringed on the Isle, this excluding Storm Petrel, Skuas, and Common Gulls. A large percentage of the total is made up of Guillemots, in fact in 1979 Fair Isle ringed 30% of all the Guillemots ringed in Britain. This could be a costly business if it were not for the British Trust for Ornithology who supply free rings for use on auks, and S.O.T.E.A.G. who pay for rings used on Shags and certain other species.

One of the prime considerations in seabird ringing is to keep disturbance to a minimum. Great harm could be caused to a colony by careless ringers. We are very fortunate on Fair Isle in having a good number of auk colonies in boulder-beach or cave sites where there is little danger of losing chicks or eggs. The birds nesting on narrow ledge sites are left well alone. The timing of the visit is crucial and we wait till most birds have young large enough to ring before visiting that colony. Many of the colonies are only accessible for an hour or so either side of low tide and the timing here is even more crucial! Before a ringing expedition we set out a supply of the correct ring sizes and string these onto rods so that the right ring can be found quickly and easily. Each member of the team has a set role once we get into the colony, there are catchers who hook the adult birds and extricate chicks from their hiding places among the boulders, someone ringing all the new birds, someone to process those adult birds that require re-ringing due to ring-wear caused by abrasion on the rocks. One of the most important jobs is that of scribe, making careful note of all the ring numbers and details such as age and bridling.

In 1980 we assisted the Seabirds at Sea Team of the NCC who needed to colour-mark a number of adult Guillemots in order to discover where these birds were feeding out at sea. Several hundred birds were marked with a yellow dye on the white parts of their plumage. This would only last till the birds moult into winter plumage but was quite long enough for this study. These yellow marked birds gave us a great opportunity to see what effect our presence in the colony was having. We were pleasantly surprised to see how quickly these birds returned to their chicks, often before we had finished ringing others in that colony.

For the first time we paid a second visit to one colony, Lericum in order to mark as many adults as possible there. As we had no need to catch the yellow-marked birds we were able to watch



them, and we were pleased to see how many of them continued to look after their chicks whilst we took un-marked birds from all around them. One bird brooded its own chick, and literally took the chick of another under its wing, and continued to brood throughout the time we were in the colony despite sitting only a few feet from the end of our climbing rope.

The recoveries of our seabirds tell us much about their movements when they are away from the Isle — which is the greater part of the year for many species. It is important to have a good stock of ringed birds, especially with the advent of oil in Shetland and the inevitable spills and tanker-washings.

Besides recoveries we get a large number of retrap adults each year. Some birds have been re-ringed five or six times and are almost old friends. These retraps give us an indication of the age structure of the population as well as colony interchange. This, coupled with the regular monitoring of selected colonies enables us to keep an eye on the population of our seabirds and document the increases or decreases each year.

Because of the difficulty of access we can rarely take visitors on our seabird expeditions but many have watched the proceedings from the top of the cliffs. Besides giving an insight into the work of the Observatory the visitors are usually rewarded by the spectacle of ringers being lacerated by irate adult Shags or Razorbills and on some occasions the added bonus of wardens wading through icy water or falling out of the boat!

## Ringing details 1980

6,432 birds of 103 species were ringed on the Island during the year. Two of these, Pine Bunting and Yellow-browed Bunting were new to the Observatory's ringing list.

The monthly ringing totals were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	4	401	185	269	1930	1829	452	987	359	16	—

The winter was not overly hard and the traps did not suffer too badly. Most needed some repair however, the North Grind was completely re-built and the Observatory trap was extensively rebuilt, the catching end was lengthened and turned to face North Haven making it much more efficient. As usual mist-nets were used to catch Storm Petrels and some of the more unusual birds. The Storm Petrels totals are the lowest for many years, this reflects poor catching conditions at the best time of year rather than any drop in numbers. Dazzling produced some rarely handled species including Pink-footed Geese and Whooper Swans. Wader trapping was not very successful due to a poor autumn passage but a

Temminck's Stint was trapped at Easter Lothar in spring.

The seabird season was excellent with fine weather and good breeding success. Once again record totals were achieved for several species. Unfortunately we missed many Kittiwakes by not being able to use our boat at the crucial time due to weather.

The top ten species ringed were Guillemot 1,152, Shag 788, Starling 683, Razorbill 371, Robin 261, Chaffinch 247, Blackbird 195, Fulmar 190, Puffin 164 and Wheatear 160. Guillemot being in top position for the second time.

Record totals were achieved for Guillemot, Shag, Razorbill, and Chaffinch, as well as Merlin 11, Bonxie 40, and Siskin 31. 143 Dunnock was the second highest for this species. Once again Twite and Wren were on the low side despite the fine summer.

Among the more unusual species handled were Pink-footed Goose 2, Scaup, Temminck's Stint, Bar-tailed Godwit, Jackdaw, Nightingale 4, Melodious Warbler, Icterine Warbler 3, Subalpine Warbler, Arctic Warbler, Richard's Pipit, Woodchat Shrike, Scarlet Rosefinch 5, Pine Bunting, Yellow-browed Bunting and Little Bunting. A full table of ringing totals and recoveries follows.

#### TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980 Total	1948-80 Total	Recovered	
	juv/	adult			1980	1948-80
Little Grebe	-	-	-	7	-	-
Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Slavonian Grebe	-	-	-	2	-	-
Fulmar	32	158	190	7821	4	59
Storm Petrel	143	-	143	7541	28	173
Leach's Petrel	-	-	-	15	-	-
Gannet	2	-	2	30	-	1
Cormorant	-	-	-	7	-	-
Shag	30	758	788	11307	10	255
Grey Heron	-	-	-	12	-	1
Whooper Swan	3	-	3	27	-	4
Bean Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pink-footed Goose	2	-	2	4	1	1
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	2	-	1
Greylag Goose	-	-	-	11	2	4
Barnacle Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Shelduck	-	-	-	1	-	-
Wigeon	-	-	-	10	-	-
Teal	-	-	-	33	-	2
Mallard	-	-	-	7	-	1
Pintail	-	-	-	1	-	1
Pochard	-	-	-	1	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-

## TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980	1948-80	Recovered	
	juv/	pull	Total	Total	1980	1948-80
Tufted Duck	-	-	-	8	-	-
Scaup	1	-	1	4	-	-
Eider	-	-	-	81	-	2
Long-tailed Duck	-	-	-	7	-	-
Velvet Scoter	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goldeneye	-	-	-	11	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	1	-	-
Goosander	-	-	-	3	-	1
Goshawk	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sparrowhawk	4	-	4	128	1	14
Kestrel	1	-	1	30	-	5
Red-footed Falcon	-	-	-	1	-	-
Merlin	11	-	11	157	1	12
Peregrine	-	-	-	6	-	1
Quail	-	-	-	4	-	-
Water Rail	1	-	1	204	-	3
Spotted Crake	-	-	-	10	-	-
Little Crake	-	-	-	1	-	1
Corncrake	-	-	-	34	-	2
Moorhen	1	-	1	66	-	3
Coot	1	-	1	12	-	1
Great Bustard	-	-	-	1	-	-
Oystercatcher	-	34	34	921	5	48
Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ringed Plover	-	9	9	340	-	3
Golden Plover	-	-	-	17	-	-
Dotterel	-	-	-	3	-	-
Lapwing	-	-	-	218	-	3
Knot	1	-	1	67	-	1
Sanderling	-	-	-	78	-	-
Western Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Stint	-	-	-	63	-	-
Temminck's Stint	1	-	1	2	-	-
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	5	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper	-	-	-	4	-	-
Purple Sandpiper	-	-	-	138	-	1
Dunlin	1	-	1	396	-	6
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ruff	-	-	-	31	-	1
Jack Snipe	1	-	1	110	-	3
Snipe	4	-	4	257	-	4
Woodcock	3	-	3	214	1	11
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	1	-	-

## TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980	1948-80	Recovered	
	juv/	adult	Total	Total	1980	1948-80
		pull				
Bar-tailed Godwit	1	-	1	8	-	2
Whimbrel	-	-	-	13	-	-
Curlew	2	2	4	42	-	2
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	3	-	-
Redshank	3	-	3	204	-	2
Greenshank	-	-	-	7	-	-
Green Sandpiper	3	-	3	27	-	1
Wood Sandpiper	-	-	-	15	-	-
Common Sandpiper	1	-	1	38	-	-
Turnstone	-	-	-	63	-	-
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	4	-	-
Grey Phalarope	-	-	-	3	-	-
Pomarine Skua	-	-	-	1	-	-
Arctic Skua	12	107	119	2547	1	56
Great Skua	-	40	40	489	1	11
Black-headed Gull	1	-	1	20	-	3
Common Gull	-	3	3	67	-	5
Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	66	68	937	1	22
Herring Gull	13	126	139	2561	4	62
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-
Glaucous Gull	-	-	-	27	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	23	70	93	1495	4	66
Kittiwake	3	137	140	2610	1	16
Common Tern	-	47	47	188	-	2
Arctic Tern	-	1	-	6	-	1
Guillemot	328	824	1152	6737	15	117
Razorbill	74	297	371	2777	7	59
Black Guillemot	2	9	11	1099	1	15
Little Auk	-	-	-	5	-	-
Puffin	82	82	164	7444	-	21
Rock Dove	-	-	-	11	-	1
Woodpigeon	1	-	1	29	-	2
Collared Dove	-	-	-	116	-	-
Turtle Dove	-	-	-	50	-	1
Cuckoo	1	-	1	70	-	1
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	1
Long-eared Owl	-	-	-	121	-	6
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	9	-	-
Nightjar	-	-	-	3	-	-
Swift	-	-	-	15	-	1
Hoopoe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Wryneck	4	-	4	143	-	-
Great Spotted						
Woodpecker	-	-	-	18	-	-

# TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980	1948-80	Recovered	
	juv/	adult	Total	Total	1980	1948-80
Short-toed Lark	-	-	-	5	-	-
Woodlark	-	-	-	2	-	-
Skylark	-	6	6	884	-	3
Shore Lark	-	-	-	3	-	-
Sand Martin	-	-	-	7	-	-
Swallow	1	-	1	209	-	8
House Martin	-	-	-	135	-	1
Richard's Pipit	1	-	1	9	-	-
Tawny Pipit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Olive-backed Pipit	-	-	-	4	-	-
Tree Pipit	3	-	3	448	-	-
Pechora Pipit	-	-	-	5	-	-
Meadow Pipit	129	24	153	6764	1	41
Red-throated Pipit	-	-	-	5	-	-
Rock Pipit	3	105	108	6422	-	21
Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	10	-	-
Citrine	-	-	5	-	1	-
Citrine Wagtail	-	-	5	-	1	-
Grey Wagtail	2	-	2	13	-	-
Pied Wagtail	4	-	4	418	-	4
Waxwing	-	-	-	33	-	-
Dipper	-	-	-	8	-	-
Wren	3	-	3	560	-	-
Dunnock	143	-	143	1437	-	5
Robin	261	-	261	4903	2	28
Thrush Nightingale	-	-	-	14	-	-
Nightingale	4	-	4	17	-	-
Siberian Rubythroat	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bluethroat	1	-	1	155	-	2
Black Redstart	-	-	-	85	-	-
Redstart	17	-	17	1321	-	1
Whinchat	15	-	15	424	-	2
Stonechat	2	-	2	40	-	-
Wheatear	160	4	164	12335	-	57
Black-eared Wheatear	-	-	-	3	-	-
Rock Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Grey-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	2	-	-
White's Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ring Ousel	14	-	14	323	-	6
Blackbird	195	-	195	15053	5	264
Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black-throated Thrush	-	-	1	-	-	-
Fieldfare	1	-	1	541	-	2
Song Thrush	71	-	71	1766	2	23

## TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980	1948-80	Recovered	
	juv/	adult	Total	Total	1980	1948-80
		pull				
Redwing	96	-	96	5711	-	61
Mistle Thrush	-	-	-	18	-	1
Pallas's Grasshopper W.	-	-	-	2	-	-
Lanceolated Warbler	-	-	-	12	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	1	-	1	69	-	-
River Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Aquatic Warbler	-	-	-	20	-	-
Sedge Warbler	15	-	15	268	1	2
Paddyfield Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Marsh Warbler	-	-	-	46	-	-
Reed Warbler	7	-	7	115	-	1
Great Reed Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Thick-billed Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Booted Warbler	-	-	-	5	-	-
Icterine Warbler	3	-	3	59	-	-
Melodious Warbler	1	-	1	8	-	-
Subalpine Warbler	1	-	1	17	-	-
Sardinian Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Barred Warbler	9	-	9	288	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	9	-	9	405	-	-
Whitethroat	6	-	6	673	-	-
Garden Warbler	81	-	81	1922	-	1
Blackcap	108	-	108	2463	-	7
Greenish Warbler	-	-	-	11	-	-
Arctic Warbler	1	-	1	24	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	-	-	-	67	-	-
Dusky Warbler	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bonelli's Warbler	-	-	1	-	-	-
Wood Warbler	5	-	5	63	-	-
Chiffchaff	26	-	26	489	-	-
Willow Warbler	136	-	136	2339	1	3
Goldcrest	22	-	22	990	-	2
Spotted Flycatcher	10	-	10	408	-	1
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	-	1	37	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	14	-	14	657	-	3
Blue Tit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Great Tit	-	-	-	5	-	-
Treecreeper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Golden Oriole	-	-	-	3	-	1
Isabelline Shrike	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	4	-	4	186	-	-
Lesser Grey Shrike	-	-	-	6	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	1	-	1	95	-	1
Woodchat Shrike	1	-	1	10	-	-

# TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1980	1948-80	Recovered	
	juv/	adult	Total	Total	1980	1948-80
Jackdaw	1	-	1	3	-	-
Rook	-	-	-	4	-	-
Hooded Crow	-	-	-	40	-	-
Raven	-	-	-	17	-	-
Starling	474	209	683	13650	10	114
Rose-coloured Starling	-	-	-	2	-	-
House Sparrow	22	-	22	1087	-	1
Tree Sparrow	-	-	-	88	-	1
Chaffinch	247	-	247	1530	-	6
Brambling	84	-	84	1931	2	8
Greenfinch	-	-	-	73	-	-
Goldfinch	-	-	-	4	-	-
Siskin	31	-	31	234	-	1
Linnet	-	-	-	101	-	1
Twite	39	-	39	3610	-	3
Redpoll	1	-	1	479	-	1
Arctic Redpoll	-	-	-	6	-	-
Crossbill	-	-	-	290	-	2
Parrot Crossbill	-	-	-	35	-	-
Scarlet Rosefinch	5	-	5	61	-	-
Bullfinch	1	-	1	27	-	-
Hawfinch	-	-	-	3	-	-
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Lapland Bunting	-	-	-	37	-	-
Snow Bunting	1	-	1	497	-	3
Pine Bunting	1	-	1	1	-	-
Yellowhammer	1	-	1	39	-	-
Ortolan Bunting	-	-	-	17	-	-
Cretzschmar's Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	-	-	6	-	-	-
Rustic Bunting	-	-	-	9	-	1
Little Bunting	1	-	1	16	-	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	-	-	-6	-	-	-
Reed Bunting	15	-	15	273	-	2
Pallas's Reed Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black-headed Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Corn Bunting	-	-	-	3	-	-
Red-headed Bunting	-	-	-	5	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3416</b>	<b>3016</b>	<b>6432</b>	<b>156385</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>1770</b>

# Recoveries in 1980

A total of 79 recoveries were reported during the year, the more interesting ones are given in full below. As usual Storm Petrel movements made up a large part of the total and these are summarised in table form. The international code of symbols for method of recovery and age of ringing are used:

- v — caught or trapped by man and released with ring
- + — shot or killed by man
- x — found dead or dying
- xA — found long dead
- () — caught or trapped alive, not released or released without ring
- /?/ — manner of recovery unknown

Where date of recovery is given in brackets it signifies the date of recovery unknown, date of finder's report given.

## Age Codes:

- 1 pullus or nestling
- 2 fully grown exact age unknown
- 3 hatched in current calendar year
- 4 hatched before current calendar year exact year unknown
- 5 hatched in previous calendar year
- 6 hatched before previous calendar year exact year unknown
- 7 hatched 2 years before ringing
- 8 hatched 3 or more years before ringing

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

## FULMAR

<i>FS46,920</i>	1	26.07.73	<i>Landberg, Fair Isle</i>
x		11.06.80	Bergen Bank, NORTH SEA 236 km 77° caught in fishing net
<i>SS50,772</i>	8	15.07.66	<i>Hoini, Fair Isle</i>
x		10.07.79	Luneberg, GERMANY. 53°52' N 8°42' E 889 km 135°. Found dead on shore
<i>SS 84946</i>	4	04.09.69	<i>North Gavel, Fair Isle</i>
x		15.04.80	Nordfriesische Inseln, GERMANY. 54°40' N 8°18' E. 806 km 132°

## STORM PETREL

<i>2171,852</i>	4	15.08.76	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		15.08.77	Inishgiora, Mayo, EIRE. 54°13' N 10°7' W 784 km 221°



Other recoveries and controls of this species were as follows:

	Ringed on Fair Isle	Controlled on Fair Isle
Foula (Shetland)		1
Yell (Shetland)	10	
Samphrey (Shetland)	1	
Fetlar (Shetland)	2	
Lerwick (Shetland)	2	
Whalsay (Shetland)	1	
Watsness (Shetland)	1	
St. Kilda (Western Isles)	2	
Shiant Is. (Western Isles)	2	1
Sule Skerry (Orkney)	1	
<i>Sanda Is. (Strathclyde)</i>	<i>1</i>	
Duncansby Head (Highland)	1	
Summer Isles (Highland)	1	1

#### GREYLAG GOOSE

5028,377	4	27.10.79	<i>Dazzle, Easter Lothar, Fair Isle</i>
x		19.04.80	Porshofn, ICELAND. 66°12' N 15°20' W 1013 km 317°
5028,378	3 ♀	27.10.79	<i>Dazzle, Easter Lothar, Fair Isle</i>
+		09.01.80	Dunblane, Central Reg., SCOTLAND 56°13' N 3°57' W 393 km 200°

These two birds ringed on the same night and almost certainly of one family produced one recovery in the wintering area and another in the breeding ground.

#### SPARROWHAWK

EH44,896	6 ♀	28.10.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
x		01.11.79	Cod Platform, Cof Field, NORTH SEA 57°4' N 2°26' E 362 km 139°

#### MERLIN

DS07,830	3 ♀	15.09.78	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		04.07.80	Eshaness, SHETLAND

#### OYSTERCATCHER

FV06,289	1	02.07.77	<i>Ward Hill, Fair Isle</i>
v	7	03.02.80	Bangor, WALES. 53°14' N 4°3' W
FV73,227	1	22.06.79	<i>Roskillie, Fair Isle</i>
v		03.02.80	Bangor, WALES. 716 km 192°

These two birds ringed as nestlings in separate years both controlled by Scan Ringing Group in the same catch.

#### WOODCOCK

EB47,695	2	28.10.76	<i>Fair Isle</i>
+		18.01.80	Strabane, Co. Tyrone, N. IRELAND 54°49' N 7°29' W 631 km 214°

Our first recovery of this species from Northern Ireland.

# GREAT SKUA

<i>HW68,611</i>	1	06.07.79	<i>Brunt Brae, Fair Isle</i>
+		18.09.79	Rzhev, Kalinin, Moscow, USSR
			56°23' N 34°30' E 2156 km 99°

A remarkable inland recovery from USSR where this species is a rare vagrant.

# GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

<i>HW68,517</i>	1	19.07.78	<i>Sheep Rock, Fair Isle</i>
()		04.02.80	FAEROE IS. 61°40' N 6°45' W
			367 km 310°

# HERRING GULL

<i>GK47,018</i>	1	08.07.77	<i>Face O'Hessin Gully, Fair Isle</i>
v	8	24.05.80	Sullom Voe, SHETLAND

# KITTIWAKE

<i>EH67,539</i>	1	12.07.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
x		23.08.80	Schleswig-Holstein, GERMANY
			54°4' N 8°58' E 884 km 133°

This bird was found dead after violent weather, our first recovery of this species from Germany.

# GUILLEMOT

A further two recoveries from Denmark is interesting and continues the trend shown in last year's report. Other recoveries were from Norway(9), England (1) and Scotland (2).

# RAZORBILL

<i>M19,404</i>	1	03.07.75	<i>Wester Lothar, Fair Isle</i>
v		29.06.80	Foula, SHETLAND. 72 km 339° "Fleyged"
<i>M26,254</i>	1	27.06.77	<i>Sauversteen, Fair Isle</i>
x		20.12.79	Jylland, DENMARK. 55°30' N 8°35' E
			755 km 126° caught in fishing net

Other recoveries of this species were from France (2), Spain (1), Portugal (1) and Southern England (1).

# BLACK GUILLEMOT

<i>EB07,206</i>	1	21.07.74	<i>Kirn O'Skroo, Fair Isle</i>
x		01.02.79	Sullom Voe, SHETLAND 101 km 9°
			oil victim

# MEADOW PIPIT

<i>A188,924</i>	2	17.09.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		16.12.79	Rye Meads, HERTS. 51°47' N 0°0'
			867 km 173°

# ROBIN

<i>A394,177</i>	4	27.03.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
xA		20.04.80	Arnhem, NETHERLANDS
			53°32' N 6°35' E 834 km 143°
<i>A753,020</i>	3	23.09.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		13.10.80	IJsselmeerpolders, NETHERLANDS
			52°32' N 5°26' E 892 km 151°

Two interesting recoveries, A394,177 had presumably overshoot to Fair Isle in spring and returned to correct its heading. A753,020 is typical of a Scandinavian migrant correcting for SE winds causing it to arrive on Fair Isle instead of the continental coast.

# BLACKBIRD

<i>XH31,248</i>	5 ♂	30.03.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
x		11.08.80	Uusimaa, FINLAND. 60°14' N 24°42' E
			1469 km 87°

This bird was probably in its breeding area when its life was cut short by a cat.

<i>XH31,472</i>	6 ♂	14.03.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
<i>Retrapped</i>		08.04.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
+		04.07.80	Telemark, NORWAY. 59°5' N 9°40' E
			642 km 94°

This bird was shot to protect fruit.

# SONG THRUSH

<i>NX37,720</i>	5	08.05.78	<i>Fair Isle</i>
+		18.10.79	Lyon, Rhone, FRANCE
			43°45' N 4°42' E 1606 km 165°
<i>XC28,400</i>	2	12.10.77	<i>Fair Isle</i>
+		19.10.80	Tours, Inder-et-Loire, FRANCE
			47°23' N 0°42' E 1358 km 174°

# SEDGE WARBLER

<i>A394,563</i>	4	13.05.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
x		20.05.80	on ship 30 miles NE of Arbroath,
			NORTH SEA. 56°35' N 1°45' W 328 km 181°

This bird apparently re-orientating after spring overshoot to Fair Isle.

# WILLOW WARBLER

<i>036,340</i>	3	30.08.80	
		07 hrs	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		31.08.80	
		13 hrs	North Ronaldsay, ORKNEY 50 km
v		01.09.80	59°22' N 2°26' W 248°
v		02.09.80	

A rapid short-distance movement.

# STARLING

<i>XH31,813</i>	4 ♂	28.03.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
x		13.05.80	Kalvola, Hane, FINLAND
			61°6' N 24°3' E 1422 km 83°

This bird, presumably in breeding area was another cat victim.

<i>XE08,462</i>	3 ♂	02.10.78	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		14.11.79	Venture 2 Rig, Claymore Field, NORTH SEA
			58°25' N 0°30' W 140 km 153°

# BRAMBLING

<i>A188,430</i>	5 ♂	17.04.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
v		01.05.79	Hardanger, Hordaland, NORWAY
			59°59' N 6°1' E 430 km 83°

Our first Norwegian recovery of this species.

## CONTROLS

### Birds ringed elsewhere and recovered on Fair Isle.

# MERLIN

Three Merlins ringed as pullus in Shetland were controlled on Fair Isle in August and September.

# BLACK-HEADED GULL

<i>EH57,920</i>	1	24.06.79	<i>Punds Water, Mainland, Shetland</i>
x	5	01.07.80	Fair Isle. 103 km 187°

# BLACKBIRD

<i>7630,122</i>			
<i>Helgoland</i>	4 ♂	14.10.79	<i>Helgoland, GERMANY. 54°11' N 7°55' E</i>
v	6	28.03.80	Fair Isle. 828 km 316°
<i>XH005,24</i>	3 ♂	17.11.79	<i>Cleveland, ENGLAND</i>
v	5	31.03.80	Fair Isle. 549 km 356°

# REED WARBLER

<i>A629,395</i>	3	24.08.80	<i>North Ronaldsay, ORKNEY. 59°22' N 2°26' W</i>
v		26.08.80	Fair Isle. 50 km 68°

# BLACKCAP

<i>15V38,204</i>			
<i>Brux.</i>	3 ♀	01.09.79	<i>Hainant, BELGIUM. 50°26' N 4°25' E</i>
v		15.10.79	Fair Isle. 1081 km 339°

An example of how birds are drifted to Fair Isle in autumn across North Sea instead of making landfall on continental coast.

## STARLING

7137, 749

Stavanger	6 ♂	23.09.76	<i>Makkevika Gisko, More og Romsdal, NORWAY</i>
			62°30' N 6°2' E
v		15.10.79	Fair Isle. 527 km 231°

## CHAFFINCH

17V97,333

BLB		20.10.78	<i>Ekeren, Antwerp, BELGIUM. 51°17' N 4°42' E</i>
v	6 ♂	30.03.80	Fair Isle. 992 km 338°

## REDPOLL

295343

Brux.	4 ♂	01.12.75	<i>Brabant, BELGIUM. 50°52' N 4°42' E</i>
v	4	23.05.80	Fair Isle. 1042 km 338°

## RETRAPS

As usual a large number of birds ringed on the Island in previous years were retrapped. Among the more interesting were:

### FULMAR

A bird ringed as a pullus at Johnnies Peats in August, 1966, was found dead at North Gunnawark on 17th July.

### LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

A bird ringed as a pullus on the Burrian on 21.07.72 was retrapped in the Axell trap on 28th July, 1980.

### TYSTIE

A bird ringed as an adult in July, 1965, in South Haven and subsequently re-ringed on three occasions was retrapped with a chick on 31st July, 1980. This bird must be in the region of 20 years old.

### OYSTERCATCHER

A bird ringed as a pullus in Homisdale on 11.07.63 was found long dead on 19.07.80.

### CHIFFCHAFF

One ringed on 14.06.80 was retrapped on the Isle on 21.06, 08.07 and 20.08.80.

## STARLING

A bird ringed as an adult. ♀ in March, 1970 was found dead on 01.07.80.

# Spend a Holiday on Fair Isle

Reasonably priced accommodation on the fascinating island of Fair Isle is available in the Fair Isle Bird Observatory to Ornithologists and general visitors alike, from March to October.

During the peak bird migration periods the island is of course an irresistible destination for keen ornithologists, but at other times — June, July and August — Fair Isle has much to offer those who enjoy quiet, away-from-it-all holidays in an incomparable island setting. Towering cliffs, gently-rounded hills and the friendliness of the islanders combine to provide an unforgettable holiday for the artist, walker, naturalist or out-of-season bird watcher — or for those with a less energetic holiday in mind.

## Accommodation rates in the Hostel

(including board and lodging):

Single Room	£65 per person per week, £12 per day
Double Room	£52 per person per week, £9.50 per day
Dormitory	£40 per person per week, £7 per day

Further details from, and bookings to, Nick Riddiford, F.I.B.O.T. Warden, Fair Isle, Shetland. Telephone Fair Isle (035-12) 258.

## Transport to Fair Isle

<b>Monday</b>	Loganair scheduled flights on eight-seater Islander plane from Tingwall Airport, Shetland.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Fair Isle Mail Boat, "Good Shepherd", leaves from Grutness Pier, Shetland, at noon. (Return: leaves 0700, arrives Grutness 10.00).
<b>Wednesday</b>	No transport
<b>Thursday</b>	No transport
<b>Friday</b>	"Good Shepherd" from Grutness at noon. (Return: leaves 07.00, arrives Grutness 10.00). May and September. Loganair flight from and to Shetland.
<b>Saturday</b>	Loganair flight from and to Shetland. "Good Shepherd" as above, June to August.
<b>Sunday</b>	No transport.

## Transport details from:

Loganair Scheduled Service Bookings, Loganair, Tingwall. Tel. Gott (059 584) 246.

J. W. Stout: Tel. Fair Isle (035-12) 222 (for "Good Shepherd" bookings).

## Friends of Fair Isle

We urgently need more 'Friends of Fair Isle'. The minimum annual subscription is £2.50 and can be paid by Banker's Order or Deed of Covenant.

Full details from;

*The Hon. Secretary  
21 Regent Terrace  
Edinburgh, EH7 5BT*

## Acknowledgements

As usual we are indebted to many people for their help during the year. John Holloway provided bird records during my absence from the Isle. Stewart Thomson, Jim Wilson, John Best and Brian Wilson all helped with maintenance problems. David Okill helped us from the Shetland Mainland. S.O.T.E.A.G. once again gave a generous grant towards our seabird ringing work. Many islanders and visitors helped us through the year and to all we are very grateful.

The vignettes were kindly drawn for us by Mr John Holloway who runs the shop on Fair Isle and from drawings are available direct, and of the Brunnich's Guillemot by Mr Mark Richardson. All photographs were taken by Mr Iain Robertson except on pages 13, and 16 by the National trust for Scotland, and on page 9 by the late Mr James MacGeoch.

# Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

## Treasurer's Report

Before I say anything about the 1980 figures, I would like to pay my own tribute to a friend, and to express the personal loss that I felt on hearing of the death of George Waterston. George, Irene and I were on Fair Isle for the opening of the new community hall in June — a far cry in time and distance, from the German prisoner of war camp in which George and I first discussed the setting up of the Observatory. His main concern was always for the people of the island, and I know the happiness that he felt in seeing all those children sliding up and down the new hall floor. It is not so many years since the school had only two pupils. Without George and his determined enthusiasm I would not be writing this, and it is perfectly possible that Fair Isle might have been another St. Kilda. A fine man.

The Observatory still keeps its head above water. We show a surplus for the year of some sixty odd pounds, but I would draw your attention to three points. First, that we depend on the running profits of the Hostel to combat rising inflation; secondly that the surplus is arrived at after making a larger than usual provision for extra-ordinary expenditure; and thirdly, that even that larger figure does not cover the improvements we are already committed to undertake. There will be a probable shortfall of some £2,000 after receipt of grants. I will take the accounts individually, and ask you to remember that the important points are the Revenue Account and the figure for net current assets in the Balance Sheet.

### **I Revenue Account**

*Income* increased by £4,000 from last year's figure, three quarters from Board charges. The National Trust for Scotland Wildlife Fund made a welcome increase in their grant, for which our thanks, and there is little other change except I would stress that Interest on Temporary Deposits was exceptional due to higher interest rates, and will only accrue while the money remains unspent on future improvements.

*Expenditure* is inevitably increased on practically every item listed. Iain and Sally Robertson are to be congratulated on keeping the increases incurred in running the Hostel under firm control.

### **II Appeal Fund**

Carried to Capital Account.



### **III Capital Account**

We received a further sum of £496 from Richard Richardson's Executry. And the Dulverton Trust, who have been so exceptionally good to us in the past have made a further generous gift of £2,000. I can only thank them once more for all their help. We are also indebted to Mrs Dorothy L. Rand, President, Caribbean Welfare Foundation, Mr and Mrs Crawford Greenwalt per Scottish Heritage Trust, U.S.A. Inc., Granada TV, and the Tay Charitable Trust, who contributed a further £1,079 to our funds. The final result is, as usual, transferred to the Balance Sheet.

### **IV Balance Sheet**

The important figure of net current assets is up by some £2,500 to £12,919 which gives us a reasonable buffer. The Garage and Tank House just completed appear for the first time. I would remind you once more that, although plant and machinery are written down annually, we have never written down the cost of the Hostel.

# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st OCTOBER, 1980

## REVENUE ACCOUNT

### INCOME

<u>1979</u>		
£13,996	Board .....	£16,945
400	Grant — National Trust for Scotland	
	Wildlife Fund.....	500
484	Fair Isle Endowment Trust.....	456
1,563	Subscriptions and Donations.....	1,582
304	Tax Recovered from Deeds of Covenant.....	267
381	Sale of Publications.....	434
225	Interest on Government Stock.....	225
849	Interest on Temporary Deposits.....	1,911
275	Bird Rings Recovered.....	127
<u>£18,477</u>		<u>£22,447</u>

### EXPENDITURE

£4,064	Provisions.....	£4,519
4,492	Wages and National Insurance.....	4,768
982	Insurances .....	1,209
1,863	Heat and Light.....	2,593
1,022	Repairs and Renewals.....	1,398
1,179	Telephone, Postages and Stationery.....	1,643
841	Printing Annual Report.....	725
853	Travelling Expenses.....	1,354
603	Motor Expenses.....	504
250	Freight Inward .....	159
267	Bird Rings and Nets.....	298
702	Administration Expenses.....	701
152	Audit and Legal Charges.....	154
1	Loan Interest.....	—
600	Provision for Extraordinary Expenditure.....	1,500
566	Depreciation on Machinery and Equipment.....	859
40	Surplus for year.....	63
<u>£18,477</u>		<u>£22,447</u>

## APPEAL FUND

<u>1979</u>		
<u>£1,228</u>	Balance at 31st October, 1979.....	<u>£1,026</u>
£202	Alterations carried out during year.....	£ —
	Balance transferred to Capital Account	
1,026	to be expended on new Buildings.....	1,026
<u>£1,228</u>		<u>£1,026</u>

## CAPITAL ACCOUNT

£63,329	Balance at 31st October, 1979.....	£67,411
3,197	Richard Richardson's Executry.....	496
—	Dulverton Trust — Donation.....	2,000
270	Other Donations.....	1,079
—	Interest Received for previous year.....	688
—	Insurance Claim on Generator.....	1,500
	Transfers to meet expenditure on New Buildings	
—	from Extraordinary Expenditure Provision.....	3,243
—	and Appeal Fund.....	1,026
575	Shetland Islands Council — Grant.....	—
—	Highland & Islands Development Board — Grant.....	144
40	Surplus for year.....	63
<u>£67,411</u>	Balance transferred to Balance Sheet.....	<u>£77,650</u>

# **BALANCE SHEET as at 31st October, 1980**

## **FIXED ASSETS**

	Cost or Val	Deprec. to date		1979
Hostel Buildings.....	£51,548	£ —	£51,548	£51,548
Garage and Tank House...	6,203	—	6,203	—
Machinery and Equipment.	3,711	1,813	1,898	790
Land Rover.....	2,430	930	1,500	2,100
	<u>£63,892</u>	<u>£2,743</u>	<u>£61,149</u>	<u>£54,438</u>

## **INVESTMENT**

£2,642 8½ % Treasury Loan 1980/82 (Market Value £2,503).....	£2,582		2,582
£1,000 14½ % Falkirk D.C. Mortgage 1983.....	<u>1,000</u>	3,582	1,000

## **CURRENT ASSETS**

Stocks.....	£1,564		£ 1,283
Sundry Debtors.....	140		175
Temporary Deposits.....	14,200		14,501
Bank and Cash.....	1,258		1,538
	<u>£17,162</u>		<u>£17,497</u>

## **CURRENT LIABILITIES**

Sundry Creditors.....	£2,100		£ 3,195
Provision for Extraordinary Expenditure.....	1,500		3,243
Special Funds.....	<u>643</u>		<u>642</u>
	<u>4,243</u>		<u>£ 7,080</u>

## **NET CURRENT ASSETS**

12,919      10,417

£77,650      £68,437

## **CAPITAL ACCOUNT**

£77,650      £67,411

## **APPEAL FUND**

—      1,026

£77,650      £68,437

*Notes: 1. No depreciation has been provided on the Hostel.*

*2. Commitments for Capital Expenditure at 31st October, 1980, amount to £7,000 of which 50% will ultimately be recovered by Grants.*

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

Edinburgh, 30th January, 1981.

COOPERS & LYBRAND,  
Chartered Accountants.

# **FAIR ISLE ENDOWMENT TRUST**

## **Summary of Account for the year ended 31st October, 1980**

	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
Fund at 31st October, 1979.....	£8,309	
Income for year per Schedule.....		£ 377
Income Tax Refund 1979/80.....		<u>162</u>
		£ 539
Trustees Fees and Outlays.....	£ 83	
Remittances to F.I.B.O.T.....	<u>456</u>	
		<u>539</u>
Fund at 31st October, 1980.....	<u>£8,309</u>	

### **SCHEDULE**

	<u>Market</u>	<u>Capital</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
	<u>Value</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
Treasury Loan 1987/90, £2,400 8¼ % Loan .....	£1,944	£2,114	£ 139
Treasury Stock 1992, £2,750 10% Stock .....	2,296	2,500	192
Henderson Administration, 960 High Income Units.....	<u>615</u>	<u>638</u>	44
	<u>£4,855</u>	£5,252	
Heritable Property 21 Regent Terrace.....		3,050	
Cash Balance.....		<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>
		<u>£8,309</u>	<u>£ 377</u>

## **THE JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND**

Year ended 31st October, 1980

Balance of Funds at 31st October, 1979.....	£4,486.09
Richard Richardson's Exy — Royalties.....	471.23
Interest Received.....	514.35
Tax Refunded.....	260.36
Donations.....	<u>11.54</u>
	<u>£5,743.57</u>
Deduct:	
Legal Charges.....	£ 84.50
Grants paid (4).....	<u>240.00</u>
	<u>324.50</u>
Balance of Funds at 31st October, 1980	£5,419.07
Held as follows:	
Investment	
£6,000, 9% Treasury Loan 1994.....	£4,988.19
(Market Value £4,575)	
On Temporary Deposit.....	400.00
Cash.....	<u>30.88</u>
	<u>5,419.07</u>

## THE JOHN HARRISON MEMORIAL FUND

### Administering Committee:

Mr J. M. S. Arnott; Mr B. Grewcock (Organiser); Mr A. T. Macmillan; Mr J. H. Mellalieu; Major A. D. Peirse-Duncombe.

This special fund was set up to help young people to visit Fair Isle. It was instituted in 1968 by the late Richard Richardson in memory of John Harrison of Hunstanton in Norfolk. John, a very keen birdwatcher had visited Fair Isle three times before he died at the early age of nineteen.

The Fund gives financial assistance to young birdwatchers aged between fifteen and twentyone. Grants are awarded to successful applicants to help defray the cost of accommodation and travel. PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE to use the Fund to visit Fair Isle — all applications should be sent to the Hon. Assistant Secretary, F.I.B.O.T., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

It is essential that the Fund be continually increased so that more people can be offered financial help to visit Fair Isle. Please send your contribution to:

**The Hon. Treasurer  
Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust  
48 Castle Street  
Edinburgh EH2 3LX**

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Application for assistance from the John Harrison Memorial Fund, to visit Fair Isle must be received by 31st October.

**To: The Hon. Assistant Secretary, F.I.B.O.T., 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.**

Name ..... Age.....

Address .....

Interests .....

Why do you want to visit Fair Isle? .....

Estimate of travel costs .....

Please enclose letters supporting your application from two referees, such as a school teacher and a senior naturalist, with whom you are well acquainted.



*Reconstruction of observatory trap, March 1980.*

---

Fair Isle is only one of many Scottish Islands our Naturalist or Birdwatching Cruises and Safaris visit each summer.

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Photo: Charles Tait

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Note for Twitchers: Our unique "Islander" is distinguished from the common variety by its attractive blue and white plumage



# Scottish Ornithologists' Club

The Scottish Ornithologists' Club was formed in 1936 and membership is open to all interested in Scottish Ornithology. Meetings are held during the winter months in Aberdeen, Ayr, the Borders, Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Inverness, New Galloway, St Andrews, Stirling, Thurso and the Wigtown District at which lectures by prominent ornithologists are given and films exhibited. Expeditions are organised in the summer to places of ornithological interest.

The aims of the Club are to (a) encourage the study of Scottish ornithology and to promote an interest in wild birds; (b) co-ordinate the activities of Scottish ornithologists; (c) encourage ornithological work in Scotland; (d) encourage conservation of Scottish birds and protection of threatened and rare species; (e) hold meetings for discussion and to arrange ornithological field meetings, and (f) appoint local recorders and publish material relating to Scottish ornithology, including *Scottish Birds*, the club journal.

There are no entry fees for Membership. The Annual subscription is £5, or £2 in the case of Members under twenty-one years of age or Students under 25, who satisfy the Council of their status as such at the times at which their subscriptions fall due. The life subscription is £100. Family Membership is available to married couples and their nominated children under 18 at an Annual subscription of £7.50, or Life subscription of £150. *Scottish Birds* is issued free to Members but Family Members will receive only one copy between them. Subscriptions are payable on 1st October annually.

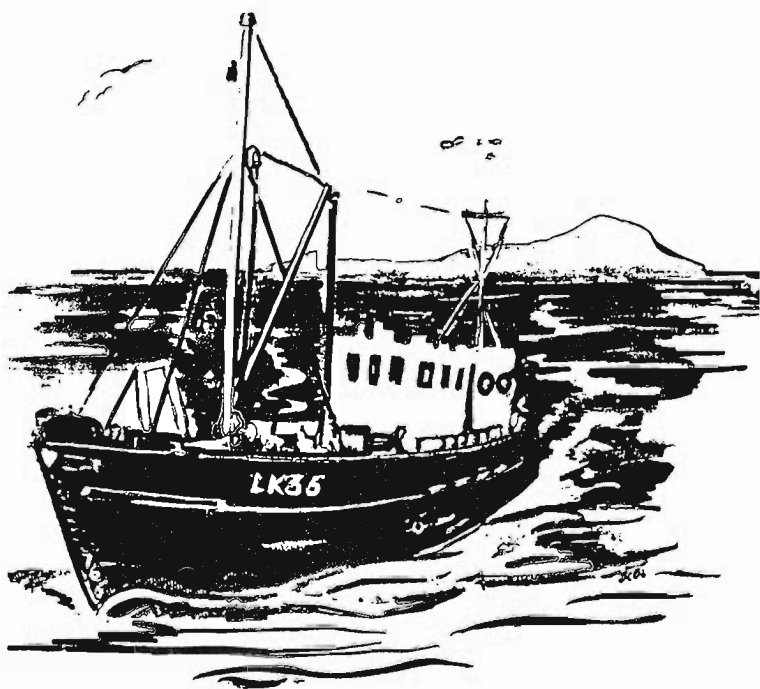
*Scottish Birds*, which is published quarterly, includes papers, articles and short notes on all aspects of ornithology in Scotland. The Scottish Bird Report is published in the Journal.

Application for Membership form, copy of the Club constitution, and other literature are obtainable from the Club Secretary, Major A. D. Peirse-Duncombe, Scottish Centre for Ornithology and Bird Protection, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT (Telephone: 031-556 6042).

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