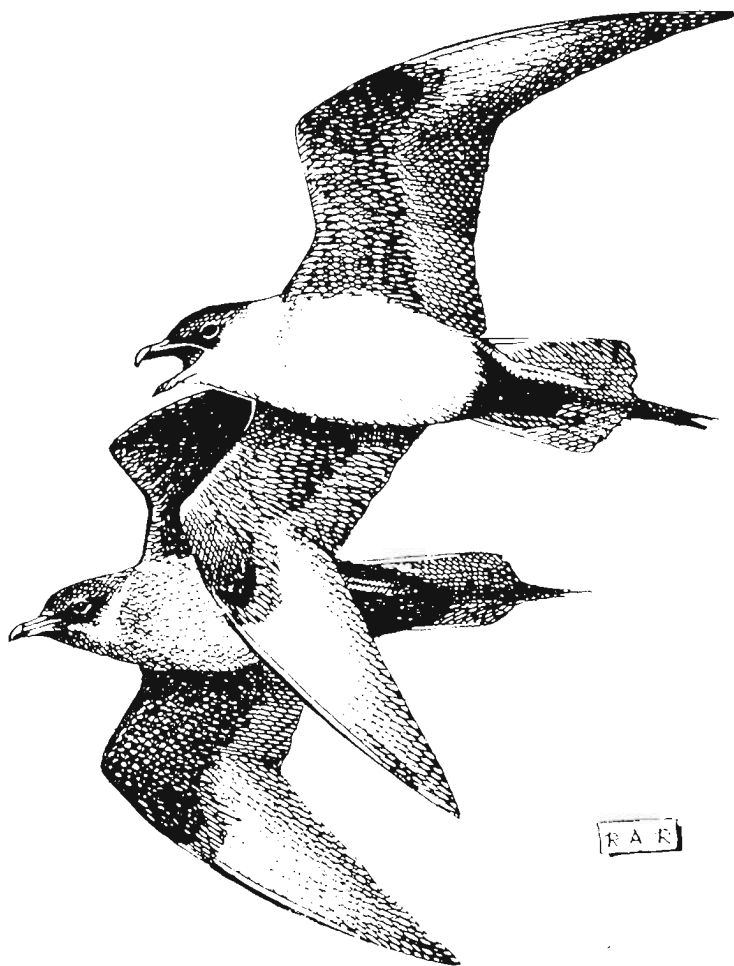


FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Report for 1985



FAIR

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

ISSN 0427-9190

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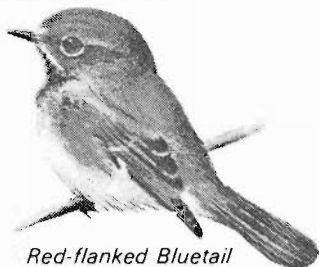
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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

REPORT No. 38
1985

Edited by Nick Riddiford

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21 Regent Terrace
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for 'Friends of Fair Isle'

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

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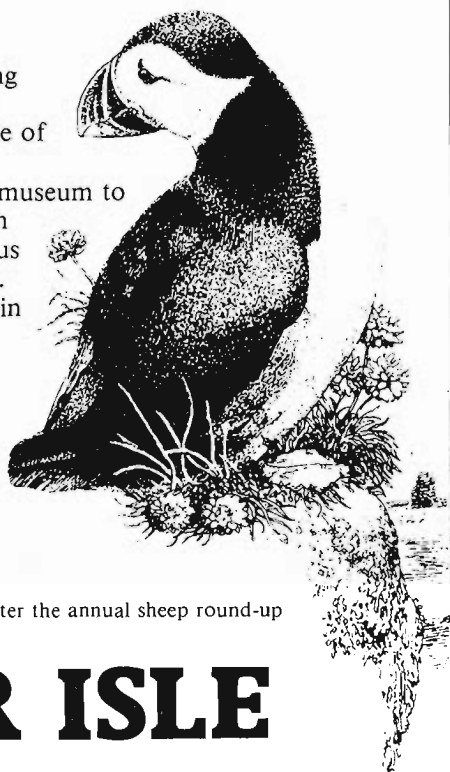
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Chairman's Report

At the 37th Annual General Meeting of the Trust held on 1st March 1985 Trustees voted to reconstitute the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust as a limited company. This was essentially to allow the freehold interests of 21 Regent Terrace in Edinburgh to be transferred to the Scottish Ornithologists' Club. It was also an opportunity to restructure FIBOT to take advantage of the opportunities likely to be opened in the next few years. The 1985 AGM also elected for the first time a total non-ornithologist as Chairman!

Now nearly 12 months on, the restructuring is complete subject to final approval of the 1986 AGM. The future of 21 Regent Terrace as a Scottish Centre for Ornithology is assured, with the SOC now able to spend considerable sums required for the refurbishment of the building. The Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust's existing use of the offices has been guaranteed by the SOC. It is an indication of the strength of commitment to ornithology in Scotland and the recognition of the part that Fair Isle can play in that scene that the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trustees agreed to the transfer. I look forward to continuing and expanding upon the close links that exist between the SOC and FIBOT to our mutual benefit.

FIBOT will operate from the 1st April 1986 as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. This is a common *modus operandi* for organisations similar to FIBOT. The Trustees having taken full legal advice are convinced that the future challenges for the Observatory are best met by the restructured constitution. We have created a small Management Committee and a Research and Ornithological Committee. Both committees recognise the increasing pressures being made on the Warden and his small staff and hopefully will provide the broader back-up support that allow him to act positively and constructively to operate and promote Fair Isle in a national and international context. The new Company has created two tiers of management — the conventional Directors who essentially replace the Executive Committee. There is also the Friends of Fair Isle who will include all the previous Trustees and many further and all supporters of the Trust but these people will not be acting as Directors. The Directors are anxious to expand the influence and experience of the Friends by enlarging the membership. This is almost a cliché in the world of conservation charities today but if FIBOT is to have any significant and worthwhile part to play in the Ornithological and Natural History theatres of the UK, we can not rely on our laurels. We have to earn and retain that respect and position by our actions. Surely FIBOT is worth preserving as an independent active organisation. We can best do so with a strong, if not enormous, membership back-up to the activities on the Island. The introduction of new members brings new ideas, new enthusiasm and commitment to the future of FIBOT. I hope that all readers of this report will both join and rejoice as members and exhort others to do likewise.

One of the attractions of the restructuring is the ability to prepare more effectively for a changing role of the Hostel in the context of Fair Isle. The contribution that FIBOT has been able to make to the economy of Fair Isle over the years is a direct reflection of our ability to attract and hold visitors to the Hostel. Until 1985 in recent years we have seen a fall in the number of visitor weeks. However the actual number of visitors has possibly increased with the increasing transport facilities to the Island. In 1985 however the visitor weeks rose by 3% and bookings for 1986 look even more encouraging. We cannot be complacent but it does look as if the hard work by Nick and Elizabeth over recent years with the help of the Executive Committee is at last earning rewards. FIBOT has to recognise that we are in a highly competitive tourist market, operating within difficult, unpredictable and expensive conditions. If FIBOT is successful we can play a constructive part in the Island's life and future prosperity. By doing so we can make a visit to Fair Isle especially attractive.

Against the harsh realism of the financial world in which we have to operate we do

try to retain the established features of life in the Observatory which are the characteristics of FIBOT that so many visitors value. Finding that balance is not easy. It is tempting to reduce the priorities of the ornithological work and concentrate our limited resources on the tourist accommodation base. Fortunately Fair Isle's important location and valuable database of migration and sea-bird statistics, accumulated since 1948, will ensure that the importance of the ornithological influence of FIBOT can never be underestimated. This aspect of the Observatory has only recently been re-emphasised by the Nature Conservancy Council. However we must look for broader interests in the Island to complement the birds. Part of Fair Isle has recently been re-designated as a SSSI, reaffirming again the status of the Island's scope of natural history. These many attractions of Fair Isle should help us to promote a growing use of the Observatory and Hostel for more visitors with a variety of interests.

I would like to reiterate the importance of the Trustees' gratitude for financial support given by authorities, agencies and individuals. Seldom is that support limited to money alone. Guidance from the Shetland Islands Council, Highlands and Islands Development Board, the National Trust for Scotland and others is always forthcoming and appreciated. I hope that we continue to prove worthy of on-going support by preparing in an adventurous and responsible way for the future.

As the original FIBOT closes its doors finally in the spring of 1986, I feel confident that George Waterston, Ian Pitman and Sir Arthur Duncan would rejoice that their original idea has blossomed to the successful story it is today. Although we have some way to go, I believe that the new direction we are facing is as exciting as it is challenging. While we should not be over-confident we can rightly be proud of all that FIBOT has achieved in nearly four decades as a bird observatory, a visitors' hostel, a bird-watchers' paradise, a training centre for wardens and a significant contribution to some of the features on the Island and which might not have been installed without the existence of FIBOT.

This has not been achieved without a great deal of hard and normally rewarding work by many people over the years. Certainly it is not worth squandering. FIBOT has a leading role to play as an Observatory in Europe and will continue always to be host to exciting and fascinating visitors, predictable and "first sighters" be they the feathered or smooth skinned species.

The upkeep of FIBOT is always a challenge but if the study of migrants and a general understanding of natural history and the experience of real Island life is worth maintaining for our own enjoyment and for the benefits of others to come, then we must succeed.

As FIBOT enters a new era the future is as exciting and daunting as it must have been in 1948. In 1986 the need for FIBOT to grow in stature is greater than ever. I hope that your commitment will be seen in active support.

Warden's Report for 1985

We report, with some satisfaction, that the downward trend in accommodation figures, which has been continuous since 1978, has been halted. The 1985 total of 310 visitor/weeks represents a 3% increase on 1984 though still 6% below that for 1983. The visitor is a very important ingredient in the rather complex mix which constitutes Fair Isle Bird Observatory and we have always placed a high priority on establishing a friendly and welcoming atmosphere giving full visitor satisfaction. In this regard we are much indebted to the efforts and goodwill of our staff. We were thus most fortunate in 1985 to obtain the willing and happy services of Ann Prior (Cook), Cathy Falkner (Assistant Cook), Paul Harvey and Kevin Shepherd (Assistants) and Dave Suddaby (Voluntary Seabird Assistant). Barbara Wayne, Liz High and Elizabeth Eastham helped out on a voluntary basis for varying lengths of time, covering for domestic staff holidays and busy periods, and they too contributed a great deal to the happy atmosphere. Our sincere thanks to them all.

The end of the downward trend in visitor/weeks has not been achieved without a great deal of time and effort by both Elizabeth and myself. However, we are not resting on our laurels. It is essential that this is not just temporary and that we may look to a regular good room-occupancy during the summer months which have latterly become our slack period. The prospects for the next year at least look hopeful. In the present financial climate we cannot rely on past reputation or 'word of mouth' to maintain a high level of bookings and thus we have actively entered the very competitive world of promotions and publicity. We have spent long hours investigating promotion outlets and presentation, and have contacted a variety of tourist industry and holiday agencies in so doing. As a starting point we engaged in discussions with the Shetland Islands Council's Research and Development and their Leisure and Recreation Departments, with the Shetland Tourist Officer, Maurice Mullay, and the HIBD at local level. We involved ourselves in the Shetland draft Tourism Plan including persuading its compiler, Andrew Blackadder, to come to Fair Isle. The ensuing public meeting must have been an eye-opener to him, for it was gratifying — though not surprising — to see the support and strength of feeling towards an increased flow of visitors to the isle expressed by the many Islanders who attended the meeting. It was gratifying, too, to receive the support and encouragement of the HIBD. Their tourist officer, Dr Maurice Cantley, became very much involved in our discussions and we were very pleased to welcome the HIBD Chairman, Mr Bob Cowan, on a fact-finding visit in August. They were most helpful with ideas for presentation and planning of our 1986 promotion package. One very positive result of these discussions has been a 50% HIBD marketing scheme grant which has given us far more scope for our 1986 promotions. Another equally positive development is the introduction in May 1986 of a Loganair Saturday service flight to and from Orkney. This service is being underwritten by the HIBD but we are fervently hoping that the service will prove a successful venture and thus become a regular feature in future years. The Shetland Tourist Officer, Maurice Mullay, has also explored ways of assisting us with promotions. He has organised the preparation of a Fair Isle Broadsheet (but planned and written by us and several Islanders) and advised us on various schemes and packages. We too have looked for packages or publicity, making direct contact with Scotsell, P&O Ferries, Smyril Line and Loganair.

All this has been part of a very busy year during which we also initiated a questionnaire to get visitors' views on their needs and requirements both at and travelling to Fair Isle, sought free copy in a variety of journals, persuaded journalists and travel writers to give us publicity, showed round a succession of journalists, managed to get 'interesting bird events' and other relevant items in national and local newspapers, contributed to BBC Ceefax, drew up a much fuller and more enticing information sheet, wrote publicity articles ourselves, lent slides to people wishing to

give Fair Isle lectures within Britain, investigated the setting up of slide packs, and contacted RSPB local groups. We have persuaded Aigas Field Studies Centre to do three week-long field courses on Fair Isle next summer and the Young Ornithologists Club to bring a group next August under the leadership of Peter Holden. Already we have had successful visits from the McHugh tour group from the USA and Caledonian Wildlife which have led to further bookings next year — in the case of Caledonian Wildlife two, possibly three visits in 1986. We have established a series of 'family' and 'YOC' reductions for visitors staying outside the peak spring and autumn periods. We have put substantial work into preparation of the European Diploma booklet which is to be published to coincide with the (imminent) presentation of that award to the Isle. We have entered into negotiations with the Nature Conservancy Council which look likely to produce results in re-vamping our seabird work from 1986 and ensuring financial funding for that work.

In keeping with recent years we welcomed visitors of many nationalities: from USA 14, Canada 2, New Zealand 2, Zimbabwe 1, South Africa 4, West Germany 4, Switzerland 4, Holland 2, France 3, Spain 5, Sweden 4 and Finland 2. Researchers contributed a useful 81 visitor/weeks. The number of workmen staying, a significant contribution to accommodation figures in many recent years, has steadily declined and only 5 stayed in 1985. One was a long-stay resident, boosting the visitor/weeks total to 59. However, there is no prospect of similar bookings in 1986 and FIBOT can no longer envisage workmen as substantial contributors to accommodation figures. One extra form of income was derived from the offer of restaurant facilities, 104 non-residents partaking of this service during the year. In addition to the many helpful officials, mentioned previously, we were pleased to welcome Sir Henry Fisher (Retiring Chairman of the Pilgrim Trust) and his wife, Felicity, Sue Balfour (daughter of the late Ian Pitman) on her first visit to Fair Isle — "having seen it I wish I'd come earlier" was her opinion of her Isle — and Pat Webster. Pat, also on her first visit, is a lady whose contribution to FIBOT work from her Edinburgh base — particularly through her administration of the *Friends of Fair Isle* — should not be understated. Trustees visiting during the year were David MacLehose (twice), Roy Dennis, Dave Okill (twice) and Dr Peter Slater.

Visiting journalists included Americans from New York, Tampa, San Francisco and Toronto, flown in by the HIDB. We also received travel correspondants from *The Times*, *The Financial Times*, and the BBC Japanese service. One article, at least, has resulted from these flying visits but, perhaps not surprisingly, rather more articles have emanated from freelance writers who have stayed rather longer with us. Some of these articles are listed in the *Publications* section of the report. Another nationwide form of publicity came in the guise of a BBC2 television programme screened in June. Entitled 'Favourite Walks', it featured Fair Isle visitor of long-standing, Bill Oddie, whose description of the Observatory as the "Birdwatcher's Hilton" was most apt. Our involvement with television has recently entered a new phase. From October 1985 we have submitted items regularly to the BBC Ceefax Country Diary. Anyone wishing to get up-to-date news of the ornithological and, frequently, general natural history events on the Isle can now do so at the press of a button. Certain special events have attracted wider media attention. The Daurian Starling was featured in the *Daily Mail* and our May Bluethroat invasion was an item on BBC's *Newsround*. These stories were provided by us direct or via an agent of the Press Association. Two film crews stayed at the Observatory during 1985, both concentrating on the establishment and workings of the aerogenerator.

Thus, in a variety of ways Fair Isle and FIBO have been maintained in the public eye and we hope that this can be converted into increased bookings. There have been some radical changes accompanying this new policy of very active promotion. For long the accommodation part of FIBO has been referred to as 'the Hostel'. This term was adopted to stress the rather specialised nature of our operations; we are not a hotel with the full facilities and staff such a status would require. But of course we are not a hostel

in the generally accepted sense of the word either, exceeding in comfort and facilities those of a hotel and in cost, too, owing to the existence of full board service. We, and the agencies who would like to help us with our promotions, were painfully aware that the term 'hostel' was damaging our appeal: too expensive for the cost-conscious hosteller who might compare our prices unfavourably with lower grade self-catering hostels elsewhere; and apparently too low grade for that part of the market which looks for the kind of facilities we offer but which are not generally understood as available in a 'hostel'. We have thus introduced the word 'Lodge' to describe the accommodation. Our advertising for 1986 has been carried out under the title *Fair Isle Bird Observatory Lodge*.

It is early days yet to assess the effect of our advertising but the name 'Lodge' appears to appeal as does the new approach of including approximate travel costs in advertisements, which has for instance initiated a flood of enquiries from the *Birds* magazine readers. Our new information leaflet contains far more details than before, the aim being to give all the information that potential visitors generally request in follow-up letters. The extra details are intended to inform rather than to present a glossy sales pitch, although the back page does contain some of the very many happy comments which satisfied customers have left in the visitors' book over the last five years. We have received many favourable comments welcoming the leaflet.

On the domestic front the staff block roof and the vehicle have been major preoccupations throughout the year. While funds were being sought for the roof we made frequent stop-gap repairs to newly developed holes, thus holding the leaks at bay for at least short periods. We were fortunate in this respect to avoid the summer deluges which afflicted much of mainland Britain!

The Landrover continues to deteriorate though was still usable at the end of 1985 thanks to the mechanical genius of Stewart Thomson and some Heath Robinson repairs. There were periods during the year, however, when it was out of service. The catalogue of problems included a blown exhaust, faulty fuel pump, expired water pump, sheared gear stick and worn gear selection gates turning gear changes into an art form. Corrosion of a hot water pipe under the building and of radiators was a problem which led us to cleaning out the central heating system prior to treating it with anti-corrosion agent and anti-freeze. On the credit side the installation of a new cooker greatly improved cooking facilities, ensuring better and more consistent results than its latterly inefficient predecessor. Following the Bradford fire tragedy we carefully revised our own fire regulations which, though already in compliance with the rules of and regularly inspected by the Northern Fire Brigade, we were able to make even more effective. We also drew up an inventory of the Observatory's fittings and equipment as a preliminary to FIBOT Management Committee's reassessment of our insurance needs. Out of doors, a tree planting programme was started in the form of remedial work on the Plantation. The present trees are suffering from 'die-back' and a replanting programme is necessary if the Plantation is to regain vigour. The plan is to remove a few trees each year, replacing them with new saplings. Seven trees were felled in 1985 and the ground left 'fallow' prior to the introduction of saplings in early spring 1986.

The ornithological work was again varied. Counts of Black Guillemots at Busta Geo in May for SOTEAG was an addition to our census work. Other long-term census work was carried out as per normal. The BTO Seabird Ringing Course, in its second year, was again a success and will be repeated in July 1986. The Guillemot studies initiated in 1984 by Dr Tim Birkhead were amplified with the establishment of his student — and ex FIBO assistant — Adrian del Nevo in a three-year Ph.D. study of Guillemot breeding biology. Although Adrian is not lodging with the Observatory a series of his helpers and Dr Birkhead did so during the summer. Adrian is working in close co-operation with FIBO. Dr Birkhead continued his own particular Guillemot research and Dr Peter Evans returned, assisted by Viv Wood (formerly of Bardsey Bird Observatory), to continue his study of Fair Isle Starling genetics. Rather few non-ornithological faunal and floral studies have taken place on Fair Isle which is a great pity as Edward Milner, an arachnid

specialist, and Dr Roy Watling of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, most ably demonstrate: Dr Watling's finds, which are published in this report, illustrate the fungus floral relationships of Fair Isle with more northern sites, such as the Faroes and Scandinavia; while Edward Milner's paper, which is destined for the *Bulletin of the British Arachnid Society* lists 2 or 3 rarities and some spiders from Ward Hill normally only found on mountains! Dr Watling was assisted by Bobby Tulloch, pursuing fungi with the same infectious enthusiasm he maintains for birds.

During 1985 I drew up a draft ornithological plan, setting down on paper the previously unwritten but widely understood ornithological activities of the Observatory. One unfortunate aspect of any written plan is that it is difficult to allow for a situation which is constantly evolving. The draft plan will make a useful discussion document. However, it was written before we entered into negotiations with the NCC. These negotiations, if successful, will re-shape much of our seabird work during the summer months. I envisage that the work will be a combination of census plots, ringing, colour-marking as a means of assessing adult survival, and productivity plots to assess breeding success. This departure in FIBO ornithological activities, though inevitably demanding in time and effort, is an exciting and challenging new development.

Fair Isle 1985

Just as FIBOT has been having some major re-organisation in 1985, so the National Trust's administration of Fair Isle has changed in that year. Mr Richard Seligman, who has so ably and conscientiously factored Fair Isle for the Trust for a number of years, has left the Trust's employment for a senior Factorial position on a large estate in the South of Scotland. He will be much missed and we wish him well. No doubt he will miss Fair Isle too. His place is being taken by Mr Alexander Bennet in the Trust's Inverness Office, who will follow in the tradition of caring Trust Factors for Fair Isle.

However, despite all these changes, Fair Isle and its Islanders carry on as before, as befits a country and people used to standing up to changes in weather and circumstances. Fair Isle is famous for its birds and scenery but it is the sturdy independence, hard work and welcome of the Islanders themselves that strikes all visitors as the outstanding feature of the Island.

This is fact has been recognised on a wider stage, when the Council of Europe resolved to award a Special Diploma to Fair Isle. This Diploma is likely to be presented in Spring 1986.

Life on the Island has not all been so easy in 1985. Fair Isle, like much of the rest of the country had a very bad summer, with adverse effects on the crofting enterprises. The main changes in personnel have been the move by Nigel and Cathy Hallett from the Shop to one of the Crofts on the Island (Schoolton) and the return of John and Ella Henderson (she is a native Fair Islander) to Stackhoull to take over the shop. Also on the move within the Isle were John and Betty Best. They established themselves in much renovated Utra in May just in time to host one of the events of the year, the marriage of their daughter, Fiona, to Robert Mitchell of Inverness. The wedding, which was held on 17th May, was the first to be celebrated on the Isle for several years; my congratulations and best wishes to the happy couple. One final change saw a departure and an arrival: Bill and Elfriede Buchan, missionary and schoolteacher, left in the summer to take up new challenges on mainland Britain in their respective vocations. Their place was filled, in November, by Mrs Sheila Ord who, for the present, is fulfilling both posts of missionary and teacher. Her husband is to join her in 1986 once he has completed current occupation commitments.

With regard to Transport, an experimental air service linking Orkney and Fair Isle is to be introduced next Spring by Loganair with support from the HIDB. It is hoped that the new *Good Shepherd* will be commenced in 1986.

The George Waterston Memorial Centre is complete structurally and its contents of Fair Isle artefacts and pictures are being collected and prepared for opening in 1986. During Easter a group from Bradford University returned for a second season of archaeological survey. Having surveyed the south in 1984 they concentrated their efforts this time on the heather-clad north of the Isle identifying, in their words "complexes of prehistoric hut circles and boundaries in a rare state of preservation".

The aerogenerator at the moment seems to be going well, thanks to the constant vigilance of Barry Sinclair.

Social life in 1985 has not been confined to the Island. In that year, the proposed return trip by a number of the Islanders to the Faroes was held for the Faroese Folk Festival in July. Judging from the reports in the *Fair Isle Times* this was a great success.

Life on Fair Isle will always be hard, but co-operation by all parties concerned and the continuing qualities of the Islanders will ensure that the satisfaction of living in such a community, however remote, exceeds the physical disadvantages.

*D. S. Erskine
December 1985*

A View from the Isle

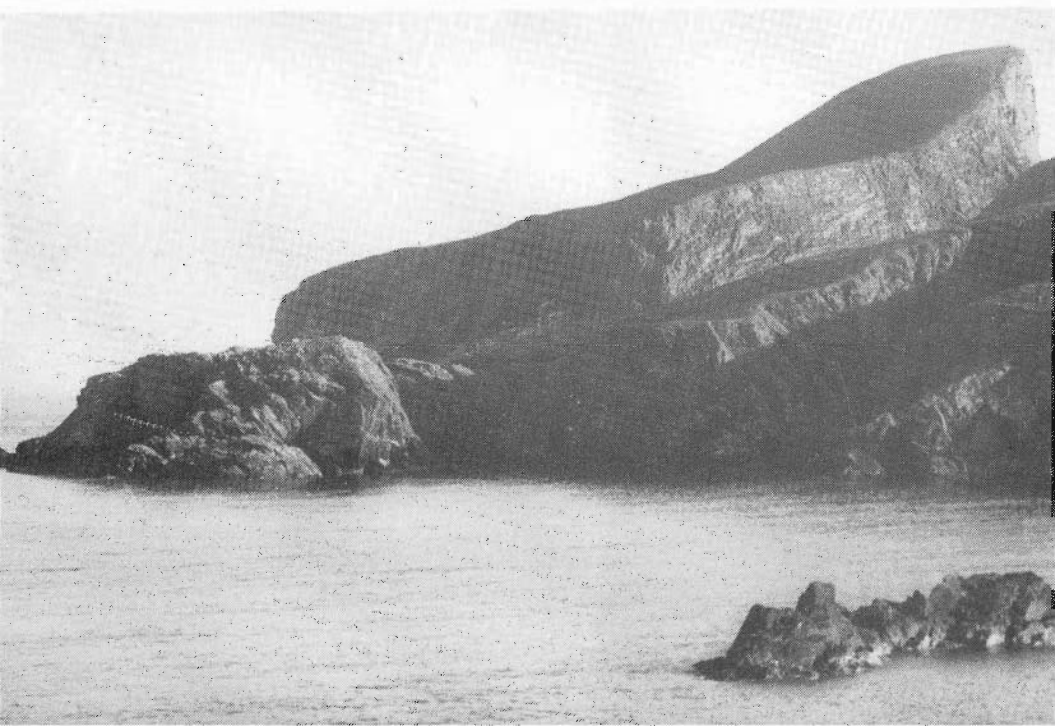
Fair Isle is more than just a place to watch birds. An increasing number of visitors are attracted by other aspects, including the warm and friendly community spirit which has always been a hallmark of the isle. Some visitors whose first visit has been solely in search of birds, have returned time and again, drawn by that extra dimension which island life offers. For them the single page of the report usually devoted to island events is simply not enough — though the weekly island newspaper, *The Fair Isle Times*, has done much to keep them informed in recent years. This new series, *A View from the Isle*, will I hope accede to requests to read more about the Isle. The following contributions, all written by Islanders, are a fascinating contrast of old and new, the account of establishing the bird observatory and the desire to interpret Fair Isle past and present through its artefacts and displays lead easily on to the technicological approach of modern island life.

When the Bird Observatory Opened

When Nick Riddiford asked me to write an article for this report, I started to recall memories of how we converted the naval huts into the Fair Isle Bird Observatory.

Materials to do the job (timber, plasterboard, etc.) were the first priority, so stripping the army huts at the Ward Hill was the start of the conversion plans. Quite a few of us were employed to do this; the wages were not good, but very welcome. The plasterboard presented the worst problem. Removing it as whole as possible and transporting it to the Haven huts were fraught with breakages. However we managed to save enough to do what was necessary. Floor sections were used as passage wall linings. They were approximately 8' x 4' and fairly heavy to carry, especially from the nissan huts at the back of the Ward Hill. These nissan huts were the quarters for the

Sheep Rock, an outstanding landmark.



Royal Artillery soldiers manning the "Bofors" anti-aircraft gun station on the north side of the Ward Hill summit. The Artillery also manned one "Hispano" cannon at the back of the hill along with a "Maxim" machine gun. All these memories stay clear in my mind because, as schoolboys during the war, guns, planes, etc. were very interesting to us.

Back to my story: the floor sections from the two nissan huts were carried down the back of the hill to the Dronger peat road where we got them loaded on a truck. I remember clearly that one hut floor was hardwood and, believe me, the sections were really heavy. The day we carried them down was fairly windy; it was a case of one man with one section on his back, literally staggering down the hill. It would have appeared rather amusing from the air — half a dozen wobbly sections with no sight of the human transport!

One of the timber huts at the hill was ninety feet long. We had removed all the plasterboard and partition timber and transported them to the Haven. That night the weather deteriorated and the wind increased to severe gale from approximately west by south. The following morning there was no sign of the hut apart from a few bits of firewood over the back of the hill! The ninety foot hut had completely vanished and had obviously blown right over Wirvie and into the sea.

Copper piping from the hill camp was used to plumb the rearranged naval huts. I remember doing the plumbing with Pat Robertson, learning as I helped him. The old pipe caused us a lot of problems at times. It was a case of 'making do' as best we could. All this work was done sometime during the years after the war and before 1948 when the Fair Isle Bird Observatory was first opened.

Ken Williamson was the first Warden and, with his Faroese wife Esther, opened up a new phase in the life of Fair Isle. Of course the added attraction of blonde Faroese girls as maids did not go unnoticed!!! We became very friendly with Ken and Esther Williamson, and one night when one or two of us 'young men' were invited to their flat to play the card game "500", we discussed the future of our island. We explained how we thought the way of life as it existed then was really reaching a very serious state. There was no power winch to haul the *Good Shepherd*, no deep water pier, we had to use flit boats to take passengers and freight ashore, the roads were in a poor state, the average age of the population was fairly old, and there were no young unmarried women. I am afraid that we startled them, for we told them we were going to leave the island and join the merchant navy as we could see no future here. As a result of this discussion Ken Williamson, when in Edinburgh for the winter, reported the whole situation to George Waterston and the 'powers that be' down south. Interest was aroused in no uncertain way, and in the next two years we were promised a deep water pier, power winch, etc. This being the case we stayed on, and I am still here; but it took that decision of ours to leave, so many years ago, to start the wheels in motion in the right way to save Fair Isle. I honestly believe that. The fact that the Bird Observatory had just opened, and outside interest was aroused, did the trick. Otherwise the island situation would have lain in the 'doldrums' for years and who knows what might have happened and who might have left?

I remember, when I was Observatory handyman for a short time, going along the traps on my way north in the morning. This was always very interesting, wondering what might be in them.

These are but a few of my memories of that time before and after the Bird Observatory opened. In my opinion Fair Isle needs the Observatory for the visitors it brings, for the staff who run it, for the friendships formed over the years; and the Observatory needs the friendship, the community spirit and help of an island that is unique in its way. So with each party forming a happy partnership, let us hope the success in the past and present will continue. Here's to the future!

Alec Stout

The George Waterston Memorial Centre & Museum

When the new hall was opened on the Isle in 1980, a new use had to be found for the old one. Built originally as a school, the Auld Schùle had been used as a community hall since the 1880's, and it was decided that the building would be the ideal site for a Fair Isle museum. Now, five years later, the building has been re-roofed and renovated, and we hope to open as a Centre in the spring of 1986.

Although the last five years have seen a lot of effort put into the raising of funds and the beginnings of conservation work, the main core of the Museum's artefacts had already been collected by Gordon and Perry Barnes when they lived in Setter. Without their initial efforts many important items would have been lost, and for this Fair Isle owes them many thanks.

The committee now have several interesting items to add to the Barnes collection. Objects which were presented to the Island by J. P. Coats of Glasgow at the beginning of the century include a piano and pianola, a sail sewing machine, a gramophone, books and spectacles. The late George and Irene Waterston left, among other things, an elegant china doll's head from *The Lessing*, a ship wrecked on Fair Isle in 1867. Our latest acquisitions include a dresser made circa 1930, and a beautiful Fair Isle sweater knitted on the Isle by an Islander in 1924.

The Auld Schùle has been re-lined and re-floored, and now display cases are being made. The Centre is incorporating a but-end, set around the intriguing corner fireplace which was found when the old lining came down. The crofts and the fishing, so vital a part of the Island's history, will be represented by artefacts, display charts, and old photographs. We are fortunate in having a complete set of ox harness, used on the crofts for many years, and an old line fishing tub of a type found — we are told — only in Fair Isle and the Balearic Islands.

There are many other aspects of Island life, past and present, to cover: shipwrecks over the centuries and the many heroic rescues; the story of the coastguards and the lighthouses; archaeology and natural history; and of course Fair Isle knitwear, famous the world over.

Today, Fair Isle maintains an active, caring community working a traditional crofting system while supporting all the more modern services which make life and work much easier than in the days of our forebears. It is vital that relics and traditions do not disappear, and already the renovation and restoration work involved in setting up the Centre has harvested much information. We hope that its existence — dependent on the continued concern and goodwill, the financial and practical aid of all those interested in the Isle — will ensure that the history and folk lore of Fair Isle will never be lost.

*Anne Sinclair, Busta
19th December 1985*

Automation of the Lights

Over the past five years the Lighthouses at both ends of the Island have seen complete changes both in manning arrangements and in the status of the Lights — from Rock Station to fully Automatic in the case of the North Light, and from Shore Station to Rock Station with semi-automatic capability at the South Light.

The Northern Lighthouse Board having taken the decision as to how the changes were to be put into effect, things were to happen in an ever increasing and drastic fashion. Beginning at Fair Isle North the keepers were largely instrumental in taking out the old Kelvin diesels, then ripping out the floors of the engine room and oil cellars and re-laying the new floors with ducting for all the wiring; all under the watchful eye of John Harris contracted to the NLB for this phase of the work. The old Hoist was demolished and workshop and paint store became a room for the special Alkaline cells

which were to power the new light. The old light was substituted with a temporary light on the balcony, whilst the new electric light and gearless pedestal were fitted in the lantern, the control boxes and switches taking the place of the old machine for cranking the weight up the tower. This old machine is now awaiting reconstruction in the George Waterston Memorial Centre (if I can remember how!). New engines were installed by Lighthouse technicians and the wiring completed by the firm of Findlaysons from Wick.

The North Light was a Rock Station with the keepers based in Stromness at the Aukerry Shore Station buildings where I spent a large part of my childhood. After a period of adjustment and monitoring of the new system the work was begun all over again at the South Light, where I became all too familiar with the bone shaking clatter of the pneumatic drill, the endless shifting about of equipment from one part of the building to another, as floors were lifted and re-laid, engines were removed and others installed. It was fascinating to see how the many different problems were encountered and solved in the removal of the lens and machinery from the light-room, and in the hoisting up of the new equipment. Some of the removal problems were solved by the sea which swept completely away one of the air receivers along with the temporary fog-signal and a hydrovane compressor. The last two items were not on the list for disposal, but in the case of the temporary fog-horn no-one was in the least put out!

Then came the electricians, the roofers, the floor-layers, the sandblasters and painters. It was a very busy period, but the work was soon completed and the testing commenced. The accommodation was then completely improved, with a room for each keeper, better cooking facilities, a shower as well as a bath, and plenty of storage space both in the living quarters and in the downstairs area, which was vacated. Then we could sit back and relax! Why did I say that. What with the gremlins shaking our radiators and exhaust pipes to bits, and the various problems with the fog-signal motors and alarm systems, we had another year of visits by various Lighthouse personnel who virtually became permanent residents before the equipment settled down.

We now have most of the problems solved and the living and working conditions are certainly much improved, but somehow I still miss the hiss of a hot vaporiser and the clack-clack of the machine as the weight slowly descended the tower; even when the temperature in the light-room is -3° !

Stewart Thomson

Fair Isle's Electricity Systems

Anyone listening to the weather forecast will be well aware of the frequent high winds predicted for Fair Isle. If in any doubt, a trip from Grutness to Fair Isle in the *Good Shepherd* will suffice to etch on the memory the awesome power of the wind.

While waiting to embark, you will have seen that a significant proportion of the cargo is barrels of fuel; some for central heating, the rest for electricity generation. This fuel is not only very expensive but it takes up valuable cargo space, and is a non renewable energy resource. In times past heat was derived from peats, both in the cutting and the burning of them. Unfortunately most of the peat reserves have been used up. For lighting, a seal-oil cole lamp was the mainstay for many generations. Then came the paraffin oil lamp — much brighter, cleaner, and a nice cheery sound especially on a stormy winter's night.

During the Second World War there were both Army and Navy forces stationed on Fair Isle, manning and protecting the Radar Station. When the war finished the forces destroyed the perfectly good generators, which could have been used to provide electricity for the Island. In the post war years many electrical gadgets which could make life a lot easier appeared on the market. However, it was to be quite a few years before Fair Islanders could reap any of these benefits.

In 1962 the NTS, with advice from the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board, installed five generators of 7 kW each, serving groups of houses. Although the hours of service were limited due to the running costs, they revolutionised the lifestyle. A simple but radical improvement were lights in each room where previously a lamp was carried about. The washing machines were a great blessing for the women folk. These engine sets gave good service until 1976 when the NTS upgraded the system with a centrally situated engine house — a generator of 20 kW for summer use, a 52 kW generator for winter time, and underground cables linking up the old group systems. At this time the Fair Isle Electricity Committee, elected by all the consumers, was formed to run the system. This system was an improvement as only one engine was running instead of five, with less maintenance required. The 52 kW set was to give an improved facility: namely the capacity to supply heaters, which was certainly appreciated on the long cold winter nights.

While we enjoyed the improved service for a few years, escalating fuel oil prices soon caused us grave concern. By this time the power usage had gradually increased and the engine was running very efficiently. To prevent the unit cost of electricity getting prohibitive we received a grant from the SIC amounting to £1500 per annum. The fuel prices continued to rise until in 1981-82 electricity cost 10p/kWhr to produce.

Obviously this state of affairs could not continue. Dave Wheeler, the Secretary of the Fair Isle Electricity Committee and also our Meteorological recorder, agreed to look at the wind regime and the feasibility of an aerogenerator. He showed that the average wind speed was 9.3 m/s and an aerogenerator should operate for 70% of the time (a remarkable accurate estimate as in the year 1983-84 the mill supplied power for 6706 hours or 76% of the time). It was obvious from his figures that we could have greatly increased hours of generation and service as well as reduced diesel fuel costs. If only a suitable scheme could be devised and funded . . .

David MacLehose, as the Factor for the NTS, took it up and became project manager. With advice from the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board, NEI Clarke Chapman Marine designed a system comprising an aerogenerator of 50 kW output, to integrate with the existing diesels. A novel and very sophisticated component of this system was the automatic electronic control of the domestic hot water and storage heaters in the houses. The scheme attracted 100% grant aid. Funding was received from the Shetland Islands Council, European Regional Development Fund, and Highlands and Islands Development Board. The North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board were technical advisers and supplied the underground cables and storage heaters at cost price.

So it was that the first aerogenerator to be operated on a commercial basis was commissioned in June 1982. The first year of operation showed that the Danish machine was to have stiffer testing than any on its home ground. After six months of operation the gearbox failed. The wings had to be removed and a helicopter hired from British Airways to lift out and replace the gearbox. This was an amazingly accurate piece of flying as the lift was one ton and had to be placed to a tolerance of 15mm. Another five months passed and the alternator failed due to salt laden moisture breaking down the insulation. The 'chopper' came in again and did another impeccable job.

If the reader ever considers siting an aerogenerator near to a sheer cliff — DON'T!! The turbulence off the high cliffs caused metal fatigue in the fantail arms. They started shearing off one by one. Annie Thomson at the Post Office actually saw them fluttering down. In the first year of operation much learning had to be done. There was a lot of fine tuning of the system both electronically and mechanically; but in the end the system settled down very well.

It may seem that the aerogenerator was a total failure but this is not so, as even during the period of all our troubles it still produced twice the total output that the diesels had in the previous year of diesel-only operation. This resulted in a saving of 825 gallons of fuel. The following twelve months (1983-84), when it had no long periods out

of commission, could be taken as a typical year to evaluate performance and costs. They are as follows:

	kWhrs	
Aerogenerator Produced	189,829	
Discarded to Dump	20,934	11.03%
Used on Network	168,895	88.97%
Total Island Consumption	185,024	
Provided by Diesel	16,147	8.7%
Provided by Aerogenerator	168,895	91.3%
Aerogenerator Available		94.5%
Load Factor		43.4%
Diesel Fuel Used		36.6% (of last pre WTG period)

As can be seen electricity consumption has increased 3.7 times over the final year of diesel-only generation; also the diesel fuel saved was 2625 gallons or 63% . The cost had come down to 3.92p/kWhr.

The Fair Isle Electricity Committee has achieved its objectives with the continued support of its consumers. Service has been greatly improved by a substantial increase in the hours of availability of electricity, and the unit cost of power has been more than halved. Heating systems for hot water and storage heaters have significantly improved the standard of comfort in the homes. Considering that our 26 consumers, located in the south of the Isle, only used 1500 gallons of diesel for the year's electricity supply, we are not taxing the fossil fuel reserves. It is nice to know, when the wind is blowing, it is at least working for us at the same time.

Barry Sinclair

Right: Hen Harrier, one of the least expected captures in the Gully trap.

Below: This juvenile Bar-tailed Godwit was trapped on North Haven beach.



Ornithology

It was a year of rich variety, the 203 species recorded being one of Fair Isle's higher annual totals. One species, Daurian Starling, was new to the island and is a candidate for the West Palaearctic List, subject to the deliberations of the British Ornithologists Union. In typical Fair Isle contrariness the next most unusual occurrence was that of Mute Swan — only the second ever.

The monthly totals of species recorded were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
33	36	82	104	145	110	75	102	136	128	82	48

As in 1984 there was a series of fascinating movements throughout the migration seasons. A feature of April was the number and variety of finches. In May and June there was an endless stream of rarities beginning at the very start of the former month. In addition the falls of commoner and less common migrants, such as Bluethroat, Wryneck and Red-backed Shrike, in May made it a holiday to remember for visitors staying at that time.

For once the migration never seemed to stop. By the last week of June irrupting Crossbills had arrived and they were joined in July by a series of adult and then juvenile Siskins — an unprecedented summer irruption for that species. Some of the seabirds had been delayed in the start of breeding by a cold spring lasting into May. However, by early July Guillemot and Razorbill chicks were leaving the cliffs in good numbers. Later birds fared less well. A rather poor, overcast July seemed to disperse or discourage sand-eel shoals with a resultant heavy seabird chick mortality. This was most evident in the Kittiwake, many nests being filled with dead chicks. More than half the Fulmar sites were abandoned by late July and the signs of Puffins still active on the isle well into August suggested that they too were finding food for their chicks hard to come by.

August could not have started better, with Subalpine Warbler and Black-headed Bunting in the first week. Two Aquatic Warblers mid month and Great Snipe, Citrine Wagtail and record numbers of Curlew Sandpipers at the end were other highlights of the best August migration for at least six years. For the *aficionado* of migration movements September and October were a little disappointing, due to a preponderance of westerly winds. Nevertheless Fair Isle's rarity magic did not fail and visitors were more than compensated by a long series of unusual migrants, most notably 3 Pechora Pipits after seven barren years. For the second year running there were record numbers of Little Buntings, the latest, in November bringing the autumn's total to 10 and the year's to 12.

National and/or island rarities not mentioned above included Little Grebe, King Eider, Smew, Honey Buzzard, Marsh Harrier, Osprey (3), Hobby, Spotted Crake (3), Crane, Dotterel (2), Lesser Golden Plover, Pomarine Skua (13), Long-tailed Skua (2), Short-toed Lark (2), Woodlark (2), Richard's Pipit (c9), Red-throated Pipit (3), Waxwing (8), Thrush Nightingale (2), Lanceolated Warbler, Arctic Warbler (2), Yellow-browed Warbler (c15), Red-breasted Flycatcher (3), Golden Oriole, Great Grey Shrike, Rose-coloured Starling, Arctic Redpoll (2), Hawfinch, Rustic Bunting (4) and Yellow-breasted Bunting (3).

Monthly Highlights

January-February

Ornithological coverage during the first two months was entirely in the hands of Jimmy Wilson of Easterhoull and Stewart Thomson of Quoy who were good enough to keep winter records for us. Other islanders contributed occasional observations. 3 Brent Geese were present during the early part of the winter and one was found dead. There were good numbers of Woodcock throughout and an above average winter population of Blackbirds, Redwings, Fieldfares and Snipe. Several Robins wintered.

In pleasant contrast to much of Europe Fair Isle enjoyed an exceptionally mild and storm-free winter. This was reflected by rather few northern birds but some unexpected visitors fleeing colder weather farther east and south. The most extraordinary sighting of the winter was not a bird at all, but a bat seen by Pat Thomson flying round Taing in broad daylight on 7th January. In January there were several unusual ducks: Tufted Duck on 18th, Goosander on 19th, male Smew on 28th and a Goldeneye throughout. The Smew, found dead at Sompal by Alan Wilson, was in perfect condition apart from its breast being eaten away. Its predator may possibly have been a raptor — Buzzard, male Merlin and Peregrine all choosing to winter. A Short-eared Owl was seen on 29th January. The only northern individual of note in January was a Little Auk on 12th. However, the species was numerous off Sumburgh on all boat crossings. In February there were 13 Snow Buntings on 6th and 2 Whooper Swans on 12th. More ducks on 10th comprised single Velvet Scoter, Mallard and Teal. These were perhaps forerunners of the spring passage. More signs of movement occurred on 13th when a Lapwing appeared, on 15th when there were 5 Oystercatchers and on 21st when 25 Skylarks arrived. A Knot was a surprise migrant on 24th. Next day 2 Ringed Plovers were more typical for late February as was an increase of Oystercatchers to 30 on 26th.

March

It was a relatively quiet March with no large arrivals and some migrants late or absent. Nevertheless there were a number of interesting occurrences. not least Woodlark — a species which appears to be returning to its regularity of earlier years.

Gulls featured early in the month with both Glaucous and Iceland present on 1st, and a Common Gull next day. Black Redstart and Rook were highlights of 5th. On 6th the overwintering Buzzard was sighted along with a Great Northern Diver and 2 Shelducks. 60 Oystercatchers and 136 Lapwings represented influxes while 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls were the year's first. Lapwings increased to 167 next day, with 72 Skylarks, 14 Purple Sandpipers and 8 Curlews also counted. 2 Bonxies were the first of the year. An interesting Redpoll showing intermediate characters between Arctic and Mealy was present near the North Haven buildings on 9th. Other sightings included 20 Curlews, 17 Fieldfares and the Great Northern Diver. Star bird of 10th, a Woodlark, was also found near the Haven buildings, while in the Havens themselves were 2 male Red-breasted Mergansers and a male Common Scoter. On 11th a Glaucous Gull was seen while 2124 Guillemots were counted ashore at Kristal Kamie.

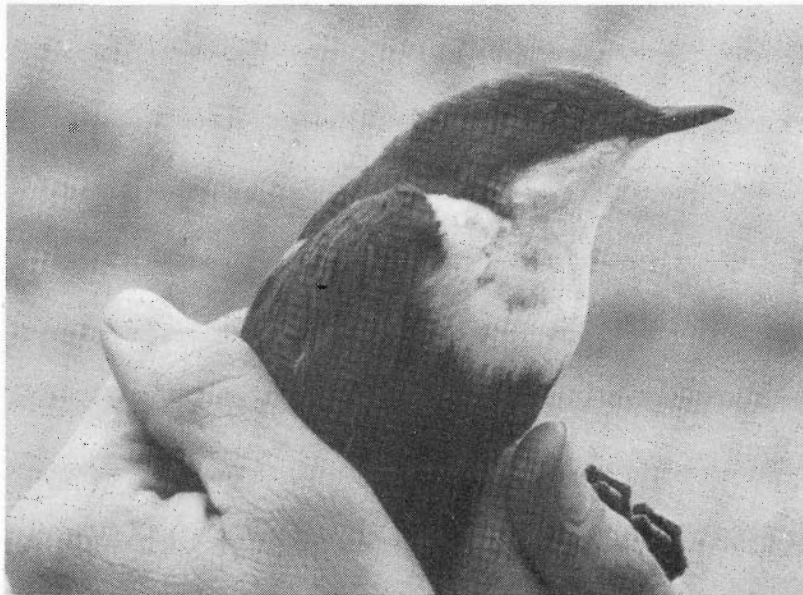
Both the Common Scoter and Great Northern Diver were still present on 13th, while a Rook and 2 Merlins were highlights of 15th. 10 Ringed Plovers on 17th were the first of the year; 160 Skylarks and a Long-tailed Duck were also present. Next day buntings featured in the guise of 17 Snow and a male Reed. Long-tailed Ducks increased to 2 along with a male Teal on 19th, while a female Goldeneye, female Merlin and the year's first Jackdaw were found on 20th. The following day 10 Common and 2 Velvet Scoters were present off North Light, the former constituting a record spring count. Strong winds resulted in 700 Great Black-backed, 500 Herring and 2 first-winter Glaucous Gulls being ashore. Glaucous Gulls increased to 3 on 22nd. Moorhen, Meadow Pipit (2) and Woodpigeon (7) were all new for the year. There was an excellent count of 110 Turnstones.

More firsts for the year were found on 23rd in the guise of male Kestrel, 2 Dunnocks, a Mistle Thrush and 25 Chaffinches. Twite increased to 20 and 2 male Shelducks were new. An influx of small gulls occurred on 25th comprising 12 Black-headed and 15 Common. Chaffinches increased to 28, with a Moorhen, Merlin and Mealy Redpoll also recorded. Kestrel, Short-eared Owl and male Reed Bunting were new next day and a first-winter Glaucous Gull was seen. There were increases of 9 Woodpigeons and 6 Meadow Pipits. A Knot was the highlight of 27th, with Long-tailed Duck and Woodcock seen next day. New for the year on 29th were Long-eared Owl and Grey Heron; 3 Woodcock and a female Reed Bunting were also of interest. A Puffin was the year's first on 30th. 2 Mistle Thrushes were seen and Snow Buntings at 27 represented an increase. Easterly winds led to a small fall on 31st involving 45 Chaffinches, 25 Blackbirds and 5 Song Thrushes.

April

With winds largely in the eastern quarter, the period 1st-13th proved exciting for migration. In particular there were excellent numbers of thrushes and finches, including a record spring passage of Mealy Redpolls. From 14th, however, winds were largely westerly and migration was suppressed for the remainder of the month.

April started well with easterly winds on 1st producing both quantity and quality. 900 Starlings, 300 Blackbirds, 250 Skylarks, 200 Lapwings, 50 Meadow Pipits, 50 Chaffinches and 6 Woodcock were counted, while Chiffchaff, *alba* Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, Greylag Goose, Red-throated Diver, 2 Ring Ouzels and 2 Stonechats were all new for the year. The star, however, was a Black-bellied Dipper frequenting the Gully. Next day there was an influx of 40 Common Gulls, 25 Curlews, 8 Mallards, 27 Fieldfares and 3 Mistle Thrushes. Short-eared Owl and Peregrine were sighted and the first Puffin ashore was seen. Although 65 Fieldfares, 6 Song Thrushes, 4 Rooks, 3 Moorhens and 3 Redpoll represented increases, the 3rd was generally a day of departures. A second-winter Glaucous Gull appeared and new for the year were Yellowhammer (2) and



Black-bellied Dipper occurred for the third successive year.

Wheatear (3) — a long wait for our first Wheatear. A Sandwich Tern in North Haven on 4th was the earliest ever by five days. Other highlights were Black Redstart, Jackdaw, Grey Wagtail and a Long-eared Owl and increases were provided by 155 Fieldfares, 55 Twite, 15 Redwings, 9 Wheatears, 8 Robins and 5 Rooks. Robins were everywhere next day — a total of 150 being logged. Other migrants in good supply were 9 Woodpigeons, 18 Wheatears, 14 Song Thrushes, 12 Goldcrests, 6 Black Redstarts, 4 Chiffchaffs and 100 Fieldfares. 11 Mealy Redpolls and 11 Yellowhammers were both spring record counts, while a Willow Warbler at Hesti Geo was the second earliest ever. Siskin was new for the year; Kestrel, Peregrine and 2 Ring Ouzels were also seen.

The prolonged spell of easterlies resulted in yet another fall on 6th, the main components being Fieldfare (270), Blackbird (250), Robin (120), Song Thrush (60) and Chaffinch (60). Woodcock (19) and Goldcrest (17) were also well represented, while gulls arrived in abundance with 225 Common, 40 Black-headed, 9 Lesser Black-backed and 2 Glaucous noted. Black Redstart numbered 2, Greenfinch 4 and there was the unfamiliar sound of a Mistle Thrush singing outside the observatory. 7 Bramblings were the year's first. The 7th was a 'finch' day: most notable were 2 massive Northern Bullfinches and a female Hawfinch. Numbers were provided by 250 Chaffinches, 40 Bramblings and 10 Greenfinches. 20 Mealy Redpolls was a new spring record. Other increases were 350 Fieldfares, 28 Woodpigeons and 4 Ring Ouzels. Further increases on 8th involved 450 Fieldfares, 140 Blackbirds, 90 Song Thrushes, 50 Woodcock, 35 Wheatears, 130 Chaffinches and 6 Reed Buntings. A count of 11 Common Scoters was yet another spring record. Kestrel, 2 Merlins, a Shelduck and 2 Mistle Thrushes were also recorded. Numbers of some species continued to increase with 680 Fieldfares, 700 Starlings, 7 Ring Ouzels and 4 Short-eared Owls seen on 9th.

Highlights of 10th were 9 Yellowhammers, 2 Goldeneyes and 7 Whooper Swans — the first of the spring. New for the year next day were Cormorant, Sparrowhawk and Arctic Skua. A male Northern Bullfinch and second-winter Glaucous Gull were seen while numbers were provided by 340 Common Gulls, 105 Lapwings, 30 Bramblings and 5 Grey Herons. Still numerous on 12th were Chaffinch (135) and Mealy Redpoll (21). 5 Chiffchaffs were seen and a Rook was new. A very early Whitethroat was at Setter on 13th. New migrants next day were 2 Siskins, a Mistle Thrush and the first 4 Linnets of the year. Linnets increased to 8 next day. A male Hen Harrier was seen and Jack Snipe and Green Sandpiper were firsts for the year. The onset of westerly winds was beginning to result in a decrease of birds. On 16th an unidentified crossbill flew over the Plantation and a male Sparrowhawk was seen. The 17th saw the year's first Collared Dove. A female Ring Ouzel and 3 Arctic Skuas were other sightings of interest. Highlight of 18th was the trapping of the male Hen Harrier. A Whimbrel was new for the year; Black Redstart, Cormorant and Shelduck were others seen. The wind increased rapidly to severe gale force on 19th and the isle became a haven for several species: 3 Swallows were new for the year, and 450 Fieldfares were counted. Most unexpected was influx of geese, 31 Greylag, 17 Barnacle and 22 Greenland Whitefronts seeking refuge on the isle. The last represented only the fifth spring record. A Common Sandpiper was new for the year the following day while Greylags increased to 40. The 21st saw a few increases: Wheatear 60, Snow Bunting 32, Fieldfare 350. 3 Wigeon, male Ring Ouzel and Long-eared Owl were new.

There was little activity over the next few days. The male Hen Harrier was still present. Snow Buntings increased to 45 and Mealy Redpolls to 20 on 23rd; Fieldfares rose to 170 on 24th. A few extra Icelandic birds — Wheatear, Redwing and Meadow Pipit — put down against NW winds on 25th. The only new birds on 26th and 27th were a Rook and first-winter Glaucous Gull respectively. A Black-tailed Godwit was the first for the year on 28th; Snow Buntings increased to 51 and a Long-tailed Duck and Black Redstart were seen. Fieldfares were still present in good numbers with 185 on 29th. The month ended with the first Tree Pipit of the year, a Yellowhammer, a Kestrel, 8 *alba* Wagtails and 20 Curlews.



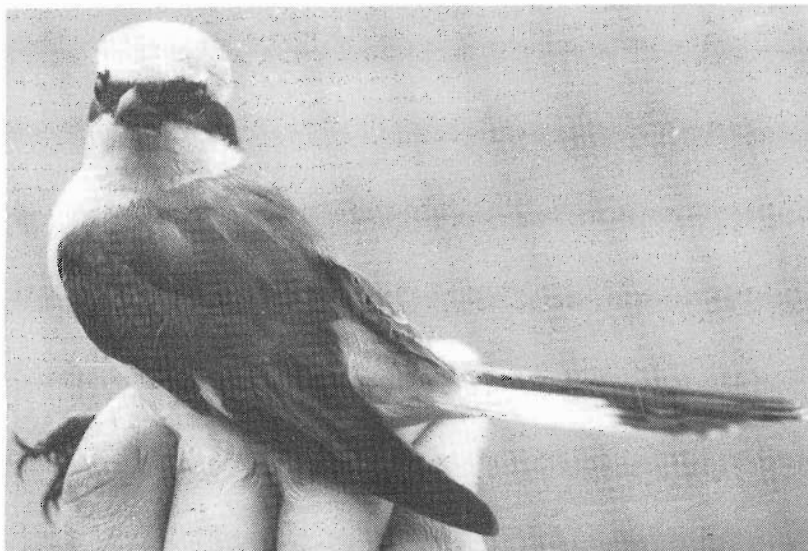
Daurian Starling, one of three species of starling in May.

May

Winds blew from the north for the first five days but thereafter were largely from the eastern quarter. As a result May was arguably the most exciting month of the year, with good numbers of Fair Isle specialities, excellent falls of common migrants and a string of rarities. It was certainly the best May for many years with scarcely a dull moment from start to finish.

The month started well: on 1st a fine male Lapland Bunting and Grasshopper Warbler were both new for the year. 8 Common Scoter, 5 Greylag Geese and a Short-eared Owl were also recorded and there were increases of Golden Plovers (31) and Common Gulls (50). Highlight of the day, however, was an Osprey, seen by all as it cruised north in the evening. The 2nd saw Skylark increase to 120 and Twite to 50. A female Ring Ouzel and Red-throated Diver also put in an appearance. Star bird of 3rd was a 'classic' Arctic Redpoll which fed along the Gilsetter Wall. Other birds of note were 130 Fieldfares, 18 Mealy Redpolls male Shelduck, male Tufted Duck, Tree Pipit and Grasshopper Warbler. Arctic Skuas put in their first major appearance next day with 50 on the hill, Shelduck increased to 2 and 2 Linnets were new.

The 5th was a warm still day and eyes were turned to the sky hoping for a large raptor. Instead, at midday, a European Crane flew north. Kestrel, Hen Harrier and Grey Heron quickly followed suit. 7 Common Terns were the first of the year. A corvid influx comprised 2 Carrion and 10 Hooded Crows. Next day a British Yellow Wagtail, Redstart (2) and Whinchat (2) were new for the year. 10 Willow Warblers, 8 Tree Pipits, 3 Whitethroats and 2 Green Sandpipers were recorded. Sparrowhawk and Woodpigeon also appeared. Spirits were already high at lunchtime on 7th after a superb male Rustic Bunting had been found at Taft but, incredibly, observers' attention was stolen by the West Palaearctic's first Daurian Starling, a male, as it 'flycatched' outside the observatory in the afternoon.



♂ Red-backed Shrike with white primary bases. Three with this feature were trapped in spring.

Next day waders were in evidence, including 29 Whimbrel, 6 Dunlin and a Greenshank. On 9th, birds arrived throughout the day resulting in an exciting array of migrants. Nine species, several of them arriving in force, were new for the year — Bluethroat (21), Red-backed Shrike (12), Wryneck (7), Dotterel (2), Lesser Whitethroat (7), Blackcap (3), Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher (2) and Spotted Flycatcher. Other migrants were 350 Fieldfares, 85 Twite, 20 Willow Warblers, 11 Reed Buntings, 8 each of Swallow and Whinchat, 5 Redstarts, Short-eared Owl and Merlin. The 10th was generally a day of departures. There was one increase, that of Reed Bunting to 45. 2 male Greenfinches were new, and a House Martin was the year's first. The highlight, however, was a Thrush Nightingale found at Barkland. Fair Isle specialities were again in good supply on 11th with 16 Bluethroats and 7 Red-backed Shrikes counted. Stock Dove and Sedge Warbler were new for the year while 2 Wood Warblers, a male Pied Flycatcher, Ring Ouzel and Sparrowhawk added interest. Both Bluethroat and Red-backed Shrike numbers increased further next day to 20 and 11 respectively. Robin (10), Blackcap (5), Woodpigeon (8), Swallow (14) and Wryneck (4) had also increased. New arrivals consisted of 6 Collared Doves, 2 Carrion Crows and single Kestrel, Woodcock and Sanderling. A staggering 70 Bluethroats were counted on 13th, an amazing day when a whole host of other increases included 18 Red-backed Shrikes, 13 Wryncks, 28 Reed Buntings, 21 Whinchats, 12 Redstarts and 7 Pied Flycatchers. 5 Tufted Ducks and 2 Shelducks also appeared, while a Cuckoo was the year's first. A spectacular and colourful fall of common migrants, the best for several years, occurred next day. Totals were 650 Wheatears, 120 Redstarts, 90 Whinchats, 160 Tree Pipits, 45 Pied Flycatchers, 50 Willow Warblers, 35 Bluethroats, 35 Reed Buntings, 14 Wryncks and 12 Red-backed Shrikes. Waders were represented by one Green and 8 Common Sandpipers. New for the year were Oortolan and Grey-headed Wagtail, both males. The 15th saw a further influx raising the Whinchat count to 130 and that of Reed Bunting to 50. Black Redstart, Long-eared Owl and 2 Teal were new. A Nightingale was the first for the year as was the star bird of the day, a Little Bunting found at Field. On 16th



Thrush Nightingale, one of the highlights of an exciting May.

further firsts for the year were Sand Martin and Garden Warbler. There were yet more arrivals of some common migrants, raising the Reed Bunting total to 60, Willow Warbler to 60 and Tree Pipit to 180. 7 Ring Ouzels, 3 Cuckoos and 12 Whimbrel also denoted increases. Fair Isle specials were still present in abundance, namely 38 Bluethroats, 18 Red-backed Shrikes, 9 Wrynecks and 2 Grey-headed Wagtails. A male Peregrine was the first for some time.

The next two days saw a steady exodus of migrants although 100 Tree Pipits, 35 Redstarts, 40 Whinchats and 200 Wheatears were still present on 18th. On the same day a Wood Sandpiper was new for the year, a second male Ortolan was found, and Grey Wagtail, Short-eared Owl and 3 Snow Buntings noted. On 19th Whitethroats peaked at 11 — sad to relate, this is a good count for recent years. A Knot was new and the second Nightingale of the spring was found at the Walli Burn. A Pintail on 20th was the year's first while a Jack Snipe at Wirvie was only the second. Great Northern Diver and Wood Warbler were new. A second Little Bunting was found along the Hill Dyke. Not far away an Ortolan was heard singing at Setter. The third Nightingale of the spring was found on 21st and there was a new Wood Warbler and Wood Sandpiper. Good numbers of common migrants were still present — for example 100 Tree Pipits, 40 Redstarts, 15 Bluethroats, 8 Whitethroats and 5 Cuckoos. There was an abundance of rarities next day. The prolonged NNE winds were keeping many birds here including the Daurian Starling, 2 Ortolans, Little Bunting and Thrush Nightingale. These were joined by a second Thrush Nightingale, a male Bluethroat of the White-spotted form, both on Vaasetter, and a superb male King Eider off Hesti Geo. Main arrivals on 23rd were of an aerial nature in the form of 60 Swallows and 32 House Martins. Red-backed Shrike (25), Bluethroat (15) and Wryneck (8) maintained their daily presence while Linnet and Dunlin increased to 5 and 10 respectively. A handsome Red-throated Pipit at Field was the highlight next day. 2 Scarlet Rosefinches were the first of the year and a third Ortolan was found. Other arrivals comprised 5 Sedge, Grasshopper and Wood Warbler, Black Redstart and Sand Martin.

The 25th was in itself a rarity for this busy month, being generally quiet. The year's first Swift was the only highlight. This very short interlude ended on 26th with the arrival of yet more goodies. A female Arctic Redpoll was trapped as was a Spotted Crake (only the forth spring record ever). A male Red-breasted Flycatcher was found in Steensi Geo and a ring-tail Hen Harrier was seen. Also of interest were Swift, Dunnock, 8 Cuckoos, 10 Spotted Flycatchers, 12 Red-backed Shrikes and 9 Sedge Warblers. The last increased to 18 next day and were joined by Scarlet Rosefinch, Turtle Dove, Short-eared Owl and Reed Warbler. An Osprey frequented South Harbour and a female Subalpine Warbler was seen at Leogh. Bird of the day on 28th was a Short-toed Lark on the airstrip. The Daurian Starling had finally departed but the original Thrush Nightingale was still present. Male Pintail and female Goldeneye were seen while observers witnessed a male Red-backed Shrike displaying to a female at Quoy. The first Corn Bunting since 1982 put in an appearance on 29th. Migrants were still plentiful comprising 50 House Martins, 18 Woodpigeons, 17 Spotted Flycatchers, 7 Cuckoos, 7 Collared and 6 Turtle Doves, 6 Sand Martins and 4 Black Redstarts. Male Hen Harrier, female Sparrowhawk, male Grey-headed Wagtail and Siskin were also seen. Next day Swallow numbers rose to 80. 3 Barnacle Geese were somewhat unseasonal.

The month ended in typical fashion. On 30th, a day full of incident, a fine Rose-coloured Starling was at Utra, then Field, 2 Little Stints (only the third spring record ever) frequented Muckle Uri Geo and both Marsh and Hen Harrier performed over the isle in the evening.

June

With winds largely from the western quarter, interspersed by odd easterlies, June failed to live up to the standards set by May. The main feature of the month was an irruption involving both Crossbills and Siskins.

Most interest was generated on 1st by a pair of Shovelers and 3 Tree Sparrows, both new for the year. The Rose-coloured Starling, one of the Little Stints and the ring-tail Hen Harrier were still present. Next day Greenshank and Green Sandpiper were noted. A small arrival occurred on 3rd comprising 50 House Martins, 14 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Swifts, 2 Kestrels, a Sparrowhawk, 2 Chaffinches, a Black Redstart, Siskin and Dunnock. Icterine Warbler was new for the year the following day; hepatic Cuckoo, Black-tailed Godwit and male Tufted Duck were noted. Prize bird, however, was a Hobby seen over the Rippack. New arrivals on 5th were Grey-headed Wagtail, Kestrel and 2 Redshanks. Female Red-breasted Merganser and female Pintail put in an appearance next day. The 7th saw the second Red-throated Pipit of the spring grace the grassy banks around the observatory. A Wryneck was the other highlight. The following day attention switched to the airstrip and Homisdale as an adult Long-tailed Skua gave thrilling views for a couple of hours before flying off east. The first Manx Shearwater of the year and 3 Storm Petrels were seen from the *Good Shepherd*. A Water Rail was new for the year on 9th, a Ring Ouzel was also somewhat unseasonal. There were signs of autumn perhaps on 10th with the passage south of 30 Black-headed Gulls. Next day 5 Chiffchaffs, a Siskin and a Redwing were seen, a male Bluethroat was the first for some time but was outranked by a Golden Oriole eventually trapped in the Gully. An Osprey gliding north on 12th made it a notable spring for that species — a grand total of three. Highlights of 13th were a Short-toed Lark found near the garage and a female Red-breasted Flycatcher trapped in the Gully. A late Greenshank was also seen. Little happened over the next few days but yet another Red-throated Pipit frequented Gilsetter on 16th. Other migrants present were Short-eared Owl, Cuckoo, *alba* Wagtail, 2 Collared Doves, 9 Swallows, 12 House Martins and a Swift. 20 Storm Petrel and a Manx Shearwater were seen from the *Good Shepherd* on 18th.

The first 4 Siskins of the irruption were also seen on 18th. The following day the Crossbill irruption began. 13 on Meoness were all feeding on thrift flowerheads and 4

remained on 20th. Both Collared and Turtle Dove were present on 21st, and a Red-throated Diver flew over the isle. The 22nd was certainly a day for the unexpected: a male Rustic Bunting was seen briefly on Skadan while a male King Eider was flushed from the foot of Wester Lother. Wryneck, Lesser Whitethroat, 2 Mealy Redpolls, 2 Crossbills and 3 Siskins also put in an appearance. Next day female Red-backed Shrike, 2 Sandwich Terns, 3 Crossbills, Whinchat and Woodpigeon were found. Continuing easterlies provided an Icterine Warbler on 24th accompanied by 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 2 Whinchats and a male Linnet, while 4 Siskins continued the influx of that species. 11 Curlews represented further signs of the gathering autumn on 25th; a Short-eared Owl was also seen. A Woodcock was unseasonal the following day, less so Grey-headed Wagtail, Blackcap and Garden Warbler. A Golden Plover and 2 Dunlin on the hill raised hopes of possible breeding. A gathering of 80 Arctic Terns in South Harbour was a high count for that species. Further unseasonal visitors on 27th were Black Redstart and Woodpigeon, A Marsh Warbler at Midway was the highlight next day and a Sedge Warbler was seen. On 29th 4 more Crossbills arrived as did 2 Chiffchaffs. The latter were to remain all summer. Finally, a Merlin was an unexpected sighting on 30th.

July

In contrast to the rest of the country July on Fair Isle was generally fine and dry. Apart from two spells of east or south-east winds from 2nd-5th and 24th-29th it was a month dominated by south-westerly winds.

The month, much as usual, saw the first signs of autumn migration. Typical for the time of year was a constant turnover of Black-headed and Common Gulls (Black-headed peaking at 46 on 5th, Common at 70 on 18th), 1-4 Collared Doves daily until 21st and up to 10 Swifts on most days. Waders were much in evidence, particularly towards the end of the month when up to 6 Golden Plovers, 6 Knot, 6 Sanderling, 35 Purple Sandpipers, 10 Dunlin, 4 Green Sandpipers and 100 Turnstones were recorded. Single Ruffs were seen on 27th and 29th, a Woodcock on 27th and Bar-tailed Godwits on 7th (2) and 26th. Odd Blackcaps were logged on many days, 1-2 Red-breasted Mergansers were present 4th-14th and 2 Chiffchaffs summered in the Leogh/Shirva area.

For the first time ever three or four Siskins summered and, most unexpectedly, these were joined by immigrant juveniles, up to 8 on most days from 13th — part of an unprecedented summer irruption that was witnessed all up the east coast of Britain. Also irrupting were Crossbills for the first time in several years; 15 arrived on 19th after which up to 31 could be seen daily as they fed on thrift-heads on the cliffs. Single Red-throated Divers flew over the Isle calling on 14th, 22nd and 24th, Manx Shearwaters passed Bunness on 17th and 18th and the first Kestrel of the autumn was seen on 27th.

Less expected were a Marsh Warbler on 2nd, a Duncock on 10th, a drake Tufted Duck on 12th-14th, Spotted Flycatcher on 21st, Greylag Goose on 22nd, Quail on 24th and Short-eared Owl on 27th. Bird of the month was a Subalpine Warbler which was trapped in the Plantation on 22nd and remained there until 2nd August.

August

The generally fine weather of July continued well into August although, from mid-month, a series of passing depressions brought very unsettled weather. It was a good month for birds; waders and Common Gulls were plentiful and numerous easterlies produced some interesting passerine falls.

A nice surprise on 4th was a superb male Black-headed Bunting which remained until 14th, spending most of its time in the oats at Schoolton. Otherwise the first week was rather quiet, punctuated only by the first Sooty Shearwater on 2nd, an out-of-season Woodcock on 3rd and the first Cormorants (2) of the autumn on 7th.

The Wind moved SE on 7th and remained from the eastern quarter until 20th, bringing a series of influxes of birds and new species almost daily. A Wood Warbler was



The first Aquatic Warbler for six years.

trapped in the Plantation on 8th, a Garden Warbler and 300 Common Gulls were seen on 9th, while Peregrine, Barred Warbler and Spotted Flycatcher on 10th, Willow Warbler on 11th and Wood Sandpiper on 12th were all new. An Icterine Warbler and a Red-backed Shrike accompanied an influx of 16 Willow Warblers on 13th while 60 Redshanks, a Spotted Redshank, Reed Warbler and Scarlet Rosefinch arrived on 14th. Common Gulls peaked at 500 on 15th, the first Fieldfares (2) put in an appearance, Barred Warblers increased to 2, Red-backed Shrikes to 3 and the first Aquatic Warbler since 1979 was found and quickly trapped at Boini Mire — it later moved to Quoy where it remained for the following two days. 14 Ruff arrived with a host of new species on 16th; these comprised Wryneck, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Pied Flycatcher, Sedge Warbler, Whinchat (2) and Spotted Crake, the last seen briefly at Schoolton. 5 Reed Warblers, a new Icterine Warbler and the first Wigeon were seen on 17th followed by another Icterine next day. A considerable arrival took place on 19th but, unfortunately, gale force south-easterlies and rain hampered observations. 50 Willow Warblers, 3 Tree Pipits, Song Thrush and Mealy Redpoll were seen but it was clear that many birds were keeping very low. The extent of the arrival was assessed the following morning when 320 Common Gulls, 60 Curlews, 410 Wheatears, 10 Swifts, 10 Wrynecks, 7 Tree Pipits, 16 Whinchats, 8 Reed, 35 Garden and 65 Willow Warblers, 6 Pied Flycatchers, 8 Red-backed Shrikes, Scarlet Rosefinch, Corncrake and a second Aquatic Warbler were recorded. The Corncrake was skulking along the base of the Hill Dyke. The Aquatic Warbler gave excellent views as it fed among the irises in the Walli Burn.

The wind moved to the west on 21st and remained mainly south-westerly until 30th. During this period the picture was generally one of emigration stimulated by clear, starry night skies. Several Reed Warblers and Red-backed Shrikes lingered, but most other migrants moved on. Replacing them were birds mainly from the north-west; 40 Knot and 105 Turnstone on 21st, 100 Redshank on 23rd, the first Merlin on 25th and up to 30 *alba* Wagtails daily. Less expected was a Curlew Sandpiper 21st-25th, a fine adult Pomarine Skua on 22nd, Spotted Redshank on 23rd and Scarlet Rosefinch on 29th.

Things livened up again on 30th and 31st following a sudden change to a fresh south-easterly late on 29th. 40 Garden Warblers, 30 Willow Warblers, 4 Pied Flycatchers, a Wood Warbler and an Ortolan arrived on 30th while one lucky observer had the good fortune to flush a Great Snipe near the Kirk. There were more migrants on 31st including the first Blackcaps (3) and Robin, 25 Ruff, 4 Curlew Sandpipers, 10 Tree Pipits, 20 Whinchats, 65 Willow, 5 Barred, 3 Wood and an Icterine Warbler. It was a most enjoyable day, but ended in frustration when a wagtail, thought to be a Citrine, flew high over Stoneybreck and could not be relocated.

September

In contrast to September 1984 winds were predominantly westerly and, consequently, major influxes were few. Nevertheless a series of rarities and semi-rarities made the month a memorable one.

Most of the migrants that arrived at the end of August remained for the first few days of September when up to 5 Red-backed Shrikes, 2 Scarlet Rosefinches, 9 Pied Flycatchers, 3 Wood and 6 Barred Warblers could be seen daily. It was a great relief when the unidentified wagtail briefly seen on 31st August was relocated near Kinn O'Skroo on 1st and confirmed as a Citrine. The following day it gave excellent views as it fed on the edge of Easter Lother Water. The Great Snipe, only seen by one observer on 30th August, was also relocated — it was seen well by everybody on 3rd, as it commuted between Barkland, Pund and Setter. In addition, Curlew Sandpipers increased to a record 9 on 1st, a fine Honey Buzzard sailed southwards on 2nd and there was a minor influx of 3 Icterine, a Grasshopper and an Arctic Warbler on 3rd, the last at Shirva.

4th-8th was a rather slack period; migrants quickly moved out as the wind backed NW. A Cuckoo (the sole autumn record) on 5th and the first Lapland and Snow Bunting on 7th were the only sightings of note. A freshening south-easterly on 9th looked more promising and a Yellow-breasted Bunting was found at North Light, to be joined shortly afterwards by a Little Bunting! 100 Common Gulls also arrived, the first Dunnock and Bluethroat of the autumn were seen and a Velvet Scoter passed at sea. A Spotted Redshank flew over on 10th and another minor influx on 11th included 5 Goldcrests, a new Bluethroat, Grey Wagtail, Turtle Dove and a second Arctic Warbler which spent the afternoon at Leogh. Another Little Bunting occurred on 12th, Bluethroats increased to 2 and the first Little Stints (2) of the autumn were on Easter Lother Water.

Unfortunately the wind settled in the west from 13th to 20th. It was generally a rather quiet period but, nonetheless, there were several notable records. The surprise of 13th, despite quite a strong south-westerly, was the discovery of 2 Yellow-breasted Buntings at Shirva where both remained next day and one lingered until 17th. The first Pink-footed Geese passed over on 14th, 3 Grey Plovers were seen on 15th while 16th was a good day for visible migration — 43 Cormorants, 200 Skylarks, 550 Meadow Pipits and 4 Common Scoter moved south, making the most of a calm day. The highlight of 17th was a vagrant of Nearctic origin — a Lesser Golden Plover which joined a small party of Golden Plovers on the Rippack where it remained until 20th. A rather odd-looking white gull causing some confusion on 18th proved to be a partial-bird Herring Gull, while a juvenile Pomarine Skua passed South Light on 20th.

The westerly airstream was replaced by an easterly one on 21st, the wind remaining between NNE and SE until 25th. 6 Bar-tailed Godwits, the first Brambling, a Bluethroat and a Scarlet Rosefinch were new on 21st while one observer had the good fortune to see a juvenile Long-tailed Skua pass Bunness. The following day was certainly one of elation when a Pechora Pipit, the first since 1978, was trapped in the Gully. Also seen was a Richard's Pipit at Leogh, the first Jack Snipe (3), Redwing and Reed Buntings (2) of the autumn. Scarlet Rosefinches increased to 3 and Lapland Buntings to 8. A good selection of migrants arrived on 23rd. A very tame Little Bunting fed by the Gilly Burn and an Eastern Stonechat was at Shirva. Goldeneye, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Sparrowhawk, Ring Ouzel (3) and Chaffinch were all new and 70 Common Gulls, 6 Tree Pipits, 20 Song Thrushes, 5 Pied Flycatchers, 4 Scarlet Rosefinches, Robin and Grasshopper Warbler also arrived. There were more migrants on 24th including 4 Bluethroats, 8 Redstarts, 25 Ring Ouzels, 50 Song Thrushes, 45 Redwings, Reed Warbler, 2 Barred Warblers, 20 Blackcaps, Wryneck, 14 Bramblings and 2 Woodpigeons. The first Yellow-browed Warblers (3) were seen, Scarlet Rosefinches increased to 5, Richard's Pipits to 2, a Mistle Thrush was seen at Kennaby and an Oortolan at Shirva. Pride of place however went to the discovery of 2 new



Yellow-browed Warbler, part of a major influx to eastern Britain in autumn.

Pechora Pipits in the Setter/Bull's Park area; both remained until 27th with one lingering until 29th. There were generally fewer migrants around on 25th although Yellow-browed Warblers increased to 4 and the first Short-eared Owl and Blackbirds (2) of the autumn were seen. The day was made memorable however by a Lanceolated Warbler in Gilsetter, while a rather enigmatic bunting, either a Red-headed or a Black-headed was found at Shirva — there was a great deal of discussion over its identity which was not resolved until it was finally trapped on 28th and proved to be an adult female Red-headed.

The last few days of the month were relatively quiet as the wind moved back to the west and most birds moved on. A Moorhen was seen on 26th, a Rustic Bunting and a Wood Warbler on 27th, a new Little Bunting on 28th, a Stonechat and a Spotted Crake on 29th and 4 Barnacle Geese on 30th.

October

October was a rather disappointing month for birds. The wind blew from the west on all but a handful of days and many species so characteristic of the late autumn, such as thrushes, Woodcock and geese, were very scarce.

The month opened with a local rarity in the form of a Stock Dove (which remained until 7th) as well as a very tame Bar-tailed Godwit feeding on North Haven beach — tame enough to allow us to lie a mist-net on top of it! The first Water Rail and Long-tailed Duck of the autumn were seen on 2nd. A strong southerly on 3rd brought 2 Jack Snipe, Collared Dove, Short-eared Owl, 270 Skylarks, 15 Bramblings, Sedge Warbler, Blackcap and a Yellow-browed Warbler. 4th-6th was a quiet period, punctuated only by a Crossbill and Great Northern Diver on 4th, another Great Northern Diver on 5th and 9 Grey Plovers on 6th. Things improved on 7th however with a fine overnight influx of



♂ Rustic Bunting caught in October.

birds. 600 Skylarks, 100 Bramblings, 6 Whinchats, 12 Wheatears, 35 Redwings, 20 Blackcaps, 20 Siskins, 4 Greenfinches, 20 Reed Buntings, 3 Linnets, a *flava* Wagtail and 2 Lesser Whitethroats were seen; the first Whooper Swans (3) of the autumn flew over, while more exciting arrivals were 5 Yellow-browed Warblers, Bluethroat, Little Bunting and a male Rustic Bunting at Skerryholm. Similar numbers of migrants remained next day with increases in Redwing (300), Siskin (21), Linnet (35) and Reed Bunting (30). 14 Barnacle Geese and a Spotted Redshank passed over. The Rustic Bunting was trapped and remained, giving excellent views daily, until 17th. Linnets increased further to a record 45 on 9th, a Richard's Pipit and 2 House Martins were new, a Manx Shearwater passed North Light and 100 Rock Doves was also a record count. A clear, starry evening resulted in a considerable exodus of migrants, leaving few birds on 10th. Nevertheless, 18 Ravens was an obvious influx and 19 Whooper Swans and 28 Greylags flew south. A Merlin, roosting on the apex of the single dyke trap was successfully dazzled. The first Glaucous Gulls (2) of the autumn were predictable on 11th as a ferocious westerly gale blew up. A further 38 Greylags flew south, 180 Lapwings were grounded but most unexpected was a Leach's Petrel, seen flying past the double dyke trap!

12th-15th was another slack period, the only records of note being 1800 Redwings and a Little Bunting on 13th. The 16th was a red-letter day for Fair Isle, however, when the rarest bird of the autumn arrived — a juvenile Mute Swan, only the second ever record — which spent the day in Wick o'South Haven. It later moved to Wick o'Furse where it remained until 20th. Also seen was a drake Pochard, the sole record of the year, and a late Reed Warbler. Several minor arrivals occurred over the next few days in relatively calm weather: 2 Water Rails, Short-eared Owl, 4 Swallows, 2 Chiffchaffs, a Scarlet Rosefinch and a Little Bunting on 17th; 300 Redwings, 60 Fieldfares,

Woodpigeon, Pied Flycatcher and Richard's Pipit on 19th; 17 Barnacle Geese, 39 Greylags, 15 Whooper Swans and a Common Scoter on 21st; and 2 new Richard's Pipits, 40 Bramblings and 10 Mallard on 22nd.

A southerly wind on 23rd brought the largest thrush influx of the month — 2300 Redwings, 1600 Fieldfares, 280 Blackbirds and 30 Song Thrushes together with 50 Bramblings, 5 Woodcock, Sparrowhawk, Long-eared Owl, Black Redstart, Pintail and Jackdaw. Migrants were almost equally abundant the following day to be joined by Ring Ouzel, 2 Long-eared Owls, 2 Short-eared Owls and a most interesting 'eastern' *flava* Wagtail, looking remarkably like a Citrine Wagtail, which remained until 30th. There was a fresh influx on 26th as the wind moved to the NE. 175 Goldcrests was a very high count for Fair Isle. There were 1300 Redwings, 450 Fieldfares, 400 Blackbirds, 35 Blackcaps, 2 Black Redstarts, 2 Redstarts, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 80 Bramblings, 2 Pied, a Spotted and a Red-breasted Flycatcher, 50 Woodcock on the hill and a record count of Long-eared Owls (14). A Little Bunting, the ninth of the autumn, was at Field, 97 Greylags flew south and a Long-tailed Duck was dazzled under the pier in the evening. An exciting early trap round on 27th resulted in the capture of 3 Long-eared Owls but, with other migrants in short supply, attentions were turned to the sea where a strong passage of Long-tailed Ducks (107 south in 100 minutes) and 2 Pomarine Skuas were recorded. Another Pomarine Skua was found freshly dead, yet another Richard's Pipit was seen at Setter and a late Red-backed Shrike at Quoy. With a northerly airstream on 28th-31st the month closed with migrants of north-west origin: Great Northern Diver and Little Auk on 28th, 85 Long-tailed Ducks on 29th, 85 Purple Sandpipers, 300 Greylag Geese, 19 Barnacle and 6 White-fronted Geese on 30th and 150 Snow Buntings, another Great Northern Diver and 2 Little Auks on 31st.

November-December

It was a typical end to the year — quiet days interspersed with surprise. There were no large thrush falls but Woodcock were plentiful at times and a large late Mealy Redpoll arrival occurred. Little Auks were regular offshore.

5 Little Auks were seen on 1st November, along with 7 Red-breasted Mergansers, 2 Glaucous Gulls and a late Ringed Plover. 26 Little Auks flew west in an hour on 2nd and a drake Velvet Scoter was in South Haven. The first major Snow Bunting arrival of the autumn, 900, occurred on 3rd and a late Garden Warbler was trapped. A lingering Winchat was still present on 4th, becoming the latest ever. 21 Greylag Geese appeared on 5th. The tenth and final Little Bunting of the autumn was found on 7th. On 8th, the last date on which the Winchat was present, a Richard's Pipit, 6 Blackcaps, 10 Bramblings, 4 Whooper Swans and a Goldeneye were seen. A first-winter Iceland Gull on 9th was the first of the autumn. Over the next few days interesting migrants included Barnacle Goose, 2 Whooper Swans, Merlin, a few Glaucous Gulls and Reed Bunting.

An absorbing mid November spell started on 13th when the first Waxwing of the year was found and 25 Mealy Redpolls announced an influx of that species. 3 Waxwings flew over on 15th when Goldcrest, 2 Short-eared Owls, Water Rail and 9 Siskins were also seen. 50 Woodcock arrived on 16th and on the same day 2500 Herring Gulls were ashore. A Common Scoter, 200 Fieldfares and 300 Snow Buntings were highlights of 17th. The wind had been south-east for several days and this led to further arrivals. On 18th there were 10 Goldcrests, a Red-throated Diver and 3 Dunlin. There were 45 Mealy Redpolls, 150 Turnstones, 50 Woodcock and 40 Blackbirds on 19th. Substantial arrivals on 20th increased the Mealy Redpoll total to 110, while thrushes were represented by 250 Blackbirds and 200 Fieldfares. 4 Waxwings, 4 Long-eared Owls, 2 Jack Snipe, a Robin and an Oystercatcher were new. One Jack Snipe and a Chiffchaff were seen next day. 3 Goosander on 23rd concluded the most interesting spell in the month. Later observations in November included 2 Glaucous Gulls on 25th, Red-breasted Merganser, Peregrine and Long-eared Owl on 28th, 15 Mealy Redpolls, 2

Goldeneyes and a Water Rail on 29th, and 12 Long-tailed Ducks and 15 Little Auks on 30th.

December was not without interest. 8 Whooper Swans flew over on 1st, 3 Twite were still present on 2nd and a Short-eared Owl on 4th. There was a small influx of 20 Blackbirds, 12 Redwings and a Chaffinch on 6th. A female Blackcap, arriving on 9th, stayed for four days. The Chaffinch was joined by another on 10th when a Great Grey Shrike, the year's first, was at Taft. A Long-eared Owl on 11th, a first-year Moorhen and a Dipper on 12th — all in or near Funniquoy Gully — completed a series of unexpected sightings.

Systematic List

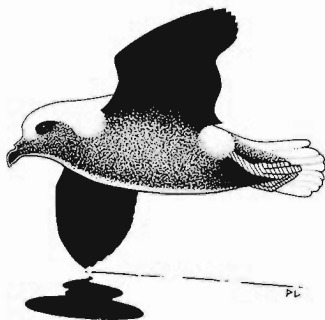
**Details of all birds preceded by an asterisk are still being considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee.*

Red-throated Diver *Gavia stellata*. One east on 1st, one on 6th April and one north on 2nd May were the only spring records. Summer singles were one on the *Good Shepherd* crossing on 1st June, and from or over the isle on 21st June, 14th, 22nd & 24th July. 1-2 recorded most days 9th-22nd September, with 4 on 11th. On crossing, one on 28th September and 4 on 1st October. From the isle, 2 south on 2nd October, singles on 5th, 6th & 26th, 2 on 27th October, one on 1st & 18th November.

Great Northern Diver *Gavia immer*. In the early part of the year there were singles on 6th, 9th & 13th March. One was seen on 20th May. In October singles flew past on 4th, 5th, 23rd, 28th & 31st.

Diver species *Gavia*. One unidentified diver seen on 5th September.

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. One on Golden Water, 8th November, was the only record.



Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*. Present all year. All the normal breeding sites were occupied as usual but a very poor breeding season with many sites empty by late July. 'Blue' Fulmars were noted occasionally throughout the year and more frequently late August to early November. Maxima were 5 from the isle on 3rd October and 10, including 2 double dark morph, on the crossing of 29th October when an all-white bird was also seen.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*. One on the crossing on 9th July was the first of the year. 1-2 were noted on seven dates in August, six dates in September and four dates in October to 17th. The only higher count was on the crossing — 4 on 1st October.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*. One on 8th & 18th June, 2 on 6th July and 3rd August were seen on the crossing. Singles were seen from the isle on 17th & 18th July, 26th August, 11th September and 9th October, and 3 on 22nd September.

Shearwater species *Puffinus*. 2 large Shearwaters were seen on 13th September.

Storm Petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*. First seen on the crossing on 28th May. Maximum count on the crossing was 20 on 18th June. First noted ashore on 4th June when one churring in collapsed wall on Buness. Plenty ashore at night, Peitron, from 17th June. 2

were seen flying south off Bunes on 18th July and one south on 15th August. Ashore at night throughout August, but in rather low numbers. Not seen in September. Only later record, one on crossing of 1st October.



Leach's Petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. The only record was, astonishingly, one in broad daylight over the isle during a severe gale on 11th October.

Gannet *Sula bassana*. Regularly ashore by early March. 138 nests were counted in late June. In addition there were 900 non-breeders ashore, mainly on Kirki Stack, Dronger and Upper North Felsigeo at the time of late June counts. Some young still on ledges in mid September when up to 200 adults noted. Up to 100 still round isle in the first week of October, declining to 12 on 28th and small numbers, intermittently, to 7th November.

Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Very scarce in spring: singles on 11th and 18th April and 1-2 on five dates 21st-30th May were the only records. 2 on 7th August, and 6 south on 23rd preceded almost daily passage 29th August-23rd October. Strongest movements 2nd-28th September, maxima 45 on 16th and 50 on 22nd. After October 1-2 present occasionally 1st-11th and 12 on 20th November.

Shag *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present all year. Many early nests were lost during a cold spell but replacement nests were very successful.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. In spring, one on 29th March, 1-3 on eleven dates 2nd-18th April — with 5 on 11th April — and one on nine dates 5th-26th May. One on 15th June was the only later record before regular post-breeding occurrences from 3 on 21st July. 1-3 noted regularly 27th July-28th September with no obvious concentrations. 1-2 noted on eight dates 2nd October-3rd November.

Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*. A juvenile from 16th-20th October was only the second Fair Isle record, the previous one being in December 1969.

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*. 2 on 12th February, 7 on 10th and 2 on 11th April were the only records before autumn passage, comprising 3 on 7th October, 7 on 9th, 19 on 10th, 15 on 21st, 16 on 25th, 8 on 26th and 2 on 30th October, 4 on 8th and 2 on 11th November. 8 were seen on 1st December.

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*. None in spring. Virtually daily passage 14th-24th September, up to 17 except 18th when 62 and 19th when 104 flew south. Later appearances entailed on 3rd, 5 on 5th, 2 on 13th and 10 on 18th October.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*. There was an unprecedented spring occurrence of 22 on 19th April with 13 still present the next day. 6 flew south on 30th October. All were probably of the Greenland race.

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*. One on 1st and 3 on 7th April preceded 31 on 19th and 40 on 20th April. 1-5 were noted virtually daily 21st April-5th May. One on Da Burrian on 22nd July was a most unexpected summer record. A series of autumn waves were concentrated between 3rd-13th October (maximum 38 on 11th), 19th-21st October (maximum 39 on 21st) and 26th October-1st November (maxima 97 on 26th & 300 on 30th). Later records comprised 21 on 5th and one on 7th-14th November.

Grey Goose species *Anser*. Unidentified grey geese were seen on 21st September (15), 30th September (4) & 18th October (8).

Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis*. 17 on 19th April were part of a general goose influx. 3 on 30th May was the only other spring occurrence. Scattered autumn passage involved 4 on 30th September, 10 on 6th, 31 on 8th, 6 on 11th & 18th, 17 on 21st & 19 on 30th October, with one on 9th-11th November.

Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*. 3 were present from at least January, one being found dead in February. It was an adult of the dark-bellied race *Branta b. bernicla* (confirmed in March by Kevin Shepherd from the corpse). Only the second record for this race, the other being in 1976.

Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*. An excellent spring for this species: one on 6th March was followed by 2 drakes on 23rd, one drake on 26th-30th March, one on 8th-13th & 18th April, a drake on 3rd May, a pair next day, 1-2 on 6th-13th May, with 3 on 7th May. In contrast, there was none in summer or autumn.

Wigeon *Anas penelope*. In spring: 3 on 7th March, 2 on 1st, 3 on 21st & 25th April, a pair on 3rd, a drake on 20th-21st and 2 on 30th May. In autumn: drake on 17th-18th August preceded virtually daily occurrence 31st August-5th November. Numbers were low — 1-6 except 8 on 9th September, 17 on 30th October. Late records comprised 2 on 21st November.

Teal *Anas crecca*. Spring records comprised one on 10th & 2 on 11th February, singles on 7th & 19th March, 2-4 virtually daily 5th-13th April, one on 29th-30th April, 2 on 6th-8th & 15th May, one on 29th May & a drake on 18th June. Virtually daily autumn records 12th August-6th November, low numbers throughout, maximum 9 on 26th October. 1-3 noted occasionally 16th November-December, with 6 on 29th November.

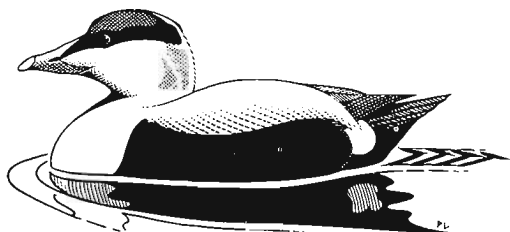
Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*. 2 on 5th February, one on 10th February and 2 on 22nd March preceded daily occurrences 1st-23rd April, maximum 8 on 2nd, and virtually daily 7th-28th May, maximum 4 on 28th. Later spring and summer records were 4 on 8th, 3 on 17th and 2 on 19th June and singles on 20th, 24th June and 2nd-3rd July. A drake on 30th July and 1-2 on four widely separate dates in August were precursors of autumn passage. Seen most days 4th September-November, maxima 10 on 22nd October and 11 on 16th November. 3 were noted on 17th December.

Pintail *Anas acuta*. In spring there were single drakes on 20th & 28th May and a duck on 6th June. The only autumn record was a duck on 23rd October.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*. A pair on 1st June remained to 3rd.

Pochard *Aythya ferina*. Only one record, a drake on 16th October.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*. A drake on 3rd-12th preceded 5 on 13th and 1-3 daily 14th-27th May. A drake on 4th-6th June was the only other spring record but there was a summer drake on 12th-14th July.



Eider *Somateria mollissima*. Present all year. There were 500 on 25th January but the spring maximum was only 250, on 25th April. The autumn maximum was lower than normal, too: 836 on 30th September.

***King Eider** *Somateria spectabilis*. A superb adult drake on 22nd & 25th May and on 22nd June probably all refer to the same individual.

Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis*. 3 were seen on 10th & 12th January. 1-2 were seen regularly 17th March-4th April. One on 10th April and a drake on 28th April concluded the spring occurrences. In autumn none was seen until 2 on the crossing of 1st October and one from the isle on 2nd heralded daily occurrences. Up to 9 were noted until 27th October when 112 flew south in 100 minutes. 40 flew south on 29th with a further 45 seen on the crossing. There were 20 offshore on 2nd and 12 on 30th November, otherwise single figures most days into December.

Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*. There was a drake from 10th-16th March, 10 on 21st-22nd and 3 on 23rd-26th March. In April there were 1-4 on six dates 5th-20th April with 11 on 8th. 8 were present on 1st May and 1-2 on five dates 2nd-22nd May. In autumn 4 flew west on 16th September, a duck was seen on 21st October, 3 were noted on the crossing on 29th October and a female plumaged bird was off South Light on 17th November.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*. 2 female plumaged individuals 21st-25th March were the only spring records. A drake on 9th September and on 2nd November were the only ones in autumn.

Goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*. In January there were singles on 11th & 26th, 2 on 15th and 3 on 24th. One was noted on 23rd February. In March there was a female plumaged bird on 20th-21st and 2 on 22nd. April records of one on 6th, 2 on 10th-11th and one on 12th-13th included a drake — on 10th-11th. A female on 28th May completed the spring occurrences. In autumn 1-2 on four dates 23rd-28th September preceded 1-2 most days 1st-29th October. 1-2 were noted on four scattered dates in November.

Smew *Mergus albellus*. An adult drake found dead on 28th January was the seventh Fair Isle record, and at a typical date.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*. In winter there was one on 26th January and one found dead on 4th February. 1-2 noted virtually daily 10th March-20th April. Intermittent records thereafter comprised a drake on 7th-8th May, female on 14th May,

1-2 daily 6th-10th June, female on 4th-6th July and 2 females on 13th-14th July. 3 on 14th September, 1-3 on 22nd-24th September and one on 1st October were followed by 1-5 regularly 10th October-2nd November, with 7 on 1st November. A drake on 28th-29th November was the only later record.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*. One on 19th January and 3 female plumaged birds on 23rd November were the only records.

Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus*. There was one record, a single on 2nd September.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. A female spent the evening of 31st May cruising up and down the isle.

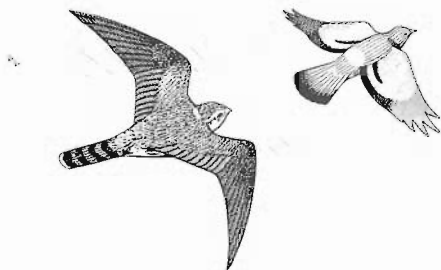
Hen Harrier *Circus cyaneus*. Five individuals in spring: 16th-28th April (male, trapped on 18th), 5th May (ring-tail), 26th-27th May (ring-tail), 29th May (male) and 30th May-1st June (ring-tail). None in autumn.

Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*. A rather poor spring passage: there were singles on 11th & 16th April, 5th-8th, 11th-19th, 22nd-23rd & 29th May and 1st & 3rd June. The species was even scarcer in autumn. A female on 23rd-24th September, one on 10th October and a male on 23rd-26th October were the only records.

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*. One bird overwintered, and was noted occasionally in the north of the isle to 16th March.

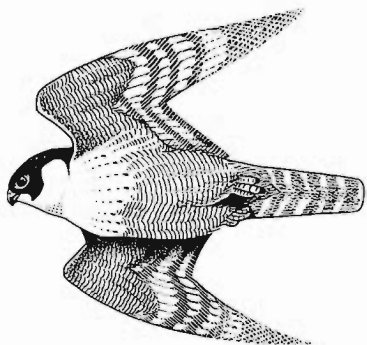
Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*. There were no less than three in spring: on 1st May, 27th-28th May and 12th June.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*. A male on 23rd and a female on 26th March preceded one on 5th-12th April and singles on 30th April, 5th, 7th & 12th May. 2 on 3rd June with one remaining to 5th were the final spring records. A first-year female on 27th July was the first of the autumn. 1-2 were present most days 5th August-13th November — at least 3, probably rather more, individuals were involved.



Merlin *Falco columbarius*. A male was noted on 25th January and one on 25th February. 1-2 were seen regularly 13th-26th March and daily 8th-12th April. Later singles 19th, 22nd-23rd April, 9th, 12th and 22nd-27th May were predominantly females. One out-of-season bird occurred on 30th June. In autumn 1-3 were noted virtually daily 25th August-mid November and 4 on 10th October. Commonest in the first half of October. Several different individuals were involved during the autumn. One was seen on 10th December.

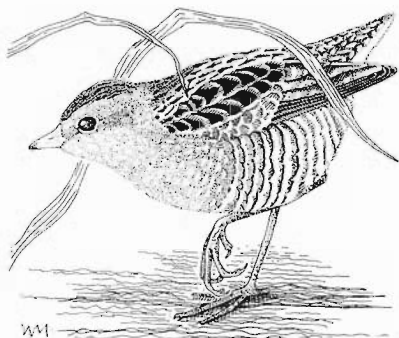
Hobby *Falco subbuteo*. A first-summer bird put in a brief appearance on 4th June.



Peregrine *Falco peregrinus*. Singles on 18th January and 3rd & 18th-19th February may have denoted a wintering bird. Daily occurrence on 2nd-7th April included both male and female individuals but hopes of breeding were dashed with their departure. The only later spring bird was a male on 16th May. An immature male which appeared on 10th August remained until at least November. There were several individuals from 7th September-November but no more than 2 on any day except 24th October when 3 seen. An adult female appeared on 17th December.

Quail *Coturnix coturnix*. One at Stoneybrake on 19th June and one singing near Pund on 24th July were the only records.

Water Rail *Rallus aquaticus*. Virtually non-existent in spring, one on the late date of 9th June being the only record. In autumn there were a succession of birds from 2nd October: in October, 1-2 on nine dates and 3 on 10th; in November, singles on nine scattered dates; and on three dates in December.



Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*. One trapped at Quoy on 26th May was still present, in Field ditch, the next day. One in Schoolton ditch on 16th August and one in the Observatory garden on 29th September made it an excellent year for this species.

Corncrake *Crex crex*. Only one record, a single on 20th August.

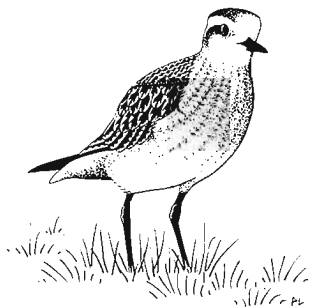
Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*. There were singles on 14 dates 22nd March-26th April, with 3 on 3rd April. Autumn records comprised one on 26th, 2 on 28th September and singles on 2nd, 5th & 7th October. A first-winter was trapped on 12th December.

Crane *Grus grus* One flying north on 5th May was the fourth Fair Isle record.

Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. One seen on 6th & 24th January. Main return from 15th February, when 5, building to 30 by 26th February and 60 on 6th March. Early spring maximum 135 on 19th April. Non-breeding flocks present in late May and June. A census of breeding pairs located a minimum of 77 territories. The highest post-breeding counts were 200 on 29th July and 150 on 5th August. There were still 100 on 21st August but rapid departures to 25 on 3rd September and one by 21st September. Only irregular from 24th September, 1-5 except 13 on 4th October. The last 2 were noted on 25th October, with the exception of a tardive bird on 20th November.

Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula*. The first 2 arrived on 25th February, but most arrived in mid March, maximum 13 on 19th. No obvious signs of through-migration except 18th-23rd May when up to 6 of the smaller, darker *tundrae* race noted. Breeding population censused at 12 pairs, with at least five pairs successful and one pair probably double-brooded. First autumn migrants noted on 21st August when 30 counted. Main passage concentrated 26th August-13th September, smaller than usual with maximum only 34 — on 31st August. Daily occurrence ended on 21st September. 1-2 on eight dates 23rd September-4th October terminated autumn migration. However, one very late adult was present on 31st October-1st November.

Dotterel *Charadrius morinellus*. The only record comprised 2 on Vaasetter on 9th May.



***Lesser Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*. A juvenile of the American race *P. d. dominica* was present 17th-20th September. Fourth Fair Isle record, and recorded for the third consecutive year.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*. One on 30th January was the only winter record. 1-4 on six dates 7th-26th March preceded regular occurrence 1st April-13th June. Generally low numbers but 19 on 20th April, 31 on 1st and 25 on 4th May. There was some displaying as in previous recent years and 1-2 were seen occasionally 22nd June-17th July, but there was no evidence of a breeding attempt. Autumn arrivals started with one on 24th, 4 on 25th and 6 on 27th July; then virtually daily 2nd August-25th October. Generally low numbers, but 25 on 16th & 23 on 17th August. There was one later bird on 19th-20th November.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*. Four records: 15th September (3), 24th-28th September, 2nd October & 6th October (9).

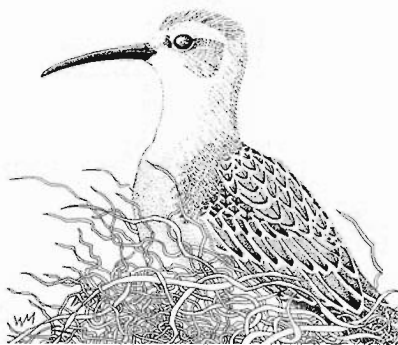
Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*. 2 on 31st January and one on 13th February preceded main spring arrivals from 3rd March, when 23 present. Strong passage 6th-11th March when 136-167 daily and 24th-26th March when 130, 100 and 80 counted. Another major influx of 200 on 1st April was followed by 145 next day. The last major arrival comprised 105

on 11th April. From mid April mainly local birds, but up to 40 on several dates in May. 6 pairs held territory but the cold spring appeared to discourage nesting and only one pair definitely successful with one other attempting. By early July local birds had departed and only 1-4 noted occasionally except for 35 on 14th July. Recorded most days 31st July-23rd November. Early autumn maxima 25 on 15th August & 25th September. Heavy passage confined to 11th-27th October when 11-36 daily and 180 on 11th, 100 on 12th.

Knot *Calidris canutus*. One very early spring migrant on 27th March was followed by singles on 5th-7th, 9th-10th, 19th & 24th May. Post-breeding arrivals started with one on 13th July, with 6 on 18th, 4 on 21st and one on 24th July. In August singles on 2nd-3rd, 10th & 11th and 7 on 14th preceded a relatively strong passage 17th August-15th September, strongest on 21st-22nd August when 40 and 38 counted. The only birds after mid September were singles on 18th, 22nd-23rd September, 3rd, 5th & 7th-9th October.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*. Spring birds are not noted every year, but there was one on 12th May and another on 18th-20th May. More typical were July records of one on 8th, 6 on 18th-20th, 2 on 21st, and 1-2 on 26th-28th. In August there were 1-2 on eight dates 15th-30th. Small numbers were present daily 1st-25th September, peak 6 on 15th. 2 on 6th-7th and one on 8th & 11th October were the only later records.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*. 2 at Muckle Uri Geo on 31st May with one remaining to 1st June were only the third spring occurrence on record, and the first since 1964. Autumn records spanned 12th-27th September, maximum 4 on 25th-26th.



Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*. One on 21st-25th August was followed by 4 on 31st, a record 9 on 1st September and one the next day.

Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima*. 4 were noted on 31st January. Seen regularly in March, including 50 on 20th and 19 on 26th. 1-22 noted most days in April. In May 10-25 daily 1st-9th, gradually dwindling thereafter to one on 31st May and complete absence till 6 on 10th July, increasing to 12 on 12th. Seen virtually daily from 25th July with an early peak of 35 on 27th July. Other highs were 45 on 1st August, 15 on 23rd September, 85 on 30th October and 20 on 1st November.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*. One winter bird seen on 30th January. In spring 2 on 8th-9th, 19th & 21st and one on 22nd April were followed by daily records 5th May-15th June, maximum 11 on 18th May. There were summer records of 2 on 26th June and one on 5th July. Post-breeding arrivals contributed 1-6 daily 13th-20th July and virtually daily

records 24th July-28th October, peaking at 11 on 31st August, 16 on 6th & 10 on 9th October. 3 appeared on 18th November, one staying to 29th.

Ruff *Philomachus pugnax*. There was none in spring. A Reeve on 27th, another on 29th July and 1-2 on 1st-3rd August preceded daily occurrence 11th August-3rd September, maxima 14 on 16th, 15 on 19th, 25 on 31st August and 12 on 1st September. Another wave of daily records 7th-15th September peaked at 6 on 10th. Later singles were noted on seven dates 20th September-4th October, with 2 on 3rd October.

Jack Snipe *Lymnocyrtus minimus*. The only spring records were singles on 15th April and 20th May. Autumn records spanned the period 22nd September-24th October when up to 3 noted most days and 4 on 25th September. Late migrants comprised 2 on 20th & one on 21st November and, in December, one on 10th.

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. Up to 20 were noted in January and 6 in February. Seen daily from mid March with early maximum 22 on 28th March. 32 on 9th May perhaps indicated migrants but difficult to assess through-passage owing to the ever increasing breeding population, which in 1985 was censused at 26 drumming birds. Fewer than normal occurred in autumn. August numbers were very low apart from 60 on 30th & 35 on 31st. Up to 35 were noted in September. 25 on 2nd October was the maximum thereafter though small numbers were seen daily to the end of the year. A small cold weather influx occurred on 29th November when 20 counted.

***Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*. One on 30th August was seen again on 3rd and 7th September.

Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. Noted occasionally in January, maximum 10 on 26th. One on 18th February. 2 on 1st and one on 7th March preceded virtually daily records 28th March-19th April. No more than 10 except 19 on 6th, 20 on 7th, 50 on 8th and 16 on 11th April. 1-2 on nine dates 5th-24th May. Continuing recent trends there were out-of-season singles on 26th June, 27th July and 3rd August. Precursors of the main autumn passage occurred on 30th September, 5th, 13th & 16th October. Small numbers were seen virtually daily from 19th October with a larger influx of 50 on 26th October. A further influx 16th-20th November provided totals of 20-50 daily.

Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*. In spring there were singles on 28th April-2nd May, 9th-10th May and 4th June.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*. None in spring but 2 on 7th July, one on 26th July, one on 31st August-1st September, 6 on 21st September and one on 1st-3rd October.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*. Seen regularly in January, with 15 on 26th. 4 on three dates, 18th-21st February. Noted daily from early March. March maximum 20 on 9th. Later passage indicated by peaks of 25 on 2nd April, 20 on 30th April and 22 on 4th May. Breeding population comprised five pairs. Post-breeding movements started in late June with maxima 26 on 3rd and 25 on 7th July. Daily passage continued to 15th October with only small numbers except 20 on 17th-18th, 16 on 19th & 60 on 20th August. 1-3 late birds were noted most days 19th October-early December, and 7 on 8th December.

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. The first spring migrant appeared on 18th April after which noted daily to early July. Generally low numbers except 29 on 8th, 23 on 9th May. In June and early July one bird displayed incessantly on Vaasetter without attracting a mate, despite the presence of an extra bird in the same area (another male?). In July 1-2 noted on 16 dates. In August, 1-6 most days with 12 on 17th. 2 on 1st, one on 13th-14th and one on 20th September were the only later records.

Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*. Singles on 14th, 23rd & 28th August, 10th & 14th September and 8th October were all considered to be different birds.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*. One on 6th February was the only winter record. Daily records from 15th March. March maximum only 11, on 29th, and generally low numbers too in April and May — maxima 18 on 1st April, 14 on 4th May. Main passage ended on 15th May after which 1-3 noted on six dates 21st-29th May. 1-2 on seven dates, 5th-28th June. Regular post-breeding arrivals contributed to daily records from 2nd July. July maximum 22 on 16th. In August there were major arrivals of 60 on 14th and 100 on 23rd; 20 on 17th was the September maximum and 32 on 6th that for October. Up to 27 were seen daily in November and December.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*. A very sparse spring passage comprised singles on 8th-9th, 14th May, 2nd & 13th June. One on 3rd August was the forerunner of a thin daily passage 9th August-3rd September, maximum 3 on 20th & 31st August. 2 late birds appeared on 10th September.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*. Singles on 15th, 18th & 20th April, 14th-15th, 18th & 21st May and 2nd June, and 2 on 6th May were the only spring records. Autumn passage started with one on 26th-27th July with 4 next day and 2 on 29th July & 1st August. 1-3 recorded most days 7th-29th August, with 5 on 16th & 21st. One on 12th September was the only other record.

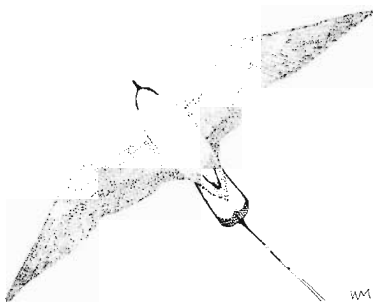
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*. In spring there were singles on 18th & 21st May. In autumn one arriving on 12th stayed to 20th August.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*. There was an early bird on 20th April. Daily passage did not occur until 6 on 7th May. Small numbers then to 9th June, maximum 9 on 28th May. Mid summer records were one on 27th June & 13th July. 15 on 15th August were not only the first but the highest count of the autumn. There were up to 8 daily to 31st August (and 11 on 20th), 1-4 daily in September to 12th and singles on four dates 16th September-1st October.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*. Up to 42 wintered. There was evidence of passage in March with maxima 110 on 22nd and 100 on 23rd. Further passage in early April contributed peaks of 110 on 4th, 6th & 8th. 95 on 2nd and 5th May demonstrated continued good numbers, but departures accelerated from 10th May. Lower numbers were still present daily to mid June and then noted most days till daily occurrence indicated returning migrants in early July. The June maximum was 23 on 2nd. In July 4-25 in the first half of the month had swollen to 100 on 27th. Thereafter up to 50 were recorded daily with occasional influxes producing counts of 75 on 6th & 24th, 105 on 21st August, 63 on 14th-15th September, 118 on 3rd, 120 on 6th, 127 on 11th & 100 on 27th October. Numbers were generally higher from November — frequently 60+ and 180 on 5th November with 200 on 17th.

Pomarine Skua *Stercorarius pomarinus*. A good showing from land and sea. Singles seen from the isle comprised an adult on 22nd August, juvenile on 20th September, one on 22nd September and 2 on 27th October when a juvenile was found dead. On the crossing there was one on 28th September and 2 on 22nd & 29th October and 7th November.

Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. A light phase appeared on 11th April. 3 on 17th April announced the start of the main arrival period, attaining 12 on 30th April and 60 by 5th May. 81 pairs held territory and there was a small bachelor club of up to 20. The first young fledged on 11th July. August departures were rapid and only 4 remained by 10th September. 1-3 seen most days to 23rd September, with only later records one on 6th and adult light phase on 22nd-23rd October.



Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*. A superb adult briefly joined the Arctic Skua bachelor club on 8th June. A juvenile flew past Bunes on 21st September.

Great Skua (Bonxie) *Stercorarius skua*. There was a very early record of 2 flying north on 7th March. Main arrivals were rather delayed: in late March there were singles on 24th & 28th and 2 on 29th. They were present daily from 1st April but only 10 had arrived by 7th and 15 on 15th April. Some breeding birds did not arrive until May. 72 pairs bred. The bachelor club started to build up in late May, reaching 189 on 26th June. After initial August departures up to 35 remained throughout September and to 15th October, after which numbers dwindled rapidly to 5 on 20th, 3 on 25th October and the last on 1st November.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*. One on 19th February was the precursor of virtually daily passage 4th March-10th June. Numbers were generally less than 10 but 40 occurred on 6th and 31 on 11th April, 27 on 1st May and 30 on 10th June. 1-4 were present most days 15th-28th June. Post-breeding movements started with 8 on 3rd July, with 46 on 5th. Recorded daily 5th July-11th October and 1-9 occasionally thereafter to 21st November. Strongest passage in August, though maximum only 15 on 9th & 12th.

Common Gull *Larus canus*. Early spring singles on 4th-5th & 7th-8th March were forerunners of regular arrivals from 15th. The first reasonable arrival was 20 on 29th March. Variable, generally moderate numbers in April were interspersed with major passage of 225 on 6th and 340 on 11th. 15-50 noted daily in May, with 80 on 5th. 7 pairs bred. Two females shared a nest on Tarryfield. Post-breeding movements were noted occasionally in July, most particularly 70 on 18th. Recorded daily throughout late summer to late autumn. Strongest passage spanned 9th August-23rd September when frequently 100+ and 300 on 9th, 500 on 15th & 320 on 20th August.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*. The first 2 were noted on 6th March but others did not appear until 6th April. Most breeders had arrived by 27th April. The breeding population has slumped in the last two years and is currently only 17 pairs. Early post-breeding departures resulted in only 1-4 after 18th August and none after 21st September apart from an adult of the Scandinavian race on 5th increasing to 2 on 6th-7th October, and a late juvenile on 22nd & 26th October (same individual both dates).

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*. Present all year. Spring maximum 500 on 21st March. The breeding population fared badly, apparently finding food scarce. Consequently, rather fewer chicks were raised to fledging. Autumn numbers were very low until 450 appeared on 1st November, with 800 next day, 2000 on 9th and 2500 on 16th November. The majority of these were large, dark backed northern birds.

Iceland Gull *Larus glaucoideus*. A second-winter on 1st March was the only record prior to a first-winter on 9th November.

Glaucous Gull *Larus hyperboreus*. In spring there was one on 1st & 11th March, 2 first-winters on 21st, 3 the next day, one on 26th & 28th March, one second-summer on 3rd April, 2 on 6th, and singles on 11th, 25th & 27th April and 22nd May. The first autumn birds were 2 on 11th & 3 on 16th October. Singles on four dates 20th October-1st November preceded 20 on 2nd November and 1-2 frequently thereafter.

Great Black-backed Gull *Larus marinus*. Present all year. Spring maximum 700 on 21st March. A reasonably successful breeding season. Autumn numbers were relatively low with 400 on 1st-2nd November the peak count.

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*. Present on ledges from late winter. Breeding season as usual, but fairly high post-fledging mortality and some chicks being abandoned in the nest — suggesting starvation following food shortages. Generally small numbers were present offshore most days from August with influxes of 300 on 16th September, 100 on 25th-26th & 110 on 28th October.

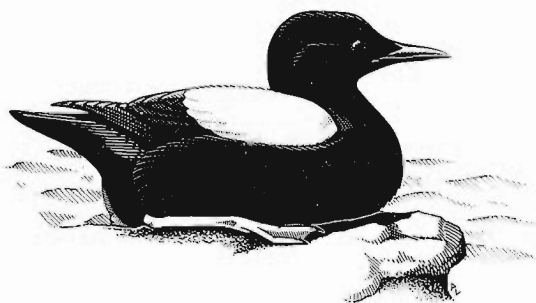
Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*. One in North Haven on 4th April was the earliest ever by five days. 2 on 20th May, 2 on 23rd June and one on 27th June appeared on more typical dates.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*. 7 arrived in North Haven on 5th May, followed by most of the rest of the population in the next few days. About 25 pairs bred on Stak o North Haven. An encouraging development was the presence of 8 pairs on Buness, several of them breeding successfully, and a pair attempted on Meoness, failing at egg stage. At post-breeding stage 20 remained to 18th August and 10 to 27th. However, 2 on 28th August were the last of the year.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*. 2 appeared on 9th May, but only 2-3 were noted occasionally until main arrivals from 20th May. The breeding population continues to increase. There were 3 pairs at North Slogar, at least 4 pairs at South Slogar and one pair with 2 eggs at Meoness. The Meoness pair and one of the North Slogar pairs failed but the species was generally more successful than the Common Terns. In August departures were complete by 17th August with the exception of singles on 20th, 22nd & 28th August. A late migrant was seen on 14th September.

Guillemot *Uria aalge*. Present on suitable days from January. Census counts in June suggested little change in numbers from the last couple of years. The species once again had an excellent breeding season with young leaving the colonies in large numbers during the first half of July. None was seen between 1st & 27th August but small numbers were noted offshore thereafter with peak counts 85 on 4th, 96 on 5th and 75 on 6th October.

Razorbill *Alca torda*. Present from early in the year. Census counts in June showed a slight increase on 1984 levels though still below 1982 figures. The species enjoyed a good breeding season with most departing the colonies by mid July. The last ashore was on 1st August after which none was seen until 26th August. 1-3 noted on only six dates in late August and September. 1-10 seen daily 1st-6th October, but only two singles later in October and early November.



Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*. Present all year. An annual late April and early May count of birds in Busta Geo was instigated. The species enjoyed a rather more successful breeding season than in 1984.

Little Auk *Alle alle*. Singles were seen on 12th January and 11th February. One on 28th October, 2 on 31st October, 5 on 1st, 26 on 2nd and one on 7th November were seen from the isle. One the crossing 9 were seen on 29th October and one on 7th November. From 13th November any watch offshore revealed Little Auks including 18 in fifteen minutes on 15th and 15 on 30th November. 20 were seen on crossing of 20th November.

Puffin *Fratercula arctica*. A rather slow spring arrival. One on 30th March and 7 on 1st-2nd April were followed by over 200 on 4th April. There were few or none then until 200 on 10th April and the normal large numbers from 13th April. The Burrista transect count of occupied burrows in June indicated a decrease of 24% on 1984 figures. In July the adults seemed to find food scarce and this may have contributed to delayed departures by juveniles and adults still present in large numbers to mid August. There were still 14 on 27th August. 1-2 were seen on eight dates in September and 3 on 5th October.

Rock Dove *Columba livia*. Present all year. Spring maximum 60 on 27th May. The breeding population, hitherto pure, is becoming tainted with domestic morphs due to a series of refugees from races south out of Shetland. In autumn 97 on 9th October represents a highest ever count for the isle.

Stock Dove *Columba oenas*. One on 11th May was the only spring record. In autumn there was one on 1st-7th October.

Woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*. An above average spring, mainly concentrated into two waves. The first, 22nd March-13th April, peaked in April with 28 on 7th, 22 on 8th and 17 on 9th. 1-2 on six dates 16th-29th April preceded a second wave of virtually daily passage 6th May-6th June, generally only 1-4 but 8 on 12th & 18 on 29th May. There were mid summer singles on seven dates 18th June-5th July. One on 12th August preceded 1-2 daily 24th September-11th October. Later records comprised one on 19th, 2 on 24th October, and one on 5th November.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*. One early bird appeared on 17th April. There were migrants virtually daily 12th May-18th June with maxima 7 on 29th-30th May and 1st & 3rd June. In summer there were 4 on 2nd July and 1-3 on 13 dates 26th June-21st July. The only later occurrences were 2 on 5th-6th & 11th August, one the following day and one on 3rd & 5th October.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*. Spring passage spanned 27th May-5th June when 1-3 daily and 6 on 29th May. Later singles were noted on 19th-21st & 24th June and 4th July. 2 were seen on 7th July. A sparse autumn passage spanned 22nd August-25th September when 1-2 on 17 dates, involving a few long-stay individuals.

Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*. A male on 13th-14th May and 3 on 16 preceded a good daily passage 18th May-4th June. Numbers peaked at 8 on 26th May declining to one on 1st June. Another arrival of 5 on 4th June included one hepatic female. One on 16th June was the only later spring record. A juvenile on 5th September was the only autumn record.



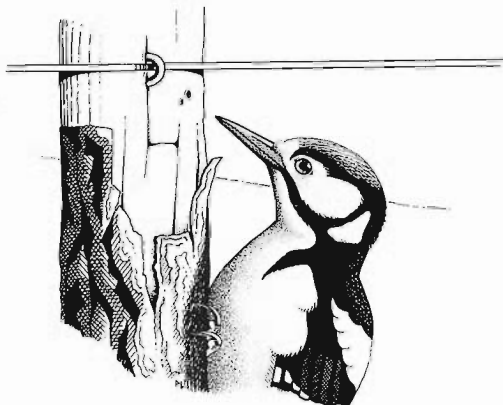
Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*. A sparse spring passage comprised singles on 29th-30th March, 4th & 21st April and 15th May. Autumn migrants did not appear until one on 23rd October commenced a period of daily occurrence to 31st October. The day maximum was 3 apart from 26th when a record 14 appeared, including 6 at the Shop. In November there were 4 on 20th and one on 28th, and in December 2 on 7th, one remaining to 11th.

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*. Spring records were scattered throughout the period. There were singles on 20th & 26th March, 1-2 most days 2nd-13th April, with 4 on 9th April, singles on eight scattered dates in May and on six dates 12th-26th June. One out-of-season bird was seen on 27th July. Autumn records were few and scattered with one on 25th-26th September, 1-2 on six dates 3rd-27th October, 2 on 15th and one on 20th November.

Nightjar species *Caprimulgus*. A rusty-brown individual sitting on the gravel parking area at Shirva very early on the morning of 10th May was not specifically identified.

Swift *Apus apus*. There was one on 25th-26th May. 2 on 31st May, one on 1st-2nd & 4 on 3rd June and 1-2 on seven dates 16th-24th June. Occurrences were most concentrated 2nd-18th July when 1-4 seen most days, 10 on 4th & 6 on 8th July. Later records comprised 4 on 24th, 3 on 28th July, singles on 9th, 10th & 12th August, 6 next day, 1-7 most days 18th-28th August with 10 on 20th & 15 on 23rd and, finally, one on 10th-11th September.

Wryneck *Jynx torquilla*. A good spring passage started with 7 on 9th May. There were daily records thereafter to 1st June with peak numbers 13 on 13th and 14 on 14th May. Later in June there were 1-2 on seven dates 4th-12th and one on 22nd. Autumn records were virtually all in August, with one on 16th & 19th, 10 on 20th, 4 on 21st, one on 22nd, 2 on 25th & one on 28th. One on 24th September was the only later record.



Great Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopus major*. An immature which arrived on 23rd September stayed to 28th.

***Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. A very smart individual on 28th-29th May and a duller bird on 13th-14th June were both of the sandier southern morph. Surprisingly, there was none in autumn.

Woodlark *Lullula arborea*. One spent the whole period 10th-25th March in the Observatory-North Haven area. There was one at Midway on 21st April. Two in a year is a welcome continuance of the species' gradual return to the regularity of earlier years.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*. Arrivals were already underway in February, with 25 on 21st February. Numbers increased gradually to 100 on 15th, 150 on 16th and 160 on 17th March. Major passage spanned 31st March-9th April with 100+ daily and 250 on 1st April. Census of the breeding population revealed a minimum of 87 pairs. Main autumn passage got underway with 200 on 16th September, rising to 300 on 24th-26th September. Further arrivals in early October resulted in peak counts of 550 on 7th, 45 on 8th and 400 on 9th. There were still 100 on 17th October. Rapidly falling numbers thereafter to 20 on 28th October, 12 on 4th November and one on 15th were followed by a small arrival 17th-21st November, when up to 25 present. A few still present in early December, including 20 on 10th.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia*. The recent population crash was again reflected in the meagre collection of occurrences: one on 16th & 24th May, 6 on 29th & 3 on 30th May and one on 18th-19th June.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*. Precursors of main passage were 3 on 19th and 1-2 on 22nd-24th April. Recorded virtually daily 1st May-8th July. Largest numbers occurred 22nd May-3rd June, including 60 on 23rd, 35 on 29th, 80 on 30th & 35 on 31st May. There were later July records of one on 18th, 3 on 19th, one on 27th & 30th. In August 1-3 were noted on seven dates 8th-25th. Daily occurrence in September was all concentrated between 17th-27th, maximum 7 on 20th. Later records comprised 1-4 on ten dates 16th October-1st November.

House Martin *Delichon urbica*. Spring passage spanned 10th May-19th June. Largest totals occurred 23rd May-3rd June, with maxima 45 on 28th May, 50 on 29th May and on 3rd June. Later singles on 24th June and on five dates 7th-23rd July with 3 on 15th. In early autumn there were 1-3 on seven dates 18th August-1st September. Further records were all in October, 2 on 9th and singles on 10th, 17th-19th & 25th.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. Occurrences were scattered throughout the period 22nd September-8th November. 1-2 were present daily in late September, one on 9th October, 1-2 on six dates 19th-30th October and one on 8th November. At least 9 individuals involved.

Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*. One on 3rd May, then daily passage 5th May-10th June. Passage was strongest 14th-28th May and particularly so 15th-22nd when 85-180 daily. The arrival of 160 on 14th May was a dramatic increase on 8 the day before. A poor autumn passage comprised 2-8 on 19th-24th August, 1-12 on 30th August-16th September and 1-9 on 22nd September-8th October.



***Pechora Pipit** *Anthus gustavi*. One trapped in the Gully on 22nd September. 2 unringed individuals at Setter & Pund on 24th, one remaining to 27th and the other to 29th. Three in one autumn after seven barren years!

Meadow Pipit *Anthus pratensis*. The first 23 returned on 22nd March increasing to 50 on 1st April. No obvious heavy passage though 95 on 29th April and 90 on 4th May will have included through migrants. Breeding population censused at 32 pairs. Major autumn passage starting with 130 on 25th August. Strong passage throughout September, peaking at 520 on 16th, and early October, declining to 4 by 1st November. One on 6th November was the last of the year apart from one on 11th December.

***Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*. After the famine of recent years, three handsome individuals in spring were a welcome change. Singles were seen on 24th May, 7th-8th June (trapped on 7th) and 16th June.

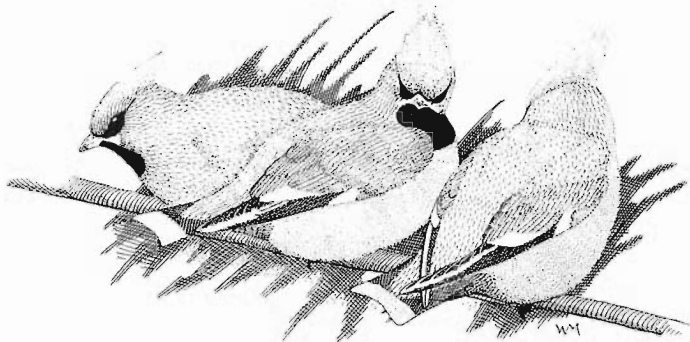
Rock Pipit *Anthus spinoletta*. Present all year, though fewer in winter. Returning breeders may have contributed to the spring peak of 70 on 2nd April. There was no breeding census owing to the inaccessibility below the cliff tops of some pairs. Autumn passage was detected on a few days, particularly peaks of 150 on 20th August, 16th September, 130 on 22nd October when visible migrants arriving from the north.

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*. Races were identified as follows: *flavissim* (British Yellow) — male on 6th May; *thunbergi* (Grey-headed) — seven individuals, 14th May (male), 15th-16th May (male), 16th-18th May (female), 22nd May (male), 29th May (male), 5th-6th June (female) & 26th June (female). Birds not identified to race were seen on 13th May, 27th May, 30th May, 10th June, 23rd June, 28th June, 7th-8th October. One very grey-and-white immature on 24th-30th October was probably a member of one of the eastern (Asian) races.

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^ * CITRINE WAGTAIL *MOTACILLA* ⁵¹ CITREOLA & first winter was present,
31st August to 2nd September.

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*. In spring there were singles on 1st, 4th & 7th April and 18th May. One on 11th-12th September was the only autumn record.

Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba*. Spring passage spanned 1st April-1st June. There were no large numbers but 13 were noted on 6th and 11 on 7th May. The majority were the White race *M.a. alba*, including 10 on 6th-7th May, but 1-2 Pied *M.a. yarrelli* were noted on 18 dates 2nd April-30th May and 3 on 6th May. A non subspecifically identified bird was seen on 16th June and a White on 26th June. Daily autumn passage 12th August-15th October was strongest 21st August-2nd September, though maximum day count only 30. All racially identified were Whites apart from 1-2 Pied most days 8th September-14th October. 1-2 late birds 24th-31st October were all Whites.



Waxwing *Bombycilla garrulus*. All records were in November: one on 13th, 3 on 15th and 4 on 20th.

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*. A Black-bellied individual, trapped in the Gully on 1st April, remained there to 4th April. Recorded for the third successive year, all at very similar dates. One on 12th December, also in the Gully, was the ninth 'autumn' record.

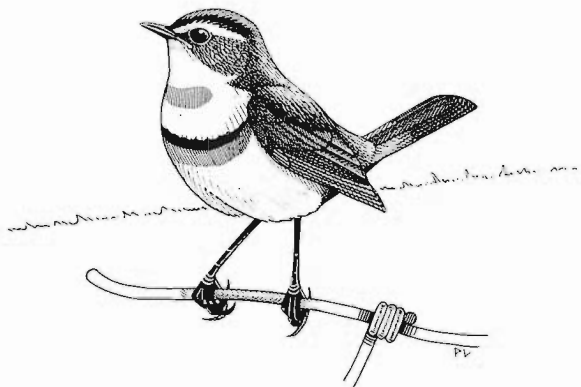
Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Present all year. Suggestion of some passage in the first five days of April. Singing males were censused, showing a very welcome increase to 25. However, no fledged young were noted until 4th August and the dismal breeding season may denote a surplus of unmated males. Low numbers throughout the autumn peaked at 9 on 21st October when apparent migrants present including a trapped bird showing characteristics of the Shetland race.

Dunnock *Prunella modularis*. There were virtually daily records 23rd March-22nd May, small numbers except 20 on 7th and 12 on 14th April. Late spring records comprised 1-2 on five dates 26th May-3rd June. A surprise mid summer bird was seen on 10th July. Autumn migrants were almost non existent, comprising one on 9th September, 2 on 24th September and one on 25th-27th October.

Robin *Erithacus rubecula*. One wintered. 3 on 6-7th were followed by almost daily passage 23rd March-29th May. Passage was very light except 5th-16th April when 150 on 5th gradually dwindled to 120 on 6th, 80 on 7th-9th and 25 on 15th-16th. A small late surge of 10 was recorded on 12th May. Autumn passage, spanning 23rd September-4th November, was well below average, the maximum day count being a mere 7 on 29th September. The only late singles were on 20th November and 9th December.

***Thrush Nightingale** *Luscinia luscinia*. One long-stay individual was present from 10th-30th May. A second individual spent three days on the cliff top at Vaasetter 21st-23rd May.

Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*. There were singles on 15th, 19th & 21st May.

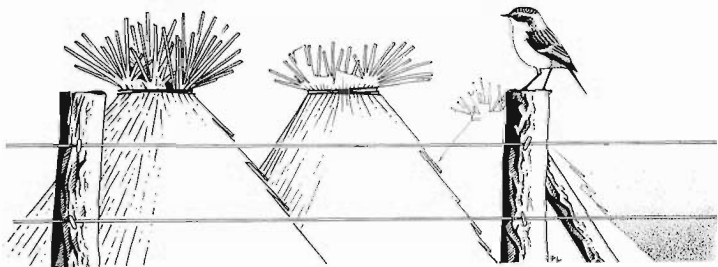


Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*. An amazing first arrival of 21 on 9th May was an indication of the record numbers to come. There were 16-20 on the next three days, then 70 on 13th and 35 the next day. The early birds were mainly males but there were rather more females among the 55 on 15th May. Numbers dropped to 5 on 17th May but further arrivals contributed to 17 on 20th and 18 on 22nd May. Daily occurrences continued to one on 1st June. A late male was seen on 11th June. All the spring males were the Red-spotted race *L.s.svecica* with the exception of a White-spotted *L.s.cyanecula* on 22nd May — only the tenth record and the first for ten years. Several individuals were involved during the autumn period 9th-29th September when singles seen most days, 2 on 12th and 4 on 24th. There was one later record on 7th-10th October.

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*. There was a very early single on 5th-6th March. Daily passage of 1-4 on 4th-14th April with 6 on 5th. 1-2 on five dates 18th-28th April. Singles on 15 dates 7th May-8th June, with 3 on 25th and 4 on 29th May. One very late individual appeared on 27th June. The only autumn records were one on 23rd and 2 on 26th-27th October.

Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. Daily passage 6th-31st May with heaviest arrivals 14th-23rd, particularly 120 on 14th, 105 on 15th and 85 on 16th. In June there was one on 5th. In autumn, 1-3 noted on ten dates 1st-16th September, up to 8 daily 22nd September-6th October, one on 14th-15th October, 2 on 26th and one on 31st October.

Whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*. Recorded daily 6th May-2nd June, 1-8 except 13th-23rd May when 18+ daily and 130 on 15th with 125 next day. 1-2 late birds on 23rd-25th June. Recorded daily in autumn 16th August-17th October. Arrivals were strongest in late August & early September but peak only 24, on 3rd September. Late records 27th October-8th November involved at least 3 individuals, the last being the latest ever at Fair Isle.



Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*. 2 females on 1st and a male on 2nd April were the only spring records. In autumn an *Eastern Stonechat *S.t.maura/steynegeri* was present 23rd-27th September and a Western race male 29th September-1st October.

Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*. 4 on 3rd April was a very late first arrival. Daily records thereafter building to 35 on 8th April and 100 on 25th. The first Greenland bird *O.o.leucorrhoa* was noted on 13th April, but only regularly from 28th April. This race involved in exceptionally heavy passage 7th-26th May, particularly 14th-16th when 650, 600 and 850 counted. Census work put the breeding population at 87 pairs, based on occupied territories. In August generally high numbers peaked at 410 on 20th. 100 remained on 3rd September decreasing to 15 on 30th September and the last daily record on 17th October. Later singles occurred on 21st & 27th October. The first Greenland race birds were recorded on 30th August. By late September this race predominated.

Ring Ousel *Turdus torquatus*. Spring passage spanned 1st April-24th May when recorded most days. Numbers did not exceed 4 except 7 on 9th, 5 on 10th April and 7 on 16th May. A tardy male appeared on 9th June. In autumn 3 on 23rd September were followed by 25 the following day, 15 on 25th, 2 on 26th, one on 27th September-1st October. One late bird occurred on 24th October.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*. Not noted until 5 on 27th February. Spring migrants noted daily 6th March-1st June and 1-3 occasionally 5th-17th June. Small numbers were recorded apart from a period of strong passage 31st March-16th April when maxima 300 on 1st-2nd April. Autumn migration was light before late October. 2 on 25th September were followed by 1-10 most days to 18th October. The first reasonable arrival was 280 on 23rd October rising to 400 on 26th. In November 2-15 in the first half of the month preceded 60 on 15th increasing to 250 on 20th. Small numbers remained thereafter and into December.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*. 3 on 14th February. 2-17 most days 6th-26th March. Recorded daily 1st April-16th May. There was a long series of major arrivals: 100+ were noted daily 4th-13th April with maximum 680 on 9th; 450 appeared on 19th and 350 on 21st April; 70-185 were noted daily 23rd April-1st May; 130 arrived on 3rd May with 165 next day; 350 on 9th May ended the series. In late May only singles remained, on six dates 18th-28th. Early autumn precursors of main passage were 2 on 15th August, one on 2nd & 4th September and one on 30th September-5th October. Small numbers daily from 9th October until 1600 arrived on 23rd October. By 1st November there were 45 decreasing until 200 on 17th and a further influx of 200 on 20th November. Small numbers remained into December.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*. Early passage was sparse: 11 on 6th March and one on 23rd preceded daily passage 31st March-23rd April. A second wave encompassed 28th April-23rd May. The only strong passage was 6th-14th April when 22+ daily and 90 on 8th April. In May the peak was 11 on 14th. Singles on 19th & 23rd August and 2 on 21st September were followed by 20 on 23rd September and the autumn peak of 50 next day. Smaller numbers occurred daily to 17th October. A further arrival 22nd-31st October peaked at 30 on 23rd. In November there was one on 7th-11th and 4 on 20th.

Redwing *Turdus iliacus*. 5 on 6th March announced daily passage 9th March-18th May. Generally fewer than 20 except 3rd-13th April when 25+ daily, 120 on 6th-7th and 100 on 9th-10th. The May peak was 8 on 5th. In late May there was 1-2 on three dates 23rd-27th. One late bird appeared on 11th-12th June. In addition there were daily records from 22nd September but only small numbers until 1800 appeared on 13th October. It was generally a poor autumn but further arrivals occurred on 23rd October when 2300 and 26th October when 1300 counted.

Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*. In spring there was one on 23rd & 29th March, 2 on 30th March, 3 on 2nd April and 1-3 on 6th-14th April. Single autumn birds were recorded on 24th September and 24th October.



***Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*. One in Gilsetter, trapped, on 25th September was the only one recorded.

Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia*. A male was singing at Skerryholm on 1st-4th May. Further singles were seen on 24th & 26th May. Autumn records comprised singles on 3rd-5th and 23rd September.

~~***River Warbler** *Locustella fluviatilis*. One in South Reeva on 7th June was the sixth Fair Isle record and second in spring. It has now occurred four times in the last four years.~~

Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*. The first since 1979, a first-year in Boini Mire on 15th-17th August was quickly followed by a second on 20th-21st August.

Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Singles on ten dates 11th-23rd May were followed by an exceptional spring influx: 5 on 24th increased to 9 on 26th and a peak 18 next day. There were still 14 on 30th decreasing to 3 on 3rd June. Singles on 5th, 11th-12th & 28th June concluded the spring passage. In autumn there were singles on 16th-17th & 19th & 21st August, 1st-2nd, 20th & 29th September and 3rd & 7th October.

Marsh Warbler *Acrocephalus palustris*. Two, both trapped: 28th June & 2nd July.

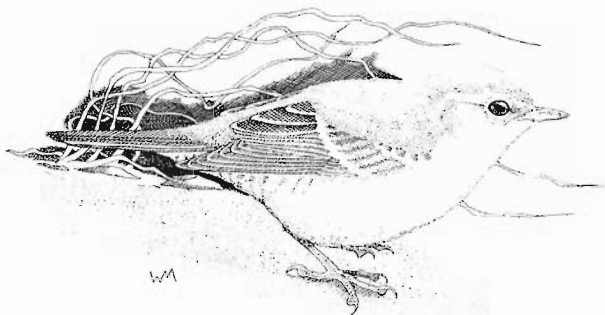
Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. One trapped on 27th May was the only certain spring record. In autumn recorded most days 14th August-7th September with highest numbers 17th-25th August when 2-5 daily and 8 on 20th-21st. Late singles occurred on 13th September, 24th-29th September & 16th October.

Reed/Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus*. Unstreaked and unidentified *Acrocephalus* warblers were one at Midway 20th May-6th June, one in the Vaadal on 31st May, and one at Charlie's Trees on 5th-9th June.

Icterine Warbler *Hippolais icterina*. Two in spring: 4th & 24th June. Six individuals in autumn: 13th-14th August, 17th August, 18th August, 31st August-3rd September, 3rd September & 3rd September — thus 3 different birds on 3rd September was the autumn's peak.

Icterine/Melodious Warblers *Hippolais*. An unidentified *Hippolais* was seen on 2nd July.

***Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*. A female spent 27th-28th May at Leog. A rather dull male, trapped in the Plantation on 22nd July remained there to 2nd August.



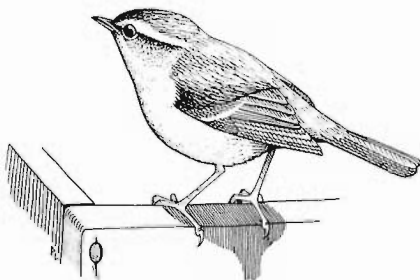
Barred Warbler *Sylvia nisoria*. One on 10th-11th, 1-2 on 14th-16th, 1-2 on 20th August. Daily 25th August-15th September, maximum 6 on 1st September. 2 on 24th September was the only later record.

Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*. 7 on 9th May announced daily passage of 1-7 to 18th May. Later in May there were singles on 21st, 26th & 31st and 3 on 23rd. In June 1-2 were noted on twelve dates 3rd-22nd. Main autumn passage spanned 16th August-27th September when noted regularly, maximum 5 on 25th September. Later birds were one on 3rd, 2 on 7th, one on 8th and 4 on 26th October.

Whitethroat *Sylvia communis*. One on 13th April was not quite the earliest ever. There were no further arrivals until 3 on 6th May after which up to 10 were recorded daily to 1st June, and 11 on 19th May. Singles were noted in June on 5th, 9th-11th & 16th. The sparse autumn passage divides into two periods: 1-2 were noted on ten dates 16th August-1st September, and 3 on 2nd September; and 1-2 occurred on eleven dates 24th September-5th October.

Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin*. There was one on 16th May, one on 22nd-23rd, 3 on 25th, then 1-4 daily 27th May-2nd June, with 5 on 1st June. 1-3 were noted on 14 dates 5th-30th June. In autumn recorded daily 9th August-8th October. Commonest in August and early September when peaks 35 on 20th, 40 on 30th August & 25 on 2nd September. Later maxima were 18 on 24th September and 11 on 3rd October. After main autumn passage singles occurred on 12th, 16th & 29th October and 3rd November.

Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla*. In spring 1-6 were seen daily 9th-16th May. A second wave of daily occurrence 19th May-6th June peaked at 12 on 23rd May. Later spring and summer birds, all single males, were recorded on 10th-11th June, 26th June, 4th July and 8th-20th July. In autumn there were 2-3 from 31st August-4th September preceding daily occurrence 23rd September-9th November. Largest arrivals were 20 on 24th September & 7th October, and 35 on 26 October. The November maximum was 6 on 8th. A late migrant occurred on 15th November and an even later one, a female, on 9th-12th December.



***Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*. Two records, both in September: one at Shirva on 3rd, and one at Leogh on 11th.

Yellow-browed Warbler *Phylloscopus inornatus*. In September there were 3 on 24th, 4 on 25th-26th, 2 on 27th and one on 29th. October occurrences were one on 3rd, 5 on 7th, one on 8th, 2 on 9th-10th and one on 11th & 15th.

Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. In spring there was one on 9th May, 2 on 11th-12th May and singles on 13th-14th, 20th-21st and 24th May. Autumn records comprise one on 8th August, 1-4 daily 30th August-6th September and one on 27th September.

Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus collybita*. There was one on 1st April and virtually daily occurrence 5th April-16th May. The April maximum was 6 on 6th-7th. In May only 1-3 except 13 on 14th and 5 next day. 4 were seen on 2nd June and 1-2 occasionally thereafter and throughout July. 2 birds summered, one at Shirva and one at Leogh, at least one remaining until completion of moult in September. Migrants were few before October. In October 1-3 were recorded on eight dates 8th-27th and 5 on 26th. In November there were singles on 13th & 21st.

Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Early singles on 5th, 7th, 12th, 14th and 18th April preceded the main passage period of 5th May-9th June when noted daily. Less than 10 seen per day except 9th-21st May when 20+ most days, 50 on 14th and 60 on 16th. Late spring stragglers were one on 20th & 24th, 2 on 27th and one on 29th June. Daily autumn passage 11th August-4th October was strongest 13th August-9th September, maxima 62 on 20th, 65 on 31st August. Late singles were seen on 8th, 17th & 26th October and 2 on 18th October.

Goldcrest *Regulus regulus*. Daily passage 1st-30th April was most concentrated in the early part of that period when maxima of 12 on 5th, 17 on 6th and 8 on 7th. A tiny second wave in May comprised 1-2 on most days 6th-15th. There were two waves in autumn too: 1-8 most days 11th September-10th October preceded heavier daily passage 22nd October-1st November when up to 16 recorded till large arrival of 175 on 26th October, dwindling to 45 next day and 7 on 27th. A small late arrival comprised one on 13th & 15th and 10 on 18th November.

Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*. In spring recorded virtually daily 9th May-25th June. Less than 10 per day except 17 on 29th May, 14 on 3rd and 15 on 4th June. One surprise bird on 21st July, then scattered records of 1-2 on ten dates 10th August-17th September. 1-3 recorded almost daily 23rd September-1st October. One on 17th-18th October and the latest ever on 26th October concluded the autumn records.

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*. A good spring showing with a male at Steensi Geo on 26th May and a female trapped on 13th June. In contrast only one was seen in autumn, on 26th October.

Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*. 2 on 9th May and singles on 11th-12th were the forerunners of an exceptionally heavy spring passage. 7 on 13th May preceded 45 on 14th, 11 on 15th and a further arrival of 25 on 16th. Up to 8 in the next few days gradually fell to one (the last) on 31st May.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*. One trapped on 11th June was considered to be an immature male.



Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*. A remarkable year: there was an exceptional spring passage for the second successive year. Most notably the largest numbers were much earlier than in 1984. Daily passage started dramatically with 12 on 9th May, reaching 18 on 13th May. Thereafter numbers fluctuated between 4 and 12 demonstrating a steady turnover of migrants and this was further emphasised by occasionally higher numbers, e.g. 18 on 16th, 15 on 22nd and 25 on 23rd May. There were still 5 on 31st May but only 1-2, all females, 1st-7th June. A late female was recorded on 23rd June. Autumn passage, in keeping with spring, was also far above average. One on 13th-14th August increased to 3 on 15th and 8 on 20th August. Numbers were maintained at 3 to 8 to 3rd September, with a series of departures and new arrivals regularly taking place. One from 5th-9th September was the last record, with the exception of one on 27th-29th October which was by far the latest ever.

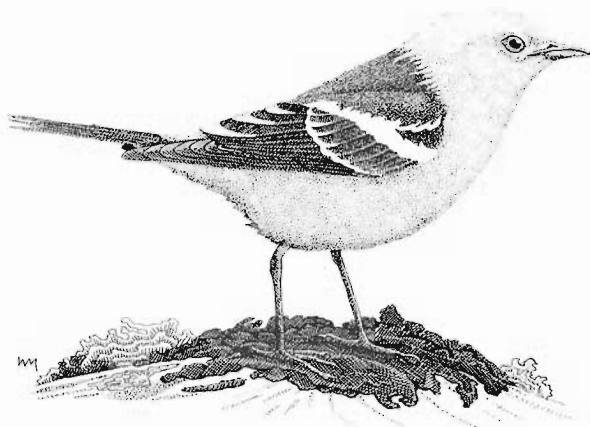
Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor*. One on 10th December was the only record.

Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*. The only spring records were one on 20th-23rd March and one on 4th April. Singles on 23rd-25th October and on 16th-17th December were the only other records.

Rook *Corvus frugilegus*. There was one on 5th March, 1-2 daily 15th-31st March, 1-5 daily 1st-7th April, 1-2 on six dates 12th-26th April and one on 13th-14th May.

Carrion Crow *Corvus corone*. In the early part of the year Hooded Crows *C.c.cornix* were noted daily, but passage birds only in early May when 10 on 5th and 6 on 6th. Carrion Crows *C.c.corone* were exceptionally scarce with the only spring records 2 on 5th, 12th & 19th-20th May. Two pairs of Hooded Crows held territory but no young were produced and by late June the adults were only noted occasionally and had disappeared completely after 14th July. 3 Hoodies were seen on 17th August before 2-3 'discovered' the isle and settled from 25th August. The only autumn Carrion Crows were 2 on 10th October.

Raven *Corvus corax*. The only obvious spring passage involved 16 on 14th April. Only four pairs attempted to breed and only 2 young were fledged, the other failing at egg stage. Autumn influxes were confined to 15 on 26th August, 16 on 16th September and 20 on 10th October.

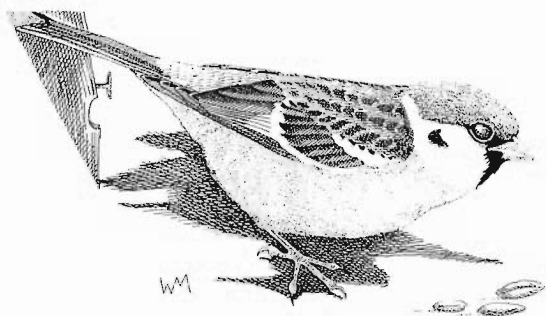


***Daurian Starling** *Sturnus sturninus*. A male which appeared outside the Observatory on 7th May remained to 28th May. It was trapped on 21st. If accepted as a genuine vagrant this will be a first record for Britain and the entire West Palaearctic.

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*. Present all year. Counts of 900 on 1st, 600 on 7th and 700 on 9th April demonstrated a period of through-passage. Otherwise the breeding season was as normal though with slightly lower fledging success for first broods and a rather heavier pre-fledging mortality among second broods. The only major autumn passage occurred on 17th September when 650 counted and late October, peak 900 on 23rd.

***Rose-coloured Starling** *Sturnus roseus*. A fine male on 31st May-2nd June was the first for ten years.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*. Present all year. Rather larger numbers than usual survived the particularly mild winter prompting colonisation by breeding pairs on new sites, eg. North Haven, North Reeve. The peak spring count of 105 on 2nd May probably indicates a breeding population of about 50 pairs — though no census done. The peak autumn count was 165 on 24th September.



Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*. 3 from 1st to 7th June was the only record.

House X Tree Sparrow *Passer*. One was noted on 1st, 6th & 29th May.

Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*. 25 on 23rd March commenced a daily passage lasting to 23rd May. The March maximum was 45 on 31st leading to a period of strong passage 1st-16th April, maxima 250 on 7th, 130 on 8th, 160 on 9th-10th, 120 on 11th, 135 on 12th & 140 on 13th. In May 16 on 3rd-4th but only 1-2 after 9th. Later spring records were one on 26th May and 2 on 3rd June. Autumn numbers were low. 1-10 were present almost daily 23rd September-4th November with a peak of only 14, on 13th October. Singles were seen on six dates 13th-29th November, a female on 6th December was joined on 10th by a male, both remaining to at least 17th.

Brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*. Noted virtually daily 6th April-25th May. Below average number except 30 on 11th, 22 on 13th April and 16 on 6th May. Daily autumn occurrence 21st September-13th November involved very low numbers except 7th-10th October when 100 arrived and 22nd-29th October when 20-80 daily. Later in November 1-2 were seen on 19th-23rd, with 6 on 21st. One occurred on 17th December.

Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*. Most concentrated spring passage spanned 6th-23rd April, peaking at 10 on 7th. 1-2 on 27th April-2nd May were followed by 2 males on 10th May, one remaining to 22nd. There were two periods of arrival in autumn: 7th-16th October when 1-4 daily and 5 on 9th & 15th; and 1-2 from 24th October to 1st November.

Siskin *Carduelis spinus*. In April there were scattered records of one on 5th, 3 on 7th, 2 on 14th, one on 17th and 5 on 18th. 1-4 were noted most days in May. This pattern continued throughout June when up to 4 were clearly intent on summering in the western cliffs. These were noted again in early July. A surprise mid summer arrival of juveniles started with 8 on 13th July. Small numbers were noted regularly thereafter in July and August with never more than 7 in a day, but an apparent turnover of individuals throughout. Further small arrivals 12th September-1st October peaked at 8 on 29th September. The only reasonable autumn arrival was 20 on 7th and 21 on 8th October with smaller numbers daily to 16th. One on 28th October and 9 on 15th November were the only later records.

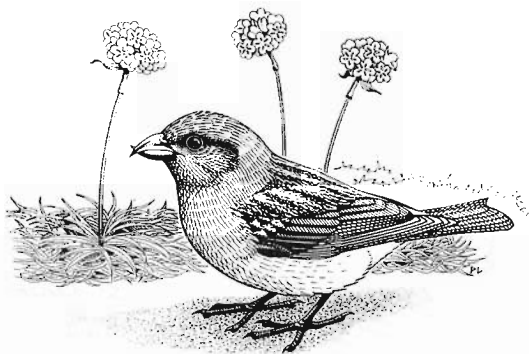
Linnet *Carduelis cannabina*. 4 on 14th increased to 8 next day and on 17th April. 1-3 were seen on six dates 18th-29th April. In May there were 2 on 4th-5th increasing to 4 on 6th-9th. 1-2 were noted daily 16th-28th, with 5 on 23rd. In June there were 2 on 1st and a male on 24th. In autumn one on 24th September preceded a major arrival from 6th October whence seen daily to 15th. 4 on 7th October rose to 35 on 8th and a record 45 next day. 20 on 10th had swollen to 30 on 11th October declining to one on 15th.

Twite *Carduelis flavirostris*. The first 4 were recorded on 9th March. There were 20 by 23rd March and 55 on 4th April. Largest arrivals, however, were in May, eg. 85 on 9th and 24th. There was no census of population owing to inaccessability of many sites but the species enjoyed a good breeding season. This was borne out by elevated numbers from mid August through September to October. Counts were consistently 100+, peaking at 300 on 11th September, 3rd October & 17th October. There were still 90 on 31st October but rapidly falling numbers in November, to 7 on 21st. Late birds comprised 3 on 1st and one on 17th December.

Redpoll *Carduelis flammea*. Singles were seen on 8th, 16th & 18th January, 15th & 25th March. A fairly strong spring passage contributed daily records 3rd April-26th May, mainly 11+ and 20 on 7th, 25 on 9th, 20 on 10th & 23rd April. All birds subspecifically identified were Mealy *C.f. flammea*. 1-2 were noted regularly 30th May-27th June, again virtually all Mealies, though a Lesser *C.f. cabaret* was seen on 9th June. There were summer singles on 13th & 18th July. A series of autumn records all involved Mealies: one on 19th-20th August, 2 on 13th, one on 14th & 24th September, 1-4 daily 6th-16th October, 1-5 most days 23rd October-10th November. 25 on 13th-18th November announced a very marked late influx. Further arrivals raised the total to 45 on 19th and 110 on 20th November. There were departures from 21st but 15 remained on 29th November.

***Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*. Following the big autumn 1984 influx there were two returning birds, one from 3rd to 14th May and one on 25th-26th May (trapped). Both were considered to be of the European race *C.h. exilipes*.

Redpoll species *Carduelis 'pallascens'*. Birds showing characters intermediate between Mealy and Arctic Redpoll were seen on 9th-12th March and 3rd May.



Crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*. The first reasonable irruption for several years commenced with 15 on Meoness on 19th June. Birds were noted almost daily throughout late June and July with maxima 15 on 1st, 30 on 7th, 31 on 8th, 16 on 10th, 20 on 11th and 22 on 13th July. Totals were lower in the second half of July but 10 were seen on 19th & 24th July. 1-2 were seen daily 1st-5th August. One on 9th, 3 on 10th and singles on 14th, 20th, 22nd & 25th August ended the influx, though an autumn single was seen on 4th October.

Crossbill species *Loxia*. One chunky individual flying over on 16th April was not specifically identified.

Scarlet Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*. It was an exceptionally poor spring: 2 on 24th May were followed by one on 26th-29th and an immature male (singing) on 30th May. Autumn was more typical. Early singles on 14th-15th, 20th-21st & 29th-30th August preceded daily occurrence 2nd September-1st October when 1-3 and 5 on 23rd-25th September. Later singles occurred on 12th & 17th-22nd October. Probably at least 15 individuals were involved during the autumn.

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. 2 male and female on 7th April, a female on 8th and a male on 11th April were all of the large Northern race, as was a male found freshly dead on 10th May. There was none in autumn.

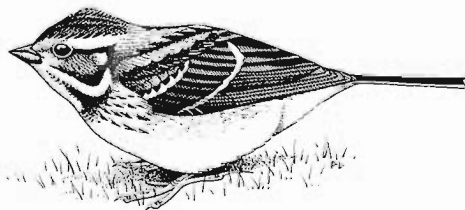
Hawfinch *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. One which appeared on 7th April and remained to 21st was part of a small influx into the northern isles.

Lapland Bunting *Calcarius lapponicus*. Spring records were a male on 1st May, another on 7th, one on 14th and a male on 20th May. In autumn singles on 7th & 11th-12th September were followed by virtually daily records 15th September-28th October. Highest count was 8 on 22nd September.

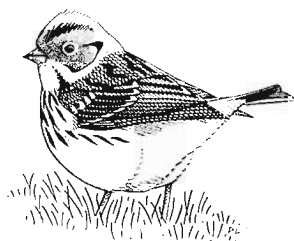
Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. In winter 3 were noted on 31st January and 5th February and 13 next day. In spring there were moderate numbers most days 15th March-6th May, maxima 35 on 9th April, 45 on 23rd, 38 on 25th, 51 on 28th & 39 on 30th April. A late second wave of 1-2 occurred 18th-23rd May. Recorded almost daily in autumn from 7th September. The September maximum was 14, on 22nd. The October maximum was only 26, on 10th, until 150 arrived on 31st. Further major arrivals in early November peaked at 900 on 3rd and 500 on 6th. There were still 200 on 21st November. 20-30 remained in December.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*. Virtually all spring passage concentrated between 3rd and 18th April. 2 on 3rd increased to a record spring total of 11 on 5th. 4 the next day were followed by another influx reaching 9 on 10th April. There were 6 on 12th, 7 on 13th dwindling to 3 on 16th and one on 18th. A late female, present on 30th April & 1st May, was the last of the year.

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana*. There was a male on 14th-16th May, 2 males on 18th-22nd May with one remaining to 31st May. There were two in autumn: 30th August-7th September, and 25th-27th September.



***Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*. A superb male was at Meadow Burn on 7th May and an equally splendid male at Utra on 22nd June. The autumn birds, one on 27th September and one from 7th-17th October were both bright individuals.



***Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*. It was a record year. Two in spring occurred on 15th-16th & 20th-22nd May. There were ten in autumn: on 9th, 12th, 23rd-25th and 28th-29th September, 7th-10th, 13th-15th, 17th-18th, 23rd-26th and 26th October, and 7th-10th November.

***Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*. Three records, all at typical autumn dates, namely one on 9th, 2 on 13th September, one remaining to 17th.

Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. In March there was a male on 19th-20th, another on 26th, a female on 29th, a male on 30th & 2 on 31st. A small passage 3rd-15th April peaked at 6 on 8th & 11th. A much stronger second wave provided daily records 3rd May-12th June. Heaviest passage spanned 9th-23rd May when maxima 45 on 10th, 50 on 15th, 60 on 16th and 55 on 19th. Rapid decreases occurred in late May and by June no more than 2 present on any one day. Daily autumn passage spanned 22nd September-29th October — no count of more than 6 except 7th-11th October when respectively 20, 30, 25, 18 & 10 counted. Late migrants comprised singles on 8th-9th, 12th, 15th & 20th November.

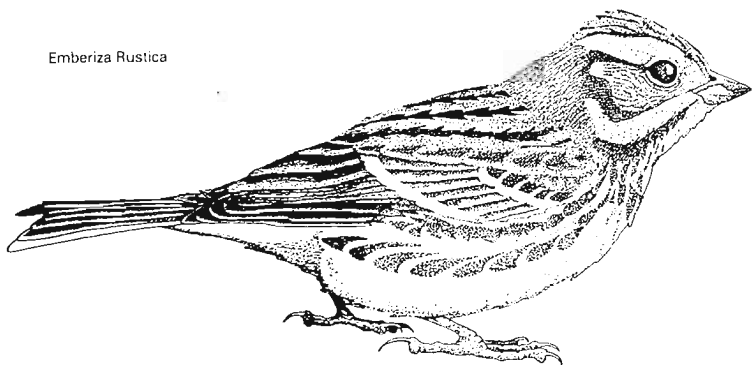
***Black-headed Bunting** *Emberiza melanocephala*. A fine male at Schoolton on 4th August remained there to 14th.

Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*. One at Quoy on 29th May was the first for three years.

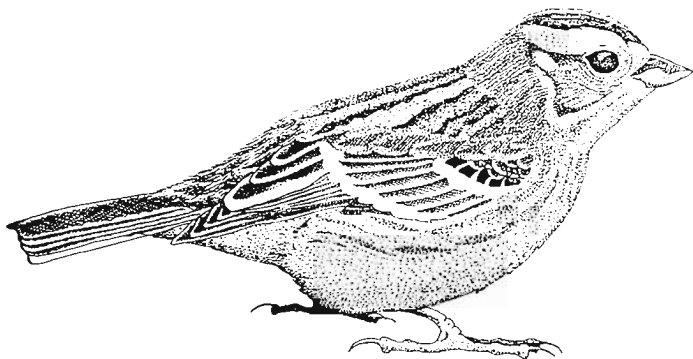
ESCAPES

Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps*. An adult female at Shirva and Schoolton from 25th September-2nd October caused all sorts of identification problems until trapped on 28th September. Features of wear led me to consider that it was an escapee from captivity.

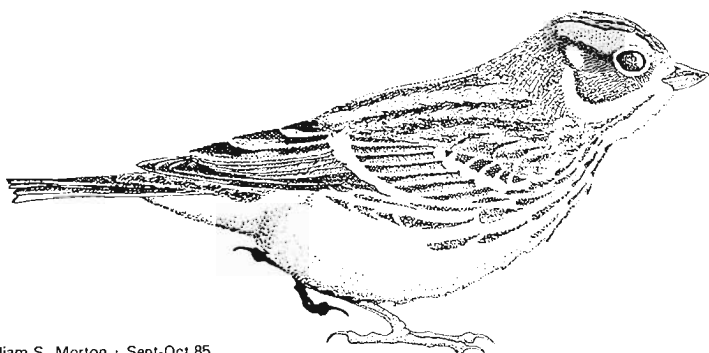
Emberiza Rustica



Emberiza Aureola



Emberiza pusilla



William S. Morton · Sept-Oct 85

Up-Date on British Birds Rarities Committee Decisions, 1982-84

1982

Gryfalcon *Falco rusticolus*. 12th April, pended; 24th December, pended; 9th December, accepted.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*. 11th-13th August, rejected.

Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*. 13th-15th August, pended.

Siberian Stonechat *Saxicola torquata stejnegeri/maura*. 6th October, rejected.

Serin *Serinus serinus*. 30th September, rejected.

Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*. 15th-16th October, no decision.

Parrot Crossbill *Loxia pytyopsittacus*. The only acceptable records appear to be 6 on 8th October and a female on 12th-29th October, trapped on 13th. Other records published in the FIBO 1982 Report should now be down-rated to 'probable only' (and cf Catley & Hursthouse. 1985. Parrot Crossbills in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 78: 482-505).

1983

Short-toed Lark *Calandrella cinerea*. 2nd-5th October, not submitted. I did not see this bird, so would readers who saw and have notes on this individual please submit them urgently to *BBRC*. All other records submitted to *BBRC* were accepted.

1984

White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*. 2nd April bird was considered to be in its 3rd or 4th calendar year; 3rd November bird was confirmed as second winter. Both were considered to be 'Rhum-zone wanderers'.

Arctic Redpoll *Carduelis hornemanni*. All records pended.

Yellow-breasted Bunting *Emberiza aureola*. The bird of 22nd-23rd September was also present on 24th.

All other records submitted to *BBRC* were accepted.

Cetacean Records in 1985

It was a very good year for cetacean sightings including one species, Minke Whale, which appears to be a 'first' for Fair Isle. Sightings are as follows:

Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*. One in Funnieuquoy Bay for nearly an hour on 8th August on one occasion came within 30 metres of our cliff-top vantage point.

Unidentified Whales: 20 off South Light on 3rd September. 5 off South Light on 4th September (considered by observer to be possibly Minke Whales). A solitary very large whale steaming rapidly south off Hjukni Geo on 22nd September.

Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*. In September there were 2 off South Light on 8th, one off Bunness on 14th and 5 on the *Good Shepherd* crossing on 28th. About 10 were off Furse on 21st October and 2 swam east off South Light on 15th November.

Killer Whale *Orcinus orca*. An excellent series of records comprised 3 (2 bulls and a cow) off North Light on 28th August, 4 (2 bulls, 2 smaller) off South Light on 2nd September, 3 (bull, cow & calf) off South Light on 11th September, a solitary bull off Sheep Rock on 26th October, and a school of 6 or 7 off South Light later the same day.

Risso's Dolphin *Grampus griseus*. 3 off South Light on 30th September.

Unidentified Dolphins: One off Bunness on 22nd September may have been a White-beaked Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*. 4 were seen off Bunness on 6th October.



Ringing Details 1985

6979 birds of 130 species were ringed in 1985. There was one addition to the list, Daurian Starling, bringing the grand total of species ringed to 246.

The monthly ringing totals were:

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	80	676	274	1904	2437	606	303	626	70	3

There were no major reconstruction requirements after a mild winter but all traps needed some attention. These permanent traps provided the usual numbers and variety of captures, including Pechora Pipit in the Gully, but other techniques increased the variety ringed — most notably dazzle-netting at night. The Daurian Starling, which had evaded all more conventional trapping methods, was eventually caught in a specially constructed clap-net. The 130 species ringed, the highest ever annual total for Fair Isle, bear witness mainly to the variety of birds appearing on the isle in 1985 rather than any effort over and above that of previous years.

A combination of poor weather at critical times, lower breeding success and a higher level of census work led to rather fewer seabirds being ringed than in the last few years. However, the BTO Seabird Ringing Course, held in the first two weeks of July, was again a success, with all delighted at the progress made by the participants; a very useful and welcome development in the summer activities of FIBO and which will be repeated in 1986.

The top ten species ringed were Guillemot 1288, Starling 708, Shag 614, Fulmar 492, Blackbird 372, Puffin 257, Kittiwake 253, Wheatear 247, Razorbill 246 and Redwing 239. Guillemot was again the major 'target' species and the figures do not show the high level of adult retraps (101 in 1985) which give so much additional information about the species. Perhaps the only 'surprise' in the top ten is Redwing. This species was trapped steadily spring and autumn despite no major falls at any time.

The Arctic Tern colonisation continues apace so it is not surprising that the previous record total was exceeded. Equally, the exceptional spring and autumn passages of Red-backed Shrike ensured a record total ringed. Kestrel, Spotted Crake and Yellowhammer captures equalled the previous highest. A Rook, caught in the Axell trap, was the first ringed for 22 years. Other rarely ringed species included Hen Harrier, Mallard, Shelduck, Curlew Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Greenshank, Little Auk, Pechora Pipit, Golden Oriole and Hawfinch.

Once again we express our thanks to the BTO, NCC and SOTEAG for assistance with ring expenses, particularly for seabirds.

A full table of ringing totals and recoveries follows.

TABLE OF RINGING TOTALS & RECOVERIES

	Ringed		1985	1948-85	Recovered	
	Juv/Adult	Pullus	Total	Total	1985	1948-85
Little Grebe	-	-	-	8	-	-
Great Crested Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-necked Grebe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Slavonian Grebe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Fulmar	70	422	492	13342	8	94
Storm Petrel	158	-	158	9257	12	236
Leach's Petrel	-	-	-	18	-	-
Gannet	1	1	2	88	-	2
Cormorant	-	-	-	7	-	-
Shag	22	592	614	15625	21	371
Grey Heron	-	-	-	15	-	2
Whooper Swan	-	-	-	29	-	4
Bean Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pink-footed Goose	-	-	-	9	-	1
White-fronted Goose	-	-	-	3	-	1
Greylag Goose	-	-	-	19	1	6
Barnacle Goose	-	-	-	1	-	-
Shelduck	1	-	1	3	-	-
Wigeon	-	-	-	14	-	-
Teal	-	-	-	37	-	2
Mallard	1	-	1	8	-	1
Pintail	-	-	-	1	-	1
Pochard	-	-	-	2	-	1
Ring-necked Duck	-	-	-	1	-	-
Tufted Duck	1	-	1	10	-	-
Scaup	-	-	-	4	-	-
Eider	1	-	1	97	-	2
Long-tailed Duck	1	-	1	12	-	-
Velvet Scoter	-	-	-	2	-	-
Goldeneye	1	-	1	14	-	1
Red-breasted Merganser	-	-	-	3	-	-
Goosander	-	-	-	3	-	1
Hen Harrier	1	-	1	2	-	-
Goshawk	-	-	-	1	-	-
Sparrowhawk	2	-	2	169	-	15
Kestrel	3	-	3	40	-	7
Red-footed Falcon	-	-	-	1	-	-
Merlin	1	-	1	167	-	13
Peregrine	-	-	-	6	-	1
Quail	-	-	-	5	-	-
Water Rail	3	-	3	235	-	3
Spotted Crake	2	-	2	14	-	-

	Ringed Juv/Adult	Pullus	1985 Total	1948-85 Total	Recovered 1985 1948-85	
Little Crane	-	-	-	1	-	1
Corncrake	-	-	-	35	-	2
Moorhen	5	-	5	82	-	3
Coot	-	-	-	12	-	1
Great Bustard	-	-	-	1	-	-
Oystercatcher	5	18	23	1124	3	61
Little Ringed Plover	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ringed Plover	17	15	32	471	1	5
Golden Plover	-	-	-	17	-	-
Dotterel	-	-	-	3	-	-
Lapwing	-	3	3	257	-	4
Knot	3	-	3	76	-	2
Sanderling	3	-	3	86	-	-
Western Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Little Stint	1	-	1	69	-	-
Temminck's Stint	-	-	-	2	-	-
White-rumped Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pectoral Sandpiper	-	-	-	5	-	-
Curlew Sandpiper	1	-	1	5	-	-
Purple Sandpiper	3	-	3	147	-	1
Dunlin	5	-	5	435	-	7
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ruff	1	-	1	32	-	1
Jack Snipe	-	-	-	113	-	3
Snipe	11	-	11	308	-	4
Great Snipe	-	-	-	1	-	-
Woodcock	14	-	14	278	-	14
Black-tailed Godwit	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bar-tailed Godwit	1	-	1	9	-	2
Whimbrel	-	-	-	14	-	-
Curlew	-	7	7	86	-	3
Spotted Redshank	-	-	-	3	-	-
Redshank	3	-	3	222	-	2
Greenshank	1	-	1	8	-	-
Green Sandpiper	2	-	2	31	-	1
Wood Sandpiper	1	-	1	16	-	-
Common Sandpiper	3	-	3	47	-	-
Turnstone	1	-	1	65	-	-
Red-necked Phalarope	-	-	-	4	-	-
Grey Phalarope	-	-	-	3	-	-
Pomarine Skua	-	-	-	1	-	-
Arctic Skua	1	48	49	2799	1	57
Great Skua	1	54	55	733	-	11
Black-headed Gull	1	-	1	25	-	3
Common Gull	-	3	3	99	-	6
Lesser Black-backed Gull	-	22	22	1188	-	31
Herring Gull	62	76	138	3579	4	83

	Ringed		1985	1948-85	Recovered	
	Juv/Adult	Pullus	Total	Total	1985	1948-85
Iceland Gull	-	-	-	1	-	-
Glaucous Gull	2	-	2	34	-	1
Great Black-backed Gull	29	38	67	1801	2	78
Kittiwake	9	244	253	4418	3	22
Common Tern	-	28	28	376	-	3
Arctic Tern	-	8	8	24	-	-
Guillemot	110	1178	1288	15994	122	502
Razorbill	73	173	246	4195	6	131
Black Guillemot	-	27	27	1230	-	17
Little Auk	1	-	1	6	-	-
Puffin	177	80	257	9413	-	24
Rock Dove	-	1	1	18	-	2
Woodpigeon	-	-	-	37	-	2
Collared Dove	5	-	5	159	-	-
Turtle Dove	1	-	1	56	-	2
Cuckoo	3	-	3	84	-	1
Snowy Owl	-	-	-	1	-	-
Long-eared Owl	6	-	6	139	-	6
Short-eared Owl	-	-	-	15	-	-
Nightjar	-	-	-	3	-	-
Swift	-	-	-	16	-	1
Hoopoe	-	-	-	3	-	-
Wryneck	8	-	8	172	-	-
Great Spotted						
Woodpecker	-	-	-	19	-	-
Short-toed Lark	-	-	-	6	-	-
Woodlark	-	-	-	2	-	-
Skylark	31	5	36	740	-	3
Shore Lark	-	-	-	3	-	-
Sand Martin	-	-	-	8	-	-
Swallow	1	-	1	227	-	8
House Martin	2	-	2	143	-	1
Richard's Pipit	-	-	-	9	-	-
Tawny Pipit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Olive-backed Pipit	-	-	-	6	-	-
Tree Pipit	24	-	24	529	-	-
Pechora Pipit	1	-	1	6	-	-
Meadow Pipit	159	19	178	7747	-	43
Red-throated Pipit	1	-	1	6	-	-
Rock Pipit	139	3	142	7529	-	23
Yellow Wagtail	-	-	-	10	-	-
Citrine Wagtail	-	-	-	5	-	-
Grey Wagtail	-	-	-	17	-	-
Pied Wagtail	5	-	5	492	-	4
Waxwing	-	-	-	34	-	-
Dipper	1	-	1	11	-	-
Wren	3	-	3	611	-	-

	Ringed Juv/Adult	Pullus	1985 Total	1948-85 Total	Recovered	
					1985	1948-85
Dunnoek	32	-	32	1635	1	6
Robin	157	-	157	5617	-	29
Thrush Nightingale	1	-	1	17	-	-
Nightingale	2	-	2	21	-	-
Siberian Rubythroat	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bluethroat	15	-	15	192	-	2
Red-flanked Bluetail	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black Redstart	7	-	7	107	-	-
Redstart	27	-	27	1449	-	1
Whinchat	16	-	16	514	-	2
Stonechat	-	-	-	45	-	-
Wheatear	247	-	247	13815	1	66
Black-eared Wheatear	-	-	-	3	-	-
Rock Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Grey-cheeked Thrush	-	-	-	2	-	-
White's Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Ring Ouzel	12	-	12	375	-	6
Blackbird	372	-	372	17413	6	290
Dusky Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Black-throated Thrush	-	-	-	1	-	-
Fieldfare	11	-	11	581	-	-
Song Thrush	38	-	38	2013	1	26
Redwing	239	-	239	6534	1	67
Mistle Thrush	1	-	1	19	-	1
Pallas's Grasshopper						
Warbler	-	-	-	3	-	-
Lanceolated Warbler	1	-	1	17	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	-	-	-	76	-	-
River Warbler	-	-	-	5	-	-
Savi's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Aquatic Warbler	1	-	1	21	-	-
Sedge Warbler	5	-	5	333	-	2
Paddyfield Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-
Marsh Warbler	2	-	2	62	-	-
Reed Warbler	4	-	4	135	-	1
Great Reed Warbler	-	-	-	4	-	-
Thick-billed Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Booted Warbler	-	-	-	5	-	-
Icterine Warbler	2	-	2	65	-	-
Melodious Warbler	-	-	-	9	-	-
Subalpine Warbler	1	-	1	18	-	-
Sardinian Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Barred Warbler	6	-	6	312	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	9	-	9	454	-	-
Whitethroat	9	-	9	732	-	-
Garden Warbler	88	-	88	2447	-	1
Blackcap	66	-	66	3428	-	12

	Ringed Juv/Adult	Pullus	1985 Total	1948-85 Total	Recovered	
					1985	1948-85
Greenish Warbler	-	-	-	12	-	-
Arctic Warbler	-	-	-	26	-	-
Pallas's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	2	-	2	76	-	-
Dusky Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Bonelli's Warbler	-	-	-	1	-	-
Wood Warbler	2	-	2	79	-	-
Chiffchaff	29	-	29	635	-	-
Willow Warbler	49	-	49	2683	-	3
Goldcrest	22	-	22	1109	-	2
Firecrest	-	-	-	1	-	-
Spotted Flycatcher	15	-	15	484	-	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	-	1	44	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	13	-	13	734	-	4
Blue Tit	-	-	-	2	-	-
Great Tit	-	-	-	7	-	-
Treecreeper	-	-	-	1	-	-
Golden Oriole	1	-	1	5	-	1
Isabelline Shrike	-	-	-	1	-	-
Red-backed Shrike	30	-	30	137	-	-
Lesser Grey Shrike	-	-	-	6	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	-	-	-	101	-	1
Woodchat Shrike	-	-	-	10	-	-
Jackdaw	-	-	-	3	-	-
Rook	1	-	1	5	-	-
Hooded Crow	-	-	-	43	-	-
Raven	-	-	-	26	-	-
Daurian Starling	1	-	1	1	-	-
Starling	457	251	708	18758	4	150
Rose-coloured Starling	-	-	-	2	-	-
House Sparrow	31	-	31	1244	-	1
Tree Sparrow	1	-	1	95	-	1
Chaffinch	168	-	168	2047	1	11
Brambling	70	-	70	2230	-	10
Greenfinch	14	-	14	132	-	-
Goldfinch	-	-	-	5	-	-
Siskin	8	-	8	268	-	1
Linnet	8	-	8	124	-	1
Twite	116	-	116	4123	-	3
Redpoll	15	-	15	534	-	1
Arctic Redpoll	1	-	1	16	-	-
Crossbill	2	-	2	295	-	2
Parrot Crossbill	-	-	-	36	-	-
Scarlet Rosefinch	4	-	4	87	-	-
Bullfinch	1	-	1	31	-	-
Hawfinch	1	-	1	5	-	-
Tennessee Warbler	-	-	-	2	-	-

	Ringed Juv/Adult	Pullus	1985 Total	1948-85 Total	Recovered	
					1985	1948-85
White-crowned Sparrow	-	-	-	1	-	-
White-throated Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Song Sparrow	-	-	-	2	-	-
Lapland Bunting	1	-	1	39	-	-
Snow Bunting	1	-	1	507	-	3
Pine Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellowhammer	5	-	5	49	-	-
Ortolan Bunting	-	-	-	18	-	-
Cretzschmar's Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Yellow-browed Bunting	-	-	-	1	-	-
Rustic Bunting	1	-	1	11	-	1
Little Bunting	1	-	1	23	-	-
Yellow-breasted Bunting	-	-	-	6	-	-
Reed Bunting	14	-	14	326	-	2
Pallas's Reed Bunting	-	-	-	2	-	-
Black-headed Bunting	-	-	-	3	-	-
Corn Bunting	-	-	-	3	-	-
Red-headed Bunting	-	-	-	5	-	-
TOTALS	3663	3316	6979	204065	199	2633



RECOVERIES IN 1985

199 recoveries were reported during the year. The more interesting ones are given in full below. The others are presented in tabular or summary form. The international code of symbols denoting method of recovery and age is used:

Manner of recovery:

- v — caught or trapped by man and released with ring
- vv — ring number read in the field, or sight record of identifiable colour rings
- vB — breeding where recaptured
- + — shot or killed by man
- x — found dead or dying
- xF — found freshly dead or dying
- xL — found dead (not recent)
- () — caught or trapped alive and not released, or released without ring
- /?/ — manner of recovery unknown

Date of recovery: where this is unknown, the date of the reporting letter is given in parentheses.

Age when ringed: this is given in the EURING code, based mainly on calendar years.

Interpretation is as follows:

- 1 pullus (= nestling or chick)
- 2 fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 hatched during calendar year of ringing
- 4 hatched before calendar year, but exact year unknown
- 5 hatched during previous calendar year
- 6 hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown
- 7 definitely hatched two years before year of ringing
- 8 hatched three or more calendar years before year of ringing

Sex: ♂ = male; ♀ = female

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

Fulmar

One bird ringed when full grown was recovered eight years later in Denmark. All other recoveries involved birds ringed as nestlings. The most unexpected recovery locality was Walney Island, Cumbria, eight months after the ringing date. Other more typical recovery areas were West Germany (3 month old bird), Sweden (2 birds — 5 and 10 years old), Norway (13 years old) and Orkney (8 years old). One bird in its fourth year had a rather chequered history: trapped on board ship in the North Sea on 27th March 1985 it was released only to be found dead at Texel, Netherlands, 13 days later.

Storm Petrel

	Ringed on Fair Isle	Controlled on Fair Isle
Yell (Shetland)	3	10
Foula (Shetland)	3	
Auskerry (Orkney)	1	
Sule Skerry (Orkney)	1	
Noss Head (Highland)	1	
North Rona (Western Isles)		2
Lewis (Western Isles)	1	
Sanda Island (Strathclyde)	1	

The above table is very typical of the scale and localities of recoveries and controls

in recent years. One further recovery was reported, however, from the species' winter quarters; the details are:

2171128	4	07.08.76	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	29.12.84	Sheley Beach, Port Shepstone, Natal, SOUTH AFRICA 30°48' S 30°25' E 10477 km SSE

This bird, reported as 'exhausted after gale', was released again back to sea. Storm Petrels are known to spend the northern winter in South African waters, particularly on the Atlantic side, but it should be noted that this individual had moved into Indian Ocean waters, no doubt entailing a rather longer distance travelled than the straight line distance of just over 10 000 kilometres.

Shag

All recoveries away from the isle were of birds in their first three years of life. Birds recovered in their first twelve months were reported from Shetland (5), Orkney (5), Highland (3), Strathclyde & Northumberland — the last two, at 439 km SSW and 454 km S respectively, dispersing considerably farther than is the norm. One year old birds were reported from Orkney (3) and Grampian, a two year old from Highland and a three year old from Orkney.

Oystercatcher

FS70927	1	20.06.76	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	25.09.80	Thornham, Norfolk, ENGLAND 52°58' N 0°35' E 742 km S
	v	20.09.84	Holme-next Sea, Norfolk, ENGLAND 52°58' N 0°32' E 741 km S
FR71020	1	02.07.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xL	(13.04.85)	Bryher, Scilly Isles, ENGLAND 49°57' N 6°21' W 1107 km SSW
FV73683	1	17.07.81	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	+	22.11.81	Sanjenjo, Pontevedra, SPAIN 42°24' N 8°48' W 1967 km SSW

Three interesting recoveries of Fair Isle hatched Oystercatchers. FS70927 is clearly a 'regular' in the Holme area of North Norfolk in September, possibly wintering there.

Ringed Plover

BV47770	3	14.09.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	10.10.82	Campos, Mallorca, SPAIN 39°26' N 3°1' E 2257 km S

This late report was of a bird controlled by Spanish ringers — a welcome development in a country where many reports still return as 'shot'.

Arctic Skua

EF85995	8	27.06.77	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xL	26.01.85	near Yzerfontein, Langebaan, Cape Province, SOUTH AFRICA 33°16' S 18°8' E 10475 km S

The bird had been dead about 7 to 10 days when found. By strange coincidence I met the finder during a visit to Cape Town a month later! He noticed it, buried in sand, by its colour rings attached to the only visible part of the bird.

Herring Gull

GJ10254	1	07.07.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	07.12.84	Bedford, ENGLAND 52°4' N 0°32' W 832 km S
GH08283	8	31.10.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	(05.11.84)	Saltburn-by-Sea, Cleveland, ENGLAND 54°35' N 0°58' W 551 km S
GJ10241	8	28.07.80	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	vv	28.10.85	Ainsdale, Southport, Merseyside, ENGLAND 53°37' N 3°3' W 668 km S
GP97599	8	02.12.73	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	04.09.85	Kjotta, Harstad, Troms, NORWAY 68°52' N 16°43' E 1358 km NE

Four rather different recoveries. GJ10254 and, probably, GJ10241 were from the Fair Isle population. GH08283 may have been a late moving Fair Isle breeder — its recovery date is accurate to within a five day period and thus the movement has been pretty direct. In winter the Fair Isle breeding population is largely replaced by large dark backed birds from northern populations. GP97599 will be one such bird.

Great Black-backed Gull

HW68624	1	11.07.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	16.09.84	Adinkerke, West Flanders, BELGIUM 51°4' N 2°36' E 977 km SSE
HW07837	8	07.11.72	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	/?/	08.09.85	Batsfjord, Finnmark, NORWAY 70°36' N 29°40' E 1895 km NE

HW07837 demonstrates the occurrence of birds from northern Scandinavia among Fair Isle winter flocks.

Kittiwake

EH44689	1	05.11.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	()	04.09.85	Forteau, Labrador, Newfoundland, CANADA 51°28' N 56°57' W 3581 km WSW
EH90030	1	08.07.81	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	+	(25.09.84)	off Wesleyville, Newfoundland, CANADA 49°10' N 53°20' W 3520 km WSW
EB07458	6	24.06.75	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	21.01.84	between Ijmuiden & Zandvoort, Noord-Holland, NETHERLANDS 52°25' N 4°33' E 878 km SSE

Kittiwakes are renowned wanderers outside the breeding season and the three recoveries above are clear illustrations of this.

Guillemot

The following tables indicate the wide ranging areas reached by Fair Isle Guillemots:

RINGED AS NESTLINGS

	Age in years at recovery											
	0 to 11mnths	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 12
Within Britain:												
Shetland		3										
Orkney		2	1									
Highland		7	3									
Fife		1										
Western Isles			1									
Strathclyde			1									
Northumberland		4	1									
N Yorkshire		1										
Lincolnshire				1								
Norfolk		1										
Cornwall		1										
Abroad:												
Iceland		1	1									
Faroese		3										
Norway		24	12	4	3	1						
Sweden		7	1					1				
Denmark		6	3	1								
West Germany		1	1									
Netherlands		1	4									
French Channel Coast		1										
French Atlantic Coast		1										

RINGED AS ADULTS

	No. of years after ringing											
	0 to 11mnths	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 12
Within Britain:												
Shetland											1	
Orkney												1
Grampian					1		1					1
Humberside				1								
Abroad:												
Norway		2	1	2	1	1	1					
Denmark		1										
Netherlands					1							
French Atlantic Coast												1

Razorbill

M46407	1	20.06.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	(23.10.84)	Playa de Fuenterrabia, Guipuzcoa, SPAIN
			43°23' N 1°48' W 1794 km S
M52070	1	29.06.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	(20.01.85)	Newbiggin-by-Sea, Northumberland, ENGLAND
			55°11' N 1°30' W 483 km S

M46197	1	02.07.83	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	15.12.84	Fonte de Telha, Estremadura, PORTUGAL 38°37' N 9°15' W 2387 km SSW
M42586	1	27.06.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	09.06.85	Cromer, Norfolk, ENGLAND 52°56' N 1°18' E 755 km SSE
M26500	1	24.07.78	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	02.02.85	Katwijk, Zuid-Holland, NETHERLANDS 52°12' N 4°4' E 896 km SSE
M34166	8	28.06.79	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	29.12.84	Kirkwall, Orkney, SCOTLAND 58°58' N 2°59' W 100 km SW

Six recoveries showing the variation in distance and directions of Razorbills of various ages away from Fair Isle.

Dunnoek

CO46141	3	17.09.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	15.02.85	Sheringham, Norfolk, ENGLAND 52°56' N 1°15' E 754 km SSE

A fascinating recovery suggesting a spring migration route much farther south than that of autumn.

Wheatear

NK13510	3 ♂	23.08.83	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	10.04.85	North Ronaldsay, Orkney, SCOTLAND 59°22' N 2°26' W 50 km WSW

This bird was caught at a Lighthouse attraction by Kevin Woodbridge, no doubt on the last stage of its spring migration.

Blackbird

XP08072	5 ♂	06.04.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	13.04.84	Vastanvik, Stockholm, SWEDEN 59°44' N 18°58' E 1156 km E
XH32411	5 ♀	04.04.81	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	/?/	18.01.85	Woodford, Galway, EIRE 53°3' N 8°24' W 832 km SSW
XH32750	4 ♀	04.11.81	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	18.10.84	Helgoland, WEST GERMANY 54°11' N 7°55' E 829 km SE
XP08395	3 ♂	10.11.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	02.01.85	Kirkwall, Orkney, SCOTLAND 58°59' N 2°55' W 96 km SW
XK68617	4 ♀	10.11.83	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	29.07.85	Revsnes, Sor-Trondelag, NORWAY 64°2' N 10°4' E 791 km NE
XK68437	4 ♂	01.12.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	+	19.11.84	Kinconquhar, Fife, SCOTLAND 56°13' N 2°50' W 375 km S

Song Thrush

NX95214	3	23.10.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	(15.02.85)	Newcastle, Clonmel, Tipperary, EIRE
			52°16' N 7°49' W 894 km SSW

NX95214, found dead during cold weather, had continued a long way south-west from its presumed first stage arrival on Fair Isle.

Redwing

NX95318	2	16.11.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	30.12.84	Kirkwall, Orkney, SCOTLAND
			59°59' N 2°55' W 96 km SW

The ring was found in a Long-eared Owl pellet.

Starling

XN54419	1	01.06.83	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	26.01.85	Wick, Highland, SCOTLAND
			58°26' N 3°5' W 148 km SW
	v	28.03.85	<i>Fair Isle</i>
XP27428	3	14.07.85	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	25.08.85	Rusness, Sanday, Orkney, SCOTLAND
			59°15' N 2°32' W 61 km WSW
XN55926	3 ♂	02.07.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	27.01.85	Weyland Bay, Kirkwall, Orkney, SCOTLAND
			58°59' N 2°57' W 97 km SW
XJ61711	3	11.07.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	30.11.85	Scone, Perth, Tayside, SCOTLAND
			56°25' N 3°26' W 362 km SSW

XN54419 is building a very interesting life history for itself by multiple captures. All indicate movements away from Fair Isle of a short or moderate distance nature by known or presumed local bred birds.

Chaffinch

B347877	4 ♀	02.10.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	29.04.83	At sea, North Sea 56°0' N 6°0' E 598 km SE

A spring migration doomed to failure. The bird died on board ship.

CONTROLS

Details were received for 17 birds in 1985 which had been ringed elsewhere and found on Fair Isle. The details are as follows:

Merlin

EK10279	1	29.06.84	<i>NW Yell, Shetland, SCOTLAND</i>
			60°42' N 1°5' W
	v3 ♀	20.10.84	<i>Fair Isle</i> 133 km SSW

The third control Merlin in autumn 1984 — all ringed as *pulli* in Shetland — ringing details for EK10279 were received too late to include in the 1984 report.

Oystercatcher

FV97349	8	10.08.80	<i>Castle Stuart, Inverness, Highland, SCOTLAND</i>
			57°31' N 4°6' W
	v	24.06.85	<i>Fair Isle</i> 266 km NNE

At first sight this appears to be an aberrant northwards movement but Fair Isle Oystercatchers often make early post-breeding departures and FV97349, already at

least 3 years old when ringed at Castle Stuart, may have moved early to that locality from Fair Isle.

Ringed Plover

NB27297	1	13.07.84	<i>Auskerry, Orkney, SCOTLAND</i> <i>59°2' N 2°34' W</i>
	v ♂	21.04.85	Fair Isle 77 km NE

A very interesting control suggesting potential recruitment to the Fair Isle population of an Orkney bred bird.

Arctic Skua

EH62579	1	05.07.83	<i>Foula, Shetland, SCOTLAND</i> <i>60°8' 2°5' W</i>
	x F	23.06.85	Fair Isle 72 km SSE

Great Skua

Three ringed as chicks on Foula, in 1974, 1977 and 1979 respectively, were found dead on Fair Isle in 1985 and another ringed as a chick on Foula in 1977 was identified by its colour rings. Recruitment into the Fair Isle breeding populations of both Arctic and Great Skuas bred on Foula has been well established over the years.

Lesser Black-backed Gull

GG16548	1	21.07.83	<i>Mousa, Shetland, SCOTLAND</i> <i>60°0' N 1°10' W</i>
	x L	03.10.85	Fair Isle 58 km SSW

Herring Gull

GG16942	1	22.06.84	<i>Lerwick, Shetland, SCOTLAND</i> <i>60°9' N 1°8' W</i>
	v	23.09.85	Fair Isle 74 km SSW

Guillemot

Copenhagen 5031101	4	30.06.71	<i>Norre Vidoy, FAROES</i> <i>62°20' N 6°30' W</i>
	x	07.03.85	Fair Isle 408 km SE

This exciting find fell to Adrian del-Nevo who discovered it on North Haven beach. It was an oiled specimen. We have long suspected that some of the Guillemots off Fair Isle in winter belong to more northern populations.

Blackbird

XN31988	5 ♀	06.04.84	<i>North Ronaldsay, Orkney, SCOTLAND</i> <i>59°22' N 2°26' W</i>
	v	13.10.84	Fair Isle 50 km ENE
Stavanger 7180055	6 ♀	30.10.81	<i>Arkavatnet, Haugesund, Rogaland, NORWAY</i> <i>59°25' N 5°17' E</i>
	v	28.10.84	Fair Isle 390 km W

Note that XN31988 has employed a similar autumn migration route to that of its previous spring movement.

Sedge Warbler

B959431	3	10.08.84	<i>Graemeshill, Holm, Orkney, SCOTLAND</i> <i>58°54' N 2°54' W</i>
	v	29.05.85	Fair Isle 101 km NE
C432718	3	10.09.84	<i>Seaside Dyke, Errol, Tayside, SCOTLAND</i> <i>56°24' N 3°11' W</i>
	v	03.10.84	Fair Isle 360 km NNE

B959431 has overshoot its breeding grounds. C432718 demonstrates a 'reversed migration' displacement, more commonly undertaken by some other species such as Blackcap and Barred Warbler.

Starling

XP74029	3 ♂	02.12.84	<i>Windwick, South Ronaldsay, Orkney, SCOTLAND 58°46' N 2°56' W</i>
	v	10.05.85	Fair Isle 113 km NE

Chaffinch

B633100	5 ♂	13.01.85	<i>Tilburg, Noord-Brabant, NETHERLANDS</i> <i>51°34' N 5°5' E</i>
	v	26.03.85	Fair Isle 979 km NNW

Chaffinches are frequently drifted across the North Sea to Fair Isle in late March if southeast winds prevail at that time.

RETRAPS

The following selection of more interesting retraps was obtained in 1985:

Oldest Seabirds	Ringed	Retrapped	Age
Fulmar	Breeding adult, 1968	Breeding adult, 1985	at least 25 yrs
Shag	pullus, 1969	Breeding adult, 1985	17
Eider adult on eggs —	Hoillie, 1971	adults on eggs — Hoillie, 1985	at least 17
Guillemot	adult, 1965	adult, 1985	at least 23
Razorbill	2 pullie, 1970	both breeding adults, 1985	15
Black Guillemot	pullus, 1972	colour-ring sighting, 1985	13
Puffin	pullus, 1961	adult, 1985	24
	pullus, 1962	adult, 1985	23

Overwintering Birds

Duncock	23.11.84	27.3.85, 8.4.85 & 13.4.85
Robin	26.11.84	16.3.85 & 26.3.85

Miscellaneous

A first-year male Kestrel spent a considerable period off-passage on the isle during which time it was trapped twice — on 28th August and 17th September.

A Herring Gull ringed as an adult in 1980 was retrapped no less than 25 times coming to free hand-outs in the Axell trap between 29th July and 16th October. During this time we were able to obtain some very useful moult progress data.

A Wren ringed in its first autumn on 19th September 1982 was retrapped on 29th June 1985. Survival for three years is quite an achievement for a Wren whose life

expectancy, in sharp contrast to many Fair Isle residents species (e.g. seabirds), is short.

One of the most spectacular weight gains in 1985 was achieved by a female Hawfinch. It weighed 38.0 gm on 7th April on first capture. On 11th April it was retrapped weighing 49.8 gm, a 31% increase in body weight in just four days! We had watched it feeding between captures and it certainly was hungry!

A Thrush Nightingale provided the most amazing retrap history of the year. It was found at Barkland on 10th May, trapped and released back there on 11th. Next day it was in South Reeve. It was relocated in Steensi Geo on 14th May where it remained until 22nd. On 25th and 26th May it was retrapped in the Axell trap, remaining by the observatory garage until 30th May. Readers with knowledge of the isle will realise that this bird sampled a variety of habitats in widely separated parts of the island during its three week stay. Had it not been ringed, it could have been considered as 3 or 4 different individuals!



SHETLAND'S LEADING
RENTAL FLEET

Fair Isle by air or sea

Our reception facilities at:

TINGWALL (*Loganair flights*) and

SUMBURGH (*Grutness ferry*) can

handle your transport requirements

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*Self-Drive Hire : Taxis : Mini Coaches
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LERWICK 2855



Fair Isle Fungi List, 1985

We were fortunate in September to receive a short visit by Dr Roy Watling of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. His express purpose was to investigate the Fair Isle fungus flora as part of a survey of the fungi of Shetland. 'Express' was the operative word for his searches were confined to the daylight hours between arrival on the Friday afternoon, 6th September, Loganair service and departure at midday the following day. Nevertheless he covered a remarkable range of habitats from the Least Willow *Salix herbacea* 'forest' on the summit of Ward Hill to the spray zone communities in the south-east. Particular attention was paid to the Creeping Willow *Salix repens* beds scattered over the southern part of the island, and these proved exceptionally rich. He was greatly assisted in his collecting by Bobby Tulloch whose prior knowledge of Fair Isle habitats and general natural history expertise ensured efficient coverage in the limited time available.

From this quick sample Dr Watling finds that certain elements in the flora are similar to those of the Faroes, and other parts of Shetland, the mountainous areas of central and western Scotland, and Scandinavia. The resulting list is far fuller than any previous one for Fair Isle and the first in recent years. I am grateful to Dr Watling for permission to publish the list, which is as follows:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Fair Isle | 6th September 1985 |
| 1. Airstrip to Ward hill | |
| Agaricus arvensis, fissuratus | |
| Collybia dryophila | Empetrum/Calluna area |
| Cortinarius anomalus
(diminutive form) | 4 or 5 colonies with <i>S. herbacea</i> |
| Hygrophorus conicus, pratensis | |
| Hypholoma elongatum | boggy area at airstrip |
| Lactarius lacunarum | 4 or 5 colonies with <i>S. herbacea</i> |
| Leptonia fulva | |
| Nolanea staurospora | |
| Omphalina ericetorum, fulvo-pallens (= pseudoandrosacea),
luteolilacina with <i>Coriscium</i> | |
| Psilocybe semilanceata | |
| Russula pascua | |
| Clavulina cinerea | 3 or 4 colonies with <i>S. herbacea</i> |
| Bovista nigrescens | |
| Lycoperdon foetidum | Empetrum/Calluna area |
| 2. Roadside heading to Observatory | |
| Calocybe carnea | |
| Entoloma prunuloides | |
| Hygrophorus coccinus, quietus | |
| Leptonia caesiocincta, pyrospila | |
| Vascellum pratense | |
| Fair Isle | 7th September 1985 |
| 3. Buiness | |
| Hygrophorus flavescens, pratensis, | |
| psittacinus, quietus | |
| Nolanea sericea, staurospora | |
| Panaeolina foeniseccii | |
| Psilocybe semilanceata | |
| Bovista nigrescens | many colonies |

4. **Observatory to School**
Agaricus arvensis
Colocybe carnea
Entoloma prunuloides
Hygrophorus miniatus, pratensis, quietus
Leptonia lampopus, sericella
Nolanea sericea
Omphalina grisella
Panaeolus rickenii
Psilocybe semilanceata
Stropharia semiglobata on dung

Lycoperdon foetidum
[Claviceps purpurea on *Anthoxanthum*]
5. **School (*Salix repens*)**
Cortinarius fulvosquamosus
Hygrophorus ceraceus, conicus, flavescens, pratensis
Leptonia anatina, sericella
Psilocybe semilanceata
Stropharia semiglobata
6. **Barkland**
Lactarius lacunarum with *S. repens*
7. **Near Church in field**
with shallow flooded ditches
Cortinarius cinnamomeus grp. with *S. repens*
by small quarry
Conocybe pubescens on pony dung
Hypholoma subericaea by Church
Stropharia semiglobata var. stercoraria small quarry near Church
8. **Church by roadside**
Cortinarius uliginosus with *S. repens*
Lactarius lacunarum with *S. repens*
9. **Church near Planticrubs**
Galerina hyporum agg.
Hygrophorus unguinosus
Omphalina ericetorum in closely cropped *Calluna*
10. **Rippack**
Hygrophorus miniatus
Leptonia sericella
Russula fragilis, pascua both with *S. repens*
cliff top R. fragilis with *S. repens*
11. **Near Taing**
Agaricus macrosporus
Calloocybe carnea
Leptonia sericella

Miscellany

Past Assistants

Sir Arthur Duncan, in his foreword to the 1983 FIBO report, paid tribute to Fair Isle Bird Observatory as a training ground for assistants taking up ornithological work as a career. Over the years a number have gone on to a career in ornithology and this has continued to be the case for recent assistants. It thus seems an appropriate moment to bring readers up-to-date with the career developments of assistants they may have met or read about in the last few years.

Pete Ewins (assistant 1978 & 1980): Pete has just completed a doctorat on Tysties in Shetland. Under the aegis of SOTEAG and the Edward Grey Institute of Oxford University, the study spanned the years 1982-84. In summer 1985 Pete was based on the Isle of May where he worked with auk specialist, Dr Mike Harris. In November 1985 Pete returned to Shetland when he took up the post of Assistant Regional Officer to Shetland for the Nature Conservancy Council.

Adrian del-Nevo (1980-81): after two years as Warden of Calf of Man Bird Observatory (1982-83), Adrian started a three year doctorat on Fair Isle, researching into Guillemot breeding biology, in 1985. He is attached to the University of Sheffield. He is also the Bulletin Secretary of the *Seabird Group*.

David Borton (1981-83): David is currently employed as Warden of Cape Clear Bird Observatory, a position he took up in 1984. Cape Clear Island is off the south-west coast of Ireland and constitutes one of the farthest possible moves while remaining within the British Isles! David experienced a most spectacular autumn 1985 on the island, which played host to extreme vagrants from North America and from the east.

Glen Tyler (1982-83): after working on swans as a research associate at the Edward Grey Institute of Oxford University Glen will, in 1986, be concentrating his attentions on Stone-curlew studies in Suffolk.

Kevin Osborn (1984): Kevin is currently working for the RSPB, censusing waders.

Dave Carter (1984): Dave has taken up the post of Countryside Ranger in the beautiful Loch Lomond area.

Kevin Shepherd (1985): while mentioning assistants it is worth recording that Kevin first came to Fair Isle in 1975 when he was a recipient of a John Harrison Memorial Fund grant. As far as I can trace he is the first JHMF beneficiary to become an assistant warden.

Vignettes

We have been most fortunate over the years to have had the services of two fine artists to illustrate our annual report. Richard Richardson, an annual visitor to the isle, established a reputation as one of the finest and most skilful bird artists of his day. His encouragement to young aspiring artists was well-known and one such protégé was John Holloway. It was thus fitting when, at Richard's sad death, John — then living on the isle — was able to take over the mantle and produce for the report work of the standard set by his illustrious predecessor.

It seems appropriate, with John's departure from Fair Isle, for us to further Richard's work of encouraging aspiring artists. In the last few years two talented youngsters have provided vignettes for the report and one of them, Billy Morton, is again featured this year. We have taken the step this year of inviting a second artist, Paul Leonard, to supply some of his work. Both show exceptional talent and we are pleased to publish examples of their art in the FIBO report as a showcase to their ability and skill. Both are recent visitors to the isle, perhaps a requisite to achieve the 'freshness' clearly evident in their vignettes. Bill Morton drew the Leach's Petrel,

Spotted Crake, Curlew Sandpiper, Long-tailed Skua, Long-eared Owl, Waxwings, Barred Warbler, Red-backed Shrike (2 vignettes), Daurian Starling, Tree Sparrow and three buntings together (Rustic, Yellow-breasted and Little). Paul Leonard drew the Fulmar, Eider, Merlin chasing Rock Dove, Peregrine, Lesser Golden Plover, Black Guillemot, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Pechora Pipit, Bluethroat, Eastern or Siberian Stonechat, Lanceolated Warbler, Arctic Warbler, Raven, Crossbill, Rustic Bunting, Little Bunting and Killer Whale.

Sale of Vignette Originals

Paul Leonard has very generously offered us the chance to sell the originals of his vignettes. All his vignettes, with the exception of Great Spotted Woodpecker, are available from FIBO, Fair Isle, Shetland. The originals will be sold on a 'first come, first served' basis. The asking price is £10 per vignette, a real bargain and a very worthwhile investment as well as providing a substantial and welcome bonus to FIBO funds. Thank you, Paul, for this generous offer.

Acknowledgements

To say thank you to all the many people who have helped us during the last year would require several extra pages of report. Many of them are mentioned in various sections above (e.g. Warden's Report, Monthly Highlights, etc.) — we offer them all our thanks. We are pleased, too, to acknowledge the support and friendship of all the Islanders without whose co-operation the Observatory's work could not function, and our many visitors for their active part in achieving a happy Observatory ambience. Special thanks must be proffered to Stewart Thomson and his son, Stewart, Neil Thomson, Brian Wilson and John Best for considerable help with maintenance problems, Nigel and Cathy Hallett for their sheep husbandry and Jimmy Wilson and Stewart Thomson Jnr. for keeping winter bird reports for us. We also acknowledge the continued SOTEAG interest in Fair Isle seabird work. Finally, we would like to express our thanks to the HIDB, and in particular Maurice Cantley in Inverness and Bill Fraser in Lerwick, for their guidance and help with a variety of matters.

Publications

The following were published in 1985 by or with the assistance of FIBO staff and facilities.

Migration & Faunistics

- Baker, K. Chill Facators and Bluethroats. *BTO News* 139 (July-August 1985): 13.
- Baker, K. Observatory News; Unprecedented Yellow-browed Warbler arrivals. *BTO News* 141: 10.
- Catley, G.P. & Hursthouse, D. Parrot Crossbills in Britain. *Brit. Birds* 78: 482-505.
- Elkins, N. Possible passage route of Fair Isle Yellow-browed Bunting. *Brit. Birds* 78: 51-52.
- Howey, D.H. & Bell, M. Pallas's Warblers and other migrants in Britain and Ireland in October 1982. *Brit. Birds* 78: 381-392.
- Norman, S.C. & Norman, W. Autumn Movements of Willow Warblers ringed in the British Isles. *Ringed & Migration* 6: 7-18.

- Osborn, K. Possible 'Eastern' Common Gull on Fair Isle. *Brit. Birds* 78: 454.
- Rodriguez, M. Weights and fat accumulation of Blackcaps *Sylvia atricapilla* during migration through Southern Spain. *Ringed & Migration* 6: 33-38.
- Taylor, K. Crossbill Invasion. *BTO News* 140: 1.

Seabirds

- Ewins, P.J. Colony attendance and censusing of Black Guillemots *Cephus grylle* in Shetland. *Bird Study* 32: 176-185.
- Ewins, P.J. & Tasker, M.L. The breeding distribution of Black Guillemots *Cephus grylle* in Orkney and Shetland, 1982-84. *Bird Study* 32: 186-193.
- Hope Jones, P., Barrett, C.F., Mudge, G.P. & Harris, M.P. Examination of corpses of auks beached on East British coasts in February 1983. *Seabird* 8: 9-14.
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- Olden, B., Peterz, M. & Kollberg, B. Seabird mortality in the gill-net fishing, Southeast Kattegat, South Sweden. *Anser* 24: 159-180.

Waders

- Galbraith, H., Furness, R.W. & Fuller, R.J. Habitats and distribution of waders breeding on Scottish agricultural land. *Scott. Birds* 13: 98-107.
- Swann, R.L. Highland Oystercatchers. *Ringed & Migration* 6: 55-59.

Behaviour & Vocalization

- Hindmarsh, A.M. 1984. Vocal Mimicry in Starlings. *Behaviour* 90: 302-324.

Information & Publicity articles

- Boulinier, T. L'observatoire ornithologique de l'île Fair. *Le Courrier de la Nature* 97: 22-28.
- Hudson, M. Earth-watch: A Fair Isle for Birds. *Audubon* 85 (5): 32-37.
- McCurley, B. Fair Isle, Shetland: A Memorable Holiday. *SOC Dundee Branch Newsletter* early March 1985.
- Moyes, S. Fair Isle. *RSPB Dundee Area Group Newsletter* Winter 1984/85.
- Nash, B. Seabird Ringing Course. *BTO News* 139: 12.
- Riddiford, N. & Riddiford, E. 1984. Fair Isle, Shetland, Great Britain. *Birding* 16: 264Q-264R.
- Wilson, D. Going Places: Travel Talk. *Manchester Evening News* Saturday, June 15, 1985: 30.

The John Harrison Memorial Fund

Administering Committee:

Mr B. Grewcock (Organiser); Mr J. M. S. Arnott; 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 twenty-one, 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. Secretary, J.H.M.F., 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**

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

**To: The Hon. Secretary, John Harrison Memorial Fund,
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.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

Treasurer's Report

1. Income & Expenditure Account

There was an increase in the deficit on this account. Whilst there was a welcome increase in hostel income, rising expenditure negated any benefit. Some of the increase in expenditure is due to:

- (a) Making the asset replacements mentioned in last year's report;
- (b) The high cost of repairs made to the Land Rover (this has now been replaced by a Bedford Van costing some £3000);
- (c) An increase in the cost of heat and light;
- (d) Not getting as much grant as we had hoped for, for the cost of producing the 1984 report; and,
- (e) Increased advertising and promotion costs. (The signs are that the increased advertising and promotional budget is having a beneficial effect on bookings for the current season.)

2. Balance Sheet

The deficit for the year has reduced the Trust's assets by £1137. A grant was received from The Pilgrim Trust for £3000; this has been specifically earmarked to cover the cost of a replacement roof so it has been credited to "provision for future expenditure". The replacement roof will cost some £17,500. £12,500 has been raised to cover this — it is very much hoped to raise the balance from the Shetland Islands Council.

3. John Harrison Fund.

The fund provided grants totalling £480 during the year. Individual amounts ranged from £65 to £95.

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Balance Sheet at

31/10/85

	£	1984 £
FIXED ASSETS		
Tangible assets	65,546	65,524
Investments	10,548	10,548
	<u>76,094</u>	<u>76,072</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stock & work in progress	4,438	3,745
Debtors	2,300	2,887
Prepayments	538	17
Value added tax	0	0
Deposit accounts	16,698	13,400
Girobank	3,140	3,990
Cash in hand	137	150
	<u>27,251</u>	<u>24,189</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Deposit in advance	2,502	1,605
Typewriter fund	0	0
Value added tax	1,082	1,257
Sundry funds (Lifter/JHM/Type)	571	1,210
Bank overdraft	0	0
Creditors	2,892	1,754
Provision for future expenditure	10,541	7,541
	<u>17,588</u>	<u>13,367</u>
Net current assets	9,663	10,822
NET ASSETS	<u>£85,757</u>	<u>£86,894</u>
FINANCED BY		
Capital balance	85,757	86,893
TOTAL FINANCE	<u>£85,757</u>	<u>£86,893</u>
Rounding error	<u>£0</u>	<u>£1</u>

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Tangible assets schedule at 31/10/85

	Land & buildings	Plant & equipment	Garage & tank house	Motor vehicles	Total
At 1/11/84	51,699	7,515	10,948	2,430	72,591
Additions	—	1,906	—	—	1,906
Disposals	—	—	—	—	—
<i>At 31/10/85</i>	<u>51,699</u>	<u>9,421</u>	<u>10,948</u>	<u>2,430</u>	<u>74,498</u>
Depreciation					
At 1/11/84	—	4,638	—	2,430	7,068
Provided	—	1,884	—	—	1,884
Disposals	—	—	—	—	—
<i>At 31/10/85</i>	<u>—</u>	<u>6,522</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>2,430</u>	<u>8,952</u>
Net book value					
At 31/10/85	<u>£51,699</u>	<u>£2,899</u>	<u>£10,948</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£65,546</u>
Net book value					
At 1/11/84	<u>£51,699</u>	<u>£2,877</u>	<u>£10,948</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>£65,524</u>

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Capital account schedule for the year ending 31/10/85

	£	1984 £
Capital account b/fwd	86,894	86,924
Net profit from P&L	(1,137)	(31)
	<u>85,757</u>	<u>86,893</u>
CAPITAL BALACE C/FWD	<u>85,757</u>	<u>86,893</u>

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Profit & Loss for the year ending

31/10/85

	£	1984 £
INCOME		
Hostel income	25,508	22,758
Royalties, grants, subs, donations	3,566	3,922
Interest received	3,294	3,494
Bird rings recovered	263	249
	<u>32,631</u>	<u>30,423</u>
 COSTS		
Purchases	7,473	6,302
Direct wages	7,257	6,596
	<u>14,730</u>	<u>12,898</u>
	<u>14,730</u>	<u>12,898</u>
 GROSS PROFIT	<u>17,901</u>	<u>17,525</u>
 OVERHEADS		
Administration	5,109	5,193
Establishment	12,702	11,065
Selling	(890)	0
Finance & Legal	2,117	1,298
	<u>£(1137)</u>	<u>£(31)</u>
 NET PROFIT	<u>£(1137)</u>	<u>£(31)</u>

FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY TRUST

Expense schedule for the year ending

31/10/85

	£	1984 £
ADMINISTRATION		
Motor & boat expenses	1,490	1,094
Travelling, subsistence	1,785	2,080
Freight inward	334	270
Bird rings & nets	0	549
Admin & accountancy	1,500	1,200
	<u>£5,109</u>	<u>£5,193</u>
ESTABLISHMENT		
Rates	78	0
Lighting & heating	5,175	3,919
Repairs & renewals	2,781	1,900
Insurances	1,534	1,910
Report & public. net of income	1,180	1,955
Cleaning, hygiene & sundry	338	339
Telephone & postage	1,244	1,042
Print & stationery	372	0
	<u>£12,702</u>	<u>£11,065</u>
SELLING		
Commissions	22	0
Advertising	(912)	0
	<u>£(890)</u>	<u>£0</u>
FINANCE & LEGAL		
Bank charges	13	0
Legal & professional	220	443
Depreciation	1,884	855
	<u>£2,117</u>	<u>£1,298</u>

FAIR ISLE ENDOWMENT TRUST

Summary of Account for the year ended 31st October, 1985

	Capital	Revenue
Fund at 31st October, 1984.....	£8,303.41	
Income for year per Schedule.....		£ 443.97
Income Tax Refund 1984/85.....		104.63
		<hr/>
		£ 548.60
Management Fees.....	£ 33.00	
Remittances to F.I.B.O.T.....	515.60	
	<hr/>	
		548.60
		<hr/>
Fund at 31st October, 1985.....	£8,303.41	

SCHEDULE

	Market Value	Capital Cost	Revenue
8 1/4 % Treasury Loan 1987/90, £2,400 Loan.....	£2,220	£2,113.93	£ 198.00
10% Treasury Stock 1992, £2,750 Stock. Henderson Administration, 960 High Income Units.....	2,729	2,500.15	192.50
	1,336	637.74	53.47
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	£6,285	£5,251.82	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
Heritable Property 21 Regent Terrace.....		3,050.00	
Cash Balance.....		1.59	—
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		£8,303.41	£ 443.97
		<hr/>	<hr/>



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BIRD OBSERVATORY
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