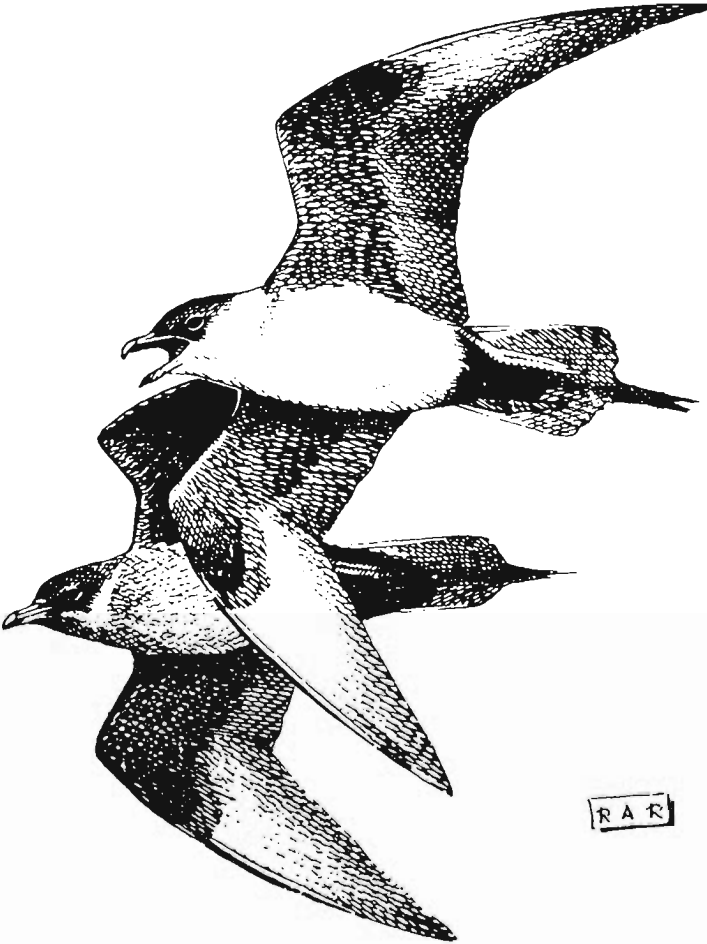


# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

## Report for 1987



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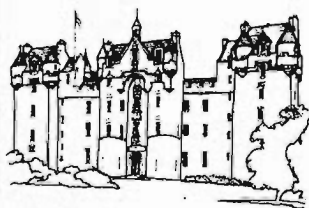
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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report No. 40

1987

*Edited by Nick Riddiford, assisted by Valerie Thom*

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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

A company limited by guarantee

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## Chairman's Report

1987 was a very exciting year ornithologically. The seabirds continued to prosper, and with them the NCC Seabird Monitoring Scheme. The Gannet population now stands at over 300 pairs, the Arctic Terns have continued their spectacular colonisation of Bunness, and the white Puffin, which featured in a recent RSPB film, was again a popular attraction for our summer guests. The migration periods were full of incident, with large movements in both April and October. Even by Fair Isle standards the rarity list was exceptional – the American Savannah Sparrow was new to Scotland and the Lesser Kestrel was the first this century.

Such ornithological delights proved a rich reward for those visitors who decided to stay longer on Fair Isle – and in doing so helped to increase our visitor week throughput to 430 (from 415 in 1986). And this increase in turn vindicated the Directors' action in using precious FIBOT funds to augment the continuing grant support we received to maintain our programme of improvements. At last, too, the broader appeal of Fair Isle's natural history interest is being more widely recognised. The introduction of a moth trap – a useful addition to the Observatory's equipment – has extended our knowledge of Fair Isle's lepidoptera, while cetaceans, mice, mosses and liverworts, fungi, flowering plants, spiders, beetles, marine biology and geology have all received attention, as the contents of this report demonstrates.

I hope that you will find this report as interesting as its immediate predecessors, which were praised for their general island interest. This year Nick, as Editor, has concentrated on illustrating the breadth of natural history interest on the isle, without I hope diminishing the importance of ornithology in the annual report of Britain's leading Bird Observatory. I believe the report reflects the interests of the visitors to Fair Isle today, who relish the sense of recreation and regeneration of spent energies – mental and physical – among the natural surroundings and glorious environment that is Fair Isle. This realisation of the broader interests of the island helped to fill the Lodge to unprecedented levels in July and August, thereby ironing out the troughs and peaks associated with the migration periods.

The Directors are anxious to maintain ornithological research as a high priority in the allocation of resources. We particularly value the on-going support of the NCC Seabird Monitoring Scheme and appreciate their invitation to include the Fair Isle study in the NCC's Commissioned Research Report Series. We would welcome suggestions for future studies – from Universities, schools, clubs and individuals. FIBOT has built up the most important data base of bird migration statistics in Europe and this must be more widely used. The continuous record maintained since 1948 will shortly be transferred to disc, making the information more easily accessible. The Trust's Research and Education Committee, with some members drawn from outwith FIBOT, is always ready to assist further study on, or connected with, the ornithology of Fair Isle.

The accounts presented in this report are the first for a full year of the new company. Despite the increasing income and generally contained overheads, we are trading in deficit. This was an exceptional year, with an unusually high wages bill and revision of the depreciation allowance. The Directors are determined that the deficit will be eliminated in 1988 – without, I hope, raising our charges to an over-onerous level. As with all aspects of the Directors' roles, we would welcome your comments and advice, be they critical or supportive.

Recent visitors to the island will have heard of the major developments planned to secure the future of the FIBOT building. We are to enclose the ex-

isting accommodation with a harled blocked envelope, increase the size of the link building to improve the kitchen and all reception areas and, most significantly, create two self-contained units for researchers. These are essential works which will secure the future of FIBOT on the island for the next few decades. We are launching an Appeal this spring, details of which you will receive with this report. I hope that you will support us in whatever way you can. Donations will obviously be very much appreciated, but please do also encourage others to support us and to visit Fair Isle.

The Appeal is really by way of a very large birthday present to FIBOT. We all appreciate the excitement and cause for celebration associated with a Jubilee event. It may seem all too short a time to those of you who remember the earliest days of redundant naval huts as the respite from travel on the *Good Shepherd II*, but in 1988 no fewer than 40 years will have passed since George cajoled others into the creation of FIBOT. In 1969 the coming of age was marked with the opening of the present building. Faith was required then to proceed with that development — and is needed again today. Life begins at forty, so we are reminded. The Directors are persuaded that the original concepts for FIBOT need no significant amendment, and we have faith in and for the future of the Observatory, the hostel (alias the Lodge), and the corporate FIBOT. We have much to celebrate and be grateful for in the vision and strength of purpose of those inspiring FIBOT in 1948 and 1969, and we plan to emulate them in 1988.

As we enter this special year it is pertinent to reflect on why FIBOT exists today and ponder its role in the next 40 years. It is vital that we do not continue unquestioning, in the euphoria of jubilee celebrations, for old times' sake and in memory of the founders. I believe that FIBOT today has a more important role to play than in 1948. The growing awareness of conservation world-wide reflects an increasing sense of responsibility for our natural heritage on a far



Ian Pitman, Sir Arthur Duncan and George Waterston, founders of FIBOT, at the opening of the Lodge in October 1969. Photo: Dennis Coutts

broader scale than hitherto. Thanks to the foresight of the pioneers of the National Trusts, the Nature Conservancy and the Countryside Commissions, we have the means to protect the best of our natural heritage. Fair Isle is well endowed with protection – although it is arguably the least vulnerable area in Scotland, preserved as it is by a responsible island community. FIBOT, with a unique database of migration records and seabird statistics, is an invaluable and increasingly appreciated reference source for scientist and layman. The finite and largely inaccessible area of Fair Isle is an ecosystem that remains undisturbed and can be easily monitored and recorded. It is important, too, that we ensure the continuation of the work at FIBOT to help preserve the character of Fair Isle and the tranquility and peace which rule on Fair Isle are becoming more appreciated commodities as they become less available to us in more populous parts of the country. Fair Isle and FIBOT must be preserved for the future. It is for these reasons that the Jubilee celebration and the launching of the Appeal are so important to me – and I hope also to you.

Nick records elsewhere in the report the Trust's thanks to the many people who assist FIBOT. I take this opportunity to express the Directors' appreciation to Nick and Liz for their dedication in what has not been an easy year. Without them 1987 would not have been what it was, a further reinforcing of FIBOT's position in the European ornithological scene.

D. MacLehose

## Warden's Report

It is good to be able to report that the improvement in visitor numbers recorded last year continued, with a further 3.9% increase bringing the visitor/weeks total for 1987 to 430. Though September has traditionally been the most popular month (and continues to be so), July 1987 was the busiest month ever for visitors. The factors behind the increase remain the same as those described in my 1986 report, including incentives such as courses and special reductions to fill the quieter periods.

As is customary, we received visitors from many parts of the world. Two YOC courses (in July and August) were highly successful and enjoyable; King's School, Grantham, operated a very successful field study week in July; specialist weeks were organised through Caledonian Wildlife; and a number of independent researchers stayed, including a diving team undertaking a marine biological survey as part of the NCC's Marine Nature Conservation Review. Several members of a Thames TV film crew stayed at the Observatory in June and early July while they made a *Splash* programme for Children's Television and an education series entitled *Environments*, which is due to be broadcast on Channel 4 in the spring. Jim Murray came in April to make a programme for BBC World Service, about the aerogenerator and the economic well-being of the isle. The majority of our visitors, however, were ordinary holidaymakers with a special interest in one or more aspects of Fair Isle life and natural history. This is a trend which we are pleased to encourage.

The continued increase in the number of visitors has kept the carriers busy. Loganair was well patronised. The service to and from Kirkwall, Orkney, which again ran on summer Saturdays, was popular; but so too were the Tingwall services. The Kirkwall and the four Tingwall services are scheduled to run again in 1988 and, thanks to Loganair's pre-planning, passengers can now reserve seats on all the 1988 scheduled services to and from Fair Isle. The *Good Shepherd IV* mailboat was also extensively used. She is a much more comfortable boat than her predecessor and this has led to a marked reduction in the percentage of travel-worn passengers and an increase in the proportion keen

to repeat the trip. There may not be on-board entertainment (apart from the natural humour of the crew) but throughout the summer White-beaked Dolphins riding and playing on the bow wave, often for several kilometres, gave many passengers a close-up wildlife spectacular which left a lasting impression.

When we returned from our winter break early in the year extensive improvement work was in progress on the Observatory building and facilities. Included among the improvements were several items of significance to visitor comfort, such as a better hot water system, duvets on the beds, and carpets in the upstairs corridors and most of the guest areas downstairs – the latter making a welcome contribution to comfort under-foot and ensuring a considerable reduction in noise level. We know, from the reactions and comments of visitors old and new, that these improvements – which were carried out with the financial assistance of the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Shetland Islands Council – have been well received.

There was certainly plenty happening on the isle in 1987, and highlights of the community's year are given in Alexander Bennett's report. The major ornithological thrust at the Observatory during the summer was again the Seabird Monitoring Scheme, which progressed extremely well, aided by good weather in June and the early part of July. We also carried out some preliminary work for the SOC/BTO European Breeding Atlas, which starts in earnest next year. Assistant Simon Aspinall undertook a detailed census of the Fair Isle Wren population. Visiting ornithological workers included Dr Peter Evans, continuing his long-term Starling genetics programme, and Adrian del-Nevo, in the final fieldwork phase of his doctoral investigation into Fair Isle Guillemot breeding biology and feeding ecology. Adrian, in association with colleagues from the University of Sheffield, also carried out research into Fair Isle Field and House Mice. Indeed, increasing interest is being shown in aspects of Fair Isle's ecology beyond the sphere of birds alone. The marine biology survey has already been mentioned. In addition, Edward Milner undertook extensive investigations of the spider and beetle fauna during his stay in September; Ian Perry of the University of Bristol researched plant fossils in the Middle Devonian period at Buness and Roskilie; Lynne Farrell, rare plant specialist with the NCC's Chief Scientist Directorate, surveyed Fair Isle flora and set up a sample plot for the Botanical Society of the British Isles' Botanical Monitoring Scheme; and I initiated a study of the moths of Fair Isle. Accounts of a selection of these studies appear in this report, as does a milestone in Fair Isle botanical studies, the first ever published list of the bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) of the isle.

The variety of work now being undertaken on the isle, and the wide range of interests drawing visitors to Fair Isle, is a very invigorating sign. However, I should not wish it to be lost from sight that we still have an important role to play as a bird observatory and this entails not just the study of birds or the finding of rarities but also making birds, and particularly the enjoyment of birds, accessible to all. The following quotation, taken from the daily log entry of 11th September 1987, sums it up better than I can: "The past three weeks have been splendid for one who has never been to Fair Isle before. The list of rarities has been impressive (see 24th August-1st September). Throughout, the sub-rarities have been a constant interest (see 24th August-11th September). The facilities of the Obs. are the best of any Obs. The social scene has been excellent. Let any reader of this page, who may be distraught at unfavourable weather and a sparsity of real rarities, please remember – there is more to birding than seeing rare birds." I, personally, would like to think that Fair Isle always offers that little bit more.

Finally, I must pay tribute to all the staff who, in such a busy year, ensured that the Observatory ran smoothly – even in July, when illness to staff members



called for great flexibility, including Warden and Assistants making breakfast on several occasions! The staff were Isla Sutherland (Cook), Vikki Walker (Assistant Cook), John Allan and Simon Aspinall (Assistant Wardens). Kevin Osborn was Seabird Monitoring Officer during the summer, while Peter Clabburn stood in on a voluntary basis until Kevin arrived. Cathy Stout and Mairi Thomson from the island worked part-time during our busiest times, and Rosie Davidson and Caroline Vawdrey were employed as cover for short periods. We extend our thanks to them all. Incidentally, I believe that Mairi Thomson is our first ever second-generation staff member. Her mother (then Triona Pennie) was FIBO Cook in 1967-68. I am most grateful, too, to Malcolm Adamson, Rob Cook, Kenneth Stout, Stewart Thomson Snr and Neil Thomson, who eased us through various mechanical difficulties; and I must make special mention of Neil Thomson who, after several years of caretaking the building and generators with able and conscientious zeal, has relinquished the task in favour of Kenneth Stout.

*Nick Riddiford*

## End of an Era

All Friends of Fair Isle will be deeply saddened to learn of the death of William Eunson of Leogh on 23rd December 1987, just two days short of his 87th birthday.

Leogh Willie's warm and easy way with people, his fund of stories – drawn from a remarkable memory – enthralling visitors with tales of the isle stretching back to the earliest days of this century, and his twinkling sense of humour, made him a real favourite amongst all who stayed at the observatory. One of the great characters of Fair Isle, he will be sorely missed. It is truly the end of an era.

*Nick Riddiford*



*Leogh Willie is at the left front of this group taken at the opening of the Bird Observatory in August 1948. Fieldy, George Waterston and Ken Williamson, the first Warden, are on the right. Photo: G. Waterston Collection*

## The NTS Scene

In a year of notable events for the Trust, Fair Isle shared in the honours by celebrating 25 years of volunteer workcamps visiting the island. In August a group of invited guests and Trust staff travelled to the isle to take part in the celebrations. To mark the event Mr Alec Warwick, who initiated the camps back in 1962, officially re-opened the Puffin hostel. Accompanying Alec were John and Louise Melbourne, who gave an account of life in the early days of workcamps, from a participant's point of view, and what they tried to achieve. All the islanders, guests and visitors then took part in a Sports Day and, in the evening, all enjoyed the usual rousing Fair Isle dance.

After some 25 years of involvement with the workcamps, Stewart and Annie Thomson have decided to take a backseat from their heavy commitment to this work. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to them by the Trust, Fair Isle and the volunteers, and we wish them well. Stewart will remain Ground Officer to the Trust for a few more years, until he retires.

With the newly refurbished Puffin now available, we have taken the opportunity to reorganise the camps, and it is hoped that, starting in 1988, each camp visiting the island will be assigned to a household, who will be responsible for welcoming that camp, looking after the campers' social welfare, ensuring that they have all that is needed during their stay, and, most importantly, allocating the work that the camp has been allotted, whether it be crofting work or Trust work. It is hoped to make the Puffin available to groups other than workcamps: any bookings for this (up to 10 persons) should be made direct to the National Trust for Scotland. Abertarff House, Church Street, Inverness IV1 1EU, telephone 0463 232034. Preference will be given to young people, and organisations, wishing to use the Puffin as a base camp.

After undergoing major alterations and improvements, Stackhoul Stores is now open again for business. Within the building, the display and storage space has been enlarged, and it is hoped that a much wider range of consumable goods and souvenir gifts will be stocked. Also, public toilets are now available, during daylight hours, to both shop patrons and visitors to the island. We wish John and Ella Henderson much success in the shop in the years to come.

As Fair Isle and the Trust start to look to the future of the island, a first step is being taken with the preparation of a management plan. This will lay down the framework for management of the island over the next five years, and will, it is hoped, give the statutory authorities and other grant giving bodies a better understanding of the way Fair Isle is managed, and what is intended for its future. The plan covers all aspects of life on the isle, from housing and employment to infrastructure projects and tourism.

One aspect of Fair Isle life which is crucial to the island's well-being is the maintenance of communications with the mainland. The success of the recently introduced connection between Orkney and Shetland by Loganair must have given the authorities confidence in the future of this operation. However, due to a tightening of the Civil Aviation Authority's regulations for the management of our airstrip, we have been forced to seek a replacement for our existing fire engine as soon as is practically possible. This, along with the tightening of safety regulations, is involving us in much increased running costs, and it is hoped that Shetland Islands Council will continue to support the running of this airstrip with their customary generous grant aid.

The Trust would like to extend a warm welcome to Grizel and Duncan MacGregor, who replace Sheila Ord as teacher and missionary on the island, and to their children, Andrew and Robert. We hope their stay is a long and happy one. We also welcome back Ian Best, who has successfully completed

his apprenticeship in boat building at a Norwegian yard. We hope he will be able to settle down to the business of boat building on Fair Isle, as soon as circumstances allow him to do so.

In looking forward to 1988, the Trust hopes to restore the Auld Haa, which has lain derelict for many years. The intention is that the house should be let to a family whose main occupation would not be dependent upon agriculture, but might take the form of a handcraft or full board accommodation.

Another project, which is essential to the security of sea transport to Fair Isle, is the construction of a breakwater at the North Haven. Not only would this provide a secure harbour for the *Good Shepherd IV* and safe anchoring facilities for visiting yachtsmen, it would also provide some spin off employment. As it is both a condition of the award of the European Diploma and the largest single project ever undertaken on Fair Isle, the breakwater is a very exciting prospect indeed, but one which will require a great deal of commitment on the part of many people. We look forward to this with the usual enthusiasm.

*Alexander M Bennett*



*The proposed breakwater would protect both the **Good Shepherd** and the pier when northerly gales sweep high seas into the Haven. Photo: G. Waterston Collection*

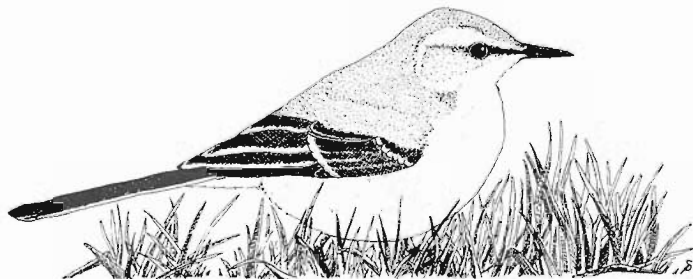
## Ornithology

It was another fascinating year, a year of variety, large movements in spring and autumn, a seemingly unending procession of rarities, and a series of astounding additions to the Fair Isle list. 205 species were recorded and they included five new to the isle. Radde's Warbler was a long predicted first for Fair Isle and Eye-browed Thrush was perhaps not too unexpected. A crystal ball would have been needed for the others: the Savannah Sparrow was only the second West Palearctic record and was unique in being the first in autumn and in Scotland; the Lesser Kestrel was the first in Scotland this century; qualifying as equal in rarity value was the year's strangest migrant — Magpie, a species never before recorded in Shetland.

The spring was dominated by some heavy movements of Robins and Dunnocks. Red Scarlet Rosefinches were recorded on two occasions, there were quite a number of Northern Bullfinches and Fair Isle 'rarities' included 2 Great Tits and a flock of Canada Geese. Copper Geo became a place of pilgrimage during the summer, with the white Puffin again in residence.

Despite unseasonal gales in July, most of the seabirds did well, with Gannet and Arctic Tern maintaining their population growth. The Seabird Monitoring Scheme, introduced in 1986, went well too. Building on our experience of the inaugural year we were able to achieve goals in a number of areas, filling in some gaps from last year. We were fortunate to have the expert assistance of Roger Broad whose specialist knowledge of Tystie sites allowed us to obtain more of the information we required for this difficult species.

A phenomenal autumn followed. There were some good warbler movements in August, exceptional Lapland Bunting arrivals in September and some heavy falls of thrushes and Robins in October, including excellent numbers of Ring Ouzels. Judged numerically from the quantity of rarity descriptions submitted to *British Birds Rarities Committee* this was the best autumn on record for unusual species. Between late August and early November hardly a day went by, it seemed, without some new rarity being found. The major highlights included 4 Two-barred Crossbills, Paddyfield Warbler and Blyth's Reed Warbler in the same week, 2 Dusky Warblers, 3 Pine Buntings, a multiple arrival of Pallas's Warblers and the amazing sight of a Treecreeper in North Reeva. The supporting cast included many of our 'regulars', not least incredible series of at least 8 Olive-backed Pipits, 8 Siberian Stonechats, 3 Lanceolated Warblers and 3 or 4 Great Snipes. The list is too long for other than a selection of 1987 highlights to be presented but mention can be made of Crane, American Golden Plover, Caspian Tern, Red-rumped Swallow, 2 Tawny Pipits, Red-throated Pipit, Citrine Wagtail, 2 Greenish Warblers, 10 Goldfinches, 2 Arctic Redpolls, Hawfinch, 5 Rustic, 10 Little and 5 Yellow-breasted Buntings. Truly a year to remember.



# Monthly Highlights

## January

Stewart Thomson, Dave Bird and Jimmy Wilson kept a watchful eye on the island's bird populations at the start of the year. Wintering Eider numbered about 700 and a Black Redstart on 8th was also probably wintering. Several days between 10th and 18th had snow or experienced freezing conditions, but for the following week a westerly airstream and milder weather prevailed. The last week of the month had strong cold north-easterly winds. Birds were few but a Shelduck on 12th, 100 Blackbirds on 15th, Waxwing at Shirva on 16th and 150 Snow Buntings on 20th were noteworthy. Guillemots were seen ashore on 22nd.

## February

The weather remained relatively mild all month and ornithologically speaking not much happened. Kittiwakes and Gannets were seen ashore and one or two returning migrants were recorded, e.g. Merlin, Oystercatchers and Black-headed Gulls.

## March

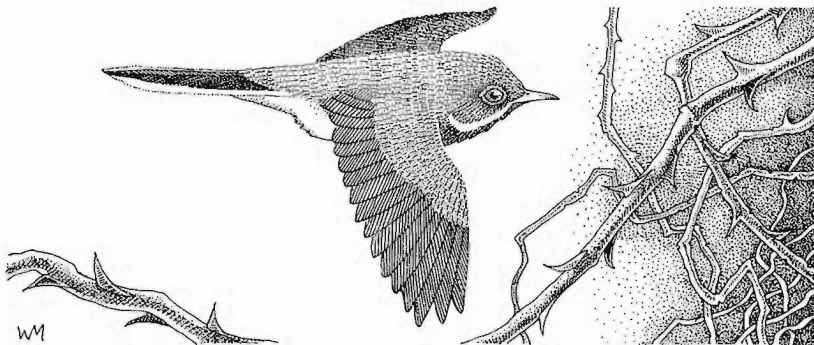
Early March was memorable for rather severe gales and colder weather generally. Winds varied between northerly and south-easterly. A light-bellied Brent Goose resided at South Light for a number of days. On 9th a Long-eared Owl evaded capture by our two newly arrived assistant wardens. Some very variable weather, anything from strong northerlies with snow to virtual calm, allowed a few migrants to progress northward. Over a hundred Lapwings, 300 Skylarks, a Black Redstart and the first Meadow Pipit of the year arrived on 11th. These were followed by Lapland Bunting, Robin and Woodpigeon on 14th. Snow and hail for the next four days grounded a Whooper Swan, Bar-tailed Godwit, Glaucous Gull and Snow Buntings. On 20th Ravens, most probably from Orkney, arrived but were not allowed to linger by the resident pairs which had begun nesting. Calmer conditions produced Grey Wagtail, Lapland Bunting and another Black Redstart on 23rd when the first Puffins were sighted off Landberg and in North Haven (a very early first arrival). South-easterly and easterly gales came on 25th and, predictably, Dunnock and Mistle Thrush appeared. The gales continued for three days and Rook, 4 Reed Buntings, 4 Mistle Thrushes and 2 Woodpigeons were found on 26th when Robins, Dunnocks, and Meadow Pipits began to arrive in numbers. Next day Chiffchaff, 40 Fieldfares, 3 Chaffinches and 4 White Wagtails were new. The weather changed to dismal north-westerlies to the month end but did not prevent Wheatear, Greenfinch and Yellowhammer bringing a glimmer of spring and a splash of colour on 28th. The first Bonxie was on the hill on 29th.

## April

The first half of April benefited from winds largely from the easterly quarter which produced exceptional falls of Dunnocks and Robins but no real rarities. The first large fall was on 4th when 10 Canada Geese (5th Fair Isle record), 2 Great Tits (first for 5 years), 22 Mistle Thrushes (a record count), 150 Robins, 100 Dunnocks, 75 Chaffinches, 28 Goldcrests and 5 Chiffchaffs arrived. The first Bullfinches of what was to be a good spring passage appeared on 5th along with a Hawfinch, 200 Dunnocks (the second best count ever) and 250 Robins. A Belgian ringed Dunnock and the second earliest ever Common Sandpiper arrived on 6th.

Birds gradually departed from 6th to 13th when the year's first Arctic Skuas arrived on the hill. The wind turned SW on 14th and remained so until 17th when southerly winds brought the earliest ever Cuckoo by nine days. Continuing southerlies until 20th produced the earliest ever House Martin and Sedge Warbler, accompanied by a Great Grey Shrike and the year's first Swallow.

The first rarity of the year came in the unexpected form of a Magpie, the first record for Fair Isle and rarer here than a Red-flanked Bluetail! Easterlies on 25th and 26th brought Wryneck, Whinchat and Grasshopper Warbler and the month rounded off on 28th when SE winds produced a male Stonechat, Blue-headed Wagtail, the earliest ever Arctic Tern, a Hen Harrier and a fine male Subalpine Warbler.



## May

May began with rather variable weather but winds were largely westerly until 16th. A NE airstream with rain on 2nd brought a Tawny Pipit and two Gadwall. These were followed by a steady trickle of arrivals through the first half of the month: Shorelark on 3rd, Spotted Crake on 4th, earliest ever Little Stint on 5th, 2 Brent Geese on 10th and Pomarine Skua on 16th.

Winds were mostly northerly then until 28th. An Osprey flew up the Isle on 18th and 22nd saw Whooper Swan, Rustic Bunting and Barnacle Goose arrive. Bluethroats were first present from 23rd when the year's first Scarlet Rosefinch appeared. A change to SE winds on 25th brought a good fall of migrants including Cuckoo, 4 Scarlet Rosefinches (one of which was a superb scarlet male), 11 Bluethroats, Temminck's Stint, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Red-backed Shrike and Swift. The passage continued on 26th when Wryneck, 2 Subalpine Warblers, 12 Bluethroats and an unidentified nightingale were also seen.

The end of the month was dominated by SE winds which produced an excellent finale to May. A Caspian Tern (2nd Fair Isle record) was seen by one lucky observer on the morning trap round on 29th. The day continued in similar vein, with Short-toed Lark, a male Subalpine Warbler, Oortolan Bunting and 6 Bluethroats found. There were 2 Oortolans present on 30th, while on 31st Reed Warbler, Wryneck, Bluethroat and another Scarlet Rosefinch ended the month in style.

## June

The fine weather at the end of May continued into June and although our seabird work took up a large amount of time we were able to make our rounds of the

crofting area most days. Small migrants including some rare ones were seen almost to the end of June, many arriving in typical drift conditions of light easterlies and fine weather with fog banks here and there.

50 Swallows and 30 House Martins arrived on 1st along with 2 Sandwich Terns, 9 Spotted Flycatchers, 5 Bluethroats, 2 Scarlet Rosefinches, Red-backed Shrike, Blue-headed Wagtail and 14 Willow Warblers. There was an intriguing report on 2nd by Jimmy Stout of Midway of a large sandy and unmarked lark on the Houll, but unfortunately we were unable to relocate it. A superb and very tame Lapland Bunting remained alongside the airstrip for two days and on 4th a male Rustic Bunting was trapped in the Vaadal just prior to Stewart Thomson of Quoy calling us out to see a Crane that had just come in over Meoness. The white Puffin reappeared at Copper Geo, confirmed as present by the original 1986 finders. Wood Warbler and Tufted Duck were both new for the year on 5th and a Green-shank called out of the fog on 7th. Three Red-backed Shrikes, another Rustic Bunting, Cuckoo and Black Redstart all occurred on 8th, when a Kittiwake bearing an Icelandic ring was found dead on Vaasetter. NW winds until 19th and the lateness of the spring conspired against further major arrivals, but Scarlet Rosefinches were a feature of this period, including an adult male at Schoolton where there was also a red one last year. A Swedish ringed Red-backed Shrike was trapped on 16th.

On 23rd all seabird work was suspended when a visitor found a superb male Lesser Kestrel near the Kirk. Although it remained only a few hours it entertained at distances down to 10 m. Despite a search of the rest of the island the only other migrant of note was a male Red-backed Shrike although we all unfortunately missed the Corncrake which joined the chickens at Upper Shirva. Following two more days without any notable changes a Greenish Warbler appeared at Leogh and a Marsh Warbler at Barkland. These effectively brought the spring to an official close, any later bird being more appropriately called an 'out-of-season' migrant. On the last day of the month 24 Swallows, 6 House Martins and a Reed Warbler were just this.

## July

July was dominated by seabird work, with our participation in the NCC monitoring scheme taking precedence over migration census work on all but inclement days.

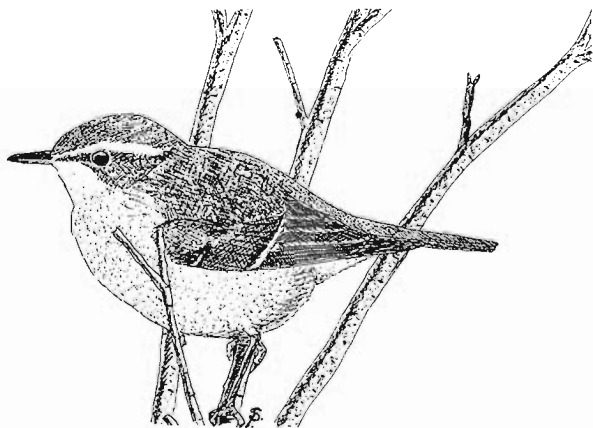
The early part of the month was notable for several out-of-season migrants including Brambling on 3rd, Woodcock on 7th and Bluethroat on 8th. Other unexpected July migrants were Red-backed Shrikes on 3rd, 4th and 8th, Turtle Dove on 3rd and the year's only Hobby on 5th, arriving on SW winds. The Arctic Tern colony on Buness continued its meteoric increase, being censused at an amazing 204 pairs. A change of wind direction to easterlies from 13th-18th, attaining gale force on 16th, brought a female Scarlet Rosefinch and an unseasonal Chiffchaff bearing a Helgoland (Germany) ring. Also arriving with the east winds were 20 Black-headed Gulls, one colour-dyed individual probably coming from Denmark, and the first returning waders of the autumn in the guise of Purple, Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers. Winds were from the north-west quarter for the rest of the month, but by then the period of easterly gales had caused the largest mortality of Kittiwakes for many years, with many hundred dead or dying in the sea. Tysties, too, were not spared, young being drowned in all exposed nests on the east side of the isle.

The rest of the month was largely uneventful, though there was a steady trickle of waders, a surprise Fieldfare on 20th, and a Norwegian ringed Black-headed Gull found.

## August

The beginning of the month was a typically interim period with most of the auks and Kittiwakes having fledged and departed and the migration yet to start in earnest. North-west winds for the first week produced a few waders and on 7th Peregrine, the first Grey Plover of the year and Long-tailed Skua were seen. The skua flew straight over Eas Breckes without lingering. The first Greenshank of the autumn and a Common Scoter were new next day. The first Gannets fledged on 9th from our ever expanding gannetry. Three Dotterel on Ward Hill on 11th constituted the earliest ever autumn record. Waders continued to appear, with 2 Little Stints, Sanderling, 6 Black-tailed Godwits and 4 Ruff mid month. In addition there was the year's first Icterine Warbler on 14th. Light and variable winds with some fog persisted for a few days and following a large influx of Two-barred Crossbills to Shetland, Fair Isle had its share in the form of three juveniles together at Restensgeo on 15th with 2 remaining next day. A juvenile Stonechat on 19th was a total surprise, and with SE winds overnight Icterine and Barred Warblers arrived. There was a good fall during easterlies on 20th involving 8 Garden, 3 Wood and 3 Barred Warblers, 3 Pied Flycatchers, 2 Crossbills, Reed Warbler, Whinchat, Cuckoo and Goldcrest as well as 2 Ruff, Green Sandpiper and 30 Ringed Plovers. Pipits and larks were the sole arrivals during a northerly gale next day.

From 24th a whole series of rare sightings kept visitors and staff alike rushing round the island. Starting with a Greenish Warbler trapped on 24th (when 2 Wood Sandpipers, Spotted Redshank, 2 Grey Plovers and 70 Ringed PLOvers were new) events became more and more exciting. The 25th produced an Icterine, 4 Barred, 2 Reed, 20 Garden and 60 Willow Warblers, 5 Pied Flycatchers and 40 *alba* Wagtails. The Greenish Warbler was still here and 2 very early Greylag Geese put in an appearance. All this was the result of a north-easterly with fog, which continued overnight. Next day the island was again very productive: an unproductive search for an Arctic Warbler seen at Stoneybrake led to first Quail, then Great Snipe being found. The Arctic Warbler and Great Snipe were seen briefly on 27th and a male Yellow-breasted Bunting was new. This purple patch continued on 28th with a female Two-barred Crossbill at Barkland, Red-throated Pipit on the hill, Dotterel, the same Yellow-breasted Bunting, 2 Icterine, 2 Barred and 25 Garden Warblers, and a Scarlet Rosefinch the highlights of an absorbing day. 600 Meadow Pipits were also freshly arrived. An eastern '*simillima*' type Yellow





Wagtail was found on 29th and was the last of the 'goodies' of the month. Seawatches turned up 18 Sooty and 5 Manx Shearwaters on 30th. Red-backed Shrike, Shoveler and Cormorant on 31st ended a remarkable month.

## September

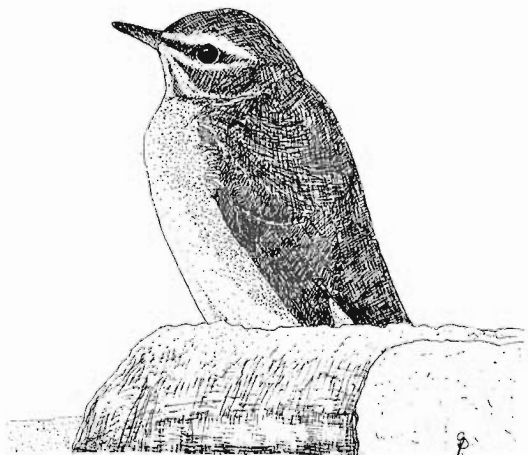
From start to finish, September was a month to remember. A Citrine Wagtail wandered far and wide before settling below Shirva on 1st and a Red-backed Shrike and 2 Scarlet Rosefinches were seen. A new Yellow-breasted Bunting proved elusive on 2nd. An early Brambling appeared. Winds were south-easterly on 3rd & 5th and concomitant arrivals were the first Wryneck of the autumn and the first Pochard for two years on 4th and Barred and Icterine Warbler plus another Scarlet Rosefinch on 5th. Highlights of 6th were Ring Ouzel, Barred, Grasshopper and 2 Icterine Warblers, the only Curlew Sandpiper of the year and the first Lapland Buntings of the autumn. Fresh westerlies set in for the next few days but still the small migrants arrived. These included an Ortolan, 50 Greater Wheatears and 300 Meadow Pipits on 7th, forerunners of an impressive Lapland Bunting landfall which reached 70 on 11th. A strong south-easterly on 12th resulted in an instant arrival including the year's second Arctic Warbler, 2 Wrynecks and 4 Reed Warblers. Three Sparrowhawks, Red-backed Shrike and Wood Warbler followed on 13th. Continuing easterlies brought Great Snipe and the autumn's third Yellow-breasted Bunting on 15th, when at least 35 Lapland Buntings and the Ortolan remained. 18 Snow Buntings were in. The Yellow-breasted Bunting arrived late in the evening but by next day had been joined by a second bird at Shirva. The Great Snipe stayed to 17th, giving splendid views. Also on the isle were 2 Scarlet Rosefinches and a Barred Warbler.

Eventually the wind went south-west. Nevertheless, a Lanceolated Warbler was found and trapped at Da Water. It was in such good condition that it had either not come very far or been on the isle for a day or two already. Surprisingly, another turned up next day — this one clearly exhausted. Marsh, Icterine, 3 Barred, 2 Reed and 18 Willow Warblers, 4 Lesser Whitethroats, 3 Scarlet Rosefinches, 150 Wheatears, 250 Skylarks and the first Chaffinch and Robin of the autumn made the 20th one of the best days for variety; yet it was surpassed next day by 2 Little Buntings, 4 Wrynecks, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Richard's Pipit, 20 Willow Warblers, 12 Redstarts, 8 Pied Flycatchers, and the autumn's first Redwings, Woodpigeons, Reed Buntings and Dunnocks. Seemingly unfavourable winds were not enough to prevent a Paddyfield Warbler adopting the oat stubble at Upper Stoneybrake on 22nd or a Rustic Bunting from looking distinctly out of place at North Light on 23rd. A far more plausible rare migrant to arrive on the north-west airstream was a large Arctic Redpoll on Mopul on 25th. The year's third Lanceolated Warbler arrived in the Plantation on 26th where it was watched down to a few inches and a Yellow-browed Warbler took refuge in the Skerryholm tatties during the fresh north-westerly which predictably brought the first Whooper Swans (6) of the autumn. A skulking *Acrocephalus* warbler at Field generated a great deal of interest on 27th, rightly so because when it was eventually mist-netted it proved to be a Blyth's Reed Warbler, the first on Fair Isle since 1928. A new Little Bunting was also found. To continue the almost daily run of new rarities there was an adult American Golden Plover on Meoness on 28th, and on 29th what amounted to a fall of 4 Siberian Stonechats (in a single flock at one point!). 445 Redwings, 8 Jack Snipe, 2 Richard's Pipits and 2 Merlins were also on the island. A southerly airstream produced the rarest bird of the month on 30th — a Savannah Sparrow from North America seen grovelling at the edge of neaps at Shirva. It constituted the second British and European record of the species, and the first in Scotland. Two Siberian Stonechats, 4 Yellow-browed Warblers, 47 Barnacle Geese and 60 Greylags were also in residence.

## October

October continued where September left off, principally due to east and south-east winds although it did not seem to matter what the weather served up — rare birds arrived and interesting movements occurred regardless.

Five new Richard's Pipits and a Pochard were found on 1st and the Savannah Sparrow was showing well. On the morning of 2nd the first of a whole series of Olive-backed Pipits was found (at the Haa), a Rustic Bunting was at Field and 3 Little Buntings were seen. A Radde's Warbler at Setter just after lunch was new for the island. Two eastern *flava* Wagtails, 5 Yellow-browed Warblers and a Red-breasted Flycatcher were found and the Arctic Redpoll was last seen. There was a quieter period from 3rd-6th, but 4 Little Buntings, a Siberian Stonechat, Barred Warbler and Corncrake were present and the first Short-eared Owls of the autumn arrived. The winds became NW — unpromising, or so we thought. A Scarlet Rosefinch, Mistle Thrush and 5 Whooper Swans were set to be the best birds of 7th, until on the day's final trap round an Eye-browed Thrush was found in the Gully and promptly trapped there. It was another new bird for Fair Isle.



450 Greylags, Long-tailed Duck, Common Scoter, 40 Barnacle Geese, Water Rail and 5 Little Auks appeared over the next few days. Despite an airstream apparently from Greenland, the 11th was another day to remember as a very well marked male Pine Bunting appeared and was seen by all. New birds continued to arrive with another Little Bunting and the second Arctic Redpoll of the autumn on 12th. The 13th was a 'rest day', although a Little Gull was seen on the crossing and another Corncrake broke cover. Overnight easterlies and rain on 14th accompanied the first large scale fall of the autumn: estimates were 8000 Redwings, 2500 Song Thrushes, 950 Fieldfares, a record 125 Ring Ouzels, 250 Blackcaps, 100 Robins, 65 Chaffinches and 20 Bramblings. Remarkably a second Olive-backed Pipit joined the long staying bird at the Haa. Other exciting birds were the first Great Grey Shrike of the autumn, and a Dusky Warbler. The warbler, trapped in Schoolton ditch, was the fourth Fair Isle record. The island was covered in birds and still boasted the Eye-browed Thrush and the Pine Bunting. Many of the thrushes were still present on 15th when the Olive-backed Pipit count had grown to an incredible five! This was the last day the Eye-browed Thrush was seen, during which time it had increased its body weight by no less than 40%. The first

Long-eared Owl of the autumn was seen next day as were 7 Short-eared Owls. A Great Snipe was found at Da Water by islanders on 17th but eluded the bird-watchers until 19th when, ironically, it was relocated just after most of our guests had left. Another Great Grey Shrike and a Little Auk were also noted, but the day's rarest bird was probably Shore Lark — once an annual passage migrant it has become extremely irregular in recent years. A Pallas's Warbler put in an all too brief appearance with SE gales on 20th and 5 Olive-backed Pipits could still be counted in addition to a new Little Bunting, 25 Redstarts, 5 Black Redstarts, 15 Reed Buntings, 5000 Redwings, 1500 Fieldfares, 150 Robins, 120 Chaffinches, 75 Blackcaps, 5 Reed Warblers and 2 Jackdaws — the second big fall of the month. It was the last day of the Pine Bunting. Overnight rain resulted in Fieldfare increasing to 5000 and about 1000 Song Thrushes being grounded. A Goldeneye was the first since the spring. Once again thrushes abounded on 22nd, when estimates of 6000 Fieldfares and 8000 Redwings were made. There was an influx of 170 Common Gulls and 45 Black-headed Gulls. A female Pine Bunting was found late in the day at Utra Brecks. It was not relocated next day but a Slavonian Grebe was new for the year and a Moorhen the first of the autumn. A Red-rumped Swallow was at Wirvie for a short time on 24th. Not much was seen on 26th-27th, two wet and windy days, but on 28th a new Olive-backed Pipit was at Furse. A return to a SSE airstream overnight resulted in an exciting 29th: those present included 2 Siberian Stonechats, a new Little Bunting, 4 Black Redstarts, Bluethroat, a very late Tawny Pipit, 2 Goldfinches, Greenfinch, Linnet, Rook, Yellow-browed Warbler, 1300 Fieldfares and 65 Snow Buntings. Topping the bill, however, was a female Pine Bunting — the *third* of the autumn! A Pallas's Warbler trapped in the Gully on 30th was the first of three that day (unringed individuals being seen at Busta and the summit of Ward Hill). Yet another Olive-backed Pipit was found on Ulieshield, a modest 40 Woodcock were on the hill and 800 Blackbirds, 650 Song Thrushes and 65 Blackcaps were freshly arrived. Best of all, Fair Isle's fifth ever Treecreeper was found in the morning, rock-creeping on the cliffs of North Reeva.



*Pallas's Warbler, one of three on 30th October. Photo: Liz Riddiford*

The month closed with another Little Bunting, the Tawny Pipit still present, and a Glaucous Gull as a reminder of coming winter.

Quite a month! A month that will be remembered for a constant succession of rare birds — especially the Eye-browed Thrush, the Pine Bunting influx, and the even more amazing multiple arrivals of Olive-backed Pipits.

### November-December

The autumn of rarities was not quite finished. The third Pine Bunting remained until at least 13th at Shirva, the Tawny Pipit stayed to 7th, the Great Snipe was relocated on 4th and the month started with the Furse Olive-backed Pipit, Little Bunting and Siberian Stonechat still present. Rarity value is relative, and from a Fair Isle viewpoint the flock of 8 Goldfinches, an unprecedented number, must rate as the most unexpected event of the month. Two Yellowhammers on 1st were a rarer occurrence than Pine Bunting this autumn. On 3rd 2 late Ring Ouzels and a Garden Warbler were seen. A Richard's Pipit was new on 4th. There were 70 Woodcock on the hill on 5th and the Great Snipe was still present. The second Dusky Warbler of the autumn on 6th finally settled at Midway. That day there were 2 Richard's Pipits, an extremely brown looking Garden Warbler, and an influx of 30 Blackcaps, 7 Chiffchaffs and 200 Snow Buntings. Two late Ringed Plovers were seen and the first Little Grebe of the year was on Golden Water. Snow Buntings increased to 320 on 7th. On 8th there was an arrival of 500 Fieldfares and 3 Richard's Pipits were present. A Black Redstart, 2 Greenfinches, 3 Tufted Ducks, 2 Short-eared Owls, and a Jack Snipe were new on 9th and 100 Woodcock were on the hill. Sighting of the day was a pod of at least 20 Pilot Whales off the west side. There was a Lapland Bunting on 11th. It was still present on 12th when 2 Common Scoter were new. On 13th an oiled Puffin was picked up dying on the beach. From mid November there were few arrivals, but good numbers of Snow Buntings remained into December, occasional small flocks of Greylag Geese and Whooper Swans were seen and raptors were represented by Peregrine, Merlin and Sparrowhawks.



# 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*. Spring singles on 4th & 22nd May and on five dates in June. One on 11th July. 3 were seen on the Good Shepherd Crossing of 28th April. In autumn there were 1-2 on eleven dates, 19th August-17th October, 4 on 28th August and 3 on 22nd October.

**Great Northern Diver** *Gavia immer*. One on 17th May, 11th June & 8th July. One on Crossing of 23rd June. Singles in October on 2nd, 7th, 9th, 19th & 29th.

**Diver Species** *Gavia*. Unidentified divers were one on 26th September and 2 on 7th October.

**Little Grebe** *Tachybaptus ruficollis*. One on 6th November was the only record.

**Slavonian Grebe** *Podiceps auritus*. One on 23rd October was the only record.

**Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*. Present all year. Breeding productivity of monitored sites was 0.53 chicks per nest. 'Blue' Fulmars were seen regularly during the year, maximum 5 on 9th October.

**Sooty Shearwater** *Puffinus griseus*. 1-6 seen on six crossings, 1st August-15th September. From land, seen on ten dates 27th August-18th September, maxima 18 on 30th & 8 on 31st August.

**Manx Shearwater** *Puffinus puffinus*. One flew east on 20th May. 8 flew north on 24th July and 4 next day. 2 were seen on the crossing of 1st August and one on 20th. From land, there were 2 on 30th August, one on 13th September and 6th October, and 3 on 9th October.

**Storm Petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*. First seen on Crossing of 30th May. Noted ashore at night from 18th June to 11th September. Late singles were seen offshore on 18th & 26th October.

**Gannet** *Sula bassana*. Ashore from at least mid February. The breeding population increased to a new high. Eight sites were occupied and the nest count was 304. Breeding productivity of monitored nests was 0.48 chicks per nest. The highest count of birds ashore was 2000 on 12th June. Fledging occurred from 9th August, but some did not fledge until October.

**Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. A minute spring passage: 2 on 21st March, 1-3 on six scattered dates 17th April-1st June and 17 on the Crossing of 2nd June. 1-2 were noted on three dates, 27th June-11th July. Singles on 2nd-3rd August preceded intermittent migration 22nd August-9th October when recorded on 19 dates, maxima 25 on 10th & 35 on 11th September. 13 were seen on 1st November.

**Shag** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present all year. Breeding productivity at monitored sites was 1.2 chicks per nest.

**Grey Heron** *Ardea cinerea*. Singles recorded on four dates on March, six dates in April, two dates in May and two dates in June. 1-3 daily, 18th-26th July and most days, 2nd August-23rd October with 6 on 23rd August. 1 on 11th November.

**Whooper Swan** *Cygnus cygnus*. 2 on 14th & 3 on 16th January. Adult on 18th March. A late bird on 22nd May. In autumn recorded on ten widely scattered dates 25th September-25th November, maximum 10 on 9th October.

**Pink-footed Goose** *Anser brachyrhynchus*. A very poor autumn passage: recorded on six dates 18th September-17th October, maximum 45 on the first date.

**Greylag Goose** *Anser anser*. 4 on 11th January. One on 7th April, 1-5 daily 17th April-8th May with 8 on 24th April. 2 early autumn birds on 25th August-4th September preceded main autumn passage 26th September-17th November. Peak movements were 8th-11th October when 450, 300, 150 & 100 counted.

**Grey Goose Species** *Anser*. Unidentified geese comprised 20 on 12th, 2 on 17th & 13 on 18th April and up to 40 on five dates 24th September-20th October.

**Canada Goose** *Branta canadensis*. A flock of ten which stayed from 4th-10th April was a record count for the isle. A single stayed from 8th-29th May at Field. Only the fifth & sixth Fair Isle records.

**Barnacle Goose** *Branta leucopsis*. One on 22nd-23rd May was the only spring record. Autumn passage spanned 30th September-30th October, particularly up to 8th October when 20+ seen most days and 47 on 30th September.

**Brent Goose** *Branta bernicla*. A pale bellied bird was present 4th-12th March and 2 were present 10th-12th May.

**Shelduck** *Tadorna tadorna*. A drake on 12th January was joined by another on 22nd January, both remaining until 29th April. A third was present on 9th-15th April. One on 15th May and 2 on 26th June were the only other records.

**Wigeon** *Anas penelope*. Scarce in spring: singles on four March dates from 2nd, 1-2 on two dates in April and 1-3 on four dates in May to 12th. Small numbers recorded regularly 16th August-12th November, with 40 on 16th and 33 on 22nd October.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera*. A pair from 2nd-14th May was the only record.

**Teal** *Anas crecca*. One on 3rd & 2 on 18th March preceded main passage, 11th April-14th May when up to 8 noted most days. 1-3 late migrants on eight dates, 23rd May-13th June. One on 25th July. 3 on 9th August preceded virtually daily occurrence 21st August-11th November, maximum 25 on 26th August.

**Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*. 8 appeared on 9th January, 3 staying to 12th. 2 on 2nd & 15th March preceded almost daily passage of 1-5 from 31st March to 21st May. 1-3 regularly 31st May-19th June. 1-4 on three dates in July from 14th. Noted most days 5th August-9th November, maximum 9 on last date.

**Pintail** *Anas acuta*. A male on 30th April was the only spring record and a female on 6th October the only one in autumn.

**Shoveler** *Anas clypeata*. A pair on 6th and on 17th-18th May were the only records.

**Pochard** *Aythya ferina*. Presumably the same female on 4th, 7th and 10th September, and a male on 1st October were the only records.

**Tufted Duck** *Aythya fuligula*. There was a male on 5th-6th June and on 1st-4th September, a female on 24th-25th September, an influx of 11 on 10th October, 3 next day and 3 on 9th November.

**Eider** *Somateria mollissima*. Present all year. Maxima were 800 on 12th February and 950 on 6th November.

**Long-tailed Duck** *Clangula hyemalis*. There were 2 on 3rd & one on 7th January. In spring there was one on 2nd March, 1-5 regularly 19th March-6th April, 2 on four

dates between 24th April & 13th May, and a pair on 3rd June. Virtually daily in autumn from 8th October, maxima 28 on 22nd and 19 on 25th October.

**Common Scoter** *Melanitta nigra*. A female was seen on 7th January, a male on 10th March, and a pair on 23rd April. A male was present 8th-15th August, 5 on 24th August, 13 on 8th October with 12 next day and 2 on 12th November.

**Goldeneye** *Bucephala clangula*. One wintered until at least early March. A small passage 9th March-9th April peaked at 4 on 27th March. Scarce in autumn: 1-2 were seen on eight dates 21st October-12th November.

**Red-breasted Merganser** *Mergus serrator*. One on 31st January. 1-2 between 26th March and 3rd April and 1-2 on ten scattered dates from 11th April to 30th May were the only spring records. 1-2 were noted on five dates 4th-20th July. A male on 13th September then regularly 25th September-8th November, maximum 14 on 9th October.

**Hen Harrier** *Circus cyaneus*. A female was present 29th April-1st May.

**Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter nisus*. A thin extended spring passage 2nd April-31st May probably involved at least ten individuals, but never more than two in a day. Autumn passage was similar with 1-3 recorded on many dates 1st September-26th November with a good number of individuals involved.

**Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*. One on 18th May was the only record.

\***Lesser Kestrel** *Falco naumanni*. A superb male which spent much of 23rd June flying round the Houll was a new species for Fair Isle and the first in Scotland this century.

**Kestrel** *Falco tinnunculus*. The only spring records were a male on 13th-14th April and a female on 27th April before one on five dates, 1st-18th June. Scarce in autumn: singles were seen on 28 dates, 22nd August-29th October.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius*. Very scarce in the early part of the year. Singles were seen on 15th February, 5th & 9th March, 7th-8th & 28th-30th April, and 2nd, 5th & 18th May. There were 2 on 14th April. Recorded regularly 22nd August-25th November, maximum 3 on 12th & 17th October.

**Hobby** *Falco subbuteo*. One on 5th July.

**Peregrine** *Falco peregrinus*. One on 9th February. 1-2 on nine dates 8th-26th March. 1-2 on six dates 5th-23rd April. 1-2 seen frequently 7th August-20th November.

**Quail** *Coturnix coturnix*. Surprisingly the only record was in autumn, on 26th August.

**Water Rail** *Rallus aquaticus*. There were singles on 2nd & 6th January, 3rd, 16th-17th, 22nd, 26th-27th & 30th March, 11th-12th May, 8th-9th, 18th & 28th October, 2nd, 5th, 16th & 25th November, 3rd & 8th December. 2 were seen on 13th November.

**Spotted Crake** *Porzana porzana*. There was one in spring on 4th May and one in autumn on 13th-14th October.

**Corncrake** *Crex crex*. One on 23rd June was the only spring record. Autumn records comprised singles on 6th & 13th-14th October.

**Moorhen** *Gallinula chloropus*. Spring records comprised singles on 6th, 8th, 10th & 14th April. There was one in autumn, on 23rd October.

\***Crane** *Grus grus*. One on 4th June was the fifth Fair Isle record.

**Oystercatcher** *Haematopus ostralegus*. Up to 4 were recorded occasionally in January & February before spring arrivals from 24th February. Spring numbers peaked at 148 on 26th March. Breeding individuals were established by April, but further arrivals of non-breeders produced a second peak of 210 on 29th May. Only 50 breeding pairs were located. Autumn departures started in July and most had gone before September, a few remaining to 9th October. Late singles occurred on 17th & 27th October.

**Ringed Plover** *Charadrius hiaticula*. First arrival on 22nd February but very few until 10th March. No obvious spring passage, though 15 on 20th April & 22nd May possibly included through-migrants. 15 pairs bred. Strongest autumn passage spanned 22nd August-16th September, maximum 75 on 24th August. Most had departed by late September, a few remaining to 19th October, and late birds on 6th (2) & 9th November.

**Dotterel** *Charadrius morinellus*. 3 on 11th August comprised the earliest ever autumn record. An adult was seen on 28th August.

**\*American Golden Plover** *Pluvialis dominica*. A moulting adult on Brecks o Busta on 28th September-11th October was the fourth record in the last five years.

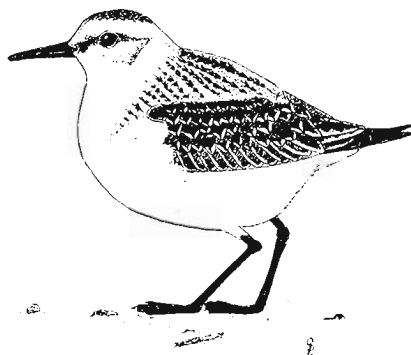
**Golden Plover** *Charadrius apricaria*. In March 1-5 recorded on seven dates from 3rd. Seen most days 3rd April-26th June with the only strong passage on 1st-6th May when 21-52 daily. Autumn return noted from 17th July, though max only 4 until start of main arrivals on 22nd August. A poor autumn passage peaked at 29 on 28th August. Irregular in October and not recorded after 29th.

**Grey Plover** *Charadrius squatarola*. The only records were one on 7th & 9th August, 2 on 24th August and one on 22nd-29th September.

**Lapwing** *Vanellus vanellus*. There were up to 6 in January and up to 14 in February. Main spring passage spanned 2nd March-mid April, most concentrated 9th-14th March when 47+ most days and 128 on 12th. 3 pairs bred, but only one or two chicks reached fledging stage. Intermittent in early autumn, but seen most days 3rd September-14th November, maxima 37 on 11th & 35 on 21st September.

**Knot** *Calidris canutus*. In spring there was one on 2nd May and 1-3 daily on 10th-22nd May, with 5 on 13th. Singles from 22nd July preceded the autumn peak of 12 on 31st July and daily occurrence thereafter to 24th September.

**Sanderling** *Calidris alba*. 2 on 9th-16th May was the only spring record. Singles on 16th-17th, 19th & 24th-25th July preceded main autumn occurrence 13th August-6th October, maximum 5 on 28th-31st August.





**Little Stint** *Calidris minuta*. There were two separate individuals in spring, a nuptial plumage bird on 5th and a winter plumage bird on 7th May. In autumn there were 1-3 on 11 dates, 13th August-22nd September.

**Temminck's Stint** *Calidris temminckii*. One on 25th-26th May was the first record for five years.

**Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea*. One on 9th September was the only record.

**Purple Sandpiper** *Calidris maritima*. Present in small numbers to early June, with the only obvious passage in late April and early May when maxima 60 on 25th April, 45 on 1st & 70 on 2nd May. First returning bird noted on 14th July, with 22 on 18th and 17 on 27th July. Rather fewer in August, but regularly from 11th September, maximum 25 on 4th November.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina*. There was one on 11th & 19th January, 2 on 10th March and singles on 1st, 7th & 19th April. Daily passage 24th April-21st June; highest numbers 1st-13th May, max 20 on 10th. A bird sang and displayed at Byerwall during June and early July but breeding was not proved. Return migrants were noted most days 16th July-29th October, maximum 15 on 6th September. 2 late migrants on 12th November.

**Ruff** *Philomachus pugnax*. A Reeve on 18th & 21st July was the first of the year. There was one on 31st July then almost daily 14th August-23rd September, maximum 7 on 21st September.

**Jack Snipe** *Lymnocyptes minimus*. One wintered, last seen on 9th March. Singles on 5th & 10th April were probably migrants. Noted most days 15th September-13th November, maximum 8 on 29th September. One on 23rd November.

**Snipe** *Gallinago gallinago*. There were up to 15 in January. In spring peak counts of 20 on 11th March & 20th April may have included migrants. Breeding census work revealed 21 drumming birds. Autumn passage was rather poor with maximum 40 on 6th September & 21st October.

**\*Great Snipe** *Gallinago media*. There were at least three, and probably four, individuals: one on 26th-27th August, one on 15th-18th September and one on 17th-24th October. One on 4th-6th November was either the October bird, overlooked for nearly two weeks, or a new arrival.

**Woodcock** *Scolopax rusticola*. The winter maximum was 5 on 15th January. Occasional spring migrants 10th March-16th May, max 10 on 11th April. There were again mid summer records: singles on 12th June & 6th July. Autumn passage from 30th September. First major influx was 25 on 21st October. Further influxes followed to mid November including 40 on 30th October, 70 on 5th and 100 on 9th November.

**Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*. Spring records comprised one on 30th April-3rd May, 3 on 11th & one on 12th-13th May. A late migrant appeared on 9th June. In August, 6 were present from 14th-21st.

**Bar-tailed Godwit** *Limosa lapponica*. One bird was present 18th March-19th April. There was one on 16th-17th July and 1-2 most days 26th August-8th October (possibly the same birds for much of that period).

**Curlew** *Numenius arquata*. 4 wintered. Seen daily from 10th March. The only apparent through-passage occurred in mid to late April with peaks of 20 on 12th & 22nd. 4 pairs bred. Post-breeding passage started with 28 on 4th July. July passage was relatively strong, with other max 20 on 16th & 23 on 24th. Recorded

virtually daily to 9th November, but only strong movements were 36 on 9th & 40 on 17th August.

**Whimbrel** *Numenius phaeopus*. Noted daily in spring 23rd April-8th June, max 12 on 9th May. 1-2 seen occasionally in late June and early July. Post-breeding movements 16th July-6th September, with strongest passage in July, max 14 on 26th. There was a late bird on 11th October.

**Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropus*. Singles on 20th-23rd July & 24th-29th August were the only records.

**Redshank** *Tringa totanus*. About 15 wintered. Small spring passage March-May, max 30 on 21st March, 27 on 30th April. 1-4 noted occasionally in June and early July. Post-breeding arrivals from 11th July reaching 22 on 23rd July. Peak counts were 51 on 28th August, 45 on 10th September and 45 on 17th October.

**Greenshank** *Tringa nebularia*. An extremely poor spring passage comprised singles on 7th & 9th June. 1-2 were noted regularly 8th August-14th September.

**Green Sandpiper** *Tringa ochropus*. Scarce in spring: there were singles on 23rd, 26th & 29th-30th April, 25th-27th May and 2 on 1st May. Stronger autumn passage, 12th July-14th September, max numbers in July, with peak 6 on 18th.

**Wood Sandpiper** *Tringa glareola*. In spring there was one on 25th, 2 on 26th & one on 31st May. A reasonable autumn passage comprised singles on 18th-24th July, 31st July-1st August, 27th, 29th August, 1st-4th September and 2 on 24th & 28th August.

**Common Sandpiper** *Actitis hypoleuca*. There were two very early singles, 6th & 11th April. 1-2 noted most days 29th April-6th June. Strong return passage in July from 12th, max 15 on 20th. Another wave 13th August-30th September, max 8 on 17th September. A late bird was seen on 6th October.

**Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres*. 250 wintered. Good numbers remained well into May, but 350 on 28th March clearly denoted through-passage. 43 were still present on 17th June. Post-breeding arrivals from mid July reached an early peak of 100 on 31st, 110 next day, but only 5 by 3rd August. There were further influxes of 123 on 8th, 100 on 13th, 140 on 16th and 210 on 17th October.

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*. One was seen on the Crossing of 12th May and a light phase adult from the isle on 17th May.

**Arctic Skua** *Stercorarius parasiticus*. First arrival, 3 dark phase on 13th April. Main arrivals from 20th April reaching 100 on 29th. The breeding population was censused at 95 pairs. Departures from July, virtually over by mid August and completely after 14th September, apart from late singles at sea on 6th-9th & 2 on 17th October.

**Long-tailed Skua** *Stercorarius longicaudus*. One was seen on a seawatch on 17th May. An adult was over Eas Brecks briefly on 7th August.

**Great Skua** *Stercorarius skua*. First arrival on 29th March. Main arrivals from 14th April. The breeding population was censused at 72 pairs. Considerable departures in August and early September, virtually complete by mid October. Late singles were noted to 6th November.

**Little Gull** *Larus minutus*. One on the crossing of 13th October was the only record.

**Black-headed Gull** *Larus ridibundus*. Up to 5 wintered. Recorded most days 25th March-12th November. Spring maxima 20 on 21st April & 18th May. Moderate

post-breeding numbers from mid July, max 36 on 24th July. Small numbers recorded in autumn and a stronger influx on 19th-26th October when 20+ daily and 45 on 22nd.

**Common Gull** *Larus canus*. Up to 5 in January. Recorded daily from early March. Obvious spring passage 12th April-1st May, max 70 on 20th April. 10 pairs bred and/or held territory. Post-breeding movements started with 50 on 17th July. Strong passage 29th-31st July, max 170 on 31st. Several further influxes, including 210 on 13th August, 100 on 16th August, 111 on 21st September and 170 on 22nd October. Last seen on 21st November.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus*. Arrived late, with 6 on 9th April. No obvious through-passage. The breeding population was again small. There was a post-breeding influx of 165 on 10th July. Departures mainly in July and August. Last seen on 6th September.

**Herring Gull** *Larus argentatus*. Present all year.

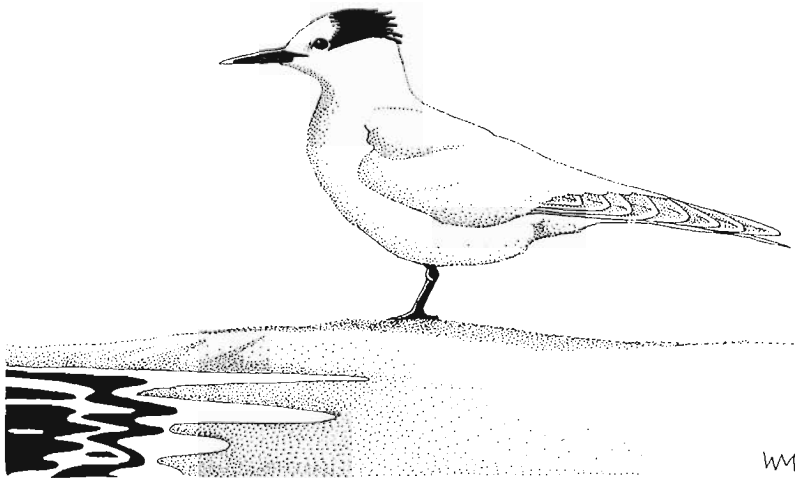
**Glaucous Gull** *Larus hyperboreus*. There were singles on 19th & 23rd January, 2 on 26th & 29th January and singles on 6th February, 19th March & 11th April. An adult was seen on 31st October and immatures on 7th November and 2nd December.

**Great Black-backed Gull** *Larus marinus*. Present all year.

**Kittiwake** *Rissa tridactyla*. Noted once in January, and daily from early February. The breeding season went well with an average of 1.00 chicks fledging per nest from monitored sites, but unseasonal prolonged easterly gales at fledging time produced one of the highest post-fledging mortalities in memory, with several hundred dead juveniles washed up on many beaches. Rather more were present in autumn than usual, including 250 on 11th September and 80 on 7th October.

**\*Caspian Tern** *Sterna caspia*. One flying north on 29th May was virtually a carbon copy of the only previous occurrence nine years before to the day.

**Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis*. Records comprised 2 on the very early date of 10th April, one on 30th April, 2 on 1st and 2 on 4th June.



**Common Tern** *Sterna hirundo*. First 3 on 30th April. Main arrivals occurred 8th-15th May. 37 pairs bred. The earliest broods fledged (first fledged young noted on 13th July) but poor weather caused 100% mortality of all later chicks/eggs. Departures from July, complete by mid August apart from one on 21st August.

**Arctic Tern** *Sterna paradisaea*. Early singles on 28th & 30th April preceded 20 on 10th May rising to 73 on 19th May. Good numbers settled in to the Bunes colony by late May with further arrivals in June producing a total of 211 pairs (based on a count of nests and scrapes) — a dramatic increase in numbers for the second successive year. Fledging success was, however, virtually nil, poor July weather wiping out all but a few early fledglings. Departures complete by early August, but occasional later migrants to last 6 on 25th August.

**Guillemot** *Uria aalge*. Present on fine days in January and daily from February. Adrian del-Nevo, as part of his PhD study, censused the island population at 32,437 individuals (compare with FIBOT's 1986 count of 33,607 individuals). Good fledging success in the first half of July. All were away from the ledges by the end of July. Small numbers occasionally in August and September, rather more regular from October including 65 on 9th October.

**Razorbill** *Alca torda*. Noted occasionally in January and regularly from mid February. Good fledging success in the first half of July. All were away from the ledges by the end of July. Very small numbers noted very irregularly August-November.

**Black Guillemot** *Cephus grylle*. Present all year. A new two-year monitoring survey was introduced by NCC Shetland/SOTEAG, which included the east coast of Fair Isle (boundaries being South Light and North Light). The 1987 counts were 222 and 216. Breeding productivity (based on a small sample) was 0.48 chicks per nest.

**Little Auk** *Alle alle*. 5 flew north on 9th and one flew north on 19th October. There were singles offshore on 13th & 25th November, an oiled individual in North Haven on 8th-9th December and 12 off South Light on 17th December.

**Puffin** *Fratercula arctica*. A very early arrival started with 5 ashore on 23rd March. 400 were present by 30th March and thousands by early April. Fledging success from 93 monitored nest burrows was 0.7 chicks per nest. Poor weather may have been a factor in prolonging the breeding season, birds being ashore until 22nd August (and 100 still ashore on 18th August). The Copper Geo white Puffin, first sighted in 1986, returned on 4th June and was seen regularly until 1st August. It did not breed but appeared to find a mate during the summer. 1-5 were seen on four dates in September, and a wedge of records 6th-9th October peaked at 33 on 7th. An oil victim which came ashore dying on 7th November was a long-winged individual.

**Rock Dove** *Columba livia*. Present all year. Peak count was 47 on 5th October.

**Stock Dove** *Columba oenas*. There was one on 3rd-22nd April, joined by a second from 10th-15th.

**Woodpigeon** *Columba palumbus*. One on 14th March then noted most days 23rd March-30th July; only small numbers except 8th-17th April when 23-26 daily. There were summer singles on 5th & 22nd July. Autumn passage 21st September-20th November, including daily 30th September-2nd November, maximum 6 on 1st-4th October.

**Collared Dove** *Streptopelia decaocto*. There was a very thin occasional passage 20th April-11th July, max 6 on 8th May & 5th June. Autumn singles occurred on 10th & 18th October.

**Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*. In spring there was one on 19th May, one on 25th May-1st June and 1-5 daily 2nd-18th June. In July there were singles on 3rd, 6th & 16th-20th. Only two in autumn, on 22nd August & 15th October.

**Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus*. One on 17th April was the earliest ever. A male on 25th May, 2 on 27th May, one on 8th June and a juvenile on 13th & 22nd-24th August were other records.

**Long-eared Owl** *Asio otus*. In spring there were singles on 9th March, 22nd-26th April & 28th May. Singles on 16th-17th & 20th October were the only later records.

**Short-eared Owl** *Asio flammea*. There were singles on 26th February, 7th, 15th & 21st-23rd April, 24th July, 5th & 14th September. Recorded frequently 30th September-17th November, max 7 on 16th-17th October.

**Swift** *Apus apus*. 1-7 were seen regularly 25th May-27th July - most regularly in July when 24 were seen on 20th. 1-3 noted on five dates, 11th-20th August. Seen most days 1st-21st September, max 19 on 6th.

**Wryneck** *Jynx torquilla*. In spring there were singles on 25th-26th April & 26th-31st May. Autumn records were in September, comprising one on 4th-7th, 2 on 12th, one on 14th, 4 on 21st and 2 on 22nd-23rd.

**\*Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. One on 29th May was the only record.

**Skylark** *Alauda arvensis*. About 12 wintered. 50 had arrived by 3rd March increasing to good passage 10th-26th March when generally 100+ and 300 on 12th. A further wave of passage 1st-6th April peaked at 160 on 1st. Breeding population censused at 61 pairs. Autumn numbers low until arrival of 250 on 20th September. Further influxes of 250 on 8th & 14th October. Still 60 on 1st November but departures rapid thereafter and last noted on 13th November.

**Shore Lark** *Eremophila alpestris*. Spring records comprised a male on 28th April and one on 3rd-4th May. One was seen in autumn, on 19th October.

**Sand Martin** *Riparia riparia*. In spring there were 1-2 on four dates 23rd-29th April, and 1-2 on eleven dates 18th May-14th June, with 7 on 29th May. 1-2 were seen on six dates, 3rd-24th July. There was one on 11th August, 1-2 on 22nd-26th August, and singles on 6th, 14th & 17th September.

**Swallow** *Hirundo rustica*. Recorded daily 19th April-28th August and most days 13th-29th September. Largest spring numbers occurred 29th May-5th June, max 50 on 1st. Later influxes included 32 on 14th June and 30 on 3rd July. The autumn max was 7 on 9th & 25th August.

**\*Red-rumped Swallow** *Hirundo daurica*. One was at Wirvie briefly on 24th October.

**House Martin** *Delichon urbica*. Early singles on 19th, 25th & 28th-29th April and 3 on 18th May preceded virtually daily occurrence, 25th May-22nd July. Only small numbers were recorded, maximum 30 on 1st June. There was no breeding attempt. In autumn 1-4 on 21st-25th August, one on 4th, 6th & 16th September, and 1-6 on 12 dates 6th October-1st November.

**Richard's Pipit** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. A good autumn passage comprised daily records 21st September-20th October involving a number of individuals and

a day maximum of 6 on 1st October. There were further arrivals of one on 30th October and 1-3 on 4th-10th November.

**Tawny Pipit** *Anthus campestris*. One elusive bird on 2nd-7th May was the first record for five years. One on 29th October-7th November was only the third autumn record and easily the latest ever.



*Tawny Pipit, first-winter in November. Photo: Liz Riddiford*

**\*Olive-backed Pipit** *Anthus hodgsoni*. An unprecedented autumn arrival began with one from 2nd October, increasing to 2 on 14th, 5 on 15th and between 2 and 5 daily to 23rd October. A new one occurred 28th October-1st November with a different bird present on 30th October. A minimum of 8 individuals were involved.

**Tree Pipit** *Anthus trivialis*. Recorded daily 27th April-10th June, maxima 12 on 18th & 26th May. Late spring singles occurred on 16th & 19th June. Autumn passage virtually daily 16th August-2nd November, max 10 on 1st October.

**Meadow Pipit** *Anthus pratensis*. In January one was noted on 1st and 3 on 9th. One on 11th March preceded arrivals from 23rd March, though only small numbers until 79 on 9th April. Spring peak counts were 200 on 17th April, 220 on 30th April and 250 on 8th May with 200 next day. The breeding population was censused at 17 pairs. Strongest autumn passage late August-mid October, including 600 on 28th August. Last 2 seen on 21st November.

**\*Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*. One record, on 28th August.

**Rock Pipit** *Anthus (spinoletta) petrosus*. Present all year. There was no obvious spring passage. A bird showing characteristics of the Scandinavian race *A p*

*littoralis* was paired with a normal *petrosus* and held territory at Wirvie between 15th April and 29th May, but breeding was probably unsuccessful. No attempt was made to census the breeding population.

**Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*. Races were recorded as follows: Yellow Wagtail *M.f.flavissima* — male on 18th May, female on 7th June. Blue-headed *M.f.f.flava* — male on 28th April, one on 27th May & 1st June, female on 3rd June. Grey-headed *M.f.thunbergi* - male on 28th & one on 31st May. In autumn there were 1-3 of indeterminate race 25th August-4th September, 12th-13th, 15th & 28th September, with 2 on 2nd October and one on 4th. Singles on 29th August-2nd September, 13th September and both on 2nd October were of the grey 'eastern type' morph.

**\*Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*. One on 1st-2nd September.

**Grey Wagtail** *Motacilla cinerea*. In spring there were singles on 23rd-24th March, 1st-4th & 8th-9th April and 9th May. There were autumn singles on 2nd & 15th October.

**Pied Wagtail** *Motacilla alba*. White Wagtails *M.a.alba* were recorded in spring from 27th March-31st May with main passage 30th April-13th May, max 20 on 10th May. Autumn passage spanned 23rd August-11th October, max 65 on 28th August. Pied *M.a.yarrelli* were noted regularly 28th March-7th October. Spring peak was only 3, but a pair bred, fledging two young at the end of July. 2 late White occurred 28th October-2nd November.

**Waxwing** *Bombycilla garrulus*. One on 16th January was the only record.

**Wren** *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Present all year. No evidence of through-migration. The breeding population was studied by Simon Aspinall — see paper in this report for details.

**Duncock** *Prunella modularis*. Noted daily 25th March-28th April, particularly 4th-12th April when peak numbers 150 on 4th, 200 on 5th and 175 on 6th. Late spring singles occurred on 13th, 18th-19th & 22nd May. Early autumn singles from 21st September, preceded main passage 13th October-8th November, max 18 on 13th & 20th October.

**Robin** *Erithacus rubecula*. Singles on 14th-15th & 22nd-23rd March preceded main passage 25th March-4th May. Heaviest passage 4th-14th April, especially 4th-8th when 120+ daily and 250 on 5th-6th. Late spring singles were noted on eleven dates 6th May-3rd June. Recorded in autumn from 20th September. Major passage 14th October-9th November, including 100 on 14th & 150 on 20th October. At least 2 remaining into December.

**Bluethroat** *Luscinia svecica*. Noted daily 23rd May-1st June, maxima 11 on 25th & 12 on 26th May. One later migrant on 4th-5th June. All spring males were of the Red-spotted form *L.s.svecica*. A female was trapped on the unexpected date of 8th July. Autumn singles were noted on 26th August, 21st September & 29th-30th October.

**Black Redstart** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. The wintering bird was last seen on 8th January. There was one on 12th March, 1-5 most days 23rd March-13th April, 1-2 on fifteen dates 25th April-31st May and one on 8th June. A female plumaged bird was present at Leogh 2nd-4th July. Autumn passage spanned 23rd September-9th November when recorded on 18 dates, max 5 on 20th October.

**Redstart** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. There was a thin spring passage in two waves: 1-2 on 24th April-2nd May; and 1-4 on nine dates, 25th May-12th June. A

late female was present on 25th-26th June. Recorded most days 31st August-24th October, max 12 on 21st September.

**Whinchat** *Saxicola rubetra*. 1-3 were noted daily 25th April-5th May. one on 11th May preceded almost daily occurrence 16th May-14th June, max 8 on 27th May. Recorded virtually daily 12th August-2nd November, strongest between 25th August & 16th September. Maximum 24 on 5th September.

**Stonechat** *Saxicola torquata*. A male on 28th April was the only spring record. One in juvenile plumage 19th-30th August was most unexpected. An influx of \*Siberian race birds *S. t. maura/stejnegeri* comprised 4 on 29th September with 2 remaining next day, one on 4th October & 2 on 29th October with one remaining to 1st November. A West European type male was present 9th-22nd October.

**Wheatear** *Oenanthe oenanthe*. 2 males on 28th March and up to 6 during the next two weeks preceded main arrivals from mid April. The spring peak count was 180 on 24th April when the first Greater Wheatears *O. o. leucorhoa* were seen. The island population was censused at 75 pairs. Local birds moved away in August and early September, with larger individuals passing mainly in September with small numbers to 29th October. Peak count of larger birds was 150 on 20th September.

**Ring Ouzel** *Turdus torquatus*. A poor spring passage involved 1-3 on fifteen scattered dates between 7th April and 30th June. A juvenile on 1st-2nd August presaged a very good autumn passage. Four early singles from 6th September were followed by almost daily passage 20th September-3rd November including a record autumn arrival of 125 on 14th October and further smaller arrivals to 22nd October.

**Blackbird** *Turdus merula*. About 15 wintered, but there was an exceptional January arrival of 100 on 15th-16th. Spring passage started in early March but numbers were low, peaking at 61 on 26th March. The April peak was 50 on 9th, rapidly decreasing thereafter though small numbers noted regularly until 13th June. A female summered at Field, and a male was seen on 6th July, these contributing to occasional records in August and September. First major arrival 225 on 14th October was followed by further relatively small influxes, and the autumn peak of 800 on 30th October. A late influx of 100 occurred on 12th November.

**\*Eye-browed Thrush** *Turdus obscurus*. One trapped in the Gully on 7th October remained to 15th October during which it increased its body weight by nearly 40%. The first record for Fair Isle.

**Fieldfare** *Turdus pilaris*. Up to 17 wintered, 12 being present well into March. 40 on 27th March was the first sign of migrants. Main passage was 9th-23rd April, max 290 on 10th. Small numbers were noted to late April, but only singles on twelve dates 1st May-5th June. One unexpected migrant appeared on 20th July. 2 occurred on 1st September, then 1-15 most days from 17th September preceding 150 on 13th and 950 on 14th October. Heavy passage 19th October-8th November, particularly 21st-23rd when 5000, 6000 & 5000 counted.

**Song Thrush** *Turdus philomelos*. 3 were present in early January. A small spring passage 3rd March-25th April was strongest 26th March-13th April when maximum 20 on three dates. Late spring singles were recorded on 4th, 16th & 22nd May, 4th & 19th June. Autumn passage daily 16th September-11th November. Strongest passage 3rd October-1st November, with particularly strong influxes of 2500 on 14th, 1000 on 21st & 1200 on 23rd October.



**Redwing** *Turdus iliacus*. 1-5 were seen occasionally in February and the first three weeks of March. Recorded daily 25th March-4th June, with strongest passage 26th March-27th April when peaks 25 on 27th March, 50 on 14th & 35 on 16th April. Late singles were seen on 9th & 22nd-28th June. In autumn from 21st September. Very heavy passage 13th-31st October including 8000 on 14th, 5000 on 20th, 4000 on 21st & 8000 on 22nd.

**Mistle Thrush** *Turdus viscivorus*. Spring records comprised 1-4 daily 25th-29th March. 2 on 1st April, an unprecedented 23 on 4th April with 2-4 to 8th and singles on 21st-22nd April, 9th-10th & 28th May. Autumn records were in October: singles on 7th, 14th, 21st, 23rd & 28th-29th, 2 on 8th and 3 on 25th.

**\*Lanceolated Warbler** *Locustella lanceolata*. The three records were all in September. One was trapped on 19th, an unringed individual was seen on 20th and one was trapped on 26th.

**Grasshopper Warbler** *Locustella naevia*. One on 26th April & 17th May were the only spring records. In autumn there were singles on 6th-7th & 23rd September.

**Sedge Warbler** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. 1-3 were noted on eight dates 19th April-11th May and 1-3 most days 22nd May-5th June, with 5 on 1st June. One was seen on 11th June and a mid summer one on 22nd July. In autumn there were 1-2 on 9th-15th September and singles on four dates 30th September-14th October.

**\*Paddyfield Warbler** *Acrocephalus agricola*. One (trapped) at Upper Stoneybrake on 22nd September was the third record in the last four years and the fifth ever.

**\*Blyth's Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*. One at Field on 27th-29th September (trapped on 27th), was the first on Fair Isle since 1928.

**Marsh Warbler** *Acrocephalus palustris*. An exceptionally poor spring, with one on 26th June the sole record. By contrast, for the second consecutive year there were autumn records: singles on 20th August and 20th September.

**Reed Warbler** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. Spring records comprised singles on 31st May-3rd June, 5th-6th June & 30th June. A prolonged autumn passage. 1-4 were noted regularly 22nd August-30th October and 5 on 20th October.

**Icterine Warbler** *Hippolais icterina*. The only records were singles on 14th, 20th & 22nd August, 1-2 daily 25th-31st August, one on 5th, 2 on 6th & one on 20th September.

**\*Subalpine Warbler** *Sylvia cantillans*. There were two records, both of males: on 28th April and 29th May.

**Barred Warbler** *Sylvia nisoria*. Arrivals were in two waves: 22nd-26th August, max 4 on 25th; and 4th-21st September, max 3 on 16th & 20th. One was present 4th-6th October.

**Lesser Whitethroat** *Sylvia curruca*. In spring there were early singles on 28th-29th April and 1st May. One on 17th-18th May preceded virtually daily occurrence 22nd May-28th June, maxima 7 on 25th & 6 on 29th May. Small numbers seen most days 26th August-16th October, max 5 on 2nd & 6th October.

**Whitethroat** *Sylvia communis*. One on 10th-11th May was followed by almost daily records 17th May-8th June and one on 15th June. The spring max was 4 on 22nd May, 1st & 3rd June. A sparse autumn passage comprised 1-2 on ten dates 22nd August-15th October.

**Garden Warbler** *Sylvia borin*. One on 29th April and 2 on 7th May preceded main spring passage 23rd May-22nd June, the peak count being 9 on 25th May. There were summer records of one on 26th June and 17th-18th July. Main autumn passage spanned 11th August-17th October. Strongest in late August when max 25 on 28th. Late singles were seen on 23rd & 29th October and 3rd-6th November.

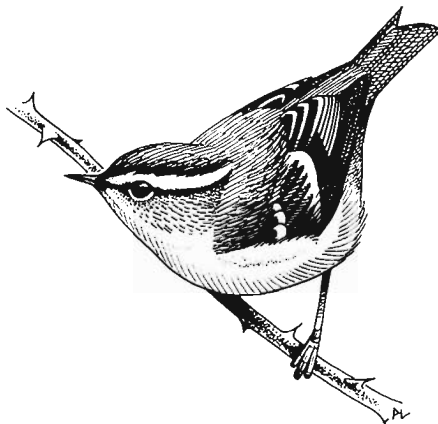
**Blackcap** *Sylvia atricapilla*. 1-2 were seen on five dates 30th April-10th May. 1-5 noted almost daily 22nd May-23rd June. Several individuals, male and female, appeared between 2nd and 23rd July, though never exceeding one in a day. A male on 10th September preceded daily passage 16th September-12th November. Heaviest passage was in October with several influxes providing peak counts of 45 on 3rd, 250 on 14th with 50 next day, 75 on 20th with 60 next day, and 65 on 30th. Strong arrivals continued into the first week of November, including 30 on 6th.

\***Greenish Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*. A worn individual at Leogh on 26th-27th June and a first-winter on 24th-25th August (trapped) were the first since 1981.

\***Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*. There were two records: one on 26th-27th August and one on 12th September.

\***Pallas's Warbler** *Phylloscopus proregulus*. An excellent series of occurrences comprised one on 20th October and 3 (one trapped) on 30th October.

**Yellow-browed Warbler** *Phylloscopus inornatus*. Seen most days 26th September-30th October, including 6 on 13th October and 5 on 2nd-3rd & 14th October.



\***Radde's Warbler** *Phylloscopus schwarzi*. One (trapped) at Setter on 2nd October was a long overdue first record for Fair Isle.

\***Dusky Warbler** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*. One (trapped) in Meadow Burn on 14th October and one on 6th November were the fourth and fifth Fair Isle records (three in the last two years).

**Wood Warbler** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. One on 5th June was the only spring record. In autumn there were 3 on 22nd August, 4 on 26th with one remaining to 28th August, 2 on 6th and one on 7th & 13th September.

**Chiffchaff** *Phylloscopus collybita*. Recorded most days 27th March-23rd June in small numbers except 24th-27th April when 20, 7, 10 & 20 respectively. One mid summer bird was present 16th-18th July. 1-2 noted on eleven scattered dates, 25th August-27th September. Main passage 1st October-12th November, maxima 25 on 2nd & 23 on 14th October.

**Willow Warbler** *Phylloscopus trochilus*. A poor spring passage 24th April-10th May peaked at 14 on 1st June. There were summer singles on 19th & 23rd June, 5th, 20th & 23rd July. One on 1st-2nd August preceded daily passage 9th August-8th October, with 3 later birds on 14th October. Strongest passage was late August, including 60 on 25th & 90 on 26th.

**Goldcrest** *Regulus regulus*. Spring passage spanned 2nd-30th April when up to 8 recorded almost daily, and 28 on 4th. In autumn 1-4 noted irregularly 22nd August-2nd November, with 8 on 30th October.

**Spotted Flycatcher** *Muscicapa striata*. Recorded daily 25th May-5th June, max 9 on 1st, and 8th-16th June, max 7 on 15th. One on 22nd and 3 on 23rd June. 1-3 recorded on 29 evenly spaced dates, 25th August-19th October.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** *Ficedula parva*. Two records, comprising singles on 21st September & 2nd-3rd October.

**Pied Flycatcher** *Ficedula hypoleuca*. Very sparse in spring: female on 28th April, male on 23rd May, one on 25th May, 3 on 1st, one on 2nd and one on 17th June. In autumn one on 14th August preceded small numbers regularly 22nd August-30th September, maxima 13 on 26th August & 10 on 21st September.

**Great Tit** *Parus major*. 2 males appeared on 4th April, one remaining to 6th. The first for five years.

**Treecreeper** *Certhia familiaris*. One was found 'rock-creeping' in North Reeva on 30th October. Fifth Fair Isle record.

**Red-backed Shrike** *Lanius collurio*. Spring records comprised a male on 25th May and 1-3 on thirteen dates 1st-23rd June (involving at least ten individuals). A female was seen on 3rd-4th and one trapped on 8th July. Autumn singles were seen on 26th August, 31st August-1st September, 9th-10th & 13th-16th September.

**Great Grey Shrike** *Lanius excubitor*. One on 19th April was the only spring record. There were 3, possibly 4, individuals in autumn; on 14th-15th, 19th & 25th-26th October.

**Magpie** *Pica pica*. The surprise migrant of 1987. One spent much of 22nd-25th April at Bull's Park (with occasional excursions as far as Busta). First record for Fair Isle and indeed for Shetland.

**Jackdaw** *Corvus monedula*. Spring records were all in April: 2 on 1st & 11th-16th and one on 17th-18th & 23rd-24th. Autumn records were in October: 2 on 20th & 22nd, one on 23rd-25th & 28th-29th.

**Rook** *Corvus frugilegus*. 3 on 18th January. In spring there were one on 26th March, 1-4 from 4th-27th April and 1-2 on five dates 3rd-17th May. In autumn there were singles on 29th October & 7th-8th November.

**Carrion Crow** *Corvus corone*. Hooded Crows *C.c.cornix* were noted on 4th & 8th January and daily from 4th March-9th June. 9 on 13th April was the only evidence of through migration. Carrion Crows *C.c.corone* were noted regularly 1st April-4th June, with a maximum 5 on 9th May. One pair of Hoodies held territory but

were not successful. 1-3 were seen occasionally in July and 3 Carrions on 12th July. 2-3 Hoodies took up residence from late August, with 5 on 7th October. A Carrion was present 29th September-20th October.

**Raven** *Corvus corax*. Present all year. Passage birds noted in April when 20 on 4th, 40 on 11th and 25 on 12th. Three pairs bred with first fledged young seen on 3rd May. Autumn movements were noted occasionally in September and October, max 21 on 11th September.

**Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris*. Present all year. About 300 wintered. Passage noted in the first half of April, peak count 600 on 9th. The breeding population was not censused. Post-breeding flock numbers peaked at 500 on 27th July. Migrant influxes in autumn produced a peak of 700 on 23rd October.

**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*. Present all year. No census was made of breeding pairs. The post-breeding population stood at a record 340 on 4th September — a reflection of better winter survival and good breeding success during the last two years.

**Tree Sparrow** *Passer montanus*. The only records were one on 9th-11th May joined by a second to 14th, and one on 25th May. Though mating was observed, breeding did not occur.

**House X Tree Sparrow** *Passer domesticus x montanus*. A bird showing characteristics of both species was seen occasionally between 20th April and 22nd June.

**Chaffinch** *Fringilla coelebs*. A female was seen on 10th & 13th January. Almost daily passage 26th March-24th May, with largest numbers 2nd-21st April when 20+ most days and peaks of 100 on 5th, 220 on 6th, 110 on 8th, 150 on 9th & 110 on 10th. Daily autumn occurrence 20th September-12th November. Small numbers except 13th-30th October when 30+ most days and 120 on 20th-21st.

**Brambling** *Fringilla montifringilla*. There was a male on 2nd-3rd January. Small daily passage occurred 28th March-3rd May, with max 16 on 20th & 24th April. 1-2 late migrants were seen on eleven dates, 7th-29th May. A female on 3rd-8th July was a surprise mid summer record. Another surprise female on 2nd-4th September preceded daily occurrence 20th September-6th November. Main arrivals were 13th-30th October when 25+ daily and 120 on 14th & 19th. One late migrant on 14th November.

**Greenfinch** *Carduelis chloris*. The few spring records were a male on 28th March-5th April, a female on 10th-11th April and a male on 26th-27th April. In autumn there was one on 29th October, 2 on 3rd-5th & 9th-12th November.

**Goldfinch** *Carduelis carduelis*. A small influx comprised 2 on 29th October, an unprecedented flock of 8 on 1st November and one next day.

**Siskin** *Carduelis spinus*. In spring there were 1-4 almost daily, 21st April-8th May. Autumn records comprised 2 on 17th September, daily 4th-24th October (maxima 25 on 13th & 40 on 19th) and singles on 29th October & 1st-2nd November.

**Linnet** *Carduelis cannabina*. 1-2 were noted on fifteen dates, 20th April-20th May. In October there were singles on 5th-9th, 11th, 20th & 29th.

**Twite** *Carduelis flavirostris*. About 20 wintered. Arrivals took place from March, with 80 on 14th March probably including through-migrants. Later major arrivals were not until late April, with the spring peak 90 on 10th May. The breeding population was not censused. Autumn numbers were a little below average for recent years. Highest counts were in September, peak 340 on 12th. 250 were still present on 1st October, 100 on 23rd, but major departures thereafter with only occasional birds seen after 9th November.

**Redpoll** *Carduelis flammea*. There were 2 Mealys *C.f.flammea* on 1st January. 1-3 Redpolls were seen on fourteen widely scattered dates 11th April-17th June. All sub-specifically identified birds were Mealy except for one Lesser *C.f.cabaret* on 19th April. One Lesser occurred on 15th September and 1-2, probably all Mealys, on ten dates 7th October-2nd November.

**\*Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*. There were two records: 25th September-2nd October and 12th October.

**\*Two-barred Crossbill** *Loxia leucoptera*. 3 juveniles on 15th August with 2 remaining next day and a female on 28th August were part of an August influx to the Northern Isles.

**Crossbill** *Loxia curvirostra*. A male and female together on 22nd August was the only record.

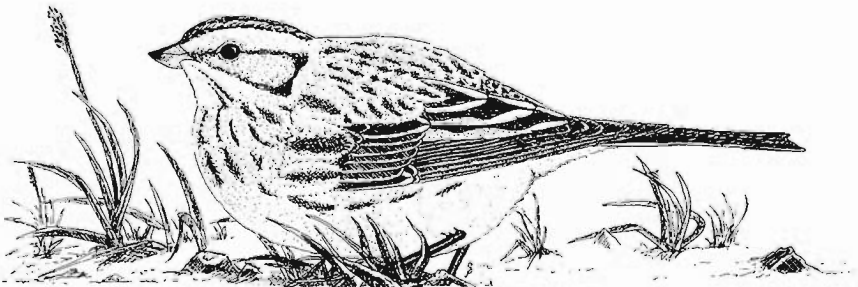
**Scarlet Rosefinch** *Carpodacus erythrinus*. In spring there was one on 23rd May, 4 (including a red adult male) on 25th May and 1-3 on fifteen dates 31st May-14th June (including an adult & a first-summer male on 11th). There was a summer bird from 13th July being joined by another on 20th-21st July, one staying to 22nd. Autumn arrivals were in two waves: 1-2 on 26th August-10th September, and 1-2 on 16th-30th September with 3 on 20th. In October there was one on 7th.

**Bullfinch** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. There was a good spring showing. One on 4th April was followed by 4 next day and 5 on 6th-8th. 2-4 were recorded daily to 17th April. In May there was one on 2nd, 2 on 3rd-4th, 3 on 5th and a male on 9th.

**Hawfinch** *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*. A female on 5th April was the only record.

**\*Savannah Sparrow** *Ammodramus sandwichensis*. One (trapped) at Shirva on 30th September-1st October was the first Scottish and second British occurrence.

**Lapland Bunting** *Calcarius lapponicus*. In spring there was one on 14th March, a female on 23rd-24th March, 2 on 26th with one staying to 28th April, and a fine male on 3rd-4th June. Exceptional numbers occurred in autumn. Recorded daily 6th September-23rd October in a series of arrivals. The strongest arrival was 70 on 11th September, followed by 35 on 22nd September and 25 on 3rd October. Late migrants were 2 on 28th & one on 30th October and one on 11th-12th November.



**Snow Bunting** *Plectrophenax nivalis*. About 30 wintered, but augmented briefly by influxes of 150 on 20th January and 65 on 13th February. Signs of passage in March included 48 on 16th and 50 on 19th. 10-35 seen daily March to 7th April, 1-7 most days thereafter in April & 1-5 on twenty dates 3rd-29th May. Present in autumn from 13th September. The first reasonable numbers were 32 on 20th rising to 55 on 27th September. The October peak was 80 on 9th. Major arrivals, however, occurred in early November, including 200 on 6th and 320 on 7th. 200 remained to at least 19th November and good numbers into December.

**\*Pine Bunting** *Emberiza leucocephalos*. There were three: a male on 11th-20th October, a female on 22nd October and a female (trapped) on 29th October-13th November. Fourth to sixth Fair Isle records.

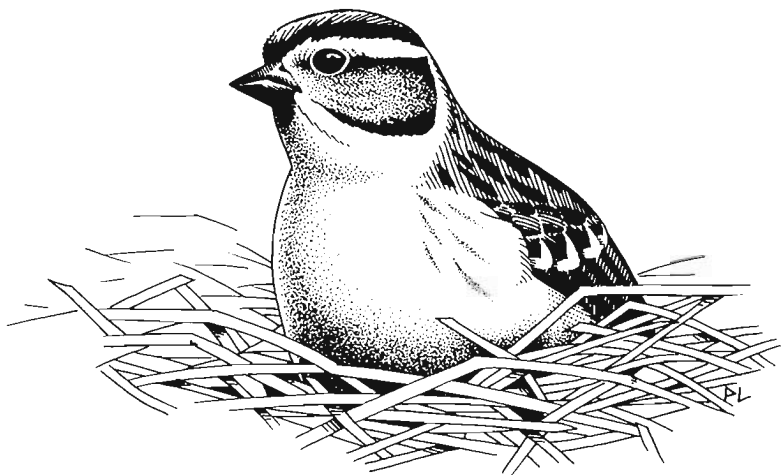
**Yellowhammer** *Emberiza citrinella*. A poor year. Singles on 28th-30th March, 1st & 4th-8th April, 2 males on 11th April and 2 on 1st November with one remaining to 3rd were the only records.

**Ortolan Bunting** *Emberiza hortulana*. A female on 29th and 2 males on 30th May were the only spring records. In autumn there were singles on 7th, 10th & 12th-15th September.

**\*Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*. There were three in spring and two in autumn: a dull male or female on 22nd May, a male (trapped) on 4th-5th June, a female on 8th-9th June; one on 23rd-24th September and one on 2nd October.

**\*Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*. Ten individuals were recorded: on 21st September, 21st-27th September, 1st-4th October, 2nd-5th October, 2nd-9th October (trapped), 4th-7th October, 12th-20th October, 20th-21st October, 29th October-1st November, and 31st October.

**\*Yellow-breasted Bunting** *Emberiza aureola*. Five records: singles on 27th-28th August, 2nd September, 15th-16th September, 16th September and 20th September.



**Reed Bunting** *Emberiza schoeniclus*. There were two waves of spring passage: 26th March-9th May when recorded almost daily, with maxima 8 on 27th March & 4th April; and daily 24th May-1st June — peak 5 on 25th. Late singles were seen on 6th-7th & 11th-13th June. Three waves in autumn: 1-2 on 21st-27th September; 1-3 on 1st-8th October; and stronger passage 13th October-13th November, maxima 15 on 20th & 14 on 22nd October.

### **Amendments to 1986 Systematic List**

**Great Shearwater** *Puffinus gravis*. One passed close to shore off Bunness on 11th September 1986. (inadvertently omitted from 1986 Report).

**Citrine Wagtail** *Motacilla citreola*. Dates for the 1986 record should be 9th-16th September, and not as published.

## **Up-Date on British Birds Rarities Committee Decisions, 1985-86**

### **1985**

**Arctic Warbler** *Phylloscopus borealis*. 3rd September & 11th September; both accepted.

**Arctic Redpoll** *Carduelis hornemanni*. 25th-26th May, accepted.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*. 23rd-25th September & 23rd-26th October; both accepted.

### **1986**

**Falcon** *Falco*, considered to be **Saker** *Falco cherrug*. 23rd October-3rd December, decision awaited.

**Gyr Falcon** *Falco rusticolus*. 20th February, decision awaited.

**Short-toed Lark** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. 27th September, not accepted.

**Red-throated Pipit** *Anthus cervinus*. 6th November, not accepted.

**Parrot Crossbill** *Loxia pytyopsittacus*. 13th October, not accepted.

**Rustic Bunting** *Emberiza rustica*. 15th May, decision awaited.

**Little Bunting** *Emberiza pusilla*. 11th October, not accepted.

**Chestnut Bunting** *Emberiza rutila*. 15th-16th June; accepted, placed in Category D.

*All other 1986 records submitted to BBRC were accepted.*

## Ringling Details 1987

4025 birds of 101 species were ringed in 1987. Eye-browed Thrush, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Raddes' Warbler and Savannah Sparrow were new to the list, bringing the grand total of species ringed to 253.

The monthly ringling totals were

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
—	—	41	420	314	1179	897	299	230	629	15	1

All the traps received attention, mainly patching jobs, though a new glass front was installed on the roadside trap, the single dyke catching box was modified and the north grind box renewed. There was no ringling course, but several ringers came independently to help us with our seabird work, and at other times, incidentally receiving a great deal of training and experience. Seabird priorities were once again determined by the NCC Seabird Monitoring Scheme. Ringling is only one of a series of requirements of the scheme, and the multi-disciplined approach is reflected in the generally lower numbers ringed.

The top ten species ringed were Guillemot 696, Starling 427, Shag 304, Robin 269, Puffin 181, Wheatear 177, Blackcap 163, Blackbird 131, Dunnock 121 and Rock Pipit 102. Good Sparrowhawk passages were reflected by record ringling totals. Barnacle Goose was the only other to surpass its previous highest. Other rarely ringed species included Long-tailed Duck, Spotted Crake, Tawny Pipit, Paddyfield Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Pallas's Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Pine Bunting and Rustic Bunting.

Once again the BTO, NCC and SOTEAG assisted financially with various aspects of our work and we express our thanks to them all.



*Raddes' Warbler, first for Fair Isle. Photo: Liz Riddiford*



## Table of ringing totals and recoveries

### (a) Species ringed in 1987

	Ringed as		Totals		Recovered	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	1987	1948-87	1987	1948-87
Fulmar	58	38	96	13685	3	101
Storm Petrel	94	—	94	9846	5	258
Gannet	1	15	16	122	—	2
Shag	44	260	304	16422	17	405
Barnacle Goose	2	—	2	3	—	—
Eider	6	—	6	120	—	2
Long-tailed Duck	1	—	1	13	—	—
Sparrowhawk	14	—	14	193	1	18
Water Rail	3	—	3	242	—	3
Spotted Crake	1	—	1	15	—	—
Oystercatcher	—	7	7	1154	1	64
Snipe	6	—	6	319	—	4
Woodcock	8	—	8	295	1	16
Curlew	1	1	2	91	—	3
Green Sandpiper	2	—	2	36	—	—
Common Sandpiper	4	—	4	52	—	1
Arctic Skua	—	33	33	2876	1	58
Great Skua	—	40	40	829	—	12
Common Gull	—	4	4	108	—	6
Lesser Black-b. Gull	—	13	13	1221	1	32
Herring Gull	17	42	59	3710	—	86
Great Black-b. Gull	27	24	51	1863	—	78
Kittiwake	36	15	51	4778	—	22
Common Tern	—	21	21	430	—	3
Arctic Tern	1	10	11	50	—	—
Guillemot	40	656	696	17937	15	585
Razorbill	18	72	90	4434	—	142
Black Guillemot	12	22	34	1277	1	18
Puffin	124	57	181	9712	—	24
Rock Dove	—	1	1	19	—	2
Woodpigeon	1	—	1	39	—	2
Collared Dove	5	—	5	175	—	—
Turtle Dove	2	—	2	63	—	2
Long-eared Owl	2	—	2	154	3	9
Wryneck	3	—	3	177	—	—
Skylark	2	—	2	748	—	3
Tawny Pipit	1	—	1	3	—	—
Tree Pipit	13	—	13	549	—	—
Meadow Pipit	77	—	77	7946	—	44
Rock Pipit	102	—	102	7782	—	24
Grey Wagtail	1	—	1	18	—	—
Pied Wagtail	4	—	4	504	—	4
Wren	5	—	5	619	—	—
Duncock	121	—	121	1843	—	6
Robin	269	—	269	6372	1	31
Bluethroat	5	—	5	199	—	2
Black Redstart	3	—	3	111	—	—
Redstart	13	—	13	1465	—	1
Whinchat	4	—	4	524	—	2
Stonechat	3	—	3	48	—	—
Wheatear	171	6	177	14158	—	67
Ring Ouzel	19	—	19	418	—	6
Blackbird	131	—	131	18111	3	295

	Ringed as		Totals		Recovered	
	Juv/Ad	Pullus	1987	1948-87	1987	1948-87
Eye-browed Thrush	1	—	1	1	—	—
Fieldfare	1	—	1	584	—	—
Song Thrush	66	—	66	2144	—	27
Redwing	82	—	82	6734	—	69
Mistle Thrush	1	—	1	21	—	1
Lanceolated Warbler	2	—	2	20	—	—
Grasshopper Warbler	1	—	1	80	—	—
Sedge Warbler	5	—	5	350	—	2
Paddyfield Warbler	1	—	1	4	—	—
Blyth's Reed Warbler	1	—	1	1	—	—
Reed Warbler	7	—	7	146	—	1
Icterine Warbler	3	—	3	69	—	—
Barred Warbler	1	—	1	318	—	1
Lesser Whitethroat	16	—	16	479	—	—
Whitethroat	5	—	5	741	—	—
Garden Warbler	66	—	66	2551	—	1
Blackcap	163	—	163	3649	—	12
Greenish Warbler	1	—	1	13	—	—
Pallas's Warbler	1	—	1	2	—	—
Yellow-b. Warbler	2	—	2	82	—	—
Radde's Warbler	1	—	1	1	—	—
Dusky Warbler	1	—	1	3	—	—
Wood Warbler	2	—	2	82	—	—
Chiffchaff	22	—	22	676	—	—
Willow Warbler	30	—	30	2787	—	3
Goldcrest	7	—	7	1124	—	2
Spotted Flycatcher	11	—	11	508	—	3
Pied Flycatcher	15	—	15	759	—	4
Red-backed Shrike	2	—	2	142	—	—
Starling	237	190	427	19589	3	161
House Sparrow	6	—	6	1256	—	1
Tree Sparrow	1	—	1	95	—	1
Chaffinch	92	—	92	2157	—	11
Brambling	75	—	75	2477	2	12
Greenfinch	2	—	2	137	—	—
Siskin	3	—	3	269	—	1
Twite	61	—	61	4265	—	3
Redpoll	2	—	2	546	—	1
Scarlet Rosefinch	8	—	8	97	—	—
Bullfinch	4	—	4	31	—	—
Savannah Sparrow	1	—	1	1	—	—
Lapland Bunting	1	—	1	40	—	—
Snow Bunting	1	—	1	508	—	3
Pine Bunting	1	—	1	2	—	—
Yellowhammer	1	—	1	51	—	—
Rustic Bunting	1	—	1	12	—	1
Little Bunting	1	—	1	24	—	1
Reed Bunting	6	—	6	332	—	2
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2498</b>	<b>1527</b>	<b>4025</b>	<b>214209</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>2864</b>
(all species ringed 1948-87)						

**(b) Species ringed/recovered 1948-87 but not ringed in 1987 (totals 1948-87)**

Little Grebe	9/0	Slavonian Grebe	3/0
Great Crested Grebe	1/0	Leach's Petrel	20/0
Red-necked Grebe	1/0	Cormorant	7/0

Grey Heron	15/2	Pomarine Skua	1/0
Whooper Swan	30/4	Black-headed Gull	29/3
Bean Goose	1/0	Iceland Gull	1/0
Pink-footed Goose	9/1	Glaucous Gull	34/1
White-fronted Goose	3/1	Little Auk	6/0
Greylag Goose	19/6	Cuckoo	84/1
Shelduck	3/0	Snowy Owl	1/0
Wigeon	14/0	Short-eared Owl	16/0
Teal	38/2	Nightjar	3/0
Mallard	9/1	Swift	16/1
Pintail	1/1	Hoopoe	3/0
Pochard	2/1	Great Spotted Woodpecker	20/0
Ring-necked Duck	1/0	Short-toed Lark	6/0
Tufted Duck	10/0	Woodlark	2/0
Scaup	4/0	Shore Lark	3/0
Velvet Scoter	2/0	Sand Martin	8/0
Goldeneye	14/1	Swallow	228/8
Red-breasted Merganser	3/0	House Martin	144/1
Goosander	3/1	Richard's Pipit	9/0
Hen Harrier	2/0	Olive-backed Pipit	6/0
Goshawk	1/0	Pechora Pipit	6/0
Kestrel	40/8	Red-throated Pipit	6/0
Red-footed Falcon	1/0	Yellow Wagtail	10/0
Merlin	168/13	Citrine Wagtail	5/0
Peregrine	6/1	Waxwing	34/0
Quail	5/0	Dipper	12/0
Little Crane	1/1	Thrush Nightingale	17/0
Corncrake	35/2	Nightingale	21/0
Moorhen	84/3	Siberian Rubythroat	1/0
Coot	13/1	Red-flanked Bluetail	1/0
Great Bustard	1/0	Black-eared Wheatear	3/0
Little Ringed Plover	1/0	Rock Thrush	1/0
Ringed Plover	478/6	Grey-cheeked Thrush	2/0
Dotterel	3/0	White's Thrush	1/0
Golden Plover	17/0	Dusky Thrush	1/0
Lapwing	259/4	Black-throated Thrush	1/0
Knot	78/2	Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	4/0
Sanderling	86/0	River Warbler	5/0
Western Sandpiper	1/0	Savi's Warbler	2/0
Little Stint	69/0	Aquatic Warbler	21/0
Temminck's Stint	2/0	Marsh Warbler	66/0
White-rumped Sandpiper	1/0	Great Reed Warbler	4/0
Pectoral Sandpiper	5/0	Thick-billed Warbler	1/0
Curlew Sandpiper	5/0	Booted Warbler	5/0
Purple Sandpiper	147/1	Melodious Warbler	9/0
Dunlin	438/7	Subalpine Warbler	19/0
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1/0	Sardinian Warbler	1/0
Ruff	32/1	Arctic Warbler	26/0
Jack Snipe	113/3	Bonelli's Warbler	1/0
Great Snipe	1/0	Firecrest	1/0
Black-tailed Godwit	1/0	Red-breasted Flycatcher	45/0
Bar-tailed Godwit	9/2	Collared Flycatcher	1/0
Whimbrel	14/0	Blue Tit	2/0
Spotted Redshank	3/0	Great Tit	7/0
Redshank	224/2	Treecreeper	1/0
Greenshank	8/0	Golden Oriole	6/1
Wood Sandpiper	16/0	Isabelline Shrike	1/0
Turnstone	65/0	Lesser Grey Shrike	6/0
Red-necked Phalarope	4/0	Great Grey Shrike	103/1
Grey Phalarope	3/0	Woodchat Shrike	10/0

Jackdaw	3/0	Tennessee Warbler	2/0
Rook	5/0	White-crowned Sparrow	1/0
Hooded Crow	43/0	White-throated Sparrow	2/0
Raven	26/0	Song Sparrow	2/0
Daurian Starling	1/0	Ortolan Bunting	18/0
Rose-coloured Starling	2/0	Cretzschmar's Bunting	1/0
Goldfinch	5/0	Yellow-browed Bunting	1/0
Linnet	130/1	Chestnut Bunting	1/0
Arctic Redpoll	16/0	Yellow-breasted Bunting	6/0
Two-barred Crossbill	1/0	Pallas's Reed Bunting	2/0
Crossbill	298/2	Black-headed Bunting	3/0
Parrot Crossbill	36/0	Corn Bunting	3/0
Hawfinch	6/0	Red-headed Bunting	5/0

## Recoveries in 1987

59 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 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
- J the suffix 'J' denotes bird still in juvenile plumage

Sex: m = male; f = female

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

### Fulmar

Two ringed as *pulli* in 1983 were recovered during their fourth winter in the Faroes. One was found dead in Friesland, Netherlands in its eighth winter.

## Storm Petrel

		Ringed on Fair Isle	Controlled on Fair Isle
Yell (Shetland)			1
Foula (Shetland)		3	
Auskerry (Shetland)			1
Tarbat Ness (Highland)		1	
Noss Head (Highland)		1	1

The three Foula birds were all ringed on 5th August and recovered 18 or 19 days later.

## Shag

A typical batch of recoveries comprised 6 first-winter and one fourth-winter bird in Shetland, two first-winters, a third-winter and a fourth-winter in Orkney, two first-winters in Highland and one in Grampian. A more spectacular recovery in Grampian involved a 19-year-old bird found dead at Findochty. Two recoveries from farther afield were not typical, and are given in full:

1186159	1	11.07.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	20.11.86	South Uist, Western Isles, SCOTLAND 57°14'N 7°27'W 425 km SW
1226052	1	27.06.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	24.09.86	Wadden Coast, Terschelling, NETHERLANDS 53°24'N 5°22'E 804 km SE

## Sparrowhawk

DR81645	6m	22.04.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	23.10.84	Nordfriesische Inseln, WEST GERMANY 54°30'N 8°53'E 845 km SE

## Oystercatcher

FR06821	3	29.08.81	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	+	15.01.87	Baie de Canche, Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE 50°33'N 1°33'E 1018 km SSE

## Ringed Plover

BV47693	3J	07.09.82	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	24.05.86	Newbiggin, Cumbria, ENGLAND 54°8'N 3°7'W 607 km S

## Woodcock

EK66745	3m	07.11.84	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	+	(05.12.86)	Rickarton, Grampian, SCOTLAND 56°59'N 2°16'W 286 km S

## Arctic Skua

One found dead on Noss in July 1987 had been ringed as a nestling on Fair Isle ten years earlier.

## Lesser Black-backed Gull

One was recovered in its fourth summer at Grutness, Shetland.

## Guillemot

A quieter year for recoveries, which were from the following areas:

### RINGED AS NESTLINGS

	Age in years at recovery								
	less than 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	
Within Britain:									
Grampian			2						
Tayside				1					
Northumberland							1		
Tyne & Wear								1	
Abroad:									
Norway			1	1					
Sweden	3								
Denmark								1	
Netherlands		1							

### RINGED AS ADULTS

	No. of years after ringing							
	less than 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	11
Norway					1		1	
Netherlands								1

## Black Guillemot

EK99428	1	26.07.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	18.01.87	Portgower, Highland, SCOTLAND
			58°6'N 3°40'W 198 km SW

A little farther afield than many first-winter recoveries, but not atypical.

## Long-eared Owl

GP37758	2	29.10.71	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	( )	(15.12.86)	Locality unknown, Pas-de-Calais, FRANCE
			(50°30'N 2°20'E) 1034 km SSE
GH08445	2f	22.11.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	(10.03.87)	Sandnes, Aust-Agder, NORWAY
			58°53'N 7°45'E 538 km E
GH08447	2m	24.11.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	15.03.87	Mellem Mogeltonder, Jylland, DENMARK
			54°57'N 8°45'E 804 km SE

The recovery circumstances were unknown for GP37758 which could have been found long before it was reported. The others were two in a series of six ringed in late November 1986. Both made an early return towards presumed Scandinavian natal quarters and both were victims of man's artefacts (hit wires and road casualty).

## Robin

C526175	5	24.04.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	x	12.10.86	Ostheim, Unterfranken, WEST GERMANY
			50°28'N 10°14'E 1257 km SE

## Blackbird

A male ringed as adult in April was recovered three winters later in West Germany and a first-year male ringed in November was taken by a cat in Northamptonshire

four Aprils later. Most interesting was an adult female ringed in late April and controlled the following November on Out Skerries, Shetland, presumably using Shetland as a migration point or wintering grounds in consecutive migrations.

### Starling

A *pullus* was controlled at Wick, Highland, in January of its first-winter, a typical short distance dispersal movement for a Fair Isle hatched bird. Other recoveries were from Thurso, Highland, and Voe, Shetland. All three were females.

### Brambling

C858351	3m	05.10.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	xF	08.10.86	North Ronaldsay, Orkney 59°22'N 2°26'W 50 km WSW
C858418	3f	14.10.86	<i>Fair Isle</i>
	v	31.10.86	Drumnadrochit, Highland, SCOTLAND 57°20'N 4°29'W 296 km SSW

Two recoveries demonstrating onward passage towards and into mainland Britain.

## Controls

Details were received for 13 birds in 1987 which had been ringed elsewhere and found on Fair Isle:

### American Wigeon

Washington

87662817	1	13.08.86	<i>near Albert, New Brunswick, CANADA</i> 54°45'N 64°47'W
	vm	21.09.86	Fair Isle 3838 km E

Confirmation of the origins of the most exciting capture of 1986. A trans Atlantic crossing within a month of fledging.

### Oystercatcher

SS89405	6	14.01.69	<i>Fife Ness, Fife, SCOTLAND</i> 56°17'N 2°36'W
	v	14.03.86	Fair Isle 366 km N

Already at least two years old when ringed, it was at least 19 years old when controlled.

### Herring Gull

A bird colour-ringed in its fourth year at Coxhoe, Co Durham, in January 1984 and sighted on Fair Isle in May 1985 was seen again on the isle on 20th July 1987. One found dead in June had been ringed as a *pullus* three summers earlier on Aukerry, Orkney.

### Black-headed Gull

Stavanger

696367	1	05.06.83	<i>Hanangervannet, Vest-Agder, NORWAY</i> 58°5'N 6°44'E
	xL	04.08.86	Fair Isle 507 km WNW

696367 had been dead about 2 weeks when found. Also, a first-summer bird was seen on 17th July which had been colour dyed in Denmark in summer 1987. Thus it had made a very rapid and early movement away from summer quarters.

**Blackbird**

RC05525	3m	18.10.86	<i>North Ronaldsay, Orkney</i>
			59°22'N 2°26'W
	v	16.04.87	Fair Isle 50 km ENE

**Blackcap**

Bruxelles			
2260902	3m	10.09.86	<i>Hamme St Anna, Oost-Vlaanderen, BELGIUM</i>
			51°6'N 4°5'E
	v	10.10.86	Fair Isle 1003 km NNW

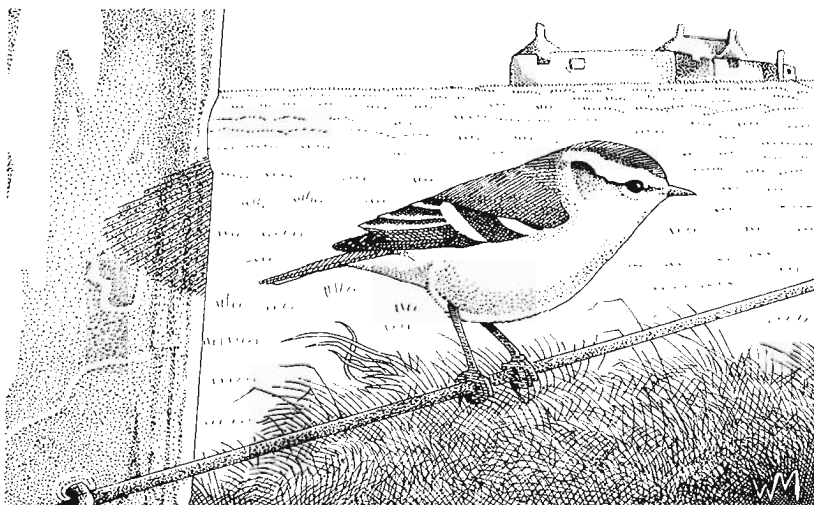
A mis-directed autumn movement.

**Brambling**

Stavanger			
9862326	4f	20.08.86	<i>Grimstadvatnet, More og Romsdal, NORWAY</i>
			62°22'N 6°0'E
	v	05.10.86	Fair Isle 517 km SW

**Snow Bunting**

A colour ringed bird seen on 13th March 1987 had been ringed as a first-winter at Keiss Links, Wick, Highland in either December 1986 or February 1987.





## Guillemot studies on Fair Isle

During the late seventies and early eighties the populations of Guillemots in northern Scotland, Orkney, and Shetland have been increasing by approximately 5% per annum (11% on Fair Isle). More recently, the numbers of Guillemots have tended to remain constant or in some colonies to decrease. These changes may well be linked with changes in food availability, possibly caused by overfishing of their prey and so a detailed study was required to help identify these and other factors influencing Guillemot biology.

The Isle is ideally suited to this and similar studies as it contains large, easily visible and accessible colonies of seabirds. Its location means that there is relatively low migration to and from the Isle. It has a tradition of seabird ringing which provides some useful information on chick and adult survival. Accommodation is available and, perhaps most importantly, there is a welcoming human population, without whom my own study would not have been feasible.

The broad aims of the Guillemot work were:

1. To compile a detailed quantitative description of the reproductive biology and feeding ecology of Guillemots on Fair Isle.
2. To investigate how prey quality, distribution, abundance and availability influence reproduction.
3. To establish a unified monitoring system to enable the detection of population changes, to give some insight as to why some colonies show marked variation in their population dynamics.

To achieve these aims a great deal of information has been collected over the three years; including: timing of breeding, feeding ecology, inter and intra colony variation in the status and distribution of Guillemots, chick growth and development, egg growth and development, breeding behaviour and numerous other data. This is currently being written up for publication and in due course a copy of my thesis will be deposited in the observatory library.

It is impossible to adequately thank the many people who have helped me either en route or on Fair Isle, but special thanks must go to Dave and Gill Okill, Michael and Cathy Stout (who helped me in countless different ways and were patient landlords for two years), Brian, Paul and Alan Wilson who assisted me in the colonies and on the cliffs, Alec and Kenneth Stout and especially Margaret for teasing me constantly but always making me very welcome, Dave Wheeler for developing photographs and providing met data, Jimmy and Edith Stout, and each and every croft for those cups of tea, meals, and many happy hours.

I am particularly grateful to the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust for providing subsidised accommodation in 1987 and to Nick and Elizabeth Riddiford for their encouragement and helpfulness throughout this work. My thanks also to the various observatory staff for their help and patience, particularly Paul Harvey and Kevin Osborn. Numerous island visitors have also assisted and to them go my sincere thanks.

*Adrian del Nevo*

## Fluctuating Fortunes of the Fair Isle Wren

The Fair Isle Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridariensis* was described as a taxonomically distinct island race of the Wren in 1951 (Williamson 1951). A census of singing males was first made in 1950 and almost annually from 1970 to 1987, but only sporadically in the intervening years. Nonetheless, Figure 1 shows the population trend quite adequately (successive years' counts are joined by solid lines). The Fair Isle Wren clearly had its heyday in the mid 1960s with 51 or 52 songsters in 1964 and 1965, but reached an all time low in 1981 when only ten males could be located. The population was more than halved between 1978 and 1979 but the reasons for this dramatic crash remain obscure. Williamson (1958) suggested that 'wet and windy weather [in winter] is perhaps more likely to influence population levels than snow and sub-zero temperatures since its [the Wren's] niche [the 'seashore'] is always open'. A preliminary analysis of Fair Isle weather data looks likely to support this observation. Whatever the case the figure shows clearly a cyclical pattern of rise and fall in the population level. The ecology of this unique race obviously deserves more attention than it has received and might easily be used to test, practically, current ecological theory concerning population regulation.

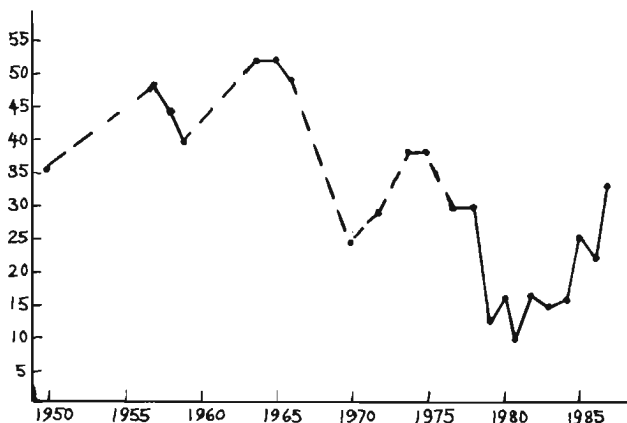


Fig. 1 Numbers of singing male Wrens on Fair Isle

In 1987, successful breeding was confirmed at nine sites. At a further fifteen sites with singing males successful breeding was considered unlikely to have escaped detection. At nine other sites the outcome was unknown. A minimum of 34 young fledged from the nine successful nests including second broods at four sites. Confirmation of double-brooding was perhaps not surprising but appears not to have been proven before. Armstrong (1955) recorded double-brooding as 'not uncommon' in mainland Wrens but that insular races of the North Atlantic were 'single-brooded' and 'monogamous'. Monogamy seems to be the case with Fair Isle Wrens.

The first young fledged on 5th June (at North Restensgeo), only four days later than the earliest ever recorded fledging date. The 1987 breeding season seems to have been a good one by and large (although comparative data were sparse). Second broods had fledged by early August. There certainly appeared to be an abundance of invertebrate prey, mostly emergent flying insects, during the

summer months. It will be interesting to see whether the Wren population maintains its current upward trend over the next few years.

## Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to Dave Wheeler of Field who made available all his weather data for analysis.

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S. J. Aspinall

## Starling Studies on Fair Isle

Starlings had a good year on Fair Isle, making up for the very unfavourable weather for them during a critical period in the summer of 1986 which caused many young to die of cold or starvation. In contrast this year, most nests fledged four or five young. The results of longterm colour-ringing of nestlings are beginning to pay off, with sightings of Fair Isle birds on Shetland, Orkney, and even the north of Scotland. Although only young birds are known to disperse from the island, and if they survive, these usually return to Fair Isle to breed, for the first time we have a record of a Fair Isle bird actually breeding on Orkney. If young from the Fair Isle population leave the island entirely, there is a possibility that birds from elsewhere also enter the island to breed. So far we have no evidence of this but if it does occur it will be extremely interesting – it means that the very different frequencies of particular genes in this island population must be maintained by local selection pressures rather than primarily by isolation.

In many nestbox colonies, female starlings are known to lay eggs in the nests of other starlings. In this way, the female can leave the burden of caring for her young to another bird. Often this behaviour occurs where nest sites are limited as may happen if there is a high population but only a few boxes to nest in. It is therefore particularly interesting to find that the same phenomenon occurs in the more widely dispersed natural nest sites on Fair Isle. Individual adult starlings on Fair Isle can often be recognised, having been colour-ringed as nestlings. This together with the fact that genetic information is collected which allows one to identify at least some young that do not belong to the nest owners, means that we are for the first time able to determine who are the females doing the egg-dumping. So far, five such females have been identified. These turn out to be associated in one way or another with the nest in which they have laid. Either they were hatched in that nest or a neighbouring one in a previous year, or they were previously mated to the male of that nest. Occasionally, nestlings have been found pecked to death, and we now know that this may be caused not by some other bird predator but by another starling. A male starling from a nest that had previously failed was observed visiting neighbouring nests before being chased off. Examination of the nests showed a number to have recently killed young. We are not yet sure why birds should practise this infanticide but suspect it causes the females to desert their nests and so be available for mating by that male. There is clearly more to the life of a starling than appears at first sight .....!

Peter Evans

## The Weather on Fair Isle in 1987

January	While much of the UK had a very cold and snowy month, with bitter east winds, the temperature was only a little below average on Fair Isle. The year's lowest air minimum $-4.5^{\circ}$ Celsius, occurred on 12th. A dry month, with predominantly north-westerly winds. The mean pressure of 1022.2mb was the highest on record for any January.
February	Cool, with frequent northerly winds and sunshine 121.3% of average. On 9th, with 5.5 hours, Fair Isle was the sunniest place in the UK – unusual for winter. Snow lay from 14th to 18th, with 7cms – the greatest snow depth – on 17th, and again on 23rd. On 16th, above the snow surface, the temperature fell to $-7.1^{\circ}$ Celsius.
March	Coldest and wettest March on record! Rainfall was 164% of normal. Winds often from south-east during the first half of the month, later northerly, bringing snow showers and snow cover on five days.
April	After a cold start with snow showers, winds became south-west to westerly in direction. As a result this was the warmest April on record though rather cloudy. Rainfall was only 82.5% of average.
May	For most of the month a persistent blocking anticyclone was present to the west or north-west of the British Isles, resulting in winds from a northerly quarter for almost 80% of the time and few easterlies or south-easterlies. Otherwise an average month.
June	Cool, dry and sunny with 60.7% of average rainfall and 129.2% normal sunshine. The 14th was the sunniest day of the year when 16.9 hours of sunshine were reported. Though very light – with a monthly mean speed of only 8.2 knots it was the calmest month ever – winds were frequently from a north-westerly direction.
July	Though unsettled over much of Europe, Fair Isle again fared much better. On 5th the temperature reached $15.9^{\circ}$ Celsius – the highest of the year. Rainfall for the month was 124% of average but there were 14 dry days, and only 4 days with no sun. The most frequent wind directions were south-easterly and north westerly.
August	A high frequency of north to north-westerly winds resulted in a cooler than average month. Rainfall was 119.5% of average. There was a gale on 30th, while the first frost of autumn occurred on 31st.
September	With 155.1% of the average this was the sunniest September on record – only two days without sun. Temperatures were close to the normal, while rainfall was only 90% of average. Most unusually no gales were recorded, and the most frequent wind was southerly.
October	This was the month when high winds created such havoc over south and south-east England. Here on Fair Isle the incidence of gales was well below normal. While rainfall totals were up to three times the normal over parts of southern England, we only had 141.9% of normal. The 7th was the wettest day of the year – 30.0mm in 24 hours (Lerwick recorded 75mm on the same day). Winds were again frequently southerly.
November	A sunny, dry and mild month. The last ten days brought a change from frequent southerly winds to northerlies, with some wintery showers and night frosts, the grass minimum falling to $-7.1^{\circ}$ Celsius on 26th.
December	The month started cool with an intense anticyclone over or near to Fair Isle. As this drifted away wintery showers were quickly replaced by milder weather as southerly to westerly winds became established for the remainder of the month. Overall the month was mild, with 140.4% of normal sunshine and 94.3% of the average rainfall.

# Meteorological data for Fair Isle 1987

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	YEAR
<b>Temperature (° Celsius)</b>													
Maximum	8.1	7.5	8.5	11.9	12.5	14.4	15.9	15.0	14.4	12.8	11.5	10.7	
Minimum	-4.5	-3.1	-2.6	1.7	1.1	4.1	5.9	7.4	4.1	3.2	0.1	0.9	
<b>Rainfall (millimeters)</b>													
Monthly	77.8	56.4	127.7	36.4	37.4	23.8	53.9	63.8	88.3	152.7	76.5	103.6	898.3
Maximum Daily fall	21.9	11.8	22.9	9.4	7.6	8.6	15.1	11.5	13.6	30.0	13.7	12.3	
<b>Sunshine (hours)</b>													
Total	23.3	71.8	103.0	121.2	204.6	214.0	144.6	134.6	165.4	76.7	45.7	21.3	1326.2
Maximum Daily	5.0	6.8	10.6	11.6	15.0	16.9	15.9	13.1	11.2	7.6	5.8	5.3	
<b>Wind speed (knots)</b>													
Mean	15.6	14.5	18.4	10.7	13.1	8.2	11.6	11.1	14.3	16.0	11.9	13.6	17.7
Maximum Gust	55	53	63	47	54	38	54	57	47	60	70	66	
<b>Number of days</b>													
Hail	12	9	16	2	6	0	0	0	3	3	9	3	63
Snow/sleet	17	12	19	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	57
Snow lying	8	6	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	20
Rain, >.1mm	20	22	21	10	15	15	15	19	22	23	24	25	231
Wet, >.9mm	14	13	21	7	9	6	9	13	18	19	13	19	161
Ground frost	14	13	14	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	5	6	59
<b>Wind (direction at 09hr)</b>													
North	6	6	4	0	6	5	2	6	1	1	5	4	46
North East	0	3	0	4	5	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	17
East	5	0	1	5	1	5	6	3	2	3	1	0	32
South East	4	5	9	3	2	3	5	5	4	10	2	4	56
South	3	1	6	4	0	1	1	1	8	11	6	8	50
South West	3	5	4	7	2	0	4	2	4	2	4	3	40
West	6	3	2	6	8	4	5	7	6	2	7	9	65
North West	3	5	5	0	6	10	7	5	5	1	4	2	53

## Cetacean records in 1987

**Minke Whale** *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*. One seen on the crossing on 2nd June.

**Sperm Whale** *Physeter macrocephalus*. A dead one was seen from the *Good Shepherd* about 7 km N of Fair Isle on 25th June.

**Porpoise** *Phocoena phocoena*. From the isle there were 2 off Buness on 7th May, 2 off South Light on 11th May & 1 off Buness on 2nd July. 3-4 swam south on 25th October. On the crossing there was one on 12th May & 23rd July, 2 on 17th & 18th August, 3 on 22nd and 1 on 24th August.

**Pilot Whale** *Globicephala melaena*. A school of over 20 moved slowly south off the west side of the isle on 9th November.

**Killer Whale** *Orcinus orca*. 3 immatures or cows were seen off South Light on 10th October.

**White-beaked Dolphin** *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*. Not identified from the isle, but seen on virtually every *Good Shepherd* trip between 2nd June and early September when first two, then increasing numbers were attracted to ride on the bow wave, often for ten minutes and occasionally much longer. The peak count was at least 14 on 18th August. A school of about 50 was seen off Sumburgh on 22nd August. At least 4 joined the *Good Shepherd* on the crossing on 24th December.

**Risso's Dolphin** *Grampus griseus*. 4 or 5 were seen a few miles south of Sumburgh on the crossing on 15th September.

**Unidentified Dolphins**: 3 large rather pale grey individuals on 26th August were probably Risso's Dolphins. 2 unidentified dolphins were off Buness on 10th October, 10 on 20th October and one on 6th November.

Nick Riddiford

## Moths on Fair Isle, 1987

Very little is known of the Fair Isle moth fauna. There are a few casual records residing in the FIBO card index, but the only attempt at systematic study dates back to a very brief period of four days in early September 1955 (Hardy 1956). First steps were taken to remedy this situation in 1987 when a mercury vapour moth trap was added to the Observatory's facilities. The trap was first used on 22nd July and was set on all suitable nights (and some less suitable ones) thereafter to early November.

The first half-season's work, the results of which are given in Table 1, must be seen as preliminary. However, certain data and patterns are already emerging. None of the captures could be classed as unexpected or rare. The results suggested a small range of resident species, with imagines on the wing for a relatively brief time in late summer (though no data is yet available before late July). The highest total of captures was 75 macro moths on 10th August, a still, overcast night. Calm nights were few in September and October, but even on calm overcast nights few or no moths were trapped, suggesting that the local season was at an end. The only certain migrant was a Dark Sword-grass on 5th November, a night when 16 Silver-Y moths *Autographa gamma* were attracted through an open window to a 40 watt light bulb, yet none came to the MV trap!

Table 1: Macro Moth captures in Fair Isle MV Light Trap, 1987

	A	B	C	D	E	F
No. of Nights	7	11	9	5	5	5
<b>Small Fan-footed Wave</b>	1					
<i>Idaea biselata</i>						
<b>Red Carpet</b>		1				
<i>Xanthorhoe munitata hethlandica</i>						
<b>Silver-ground Carpet</b>	1					
<i>Xanthorhoe montanata shetlandica</i>						
<b>Garden Carpet</b>		3				
<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata f. thulei</i>						
<b>Dark Sword-grass</b>						1
<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>						
<b>Northern Rustic</b>	8	18	24			
<i>Standfussiana lucerneae</i>						
<b>Large Yellow Underwing</b>	1	1	2	1		
<i>Noctua pronuba</i>						
<b>Autumnal Rustic</b>		76	43			
<i>Paradiarsia glareosa</i>						
<b>True Lover's Knot</b>	30	12	1			
<i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i>						
<b>Ingrailed Clay</b>	7	46	9			
<i>Diarsia mendica</i>						
<b>Square-spot Rustic</b>	1	18	25	2		
<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>						
<b>Antler</b>	4	25	40	2		
<i>Cerapteryx graminis</i>						
<b>Dark Arches</b>	1	13	1			
<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>						
<b>The Exile</b>	1					
<i>Apamea maillardi exulis</i>						
<b>The Confused</b>	1	7	4			
<i>Apamea furva britannica</i>						

KEY

A: 21st-31st July                      D: 1st-15th September  
 B: 1st-15th August                  E: 16th-30th September  
 C: 16th-31st August                F: 1st October-7th November

Table 1 clearly shows the periods of emergence for imagines of the commoner species. True Lover's Knot dominated among earlier captures but died away rapidly in August. Autumnal Rustic did not appear until August but then became the commonest moth averaging 6.9 captures per night in the first half of the month. Antler and Square-spot Rustic numbers increased as August wore on. Ingrailed Clay was only common in the first half of August while Northern Rustic was trapped in low numbers throughout the period, though with strongest numbers of 2.7 per night in the second half of August.

Many of the moths trapped were northern isles variants. All the Northern Rustics were of a uniformly dark form. Autumnal Rustics came in two forms, 76% of captures being the nominate form and 24% the Shetland form *P.g.edda*. Polymorphism seemed to be the rule for the Ingrailed Clay. Both the nominate form and the Shetland form *D.m.thulei* were trapped in good numbers. One *D.m.orkneyensis* was trapped and there were several of an attractive blackberry-coloured intermediate type. Varieties of other species trapped are given in Table 1.

Table 2: Other invertebrates identified among MV Light Trap captures

	A	B	C	D
<b>Micro Moths</b>				
<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	2	14		
(Diamond-backed Moth)				
<i>Scoparia ambigualis</i>		17	6	
<b>Caddisflies (Tricoptera)</b>				
<i>Stenophylax permistus</i>		9	6	
<i>Limnephilus sparsus</i>		2	5	
<b>Beetles (Coleoptera)</b>				
<i>Sitona lineatus</i>	8	1		
<i>Hoplia philanthus</i>		1		
<b>Spiders (Arachnida)</b>				
<i>Oedothorax fuscus</i>				1

#### KEY

As for Table 1

A considerable number of diptera and, smaller numbers of other invertebrates were also trapped. Micro moths were frequently represented and two were readily identifiable (see Table 2). The majority of micro moths and other invertebrates were not identified. All the caddisflies were identified and two of the beetles (a small weevil and a female scarabid). A full list of identified species is given in Table 2.

### Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to Pat Sellar and Brendan O'Brien for instigating the study by supplying the MV trap and associated equipment; to John Blackburn of the Freshwater Biological Association for identifying and preparing specimens for the caddis identifications; and to Edward Milner for the spider identification.

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Nick Riddiford



# A Provisional Check-List of Fair Isle Bryophytes

## Introduction

Although summaries of Fair Isle vascular plants (Scott 1972), lichens (Duncan 1963) and fungi (Watling and Riddiford 1986, 1987) are available no compilation of the island's bryophyte flora has hitherto been attempted. However, unpublished records, the earliest of which date from 1959, are held at the bird observatory. The present paper arose from fieldwork by ML in September 1986. During that time, mosses and liverworts were collected from a range of localities, but especially from Gilseter, Gill o'Funniequoy and Wirvie. The resulting specimens have been determined by CW, with those species added to the island list being checked by T.L. Blockeel. The 1986 data have been incorporated with the available earlier records to form the provisional check-list presented here. Alongside the name of each species, the year of the most recent record is given. There is some doubt about the year of some of the species listed in the unpublished details but, as they probably date from 1959, they are included here as '? 1959'. Species enclosed in square brackets require to be confirmed as occurring on Fair Isle. The sequence and nomenclature of the following list accords with Corley and Hill (1981).

## Check-list of Species

### HEPATICA

*Conocephalum conicum* (L.) Lindb. 1986  
*Aneura pinguis* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*(Pellia) epiphylla* (L.) Corda ?1959  
*Lophozia ventricosa* (Dicks.) Dum. 1959  
*Gymnocolea inflata* (Huds.) Dum. 1959  
*(Jungermannia) atrovirens* Dum. ?1959  
*Nardia scalaris* S. Gray 1986  
*Plagiochila porelloides*  
 (Torrey ex Nees) Lindenb. 1986  
*Lophocolea bidentata* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*(Chiloscyphus) polyanthus* (L.) Dum.  
 ?1959  
*Saccogyna viticulosa* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*Diplophyllum albicans* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*Scapania undulata* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*S. gracilis* Lindb. 1986  
*Cephaloziella* sp. ?1959  
*Cephalozia bicuspidata* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*Calypogeia muellerana*  
 (Schiffn.) K. Muell. 1986  
*C. trichomanis* (L.) Corda *sensu lato* ?1959  
*C. fissa* (L.) Raddi 1986  
*Frullania tamarisci* (L.) Dum. 1986  
*Lejeunea patens* Lindb. 1959

### MUSCI

*Sphagnum palustre* L. 1962  
*S. fimbriatum* Wils. 1986  
*S. subnitens* Russ. & Warnst. 1986  
*S. auriculatum*  
 var. *auriculatum* Schimp. 1986  
*S. cuspidatum* Hoffm. 1962  
*Polytrichum alpinum* Hedw. ?1959  
*P. piliferum* Hedw. ?1959  
*P. juniperinum* Hedw. 1986

*Pogonatum aloides*  
 (Hedw.) P. Beauv. 1986  
*P. urnigerum* (Hedw.) P. Beauv. 1962  
*Ceratodon purpureus* (Hedw.) Brid. 1959  
*Dichodontium pellucidum*  
 (Hedw.) Schimp. 1986  
*Dicranella palustris*  
 (Dicks.) Crundw. ex Warb. 1986  
*D. cerviculata* (Hedw.) Schimp. 1962  
*D. heteromalla* (Hedw.) Schimp. 1986  
*Dicranum bonjeanii* De Not. ?1959  
*D. scoparium* Hedw. 1986  
*D. majus* Sm. 1986  
*Campylopus paradoxus* Wils. 1977  
*C. atrovirens* De Not. ?1959  
*Fissidens osmundoides* Hedw. 1959  
*F. taxifolius* Hedw. ?1959  
*Tortula muralis* Hedw. 1977  
*Pottia heimii* (Hedw.) Fuernr. 1962  
*Barbula unguiculata* Hedw. 1962  
*Trichostomum brachydontium* Bruch 1986  
*Tortella flavovirens* (Bruch) Broth. 1962  
*Schistidium maritimum*  
 (Turn.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*Grimmia trichophylla* Grev. 1977  
*Racomitrium lanuginosum*  
 (Hedw.) Brid. 1986  
*Funaria obtusa* (Hedw.) Lindb. 1986  
*(Bryum) pallens* Sw. 1962  
*B. capillare* Hedw. 1959  
*B. pseudotriquetrum*  
 (Hedw.) Schwaegr. 1986  
*Mnium hornum* Hedw. 1986  
*Rhizomnium punctatum*  
 (Hedw.) Kop. ?1959

- Aulacomnium palustre*  
 (Hedw.) Schwaegr. 1986  
*Bartramia ithyphylla* Brid. ?1959  
*Philonotis fontana* (Hedw.) Brid. 1959  
*Ulotia phyllantha* Brid. 1977  
*Fontinalis antipyretica* Hedw. 1986  
*Thuidium tamariscinum*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*Cratoneuron filicinum*  
 (Hedw.) Spruce 1962  
*C. commutatum* (Hedw.) Roth 1980  
*Campyllum stellatum*  
 (Hedw.) J. Lange & C. Jens. 1959  
*Drepanocladus fluitans*  
 (Hedw.) Warnst. 1962  
*D. exannulatus* (Br. Eur.) Warnst. 1959  
*D. revolvens* (Sw.) Warnst. 1959  
*D. uncinatus* (Hedw.) Warnst. 1986  
*Scorpidium scorpidioides*  
 (Hedw.) Limpr. ?1959  
*Calliergon cuspidatum*  
 (Hedw.) Kindb. 1986  
*Isoetecium myosuroides*  
 var. *brachythecioides* (Dix.) Braithw. 1986  
*Homalothecium sericeum*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*Brachythecium rutabulum*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. ?1959  
*B. rivulare* Br. Eur. 1962  
*Pseudoscleropodium purum*  
 (Hedw.) Fleisch 1986  
*Rhynchoszegium riparioides*  
 (Hedw.) C. Jens. 1986  
*Eurhynchium praelongum*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*Plagiothecium denticulatum*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*P. undulatum* (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986  
*Hypnum cupressiforme* Hedw. 1986  
*H. jutlandicum* Holmen & Warncke 1986  
*Ctenidium molluscum* (Hedw.) Mitt. 1959  
*Rhytidiadelphus triquetrus*  
 (Hedw.) Warnst. 1986  
*R. squarrosus* (Hedw.) Warnst. 1986  
*R. loreus* (Hedw.) Warnst. ?1959  
*Pleurozium schreberi* (Brid.) Mitt. ?1959  
*Hylocomnium splendens*  
 (Hedw.) Br. Eur. 1986

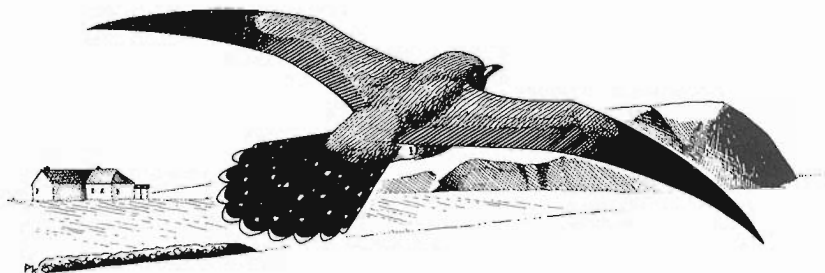
#### Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to N.J. Riddiford, F.I.B.O. warden, for permission to use the records held at the observatory. Gratitude is also expressed to T.L. Bockeel for checking the specimens submitted to him for verification, and for inspecting a draft of the list before publication.

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Colin Wall and Martin Limbert



# A Mammalogist's Impressions of Fair Isle

As a collector of remote islands, Fair Isle has been on my wish list for some time. I came from the United States as a biologist, but mediocre birdspotter with no working knowledge of bird studies or ringing techniques.

The nature of Fair Isle Bird Observatory permits flexibility of experience. One is allowed, independent of past experience, to participate in the functioning of the observatory, or at least to observe that functioning. Even with diverse backgrounds ranging from avian illiterates to experienced bird ringers on holiday, the thrill of special bird-related experiences was shared and enhanced in the sharing.

The trapping of a Long-eared Owl comes to mind. Nick called us together before breakfast for the ringing, photo session and ultimate release. For me the release was most rewarding. The spectacular bird silently lifted off and, without panic, gained its freedom. In this, there was a common bond generated among the family whose previous bird experience tended towards robins, and the observatory staff, some of whom had seen these owls many times before, and myself. The bird in its lingering departure flight held us suspended and allowed us to share its closeness and return to freedom. The transfixed looks of the observers said it all.

Likewise it was a special thrill for me to hold, for the first time, a captured bird (redwing), to sense its frail nature and warmth unstruggling in my hand, and after the ringing, to set it free unharmed. It burst into flight, back to its own world.

Adrian del Nevo's presence at FIBO while completing studies on the feeding and reproductive biology of Guillemots enhanced my visit considerably. He provided a visual, erudite, and even humorous window to Guillemot biology. Also, through his live-trapping efforts, I was introduced to the endemic Fair Isle Mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus fridariensis*. As a mammalogist this represented a rather exciting new species 'tick'.

One of the pleasures of Fair Isle is its relatively small size which allows one to experience the dramatic scenery, wildlife and friendly local people on foot and in fairly short order. My week allowed me to better sense the workings and short-term rhythms of FIBO and the island itself.

Tangential to my bird experiences a rare moment occurred by North Light on the cliffs at sunset. Below the horizon a three-masted sailing vessel moved slowly across the calm golden sea. It was framed by the black silhouetted cliffs of Fair Isle around me and skerries below me. Foula loomed dimly on the distant horizon. Powerful stuff indeed for an incurable romantic and the perfect culmination of an unforgettable week.

Robert J. Howe

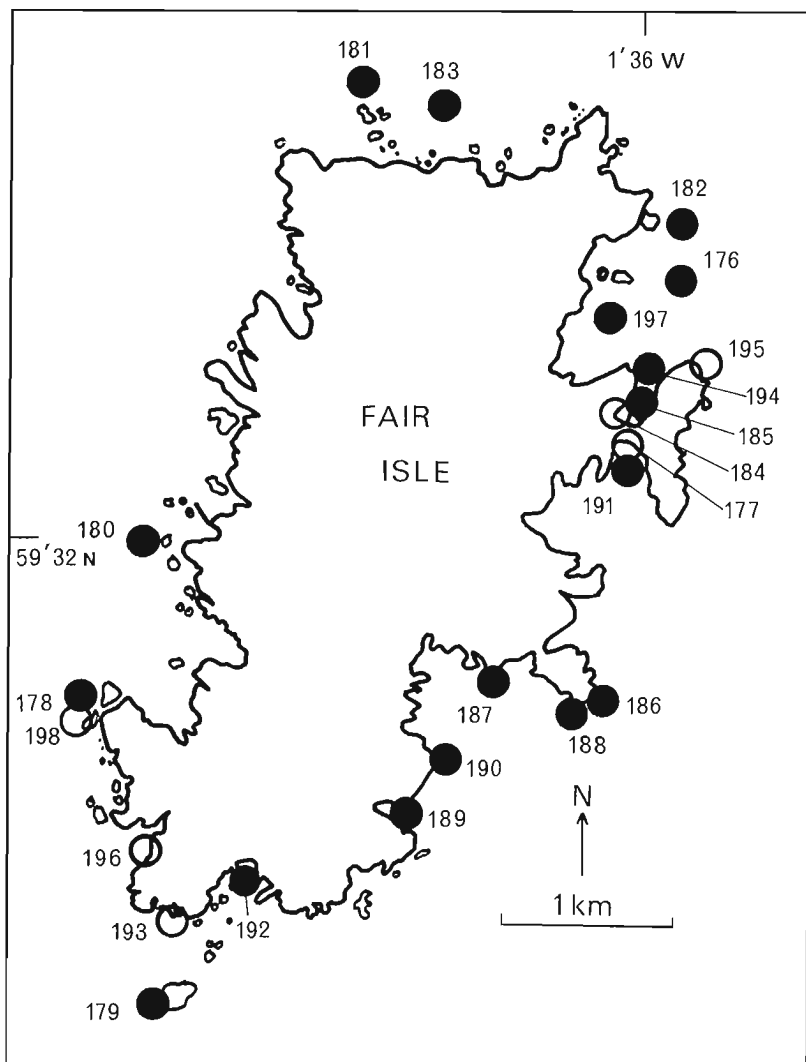


Fig. 1. Location of sites surveyed. Littoral sites are shown by open circles, sublittoral sites by closed circles.

# Marine biological surveys in Fair Isle

## Introduction

During 1986 and 1987, the Nature Conservancy Council undertook surveys in Shetland, Foula and Fair Isle to describe the range of marine habitats and communities present there. These surveys followed many other studies of marine biology, the earliest of which were the dredging activities of naturalists in the mid 19th century. However, on Fair Isle, the only recorded marine biological research was the work of Burrows *et al* (1954) who described the distribution of algae on shores and of Burrows (1963) who listed marine algae from Fair Isle. Powell (1957) also describes algal communities on Fair Isle in his work on the genus *Fucus*. This note records the sites visited (Fig. 1) and some of the main conclusions. A full report is in preparation; copies of this will be deposited at the Observatory.

## Methods

Survey was undertaken by a team of five biologists on 15, 16 and 17 August 1987 and continued by K. Hiscock on 18, 19 and 20 August. Sites were selected from maps and charts to include as wide a range of habitats as possible in the time available. Access to sites was by inflatable boats. At each site, records were made of the main habitats encountered and the abundance of all conspicuous species observed in each was recorded. Surveys were undertaken from the splash zone of the littoral to a maximum depth of 39m below chart datum in the sublittoral.

## Results

The location of the six littoral and seventeen sublittoral sites surveyed is shown in Fig. 1. The predominantly rocky shores of Fair Isle provided littoral sites ranging from those extremely exposed to wave action to those which were fairly sheltered. This contrast was most clearly observed, over distances as small as a few tens of metres, near to the south lighthouse. Rockpool and crevice communities were also well developed on this shore. The coast of Fair Isle provided the best examples of exposed rocky shore communities encountered in our surveys of Shetland, Foula and Fair Isle with populations of *Fucus disticus* subsp. *anceps* and *F. spiralis* f. *nana* particularly well developed.

Sublittoral rock on the open coast generally extended from a steep broken shore to more level sand or boulder areas at 20 to 30m. The sublittoral fringe was well developed and, at the most exposed sites, extended to 7m. Rocks were dominated by kelp forest *Laminaria hyperborea* on upward facing surfaces to a depth of about 20m with, at the most exposed sites, a band of foliose red algae and *Saccorhiza polyschides* extending further to about 25m. Vertical rock surfaces were dominated by the tube worm *Pomatoceros* sp and by the soft coral *Alcyonium digitatum*. At less exposed sites, the sea urchin *Echinus esculentus* was a dominant component of the communities present and rocks below the kelp were grazed to the layer of pink encrusting algae covering the rock. Caves extended into the sublittoral and the communities within them were well developed and characteristic of this habitat.

The communities encountered were very similar to those found on open coasts in Shetland although the extremely exposed conditions of most of the Fair Isle coast led to a predominance of communities typical of these conditions. Our work was necessarily brief and a great deal of interesting work remains to be done particularly on the broken shores which provide many littoral habitats.

## Acknowledgements

The survey work on Fair Isle was undertaken jointly by staff of the Nature Conservancy Council and Field Studies Council. Those taking part were David Connor, Sue

Hiscock, Keith Hiscock, Steve Howard, Tom Mercer and David Mills. We are grateful to the staff of the Bird Observatory for their help during our work and to Stuart Thompson for advice on diving sites and loan of equipment.

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Keith Hiscock

## Fossils on Fair Isle

An unusually calm crossing on the *Good Shepherd* in mid July saw the arrival on Fair Isle of a Palaeobotanist from Bristol University. The prime reason for this equally unusual visit was the collection of plant fossils from the Middle Devonian sediments which are exposed on the island. This rock, also known as Old Red Sandstone – usually anything but red! – is 350-370 million years old and can be divided into four lithostratigraphic groups. Put simply this means that four separate depositional events have led to the build up (vertically) of four sandstone types which are exposed horizontally across the island. The lowest (oldest) and highest (youngest) groups contain the plant fossils in the finer grained grey to buff sandstone found at Roskilie and Bunes respectively.

These sediments were laid down by eastward flowing, mainly braided, permanent rivers which formed the distal part of an alluvial fan close to a lake margin. On the edge of this lake and on the banks of the streams grew a 3 to 4 metre plant with an unbranched main stem of gymnospermlike wood (e.g. conifer) topped by a crown of fern-like foliage. Frequent catastrophic floods led to the deposition of this plant in the silts of the North Gavel fossil beds on Bunes. Palaeobotanists have called this plant *Svalbardia scotica*, a name derived from its original site of discovery on Svalbard (Spitzbergen), Norway. In terms of plant evolution it provides a link between the early plants and the ancestors of modern gymnosperms. The younger sediments at Roskilie, however, contain an even more primitive plant, named *Dawsonites roskiliensis*, resembling a squat bush consisting of unequally branched axes. Both species have been found as fertile material bearing small sporangia.

A collection of these has been made primarily from the Bunes site, which will form part of a PhD thesis examining the fossil flora of the whole of Orkney, Shetland and Caithness. Some *Svalbardia* material is also found on Shetland Mainland but not on Orkney, suggesting that the Old Red Sandstone of Fair Isle is of the same age as parts of the Walls sandstone of West Shetland. Both may have therefore evolved in the same depositional environment and their subsequent separations may be related to a dextral transcurrent movement of 60-80 km along a boundary fault across the Walls peninsula.

The fossils themselves will hopefully show spores within the sporangia of the fertile specimens. This is achieved by a process known as a transfer whereby the fossil

and matrix are embedded in resin leaving the reverse side exposed. The rock is then dissolved away using hydrofluoric acid leaving the organic material adhering to the resin. Sporangia are then picked off and stuck to a Scanning Electron Microscope stub, sputter coated with gold and examined. This should show spores *in situ*. These can then be matched with dispersed spores from rock sediments where fossil plants have not survived or were not deposited. Thus by linking the dispersed and *in situ* spores, the presence of the plant can be established in sediments containing only spore remains.

The significance of such research may at first seem obscure, however it does have applications within the oil industry. This is because the Old Red Sandstone is a prime source rock for oil deposits and any study that can help to correlate rock samples from spore data alone is of value in oil exploration. So if birdwatching begins to drag and no Lesser Kestrels or Greenish Warblers appear, spend a day looking for fossils – but please don't take too much, it is only a small island.

Ian Perry

## Heinkel Pilot visits Fair Isle

In last year's report, *A Brief History of Aviation on Fair Isle* ended with the question 'Who knows what excitement lies in store?' Little did the writer know then that Heinz Thurz, the Heinkel pilot, would soon be making his second and much happier landing on the isle, after an interval of 36 years. Thus it was that, in the late afternoon of 3rd May, with Brendan O'Brien at the controls, we touched down in a gusty North wind. Who should be first to greet Heinz and help him out of the little Jodel but Jimmy Stout (Midway), the self-same man who was on the scene to help him at the crash in January 1941.

In the ensuing week Heinz enjoyed meeting many of the islanders and charmed them with his twinkling sense of humour, never more evident than when Willie Eunson told him that the RAF rescue launch, specially sent for him and his two co-survivors, had struck a rock and sank as it approached the South harbour. It was Willie who next day rowed them out to the Lerwick life-boat.

The flight North from London had been a great adventure for Heinz, especially when he took over control several times. Flying up the Cumberland coast he announced with glee 'This is how we flew ze Heinkel' taking us right down to wave-top height with picnickers looking down at us from atop the sand dunes. Another magic moment was on the final approach to Fair Isle. Brendan and I, knowing just where to peer through the haze and relishing the prospect of breaking the news of the first sighting, had our navigational pride dashed at a stroke when Heinz suddenly announced: 'There is ze isle!' pointing an unerring finger at a very faint smudge. He had lost none of his flair over all those years.

During our week's stay, Heinz, myself, Brendan and Brendan's wife Clare, used the 4-seat Jodel to visit Out Skerries where Heinz addressed the school-children in class, and Lerwick to see where he was imprisoned for a while; and we made brief touch-downs at Fetlar and Foula. Heinz remarked on how useful the Skerries light-house had been as a landmark for the met-recce Heinkels in 1940.

A highlight of his stay was the visit, specially arranged by Anne Sinclair, to the Waterston Museum. Heinz was shown the Heinkel scrap-book which he duly enhanced with his signature. That evening turned into quite a social occasion at the observatory when Brendan entertained with stunning slides of his 5-month flying in the Antarctic.

Heinz' visit had good press coverage with Dennis Coutts, combining business with pleasure, taking the photographs of him standing beside what remains of the Heinkel. Articles appeared in *The Shetland Times* and *The Press & Journal*. A recorded interview by Anne Sinclair went out over BBC Radio Shetland.

With a day or two to spare before he had to fly back to his home in Cologne, it was deemed necessary to adjust his perspective a little by showing him a Hurricane. This was duly achieved by a visit to the RAF Museum in Hendon but there was a complete Heinkel there too, standing directly opposite.

Heinz has since written to many of his new-found friends expressing great pleasure with his visit. We all hope to see him again.

*Pat Sellar*



*Heinz Thurz examines the remains of his Heinkel.*

*Photo: Dennis Coutts*



# Miscellany

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Paul Harvey, Assistant Warden 1984-85, and Elizabeth Eastham, voluntary worker in 1985, on their marriage in August; and to Liz High, 1981 Cook, who was married this autumn.

## FIBO Sweatshirts and T Shirts

Good quality T shirts and sweatshirts, decorated with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory logo, were introduced in 1986. They proved so popular that for a time we struggled to keep pace with demand. We have caught up and currently have in stock both garments in a variety of sizes and colours. Details and order forms can be obtained from T Shirt offer, Fair Isle Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland. Tel. 035 12 258.

## Vignettes

The vignettes have been supplied by Bill Morton (Sandwich Tern, Kittiwake and Little Auk, Subalpine Warbler, Yellow-browed Warbler and croft, Ortolan Bunting), Paul Leonard (Cuckoo, Yellow-browed Warbler and Yellow-breasted Bunting) and Paul Salaman (Sanderling, Citrine Wagtail, Eye-browed Thrush, Arctic Warbler, Lapland Bunting). Two of the artists have been featured in past reports while Paul Salaman is a youngster who demonstrated his talent during a stay at the Observatory last autumn. We thank them all for their skilful pieces.

## Past Reports

The Observatory holds a virtually complete set of FIBO reports and bulletins for reference purposes. Unfortunately there are some gaps. The gaps are as follows: 1951 and 1963 reports, Bulletin 1 (the very first), Bulletins Volume 1 No 2, Volume 1 No 5, Volume 1 No 6. We would most gratefully receive any of these from persons no longer having any use for them and wishing to donate them to the FIBO collection.

## 'Errata', 1986 Report

*Page 61:* only partial recovery details were given for Lesser Black-backed Gull. Those omitted are xL (= found dead, not recent) 19.06.85.

*Page 64:* In the Total Island Census table the % change is incorrect for four species. The species concerned and the correct % change are as follows: Gannet up 3125%; Bonxie up 300%; Common Gull up 500%; Common Tern up 271%.

## Acknowledgements

Once again I would like to express our gratitude to all the islanders, visitors, friends and benefactors whose considerable help, advice and support have been of such vital importance to the smooth running and work of the Observatory.

## Publications

The following were published in 1987 by or with the assistance of FIBO staff and facilities.

### Migration

Adriaensen, F. The timing of Robin migration in Belgium as shown by ringing recoveries. *Ringling & Migration* 8: 43-55.

Aspinall, S. Savannah Sparrow on Fair Isle — The second British record. *Twitching* 1: 337-338.

Baker, J. K. & Catley, G. P. Yellow-browed Warblers in Britain and Ireland, 1968-85. *Brit. Birds* 80: 93-109.

Ellis, P. Recent Reports. *Scottish Bird News* No 6 (June 1987): 3.

Fox, A. D. & Aspinall, S. J. Pomarine Skuas in Britain and Ireland in autumn 1985. *Brit. Birds* 80: 404-421.

Gantlett, S. September on Fair Isle. *Twitching* 1: 303-310.

Glue, D. & Whittington, P. Long-eared Owls invade East Coast. *BTO News* 148 (January-February 1987): 1.

Heavisides, A. British and Irish Merlin recoveries, 1911-1984. *Ringling & Migration* 8: 29-41.

Millington, R. Those Luscious Lusciniias. *Twitching* 1: 151-152.

Murray, R. D. Bluethroats in Scotland during 1985. *Scott. Birds* 14: 168-174.

Pitches, A. Lesser Kestrel on Fair Isle, A Naumann's Conquest. *Twitching* 1: 178-179.

### Identification

Osborn, K. Moulting on upperparts of a Paddyfield Warbler. *Brit. Birds* 80: 634-635.

Riddiford, N. Nightingale resembling Thrush Nightingale. *Brit. Birds* 80: 74.

### Seabirds

Birkhead, T. R. & Del Nevo, A. J. Egg formation and the pre-laying period of the Common Guillemot *Uria aalge*. *J. Zool. London* 211: 83-88.

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Peterz, M. & Olden, B. Origin and mortality of Guillemots *Uria aalge* on the Swedish west coast. *Seabird* 10: 22-27.

Tasker, M., Webb, A., Hall, A. J., Pienkowski, M. W. & Langslow, D. R. *Seabirds in the North Sea*. NCC Peterborough.

Wanless, S. A survey of the numbers and breeding distribution of the North Atlantic gannet *Sula bassana* and an assessment of the changes which have occurred since Operation Seafarer 1969/70. *Research & survey in nature conservation* 4. NCC Peterborough.

## Faunistics

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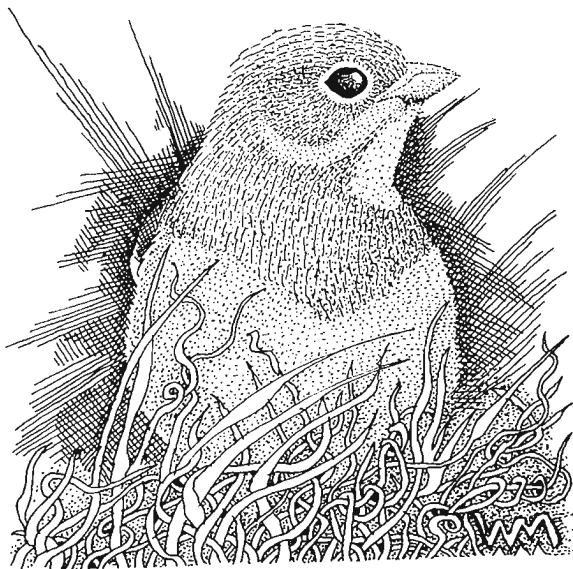
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## Just out or coming shortly!

### **Fair Isle Survey Reports**

The fourth, and final, Interim Report on the 1984-87 survey of sites and monuments, carried out by a Bradford University team led by Dr John Hunter, is now available. Providing a full and detailed documentation of all sites discovered during systematic field-walking of the island, these Interim Reports (School of Archaeological Sciences Occasional Papers 5, 6, 7 and 8) can be obtained from The University of Bradford, Bradford, W. Yorks BD7 1DP, price £2.50 each.

### **A new Fair Isle Guidebook**

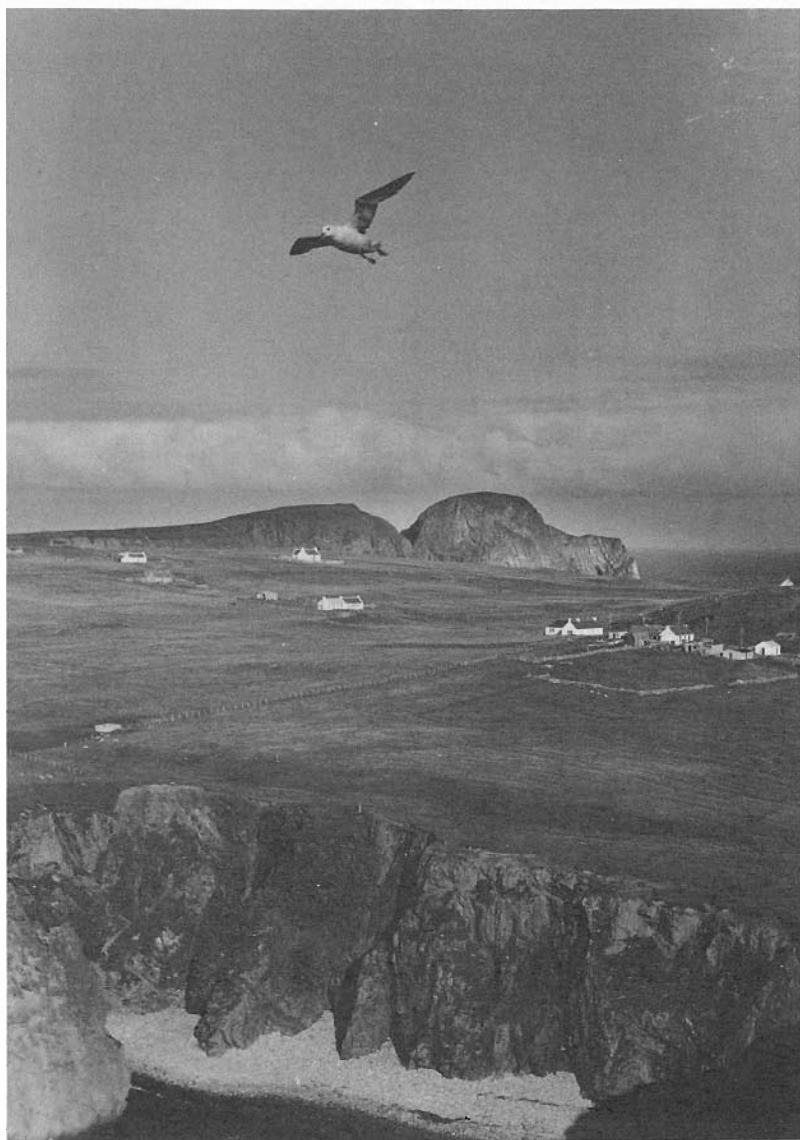
The National Trust for Scotland is about to publish its first guidebook to Fair Isle. Costing £1.50 and in full-colour, the booklet will be available in May.

### **FAIR ISLE – an island saga**

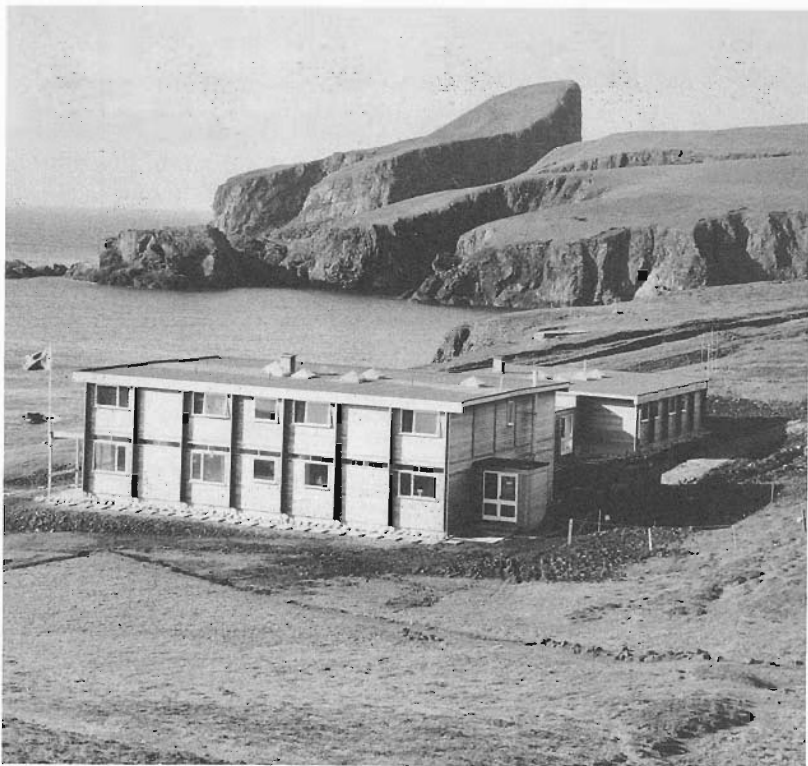
As many "Friends" are probably aware, George Waterston had planned to write a book about his beloved island. From the time of his first visit, in the mid-1930s, he made notes, collected news cuttings, and compiled an extensive bibliography. For a long time he was too actively busy to settle down to writing and, sadly, when he was eventually forced by ill-health to be more static he was not fit enough to tackle the task of converting his accumulated mass of data into a book. Some of the archival material he had assembled was used in "Fair Isle – a photographic history", which he started to work on only 8 months before he died in 1980. Eventually published in 1983, this book serves as an appetiser, but itself barely scratches the surface of the fascinating Fair Isle story.

After George's death Irene picked up the threads and had made some progress with drafting before she, too, became ill and died, leaving all the boxes and files of Fair Isle data to FIBOT. It seemed a shame to abandon the idea of a book covering all aspects of island life, so I started going through the material and considering how best to deal with it. The outcome was a proposal for a 'popular' (ie non-academic) book telling the story of island life, past and present, and illuminating the reasons for, and effects of, the changes which have taken place over the last few centuries. Work on this is now well in hand – with friends on the island kindly checking drafts to ensure accuracy – and John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, expect to publish it in spring 1989. It is my hope that "Fair Isle - an island saga" will not only meet the need for an up-to-date book about the isle but will also adequately document the part played by George, FIBOT and the NTS in helping the island to reach its present flourishing state.

*Valerie M. Thom*



*Looking across the Isle towards Sheep Craig, from Malcolm's Head. Recent visitors will have seen many changes since this photo was taken in 1962. Photo: Pat Sellar*



*Fair Isle Bird Observatory Lodge in 1969. Photo: Dennis Coutts*

## **More "FRIENDS OF FAIR ISLE" needed!**

It is many years since FIBOT organised a drive for new "Friends" and inevitably our ranks have been thinning. With plans for a bigger and better Observatory just around the corner it seems appropriate now to remind readers of this Report just what being a "Friend of Fair Isle" means.

The idea of having "Friends" who, by paying an annual subscription, would help to finance the Fair Isle Bird Observatory, was – needless to say – one of George Waterston's inspirations, when he was seeking finance to get the place going. In response to the initial Appeal, 485 people became "Friends" – sadly, the list is now down to about 300. The minimum annual subscription in the early days was one guinea; now, nearly 40 years later, it is still only £5 – although quite a few "Friends" generously give more than this. "Friends" were – and still are – entitled to a copy of the Annual Report, and also now receive a late summer Newsletter, giving up-to-date information on Observatory affairs. "Friends" (as distinct from members of an organisation) do not become involved in administration or decision-making, unless they become members of the organising set-up – in this case the Board of Directors. But as they are not "members" of FIBOT Ltd they have no financial responsibility in the event of the organisation collapsing.

It is surely not asking much of those who visit and enjoy Fair Isle that they should find the small sum necessary to become a "Friend of Fair Isle" and in so doing help to ensure the future of something which has not only contributed greatly to ornithological knowledge but has also played an important part in the economy of a very special island. IF YOU ARE NOT ALREADY A 'FRIEND' PLEASE BECOME ONE NOW – AND IF YOU ARE, PERSUADE SOMEONE ELSE TO JOIN. By covenancing your subscription, for a minimum of 4 years, you enable FIBOT, a registered charity, to reclaim the income tax you have already paid, which greatly increases the value to FIBOT at no extra cost to yourself. A membership form is enclosed; enquiries and subscriptions will be welcomed by our Membership Secretary:

**Miss Pat Webster, Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust,  
21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.**

## **Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust (A company limited by guarantee)**

### **Treasurer's Report & Accounts**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

The Trust's accounts for the year to 31st October 1987, set out below, are based on full accounts which have been examined by our auditors, Coopers & Lybrand, who have reported on the full statutory accounts, a set of which may be obtained from the Trust's headquarters.

The Trust sustained an operating deficit of £1,994 (£1,011 in 1986). The Directors have approved a budget for 1987/88 which seeks to ensure that the Trust balances income and expenditure for the year ended 31st October, 1988.

During the year the "first phase" improvements to the hostel, begun in 1986, were completed. The total cost of these improvements amounted to £42,936. The Directors are very grateful indeed to the following bodies who contributed towards these costs:-

The Countryside Commission for Scotland  
The Highlands & Islands Development Board  
The Pilgrim Trust  
The Shetland Amenity Trust  
The Shetland Islands Council

These improvements could not have been funded without the generous support of these bodies; in total they have been funded as follows: –

Grants received	£29,206
Utilisation of FIBOT brought forward	
"provision for future expenditure"	7,541
Net amount funded by FIBOT	<u>6,189</u>
	<u>£42,936</u>

The "second phase" improvements are the subject of the Jubilee Appeal.

## Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust Ltd

### Income & Expenditure Account for the year to 31st October 1987

	1987	1986
	£	£
<b>Contributed Income</b>		
Subscriptions from Friends of Fair Isle (incl. tax recovered)	1,013	
Donations	812	
Investment income	2,220	
National Trust for Scotland Grant	750	
Bank and other interest	33	
Royalties	186	
Total Contributed Income	<u>5,014</u>	<u>6,760</u>
<b>Hostel Account</b>		
Accommodation charges received	38,068	34,735
Supplies and stocks purchased	11,545	11,723
Salaries	13,737	7,904
NCC grant for seabird monitoring	(1,500)	(1,500)
Lighting and heating	2,973	3,968
Property outgoings: –		
Rates	66	78
Insurance	206	267
Repairs and renewals	2,474	2,522
Depreciation of hostel building and other fixed assets	7,167	4,751
Depreciation credit in respect of grants received	<u>(4,111)</u>	<u>(2,603)</u>
	<u>32,557</u>	<u>27,110</u>
<b>Net surplus on hostel account</b>	<u>5,511</u>	<u>7,625</u>
<b>Surplus before ornithological, promotion and admin. expenses</b>		
<b>Ornithological and promotional expenses</b>		
Annual report and other publications	1,436	2,441
Motor and boat expenses	1,263	1,220
Travel and subsistence	2,075	1,797
Bird ring costs	283	1,474
Advertising and subscriptions	<u>1,275</u>	<u>1,824</u>
	(6,332)	<u>(8,756)</u>



<b>Administration expenses</b>		
Edinburgh secretarial services	1,000	500
Printing and stationery	403	807
Telephone and posts	1,236	1,012
Directors' travelling expenses	259	773
Sundries	129	592
Audit fee	300	150
Accountancy and book-keeping	2,500	2,199
Legal	360	612
	<u>(6,187)</u>	<u>(6,645)</u>
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>(1,994)</b>	<b>(1,016)</b>
Appeal Fund Income	828	–
<b>Net operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>(1,166)</b>	<b>(1,016)</b>
Release of provision for future expenditure	7,541	–
Transfer to Appeal Fund	<u>(828)</u>	<u>–</u>
<b>Amount transferred to/(from) reserves</b>	<b><u>£5,547</u></b>	<b><u>£(1,016)</u></b>

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1987

	<b>1987</b>	<b>1986</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Investment at cost	<u>10,548</u>	<u>10,548</u>
Fixed assets at written down value		
Heritable property	88,242	62,582
Plant and equipment	870	2,847
Garage and tank house	10,072	10,510
Motor vehicles	<u>1,797</u>	<u>2,683</u>
Total fixed assets	<u>100,981</u>	<u>78,622</u>
Current assets	17,367	30,532
Less: –		
Current liabilities (under one year)		
Creditors and accruals	11,449	12,056
Grants received but not released to income and expenditure account	<u>4,111</u>	<u>1,628</u>
Net current assets	<u>1,807</u>	<u>16,848</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	113,336	106,018
Creditors due after one year (Note 1)	(23,139)	(14,655)
Provision for future expenditure	<u>–</u>	<u>(7,541)</u>
Total net assets	<u>£90,197</u>	<u>£83,822</u>
Representing: –		
Accumulated surplus	88,798	83,251
Library Fund	571	571
Appeal Fund	<u>828</u>	<u>–</u>
	<u>£90,197</u>	<u>£83,822</u>

#### NOTE (1)

Being grants received but not yet released to income and expenditure account.

## The John Harrison Memorial Fund

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 19.

The Fund gives financial assistance to young birdwatchers aged between 15 and 21, to help defray the cost of accommodation and travel. Seven grants were made in 1987. PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE to use the Fund to visit Fair Isle – applications forms can be obtained from:

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

Applications are considered only once a year, usually in mid-December, when grants are awarded for the year following. Forms must be returned to the Hon. Sec. by 31st October in order to be considered at that meeting.

Contributions to the Fund are warmly welcomed, as only through a continual increase in capital can more people be offered financial help to visit Fair Isle. Please send donations to Hon. Treasurer, JHM Fund, at the above address.

**JHM Fund Administering Committee:** Mr B. Grewcock (*Organiser*); Major A.D. Peirse-Duncombe (*Hon. Sec.*); Mr D.S. Erskine; Mr D. MacLehose.

### Accounts for the year ended 31st October 1987

	1987 £	1986 £
Revenue account		
Opening balance	89	258
Interest received	672	731
	<u>761</u>	<u>989</u>
Grants paid	700	860
Management expenses	35	40
Closing balance	26	89
	<u>761</u>	<u>989</u>
Balance sheet at 31st October		
Investments @ cost		
£6400 9% Treasury Loan 1994	5362	5362
£ 900 13¼% Treasury Stock 1997	870	870
£ 350 9½% Treasury Stock 1999	340	340
	<u>6572</u>	<u>6572</u>
Cash	217	89
	<u>6789</u>	<u>6661</u>
represented by:		
Capital Account		
Balance per last account	6572	6572
Received from R. Richardson's Exy.	186	—
Donations	5	—
	<u>6763</u>	<u>6572</u>
Revenue Account balance	26	89
	<u>6789</u>	<u>6661</u>

Although we flew over 300,000 passengers last year, we still fly the small local routes which we started with 26 years ago.

Now we're big enough to offer services associated with bigger international airlines on all our flights because we really do care.

Ask your travel agent or phone  
Gott 246, Kirkwall 3457 or  
Glasgow 041-889 3181.

Flights to Fair Isle from Edinburgh  
via Kirkwall and Lerwick.

Connecting flights from  
Edinburgh to London Heathrow  
via British Midland.

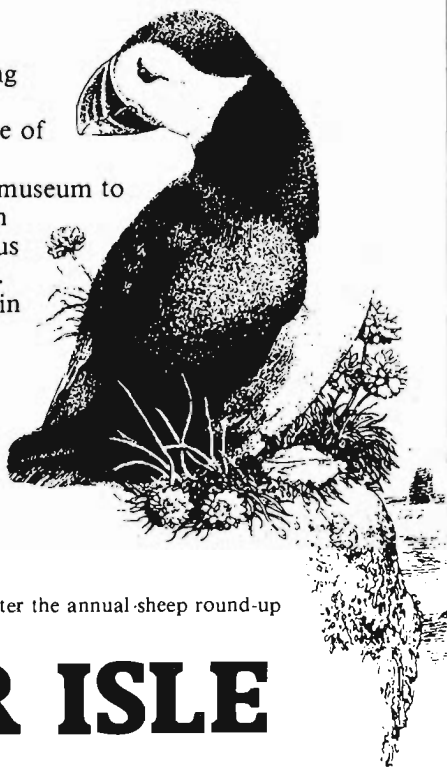
SMALL  
ENOUGH  
TO BE  
LOCAL...  
... BIG  
ENOUGH  
FOR  
300,000  
PEOPLE.



**LOGANAIR**  
Scotland's Airline

# Bring your Bins to Twitch a Goody or dance Sheep Hill with us

On tiny Fair Isle, three miles long and a mile wide there's the best birdwatching in Britain and some of the friendliest people. Miles of spectacular cliff walking, and a museum to visit on wet days. You can watch spinning, weaving and the famous Fair Isle knitwear in the making. In the evening you can socialise in the new Community Hall. You'll always find a welcome on Fair Isle



**Bins** — binoculars

**Twitch** — come and see

**Goody** — very unusual bird

**Sheep Hill** — children's dance named after the annual-sheep round-up



## FAIR ISLE

### The Island that loves visitors

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Shetland Tourist Organisation, Information Centre, Market Cross, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0LU.  
Telephone (0595) 3434 (24-hour service) Telex 75119 Shilto G