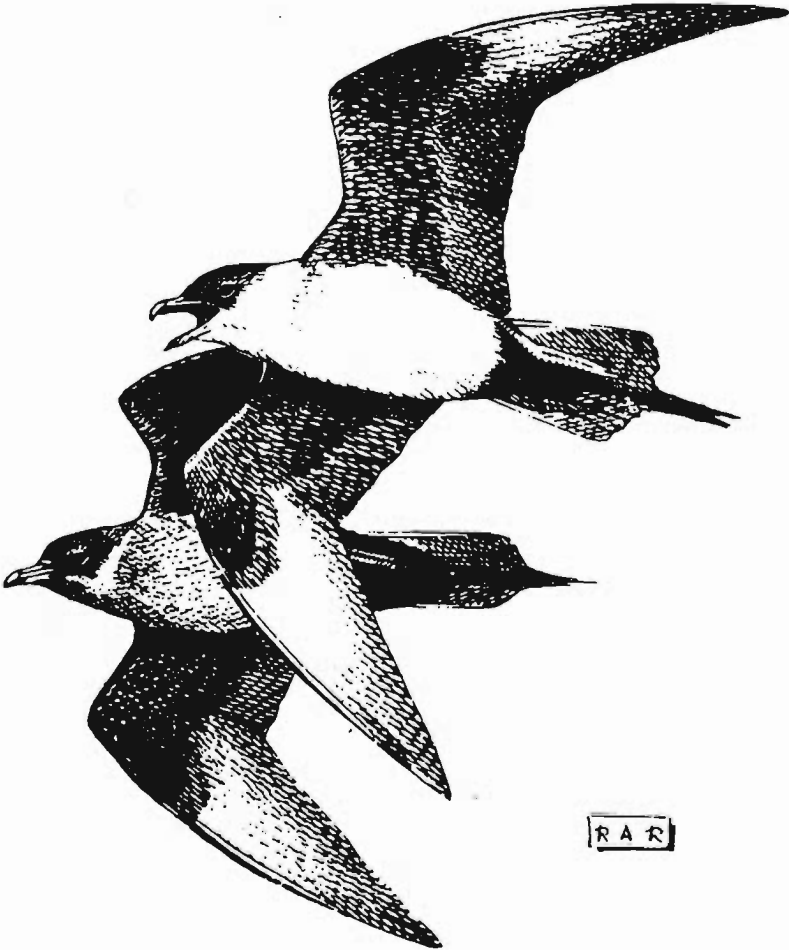


FAIR ISLE BIRD OBSERVATORY
Report for 1994



R A R

Fair Isle

The Island that loves visitors

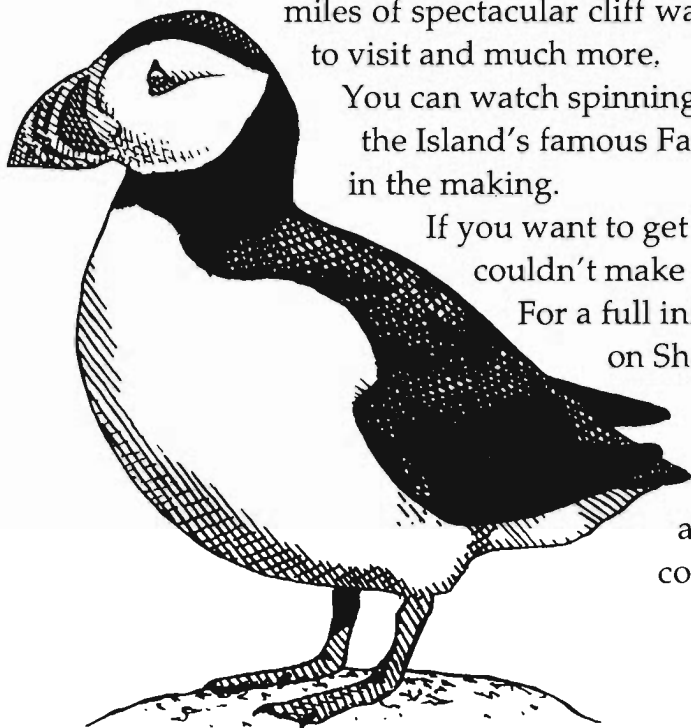
On Fair Isle - just three miles long by a mile wide - there's some of the best birdwatching in Britain. But as well as the birds, you'll find the friendliest welcome, miles of spectacular cliff walks, a museum to visit and much more.

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report No. 47

1994

Edited by Roger Riddington

CONTENTS

Chairman's report	Pat Sellar	3
Administrator's report	Wendy Christie	5
Warden's report	Roger Riddington	7
NTS	Alexander Bennett	9
The Fair Isle Special Protection Area for birds	Roger Riddington	10
Fair Isle: a prime example of the need for Marine Protection Areas	Nick Riddiford	11
Birdwatching on Fair Isle: an islander's perspective	Margaret Stout	13
Obituary: Jimmy Wilson	Nick Riddiford	14
ORNITHOLOGY		
Monthly Summary	Roger Riddington	16
Systematic List	Roger Riddington	26
Ringling Report	Roger Riddington, Nik Ward & Guy Thompson	68
Rarities Committee Update	Roger Riddington	83
Butterflies on Fair Isle in 1994	Wendy Christie	83
Fair Isle's Weather in 1994	Dave Wheeler	84
Financial Report & Accounts	John Wood	89
Fair Isle Endowment Fund		92
The John Harrison Memorial Fund		93

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust

A company limited by guarantee.

Fair Isle Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU.

Telephone: 01595 760258

Board of Directors:

Pat Sellar (Chairman)
Roy Dennis (Vice Chairman)
John Wood (Finance Director)
Alastair Cunningham
Peter Evans
Ian Grier
Maurice Mullay
Ken Shaw
Peter Slater
Anthony Bryant (Co-opted)
Magnus Flaws (Co-opted)
David Okill (Co-opted)

Warden:

Roger Riddington

Administrator:

Wendy Christie
Bird Observatory, Fair Isle, Shetland ZE2 9JU.
Tel. 01595 760258.

Solicitors:

Anderson Strathern
48 Castle Street, Edinburgh EH2 3LX.

Accountants & Auditors:

Coopers & Lybrand, CA
68-73 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 4NH.

Bankers:

Bank of Scotland
64 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2YS.

Chairman's Report

Pat Sellar

This being my last report as Chairman, it would seem appropriate to take stock before handing over the reins to Roy Dennis. First and foremost it gives my fellow Directors and me particular pleasure to have Roy returning to the Board. He brings with him the wealth of experience accumulated as Warden from 1963-1970, followed by long service as a Trustee and subsequently as a Director and Vice-Chairman. His inimitable blend of enthusiasm and energy will surely inspire FIBOT to new levels of achievement.

So, back to taking stock! Let me dwell for a moment on our strengths and weaknesses, and then speculate how best to develop the former and turn the corner with the latter. Taking our strengths first; we have, in Roger and Wendy, an exceptionally energetic, talented and resourceful team who have restored the entire operation to the high standards we have always cherished in the past. To have achieved this in one season has involved, at times, an almost intolerable workload. But the way forward should prove rewarding and, happily, less onerous. A happy and well-run ship augurs well for the future of FIBOT. The Directors and I extend admiration and thanks to them and their staff for an excellent season.

With staff of this calibre; with the observatory maintaining a high profile situated on an island of unparalleled grandeur; with a place to stay that is welcoming, warm and comfortable with intimately observable Puffins only five minutes walk away; with two successive autumns yielding an almost unprecedented avalanche of rare migrants: then surely we have an asset! Maintaining the integrity of this asset costs money. This year alone, we have been forced to purchase yet another minibus, yet another generator, new carpeting for the Warden's flat and award an increase in staff salaries.

I would ask you at this point to read the financial statement at the end of this report to acquaint you with the unsatisfactory state of our revenue account. Receiving negligible income from investments, we are precariously dependent on the generosity of the National Trust for Scotland, occasional support from industry and the most valued contribution from 'Friends of Fair Isle'. The grant aid received from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in support of our seabird monitoring programme, although crucial, falls a long way short of the total costs of our ornithological work. The Lodge, with careful husbandry by Wendy, can just pay its way even on present low levels of patronage. Visitor numbers have fallen to two-thirds of the peak enjoyed in 1990.

Urgently, we need to encourage more funding from the private sector, to increase visitor numbers and income from 'Friends'. We have an asset that should be a marketing dream, but due to crippling travel costs and an ever-faltering economy, it remains earth-bound despite our best efforts. Two of our many efforts were the superb, five-page article in 'Birds' magazine by Paul Harvey and David Parkin in 1993, followed by two beautifully illustrated articles by reporter Genevieve Leaper in the June and July issues of 'The Scots Magazine'. Impressive though they were, these were either insufficient

or not aimed at the most responsive section of the UK. populace. This is one of the many facets of our operation that we need to reconsider and revamp. Certainly we need to present new arguments in the quest for external funding.

Our 'constant effort' monitoring of seabirds and migrants over many years deserves better recognition and particularly now with the proposed new oil developments west of Shetland. There is a growing risk that our present levels of monitoring may have to be curtailed unless we can improve our revenue situation. In the light of our predicament, we have drawn up a Management Plan setting out objectives for FIBOT over the next five years. It sets out to assist Directors and staff to make the very best of limited resources by instilling sound management practices. It lays down a plan for the future, especially in the development of enhanced visitor services. Hopefully, it will help generate some long-term financial support and at least demonstrate to would-be sponsors that FIBOT has a well-focused mission and a sound management structure.

I must not run the risk of sounding over-pessimistic when in fact I acknowledge that we do have a goodly measure of support from outside agencies. Especially helpful this year have been Shetland Islands Council, Shetland Enterprise and the Shetland Wildlife Fund, but you have only to read the Administrator's and Warden's reports to realise that, in addition to massive support from 'down the Island' there is a small army of enthusiasts who seem ever ready with help of many kinds. I hereby extend my thanks and appreciation to them all and especially to my co-Directors, some of whom have worked far beyond the call of duty. Joining the team at the 1994 AGM we extend a welcome to Dr. Peter Evans, who has been a regular visitor to the Isle for many years, pursuing his Starling research.

Two further initiatives deserve mention. Clare Ross-Smith, based on Fair Isle, has taken on the administration of 'Friends of Fair Isle' with efficiency and enthusiasm. Secondly, the Board has launched a strong drive, to be spear-headed by NTS, to create a Marine Protection Area around Fair Isle. Terra Firma has been well catered for in having Special Protection Area status granted to a large part of the island this year, but it is now surely time to turn our attention to surrounding waters. It will no doubt take time, but a sounding board for discussion has been put in place.

My parting exhortation to all those reading this report is please recruit another Friend and then use up some of your 'Air Miles' by visiting the island (British Airways, and 'Air Miles', can fly you all the way to Fair Isle now). You will enjoy your visit I'm sure, and return full of enthusiasm for your friends to do likewise. I wish you bon voyage.

Administrator's Report

Wendy Christie

Having both thoroughly enjoyed the 1992 season on Fair Isle, Roger and I were delighted to be invited back to the observatory as Warden and Administrator. We were given a very warm welcome from the islanders when we arrived in mid-March, and this continued throughout the year, along with support from friends off the island.

We were dismayed to see how much the building had suffered through being empty for much of a second winter. A huge amount of effort has had to be directed towards repairs and maintenance this year. In fact, it seemed that for quite some time, everything that could possibly break down did! Our first full day on the island saw Roger on the roof helping Brian Wilson, Kenny Stout and Bill Murray repair a major leak that caused considerable damage to the Lodge ceilings. We soon discovered that the generators were in an appalling state, and in fact we survived the season running on one generator (i.e. with no back-up). The 9KW generator was considered unsafe to use and not worth the repair bill; the 25KW just survived the season before bursting into flames in November and is now off the island being repaired. We hope to have a new 30KW unit installed for the beginning of next season, thanks to grant aid from Shetland Islands Council and Shetland Enterprise. The boiler caused intermittent problems throughout the year, and we were without heating and hot water for three weeks in November. One of the pumps, the motor, control box and transformer have all been replaced, with several more components awaiting replacement; we are cautiously optimistic about next year. The blue bus was not roadworthy when we arrived, but a replacement vehicle was discovered on Shetland during the spring. Our bright red Nissan Urvan is proving to be a capable workhorse, whilst at the same time being able to fit onto Good Shepherd IV and into our garage. This should enable it to be serviced regularly and garaged in the winter; all of which will hopefully prolong its life with us.

There was a slight improvement on visitor numbers this year compared to last, but we are still a long way from the record numbers of 1990. One of the main limiting factors is the high cost of transport to the Isle. Saturday flights from Kirkwall improved access, and this service will be maintained throughout 1995.

Our first visitors, 16 folk from KIMO (a local authorities international environmental organization) arrived in mid-April and we had a busy time preparing for their arrival. Many faces familiar to the Lodge returned this year, along with many first-time visitors from both the UK and abroad. We welcomed several groups of people this year, including the regular YOC group in July (led by Graham Rowe), a group from Island Holidays (led by Peter Clement) as well as a group of Americans from Natural Habitat holidays. Several cruise ships visited throughout the year; those passengers who were able to land (the weather never does what you'd like it to do!) enjoyed guided walks around the island by the observatory staff. We also welcomed most of the FIBO directors to the island this year. Pat Sellar, David Okill and Magnus Flaws visited the island in both spring and autumn; Roy Dennis, John Wood, Ian Grier, Peter Evans, Maurice Mullay and Antony Bryant all came in spring/summer, whilst Alastair

Cunningham enjoyed a visit in September. We would like to thank all of the directors for their support throughout the year.

To ensure the successful operation of the Lodge, a strong team effort is vital. To this end, we would like to thank our staff for their hard work and moral support throughout the season. Joyce Hales returned as cook, having spent two months here at the end of the 1993 season. If waistlines are an indicator, Joyce's cooking maintained its high standard throughout the year! Joyce's daughter Elizabeth was assistant cook. We had a change of domestic assistants halfway through the year. Lesley Holmes was replaced by Andy Smith in July, whilst Mark Newall stepped in to replace Birgit Burdach at very short notice at the start of the autumn. Nik Ward and Guy Thompson were the ornithological assistants but also formed an integral part of the lodge team. Jane Reid worked as a volunteer throughout the season and her cheery smile was missed by all when she left for Cambridge University in September. Clare Ross-Smith, the FIBOT secretary helped out very capably with bookings during the winter period, and has offered us her continued support.

No doubt our first season here will be the most difficult. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has helped us throughout the year. Although almost all of the islanders helped us in so many ways, there are some who deserve special thanks. Margaret Stout kindly looked after us at Barkland when we arrived on the island, until we were able to move into the observatory. Kenny Stout was a tower of strength during our first few weeks, and gave endlessly of his time. Generator problems were attended to by Kenny and Michael Stout, and Malcolm Adamson, from Shetland. The boiler received attention throughout the year by Patrick Ross-Smith and Kenny again, whilst Patrick also managed to locate a persistent electrical fault in the van. We are perhaps most deeply indebted to Kenny and Patrick for their help in emergencies this year. Brian Wilson, John Best and Bill Murray helped us with various building matters, Barry Sinclair attended to telephone and electrical problems, whilst Dave and Jane Wheeler cheerfully provided weather information throughout the season. Paul Harvey and Elizabeth Eastham, along with Nick and Elizabeth Riddiford gave us the benefit of their enormous knowledge of the Lodge and observatory. On Shetland, Maurice Mullay helped us acquire a new van, whilst Paul Harvey, Dave Okill, Kevin Osborn and Dave Suddaby all put items to the boat or plane. Finally, thanks to all those who helped us keep smiling!



Quail

Warden's Report

Roger Riddington

1994 proved to be a superb year ornithologically, with every one of Fair Isle's great diversity of ornithological assets providing true highlights.

Arguably, Fair Isle is first and foremost an island of breeding seabirds, and sandeel availability ensured that most species enjoyed good breeding success. Population fluctuations, by and large, continued recent trends. The all-island census of Guillemots revealed a staggering 37,600 individuals, whilst Gannets reached a new peak of 825 pairs. Tysties bucked the downward trend suggested in 1993 and we can be confident that the *Braer* oil spill has had little impact on Fair Isle. Arctic Skuas and Kittiwakes continue to decline however, and the Arctic Tern population was down to almost half of the 1992 peak.

Ringling activities provided many highpoints during the year, not least the first-ever Marsh Harrier to be ringed at the observatory – indeed the first-ever adult ringed in Britain. Record totals were achieved for four species, Gannet, Sparrowhawk, Great Skua and Bullfinch, whilst second-highest figures for several species included both Storm and Leach's Petrels, reflecting much hard work on summer nights.

The spring migration was good rather than exceptional, with reasonable numbers of common migrants and some of the scarcer species such as Bluethroat. A male Sardinian Warbler in late June, the second for Fair Isle, provided a real bonus at the end of the season.

Autumn was, however, even by Fair Isle's incomparable standards, stunning: rarity-stuffed and with good numbers of most common migrants. An adult female Isabelline Shrike in late August ensured a good start. What was perhaps the find of the year followed shortly – Britain's third Red-necked Stint, the first juvenile for Europe, was picked up freshly dead on August 31st. September was memorable for records of three of the four so-called 'Fair Isle specialities': Pechora Pipit, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler and Yellow-breasted Bunting, whilst October added the fourth, Lanceolated Warbler. The autumn helped push the species list for the year towards its final total of 203, but the best was still in hand. Early November south-easterlies brought Little Bustard, the first for Shetland, and Pine Bunting to our shores, delighting those staff members who had stayed so late in the year. Fair Isle's reputation as the best single site to observe rare migrants in the UK is once again unchallenged.

The work of the observatory always depends on staff calibre, although this was perhaps more true than ever in 1994. Nik Ward, assistant warden, combined excellent PR skills with his considerable all-round ornithological talents. Guy Thompson was a conscientious and competent seabird monitoring officer. Jane Reid, although 'only' a volunteer, worked exceptionally hard and made a huge contribution.

Research visitors to the observatory were sadly limited in 1994. Peter Evans, now a director of the Trust, returned yet again to continue his studies of Fair Isle Starlings. Pilot work between Juliet Vickery of Edinburgh University and myself, to look at dis-

turbance impact on breeding seabirds, was initiated. A small contract to study seabird diet in more depth than is permitted by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee work was awarded to the observatory by Scottish Natural Heritage, North East Region. It is hoped that the research effort will be expanded considerably in the coming years. A new computer, installed late in the year with the help of considerable grant aid from the Shetland Wildlife Fund, will help analysis and publication of observatory data, and also streamline and modernise data recording.

Four young people were recipients of grants from the John Harrison Memorial Fund, including Jane Reid. Applications for 1995 were very low, and this is a problem we hope can be resolved very quickly. Fair Isle offers perhaps unrivalled breadth of experience to young ornithologists, and this is a channel through which many potential future staff emerge.

Last but by no means least, I would like to express sincere thanks to the following people and organisations for their assistance during the year:

Paul Harvey, my mentor at FIBO in 1992, provided constant help, encouragement and advice throughout the year, whilst Nick Riddiford was another invaluable mine of information and provided records for the log during the period when the observatory was untenanted. Dave Okill, the staunchest of FIBO supporters, devoted a great deal of time and effort during the course of the season. Many people helped with seabird work: Wendy Christie, Andy Gosler, Paul Harvey, Caroline Jackson-Houlston, Nick Riddiford, Daffyd Roberts, Clare Ross-Smith, Graham Rowe and his team of YOC's, with special thanks to Ian Grier and Richard Pike who spent the majority of their fortnight's holiday doing seabird work. Nic Hallam made a terrific job of constructing new catching boxes for four of the traps during quiet days in the autumn. Vignettes for this report were kindly supplied by: Ian Fisher (Goldeneye, Guillemot), Jane Reid (Yellow-breasted Bunting), Clare Ross-Smith (White-tailed Eagle), Guy Thompson (Bullfinch, Sardinian Warbler, Storm Petrel), Steve Votier (Common Tern, Sparrowhawk, Yellow-browed Warbler), Nik Ward (Black-throated Thrush, Isabelline Shrike, Ringed Plover) and Kester Wilson (Booted Warbler, Quail, Twite).

S.O.T.E.A.G., J.N.C.C., B.T.O. and S.N.H. all provided financial assistance for aspects of the seabird and ringing work carried out by the observatory.

Finally I would like to thank J. Barbour and Son Ltd and Buffalo who provided items of outdoor clothing for use by observatory staff.

The National Trust for Scotland: Fair Isle 1994

Alexander Bennett

If ever Fair Isle took a chance to draw breath it was during 1994, which brought some welcome relief to the Isle after the *Braer* disaster in 1993, where life again returned to normal with families, both new and old, settling down to their daily routines again. Fair Isle has always had this ability to spring back from difficult times and has again set itself on a positive path for the future.

In the wake of the *Braer* incident, Lord Donaldson published his long-awaited report 'Safer ships, cleaner seas'. It advised urgent action and set out 103 recommendations, which in short were that 'whilst we may never be able to completely eliminate human error, we can certainly ensure cleaner seas if proper attention is given to the building, management, administration and routing of merchant shipping'. This is welcome news, but at the end of the day action will speak louder than words: we wait with baited breath to see what happens.

It is within the context of the general concern of the seas around Fair Isle that the Trust is taking an initiative to seek ways and means to achieve the protection of the marine environment around the Isle. Working with the islanders, FIBOT, the RSPB and SNH, much discussion has already taken place. The Shetland fishermen are also worried about fishing in general around the Shetland waters and agree that it is unlikely we will ever see the free for all in fishing again. It is therefore in the interests of everyone to find a formula to achieve conservation of fish stocks, not only for the Shetland fleet but for the Fair Islanders and the seabirds which depend on the waters around Fair Isle. The Trust is under no illusions that to negotiate protection for this fragile environment is a long and difficult task, but with a consensus of opinion and the support of Europe behind us (through the Habitats directive), a solution is within our grasp.

During the year, Joan Mayol, an inspector for the Council of Europe, visited Fair Isle to assess the Isle for renewal of the European Diploma, about to enter its third phase. He was particularly interested in the developments towards the implementation of the Marine Protection Area and also extremely encouraged to see that Fair Isle is now covered by Environmentally Sensitive Area and Special Protection Area status.

Fair Isle, with its dynamic population, continues to change and sadly we said good-bye to Ingrid Eunson and her three daughters from Upper Leogh, who have moved back to Shetland. Arriving at Upper Leogh, we welcome Andrew and Kathleen Beattie and their daughter Charlotte from Haddington in East Lothian, who come to Fair Isle with their own particular skills to take part in community life. The birth of a son Scott to Robert and Fiona Mitchell at Stackhoull Stores demonstrates how the community is revitalised. With the expectations of births to come, at least the future of the school is assured.

With the government now encouraging renewable energy schemes, it is gratifying to know that Fair Isle took this initiative on board some 13 years ago and can today demonstrate clearly its success in running an aerogenerator-based power system for a

remote community. Fair Isle is highly regarded in its field, but since the design life of the present system is coming ever closer, steps are now well advanced to take the electricity system forwards into the next century. If all goes to plan, a second aerogenerator will be erected to complement the existing machine, which will be refurbished at the same time. Much wind will pass over the Isle before the new system is up and running, but if I can survive the bureaucratic nightmare of European funding we may be up and running in 1996.

Finally, I would follow Pat Sellar in making a plea to those friends of Fair Isle who have visited the Isle at some point in the past: why not make a date to return and visit the Isle soon? Fair Isle is a wonderful place to come and relax, meet people in pleasant surroundings, or simply watch the seabirds drift by. I cannot think of an better place which leaves such a lasting impression.

The Fair Isle Special Protection Area for Birds

Roger Riddington

In 1984, part of Fair Isle (the Hill area and the cliffs) was designated by the Nature Conservancy Council as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Among other qualities, this reflected the area's outstanding national importance for breeding seabirds.

Ten years on, the SSSI designation has been 'upgraded' to Special Protection Area (SPA) status. This has come about through the UK's membership of the European Community and therefore being bound by the Wild Birds Directive. This directive requires Member States of the EC to take special measures to conserve the habitats of rare and migratory birds, including designating the most suitable areas for these species as SPA's. In such areas, governments are required to ensure that pollution, habitat degradation and any disturbance to the birds for which the site is designated, is avoided.

The new designation recognises that Fair Isle is of *international* significance for breeding seabirds. In practice, it tightens up controls of any developments which require planning permission and which might have an adverse effect on the conservation interest of the site. Such developments within SPA's are likely to be permitted only if there are no alternative solutions *and* there are important reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, for the development going ahead.

In summary, the new designation strengthens protection of the terrestrial habitats of breeding seabirds. To achieve a more complete conservation strategy, it would seem appropriate to focus now on the marine environment, which forms the feeding areas of these same seabirds. Recent developments and progress in this sphere are addressed in the following article, by Nick Riddiford.

Fair Isle: a prime example of the need for Marine Protection Areas

Nick Riddiford

The background. The island community has recognised for some time that Fair Isle's marine environment is under stress and this prompted a unanimous call from the island community some five years ago to explore possibilities for restoring a balanced ecosystem offshore. Some of the spade-work fell to me and after years of seemingly little progress, some headway at last has been made. The impetus undoubtedly came through the publication, in May 1994, of the RSPB document 'Seas: The Opportunity' in which Fair Isle was identified and highlighted as the first of six sites in the UK which constitutes unprotected areas of highest conservation interest and which were in urgent need of marine management and protection. The Fair Isle Committee instructed me to write, expressing gratitude and enthusiasm, to the RSPB for this initiative. This led to my representing Fair Isle at the first 'Seas At Risk' conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in October (where the Fair Isle situation provoked great interest since it epitomised in one site, many of the issues of more general concern); and also to the convening of a meeting between the National Trust for Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, RSPB, FIBOT and myself as a representative of the island community, in order to explore how best to convert Fair Isle's quest for marine protection into reality.

The argument. Fair Isle's marine environment is pollution-free, relatively unspoilt and rich in marine life, due to upwellings, currents and the juxtaposition of the North Atlantic and North Sea waterbodies. In response to these factors, it has (together with Shetland) the highest diversity of breeding seabirds in Europe. The offshore seabed is a major spawning and feeding area for fish, particularly sandeels *Ammodytes* sp. Fair Isle's large seabird populations have been under recent stress from prey shortages. Though some of these shortages may reflect environmental changes, Fair Isle's seabirds have to compete with commercial fishery interests for the same prey species. Fair Isle is located only 40 km SSE of the Shetland coastline where the *MV Braer* oil tanker ran aground early last year after getting into difficulties negotiating the Fair Isle channel.

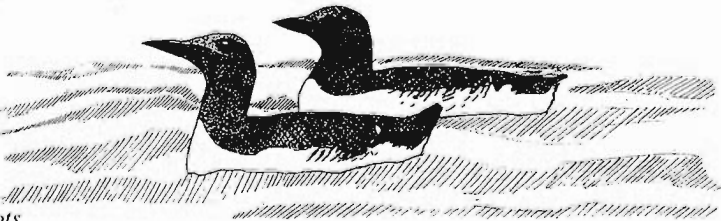
Fair Isle's seabirds are important not merely because of species diversity and internationally significant population sizes, but because of their research role (they have been subject to the longest continuous study of any seabird community in Britain), their educational and recreational role (as one of Britain's best and most accessible sites for seeing seabirds), their position at the head of a complex and fragile ecosystem and their role in attracting visitors (to the economic benefit of both the island and the bird observatory). Fair Isle's coastline and moorland are recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its seabirds, and this has just been strengthened by the recent designation as a Special Protection Area (in December 1994). However, the primary objective, to protect seabird populations, will not be achieved unless a similar consideration is given to the feeding areas. All these factors have been recognised by the RSPB, which, in its Marine Life initiative launched this spring, chose to highlight Fair Isle as one of six major UK sites in urgent need of statutory marine environmental protection.

The small human community is also part of Fair Isle's delicate land and marine ecology.

This has been recognised by the Council Of Europe, which awarded its European Diploma to the Isle “aesthetically because of the beauty of the landscape; culturally, because of the existence of a prosperous farming community whose achievements were many; scientifically because the island was an important breeding site for seabird populations and a crossroads for certain migratory species”. The damaging impact of an offshore industrial fishery is not limited to breeding seabirds, but has already been felt by island inhabitants, who can no longer obtain the quantity, variety or size of fish previously caught for local consumption and small-scale commercial gain. For centuries, islanders have lived in harmony with their environment, terrestrial and marine. This is not for altruistic reasons, but because isolation renders the principles of resource sustainability essential for survival. Outside factors and commercial interests have swept this all away.

The opportunity. Terrestrial conservation, including habitat protection through a series of protected areas and legal safeguards, is well-developed in the UK: but only as far as the shoreline. The marine environment has suffered gross neglect and action is needed to redress the balance. As the seas come under increasing pressure, attitudes are changing from concern to outright alarm, particularly as all those concerned with the marine environment see massive ecosystem changes. For example, the intensity of fishing has altered significantly the age-structure of fish populations, such that larger adults have all but disappeared leaving a preponderance of smaller, younger-age fish.

There appears to be no statutory mechanism in the UK for establishing a Marine Protection Area. Nevertheless, my feeling, particularly after speaking to many Europeans at the ‘Seas at Risk’ conference, is that proper integrated management of European seas would be of long-term benefit to all, and it has to come, with governments providing legislative structure to allow for this. Fair Isle will be in pole position to be a ‘model site’, a testing ground for applying management techniques. The island has so many advantages: a rich marine environment; a local community that is unanimous in its support and that is prepared (and able) to take an active role in management; a strong scientific base through the work of the bird observatory; together with the means and ability to develop the concept, through the themes of research, education and recreation, with the bird observatory and the community taking prominent roles. The objective should be to reinstate, through management and protection, a natural ecosystem where the natural relationship between coast and sea can be strengthened and promoted. Beleaguered governments have the opportunity to win a publicity coup by taking the plunge and giving the waters around Fair Isle the protected status they need. Fair Isle is a prime example of how communities, as well as the environment, would benefit.



Guillemots

Birdwatching on Fair Isle – an islander's perspective

Margaret Stout

For me, birdwatching has become an important part of my life. Over many years, I had watched birdwatchers and 'twitchers' with some amusement, and could never understand how seeing a particular bird could generate so much excitement! However, one day in early October 1992, I gave one of my guests, Nick Green, a lift to Setter, where a Pallas's Warbler had been discovered in the polytunnel. I looked too, standing in silence with a dozen or more others, and watched this tiny, beautifully-marked bird, hopping and darting among the flowers. When we returned to Barkland, we looked up an atlas and marvelled at how far this minute creature had travelled – all the way from Siberia! That short trip started my interest, and it was fuelled next morning by two Olive-backed Pipits, also from Siberia. Even rarer, an Eye-browed Thrush was found that same day. Nick, the finder, came to fetch me and I watched the bird through a telescope. I was hooked!

I realised, however, that to appreciate the rare birds, I had to learn about and recognise the common ones. This is quite a task for my old and rather dormant brain, but thanks to all the help and encouragement I get from my birding friends, I am starting to be able to identify birds and realise what I am looking at. I amazed myself this autumn by just how much I could remember from seeing the birds last year. Now that I no longer have my job as school canteen cook, I try to use that time to get out with my binoculars and see what I can see. I enjoy this enormously and now I too get very excited when I see a new bird! Does that mean I am now a twitcher?

I must thank all the obs. staff and Nick Riddiford for their help, encouragement and patience. Roger, Nik and Guy have made sure that I haven't missed any good birds. The phone rings and off I go! Those of my paying guests who are not interested in birds are frequently bemused, but seem to accept that their landlady has her priorities right and puts birds before people! Seeing birds in the hand helps me to learn about identification, and I have enjoyed accompanying the staff on trap rounds and watching the birds being ringed. When a rarity is found and I arrive, I feel like a V.I.P.! I'm given the best vantage point and allowed to look through a telescope. Being old and infirm therefore has some advantages, but I really do appreciate the thoughtfulness. Nick and Elizabeth Riddiford often join myself and other interested islanders, particularly Clare and Brian. They have encouraged me from the start, and I am particularly grateful to Nick for his untold patience and answers to my many questions. This adds enormously to my knowledge and therefore enjoyment.

What of the highlights this year? There have been so many. One of the biggest thrills must have been the Little Bustard, because of its size, beautiful markings and its rarity. But then, seeing the Gannets and Puffins return in spring, watching up to ten male northern Bullfinches playing together, seeing Sparrowhawk and Long-eared Owl in the hand, are all just as exciting. One Sunday in October, as I sat writing a letter, a Waxwing landed on the garden fence and sat watching me. Another day, fifteen Greenfinches argued and fought over the seed on the bird table. Other visitors to my small

garden were Black Redstart, Icterine Warbler, Mistle Thrush and a stunning male Blue-throat. The Isabelline Shrike was fantastic, as was the male Marsh Harrier caught in spring and taken back to the observatory in the passenger seat of my car! I could go on and on. I believe I must be one of the luckiest people alive to have all this on my doorstep and good friends to share the pleasures with. Fair Isle has been my home, and a very special place to me for thirty five years, but now I feel that I am appreciating all the things I used to take for granted. The birds, plants, the landscape and the climate with its unforgettable sunsets have all taken on new meaning for me.

Birdwatchers may seem a strange species to some folk, but I for one am glad that I can count myself among their number. I look forward to many more years of enjoyment, new birds and a close friendship with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory and its staff.

*Jimmy Wilson, 1915-1994;
A Distinguished Fair Isle Ornithologist.*

Nick Riddiford

It is with great sadness that I report the death of James Wilson on November 2nd, 1994. Better known to many as Schoolton Jimmy (after his croft), often shortened to School Jimmy, he will be remembered by generations of birdwatchers as a friendly face on the Isle. Not all were aware that he was also a distinguished and skilled ornithologist, whose knowledge and powers of observation ran deeper than many visiting bird-watchers realised. If they were unaware, it was because of his modest, self-deprecating nature.

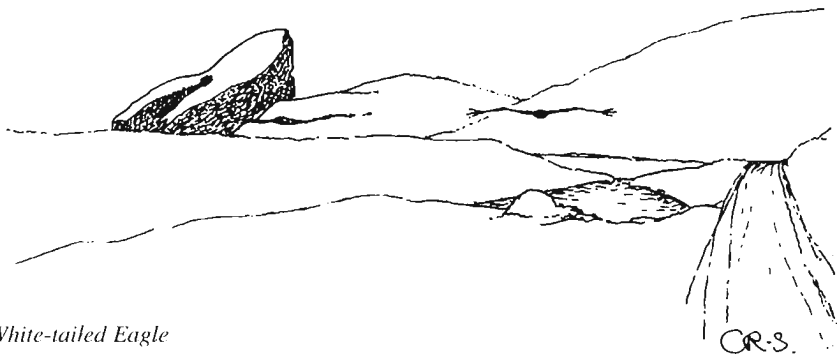
Fair Isle was 'discovered' ornithologically by such early twentieth-century luminaries as Dr. Eagle Clarke, the Duchess of Bedford and Surgeon Rear-Admiral Stenhouse. But the true extent of Fair Isle's migratory riches was only revealed when first Eagle Clark, then Stenhouse, trained and encouraged some of the islanders to act as resident watchers on the Isle. Jimmy was one of these. By the time the Bird Observatory came along in 1948, collecting of specimens was giving way to field observations. But Jimmy continued to contribute. Ken Williamson reported (in 'Fair Isle and its Birds') how Jimmy was summoned to confirm the identity of a mystery bird as Pechora Pipit. Only about a dozen had been recorded in Western Europe at that time, all on Fair Isle. In later years, we became more knowledgeable and sophisticated in our identification of the eastern pipits, but more than one subsequent warden was grateful, on first encounter with a Pechora, to have the confidence boost of Jimmy's opinion.

Jimmy's ornithological assets included a sharp eye, a good ear and a penchant for being out of doors. These, combined with an undoubted depth of knowledge, led to a number of exciting finds. I particularly remember a Great Snipe which he found and identified correctly from the shortest of views and in the most appalling conditions; a most unexpected out-of-season Dotterel in December; his simultaneous discovery of Yellow Wagtails and Quail breeding in his tatty rig and the enormous effort he took to preserve

them. I also remember him for his meticulous note-taking (extremely useful for filling in gaps during the warden's winter absence), his constant willingness to help and advise, unfailing interest in ornithological events and warm hospitality. This is not the place to list all his qualities, for this article is to pay tribute to his ornithological abilities and contribution. However, he will be missed in his many and varied ways, all of them good. He was a man of virtue and high values, kind and generous of mind and spirit.

Jimmy was not the only resident field ornithologist. Others included 'Fieldy' Stout, his son James A. Stout (who continues to amaze me with the depth of his expertise) and the very first, Jerome Wilson of Springfield. Jerome was Jimmy's father and it is comforting to report that the family legacy has passed down the generations. Jimmy's son Brian, of Houll, has more than a passing knowledge and interest, and grandson Alan is learning fast.

In remembering Jimmy, we should appreciate and admire the enormous contribution he and a number of other Islanders have made to ornithological knowledge this century; all done with great care, without fuss and often without the full recognition he, and they, deserve.



White-tailed Eagle

ORNITHOLOGY

Monthly Summary

Roger Riddington

In order to provide a chronological account of migration records and ringing activities at the observatory, the following account has been derived from the observatory 'grapevine', which is copied to all British observatories on a monthly basis. Each month has four sections: (i) weather and overall summary; (ii) ringing details, featuring numbers ringed, the most common species and any unusual species ringed; (iii) main movements, falls, irruptions etc. and finally (iv) rarities and scarce migrants. For some months, a fifth section, detailing any noteworthy sea passage, is included.

JANUARY / FEBRUARY / MARCH

(i) *Summary* Full coverage commenced with our arrival at the end of March. Whilst the early part of the year had no doubt been largely quiet, there were good records of a Great Crested Grebe in North Haven early in January and two Goosanders in early March. The latter half of March saw the first returning summer migrants, particularly waders, and a good passage of Skylarks.

(ii) *Ringing.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 26, of 9 species.

(b) *Top ringing species for month, with totals:* Blackbird 13, Meadow Pipit 6

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Long-eared Owl 1

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

March 28th Oystercatcher 110, Lapwing 110, Skylark 720, Meadow Pipit 70

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Great Crested Grebe	1, January 12th
Shelduck	1, March 28th
Pochard	1, March 2nd-3rd
Goosander	2, March 2nd-3rd
Iceland Gull	1, March 25th
Stock Dove	1, January 12th

APRIL

(i) *Weather/summary.* Winds in April were mostly between south and west, with a spell of northern-quarter winds mid-month. South-easterlies blew on only three days, with the result that there were no particularly large falls of migrants. However, the 9th was a good day, with the arrival of a male Norwegian-ringed Hawfinch (sadly recovered dead on the 10th). Two Great Tits took up residence around the observatory mid-month, and the 24th-25th saw a good movement of Northern Wheatcars, the first records of many spring migrants and the capture of a first-summer male Marsh Harrier.

The 27th was another notable day; an immature White-tailed Eagle drifting over the north cliffs was seen by two lucky observers and a first-year male Little Bunting was trapped.

(ii) *Ringling.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed 305, of 27 species.*

(b) *Top three ringling species for month, with totals:* Blackbird 77, Brambling 55, Robin 44.

(c) *'Unusual' ringling activity:* Marsh Harrier 1, Stonechat 1, Great Tit 2, Little Bunting 1.

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

5th Skylark 345

6th Meadow Pipit 125, Rook 6

9th Common Gull 60, Black Redstart 3, Stonechat 2, Jackdaw 4, Brambling 10, Hawfinch 1

12th Blackbird 30, Redwing 75, Chiffchaff 5

18th Common Gull 55, Redwing 105

19th Meadow Pipit 120, Brambling 105

20th Blackbird 70, Goldcrest 10

24th Northern Wheatear 60, Brambling 145, single Tree Pipit, Yellow Wagtail, Redstart, Sedge Warbler

25th Whimbrel 4, Woodpigeon 17, White Wagtail 5, Swallow 9, Northern Wheatear 185, Fieldfare 65, Willow Warbler 6, single Sparrowhawk, Green Sandpiper, Sand Martin

27th Common Gull 45, Fieldfare 225, Hooded Crow 12, Carrion Crow 17

29th Turnstone 225, Black-headed Gull 33

30th Golden Plover 98, Whimbrel 15, Woodpigeon 13

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

White-tailed Eagle 1, 27th

Marsh Harrier 1, 24th-30th

Moorhen 1, 12th-28th, plus 1, 21st-24th

Iceland Gull 1, first-summer, 26th-28th

Great Tit 1, 10th-25th, 1, 16th-22nd

Hawfinch 1, 9th-10th

Little Bunting 1, 27th-30th

MAY

(i) *Weather/summary.* The weather was predominantly south-easterly until the 11th, from when a long spell of north or north-east winds set in, lasting until the 26th. Western-quarter winds saw the month out. Overall, a very dry and sunny month. Not surprisingly, given the wind directions, the first half of the month was better for migrant arrivals. Early in the month, there were a number of records of scarce migrants,

with Goldfinch and Ortolan Bunting on the 4th, Osprey on the 6th, Dotterel, another Ortolan and a Little Bunting on the 7th and at last the year's first true rarity, a 'Siberian' Stonechat on the 8th. A male Subalpine Warbler, Osprey, Wryneck and a male Common Rosefinch on the 10th paved the way for the two best days of the spring, the 12th-13th, which saw a good variety of waders, hirundines, chats (including an impressive fall of Bluethroats), warblers and flycatchers plus records of Marsh Harrier, Quail, two more Subalpine Warblers and a Corn Bunting. The aftermath of this spell of southeasterlies continued to affect Fair Isle for a few more days, with the following week bringing two more Marsh Harriers, another Osprey, Nightingale and a fine male Rustic Bunting on the 15th. The end of the month saw no large migrant arrivals, although continued sightings of scarce or rare species maintained interest. The last week of the month saw the fourth Osprey record, yet another Subalpine Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Red-breasted Flycatcher and a second Rustic Bunting.

(ii) *Ringling.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed 276, of 43 species.*

(b) *Top three ringing species for month, with totals:* Starling 100, Redstart 22, Willow Warbler 18

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Sparrowhawk 12, Quail 1, Green Sandpiper 1, Wryneck 1, Bluethroat 9, Marsh Warbler 1, Subalpine Warbler 1, Tree Sparrow 2

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

5th Carrion Crow 49

6th Whimbrel 15, Common Gull 70

8th Purple Sandpiper 52, Ring Ouzel 7, Chiffchaff 10

9th Common Gull 50, Swallow 20

12th Green Sandpiper 2, Wood Sandpiper 2, Greenshank 1, Swift 9, House Martin 10, Tree Pipit 15, 'flava' Wagtail 4, Bluethroat 13, Redstart 45, Whinchat 12, Lesser Whitethroat 20, Whitethroat 12, Chiffchaff 12, Willow Warbler 20, Spotted Flycatcher 6

13th Swallow 30, Tree Pipit 20, Bluethroat 15, Redstart 60, Northern Wheatear 150, Swallow 9, Lesser Whitethroat 30, Whitethroat 20, Blackcap 5, Wood Warbler 5, Chiffchaff 10, Willow Warbler 25, Spotted Flycatcher 7, Pied Flycatcher 20.

15th Whitethroat 25

27th Sparrowhawk 6, Whimbrel 9, Common Gull 55, Glaucous Gull 1

28th Swallow 35

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Pochard 1, 11th-14th

Marsh Harrier 1, 13th-14th; 1, 19th

Osprey 1, 6th, 1 10th, 1 16th, 1 26th

Quail 1, 13th

Dotterel 1, 7th

Wryneck 1, 10th-14th

Nightingale 1, 18th-19th

Bluethroat from 11th-28th, max. 15, 13th

'Siberian' Stonechat	1, 8th-9th
Marsh Warbler	1, 30th
Icterine Warbler	2, 23rd, 1 until 26th
Subalpine Warbler	1, 10th-12th; 1, 12th; 1, 12th-20th; 1, 30th
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1, 26th
Goldfinch	1 or 2, 4th-9th
Common Rosefinch	1, 10th-14th; 1-3, 22nd-29th
Ortolan Bunting	1, 4th; 1, 7th
Rustic Bunting	male 15th, male 26th-28th
Little Bunting	1, 7th
Corn Bunting	1, 13th

(v) *Sea passage.*

31st Manx Shearwater 3, Cormorant 1, Arctic Skua 11, Bonxie 7; all north.

JUNE

(i) *Weather/summary* The weather was predominantly westerly: damp, cool and windy. A very poor month for migration, especially considering what Fair Isle can come up with in early June. The first few days of the month saw a reasonable variety of migrants, including the first Red-backed Shrike of the year, plus records of Quail, Bluethroat and Common Rosefinch. Numbers of almost all species were very low. Arctic Terns suffered from the weather, which also severely hampered seabird monitoring. The end of the month, however, produced unexpectedly what was undoubtedly bird of the spring: a superb male Sardinian Warbler at North Shirva, only the second Fair Isle record.

(ii) *Ringling.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 1716, of 41 species.

(b) *Top three ringing species for month, with totals:* Guillemot 537, Shag 317, Razor-bill 217.

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Water Rail 1, Golden Oriole 1, Red-backed Shrike 1.

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

2nd Swallow 50, House Martin 20, Tree Pipit 4, Bluethroat 5, Sedge Warbler 4, Lesser Whitethroat 6.

Siskins were present for most of the month, with 52 on the 24th.

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Quail	1, 1st-5th
Long-tailed Skua	1, north, 14th
Bluethroat	1st-5th, max. 5 on 2nd
Sardinian Warbler	1, 23rd-28th
Golden Oriole	1, 17th
Red-backed Shrike	1, 2nd; 1, 5th
Common Rosefinch	1-2 2nd-5th; 1, 22nd

JULY

(i) *Weather/summary* Cool, foggy, with winds predominantly eastern-quarter. Carrying on where the latter part of June left off, July was dominated by seabirds, as the ringing totals demonstrate. There was scarcely any migration worthy of mention, although gulls and waders started to move again at the end of the month.

(ii) *Ringing.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 2538, of 24 species.

(b) *Top three ringing species for month, with totals:* Storm Petrel 898, Arctic Tern 360, Puffin 190

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Leach's Petrel 5

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

27th Golden Plover 7, Sanderling 10, Dunlin 10, Whimbrel 17, Redshank 55, Turnstone 106

30th Black-headed Gull 52, Common Gull 550

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Shoveler 1, 27th

Sandwich Tern 1, 27th

AUGUST

(i) *Weather/summary* August's weather was predominantly westerly, but there was a spell of productive south-easterlies at the beginning of the fourth week. Another dry month, with now very little open freshwater on the island. The first week of August produced a few migrants, including Barred Warbler and Red-backed Shrike, but an Aquatic Warbler at Meadow Burn on the 4th-5th, was the centre of attention. The rest of August was quiet, until a spell of south-easterlies at the beginning of the fourth week livened things up considerably, marking the start of the autumn proper. Completely out of the blue, a superb adult female Isabelline Shrike was trapped in the Gully on the 23rd, the fourth record for Fair Isle. Although little else seemed to accompany it, the next day saw an excellent fall of waders and passerines. The most unexpected event of the whole year, however, was reserved for the last day of the month, when the corpse of a freshly-dead Red-necked Stint was picked up at South Harbour. It was identified when handed in at the Observatory the following day. The third for Britain, a first for Scotland and the first record of the species for Europe in juvenile plumage.

(ii) *Ringing.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 1407, of 33 species.

(b) *Top three ringing species for month, with totals:* Storm Petrel 951, Twite 119, Meadow Pipit 69

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Leach's Petrel 1, Wigeon 1, Green Sandpiper 3, Wry-neck 3, Barred Warbler 5, Isabelline Shrike 1, Common Rosefinch 1

(iii) Main movements/arrivals

1st	Common Gull 211
5th	Oystercatcher 190
16th	Common Gull 455
22nd	Pied Wagtail 60
23rd	Teal 15, Meadow Pipit 200
24th	Oystercatcher 150, Golden Plover 60, Green Sandpiper 4, Common Gull 340, Wryneck 5, 'flava' wagtail 5, Whinchat 40, Northern Wheatear 150, Grasshopper Warbler 4, Barred Warbler 5, Garden Warbler 50, Willow Warbler 60, Red-backed Shrike 5
25th	Tree Pipit 13, Whinchat 50, Reed Warbler 13, Red-backed Shrike 8
28th	Ruff 9, Redshank 75, Pied Wagtail 52
29th	Pied Flycatcher 12
30th	Meadow Pipit 270

(iv) Rarities and scarce migrants

Corncrake	1, 24th-25th
Wryneck	1, 17th-18th; 5, 24th; 4, 25th; 1, 26th
Aquatic Warbler	1, 4th-5th
Icterine Warbler	1, 23rd; 1 27th-28th; 1, 29th
Barred Warbler	1, 3rd-11th; 2 on 6th. Then from 16th-31st, max. 5 24th-25th
Isabelline Shrike	1, 23rd-24th
Red-backed Shrike	1, 4th-7th, then 23rd-31st, max. 8, 25th
Common Rosefinch	1, 14th-20th; 3, 30th; 4, 31st

SEPTEMBER

(i) Weather/summary Winds were predominantly east or south-east until the 10th; northern-quarter winds then held sway until the middle of the month, followed by a spell of westerlies until the month's end. This did not seem to hinder migrant arrivals though, and a mouthwatering collection of rarities kept most of our visitors satisfied. The highlights in a star-studded cast were four Pechora Pipits (including three on the 16th), the first Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler since 1988 and two Paddyfield Warblers. These eastern gems were well-supported by a Short-toed Lark, a Citrine Wagtail, a Booted Warbler, three Arctic Warblers, a Rose-coloured Starling, two Little Buntings and two Yellow-breasted Buntings. One of the best falls of the year, on the 9th, was enjoyed by scarcely any visitors though (why does no-one come to Fair Isle in early September these days?), with a magical array of waders, chats, warblers and flycatchers crowned with a smart Yellow-breasted Bunting.

(ii) Ringing. *(a) Total number of birds ringed 344, of 49 species.*

(b) Top three ringing species for month, with totals: Twite 62, Garden Warbler 53, Meadow Pipit 37

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Great Spotted Woodpecker 1, Pechora Pipit 1, Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler 1, Paddyfield Warbler 1, Arctic Warbler 1, Yellow-browed Warbler 3, Little Bunting 1

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

4th Teal 31, Lapwing 32, Ruff 17, Redshank 44, Pied Flycatcher 15
 5th Whinchat 15, Northern Wheatear 100
 9th Wigeon 37, Teal 25, Pintail 5, Ringed Plover 39, Golden Plover 40, Lapwing 45, Ruff 59, Jack Snipe 8, Snipe 62, Redshank 56, Common Sandpiper 6, Skylark 90, Tree Pipit 18, Redstart 10, Whinchat 35, Northern Wheatear 100, Reed Warbler 7, Garden Warbler 80, Willow Warbler 45, Spotted Flycatcher 9, Pied Flycatcher 20
 10th Dunlin 60, Common Gull 105, Whinchat 56
 11th Wryneck 10, Blackcap 12, Snow Bunting 100
 18th Wigeon 50, Skylark 190
 20th Redstart 7, Garden Warbler 20, Blackcap 10, Yellow-browed Warbler 5, Willow Warbler 30
 28th Greylag Goose 85, Turnstone 135
 29th Greylag Goose 350, Teal 17, Skylark 350, Swallow 12, Siskin 16
 30th Golden Plover 88, Dunlin 20, Jack Snipe 15, Redshank 50, Turnstone 170, Ring Ouzel 25, Blackbird 15, Fieldfare 60, Song Thrush 80, Redwing 1500, Goldcrest 10, Chaffinch 15, Brambling 130

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Black-throated Diver	1, 25th
Little Grebe	1, 24th
Brent Goose	2, 28th
Dotterel	1, 11th-13th
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1, 2nd-9th; 1, 15th
Wryneck	1-2, 3rd-5th; 2-10, 9th-14th
Short-toed Lark	1, 18th-24th
Richard's Pipit	1, 10th-12th; 1-2, 19th-30th
Pechora Pipit	1, 15-16th; 1, 16-19th; 1, 16-18th; 1, 25th
Citrine Wagtail	1, 1st-4th
Bluethroat	12th, 15th, 1-2 20th-23rd, 30th
Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler	1, 21st
Paddyfield Warbler	1, 22nd-26th; 1, 24th-25th
Marsh Warbler	1, 25th
Booted Warbler	1, 11th
Icterine Warbler	1, 1st, 1 30th
Barred Warbler	1-4, 1st-26th
Arctic Warbler	1, 18th; 1, 20th-22nd; 1, 21st-22nd
Yellow-browed Warbler	1-6, 16-25th; 1-3, 29-30th
Red-backed Shrike	1-3, 1st-5th; 1-3, 9th-13th
Great Grey Shrike	1, 21st

Rose-coloured Starling	1, 22nd-30th
Common Rosefinch	1-6, 1st-12th; 1-3, 19th-28th
Ortolan Bunting	1, 4-5th; 2, 9th; 1, 12th; 1, 20th
Little Bunting	1, 26th-28th; 1, 26th-30th
Yellow-breasted Bunting	1, 9th, 1, 18th

(v) *Sea passage*

27th Sooty Shearwater 11, Manx Shearwater 1

28th Sooty Shearwater 12

OCTOBER

(i) *Weather/summary* Northerly winds at the start of the month gave way to south/west winds until mid-month. Three days of northern-quarter winds preceeded six days of south-easterly gales from the 18th. Light and variable winds saw the month out. Following the trend of recent years, October was a superb month for migration, with new arrivals most days. Rarities were well-represented, with the period from the 10th-17th outstanding. Also following recent trends, there were scarcely any visiting bird-watchers to enjoy the highlights encountered mid-month. In the first few days, there were good counts of species that arrived in Britain in exceptional numbers this autumn, with four Richard's Pipits on the 2nd (nicely balanced by the fifth Pechora Pipit of the autumn) and nine Yellow-browed Warblers on the 10th. Also on the 10th, there was a good arrival of thrushes (at least by 1994's standards) whilst Olive-backed Pipit and Lanceolated Warbler made the day particularly memorable. A second Lanceolated Warbler was found on the 15th, whilst late that same day a possible Black-throated Thrush was glimpsed near the Observatory. Happily it was relocated next day, but it was the 17th that proved to be one of the best days of the year for rarities. A Rustic Bunting was trapped in the Vaadal after breakfast, a second Black-throated Thrush was found (with the first one still present) whilst the third Little Bunting of the autumn rounded things off! The end of the month was memorable for an unprecedented invasion of Northern Bullfinches, late records of Pallas's and Arctic Warbler, and a number of records of scarce migrants to Fair Isle.

(ii) *Ringling.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 591, of 42 species.

(b) *Top three ringling species for month, with totals:* Blackbird 245, Redwing 85, Bullfinch 35

(c) *'Unusual' ringling activity:* Barred Warbler 1, Yellow-browed Warbler 5, Rose-coloured Starling 1, Common Rosefinch 1, Bullfinch 35, Rustic Bunting 1, Little Bunting 1

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

1st Wigeon 20, Teal 10, Meadow Pipit 220

2nd Greylag Goose 135, Skylark 370, Richard's Pipit 4, Redwing 600

3rd Greylag Goose 155, Turnstone 165

9th Meadow Pipit 200, Yellow-browed Warbler 8, Snow Bunting 23

- 10th Lapwing 21, Ring Ouzel 5, Fieldfare 200, Song Thrush 50, Redwing 1500, Brambling 55, Siskin 15
- 16th Merlin 5, Snow Bunting 33
- 18th Goldeneye 6, Red-breasted Merganser 3, Golden Plover 55, Turnstone 175, Blackbird 130, Fieldfare 325, Song Thrush 30, Redwing 450
- 20th Mallard 20, Long-tailed Duck 34, Herring Gull 500, Great Black-backed Gull 850, Woodpigeon 4, Blackbird 170, Fieldfare 800, Redwing 350
- 21st Wigeon 74, Teal 14, Mallard 35, Goldeneye 9, Blackbird 350, Blackcap 10, Goldcrest 10, Redpoll 15
- 22nd Lapwing 35, Redshank 52, Turnstone 190, Woodpigeon 5, Brambling 75, Greenfinch 40, Redpoll 28, Yellowhammer 8
- 23rd Snipe 40, Turnstone 230, Common Gull 30, Skylark 300, Blackbird 600, Fieldfare 1050, Redwing 650, Siskin 23, Yellowhammer 11, Reed Bunting 14
- 25th Whooper Swan 5, Long-tailed Duck 22, Blackcap 15
- 26th Whooper Swan 9, Lapwing 16, Long-eared Owl 3, Skylark 165, Meadow Pipit 50, Chaffinch 10, Bullfinch 44, Snow Bunting 48, Reed Bunting 11
- 27th Whooper Swan 18, Greylag Goose 125, Long-tailed Duck 15, Water Rail 3, Chiffchaff 5, Goldcrest 12
- 30th Herring Gull 500, Great Black-backed Gull 1000
- 31st Woodcock 60, Redshank 54, Robin 18, Ring Ouzel 3, Blackbird 195, Fieldfare 750, Song Thrush 25, Redwing 1100, Bullfinch 69



Bullfinch

(iv) Rarities and scarce migrants

Great Crested Grebe	1, 7th
Little Grebe	1, 18th-23rd
Goosander	1, 21st
Hen Harrier	1, 20th-25th; 1, 31st
Buzzard	1, 20th-31st
Short-toed Lark	1, 11th-3th

Richard's Pipit	1st-11th, max. 4 on 2nd; 1, 23rd-25th
Olive-backed Pipit	1, 10th-12th
Pechora Pipit	1, 2nd-9th
Waxwing	1, 28th; 2, 29th; 1, 30th
Bluethroat	1, 15th-26th

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

(i) *Weather/summary* The first half of November saw predominantly south-east winds, which brought the final rewards of an outstanding autumn: Little Bustard, new for Fair Isle, and a male Pine Bunting. The rest of the year was typically windy, southerly and western-quarter winds predominating, but never particularly cold. Seawatching was well rewarded in mid-November, with records of Great Northern Diver, Brent Goose, Scaup and Goosander, plus good numbers of Long-tailed Ducks and Goldeneyes. Predictably, the latter half of November and December were quiet, although the remnants of the Bullfinch invasion lingered into December, Little Auks were recorded on almost every seawatch, and there were sightings of Pochard and Buzzard.

(ii) *Ringing.* (a) *Total number of birds ringed* 77, of 12 species.

(b) *Top three ringing species for month, with totals:* Blackbird 27, Bullfinch 21, Robin 15

(c) *'Unusual' ringing activity:* Pochard 1, Long-eared Owl 3, Black Redstart 1

(iii) *Main movements/arrivals*

1st Nov	Turnstone 225, Bullfinch 77
7th Nov	Skylark 150+, Robin 25, Blackbird 250, Fieldfare 750, Redwing 500
9th Nov	Blackbird 350

(iv) *Rarities and scarce migrants*

Slavonian Grebe	1, 12th-13th
Brent Goose	2, 12th-13th Nov
Gadwall	1, 26th Nov
Pochard	1, 4th-11th Dec
Goosander	3, possibly 4, 12th Nov
Buzzard	1, 1st-11th Nov; 1, 11th Dec 1995
Little Bustard	1, 5th-6th Nov
Iceland Gull	1, 6th Dec
Rose-coloured Starling	1st-3rd Nov
Pine Bunting	1, 7th Nov

(v) *Sea passage*

Nov 12th	Scaup 5, Long-tailed Duck 8, Common Scoter 3, Goldeneye 21, Bonxie 1, Kittiwake 27, Little Auk 1
Nov 13th	Great Northern Diver 1, Long-tailed Duck 11, Common Scoter 2, Glaucous Gull 1, Kittiwake 67, large auk sp. 66, Little Auk 2

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Roger Riddington

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Scarce but regular migrant, mainly late spring and autumn

There were two records in spring: one on June 17th and two on July 8th. In autumn, singles occurred on three dates in September, with the last record one off South Light on October 8th.

BLACK-THROATED DIVER *Gavia arctica*

Vagrant

One flew north on September 25th, seen by two observers during an early morning sea-watch from Bunness. Only the fourth record for Fair Isle (previous records in October 1935, November 1963 and May 1983).

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

Scarce autumn migrant

One off the North Light on September 26th, and one seen from South Light on November 13th.

LITTLE GREBE *Tachybaptus ruficollis*

Vagrant

Recorded for the third year in succession. One in South Harbour on September 24th, with another in Smirri Geo on October 18th. What was presumably the latter individual was seen again, at the same site, on October 23rd.

GREAT CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus*

Vagrant

Two records, the highlight of an excellent year for grebes. One in North Haven on January 12th, and a juvenile, also in North Haven, on October 7th. The 10th and 11th records for the island.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Very scarce autumn migrant

A winter-plumaged bird in North Haven, November 12th-13th, was the sole record.

FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Resident, breeds

The breeding population remains more-or-less stable. Counts of Apparently Occupied Sites (A.O.S.) at five monitoring plots revealed a 3.3% increase from 1993. Breeding success was 0.51 chicks per pair, slightly lower than 1992 (0.55) and 1993 (0.57) but an average value for the nine seasons since monitoring began in 1986. The Fulmars in North Haven do not appear to have recovered from disturbance due to construction of the new breakwater and pier – productivity was only 0.28 at this site.

‘Blue’ Fulmars were recorded sporadically throughout the year, with a max. count of six on September 29th.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Regular autumn migrant

Recorded in autumn between August 13th and October 4th, predominantly in the second half of September. Mostly singles, but 11 on September 27th and 12 on September 30th were notable.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce autumn migrant, occasional in spring

Spring records comprised one north on May 14th, and three north on May 31st. In a very poor autumn, there were singles on September 11th and 27th from the island, with one record from the Good Shepherd, August 4th.

STORM PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Summer visitor, breeds

Recorded sporadically on the crossing between June 7th and September 24th, with a max. of 60 on August 4th. Large numbers were attracted to tape lures below the observatory during July and August, and 1851 were ringed, the second highest total ever. 27 foreign controls were trapped during this time, 19 from Norway, five from Portugal and three from Denmark.

Two recently-fledged juveniles grounded in late September/early October at South Light were successfully released.

LEACH'S PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Scarce migrant, summer and early autumn

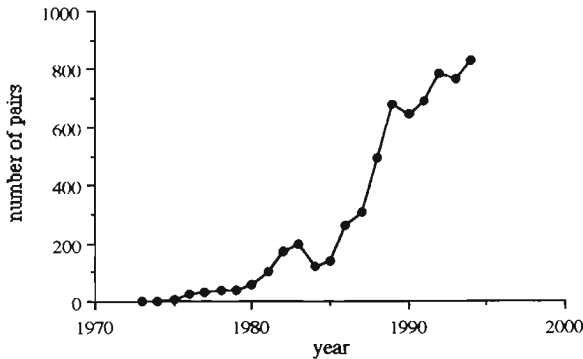
Six individuals were tape-lured, four on July 24th, one on July 27th and one on August 11th. In addition, one was reported from the Good Shepherd on August 16th.

GANNET *Sula bassana*

Breeds, seen offshore all year

1994 witnessed continued expansion of Fair Isle's Gannet population (see graph, below). The total of 825 pairs represents an 8.0% increase from 1993, and is the highest total ever recorded. Breeding success was also high, at 0.77 chicks per pair (n=141), close to the maximum figure recorded here. Loafing birds were present on Fugli Stack (off Malcolm's Head) through the summer, and this is an obvious site for colonisation. The future of the Gannet population looks healthy, as long as food supplies are assured.

The increasing Gannet population on Fair Isle



CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Regular autumn migrant, small numbers in spring

One or two birds were recorded on seven dates in January, then singles on eight dates between May 6th and June 6th. In autumn, recorded intermittently from August 29th, with a max. of 18 on September 2nd. One to five birds were recorded in South Harbour during November and December. of December.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A flock was reported intermittently from January through to early March, with a max. of 43 on January 5th. In spring, 18 flew north on March 20th, singles were seen on April 16th-17th, May 12th-13th and June 10th, with two on May 26th. In autumn, two from September 3rd-13th preceeded the main migration period, from September 26th. Numbers peaked in late September and the first half of October, maxima of 350 on September 29th and 178 on October 11th. A flock of up to 87 were present from mid-October into 1995, with numbers gradually dwindling.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Regular autumn migrant

Two to four birds were recorded almost daily during late September and early October. The extreme dates of autumn passage were September 18th and October 27th, with a max. of five on October 24th.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Vagrant

Two dark-bellied birds (*B. b. bernicla*) were seen on September 28th. Two more individuals of the dark-bellied race, an adult and a first-winter, were present from November 12th-13th.

SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Irregular spring migrant

A single was reported from South Light on March 28th.

WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In the early part of the year, there were two on January 18th, two on March 5th and three on March 7th. A thin spring passage, stretching between April 21st and June 3rd, saw one to three birds recorded on 16 dates. In autumn, recorded most days from August 24th through September and October with 74 on October 21st the best count, and the second highest ever for the island. One to five were recorded sporadically during November and December.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Vagrant

A male was reported at South Light on November 26th.

SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Resident, breeds

For the fifth year in succession, the number of nests at monitored plots showed a slight decline. However, breeding success was again excellent, the third successive year of high productivity, with 1.65 chicks fledged per nest (n=79).

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Regular autumn migrant, small numbers in spring

Recorded in all months of the year except July, with numbers showing clear peaks in

September (33 bird-days) and late October (32 bird-days). The max. count was seven on September 18th.

WHOOPEE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*

Regular autumn migrant, irregular in spring

An overwintering adult bird from 1993 was picked up dead on March 19th, and found to be emaciated. Two on April 11th were the only spring record. In autumn, seven on September 25th, were followed by records on eleven dates until the end of the year. A peak in numbers in late October/early November was evident, when the max. count of 18, on October 27th, was recorded.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*

Regular autumn migrant, occasional in spring

One on May 3rd, increasing to five on the 4th, and staying until May 13th. A poor autumn, in common with many other areas. One on September 17th preceded reasonable numbers in the last week of September, with a max. of 55 on September 24th. One or two birds remained with a flock of Greylag Geese from mid-October until the end

TEAL *Anas crecca*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Recorded in all months of the year except February. Spring passage, of up to three birds, was concentrated in late April/early May. The main autumn passage lasted from mid-August to the end of October, most counts of 15 or less, but 31 on September 4th, and 25 on September 9th.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Recorded in all months of the year. There was a well-defined autumn passage, peaking in late October with a max. count of 38 on October 22nd.

There were three breeding attempts; two produced ducklings whilst the third suffered predation from corvids.

PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Very scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a pair were seen on May 12th, with the male remaining until May 15th. In autumn, five were seen on September 8th, two remaining to the 9th and one to the 10th. Otherwise, there were singles on September 24th and October 1st, with three on September 30th.

SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

A female spent a couple of hours on the tiny roadside pond at Field on July 27th. In autumn, three were seen in flight over Hesti Geo on September 23rd, and a single was reported the following day, September 24th.

POCHARD *Aythya ferina*

Vagrant, mostly autumn

One of the best years ever began with a drake at Field pond, March 2nd-3rd. In May, a female spent four days on Golden Water, in the company of two Tufted Ducks, May 11th-14th. Then in December, a male seen flying down the island on the 4th was present in South Harbour the following day. Presumably the same bird was seen again on December 11th, when it was trapped and ringed. The first records since 1990.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce but regular spring migrant, irregular in autumn

In spring, two from May 9th to May 15th, then two to four between June 2nd and June 7th. Single birds recorded on three dates in July may refer to the same individual, whilst a first-winter male, present from September 24th-28th was picked up dead on the last date.

SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

A female was present from September 29th to October 4th, first in South Harbour, then in North Haven. A flock of five, including a male, flew south past South Light on November 12th.

EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

Resident, breeds

Present throughout the year. In late April, 405 were counted during a survey of the whole coastline. In autumn, the max. count was 465 on September 29th, another year when the maximum count was only about half the numbers that reported at the end of the 1980's.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Regular autumn migrant, very scarce in spring

Early in the year, there were singles on two dates in February and one in March, then in spring one bird present from April 8th - May 5th. In autumn, following one from

September 29th to October 4th, the main passage fell between October 15th and November 14th, with a clear peak in late October (max. count of 34 on October 20th). In mid-December, three to four birds were recorded on five dates.

COMMON SCOTER *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce spring, autumn and winter migrant

Two on April 16th were the only spring record. In autumn, regular sightings between October 14th and November 2nd probably relate to the same female, although in addition a male was reported on October 20th. Seawatching produced other November records, one to three off South Light, November 12th-14th and a group of six in Swarts Geo, November 30th. A female was seen off Bunness, December 24th-26th.

VELVET SCOTER *Melanitta fusca*

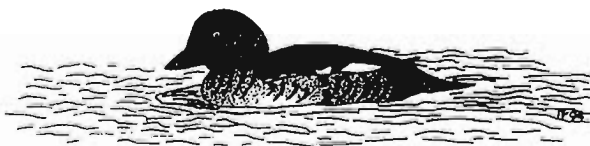
Irregular autumn migrant

Two off South Light on September 19th, with another south off the Rippack on October 11th.

GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Scarce but regular autumn migrant, irregular in spring

Spring records comprised one on March 11th and a female from May 4th-6th. An excellent autumn passage began on October 16th and resulted in up to five birds overwintering. Most were recorded during the third week of October, with a peak of nine on October 21st. However, on November 12th, an exceptional count of 21, the highest ever on Fair Isle, was composed mainly of birds moving south off South Light. Late in the year, one to five birds were seen most days during late November and December.



Goldeneye

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Regular autumn migrant, more scarce in spring

In spring, there was a scatter of records from March 25th to June 7th, probably involving no more than eight individuals. Following a female on July 23rd, there were intermittent autumn records of one to three between September 11th and November 11th.

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Rare migrant in winter, spring and late autumn

Two on March 2nd, remaining to the 3rd. One flew over Ward Hill on October 21st and three, possibly four, were seen off South Light on November 12th.

WHITE-TAILED EAGLE *Haliaeetus albicilla*

Vagrant

A first-year bird was seen heading north over the north cliffs at about 09.00 on April 27th. Bearing a red patagial tag, this identified it as one of the juveniles released in the Highland region in 1993. What was presumably the same bird had been seen the previous day on North Ronaldsay, and about an hour after leaving Fair Isle, was seen heading north over Sumburgh Head. A wing-tagged individual from the Rum scheme was seen on Fair Isle in 1984, and the three other records in the last 25 years, all in the 1980's, may also relate to individuals released on Rum.

MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Vagrant

The best year ever, with three records. A first-summer male was trapped in the Gully on April 24th, the first-ever full-grown Marsh Harrier to be ringed in the U.K. It remained on the island until April 30th. A different immature male was present on May 13th-14th, whilst a female was seen on May 19th.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

A ringtail, probably a female, was present from October 20th-25th; what may have been a second individual was seen on October 31st

SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage stretched between April 19th and June 28th, concentrated in late May with an unprecedented six on May 27th, the highest-ever count on Fair Isle. Autumn records spanned August 20th to November 11th, mostly in late October with four individuals recorded on two dates in the third week. The record number of birds ringed this year, 26 (compared to previous best of 14), indicates that there was a rapid turnover of birds.



Sparrowhawk

BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Very rare spring and autumn migrant

A single bird arrived on October 20th and stayed until November 11th. A second individual arrived on December 11th, and remained on the island until spring 1995.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Very rare spring and autumn migrant

An excellent spring, with four records. Following the first, heading south-west on May 6th, singles flew north on May 10th, May 16th and May 26th.

KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A poor spring, sightings from April 30th to June 9th probably involved just four birds. After one on July 30th and singles on six dates in August, September saw almost daily sightings of one or two birds. Singles were then recorded intermittently through October and November, the last on November 26th, with a max. of three on November 2nd.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring records from March 20th to May 21st with singles on nine dates. In autumn, one to three were recorded most days between September 12th and November 3rd, with five on October 16th and six on October 29th, including a group of three passing south over the island. A late male was seen on December 5th.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

In spring, one from March 21st-28th, then records of single birds on two dates in mid-May with one on June 3rd. A juvenile was seen on July 29th, then in autumn there were virtually daily records of one or two birds from August 22nd to October 11th. In late autumn, singles occurred on seven dates between late October and early December.

QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Rare spring and summer visitor; has bred

An astonishing record on May 13th, when a bird was discovered in the Axell trap below the observatory garages. Consequently this species was ringed at the observatory for the second year in succession; this year's individual was probably a first-summer female. The only other record was an elusive bird moving between Field and Taing during June 1st-5th.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Two mid-winter sightings, in late January and early February, probably relate to the same individual. In spring, there were singles on eight dates between March 10th and April 17th, with two birds on the last date: probably five individuals in total. A female trapped on June 21st was only the fourth midsummer record for the Isle. In autumn, one or two birds were recorded from October 1st to November 11th, concentrated in late October with a max. count of three on October 27th.

CORNCRAKE *Crex crex*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

One in the Taing/Da Water area on August 24th-25th was extremely elusive. A second was seen at Pund on September 10th.

MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

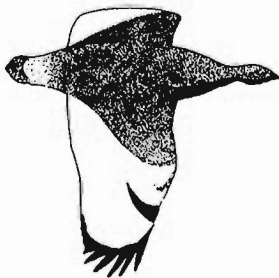
In April, one from 12th-28th with a second bird present from 21st-24th. To complete an excellent spring, a bird was seen on May 31st and what was presumed to be a fourth bird seen on June 13th and 17th. One autumn record, a single present from November 8th-10th.

LITTLE BUSTARD *Tetrix tetrix*

Vagrant

One found at Setter during the early afternoon of November 5th eventually settled in Johnny Arcus' Park, allowing excellent views. It was seen briefly the following day during appalling weather conditions, near Field and then at Upper Stoneybreck. The first record for Fair Isle and Shetland, the fifth for Scotland.

Accepted by BBRC.



Little Bustard

OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Summer visitor, breeds. Also passage migrant, spring and autumn

After the first record on February 12th, numbers increased steadily from mid-March with most day-totals of 50-100. Flocks of migrants or non-breeders peaked in May and June with monthly maxima of 124 on May 14th and 128 on June 19th.

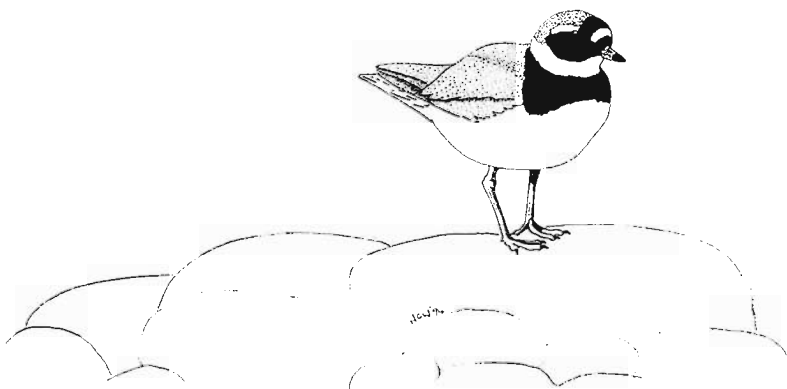
An estimated 60 pairs bred, towards the lower end of the range recorded during the past 15 years.

In autumn, numbers peaked in early August with 190 on the 5th. Recorded throughout September in dwindling numbers with the last on October 3rd.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Summer visitor, small numbers breed. Also regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Sightings on three dates in February preceeded a scarcely perceptible spring passage, with no notable counts. Twelve pairs bred, about average for the last ten years. Numbers of autumn migrants peaked in mid-September, with 35-40 during September 9th-11th. Last record October 25th.



Ringed Plover

DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Very rare spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a male on Ward Hill on May 7th. In autumn, an incredibly confiding juvenile remained at Upper Station from September 11th-13th.

EURASIAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; has bred

Recorded on three dates in February and two dates in early March, main spring passage

began in late March, peaking in late April/early May with 98 on April 30th. There were odd mid-summer records but unfortunately no real signs of breeding. Double figure counts were recorded virtually daily through August-October, with a max. of 88 on September 30th. One to four were seen intermittently during November and December.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant

A short but distinct autumn passage with daily records of between one and five from September 9th-24th.

LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Summer visitor, small numbers breed. Also regular spring and autumn migrant, occasional in winter.

Twelve pairs bred, continuing the high population levels of the last three seasons.

Recorded in all months of the year. Peak movements were in March (three dates with over 100 recorded, max. 110 on March 28th). In autumn, 51 on August 7th was the best count, with only two subsequent counts over 40.

KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

A single on February 2nd and two on June 5th were the only records in the first half of the year. Autumn passage was protracted, from July 20th to November 13th, with most in late August/early September, although the max. day count was five on July 28th.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

One from June 3rd-6th was the sole spring record. Like Knot, a lengthy autumn passage, with records stretching from July 20th to November 8th. Most occurred in late July and August with a max. of ten on July 27th.

RED-NECKED STINT *Calidris ruficollis*

Vagrant

A juvenile male, found freshly dead at South Harbour on August 31st, was identified when handed in at the observatory on September 1st. This is the third record for Britain, the first in Scotland and the first juvenile ever to be recorded in Europe. The skin is now preserved in the Royal Museum of Scotland. See Birding World Vol. 7 (9) 355-358.

Accepted by BBRC.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Scarce autumn migrant

Seven juveniles arrived on September 10th, gradually dwindling to one by the 13th, the last record.

CURLEW SANDPIPER *Calidris ferruginea*

Very scarce autumn migrant

One record, a juvenile present from September 9th-14th.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; also overwinters

Recorded in all months of the year, although absent for most of June and the first half of July. Spring passage peaked in early May with 52 on the 8th. More scarce in autumn, maxima being 24 on October 19th and 26 on November 10th; single figure counts were the norm.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Regular spring and autumn migrant. Has bred

One to three were recorded sporadically throughout January and February. The main spring passage was in May, with 20 on May 4th the highest count. In autumn, there were more-or-less daily records from mid-July to late October, September being the month of heaviest passage with a max. of 60 on the 10th. Singles were recorded on four dates during November and early December.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

The majority were recorded in late August and September, extreme dates being August 15th and September 24th. 59 on September 9th was an exceptional count, one short of the Fair Isle record (September 1973). A late bird was seen on October 11th.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

In the early part of the year, there were two reports in January and one in February, possibly relating to the same individual. No spring records, but in autumn seen virtually daily from September 9th to the end of October. Mostly single figure counts, and 15 on September 30th was the maximum. At the end of the year there were sightings on two dates in both November and December.

SNIPE *Gallinago gallinago*

Small numbers breed. Also regular spring and autumn migrant, some overwinter

Present throughout the year. A notoriously difficult species to census on migration, with numbers logged almost certainly being underestimates. The max. spring count was 40 on April 19th, and the peak in autumn was 62 on September 9th.

Twenty one drumming males were counted, which is towards the upper end of the range recorded breeding on the island.

WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Regular spring and late autumn migrant, occasionally winters

Another difficult species to gauge numbers accurately. There were sightings on two dates in January and February, then occasionally throughout March and April. Singles were seen on two dates in May, also one in June and one in July. Although one or two were seen in late September, there was a clearly-defined autumn passage in late October/early November, with 60+ on October 31st the max. count.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

Two were reported on May 9th, with a single on September 4th the only other record.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

In spring, singles were reported on four dates between April 27th and June 1st. In autumn, two distinct migration periods were evident: from July 6th-22nd, with singles on four dates and two on the 8th; then almost daily records of one or two birds from September 9th-20th.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Following the first of the year on April 15th, spring passage peaked in late April/early May with 15 on April 30th and May 6th. There were intermittent records throughout the summer months. Autumn passage was heaviest in late July/early August with 21 on July 28th the highest count. The last record was on September 19th.

CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Small numbers breed. Also regular spring and autumn migrant, occasionally overwinters

Recorded in all months of the year, with a spring peak of 21 on May 1st, and the highest autumn count of 26 on August 16th.

Five pairs bred, another breeding wader for which 1994 was a good year.

REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant. Rare breeder, and overwinters most years

Up to 35 were present in January-February, but spring passage was poor, the max. count only 30, on March 25th.

For the second year in succession, a pair bred, successfully fledging two chicks.

In autumn, good numbers were present from July to October, peaking at 90 on August 24th, with up to 70 remaining during November-December.

GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Singles reported on six dates in spring, between April 19th and May 22nd, probably relate to three or four individuals. In autumn, singles were recorded on ten dates between August 5th and September 30th, with two on August 11th.

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

A good spring passage, concentrated in May, after a single on April 25th; three were recorded on May 14th-15th. Autumn passage lasted from July 24th to September 13th, mostly one or two birds, but three on September 10th and four on August 24th-25th.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce migrant, spring and autumn

In spring, two on May 12th-14th, one remaining to the 15th. Autumn records fell between August 24th and September 17th, all singles apart from two on August 29th, and involving about six individuals.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleuca*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Following a single on April 30th, recorded on most days in May with the last on June 2nd. The max. count was six on May 20th. In autumn, recorded sporadically through August and early September, mostly one or two birds, although there were six on September 9th. Late singles were reported on September 23rd and October 7th.

TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; small numbers throughout the year

Present throughout the year, with three figure counts in all months except June. Five counts in excess of 200 were logged: all during the winter months except 225 on April 29th, with 320 on December 12th the highest count of the year.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Summer visitor, breeds. Passage migrant in small numbers

The first record was on April 15th, and sightings were daily from then on. In spring, seawatching from Bunness revealed small numbers passing north, well out to sea, mostly in late May.

93 territories were occupied in 1994, a decrease of 14% from 1993. This reflects continuing decline of this species during the 1990's (except for 1992) but is the largest decrease since 1988. Breeding success was moderate, with c. 65 chicks fledged.

Seawatching produced the last records, with singles on October 1st and 3rd.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

Rare migrant, spring, summer and autumn

One record: an adult north off Bunness on June 14th.

GREAT SKUA *Stercorarius skua*

Summer visitor, breeds. Passage migrant, small numbers

Recorded daily from March 28th until the end of October. As with Arctic Skuas, small numbers were recorded passing north off the island in spring, mostly in late May. Seawatching also produced two late records, off South Light on November 9th and 12th.

In contrast to the Arctic Skua population, Great Skuas continue to thrive on Fair Isle. 101 territories were occupied, stable from 1993, although slightly lower than the peak year of 1992. Breeding productivity reached new levels, with possibly as many as 150 chicks fledging. The continued success of Great Skuas may be at the expense of Arctic Skuas, whose breeding areas were squeezed yet further in 1994 due to expansion of Bonxies.

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were occasional records from January to early March, then most days from late March to late October. Spring passage was heaviest in late April/early May (with 33 on April 29th) and again in mid-June (with 35 on June 13th). In autumn, the largest numbers were in late July/early August: 64 on July 25th and 63 on August 5th, with just two other counts over 50. Sporadic records in November/December.

COMMON GULL *Larus canus*

Summer visitor, small numbers breed. Also, regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage peaked during April-May, with 70 on May 6th the best count and three other counts over 50 during that period.

Seven pairs nested and at least four fledged young were seen; population size and breeding performance were therefore on a par with recent years.

In autumn, movements were greatest between July 24th and August 26th: 550 on July 30th, 455 on August 16th and 340 on August 24th being the highest counts. In September, 105 on the 10th was the only three-figure count. Recorded intermittently throughout the winter months.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor, breeds. Also passage migrant, spring and autumn

First record was April 3rd and the max. spring count was 28 on April 30th. No large numbers were seen in autumn and the last record was on October 21st.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

Resident, breeds. Also hard-weather migrant, autumn and winter

No information on breeding success or population levels was obtained. Hard weather movements were recorded several times during the winter months, but counts were rarely in excess of 500.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Scarce and irregular in winter and spring

There were two spring records: a first- or second-winter on March 25th and a first-summer April 26th-28th, presumed the same on May 3rd. In December, a second-winter was seen in South Harbour on December 6th.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Scarce but regular migrant, spring, late autumn and winter

One record in spring, at Easter Lothar on May 29th. In autumn, single adults were recorded on September 27th and 30th, presumably the same bird. A first-winter was reported on October 3rd, then three birds during October 20th-21st: an adult, a first-winter and a first- or second-winter. A first-winter was seen on November 13th and 15th, and another/the same on November 30th and December 23rd.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

Resident, breeds. Hard-weather movements observed in autumn and winter

No information on population trends or breeding success, although clearly the population nesting on Sheep Rock continues to thrive: on June 30th, 185 chicks were ringed in less than two hours by a team of four ringers.

Hard weather movements were recorded primarily in October, with 850 on October 20th and c.1000 on 30th.

KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Summer visitor, breeds. Autumn passage migrant

1994 saw continuing decline of the breeding population; at ten monitored plots, the decrease in Apparently Occupied Nests since 1987 has been 35%. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the species suffers quite badly from interspecific competition with Fulmars for nest sites and from predation (especially of chicks) by Great Skuas. Despite the population decline, productivity was high in 1994, at 1.25 chicks fledged per pair, the second-highest ever recorded on Fair Isle and clearly reflecting good sandeel availability. Adult survival from 1993 at the new colour-ringing site at Goorn was also good, estimated at 78.7% (n=47).

Seawatching revealed a light northerly passage in the latter half of May; southward movements in autumn peaked in early October.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Irregular migrant, spring, summer and autumn

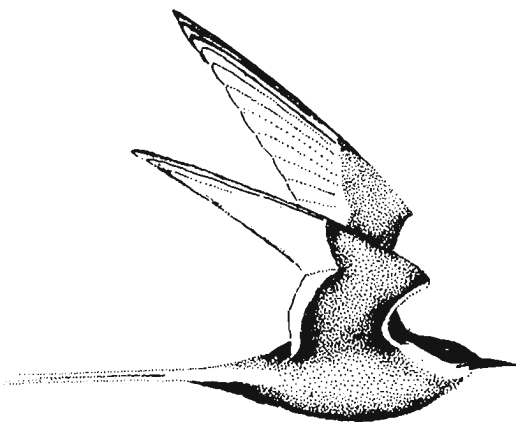
In spring, there were three on May 26th and two on June 2nd. Also one late summer record, a single on July 27th.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor, small numbers breed

Early and late dates were May 2nd and August 22nd

Only three pairs were located in 1994, two on Buness, one at South Light; the small population is clearly at risk of extinction. Despite this, productivity was high, with a minimum of seven chicks fledged.



Common Tern

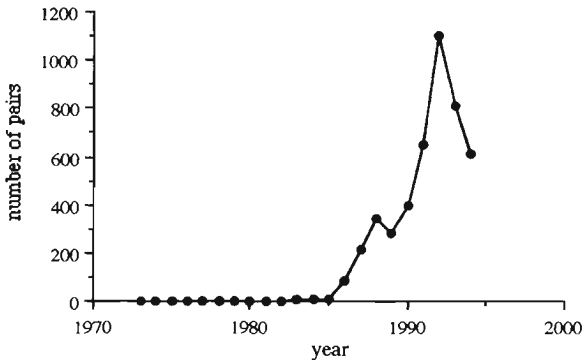
ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor, breeds

Early and late dates were May 4th and September 29th.

Fair Isle's Arctic Terns continue their roller-coaster population fluctuations (see graph, below). Precise counts of this species are always difficult to obtain, and this was especially so in 1994. For some undetermined reason, birds gradually abandoned the Eas Brecks colony (where in the past, up to half the population has nested) and moved to the main colony at Tarryfield. The final estimate was 615 Apparently Incubating Adults, over 90% at Tarryfield with a few pairs nesting on Eas Brecks, at South Light and on Bunness. The breeding season was especially protracted in 1994, with many early clutches or broods being lost as a result of cold, wet weather in June. However, later chicks fared better and re-lays were probably successful. At least 150 chicks were estimated to have fledged.

Fluctuations in the Arctic Tern population on Fair Isle



GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Summer visitor, breeds. Also autumn passage migrant

The whole island population of Guillemots was censused in 1994. 37,600 attendant adults were counted, an increase of 16.2% on the previous count in 1989. The increase was especially marked along the east side of the island, especially around Sheep Rock and in Heswalls. In contrast the west-side colonies seem to have remained at similar population levels to those recorded in 1989. This may reflect availability of nesting sites, local climatic conditions (especially degree of shelter) and/or local food distribution. Guillemots enjoyed a good breeding season, with 0.74 chicks fledged per Apparently Incubating Adult at monitored plots. A total of 271 food items were observed during feeding watches; all items identified (99%) were sandeels.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Summer visitor, breeds

Razorbills had a moderately successful year in 1994, fledging 0.64 chicks per egg laid at the Easter Lothar monitoring site.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cephus grylle*

Resident, breeds. Dispersive

Although censused in 1993, the Black Guillemot population was censused again in 1994 to determine whether the large decline recorded in 1993 was real or apparent, and to see whether the effects of the *Braer* oil spill incident had a significant impact on the Fair Isle population. Counts took place between April 16th-23rd. The maximum count of individuals in breeding plumage was 304, 15.6% higher than the 1993 figure but 11.9% down on that of 1989. However, counts of the east coast monitoring plot were comparable with 1991 figures and from this it can be concluded that there has been no lasting impact of the *Braer* on Fair Isle's Tysties. In contrast to the encouraging population size figures, breeding success was poor, with only 0.58 chicks fledged per nest. Of necessity, however, all monitored sites in 1994 were accessible by foot and such sites may be biased towards high levels of predation, especially by feral cats.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Regular winter visitor

No records in the early part of the year, but sightings on three dates in October, then regularly during November and early December, the max. being 6 on November 25th and December 1st.

PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Summer visitor, breeds

The first record of birds ashore this year was on April 1st. Adult survival from 1993 was slightly below average, calculated at 73.7% from the colour-marked population at Roskilie. However, Puffins experienced an excellent breeding season, fledging 0.83 chicks per pair at monitored burrows on Greenholm and at Easter Lothar. Diet studies revealed that almost 94% of items delivered to chicks were sandeels, and that mean load weights were 9.8g, the second highest ever recorded on Fair Isle.

ROCK DOVE *Columba livia*

Resident, breeds. Also spring and autumn migrant

There were only three counts of more than 50 birds: 55 on April 6th, 51 on June 18th and 53 on October 22nd.

STOCK DOVE *Columba oenas*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

One at Quoy on January 12th was the first true midwinter record for Fair Isle. In spring, one at Upper Stoneybreck on May 11th was the only record. In autumn, three were seen: one on October 9th, one from October 19th-23rd and one from October 30th-November 2nd.

WOODPIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

As for Stock Dove, there was a midwinter record, with one from January 5th-12th. In spring, there were virtually daily records from March 28th to May 26th, the maximum being 17 on April 25th. Recorded intermittently in June, and on three dates in July. Autumn passage was light compared to the spring, stretching from September 18th to November 14th, mostly single birds involved, with a max. of six on October 23rd.

COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Regular spring migrant, rare in autumn

The spring passage brought regular records from April 21st to June 27th. Most days, just one or two birds were involved, but there were nine on June 18th. Later on, one to four were seen between July 7th-30th.

TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

Scarce but regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, one to four were recorded between May 10th and June 19th. One was present from July 7th-10th, whilst there were just two records in the autumn: one September 10th-11th and one September 23rd-25th.

CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

Singles were recorded intermittently in spring between May 8th and June 13th. In autumn, just two records, both juveniles: one August 1st-8th and one August 23rd.

LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Single records in January and February and then sightings on three dates late April/early May, possibly relating to just two birds. In autumn, passage lasted from October 20th to November 14th, with one to three seen most days. Eight were ringed during the autumn, suggesting a regular turnover of individuals.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A very poor showing, in both spring and autumn. There were just two spring records, one May 5th-6th and one May 31st, presumed the same on June 2nd. In autumn, one on August 31st, five sightings between September 20th and 28th that may relate to just one individual, and one on October 21st, possibly the same on October 24th.

SWIFT *Apus apus*

Regular migrant in spring, summer and autumn

Nine on May 12th were the first recorded and the highest count of the year. After that, one to seven recorded sporadically until September 10th.

WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Scarce but regular migrant, spring and autumn

In spring, one May 10th-14th and one May 20th. A good autumn passage stretched from August 17th to September 14th, with ten on September 11th the max. count, and five or more seen on three other dates.

GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER *Dendrocopos major*

Scarce and irruptive autumn migrant

A juvenile of the nominate European race *D. m. major* was discovered at Upper Stoneybreck on September 2nd and stayed to the 9th. It was trapped at Single Dyke on the September 5th. A second individual was reported on September 15th at South Reeva.

SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

In spring, an extremely mobile individual was discovered at Upper Stoneybreck on May 11th and subsequently visited most of the crofts on the island during its two-day stay. In autumn, one at Taft on September 18th remained until 24th, whilst a second individual, at North Shirva from October 11th-13th, also remained faithful to its chosen area.

SKYLARK *Alauda arvensis*

Summer visitor, breeds. Also regular spring and autumn migrant and small numbers overwinter

Present throughout the year. Spring passage peaked in late March/early April with a count of 720 on March 28th. The breeding population was censused by counting singing males, which revealed 75-80 pairs. In autumn, passage was heaviest in late September/early October, the highest count being 370 on October 2nd.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

In spring, there were occasional records of one to four individuals between April 25th and June 3rd. In midsummer, a single was present on July 15th-16th, and there were no autumn records.

SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds

Daily records between the earliest and latest dates, April 25th and October 3rd. In spring, good numbers were recorded in May and early June, 50 on June 2nd being the highest count. Autumn passage was comparatively poor, 13 on August 6th the best count.

At least two pairs bred: three fledged young were seen around Boini Mire in early August and then in late September, two fledglings were seen around the buildings below the observatory.

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn. Has bred

Almost daily records of 1-20 birds in spring, from May 4th to June 29th, with the highest numbers in early June. There were sporadic records in July, August and September, a max. count of nine and the last record on September 13th.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Scarce autumn migrant

In what was a bumper year for the species in Britain, Fair Isle too fared well. Following one from September 10th-12th, the main passage occurred in late September/early October. One to two were present between September 19th-26th, then one to four from September 29th to October 3rd (four on October 2nd). One lingered at Skerryholm from October 5th-11th, whilst a late bird was seen in Da Water October 13rd-25th, possibly until 30th. Judging the total number of individuals present is difficult, but it seems likely that a minimum of eight different birds were involved.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT *Anthus hodgsoni*

Extremely rare autumn migrant

Again reflecting the national trend, a poor year with just one record. One found at Klingers Geo on October 10th stayed until October 12th.

Accepted by BBRC.

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage lasted from April 24th to June 7th, mostly involving single figure counts, but with 20 logged daily from May 13th-15th. In autumn, recorded virtually daily from August 23rd to September 25th, in similar numbers to the spring, with a max. of 18 on September 9th. A late bird was reported on October 3rd.

PECHORA PIPIT *Anthus gustavi*

Vagrant, autumn

A quite remarkable year, with at least four, probably five records. Following one trapped in the plantation on September 15th*, there were three present the following day, September 16th: the trapped individual was seen by the Vaadal stream and new birds were found at Midway* (moving to Quoy on the 17th and remaining to 19th) and Springfield* (remaining to 18th). One was reported on September 25th†, but seen in flight only, then in October one frequented Field ditch from 2nd-9th*. The best year on record although the earlier status of this species on Fair Isle is unclear.

* Accepted by BBRC. † Under consideration by BBRC.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Summer visitor, breeds. Regular spring and autumn migrant

Daily records from March 21st until mid-November. Spring passage peaked in early April, with 125 on 6th the highest number logged.

The breeding population was estimated at 30-40 pairs.

In autumn, numbers were much greater than in spring, with counts of 200+ on 28 dates between late August and early October: 350 on September 13th was the highest count. There were regular sightings of one to three individuals during November-December, possibly overwintering.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Resident, breeds. Also spring and autumn migrant

The max. autumn count was 220 on September 7th.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, one to four were recorded intermittently between April 24th and June 7th. Of those that were identified to race, there was a roughly even split between *M. f. thunbergi*, *M. f. flava* and *M. f. flavissima*. In autumn, one to six were recorded, again intermittently, between August 20th and September 25th. A late bird on October 10th-15th

led observers something of a dance before it was finally pinned down feeding with cattle at Taing. It proved to be one of the eastern races of *M. flava*, but showed many characters associated with Citrine Wagtail.

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola*

Vagrant, autumn

One record. A bird discovered just before dusk on September 1st, attempting to roost in the Springfield crop, was eventually relocated the following day at Golden Water. What was presumably the same bird was seen briefly near the Haa on September 4th.

Accepted by BBRC.

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant; has bred

Just one spring record, a long-staying bird from March 28th to April 11th. Autumn passage was similarly thin, one from October 10th-12th with another on October 22nd.

PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; occasional breeder

First recorded on March 19th, spring passage peaked at a lowly 15 on May 5th. For most of April and May, records comprised a mixture of *M. a. alba* and *M. a. yarelli*, the first *alba* recorded on April 1st.

At least two pairs bred successfully, at North Haven and at South Light, with fledged juveniles first recorded on June 22nd.

Autumn passage commenced in mid-August and peaked in late August. The max. count was 60 on August 22nd, with the last record on October 27th.

WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce and irruptive autumn migrant

Three records, involving four individuals. One on Ward Hill on October 28th, two flew north over North Light on October 29th and one was seen between Barkland and Taing on October 30th.

WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident, breeds. Also very occasional spring and autumn migrant

Census work, using a combination of singing males and sightings of fledged broods, revealed 32-37 pairs breeding. The population has now stabilised at 30-35 pairs, with little variation during the past eight years, recovering from the 1979-81 'crash', when as few as ten pairs bred.

There were no confirmed records of nominate *T. t. troglodytes* during the year.

DUNNOCK *Prunella modularis*

Regular spring and autumn migrant. Has bred

One mid-winter record, a single on January 13th. In spring, one to six recorded most days from April 2nd to May 12th. Autumn was extraordinarily poor, a single on August 21st then singles on nine dates in late October/early November, with two on November 10th.

ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

One was recorded intermittently through January and February, with two seen on February 16th. Spring passage commenced on March 25th and lasted until May 27th, mostly single figure counts, though with 25 on April 10th. Like Dunnock, this species was notable by its scarcity in autumn. After one on September 10th, the main migration lasted from late September to early November. Birds were recorded most days, but again single figure counts predominated, with a max. of only 25 on November 7th. Up to eight were seen in late November/December.

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarhynchos*

Vagrant, usually in spring

A bird discovered at Wirvie on May 18th had moved to Field the next day.

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a male on May 11th was the first. The following day, 13 were recorded, all males, and by May 13th, 15 were present, including 13 males. Then followed almost daily records until June 5th, with other arrivals of nine on May 23rd and seven on May 26th. In autumn, one or two on eight dates in the second half of September, with a late male staying from October 15th-26th

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochurus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

In spring, there were two distinct arrival periods: April 9th-22nd, when one to five were logged and May 8th-14th, when one to three were present. A single was also seen on May 26th. In autumn, one August 6th-7th, then in late October one to three on several dates between October 21st-30th. Finally, singles were recorded on three dates in November, with a late male on December 11th.

REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Early birds were seen on April 24th and May 3rd, preceeding the main spring passage

which saw daily records from May 10th to June 2nd. In midsummer, one was seen on July 18th. Autumn passage started with a single on August 26th, followed by records on most days until October 4th; ten on September 9th was the only count in double figures. Two late birds on October 24th rounded off the year.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, there were daily records from May 3rd-26th, with a max. of 12 on 12th-13th. Also, one or two present June 1st-3rd and a male June 13th-15th. Autumn passage commenced on August 17th and sightings were daily until the last recorded, on October 16th. Although single-figure counts were the norm, there were two notable influxes: 40 on August 24th increased to 50 by the 25th, then 35 on September 9th, increasing to 56 by the 10th.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce and irregular migrant, spring and autumn

In spring, one or two were recorded intermittently between April 1st-24th. One of the most interesting birds of the year was a stunning male of one of the eastern races, almost certainly a first-summer male *S. t. maura**, which was discovered near the Kirk on May 8th. It finally settled near Midway and remained until May 9th. A western-race female was present on May 11th and was the last spring sighting. In autumn, the sole record was of a male on November 7th-9th.

* Accepted by BBRC.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, breeds. Also regular spring and autumn migrant

Single males on March 28th and April 6th preceeded the main arrival from April 9th, with daily sightings from then until October 11th. Largest numbers in spring were 185 on April 25th and 150 on May 13th.

The breeding population was censused and was estimated to be 75 pairs, a figure in line with recent population surveys.

There were no major falls in the autumn, the two largest counts being 170 on August 22nd and 150 on August 24th. A single on October 24th was the last record.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Singles were recorded on six dates in April, the first on the 2nd, with two on April 25th. Birds were recorded on most days in May, with a maximum of seven on May 8th and the last on May 31st. In autumn, records fell between September 29th and November 8th, 25 on September 30th the only double-figure count.

BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

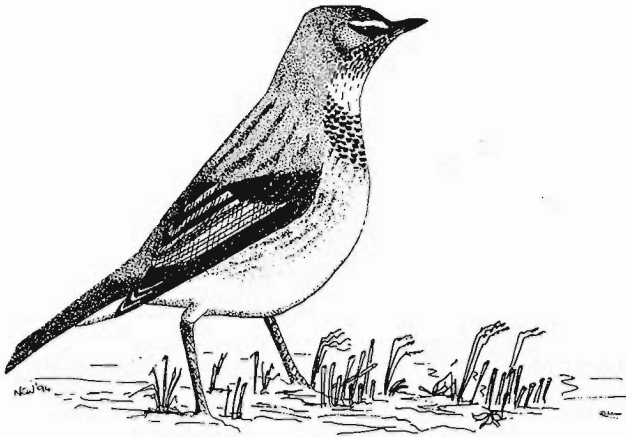
Regular spring and autumn migrant. Has bred, small numbers overwinter

Up to 20 were recorded in January and February, before the spring migration proper commenced in mid-March. Numbers peaked in mid-April, with a max. count of only 70 on 20th. Single figure numbers were recorded during May, and on five dates in June with the last on June 24th. Autumn records were intermittent during September, after the first on August 31st. Numbers peaked later on during two main influxes: in late October, with a max. of 585 on the 23rd, and again in early November with 350 on the 9th. 150 were still present in mid-November, and up to 55 were logged in December.

BLACK-THROATED THRUSH *Turdus ruficollis*

Vagrant

Following a possible sighting at dusk on October 15th, a first-winter male was discovered at Upper Stoneybreck the following day, October 16th. This bird was still



Black-throated Thrush

present on October 17th when, remarkably, a second first-winter male was discovered and watched simultaneously, at North Shirva. The fifth and sixth records for Fair Isle (previous records in December-January 1957-8, October 1978, October 1982 and October 1993).

Both accepted by BBRC.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Regular spring and autumn migrant, often overwinters

Records of up to 12 throughout January and February preceeded the main spring migration in April and early May. Numbers peaked in late April, with 125 on 26th and

225 the following day. A late spring migrant was seen on June 14th. Autumn passage began in August, the first on the 6th, but 60 on September 30th was the first count of more than 10. Like other common thrushes, there were marked arrivals in late October (max. of 1050 on 23rd) and early November (with 750 on 7th). 30-50 remained throughout November and December.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; has bred

There were isolated midwinter records of one or two birds during January and February. Spring passage lasted from the end of March until the end of May, with two June records, the last on the 19th. Numbers were poor, ten on April 10th the only count in double figures. In autumn, this was again very much the scarcest of the four common thrushes. Passage lasted from September 19th to mid November, with peaks of 80 on September 30th, 55 on October 2nd and 50 on October 10th. Singles were occasionally seen until the year's end.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant. Has bred and sometimes overwinters

Up to 15 were recorded January to March. Spring passage built up to a peak in mid-April with 105 on 18th-19th. Single figure numbers continued through May, and one bird summered. In autumn, the main influxes were 1500 on September 30th, 1500 October 10th-11th, 650 October 23rd, 1100 October 31st and 500 November 7th-9th. Up to 35 were still present in late November/December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Scarce and irregular spring and autumn migrant

One to three birds were recorded in February and early March, followed by singles on two dates in late March and the last on May 7th. Singles were reported on three dates in autumn: September 24th, October 10th and November 9th.

PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella certhiola*

Vagrant

A first-winter bird was found at North Leogh on the morning of September 21st; it was ringed after it flew into a small outhouse and became trapped. Unfortunately, the bird was picked up freshly dead on September 23rd. The ninth record for Fair Isle and the first since 1988.

Accepted by BBRC.

LANCEOLATED WARBLER *Locustella lanceolata*

Extremely rare autumn migrant

One discovered at Springfield on October 10th remained until the 13th. A second individual was found near Pund on October 15th.

Both accepted by BBRC.

GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Spring records fell between May 3rd and May 19th, with one to three birds recorded most days. In autumn, one to four were seen between August 23rd and September 2nd, with two September 9th-10th and one September 31st-October 1st.

AQUATIC WARBLER *Acrocephalus paludicola*

Vagrant, autumn

One in Meadow Burn on August 4th-5th; the first on Fair Isle since 1989.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

An early spring migrant was seen on April 24th, but the bulk of the spring passage was in May and early June, with a max. of ten on May 14th and the last on June 9th. There was one midsummer record, on July 1st. In autumn, passage was limited to September 9th-21st, when one to three were recorded on eight dates.

PADDYFIELD WARBLER *Acrocephalus agricola*

Vagrant

One was trapped in the Gully on September 22nd. The next day it appeared in the observatory garden, where it remained until September 26th. In addition, a less obliging individual was present between the Haa and Busta on September 24th-25th. The ninth and tenth records for the island.

Both accepted by BBRC.

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*

Rare spring migrant, has occurred in autumn

One was trapped in the Gully on May 30th. In autumn one was seen well in the ditch below Taing on September 25th.

REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Rare spring migrant, scarce in autumn

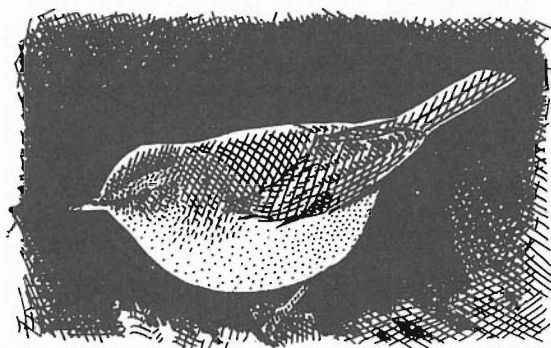
Just one spring record, a single at Setter on May 13th. In autumn, the species was much more widespread, and there were records most days from August 20th to October 2nd. 13 on August 25th was the maximum. A late bird was trapped on October 22nd.

BOOTED WARBLER *Hippolais caligata*

Vagrant

One was found in the bracken at Furse on the morning of September 11th, and performed well to many admirers for the rest of that day. The ninth record for Fair Isle.

Accepted by BBRC.



Booted Warbler

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*

Scarce spring migrant, irregular in autumn

In spring, two on May 23rd, one staying to 24th and presumably the same bird recorded again on the 26th. A better autumn followed, with four records: one August 23rd, one August 27th-29th, one trapped on September 1st and a late bird at Lower Station, September 30th.

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*

Extremely rare spring migrant

An excellent spring, with four records. A first-summer male, showing characters of the eastern race *S. c. albistriata*, was found at the base of Malcolm's Head on May 10th. It moved to the Haa that evening and stayed until the 12th. On May 12th, it was joined by a nominate-race male at Setter, which remained for just an hour or two, and a dull first-

summer male at Stackhoull. The latter stayed until May 20th. Finally a first-summer female was trapped in the Gully on May 30th.

All accepted by BBRC.

SARDINIAN WARBLER *Sylvia melanocephala*

Vagrant

A male was found at Shirva on June 26th and remained until the 28th, moving between Shirva and North Shirva. It may have been present from June 24th. Only the second record for the island, the first having been in May 1967.

Accepted by BBRC.



Sardinian Warbler

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

Regular autumn migrant

One or two birds were recorded from August 3rd-11th, preceeding the main migration period, which saw daily records between August 16th and September 26th. Up to five were recorded in a day (August 24th-25th). A late bird was trapped at the plantation on October 17th. A minimum of twenty individuals was involved.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A good spring for this species. Records fell between May 3rd and June 24th, the bulk seen in May, with 20 on 12th increasing to 30 the next day. In autumn, early and late dates were August 25th and October 22nd, with a maximum of nine on September 18th.

WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

Another *Sylvia* warbler to put in a good spring showing, with daily records in May after the first on May 4th. The largest count was 25 on May 15th. Two were seen on June 2nd, one on the 4th. In autumn, birds were logged between August 19th and October 3rd, with a max. count of five on several dates.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, daily records from May 9th to June 10th, eight on May 14th being the best count. A late bird was seen on June 25th. Numbers in autumn were much improved on the spring, with influxes of 50 on August 24th and 80 on September 9th increasing to 85 the next day. Sightings were daily from August 16th to September 25th, with records on three dates in October, the last on 11th.

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage was poor, intermittent records of one to five birds between April 9th and June 6th. In autumn, passage lasted from mid-August to mid-November, sightings being virtually daily in September and October with up to fifteen present. Odd stragglers were recorded until the end of November.

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*

Very rare autumn migrant

An excellent year, with four records. One was seen briefly in the Gully by two observers at dusk on September 18th. Two days later, September 20th, an adult bird was seen and subsequently trapped at Bulls Park. This bird moved to Barkland, Field and then Midway where it remained until the 22nd; it was found, killed by a cat, on September 23rd. Simultaneously, a third individual was present, at Furse on September 21st-22nd. Finally, a very late bird, easily the latest-ever on Fair Isle, was seen at the plantation on October 26th.

All accepted by BBRC.

PALLAS'S WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Vagrant, autumn

After a possible sighting at Wirvie on October 20th, what was presumably the same individual was seen late that afternoon on the cliffs at Wester Lothar. A rather disappointing autumn considering the unprecedented arrival in eastern Scotland in early November.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Scarce autumn migrant

In a good year for *Phylloscopus* warblers, this species was one of the highlights. There were two main arrivals: September 16th-30th, with records on most days and six on 21st-22nd, and then October 9th-19th, with a max. of nine on October 10th. A late bird was trapped on October 26th and stayed until the 29th. Approximately 25 individuals were involved, one of the best years on record.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A short spring passage, daily sightings from May 12th-15th, with five on the 13th. In autumn, one to two between August 18th-22nd, then one to four from September 1st-11th.

CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Following singles on March 28th and 30th, the main spring passage commenced on April 9th, and there were records most days until June 3rd, with a max. of 12 on May 12th. One individual summered in the south of the island. Autumn passage was very thin, records intermittent throughout September and October, the largest numbers at the end of October with five on October 27th. There were records on nine dates in November with the last on November 24th.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, recorded between April 18th and June 17th, with a peak count of 25 on May 13th. In autumn, there were records most days from August 4th until October 2nd, the main arrivals being 60 on August 24th, 45 on September 9th and 30 on September 20th. A late bird was seen on October 16th.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Two on March 27th were the first, but the main passage occurred in mid-April, with daily records and a max of ten on the 16th. Two on May 8th were the last of the spring. In autumn, one on August 30th was early, with most seen from mid-September to early November. Again, numbers were modest, with 18 on October 28th the highest count. A single on November 10th was the last record of the year.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

Spring counts ranged from one to seven individuals, between May 8th and June 10th. In autumn, one was seen on August 20th, whilst all other records were in September: sporadic records of one to nine birds with the last on the 29th.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

Very scarce autumn migrant, rare and irregular in spring

A first-summer bird at Houll brightened up a wet afternoon on May 26th. In autumn, one was at Quoy on October 1st-2nd.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, most were seen in May, with records from 6th-23rd peaking at 20 on May 13th. One or two were recorded on three dates in June. Autumn passage was more prolonged, from August 15th to October 10th, 20 on September 9th the highest count.

GREAT TIT *Parus major*

Vagrant

One of the best years ever, with four different birds seen. In spring, a first-year female arrived on April 10th and stayed around the observatory until April 25th. She was joined by a first-year male on April 16th, the male remaining until the 22nd. Then in autumn, a first-winter male on October 24th-27th was joined on the last date by a first-winter female.

GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

Vagrant, mostly spring

One record, a first-summer, probably female, on June 17th, first seen near Barkland, and later trapped in the Vaadal.

ISABELLINE SHRIKE *Lanius isabellinus*

Vagrant

An adult female, probably *L. i. phoenicuroides*, was trapped in the Gully on August 23rd. It remained until the following day. The fourth record for Fair Isle, following an adult male in May 1960, a first-winter in October 1979 and an adult male in October 1981.

Accepted by BBRC.

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A poor spring, with just two records: single males on June 2nd and June 5th. In contrast, the autumn was a good one with approximately fourteen individuals involved. A male from August 4th-7th preceeded the main passage, from August 23rd to September 13th, when there were almost daily records. An influx of five on August 24th, increasing to eight next day was the max. count.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

Just one record, one seen briefly at Wirvie on September 21st.

JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, two on March 2nd, then sporadic records from late March to early May, with the max. count of four recorded on three dates, and approximately 16 individuals involved in total. In autumn, there were two from November 7th-10th, with one lingering until 13th.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Scarce spring migrant, irregular in autumn

In spring, one on March 1st, with other records between March 29th and May 7th. Six on April 6th was the peak count. In autumn, one to three were recorded most days from November 7th-13th.

CARRION CROW *Corvus corone*

Resident, breeds (*C. c. cornix*); also spring and autumn passage migrant (*C. c. corone*)

Hooded Crows (*C. c. cornix*) were present throughout the year, with a max. spring count of 12 on April 27th certainly involving some migrants. Carrion Crows (*C. c. corone*) were recorded in large numbers in spring, an influx of 17 on April 27th increasing to 22 by 28th, preceeding an arrival of 49 on May 5th, the highest count ever recorded on Fair Isle. In contrast, autumn passage was virtually non-existent, with no more than three recorded on any one day.

RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Resident, breeds. Also, irregular migrant, spring and autumn

Present throughout the year.

STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident, breeds. Also regular spring and autumn migrant

The breeding population was approximately stable, with good recruitment following a successful breeding season in 1993. Hatching success, as usual, was good (92%) but high fledgling mortality was experienced, particularly of very small chicks. Dry weather early in the breeding season meant that ground invertebrate food, especially leatherjackets, was scarce; this was compounded by cold, wet weather during the fledgling period, to increase chick mortality. Pairs adjacent to damper areas, such as Gilsetter, therefore fared better than pairs in drier parts of the island. Of 71 nests that were studied, 252 eggs were laid and 134 chicks fledged, breeding success of 53%.

ROSE-COLOURED STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

Vagrant

A juvenile arrived on September 22nd, and stayed until November 3rd, favouring the area around the buildings below the observatory, and the cliffs between Mavers Geo and Goorn. It was trapped on October 2nd, when it was sexed as a female. The last record was in 1989.

Accepted by BBRC.

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Resident, breeds

Present throughout the year.

TREE SPARROW *Passer montanus*

Very scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

There were good numbers in spring: an influx of six on May 4th increased to seven on May 6th, with one or two remaining until the 14th. Three more were present from May 25th-28th. In autumn, one was seen on October 27th-30th.

CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A winter record on January 5th preceeded spring passage from March 10th to May 21st, with sightings most days but a maximum of only ten on April 14th. In autumn, one on September 4th and four on September 14th preceeded the main passage, from September 24th to November 14th. Recorded most days, but again numbers were desperately low, the max. of 15 on September 30th being one of only two double-figure counts. A late female was seen on December 15th.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, there were almost daily records from April 7th to June 1st, with the majority in April and two main influxes: 105 on April 19th and 145 on April 24th. In autumn, records stretched from September 16th to November 14th, with the bulk in October following an influx of c. 130 on September 30th, the highest count of the autumn.

GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Scarce migrant, spring and autumn

Spring passage was modest, with sightings from April 3rd to June 10th and a max. count of just four individuals. A male was seen on August 1st. Autumn, however, was one of the best on record for this species, following the trend towards greater numbers over the last decade. Records were daily from October 9th to November 14th, with an arrival of 36 on October 22nd increasing to a peak of 44 by October 24th. One or two were still present on the island until the year's end.

GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Very rare spring and autumn migrant

The fourth year in succession of multiple arrivals, suggesting that this may be another *Carduelis* finch whose status on Fair Isle is changing. In spring, sightings on four dates between May 4th and May 9th probably relate to two individuals. In autumn, one on October 26th.

SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Single males were seen on February 3rd and 14th. The first of the spring arrived on April 12th, and the peak count in early spring was 12 on April 22nd. Although recorded most days in May, numbers were low, with a maximum of just three. The latter half of June, however, saw a large arrival, with 52 on June 24th (the highest spring count on record for the island), with what were presumably remnants of this fall lingering through July and August. Autumn passage proper began in late September and records were virtually daily in October with a max. of 28 on October 14th. One on November 12th was the last of the year.

LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Regular spring migrant, irregular in autumn

In spring, passage lasted from April 5th to May 19th; most were in May following the peak count of 16 on April 30th. The species was very scarce in autumn, with two on October 4th and singles on October 13th and 16th.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Summer visitor, breeds. Small numbers overwinter

Present throughout the year. Twites appeared to have an excellent breeding season, with ten log counts of 300 or more in September and a peak of 460 on September 18th. 244 were ringed, the second-highest total at FIBO and almost all in autumn, again suggesting that population levels and breeding success were high.

REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were no spring records of Redpolls, and the first of the year was one on July 24th-28th. Autumn passage was similarly unremarkable. One on September 10th, was well ahead of the main period of records, from September 22nd-November 2nd. 28 on October 22nd was the peak day total, but there were only two other days when numbers exceeded ten. In November, there were two on the 11th and late singles on 14th and 25th.

CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Scarce and irruptive summer and autumn migrant

A male on June 22nd was the first of the year. In July, a family party (male, female and a juvenile) arrived on the 20th and stayed together for three days; the male was still present on July 25th. Singles were seen on two dates in late August, with the last record one from September 10th-11th.

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodaceus erythrinus*

Scarce but regular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, singles from May 10th-14th, then one to three from May 22nd to May 29th, one to two June 2nd-5th and finally one on June 22nd. Approximately eight individuals were involved, with just one adult male. It was another good autumn for this species, with records stretching from August 14th to October 24th; the max. count six on September 2nd and a total of approximately seventeen individuals involved.

BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

In line with other northern islands, 1994 was a record year, far removed from anything previously recorded. Sightings stretched from October 11th into December, with most in the last week of October and first week of November resulting in a peak of 77 individuals on November 1st (compared to the previous recorded best of 16 in October 1988!). A minimum of 100 individuals were involved, though possibly as many as 150 passed through, since ringing returns suggested a regular turnover. The ringing total of 56 compares with 41 ringed previously at FIBO (i.e. 1948-93). All individuals trapped

were of the nominate north Eurasian race, *P. p. pyrrhula*. The last one, a male, finally departed on December 5th.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Very rare spring migrant

A male on April 9th was unfortunately killed by a dog the following day. It bore a Norwegian ring, and proved to have been ringed on October 11th 1990 at Jabekk, Vest-Agder, Norway (see ringing report). This is only the second foreign-ringed Hwfinch to be recovered in the UK, and the first from Norway.

LAPLAND BUNTING *Calcarius lapponicus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Spring records were limited to just one, on May 6th. In autumn, the species was recorded more regularly, with one to six seen most days from September 2nd to October 27th, the majority in September.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; often overwinters

Up to 50 were recorded during January and February, and 70 on March 2nd was the highest count in the first part of the year. Small numbers were seen throughout April and early May with the last one a male on May 20th. A single male was seen on Ward Hill on July 13th. Autumn began in spectacular fashion with 100 on Ward Hill, September 11th-12th. There were further influxes of 63 September 18th, 48 October 26th and 51 October 31st. Present throughout the latter half of November and December, with a peak count of 40 on December 5th.

PINE BUNTING *Emberiza leucocephalos*

Vagrant

A stunning male, probably a first-winter, was discovered at the Haa early on November 7th. It was tracked across Skerryholm to Leogh, but not seen after that morning. The sixth record for the island.

Accepted by BBRC.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, one to two were seen intermittently from March 29th to May 5th. In what was an excellent autumn for this species, birds were seen most days from October 20th to November 11th, with a max. of 11 on October 23rd. Late singles were seen on November 14th and 25th.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*

Irregular spring and autumn migrant

In spring, there was a male on Ward Hill on May 4th and a female at Upper Stoneybreck on May 7th. In autumn, there were four records, involving five individuals: one September 4th-5th, two September 9th, one September 12th and one September 20th.

RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*

Very rare spring and autumn migrant

In spring, there were two records, both involving immaculate males: one at the Haa on May 15th, (moving to Quoy later in the day), and one ranging between Gilsetter and Setter, May 26th-28th. In autumn, a first-winter bird, probably a female, was trapped in the Vaadal on October 17th, and later seen between Kenaby and Springfield.

All accepted by BBRC.

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*

Scarce autumn migrant; vagrant in spring

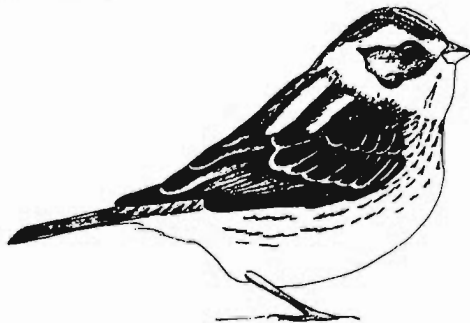
A first-year male was trapped in the Single Dyke on April 27th, and was relocated at Field on April 30th. A second spring bird was watched between Springfield and the Haa on May 7th. In autumn, two arrived on September 26th, one staying until 28th, the other until October 2nd, trapped in the Gully on September 27th. Finally, one from October 17th-29th, trapped in the Vaadal on 23rd.

YELLOW-BREASTED BUNTING *Emberiza aureola*

Very rare autumn migrant

Two autumn records, both of female/immature birds: at Setter on September 9th and between Taft and Quoy on September 18th. The first records since 1992.

Both accepted by BBRC.



Yellow-breasted Bunting

REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A male was reported on January 31st. The main spring passage lasted from April 8th until June 7th, the bulk in late April and May with one to seven birds recorded most days. Autumn records fell between September 20th and November 10th, with 14 on October 23rd the best count.

CORN BUNTING *Miliaria calandra*

Vagrant; formerly bred

One near Quoy on the evening of May 13th, was only the second record since the 1970's (with one in May 1985).

Ringling Report 1994

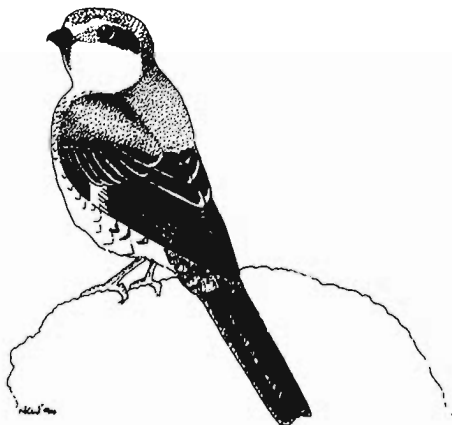
Roger Riddington, Nik Ward & Guy Thompson

A total of 7280 birds were ringed in 1994. Good seabird breeding success and another huge effort at tape-luring petrels ensured that the overall total was respectable, indeed one of the higher totals of the past ten years. The table of the 'top ten' species ringed this year has a familiar look to it, with seabirds dominating.

Table 1. The ten most commonly ringed species, with totals, on Fair Isle in 1994; 1993 totals in parentheses.

Storm Petrel	1851	(988)
Guillemot	722	(833)
Shag	468	(265)
Arctic Tern	458	(757)
Blackbird	371	(405)
Razorbill	320	(396)
Starling	279	(295)
Twite	244	(98)
Puffin	235	(102)
Great Black-backed Gull	185	(109)

A total of 104 species was ringed in 1994, with one new species, Marsh Harrier, added to the observatory list. For those who appreciate statistics, record totals were achieved for Gannet, Sparrowhawk, Great Skua and Bullfinch; equal best-ever totals for Yellow-browed Warbler, Great Tit and Little Bunting and second highest totals ever for Storm Petrel, Leach's Petrel, Great Black-backed Gull and Twite. Rarely-ringed species included Pochard (3rd), Quail (7th), Pechora Pipit (9th), Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler (7th), Paddyfield Warbler (6th), Golden Oriole (8th), Isabelline Shrike (2nd) and Rose-coloured Starling (3rd).



Isabelline Shrike

The traps wintered reasonably well, with major work required only on the Plantation and Hjon Dyke traps. The state of the Plantation is now a serious cause for concern, since the trees are completely outgrowing the existing trap. Furthermore, the ill-health of the Sitkas at the heart of the plantation means that many birds simply use the new growth near/above the roof of the trap and never enter the catching area. Drastic action will probably be required in the very near future if the viability of the Plantation is to be maintained.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Little Grebe	—	—	—	10	—	—
Great Crested Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Red-necked Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Slavonian Grebe	—	—	—	3	—	—
Fulmar	16	150	166	15312	5	140
Storm Petrel	1851	—	1851	20390	181	765
Leach's Petrel	6	—	6	40	1	1
Gannet	5	31	36	249	1	5
Cormorant	—	—	—	7	—	—
Shag	25	443	468	19267	23	498
Grey Heron	—	—	—	20	—	—
Whooper Swan	—	—	—	33	—	6
Bean Goose	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pink-footed Goose	—	—	—	11	—	1
White-fronted Goose	—	—	—	3	—	1
Greylag Goose	—	—	—	20	—	7
Barnacle Goose	—	—	—	3	—	—
Shelduck	—	—	—	4	—	—
Wigeon	1	—	1	16	—	1
Teal	1	—	1	45	—	2
Mallard	—	—	—	12	—	1
Pintail	—	—	—	1	—	1
Shoveler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pochard	1	—	1	3	—	—
Ring-necked Duck	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tufted Duck	—	—	—	15	—	15
Scaup	—	—	—	4	—	—
Eider	1	—	1	138	1	1
Long-tailed Duck	—	—	—	15	—	1
Velvet Scoter	—	—	—	2	—	—
Goldeneye	—	—	—	17	—	1
Red-breasted Merganser	—	—	—	3	—	—
Goosander	—	—	—	3	—	1
Marsh Harrier	1	—	1	1	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Hen Harrier	—	—	—	2	—	—
Goshawk	—	—	—	1	—	—
Sparrowhawk	26	—	26	279	—	18
Red-footed Falcon	—	—	—	1	—	—
Kestrel	—	—	—	45	—	8
Merlin	1	—	1	175	—	11
Peregrine	—	—	—	6	—	1
Quail	1	—	1	7	—	—
Water Rail	4	—	4	275	—	3
Spotted Crake	—	—	—	17	—	—
Little Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Baillon's Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Corncrake	—	—	—	38	—	2
Moorhen	—	—	—	90	—	3
Coot	—	—	—	14	—	1
Great Bustard	—	—	—	1	—	—
Oystercatcher	—	37	37	1336	2	65
Little Ringed Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ringed Plover	—	3	3	548	—	6
Dotterel	—	—	—	4	—	—
Eurasian Golden Plover	—	—	—	20	—	—
Grey Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Lapwing	—	9	9	295	—	6
Knot	—	—	—	89	—	2
Sanderling	—	—	—	90	—	—
Western Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Little Stint	—	—	—	73	—	—
Temminck's Stint	—	—	—	2	—	—
White-rumped Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Baird's Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pectoral Sandpiper	—	—	—	5	—	—
Curlew Sandpiper	—	—	—	5	—	—
Purple Sandpiper	—	—	—	151	—	1
Dunlin	1	—	1	495	—	7
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ruff	—	—	—	33	—	1
Jack Snipe	—	—	—	122	—	3
Snipe	5	—	5	366	—	4
Great Snipe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Woodcock	6	—	6	356	1	19
Black-tailed Godwit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Bar-tailed Godwit	—	—	—	9	—	2

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Whimbrel	—	—	—	15	—	—
Curlew	—	3	3	113	—	5
Spotted Redshank	—	—	—	3	—	—
Redshank	1	—	1	245	—	2
Greenshank	—	—	—	9	—	—
Green Sandpiper	3	—	3	55	—	1
Wood Sandpiper	—	—	—	17	—	—
Common Sandpiper	1	—	1	48	—	1
Turnstone	—	—	—	72	—	—
Red-necked Phalarope	—	—	—	6	—	—
Grey Phalarope	—	—	—	3	—	—
Pomarine Skua	—	—	—	1	—	—
Arctic Skua	2	88	90	3449	2	65
Great Skua	—	151	151	1460	2	25
Black-headed Gull	—	—	—	45	—	1
Common Gull	—	3	3	181	—	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	—	17	17	1353	—	30
Herring Gull	—	39	39	4027	2	90
Iceland Gull	—	—	—	1	—	—
Glaucous Gull	—	—	—	35	—	1
Great Black-backed Gull	—	185	185	2426	6	91
Kittiwake	19	116	135	6072	—	31
Common Tern	—	7	7	463	—	3
Arctic Tern	—	458	458	4398	1	17
Guillemot	65	657	722	22981	45	773
Razorbill	50	270	320	6573	6	171
Black Guillemot	1	8	9	1531	1	19
Little Auk	—	—	—	9	—	—
Puffin	143	92	235	11434	—	29
Rock Dove	—	—	—	25	—	—
Woodpigeon	1	—	1	56	—	2
Collared Dove	6	—	6	228	—	3
Turtle Dove	2	—	2	69	—	2
Cuckoo	2	—	2	99	—	1
Snowy Owl	—	—	—	1	—	1
Long-eared Owl	9	—	9	215	—	12
Short-eared Owl	—	—	—	17	—	—
Nightjar	—	—	—	4	—	—
Swift	—	—	—	17	—	1
Hoopoe	—	—	—	3	—	—
Wryneck	6	—	6	197	—	—
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	—	1	25	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Short-toed Lark	—	—	—	7	—	—
Woodlark	—	—	—	2	—	—
Skylark	1	4	5	795	—	3
Shorelark	—	—	—	5	—	—
Sand Martin	—	—	—	8	—	—
Swallow	—	—	—	239	—	2
House Martin	—	—	—	140	—	1
Richard's Pipit	—	—	—	10	—	—
Blyth's Pipit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tawny Pipit	—	—	—	3	—	—
Olive-backed Pipit	—	—	—	8	—	—
Tree Pipit	7	—	7	595	—	—
Pechora Pipit	1	—	1	9	—	—
Meadow Pipit	172	3	175	8894	1	45
Red-throated Pipit	—	—	—	7	—	—
Rock Pipit	119	—	119	8699	1	29
Yellow Wagtail	—	—	—	10	—	—
Citrine Wagtail	—	—	—	5	—	—
Pied Wagtail	8	1	9	577	—	4
Waxwing	—	—	—	36	—	—
Dipper	—	—	—	13	—	—
Wren	11	—	11	710	—	—
Dunnock	20	—	20	2125	—	6
Robin	76	—	76	7333	1	35
Thrush Nightingale	—	—	—	24	—	—
Nightingale	—	—	—	26	—	—
Siberian Rubythroat	—	—	—	1	—	—
Bluethroat	12	—	12	241	—	2
Red-flanked Bluetail	—	—	—	2	—	—
Black Redstart	4	—	4	138	—	—
Redstart	25	—	25	1603	—	1
Whinchat	4	—	4	561	—	2
Stonechat	1	—	1	54	—	—
Northern Wheatear	138	—	138	15237	1	72
Pied Wheatear	—	—	—	1	—	—
Black-eared Wheatear	—	—	—	3	—	—
Rock Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
White's Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Grey-cheeked Thrush	—	—	—	2	—	—
Ring Ouzel	5	—	5	462	—	8
Blackbird	371	—	371	20234	3	313
Eye-browed Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	1
Dusky Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Black-throated Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Fieldfare	4	—	4	611	—	1
Song Thrush	37	—	37	2438	—	29
Redwing	128	—	128	7716	1	70
Mistle Thrush	—	—	—	22	—	—
Pallas' Grasshopper						
Warbler	1	—	1	6	—	—
Lanceolated Warbler	—	—	—	25	—	—
Grasshopper Warbler	4	—	4	101	—	—
River Warbler	—	—	—	7	—	—
Savi's Warbler	—	—	—	3	—	—
Aquatic Warbler	—	—	—	22	—	—
Sedge Warbler	4	—	4	389	—	—
Paddyfield Warbler	1	—	1	6	—	—
Blyth's Reed Warbler	—	—	—	2	1	1
Marsh Warbler	1	—	1	89	—	—
Reed Warbler	9	—	9	185	—	1
Great Reed Warbler	—	—	—	6	—	—
Thick-billed Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Booted Warbler	—	—	—	7	—	—
Icterine Warbler	1	—	1	89	—	—
Melodious Warbler	—	—	—	11	—	—
Subalpine Warbler	1	—	1	24	—	—
Sardinian Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Barred Warbler	10	—	10	356	—	1
Lesser Whitethroat	25	—	25	594	—	1
Whitethroat	10	—	10	825	—	—
Garden Warbler	93	—	93	2998	—	3
Blackcap	65	—	65	4264	—	19
Greenish Warbler	—	—	—	19	—	—
Arctic Warbler	1	—	1	30	—	—
Pallas's Warbler	—	—	—	2	—	—
Yellow-browed Warbler	8	—	8	103	—	—
Radde's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dusky Warbler	—	—	—	4	—	—
Bonelli's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Wood Warbler	2	—	2	95	—	—
Chiffchaff	14	—	14	929	—	2
Willow Warbler	43	—	43	3115	—	6
Goldcrest	15	—	15	1352	—	2
Firecrest	—	—	—	1	—	—
Brown Flycatcher	—	—	—	1	—	—
Spotted Flycatcher	5	—	5	684	—	3

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total 1994</i>	<i>Total 1948-94</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>			<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Red-breasted Flycatcher	—	—	—	50	—	—
Collared Flycatcher	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pied Flycatcher	23	—	23	841	—	—
Coal Tit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Blue Tit	—	—	—	2	—	—
Great Tit	2	—	2	9	—	—
Treecreeper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Golden Oriole	1	—	1	8	—	—
Isabelline Shrike	1	—	1	2	—	—
Red-backed Shrike	1	—	1	176	—	—
Lesser Grey Shrike	—	—	—	6	—	—
Great Grey Shrike	—	—	—	110	—	1
Woodchat Shrike	—	—	—	13	—	—
Jackdaw	—	—	—	4	—	—
Rook	—	—	—	5	—	—
Carrion Crow	—	—	—	44	—	—
Raven	—	—	—	26	—	—
Starling	106	173	279	22473	4	185
Daurian Starling	—	—	—	1	—	—
Rose-coloured Starling	1	—	1	3	—	—
House Sparrow	14	—	14	1358	—	3
Tree Sparrow	2	—	2	99	—	1
Chaffinch	21	—	21	2322	—	11
Brambling	85	—	85	2927	—	12
Greenfinch	20	—	20	181	—	—
Goldfinch	—	—	—	6	—	—
Siskin	19	—	19	326	—	1
Linnet	—	—	—	137	—	1
Twite	244	—	244	5152	—	4
Redpoll	1	—	1	582	—	1
Arctic Redpoll	—	—	—	18	—	—
Two-barred Crossbill	—	—	—	1	—	—
Crossbill	—	—	—	455	—	2
Parrot Crossbill	—	—	—	37	—	—
Common Rosefinch	5	—	5	138	1	1
Bullfinch	56	—	56	97	—	—
Hawfinch	—	—	—	11	—	—
Tennessee Warbler	—	—	—	2	—	—
Savannah Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
Song Sparrow	—	—	—	3	—	—
White-crowned Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
White-throated Sparrow	—	—	—	2	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1948-94</i>
Lapland Bunting	—	—	—	45	—	—
Snow Bunting	—	—	—	519	—	3
Pine Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Yellowhammer	—	—	—	54	—	—
Ortolan Bunting	—	—	—	18	—	—
Cretzschmar's Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Yellow-browed Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Rustic Bunting	1	—	1	14	—	1
Little Bunting	3	—	3	31	—	—
Yellow-breasted Bunting	—	—	—	6	—	—
Reed Bunting	5	—	5	379	—	2
Pallas's Reed Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Black-headed Bunting	—	—	—	3	—	—
Corn Bunting	—	—	—	3	—	—
Red-headed Bunting	—	—	—	5	—	—
Chestnut Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—

Ringing recoveries/controls reported to FIBO during 1994.

For some of the seabirds, where longevity records are of interest, notable recoveries or retraps from Fair Isle are also reported. The international code of symbols denoting method of recovery and age is used.

Manner recovered/controlled:

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

Age when ringed/recovered, given in EURING code:

- 1 — pullus/nestling
- 2 — fully grown, year of hatching unknown
- 3 — hatched during calendar year concerned
- 4 — hatched before calendar year concerned, but exact year unknown
- 5 — hatched during previous calendar year
- 6 — hatched before previous calendar year, but exact year unknown etc.
- J — still in juvenile plumage

Sex — m denotes male, f denotes female

The coordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N, 01°37'W.

Part I. Birds ringed on Fair Isle and reported elsewhere.

FULMAR. There were five reports away from Fair Isle. A nestling ringed in 1985 was controlled in 1994 on Eday, Orkney. Two birds ringed as nestlings, in 1983 and 1990, were recovered in the Faeroe Islands. Finally, birds ringed in 1963 and 1989, as nestling and adult respectively, were recovered in Denmark. Full details of the former are given below: this is the oldest Fulmar known from Fair Isle.

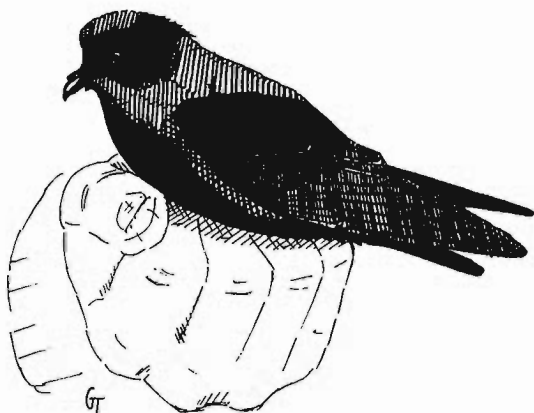
SS05727	1	08.08.63	Fair Isle
	x	14.09.93	Klim Strand, Jylland, DENMARK
			685 km, 113°, 10995 days.

STORM PETREL. 181 individuals ringed on Fair Isle were controlled elsewhere and reported during 1994. These are described in the following table:

Sumburgh, Shetland	1	Mousa, Shetland	10
Yell, Shetland	66	Burray, Orkney	1
Eday, Orkney	2	Auskerry, Orkney	2
Sule Skerry, Orkney	2	North Ronaldsay, Orkney	26
South Ronaldsay, Orkney	11	Eilean Nan Ron, Highland	11
Strathy Point, Highland	2	Noss Head, Highland	5
Faraidh Head, Highland	4	Bettyhill, Highland	1
Muchalls, Grampian	1	North Rona, Western Isles	3
Filey Brigg, North Yorkshire	1	Sandoy, FAEROES	6
Nolsoy, FAEROES	1	Frugga BO, Nordland, NORWAY	1
Oygarden, Hordaland, NORWAY	1	Flo, Ulstein, NORWAY	2
Kristiansund, NORWAY	2	Heroy, NORWAY	8
Selekaien, Rogaland, NORWAY	2	Utsira, NORWAY	2
Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY	6	Faro, Algarve, PORTUGAL	1

Also an adult ringed on the Isle in 1975, and retrapped here in August 1994. A truly bumper crop of foreign controls: 24 to Norway, seven to the Faeroes and another to the Portuguese coast. Two of these movements are reported in full below: the first an example of the vast distances which these birds cover and the second an illustration of just how fast they can do it.

2410863	4	21.07.92	Fair Isle
	v	31.05.94	Faro, Algarve, PORTUGAL
			2551km, 192°, 679 days
2416859	4	08.08.93	Fair Isle
	v	11.08.93	Heroy, More og Romsdal, NORWAY
			506 km, 51°, 3 days



Storm Petrel

LEACH'S PETREL.

NB84599	4	27.07.94	Fair Isle
	v	28.07.94	Burray, Orkney
			103 km, 223°, 1 day

GANNET. A nestling ringed in 1991 was found dead on a South Ronaldsay beach in September 1994.

SHAG. 23 individuals were recovered away from the island. Eleven were victims of the *Braer* oil disaster, in Shetland, January 1993, including two birds ringed as nestlings in 1981. Four other birds recovered in Shetland died of other causes (including one drowned in a salmon cage). Four were recovered in Orkney, including one ringed as a nestling in 1982 and recovered in 1993. Four recoveries were reported from mainland Scotland, one from Grampian and three from Highland. Finally, there were three interesting reports of resident Fair Isle birds: Nestlings ringed in 1974 and 1976 were recaptured at breeding colonies, the latter equalling and the former breaking the longevity record for this species on Fair Isle (see below). Even more intriguing, a ring was discovered at the North Naaversgill colony in 1994 that belonged to a Shag ringed as a nestling in June 1963! Although we can only speculate on when its owner was last alive, this is almost certainly the oldest Shag known on Fair Isle.

IIIIII16	I	14.06.74	Fair Isle
	vB	03.07.94	Fair Isle
			0 km, 360°, 7324 days

EIDER.

An adult female ringed in 1987 was recovered at Uradale, Shetland in January 1993, another victim of the *Braer* oil spill. Perhaps surprisingly, the first recovery involving an Eider ringed on Fair Isle.

OYSTERCATCHER.

A first-winter ringed in August 1991 was controlled on the Wash at Heacham in April 1993, a distance of 748 km (170°) in 609 days. In addition, an adult ringed in 1976 was found dead at Holy Loch, Strathclyde in September 1994, 442 km (206°) in 3115 days.

WOODCOCK. A bird ringed in November 1993 was shot near Ullapool, Highland, in January 1994.

ARCTIC SKUA. Two birds, ringed as nestlings in 1975 and 1986, were trapped as breeding adults on Foula in 1994, whilst an adult ringed in 1974 was found dead on Fair Isle in 1993.

GREAT SKUA. One ringed as a nestling in 1981 was found dying on Westray, Orkney, in 1994. In addition, a recovery from Spain was reported, (the second for Fair Isle), details of which are given below.

HT48918	1	05.07.93	Fair Isle
		08.01.94	Isla Cristina, Huelva, SPAIN
			2515 km, 189°, 187 days

HERRING GULL. A bird ringed as an adult in 1974 was recovered on Shetland in 1993, whilst a nestling ringed in 1992 was recovered in Orkney.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. Five individuals ringed as chicks were recovered, one in Shetland, two in Orkney and two in Grampian. In addition a movement to the Faeroes was reported:

HT48730	1	12.07.93	Fair Isle
	+	11.01.94	Suderoy, FAEROES
			352 km, 308°, 183 days

ARCTIC TERN. The first French recovery of a Fair Isle–ringed Arctic tern was reported as follows:

SX32270	1	22.06.92	Fair Isle
	x	15.09.93	Granville, Manche, FRANCE
			1189 km, 180°, 450 days

GUILLEMOT. 39 recoveries of birds ringed as nestlings were reported, and are tabulated below. In addition, birds ringed as adults were recovered from Shetland (two), Orkney, Nordland, Norway and Rogaland, Norway. Causes of death for these 43 birds were as follows: four were oiled, four shot (all on the Faeroes, not surprisingly), eleven drowned in fishing nets and 25 were simply found dead, many of which were part of the auk wreck along the Scottish and English east coast early in 1994.

		Age at Recovery				Total
		<1	1	2	2+	
Shetland/Orkney	2	—	—	—	2	
Mainland Scotland	5	—	—	1	6	
England	4	—	1	—	5	
Faeroes	4	—	—	—	4	
Norway	5	1	2	3	11	
Sweden	1	—	—	1	2	
Denmark	1	—	1	—	2	
Netherlands	3	2	—	—	5	
Germany	2	—	—	—	2	
France	—	—	1	—	1	

In addition, there was a record of a nestling found breeding at a colony in Sweden:

T26630	1	25.06.87	Fair Isle
	vB	08.07.94	Vasterbotten, SWEDEN
			1227 km, 069°, 2570 days.

Finally, two elderly citizens were retrapped during colony ringing on the island in 1994, one ringed as a nestling in 1971 (having previously worn out three rings, it was fitted with its fourth in 1986!) and the other in 1972.

AJ51727	1	05.07.71	Fair Isle
	vB	26.06.94	Fair Isle
			0 km, 360°, 8392 days

At 22 years, 11 months and 20 days old, the oldest known Guillemot on Fair Isle by the narrow margin of three days!

RAZORBILL. There were seven foreign recoveries of Fair Isle-ringed Razorbills during 1994, all ringed as nestlings: one killed in a salmon net in Eire, three in the Netherlands (all oiled), one in Denmark, one in France and one in Spain. On Fair Isle, a bird ringed as an adult in 1975 was retrapped at a breeding colony in 1994.

BLACK GUILLEMOT. A nestling ringed in 1993 was picked up dead on North Ronaldsay in February 1994. A typical recovery for this, one of the most sedentary of our seabirds.

MEADOW PIPIT. A juvenile ringed in August 1993 was picked up dead the following month on Bressay, Shetland.

ROCK PIPIT. The following bird was found alive on board ship and (seemingly) released successfully.

2401023	3J	18.07.91	Fair Isle
	v	09.03.94	At sea, North Sea, 58°39'N, 01°39'W
			98 km, 181°, 965 days

ROBIN. A first-year bird ringed in March 1991 was found dead at Altrincham, Cheshire in December 1993.

WHEATEAR. A recovery of a wintering bird in Morocco, the fifteenth for Fair Isle in that country.

NK76156	5m	28.04.90	Fair Isle
	x	05.10.90	Medina Benahmed, MOROCCO
			2965 km, 188°, 160 days

BLACKBIRD. A first-winter female ringed in October 1992 was found dead in Grampian the following month, whilst two other first-year birds ringed on the island headed in the opposite direction:

RE47056	3m	23.11.90	Fair Isle
	xF	10.03.94	Sandefjord, Vestfold, NORWAY
			673 km, 094°, 1203 days

RH68341	3f	14.10.91	Fair Isle
	+	18.10.92	Lund, Rogaland, NORWAY
			470 km, 104°, 370 days

REDWING. A first-winter ringed in November 1992 was recovered a year later at Wick, Highland.

BLYTH'S REED WARBLER. The bird ringed on 22.10.93 was killed by a cat at Sumburgh, Shetland on 31.10.94, a distance of 40 km. It had been trapped and positively identified by Shetland ringers on 29.10.94.

STARLING. Four nestlings ringed on Fair Isle were reported away from the Isle: one at Burra Isle, Shetland, one at Rousay, Orkney, one at Wick and one at Thurso, both Highland.

COMMON ROSEFINCH.

J140169	3	18.09.93	Fair Isle
	v	02.10.93	Nolsoy, FAEROES
			388 km, 315°, 14 days

The first record of a Fair Isle-ringed Rosefinch away from the island, and in a strange direction. It also proves that not every bird is shot as soon as it enters Faeroe airspace!

Part II. Birds ringed elsewhere and recovered/controlled on Fair Isle.

STORM PETREL. 188 individuals, controlled on Fair Isle, were reported during the year:

Noss, Shetland	2	Lerwick, Shetland	2
Foula, Shetland	4	Mousa, Shetland	3
Ness of Gossabrough, Shetland	11	Yell, Shetland	67
North Ronaldsay, Orkney	27	South Ronaldsay, Orkney	10
Burray, Orkney	3	Eday, Orkney	1
Auskerry, Orkney	2	Holm of Papa, Orkney	1
Eilean Nan Ron, Highland	2	Tarbat Ness, Highland	2
Strathy Point, Highland	3	Noss Head, Highland	1
Aberdeen, Grampian	5	Collieston, Grampian	1
Lough Slough	1	Sanda Island, Strathclyde	2
Ailsa Craig, Strathclyde	1	Eyemouth, Borders	3
Tynemouth, Tyne and Wear	9	Whitburn, Tyne and Wear	2
Seahouses, Northumberland	1	Filey Brigg, North Yorkshire	1
Flamborough, North Yorkshire	1	Annet, Scilly	1
Nolsoy, FAEROES	2	Heroy, NORWAY	2
Vagsoy, Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY	6	Flo, Ulstein, NORWAY	4
Oysgarden, Hordaland, NORWAY	2	Faro, Algave, PORTUGAL	3

Once again, the three Portuguese birds are probably the pick of another superb collection of controls; each bird covering over 2,500 km to reach Shetland waters. All three were ringed in Portugal during the early summer (between June 4th–16th), on their way north.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL. One ringed as a nestling in Shetland in 1985 was found dead on Fair Isle in 1994. In addition, a Norwegian–ringed bird was picked up on Fair Isle in 1992:

358684	1	12.07.90	Aukra, More og Romsdal, NORWAY
	x	25.09.92	Fair Isle
			584 km, 230°, 806 days

SPARROWHAWK. In a bumper spring for the species, two individuals ringed on North Ronaldsay moved north to investigate Fair Isle’s Heligoland traps. A first-year male ringed on 07.05.94 was controlled on Fair Isle two days later, whilst another first–year male ringed on 18.05.94 was controlled here three days later.

MERLIN. A female ringed as a fledgling in the Tingwall Valley, Shetland, in July 1993, was controlled as it moved south in the October of the same year.

ROBIN. One ringed at Kilnsea, Humberside, in October 1993 was controlled on Fair Isle the following spring, in late April.

BLACKBIRD. An adult female ringed at Theddlethorpe Dunes, Lincolnshire in March 1993 was controlled on Fair Isle in late October of the same year.

BLACKCAP.

F398380	3m	30.09.92	Vlieland, NETHERLANDS
	v	24.10.92	Fair Isle
			805 km, 330°, 24 days

A not atypical westward movement for an autumn juvenile. In contrast, another first-winter male, ringed at Gibraltar Point, Lincolnshire on October 7th 1994, was controlled on Fair Isle a week later, on the 14th. A distance of 725 km, 350°, in seven days; surely an unusual migration strategy?

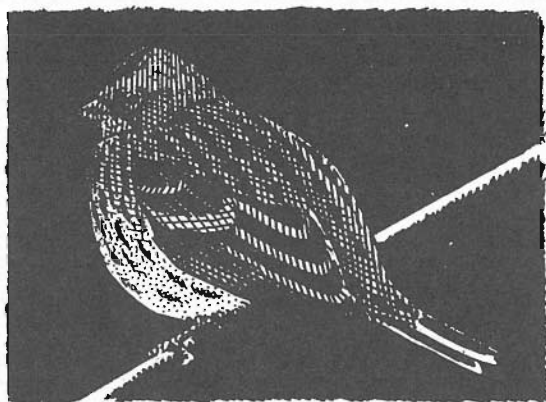
WILLOW WARBLER. One ringed as a juvenile in August 1993 near Anglezarke Reservoir, Lancashire, was controlled on Fair Isle in late April 1994. In addition, an adult bird from Norway was trapped in early August 1992, along with several other cold, grey (and thus probably Scandinavian) Willow Warblers.

H38862	6-	30.09.90	Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY
	v	10.08.92	Fair Isle
			416 km, 282°, 823 days

STARLING. A first-winter female ringed in Lerwick in January 1994 was controlled on Fair Isle in late May 1994.

HAWFINCH. A male ringed at Jabekk, Vest-Agder, Norway, was recovered on the Isle on April 10th, 1994, taken by a dog.

8270009	2m	11.10.90	Jabekk, Vest-Agder, NORWAY
	xF	10.04.94	Fair Isle
			552 km, 288°, 1277 days



Twite

Update of British Birds Rarities Committee Decisions

Roger Riddington

1993

Blyth's Pipit	October 31st-November 4th	Under consideration
Olive-backed Pipit	October 3rd	Accepted
Pechora Pipit	September 27th-October 5th	Accepted
Blyth's Reed Warbler	October 22nd	Accepted
Arctic Redpoll	May 20th-23rd	Accepted
Little Bunting	Six accepted: September 24th; September 24th-25th; September 24th-October 5th, September 26th (two) & September 28th.	

Butterflies on Fair Isle, 1993-94

Wendy Christie

While there are seldom large numbers of butterflies seen on Fair Isle, there are annual sightings of migrants. There have been no large influxes of butterflies since the record numbers in 1980, when there were c.500 sightings ('butterfly-days'). 1994 saw the second-largest number of sightings since then, 89, following 106 sightings in 1992. The three species which occurred in the two-year period are regular visitors to Fair Isle. A summary of records in the two years is given below:

	1993	1994
Number of sightings	7	89
Number of species	2	3

RED ADMIRAL *Vanessa atalanta* There were six records in 1993, in May and June. Of the 51 records in 1994, most occurred during July and August, although there was a late sighting on October 26th.

PAINTED LADY *Cynthia cardui* The only record in 1993 was on June 12th. 35 sightings in 1994 were spread from June to September, August the peak month, with 27 sightings.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL *Aglais urticae* Three records, in July and August, 1994.

The Fair Isle Weather in 1994

Dave Wheeler

January

Over the UK as a whole the month was wet; on Fair Isle this was the second wettest January on record. In a generally windy month, the 23rd was a particularly stormy night, with winds reaching hurricane F12 and gusting in excess of 95 knots (since there was no power, due to the windmill shutting down, the recorder had reverted to full range and was unable to record the highest gust!). The highest daily mean windspeed was 69 knots, almost 80 mph! Elsewhere in the UK temperatures were up to 1°C above average.

Fair Isle: Rain 169.6%, sun 97.0%, mean temperature -0.1°C .
(compared to the 1974-93 average)

February

The month was rather windy, dry and cold, with the wind frequently having an easterly component. Over the UK as a whole, temperatures were about average, with predominantly westerly winds.

Fair Isle: Rain 56.7%, sun 94.0%, mean temperature -0.6°C .

WINTER (December – February)

Fair Isle: Rain 125.1%, sun 99.8%, mean temperature -0.7°C

UK Mild in the south, wet almost everywhere.

March

Continuing cold and windy, with quite a lot of snow, especially on the 20th, when in a matter of a few hours during the morning, 10 cm of fine powder snow fell under calm and very cold conditions. A strengthening wind then brought blizzard conditions – at times reducing the visibility to nil – and increasing the snow depth to 25cm, with drifts to several metres! This was the year's coldest day, with a daytime maximum of -0.3°C . The following night the air temperature fell to the year's minimum of -4.8°C while on the snow surface the temperature fell to a Fair Isle record of -12.5°C . By the morning of the 22nd, following a night of very heavy rain and rapid thaw, most of the snow had gone. On Fair Isle, this was the wettest March on record, continuing the trend away from this being a dry month with frequent easterly winds, to one with a moist Atlantic regime. For Scotland as a whole, this was also the wettest March on record, some places having as much as 500% of their normal March rainfall. In the 126 year Scottish rainfall record, the last 17 years have included twelve of the wettest March months, with 1990, 1992 and 1994 the top three!

Particularly impressive auroral displays were observed on the nights of the 7th and 8th. Over the rest of the UK, dull and wet in the west, dry and sunny in the east, and generally mild.

Fair Isle: Rain 167.1%, sun 123.5%, mean temperature -0.6°C .

April

Though sunny, it was also an unsettled month and wetter than normal. The mean barometric pressure was well below the April mean (-7.3 mb). It was also a little windier than average, with wind directions slightly favouring a south-westerly quarter.

Similar conditions were experienced by the rest of the UK.

Fair Isle: Rain 124.9%, sun 119.7%, mean temperature $+0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$.

May

With 278.1 hours of sunshine recorded, this was the sunniest month ever recorded on Fair Isle! Following a mild start, temperatures fell from around mid-month as the winds settled into the north-east. During May, there were only eight days when the maximum temperature reached double figures. Until the last few days, it was also an extremely dry month. Another consequence of a high frequency of winds from the north-east was that the visibility, almost without exception, was good: 60 km being the most frequent. In Orkney, it was also dry, with only 17.6 mm of rainfall measured at Kirkwall. With records going back 45 years, they also had their sunniest month ever, with 280.1 hours of sunshine.

Other than over northern areas, the rest of the UK had a cool, wet and dull month.

Fair Isle: Rain 53.7%, sun 143.0%, mean temperature -0.4°C .

SPRING (March – May)

Fair Isle: Rain 129.5%, sun 130.8%, mean temperature -0.5°C .

UK: Mild in the south. Wet almost everywhere, although May was dry in the north.

June

Unlike most of the UK, which had a mild, sunny and dry month, Fair Isle experienced the third wettest June on record. It was also windy, with winds frequently from a westerly direction. The 16th was the year's sunniest day, with 16.9 hours of sunshine recorded.

Fair Isle: Rain 153.3%, sun 107.1%, mean temperature -0.3°C .

July

Summer arrived, with the temperature reaching 17.0°C on the 31st. This was the highest temperature recorded on Fair Isle since June 1992. Despite the relative warmth, Fair Isle recorded the UK's lowest maximum temperature on 13 days during the month. With a rainfall of only 18.1 mm this was the driest July on record. However, as wind speeds were lighter than normal, and from a SE direction on 14 days (compared to an average of 4.6), the mean relative humidity was 93.9%. As a consequence, it was no surprise that fog occurred on 15 days. Noctilucent clouds were observed on the nights of the 7th, 17th, 21st and 26th.

A warm, dry and sunny month over most of the UK

Fair Isle: Rain 34.5%, sun 121.1%, mean temperature +0.8°C.

August

The month was dry, mild and sunny. The year's highest temperature was recorded in the early hours of the 1st, 17.2°C. The month ended with severe thunderstorms over Orkney and Shetland.

Elsewhere in the UK, it was generally dull with approximately average temperatures.

Fair Isle: Rain 31.9%, sun 120.1%, mean temperature +0.3°C.

SUMMER (June – August)

Fair Isle: Rain 64.1%, sun 115.7%, mean temperature +0.3°C.

UK: Warm and generally sunny. While some parts were dry, others were wet due to localised thunderstorm activity.

September

A freak storm ripped through Shetland during the early hours of the 1st, with a number of livestock killed by lightning. Lerwick observatory recorded 45.9 mm between 0200 and 0700 GMT, 21.3 of that between 0300–0400. There was also a severe thunderstorm in Orkney during the afternoon of September 1st, but on Fair Isle, there was simply 'thunder heard' during the morning. Though a month which usually sees the first of the autumnal gales, September was less windy than usual, with gales occurring on only three days. Easterly winds were not infrequent. On the 23rd the temperature reached 21°C in Kirkwall, but although it was the warmest day of the month on Fair Isle, the temperature here only reached 14.7°C.

Over the rest of the UK it was generally cool, dull and wet.

Fair Isle: Rain 106.9%, sun 105.9%, mean temperature 0.0°C.

October

The month was dry and sunny, though a little cooler than normal. While wind directions varied, there was a bias towards winds from the south-east.

Over the rest of the UK, the month was mostly sunny, although wet in the south.

Fair Isle: Rain 62.9%, sun 106.7%, mean temperature -0.4°C.

November

For Fair Isle, as with the rest of the UK, this was the warmest November since records began. However, while the Fair Isle records go back only to 1974, for England it was the warmest November since 1650! Due to the mild weather, the incidence of snow, sleet and hail was well below normal and fog was more frequent. It was a slightly windier month than usual: whilst the frequency of winds from the south to west quad-

rant was about normal, there was an increase in the number of occasions that the wind was south-easterly. There were no cold northerlies! During the month as a whole, there were only two short periods when the mean daily temperature fell below the average.

Fair Isle: Rain 99.0%, sun 107.6%, mean temperature +1.7°C.

AUTUMN (September – November)

Fair Isle: Rain 89.0%, sun 106.1%, mean temperatures +0.4°C.

UK: Mild, generally wet and dull.

December

The mild weather of the previous month continued into December, with mean temperatures consistently above average during the first half of the month. The second half of the month was then marked by cold snaps alternating with milder periods. December was windy, with not only a high frequency of winds from a SW direction, but also a significant number of days with NW winds, bringing a touch of winter from time to time in the latter half of the month.

Fair Isle: Rain 124.0%, sun 147.7%, mean temperature +0.6°C

UK: Mild, generally wet but also sunny.

Meteorological Data, Fair Isle 1994.

Temp. (°C)	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	YEAR
Mean	4.2	3.6	3.8	5.6	7.2	9.4	12.1	12.1	10.5	8.4	8.5	5.9	7.6
Maximum	9.1	6.8	8.5	11.0	12.9	14.6	17.0	17.2	14.7	13.0	12.0	10.3	(7.5)
Minimum	-0.2	-0.7	-4.8	0.5	2.9	4.7	8.1	6.1	5.4	0.9	2.7	-2.2	
Rainfall (mm)													
Monthly	170.6	35.7	140.8	60.0	20.9	62.7	18.1	20.7	99.4	68.2	114.8	132.3	944.4
Max. daily fall	19.0	9.8	15.3	14.2	8.1	12.6	3.7	3.1	22.2	15.9	17.2	18.7	
Sunshine (hrs)													
Total	25.2	56.6	120.3	178.9	278.1	181.7	165.3	173.8	123.1	75.8	39.6	23.5	1441.9
Max. daily	3.3	6.5	7.9	13.3	15.3	16.9	16.0	13.6	11.7	8.5	4.8	2.9	
Wind Speed (knots)													
Mean	22.3	21.5	24.0	15.7	13.5	14.2	9.5	10.4	13.3	16.1	19.8	21.2	16.8
Max. gust	95	59	71	53	52	43	37	41	49	61	63	71	
No. of days													
Hail	21	12	22	6	3	1	0	0	0	5	3	13	86
Snow/sleet	15	15	21	7	1	0	0	0	0	5	2	17	83
Rain, >1mm	29	13	29	21	9	19	12	13	17	22	19	25	228
Wet, >9mm	27	9	28	12	5	14	6	8	15	16	17	21	178
Ground frost	17	8	11	2	3	0	0	1	1	7	1	10	61
Wind (direction at 09.00)													
North	0	3	1	5	5	1	0	2	4	3	0	2	26
North East	3	1	1	2	11	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	27
East	2	7	2	3	0	0	4	4	6	2	3	0	33
South East	8	8	1	2	8	6	14	4	3	7	5	3	69
South	0	8	7	4	3	3	2	6	4	4	6	9	56
South West	7	0	8	5	1	4	7	2	3	5	6	9	57
West	9	1	9	6	2	13	2	6	5	4	6	2	65
North West	2	0	2	3	1	3	0	5	1	2	2	4	25
Calm	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	1	1	7

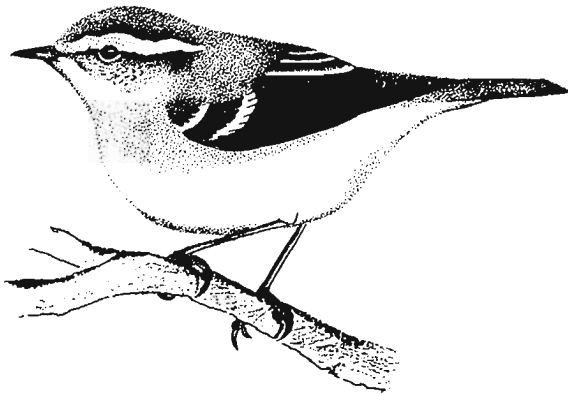
Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust: Financial Report & Accounts.

John Wood

A summary of the Trust's accounts for the year ended 31st October 1994 appears on the following pages. The full statutory accounts and auditor's report by Coopers & Lybrand can be inspected at the Bird Observatory on Fair Isle.

Visitor numbers have shown a small increase from the low of 1993, but transport costs between the island and mainland Britain, particularly by air, continue to affect recovery adversely. Although our current overall financial position remains satisfactory, the revenue deficits of recent years are not. In order to rectify this, the Directors have commissioned a five-year management plan incorporating the development of visitor services and the vigorous pursuit of external funding for research on seabirds and migrants, as well as a proposal to set up a transport forum in partnership with other organisations within Shetland with a view to better and more affordable links with the mainland.

The Directors again wish to acknowledge the generous financial support given by Shell (UK) Ltd. and the National Trust for Scotland.



Yellow-browed Warbler

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st October 1994

	1994		1993	
	£	£	£	£
LODGE INCOME		54,183		77,410
Less:				
Lodge Supplies	18,964		23,698	
Staff Costs	<u>19,807</u>	<u>38,771</u>	<u>22,429</u>	<u>46,127</u>
GROSS PROFIT		15,412		31,283
Less: Overhead Expenses				
Administration	8,122		11,064	
Establishment	21,025		23,186	
Promotion	4,404		3,212	
Financial and Legal	<u>5,555</u>	<u>39,106</u>	<u>6,032</u>	<u>43,494</u>
OPERATING DEFICIT		(23,694)		(12,211)
OTHER INCOME				
Subscriptions	4,254		4,292	
Donations	6,251		6,864	
Interest Receivable	1,809		3,789	
Grants Receivable	2,977		2,835	
Deferred Grant Income Release	3,055		2,916	
Gain on Matured Investment	<u>452</u>	<u>18,798</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>20,696</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) BEFORE DEPRECIATION		(4,896)		8,485
Depreciation Charge		<u>(13,157)</u>		<u>(13,830)</u>
NET (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR YEAR		<u>(18,053)</u>		<u>(5,345)</u>

Statement of Accumulated Surplus

Balance at beginning of the year		99,251		95,519
Deficit for year	(18,053)		(5,345)	
Release from Appeal Reserve	<u>9,077</u>	<u>(8,976)</u>	<u>9,077</u>	<u>3,732</u>
Balance at end of year		<u>90,275</u>		<u>99,251</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1994

	1994		1993	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets		178,022		186,483
Investments		<u>10,858</u>		<u>10,548</u>
		188,880		197,031
CURRENT ASSETS				
Stocks	5,919		7,688	
Debtors	4,413		5,103	
Cash at Bank and in hand	<u>955</u>		<u>13,779</u>	
	11,287		26,570	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors – amounts falling due within one year	<u>25,564</u>	<u>(14,277)</u>	<u>30,190</u>	<u>(3,620)</u>
		174,603		193,411
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors – amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>(13,558)</u>		<u>(14,313)</u>
		<u>161,045</u>		<u>179,098</u>
Representing:				
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		90,275		99,251
Appeal Reserve		<u>70,770</u>		<u>79,847</u>
		<u>161,045</u>		<u>179,098</u>

Fair Isle Endowment Fund: accounts for the year to 31st October 1994

	1994	1993
	£	£
REVENUE ACCOUNT		
Investment Income (Gross)	259	—
Investment Income (Net)	174	308
Deposit Interest (Gross)	99	234
Tax Refund	<u>69</u>	<u>102</u>
	<u>601</u>	<u>644</u>
Management Fees	76	43
Balance due to FIBOT	<u>525</u>	<u>601</u>
	<u>601</u>	<u>644</u>
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
Investments at cost		
10% Treasury Conversion Stock 1996		
£2, 593 Stock	2,749	2,749
Henderson Administration		
960 High Income Units	638	638
5.5% Treasury Stock 2008/12		
£2, 875 Stock	<u>2,497</u>	<u>—</u>
	5,884	3,387
Cash Balance held on Deposit	<u>(95)</u>	<u>2,402</u>
	<u>5,789</u>	<u>5,789</u>
Represented by:		
Balance per last account	<u>5,789</u>	<u>5,789</u>
Gain on Maturity Investments	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
	<u>5,789</u>	<u>5,789</u>

The John Harrison Memorial Fund.

This fund is administered by the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust. John Harrison was a young birdwatcher from Norfolk, who visited Fair Isle three times, but whose life was tragically cut short. The fund was established in his memory at the instigation of the late Richard Richardson. Grants are given each year to help young people, between the ages of 15 and 21, with the cost of travel and their stay at the Observatory.

Successful applicants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements and booking at the Observatory, where they must stay for a minimum of one week. They are strongly encouraged to visit during July or August, to experience seabird and/or migration work, and to assist with Observatory work. Application forms are available from the Warden at the Observatory; they must be returned no later than October 31st for consideration in mid-December.

The John Harrison Memorial Fund: accounts for the year to 31st October 1994

	1994 £	1993 £
REVENUE ACCOUNT		
Interest Received	863	785
Tax Refund 1992/93	<u>—</u>	<u>144</u>
Grants Paid	700	610
Transfer to Capital	121	276
Management Expenses	<u>42</u>	<u>43</u>
	<u>863</u>	<u>929</u>
CAPITAL ACCOUNT		
Investments at Cost		
£900 13.25% Treasury Stock 1997	870	870
£1, 400 9.5% Treasury Stock 1999	1,435	1,435
£6, 000 9% Treasury Conversion Stock	<u>6,411</u>	<u>6,411</u>
	8,716	8,716
Cash	<u>944</u>	<u>803</u>
	<u>9,660</u>	<u>9,519</u>
Represented by:		
Balance per last account	9,519	9,224
Donations	20	19
Gain on Realisation of Investments	—	—
Transfer from Revenue	<u>121</u>	<u>276</u>
	<u>9,660</u>	<u>9,519</u>

The National Trust for Scotland

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by visiting these properties in Highland region*

Historic Sites

Culloden Battlefield, 5 m E of Inverness on B9006

Glencoe, 17m S of Fort William on A82

Glenfinnan, 18m W of Fort William on A830

Hugh Miller's Cottage, in Cromarty



Castles

Brodie Castle, 4m W of Forres on A96

Gardens

Inverewe, 8m NE of Gairloch on A832

Lochalsh Woodland Garden, near

Kyle of Lochalsh on A87



Mountains & Wild Land

Glencoe 17m S of Fort William on A82

Kintail

Glomac

West Affric

Torridon

} 16m E of Kyle of Lochalsh on A87

9m W of Kinlochewe on A896

For further details contact

Peggie Gordon, Abertaff House, Church St, Inverness IV1 1EU

Tel. No. Inverness 01463 232034

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