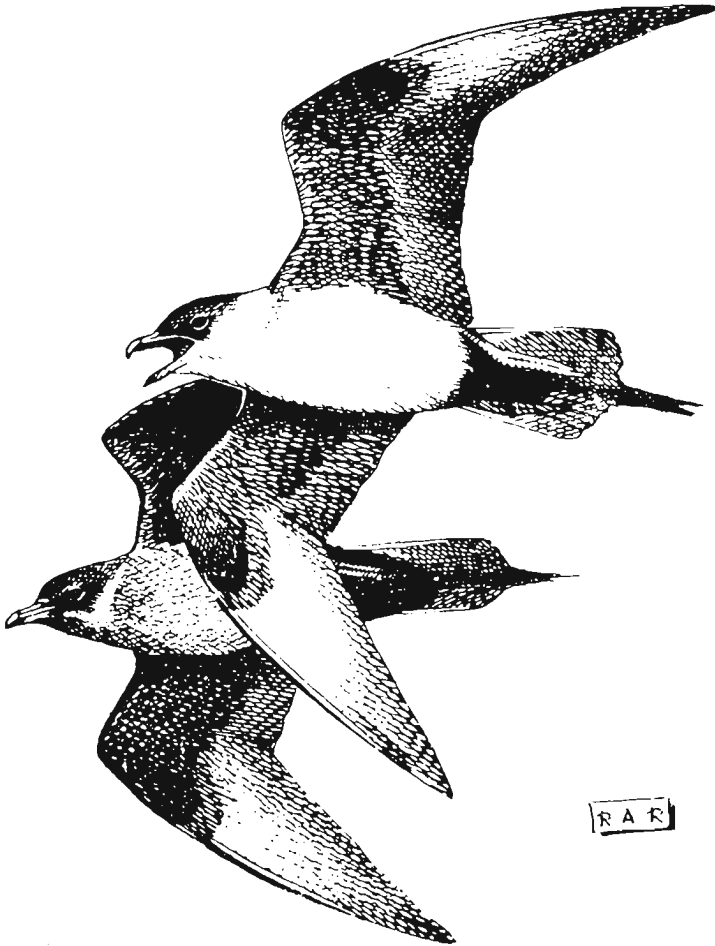


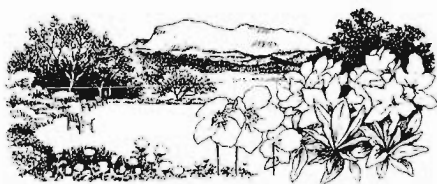
# FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY

## Report for 1990



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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report No. 43

1990

*Edited by Paul Harvey & Valerie Thom*

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# Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

A company limited by guarantee

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## Chairman's Report

It gives me very great pleasure to report at the end of my first year as chairman that FIBOT has had yet another record season. The greatly enhanced comfort and amenities at the Lodge, so ably promoted by Paul and Elizabeth, are now clearly reaping dividends in terms of increased patronage. Much of the credit for this achievement lies in the atmosphere of welcome and care extended to our visitors by the Lodge staff. All concerned deserve our heart-felt thanks. The results also reflect the efforts of our marketing committee in exploring new ways of attracting the less ornithologically dedicated visitor to come and help fill the gaps in mid summer. Do please consult the 1991 prospectus for it contains all the information anyone needs, whether planning a "special week" or an independent visit. In particular I commend to our more distant Friends the special return air fare offered by British Midland from London; not a bad offer considering the distance is about the same as to Lake Como and the flight timings fit nicely into a day's travel between breakfast and tea-time.

In reading this report, and there is much of interest to be found in it, you will gather that the gamble we took in doubling the size of the "link block" to provide self-catering accommodation for research visitors is already showing signs of paying off and will surely continue to improve the observatory's standing as an attractive and economic base for research. If this new facility had not been in place then Dr Pat Monaghan and her team would not have been able to locate part of their vital study of seabirds in relation to sandeels on the island. As it was, two team members were in residence through most of the season.

The "link" was also the first choice for the students from St. Andrews University who came to punch another huge batch of data into the computer. This, as I am sure you know, is proving another enhancement to our research capability. We have sent a first report back to the Carnegie UK Trust who so generously funded it for us. Two major input projects have been undertaken, top priority being awarded to our seabird monitoring carried out over the past four years under the NCC contract. Second comes a "key" migrant, the Blackbird, for which we have data on the ringing and measurements of nearly 20,000 birds. This long run lends itself admirably to a test programme to see whether any significant loss of analytical accuracy would have resulted had the sample been a lot smaller. The same philosophy could then apply to other species taking their turn in the queue for data input, thus achieving much more effective use of manpower.

Broadening our range of activity and creating a more attractive ambience at the Lodge make for more visitors coming to stay for a wider variety of reasons. That is the key to achieving a high occupancy level, breaking free from the tight-rope of just making ends meet, with all the stress that that situation brings on our hard working staff. So I guide you gently into looking at our financial report.

Through very careful and enlightened stewardship at the Lodge, Paul, Elizabeth and Joan Macdonald turned in a most encouraging operating profit. There is no doubt that they were helped on the road to achieving this by the new system of management accounting developed by Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte. So much for the revenue account. A year ago we were very concerned at the shortfall in the Development account and the continuing high interest rate charges draining our resources. It was not that our Appeal and all the generous support we received fell short of expectations but the later discovery of serious defects in the building foundations and water services that incurred so much additional expenditure. So we have had to launch a "Re-appeal" and who better to tackle this than our ex-chairman David MacLehose? His success in all but closing the yawning gap is yet again evidence of his unflagging commitment to FIBOT from which we have

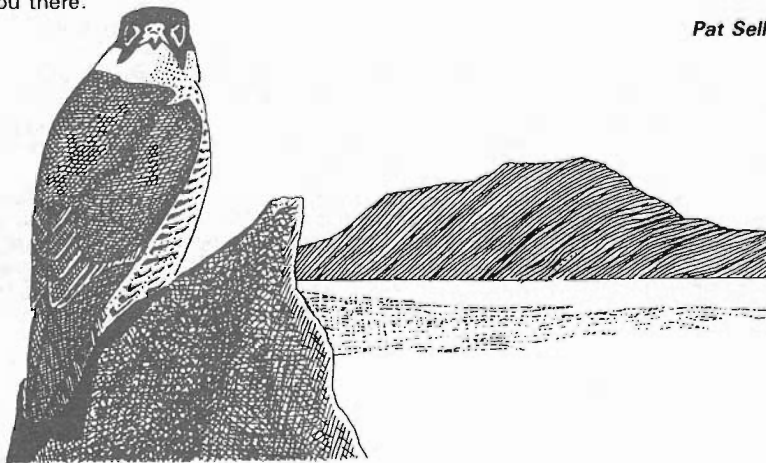
benefited so much in the last sixteen years. Once again we are grateful to our principal benefactors HIBD and NTS.

Sadly, David now takes leave of us at this AGM and many will find it hard to believe that it is sixteen years since he first fired Fair Isle with his dynamic presence as NTS factor in 1975. He has subsequently served a long stint on the FIBOT executive committee and was chairman for five years. A great deal was achieved in those five years and to have been at the helm at that time demanded a degree of resolution, determination, risk-taking bordering on indiscretion and many other attributes. Fortunately for us, David had all of these in full measure and we have emerged from troubled waters healthier and on target for an exciting and prosperous future. We wish him good luck and hope that he will be back with us on the Board just when we find ourselves in need of another shot of adrenalin. In his place we extend a very cordial welcome to Dr David Parkin of the Department of Genetics at the University of Nottingham. A frequent visitor to the isle, he will, I am sure, contribute a further boost to raising our capability in the research field.

I thank my fellow directors for their unfailing enthusiasm and support throughout the year. Valerie Thom in particular has been tireless in her efforts to keep my finger on the pulse; not easy when I live in such a remote spot as Surrey. There are others toiling behind the scenes, and none more reassuring to me than our new Administrative Secretary, Michael Murphy at 21 Regent Terrace. He joined us in October and I was delighted that he lost no time in visiting the Lodge to view the operation at the sharp end. We are sharing his services with the SOC and he is certainly good news for long-suffering Valerie from whom he is taking over numerous secretarial functions. As Membership Secretary we are fortunate in having part-time assistance from Sylvia Laing also at Regent Terrace. Thus invigorated with new blood we are poised for a new membership drive with which we hope that existing Friends will help us.

I have sounded a generally optimistic note in this, my first report. But nothing will come of even the best laid plans without the support of the Fair Islanders themselves. For me it is a great privilege and reward to be working in partnership with an island community uniquely resourceful, self-motivating, friendly and indeed possessed of all those qualities we ourselves need if we are to continue to thrive. To those of you who have not refreshed their spirits for some time I do most strongly commend a visit this summer. I wish you all bon voyage and look forward to seeing you there.

**Pat Sellar**



## Warden's Report

In terms of visitors 1990 was another record breaking year, with a total of 505 visitor-weeks. As usual September was the busiest month but it was heartening to see more visitors in August, traditionally a quiet month, and the continuation of high occupancy in October.

One major reason for the upward trend in visitors to the Observatory is the increased transport links to the Island. With the new Loganair schedule initiated in 1989 it is now possible, during the summer months, to travel between Shetland and Fair Isle on 5 days a week, and to fly to and from Orkney on Wednesdays and Saturdays, an ideal situation for short stay visitors. Unfortunately the Loganair Shetland/Fair Isle schedule suffered frequent delays and cancellations during the season. The implications of this deterioration in the service are obvious and as any reduction in visitors to the Isle will be concurrent with a loss of business for Loganair it is to be hoped that the situation will be rectified, and we will soon see a return to the excellent service of the past.

More effective advertising and better promotion are other factors responsible for the increased level of visitors to the Island, and to this end we were fortunate that the Shetland Tourist Organisation sent a group of distinguished journalists to visit us on 6th June. The group, led by Libby Weir-Breen, comprised Gary Buchanan (Travel G.B.I.), Peter Chambers (Today), Claire Hall (Mail on Sunday), Cliff Michelmore (Radio 4 Breakaway programme), and Libby Purves (Highlife Magazine).

That Fair Isle already has a significant international reputation was once again illustrated by the origins of many of our visitors. Twenty nationalities were represented spanning all five continents. There were fewer group visits in 1990, although we hosted the Grenoble Bird Club (France) and the usual Y.O.C. groups in July and August. The July Y.O.C. group under the excellent stewardship of Graham Rowe deserve a special mention, the participants contributing so enthusiastically to the work of the Observatory during their short stay. The John Harrison Memorial Fund again enabled young ornithologists to come and play an active role in the work of the Observatory, and three recipients (Kendrew Colhoun, Adam Manvell and Steve Votier) were of outstanding quality.

The inaugural Island Insights Course took place in June and was deemed a great success by all 13 participants and island tutors alike (an expanded account appears elsewhere in the report). Following the success of the first course, two will take place in 1991, one in June and the other in July. We are also expecting to hold both an Art course and a Wildlife course in August. Full details of all these courses can be found in the 1991 brochure.

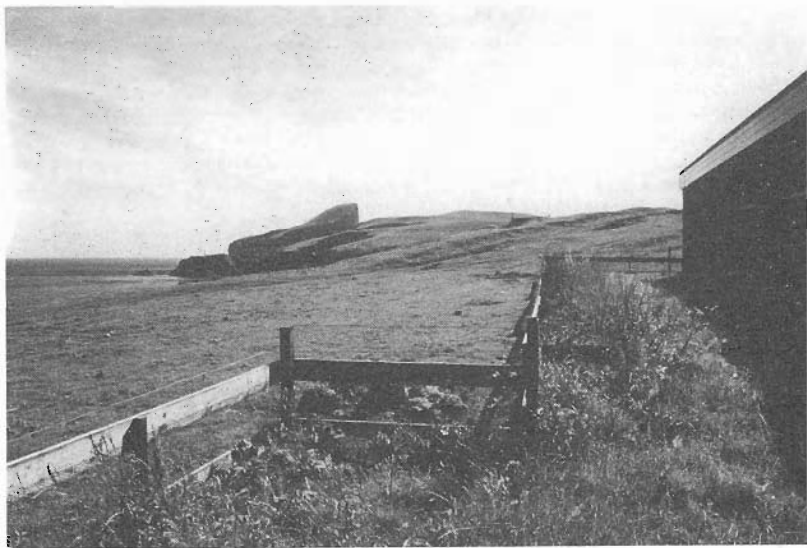
It is important that the Lodge and the Island are subject to regular visits from the trustees, so that they can witness first hand the day to day running of the Lodge. In 1990 we welcomed Anthony Bryant, Alastair Cunningham, Dave O'Kill, Peter Slater, Valerie Thom and Pat Sellar, on his first visit to the Island in his new role as Chairman of F.I.B.O.T. We also received a visit from Michael Murphy, whom I would like to welcome as our new part time administrative officer based at Regent Terrace.

At times during the season the Lodge was the centre of frenetic activity, none more so than on days when we entertained the Rowan Yarns Travel Company Tours for Lunch. These tours were a new feature in 1990 with clients flown from Sumburgh by helicopter on six Saturdays in the spring and five in the autumn. With up to 40 participants the island's transport and Lodge facilities were stretched to capacity. It is a great tribute to the staff that they coped with these visits so ably, even when on one Saturday they had to provide lunch for 80, during which a water standpipe burst and the Lodge sewers blocked! Other day visits included the cruise ship Polaris

(twice) and two groups from the National Trust for Scotland, the latter receiving lunch and a guided wildlife walk. 1990 also saw the tenth anniversary of the Fair Isle Crafts co-operative, and the Lodge hosted the celebratory meal in April. Lodge staff also offered an Indian Evening in May - judged a great success by all that attended, and organised a childrens summer party in August, complete with 'bouncy tunnel'.

As is already evident we were once again fortunate in gaining the services of some excellent staff, to all of whom we would like to extend a big thank-you. It was a great relief to welcome Joan Macdonald back as Catering Manager, hers will be a difficult act to follow. She was assisted in the kitchen by Nigel Milius, whose vegetarian expertise was so great as to tempt even the most ardent carnivores to occasionally opt for the vegetarian alternative. We had some difficulty in attracting domestic staff but Alan Young, Leona Johnson (until June 19th) and Lorne Blyth (from June 19th) all coped admirably, Lorne managing to keep a smile on her face even under the most adverse conditions. On the ornithological side Chris Donald and Bob 'lightning' Proctor were most likeable and competent assistants. Unfortunately Chris had to leave in early October after securing the post of Crofting and Farming Wildlife Adviser in Shetland. We wish him every success in his new venture. Keith Bowey, initially booked in as a visitor, kindly covered for Chris until the end of the month.

Apart from two sizeable leaks in the roof, soon repaired by Northmen, the building wintered fairly well. However there was an unfortunate series of maintenance problems during the year. The most serious of these was the complete breakdown of the Fire Alarm system in late July. A new control panel and many new emergency lights were fitted in August/September. Following advice from the Shetland Fire Officer we also fitted battery operated smoke alarms in all the bedrooms in April. During the spring and summer months, the Lodge sewers seemed to block with monotonous regularity - indeed there were times when the Wardening staff could



*The Lodge garden*

*Photo: Paul Harvey*



be excused for thinking they were in fact employees of the newly privatised water industry! A poignant reminder to all that working at the Observatory is far from all ornithology. The chimney outlet from the diesel fired hot water boiler showed severe cracks during the year and was encased in block work by Northmen in August. Towards the end of the season the boiler itself began to misbehave. To my astonishment the minibus survived until early October when it was finally taken off the road. The appropriation of a new vehicle for next season is now a priority.

Following the completion of the refurbishment of the Lodge, a new garden was created in April. Willow, whitebeam, birch, alder, rowan, sycamore, spruce, pine, fuschia, flowering currant, elder and Japanese Rose were kindly donated by David Bell, George Petrie, Dave Okill and Jerry and Aggie Stout, we thank them all. I would also like to thank Larry Dalziel and D.I.T.T. Construction, Shetland, for donating wood for the garden fence.

It was pleasing to see that our new research facilities were well patronised in 1990 with researchers contributing 45 visitor-weeks. Glasgow University had two students (Caroline Askew and Gillian Gilbert) working on their seabird/sandeel project, and Fiona Hunter returned to finish her Fulmar work (full accounts of both appear later in the report). Peter Evans returned yet again to continue his research into Fair Isle's Starlings and Kevin Osborn (ex A.W. and Seabird Monitoring Officer) came in to study some aspects of Razorbills. Nick Dymond visited us several times to research for his book, *The Birds of Fair Isle*, and this should be published late in 1991. Two St Andrews University students (Frithjof Praetsch and Colin Sharples) returned for a month each, to input more data onto the computer, and Nick Riddiford continued to analyse data under contract to F.I.B.O.T.

The main thrust of our ornithological work was much as last year, with a massive effort targeted at the Seabird Monitoring Scheme. We also assisted the Glasgow students with their work and trapped another huge sample of Storm Petrels, as part of a co-ordinated North Atlantic study. Other ornithological work included collecting biometric data on all passerine species trapped, for the B.T.O.'s Biometric Working Group, and censusing work for the new B.T.O. Breeding Atlas. Non ornithological work involved regular moth trapping and a survey of the Isle's coastline for the national Coastwatch project.

Lastly it falls to me to thank the many people that have helped during the year, islanders and visitors alike. Special thanks though are due to maintenance man Kenneth Stout, who continued to come at a moments notice when serious problems arose, to Stewart Thomson Jnr. for tending the Skadan sheep flock, and to Jerry and Ingrid Eunson and Florrie and Jimmy Stout, for ferrying visitors to and from the airstrip following the inevitable demise of the minibus. Malcolm Adamson again cast an expert eye over the generators on his occasional visits to the island and Dave Okill was a great help in getting goods to and from Lerwick.

As I have mentioned earlier our seabird work demands a huge input and many people assisted us with this task. Deserving of special thanks are Caroline Askew, Kendrew Colhoun, Ian Fisher, Gillian Gilbert, Fiona Hunter, Adam Manvell, Kevin Osborn, Colin Sharples, John Strawger and Steve Westerberg. Nigel Milius and Alan Young also spent many hours beyond the call of normal duty to help us with Storm Petrel ringing.

Finally, Elizabeth and I would like to express warm thanks to Sigrid Stout and Sonia Spathis who looked after our daughters Holly and Bryony so well during the busy summer months.

*Paul Harvey*



*The restored Haa*

*Photo: Alexander Bennett*

## **The National Trust for Scotland in 1990**

Each successive year on Fair Isle sees another milestone in its history, and this year was no exception. Two major projects dominated the scene. The first was the completion of the restoration of the Auld Haa and the second was the installation of 2 new diesel generators and the recabbling of all the croft houses 'down the Isle'.

The Auld Haa, the oldest building on Fair Isle, lay derelict latterly, and in 1987 it was decided to restore the building. The restoration has been carried out in sympathy with the existing building and, where possible, existing features have been retained. There was much emphasis on the traditional use of timber throughout the house and the emphasis has been put quality, where possible. The accommodation comprises lounge/diningroom, four bedrooms, bathroom, shower room, kitchen/dining area, utility room and adequate storage space. A large general purpose shed has also been provided. The Trust would like to let the building early in the new year to an incoming family, who could possibly bring some employment with them, or take up knitting or guest accommodation.

The electricity scheme has grown, like Topsy, over the years and the recent development was necessary to bring up the diesel generation capacity to match that of the aerogenerator. Two new diesel generators were installed in the existing engine shed and have been working quite satisfactorily since May. Also, the new cabling around the crofting community was necessary to try and alleviate some of the voltage drop to the consumers and to provide as near as possible a mainland electricity system. The system will continue to develop in the future and already the Trust and the Fair Isle Electricity Council are looking at the next phase, which would hopefully see a second windmill linked to the existing machine, and a kinetic energy storage system to further reduce the reliance on diesel power.

The Fair Isle National Scenic Area has now held its European Diploma for 5 years and we are very proud of the fact that a second Diploma was awarded on 22 September 1990. It is gratifying to know that Council of Europe ministers feel confident that Fair Isle still merits this major European award.

It is always nice to welcome newcomers to the Fair Isle community and the Trust, along with the Fair Islanders, extended open arms to Sue and Neil Roth and son Joshua, who arrived on Fair Isle this year, Sue taking up the post of nurse in North Shirva. It is also nice to welcome Magnus Richard Alexander Stout into Setter, a brother for Jennifer. We wish them every prosperity and a long stay on Fair Isle.

It was pleasant to welcome Fridarøy Folk, the Fair Isle band, down to Brodie Castle in August, where they accompanied the Celtic folk rock band, Wolfstone, in celebration of a Taste of Moray. This was a delightful experience for the visitors to Brodie Castle, who enjoyed a wide variety of traditional and contemporary music.

The situation with regard to the seabird breeding populations is dealt with by others, but for the Trust's part we accept that we will pursue the condition of the award of the second European Diploma, which states that 'Protection should be reinforced and extended to the seas around the island, if possible through the creation of a total marine reserve, and there should be scientific study of the development of the sandeel population near the island'. Initially, the Trust would like to look at the possibilities of putting in place a voluntary marine reserve and then go on to explore the possibilities of the total marine reserve longterm.

Many other developments continue apace around the island, with the repair programme to all the croft houses continuing, as well as an extension on Skerryholm croft house to give accommodation and storage space for Fair Isle Crafts.

One project which comes up over and over again is the construction of a breakwater in the North Haven. The need for this breakwater is obvious and I am pleased to report that Shetland Islands Council are now giving this project greater priority in their roads and transport capital improvement budget. Many discussions have now taken place with the Council, the island and the trust, and we are confident that in 1991 real progress will be made towards its construction. This essential infrastructure project will give great security to the *Good Shepherd* and to all who use the North Haven, and I join with the islanders in looking forward to the opening ceremony.

Finally, I wish to add my congratulations to Mairi Thomson and her fiancé, Richard Malcolmson, on their recent engagement, and also to Ian Best and Lise Sinclair on their forthcoming marriage in March. I wish them health, wealth and happiness in their future lives together.

*Alexander Bennett*

## Fair Isle Crafts - Ten Years On

Fair Isle crafts may not appear to have been in existence very long but it was ten years ago, on 7th April 1980, when the co-operative began trading. The seed from which the enterprise grew was sown some time earlier when David MacLehose, in his role as National Trust Factor, visited Barkland where he saw Margaret and Alec Stout working with a new-fangled machine which could produce Fair Isle knitting and, from that point, with his usual boundless enthusiasm, the wheels were set in motion.

During the eighteen months prior to the establishment date, a string of correspondence was conducted between Florrie Stout and a variety of organisations such as the Highlands and Islands Development Board, the Scottish Agricultural Organisation, the Registrar of Friendly Societies and others. Also, at this time, Ingrid Eunson unearthed and typed masses of information in connection with co-operatives, knitting machines, yarns etc, all whilst preparing to bring Eve into this world! The culmination of these negotiations was a training period of two weeks held in Angus Edwards' house at the South Lighthouse, organised and largely financed by the Highlands and Islands Development Board (after some gentle persuasion by the indomitable Mr MacLehose). Annie Robertson from Lerwick cheerfully and expertly guided eleven prospective co-operative members through the intricate workings of Knitmaster machines and the finishing of garments until, by the end of the session, knitwear of varying degrees of quality (but mostly coloured red, grey and brown) was being sported around the island. Some of these first garments were put up for sale and were eagerly bought by visitors (could it have been with an eye to their ultimate antique value?). Even Slogar Joe, of Fair Isle Times fame, had a washing line full of Fair Isle patterned "leotards".

Following this "Fair Isle Crafts Ltd." was officially formed and Alec became Chairman, with Florrie as treasurer and Ingrid as Secretary. The publication of articles in the "In Britain" and "Good Housekeeping" magazines led to a steady flow of orders in the early years, whilst every summer the weekly workshop in the Hall brought business from Island visitors. An innovative undertaking was the introduction of Fair Isle as a calling point for "Polaris" cruise passengers in 1987, bringing an increase in sales which continued for the next three years. During spring and autumn of 1990 a new activity was embarked upon in conjunction with Rowan Travel Ltd. and this involved the demonstration of knitting and finishing to parties of tourists who are interested in textiles. These groups mainly come from Canada, the U.S.A. and Australia and such was the popularity of the trips that they have requested to return in 1991 with an extended programme of visits.

Contributors to the success of the business, apart from all of our customers of course, included the Shetland Islands Council (in particular Mr Alvin Bashforth and his staff) with additional help from the Shetland Knitwear Trades Association. These two organisations assisted Fair Isle Crafts to reach another milestone; the introduction of the "Star Motif" Trade Mark, which finally became a reality in 1986 after some 6 years of negotiation. Until now it has carried the inscription "Certification Applied For", but necessary rules and regulations for complete acceptance have been satisfied and this year it has become a fully fledged Trade Mark which hopefully will see Fair Isle Crafts through a further period of prosperity.

*Bill Murray.*



Rowan group about to depart

Photo: Dave Wheeler

## Fair Isle Through Young Eyes

Having only six days earlier left the sun drenched beaches of the Red Sea, one can appreciate my anguish at watching the '*Good Shepherd*' slip out of Grutness on an incredibly wet Saturday morning in June. To have come so far only to miss the final connection of my journey by no more than a few minutes was, to say the least, depressing. Anyway that's air travel for you.

Three days later, by now well acclimatised to the rain and putting aside any reservations about ever flying again, I had my first brief view of the Isle only seconds before touch down - so low was the mist! I had arrived! Some weeks later I almost had to be chained to the railings of the *Good Shepherd* to ensure that I left.

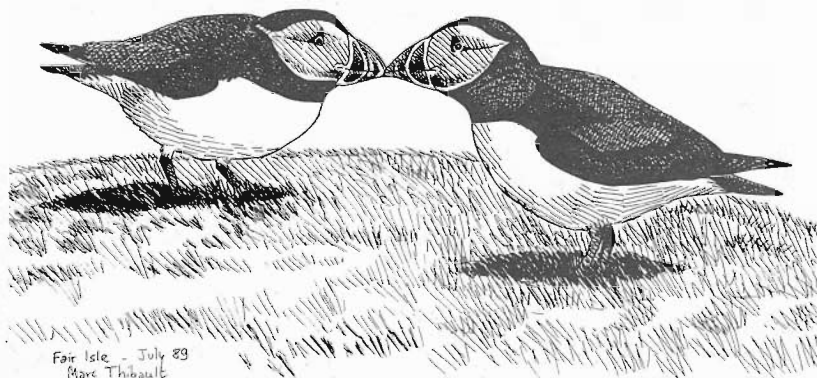
Dave Bird, whom I am sure many of those who have worked, visited or lived on the Isle will know well, first drew my attention to the John Harrison Memorial Fund when I was on Cape Clear in autumn 1989. Fair Isle has an excellent reputation, not only in ornithological circles, and what a splendid opportunity this was to fulfil every leprechaun's dream!

After the initial adrenalin rush and the mad dash after Melodious Warbler and Golden Oriole, birding took a back seat, the more scientific aspects of the Observatory's work taking precedence. Not a bad thing really as I am presently studying for a degree in Environmental Sciences. The wealth of experience I acquired whilst working at the Obs. will, no doubt, stand me in good stead in the future and has made me all the more eager to return a.s.a.p.

My initial task was as chief scribe, taking great care to record ring numbers, wing-lengths, weights etc. But soon I too was ringing, measuring and weighing birds amid the splendid backdrop of the Fair Isle west cliffs. Who in their right mind wouldn't enjoy getting torn to pieces by adult Puffins, ringing Puffin chicks (which incidentally must be the cuddliest thing since sliced bread), smelling of Fulmar regurgitates, or being bombarded by Bonxies! Never a dull moment, I permanently found myself with something to do - from walking across slippery bridges to swimming across to offshore Holms!

I can only say that I had so many great experiences that I could never fit them all into such a small space. No matter what age you are there's so much happening that you could not fail to have the holiday of a lifetime. In conclusion I'd like to express my gratitude to the trustees of the John Harrison Fund, to the staff of the Observatory, some of whom will no doubt remember me most for my facial expressions in times of imminent contact with the sea, and last but not least the islanders who made me feel so welcome at all times. Fair Isle is simply a must for everyone and I hope to be back in 1991!

*Kendrew Colhoun (J.H.M.F grant recipient 1990)*



After a long and tiresome journey we finally arrived at Fair Isle. The last stretch of water was crossed on the infamous 'Good Shepherd' and even the best sailors in the group could not cope with 2 hours tossing and heaving. For me disaster struck immediately as I was never gifted with sea legs.

When all our bags had been loaded into the rather old but comfortable observatory minibus, we strolled up to the luxurious observatory where we were to stay for a week. The atmosphere struck me straight away and I began to feel at home, helped of course by a most welcome bowl of steaming hot vegetable soup. So began my holiday on Fair Isle.

My stay was hectic and exhausting, but I enjoyed every minute. Every day the Y.O.C's would either latch onto a group from the observatory or walk down to the south of the island by themselves. There was no pressure on you to join in the activities, but to stay inside would have meant missing so much. We always returned to the observatory for lunch and dinner, refusing to miss these meals. The food was superb and there was always more if you wanted it. The evenings were for relaxing and then calling the log of the day's observations. Then we would get together and play a couple of amusing games, devised by our leader Graham. These would pass the time until it was dark enough to begin 'Storm Petreling', - this I enjoyed the most. Sessions usually began at half past eleven at night and continued until three in the morning. We would sit listening to the tape of recorded petrel song and watch the people manning the net. When they leapt up to extract a bird one of us would run across, open up a bird-bag for the petrel and then, with the bird inside, take it to be ringed. When it was really busy the group split into two, one half working at the net and the other half releasing the birds after ringing. I was out every night; how I managed I don't know, but my body clock soon adjusted.

As the week went by I felt like a member of a large family. Everybody would join in whatever was happening, I knew everyone by name and I was never made to feel ashamed of my lack of knowledge of birds. I received constant encouragement from everybody, especially the observatory staff. This gave me confidence and I learnt so much.

After being dive-bombed by Great Skuas, scratched by Puffins, spewed on by Fulmar chicks and followed by sheep, we played a football match. The Y.O.C's joined forces with the islanders. First we lost to the observatory staff, but then we thrashed the French scouts staying at the Puff inn, much to their disappointment.

The beauty of the island was overwhelming and I must have taken over 100 photos. The only sounds that could be heard were those of the birds and the sheep - a welcome change from the noise and bustle of my home town near London. I was sad to leave and have vowed that I will return sometime, when I do not know, but hopefully it will be soon.

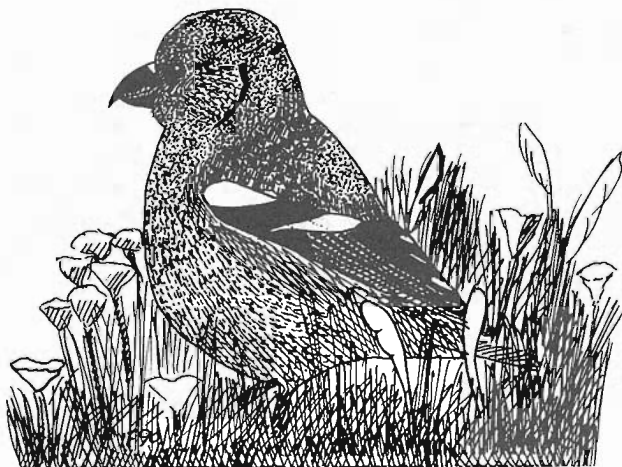
*Marie Axford (Y.O.C group member, July 1990)*

When I chose to go to Fair Isle, I was expecting the average birdwatching holiday with perhaps the chance of watching people ringing birds. I never imagined all the wonderful things we saw and did! Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to see Two-barred Crossbill, King Eider or Leach's Petrel! I was also delighted to ring both a young Fulmar and a Puffin, even though the Puffin bit my thumb so hard that I couldn't feel it for fifteen minutes! It was great fun to stay up until 3 a.m. in the morning to assist with the Storm Petrels - that was one of the highlights of the holiday for me.

I also loved to explore the island itself with its spectacular cliffs and beautiful scenery, but I think the thing I enjoyed most was meeting the bird observatory staff. They made us feel so welcome and there was almost a family atmosphere about the observatory. It was wonderful to get to know such nice people with the same interests as us, and to hear their stories about previous wildlife experiences. The food was delicious and the observatory was extremely comfortable - we couldn't have asked for more!

We were all very sad to leave at the end of the week and even sadder that the '*St Clair*' when sailing south to Aberdeen, didn't pass close to Fair Isle because of the mist. I took home very happy memories of Fair Isle and am now even more certain that I want a career in birds or conservation.

*Jennifer Ward* (Y.O.C group member July 1990)







*Getting down to it!*

*Photo: Gordon Whitby*

## Island Insights Course

So this is where the gales come from - but the first insight into the first ever Island Insights Course didn't reveal any, the nearest contact with gales being the Airport Manager/Resident Meteorological Officer/Crofter/Fire Chief, driving the statutory airfield fire engine, as the aluminium Islander came to rest alongside the Airport Control Tower/Terminal Building. And so the first five of the course participants had arrived from Lerwick; more were to come on the aircraft's return flight from Kirkwall, and the final contingent was welcomed by the early birds when the gleaming *Good Shepherd IV* eased herself majestically to her birth in the late-evening midsummer sun.

The very name Fair Isle conjures an air of magic for many reasons, and not only to ornithologists; the many new faces had arrived to sample it. They were not to be disappointed, for not only did the Observatory turn out to be the best Gannet's nest (and in the most gourmet way) on the isle but a most comfortable hostelry. The programme turned out to be most relaxing (what are holidays for?), and very instructive, and was helped along with unfaltering genuine friendship from the islanders without exception - especially from the Skuas which were intent on making as close an acquaintance, when we penetrated their high moorland habitat, as was aerobatically possible short of actually shaking hands/heads/feet or whatever.

It is quite surprising what expertise there is on such a small island (three miles by one) of about 70 people - driven no doubt by an intense affection for it. Not only mind boggling expertise in identifying micro-dots flying in from the sun, but deep knowledge of the island's archaeology, including what was surely Britain's most remote railway. Expertise also ranged from plant life, sea life and sea conditions

to a thriving boat-building industry and design and maintenance of an attractive island museum - all this before mentioning its world-famous industry, the Fair Isle patterned knitwear. An attempt to initiate new recruits to this latter activity induced much hilarity as the inexperts ran the spinning wheels in erratic spurts of forward and reverse and tangled twists of knotty yarn - it had looked so simple when done by the professional! Crofting is practised by almost all the residents, some with experimental developments into farming and market gardening in a very inhospitable climate (winter wind speeds are amongst the highest in the British Isles).

The week was all too short, but certainly long enough to convert the participants into Friends of Fair Isle (or at the very least Friends of FIBOT) for life. For those of us who are not single-minded ornithologists it is a thoroughly worth-while way to relax. Come to think of it, perhaps it would be even more valuable to dedicated twitchers as an insight into the fact that there is more to life than just birds, fascinating though they may be.

Go on, try it, you won't be sorry you did.

*Laurence and Pamela Draper July 1990.*

## **Miscellany**

I was extremely fortunate to have so many people willing to draw vignettes for this years report, and I would like to thank them all; Phil Bristow (Swainson's Thrush and Lanceolated Warbler), Tony Broome (King Eider, Great Spotted Woodpecker and Dusky Warbler), Chris Donald (Siberian Stonechat), Ian Fisher (Water Rail, Wryneck, Red-backed Shrike and Two-barred Crossbill), Billy Morton (Peregrine, Red-throated Pipit and Citrine Wagtail), Dave Suddaby (Long-billed Dowitcher, Olive-backed Pipit, Raven, Parrot Crossbill and Yellow-headed Blackbird) and Marc Thibault (Gannet, Sanderling, Kittiwake and Puffin).

Paul Harvey

The Directors of Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust acknowledge with gratitude the financial contribution made by British Petroleum towards the cost of the Report.

## Ornithology

Undoubtedly the most significant event of the ornithological year was the almost total breeding failure of some of Fair Isle's seabirds. As in previous years it was species feeding on sandeels near the sea surface that were worst affected. Some 19000 pairs of Kittiwakes fledged just 2 chicks, 400 pairs of Arctic Terns successfully raised only 1 chick, Common Terns failed completely and just 3 young Arctic Skuas survived to leave the island. As if this is not alarming enough there is evidence to suggest that the current problems may now be affecting a broader spectrum of species. Fair Isle's Fulmars, Shags, Great Skuas and Puffins all suffered their poorest breeding season since monitoring began in 1986. Even for Guillemots and Razorbills, species that have maintained good breeding success, there are worrying signs. In 1990 chicks of both species weighed significantly less at a given age than in 1989. Large gulls have not been subject to rigorous monitoring but their breeding success in 1990 was noticeably poor, with only 5 each of Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls fledging from the two large colonies at Goorn and South Gavel. Whether a pattern of widespread failures will establish itself or whether 1990 was just a minor hiccup for some species remains to be seen, but many of us await the 1991 season with trepidation.

Fortunately migration continued much as normal and a total of 193 species were recorded in 1990. This total is below the average for recent years, but reflects the rarity of easterly winds. The spring was again dominated by winds from the western quarter with May being among the worst on record, there being no large falls of common migrants and only a handful of rarities. In contrast the autumn was excellent with rarities occurring regularly from mid-July and some excellent 'falls' in October. The most memorable event of the year was the irruption of Common Crossbills. Large arrivals were commonplace from June to October and 6 Two-barred and a Parrot Crossbill were found among their more common cousins. Indeed, irruptive species were a prominent feature of the year with Great Spotted Woodpeckers and Waxwings also appearing in good numbers.

Two species, both of Nearctic origin, were new to the Island, Yellow-headed Blackbird and Swainson's Thrush, bringing the Fair Isle list to 350 (343 on Category A). A Long-billed Dowitcher in September was the second Island record and the arrival of at least 9 Olive-backed Pipits was unprecedented. Other unusual species



recorded during the year were King Eider, Snowy Owl, Short-toed Lark (2), Red-throated Pipit (2), Tawny Pipit, Citrine Wagtail (2), Lanceolated Warbler (2), Greenish Warbler, Arctic Warbler, Dusky Warbler (2), Melodious Warbler, Woodchat Shrike, Arctic Redpoll, Rustic Bunting, Little Bunting (5) and Yellow-breasted Bunting (2).

## Spring Migration

March was dominated by south-westerly winds and as a consequence the usual large arrivals of thrushes and finches did not occur. The migrant most in evidence was Skylark reaching a peak of 450 on 20th, the same day as the first significant arrival of Meadow Pipits (60) occurred. Visible migration was good on 28th when 37 Whooper Swans and 15 Ravens flew south. A Slavonian Grebe in North Haven from 15th-19th was the highlight of the month, while exceptionally early arrivals were a Lesser Black-backed Gull on 16th and a Wheatear on 19th.

The first easterly wind of the spring came on the opening day of April and resulted in a small arrival of 175 Meadow Pipits, 60 Blackbirds, 45 Redwings, 3 Chiffchaffs and 4 Goldcrests. A northerly gale followed and put paid to any more migration until 4th when the wind backed south-west and 100 Blackbirds and 90 Snow Buntings were counted. Next day saw some increases with 125 Oystercatchers, 380 Skylarks, 180 Meadow Pipits and 45 Wheatears logged, but a Lapland Bunting was the main attraction. Puffins made a long overdue first appearance ashore on 6th. A quiet period followed, punctuated by a Long-eared Owl and 185 Meadow Pipits on 10th and 2 Jackdaws on 12th. A south-east blow on 13th produced the best fall of the month with 500 Fieldfares, 150 Redwings, 25 Song Thrushes, 2 Mistle Thrushes, 8 Chiffchaffs, 12 Goldcrests, 7 Rooks, 50 Bramblings, 3 Greenfinches, a Peregrine and the first Arctic Skua of the year. New arrivals on 14th included 3 Stonechats, 2 Linnets and 25 migrant Ravens.

With the wind veering south-westerly migration all but ceased until a period of easterly winds from 19th-23rd sparked off a series of new arrivals. Swallow, Collared Dove, Whimbrel, Willow Warbler and Lesser Whitethroat all made their first appearances of the year, while more notable records included Grasshopper Warblers on 20th & 23rd a Stock Dove on 21st and 3 Pink-footed Geese on 24th. The highlight however was a super Arctic Redpoll that put in a brief appearance at Easterhoull on 23rd.

A rapidly increasing westerly wind on 26th produced what for many was the bird of the spring. A phone call from Mary Wilson at lunchtime describing a black bird with a yellow head resulted in a precipitous exit from the observatory, and a few minutes later a group of excited birders were watching the Island's first Yellow-headed Blackbird. This Nearctic visitor rather overshadowed what was a very creditable arrival of 155 Golden Plovers. Despite continuing westerly winds, a Buzzard flying north next day and a super male Stonechat of one of the eastern races in Gilsetter on 28th kept observers on their toes. The Golden Plover flock increased to 175 on 30th and a fall of 200 Wheatears occurred.

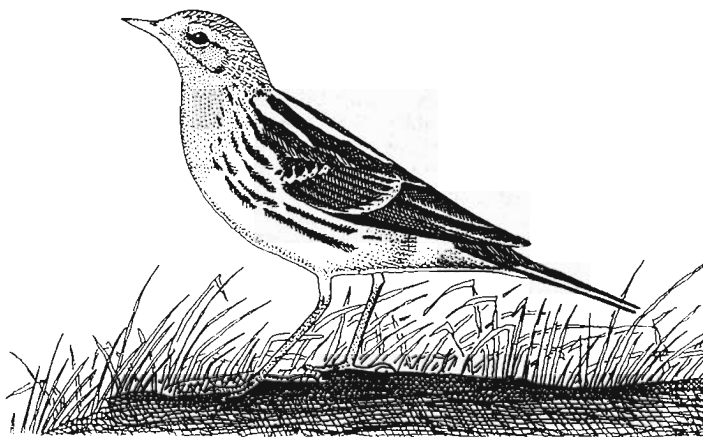
May opened with southerly winds and an increase to 300 Wheatears. A spotted Redshank on 1st and 3 Pintail on 2nd were unusual, but on 3rd the best fall of the spring occurred. Redstart, Whinchat and Common Tern made their first appearances of the year, Wheatears numbered 230, 35 Swallows, 8 House Martins and 15 Tree Pipits were logged, and warblers comprised 15 Willows, 3 Grasshoppers, 3 Sedge, 25 Chiffchaffs and 14 Lesser Whitethroats. The year's first Wood Warbler and Arctic Tern appeared next day and a second Buzzard flew north on 5th. One lucky observer scored with an Osprey, also flying north, on 6th and a Wryneck proved to be the highlight of 7th. Light easterly winds on 8th-9th produced a few arrivals. The

supporting cast included 30 Whimbrels, 3 Common Sandpipers, 15 Willow Warblers and 4 Pied Flycatchers on 8th and 5 Whinchats and 6 Lesser Whitethroats on 9th; and the stars, a Nightingale in the Plantation on 8th and a Short-toed Lark at Kennaby on 9th.

With winds continuing light and easterly anticipation was high, but skies were clear and common migrants disappointingly few and far between. The 12th though produced 200 Meadow Pipits, 2 Nightingales and 5 Black-tailed Godwits, but the airstrip quickly became the focus of attention when an almost pure white male Snowy Owl was located. The Owl continued to delight observers over the next couple of days when the only movements of note were 7 Barnacle Geese on 13th and 3 Sparrowhawks on 14th. Rarities again featured on 15th when a Little Bunting frequented the Kirk area. A Grey-headed Wagtail and 4 Shoveler were also seen, but rarest in Fair Isle terms was the pale-bellied Brent Goose found in Hjukni Geo.

A switch from north-east to south-east wind late on 19th signalled the end of a desperately quiet period, and ensured a swift post breakfast exit from the observatory next day. A Wood Sandpiper, a male Red-backed Shrike and an Ortolan Bunting were located amongst a scattering of common migrants, but find of the day was a Tawny Pipit on Vaasetter, the first since 1987. The 21st produced the spring's third Nightingale, 2 Wood Sandpipers, a Wryneck, and, to the relief of many of our visitors the first 2 Bluethroats of the spring. A Long-eared Owl was the surprise of a quieter 22nd, while a new Ortolan Bunting, a Wryneck and 14 Spotted Flycatchers were located on 23rd. Highlights over the next few days were the first Rosefinch of the spring on 24th, a Grey-headed Wagtail on 25th, an Iceland Gull and Wryneck on 26th and the second Short-toed Lark of the spring, found at Pund, on 27th.

Aerial migrants were prominent on 28th with 45 Swallows and 12 Sand Martins counted. Three Bluethroats were found and these vied for attention with a new male Red-backed Shrike and another Rosefinch. An Icterine Warbler was a creditable find next day but was soon forgotten when a poorly marked Red-throated Pipit exploded out of Boinni Mire. Later in the day observers trying to relocate the pipit found a Crossbill, and although many of us thought this might be the forerunner of an irruption, none would have predicted the scale of the invasion we were to witness over the course of the summer.



The wind had veered south-west by dawn on 30th but there was no time for complacency with a super male Red-breasted Flycatcher performing well at Leogh and a Quail giving itself up remarkably easily at Barkland. June opened with 2 Bluethroats, a Rosefinch, and the spring's first Marsh Warbler and only Siskin! Two Cuckoos, a new Marsh Warbler and a Red-backed Shrike appeared next day, and a male Bluethroat and 55 Crossbills were the stars of 3rd. Highlight of the 4th was a stunning second-summer Long-tailed Skua, that spent just long enough with the non breeding Arctics in Homisdale, overshadowing somewhat the spring's second Icterine Warbler at Leogh. The wind moved into the south-east on 5th and was to produce a trickle of exciting observations over the next few days. On 6th, 50 Swallows and 50 House Martins were counted, but observers' attention was divided between a new male Bluethroat, 2 Rosefinches, one a red male, 2 Red-backed Shrikes and new Marsh and Icterine Warblers. The real prize though took some time to identify as it skulked in the Lower Leogh garden. Eventually it showed itself well enough to be confirmed as the first Melodious Warbler since 1981. A Golden Oriole found at Kennaby late in the evening was the star of 7th, a singing Quail highlight of 8th, and 2 Wrynecks and 3 Red-backed Shrikes best finds of 9th. Apart from a late Spotted Redshank on 22nd and a female Red-backed Shrike on 25th, Crossbills were the main feature of the rest of the month with notable arrivals of 50 on 10th, 100 on 11th, 75 on 13th and 70 on 28th.

## Autumn Migration

July proved to be outstanding for rarities. Crossbills continued to arrive all month with a maximum of 100 on 20th, and the biggest surprise came during routine seabird ringing activities on 25th when a superb male and female Two-barred Crossbill were found accompanying them on the cliff top at Lericum. Unseasonal visitors included an Osprey flying north on 15th and a Black Redstart on 22nd. A search through the South Light Eider flock on 19th revealed the presence of an eclipse male King Eider, while the huge effort directed at ringing Storm Petrels was rewarded with Leach's Petrels trapped on 21st and 28th.

Common migrants were on the move by the end of the month with 10 Whimbrel and a Reed Warbler on 29th, a Green Sandpiper and 140 Common Gulls on 30th and the first Willow Warblers next day. Waders were again prominent in early August with 120 Oystercatcher on 1st, 3 Green Sandpiper on 2nd and 9 Knot on 3rd. Another large influx of Crossbills occurred on 4th with 100 counted. With the wind remaining largely in the west a quiet period ensued, 600 Common Gulls on 10th being the only noteworthy movement. A Sparrowhawk and Long-eared Owl on 13th were both exceptionally early, while 13 Black-tailed Godwit seen the same day represented a record count for that species. A juvenile Peregrine delighted observers as it performed well over the next few days and White Wagtail passage got under way on 14th, when 35 were counted. A breath of east wind on 16th produced the first real 'fall' of the autumn. Meadow Pipits numbered 225 and 200 Wheatears were counted. A Spotted Redshank and 2 Green Sandpipers were found, but the real stars were a Greenish Warbler found just outside the Observatory after lunch and a juvenile Two-barred Crossbill that put in a lightning appearance at Setter later in the afternoon.

Although the east wind was short-lived the next few days were far from void of excitement. A Great Spotted Woodpecker was a surprise find on 17th, it being the precursor to a large irruption of that species, and on 19th White Wagtails numbered 70. A brief return to south-east wind on 20th brought another good arrival. Crossbills numbered an incredible 200, and 10 Sanderlings, 4 Ruff, 22 Willow



*Two-barred Crossbill*

*Photo: Ian Fisher*

Warblers and the first 2 Barred Warblers of the autumn were found. Next day 2 Sandwich Terns fed in Finniquoy. The 23rd saw another huge arrival of Crossbills with 225 counted, and among them on the thistles outside the observatory was a super juvenile Two-barred Crossbill.

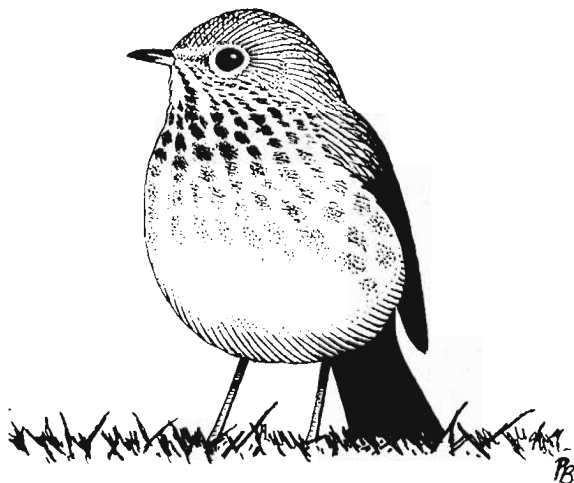
The wind remained in the eastern quarter and birds continued to arrive. A new Barred Warbler was found on 25th and next day Meadow Pipits increased to 800, and 250 Wheatears, 110 White Wagtails, 50 Willow Warblers and 270 Twite were logged. Three Great Spotted Woodpeckers and 2 Peregrines were present and a new Rosefinch and Barred Warbler were seen. The star bird though was an Arctic Warbler at North Shirva, the first since 1987. The 27th was even better with two much sought after Fair Isle 'specials', Yellow-breasted Bunting and Citrine Wagtail, found within 10 minutes of each other below Shirva. The supporting cast included 3 Barred and 2 Wood Warblers. The next day was quieter but a handful of lucky observers registered the third juvenile Two-barred Crossbill of the autumn at Malcolm's Head. Finally, a Wryneck was trapped on 31st, a fitting end to an excellent month.

Almost inevitably September started more quietly than August had ended. Waders were much in evidence on 1st with excellent counts of 125 Ringed Plover and 10 Curlew Sandpiper. With the wind firmly in the western quarter the next few days were quiet, a new Rosefinch appeared on 2nd, 90 Crossbills, a Wood Warbler and Lapland Bunting on 3rd and a Corncrake on 4th. A brief spell of south-east wind on 5th led to a small arrival, with 450 Meadow Pipits, 15 Willow, 8 Garden and a Wood Warbler and 3 Lapland Buntings seen. Swifts increased to 16 and a Tree Sparrow was found. A Spotted Redshank was the highlight of 6th and with the wind moving into the north-east, the 7th produced the most diverse fall of the autumn. Among a good sprinkling of common migrants were 3 Barred, 2 Wood and a Grasshopper Warbler, 13 Herons, 7 Little Stints, 8 Ruff, a Grey Plover, 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers and a Wryneck.

With a steady south-westerly airflow numbers of common migrants decreased markedly over the next few days, but in typical Fair Isle fashion rarities continued to arrive. The autumn's second Yellow-breasted Bunting occurred on 9th, and on 11th another Citrine Wagtail was found, on Meoness, and a juvenile Woodchat Shrike was found self-trapped in the Double Dyke. An exceptionally early Yellow-browed Warbler was at the Haa next day and a Red-backed Shrike and new Rosefinch were also present. Visitors awoke to a flying north-west gale on 14th, tempting many to remain inside the Observatory. There was a quick exit though as news of a Long-billed Dowitcher at Easter Lother filtered through. It played hard to get until finally settling down on the Rippack late in the afternoon. A Corncrake and the autumn's first Snow Buntings were also seen. The 15th saw 2 Barred Warblers, another new Rosefinch and a fresh influx of 65 Crossbills, while 3 Bluethroats, 2 Wrynecks and a new Rosefinch were highlights of 16th, and 2 Yellow-browed Warblers and a Pintail of 17th.

The wind was now firmly in the west and reached severe storm force eleven on 19th when 10 Storm Petrels were seen flying over the Island - some landing in fields! The first geese of the autumn, 50 Pink-feet, also put in an appearance. Both Iceland and Glaucous Gulls were seen next day and a Scaup was the highlight of 21st.

By the morning of 22nd the wind was in the north-east. Goldcrests numbered 100 and no less than 6 Yellow-browed Warblers were found. Other stars were a Red-breasted Flycatcher at Hjukni Geo, a Little Bunting at Quoy, a new Rosefinch, a Bluethroat and 2 Wrynecks. Next morning attention focused on South Reeva where an obliging Olive-backed Pipit had been found. On returning for lunch observers were then treated to the sight of a Lanceolated Warbler running along the roadside at Setter. A supporting cast included 3 Great Spotted Woodpeckers, 350 Meadow Pipits, 160 Snow Buntings and 35 Whinchats. On 24th a confiding Parrot Crossbill was trapped below Shirva, enabling excellent comparisons as it fed with several of its commoner cousins. Two Richard's Pipits were found and 20 Jack Snipe were counted. Two Rosefinches and another Olive-backed Pipit were found on 25th, with the last mentioned species increasing to a remarkable 3 on 26th, when a new Barred Warbler, 2 Yellow-browed Warblers (one bearing a Norwegian ring) and a male Stonechat of one of the eastern races were also found. Eighty Pink-feet moved south on 28th and 320 Meadow Pipits, 20 Lapland Buntings and 140 Snow Buntings represented the most significant arrivals of 29th.





The 30th dawned calm and not even the most optimistic observer could have predicted what awaited them. Immediately after breakfast a Dusky Warbler was trapped at the Plantation, barely had the bird been released before news of Fair Isle's first Swainson's Thrush at Hjukni Geo came ringing out from the C.B's. After lunch a Red-breasted Flycatcher was located by the garage and a skulking locustella warbler was chanced across in Gilsetter. The latter was soon identified as a Lanceolated Warbler and proved to be the spectacle of the autumn as it enthralled the assembled masses by walking around at point blank range, over boots and between legs, even perching momentarily on observers' hands. Other arrivals included a Bluethroat, 3 Yellow-browed Warblers, a second Red-breasted Flycatcher and 400 Redwings.

October opened with 1500 Redwings, a Greenland race Redpoll and yet another Olive-backed Pipit. New rarities were appearing daily and this theme continued with a well marked Red-throated Pipit at the base of Malcolm's Head on 2nd and a male Rustic Bunting at Quoy next day. The 4th was a little quieter but still produced 4 Pintail and Barred and Yellow-browed Warblers. Goose passage was heavy over the next 2 days with 570 Greylags, 45 Pink-feet and 23 Barnacles on the 5th and 500 + Greylags and 71 Barnacles on 6th. Other notable counts were 15 Whooper Swans on 5th and 600 Meadow Pipts, 425 Skylarks and 300 Twite on 6th.

Winds remained in the west and even the passage of Icelandic species faltered. However a Little Auk on 8th and both Iceland and Glaucous Gulls on 9th pleased southern observers. A ringtail Hen Harrier put in an all too brief appearance on 11th. The 12th was a better day with 110 Barnacle Geese, a Slavonian Grebe, 2 very late Arctic Terns and a new Richard's Pipit. South-east winds on 15th produced another 60 Barnacles, a new Richard's Pipit, and 5 Waxwings. Yet another Olive-backed Pipit was found next day and Blackbirds increased to 300, Fieldfare to 1500 and Brambling to 250. With the wind now firmly in the south-east a whole series of arrivals occurred over the next few days. Richard's Pipits increased to 2 on 17th and a huge fall occurred on 18th. One hundred Chiffchaffs represented a new record count, all but 2 being of the northern or eastern races. Thrushes were much in evidence with 5000 Fieldfare, 2000 Redwing, 450 Blackbird and 60 Song Thrushes. A minimum of 6 Merlins were present and 5 Great Spotted Woodpeckers looked very out of sorts. Most excitement though, was generated by 30 Waxwings, a Barred Warbler, a Bullfinch, a Red-backed Shrike, a Little Bunting at Leogh and the autumn's sixth Olive-backed Pipit. Numbers of most species had decreased on 19th, but a Dusky Warbler at Utra and 3 Little Buntings provided more than enough entertainment.

Thrush numbers were to remain high for several days but a female Two-barred Crossbill and another Olive-backed Pipit stole the show on the 20th. Highlights of the 21st were 90 Goldcrests and a Great Grey Shrike, while Woodcocks increased to 100 next day and 3 Long-eared Owls were seen on the 22nd. The autumn's Olive-backed Pipit total increased to 9, when 2 more were found in Boinni Mire on the 24th, 3 Sparrowhawks were also seen. The wind was still south-east and the more notable arrivals over the next few days were a new Richard's Pipit on the 26th, 3 Waxwings on the 27th, 2 Bullfinches on the 28th and 150 Woodcocks on the 29th.

November was as expected a quieter month. Highlights were 205 Greylags and a new Richard's Pipit on 1st, a White-fronted Goose on 6th, the latest ever Whinchat on the 26th and a series of Waxwings, Bullfinches and Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

## 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*. Recorded between 10th May and 20th October, with 1-2 on 5 dates in May, 11 dates in June, 4 dates in July and 4 dates in August; and singles on 5 dates in September and 7 dates in October.

**GREAT NORTHERN DIVER** *Gavia immer*. One in Finniquoy on 6th March and one off South Light on 3rd October, were the only records. The poorest showing since 1974.

**SLAVONIAN GREBE** *Podiceps auritus*. Singles in North Haven on 15th-19th March, off Furse on 12th October and off South Green on 18th-19th October, represent the best showing since 1983.

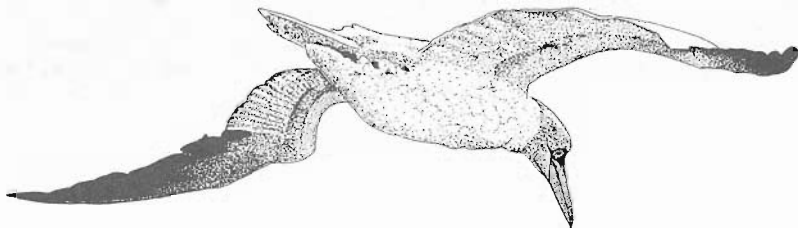
**FULMAR** *Fulmarus glacialis*. Present all year, with 'Blue' Fulmars seen most months. At monitored plots, breeding productivity averaged 0.27 chicks fledged/Apparently Occupied Site, the lowest figure since monitoring began in 1986.

**SOOTY SHEARWATER** *Puffinus griseus*. An early individual seen from the Good Shepherd on 12th July was followed by records of 1-5 seen from the Isle, or on crossings, on 11 dates 27th August-16th September, with later singles on 6th, 11th & 19th October.

**MANX SHEARWATER** *Puffinus puffinus*. One-2 were reported on 10 crossings between 12th July-6th September, with records from the Isle comprising 2 on 28th and 3 on 31st August, and singles on 3rd, 4th, & 8th September.

**STORM PETREL** *Hydrobates pelagicus*. First noted on 31st May when two were attracted to a tape lure at Kirn 'o' Skroo. Regularly recorded on crossings from 10th July-22nd September and unusual numbers were seen daily off South Light between 26th-31st August, max. 80 on 31st. A juvenile found in Gilsetter on 8th October was later released at the North Haven.

**LEACH'S PETREL** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. Individuals were attracted to a tape lure near the observatory on 21st & 28th July, the first to be trapped since 1986.



**GANNET** *Sula bassana*. Present from at least mid-February. There was a decrease in the number of occupied nests for the first time since colonisation in the mid-seventies, with 643 nests counted (5% lower than the 1989 figure). Breeding productivity at monitored plots was 0.68 chicks fledged/nest. One pair were still incubating a chick on 8th November.

**CORMORANT** *Phalacrocorax carbo*. In January singles were recorded on 1st & 17th. Spring records comprised singles, on 17 dates between 6th March-17th April, on 7th May and on 13th & 22nd June. In autumn, 1 on 10th and 12 on 23rd August preceded regular records of 1-7 until 25th October, after which there were occasional singles until late December

**SHAG** *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*. Present all year. The whole island census revealed 1073 nests representing a 2.4% decline since 1986. Breeding productivity at the monitoring plot was 0.97 chicks fledged/nest, the poorest figure since monitoring began in 1986.

**GREY HERON** *Ardea cinerea*. Spring records comprised singles on 12th March and 4th April and 1-2 on 5 dates 7th-16th May. Regular in autumn between 13th July-9th November with high counts of 13 on 7th and 16 on 22nd September. One on 20th November was the only later record.

**WHOOPEE SWAN** *Cygnus cygnus*. Four on 3rd January were the first in mid-winter since 1987. Spring records comprised 3 on 27th and 37 on 28th March and 1 on 12th April. Autumn passage spanned 5th October-11th November with records on 11 dates, max. 15 on 5th October. Three on 13th December was the only later record.

**PINK-FOOTED GOOSE** *Anser brachyrhynchus*. Spring records comprised 3 on 24th April, 1 on 5th May and 8 on 6th May, with 7 remaining until 14th and 1 until 17th May. Autumn passage spanned 19th September-15th October, with main movements of 50 on 19th and 80 on 28th September, and 45 on 5th October.

**WHITE FRONTED GOOSE** *Anser albifrons*. A single, probably of the Greenland race, put in a brief appearance on 7th November. The first since 1988.

**GREYLAG GOOSE** *Anser anser*. In spring there were singles on 29th March and 27th-29th April and 1-3 daily 8th-17th May. In autumn, 1-2 on 3 dates 21st-29th and 36 on 30th September, preceded heavy passage on 5th-6th October, with a record count of 570 on 5th and 500 on 6th. Lower numbers were then recorded most days until the next large movement of 205 on 1st November, after which a flock of 55 remained on the Isle until 10th, decreasing to 48 by 30th, with 35 remaining until 5th December.

**BARNACLE GOOSE** *Branta leucopsis*. Seven on 13th May was the only spring record. In autumn, 5 on 1st October preceded two periods of heavy passage, 5th-6th October, max. 71 on 6th; and 12th-16th October, max. 110 on 12th. There then followed a single on 21st-30th and 5 on 31st October, and in November, 2 on 4th then 11 next day, with 7 remaining until 13th.

**BRENT GOOSE** *Branta bernicla*. An individual of the pale bellied race frequented Hjukni Geo and South Harbour from 15th May-5th June.

**SHELDUCK** *Tadorna tadorna*. A single on 9th May was the only record. The worst showing since 1976.

**WIGEON** *Anas penelope*. One on 11th January was the first recorded in mid-winter since 1980. Spring records comprised 1-4 on 4 dates in April and 2 on 8th June. In autumn recorded almost daily from 26th August-27th October with peaks of 16 on 6th-7th September and 30 on 6th October. One on 8th November was the only later record.

**TEAL** *Anas crecca*. Mid-winter records comprised 4 on 12th and 3 on 18th January. In spring there were 1-4 on 12 widely scattered dates 5th April-27th May. In autumn there were almost daily records from 3rd August-22nd October, with main movements, 17 on 31st August, 15 on 7th September and 17 on 22nd October. One-3 on 3 dates in November were the only later records.

**MALLARD** *Anas platyrhynchos*. In mid-winter there were 2 on 2nd & 21st January. In spring 2 on 14th & 24th March preceded records of 1-2 on 18 dates 20th April-28th June. In autumn, recorded from 17th July with widely scattered records of 1-3 until 26th August, after which seen almost daily, with main passage 12th-28th October, max. 16 on 22nd. One remained until early December.

**PINTAIL** *Anas acuta*. Records comprised 2 males and a female on 2nd May, 1 on 17th September, 4 on 5th October and a male on 12th October. An excellent showing after last years absence.

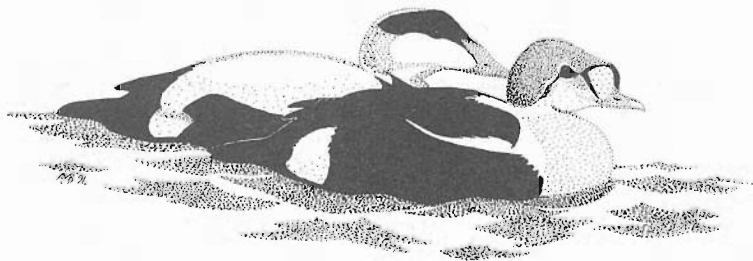
**SHOVELER** *Anas clypeata*. In spring there were 4 males on 15th May with 2 remaining until 18th, and in autumn there was 1 on 7th October.

**POCHARD** *Aythya ferina*. A female on 12th January was the first record since 1988.

**TUFTED DUCK** *Aythya fuligula*. Spring records comprised singles on 16th-18th, 22nd & 30th March; on 3rd-10th May, and on 7th-8th June, with 3 on 6th May. Autumn records comprised singles on 26th-29th July, and on 4 dates 4th-11th September.

**SCAUP** *Aythya marila*. An immature/female visited South Harbour briefly on 21st September. The first record since 1988.

**EIDER** *Somateria mollissima*. Present all year, with a max. of 650 on 30th September.



**\*KING EIDER** *Somateria spectabilis*. A male present from 19th July to at least 13th December was presumably the individual first seen in 1988.

**LONG-TAILED DUCK** *Clangula hyemalis*. A poor year. In spring there were singles on 5th-6th March, 5th & 7th-8th April. In autumn singles on 22nd & 29th September preceded daily records of 1-8 from 3rd-21st October, with later records, of 1-3 on 5 dates in November, and 1-5 on 3 dates in December.

**COMMON SCOTER** *Melanitta nigra*. All records were in autumn, with 3 on 30th and 1 on 31st August, 15 on 5th October and 3 on 8th November.

**GOLDENEYE** *Bucephala clangula*. In October, 1 on 14th and 3 on 18th preceded daily records of 1-4 from 20th-24th. In November 2 on 7th.

**RED – BREASTED MERGANSER** *Mergus Serrator*. Recorded in most months. In March, there were singles on 5th, 12th & 26th; in April, 2 on 26th-27th; in May, 1-2 daily 8th-21st; in June, singles on 4th & 12th; in July, 1 on 6th; in September, 1 on 19th and 2 next day; in October, 7 on 5th, 15 on 7th and 1-2 on 6 dates 10th-26th; in November, 1 on 12th, and in December 1 on 8th.

**HEN HARRIER** *Circus cyaneus*. A ringtail over the Rippack on 11th October eventually flew off out to sea in a southerly direction. The first since 1988.

**SPARROWHAWK** *Accipiter nisus*. Mid-winter records on 9th & 16th January were unusual. There were spring singles on 16 dates 9th April-31st May, with 3 on 14th May. In autumn one on 13th-16th August was the earliest since 1973, and was followed by singles on 2nd, 7th & 17th September and 15th October, prior to daily records of 1-3 from 20th-29th October.

**BUZZARD** *Buteo buteo*. Singles flew north on 27th April and 5th May. These are only the 5th and 6th records since 1979.

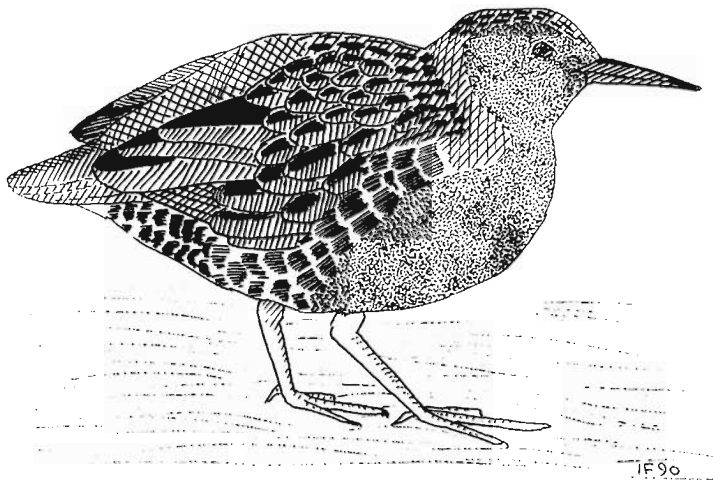
**OSPREY** *Pandion haliaetus*. One flew north on 6th May and another flushed off Ward Hill on 15th July was the first record for that month.

**KESTREL** *Falco tinnunculus*. Singles on 22nd February, 21st March and 5th April preceded light spring passage from 2nd May-12th June, when singles were recorded on 13 dates. In autumn singles on 5 dates 1st-14th August preceded daily records of 1-3 from 22nd August-23rd October. A late individual occurred on 5th November.

**MERLIN** *Falco columbarius*. Singles were recorded on 1 date in January, 3 dates in February, 4 dates in March and on 3rd April, prior to light spring passage 24th April-30th May when singles were reported on 11 dates. In autumn, singles on 9 dates 23rd July-31st August preceded daily records of 1-3 in September-October, with heaviest passage in early to mid-October when 4 on 6th and 6 on 18th. One-2 were seen on several dates in November and December.

**PEREGRINE** *Falco peregrinus*. Scarce early in the year with individuals recorded on 25th January, 9th March and 13th April. There were more regular records from 13th August, with 1-2 seen most days until 29th October, and later singles on 9th November and from 17th December.

**QUAIL** *Coturnix coturnix*. A male performing well at Barkland on 31st May, and males heard calling on 8th & 14th June were the only records.



**WATER RAIL** *Rallus aquaticus*. One on 21st January was the only mid-winter record and 1 on 15th April the sole spring record. In autumn, singles on 12th September and on 4 dates from 3rd-13th October, preceded main passage, when there were daily records of 1-3 from 16th-24th October, 1-2 from 29th-31st October and 1-5 from 6th-11th November. Two remained well into December.

**CORNCRAKE** *Crex crex*. Singles were seen on 4th-6th & 14th September and 27th October.

**MOORHEN** *Gallinula chloropus*. For the first time since 1967 there were no spring records. Autumn records comprised singles on 13 dates 5th-28th October, with 2 on 13th; and singles on 7th & 25th November.

**OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus ostralegus*. The first individual occurred on 2nd February, with the main arrival commencing with 20 on 19th February. Numbers built up rapidly in early March to 145 by 14th, with a peak spring count of 200 on 8th May. Flocks of non-breeders or failed breeders arrived in late May, peaking at 190 on 25th. The breeding population was estimated at 75 pairs. Autumn passage commenced in late July, with a peak count of 200 on 1st August. Numbers were much reduced by mid-August, with a September max. of 35 on 4th. Daily records continued until 5th October, after which a single remained until 13th, with late singles recorded on 30th October and 12th November.

**RINGED PLOVER** *Charadrius hiaticula*. The first 6 arrived on 23rd February and by 20th March, a max. spring count of 24 was reached. The breeding population was censused at 14 pairs. Recorded daily in autumn until 7th October with occasional records of 1-3 until 19th October. Passage was heaviest in late August-early September, with the max. count of 125 on 1st September the highest number ever recorded on the Isle.

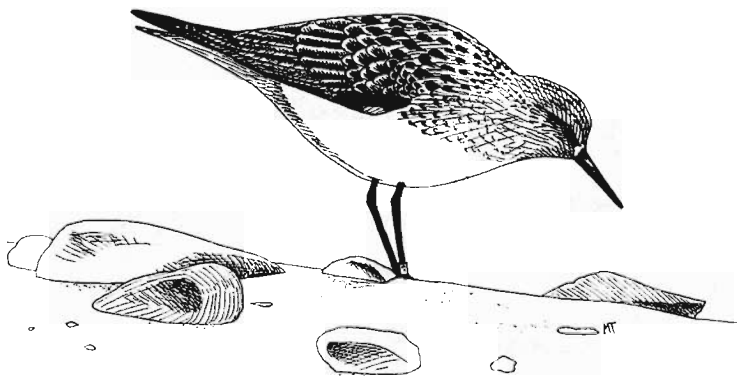
**GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis apricaria*. Two on 12th February and 1 on 5th March, preceded regular records from 20th March-9th June. The heaviest passage occurred from 23rd April-mid May with 155 on 26th April increasing to a highest ever spring

count of 175 by 30th. Numbers remained high until the last week of May, with a June max. of 15 on 15th. A pair held territory for the second year in succession but there was no evidence of breeding. Autumn passage commenced with 4 on 29th July after which records were almost daily until 1st November, with an August max. of 45 on 24th, September max. of 50 on 20th and an October max. of 65 on 5th. In November there were 1-3 on 3 dates to 7th, and late singles occurred on 4th & 18th December.

**GREY PLOVER** *Pluvialis squatarola*. A poor year with singles on 7th-14th & 21st-29th September the only records.

**LAPWING** *Vanellus vanellus*. February records comprised 1 on 8th, 17 on 11th, 9 on 21st, 10 on 22nd and 31 on 24th. There were daily records from 6th March with heaviest passage in mid-March, max. 110 on 16th. Five pairs attempted to breed. In June, flocks of non-breeders or failed breeders numbered 7 on 11th, 11 on 27th and 26 on 28th. Light autumn passage commenced in mid-July with the only large counts, 65 on 7th September and 32 on 1st October. There were daily records until 25th October, and then 1-9 on 7 dates to 21st November.

**KNOT** *Calidris canutus*. In spring there were singles on 16th May and 3rd June. Recorded regularly in autumn from 20th July-27th September, with monthly peaks of 4 on 28th July, 9 on 3rd August and 9 on 7th September.



**SANDERLING** *Calidris alba*. In spring there was 1 on 11th May and 1-2 on 8 dates 3rd-18th June. In autumn 1-2 on 4 dates 18th-30th July, preceded almost daily passage 2nd August-11th September, max. 10 on 20th August. Two on 23rd September was the only later record.

**LITTLE STINT** *Calidris minuta*. All records were in autumn, with 1 on 31st August, then in September, 7 on 7th, 2 on 9th-10th and further singles on 9 dates to 29th.

**CURLEW SANDPIPER** *Calidris ferruginea*. A good autumn showing, following last years absence, commenced with 9 on 31st August. There were 10 on 1st September, decreasing to 5 by 4th, followed by 1-3 daily until 11th, and a late single on 20th-22nd September.

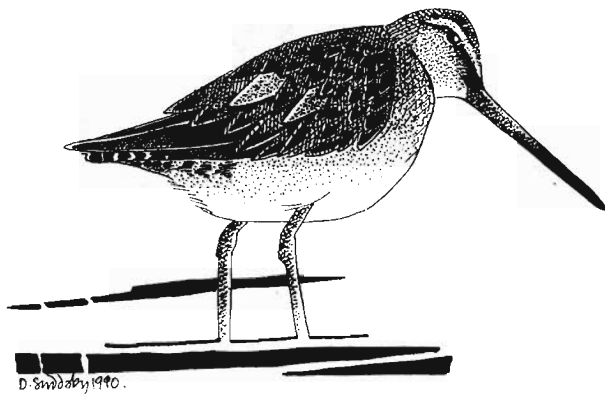
**PURPLE SANDPIPER** *Calidris maritima*. Recorded in all months but with an obvious spring passage. Spring max. 35 on 27th May and autumn max. 25 on 13th November.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*. There were daily spring records from 27th April-17th June, max. 14 on 2nd June, then occasional records of 1-3 until almost daily autumn passage from 2nd August-22nd October. Heaviest passage occurred from mid August-mid September with max. of 50 on 7th September. Singles on 24th & 28th October and 11th November, were the only later records.

**RUFF** *Philomachus pugnax*. All records were in autumn, with singles on 9th & 12th July, and 1-4 on 7 dates 6th-27th August preceding daily records from 29th August-19th September, max. 8 on 7th. The only later report was of 3 on 22nd September.

**JACK SNIBE** *Lymnocyrtus minimus*. Spring records comprised singles on 9th, 15th & 18th March and 8th, 23rd & 25th April. In autumn 1 on 16th September preceded daily records from 22nd September-31st October, with heaviest passage in late September-early October, max. 20 on 24th September. In November there were singles on 5th & 7th and 6 on 30th, with 4 remaining into December.

**SNIBE** *Gallinago gallinago*. Present all year, with a spring max. of 60 on 19th April, and an autumn max. of 90 on 22nd September. A census revealed 18 drumming birds.



**\*LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*. A juvenile moulting to first-winter was located at Easter Lothar on 14th September. It led observers a merry dance until it eventually settled on Vassetter next day.

**WOODCOCK** *Scolopax rusticola*. Mid-winter records comprised 3 on 1st and 1 on 18th January. In spring there were 1-3 on widely scattered dates 18th March-28th May. In autumn, 1-6 on 8 dates 1st-19th October, preceded heavy passage from 20th-29th October with over 100 recorded on 3 dates and 150 on 29th. In November there were 1-4 on 9 dates, and 12 on 9th.



**BLACK-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa limosa*. An excellent year. Spring records comprised 1 on 7th-11th, 5 on 12th and 2 on 13th & 19th May. In autumn there was a record total of 13 on 13th August, and 2 on 11th September.

**BAR-TAILED GODWIT** *Limosa lapponica*. Records were confined to spring, with a single on 1st-2nd May and 2 on 2nd June, with 1 remaining next day.

**CURLEW** *Numenius arquata*. In mid-winter there were 2 on 2nd January and 1 next day. In spring 1 on 10th March preceded daily records from 14th, with high counts of 20 on 13th April and 25 on 8th May. Six pairs attempted to breed. **Non or post** breeding flocks were present from 28th June when 25 were counted, with almost daily records until 13th November. Main passage was in mid-August, max. of 45 on 18th. Finally, occasional singles until 18th December.

**WHIMBREL** *Numenius phaeopus*. In spring recorded daily from 23rd April-6th June, with heaviest passage in early May, max. of 30 on 8th & 9th. There were occasional singles to the end of June, after which returning migrants were recorded most days until 4th September, max. 10 on 28th July. Singles on 14th & 19th September and 4 on 5th October were the only later records.

**SPOTTED REDSHANK** *Tringa erythropus*. Singles on 1st-4th May and 22nd June were only the 7th & 8th spring records. Autumn singles occurred on 16th-21st August and 6th September.

**REDSHANK** *Tringa totanus*. Recorded in all months, with up to 25 in January-February. Spring passage was from early March, with March max. of 42 on 20th and April max. of 40 on 14th. Numbers then declined to 10 by 2nd May, with 1-3 most days 9th May-9th June. There were occasional records of 1-3 from 21st June with daily records from mid-July. The main autumn movements were 135 on 4th September and 80 on 3rd October. Up to 70 remained into December.

**GREENSHANK** *Tringa nebularia*. In spring there were 1-3 on 7 dates 1st-13th May and 1 on 2nd-5th June. Autumn records comprised singles on 14 dates 10th August-7th September with 3 on 30th and 2 on 31st August. The only later record was of 1 on 5th October.

**GREEN SANDPIPER** *Tringa ochropus*. There were spring singles on 6 dates 14th-21st May, and on 20th June. Autumn passage occurred over two periods; 1-3 on 4 dates 30th July-4th August; and 1-2 almost daily 16th August-1st September.

**WOOD SANDPIPER** *Tringa glareola*. All records in May, with singles on 20th & 23rd, and 2 on 21st. The second poor year in succession.

**COMMON SANDPIPER** *Actitis hypoleucos*. In spring there were 1-3 most dates 1st-30th May and later singles on 3rd, 10th & 17th June. A poor autumn passage comprised singles on 10 dates 3rd August-14th September, with 6 on 16th and 2 on 18th August.

**TURNSTONE** *Arenaria interpres*. Recorded almost daily throughout the year, with monthly max. of 150 in January, 200 in February, 250 in March, 300 in April, 90 in May, 38 in June, 75 in July, 95 in August, 120 in September, 220 in October, 130 in November and 75 in December.

**ARCTIC SKUA** *Stercorarius parasiticus*. The first, a dark phase individual, arrived on 13th April. Numbers increased gradually to 25 by 23rd, and 50 by 30th April. The breeding population was estimated at 105 A.O.T's. but another disastrous breeding season resulted in just 3 chicks fledging. Following the poor breeding season the autumn exodus was quicker than usual, with just 2 left on 24th August. Thereafter 1-3 migrants were recorded most days until the end of the month, and 1-2 were seen on 4 dates 4th-19th September. Finally there was a late single on 5th October.

**LONG-TAILED SKUA** *Stercorarius longicauda*. A second-summer individual briefly joined the non-breeding Arctic Skuas at Homisdale on 4th June.

**GREAT SKUA** *Stercorarius skua*. Early singles on 22nd & 24th March preceded daily records from 28th. The main arrival occurred in early to mid-April, with 25 by 8th and 50 by 13th. The breeding population was estimated at 73 A.O.T's with breeding success estimated at 0.70 chicks fledged/A.O.T. There were daily records until 12th October, followed by 1-3 on 8 dates until 25th October.

**BLACK-HEADED GULL** *Larus ridibundus*. Singles on 11th & 28th February preceded almost daily records 14th March-9th June. Main movements comprised 25 on 9th & 25th April and 30 on 1st May. There were fewer reports in June-July with best counts, 15 on 28th June and 25 on 15th July. In autumn recorded most days until the end of October, with main passage in early August, max. of 30 on 2nd. In November there were 1-3 on 7 dates until 21st, and in December, 1 on 9th and 18th.

**COMMON GULL** *Larus canus*. One-3 were seen regularly January-February. The first influx of 20 occurred on 5th March after which there were almost daily records. The main passage took place mid April-early May, with a max. of 75 on 3rd May. Nine pairs attempted to breed raising 8 chicks to fledging. Returning migrants appeared from mid-July when 200 on 15th, with largest numbers occurring in early August, max. of 600 on 10th. There were fewer in September, max. of 85 on 3rd, and in October, max 52 on 21st, and occasional records of 1-2 in November and December.

**LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus fuscus*. An early spring record on 16th March was followed by almost daily sightings after 4th April. A very poor breeding season saw just 5 chicks fledge from the colonies at Goorn and South Gavel. Recorded regularly in autumn until 14th September, although there were no notable influxes. Finally, an oiled individual on 6th November was the latest ever.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*. Present all year. This species too, suffered a very poor breeding season with just 5 chicks fledging from the colonies at Goorn and South Gavel. The largest counts of birds ashore were 2000 on 16th and 1600 on 22nd January.

**ICELAND GULL** *Larus glaucoides*. In spring there was a first or second-summer on 26th May and in autumn, first-winters occurred on 20th-22nd September and 8th-19th October.

**GLAUCOUS GULL** *Larus hyperboreus*. In January there was an adult on 7th and a first-winter on 15th. Spring records comprised third-summers on 25th April and 20th May, and a first-summer on 15th May. Later in the year there were first-winters on, 22nd-23rd September, 8th-12th, 15th & 23rd October, and 1-2 on 6 dates in

November; a second-winter on 8th & 12th October; and an adult on 20th-22nd September.

**GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** *Larus marinus*. Present all year, with the highest count of birds ashore 2000 on 16th & 22nd January.

**KITTIWAKE** *Rissa tridactyla*. Present on cliffs from February. The breeding season was the poorest to date, with pairs at all (1363) monitored nests failing to rear any young successfully. Indeed it is doubtful whether more than 2 chicks fledged from the island as a whole. Following the catastrophic breeding season all breeders had departed colonies by early August, after which there were regular records of up to 30 at sea until mid-October, and then occasional records of 1-2 to mid-November.

**SANDWICH TERN** *Sterna sandvicensis*. Two off Landberg on 21st August was the only record.

**COMMON TERN** *Sterna hirundo*. The first 3 occurred on 3rd May with numbers building up to 25 by 13th. Only 7 pairs attempted to breed, the lowest total since 1975, and these all failed during incubation. The autumn exodus was quick with the last record, 2 on 22nd July.

**ARCTIC TERN** *Sterna paradisaea*. The first on 4th May preceded the main arrival from 8th, with 70 by 10th and 150 by 12th. A record total of an estimated 400 pairs attempted to breed but once again breeding success was dismal, with just 1 chick surviving to fledge. There were daily records until 10th August. Late records involved singles on 19th September and 7th-8th October and 2 on 12th October. These were the first ever definite October records.

**GUILLEMOT** *Uria aalge*. Present on fine days from at least February. Numbers at the 5 monitored plots all showed significant decreases, with an average decrease of 27.6%. Breeding success was again good, with 0.72 chicks fledged/incubating adult. Most breeders had departed by late July, and there were few August records. Sightings were more regular from September, with max. of 30 on 2nd October.

**RAZORBILL** *Alca torda*. Present from late February. Breeding success at Easter Lother was estimated to be in the region of 0.55-0.69 chicks/breeding pair. Most breeders had departed by the end of July after which there were scattered records of 1-5 from 28th August-10th October.

**BLACK GUILLEMOT** *Cepphus grylle*. Present all year. Breeding productivity at monitored nests was 0.73 chicks fledged/nest.

**LITTLE AUK** *Alle alle*. Records from the Isle comprised singles on 11th January and 7th & 20th October, and 1-4 on 6 dates 12th November-13th December. From the Good Shepherd, 1 on 30th October and 5 on 6th November.

**PUFFIN** *Fratercula arctic*. Birds arrived much later than in recent years with the first 5 ashore on 6th April, and large numbers were not evident until mid-month. Breeding success at 0.57 chicks fledged/occupied burrow at monitored burrows was lower than in any year since monitoring began in 1986. At least some of this failure can be attributed to flooding of burrows during a period of intense rainfall on July 1st. Most breeders had departed by the end of August, with occasional records of 1-5 offshore until 11th October.

**ROCK DOVE** *Columba livia*. Present throughout the year, with noticeable spring and autumn peaks. The highest spring count was 52 on 26th May, the highest autumn count, 70 on 7th-8th November.

**STOCK DOVE** *Columba oenas*. One at Field on 21st April was the first since 1988.

**WOOD PIGEON** *Columba palumbus*. One on 18th January was unusual. Light spring passage spanned 14th March-14th June, with 1-5 on 7 dates in March, 1-4 on 19 dates in April, 1-7 on 19 dates in May and 1-2 on 9 dates in June. In autumn there were 1-4 on 6th-15th, 2 on 20th and 1-2 on 25th-29th October, and 1 from 25th November-3rd December.

**COLLARED DOVE** *Streptopelia decaocto*. Two on 19th-20th and 1 on 27th April preceded main spring passage from 1st May-2nd July when recorded almost daily, with max. of 14 on 28th May. Thereafter 5 on 13th July and singles on 5 dates to 14th August.

**TURTLE DOVE** *Streptopelia turtur*. Spring records comprised 2 on 27th and 1 on 29th May, 1-4 daily 5th-10th June, and singles on 7 dates to 3rd July. In autumn there were singles on 11th, 12th & 24th September, with a late individual from 20th October-1st November equalling the latest ever record.

**CUCKOO** *Cuculus canorus*. Records were restricted to June, when 2 on 2nd and singles on 3rd, 11th & 15th. The poorest showing for many years.

**\*SNOWY OWL** *Nyctea scandiaca*. A superb adult male spent 12th-18th May on the south side of Ward Hill. Recorded for the second year in succession.

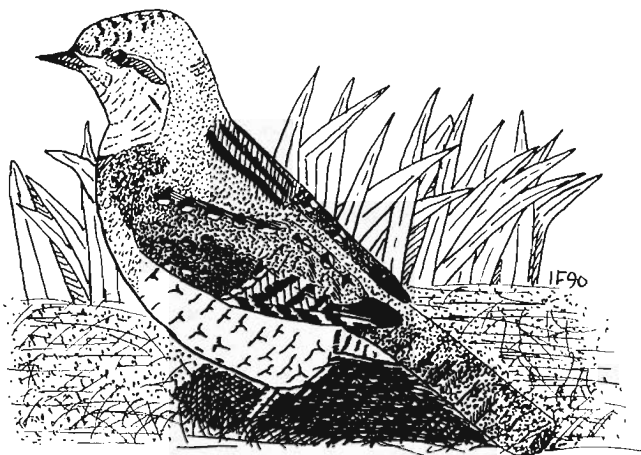
**LONG-EARED OWL** *Asio otus*. In spring there was 1 on 10th April and a long staying individual from 22nd May-12th June. In autumn an early individual on 13th-16th August preceded the main passage from 18th October-11th November, when 1-3 recorded on 15 dates. One on 4th December was the only later record.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** *Asio flammeus*. In spring, 1-3 were recorded on 14 dates 26th April-24th May. A poor autumn passage comprised singles on 5th August, and 24th-25th September, 1-2 daily 13th-16th October and 1-2 on 5 dates 25th October-8th November.

**SWIFT** *Apus apus*. There were regular records from 30th May-16th September. Recorded on 17 dates in June, max. of 6 on 25th; on 15 dates in July, max. of 6 on 26th; on 12 dates in August, max. of 9 on 31st; and on 16 dates in September, max. of 16 on 5th.

**WRYNECK** *Jynx torquilla*. Another poor year. Spring records comprised singles on 7th-8th, 21st, 23rd, & 26th May, and 2 on 9th-10th June, with 1 remaining until 13th. In autumn there were singles on 31st August and 7th September and 2 on 16th & 22nd September.

**GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER** *Dendrocopus major*. A notable irruption commenced with an early single on 17th August. Three followed on 26th August and new arrivals continued throughout September and October, with 1-3 recorded on 40 dates. The only later records were singles on 5th & 22nd November.



**\*SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella brachydactyla*. There were two records both in spring. One at Kennaby briefly on 9th May, and 1 at Pund from 27th May-6th June.

**SKYLARK** *Alauda arvensis*. Regular sightings of 1-3 in January-February, preceded the first large arrival of 35 on 11th February after which seen daily. The main spring passage occurred from March-early April, with high counts of 350 on 15th and 450 on 20th March, and 380 on 5th April. The breeding population was estimated at 115 pairs. Autumn passage commenced in late August and was heaviest in late September-early October, with high counts of 350 on 22nd September and 425 on 6th and 400 on 12th October. Numbers decreased from late October with 30 remaining until mid-November and scattered records of 1-2 in December.

**SAND MARTIN** *Riparia riparia*. In spring there were daily records of 1-3 on 1st-4th May, followed by singles on 8th, 18th & 26th, prior to the peak count of 12 on 28th May. There were then 4 on 29th and 2 on 30th, with 1 remaining until 6th June. Autumn records comprised singles on 19th & 26th August and 6th & 7th September.

**SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*. In spring 2 on 19th April and 1 next day, preceded daily passage from 30th April-21st June, with the best movements, 35 on 3rd, 40-50 on 27th-29th May and 50 on 6th June. One-9 were reported regularly from 24th June-11th August, preceding daily records from 14th August-6th September, max. of 20 on 14th. The only later records were of 6 on 22nd September and singles on 8 dates until the last on 23rd October. A pair bred at Lower Station, successfully fledging one chick. The first breeding record since 1982.

**HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon urbica*. In spring there were almost daily records from 2nd May-15th June, with heaviest passage in late May-early June, max. of 50 on 6th June. There were then 8 on 18th June and 1-2 on 4 dates to the end of the month. In July there were 1-2 on 6 dates. Light autumn passage comprised 1-2 on 7 dates 14th August-2nd September and singles on 3rd-8th & 15th-16th October.

**RICHARD'S PIPIT** *Anthus novaeseelandiae*. Seven individuals were recorded. In September, there were 2 on 24th with 1 remaining next day, then in October there was 1 on 12th-13th, 1 on 15th-16th joined by another on 17th with both remaining until 18th, and 1 on 26th-27th. Finally there was 1 on November 1st.

**TAWNY PIPIT** *Anthus campestris*. One on Vaasetter from 20th-26th May was the first record since 1987 and the 13th record for the Isle.

**\*OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT** *Anthus hodgsoni*. A bumper year after last years absence with a minimum of 9 individuals recorded. The first on 23rd September is the earliest island record. This was joined by another on 25th and a third on 26th, with all 3 still present on 28th, and 2 remaining until 1st October, when a new individual was found at Leogh. Further singles occurred on 16th, 18th & 20th October and then 2 frequented Boinni Mire from 24th-28th, with 1 remaining until 31st October.

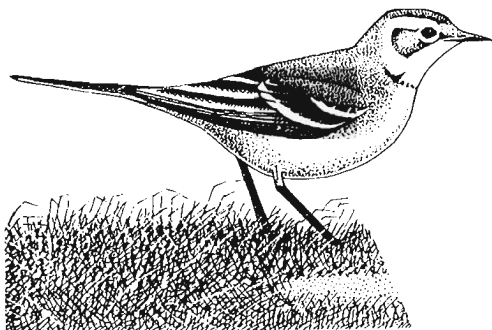
**TREE PIPIT** *Anthus trivialis*. A poor year. In spring there were almost daily records 1st May-3rd June, with main passage 2nd-3rd May, max. of 15 on 3rd. Autumn records comprised, 1 on 22nd and 1-3 daily 27th-29th August, singles on 5 dates in September, and 1 on 5th October.

**MEADOW PIPIT** *Anthus pratensis*. One-2 were recorded on 5 dates in January-February. There were daily records from 14th March with the first main arrival of 60 on 20th. Heaviest passage occurred in two phases, 1st-10th April, max. of 185 on 10th; and 22nd April-15th May, max. of 200 on 12th. The breeding population was estimated at 40 pairs. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August with large counts of 800 on 26th August, 450 on 5th September and 600 on 6th October. Numbers decreased to less than 100 daily by mid October, and less than 10 daily by 4th November, with occasional records of 1-2 until 26th November.

**\*RED-THROATED PIPIT** *Anthus cervinus*. A spring individual inhabited Boinni Mire and Da Water on 29th May, and an autumn individual frequented the base of Malcolm's Head on 2nd October. The first multiple occurrence since the 3 in 1985.

**ROCK PIPIT** *Anthus petrosus*. Present all year, with no obvious passage. Individuals showing the characteristics of the Scandinavian subspecies *littoralis* were recorded on 17th March and 2 on 27th April.

**YELLOW WAGTAIL** *Motacilla flava*. Spring records comprised 1-2 on 18 dates 12th May-2nd June and 3 on 3rd June. Those subspecifically identified were *M.f.flavissima*, 1 on 31st May and *M.f.thunbergi*, singles on 15th, 25th & 30th May. In autumn there were 2 on 5th and singles on 6th, 16th-17th, 24th-27th & 30th September and 1 on 1st October. The individual present from 24th-27th September belonged to one of the 'grey and white' eastern races.



**\*CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*. The equal earliest ever was at Field on 27th-30th August, and another was on Meoness from 11th-13th September. Recorded for the sixth year in succession, and the first year since 1974 that more than one has been recorded.

**GREY WAGTAIL** *Motacilla cinerea*. There were spring singles on 6th April, 8th-10th May and on 6 dates, 16th May-10th June. In autumn 1-2 were recorded on 15 dates 30th September-12th November.

**PIED WAGTAIL** *Motacilla alba*. The first 2 appeared on 14th March, after which there were almost daily records until 27th October. The main spring passage spanned 7th April-21st May with a max. of 12 on 13th & 23rd April. Two pairs bred successfully. The first autumn arrival of 35 on 14th August, was followed by heavy passage in late August, max. of 105 on 26th. There were less than 10 daily after 17th September, with 1-6 daily in October. One on 10th was the only November record. Pied Wagtails (*M.a. yarelli*) predominated in March and October, with White Wagtails (*M.a. alba*) predominating at other times.

**WAXWING** *Bombicilla garrulus*. A good autumn, surpassed only by 1988 in recent years. Five flew south on 15th October, followed by 30 on 18th October and then 1-7, on 7 dates to the end of the month. In November there were singles on 1st & 20th and 10 on 5th.

**WREN** *Troglodytes troglodytes*. Present all year. Census work revealed 31 singing males. Migrants of the nominate race were recorded in April, with 2 on 13th & 24th, and 1 on 19th.

**DUNNOCK** *Prunella modularis*. A poor year. Spring passage comprised 1-3 on 21 dates 1st April-5th May and 1 on 12th May, while autumn records were limited to singles on 20th-23rd & 31st October and 10th-25th & 13th-30th November.

**ROBIN** *Erithacus rubecula*. Singles on 22nd & 28th February preceded almost daily records 14th March-31st May. Strongest passage was in mid-April, max. of 17 on 20th. Apart from 8 on 3rd all May records were of 1-2. In June there were singles on 3rd & 17th-19th. In autumn, singles on 6 dates 5th-20th September preceded daily records from 22nd September. Heaviest passage was in late October-early November, with a max. of 15 on 3 dates. At least 5 remained into December.

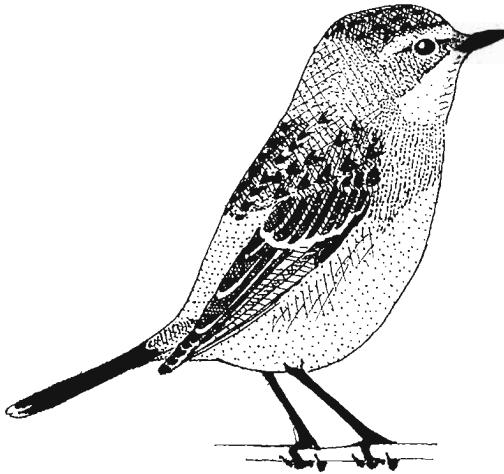
**NIGHTINGALE** *Luscinia megarhynchos*. There were 3 records all in May. One inhabiting the Reeves from 8th-13th, was joined by a second on 12th, with another at the Plantation on 21st.

**BLUETHROAT** *Luscinia svecica*. A poor spring. In May there were 2 on 21st, 1 on 23-26th, 3 on 28th and 2 on 31st, and in June, 2 on 1st and singles on 3rd-5th, 6th & 11th. All autumn records were in September with 3 on 16th and singles on 17th, 22nd, 24th & 30th.

**BLACK REDSTART** *Phoenicurus ochruros*. In spring there were 1-2 on 4 dates 20th-24th April, and singles on 3rd May and 9th-10th June. A mid-summer record on 22nd July and 1 on 11th-14th August were unusual. Autumn passage commenced with 1 on 8th October followed by 1-3 almost daily 13th-30th October. In November there were 1-2 on 5 dates until 11th.

**REDSTART** *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*. In spring there were 1-2 on 11 dates 3rd-19th May, with a spring max. of 4 on 13th, and later singles on 28th May and 8th-11th June. Autumn singles on 7th & 15th September preceded daily passage 23rd-27th, max. of 7 on 24th, and in October there were 1-2 on 6 dates 14th-20th, with later singles on 25th & 29th-31st. An appalling year!

**WHINCHAT** *Saxicola rubetra*. Spring records comprised 1-5 daily 3rd-22nd May, and singles on 31st May-1st June & 5th-6th June. The main autumn passage spanned 13th August-29th September and was strongest in late August-early September, max. of 12 on 29th August & 7th September. In October there were 1-2 on 11 dates 14th-30th, with November singles on 4th, 11th & 26th, the last two occurring later than ever before.



**STONECHAT** *Saxicola torquata*. Spring records comprised single males on 6th-7th & 12th March, then in April, females on 1st & 4th, then 3 (2 males and a female) on 14th, with 2 remaining until 18th and 1 until 22nd. In autumn there was a male on 25th October, then a male and female on 28th-30th October, with the male remaining until 1st November, and a further male on 7th November. Two individuals of the eastern races *S.t. maura/stejnegeri* were the first since 1987. A first-summer male in Gilsetter on 28th-30th April was the first ever spring record and a probable first-winter male frequented Pund on 26th-29th September.

**WHEATEAR** *Oenanthe oenanthe*. An exceptionally early individual on 19th March preceded daily records from 31st March. The main passage occurred in late April-early May, max. of 300 on 1st May. The breeding population was estimated at 70 pairs and fledging success appeared normal. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August and was strongest in late August-early September, max. of 250 on 26th August & 5th September. There were fewer than 100 daily after 6th September with an October peak of 70 on 3rd. After 18th October there were fewer than 10 daily, with the last seen on 27th.



**\*SWAINSON'S THRUSH** *Catharus ustulatus*. One frequented Hjukni Geo from 30th September-6th October. The first Fair Isle and second Scottish record, and for many the surprise of the year.

**RING OUZEL** *Turdus torquatus*. In April there was 1 on 15th, 1-4 daily 20th-24th and 2 on 26th. Then in May, 1-2 on 7 dates and in June, 1 on 4th. A practically non-existent autumn passage saw 2 on 23rd September and singles on 16th & 21st October and 7th November.

**BLACKBIRD** *Turdus merula*. Up to 4 over-wintered. Spring passage occurred from 5th March with March max. of 50 on 18th. Heaviest passage was in early April with max. of 100 on 4th. After the 10th there were fewer than 10 daily, with 1-3 on 14 dates in May and singles on 4 dates in June. In autumn singles on 26th & 28th August preceded daily records from 23rd September-mid November. Heaviest passage took place from 15th-31st October, when over 150 were recorded daily and large arrivals of 450 on 18th and 500 on 22nd occurred. The November max. of 60 on 1st was followed by a gradual exodus with about 10 remaining into December.

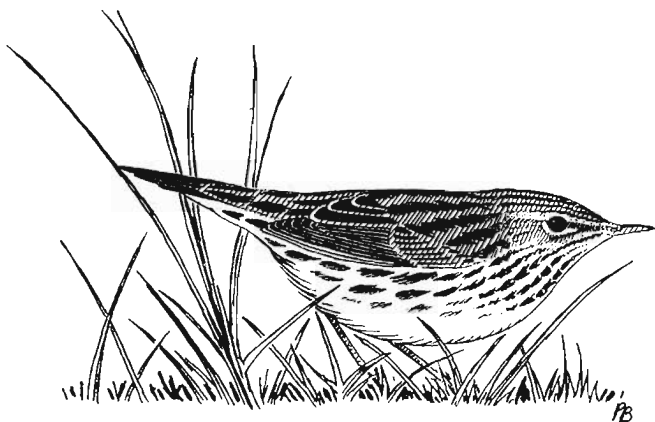
**FIELDFARE** *Turdus pilaris*. A wintering flock of up to 100 were present from January-mid March confusing the picture of spring migration. However, heavy passage occurred in mid April, with 500 on 13th, 130 on 14th and 225 on 15th, after which there were fewer than 35 daily until the end of the month. There were singles on 5 dates in May and 1-2 on 6 dates 1st-16th June. In autumn there were 1-3 daily 28th July-3rd August, 1-6 most dates 25th August-6th September, 1 on 16th September and 1-5 on 22nd-30th September. The first large arrival took place on 1st October when 120 counted. Heaviest passage was from 12th-27th October when over 500 were recorded most days and notable arrivals included 1500 on 16th, 5000 on 18th and 3500 on 22nd. There were daily records in November, max. of 80 on 9th, but fewer than 5 remained into December.

**SONG THRUSH** *Turdus philomelos*. One-2 were seen occasionally in January-February. In spring 1-8 seen regularly from 5th March preceded main passage on 13th-15th April, max. of 25 on 13th, after which there were up to 10 recorded daily until 25th April, and then singles on 17 dates until 9th June. In autumn 1 on 31st August preceded almost daily records from 20th September-13th November, with main passage in late September-mid October, when main arrivals were 35 on 24th & 26th September and 40 on 1st and 60 on 18th October. One on 5th December was the last record.

**REDWING** *Turdus iliacus*. There were regular sightings of 1-10 in January-March suggesting some birds over-wintered. The main spring passage occurred in April with largest arrivals, 50 on 4th, 80 on 9th, 150 on 13th, 105 on 14th and 80 on 28th. There were 55 on 1st May, and then after the 6th, 1-3 on 25 dates until 19th June. In autumn singles on 17th, 18th & 20th September preceded daily records from 22nd September. The first large arrival of 400 occurred on 30th September and was followed by 1500 next day. Heaviest passage though, took place on 17th-23rd October, with 1000 on 17th, 2000 on 18th, 1200 on 21st, 2000 on 22nd and 1200 on 23rd. The November max. of 110 was recorded on 9th, and at least 20 remained into December.

**MISTLE THRUSH** *Turdus viscivorus*. Spring records comprised singles on 19th March & 14th-16th April and 2 on 13th April. Most autumn records occurred in October,

with singles on 20th, 23rd, 27th-28th & 30th, 3 on 21st and 2 on 22nd. Finally there was a late individual on 25th November.



**\*LANCEOLATED WARBLER** *Locustella lanceolata*. There were two records, both in September. The first along the roadside at Setter on 23rd, and the other in Gilsetter on 30th. The second individual was ridiculously tame, walking between and over the feet of its assembled admirers prior to being picked up for ringing! The species has now been recorded for seven years in succession.

**GRASSHOPPER WARBLER** *Locustella naevia*. Another good year with spring singles on 20th, 23rd & 28th-29th April and 4th & 6th-7th May, and 3 on 3rd May. In autumn there were singles on 28th August and 7th September.

**SEDGE WARBLER** *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Spring records comprised 3 on 3rd May, 1-2 on 8 dates 12th-30th May and 1-2 daily 8th-11th June. In autumn there was 1 on 28th August and 1 daily 21st-29th September, with 2 on 23rd-24th.

**MARSH WARBLER** *Acrocephalus palustris*. A poor year with only 3 individuals, all recorded in June, on 1st, 2nd-3rd & 6th.

**REED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*. One on 14th June was the sole spring record. Autumn records comprised singles, on 29th July-1st August, 17th August, on 7 dates 25th August-3rd September and on 19th-22nd October.

**ICTERINE WARBLER** *Hippolais icterina*. All 3 records were in spring, with singles on 29th May and 4th & 6th June. The first year since 1981 without an autumn record.

**MELODIOUS WARBLER** *Hippolais polyglotta*. One at Leogh on 6th June was the first since 1981 and the tenth island record.

**BARRED WARBLER** *Sylvia nisoria*. Two on 20th August were followed by 1-3 daily 25th-30th August, then 1-3 daily 5th-17th September and later singles on 25th & 26th September, and 4th & 18th October. About 17-18 individuals in all.

**LESSER WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia curruca*. Spring singles on 24th & 26th April preceded a large arrival of 14 on 3rd May, after which there were 1-4 most days until 23rd June with 6 on 9th May. In autumn, 1-2 on 11 dates 22nd August-16th September, preceded daily passage 22nd September-7th October, max. of 5 on 3rd. Later records involved 2 on 13th, 5 on 18th and 1-2 daily 19th-25th October.

**WHITETHROAT** *Sylvia communis*. In spring 1 on 3rd May preceded almost daily records 13th May-19th June, with 7 on 21st May and 8 on 6th June the best arrivals. In autumn 1 on 13th August was followed by daily records 17th August-6th September, max. of 4 on 19th, then 1-3 almost daily 22nd-30th September and a late single on 8th October.

**GARDEN WARBLER** *Sylvia borin*. In spring 1-3 on 8 dates 12th-31st May, preceded daily passage 3rd-13th June, max. of 8 on 6th. One on 17th-19th June was the only later record. In autumn recorded regularly between 14th August-27th September, with fewer than 9 daily except 15 on 7th September. October records comprised 1-2 on 3rd-5th and late singles on 21st & 25th.

**BLACKCAP** *Sylvia atricapilla*. In spring 5 on 3rd May were followed by scattered records of 1-3 until 30th June. Autumn records spanned 30th August-13th November with the main passage from 13th-25th October, max. of 40 on 18th. One on 22nd November was the only later record.

**\*GREENISH WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochiloides*. A first-winter fed around the Observatory on 16th August. After a 5 year absence the species has now been recorded in 3 of the last 4 years.

**\*ARCTIC WARBLER** *Phylloscopus borealis*. One at North Shirva on 26th August moved to the Houll next day. The first since 1987.

**YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER** *Phylloscopus inornatus*. One at the Haa on 12th September was the earliest in the Observatory period. It was followed by 2 on 18th, 1 on 19th, 6 on 22nd, 2 on 26th and 3 on 30th September. In October there was 1-2 on 2nd-5th and a late single on 20th.

**\*DUSKY WARBLER** *Phylloscopus fuscatus*. One trapped at the Plantation on 30th September was the earliest ever. After release it frequented the lower Leogh area. A second individual was found at Utra on 19th October. The sixth and seventh records.

**WOOD WARBLER** *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*. Singles on 4th & 29th May were the only spring records. Autumn records comprised in August, 2 on 27th and 1 on 28th-29th, and in September singles on 3rd-4th & 5th-6th, 2 on 7th and 1 on 23rd.

**CHIFFCHAFF** *Phylloscopus collybita*. Seen regularly 1st April-20th June with the heaviest passage in early May, max. of 25 on 3rd. The April maximum of 8 occurred on 13th & 20th, while in June day counts were of 3 or less. In autumn there were singles on 2nd, 9th & 12th and 1-3 daily 26th-30th September. Then in October singles on 4 dates 1st-13th, preceded heavy passage 16th-22nd with a record arrival of 100 on 18th, nearly all of which were of the grey northern or eastern races. In November there were daily records until 13th, max. of 10 on 11th, with the last 3 on 21st.

**WILLOW WARBLER** *Phylloscopus trochilus*. The first 4 on 24th April were followed by 2 singles before daily records 1st May-11th June, with the best count of 15 on 3rd & 8th May. The main autumn migration spanned 31st July-6th October, with two periods of heavy passage; 25th-29th August, max. of 50 on 26th; and 22nd-25th September, max. of 35 on 24th. In October, there was a maximum of 10 on 3rd, with occasional singles until 19th and a very late individual from 25th-1st November.

**GOLDCREST** *Regulus regulus*. Spring passage occurred from 14th March-25th April, max. of 12 on 13th April. In autumn, singles on 4 dates 25th August-4th September preceded daily records from 12th September-1st November. Heavy passage occurred in two periods; from 22nd September-5th October, max. of 100 on 22nd; and from 13th-25th October, max. of 90 on 21st. One on 21st November was the last record.

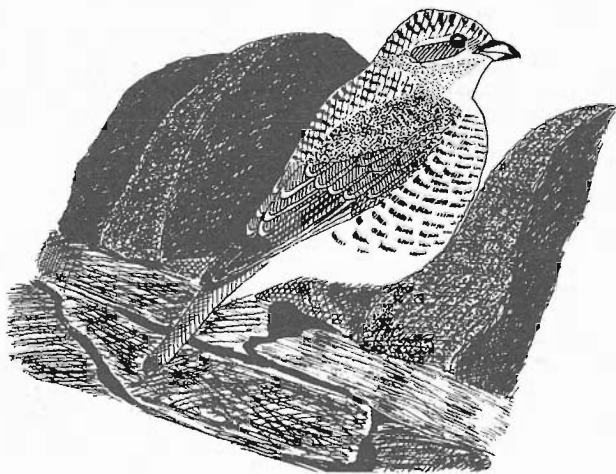
**SPOTTED FLYCATCHER** *Muscicapa striata*. In spring recorded most days 13th May-10th June, max. of 14 on 23rd, with later singles on 4 dates to 24th June. Autumn records comprised 1 on 7th and 4 on 22nd September, and 1-2 daily 23rd September-6th October.

**RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula parva*. A super 'red' male at Leogh on 30th May was the only spring record. In autumn there was 1 on 22nd September and 2 on 30th September-1st October with 1 remaining until 3rd.

**PIED FLYCATCHER** *Ficedula hypoleuca*. A poor year. Spring records comprised 1-2 on 10 dates 5th May-6th June, and 4 on 8th May. In autumn an early single on 10th August was followed by 1-4 on 12 dates 22nd August-30th September with 11 on 7th September. One on 17th October was the only later record.

**COAL TIT** *Parus ater*. The individual first seen on 26th September 1989 remained until at least 1st February 1990.

**GOLDEN ORIOLE** *Oriolus oriolus*. One in the Busta/Koolin area on 7th June was the first since 1988.



**RED-BACKED SHRIKE** *Lanius collurio*. In spring there were single males on 20th, 21st & 28th May and 2nd-5th June, then 1-3 daily 6th-15th and a female on 25th June. There were just 2 autumn records, 1 in the Gully on 12th September and 1 at Utra on 18th October. The poorest showing since 1983.

**GREAT GREY SHRIKE** *Lanius excubitor*. One at Pund on 21st October was trapped in the Plantation next day.

**\*WOODCHAT SHRIKE** *Lanius senator*. A juvenile self-trapped in the Double Dyke on 11th September was the first autumn record since 1982.

**JACKDAW** *Corvus monedula*. Spring records comprised 1 on 13th February, 1-2 daily 12th-21st April, 2 on 3rd May and 1 on 27th May. There were no autumn records for the first year since 1984.

**ROOK** *Corvus frugilegus*. The first 3 on 13th February were followed by 1 on 14th March with 2 next day, both remaining until 22nd. In April singles on 8th & 12th preceded an influx of 7 on 13th, followed by 1-3 daily until 18th, and in May there were 2 on 10th and 1 on 17th. One on 19th October was the sole autumn record.

**CARRION CROW** *Corvus corone*. Hooded Crows *C.c.cornix* were noted regularly throughout the year with obvious influxes of 8 on 20th March and 28th May and in October, 20 on 1st, 8 on 7th and 9 on 18th. Carrion Crows *C.c.corone* were present throughout the year with 1-2 regularly in January-February, 1-3 daily in April, 1-5 daily in May, 1-3 daily June-August, 1-4 daily September-October and 1-2 regularly November-December. The only obvious influx was 7 on 28th March.

**RAVEN** *Corvus corax*. Present all year. In spring flocks of migrants comprised 15 on 28th March and 7 on 6th, 25 on 14th & 10 on 16th April. In autumn parties of migrants numbered 9 on 25th August, 9 on 9th and 7 on 30th September, and 6 on 5th October. Three pairs attempted to breed; all were unsuccessful.

**STARLING** *Sturnus vulgaris*. Present all year with little obvious passage. Spring peak of 600 on 18th March and 13th April and autumn peak of 700 on 3rd October.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*. Little data, but present all year. There was a post-breeding count of 120 on 24th August and a late autumn max. of 76 on 8th October.

**TREE SPARROW** *Passer montanus*. One at the Haa and then below Shirva on 5th-6th September was the only record.

**CHAFFINCH** *Fringilla coelebs*. Another poor year. Light spring passage occurred from 1st April-1st May, max. of 8 on 4th. There were occasional singles in May with a female summering. A poor autumn passage was observed between 23rd September-7th November, with September max. of 7 on 28th and October max. of 8 on 19th.

**BRAMBLING** *Fringilla montifringilla*. In spring 1-2 on 3 dates 4th-7th April, preceded daily records 13th-30th, max. of 50 on 13th. In May there were 1-3 on 8 dates 1st-19th and in June there was 1 on 1st. Autumn passage occurred in two phases; light passage 21st September-6th October, max. of 13 on 1st; and heavy passage 11th October-1st November, max. of 250 on 16th. The last individual was recorded on 13th November.

**GREENFINCH** *Carduelis chloris*. One on 5th January may have remained from December 1989. All spring records were in April, with 3 on 13th, and 2 on 20th-21st, followed by 1 daily until 30th. There were daily autumn records from 12th October-11th November, with notable counts of 11 on 22nd & 25th and a maximum of 21 on 29th October.

**SISKIN** *Carduelis spinus* One on 1st June was the only spring record. In autumn there were 2 on 3rd September, 1-3 daily 14th-22nd October and 1 on 1st-4th November. Certainly the worst showing in recent years if not ever.

**LINNET** *Carduelis cannabina*. There were daily spring records of 1-4 from 14th April-16th May. For the first time since 1973 the species was absent in autumn.

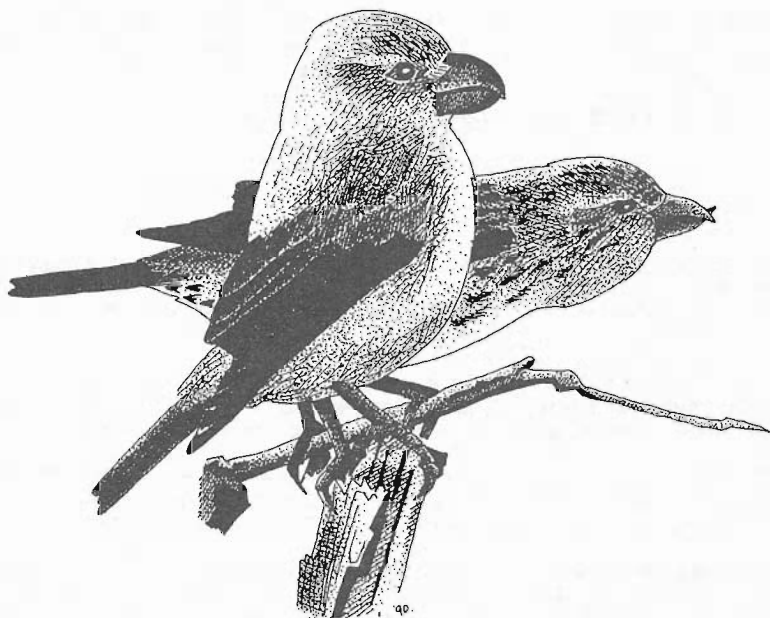
**TWITE** *Carduelis flavirostris*. Occasional records of up to 14 in January-mid February indicate at least some over-wintered. Twenty-six on 13th February were probably migrants. Local birds arrived from early March but numbers remained low until late April when there were 70 on 21st, and a spring max. of 120 on 27th. The May maximum was also of 120, occurring on 13th. Autumn passage commenced in mid-August with monthly max. of 270 on 26th August, 280 on 7th & 27th September and 350 on 2nd October. There were fewer than 100 daily after 20th October, with a November max. of 45 on 7th, and a December max. of 15 on 10th.

**REDPOLL** *Carduelis flammea*. Spring records comprised singles on 24th & 26th-28th April, 23rd-25th May, and 1st, 3rd & 11th June. In autumn there were 2 on 26th July, 1-2 on 9 dates 16th August-25th September, 1-7 daily 1st-21st October, and in November singles on 4 dates until 17th. Most individuals belonged to the nominate subspecies but 'lesser' Redpolls (*C.f. cabaret*) were recorded as follows; 1 on 11th June, 1 on 13th-17th October and 2 on 18th October, and an individual of the Greenland race (*C.f. rostrata*) was present on 1st-3rd October.

**\*ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Carduelis hornemanni*. One at Easterhoull on 23rd April was the only record.

**\*TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL** *Loxia leucoptera*. The best year ever with 6 individuals recorded. An adult male and female spent 25th-31st July feeding on thrift heads in the Easter Lothar/Millens Houllen area. These were followed by 3 juveniles, all in August, at Setter on 16th, outside the observatory on 23rd and at the base of Malcolm's Head on 28th. Finally a female was seen in the north on 20th October.

**CROSSBILL** *Loxia curvirostra*. A phenomenal year saw daily records from 29th May-25th October. A male was present on 29th May-2nd June with the first influx of 55 occurring next day. Thereafter numerous influxes occurred throughout the summer, the largest being 100 on 11th June, 100+ on 20th July, 100 on 4th August, 200 on 20th August, and 225 on 23rd August. Although numbers had decreased by September new arrivals still occurred, notably 90 on 3rd and 80 on 9th. There were still 40 present on 1st October but by 15th there was just 1 left, with another influx of 25 occurring on 16th. The last sighting was on 1st November. It was interesting to see how the main item of food changed throughout the year. Initially birds fed on the growing tips of Ling *Calluna vulgaris*, they then moved onto the seeding heads of Thrift *Armeria maritima* in late June and from there onto the seeding heads of Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare* from mid August. Finally in September birds moved onto arable oats *Avena strigosa*.



**\*PARROT CROSSBILL** *Loxia pytyopsittacus*. A female below Shirva on 23rd-24th September was trapped on the latter date. The first since 1982.

**SCARLET ROSEFINCH** *Carpodacus erythrinus*. In spring there were at least 5 different individuals, including one red male. The first on 24th May was followed by 1-2 daily 28th May-8th June. In autumn there were singles on 22 dates 20th August-27th September, and 2 on 25th September, involving at least 9 individuals.

**BULLFINCH** *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*. In October there were females on 18th-19th and two on 28th, then in November a female on 1st-2nd was followed by a pair on 5th-13th, with the male remaining until 15th, and another female on 22nd. As is usual all belonged to the large northern nominate race.

**LAPLAND BUNTING** *Calcarius lapponicus*. One on 5th April was the only spring record. Regular in autumn from 3rd September-31st October, with heaviest passage late September, max. of 20 on 29th.

**SNOW BUNTING** *Plectrophenax nivalis*. Probably over-wintered with up to 32 recorded regularly January-February. Spring passage commenced in mid-March and was heaviest in early April, when 90 on 4th & 5th. After mid-April there were fewer than 10 daily, except for 13 on 23rd, and in May there were 3 on 1st & 2 on 6th. Regular in autumn from 14th September, with heaviest passage late September when 160 on 23rd & 140 on 29th. The October max. of 80 occurred on several dates and in November there was a maximum of 100 on 5th. At least 12 remained into December.

**YELLOWHAMMER** *Emberiza citrinella*. Spring singles occurred on 28th March-1st April, 21st & 29th-30th April. In autumn there were daily records from 13th-31st October with max. of 6 on 22nd, with a single remaining until late December.

**ORTOLAN BUNTING** *Emberiza hortulana*. There were two spring records, both at North Shirva, on 20th-21st & 23rd-27th May.

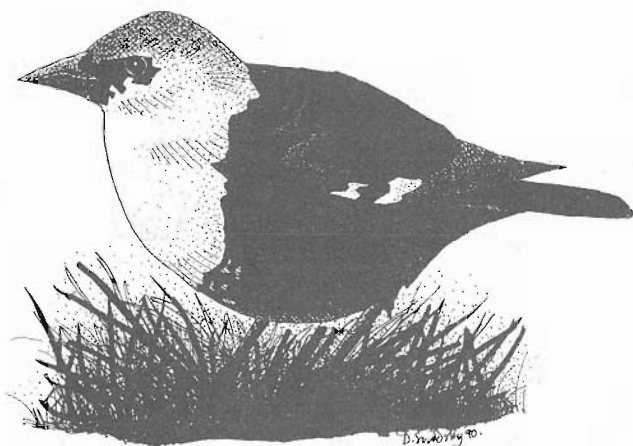
**\*RUSTIC BUNTING** *Emberiza rustica*. One, probably a male, was at Quoy on 3rd-5th October.

**\*LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla*. Recorded for the third successive spring with one near the Kirk on 15th May. Four different individuals occurred in autumn, with 1 on 22nd September, then 1 on 18th October, joined by two more next day with 2 remaining until 20th and 1 until 25th.

**\*YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING** *Emberiza aureola*. One in the Shirva/Schoolton area on 27th-29th August was the equal earliest ever, and was followed by another at Pund on 9th-14th September. Two records is below average for recent years.

**REED BUNTING** *Emberiza schoeniclus*. Spring records comprised, 1 on 20th March, 1-3 on 13 dates 3rd-24th April, 1-2 on 9 dates 7th-18th May, and 1 on 7th-8th June. In autumn, there were 1-6 almost daily 23rd September-1st November.

**\*YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*. A male found at the Houll on 26th April eventually moved up to the Pund area where it remained until 30th, occasionally singing from fence posts. The first Island and second Scottish record.





# Up date on British Birds Rarities Committee Decisions 1979-1989.

All records published in the 1989 report have been accepted, except:

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola* 27th August. Not yet submitted.

**1988**

**BLYTH'S PIPIT** *Anthus godlewski* 13th-22nd October. Decision awaited.

**BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** *Dendroica fusca* 7th October. Accepted as second British record.

**1987**

**LITTLE BUNTING** *Emberiza pusilla* 20th-21st October. Accepted.

**1986**

**SAKER** *Falco cherrug* 23rd October-3rd December. Accepted and placed into Category D.

**1983**

**SHORT-TOED LARK** *Calandrella brachydactyla* 2nd-5th October. Not yet submitted.

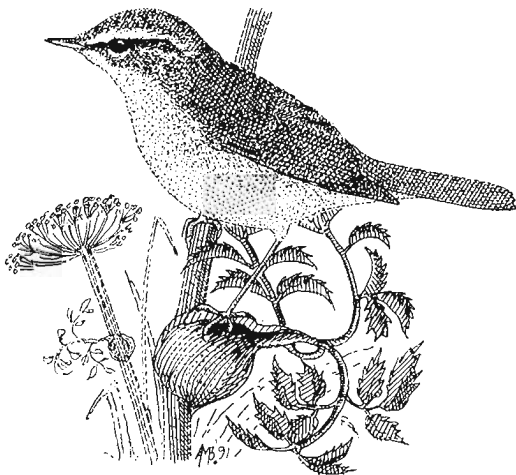
**1982**

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola* 13th-15th August. Decision still awaited.

**ARCTIC REDPOLL** *Carduelis hornemanni* 15th-16th October. Accepted.

**1979**

**SPECTACLED WARBLER** *Sylvia conspicillata* 4th-5th June. Now considered NOT acceptable



## Ringling Details 1990

5518 birds of 108 species were ringed in 1990. The monthly ringing totals were

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
0	0	36	157	256	674	2325	1155	267	593	55	0

During July and August a huge ringing effort was again targeted at Storm Petrels in this the last year of the North Atlantic Storm Petrel Study. As a result a record total of 1829 were ringed. Record totals were also achieved for Arctic Tern following the increase in the breeding population and for Crossbill as a result of the large irruption that occurred from June-September.

Not suprisingly Storm Petrel was the species with the highest ringing total; others in the top ten were Guillemot 481, Razorbill 326, Blackbird 322, Starling 320, Shag 250, Redwing 187, Puffin 173, Wheatear 162 and Crossbill 155. Rarely ringed species included Leach's Petrel (2), Grey Heron, Tufted Duck, Little Auk, Swift, Great Spotted Woodpecker (3), Mistle Thrush, Lanceolated Warbler, Melodious Warbler, Greenish Warbler, Dusky Warbler, Woodchat Shrike and Parrot Crossbill.

Although we are still awaiting full details, two controls deserve special mention. The first, a Storm Petrel ringed in the Portuguese Algarve, was one of the first 7 ever ringed in the Iberian peninsula. Furthermore, it was ringed by Peter Harris of the A Rocha Christian Bird Observatory, who ringed Stormies for the first time during his visit to Fair Isle last August! The other, a Yellow-browed Warbler ringed in Norway, is the first foreign ringed individual of the species to be controlled in Britain.

Trap repairs again featured prominently in the early spring, the Roadside trap and the North Grind were completely rebuilt, the Gully was re-roofed and the catching ends of the Double Dyke rewired. Extensive rewiring was also undertaken on the Axell, Hjon Dyke and Plantation while the Single Dyke and Vaadal required some minor patching. New catching boxes were made for both ends of the Plantation and the Single Dyke.



## Table of Ringing Totals & Recoveries

### a) Species ringed in 1990

	Ringed as		Totals		Recovered	
	Juv/Adult	Pullus	1990	1948-90	1990	1948-90
Fulmar	6	86	92	14136	8	125
Storm Petrel	1829	-	1829	13683	41	354
Leach's Petrel	2	-	2	22	-	-
Gannet	1	4	5	148	-	2
Shag	13	237	250	17517	17	445
Grey Heron	1	-	1	18	-	2
Tufted Duck	1	-	1	11	-	-
Eider	1	-	1	127	-	5
Sparrowhawk	13	-	13	224	-	18
Merlin	1	-	1	171	-	13
Water Rail	5	-	5	254	-	3
Moorhen	3	-	3	87	-	3
Oystercatcher	4	22	26	1233	2	69
Ringed Plover	2	-	2	487	-	6
Lapwing	-	2	2	265	-	4
Knot	1	-	1	79	-	2
Dunlin	2	-	2	440	-	7
Jack Snipe	1	-	1	117	-	3
Snipe	4	-	4	335	-	4
Woodcock	11	-	11	318	-	17
Redshank	2	-	2	230	-	2
Green Sandpiper	1	-	1	40	-	1
Arctic Skua	-	26	26	3054	1	59
Great Skua	-	51	51	1015	3	20
Black-headed Gull	2	-	2	36	-	3
Common Gull	2	9	11	163	-	6
Lesser Black-back Gull	-	7	7	1280	-	32
Herring Gull	4	12	16	3847	2	91
Great Black-back Gull	4	-	4	1916	1	87
Kittiwake	37	7	44	5181	1	24
Arctic Tern	-	139	139	308	-	-
Guillemot	43	438	481	18835	28	664
Razorbill	97	229	326	5048	2	163
Black Guillemot	7	27	34	1374	-	18
Little Auk	1	-	1	7	-	-
Puffin	122	51	173	10401	1	28
Wood Pigeon	2	-	2	46	-	2
Collared Dove	7	-	7	195	-	1
Turtle Dove	2	-	2	66	-	2
Cuckoo	2	-	2	90	-	1
Long-eared Owl	9	-	9	188	1	10
Swift	1	-	1	17	-	1
Wryneck	1	-	1	188	-	-
Great Spotted Woodpecker	3	-	3	23	-	-
Skylark	7	-	7	762	-	3
Swallow	1	-	1	230	-	8

	Ringed as		Totals		Recovered	
	Juv/Adult	Pullus	1990	1948-90	1990	1948-90
Tree Pipit	5	-	5	573	-	-
Meadow Pipit	110	-	110	8341	-	45
Rock Pipit	90	-	90	8120	1	26
Grey Wagtail	1	-	1	25	-	-
Pied Wagtail	5	-	5	526	-	4
Wren	12	-	12	650	-	-
Dunnock	9	-	9	1960	1	7
Robin	48	-	48	6679	-	33
Nightingale	2	-	2	24	-	-
Bluethroat	1	-	1	219	-	2
Black Redstart	4	-	4	123	-	-
Redstart	7	-	7	1515	-	1
Whinchat	3	-	3	547	-	2
Stonechat	4	-	4	52	-	-
Wheatear	162	-	162	14635	1	69
Ring Ousel	1	-	1	441	-	8
Blackbird	322	-	322	19022	1	305
Fieldfare	3	-	3	601	-	-
Song Thrush	25	-	25	2240	-	29
Redwing	187	-	187	7232	1	71
Mistle Thrush	1	-	1	22	-	1
Lanceolated Warbler	1	-	1	23	-	-
Grasshopper Warbler	1	-	1	90	-	-
Sedge Warbler	4	-	4	369	-	2
Marsh Warbler	1	-	1	79	-	-
Reed Warbler	4	-	4	156	-	1
Icterine Warbler	1	-	1	74	-	-
Melodious Warbler	1	-	1	10	-	-
Barred Warbler	4	-	4	331	-	1
Lesser Whitethroat	15	-	15	532	1	1
Whitethroat	9	-	9	776	-	-
Garden Warbler	30	-	30	2753	-	3
Blackcap	43	-	43	3892	2	15
Greenish Warbler	1	-	1	15	-	-
Yellow-browed Warbler	3	-	3	89	-	-
Dusky Warbler	1	-	1	4	-	-
Wood Warbler	2	-	2	85	-	-
Chiffchaff	31	-	31	801	1	1
Willow Warbler	47	-	47	2916	2	5
Goldcrest	29	-	29	1211	-	2
Spotted Flycatcher	10	-	10	540	-	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	-	1	48	-	-
Pied Flycatcher	4	-	4	790	-	4
Red-backed Shrike	1	-	1	161	-	-
Great Grey Shrike	1	-	1	107	-	1
Woodchat Shrike	1	-	1	12	-	-
Starling	73	247	320	20864	2	172
House Sparrow	2	-	2	1283	-	3
Chaffinch	16	-	16	2243	-	11
Brambling	31	-	31	2598	-	13
Siskin	2	-	2	279	-	1

	Ringed as		Totals		Recovered	
	Juv/Adult	Pullus	1990	1948-90	1990	1948-90
Linnet	2	-	2	132	-	1
Twite	117	-	117	4594	-	3
Redpoll	8	-	8	566	-	1
Crossbill	155	-	155	454	-	2
Parrot Crossbill	1	-	1	37	-	-
Scarlet Rosefinch	1	-	1	108	-	-
Bullfinch	3	-	3	40	-	-
Lapland Bunting	1	-	1	42	-	-
Snow Bunting	2	-	2	513	-	3
Yellowhammer	1	-	1	53	-	-
Reed Bunting	3	-	3	344	-	2
TOTALS (all species ringed 1948-90)	3924	1594	5518	230138	122*	3092

\* A Curlew was also recovered but the species was not ringed in 1990.

**b) Species ringed/recovered 1948-89 but not ringed in 1990(totals 1948-1989)**

Little Grebe	9/0	Great Crested Grebe	1/0
Red-necked Grebe	1/0	Slavonian Grebe	3/0
Cormorant	7/0	Whooper Swan	30/4
Bean Goose	1/0	Pink-footed Goose	9/3
White-fronted Goose	3/1	Greylag Goose	19/6
Barnacle Goose	3/0	Shelduck	4/0
Wigeon	14/0	Teal	38/2
Mallard	9/1	Pintail	1/1
Pochard	2/1	Ring-necked Duck	1/0
Scaup	4/0	Long-tailed Duck	14/1
Velvet Scoter	2/0	Goldeneye	15/1
Red-breasted Merganser	3/0	Goosander	3/1
Hen Harrier	2/0	Goshawk	1/0
Kestrel	43/8	Red-footed Falcon	1/0
Peregrine	6/1	Quail	5/0
Spotted Crake	15/0	Little Crake	1/0
Corncrake	35/2	Coot	13/1
Great Bustard	1/0	Little Ringed Plover	1/0
Golden Plover	17/0	Dotterel	3/0
Sanderling	88/0	Western Sandpiper	1/0
Little Stint	69/0	Temminck's Stint	2/0
White-rumped Sandpiper	1/0	Pectoral Sandpiper	5/0
Curlew Sandpiper	5/0	Purple Sandpiper	147/1
Buff-breasted Sandp.	1/0	Ruff	32/1
Great Snipe	1/0	Black-tailed Godwit	1/0
Bar-tailed Godwit	9/2	Whimbrel	14/0
Curlew	94/4	Spotted Redshank	3/0
Greenshank	8/0	Wood Sandpiper	16/0
Common Sandpiper	56/0	Turnstone	65/0
Red-necked Phalarope	5/0	Grey Phalarope	3/0

**Species ringed/recovered 1948-89 but not ringed in 1990(totals 1948-89)**

Pomarine Skua	1/0	Iceland Gull	1/0
Glaucous Gull	35/1	Common Tern	442/3
Rock Dove	22/2	Snowy Owl	1/0
Short-eared Owl	17/0	Nightjar	3/0
Hoopoe	3/0	Short-toed Lark	7/0
Woodlark	2/0	Shorelark	3/0
Sand Martin	8/0	House Martin	144/1
Richard's Pipit	9/0	Tawny Pipit	3/0
Olive-backed Pipit	6/0	Pechora Pipit	6/0
Red-throated Pipit	6/0	Yellow Wagtail	10/0
Citrine Wagtail	5/0	Waxwing	36/0
Dipper	12/0	Thrush Nightingale	22/0
Siberian Rubythroat	1/0	Red-flanked Bluetail	1/0
Pied Wheatear	1/0	Black-eared Wheatear	3/0
Rock Thrush	1/0	Grey-cheeked Thrush	2/0
White's Thrush	1/0	Eye-browed Thrush	1/0
Dusky Thrush	1/0	Black-throated Thrush	1/0
Pallas's Grasshopper W.	6/0	River Warbler	5/0
Savi's Warbler	2/0	Aquatic Warbler	22/0
Paddyfield Warbler	4/0	Blyth's Reed Warbler	1/0
Great Reed Warbler	6/0	Thick-billed Warbler	1/0
Booted Warbler	6/0	Subalpine Warbler	21/0
Sardinian Warbler	1/0	Arctic Warbler	26/0
Pallas's Warbler	2/0	Radde's Warbler	1/0
Bonelli's Warbler	1/0	Firecrest	1/0
Collared Flycatcher	1/0	Coal Tit	1/0
Blue Tit	2/0	Great Tit	7/0
Treecreeper	1/0	Golden Oriole	6/1
Isabelline Shrike	1/0	Lesser Grey Shrike	6/0
Jackdaw	3/0	Rook	5/0
Hooded Crow	43/0	Raven	26/0
Daurian Starling	1/0	Rose-coloured Starling	2/0
Tree Sparrow	97/1	Greenfinch	153/0
Goldfinch	5/0	Arctic Redpoll	17/0
Two-barred Crossbill	1/0	Hawfinch	10/0
Tennessee Warbler	2/0	Song Sparrow	3/0
White-crowned Sparrow	1/0	White-throated Sparrow	2/0
Savannah Sparrow	1/0	Pine Bunting	2/0
Ortolan Bunting	18/0	Cretzschmar's Bunting	1/0
Yellow-browed Bunting	1/0	Rustic Bunting	12/1
Little Bunting	25/0	Chestnut Bunting	1/0
Yellow-breasted Bunting	6/0	Pallas's Reed Bunting	2/0
Black-headed Bunting	3/0	Corn Bunting	3/0
Red-headed Bunting	5/0		

## Recoveries in 1990

A total of 122 recoveries away from the Isle were reported during the year. Information on these is presented below. 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 / 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

Age when ringed: this is given in the EURING code:

- 1 pullus/nestling
- 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
- 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

There were 8 recoveries away from the Isle, 5 of which were found dead in the North Sea. Curiously, 4 of these were of breeding age and were recovered in May-July. Other recoveries were of birds ringed as nestlings found dead, in Holland 5 years later, and on the Isle of Man 6 years later. A juvenile ringed in August 1981 was controlled on North Ronaldsay, Orkney, in July 1987.

### STORM PETREL

Forty-one birds were controlled away from the Isle, these are tabulated below.

Lerwick, Shetland	1	North Ronaldsay, Orkney	6
Unst, Shetland	1	Sanday, Orkney	1
Whalsay, Shetland	1	Noss Head, Highland	2
Yell, Shetland	17	Island Roan, Highland	2
Foula, Shetland	1		
More og Romsdal, NORWAY	3		
Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY	1		
Nordland, NORWAY	1		
North Nolsoy, FAROES	3		

These are our first controlled in Norway and, along with the Faroese recoveries, result from an increase in ringing activity in the respective countries. Full details of a quick movement to the Faroes, and the furthest north in Norway, are given below.

2391209	4	06.08.90	Fair Isle
	v	10.08.90	Nolsoy, FAROES 61°59'N 6°38'W 385km NW 4 days.
2230194	4	15.07.81	Fair Isle
	v	15.08.81	Stormvaer, Rost, Nordland, NORWAY 67°26'N 11°52'E 1101km NE 31 days.

### SHAG

There were 17 individuals found dead away from the Island. Ten in Orkney, (9 in their first year) 4 in Shetland, (2 in their first year), 2 in Highland (both in their first year) and the furthest afield, an individual in its first year recovered 496km away in Whitley Bay, Northumberland.

Both the proportion of first years recovered and the geographical spread are fairly typical.

### OYSTERCATCHER

FS70983	1	15.07.76	Fair Isle
	xF	06.12.89	Llandbedrog, Gwynnedd, WALES 52°51'N 4°29'W 793 km S 4892 days.
FV06250	1	18.06.77	Fair Isle
	xF	18.08.90	Musselburgh, Lothian Reg. SCOTLAND 55°55'N 3°2'W 410km S 4809 days.

Presumably one wintering and the other migrating.

### CURLEW

FR60478	3m	07-09-82	Fair Isle
	+	11-02-90	Lampaul-Plouarzel, Finistere, FRANCE 48°27'N 1°37'W 1248km S 2714 days.

Our fourth recovery, the other 3 having been in Norfolk, the Outer Hebrides and Norway.

### ARCTIC SKUA

A juvenile dazzled on the airstrip in 1964 killed itself against wires on Fetlar, Shetland, 26 years later.



## GREAT SKUA

There were three recoveries away from the Isle, all of birds ringed as nestlings. One in its second year in Norfolk in August, one in its third year in Cornwall in January and one in its fifth year in West Germany in May.

The species is uncommon off the British South coast in winter.

## HERRING GULL

There were two recoveries away from the Isle both in Orkney. An adult ringed in July 1988 recovered on Sanday in June 1990 and a nestling ringed in 1986 recovered on South Ronaldsay in May 1990.

## GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

HW94305	8	18.07.87	Fair Isle
	xL	15.05.90	Busum, Schleswig-Holstein, GERMANY
			54°8'N 8°51'E 873km SE 1032 days.

## KITTIWAKE

An adult ringed in 1972 was found starving in late June 1990 on a North Sea Gas Rig 113 km to the South East of Fair Isle.

## GUILLEMOT

Recoveries are tabulated below.

Ringed as nestlings

	Age at recovery								
	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	18
Norway	2					1		1	1
Sweden	2		1		1		1		
Denmark				1	1			1	
Holland	1			1					
England				1					
Scotland	1								
Faroe	2								

Eight were drowned in fishing nets, 2 were oiled, 1 shot, and 8 found dead on the tideline.

Adult recoveries comprised 4 in Norway (3 drowned in nets, 1 oiled), 2 in Denmark (1 drowned in fishing nets, 1 oiled), 2 in Scotland (both found dead on the tideline) and 1 in England.

## RAZORBILL

Two were recovered away from the Isle. One in its first winter was recovered in Orkney, and an adult ringed in 1985 was recovered in France in June 1990.

## PUFFIN

An adult ringed in 1974 was found dead on South Ronaldsay, Orkney in May 1990.

**LONG-EARED OWL**

GH19270	2f	05.11.89	Fair Isle
	x	26.03.90	Tealing, nr Dundee, SCOTLAND, 56°32'N 2°57'W 342km S 141 days

The bird may well have moved south to winter in Scotland after its late autumn capture on Fair Isle. Needless to say it was a road casualty.

**ROCK PIPIT**

One, ringed as a juvenile, was found alive and released at Deerness on Orkney. Previous recoveries of Fair Isle ringed birds have been from Orkney (7), Caithness (6), Scottish East coast (7), Scottish West coast (2), Northumberland (1), at sea North Sea (1) and Holland (1).

**DUNNOCK**

One ringed on Fair Isle on 1st May was recovered on North Ronaldsay two days later.

**WHEATEAR**

NK76048	3	22.09.89	Fair Isle
	x	25.09.89	Neuwerk, Dusseldorf, GERMANY, 51°14'N 6°25'W 1053km SSE 3 days.

Our second to Germany made a quick movement across the North Sea to an inland location.

**BLACKBIRD**

XP28345	5m	24.04.86	Fair Isle
	v	19.06.88	Jomfruland, Kragero, Telemark, NORWAY 58°52'N 9°36'W 642km E 787 days.

Presumably caught when migrating north in its first spring, and controlled on its Norwegian breeding grounds.

**REDWING**

RX37644	3	22.10.89	Fair Isle
	xF	17.04.90	Sydrugota, FAROES, 62°11'N 6°46'W 405 km NNW 177 days.

This individual met an unfortunate end, killing itself against a window, when moving back north in its first spring.

### LESSER WHITETHROAT

F177666	5	13.06.90	Fair Isle
	v	14.06.90	North Ronaldsay, Orkney, SCOTLAND 59°22'N 2°26'W 50km WSW 1 day.

The first recovery of a Fair Isle ringed Lesser Whitethroat.

### BLACKCAP

There were 2 recoveries away from the Isle. A female ringed on 13th June was controlled on North Ronaldsay 2 days later, and a female ringed on 22nd October 1989, and retrapped on 30th October, was recovered on Out Skerries, Shetland on 11th November 1989.

### CHIFFCHAFF

4K3219	4	23.05.89	Fair Isle
	xF	01.11.89	Camb, Yell, Shetland 60°37'N 1°37'W 124km N 162 days.

The first recovery of a Fair Isle ringed Chiffchaff. Presumably it had summered in Shetland.

### WILLOW WARBLER

4K3402	4	08.05.90	Fair Isle
	v	11.05.90	North Ronaldsay, Orkney, SCOTLAND 59°22'N 2°26'W 50km WSW 3 days.
4K3405	4m	08.05.90	Fair Isle
	xF	17.05.90	Newtonhill, Grampian Reg. SCOTLAND 57°2'N 2°8'W 279km S 9 days.

Two individuals that both seem to have 'overshot' in the same movement. These are only the fourth and fifth recoveries of Fair Isle ringed birds!

### STARLING

Two recoveries of birds away from the Isle, both in Shetland. A male recovered in it's first winter at Sumburgh, and a second winter male controlled at Trondra.

## Controls

Details were received for 62 birds in 1990 which had been ringed elsewhere and controlled on Fair Isle.

### STORM PETREL

Fifty-four birds were controlled on Fair Isle. These were ringed at:

Lerwick, Shetland	8	North Ronaldsay, Orkney	2
Yell, Shetland	18	Sanday, Orkney	1
Whalsay, Shetland	4	Noss Head, Grampian Reg.	8
Mossbank, Shetland	2	Girdleness, Grampian Reg.	1
Foula, Shetland	2	Collieston, Grampian Reg.	1
Eyemouth, Borders	1	Sanda Is. Strathclyde	1
Tynemouth, Tyne & Wear	1	Low Hauxley, Northumberland	1
Rathlin Is. N.Ireland	1	Nordland, NORWAY	1
Streymoy, FAROES	1		

Full details of our third Norwegian and first Faroese controls are presented below.

Oslo			
CA04327	4	15.08.88	Hernyken, Rost, Nordland, NORWAY 67°26'N 11°52'E
	v	23.08.90	Fair Isle 1101km SW 8 days.
Copenhagen			
9907786	4	13.09.88	Howick, Streymoy, FAROES 62°2'N 6°45'W
	v	12.08.89	Fair Isle 393 km SE 333 days.

Note the Norwegian control took just 8 days to cover the 1101km.

### OYSTERCATCHER

FR25099	3	12.09.81	Wig, Nr Bangor, Gwynedd, Wales 53°14'N 4°3'W
	x	17.10.89	Fair Isle 716km N 2957 days.

### BLACKBIRD

Helgoland			
7666679	3f	24.10.87	Helgoland, GERMANY 54°11'N 7°55'E
	v	17.10.88	Fair Isle 829km NW 359 days.
Helgoland			
7664510	6f	04.05.88	Helgoland, GERMANY 54°11'N 7°55'E
	v	20.05.88	Fair Isle 829km NW 16 days.

Stavanger 7193070	3m	07.10.89	Rindal Sentrum, More og Romsdal, NORWAY 63°3'N 9°13'E
	v	30.10.89	Fair Isle 697km SW 23 days.

Two exchanges between two of Europe's most famous Bird Observatories. One, an individual making land fall further north on its second autumn migration, the other continuing north on its spring migration.

There was a further control of a bird ringed on North Ronaldsay on 27th March and trapped on Fair Isle 5 days later.

### CHIFFCHAFF

Copenhagen H11860	4m	15.04.89	Jestrup, Thisted, Jylland, DENMARK 56°51'N 8°27'E
	v	16.05.89	Fair Isle 660km WNW 31 days.

Fair Isle's second foreign ringed Chiffchaff coming only a year after the first!

### CHAFFINCH

A male ringed on North Ronaldsay on 28th March was controlled on Fair Isle on 1st April.

### BRAMBLING

A first winter female ringed on North Ronaldsay on 11th October 1989, was controlled on Fair Isle next day.

## Longevity

A selection of longevity records for Fair Isle ringed birds is shown below. Those marked with an asterisk exceed the presently published B.T.O records.

SPECIES	Age	Ringed	Retrap/Recovered	Yrs.	Mnths.	Days
Fulmar	1	10.08.61	Ret. 04.06.89	27	9	25*
Storm Petrel	3	31.07.69	Ret. 12.08.90	21	0	12*
Eider Duck	3	06.09.66	Rec. 03.05.88	21	7	27
Oystercatcher	1	22.06.63	Rec. 15.07.88	25	0	23
Arctic Skua	3	08.08.64	Rec. 16.06.90	25	10	6*
Guillemot	8	07.07.60	Ret. 24.06.83	22	11	17*
Razorbill	8	06.07.66	Rec. 04.01.88	21	5	29
Black Guillemot	1	31.07.70	Ret. 13.07.90	19	11	13
Puffin	1	16.07.61	Ret. 04.06.89	27	10	19*

## Seabirds and Sandeels

As many people may be aware, Shetland's seabirds have suffered severe breeding failures during recent years. Hardest hit have been the surface feeding Arctic Tern and Kittiwake. Serious breeding failure began in Arctic Terns in 1984, since which time breeding success in Shetland as a whole has been very poor indeed. Kittiwakes began having problems a year later. The birds on Fair Isle initially fared rather better than those on the mainland of Shetland, but unfortunately this no longer seems to be the case.



We have been carrying out detailed studies of Arctic Terns on the mainland of Shetland since 1987. In 1990, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council, we extended our work to include the Kittiwake plus two diving seabirds, the Shag and the Guillemot, and also to include Fair Isle in our study areas as well as mainland Shetland. It is clear that a shortage of their main food item, the sandeel, is at the root of the seabird problem, but very little is known of the factors which influence the abundance of this fish or its availability to seabirds. A fishery for sandeels began in Shetland in 1974, and this is the main source of information about changes in the sandeel stock in the Shetland area. Landings peaked in the early 1980's, but since then the production of young sandeels, very important to seabirds as food, has declined drastically. It is not known why this has occurred, but there is a considerable controversy over the involvement of the fishery in the decline in sandeel production, and over whether or not the fishery should be allowed to continue now that production is so low.

By carrying out detailed observations of the birds at study plots, we are quantifying how long they must leave the nest to find food and what effect this has on their breeding performance. For the Guillemot and the Arctic Tern, which carry prey in their bills, we can record directly the size and type of fish being fed to chicks; for Shags and Kittiwakes, chick diet is assessed by food regurgitated by chicks when handled, and from the pelleted remains of undigested hard parts of the food which are produced by the adults. At Sumburgh Head, on the Southern tip of the mainland of Shetland, we are radio-tracking the birds to their foraging areas; this allows us to quantify how far they must travel to find food, and to examine the kind of location they are using. At this site we are also studying changes in the body weight of adults in order to evaluate whether they are in poor condition. To avoid disturbing the birds to obtain this information, we are using artificial rocks inside which electronic balances, linked to a computer, are concealed. These 'rocks' are placed near the nest site and when the birds stand on them we can obtain their body weight.

In conjunction with our work, there is also a parallel study of the sandeels, contracted by The Department of the Environment to the Department of Fisheries and Food for Scotland, and also involving Aberdeen University. This project is investigating ways of measuring sandeel distribution and abundance around the South Mainland of Shetland and Fair Isle, how this is linked to hydrographic factors and to plankton abundance, and when and why sandeels move up and down in the water column. This latter factor is very important in understanding what controls the availability of sandeels to surface feeding seabirds such as terns and Kittiwakes. The seabird foraging areas are also being investigated and the sandeels are being sampled to examine various aspects of their biology.

For terns and Kittiwakes, the 1990 breeding season was very poor. In fact, Fair Isle was one of the very few places in Shetland where Arctic Terns even laid eggs; only 1 young fledged however. Most of the young Kittiwakes died not long after hatching and the remainder succumbed when left alone for long periods when both parents were searching for food. From our radio tracking work it is clear that the Kittiwakes are having to travel very long distances in search of food. Field work will continue next year, and we hope to carry out some radio tracking work directly from Fair Isle. The seabird data on Fair Isle in 1990 were collected by Caroline Askew, assisted by Gillian Gilbert. They were greatly helped by others on the island, notably of course by the Bird Observatory Warden, Paul Harvey to whom we are extremely grateful. We are also very grateful to all those workers and visitors in the Observatory who helped prevent spirits from flagging too low!

*Pat Monaghan, Glasgow University.*

## **A Tale of Fair Isle Maalies**

In 24 hours time I will be leaving for the International Ornithological Congress in New Zealand. The purpose of my journey? To tell the ornithological world about the fascinating Maalies of Fair Isle.

Since first discovering Fair Isle and its seabirds in 1985, I always wanted to return, not just for a couple of weeks in the summer but for a longer time. So when the opportunity to study the behaviour of Fair Isle's maalies presented itself, I jumped at the chance.

Fulmars are known to pair for life and to have strong pair bonds, but work on other bird species has shown that this is not always as straightforward as it sounds. I wanted to find out what was really going on within the pair.

My first field season, in 1988, was spent mainly watching my colony of birds on the Kame o' Furse. Each maalie was identifiable by the markings on its bill. For most field workers this would have been a cold and uncomfortable time, but not for me having a grand hide, built by Stuart Thomson to stand the worst of any weather! I laughed at the wind and rain and was able, with the help of my trusty assistant Sarah Watts, to collect a mass of exciting information on maalie behaviour. For example; did you know that the male Fulmars protect their mates against the advances of other males? and did you know that despite this female Fulmars sometimes mate with other males? and did you know that males with long bills are favoured by females? After discovering all this and more, I wanted to know if some males ended up raising chicks that did not belong to them. According to the theories of evolution this is a bad situation for a male to be in.

By the end of the 1988 season I had collected blood samples from all the chicks on the Kame, and in 1989 I caught as many adults as possible and took samples from them too. Back in the lab I subjected the blood samples to a new genetic process, DNA fingerprinting. This identifies whether the pair male is the father of the chick. The results? Not a single chick was fathered by any individual other than the male who raised it! How do fathers achieve this? Well it looks as though it may all be down to careful timing. Pair males make sure they mate with their females last, after any other male and this ensures that they father the chick!

Of course I could not have done all this on my own - it would take pages and pages to thank all those people who have helped me, but I would like to say how grateful I am to all the islanders, bird observatory staff and visitors who have supported me throughout the project. Thank you.

*Fiona Hunter, Sheffield University.*





# Moths, Caddis Flies and other Invertebrates on Fair Isle in 1990.

This article presents the results of trapping invertebrates attracted to light at two sites on Fair Isle in 1990. Following a study of the Fair Isle moth fauna in the second half of 1987 (Riddiford 1987) and in 1988 (Riddiford 1988) studies were resumed in July 1990 using the same equipment, a mercury vapour light trap, and the same site, immediately adjacent to the Observatory building situated at Mavers Cup in the north of the island. Trapping was carried out on all suitable nights between 6th July and 11th September. In addition, a Heath actinic light trap was operated at a new site, Schoolton in the south of the island, between 25th July and 30th October, also on all suitable nights. Though trapping was mainly intended to sample the larger (macro) moth fauna, records were kept of identifiable micro moths and, at Schoolton only, of caddis flies and beetles. Trapping results are presented in Tables 1 & 2.

**Table 1: Macro Moth Captures in 1990**

No. of nights	M S	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
		5	6 4	10 11	5 9	4 5	5	1	3
Map-winged Swift	M	1							
<i>Hepialus fusconebulosa</i>	S		1						
Red Carpet	M								
<i>Xanthorhoe munitata</i>	S		5	25	9	1			
<i>hethlandica</i>									
Silver-ground Carpet	M								
<i>Xanthorhoe montanata</i>	S			1					
<i>shetlandica</i>									
Garden Carpet	M			3	2				
<i>Xanthorhoe fluctuata</i>									
Autumn Green Carpet	M								
<i>Chloroclysta miata</i>	S						1		
July Highflyer	M								
<i>Hydriomena furcata</i>	S			1					
Narrow-winged Pug	M	1							
<i>Eupithecia nanata angusta</i>	S								
Dark Sword-grass	M								
<i>Agrotis ipsilon</i>	S						1		1
Northern Rustic	M	3	16	26	21	4			
<i>Standfussiana lucerneae</i>	S		19	140	25	3	1		
Large Yellow Underwing	M			16	17	3			
<i>Noctua pronuba</i>	S			23	29	26	4	1	

No. of nights		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	M	5	6	10	5	4			
	S		4	11	9	5	5	1	3
Autumnal Rustic	M			88	25				
<i>Paradiarsia glareosa</i>	S			1	1				
True Lover's Knot	M	10	304	74					
<i>Lycophotia porphyrea</i>	S		3						
Ingrailed Clay	M	3	60	121	6	2			
<i>Diarsia mendica</i>	S		15	101	102	22			
Small Square-spot	M								
<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	S		9						
Setaceous Hebrew	M								
Character	S		1	3					
<i>Xestia c-nigrum</i>									
Square-spot Rustic	M			10	16	1			
<i>Xestia xanthographa</i>	S			12	66	36	1		
Marbled Coronet	M	1							
<i>Hadena confusa</i>	S								
Antler	M		62	216	45	3			
<i>Cerapteryx graminis</i>	S		22	138	16	1			
Smoky Wainscot	M								
<i>Mythimna impura</i>	S			1					
Brindled Ochre	M								
<i>Dasypolia templi</i>	S						1		
Dark Arches	M		7	17	1				
<i>Apamea monoglypha</i>	S		10	20	1				
The Confused	M		1	5	4				
<i>Apamea furva britannica</i>	S		1	5	1				
Rosy Rustic	M								
<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	S			1	26	31	3		
Silver Y	M	1	1						
<i>Autographa gamma</i>	S		3	4					

#### KEY

M: Mavers Cup  
A: 1st-15th July  
C: 1st-15th August  
E: 1st-15th September  
G: 1st-15th October

S: Schoolton  
B: 16th-31st July  
D: 16th-31st August  
F: 16th-30th September  
H: 16th-31st October

**Table 2: Other invertebrate captures in 1990**

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<b>Micro Moths</b>									
<i>Plutella xylostella</i>	S			1		1			
<i>Eana osseana</i>	S		7	34	1				
<i>Eana penziana colquonana</i>	M		12	14	7				
	S		2	10	1	1	1		
<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	S				1				
<i>Agriphila tristella</i>	S			1					
<i>Udea lutealis</i>	S				3				
<b>Caddis Flies</b>									
<i>Stenophylax permistus</i>	S		1	60	42	8			
<i>Limnephilus sparsus</i>	S		8	26	27	1			
<i>Limnephilus species</i>	S			3					
<i>Plectrocnemia conspersa</i>	S				3				
<i>Halesus radiatus</i>	S				4	1			
<b>Beetle</b>									
<i>Aphodius rufipes</i>	S		1	6					

**Key as Table 1**



*Large Yellow Underwing*

*Photo: Paul Harvey*

### Macro Moths

The addition of Schoolton to the study increased the list of species trapped by six, Autumn Green Carpet, July Highflyer, Small Square-spot, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Smoky Wainscot and Rosy Rustic. The first five were first records for the island. None of them were trapped at Mavers Cup in 1990 but Williamson (1955) reported Rosy Rustic as rare at North Haven in late August 1955 (and common in the "village area"), and in 1990 one was caught by hand in the Observatory garage on 28th August. Further studies will be required before it is established whether Autumn Green Carpet, July Highflyer, or Smoky Wainscot are resident on the Isle, but sufficient Setaceous Hebrew Characters were trapped to suggest they are a regular part of the crofting area fauna, while Rosy Rustic was one of the commonest moths in late August-early September. The nine Small Square-spots were all on two consecutive nights in July, which may have denoted a nearby hatch of imagines. Red Carpet for which there has only been one Mavers Cup record, in early August 1987, was common at Schoolton. The absence of these species from Mavers Cup captures and notable differences in numbers of other moth species at the two sites were probably due to habitat differences. Thus for instance, True Lover's Knot, the commonest species among late July captures at Mavers Cup and Autumnal Rustic, one of the most abundant there in August, occurred in very low numbers at Schoolton. Differences in species composition and abundance at the two sites probably denote moorland species at Mavers Cup and rough grassland species at Schoolton, with generalists (such as Ingrailed Clay) occurring abundantly at both sites.

Captures at Mavers Cup were generally consistent with the two previous years, although in August Antler and Ingrailed Clay occurred in proportionately greater numbers than in August 1987-88 while Autumnal Rustic was proportionately less abundant. The first and last capture dates (Table 3) and main occurrence patterns were as would be expected generally similar at both sites. One exception was Ingrailed Clay which was equally abundant in both halves of August at Schoolton but, in parallel with 1987-88, declined rapidly after mid month at Mavers Cup.

Table 3: First and Last dates for selected species.

	First	Last
Red Carpet	25.7	06.9
Garden Carpet	03.8	29.8
Dark Sword-grass	23.9	30.10
Northern Rustic	14.7	16.9
Large Yellow Underwing	01.8	01.10
Autumnal Rustic	07.8	30.8
True Lover's Knot	10.7	15.8
Ingrailed Clay	06.7	15.9
Small Square-spot	25.7	26.7
Setaceous Hebrew Character	31.7	14.8
Square-spot Rustic	03.8	16.9
Antler	22.7	03.9
Dark Arches	22.7	29.8
The Confused	25.7	30.8
Rosy Rustic	15.8	16.9
Silver Y	13.7	13.8

As in all previous years, all Red Carpets were of the subspecies *X.munitata hethlandica* and all Silver-ground Carpets *X.montanata shetlandica*. The Smoky Wainscot was of the nominate race, despite the occurrence of a Scottish race.

### Micro Moths and Other Invertebrates

The majority of micro moths trapped were identified and counted at Schoolton, but only the distinctive *Eana penziana colqhounana* was counted at Mavers Cup. Two species, *Agriphila tristella* and *Udea lutealis*, had not been trapped in previous years at Mavers Cup. Only three *Udea lutealis* were trapped but it is common and active in the daytime in early August along ungrazed grass verges in the crofting area, including at Schoolton.

A careful record was also kept at Schoolton of caddis flies. Two species, both of which had been recorded at Mavers Cup in 1987, predominated and initially it seemed these would prove the only species on the Isle. However, from 12th August another three species were identified, though one only to genus.

The only beetle species to occur was *Aphodius rufipes*, a distinctive little scarabid with antler-like antennae, including 3 at once on 3rd August. The only other invertebrate identified was a Smooth Jet Slug *Milax gagates* which crawled into the Schoolton trap on 6th September, leaving numerous companions in the Schoolton vegetables!

### Other Moth Observations

The traps failed to secure the most exciting moth of the year, a Bedstraw Hawk Moth *Hyles galli* seen feeding at Spear Thistle flowers outside the Observatory by Paul Harvey and Ian Fisher on 29th July. This was the second Fair Isle record of this rare migrant hawk moth, the other being, amazingly, on the same date in 1974. A number of other species were recorded only away from the traps. The micros *Scoparia ambigualis* and *Crambus nemorella* (= *lathonellus*) were abundant on the heather banks of Wirvie on 17th June. Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa* were seen at several localities, including Quoy and the Observatory in August-early September. *Anthophila fabricana* appeared in early August on nettle stands at the Observatory and at North Haven as it has done at the same time each year for at least the last four. This year the species shared the nettles with Red Admiral *Vanessa atalanta* caterpillars. Also in early August, Middle-barred Minor *Oligia fasciuncula* was common in marshy grassland areas of the crofting area where it was active during the day and was frequently to be found on Marsh Ragwort flower heads; and a Yellow Shell *Campptogramma bilineata* and 2 Juniper Pugs *Eupethestia pusillata* were caught by hand at the Observatory on 7th August. Several Twin-spot Carpets *Perizoma d. didymata* and one of the form *P.d. hethlandica* were present in the dense stand of reed-grass in the western part of Meadow Burn on the evening of 13th August. Brown House Moths *Hofmannophila pseudospretella* were seen regularly in and around buildings and the White-shouldered House Moth *Endrosis sarcitrella* was even more abundant, being present in large numbers in some outhouses.

Identifications of micro moths and caddis flies were facilitated by Mike Terry and Simon McKelvy respectively. Our thanks to them both.

### References

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Riddiford, N. 1988. Moths on Fair Isle, 1988. *FIBO Rep.* 41: 59-62  
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Nick Riddiford and Bob Proctor

## The weather on Fair Isle in 1990

January	Mild and sunny, mean temp. 2°C above average. Rather unsettled and wet with frequent southerly winds. Very stormy early on 17th with south-west winds gusting to 109kts and mean hourly speed of 72kts.
February	Frequent westerly winds, very mild. Mean temps. 1.5°C above average, the warmest February since 1974. The max. of 10.5°C on 5th is the highest ever recorded for the month. Second wettest February on record. Unsettled with frequent gales. Aurora seen on 12 nights.
March	A cold start with thin snow cover on 1st and 4cms deep on 2nd, but then very mild and wet. Mean temps. continuing 1.5°C above average to give the mildest March on record, with 16th the warmest March day ever at max. 10.9°C. It was also the wettest March on record!
April	Mild and very sunny, but wetter than usual. Winds variable in direction – with an outbreak of arctic air bringing snow cover on 3rd and 4th, when it lay 4cms deep.
May	Mild, with near av. sun and rain. Winds, mostly light, were often E or NE in direction. With 15.3 hours of sunshine 27th was sunniest day of the year. The spring's last ground frosts on 27th and 28th.
June	Dull and very wet with almost three times normal rainfall. 30th was wettest day of the year with 31.7mm of rain. Max. temp. only 13.8°C, but mean temps. a little above normal. Frequent E winds.
July	Average temperatures but dry and sunny. Fog occurred on 13 days.
August	Warm, wet and cloudy. Fair Isle had its warmest day of the year on 2nd – a mere 17.1°C. Fog again occurred on 13 days.
September	Wet, but otherwise an average month. 18th was the wettest September day ever with 28.5mm of rain. The first of the autumn gales, on 19th, brought a max. gust of 74kts, with a mean hourly wind speed of 52kts. The storm force NW winds lasted some time – making it the year's windiest day with a mean speed for the 24 hrs of 41kts (higher than 17th Jan) – and resulting in huge seas that battered the isle. The 30th saw the first ground frost of the autumn.
October	Mild & wet with winds frequently westerly in direction for the first half and south-east during the second half of the month.
November	A little milder and drier than normal with average sunshine.
December	Temp. and sunshine both about average, slightly less rain than normal. An early cold spell gave the year's lowest temperature of -3.5°C on 7th with snow cover which increased to 5cms by 8th – the year's greatest depth. With predominantly SW winds these were the only days with snow lying during the month. The year's min. barometric pressure, 954.8mb, recorded on 16th max. 1035.9mb, on 26th.
Year	The effect of global warming or not, 1990 was the warmest (+0.7°C) and wettest (128%) year on Fair Isle since records began in 1974. Sunshine was very close to average. South-west to westerly winds were more frequent than usual, with a corresponding decrease in easterlies. Aurora, while not as frequent as in 1989, was observed on 50 nights. Thunder was reported on 10 days, almost twice the usual frequency. Lying snow covered the ground on only 8 mornings – about half the normal yearly figure.

## Meteorological data for Fair Isle 1990

Temperature (° Celsius)	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	YEAR
Mean	6.1	5.5	5.8	5.9	8.4	10.1	11.5	12.5	10.5	9.7	7.1	5.3	8.2
Maximum	10.0	10.5	10.9	11.4	15.7	13.8	16.7	17.1	15.0	13.6	10.9	10.6	(7.5)
Minimum	1.7	0.2	-2.8	-1.2	5.6	8.4	8.2	9.2	4.1	5.1	3.1	-3.5	
<b>Rainfall (millimetres)</b>													
Monthly	130.3	138.5	136.1	72.6	36.2	101.5	43.2	85.3	141.1	119.5	78.0	85.6	1167.9
Maximum Daily fall	23.3	23.9	16.0	11.6	16.6	31.7	11.8	11.8	28.5	28.9	11.1	13.7	(914.8)
<b>Sunshine (hours)</b>													
Total	34.5	56.0	93.2	177.3	201.4	104.1	148.3	134.9	111.3	72.9	34.6	14.9	1183.4
Maximum Daily	4.1	6.3	9.6	13.3	15.3	12.8	13.7	12.6	11.1	7.8	6.2	4.0	(1198.7)
<b>Wind speed (knots)</b>													
Mean	21.5	21.1	21.3	15.6	9.0	10.1	10.9	10.9	14.0	16.1	13.9	18.9	16.7
Maximum Gust	109	70	76	53	39	49	47	41	74	64	59	72	(16.3)
<b>Number of days</b>													
Hail	15	18	15	12	1	0	0	1	4	4	10	18	98
Snow/sleet	7	11	12	8	0	0	0	0	2	2	7	6	36
Rain, > .1mm	28	27	27	20	9	19	17	23	23	22	23	26	264
Wet, > .9mm	26	24	23	19	6	15	9	15	18	16	18	20	209
Ground frost	6	3	4	5	2	0	0	0	1	2	3	9	37
<b>Wind (direction at 09hr)</b>													
North	2	1	0	3	4	7	2	3	2	1	8	4	37
North East	0	1	0	4	6	3	1	2	3	3	2	0	25
East	0	0	0	2	3	7	4	1	1	3	2	3	26
South East	3	2	1	1	6	5	8	7	0	9	3	1	46
South	11	9	6	4	4	3	1	7	3	5	3	8	64
South West	8	7	9	8	2	2	2	3	8	2	3	7	61
West	7	3	9	6	3	1	7	3	9	6	2	8	64
North West	0	5	6	2	3	2	6	5	4	1	5	0	39
Calm	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	3

(Figures in brackets are the average for the period 1974-1990)

# Cetacean Records in 1990

**PILOT WHALE** *Globicephala melaena*. Four were seen from the *Good Shepherd* on the crossing of 15th August and 2 on the crossing of 1st September.

**WHITE BEAKED DOLPHIN** *Lagenarhynchus albirostris*. Seen fairly regularly from the *Good Shepherd*. In July, 2 on 31st. In August, 2 on 7th, 4 on 11th, and 2 on 25th and in September 9 on 28th. Six were seen from the Isle on 17th October.

**ATLANTIC WHITE SIDED DOLPHIN** *L. acutus*. A pod of 13 were seen from the *Good Shepherd* on the crossing of 30th September.

**RISSO'S DOLPHIN** *Grampus griseus*. Sightings from the Isle of 6 on 6th, 4 on 8th and 3 on 11th September probably related to the same party.

**HARBOUR PORPOISE** *Phocoena phocoena*. Records from the Isle comprised in May, 10 on 18th; in August, 5 on 13th, 2 on 24th & 1 on 28th; in September, 1 on 9th, 3 on 15th, 6 on 23rd, and 6 on 30th; and in October, 6 on 9th, 2 on 10th and 2 on 11th. From the *Good Shepherd* 2 on the 15th August and 3 on 27th November.

## Publications

The following were published in 1990 by, or with the assistance of, FIBO staff and facilities.

### Seabirds

Harvey, P.V. Silcocks, A.F. & Howlett, P. Fair Isle seabird monitoring scheme: report to N.C.C of fourth season's work (1989). N.C.C. Chief Scientist's Directorate Report No. 991.

Pennington, M.G. Osborn, K. & Harvey, P.V. Differences in weight:winglength relationships of Razorbill chicks at Hermaness and Fair Isle in 1989. *Scott. Birds* 16:33-34.

### Migration

Harvey, P.V. & Riddiford, N. An uneven sex ratio of migrant Long-eared Owls *Ring. & Mig.* 11: 132-135

### Moult

Riddiford, N. Tree Pipit with suspended or arrested moult. *Ring. & Mig.* 11: 104

### Identification

Gantlett, Steve. Parrot Crossbill variation. *Bird. World* 3:349.

Harvey, Paul. Pechora Pipit identification. *Bird. World* 2:370

Harvey, Paul. Two-barred Crossbills in the Northern Isles. *Bird. World* 3:266-267

Heard, C.D.R. Citrine Wagtail identification. *Bird. World* 3:27-28.

Osborn, K. Yellow-headed Blackbird on Fair Isle. *Bird. World* 3:160.

Paterson, A.M. & Riddiford, N.J. Does the Cape Gannet enter European waters *Brit. Birds* 83:519-525.



# The John Harrison Memorial Fund

This fund gives financial assistance to young birdwatchers aged between 15 and 21, to help defray the costs of a visit to Fair Isle. The fund is administered by a small committee which, in consultation with the Warden, considers all applications in mid-December and makes awards for the following year. **Applications must be submitted by 31st October**; those eligible should write to the Hon. Sec., JHM Fund, 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5BT.

## The John Harrison Memorial Fund

### Accounts for the year to 31st October 1990

	1990 £	1989 £
Revenue account		
Opening balance	118	368
Interest received	853	829
Tax refund (1987)	—	—
	<u>971</u>	<u>1197</u>
Grants & Prize paid	654	270
Transfer to capital	272	779
Management expenses	45	30
Closing balance	—	118
	<u>971</u>	<u>1197</u>
Balance sheet at 31st October		
Investments @ cost		
£6400 9% Treasury Loan 1994	5362	5362
£ 900 13¼% Treasury Stock 1997	870	870
£1400 9½% Treasury Stock 1999	<u>1435</u>	<u>1435</u>
	7667	7667
Cash	<u>272</u>	<u>118</u>
	<u>7939</u>	<u>7785</u>
represented by:		
Capital account		
Balance per last account	7667	6881
Received from R.A.Richardson's Exy.	—	7
Donations	—	—
Transfer from Revenue	<u>272</u>	<u>779</u>
	<u>7939</u>	<u>7667</u>
Revenue account balance	—	118
	<u>7939</u>	<u>7785</u>

# **Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust**

## **(A company limited by guarantee)**

### **Financial Report & Accounts**

The Trust's accounts for the year to 31st October 1990, summarised below, are based on the full statutory accounts, which have been examined and reported on by our auditors, Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte. Copies of the full statutory accounts, together with the audit report, may be obtained by writing to the Trust at 21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh.

The directors are pleased to record that the finances of the Trust remain in a buoyant position with increased income from the visitors to the Lodge up by 25%. With the addition of the income from grants and subscriptions the Directors have been able to meet the full level of depreciation and retain funds in reserve for an ongoing programme of improvements. This is a pleasing result reflecting the benefits of the improvements to the building through the development and the efficient management of the staff.

In the difficult financial times of to-day with the uncertainties on many fronts, the Directors consider that the position in which FIBOT finds itself is satisfactory and with the anticipated level of income already indicated for the coming year, together with the increased subscription base, it is in a sound position from which to meet the commitments expected of the Trust, in the coming financial year.

As the accounts illustrate there remains the continuing need to clear the negative balance on the development account. The Directors are very grateful to the Highlands and Islands Development Board for their continued support through a further grant of £34,050. In addition the following Trusts have generously provided funds of £1,000 or more during the year: –

Gannochy Trust, Miss I.F. Harvey's Charitable Trust, the Dulverton Trust, the Joseph Rank Charitable Trust, the Manifold Trust and Williams MacDonald and Hastings. The Directors wish to record the generous loan by The National Trust for Scotland of £10,000.

# Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st October 1990

	1989		1990	
	£	£	£	£
HOSTEL CHARGES		54,305		67,700
Less:				
HOSTEL SUPPLIES				
Opening stock	3,229		3,952	
Purchases	<u>20,385</u>		<u>23,581</u>	
	23,614		27,533	
Closing stock	<u>3,952</u>		<u>3,857</u>	
	19,662		23,676	
DIRECT EXPENSES				
Staff costs	<u>15,231</u>		<u>20,581</u>	
		34,893		44,257
GROSS PROFIT		<u>19,412</u>		<u>23,443</u>
Less:				
OVERHEAD EXPENSES				
Transport and Freight	4,593		4,337	
Establishment	13,919		16,663	
Promotion	2,509		432	
Financial and legal	<u>3,342</u>		<u>2,756</u>	
		24,363		24,188
OPERATING DEFICIT		(4,951)		(745)

	1989		1990	
	£	£	£	£
OTHER INCOME				
H.I.D.B. grant receivable	588		—	
N.C.C. grants received	2,000		2,300	
N.T.S. grants received	1,000		1,100	
Subscriptions and donations	5,699		5,214	
Investment interest	1,942		2,261	
Deferred grant income release	<u>4,108</u>		<u>2,673</u>	
		15,337		13,548
SURPLUS BEFORE DEPRECIATION		10,386		12,803
Depreciation charge		(13,730)		(13,757)
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR YEAR		(3,344)		(954)
Add: Release from Appeal Reserve		8,590		8,894
		<u>£5,246</u>		<u>£7,940</u>

**Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1990**

	1989	1990
	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	223,067	215,593
Investments	10,548	10,548
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Stocks	3,952	3,857
Debtors	39,997	14,560
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>8,939</u>	<u>11,412</u>
	52,888	29,829
<b>CREDITORS – amounts falling due within one year</b>	<u>107,130</u>	<u>66,727</u>
<b>NET CURRENT (LIABILITIES)/ASSETS</b>	<u>(54,242)</u>	<u>(36,898)</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>	179,373	189,243
<b>Less: Non current liabilities</b>		
<b>CREDITORS – amounts falling due after more than one year</b>	16,116	(23,200)
	<u>£163,257</u>	<u>£166,043</u>
<b>Representing: –</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED SURPLUS</b>	95,349	103,289
<b>Reserve funds</b>	<u>67,908</u>	<u>62,754</u>
	<u>£163,257</u>	<u>£166,043</u>

## Fair Isle Endowment Fund

### Accounts for the year to 31st October, 1990

	1990 £	1989 £
Income and Expenditure Account		
Investment income received (net)	505	491
Tax Refund	<u>111</u>	<u>97</u>
	616	588
Management Fees	50	50
Balance remitted to Fair isle Bird Observatory Trust	<u>566</u>	<u>538</u>
	616	588
Balance sheet at 31st October		
Investments @ cost		
8½ % Treasury Loan 1986/90 £2400 Loan	—	2114
10% Treasury Stock 1992 £2750 Stock	2500	2500
Henderson Administration 960 High Income Units	<u>638</u>	<u>638</u>
	3138	5252
Cash Balance	2401	1
Total Assets	<u>5539</u>	<u>5253</u>
represented by:		
Balance brought forward	5253	5253
Surplus on Maturity of Investment	<u>286</u>	<u>—</u>
Balance carried forward 31.10.90	<u>5539</u>	<u>5253</u>

## Friends of Fair Isle

In his Chairman's Report, Pat Sellar has indicated that we plan a drive for more 'Friends of Fair Isle', so it seems appropriate to make use of the space available here to do a little promotion for this cause! As many readers will already be aware, George Waterston initiated the 'Friends' scheme with the aim not only of obtaining financial support for FIBOT but also of helping to encourage interest in and support for the Observatory.

'Friends' have always been entitled to a copy of the Annual Report and they currently also receive two Newsletters per year, up-dating them on events at the Observatory. The brochure/booking form for the following season is distributed with the winter Newsletter, which also gives details of the spring meetings held in Edinburgh and London, and it has recently been decided that in future 'Friends' should benefit by receiving some degree of priority in bookings. This will be offered in two forms:

- (1) for the peak September period bookings will open for 'Friends' one month before other applicants (in effect bookings by 'Friends' for September 1993 will be accepted from 1 July 1991; general booking opens on 1 August), and
- (2) as from the current (1991) season, 'Friends' visiting the Lodge in August will be able to do so at 'low season' rates.

It is surely not asking much of those who visit and enjoy Fair Isle that they should find the relatively small sum (£10) 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 covenanting 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 Sylvia Laing, Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust,  
21 Regent Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 5BT.**

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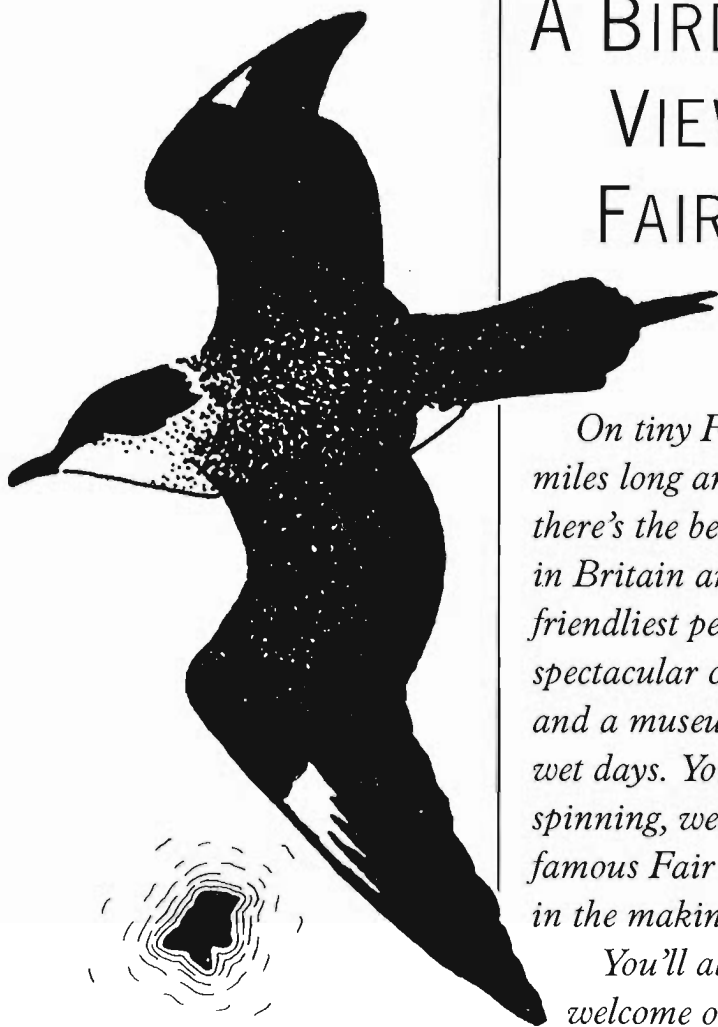
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**THE ISLAND THAT LOVES VISITORS**

For full information pack, including travel and accommodation on Shetland and Fair Isle, contact:

Shetland Tourist Organisation, Information Centre, Market Cross, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0LU

Tel: (0595) 3434 (24-hour service) Telex: 75119 Fax: (0595) 5807