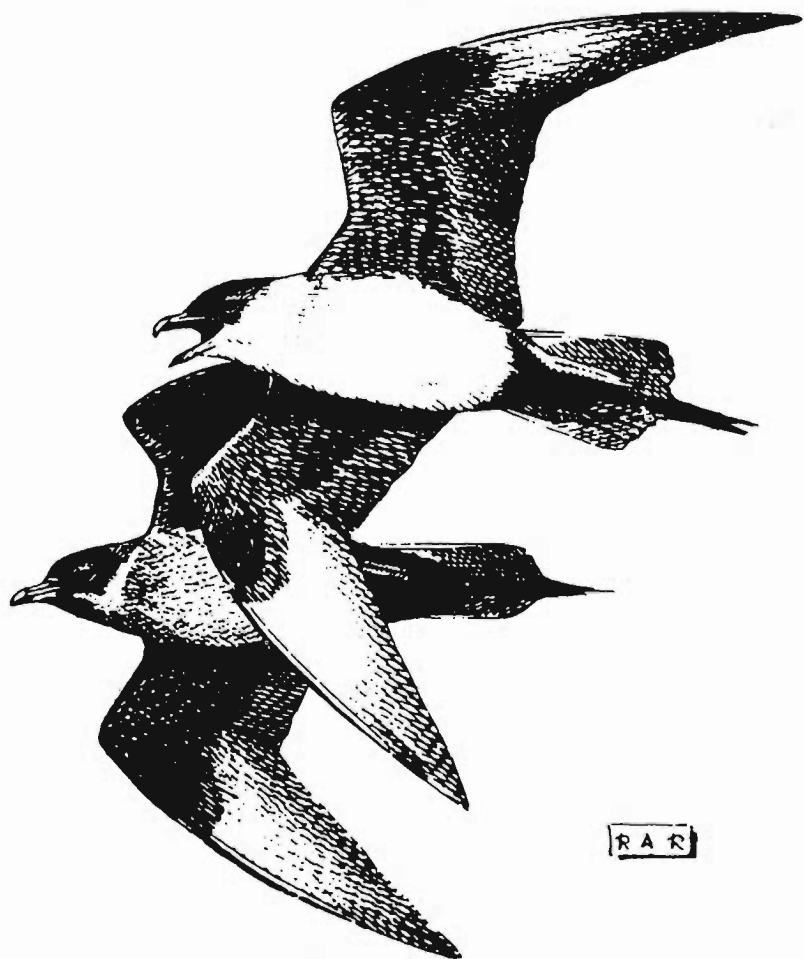
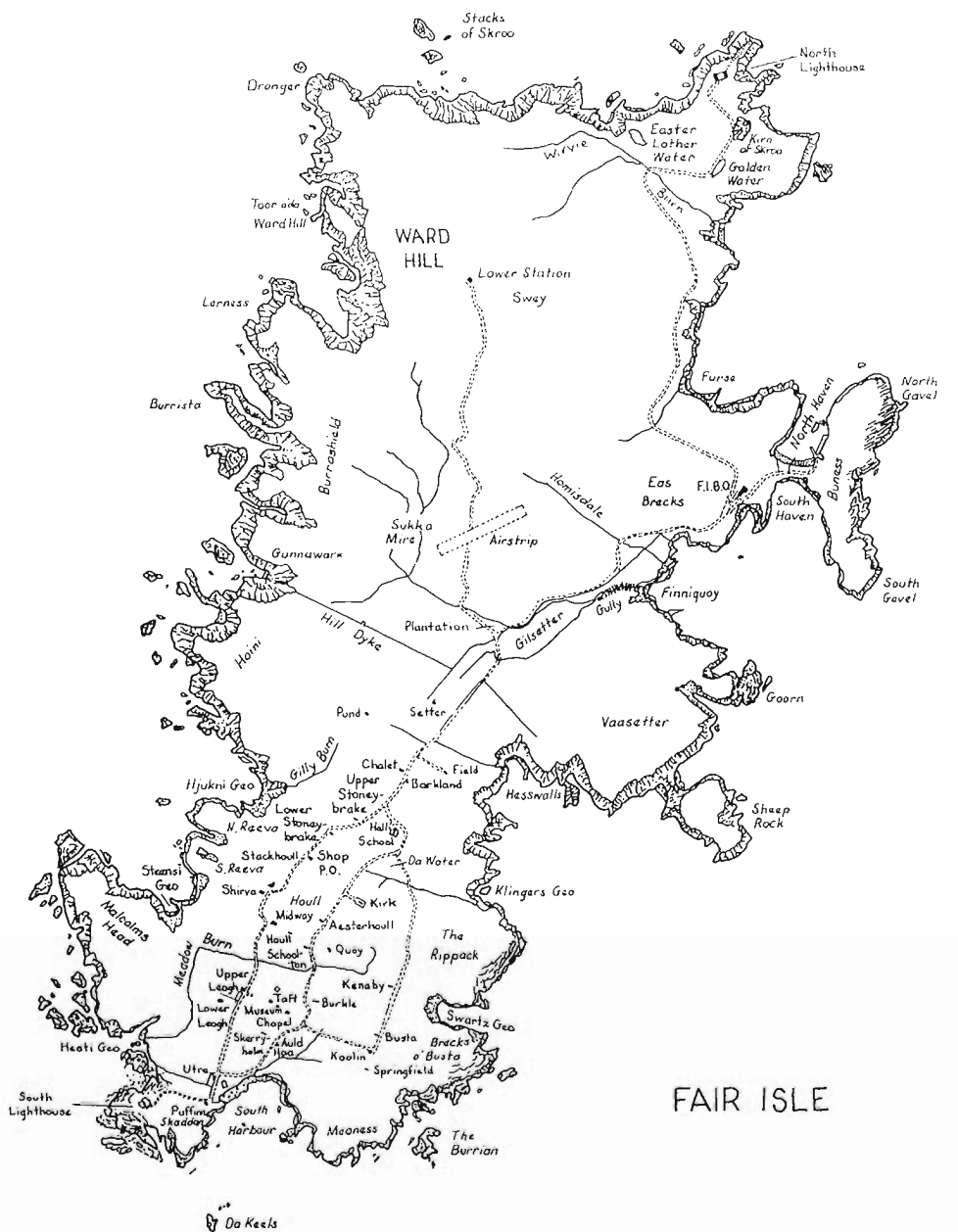


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Report for 2000





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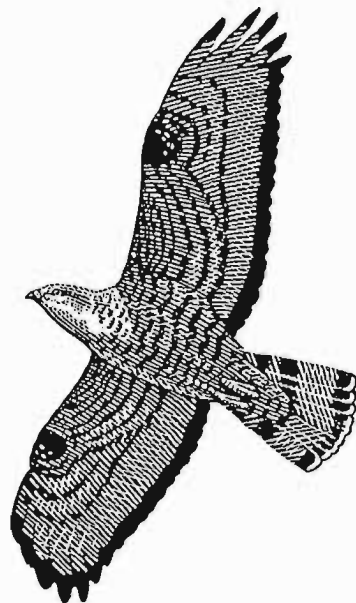
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Fair Isle Bird Observatory

Report no. 53

2000

Edited by Deryk and Hollie Shaw

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The marriage of Deryk and Hollie, on Landberg on 5th August 2000 before the whole island, assorted family and other friends.



Brown Shrike, Plantation, 21st October.

Hywel Maggs



Long-eared Owl, Utra, 19th April.

Hywel Maggs

Chairman's Report

Roy Dennis

It is a pleasure to report another successful year for the Bird Observatory. We are indebted to Deryk and Hollie for their excellent leadership which, along with a fine staff, has resulted in the directors receiving many letters from visitors who have had happy and enjoyable holidays on Fair Isle.

The Observatory aim is to provide instruction and enjoyment in a friendly atmosphere as well as to carry out its ornithological work. It is encouraging to see that we are achieving this. There were a high number of new visitors as opposed to returning regulars, so our client base is increasing. Do please come back and try to encourage others to visit for a first time. Visitors are important not only for the viability of the observatory, but also for the economic and social well being of the islanders.

As ever the migration of birds at Fair Isle has enthralled and surprised us. Three new species for the island in one season, as well as some excellent falls of common and rarer migrants gave a total of 203 different species. The new birds were Brown Shrike, Dartford Warbler and Balearic Shearwater.

In early June, a ferocious Atlantic storm raged for two days against the west cliffs of the island. It destroyed many sea bird nests with eggs and young. Shags were particularly badly affected, with half the west-side nests destroyed and even Gannets were washed off their stacks. Sea birds breeding on the sheltered eastern side of the island were safe, but with such dramatic variations occurring in our climate, these dramatic episodes are likely to increase.

Our long term monitoring and research on sea-birds is ever more important for understanding the marine environment. Fair Isle's contribution to the national Seabird 2000 census revealed that the population of Fulmars breeding on the island has halved to 20,500 pairs since 1996, almost certainly due to the changes in fishing policy. On the credit side, Arctic Terns had an excellent year with over a thousand young reared to fledging.

I close on just one disappointment. Some years ago the Fair Islanders proposed that the seas around the island should become a marine protected area to complement the protected status of the island. Their initiative was enthusiastically supported by the Fair Isle Bird Observatory, the National Trust for Scotland and other partners, but alas it has not yet been declared. Let's all try harder to make it a reality in 2001.

Warden and Administrator's Report

Deryk and Hollie Shaw

2000 was a most enjoyable second year – and certainly less stressful than our first year, now that we know a lot more about the job and the Island.

Our birding staff this year were Chas Holt, for a third season (SMO) and Hywel Maggs (AW) with added valuable assistance from Diana de Palacio as Ranger. It was a very hardworking and effective team. Finding suitably qualified birding staff is proving more difficult each year, as young graduates opt out of conservation orientated careers in favour of better paid jobs. So it is fortunate that Hywel will be returning in 2001 (provided he survives the winter volunteering in New Zealand!) to take up the role of SMO. On the domestic staff front, Ann Prior returned to work as Cook for her ninth season and Beverley Howlett returned for her second season as Assistant Cook. Both arrived at the end of April. They were joined in early May by Roland Pritchard and Roger Parris, who came to work as General Assistants. Alex Wood arrived in June as childminder and was invaluable at helping during the summer holidays with the children and various other tasks. Roland left in July to return home to his family and was replaced by Ann's partner, Ken Passfield, who had sailed to Fair Isle single-handed from South Georgia. Ken left in late August and was replaced by a very familiar face, Alan Bull who helped out during the September rush.

A total of 203 bird species were recorded on the Isle in 2000 (plus two presumed escapes – Bar-headed Goose and Pallas's Rosefinch). This total included three new additions to the Island list – Britain's second Brown Shrike, Scotland's second Dartford Warbler and Shetland's first Balearic Shearwater (rejected by Shetland's rarities committee). Other star birds were; spring records of Red-rumped Swallow, Calandra Lark, Thrush Nightingale, two Blyth's Reed and five Subalpine Warblers. Summer was brightened up with Rosy Starling and Red-necked Phalarope whilst the autumn produced Pacific Golden Plover (second Fair Isle record), Great Snipe, White-throated Dipper (of the Black-bellied race), three Citrine Wagtails, five Olive-backed Pipits, at least four Lanceolated Warblers, three Greenish, two Arctic, two Booted and a single Pallas's Leaf Warbler. On the downside, the first confirmed breeding of Corn Crake since 1966 was unfortunately not discovered until the nest (at Quoy) was accidentally mowed.

Seabirds had a successful breeding season on the whole, although there were some heavy losses on the west coast due to the heaviest June seas ever experienced. European Shags appeared to suffer most in these storms with estimated losses of some 50% on the west side although losses to the auk species are harder to estimate as they do not have nests. Basically, those species with monitoring plots on the west side did badly, whilst those with plots on the sheltered east coast did well or very

well. As an example – the JNCC European Shag monitoring plot in Finnikoy Bay recorded the second highest productivity since monitoring began in 1986 (an average of 1.79 chicks per nest). The Arctic Tern colony doubled this year to 1250 pairs, fledging over 1000 young – a near record figure bettered only in 1992. The Skua populations seem to be fairly stable at c.130 pairs of Great Skua and half as many Arctic Skua territories. Great Skuas had an average breeding season whilst Arctics had a poor year, largely due to predation by their larger cousins.

Whole island counts of Northern Fulmar, Black-legged Kittiwake, Atlantic Puffin and Razorbill were carried out as part of the national 'Seabird 2000' project. European Shags too were being counted but, as in 1999, the count had to be abandoned once the storm had taken its toll. There has been an apparent halving of the Northern Fulmar population, since the last count in 1996, to 20,500 pairs. This drastic reduction is similar to that recorded on Foula and is thought to be due to recent changes in fishing policy, resulting in less discards. Similarly, Black-legged Kittiwakes, although having improved breeding success, have declined further to 8,175 Apparently Occupied Nests, nearly 30% down on the 1997 count, which in itself was a 35% decrease on the 1992 count. This decline is predicted to continue for several years (see article on page 19). Atlantic Puffins on the other hand are apparently booming. An estimated population of 80,000 birds is nearly double that of five years ago. However the calculation method may be flawed, and we may try to count them again in Spring 2001.

Over 7,000 birds were ringed during the year, headed by 1,415 Arctic Tern chicks. This is a good total when you consider that both Northern Fulmar and European Storm-petrels were ringed in lower than average numbers. Unusual captures included the first Brown Shrike to be ringed in Britain, our fifth Greater Scaup, 8th-9th captures of Blyth's Reed and Booted Warblers, ninth Red-throated Pipit and Common Quail, 14th White-throated Dipper, 18th Tufted Duck and Hawfinch, and a further nine Leach's Storm-petrels (to add to the 14 last year)! The traps needed some extensive repair work in the early part of the year but survived the rest of the season more or less intact. The Plantation however is looking in a sorry state and something must be done about it. A proposal for rebuilding and extending the planted area has been drawn up and work is due to begin in the summer of 2001.

The start of the new Millennium was positive, with bed-nights at the Observatory up by 7% in 2000 compared to 1999, with a total of 1,937 bed-nights and approximately 400 visitors. This is an encouraging trend and one that we wish to maintain in future years. Organised tour groups again contributed significantly to this figure and we welcomed two new groups, New Horizons and Heatherlea Bird Watching Tours, as well as the regular groups of Shetland Wildlife Tours and Speyside Wildlife.

The FIBO web-site continues to be developed and was updated daily during September and October. This proved very popular with visitors both prior to and after their visits. People who couldn't make it to the isle this year also 'logged on' to see what they were missing on the daily update page! These updates will continue next spring and autumn. The addition of photos to the web-site also helped brighten up the web pages. We were able to do this with the generous loan of a digital camera by Trevor Codlin from London Camera Exchange. With the world-wide-web becoming increasingly important as a means of communication and potential advertising, we were only too pleased to be featured by a very popular birding web-site, *Surfbirds.com*, throughout the autumn, with bird-news and photographs from Fair Isle reaching an even wider audience.

The range of goods on sale in the FIBO shop was extended during the year to include T-shirts and sweatshirts with Puffin and seabird designs. These proved so popular that we almost sold out after just two cruise-ships visits!

The Fair Isle Ranger Service continued to provide information and activities to visitors during 2000. This was the last year of the current contract with Scottish Natural Heritage although a new contract covering the next three years has already been agreed. The service continued to improve this year with record numbers of 'welcome packs' and self-guiding leaflets being distributed to all Fair Isle visitors. More guided walks took place than ever before and although 'Puffin walks' proved to be the most popular, walks led by islanders on subjects such as archaeology, wild flowers and weather & crofting were also enjoyed by group visitors. Our planned seabird week fell through due to a lack of interest resulting from the delay in funding for advertising. However, activity weeks are planned for next year and have already generated great interest. As in previous years the Ranger visited the local school and over the course of the season produced a video with children about their experiences and knowledge of the Natural History of Fair Isle. Once edited this video will be distributed to other schools. Projects planned for future years include the children putting on an environmentally themed play and the making of a small, illustrated booklet that could be sold to visitors to raise money for both the school and Observatory. A record number of 21 cruise ships were booked for the 2000 season, with all but two able to land. Seventeen of these took part in guided walks through the Fair Isle Ranger Service and all received 'Welcome Packs' and a brief welcome talk from Observatory staff. Several Orkney day-trips were also planned as usual for the summer holidays but a combination of poor weather, pilot availability and technical problems meant that only one took place. It is hoped that these factors don't affect next year's flights.

The Observatory building survived the season, with some help. Three plumbing leaks (above the lobby toilet, in the link corridor and beneath the stairs to the Warden's flat) were repaired with help from Kenny Stout and the Northmen. Brian Wilson also removed the damaged skylight on the landing (which blew off during

a ferocious January storm the previous winter) boarded up the hole and felted the roof. There is another skylight right next to it so it does not make it too dark! The Northmen also replaced two windows in the warden's flat and fitted a new fire escape in the lounge. Two new shower units and a new state-of-the-art 'megaflo' hot water tank seem to have solved the problems with the showers as we had no complaints about hot water this season! New wooden toilet seats, wooden shelves and towel rails in the rooms also seem to have been well appreciated. Both generators had to have their radiators repaired (luckily, one after the other) during the season, but apart from a couple of minor starting faults they have run well this season. Malcolm Adamson, as usual, always checked them over whenever he was on the Isle. The van was well worked, clocking up 5,000 miles – not bad for a small island! Minor repairs were made: the fuel filter had to be replaced in March and it was sent out to Shetland in August to have the brake shoes replaced and have a full service.

Fair Isle is a small and ever-changing community and the year 2000 saw some departures and new arrivals. Michael and Cathy Stout and their three children Jenny, Magnus and Freya left Barkland in January to move to Mainland Shetland. Their cheerful faces and Michael's expertise with a Zodiac will be sorely missed! New faces came to the isle in the professional sector, as Jessie McCaffrey arrived to take over as Head Teacher at the school from the retiring Ruth Stout and new nurse Claire Johnston and her family moved into North Shìrva to cater for the health of the island residents. All have been very well received and will hopefully have a long and happy future on the isle.

Building work on the isle continued as renovation work at Setter was completed for Iain and Ruth Stout and then Quoy for Stewart and Triona Thompson. The Houll has been completely demolished and rebuilt in a new 'green' design incorporating many energy efficient and ecologically sound elements. Brian and Mary Wilson moved back in to their new house early in 2001. Work on the South Lighthouse buildings, which have been purchased by the NTS, is due to begin in 2001 and will accommodate a small café, a couple of residential flats, a workshop for the newly established Fair Isle Silver Company and storage space for the George Waterston Museum.

On April 7th 2000, Fair Isle Crafts celebrated twenty years of producing traditional Fair Isle knitwear with a banquet held in the Observatory. This company was set up to promote the production and marketing of the distinctive sweaters, cardigans, hats and scarves, which are still very much in demand today.

The Bird Observatory acted as a conference centre in June 2000, when Fair Isle, through the Fair Isle Marine and Environment Tourism Initiative (FIMETI) hosted a three-day conference on long-term sustainability and community development in relation to natural and cultural resources. It was organised through the EU and

Norwegian Government funded Northern Periphery Programme and delegates attended from as far away as Norway and Sweden. Remote communities in other parts of Northern Europe experience similar problems of sustainability as we do here on Fair Isle. The conference aimed to discuss the limitations of remote rural areas and to put forward ideas for providing people with a source of income and persuading younger people to remain in the community or outsiders to join. Many innovative ideas were aired and discussed and everyone felt that the conference had been worthwhile. FIMETI is also a driving force behind the campaign to declare the waters around Fair Isle as a protected area, to complement the same designation given to the island itself. Not only in view of the numbers of seabirds breeding on the isle but also to recognise that the island and its community would be very much worse off without the rich sea-life surrounding it. Beaurocratic red tape and European laws on fishing rights have so far thwarted this campaign. However, the current rate of plundering the fish stocks of the North Sea cannot go on and the Fishing Industry, as a whole, is going to have to be downsized if we wish to continue eating fish at all and the rich seabird communities around the British coast are to survive.

Fair Isle hosted one other event in 2000, in the form of our wedding. We were married on 5th August by Reverend John Best (Utra) at 4.30pm on Landberg, just east of the Observatory. Fifty friends and family had made the journey to Fair Isle and the whole island also joined us as we stood in the fog, wind and rain for the ceremony. Everyone quickly retreated to the Observatory for the signing of the register and some Champagne and later we all met up again at the Community Hall for a sit down buffet and music, singing, children's games and dancing. The whole day (and indeed the days leading up to and following the wedding) were fantastic and something that we will never forget. It is amazing to witness how such a small community can pull together to put on such a big event. We are extremely grateful to all the islanders who helped out so much with all the organising, from the food to flowers and from providing the entertainment to arranging hen and stag nights!

As usual the Observatory relies on a greater number of people, other than those that work here, to function successfully. It is impossible to thank everyone, however a few deserve a special mention here. As already mentioned the Northmen and Kenny Stout carried out several building and plumbing repair jobs throughout the season and a heartfelt thankyou goes out to them. Malcolm Adamson put in many hours caring for the generators and his help is always much appreciated. Robert and Fiona Mitchell at Stackhoull Stores must be thanked for supplying us with the essentials for life . . . (often outside opening hours), for a cheerful Post Office . . . (often inside (!) opening hours) and for friendliness and advice . . . anytime! A big "Thankyou!" is also due to: Jimmy Stout and the crew of the Good Shepherd IV for passenger and freight services; Florrie Stout for help with bookings and cruise-ship arrangements; Dave Wheeler for web-site maintenance and regular weather

reports; Patrick Ross-smith for his plastering skills and maintenance of the boiler and Iain Stout for looking after the Observatory sheep . . . alive and once dead! Also, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Directors for allowing us to use the Observatory for our Wedding. It was a fantastic occasion, made all the better by being able to share it with so many of our friends and family.

Finally, it just remains for us to thank those organisations who provided much appreciated financial assistance (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Scottish Natural Heritage and the British Trust for Ornithology) and all those who have contributed records to the daily log and articles, photos and vignettes to this report. Credits are due to the following for vignettes: Steve Turner (European Honey Buzzard, Gyr Falcon, Slavonian Grebe, Little Bunting); Paul French (Northern Gannet, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Cuckoo, European Robin, Rosy Starling); Mattias Petterson (Citrine Wagtail) and Oliver Slessor (Great Skua chick).

It has been a hard but enjoyable season, not made any easier by having a small child crawling round the place, but we are gluttons for punishment and are expecting another one in May 2001!! We are looking forward to continuing to improve the facilities within the Bird Observatory and also have plans for the trapping areas. If you visit Fair Isle in the next few years, you will hopefully be able to see some of the changes for yourself.

The National Trust for Scotland, 2000

Alexander M. Bennett
Conservation Manager

Fair Isle is gaining a reputation; not a bad one, but one where concern for their environment place is at the forefront of the drive to protect its marine and terrestrial environment. There is a clear determination by the community to think of the 'big picture' and to look to the future rather than short term gain. These efforts have been stimulated by two major events. The renewal of the European Diploma for the third time, its fourth diploma, with its constituent resolutions centred round the marine environment and the implementation of the two-year transitional 'Safeguarding Our Heritage' supported by the ERDF in Article 10 Northern Periphery Program (NPP).

Activities in the environment are numerous, with a move to designate the area currently under the SSSI designation as a special area of conservation (SAC), to afford more protection to the land. However, in its drive to protect the land, the authorities seem to be missing a trick in taking the opportunity to extend this SAC designation into the sea surrounding Fair Isle, which is so important in supporting the breeding sea-bird populations on land. To date, the authorities have a poor record on marine protection, as can be seen from the struggle to protect fish stocks and the difficulties that control measures bring. Whilst it may be understandable that the authorities may not wish to go head long into marine protection, it is I hope, inevitable in the long run. In the meantime we, the NTS and the Fair Islanders, will continue the struggle to persuade the authorities of the absolute need for protection of the seas as well as the land.

Being a keen bird person, it is always tempting to ramble on for hours about birds on Fair Isle, especially since during a visit in the summer I was inundated by Arctic Terns at the aerodrome. They had one of their most successful breeding seasons ever, which is good in respect that it confirms that their food source seems to be safe, well this year anyway. Hopefully the continuing partial ban on sand-eel fishing will continue to help support these bird populations. However, that's enough on birds by me, I'll leave the 'experts' to deal with the nitty gritty of bird migration, breeding success and another three 'firsts' for Fair Isle.

As for developments *down the isle*, its been an interesting year with the disappointing news that the windmill system continues to be dogged by faults, with the resultant shutting down of the 60 kilowatt aero-generator on the Houll. Despite efforts to repair the alternator, it has again broken down and continues to be a problem. This has been compounded by gear- box failure on the 100-kilowatt aero-generator and is really giving the new electricity company a testing time. However, Fair Isle's commitment to renewable energy is unabated and efforts continue to get

the system up and running. This will not only give the electric company piece of mind, but to allow the islanders to enjoy cheaper, green energy.

The building program continues and after the successful completion of Setter, the Northmen moved on to renovate Quoy. This is now complete and Stuart and Triona Thomson have moved back into a much-improved environment. The Northmen then moved onto a difficult one – Houll croft house. The Trust had a dilemma; do we demolish and rebuild, or do we try and adapt the existing house, not that there was much of the original croft house left. In the end the decision was easy – demolish and take the opportunity to build a new, *environmentally sensitive* house. At the time of writing work is well under way and some people may think the Trust has finally lost it's marbles and chosen to build blue houses on Fair Isle. Not so, this has been an opportunity to build a new style of house based on tradition, but designed for the 21st century. I am sure that Brian and Mary Wilson will enjoy living in it, but whether the islanders and visitors alike can live with a blue house in their midst is another matter. Only time will tell.

As you grow to expect with the dynamic community, there has been quite a considerable movement within the population. Michael and Cathy Stout and the family from Barkland have moved back to Shetland. A new nurse, Claire Johnson and her husband Andy with their two children, Callum and Danielle have moved to take up residence in North Shirva. And of course, as many of you will know, Hollie and Deryk at the Observatory were married in August. The Trust is now moving towards letting the vacant croft at Barkland, which to all accounts will attract a good deal of interest.

As for the future, well, the building program moves on to tackle the South light-house buildings, where we hope to build in three flats, two workshops and some storage space. This is in addition to the newly founded Fair Isle Silver Company taking occupation of the old garage buildings. Clare Scott of Taft set this up during the year and has established an early reputation of originality of designs and a quality product. Again, this demonstrates what makes Fair Isle special in its ability to nurture such talent and allow it to develop and establish itself as a basis of a vibrant community.

Report on causes of death in wild birds on Fair Isle in 2000

Jason Waine

Staff and visitors at the Bird Observatory, Fair Isle have been saving the carcasses of wild bird casualties for post-mortem examination for the past six years as part of a continuing investigation into the disease states and causes of death in wild birds. The information obtained has built up into a valuable database. In the last two years the project has suffered a couple of set backs with, in 1999, a freezer full of specimens breaking down causing the loss of all its contents, whilst last year (2000), a parcel containing a substantial number of specimens was delayed in the post, again resulting in total loss of the contents. Despite these setbacks, however, thirty-four bodies were received in a fit state for autopsy.

Table 1 is a list of all birds received, including those on which no examination was carried out and Table 2 lists the birds autopsied in order of the causes of death. Including those “lost in the post” a total of 58 birds were received with representatives from 7 orders (Procellariiformes, Pelecaniformes, Anseriformes, Gruiformes, Charadriiformes, Piciformes and Passeriformes), 20 families and 35 species. The most commonly represented species were Common Guillemot (7 birds), Blackcap (6 birds) and Arctic Tern, Common Starling and Water Rail (each with 3 birds). Unusual species included a Corn Crake, a Long-tailed Duck and a Jack Snipe. Of the 58 birds four were already ringed. Causes of death were dominated by trauma incidents with 13 collision injuries (including 4 road accidents, 1 that had hit a fence, 1 possible netting collision and 2 birds that had completely empty gastrointestinal tracts and therefore, probably significantly low blood sugar), and 4 cases of predation (3 by cat and 1 by raptor). Starvation/migration stress also featured as a common problem with 12 birds affected in this manner. Unusual cases included a Common Snipe with a fungal infection of the lungs (pulmonary aspergillosis) and a liver infection – probably by a bacterium called *Yersinia*. A Willow Warbler with a parasitic disease of the heart muscle together with a Herring Gull with a kidney tumour were also notable.

Table 1: Birds Received

Species No.	Latin Name	Age	Sex	Date Found	PM No.
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
European Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	adult	M	no data	no pm
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	2yo	F	26-05-00	no pm
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	juv	F	no data	01-03-43
Corn Crake	<i>Crex crex</i>	3	M	29-09-00	01-03-32
Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	adult	M	06-11-00	01-03-28

Species No.	Latin Name	Age	Sex	Date Found	PM No.
Water Rail	Rallus aquaticus	3	F	07-11-00	01-03-29
Water Rail	Rallus aquaticus	adult	M	30-10-00	01-03-30
Eurasian Oystercatcher	Haematopus ostralegus	adult	n/k	17-03-00	no pm
Jack Snipe	Limnocyrtus minimus	3	F	20-09-00	01-03-33
Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	adult	M	18-07-00	01-03-34
Great Skua	Catharacta skua	pullus	M	18-07-00	01-03-35
Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	adult	n/k	17-03-00	no pm
Herring Gull	Larus argentatus	adult	F	17-12-00	01-03-36
Great Black-backed Gull	Larus marinus	adult	n/k	14-03-00	no pm
Black-legged Kittiwake	Rissa tridactyla	adult	n/k	26-06-00	no pm
Arctic Tern	Sterna paradisaea	juv	M	17-07-00	01-04-28
Arctic Tern	Sterna paradisaea	adult	n/k	20-06-00	no pm
Arctic Tern	Sterna paradisaea	juv	n/k	10-07-00	no pm
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	M	02-11-00	01-03-37
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	n/k	03-12-00	01-03-38
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	n/k	03-12-00	01-03-39
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	adult	n/k	03-12-00	01-03-40
Common Guillemot	Uria aalge	imm	F	15-11-00	01-03-42
Little Auk	Alle alle	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Black Guillemot	Cepphus grille	pullus	n/k	09-07-00	no pm
Black Guillemot	Cepphus grille	pullus	n/k	09-07-00	no pm
Atlantic Puffin	Fratercula arctica	adult	n/k	12-06-00	no pm
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocops major	adult	n/k	20-06-00	no pm
Sky Lark	Alauda arvensis	3	M	20-10-00	01-03-26
Pied Wagtail	Motacilla alba	adult	M	03-07-00	no pm
Meadow Pipit	Anthus pratensis	3J	n/k	26-06-00	no pm
Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	3J	M	09-09-00	01-04-56
Hedge Accentor	Prunella modularis	3	F	24-10-00	01-04-52
Northern Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe	3J	n/k	29-06-00	no pm
Northern Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe	adult	M	05-09-00	01-03-31
Redwing	Turdus iliacus	3	F	22-10-00	01-04-27
Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos	3	M	24-10-00	01-04-29
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	3	F	16-09-00	01-04-21
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	3	F	30-10-00	01-04-22
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	3	M	26-09-00	01-04-23
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	3	F	23-10-00	01-04-24
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	3	F	23-10-00	01-04-25
Blackcap	Sylvia atricapilla	adult	M	14-09-00	01-04-26
Common Whitethroat	Sylvia communis	adult	n/k	28-05-00	no pm
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	adult	M	23-09-00	01-03-44
Eurasian Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus	adult	M	25-09-00	01-03-45
Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	3	n/k	18-10-00	01-04-57
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	3J	n/k	13-06-00	no pm
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	adult	n/k	no data	no pm
Common Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	3	F	07-11-00	01-04-55
Eurasian Siskin	Carduelis spinus	adult	M	25-09-00	01-04-53
Reed Bunting	Emberiza schoeniclus	3	M	21-09-00	01-03-27

Table 2: Causes of Death

PM No.	Species	Age	Sex	Causes of Death
01-03-44	Eurasian Reed Warbler	adult	M	primary starvation (migration stress); secondary pneumonia
01-03-45	Eurasian Reed Warbler	adult	M	primary starvation (migration stress)
01-03-43	Long-tailed Duck	juvenile	F	primary starvation
01-03-37	Common Guillemot	adult	M	primary starvation
01-03-42	Common Guillemot	imm	F	primary starvation
01-03-31	Northern Wheatear	adult	M	primary starvation (migration stress)
01-04-53	Eurasian Siskin	adult	M	primary starvation
01-04-24	Blackcap	imm	F	primary starvation (migration stress)
01-04-25	Blackcap	imm	F	primary starvation (migration stress)
01-04-52	Hedge Accentor	imm	F	primary starvation; secondary pneumonia & predation (cat)
01-04-54	Chaffinch	adult	M	primary starvation and exposure
01-04-57	Willow Warbler	3	n/k	primary starvation; secondary enteritis; incidental parasitic myocarditis
01-03-26	Sky Lark	3	M	collision injuries
01-04-27	Redwing	3	F	collision injuries
01-04-56	Barn Swallow	3J	M	collision injuries
01-03-28	Water Rail	adult	M	collision injuries (road accident)
01-03-29	Water Rail	3	F	collision injuries (road accident)
01-03-30	Water Rail	adult	M	collision injuries (road accident)
01-04-28	Arctic Tern	juv	M	collision injuries (road accident)
01-04-26	Blackcap	adult	M	collision injury to beak; secondary starvation
01-03-33	Jack Snipe	imm	F	collision injuries (fence)
01-04-29	Song Thrush	3	M	collision injuries
01-04-22	Blackcap	3	F	collision injuries; hypoglycaemia
01-04-23	Blackcap	3	M	collision injuries; hypoglycaemia
01-03-27	Reed Bunting	3	M	predation (cat); low blood sugar
01-03-32	Corn Crane	3	M	predation (cat); secondary pneumonia
01-04-55	Common Starling	3	F	predation (raptor)
01-03-35	Great Skua	pullus	M	concussion from blow to head; incidental parasitic gastritis
01-04-21	Blackcap	3	F	haemorrhagic enteritis
01-03-36	Herring Gull	adult	F	nephroma; injuries to proptagial ligament and ventral abdomen; secondary starvation
01-03-34	Common Snipe	adult	M	pulmonary aspergillosis; secondary hepatitis
01-03-38	Common Guillemot	adult	n/k	no diagnosis
01-03-39	Common Guillemot	adult	n/k	no diagnosis
01-03-40	Common Guillemot	adult	n/k	no diagnosis

In order to help further this project, would any visitors finding any dead birds, please take them to the staff at the observatory and supply details of when and where the body was found together with any known history.

Trip durations of Gannets on Fair Isle

Sue Lewis

The northern gannet is the largest seabird in the north Atlantic and returns each summer to breed in a small number of colonies that range in size from a few pairs to over 60,000. The single egg is incubated for six weeks, and chicks fledge at 13 weeks of age. As part of my PhD at the University of Durham, under the supervision of Keith Hamer, Sarah Wanless (CEH Banchory) and Tom Sherratt, I am studying the foraging patterns of gannets between colonies of different sizes. In the summer of 2000, a number of people including Alan Bull, Chas Holt and Diana de Palacio from Fair Isle Bird Observatory, helped me collect data from nine colonies of markedly different size around the UK and Ireland (see Figure 1). Given that there may be greater competition for food around large gannet colonies than small ones, one might expect gannets to have to travel further from large colonies to obtain enough food for the chick.

At each colony, we carried out field observations of 20 pairs of gannets during the chick-rearing period. The arrival and departure of a bird was recorded for each pair. This is straightforward because gannets are noisy and conspicuous. When a bird arrives at a nest the pair greets one another with a 'fencing' display, and birds point their bills skywards prior to departure. From these data on arrival and departure times, the average length of time birds spent at sea can be calculated. This is called trip duration.

Fair Isle gannets made trips of approximately nine hours on average. Previous work on gannets by Keith Hamer, using satellite telemetry, has shown that there is a close link between trip duration and foraging range. Using this relationship, gannets on Fair Isle had an average foraging range of 62 kms.

I am currently collating the data on the other colonies. If I find that trip duration increases with colony size, it raises many questions concerning the breeding success at colonies of differing size. Longer trip durations mean fewer feeds for the chick. Can an adult gannet from a large colony compensate for the fewer number of feeds for the chick by bringing back more food per visit? If it

Colony size (pairs)

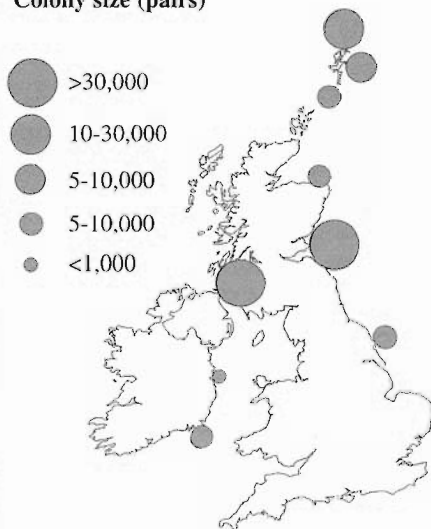


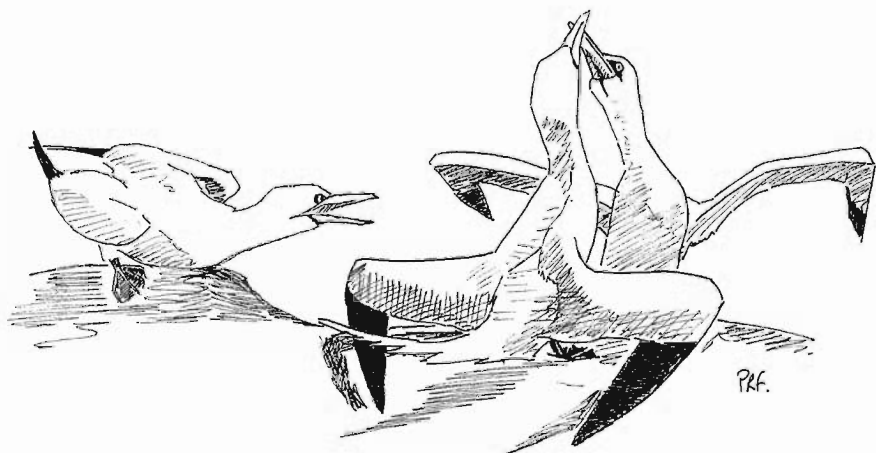
Figure 1: Location of nine study gannetries

cannot do so, then its chick will receive less food overall, so will presumably grow more slowly and may be more susceptible to starvation. Such a relationship may partly explain why small gannet colonies such as Fair Isle are growing in size much faster than large gannet colonies such as Bass Rock or Ailsa Craig.

Many thanks to the following for their kind assistance with data collection: Paul Harvey, Micky Maher, Chris Rodger and Andy Upton (from SNH), Deryk Shaw, Alan Bull, Chas Holt and Diana de Palacio (from Fair Isle Bird Observatory), RSPB, Scottish Seabird Centre, Tracey Begg, Jenny Bull, Catherine Gray, Mike Harris, Linda Milne, Kelly Redman and Bernie Zonfrillo. Thanks to Oscar Merne, Alyn Walsh, Martin Smyth and Lynda Smyth for support in Ireland. Thanks to Jane Hill and Robert Moss for advice, and finally a big thanks to Francis Daunt for his help throughout.

Sue Lewis

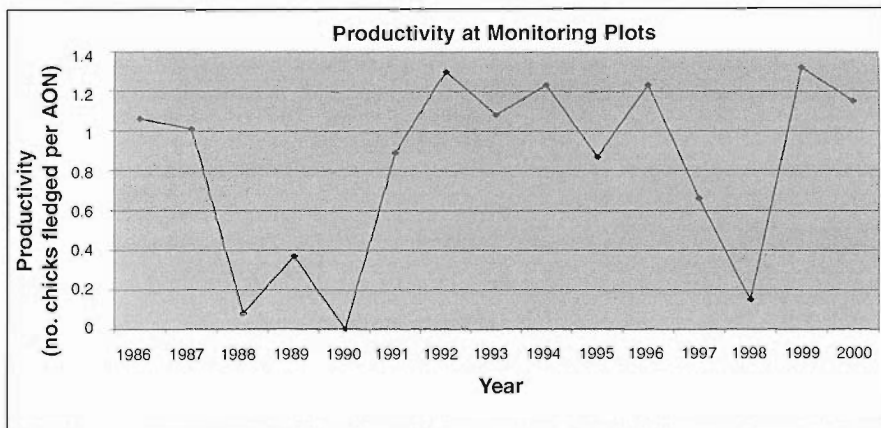
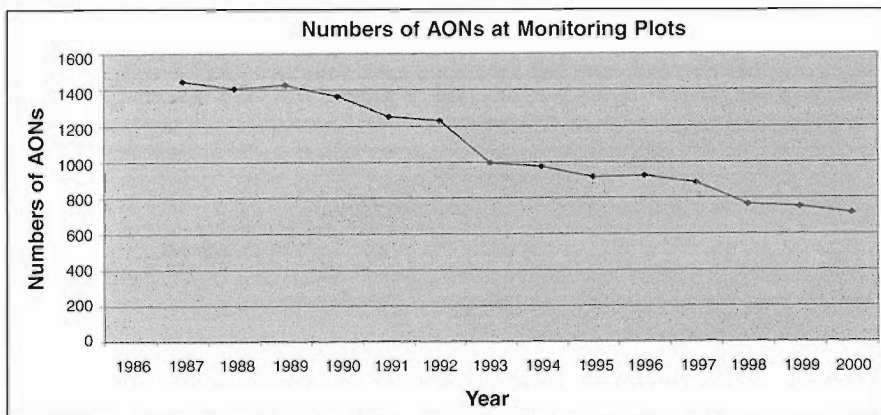
Department of Biological Sciences, University of Durham,
South Road, Durham DH1 3LE.



Northern Gannets

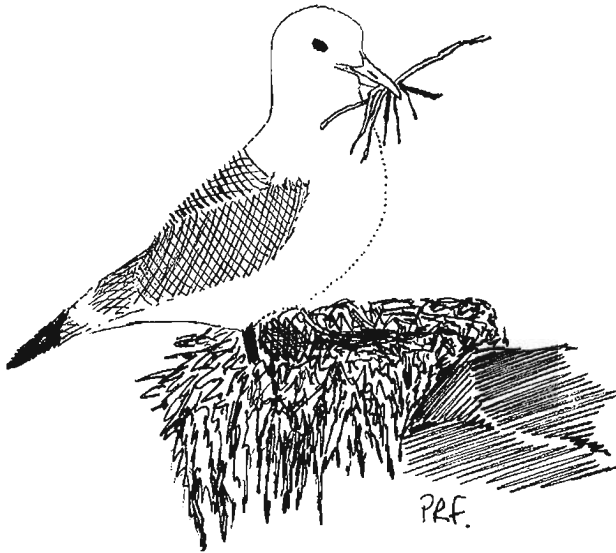
The Decline in Numbers of Kittiwakes on Fair Isle

Black-legged Kittiwakes *Rissa tridactyla* are an important component of the marine avifauna in northern seas. These small surface-feeding gulls have high foraging costs and a high risk of predation of unattended eggs and chicks, characteristics that make them very sensitive to changes in prey abundance. The Kittiwake has therefore often been used as a bio-indicator to monitor changes in the marine environment. Since 1986 FIBOT has followed the number, breeding success and the survival of colour-ringed adults of Fair Isle Kittiwakes under contract from JNCC as part of their Seabird Monitoring Programme. The first detailed analysis of these results has now been made by seabird workers at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (formerly ITE).



The numbers of Kittiwakes on Fair Isle declined at a rate of approximately 6% per annum between 1987 and 1999. Breeding success over this period was extremely variable but averaged 0.81 young reared per Apparently Occupied Nest (AON). Average annual survival of adults between 1986 and 1996 was 86.0% with no significant annual differences. Survival in 1997 (51.6%) was significantly lower and preliminary estimates for 1998 suggested that survival was again low. The data suggested a 20% survival from fledging to recruitment (much lower than similar estimates from elsewhere) and an age of first breeding of 4-5 years. Incorporating these values into a simple population model indicates that the Fair Isle colony will decline by a further 13-48% over the next three seasons.

More details of this study can be found in a paper by Peter Rothery, Mike Harris, Sarah Wanless & Deryk Shaw 'Colony size, adult survival rates, productivity and population projections of the Kittiwakes on Fair Isle' due to be published in *Atlantic Seabirds* during 2001.



Black-legged Kittiwake

Fair Isle has long been an ideal place to study migration and to see many common, unusual and rare birds. This has lured many eager ornithologists to its shores and eventually resulted in the setting up of the Bird Observatory. Here one of the earliest visiting birdwatchers to the Observatory remembers his trip . . .

Fair Isle . . . Shetland, Scotland 1950

Michael Wotton

September 12-15: Lerwick and its noisy herring gulls fell behind as the local bus carried us south across rolling Shetland moors toward Scousburgh. We passed tiny crofts, miniature ponies, stacks of drying peat, lochs and sea islands and at the Spiggie Hotel met a welcoming Tom Henderson. Fair Isle was fifty kilometres away over famously stormy seas.

At the time, the island was a bird-watcher's mecca that only recently had become more reachable. North of the Scottish mainland, half way between the Orkney and Shetland Islands, it was an isolated speck of land with an outstanding reputation as a way-stop for not only migrant birds, but migrants of exciting rarity. Attention had been drawn to it by writings of W. Eagle Clark in the early 1900s, but for years Fair Isle was too remote to encourage wider interest; lack of accommodation for would-be visitors was another difficulty. Following the Second World War, however, private purchase was followed by establishment of the Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust, and in 1948 a director was appointed and a hostel opened in former war-time hutments.

The following day we were due to sail with *The Good Shepherd*, a fishing boat that had long been the island's principal link with the outside world. But in the morning the trip was cancelled. A storm was blowing up, and its fury delayed our departure for three full days.

Within easy walking distance lay the Loch of Spiggie, Spiggie Bay, and moorland edged by fine cliffs and crashing ocean. Unperturbed by the wild waves were flotillas of Common Eiders, a few Long-tailed Ducks, and a sprinkling of Black Guillemots. Equally at home in the teeth of the gale were Northern Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Arctic Skuas and Great Skuas. Winter-Wrens and "hooded" Carrion Crows foraged along the tide-wrack, a Merlin preyed on flocks of Twites. There was a local population of Rock Pigeons which gave every indication of being truly wild stock. The tidal Pool of Virkie hosted Dunlins, Ringed Plovers, Common Redshanks, Common Greenshanks, Eurasian Curlews and (a surprise) two Curlew Sandpipers.

On the third day of our layover the gale reached peak intensity, and lashed the sea

into a torment of driven foam. Then its fury faded, and by late afternoon the crofters of Noss were back to sickle-harvesting their grain. For the fourth time our bags were packed for departure.

September 16: We boarded *The Good Shepherd* at Grutness Pier in early afternoon, and after leaving the shelter of the bay were soon into a heaving Atlantic swell. Bucking and shuddering, occasionally taking on sheets of spray, the little vessel steered under heavy cloud for a still-invisible point on the horizon, storms of rain came and went. Northern Fulmars paced the boat, hung in the air beside us. A few Northern Gannets went by. Four hours later the engines shut down, and we tied up to a buoy in the quiet waters of Fair Isle's cliff-sheltered North Haven. An Arctic Tern dipped and called as we were ferried ashore with a small mountain of supplies.

Over dinner, Ian and Dougal, Pamela and Mary, bird-watchers already on the island, reported that for several weeks the winds had not been favourable for incoming migrants. Other than the brief appearance of an Ortolan Bunting, they'd seen little that was unusual. But as we talked, a light southeasterly air was developing.

September 17-18: The previous evening's breeze intensified overnight, became a full southeasterly gale during the day, and was accompanied by downpours of rain. Traditionally, southeasters are the most certain of Fair Isle's weather possibilities to precede the arrival of interesting migrants, and so despite the rain, each of us inspected favoured locations, and checked the several wide-mouthed Heligoland traps. Birds were beginning to show, but not in significant numbers. There were Whinchat, Garden Warbler, White Wagtail, Grey Wagtail and a few shorebirds. Overnight the wind backed around to the southwest, and throughout the day was accompanied by squalls of drizzle. More birds showed up, some were captured, some only seen . . . Blackcap, Pied Flycatcher, Meadow Pipit, Merlin, Twite, and just possibly an *Acrocephalus*.

Each of us learned the island's geography, names of the crofters' holdings, how to operate the traps, transport captured birds, measure and band them. Getting around was by pedal power and the Observatory's fleet of well-used bicycles; given the island's small size (some 5.6 kilometres long by 2.4 wide) and its limited system of rock and gravel roads, it was a handy arrangement.

September 19: An exciting day! To check the traps before breakfast I made my way south past the crofts of Upper and Lower Stoneybrake, Quoy, Upper and Lower Leogh . . . all two-roomed dwellings with cultivated strips of grain, cabbages, turnips and potatoes in front of each. These food crops, I was told, provided attractive cover for incoming birds; elsewhere, only sheep favoured the open moorland. I passed the ruins of "Ortolan Cottage", once the Fair Isle home of early-day bird enthusiast the Duchess of Bedford, and arrived at the Old Haa, built

as the laird's residence and now a modestly equipped laboratory of the Observatory. I walked the length of a strip of turnips, clapped occasionally, saw a small dark warbler flush then dive into a ditch. It flew again . . . olive above, many black streaks, tail long and rounded . . . a *Locustella*.

Capture was plotted over breakfast, and duly accomplished by gently driving the bird toward a frame-mounted net placed astride the turnip rows. Later, it was pronounced a Common Grasshopper Warbler. The question mark *Acrocephalus* caught in similar fashion was a Reed Warbler; so far north, both were scarce birds. While they were being examined and released I tramped across heather moorland to the top of Ward Hill (at just over two hundred metres, the island's highest point), found two flocks of Snow Buntings, and sheltered from heavy rain as the birds fed and called at my feet. A Red-throated Diver fished below tall cliffs in the Bay of Furse.

With an hour or more to dinner I set out again from North Haven and was free-wheeling downhill past Lower Stoneybrake when I spotted Ian and Dougal driving a turnip patch . . . they'd found a *Phylloscopus* with a small wing bar. I joined them, we urged the bird forward, there was a movement in the mouth of the net and a small olive-green leaf warbler made its escape; as it dropped back into cover we saw a prominent eye-stripe. Captured later, the bird checked out as a Greenish Warbler, the fifth ever recorded in Britain. By then I knew that, remarkably, Ian and Dougal had also seen a male Red-headed Bunting, only the second for Britain.

September 20: With little wind and calm seas it was a time for *The Good Shepherd* to sail for Mainland (the Shetlanders' name for their principal island) with its hold full of sheep, and a disappointed Pamela and Mary who had just missed the Red-headed Bunting. For the rest of us it was our fortune to follow up on the earlier sighting, and after finding the rare visitor at Upper Stoneybrake to watch it at leisure. Striking features were the large size, erect posture, bright yellow rump and underparts, reddish-brown bib and head, a pale steely-blue bill. In subsequent years, caged birds of the species were imported from overseas and seemingly wild individuals were usually discounted as escapes. In the case of the Fair Isle bird, I can only say its plumage was well groomed, the tail feathers which often suffer first in captivity, were in perfect trim.

Still the day's excitements were not quite over. In the Haa garden I came across a confiding and very distinct Common Redpoll, an apparent member of the robust and heavily marked Greenland race. Ian and Dougal captured a rare Marsh Warbler in the Gully trap, and by evening there was again a strong easterly component in the wind direction.

September 21: Yet another good day! Even before breakfast a mystery bird was discovered, an extreme skulker that was expert at keeping itself hidden among the Lower Stoneybrake turnips. Brief partial views were never quite sufficient to

identify it, although the impression was of a small bird whose upperparts were rich chestnut broadly streaked with black, whose head was perhaps striped in some way, whose tail had a shallow fork. A Little Bunting? We'll never know.

Elsewhere, Ian captured a first-winter Bluethroat on Ward Hill, and McKay (who came in on *The Good Shepherd* the previous evening) saw the Red-headed Bunting. But a Barred Warbler that Ian and Dougal flushed went clear away. Working in its pursuit, two of us arrived at Quoy to find Willow and Garden Warblers in the croft's turnips, then a handsome Lesser Whitethroat and, was there something else flitting among the leaf cover? It took off from the last turnip in the row, flew a short distance, and dived out of sight. We'd had time to see a small green warbler with a prominent eye-stripe, a large wing bar, and a shorter one above it . . . a Yellow-browed Warbler.

Under threat of going without if we should be late for a meal, we were back for lunch on time and met by Ken Williamson, director of the Observatory. He'd been unwell since before we arrived, and was just getting on his feet again. Now he held out his hand to show us a small brown bird with buffy underparts, a panel of white on each side of its longish tail. The Red-breasted Flycatcher had spent several hours around the hostel buildings before being coaxed into a trap.

Ian and Dougal left promptly to have time watching the new warbler before an attempt was made at trapping it. When others arrived a little later though, their enthusiasms had shifted to a Common Rosefinch they'd discovered. Each of us saw this rather drab young bird near the Busta and Springfield crofts, and the Yellow-browed Warbler at Quoy was duly captured. Towards evening I drove the Heligoland trap at the Haa and simultaneously caught a Common Whitethroat, Northern Wheatear, White Wagtail, Common Starling, and two Rock Pipits. It had been quite a day.

September 22: Housekeeping chores completed, my morning was spent at the south end of the island. The Red-headed Bunting was still about, a few Willow Warblers and a Garden Warbler showed up, a Jack Snipe flushed, and there was a Tufted Duck near the South Lighthouse. Exploration of new territory took me along the top of the great West Cliffs, down again across Sukka Moor to Vaasetter and an eastside view of imposing Sheep Craig. Almost detached from the island proper, this cliff-girt mass of rock was capped with a steeply sloping sward of grass so valued as pasturage that sheep were kept there year-round; removal required lowering the animals with ropes to a waiting boat. The overlook was a great spot to spend an hour or two watching the sea and the surf, the Grey Seals, the Common Eiders and Black Guillemots, and the easy flight of Northern Fulmars.

September 23: A slow day. With no favourable winds there were few new arrivals. An extensive search of the crofts produced only a single Willow Warbler, Chaffinch, Common Redpoll, and Eurasian Wigeon, plus two Dunlins, and a couple of dozen each of "Hooded" Crows and Rock Pigeons.

September 24: In the morning, I walked to the north lighthouse with the deep-sea diver who, for several days, had worked underwater . . . outfitted in traditional bronze helmet and lead-weighted suit . . . on repair of the North Haven slipway. We passed the Kirn of Skroo, a great pothole where the sea surged in at the bottom, and viewed distant Foula, the diver's home island. By the time we returned the winds had assumed an easterly set and still more birds were expected.

Already, Ian and McKay had found several Lapland Longspurs in a potato field at Upper Leogh, and later, each of us saw them well. Then a second Yellow-browed Warbler turned up at Upper Stoneybrake, and six Northern Lapwings flew over. Yet another Yellow-browed Warbler appeared at Quoy, and a Common Redstart was found well inside the Haa trap's mouth. On our return to the Observatory, we learned that Ian had visited the Gully trap and captured a fourth Yellow-browed Warbler.

September 25: Morning found a fierce northeasterly gale lashing the island, and although I did go out for a short time, it was wasted effort. Binoculars simply could not be held steady. Yet the others, between them, found a Goldcrest, Redwing and Eurasian Woodcock. An optimistic thought prompted a hike to the sheltered West Cliffs, but we found nothing there. The event of the day was a social occasion, afternoon tea with the island's resident nurse.

September 26: This should have been my last day on Fair Isle, but the wind was so strong it left no chance at all for *The Good Shepherd* to sail. Yet there was some bird activity. A few Willow Warblers, a Redwing at Quoy, a Eurasian Siskin at the Haa, four Lapland Longspurs and our fifth Yellow-browed Warbler at Upper Leogh. This last bird behaved perhaps better than any of its kind before, and sat up on the tops of potato stalks giving us ample time to see it well.

September 27-29: Morning arrived with a howling south-westerly gale buffeting the hostel buildings. *The Good Shepherd*, deserted, tossed at its mooring in the North Haven, and even merchant ships sheltered in the lee of the island. The next day the gale worsened, the day after there was more of the same, but by evening things began to improve

September 30: It was not yet six o'clock when lights from an approaching vehicle shone through my window, then I heard voices and the bleating of sheep as the animals were loaded onto *The Good Shepherd*. A quick breakfast, a round of farewells, and soon we were easing out of North Haven. The storm had passed, but there was still an angry sea running. Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars and Northern Gannets were frequent on the crossing, and we were passed by Eurasian Skylarks plus Rock and Meadow Pipits flying low over the waves toward a diminishing Fair Isle.

By the time we reached Grutness Pier the sun was shining. A bus took us back to Tom Henderson's Spiggie Hotel, and we were still eager enough for a walk down to the Loch of Spiggie to see six Whooper Swans gracing its ruffled blue water. Lunch, the trip back to Lerwick, and so aboard the S.S. *St. Clair* for a night run to Aberdeen. Outbound Shetlanders were on their way to South Georgia and whaling in the south Atlantic.

The Luckiest Young Ornithologist

Oliver Slessor

The feeling of privilege as I held the tiny Razorbill chick was immense; placing a tiny metal ring on it's fragile leg, and returning the chick to it's own rock crevice, watching it scurry away. I knew that this bird would now be carrying a unique number; one day someone might find that number and important results would be achieved.

But this is why I came to Britain's best Bird Observatory, to gain vital and very important work experience, experience that would help me so much towards my quest for a career in Ornithology.

The work I was involved in was predominately ringing but I was also involved in survey and census work. I monitored the Guillemots and Puffins, recording how much fish they brought in for their young. This involved waking up at 2:30am! Also, I did number counts of Guillemots and Razorbills on certain cliff-ledges. But most time consuming was to count all the Fulmars on the island! This was a survey that took absolutely ages and many weeks to complete. By using maps of different parts of the island, I would plot the position of specific Fulmar colonies. It was a survey that allowed me to explore the outside of the island, taking in breathtaking scenery, seeing vast cliff faces towering over me, covered in hundreds of Fulmars. The result from the survey; 20,000 Fulmars!

Other census work included recording colour ringed House Sparrows. It's great that House Sparrows are so versatile; you can see them almost anywhere in Britain! Although they are now declining, it is important to see the situation of their population on Fair Isle. I found myself searching around any farm buildings for the chance of seeing a new colour combination. This was very important as we could see exactly how well the Sparrows on the island were doing. By checking all the colour combinations to find out exactly how old the birds are (as many of the House Sparrows are colour ringed on the island when juveniles) we could see if the island is supporting a larger population than it used to.

I also recorded the colour-ringed Kittiwakes, this was great fun, although sometimes difficult; the birds often didn't show both legs and sometimes none at all! It helped when an attacking Great Skua put the birds up, I could occasionally get a glimpse of a red or green ring! Many of the Kittiwakes had no colour combinations, so later in the season we had to catch the 'Zodiac' to the island of Goorn to put new colour rings on them. I absolutely loved going top speed over the sea, with the wind in my face, watching all the seabirds, all with a mission in life, to feed themselves and their young. I saw Northern Gannets being chased by Great Skuas, the Bonxies pulling at the Gannet's feathers, forcing the birds into the sea and thrusting the Gannet's head below the surface, hoping the Gannet would give up its mouthful of

sand eels. I was extremely lucky once as the warden and I spotted 2 Storm Petrels, the first of the year! I had never seen them fishing before, and I could see their distinctive behaviour well, their fluttering flight and the way they paddled the sea, hoping to attract small shrimps and crustaceans! It was great to put new coloured ring combinations on Kittiwakes; great fun using the noose to catch an adult, but I really enjoyed climbing the ladder to ring and process the pulli. As well as collecting food samples from all the other seabirds, we also wanted food samples from the Kittiwakes.

While I was on Fair Isle, I ringed 16 of the 17 species of breeding seabirds, by far the most common ringed were the Guillemot pullus and the Arctic Tern pullus. Many days involved me scrambling down huge cliff faces, panting and sighing, until I landed in an auk colony, the smell was phenomenal – absolutely out of this world, the noise fantastic! I was in the heart of the colony. Here small dumpy, fluffy chicks surrounded me, calling at me, upset and frustrated. They were mostly Guillemots but there were also Razorbills. It was brilliant to use the special Guillemot and Razorbill rings, learning the new ringing process of putting one of these very different rings on. Here we had to work quickly and efficiently, in some of the colonies there were so many chicks, we began filling pillowcases full of unringed birds! We had to check each pullus, as many were too small to ring. We also ringed the adult auks, to get these we had to use a furkler, used to pull the birds by their feet harmlessly towards us.

Also amongst the noise of hundreds of screaming auks was the guttural calling of Shags. Shag pullus were extraordinary looking creatures, very Pterodactyl-like, but downy! They made squeaky calls, unlike their parents; the male highly guttural, the female hissing! Here I also had to check that the young were large enough to ring. Shags take K rings; very large rings that need great pressure to close properly.

On some of the colonies, particularly on a higher elevation than the other auks, Puffins were feeding; to ring these we had to stick our arms down the burrows and bring the chicks and adults out. It was highly exciting to stick your arm down a burrow, not knowing what you would pull out. I was very lucky to ring the Puffin chicks; they are hardly ever seen, staying in their burrow, until they are bigger. Puffin chicks are very peculiar, extremely different to their parents, and very fluffy. Other ways we caught adult Puffins included mist netting them in their colonies, noosing them and placing nets over their burrows. All these methods worked very well.

Many days were also spent visiting the Arctic Tern colonies; it was funny to watch tiny little tern chicks all running away from me in a long line, little feathery bodies on tiny webbed feet! Of all the birds, the Arctic Terns were the most vicious towards you, even with a woolly hat on, the bill penetrating the head was very painful, but who can blame the poor birds. Of all the hundreds of Arctic Tern chicks I ringed on Fair Isle I only ringed one Common Tern, not many breed here;

you could tell the difference by the longer tarsus length of a 'Common' and the different plumage tone.

But the island was also full of many passerines; the first bird I saw on Fair Isle after my journey from Shetland on board the 'Good Shepherd' was an adult female Subalpine Warbler! Great views and a lifer, it reminded me of a Common Whitethroat, although prettier with a distinctive grey head, red orbital ring around the eye and a white moustache! It certainly looked like a Mediterranean species; but what on earth was it doing on Fair Isle?! After a good look I returned later on my own and found the bird again! I loved searching the ditches and dikes hoping I would find a rarity. I managed to see some other rarities; Blyth's Reed Warbler was a real treat – extremely similar to Reed Warbler. It was very useful to have the bird in the hand, identification made easy! Here I could see the much shorter primary projection and the dark black smudge on the lower mandible – this practically impossible to see in the field. Fair Isle is the best place in Britain to see this rare migrant. But also on the same day we caught a Caspian Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus scirpaceus fuscus*, a sub-species of the common European Reed Warbler! There have not been many records of these in Britain; it remains a sub-species, although the Dutch have split it!

But what made my trip was to catch my own scarce migrant. I heard there was a shrike-like bird in the plantation area of the island, my mission to identify it. As I was looking around the vicinity, I noticed a thrush-like bird, with a hooked bill fly into the Plantation, I raced in flushing it down towards the catching box, hand on the cord I opened the trapping box door and the bird flew in. Great! Caught! I darted out and peered through the glass, Red-backed Shrike! For me this was brilliant, to ring a bird that you had never even seen before.

I loved checking the heligoland traps every morning, and in-between other work, it was well worth it. I needed the practice on any species and even a Starling would provide the opportunity to study the plumage and learn more about ageing and sexing. I caught many residential passerines I hadn't ringed before, including juvenile Wheatear, Rock Pipit and Twite. It would be very hard to catch these three species back home in Greater London! I was particularly interested in the Fair Isle subspecies of the Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes fridarensis*; it was obviously much darker and bigger! Easier to identify than the Caspian Reed Warbler!

One of my less exciting jobs but nevertheless important, was to collect the dead seabirds lying on the beach and wrap them up in bin liners for the freezer, to be sent to be autopsied. I was amazed by the variety of dead species; I found three dead Gannets, along with Fulmar, Razorbill and Puffin. In fact we found so many, that the freezer was full, so I decided to bait the Crow Trap! Here I placed the dead Gannets, along with lamb chops! We caught Rock Pipits, Pied Wagtails and Starlings, all after a bit of meat; but much more exciting was an unexpected surprise! On the way back from ringing Kittiwakes in the 'Zodiac', we passed the

Crow trap, and I saw an enormous Gull wandering around. I shouted, "Gull", pointing at the bird; I ran towards the trap, through the door and gently picked the beast up. It was a sub-adult Great Black-backed Gull!

Gull ringing was very important and we had to wait till the right time to ring the chicks. The trouble is Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gull chicks are impossible to tell the difference when very small. When the chicks are larger the feathers are longer and plumage detail is evident. Herring Gulls having freckled inner primaries, where-as Lesser Black-backed Gulls have black inner primaries. It was amazing the size difference between many chicks, some very large; one individual coughed up a dead Razorbill chick! We also ringed a few Common Gull pullus, I hoped they wouldn't be lunch to a Bonxie!

One particular bird that got the adrenalin pumping was an extremely rare British Bird, a bird very rarely heard let alone seen. A Corn Crake had decided to stay on the island while I was there. I had heard news of it and was so shocked that I had to check people were not meaning Shetland. I said, "a Corn Crake! On this Isle!" The time was 11pm; I borrowed a bike and pedalled down to the site where it was seen. After crossing barbed wire and sheep fields I began to hear a faint "*crex crex*, *crex crex*", call, so obvious, as I walked closer the noise grew and was so obviously Corn Crake; just like grating a comb! What an experience, soon I decided to head back as it was getting very late and I had to check the traps early the next morning. It was an adventure cycling back, it started to rain, gradually sheeting down, myself getting absolutely soaked while passing the drumming of Snipe.

I remember that it was on July 1st that we rushed into the warden's van and stormed down towards Midway, scouring the island for a brilliant bird, until we eventually found the striking individual with a flock of Common Starlings. Rose-coloured Starling! What a cracker. The views were great, the pink on the breast and the back stood out tremendously, along with the pink bill and also the prominent black crest. It was so distinctive; confusion would never be a problem! I was extremely lucky to see this, the bird was so off-course; the nearest breeding range of Rosy Starling is Eastern Turkey! Also I was incredibly pleased it was a gorgeous adult male, often you only see the drab juvenile! It just proves that on Fair Isle anything can turn up at any month of the year!

It had just gone midnight. My hand went into the bird bag, I felt for the bird, then got the bird into the Ringer's Grip. Yet the bird I was to pull out was an extraordinary bird, a bizarre looking bird, a Storm Petrel! As I held the lovely seabird I felt touched by it's gentle appearance, the tubenose was fascinating – used to filter out the seawater. It was incredible to think such a small delicate bird spent its life in the stormy oceans! Here I used A2 rings, special rings, designed to be strong against the sea, being tougher, these were harder to close than other rings. The Petrel family breed later than the auks so along with the Storm Petrels I also ringed

the adult and pullus Fulmars. These were great fun, they coughed disgusting smelly gunge made of digested fish matter, all over me, but I didn't care. Here we had to noose them like the Kittiwakes. It was funny to see the pullus birds attempting to cough over me! I had nothing to fear!

Of all the birds I ringed my favourites had to be the Skuas. I can picture it; there I was ringing an Arctic Skua chick while under heavy attack from its parent. I wandered around their territory hearing the loud 'Whoosh' just above my head; highly territorial! It was unusual to get a nip from a tiny Skua chick; they are so brave so quickly. Along with the Arctic's were the almighty Great's; Great Skuas have a nasty reputation amongst the other seabirds, they can kill almost anything! The chicks though looked harmless, until I felt a nip! It was great using H rings, using the process of dipping the ring to properly shut it. You could really see how the birds were designed for a life as a predatory seabird. A huge bill ending in a sharp point, large thick legs with webbed feet and sharp claws. What was so strange was the sandy coloured appearance of the young, so different in colour to the brown adult birds. Coming back from auk ringing I was lucky enough to see a sub-adult Long-tailed Skua. Unfortunately it had no long tail, but was still a fantastic sight, smaller than Arctic with a bouncier flight, also a much darker, blacker cap. It stayed for a few days and congregated with the Arctic's on the airstrip, here I got a good comparison.

The hardest seabirds to find to ring were the Black Guillemots. As well as the low population, compared to the other seabirds, it was difficult to find the nest sites and hard to get to them. I found myself up a ladder taking a couple of small chicks from their deep, dark, murky nest site before ringing and processing them. I think they must be some of the loveliest looking chicks, sooty black with a bright red gape.

I was so overjoyed working at Fair Isle Bird Observatory, I have had the best time of my life, and the Warden's job is beyond my imagination. To have birds all around you, and not know what to expect was extremely exciting! I learnt so much – improving my ringing, identification and learning new field skills that Observatory Wardens commit themselves to. It has certainly helped me tremendously towards my Ornithological career. May I thank all the Ornithological staff and islanders for making my stay so fantastic!

I can really see why John Harrison loved this island with its rich birdlife, it is the vast combination of a variety of seabirds and passerines, many common, many rare, that give Fair Isle that Magic Quality, not to mention the most beautiful scenery and friendly people, it is like nowhere else in Britain! I really hope many young ornithologists hear of this superb scheme, it really can do wonders for you! I have already encouraged friends to be JHMF volunteers before it is too late!

I can't wait to go back to the birdwatcher's paradise!

Oliver Slessor

(Fair Isle June/July 2000)

ORNITHOLOGY

MONTHLY SUMMARY

Hywel Maggs

The monthly totals of species recorded were:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
37	43	66	112	140	99	74	116	156	130	100	40

January

A quiet start to the year featured a selection of waders including single Northern Lapwing, Purple Sandpiper and 15 Common Redshank on the 1st. A female Merlin was also present on the 1st and was seen again on the 7th. Thirty-four Twite on the 9th was a monthly peak, with double figure counts regular throughout. Northern Lapwings had increased to three by the 10th followed by single Grey Herons on the 11th and 17th. A Carrion Crow passed through on the 13th and a Black-headed Gull on the 15th was the month's only record of this species. Passage began to pick up towards the month's end with a Water Rail at Skerryholm on the 22nd and nine Greylag Geese on the 24th, of which four had been present since the beginning of the month. The long staying immature Whooper Swan was recorded throughout and a Meadow Pipit arrived on the 26th. The following day, a Skylark was the first of the year followed by single Redwing and Goldcrest on the 28th. The month came to a close with the most notable influx on the 30th when Mallards had increased to 22, a female Common Goldeneye was in North Haven and wader numbers increased, with 100 Ruddy Turnstone and two Eurasian Curlew. Thrushes were represented by three Common Blackbirds and two Fieldfares, whilst eight Snow Bunting were also present.

February

The month kicked off with one of the best birds of the year. A majestic white morph, immature male Gyr Falcon was found in the vicinity of South Harbour on the 3rd before settling at Burrashield, sheltering from the cold north-westerly wind. The bird remained until the 16th, and spent its second week ranging over the south of the isle, during which time it was seen taking rabbits and chasing Rock Pigeons. Wildfowl on the 5th included a drake Eurasian Teal on Easter Lother Water, seven Mallard, 60 Common Eider and eight Black Scoters at North Light. Single Great Cormorants were in North Haven on the 5th and South Harbour the following day. Merlins increased to two between the 9th and 11th, on which date Iceland Gulls reached a monthly maximum of five together in South Harbour. Sightings of this species were regular throughout the month and involved at least four first-winters and a single second-winter bird. Glaucous Gull records were more sporadic and usually involved singles, although two first-winters were present from the 10th to 11th. Forty Snow Buntings arrived on the 15th followed by a European Robin at

the Observatory from the 18th to 20th. Two Common Blackbirds were present throughout and towards the month's end wader numbers increased. There was an influx of 20 Northern Lapwing on the 24th, followed by 40 Common Redshank, 120 Ruddy Turnstone and 40 Eurasian Oystercatcher on the 28th. Fifty Skylarks were recorded on the 28th and on the final day of the month a Song Thrush was seen at the Observatory.

March

An unsettled month began with records of white-winged gulls; two Iceland and one first-winter Glaucous Gull were present on the 1st. Single Iceland Gulls were recorded on a further five dates until the 17th and single Glaucous Gulls were seen on the 3rd, 28th and 29th. The first week was generally quiet, with the most noteworthy movements involving Common Guillemots and Razorbills returning to the cliffs on the 7th. The earliest ever Short-eared Owl arrived on the 9th, as did 12 Mallard and two Long-tailed Duck while Ruddy Turnstone numbers peaked at 110. Returning seabirds continued to feature through the first half of the month, with many Black-legged Kittiwakes on ledges on the 11th. Also on this date a pair of Common Ravens were nest building and a female Stonechat was at Schoolton. Single Stonechats were present on five dates during the rest of the month. Two male Red-breasted Mergansers in South Harbour were the first of the year and 300 Great Black-backed Gulls was a peak count on the 14th. Typically early migrants were 90 Northern Lapwings on the 17th with displaying birds noted by the 21st. Four hundred Skylark and a Long-eared Owl were highlights on the 18th with the latter remaining until the 21st. The following day saw the arrival of an early Common Chiffchaff, followed by a Water Rail on the 20th and 12 Whooper Swans on the 21st. Passage on the 28th was represented by three Eurasian Teal, six Black Scoter and single Hedge Accentor, Black Redstart and Eurasian Collared Dove. A lone 'Bonxie' returned on this date, as did the first Atlantic Puffins. Gentle passage continued with single Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Northern Wheatear, Mistle Thrush, and six Common Chiffchaffs on the 29th. Thrush movements involved 30 Common Blackbirds and 12 each of Fieldfare and Redwing on the 29th followed by a European Goldfinch on the 31st.

April

The month was dominated by winds from the north-east, however a period of easterly veering south easterly produced the most notable passage from the 18th. Eight Black Scoter were off South Light on the 2nd and a first-winter Iceland Gull remained from the previous month. A second-summer bird was a long stayer throughout April, often commuting between South Harbour and Hjukni Geo. Waders were noted on the 5th with 34 Ringed Plover followed by the only Jack Snipe of the spring the next day. Small waders were certainly on the menu for the three Merlin and Peregrine Falcon present on the 6th. A Eurasian Jackdaw on the

7th was the month's only record of the species prior to *corvid* movements on the 11th. Ducks on the 9th were represented by four Long-tailed and seven Eurasian Teal. An early arrival on the 9th was two Arctic Skuas preceding the main influx of breeders from the 21st. Another early migrant was a Willow Warbler on the 11th. *Corvid* passage on this date involved 29 Common Ravens, three Rooks and three Carrion Crows. A count of 230 Skylark was also noteworthy on the 11th. As north-easterlies continued to increase during mid-month, two Glaucous Gulls (first and second-winters) paused briefly on the 13th when Eurasian Oystercatcher numbers reached a spring maximum of 190. Forty-five Common Redshanks on the 14th preceded counts on 17th of 160 Eurasian Curlew, a Green Sandpiper at Wester Lother, 90 Mew Gull, Short-eared Owl, Black Redstart and a Hawfinch at Setter. Winds decreased and swung round to the east on the 18th resulting in a period of new arrivals. A fly over Red-Throated Diver was calling and an impressive male Hen Harrier hunted the airstrip area. Other raptors included two Eurasian Sparrowhawks and the first Common Kestrel of the year. More year ticks came in the form of a Whimbrel and Grey Wagtail. Sixteen White Wagtails also passed through and 50 Hedge Accentors were grounded. The 18th was the first day of notable finch passage, with 90 Brambling, two Hawfinch and 33 Chaffinch logged. Four Reed Bunting and three Yellowhammer also featured. The 19th was a sunny day with light south-easterlies and 'birds in'. An early morning trap round was very productive with the highlights being a Great Grey Shrike and Long-eared Owl. Another four Long-eared Owls were seen over the course of the day as was the first Barn Swallow. Two Common Moorhens were at Lower Leogh and one was found at Setter. Forty-one Common Wood Pigeons was a respectable count and a fall of European Robins totalled 500. Common Chiffchaff and Goldcrest numbers were also up, with counts of 35 and 25 respectively. The greatest influx during this period involved thrushes: Song Thrushes reached 500, 170 Common Blackbirds were present, Redwings peaked at 180 and 50 Ring Ouzels was an above average spring count. The 20th saw the earliest Fair Isle record of Subalpine Warbler, with a female trapped in North Grind during the afternoon. New in were Common Redstart, Tree Pipit and Fieldfares, with 400 on Hoini. Southerly winds prevailed on a warm and sunny 21st when 220 Northern Wheatears were seen around the island. Gulls on the 22nd included ten Lesser Black-backed and a first-winter Glaucous. The year's first Common Sandpiper was in Hesti Geo and a Common Greenshank arrived on the 22nd. *Hirundines* appeared during north-easterlies on the 23rd. Five Sand Martin, a Whinchat, another Hawfinch (remaining the next day) and a male Lapland Longspur were highlights. A *littoralis* Rock Pipit was at the Observatory on the 25th and Common Starling numbers swelled with migrants, reaching 700. A female Eurasian Marsh Harrier favoured the north on the 27th, 28th and 30th. It was seen hunting Common Snipe at Dronger on the latter date. There was no shortage of this prey species during this period, 36 were counted on the 28th along with 36 European Golden Plover also present. The first

Lesser Whitethroats, Common Whitethroats and Pied Flycatchers passed through from the 28th, but bird of the month was a Dartford Warbler, found on the 29th. This first for Fair Isle remained around Lower Leogh until the months end before heading north. During Dartford viewing on the 30th, a Common Shelduck flew over Malcolm's Head, disappearing out to sea. Ninety Bonxies were holding territory by the 30th.

May

May was a month of two halves. High pressure produced warm, sunny skies until 16th, with a number of associated rarities. The second two weeks thereafter, were disappointing. Scotland's second ever Dartford Warbler was still present on 1st and was seen on the Hill Dyke near Gunnawark. Eighty-five Purple Sandpipers, 26 Whimbrel and the female Eurasian Marsh Harrier from April were also present. The years only Horned Lark sighting was a group of five at North Light 1st-2nd. The second-summer Iceland Gull was present from the 1st-23rd and was joined by another on the 16th. Single European Goldfinches were noted on the 3rd, 4th and 7th- 9th, while a run of Subalpine Warblers featured the female (trapped on the 20th April) again on the 3rd, followed by two males, one in the south from the 7th-11th and the other on Vaasetter on the 14th. A Rough-legged Buzzard, Osprey and 35 Black-headed Gulls went through on the 4th, on which date a Hoopoe was flushed from Easter Lothar and performed well around the Wirvie Burn. The first Bluethroat arrived on the 7th, a nice male at Auld Haa and Skerryholm. There followed regular sightings of this species throughout the rest of the month. Other attractions on the 7th were four Black Redstarts, three Common Redstarts, four Whinchats, a Stonechat, 250 Northern Wheatears, a Wood Warbler at Easter Lothar and a Common Quail in the Walli Burn. Morning fog cleared on the 8th to reveal two Common Swift, ten Sand Martin and passage of 90 Carrion Crows. Weather improved dramatically over the following week with bright, sunny and warm days. Winds turned to the south-east and some top birds showed up. A Red-rumped Swallow showed well in South Raeva, before turning up at the Observatory during lunch on 11th, the sixth record for the Isle. A Pallas's Rosefinch of unknown (but presumed suspect) origin began a six-day stay on 12th. Initially found at Busta it spent the majority of its stay at the Observatory (after being trapped). Unfortunately it was thought to have been taken by a Eurasian Sparrowhawk on the latter date. Britain's ninth and Fair Isle's third Calandra Lark was at Shirva on 13th being three days earlier than 1999's individual. It never looked entirely settled and eventually left the Island sometime during the late afternoon. Overshadowed by this amazing find were single Eurasian Wryneck, Wood Sandpiper and Eurasian Dotterel. South-easterlies continued and 140 Barn Swallows, 40 House Martins, nine Tree Pipits, a Common Buzzard and the months second Osprey featured on the 14th. Britains earliest Blyth's Reed Warbler was trapped in Double Dyke on 15th bringing back further memories of 1999. An Ortolan Bunting showed well at Shirva on the 15th

and remained the following day. A male Stonechat showing characteristics of one of the eastern races was mobile on the 16th, when another Common Buzzard passed through. A pair of Garganey the next day was the seventh record for the Island. A weak low-pressure system took over and winds turned to the west, inevitably passage slowed. Despite generally low numbers of common migrants, a selection of scarcities were seen. Two late Common Goldeneyes and the months third Osprey are worth a mention for the 20th. A Golden Oriole began a five-day stay from the 21st and on one occasion was seen flying around the Observatory garden. Two Sandwich Terns arrived on the 22nd, followed by a first-summer Eurasian Hobby and another Common Quail on the 23rd. A brief 'puff' of south-easterly on the 25th brought a very short- staying Greater Short-toed Lark on Meoness along with a Eurasian Wryneck and Corncrake. Late birds on the 26th included a Northern Bullfinch, Eurasian Tree Sparrow and Hawfinch. Winds now veered to the east and resulted in a fall on the 27th. Highlights were three Bluethroats, four Icterine Warblers, ten Spotted Flycatchers and five Red-backed Shrikes. The following day twenty Garden Warblers, a Wood Warbler and an increase to seven Bluethroats were logged. Bluethroat bird-days reached 36 by the end of the month. A Spotted Redshank was the lone spring record on the 30th and on the final day of the month an un-streaked *acro* at the School turned out to be a Marsh Warbler.

June

Southerly winds moved around to the north-west during the first three days of the month, with rarity highlights including the springs fourth Subalpine Warbler; a stunning male was present at Barkland between the 1st-3rd. Five Common Whitethroat were scattered around the south during the opening day of the month and a first-summer Eurasian Hobby perched on fence posts around the Houll. Red-backed Shrikes were still present and two were seen on the 1st followed by singles on a further seven dates until the 22nd. Five Great Cormorant, ten Dunlin and a Long-eared Owl on the 3rd preceded two days of north-east to south-easterly winds. On the 4th, Bluethroat, Grey-headed Wagtail, two Sedge Warblers, a late Redwing and the months only Common Rosefinch were new in. This singing male red Rosefinch favoured the Shirva area and was enjoyed by many. A more elusive bird was a Thrush Nightingale found at the Mast. One lucky observer watched the bird inside one of the buildings before it disappeared and was not relocated, despite a thorough search. Over breakfast on the 6th, a Bonxie pursued an Osprey as it flapped its way past the Observatory. Winds were now set in the west and passage involved nine Eurasian Collared Doves, two Tree Pipits, a Marsh Warbler, three Willow Warblers and four Spotted Flycatchers on the 9th. Forty Barn Swallows and 15 House Martins kept the long staying Eurasian Hobby occupied on the 10th and an un-seasonal Fieldfare was also present. However, bird of the day was a female Subalpine Warbler, found in North Haven, taking the spring total to five individuals. The springs second Blyth's Reed Warbler was found at Midway on the 12th. Views

were typically brief, so the bird was eventually trapped. Staff, visitors and islanders (namely Jimmy 'Myers' Stout) enjoyed in the hand views on the doorstep of Midway. Another un-streaked *acro* was trapped on the 12th in the form of a very interesting Eurasian Reed Warbler. It exhibited various features possessed by the eastern race *fuscus*. The bird remained around the Observatory until the 16th, then was re-trapped at the plantation on the 27th and still present at the month's end. A Bluethroat and Whinchat were more regular migrants on the 12th. A Eurasian Hobby at the Wirvie Burn on the 13th was probably the long-staying bird and was seen again the following day. During mid-month, a severe south-westerly storm washed out many nesting seabirds. European Shags and Razorbills were most affected, with many nests on the West Cliffs being lost. Another Marsh Warbler turned up on the 15th and a late Water Rail was in Gilsetter. An Icterine Warbler was feeding in bushes at Barkland on the 17th-18th and after a short-lived spell of south-easterly, there were a number of fresh migrants. The 19th produced six Common Swifts, Sandwich Tern (until the 25th) and a second-summer Long-tailed Skua. The skua was first seen whilst returning from seabird work in Wester Lothar, then settled at the airstrip until the 22nd. On the latter date, Eurasian Collared Doves reached 14 and Lesser Black-backed Gull passage involved 70 birds on the 30th.

July

A relatively quiet passage month meant emphasis was on seabird work. A foggy start with light north-easterly winds saw continued presence of the Eurasian Reed Warbler showing characteristics of the eastern race. Also on the 1st, an adult Rosy Starling joined a group of Common Starlings at the Chalet, but was gone the following day. Two Common Crossbills were present on the 3rd, but more un-seasonal were a Water Rail and a female Red-backed Shrike at the Plantation. Waders were beginning to trickle through with 26 Eurasian Curlew and six Ruddy Turnstone on the 3rd, followed by two Ruff on the 9th. An un-seasonal Redwing flew out of the Gully on the 12th and Common Redshank numbers had reached 70 by the 18th. Thirteen Black-headed Gulls passed through during the 18th, but the best bird was a male Red-necked Phalarope on Easter Lothar Water. It remained for the day and showed extremely well amidst the fog of the early evening. An equally obliging individual was a first-summer Glaucous Gull at the Observatory on the 21st. It was often seen competing with Herring Gulls for food scraps put out by kitchen staff and remained until the month's end. A report of another all white bird came from the crew of the Good Shepherd, when an albino Atlantic Puffin was seen just outside North Haven on the 20th. European Storm-petrel trapping resulted in the ringing of 567 birds during the month. Seven Leach's Storm-petrels were caught between the 22nd and 30th. By the 23rd, Eurasian Oystercatcher numbers peaked at 170 and 70 Mew Gulls pre-empted the main passage at the beginning of August. Pressure increased and winds turned to the south-east. A blanket of fog hung over the Isle for the final week of the month. Waders continued to arrive, with

11 Purple Sandpipers on the 24th and three Common Greenshank by the 27th. Unseasonal records were a male Blackcap on the 24th and a Common Rosefinch at the Observatory on the 28th. As the fog cleared, migrants on the 30th included single Common Kestrel, Sanderling, Wood Sandpiper, two Ruffs and nine Common Swift.

August

Variable winds were light to moderate for the majority, with a spell of wet and windy weather from the south east towards the months end. Two hundred and seventy Mew Gulls were roosting on the 1st and wader passage was evident with 50 Ruddy Turnstone on the 2nd, one Wood, three Green and five Common Sandpipers on the 3rd followed by 13 Ruff on the 11th. Two Leach's and 156 European Storm-petrels were trapped during the 8th and a Sooty Shearwater was sighted from North Light on the 11th. The first autumn rarity arrived on the 14th in the form of a first-winter Citrine Wagtail. It remained in the Chalet/Barkland area until the 16th. The first Eurasian Wryneck was seen on the 14th followed by singles on the 23rd and 26th, two on the 28th and four on the 27th. After light south-easterlies swung around to the north-east a fall involved 250 Northern Wheatears on the 15th. Four Common Shelducks were on Buness the following day and two Red-throated Divers were also logged. Scarce migrants included Marsh Warbler on the 17th and 18th followed by nine Common Greenshank and two Wood Sandpiper on the 19th. A Greenish Warbler was associating with Willow Warblers at Springfield during the 19th, followed by another from the 27th-29th (trapped at Upper Leogh and relocating to Setter) with a third bird from the 28th-30th. Two were even seen feeding together at the Chalet on the 28th! An influx of passerines featured two Wood Warblers on the 19th, Icterine Warbler on the 20th and a Black Redstart on the 25th. Single Common Rosefinches were present on seven dates with two present on the 26th and single Barred Warblers on eight dates with three on the 21st and two on the 19th and 30th. Passage during the 27th included a Red-backed Shrike, Corncrake, Common Cuckoo, 35 Eurasian Teal, two Gadwall, 60 European Golden Plovers, three Tree Pipits, Yellow Wagtail, five each of Spotted Flycatcher and Common Redstart and 16 Pied Flycatchers. Winds were in the north-east during the 28th, producing three Green Sandpiper, seven Eurasian Wigeon, 500 Meadow Pipits, 200 *Alba* Wagtails, 200 Twite, 60 Willow Warblers and two Common Grasshopper Warblers. Two Red-backed Shrikes were present between the 28th and 30th. Passage of 25 Whinchats, 12 Eurasian Reed Warblers, two Common Kestrels and a Short-eared Owl was also noted during the 30th. A Northern Pintail was new for the year on the 31st, when a Corncrake and Goldencrest were also seen.

September

With a promising weather pattern developing, the month was set to produce some potentially noteworthy records. Although the prolonged spell of easterly winds did

not quite produce a plethora of rarities, there were highlights throughout. Scarce migrants were abundant with single Eurasian Wrynecks on four dates and two on the 1st-2nd. Barred Warblers were seen singly on fourteen dates with two on the 2nd, 4th and 12th. Three Red-backed Shrikes on the 1st preceded singles on seven dates. Common Rosefinches were almost daily, with six being the highest count on five dates. A Booted Warbler was found at Setter on the 1st and remained the following day. On the 2nd, a Citrine Wagtail showed briefly on Meoness during the afternoon and 65 Whinchats were typically obliging. A Spotted Redshank on the 4th was overshadowed by rarities. Firstly, an Arctic Warbler was at Aesterhoull followed by the earliest Fair Isle record of Lanceolated Warbler, trapped in the Gully. After processing, the bird showed extremely well outside the New Plantation, before climbing up the mesh and disappearing into the undergrowth. A Grey Wagtail and Marsh Warbler were seen on the 5th. The latter species was seen again, singly on the 6th and 12th. During strong south-westerly winds on the 7th, two Manx Shearwaters, 26 European Storm-petrels, a Leach's Storm-petrel and a Balearic Shearwater flew past South Light. The latter species is a first for Fair Isle and Shetland. Attention was focussed on the sea the next day when 86 'Bonxies', 8 Arctic Skuas, 83 Black-legged Kittiwakes, 48 Common Guillemots, a Manx and 33 Sooty Shearwaters passed. A second Booted Warbler turned up on the 10th and was trapped at the Observatory. This worn adult bird was later seen on Dronger! Other noteworthy records on this date include a Greenland Redpoll from 10th-17th. The month's second Lanceolated Warbler was at Setter on the 11th and two were present on the 12th. One was trapped in the Gully and the other was elusive in the Meadow Burn. Single 'Lanceys' were seen on the 15th and doubles again on the 16th and 17th. Four to five individuals were thought to have been involved during the month. A ringtail Hen Harrier was second place to a stunning adult Red-throated Pipit, which joined Meadow Pipits at Skerryholm on the 12th-15th. Little Buntings became a usual sighting from the 12th with four seen on the 17th. Six Ruffs, a Grey Plover and 18 Pied Flycatchers featured on the 14th but another Arctic Warbler stole the show at Schoolton until the 15th. Almost as rare were seven *hrota* Brent Geese past Meoness on the 14th, the first record since the 26th December 1997. An Osprey went through during the 15th and a Eurasian Hobby began an eight-day stay. Ducks featured on the 15th with 78 Eurasian Wigeon and 33 Eurasian Teal favouring the Field area. A Eurasian Dotterel was also found on the 15th and remained until the 25th. Two Bluethroats were present on the 15th, 20th and 25th. Ortolan Buntings were daily from the 16th with a count of three on the 23rd being a maximum. Two hundred Northern Wheatears dropped in on the 17th followed by a movement of 80 Lesser Black-backed Gulls and 650 Meadow Pipits on the 18th. Two Great Northern Divers were also on the move during a sea-watch on the 18th. Corncrakes were seen singly on the 18th, 21st, 26th and 29th. Lapland Longspurs were regular with up to forty present on the 19th. The autumn's third Citrine Wagtail was seen during bad weather on the 20th when Garden

Warblers reached a respectable 60. A Common Quail was sitting tight on the 20th and remained until the 23rd. During strong south-easterlies on the 21st a day list included 90 Pink-footed Geese, 95 Barnacle Geese, four Little Stint, 100 Common Snipe, three Arctic and one Sandwich Tern, Common Cuckoo, 80 Tree Pipits, six Common Grasshopper Warblers, 18 Eurasian Reed Warblers, two Common Crossbills, 250 Blackcaps and a Spotted Crake. The following day 16 Spotted Flycatchers took a back seat to a Great Snipe found near Barkland. Red-breasted Flycatchers were seen on the 22nd, 25th and 26th. A second Red-throated Pipit was elusive on the 23rd and 65 Common Redstarts were counted. The European Honey Buzzard invasion reached Fair Isle with two struggling in strong winds on the 23rd. Singles also passed over on the 18th and 27th. Probably a different Great Snipe was flushed from Boini Mire on the 24th when 11 Common Kestrel, 95 Dunlin, 150 Song Thrush, 360 Eurasian Siskin and 180 Snow Bunting were also present. During the prolonged period of strong south-easterlies the majority of migrants were sheltering on the West Cliffs and on the 23rd, 200 each of Goldcrest and Chaffinch were new in. Back on flat land 12 Jack Snipe were flushed. A Greater Scaup was present in South Harbour on the 26th-27th, and 15 Ring Ouzel plus 32 Reed Bunting were present on the 28th. Yellow-browed Warblers peaked at five on the 28th but had been regular from mid-month. Flight views of a 'Lesser' Golden Plover on the 28th were insufficient to assign it to a specific species. The month came to a close with the continued presence of an Olive-backed Pipit, initially found at the top of Troili Geo on the 25th. Records of this species continued to the 30th and on the 29th, two were present: one at Schoolton and the other at the Kirn o' Scroo.

October

The month was dominated by low-pressure systems from the south-west, however there were some prolonged periods of south-easterly winds, resulting in some impressive falls. The month began with the continued presence of Little Buntings, with two on the 1st and 2nd followed by singles on a further eleven dates throughout the month. A Red-backed Shrike began a five-day stay from the 1st and a Yellow-browed Warbler was also seen. During the 2nd there were some exciting finds with the autumn's third Red-throated Pipit at Pund (remaining until the 7th – trapped on the 6th), an Olive-backed Pipit and a positive identification on the 'lesser' Golden Plover that had been present during late September. The bird showed well on Vaasetter and was assigned to the Pacific species (remaining until the 12th). Scarcities on the 2nd included two Yellow-browed Warblers, Sooty Shearwater and two Ortolan Buntings, one of which remained throughout the month. A fall of common migrants on this day saw the arrival of 450 European Robins, 40 Common Redstarts, 29 Whinchats, 20 Common Chiffchaffs, 35 Tree Pipits, 300 Bramblings, 25 Reed Buntings, 3 Grey Wagtails, 100 Twite, 60 Snow Buntings and 100 Barnacle Geese. Single Yellow-browed Warbler and Sooty

Shearwater were seen on the 3rd, as were 15 Jack Snipe, 140 Chaffinches, 70 Eurasian Siskins and two Great Northern Divers. The best find on the 3rd involved a second Olive-backed Pipit, to take the day count for the species to two. A first-winter Glaucous Gull roosted during strong winds on the 4th, followed by the arrival of a Bluethroat and Great Grey Shrike on the 5th. The latter performed well at Springfield, and was watched predating Meadow Pipits. A Common Quail was flushed on the 5th and remained the following day, as did two Ortolan Buntings. The European Golden Plover flock reached 108 on the 5th and five Common Kestrels was a monthly maximum. Fifteen Whooper Swans passed through during the 6th and three Richards Pipits were present on the 7th. The latter species was well represented throughout the rest of the month, with two on the 8th and singles on fourteen dates. One of the birds of the month was discovered on the sea during the 8th and remained until the 15th: an immature Mute Swan (fifth Fair Isle record) which spent most of its stay around the South Light and may have died on the last date it was seen. Also noteworthy were two Slavonian Grebes in Furse during the 8th. The 9th was a relatively quiet day involving sightings of another Sooty Shearwater, a Greenland Redpoll, nine European Greenfinch, 15 Barn Swallows and a late Common Swift. Roosting gulls on the 10th totalled 3000 Herring and 2000 Great Black-backed. A Long-eared Owl and 135 Ruddy Turnstone also featured during the 10th. The years second Greater Short-toed Lark was found at Setter on the 10th followed by singles on a further five dates and two on the 12th. Eight-hundred Song Thrushes and five Black Redstarts were grounded on the 11th, when an adult Iceland Gull paused briefly in the north. A fall of Goldcrests on the 12th totalled 140 and included two each of Red-breasted Flycatcher and Yellow-browed Warbler. Two Great Northern Divers and seven Lapland Longspurs were also recorded on this date. A quiet period between the 13th and 19th saw highlights of a Red-breasted Flycatcher (13th), three Common Linnets (14th), five Short-eared Owls and a Pallas's Leaf Warbler (16th), 79 Hedge Accentors and a late Barred Warbler (17th). On the 19th a third Olive-backed Pipit was seen briefly in the north, then again in the trapping area later that afternoon. A very late Arctic Tern was in the Havens on the 20th. The 21st was a memorable day indeed when a fall involved 200 Blackcaps, ten Eurasian Woodcock, 35 Ring Ouzel, late single Willow Warbler and Pied Flycatcher. By far the best bird of the fall was a first-winter female Brown Shrike trapped during the morning. It was released at the Plantation and remained for the rest of the day, but had departed by the 22nd. A Great Grey Shrike arrived on the 22nd and was present until the 24th. The biggest thrush fall of the year occurred on the 23rd with counts of 13000 Redwings and 500 Common Blackbirds. Also included were five Stonechats, three European Goldfinches, a late Common Grasshopper Warbler and a Common Moorhen (remaining until the 25th). Four Yellowhammers on the 25th was the month's highest count. A fourth Olive-backed Pipit was found on the 26th and favoured the Dutfield area until the 27th. Two late Common Redstarts

were also recorded on the 26th. Fieldfares peaked at 260 on the 27th and before the month's end there was still time for 12 Little Auks and a White-throated Dipper (trapped) on the 30th.

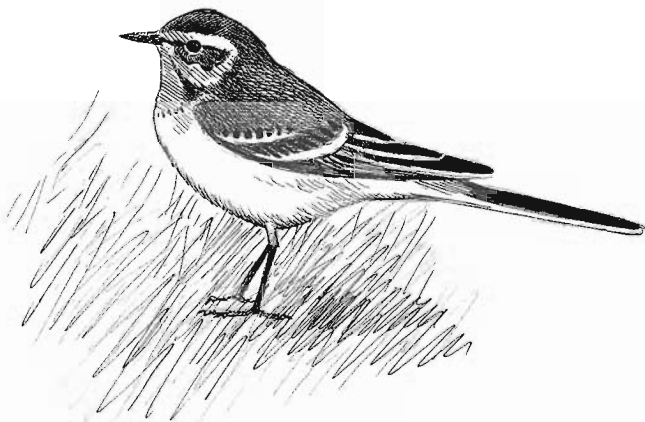
November

Winds were variable through the majority of the month, and often involved an easterly component. A sunny start with south-easterlies saw finch passage including 43 Chaffinches and two European Greenfinches on the 1st, followed by two Mealy Redpolls on the 2nd. Buntings also featured on the 1st, with individual Lapland, Ortolan (remaining from October), Little Bunting and Yellowhammer. A Glaucous Gull was present for a seven day period from the beginning of the month and during the 2nd, ten Eurasian Woodcock arrived and two late individuals were a Garden Warbler and Northern Wheatear. The winds turned north-easterly on the 3rd and the sun was still shining. Seventeen Hedge Accentors, two Black Redstarts, 15 Blackcaps, 18 Goldcrests and 14 Bramblings were new in followed by 60 Greylags, Ring Ouzel, 17 Common Ravens and a White-throated Dipper (the individual trapped in October) on the 4th. Sea watching was rewarding during the 5th, with a Great Northern Diver, 21 Little Auks and a male Goosander. Back on land, a very late Common Rosefinch was at Leogh and a strikingly pale bird was identified as a leucistic Eurasian Collared Dove. Sea duck on the 7th involved two Long-tailed and a female Black Scoter. A first year male Greater Scaup began an eleven-day stay on the 8th, and was trapped on the 18th. Passerines on the 7th included 50 Skylarks, a Eurasian Jackdaw and a particularly late Common Redstart. Mealy Redpolls were present singly to the 12th, however two were present on the 8th. Eight Great Cormorants and a Tufted Duck on the 9th were soon forgotten when an Olive-backed Pipit was found at Hesswalls the next day. This took the autumn count to 5 individuals. A Rook, Common Linnet and 115 Snow Buntings were also seen on the 10th. The winds turned south-westerly on a sunny 11th, resulting in a fall of thrushes involving 80 Common Blackbirds, 360 Fieldfares, 20 Song Thrushes, 390 Redwings and a Mistle Thrush. This was plenty for the three Merlins to replenish lost energy during the 12th. Single Great Northern and Red-throated Diver were off South Light on the 12th and 45 Purple Sandpipers were on the rocks. Sea-watching remained fruitful the next day with six Little Auks and a grebe species that was probably a Slavonian. Ruddy Turnstone numbers reached 150 on the 14th and 40 Twite preceded a European Greenfinch on the 15th. There followed a quiet period, during which time a male Eurasian Sparrowhawk was a highlight on the 17th. A week of south-easterlies followed, bringing yet more thrushes. Prior to the main arrival, a Common Chiffchaff was seen on the 21st followed by four Water Rails and an adult Iceland Gull on the 22nd. Non-passerines on the 23rd included 15 Mallards, 186 Northern Lapwings, 95 Common Redshanks, 14 Mew Gulls and two Black-headed Gulls. Thrushes were represented by 160 Common Blackbirds, 300 Fieldfares, 500 Redwings and

a Mistle Thrush. Also present on the 23rd were 70 European Robins, four Reed Buntings and a Blackcap. A female Yellowhammer on the 25th required a 'good grilling' and a pair of Common Goldeneye were in Furse on the 26th. Gulls were building in numbers during this period with 5000 Herring and two first-winter Glaucous Gulls being counted on the 26th. The 27th produced a Peregrine Falcon and a Black Redstart to round off a relatively eventful month.

December

The final month of the year saw wintering records of thrushes, Water Rail and of course, the Whooper Swan that had been present all year. A first-winter Glaucous Gull was at Easter Lother Water on the 4th when two Common Guillemots were in the Havens. A late Brambling was at Schoolton on the 6th followed by the two-day stay of a Long-eared Owl, favouring the Plantation. Coverage was minimal during mid-month and it was not until the 23rd when a count of 19 Northern Lapwings was made. On the 24th, a Grey Heron rested for a day followed by un-seasonal thrush numbers on the 25th. One hundred each of Redwing and Fieldfare were impressive winter counts. A flock of Greylag Geese were present through much of the month, peaking on the 28th at 30 and were joined by two Barnacles on the 27th. Other winter wildfowl during the 28th included, two Eurasian Wigeon, a female Eurasian Teal, six Mallard, four Black Scoters and 380 Common Eider off South Light. Waders and passerines were also seen with ten Ruddy Turnstones, 20 Common Redshanks, four Song Thrushes and a Stonechat. This constitutes the first December sighting of Stonechat on record. The year was fast approaching a close, but there was still time for notable sightings on the 29th when 30 Common Snipe, 12 Common Blackbirds, two Skylarks and a Meadow Pipit were recorded. Best of all were single Bohemian Waxwings on 27th and 28th, with three on 29th to bring the year's species total to 203 and round off a most memorable year.



1st year Citrine Wagtail, Fair Isle 16th August 2000.

Mattias Petterson

SYSTEMATIC LIST 2000

Deryk Shaw

A total of 203 species were recorded in 2000, details of which follow. Some species names in the list have been changed to comply with those of the British Ornithologists Union (BOU) which all Observatories have agreed to adopt. Most changes are obvious, however where confusion may be possible, the previous name is included in parentheses.

Status Categories

Vagrant	ten records or less in the past 20 years
Rare	11–40 records in the past 20 years
Scarce	averaging 10 records or less per annum
Regular	averaging 11–40 records per annum
Frequent	averaging 41–500 records per annum
Common	averaging more than 500 records per annum

Breeding Categories

Small Number	on average, less than 100 pairs per annum
Moderate Numbers	on average, 101–1000 pairs per annum
Large Numbers	on average, more than 1000 pairs per annum

Species considered by the British Birds Rarities Committee (BBRC) are followed by a statement as to whether records have been accepted or are under consideration.

RED-THROATED DIVER *Gavia stellata*

Regular migrant, mainly late spring and autumn

Occasional summer-plumaged individuals flew over the isle on five dates from April–June and two on 16th August. In the autumn, birds were occasionally seen on seawatches – singles on seven dates with a maximum count of three on 23rd September.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER *Gavia immer*

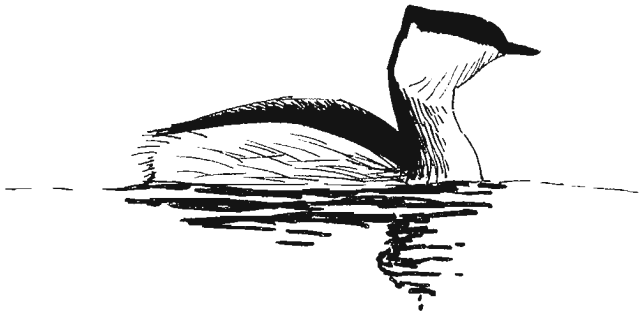
Scarce autumn migrant

All birds reported were seen on seawatches in the autumn; one on 17th & two on 18th September, two on 3rd & one on 12th October and singles on 5th & 12th November.

SLAVONIAN GREBE *Podiceps auritus*

Scarce autumn migrant

Two frequented Furse on 8th October and a grebe off South Light on 13th November was probably this species.



Slavonian Grebe

NORTHERN FULMAR *Fulmarus glacialis*

Resident; breeds in large numbers

Numbers at monitoring plots bucked the recent trend by showing a 19.2% increase from 1999. Productivity was also above average with an average of 0.45 chicks fledged per Apparently Occupied Site being the highest recorded since 1995. A whole island census however, revealed 20,424 AOS, which is a massive 52.9% decrease since the last count in 1996. Interestingly, a similar rate of decline has been noted on Foula, 40 miles to the north. 'Blue' individuals were recorded in April and August and an apparent albino on 6th September.

SOOTY SHEARWATER *Puffinus griseus*

Frequent autumn migrant

One past North Light on 11th August was the only sighting until 31st August. There were occasional records of 1-4 during September apart from a count of 33 in strong winds on 8th September. Three singles in early October with the last on 9th.

MANX SHEARWATER *Puffinus puffinus*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

Strong winds on 7th & 8th September produced sightings of one and two respectively from South Light.

BALEARIC SHEARWATER *Puffinus mauretanicus*

The first record for Shetland was seen from South Light on 7th September by a large group of sea-watchers. Unfortunately, this bird was not accepted by the Shetland records committee.

EUROPEAN STORM-PETREL *Hydrobates pelagicus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers but non-breeders common

As usual most birds recorded were those trapped during ringing sessions in July and August. Late July and early August produced regular catches over 100 and over

200 on two dates. Seawatching on 7th & 8th September produced counts of 26 and two, respectively. Three from the *Good Shepherd* crossing on 16th September were the last records of the year.

LEACH'S STORM-PETREL *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*

Scarce migrant, summer and early autumn

Birds were trapped during European Storm-Petrel netting sessions, resulting in nine birds being caught and ringed. Three birds were seen on the nights of 22nd & 27th July. Additionally, one was seen on the productive seawatch from South Light on 7th September.

NORTHERN GANNET *Sula bassana*

Breeds in large numbers, seen offshore all year

Continuing the slow spread, the breeding population increased by 3.5% from 1999 to 1,162 Apparently Occupied Nests, including four pairs on Sheep Rock. As in the previous breeding season, Gannets suffered in the huge storm which hit Shetland in mid-June; from a total of 196 occupied nests, 16 (8.2%) were lost. A total of 107 chicks reached fledging age giving a productivity of just 0.55 which, although similar to that of 1999, is the worst since 1991.

GREAT CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

Occasional singles were seen in the early part of the year. A very light spring passage was noted in May and early June with a maximum count of five on 3rd June. A single on 8th August preceded regular passage from 30th when 12 were counted. Counts of 1-4 were frequent until 23rd November, with peaks of eight on two dates and a maximum count of 14 on 10th September.

EUROPEAN SHAG *Phalacrocorax aristotelis*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

Counts of nests showed a substantial increase at all five monitoring plots, compared to 1999. An overall increase of 61.4% is a welcome reversal of fortune of a species that had fallen to an all-time low in 1999. Similarly, breeding success at the productivity plot was the second highest, since monitoring began in 1986, at a mean of 1.79 chicks per nest. It should be noted however that this plot is on the east coast of the island and was therefore sheltered from the worst of the south-west gale and high seas on 13th June. The exposed west coast suffered losses of nests estimated to be in the region of 40-50%.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter/spring

Occasional singles at either end of the year but for two on 11th November. Spring passage was as usual light during the first half of May with a maximum

of four on the 3rd. There were occasional mid-summer sightings before autumn passage commenced at the end of July. Counts of 1-5 were almost daily until mid-October.

MUTE SWAN *Cygnus olor*
Vagrant; four previous records

A juvenile, spotted swimming south down the east coast on 8th October, was relocated on the pool at South Light, where it remained until 15th. The fifth island record and the first since three birds in 1996.

WHOOPE SWAN *Cygnus cygnus*
Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Last year's overwintering juvenile remained throughout this year, moulting into adult plumage and befriending the local farmyard geese. Despite having full mobility it appears to have become an island resident. It was joined by an adult from 29th February, which then departed with the only migrants of the spring – a party of 12 – on 21st March. Autumn passage saw groups of 2-14 pass through on just seven dates between 5th and 22nd October, apart from a lone individual on 5th November. A maximum total of just 55 birds.

PINK-FOOTED GOOSE *Anser brachyrhynchus*
Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring

The only spring record was of a single bird which joined Greylags from 25th-27th April. Autumn passage commenced with 11 on 12th September and continued until 16th October with additional lone birds from 21st October-3rd November and a different individual from 5th-23rd November. Counts varied from 3-67 apart from a maximum of 90 on 21st October.

GREYLAG GOOSE *Anser anser*
Common spring and autumn migrant

A party of four arrived on the 1st January, increased to seven on the 3rd and remained until 11th March. They were briefly joined by migrating pairs on four occasions. Passage continued until 25th May with small groups of birds (max. six) resting on the isle for several days at a time. Stragglers or non-breeders were noted on 20th June (four) and 3rd July (nine). The first autumn migrants were 26 on 17th September and passage was daily from 2nd October-14th November with peaks in mid-October and early November. Most counts were below 100 and 200 on 13th October was a maximum count. A party of 11 arrived in late November whilst late December produced parties of 19 and 30.

CANADA GOOSE *Branta canadensis*
Rare spring visitor; fourteen previous records (28 individuals)

Recorded in seven of the last ten years. One on 5th May is the first record since 1998.

BARNACLE GOOSE *Branta leucopsis*

Frequent autumn migrant

The only spring records were a flock of 13 on 11th May and a single bird on 16th June. Autumn migration commenced with 95 on 21st September and continued to mid-October. The peak count was of 100 on 2nd October. A party of six (one bearing an orange darvic ring) rested on the isle from 18th-26th October with one remaining until 1st November. Finally, there was a late December record of two birds on 27th.

BRENT GOOSE *Branta bernicla*

Rare autumn migrant

Seven of the pale-bellied race (*B. b. hrota*) flew north past Meoness on 14th September. The first record since 1997.

COMMON SHELDUCK *Tadorna tadorna*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

Three records. One was seen flying north on 30th April. In August, two were at South Light on 13th and four were on Bunes on 16th.

EURASIAN WIGEON *Anas penelope*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

Recorded in every month except January and February. A pair from 31st March-2nd April were the first of the spring. Four further records in April included the maximum spring count of five on 27th. There were three sightings in May, involving seven birds and seven in June, of three birds. There was a sole July record, of a female on 9th. Autumn passage commenced on 17th August and was almost daily until 13th November with a noticeable peak between mid-September and mid-October. Maximum counts were of 80 on 23rd September and 85 next day. A single on 22nd November and two on 28th December were the last of the year.

EURASIAN TEAL *Anas crecca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant, scarce in winter

There were records from every month except January. A male was on Easter Lothar on 5th February. Main spring passage was from the end of March until early May involving regular single-figure counts (max. seven) and there were occasional singles or pairs in late May, June and July. Autumn passage commenced in early August and lasted until the end of October. Single figure counts were the norm but for an influx of 35 on 27th August and a peak passage around mid-September involving daily counts of 15-33 birds and a maximum count of 60 on 21st September. A single bird and a group of four were noted in November and a lone female in December.

GADWALL *Anas strepera*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 33 previous records (52 individuals)

A pair were seen at North Light on 27th August and possibly the same in the Vaadal Stream on 3rd September.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; breeds in small numbers

The resident seven birds were joined briefly on 30th January by 15 truly wild birds. Spring passage was light with five on 9th March the maximum count. Breeding was attempted by at least two females but only two ducklings were thought to have fledged. Autumn passage was equally negligible with peak counts of 11 on 30th October and 15 on 23rd November.

NORTHERN PINTAIL *Anas acuta*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

No spring records. A female on 31st August, two on 1st September and a further 2-3 singles and a pair in the same month made for a better than average autumn.

GARGANEY *Anas querquedula*

Vagrant; six previous records, all in spring

A pair was seen on several parts of the isle on 17th May.

TUFTED DUCK *Aythya fuligula*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

Spring occurrences involved two pairs and a single female between 29th April-20th May. A male was found freshly dead on 7th May. There was a mid-summer bird, recorded from 14th-17th July. Autumn sightings from 21st September-29th October involved 5-6 individuals and there was a later record on 9th November.

GREATER SCAUP *Aythya marila*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

The first records since 1998 were of one in South Harbour from 26th-27th September and one in Muckle Uri Geo from 8th-18th November. It was trapped on the latter date, ringed and released into North Haven, where it remained until the 20th.

COMMON EIDER *Somateria mollissima*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Present offshore all year. No regular counts were made. The highest count was a flock of 380 off South Light on 28th December. The first young were four broods on 9th June however breeding success was thought to be quite low, mainly due to predation by Great Skuas and large gulls.

LONG-TAILED DUCK *Clangula hyemalis*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

Spring sightings were of a pair on 9th March, singles on two further dates in March, a total of ten birds in April and a pair on 17th May. The first autumn record was one on 30th September then no further sightings until two on 12th October. There were regular records from 16th October-13th November of groups of 1-4, involving approximately 17 birds.

BLACK SCOTER (COMMON SCOTER) *Melanitta nigra*

Scarce spring, autumn and winter migrant

There was a group of eight off North Light on 5th February. Six off South Light on 28th March which rose to eight on 2nd April, with two remaining until 7th April, were the only spring records. Autumn sightings comprised of just one on 1st September and two on 17th, whilst later in the year there was a single on 7th November and four on 28th-29th December.

COMMON GOLDENEYE *Bucephala clangula*

Regular winter, spring and autumn migrant

A female in North Haven on 30th January was the sole record until spring occurrences of males in South Harbour on 11th & 16th April and two on 20th May. October records comprised singles on 8th, 16th & 28th and three birds on 17th. In November, there were sightings on nine dates involving 6-7 birds.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Recorded irregularly throughout the year in ones or twos but for three on 28th-29th June and five on 3rd and 7th October.



Honey Buzzard

GOOSANDER *Mergus merganser*

Rare migrant in winter, spring and late autumn

A male in South Harbour on 5th November was the only record.

EUROPEAN HONEY BUZZARD

Pernis apivorus

Vagrant; 37 previous records

Fair Isle grabbed a tiny piece of the huge influx of this species nationally in 2000 with singles on 18th & 27th September and two on 23rd.

EURASIAN MARSH HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

Vagrant; 26 previous records

A female spent 27th April-1st May on the isle, roosting in Homisdale.

HEN HARRIER *Circus cyaneus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Two records. A male on 18th April and a ringtail on 12th September.

EURASIAN SPARROWHAWK *Accipiter nisus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage commenced on 29th March. There were irregular sightings of 1-2 birds until 22nd May and a late record on 6th June. A light autumn passage from 17th September-29th October involved regular sightings of 1-2 birds and three birds on two dates. Additional singles were seen on two dates in November.

COMMON BUZZARD *Buteo buteo*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Singles on 14th, 16th & 18th May perhaps related to the same individual.

ROUGH-LEGGED BUZZARD *Buteo lagopus*

Vagrant; 38 previous records (40-41 individuals)

One was seen drifting north over Ward Hill on 4th May.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant; 63 previous records

A good spring comprised of singles on 4th, 14th and 20th May and another on 6th June. Autumn provided one on 15th September.

COMMON KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage consisted of singles on 17 dates between 5th April and 21st May. There were sporadic singles from the end of July until main autumn passage from 8th September-21st October. Counts of 1-3 were the norm but seven was recorded on three dates, eight on two and a maximum of 11 on 24th September.

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

1-2 overwintering birds were recorded in January and February. Spring passage was recorded on 13 dates from late March-late April, with stragglers on four dates in May. Mainly singles were involved although two were seen on three dates and there were three on 6th April. Autumn sightings were almost daily from mid-August well into November, involving counts of 1-3 and a maximum four on 26th September.

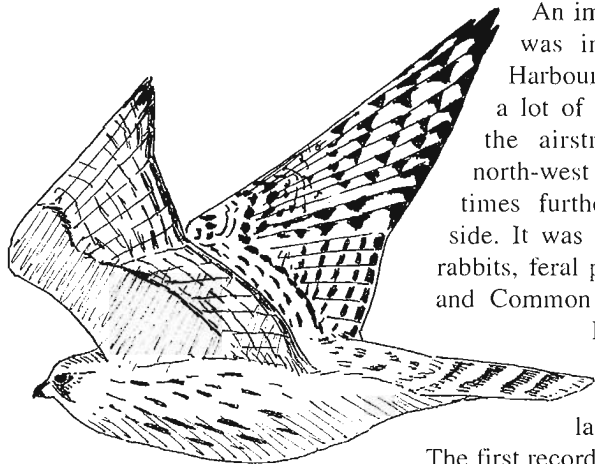
EURASIAN HOBBY *Falco subbuteo*

Vagrant; 38 previous records

A good year. A first-summer bird was seen on 23rd-24th May. In June, further first-summer individuals were seen on the 1st, 9th and 13th-14th. In autumn, one roosted in Busta Geo from 15th-20th September and it or another was seen on 22nd September.

GYR FALCON *Falco rusticolus*

Vagrant; 11 previous records (12 individuals – 8 dark morph, 4 pale morph)



An immature white morph male was initially located at South Harbour on 3rd February but spent a lot of it's fortnight stay west of the airstrip, sheltering from the north-west wind, but was seen several times further south along the west side. It was observed chasing/catching rabbits, feral pigeons, Common Starling and Common Ravens. A freshly eaten Northern Fulmar carcass was also, undoubtedly, one of its victims. It was last seen on 16th February.

The first record since 1982.

Accepted by BBRC

PEREGRINE FALCON *Falco peregrinus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

The first was on 6th April, then on five dates to the 1st May. A male was seen on 22nd June. In the autumn there were daily sightings of 1-2 birds in late August, then again from late September until late October. Additional singles on two dates in November, the last on the 27th.

COMMON QUAIL *Coturnix coturnix*

Scarce spring and summer visitor; has bred

In May, one spent 7th-8th in the Walli Burn area, one was at Meadow Burn on 23rd, whilst another was trapped outside the Observatory on 25th. The first autumn records since 1989 involved birds flushed from Springfield on 20th September, from Kenaby on 23rd September and from Kenaby again on 5th-6th October.

WATER RAIL *Rallus aquaticus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant; occasionally winters

An overwintering bird was spotted at Skerryholm on 22nd January. Spring records concerned singles on 20th March, 14th April, 19th & 26th May and 15th June. One was seen on 3rd July. Autumn records comprised of almost daily sightings of 1-2 birds from 13th September and counts of three birds on two dates. There was a count of four on 22nd November and at least three birds are known to have overwintered into 2001.

SPOTTED CRAKE *Porzana porzana*

Rare migrant, mostly autumn; 35 previous records

One 'spotted' hiding under a bridge, on the burn to Hesti Geo, on 21st September, was the only record.

CORN CRAKE *Crex crex*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; formerly bred

In spring, one was flushed in Homisdale on 25th May and one was heard calling between Kenaby and Quoy on the nights of 21st-22nd June. It was later proved to have been a breeding bird – a nest containing eggs was accidentally destroyed at Quoy when the crop was mown. This is the first proven breeding record since 1966! In autumn, singles were recorded on 18th, 21st & 26th September and one was caught by a cat and kept in care on 27th, released on 28th but was unfortunately found dead on 29th.

COMMON MOORHEN *Gallinula chloropus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Spring records comprised three birds on 19th April and singles recorded on five dates to the end of the month. Probably just four birds in total. The sole autumn record concerned a lone bird from 23rd -25th October.

EURASIAN OYSTERCATCHER *Haematopus ostralegus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also common migrant, spring and autumn

The first returning birds were two on 3rd February increasing to 40 by the end of the month. Passage continued through March with counts varying from 20 – 110. Counts were consistently over 80 (max 190) in April, and around 150 in May. A non-breeding population of 100-130 birds boosted the breeding numbers (40-50 pairs). In autumn, 200 on 5th August was a maximum count and numbers dwindled toward the end of the month to single figures by September. A handful (1-4) was recorded through October and into November, the last being on 23rd. One was seen on 25th December.

RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first returning migrants were four on 24th February, then none until 16 on 1st March. Four on 9th March at North Light included a displaying male. Passage continued through March, peaking at 34 on 5th April and dwindled thereafter until only the breeding birds and odd late migrant remained. Fourteen pairs bred. An unspectacular autumn passage began at the end of July, was heaviest around mid-September, peaking at just 42 on 23rd September and was virtually over by early October. Occasional sightings of 1-2 birds continued through October and into November, with the last on 23rd November.

EURASIAN DOTTEREL *Charadrius morinellus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

A male at Upper Stoneybrek on 13th-14th May was the sole spring record. Likewise, the only autumn bird was a juvenile that frequented Ward Hill from 15th-25th September.

PACIFIC GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis fulva*

Vagrant; one previous record

A much-studied juvenile was present from 2nd-12th October, however a 'Lesser' Golden Plover species seen briefly on 28th September, was probably this bird. It initially frequented Vaassetter but later moved to Meoness. The second record for the isle – the first being on 2nd-3rd July 1992.

Accepted by BBRC

EUROPEAN GOLDEN PLOVER *Pluvialis apricaria*

Common spring and autumn migrant; has bred

The first was on 29th February followed by further singles on two dates in March and three dates in early April before the arrival of ten on 10th April. Small parties infrequently passed through until main passage from late April to mid-May with peaks of 36 on 28th April and 35 on three dates. Low single-figure counts continued until mid-June, the last on 19th. Return passage commenced on 18th July, with records of 1-3 on six dates (involving eight birds) until almost daily passage from 2nd August. Heaviest passage was from mid-September to near the end of October. Counts were mainly between 40-70 birds and over 100 on just two dates, 108 on 5th October the maximum count. Occasional singles were recorded in November, the last on 22nd.

GREY PLOVER *Pluvialis squatarola*

Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring

Just one record, of a single from 14th-15th September.

NORTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus vanellus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also common spring/autumn migrant and regular winter visitor

Low single figure counts were present during the first 7-8 weeks of the year. Migration picked up at the end of February when 20 were counted on 24th, increased through March with maximum counts of 70 on 13th and 90 on 17th and tailed off from mid-April until only the breeders remained by mid-May. Displaying birds were first noticed on 21st March and six pairs bred. Occasional small numbers of migrants were seen in July before almost daily records from August 1st. Single figures were recorded (apart from 26 on the 1st August) until main passage from mid-September to early-October. Counts of 40-50 were frequent and 87 on 28th September was the maximum. Mainly single figures were recorded daily to the end of October and occasionally in November and December but for an extraordinary count of 70 on 22nd November and an amazing 186 the following day.

RED KNOT *Calidris canutus*

Frequent autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Spring records consisted of a single on 7th May, two on 10th and one from 13th-14th May. Autumn passage commenced on 28th July but only counts of 1-4 birds were made on five dates until 24th August, when single figures were recorded daily until 24th September, apart from a maximum count of ten on two dates. Lastly, 1-3 birds were recorded daily from 3rd-10th October.

SANDERLING *Calidris alba*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

Singles were recorded on 13th, 14th & 15th May, two from 24th-25th May and one from 6th-7th June. In autumn, there were intermittent counts of 1-4 birds from 17th July-27th August when sightings became daily, until the last on 24th September. Typically, a peak count of just six was made on two dates.

LITTLE STINT *Calidris minuta*

Regular autumn migrant

One, on the airstrip on 1st September, was the sole record until 1-4 were recorded daily from 20th-24th September.

PURPLE SANDPIPER *Calidris maritima*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; also over-winters

Very small numbers recorded in January/February. Passage slowly built up in March (max. 16), increased in April (max. 80), peaking in early May (max. 90) and tailed off rapidly from 22nd May. No June records. There were two birds on 13th July, then small numbers were recorded regularly from 24th July-21st November but for influxes of 30 on 2nd August, 40 on 13th August and 45 on 12th November. No December records.

DUNLIN *Calidris alpina*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant. Has bred

In spring, one on 21st April was followed by six on 28th, then daily records from 30th May-3rd June involved single figure counts but for 11 on four dates. Counts of 1-4 birds were regular until 16th June, then again from 24th-30th June. Occasional ones or twos were seen from 9th July until almost daily records from 31st July-25th October. Mainly single figures were recorded in August/early September and again in October, but for 19 on 28th August and 24 on 2nd October. Main passage, from 9th-28th September, involved regular counts of 20-40 and peaks of 62 on 22nd, 90 on 23rd rising to 95 on 24th. Additional singles were recorded on three dates in November, the last on 29th.

RUFF *Philomachus pugnax*

Frequent autumn migrant, rare in spring

No spring records. In autumn, two males from 9th-14th July pre-empted daily passage from 26th July-16th August, with maximum counts of ten on 7th August and 13 on 11th. There then followed occasional counts of 1-2 birds until a further light passage from 13th September involved daily records (max. six) until the last on 27th September.

JACK SNIFE *Lymnocyptes minimus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in winter and spring

The sole spring record was one flushed from the Walli Burn on 6th April. Autumn records were from 13th September and single figure counts were daily until the end of October apart from two counts of ten and single counts of 11, 12 and 15 (maximum count on 3rd October). Records of 1-3 were regular throughout November.

COMMON SNIFE *Gallinago gallinago*

Breeds in small numbers. Also common spring and autumn migrant, some over-winter

Present throughout the year. Light spring passage from April-early May peaked at just 36 on 28th & 30th April. Autumn passage was from the end of August, throughout September and October with monthly peaks of 50, 100 and 75 respectively. Numbers remained fairly high throughout November (max. 45) and December (max. 30).

GREAT SNIFE *Gallinago media*

Rare autumn migrant

Now an expected autumn visitor which was recorded for the eighth year in succession; one flushed from Barkland Ditch on 22nd September was seen briefly twice more, as it was flushed from Da Water and The Rippack, before

disappearing. Two days later another, smaller individual, was found in Boini Mire and gave excellent flight views to a gathered crowd whilst a patient few were rewarded later with views on the ground.

Both birds accepted by BBRC as relating to the same individual

EURASIAN WOODCOCK *Scolopax rusticola*

Frequent spring and late autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters

In spring, 1-3 birds were recorded on two dates in March, six dates in April and six dates in May. A very light autumn passage commenced on 25th September, was daily in the second half of October and early November with occasional records thereafter until 22nd November. The maximum count of just ten was achieved on two dates.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa limosa*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Only recorded in spring; singles on 3rd 12th -14th & 16th May and two on 6th June.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT *Limosa lapponica*

Regular autumn migrant, rare in spring

Spring records were comprised of singles on 8th April and 13th-14th May. In autumn, singles on 22nd and 28th-29th August preceded daily counts of 1-3 birds from 8th-25th September and the last, from 28th-29th September.

WHIMBREL *Numenius phaeopus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage commenced on 18th April and was daily from 25th April-10th June with stragglers on a further seven dates in June. Counts were of single figures except during the first week of May when counts in the teens were the norm and 26 on 1st was easily the maximum. Typically, there was barely a noticeable break between the end of spring passage and the start of return migration. Birds appeared regularly, in very small numbers, from 5th July until 6th August and on a further eight dates to the 11th September, with a maximum count of just seven on 3rd August.

EURASIAN CURLEW *Numenius arquata*

Breeds in small numbers. Also frequent spring/autumn migrant, occasionally over-winters

Three birds were seen in January and five in February. Sporadic very small numbers were recorded on five dates in March with main spring passage, involving daily counts of 10-20, occurring in April and early May except for a remarkable record count of 160 on 17th April. Eight pairs bred (equalling the record number

in 1996) and these were augmented by small groups passing through on ten dates in late May/June. The first indication of return migration was a flock of 25 on 22nd June and sporadic single figure counts continued through July (except for 26 on 3rd) and were almost daily during August and September (but for peaks of 16, 20, 27 and 25 respectively). Counts of 1-5 were received on 13 dates in both October and November. Finally, four were recorded on 28th December.

SPOTTED REDSHANK *Tringa erythropus*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

The tenth ever spring record was one in summer plumage on 30th May. The sole autumn record was a single from 1st-4th September.

COMMON REDSHANK *Tringa totanus*

Common migrant in winter, spring and autumn migrant; has bred

An overwintering population of 20-30 in the early part of the year. Migration from late February-early May was very light with peaks of 40 on 28th February, 25 on 18th March and 45 on 14th April. One or two were still recorded daily until 20th May and sporadically through June. Five on 30th June were probably the first returning migrants. Daily passage in July fluctuated from 1-70 (with counts above 20 on seven dates), was heavier in August (counts over 20 on 12 dates – max. 65) and September (daily counts over 20 – max. 62) peaking in October (daily counts over 30 – max. 65) and November (regular counts over 50 – max. 95). Good numbers remained into December and 30-40 birds saw the year out.

COMMON GREENSHANK *Tringa nebularia*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

Spring records were comprised of singles on 22nd & 29th April and 7th & 30th May with a straggler on 3rd July. Autumn passage was almost daily from 27th July-28th August and then again from 18th-29th September. Counts were of 1-4 but for five on 5th August and nine on 19th August. Finally, a very late bird arrived at Hesti Geo on 5th October and finally departed on 14th November!

GREEN SANDPIPER *Tringa ochropus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring records involved singles on 17th, 20th, & 26th April and 9th-12th May. Autumn passage from 26th July involved regular counts of 1-3 birds during August and sporadic counts of 1-2 in September, the last on 25th.

WOOD SANDPIPER *Tringa glareola*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One on 13th May was the sole spring record whilst in autumn, singles on 30th July and five dates in August involved at least three birds.

COMMON SANDPIPER *Actitis hypoleuca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage involved sporadic counts of 1-3 birds from 22nd April-3rd June. Autumn migration was regular throughout August and daily during the latter half of September until the last on 5th October. Counts were of 1-4 except for five on 3rd August.

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Common winter, spring and autumn migrant

Recorded in every month. Peak monthly counts:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
100	120	110	80	54	14	10	50	60	135	150	90

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE *Phalaropus lobatus*

Vagrant; 15 previous records (19 individuals)

One, a male, spent 18th July feeding on Easter Lothar Water. The first record since 1997.

PHALAROPE SPP. *Phalaropus spp*

One reported from the *Good Shepherd* crossing on 1st October was, given the date, probably a Grey Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*.

ARCTIC SKUA *Stercorarius parasiticus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Frequent passage migrant

The first were two on the fairly early date of 9th April and eight displaying birds on 21st, rising to 34 by the 30th, signalled the return of the local breeders. The annual census revealed 65 territories (5.8% down from 1999). Breeding performance too was very poor – an estimated 24 chicks fledged, giving a productivity figure of just 0.37. Predation of large chicks by Great Skua was thought to have had a major impact. Most had departed by the end of August and the last on 12th September.

LONG-TAILED SKUA *Stercorarius longicaudus*

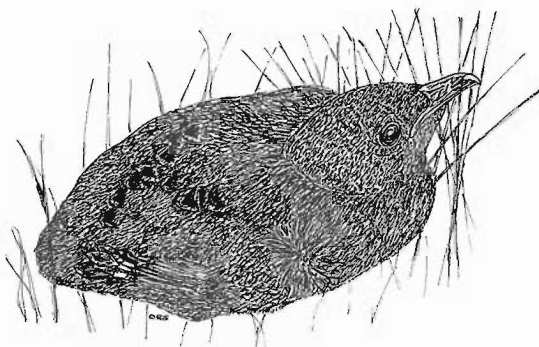
Rare migrant, spring, summer and autumn

A second-summer bird was spotted drifting over Easter Lothar on 19th June. It spent the next few days loafing on the airstrip, before departing on 22nd.

GREAT SKUA *Catharacta skua*

Summer visitor, breeds in moderate numbers. Frequent passage migrant

Present from 28th March, with the main arrival in late April, finally departing on 27th October with occasional birds seen off South Light until 7th November. A total of 135 territories is a slight increase on 1999 (132 territories) whilst a productivity of 0.74 (100 chicks fledged) is slightly down on last year (0.76).



Great Skua Chick

BLACK-HEADED GULL *Larus ridibundus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Single birds were recorded in January & February. Spring passage was very light through March, picked up in April and was heaviest in early May. Peak counts of 19 on 21st April and 35 on 4th May. Single-figure counts were regular through June/early July and daily from mid-July-mid-August but for low double-figures on five dates. There was further light passage from mid-September-mid-October, again of daily single-figure counts. Finally, there were two on 23rd November and one on 29th.

MEW (COMMON) GULL *Larus canus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also, common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers in winter

There were sporadic single-figure records from the first three months and a maximum of ten on 19th March. Spring passage commenced in early April and continued to mid-May with peak counts of 90 on 17th April and 60 on 22nd. Nine pairs attempted to breed and at least six chicks fledged. Small numbers of non-breeders lingered throughout, until 13 on 18th July were the first true sign of returning migrants. Numbers fluctuated daily right up to the end of October and there were several large influxes; 270 on 1st, 250 on 2nd, & 120 on 12th August, 170 on 13th, 150 on 14th, 150 on 21st, 100 on 22nd & 120 on 27th September. Single figures were recorded daily up to the middle of November and occasionally to the year's end.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus fuscus*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first spring bird was not until the late date of 8th April and birds were ever present from then. The breeding birds (only 7 pairs) were augmented by regular

influxes throughout May/June. Peak counts were in late June with a maximum of 70 on 30th. Autumn passage was very light with peaks of 27 on 9th September and 13 on 14th. The last bird was on the early date of 25th September.

HERRING GULL *Larus argentatus*

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

Present throughout the year. As usual, stormy weather caused birds to seek shelter on the isle with counts of 3,000 on 10th October, 1,000 on 6th November and 5,000 on 26th.

ICELAND GULL *Larus glaucoides*

Scarce migrant, winter and spring

Recorded regularly in the early months with a count of five birds (four first-winters & a second-winter) together in South Harbour on 11th February the maximum count. Additionally, there were two from 28th February-1st March, singles on five other dates in March and 1-2 almost daily in April-23rd May involving 4-5 birds. In contrast, autumn records were sparse with adults on 11th October and 22nd November the only records.

GLAUCOUS GULL *Larus hyperboreus*

Regular migrant in spring, late autumn and winter

Records of 1-2 birds were regular in February, on four dates in March and two dates in April involving a total of perhaps ten birds – all first-winters except for a second-winter on 13th April. There was a mid-summer record of a first-summer bird from 21st-30th July. In autumn there were first-winters on 4th October, 31st October-7th November, 26th November (two) and 4th December.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL *Larus marinus*

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

Recorded throughout the year. Storm blown birds occasionally boosted the numbers with several hundred recorded periodically and a maximum count of 2,000 on 10th October.

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE *Rissa tridactyla*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers. Common autumn passage migrant

An adult on 3rd March signalled the return and many were back on ledges by the 11th. A whole island census in June revealed that the long-term decline recorded at monitoring plots is a true indication of the state of the island population. A total of 8,175 Apparently Occupied Nests represents a 29.8% decrease on the 1997 count of 11,650 AONs. An analysis of counts and breeding performance has predicted

that this decline will continue for another three-four years (see page 19). It is not all doom and gloom however – following on from the record year in 1999, breeding success was again high in 2000; an average of 1.15 chicks fledged per AON compares well with an average of 0.87 for the previous ten years, despite some losses to the unseasonal June storms. Adult survival over the 1999-2000 winter (76.7%) was also a vast improvement on the previous two winters.

SANDWICH TERN *Sterna sandvicensis*

Scarce summer migrant

A better than average year. Two were seen on 22nd & 25th May and one on 30th. Further singles were seen on 19th-20th & 25th June and 27th July. Finally, there was an autumn record of one on 21st September.

COMMON TERN *Sterna hirundo*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers

Two on 7th May were the first and breeding birds were present from 12th. Three pairs bred within the Arctic Tern colony on Buness fledging at least two young.

ARCTIC TERN *Sterna paradisaea*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

Six on the 4th May were the first, rising to 100 on 9th, 500 next day and an impressive 2,600 by the end of the month. A total of 1,251 Apparently Incubating Adults were mainly concentrated on Tarryfield and Buness with small numbers on Eas Brecks, Horstibrekks and Byerwall. An estimated 1,000 chicks fledged which gives an excellent productivity figure of 0.80 – bettered only by the years 1991 and 1992. The vast majority had left the isle by early August and birds were recorded on three dates in September, the last was a juvenile on the late date of 20th-21st October.

COMMON GUILLEMOT *Uria aalge*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers. Common autumn passage migrant

Occasionally seen in January/February but several hundred ashore on 7th March signalled the start of the breeding season. Virtually all had left again by the end of July and small numbers were seen on seawatches until the year's end. Breeding success was typically good with a productivity of 0.77 at the two monitoring sites, however these are on the east coast which was sheltered from the worst effects of high seas in the June storm.

RAZORBILL *Alca torda*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

As with Guillemot, the first significant return of breeders were several hundred ashore on 7th March and almost all had left by late July. Breeding performance at

the Easter Lother monitoring plot was, similar to 1999, disappointingly low. A productivity figure of 0.47 rates as the worst since monitoring began in 1990, however 16.5% of nests were lost in the June storm, whilst losses on the west coast were thought to have been even heavier. A whole island census in early May gave a population of 3,599 individuals, which represents a 9.2% increase on the 1998 count.

BLACK GUILLEMOT *Cepphus grylle*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers

Present all year. The annual east coast census revealed a maximum count of 173 birds which, bucking the recent trend, is a 20.1% increase on the 1999 count. Only 15 accessible nests were found, however these were relatively successful, fledging an average of 1.07 chicks per nest.

LITTLE AUK *Alle alle*

Frequent late autumn/winter visitor

Recorded from the isle in October and November with maximum counts of 12 (in a one-hour seawatch) on 30th October and 21 on 5th November. There was a good count of 100 from the *Good Shepherd* crossing on 18th December.

ATLANTIC PUFFIN *Fratercula arctica*

Summer visitor, breeds in large numbers

The first birds ashore were on 28th March. Adult overwinter survival at the Roskilie colony was uncharacteristically low at 68%. A whole island count suggested an amazing doubling of the population in the past five years to 80,000 birds. The calculating method may however be flawed and a repeat count may be attempted in 2001. Breeding performance was below average – a productivity of 0.58 chicks fledged per nest may be unrepresentative of the isle as a whole as the monitoring plot is on Greenholm, and this site was affected by the June storm.

ROCK (DOVE) PIGEON *Columba livia*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Present throughout the year. A count of 21 on 23rd April was the highest received.

COMMON WOOD PIGEON *Columba palumbus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage, from 29th March-31st May, involved almost daily single-figure counts except for an impressive 41 on 19th April, with 17 still remaining on 23rd. Singles were recorded on five dates in June and one in July. There was a single August record and three in September before main autumn passage from 11th-28th October involved daily records of 1-5 birds. In November, one was found dead on 14th and the last was seen on 23rd.

EURASIAN COLLARED DOVE *Streptopelia decaocto*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

One on 28th-29th March was the sole record until daily sightings throughout May and regular counts in June. Maximum count was nine on two dates. Birds were recorded on three dates in July (five individuals) and four in August. Singles were seen on nine dates in September and 1-2 on four dates in October. The last was an apparently leucistic bird on 5th-6th November.

EUROPEAN TURTLE DOVE *Streptopelia turtur*

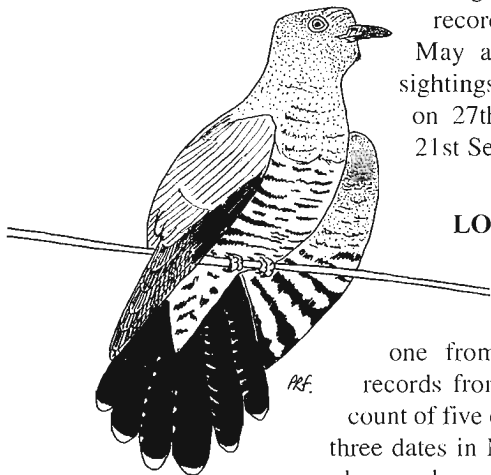
Regular spring and autumn migrant

There was just one spring record, of a lone individual on 21st May. In autumn, 1-2 birds were recorded daily from 5th-26th September but for a maximum of three on 18th. Probably just 3-4 birds were involved.

COMMON CUCKOO *Cuculus canorus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

A light spring passage saw 1-2 birds recorded on nine dates from 12th-30th May and a single on 9th June. Autumn sightings were even less frequent with singles on 27th-28th August and the late date of 21st September.



LONG-EARED OWL *Asio otus*

Regular autumn migrant, scarce in spring

A good spring was comprised of one from 18th-21st March then a run of records from 18th-23rd April with a maximum count of five on 19th. Further singles were seen on three dates in May and two dates in June. Autumn records were however, scarce with just singles on 10th October and 8th-10th December.

SHORT-EARED OWL *Asio flammeus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The earliest ever spring record, on 9th March, was the only record until one on 17th April, 1-3 on 2nd-5th May and singles on 9th & 23rd May. In autumn, one on 30th August was followed by singles on four dates in September and more regular passage in October, with a maximum of five on 16th.



'Blythii' Lesser Whitethroat, trapped September 2000.

Hywel Maggs



Marsh and Eurasian Reed Warblers, trapped at Quoy 12th September.

Deryk Shaw



First-winter Brown Shrike trapped in the Gully, 21st October.

Deryk Shaw



First-winter Brown Shrike trapped in the Gully, 21st October.

Hywel Maggs





Red-rumped Swallow at Shirva, 11th May.

Hywel Maggs



Little Bunting trapped at Setter, 15th September.

Deryk Shaw



Subalpine Warbler, May 2000.

Keith Regan



Arctic Warbler at Aesterhoull, 14th September.

Roy Beddard



Ortolan Bunting at the Observatory, October 2000.

Hywel Maggs



'Leucistic' Reed Warbler trapped at Quoy, 16th September.

Hywel Maggs



Booted Warbler, trapped at Setter 1st September.

Hywel Maggs



Deryk Shaw



Hywel Maggs

'Fuscus' Reed Warbler trapped at Observatory, 12th June.

COMMON SWIFT *Apus apus*

Frequent spring, summer and autumn migrant

Two birds on 8th May were followed by low single-figure counts on a further four dates in May, five in June, four in July, eight in August, almost daily in September and the last on 9th October.

HOOPOE *Upupa epops*

Vagrant; at least 35 previous records

One was found near Easter Lothar on 4th May – the same date as last year's individual.

EURASIAN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

There were just two spring birds; on 13th & 25th May. In autumn, one on 14th August was followed by singles on 23rd & 26th increasing to a maximum count of four on 27th with two next day. September records comprised two on 1st & 2nd and singles on a further four dates, the last on 28th.

CALANDRA LARK *Melanocorypha calandra*

Vagrant; two previous records

One, very flighty individual, initially spotted dropping into the rig at Shirva on the morning of 13th May, spent the early afternoon commuting between Shirva and Quoy. This, the third record for Fair Isle, was almost exactly a year after the second record (16th May 1999) and, as last year, departed shortly before the arrival of a boatload of twitchers from Shetland Mainland. A serious case of déjà-vue!

Accepted by BBRC

GREATER SHORT-TOED LARK *Calandrella brachydactyla*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Just one spring record of a bird seen briefly on Meoness on 25th May. In autumn, one was at Setter from 10th-14th October whilst one was on Meoness on 12th and finally, another bird was at Setter from 23rd-26th October.

SKY LARK *Alauda arvensis*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also common spring/autumn migrant, small numbers over-winter

Present in every month. Occasional singles recorded in the winter months until the first signs of strong passage were 50 on 28th February. Passage increased through March and April, with over 100 most days and over 200 on five dates including a peak count of 400 on 18th March. Main autumn passage was mid-September-mid-October with almost daily counts over 100 and a peak of 160 on 29th September.

HORNED (SHORE) LARK *Eremophila alpestris*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

Just one record – a group of five that frequented the North Light area on 1st-2nd May.

SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

The first were three on 21st April and sightings were regular until 15th May with a peak of ten on 8th. There were sightings of 1-2 birds on two dates in June and once in August. Records of 1-2 birds were received on nine dates in September, the last on 22nd.

BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*

Common spring and autumn migrant; occasionally breeds

First arrival was on 19th April. Recorded daily from 28th April-17th June with a marked peak passage in mid-May – nine on 12th rose to 50 next day and to a maximum count of 120 on 14th, which was halved the following day, falling to 21 on 16th. Very small numbers were recorded into July. One pair remained to breed, raising five chicks in the shed at Shirva, which fledged on 30th August. A light autumn passage saw small numbers on most days and 15 on two dates, until the last on 16th October.

RED-RUMPED SWALLOW *Hirundo daurica*

Vagrant; five previous records (seven individuals)

The sixth record and first since 1987. One mobile individual, found near the Raevas on the morning of 11th May, was later seen outside the Observatory and eventually settled around Shirva. It had departed by the next day.

Accepted by BBRC

HOUSE MARTIN *Delichon urbica*

Frequent spring migrant, uncommon in autumn. Has bred

In spring, records were almost daily from 4th May-30th June, mainly of small numbers but for a marked peak of 40 on 14th May (the same day as the Swallow influx). Autumn passage was as usual much lighter with regular counts of just 1-3 birds from 6th-28th September.

RICHARD'S PIPIT *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Scarce autumn migrant

All records were in October with regular sightings throughout the month, mainly of single birds and a maximum count of three on 7th. A total of 6-7 birds were involved.

OLIVE-BACKED PIPIT *Anthus hodgsoni*

Rare autumn migrant

One found in Troili Geo on 25th September was relocated next day further south and spent the next week commuting between crofts at the southern end of the island. Another was found in the Kirn O' Scroo on 29th September and it, or another, was seen briefly at Furse on 3rd October. One was seen in the Gilsetter area on 19th October. The fourth of the autumn spent 26th-27th October feeding at the side of the road at Dutfield and the last was found at Hesswalls/Shieldi Geo on 10th November.

All accepted by BBRC

TREE PIPIT *Anthus trivialis*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first of the spring was on 20th April with another on 22nd. Almost daily records from 29th April-1st June, with a peak of just nine on 14th May, and stragglers until 16th June. Autumn passage from 22nd August-26th October peaked in late September; a maximum count of 80 on 21st was over twice the next highest count.

MEADOW PIPIT *Anthus pratensis*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Common spring and autumn migrant

Occasional singles were seen in the winter months. Light spring passage from late March picked up in mid-April peaked in early May and tailed off rapidly after 10th May. Counts over 100 were regular and 320 on 3rd May was the maximum. There were several sightings of a striking leucistic individual from 17th June-28th August. Autumn passage comprised daily counts of several hundred birds from late-August to late-September (peaking at 650 on 18th September) with smaller numbers throughout October.

RED-THROATED PIPIT *Anthus cervinus*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

Three birds, all in autumn. A superb adult was found at Leogh on 12th September and remained until 15th. A second, flighty individual was flushed from Da Water on 23rd and was reported near the shop the following day. Finally, a first winter seen near Pund on 2nd & 3rd October was trapped in the Plantation on 6th and again on 7th!

Accepted by BBRC except the bird of 23rd which is still pending.

ROCK PIPIT *Anthus petrosus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also frequent spring and autumn migrant

Present throughout the year. No meaningful counts made. Individuals of the Scandinavian race *A. p. littoralis* were recorded on 25th April and 3rd-5th May.

YELLOW WAGTAIL *Motacilla flava*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A very poor spring passage comprised singles of the British race *M. f. flavissima* on 12th-17th May, relating to a maximum of two birds and an individual of the Grey-headed race *M. f. thunbergi* on 4th June. Autumn passage was slightly better with a single on the last four days of August, then regular sightings of 1-5 birds from 16th September-5th October. Most were left unassigned to race, however of those that were, the majority were *flavissima* and three were the Blue-headed race *M. f. flava*.

CITRINE WAGTAIL *Motacilla citreola*

Rare autumn migrant

A good year. One at Barkland Ditch from 14th-16th August. A second, on Meoness on 2nd September and a third, in a south-easterly gale and driving rain, on Ward Hill on 20th September.

All accepted by BBRC

GREY WAGTAIL *Motacilla cinerea*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant; has bred

There was just a single spring bird on 18th April. Autumn records were of 1-3 birds almost daily from 25th September until the last on 26th October.

WHITE/PIED WAGTAIL *Motacilla alba*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant; occasional breeder

The first was a male of the British race *M. a. yarrellii* on 1st March, then none until another male on 14th and birds on a further four dates in the month with a maximum of five on 30th. Almost daily passage of *yarrellii* continued through April and May, peaking in late April with a maximum count of just seven. Passage of the north European, Icelandic and Faroese race *M. a. alba* was, as always, slightly later, from 11th April-late May. Daily counts were of single-figures but for 16 on 18th & 15 on 21st April and 12 on 7th May. Occasional stragglers of both races were recorded in June. A pair of British Pied Wagtails *M. a. yarrellii* remained to breed, in one of the Observatory out-buildings, fledging four young on 26th June. Autumn passage began in early August and was heaviest in the latter part of the month and early September. Counts fluctuated daily and there were three days of heavy passage; 100 on 19th August & 1st September and 200 (a record count) on 28th August. Small numbers (1-8) were seen daily until 23rd October and stragglers into November, the last on 10th.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING *Bombycilla garrulus*

Scarce/irruptive autumn migrant. Rare in spring

Singles on 27th & 28th December and three on 29th.

WHITE-THROATED DIPPER *Cinclus cinclus*

Vagrant; 24 previous records

The ninth autumn record. One of the nominate North European race *C. c. cinclus* (Black-bellied Dipper) was trapped in the Gully on 30th October and remained in the area until 4th November.

WINTER WREN *Troglodytes troglodytes*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also scarce spring and autumn migrant (status unclear)

A survey of singing males revealed a total of 29 territories in 2000 – a slight increase on the 1999 figure (26 territories). Although no counts of migrants were made in spring, there was ‘a feel’ of some passage in mid-April. In autumn, passage was noted in mid-October with a peak count of 40 on 13th.

HEDGE ACCENTOR (DUNNOCK) *Prunella modularis*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant. Has bred

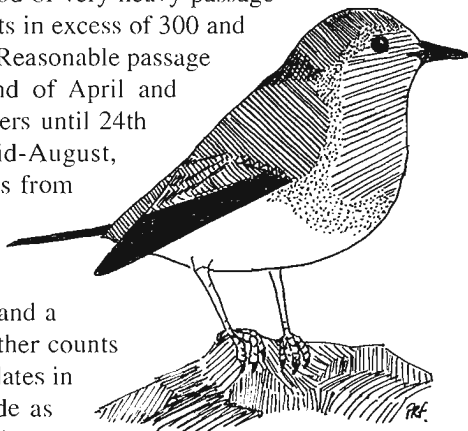
The first of the spring was on 28th March, which remained until main passage commenced in mid-April. The main influx was on 18th April, when 50 were counted with 25 the following day, and single figures were regular until 29th May. Autumn migration spanned mid-September to end-October, with stragglers into November, the last on 23rd, apart from one recorded on 24th December. Numbers peaked in late September (max. 70) with further influxes in the third week of October (maximum counts of 80 on 17th & 70 on 22nd).

EUROPEAN ROBIN *Erithacus rubecula*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A single bird was recorded in February. Spring passage from 28th March involved low single-figure counts until a period of very heavy passage from 18th-21st April saw daily counts in excess of 300 and an exceptional peak of 500 on 19th. Reasonable passage (30-100 daily) continued to the end of April and single figures into May with stragglers until 24th May. Two birds arrived in mid-August, however main autumn migration was from mid-September to late November.

Passage was heaviest during the period 28th September-6th October with daily counts over 100 and a maximum count of 450 on 2nd. Further counts in excess of 100 were made on two dates in October and a count of 70 was made as late as 23rd November. Small numbers



lingered into December and 4-5 overwintered. With such an exceptional passage in both spring and autumn, the year 2000 must go down as the best year on record for Robins on Fair Isle.

THRUSH NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia luscinia*

Rare spring migrant (39 records); vagrant in autumn (3 records)

One around the buildings at Lower Station on 4th June was only enjoyed by the finder for a few minutes before it disappeared.

Accepted by BBRC

BLUETHROAT *Luscinia svecica*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage comprised records on sixteen dates from 7th May-12th June with peaks of five on 12th & seven on 28th May. Autumn passage was very light, from 15th September-5th October; two birds on three dates and singles on two dates.

BLACK REDSTART *Phoenicurus ochurus*

Regular spring migrant, scarce in autumn

The first was on 28th March then none until regular counts of 1-2 birds from 17th April-29th May, with a peak of four on 7th May and stragglers until 20th June. Autumn records comprised singles on 25th August & 1st-5th September before light passage from 10th-28th October (peak of five on 11th & 12th) and additional records of 1-2 birds on four dates in November with the last on 2nd December.

COMMON REDSTART *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A light spring passage, on 13 dates from 20th April-22nd May, peaked at just six on 29th April. Daily autumn passage, from 27th August-15th October, was heaviest in the latter half of September and early October with regular counts over 30 and a peak of 65 on 23rd September. Late birds were recorded on 26th October (two) and 7th November.

WHINCHAT *Saxicola rubetra*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A very light spring passage from 23rd April-29th May involved mainly singles and a peak of just four on 7th May. A straggler was recorded on 12th June. In autumn, singles were seen on five dates from 2nd August until daily passage from 26th August-28th October. Counts were greatest in early September (peak of 65 on 2nd) and 15-35 were seen almost daily during the rest of the month with single figures in October.

STONECHAT *Saxicola torquata*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Birds of either of the western races *S. t. hibernans/rubicola* were recorded as follows: A female on 11th March was followed by a male next day and further females on 22nd & 29th-30th. In late April there were single birds on 23rd & 25th-26th and May records on 7th & 9th. In autumn, 1-2 birds were recorded regularly from 20th September-28th October with three on two dates. Finally, there was one on 28th December.

A male of one of the Siberian races **S. t. maura/stejnegeri* was found on 16th May.

*Accepted by BBRC

NORTHERN WHEATEAR *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Also common spring and autumn migrant

A female on 29th March was the first and birds were daily from 6th April. Thirty on 10th April was the first significant arrival, then 80 on 15th and heavier passage from 19th April-13th May saw almost daily counts over 100 and over 200 on five dates (max. 250 on 7th May). Only the breeding birds remained by the third week of May, estimated at around 50 pairs. Daily autumn passage was noted from mid-August, with regular counts of 40-90 until early October and then single figures until 26th. Daily counts over 100 were made from 15th-20th August (max. 250 on 15th) and 12th-22nd September (max. 200 on 17th). The last was a late straggler on 2nd November.

RING OUZEL *Turdus torquatus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One reported on 6th April and then one on 10th, preceded a fall of 38 on 17th, 50 next day and 15 on 19th. Numbers dropped to more normal single-figures by 20th and this was maintained until 9th May with stragglers until 22nd May. Regular autumn passage, from 20th September-30th October, involved mainly counts of 1-4 and peaks of 35 on 21st & 27 on 23rd October. The last was a straggler on 4th November.

COMMON BLACKBIRD *Turdus merula*

Common spring and autumn migrant. Has bred, small numbers over-winter

Low single-figures seen in January/February. Spring passage from late March-early May was mainly concentrated in the period 17th-21st April with daily counts over 100 and a maximum count of 170 on 18th. Smaller numbers (15-30) were recorded daily into early May and single figures to early June. A late straggler was seen on 16th June. Autumn passage started slowly from 13th September with single

figures until 10th October, rising to low double figures until a large influx on 21st saw a count of 200, falling to 70 the following day before another, larger, influx estimated at 500 birds, on 23rd. Good numbers continued to pass through, with daily fluctuations between 100 and 230 for the next six days followed by the largest fall of the autumn – 800 birds on 30th October. Daily counts of 50-80 continued through November with a fall of 160 on 23rd. Up to 20 persisted throughout December and into 2001.

FIELDFARE *Turdus pilaris*

Common spring and autumn migrant, often over-winters

One or two noted in January. Sporadic records in March with a maximum of 12 on 30th. Main spring passage was very sudden. Single figures on just four dates in the first half of April rose to 70 on 17th, to 80 next day, to 230 on 19th and 400 by 20th. Several hundred were noted each day until 3rd May, with a maximum of 500 on 30th April. Passage ended almost as quickly as it had begun with only single figures noted regularly from 6th May and stragglers on two dates in June. Early autumn birds were noted in late August and a few birds were seen daily at the end of September. Unlike other thrushes, records were sparse until the end of October when 260 arrived on 27th and 220 on 30th. Smaller numbers passed through daily in November with influxes of 360 on 11th, 150 on 22nd, 300 on 23rd and 100 on 29th. Small numbers persisted through December but 100 were counted on 25th.

SONG THRUSH *Turdus philomelos*

Common spring and autumn migrant; has bred

Singles were seen in late February and March. Spring passage was almost compressed into the few days 17th-21st April. A count of 250 on 17th was doubled next day, back to 250 on 19th and still 80 on 21st. Single figures were regular until early May and sporadic records until early June and a straggler on 22nd. Main autumn passage commenced in the last third of September with daily counts over 100 up to the end of October and a peak of 800 on 11th October. Smaller numbers (10-45) persisted through November and single figures were noted in December.

REDWING *Turdus iliacus*

Common spring and autumn migrant. Has bred and sometimes over-winters

A single bird was noted in January. Spring passage from end-March-early-May was (as with Song Thrush) mainly concentrated in the period 17th-21st April, peaking at 250 on 19th. Ones and twos were seen in May and the last on 4th June. There was a single mid-summer bird on 12th July. Heavy autumn passage saw daily counts over 100 during the last third of September, rising to several hundred every day in October to mid-November except for peak counts of 2,500 on 7th, 6,000 on 21st, an amazing 13,500 on 23rd and 1,100 on 26th October. Later influxes included 300 on 22nd November, rising to 500 next day and a count of 100 on 25th December.

MISTLE THRUSH *Turdus viscivorus*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

One on 29th March was followed by singles on five dates in April with two on 19th. Autumn records comprised singles on 26th September, on six dates in October (with two on 21st) and on two dates in November.

LANCEOLATED WARBLER *Locustella lanceolata*

Rare autumn migrant

Another good year for this Fair Isle speciality. Our earliest ever autumn record was trapped in the Gully on 4th September. Another was found at Setter on 11th, whilst next day produced two more – a second capture in the Gully and one in the Meadow Burn. The latter two were re-located, in Field Ditch and Skerryholm tattie rig respectively, and stayed until 17th.

All accepted by BBRC

COMMON GRASSHOPPER WARBLER *Locustella naevia*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

A sole spring record on 30th April. The first of a protracted autumn passage was on the early date of 15th August and 1-2 were recorded daily from 27th August-3rd September. Further daily counts (1-3) from 16th-28th September peaked at six on 21st. Sporadic records of 1-2 birds continued until the last, on the 23rd October, which was over a week later than the previous latest ever record.

SEDGE WARBLER *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

Spring passage commenced on 25th April and was almost daily in May with stragglers until 14th June. Maximum counts were of seven on 15th & 21st May, eight on 16th and six on 27th. Autumn records were of sporadic counts of 1-2 on six dates in August and nine dates in September, except for a count of five on 22nd September.

BLYTH'S REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Vagrant; 14 or 15 previous records

Another excellent year. Following on from three records in 1999, two birds were seen this year and, unusually, both were in spring. The earliest ever British record was trapped in Double Dyke on 15th May whilst another was trapped at Midway on 12th June and remained around the Observatory next day. There have now been 16-17 records, including five in spring.

Both accepted by BBRC

MARSH WARBLER *Acrocephalus palustris*

Scarce spring migrant, rare in autumn

In spring, there were singles on 31st May and 9th & 15th June. Autumn records consisted of singles on 17th & 18th August and 5th-6th & 12th September.

EURASIAN REED WARBLER *Acrocephalus scirpaceus*

Scarce spring migrant, regular in autumn

The only bird of the spring was a very interesting individual bearing resemblance to the eastern race *A. s. fuscus*, known as Caspian Reed Warbler. It was trapped at the Observatory on 12th June and remained in the vicinity until 1st July (see *Birding World* Vol 13; 9). Autumn passage commenced in mid-August and was daily from 26th August-5th October with stragglers until 19th October. Mainly single-figure counts were involved except 10-12 on 28th-30th August and 18 (max. count) on 21st-22nd, 12 on 23rd & 14 on 25th September. A most striking leucistic individual was present in the Meadow Burn on 16th September.

BOOTED WARBLER *Hippolais caligata*

Vagrant; ten previous records

The first since 1996 and the first year of multiple records. One trapped at Setter on 1st September remained the following day. Another, trapped at the Observatory before breakfast on 10th September, was seen at Dronger later the same morning! This last bird was a worn adult – the first of this age to be recorded here.

Both accepted by BBRC

ICTERINE WARBLER *Hippolais icterina*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Spring records were all confined to the three days 27th-29th May; four on 27th, two on 28th and three on 29th. The sole autumn record was a single, in Utra garden, on 20th August, which is one more than in the autumn of 1999.

DARTFORD WARBLER *Sylvia undata*

Vagrant; first for Fair Isle

A probable male was found at Upper Leogh late on 29th April but was only seen by the lucky finder. Thankfully it was still there the following day and was enjoyed by all, including a boatload of Shetland birders. It was last seen on the Hill Dyke on 1st May. This was only the second record for Scotland (the first was at St Abbs, Borders in 1993).

SUBALPINE WARBLER *Sylvia cantillans*

Rare spring migrant; 55 previous records

A good year, following the disappointing blank in 1999, with five records. The first, a female trapped in North Grind on 20th April, was the earliest ever record. It disappeared towards Roskilie after release but was seen again, on the east cliffs nearly two weeks later, on 3rd May. The second was a male, initially in Meadow Burn on 7th May, which was seen at Leogh and then Barkland until 11th and another male was at Vaasetter/Parks on 14th May. In June, a male was seen from 1st-3rd and the last was a female in the Havens on 10th June.

All accepted by BBRC

BARRED WARBLER *Sylvia nisoria*

Regular autumn migrant

Birds were recorded on most days from 19th August-22nd September with an additional late bird on 17th October. Counts were of 1-2 birds and a maximum of three on 21st August. A total of 18-20 birds.

LESSER WHITETHROAT *Sylvia curruca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring records involved regular counts of 1-4 birds from 28th April-29th May with a later bird on 12th June. Autumn passage was daily from 28th August-30th September, peaking at seven on two dates, with just two stragglers in October, the last on 14th. Occasional birds of the Siberian race *S. c. blythii* were seen or trapped in September.

COMMON WHITETHROAT *Sylvia communis*

Frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

Spring passage mirrored that of the previous species with regular counts of 1-4 from 29th April-4th June (max. five on 30th April) with a later individual on 16th June. Autumn passage too was similar to that of Lesser Whitethroat but extended further, with daily records from 27th August-13th October and the last on 16th. Maximum count was of eight, on two dates.

GARDEN WARBLER *Sylvia borin*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage from 11th May-10th June was mainly concentrated at the end of May with peak counts of 12 on 27th & 20 on 28th. Autumn passage was from mid-August to end-September with stragglers up to 20th October. Daily single-figure counts were the norm but there were two distinct peaks of passage, at the end of August (max. 42 on 28th) and the 20th-21st September (max. 60).

BLACKCAP *Sylvia atricapilla*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

As usual spring passage was very light, from 19th April-31st May with single stragglers on five dates in June. Counts of 1-6 were regular but two counts of nine and one of an exceptional 12 were also received. There was a mid-summer sighting of a male on 24th July. Autumn migration was, as always, much heavier. Single figures were counted daily from 28th August until an influx of 100 on 13th September and a further influx on 20th saw a count of 200 birds which rose to 250 the following day with still 100 on 22nd. Smaller numbers (20-70) continued to pass through daily right up to 26th October except for larger falls of 130 on 13th, 140 on 14th & 200 on 21st October. Single figures were seen until 14th November and the last on 23rd.

GREENISH WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

Vagrant, mostly autumn; 30 previous records (3 in spring)

Three records, typically all in August. The first was at Springfield on 19th August. Another, at Leogh on 27th, was trapped and seen next day at Field, in the company of an unringed bird, with both remaining next day and the latter bird until the 30th.

All accepted by BBRC

ARCTIC WARBLER *Phylloscopus borealis*

Spring vagrant; rare autumn migrant. 67 previous records.

A well-marked large individual at Aesterhoull on 4th September, was followed by a smaller much trickier bird in the same spot on 14th-15th September.

Both accepted by BBRC

PALLAS'S LEAF WARBLER *Phylloscopus proregulus*

Rare autumn migrant. 26 previous records.

One was reported in Field Ditch on 16th October.

YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER *Phylloscopus inornatus*

Regular autumn migrant

The first was at Gunnawark on 19th September. Four on 25th September had increased to five by 28th. One or two were recorded in early October, two on 12th and the last on 23rd.

WOOD WARBLER *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring singles were seen on 7th & 26th May. In autumn, 1-2 were recorded on seven dates in the second half of August followed by four sporadic singles in September.

COMMON CHIFFCHAFF *Phylloscopus collybita*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

An early bird arrived on 19th March and passage became more regular from 29th and was daily from mid-April–early June with stragglers until 22nd June. Counts were of low single figures but for periods of heavier passage from 18th-21st April (max. 35) and 1st-7th May (max. 27). All were of the nominate race *P. c. collybita*. Autumn passage was daily from 21st September-25th October with further singles on six dates in November. Counts were of single figures but exceeded ten on five dates, peaking at 21 on 2nd October. The majority of birds were of nominate *P. c. collybita* however many birds in late October and November were of the eastern races *P. c. abietinus/tristis*.

WILLOW WARBLER *Phylloscopus trochilus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

The first of the spring was on 11th April, then seven on 15th was the first major arrival. Sightings were almost daily from 18th April-31st May with stragglers until 13th June. All counts were however, of just single figures except for 13 on 30th April and 11 on 14th May. Autumn passage was daily, from 10th August-13th October with the last on 21st October. The maximum count was 60 on 28th August but counts of 20-40 (max. 45) were regular throughout September, falling to single figures in October.

GOLDCREST *Regulus regulus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

One on 28th January was unprecedented. Spring passage was regular, from 28th March-3rd May. Counts were of 1-3 but for six on two dates, eleven and a maximum 25 on 19th April. The first autumn migrant was on 31st August and passage was daily from 4th September-11th November. Counts were of less than 50 (often single figures) except for four noticeable influxes; 200 on 25th September, 100 on 10th, 140 on 12th & 80 on 16th October.

SPOTTED FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa striata*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A light spring passage was recorded on most days from 12th May-12th June with counts of 1-5 the norm and a maximum of ten on 27th May. In autumn, birds started to appear from mid-August but sightings were infrequent, until main passage from 12th-28th September saw daily counts, peaking at 16 on 22nd. The last were two birds on 5th October.

RED-BREASTED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula parva*

Scarce autumn migrant, rare in spring

No spring records. Autumn records comprised singles on 22nd & 25th-26th September, two on 12th October and a single trapped on 13th.

PIED FLYCATCHER *Ficedula hypoleuca*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring passage was very light comprising counts of 1-3 birds on ten dates between 29th April-22nd May involving no more than 15 individuals. The first of the autumn was on the very early date of 3rd August, with another on 17th, then an influx of 16 on 27th signalled the start of daily passage until 29th September, with a peak count of 18 on 14th. Stragglers were noted on three dates in October, the last on 21st.

EURASIAN GOLDEN ORIOLE *Oriolus oriolus*

Vagrant; 36 previous records (37 individuals)

A green individual, initially spotted at Stackhoull on 21st May, was seen every day until 25th, including sightings in the Plantation and the Observatory garden.

BROWN SHRIKE *Lanius cristatus*

Vagrant; first for Fair Isle

The bird of the year. A first-winter trapped in the Gully on 21st October was only the second British record (the first was at Sumburgh, Shetland in 1985). It showed well to the lucky few whom were present, when released at the Plantation, and ended up back in the Gully, where it was still at dusk. Unfortunately, it had departed by the next morning. (see *Birding World Vol.13; 10* and *Birding Scotland Vol 4; 1*).

Accepted by BBRC

RED-BACKED SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The first, and largest, count of the spring was of five on 27th May. Light and irregular passage continued until 3rd July involving a total of 16-20 birds. Autumn sightings were equally sporadic, from 27th August-5th October, involving ten birds and a maximum count of three on 1st September.

GREAT GREY SHRIKE *Lanius excubitor*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Three records. In spring, one was trapped on 19th April and remained until the following day. In autumn, one was at Springfield on 5th October and another was present from 22nd-24th October (trapped in the Plantation on 22nd).

EURASIAN JACKDAW *Corvus monedula*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

In spring, singles were seen on 7th April, 4th, 16th-19th & 23rd May. In autumn there was just one, on 7th November.

ROOK *Corvus frugilegus*

Regular spring migrant, less common in autumn

In spring, 1-3 birds were recorded, on most days from 11th April-5th May and on a further four dates until 24th May. A single on 10th-13th November was the only autumn record.

CARRION/HOODED CROW *Corvus corone*

Hooded Crow (C. c. cornix) resident, breeds in small numbers; Carrion Crow (C. c. corone) frequent spring migrant, less common in autumn

A light spring passage of Hooded Crows *C. c. cornix* was noted from mid-April to mid-May involving daily single-figure counts. At least two pairs attempted breeding, one of which fledged four young.

A single Carrion Crow *C. c. corone* was seen occasionally throughout the winter. A light passage in April escalated in May to almost daily counts over ten and peaks of 22 on 4th, 33 on 7th & a record count of 90 on 8th. Single figures were still present in June and occasional ones or twos in early July.

Passage in autumn was clouded by resident birds (4-6) however it is likely that small numbers of Hooded and Carrion Crows passed through in September/October.

COMMON RAVEN *Corvus corax*

Resident, breeds in small numbers. Also regular spring and autumn migrant

Present all year. A bird was seen carrying wool on 11th March. Passage was noted in April with a maximum count of 29 birds together over Ward Hill on 11th. Three pairs bred and a brood of five fledged from Skinners Glig on 22nd May. In autumn, daily counts of 5-10 birds were mainly of resident birds however the maximum counts of 15 on 2nd September and 17 on 4th November must have included some migrants.

COMMON STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Resident, breeds in moderate numbers. Also common spring and autumn migrant

Present throughout the year. Few counts were attempted though some passage was noted in late April, with a maximum count of 700 on 25th. No counts were made in autumn.

ROSY STARLING *Sturnus roseus*

Vagrant; at least 30 previous records involving 31 or more individuals

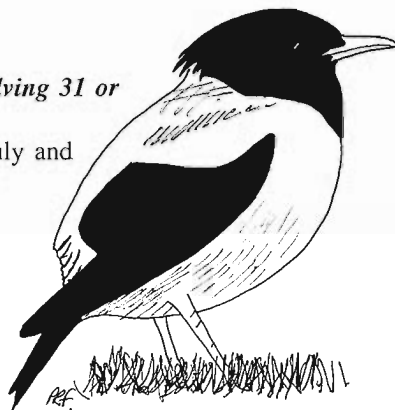
An adult was found at the Chalet on 1st July and seen later with Common Starlings on Taing.

Accepted by BBRC

HOUSE SPARROW *Passer domesticus*

Resident, breeds in small numbers

Present all year. A post-breeding estimate of 185 on 4th September was the only count.



CHAFFINCH *Fringilla coelebs*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A male on 17th March was the first and there were regular counts of 1-2 from 28th March-14th April. Counts were then daily until the last on 6th May with peaks of 14 on 17th, 33 on 18th & 19 on 20th April. Autumn passage, which commenced on

12th September and was daily until 14th November, was heaviest in the period 21st September-12th October with counts over 100 on 11 dates and a maximum of 200 on 25th. A flock of seven was noted in late November.

BRAMBLING *Fringilla montifringilla*

Common spring and autumn migrant

In spring, a bird from 11th-13th April was the first before daily passage from 17th April. Peak counts were 87 on 18th & 60 on 21st April. Single figures were noted in May with the last on 26th. Autumn passage commenced in mid-September and was daily right up to mid-November, however the vast majority of birds passed through in early October, when a maximum count of 300 was over three times that of any outside that period. Finally, a bird was seen on 6th December.

EUROPEAN GREENFINCH *Carduelis chloris*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring records comprised occasional ones or twos from 7th April-25th May and a maximum of three on 4th May. In autumn there were daily single-figure counts from 8th-25th October and stragglers on three dates up to 15th November.

EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *Carduelis carduelis*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

After the record year of 1999, a return to more usual low numbers. One on 31st March, the earliest ever, was followed by singles on five dates in May. In autumn, 1-3 from 23rd-28th October involved 4-5 birds.

EURASIAN SISKIN *Carduelis spinus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

Sporadic spring records on 17 dates from 18th April-1st June were mainly of counts of 1-3 with a maximum of seven on 22nd April. Autumn passage, from mid-September to mid-October, was mainly in the period 22nd-28th September when daily counts exceeded 100 and peaked at 360 on 24th.

COMMON LINNET *Carduelis cannabina*

Regular spring migrant, more scarce in autumn

A male on 10th April was followed by sporadic singles on 14 dates until the last on 2nd June, except for counts of three on two dates and a maximum of four on 4th May. Autumn records were comprised of counts of 1-3 from 5th-20th October (involving 4-6 birds) and the last on 10th November.

TWITE *Carduelis flavirostris*

Summer visitor, breeds in small numbers. Common spring and autumn migrant, small numbers over-winter

The highest winter count was 36 on 3rd February. The highest spring count was even less at just 29. Autumn counts were regularly over 100 from mid-August and a count of 200 on 28th August was the highest, falling away in October to a flock of about 40 in November.

LESSER REDPOLL *Carduelis cabaret*

Scarce migrant in spring, summer and autumn

All records of this species, which has been recently split, were in the autumn. Counts of 1-2 birds on eight dates in September (3-5 individuals) and singles on nine dates in October (three individuals).

COMMON REDPOLL *Carduelis flammea*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

Spring records were comprised of three, unassigned to race, on 7th April and another the following day. Single Mealy Redpolls *C. f. flammea* were seen daily from 8th-16th April involving 4-5 individuals. Another Mealy was seen on 18th June. In July there were occasional counts of 1-5 Mealys on ten dates. In autumn there were regular counts of 1-5 birds in September, occasional records in October and early November. About half were assigned to race and all were Mealys apart from an individual of one of the larger Greenland *C. f. rostrata*/Icelandic *C. f. islandica* races on 10th-17th September.

COMMON CROSSBILL *Loxia curvirostra*

Scarce/irruptive autumn migrant

Two on 3rd July and a single on 26th September were the only records.

COMMON ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

The only spring record was of a stunning red male, singing at Shirva and Schoolton, on 4th June. There was a mid-summer sighting on 28th July. In autumn, there were daily records from 23rd August-25th September with peak day counts of six on five dates, involving approximately 17 birds. Finally, there was one at Leogh on the very late date of 5th November.

COMMON BULLFINCH *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*

Scarce autumn migrant, less regular in spring

Just one record; a female was seen at Utra on 25th-26th May.

HAWFINCH *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*

Rare spring migrant

In April, there was one at Setter on 17th, two (at Leogh and North Light) on 18th and a single on 23rd-25th (at Busta & Nether Taft).

LAPLAND LONGSPUR (BUNTING) *Calcarius lapponicus*

Frequent autumn migrant, less common in spring

The sole spring record was of a male on Hoini from 23rd-26th April. Autumn passage, was daily from 9th September-26th October and heaviest in September. Peak counts were 18 on 18th rising to 40 on 19th and 15 on 28th. Single figures were noted in October and the last was on 3rd November.

SNOW BUNTING *Plectrophenax nivalis*

Common spring and autumn migrant; often over-winters

In the early part of the year numbers fluctuated markedly with 40 on 15th February the maximum count. Spring passage was sporadic and mainly involved single-figure counts however there were counts of 30 on 10th & 25 on 12th April and 20 on 22nd May. The last was seen on the late date of 4th June. Autumn passage commenced in mid-September was heaviest at the end of the month when regular counts over 100, peaked at 180 on 24th. Daily counts in October ranged from 5-60 and in November from 9-115.

YELLOWHAMMER *Emberiza citrinella*

Regular spring and autumn migrant

Spring records involved just three birds from 17th-20th April with one staying until 30th. Autumn records were almost as scarce with 1-4 seen almost daily from 20th October-1st November and one on 25th November.

ORTOLAN BUNTING *Emberiza hortulana*

Scarce spring and autumn migrant

Spring provided just one bird, from 15th-17th May, at the Kirn O' Scroo. Autumn sightings were daily from 16th September right through to the 1st November, however this included one bird which arrived on 18th September and took up residence around the Observatory and Havens and was last seen on the 1st November. A total of just four individuals.

RUSTIC BUNTING *Emberiza rustica*

Rare spring and autumn migrant

The only record was a male at Guidicum from 12th-13th October.

Accepted by BBRC

LITTLE BUNTING *Emberiza pusilla*

Scarce autumn migrant; rare in spring

Daily counts of 1-4 were made from 12th September-3rd October, followed by singles from 12th-17th October and 21st October-1st November.

A total of at least 13 individuals.



REED BUNTING *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Frequent spring and autumn migrant

A poor spring passage saw almost daily counts of 1-5 birds from 17th April-14th May and a later bird on 23rd May. Autumn passage from mid-September to end-October saw peaks of 32 on 28th September and 25 on 2nd October. A later flurry of migrants in November saw 1-3 daily from 7th-12th and four on 23rd.

Escapes:

BAR-HEADED GOOSE *Anser indicus*

A party of four, which had been on Mainland Shetland, visited Fair Isle on 12th May and returned to Mainland next day.

PALLAS'S ROSEFINCH *Carpodacus roseus*

A female/immature male which, although in immaculate plumage was very tame, was trapped at Busta on 12th May and habituated the Observatory garden until 17th.

Update of British Birds Rarities Committee Decisions

NIGHTINGALE *Luscinia megarynchos hafizi*

One found dead on 30th October 1971 and now in the National Museum in Edinburgh has been confirmed as the first British record of this Central Asian race.

ARCTIC REDPOLL *Carduelis hornemanni*

A first-winter 20th-25th October 1986 (trapped on 20th). Accepted on to Category A.

FAIR ISLE RINGING REPORT 2000

Alan Bull and Deryk Shaw

A total of 7,120 birds of 103 species were ringed in 2000. Table 1 gives the ten most commonly ringed species. Seabirds fared very well during 2000 with totals for some, most notably Arctic Tern, being better than in recent years. Storm Petrels were only ringed when there was visitor demand for it, hence a below average total.

Table 1. The ten most commonly ringed species, with totals, on Fair Isle in 2000; (1999 totals in parentheses)

Arctic Tern	1435	(255)
Guillemot	1105	(1415)
Storm Petrel	849	(2716)
Robin	436	(106)
Blackbird	309	(178)
Shag	252	(36)
Razorbill	247	(275)
Blackcap	237	(249)
Meadow Pipit	194	(102)
Starling	173	(214)

Two new species were added to the ringing list during 2000. These were Pallas's Rosefinch in the spring, although this bird remains of suspect origin, and Brown Shrike in the autumn. The Brown Shrike is the first to be ringed in Britain. Other unusual birds captured were: Scaup (5th), Blyth's Reed Warbler (8th-9th), Booted Warbler (8th-9th), Red-throated Pipit (9th) and Quail (9th). Rarely ringed species included: Black-bellied Dipper (14th), Tufted Duck (18th), Hawfinch (18th) and Ortolan Bunting (20th). Record annual totals were achieved for just two species: Booted Warbler (2) and Reed Warbler (25).

Species ringed in above average numbers during 2000 were: Great Skua, Arctic Tern, Robin, Whinchat, Dunnock, Chaffinch and Brambling. Species ringed in unusually low numbers were Fulmar and Storm Petrel, although both of these totals can be attributed to reduced effort.

Table 2. Numbers of birds ringed on Fair Isle and recovered/controlled elsewhere in 2000, together with cumulative totals from 1948

<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>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Red-throated Diver	—	—	—	1	—	—
Little Grebe	—	—	—	10	—	—
Great Crested Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Red-necked Grebe	—	—	—	1	—	—
Slavonian Grebe	—	—	—	3	—	—
Fulmar	38	32	70	16556	1	163
Storm Petrel	849	—	849	29102	59	1084
Leach's Petrel	9	—	9	81	—	1
Gannet	—	—	—	347	—	9
Cormorant	—	—	—	7	—	—
Shag	7	245	252	21280	5	542
Grey Heron	—	—	—	20	—	—
Whooper Swan	1	—	1	40	—	6
Bean Goose	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pink-footed Goose	—	—	—	13	—	1
White-fronted Goose	—	—	—	3	—	1
Greylag Goose	—	—	—	42	—	8
Barnacle Goose	—	—	—	3	—	—
Shelduck	—	—	—	5	—	—
Wigeon	—	—	—	55	2	3
Teal	—	—	—	70	—	4
Mallard	—	—	—	15	—	1
Pintail	—	—	—	2	—	1
Shoveler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pochard	—	—	—	3	—	—
Ring-necked Duck	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tufted Duck	1	—	1	18	—	—
Scaup	1	—	1	5	—	—
Eider	—	—	—	160	—	1
Long-tailed Duck	—	—	—	18	—	1
Velvet Scoter	—	—	—	2	—	—
Goldeneye	—	—	—	20	—	1
Red-breasted Merganser	—	—	—	3	—	—
Goosander	—	—	—	3	—	1
Marsh Harrier	—	—	—	1	—	—
Hen Harrier	—	—	—	2	—	—
Goshawk	—	—	—	2	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total 2000</i>	<i>Total 1948-00</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>			<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Sparrowhawk	9	—	9	345	1	22
Kestrel	—	—	—	47	—	8
Red-footed Falcon	—	—	—	1	—	—
Merlin	3	—	3	188	—	12
Peregrine Falcon	—	—	—	6	—	1
Quail	1	—	1	9	—	—
Water Rail	2	—	2	299	—	3
Spotted Crake	—	—	—	18	—	—
Little Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Baillon's Crake	—	—	—	1	—	—
Corncrake	1	—	1	40	—	2
Moorhen	—	—	—	97	—	3
Coot	—	—	—	14	—	1
Great Bustard	—	—	—	1	—	—
Oystercatcher	1	12	13	1478	1	69
Little Ringed Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ringed Plover	7	1	8	662	—	6
Dotterel	—	—	—	4	—	—
Golden Plover	—	—	—	23	—	—
Grey Plover	—	—	—	1	—	—
Lapwing	—	10	10	328	—	6
Knot	—	—	—	98	—	2
Sanderling	1	—	1	93	—	1
Western Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Little Stint	—	—	—	121	—	—
Temminck's Stint	—	—	—	2	—	—
White-rumped Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Baird's Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Pectoral Sandpiper	—	—	—	5	—	—
Curlew Sandpiper	—	—	—	6	—	—
Purple Sandpiper	—	—	—	155	—	1
Dunlin	2	—	2	542	—	7
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Ruff	—	—	—	41	—	1
Jack Snipe	1	—	1	134	—	3
Common Snipe	3	3	6	447	—	4
Great Snipe	—	—	—	2	—	—
Woodcock	12	—	12	415	1	20
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>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Whimbrel	—	—	—	16	—	—
Curlew	—	6	6	154	—	6
Spotted Redshank	—	—	—	3	—	—
Redshank	—	—	—	276	—	2
Greenshank	—	—	—	12	—	—
Green Sandpiper	—	—	—	56	—	1
Wood Sandpiper	—	—	—	18	—	—
Common Sandpiper	2	—	2	70	—	1
Turnstone	—	—	—	77	—	—
Red-necked Phalarope	—	—	—	5	—	—
Grey Phalarope	—	—	—	3	—	—
Pomarine Skua	—	—	—	1	—	—
Arctic Skua	1	54	55	3760	1	66
Great Skua	—	150	150	2222	4	34
Black-headed Gull	—	—	—	45	—	2
Common Gull	—	6	6	197	—	3
Lesser Black-backed Gull	—	10	10	1421	1	33
Herring Gull	1	36	37	4222	—	93
Iceland Gull	—	—	—	1	—	—
Glaucous Gull	1	—	1	40	—	1
Great Black-backed Gull	1	—	1	2837	3	105
Kittiwake	36	55	91	6853	—	35
Common Tern	—	6	6	481	—	3
Arctic Tern	—	1435	1435	11152	2	33
Guillemot	42	1063	1105	32608	33	963
Razorbill	30	217	247	9094	10	225
Black Guillemot	3	13	16	1616	—	19
Little Auk	—	—	—	13	—	—
Puffin	103	32	135	12532	—	31
Rock Dove	—	—	—	67	—	—
Wood Pigeon	—	—	—	69	—	2
Collared Dove	5	—	5	302	1	6
Turtle Dove	—	—	—	80	—	2
Cuckoo	3	—	3	106	—	1
Snowy Owl	—	—	—	1	—	1
Long-eared Owl	3	—	3	242	—	13
Short-eared Owl	—	—	—	17	—	—
Nightjar	—	—	—	4	—	—
Swift	—	—	—	17	—	1
Hoopoe	—	—	—	3	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total 2000</i>	<i>Total 1948-00</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>			<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Wryneck	3	—	3	212	—	—
Great Spotted Woodpecker	—	—	—	28	—	—
Short-toed Lark	—	—	—	9	—	—
Woodlark	—	—	—	3	—	—
Skylark	—	2	2	1241	—	3
Shorelark	—	—	—	5	—	—
Sand Martin	—	—	—	8	—	—
Swallow	—	—	—	246	—	2
House Martin	—	—	—	141	—	1
Richard's Pipit	—	—	—	10	—	—
Blyth's Pipit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Tawny Pipit	—	—	—	3	—	—
Olive-backed Pipit	—	—	—	9	—	—
Tree Pipit	9	—	9	637	—	—
Pechora Pipit	—	—	—	9	—	—
Meadow Pipit	155	39	194	9834	—	45
Red-throated Pipit	1	—	1	9	—	—
Rock Pipit	85	—	85	9202	—	29
Yellow Wagtail	—	—	—	10	—	—
Citrine Wagtail	—	—	—	5	—	—
Grey Wagtail	1	—	1	30	—	1
White/Pied Wagtail	6	4	10	677	—	4
Waxwing	—	—	—	37	—	—
Dipper	1	—	1	14	—	—
Wren	19	—	19	814	—	—
Duncock	116	—	116	2478	—	7
Robin	436	—	436	8508	2	39
Thrush Nightingale	—	—	—	31	—	—
Nightingale	—	—	—	27	—	—
Siberian Rubythroat	—	—	—	1	—	—
Bluethroat	5	—	5	265	—	2
Red-flanked Bluetail	—	—	—	2	—	—
Black Redstart	2	—	2	153	—	—
Redstart	38	—	38	1793	—	1
Whinchat	20	—	20	624	—	2
Stonechat	1	—	1	56	—	—
Northern Wheatear	104	—	104	16006	—	73
Pied Wheatear	—	—	—	1	—	—
Black-eared Wheatear	—	—	—	3	—	—
Rock Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—

<i>Species</i>	<i>Ringed as:</i>		<i>Total 2000</i>	<i>Total 1948-00</i>	<i>Recovered/Controlled</i>	
	<i>Juv/Ad</i>	<i>Pullus</i>			<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
White's Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Hermit Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Grey-checked Thrush	—	—	—	2	—	—
Ring Ouzel	8	—	8	484	—	8
Blackbird	309	—	309	21796	1	322
Eye-browed Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	1
Dusky Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dark-throated Thrush	—	—	—	1	—	—
Fieldfare	1	—	1	625	—	1
Song Thrush	65	—	65	2828	—	32
Redwing	147	—	147	8658	1	73
Mistle Thrush	—	—	—	22	—	—
Pallas' Grasshopper Warbler	—	—	—	11	—	—
Lanceolated Warbler	2	—	2	32	—	—
Grasshopper Warbler	2	—	2	113	—	—
River Warbler	—	—	—	7	—	—
Savi's Warbler	—	—	—	3	—	—
Aquatic Warbler	—	—	—	22	—	—
Sedge Warbler	16	—	16	436	—	—
Paddyfield Warbler	—	—	—	9	—	1
Blyth's Reed Warbler	2	—	2	9	—	1
Marsh Warbler	6	—	6	113	—	—
Reed Warbler	25	—	25	252	—	1
Great Reed Warbler	—	—	—	6	—	—
Thick-billed Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Olivaceous Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Booted Warbler	2	—	2	9	—	—
Icterine Warbler	1	—	1	98	—	—
Melodious Warbler	—	—	—	11	—	—
Subalpine Warbler	1	—	1	26	—	—
Sardinian Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Barred Warbler	3	—	3	388	—	1
Lesser Whitethroat	11	—	11	662	—	1
Whitethroat	14	—	14	928	—	—
Garden Warbler	68	—	68	3383	1	4
Blackcap	237	—	237	5141	3	23
Greenish Warbler	1	—	1	23	—	—
Arctic Warbler	—	—	—	32	—	—
Pallas's Warbler	—	—	—	3	—	—

<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>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Yellow-browed Warbler	—	—	—	114	—	—
Radde's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Dusky Warbler	—	—	—	5	—	—
Bonelli's Warbler	—	—	—	1	—	—
Wood Warbler	2	—	2	105	—	—
Chiffchaff	53	—	53	1150	—	3
Willow Warbler	59	—	59	3491	—	7
Goldcrest	58	—	58	1579	—	2
Firecrest	—	—	—	1	—	—
Brown Flycatcher	—	—	—	1	—	—
Spotted Flycatcher	6	—	6	735	—	3
Red-breasted Flycatcher	1	—	1	55	—	—
Collared Flycatcher	—	—	—	2?	—	—
Pied Flycatcher	16	—	16	928	—	—
Coal Tit	—	—	—	1	—	—
Blue Tit	—	—	—	2	—	—
Great Tit	—	—	—	10	—	—
Treecreeper	—	—	—	1	—	—
Golden Oriole	—	—	—	8	—	—
Brown Shrike	1	—	1	1	—	—
Isabelline Shrike	—	—	—	2	—	—
Red-backed Shrike	3	—	3	205	—	—
Lesser Grey Shrike	—	—	—	6	—	—
Great Grey Shrike	2	—	2	114	—	1
Woodchat Shrike	—	—	—	13	—	—
Jackdaw	—	—	—	4	—	—
Rook	—	—	—	6	—	—
Hooded/Carrion Crow	—	—	—	48	—	—
Raven	—	—	—	26	—	—
Daurian Starling	—	—	—	1	—	—
Starling	113	60	173	25176	2	192
Rose-coloured Starling	—	—	—	3	—	—
House Sparrow	5	—	5	1465	—	3
Tree Sparrow	—	—	—	101	—	1
Chaffinch	57	—	57	2875	—	11
Brambling	70	—	70	3362	—	14
Greenfinch	10	—	10	254	1	2
Goldfinch	—	—	—	11	—	—
Siskin	10	—	10	401	—	1
Linnet	2	—	2	151	—	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>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1948-00</i>
Twite	30	—	30	5473	—	5
Redpoll	4	—	4	627	—	6
Arctic Redpoll	—	—	—	19	—	—
Two-barred Crossbill	—	—	—	1	—	—
Common Crossbill	—	—	—	459	—	2
Parrot Crossbill	—	—	—	37	—	—
Pallas's Rosefinch	1	—	1	1	—	—
Common Rosefinch	3	—	3	180	—	1
Bullfinch	—	—	—	108	—	—
Hawfinch	1	—	1	18	—	—
Tennessee Warbler	—	—	—	2	—	—
Savannah Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
Song Sparrow	—	—	—	3	—	—
White-crowned Sparrow	—	—	—	1	—	—
White-throated Sparrow	—	—	—	2	—	—
Lapland Bunting	1	—	1	48	—	—
Snow Bunting	—	—	—	630	—	3
Pine Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Yellowhammer	2	—	2	62	—	—
Ortolan Bunting	1	—	1	20	—	—
Cretzschmar's Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Yellow-browed Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Rustic Bunting	—	—	—	17	—	1
Little Bunting	2	—	2	35	—	1
Chestnut Bunting	—	—	—	1	—	—
Yellow-breasted Bunting	—	—	—	6	—	—
Reed Bunting	13	—	13	438	—	3
Pallas's Reed Bunting	—	—	—	2	—	—
Red-headed Bunting	—	—	—	5	—	—
Black-headed Bunting	—	—	—	3	—	—
Corn Bunting	—	—	—	3	—	—
Totals:	3,629	3,491	7,120	314,115	136	4,629

Ringing recoveries/controls reported to FIBO during 2000

A re-trap is a bird ringed and then re-caught alive at the same place of ringing.

A control is a bird ringed by one ringer and then caught alive elsewhere by another ringer.

A recovery is a bird ringed and then found dead elsewhere. (Birds ringed and found dead on the isle are not included in table 2.)

The co-ordinates of Fair Isle are 59°32'N, 01°37'W.

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

FULMAR. Only one recovery away from the isle was reported during 2000. An adult ringed in June 1987 was found freshly dead on a beach at Jylland, **Denmark** (4465 days, 719 km, SE). An interesting re-trap concerns a bird ringed on the isle as a chick in July 1966 and re-captured as a breeding adult in July 2000. This is Fair Isle's oldest known Fulmar.

STORM PETREL. A total of 59 individuals ringed on Fair Isle were controlled elsewhere and reported during 2000. These are summarised in the following table:

Table 3. Storm Petrels ringed on Fair Isle and controlled/recovered elsewhere: reports received during 2000.

Yell, Shetland	23	Eilan Hoan, Highland Region	2
Unst, Shetland	1	Eilan nan Ron, Highland Region	8
Eday, Orkney	3	Fife Ness, Fife	1
Deerness, Orkney	1	Rost, Nordland, NORWAY	2
Brough Head, Orkney	8	Sogn og Fjordane, NORWAY	3
North Ronaldsay, Orkney	2	Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	1
Sanda Island, Strathclyde	2	Fribourg, SWITZERLAND	1
		Banneg Island, Finistere, FRANCE	1

All birds were controlled by other ringers within four years of ringing, with the exception of the following birds. One of the birds controlled at Eilan nan Ron in July 2000 was ringed on Fair Isle in August 1993 (2527 days, 189 km, SW). The bird recovered at Fribourg, **Switzerland** was displaced by hurricane Lothar and was found dying in December 1999 (521 days, 1551 km, SE). A remarkable inland recovery of a seabird.

One of the birds controlled at Eilan Hoan in July 2000 was ringed on the isle in 1998 and was controlled in 1999 at Faraidh Head, Highlands. A 'Stormie' ringed in 1999 was recaptured in July 2000 on Unst and then four days later on Yell,

Shetland. This bird is included twice in the table. One ringed on Fair Isle in 1977 was re-trapped here 23 years later.

SHAG. Five recoveries were reported during 2000, all of which were found dead. A chick ringed in June 1997 was found on Papa Stour, Shetland in November 1999 (864 days, 87 km, NNW). A chick ringed in July 1998 was found near Wick, Highland Region in January 1999 (210 days, 146 km, SW). A chick ringed in July 2000 only survived until October when it was found in a lobster creel in Bay of Skaill, Orkney whilst one ringed in June 2000 was found dead at Walls, Shetland in October. Finally, an adult male ringed in June 1998 was found in Cunningsburgh, Shetland in February 2000 (615 days, 60 km, NNE).

WIGEON. Two recoveries. A 1st-year female ringed in September 1998 was shot near Blanchland, Northumberland in December 1999 (446 days, 521 km, S). The second, again a 1st-year female, was ringed in October 1998 and shot at Newbiggin, Northumberland in November 1999 (398 days, 485 km, S). These are only the second and third recoveries of Wigeon ringed on Fair Isle.

EIDER. Two Eiders ringed on the isle were found dead on the isle during 2000. A chick ringed in September 1988 was found in July 2000 (4319 days) and an adult female ringed in June 1998 was recovered in May 2000 (720 days).

SPARROWHAWK. An adult male ringed in April 1997 was found dead at Jylland, **Denmark** in April 2000 having flown into a window (1070 days, 731 km, E).

OYSTERCATCHER. One ringed as a chick in July 1996 was controlled in October 2000, near Bangor, Wales (1566 days, 715 km, SW).

WOODCOCK. A juvenile ringed in November 1997 was found dead on Islay, Strathclyde in January 2000 (799 days, 508 km, SW).

ARCTIC SKUA. A chick ringed in July 1986 was found dead on the isle in June 1998 and was thought to have been killed by a 'Bonxie' (4380 days). Away from Fair Isle, a chick ringed in July 1999 was unfortunately found dead at Flamborough Head, Humberside in September 1999 on its southward bound migration (81 days, 609 km, SSW).

GREAT SKUA. All recoveries reported during 2000 relate to birds found dead. A chick ringed in July 1987 was found in July 2000 at Jylland, **Denmark** (4776 days, 726 km, ESE). A chick ringed in July 1995 was found in July 2000, again at Jylland, **Denmark** (1829 days, 736 km, ESE). A chick ringed in July 1997 was found after violent weather in December 1999 at Dordogne, **France** (899 days,

1586 km, S). A chick ringed in July 1999 was recovered at Calvados, **France** in February 2000 (201 days, 1136 km, S). Birds ringed in 1996 and 1998 were found dead on the isle in 2000.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL. A chick ringed in July 1999 was seen in Douro Litoral, **Portugal** in October 1999 (107 days, 2097 km, SSW). This was a sight record from a bird-watcher who read the ring through his telescope.

GREATER BLACK-BACKED GULL. A chick ringed in June 1992 was found sick on the Out Skerries, Shetland in September 1999 (2632 days, 109 km, NNE). A chick ringed on the same day as the last individual was found dead on Fair Isle in April 2000 (2843 days). A chick ringed in June 1995 was found dead on Whalsay, Shetland in July 1999 (1488 days, 98 km, NNE). Finally, one ringed as a chick in July 1993 had its ring read in the field at Pas de Calais, **France** in September 2000 (2634 days, 999 km, S).

ARCTIC TERN. Two birds ringed as chicks in June 1992 were found dead on North Ronaldsay, Orkney in May 2000, having been taken by cats (2895 days, 46 km, SW).

GUILLEMOT. Thirty-three reports of birds ringed as chicks were received during 2000, with a further two reports of birds ringed as adults. Table 4 lists the recovery locations of birds ringed as chicks in June/July 1999 and recovered during the 1999/2000 winter, whilst the text below details birds ringed in previous years and recovered during 2000.

Table 4. Location of Guillemots recovered away from Fair Isle in their first year of life.

At sea: North Sea	1	FAEROES	6
nr. Aberdeen	1	SWEDEN	1
Lothian	1	NETHERLANDS	2
NORWAY	7	GERMANY	1
DENMARK	1		

All birds were found dead. Six were found in fishing nets, seven were found dead on beaches, one died as a result of severe weather, one due to the effects of oil pollution and the birds in the Faeroes were shot.

Recoveries during 2000 of chicks ringed in previous years are listed below:
Sweden: One ringed in June 1980 was found caught in a fishing net in December 1982 (914 days, 795 km, E). A very late processing of a recovery! One ringed in June 1996 was an oil victim in December 1999 (1258 days, 921 km, E). Finally one

ringed in June 1998 was found dead in a fishing net in November 1999 (498 days, 863 km, E).

Norway: One ringed as a chick in June 1996 was recovered from a fishing net in March 1998 (633 days, 676 km, E).

Faeroes: One ringed as a chick in June 1995 was shot in October 2000 (1940 days, 371 km, NW).

Netherlands: One ringed in June 1994 was found in March 2000 (2077 days, 819 km, SE) and another ringed in June 1997 was found in March 2000 (980 days, 810 km, SE). Both were oil victims. One ringed in June 1998 was found dead in February 2000 (611 days, 953 km, SE).

Arctic Ocean: A bird ringed in June 1998 was found drowned in a fishing net at sea in April 2000 (651 days, 1414 km, NE). A specific location was not given.

North Atlantic: A chick ringed in June 1999 was shot in October 1999, just off the Faeroes (123 days, 529 km, NW).

Belgium: A chick ringed in June 1998 was an oil victim in March 1999 (264 days, 967 km, SE).

France: Two birds, ringed in June 1997 & 1998, were victims of the oil spill in the winter. Both birds were taken into care where they unfortunately died, in January 2000 (557 days, 1341 km, S).

Adults recovered during 2000:

Faeroes: An adult ringed in June 1984 was found dead having been shot in January 2000 (5686 days, 397 km, NW).

Denmark: A bird ringed in June 1994 was found dead in December 1999 (1992 days, 660 km, E).

RAZORBILL. Ten reports were received during 2000, nine of which were foreign. An adult ringed in July 1989 was an oil victim in February 2000 in **France** (3858 days, 978 km, S). An adult ringed in June 1993 was found dead in **Belgium** in January 2000 (2407 days, 970 km, SSE). An adult ringed in June 1975 was found dead in **Denmark** in August 2000 (9193 days, 673 km, E). A chick ringed in June 1997 was found dead in **France** in January 1998 (210 days, 1295 km, S). A chick ringed in June 1996 was an oil victim in **France** in February 1999 (969 days, 1058 km, S). One ringed as a chick in June 1992 was recovered in **Sweden** in July 2000 (2934 days, 774 km, E). A chick ringed in June 2000 was found dead on a beach in **Eire** in October (106 days, 650 km, SW). A chick ringed in June 1997 was an oil victim in the **Netherlands** in January 2000 (949 days, 885 km, SE). A chick ringed in June 1998 was found dead in April 2000, also in the **Netherlands** (650 days, 930 km, SE). The best, however, concerns a bird re-trapped in June 1992. It was ringed on the isle in June 1964 and was also re-caught in June 1972 (10233 days).

PUFFIN. Three birds ringed as adults on the isle were found dead during 2000 as a result of predation from 'Bonxies'. One was ringed in May 1987, one in July 1994 and the other was ringed in July 1996.

COLLARED DOVE. Perhaps the most interesting recovery of the year. A bird ringed in June 1975 was found dead at St. Margaret's Hope, Orkney in July 1999 (8808 days, 111 km, SW).

ROBIN. A first-year ringed in April 2000 was controlled on North Ronaldsay in May 2000 (6 days, 50 km, SW) whilst another ringed in the same period was found dead on Fair Isle two days later. One ringed in September 2000 was controlled in the **Netherlands** 19 days later (879 km, SE).

BLACKBIRD. A first-year male was ringed in October 1997 and controlled in **Norway** in September 2000 (1043 days, 387 km, E).

REDWING. An adult ringed in October 1998 was shot in Ardennes, **France** in November 1999 (389 days, 1196 km, SSE).

BARRED WARBLER. One ringed on 28th August 2000 was taken by a cat on the isle six days later.

GARDEN WARBLER. One ringed on 28th May 2000 was controlled on North Ronaldsay, Orkney nine days later (49 km, SSW).

BLACKCAP. A 1st-year female ringed in September 1999 was found alive in Accra, **Ghana** in January 2000 (118 days, 5999 km, S). Another 1st-year female ringed in October 1999 was found closer to home, having been killed by a cat on Unst, Shetland four days after ringing (142 km, N). One ringed in October 2000 hit a window in Boston, Lincolnshire three weeks later (736 km, S).

STARLING. A chick ringed in June 1996 was controlled in December 1999 at Quina, Orkney (1284 days, 101 km, SSW), whilst another chick, ringed in June 1999 was controlled in Wick, Highland Region in December 2000 (568 days, 148 km, SSW).

GREENFINCH. A female ringed in April 1998 was controlled at Turoey, **Norway** in October 1999 (549 days, 378 km, E). This is only the second Fair Isle ringed Greenfinch to be found away from the island.

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

STORM PETREL. We received details of 34 Storm Petrels controlled on Fair Isle during 2000; eight foreign birds and three ringed in the UK.

All were trapped during mist-netting sessions near the Observatory in July, August and September.

Table 5. Storm Petrels ringed elsewhere and recovered on Fair Isle; reports received during 2000.

Mousa, Shetland	2	Treshnish Isles, Strathclyde	1
Ramna Stacks, Shetland	1	Runde, Heroy, NORWAY	2
Yell, Shetland	9	Klepp, Rogaland, NORWAY	1
North Ronaldsay, Orkney	6	Utsira, NORWAY	3
Brough of Birsay, Orkney	5	Lindesnes Fyr, NORWAY	1
Eilann nan Ron, Highland	1	Kinn, Flora, NORWAY	1
Faraidh Head, Highland	1		

Most birds were controlled within a year of ringing except the following: One of the birds ringed at Runde, **Norway** was ringed in August 1990 (3295 days, 506 km, SW) and the bird ringed at Kinn, **Norway** was ringed in August 1992 (2549 days, 416 km, SW). The bird from the Treshnish Isles was ringed in June 1986 and one of the birds from Yell was ringed in August 1995.

BARNACLE GOOSE. An adult bearing the orange darvic colour ring AD1 on its left leg, was sight read as it sat on rocks at South Light in September 1999. It was ringed at Caerlaverock, Dumfries & Galloway in November 1998.

ARCTIC TERN. A chick ringed on Mousa Isle, Shetland in June 1996 was found dead on Fair Isle in July 2000 (1482 days, 56 km, S).

SHORELARK. One with colour rings at North Light in May 1999 was sight read in the field and was found to have been ringed at Holkham Meals, Norfolk in December 1998 (134 days, 745 km, N). It was colour ringed as part of a Shorelark project and was one of only fifty birds ringed that winter.

WHITETHROAT. A second-year female ringed in April 1999 at Isla de l'Aire, Menorca, **Spain** was controlled on Fair Isle in May 1999 (25 days, 2232 km, NE).

SEDGE WARBLER. A 1st-year ringed in July 1999 at Queenamidda, Orkney was controlled on Fair Isle in May 2000 (292 days, 98 km, NE).

BLACKCAP. A 1st-year ringed at Zele Heikant, **Belgium**, was controlled on Fair Isle in September 1999 (47 days, 1006 km, NW).

CHAFFINCH. A male ringed on 5th October 1999 on Unst, Shetland was controlled on Fair Isle two weeks later (148 km, SSW). Of interest, the same bird was controlled at Raggra, Highlands on the 18th December 1999, a further 300 km South.

Fair Isle Moths, 2000

Nick Riddiford

In similar vein to 1999, there was a slow start to the moth “season”. The Observatory trap was running from as early as May, with single Shears *Hada nana* and Marbled Coronet *Hadena confusa* on 15th the first captures, but very little was trapped until July. The first macro moths in the Schoolton trap were two Small Square-spots *Diarsia rubi* on 3rd July. Thereafter, all the regular species occurred, with largest numbers and variety in August. The commonest moth at Schoolton was again Dark Arches *Apamea monoglypha*. It was particularly abundant from 21st July to 3rd August, with maxima of 110 on 28th and 102 on 30th July. The only other species occurring in substantial numbers was the Ingrailed Clay *Diarsia mendica*. This polymorphic species was commonest between 16th and 29th August, peaking at 84 on 28th. There were still 35 in the Schoolton trap as late as 3rd September, after which numbers rapidly declined. The Square-spot Rustic *Xestia xanthographa* was also frequent in early September, and 25 were trapped on 5th. The most abundant moth in the Observatory trap was the heather-loving True Lovers Knot *Lycophotia porphyrea*, mainly concentrated in the last week of July, peaking at 108 on 31st.

We know that some species are common residents on the isle but rarely attracted to light. One such moth is the Twin-spot Carpet *Perizoma didymata*. On the late afternoon of 11th August Schoolton meadow and the Quoy roadside was full of them, some flying but most lurking in areas of reed-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*. The nominate and the Shetland form *hethlandica* were represented in roughly equal proportions. It is harder to assess the status of other rarely encountered species. One such is the Setaceous Hebrew character *Xestia c-nigrum*. This species is recorded every year, but the 2000 records of one in the Schoolton trap on 26th July and one attracted to sugar on 2nd August is a typical tally. Its annual occurrence suggests that there is a (small?) resident population. Another species of uncertain status is the Brindled Ochre *Dasypolia templi*. One was trapped at Schoolton on 6th October. This species has only been encountered a few times, but angelica is a potential food plant.

The Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* is a well-known migrant throughout Europe. Nevertheless, there are few Fair Isle records, so one in the Schoolton trap on 22nd August, and sight records on 27th September, two on 29th September, a single on 1st October, four on the 6th and further singles on 14th & 18th October constitutes the best ever year. We have come to recognise September as a month of migrant moths as well as birds. The Brick *Agrochola circellaris* made its now annual appearance on 15th September when one was caught against a Schoolton window and four more were attracted to posts painted with a sugar solution.

Further sightings were reported in the north on 25th September and ‘many’ on 26th with the last on 13th October. It is known that sugar solution attracts species that are less likely to enter light traps. This was clearly demonstrated by an impressive run of Dark Sword-grass *Agrotis ipsilon* and Angle Shades *Phlogophora meticulosa*. Both are well known migrants, though Angle Shades has been recorded breeding on the isle. Only three Dark Sword-grass were caught in the Schoolton trap (on 22nd and two on 30th September), but at sugar there were single individuals on seven dates between 14th September and 1st October and two on 17th and 22nd September. A similar pattern was recorded for Angle Shades. Single moths were trapped on 4th and 16th September, but individuals visited the sugared posts on 12 nights between 29th August and 1st October, with three there on 12th and four on 17th September. Further field sightings were singles in the Plantation on 13th May and at the Observatory on 30th September, 1st & 13th October.

One of the earliest moths of the year was a most exciting migrant, a Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* at the bottom end of the Field ditch on 22nd June. This was only the third Fair Isle record, but it was quickly followed by the fourth (25th June), fifth (4th July) and sixth (26th July). On the last date the isle was full of Diamond-backed Moths *Plutella xylostella*, present in their thousands. This is by no means a rare moth, but never ceases to amaze when one considers its tiny size and the huge distances it covers.

There was another hawk-moth on 20th September, a Convolvulus Hawk *Agrius convolvuli*. It was still alive when picked up at South Light on a foul day, but was so battered that it had lost all its scales. It was part of a major irruption to the northern isles, but only the second Fair Isle record. A Smoky Wainscot *Mythimna impura* in the Schoolton trap on 28th July was another second record. Pride of place for Fair Isle rarity, however, goes to a Crinan Ear *Amphipoea crinensis* on 29th July in the Schoolton trap, a Turnip Moth *Agrotis segetum* on 28th August at Schoolton sugar and The Suspected *Parastichtis suspecta*, all first records for Fair Isle. There was competition for the first Suspected. I caught one on sugar at Schoolton and Paul Harvey caught two at Springfield, also on sugar, all on the evening of 3rd August.

Many thanks to islanders, visitors and Observatory staff for additional records. Barry Goater and Colin Plant again helped with identifications of difficult species.

Other Wildlife

Alan Bull

Records of most forms of wildlife (as well as birds) are kept at the Observatory, with all visitors being encouraged to report sightings at the daily log or directly to the ornithological staff. Cetaceans, butterflies and moths make up the bulk of such sightings. These records are submitted to the relevant organisations in Shetland, which produce the following Annual Reports:

Shetland Entomological Group (includes records of butterflies and moths on Fair Isle). Membership £5, includes Annual Report. Contact Mike Pennington, 9 Daisy Park, Baltasound, Unst, Shetland. Tel: 01957 711307

Shetland Sea Mammal Group (includes records from Fair Isle and also from the 'Good Shepherd' during the Crossings to and from Shetland. Membership £5, includes Annual Report. Contact Howard Loates, 'Windrill', Exnaboe, Virkie, Shetland ZE3 9JS. Tel: 01950 460648

Summary of Cetaceans

As usual, most Cetacean sightings came from the Good Shepherd IV (details of which can be found in the Shetland Sea Mammal Group Report). Fair Isle 'land based' observers fared well too. The highlights were undoubtedly pods of Killer Whales seen in May and June. There were four on the 24th May, three on the 29th (probably the same group) and six on the 4th June. Other sightings included:

Minke Whale: 1 on 14th August

Harbour Porpoise: 2 on 22nd July, 2 on 11th and 30th August, 6 on 24th September

Risso's Dolphin: 6 on 6th September, 2 on 6th October

Dolphin Spp: 3 on 13th August, 9 between 7th and 10th September

Summary of Butterflies

2000 was a good year for Butterfly sightings. Reasonable numbers were seen of both Red Admiral and Painted Lady, although there was just one sighting of a Small Tortoiseshell. There were a total of 80 sightings ('butterfly days'), centred mainly around the peak bird migration times. These are summarised in the following table:

	June	July	August	September	October
Painted Lady	10	4	1	3	
Red Admiral	2	1	2	51	5
Small Tortoiseshell			1		

The year's first Butterfly was a Painted Lady on the 15th June, with the last of that species seen on 10th September. Red Admirals were recorded between 18th June and 17th October. The Small Tortoiseshell was seen on 15th August.

Summary of Mammals

A sighting of interest concerned a Grey Seal with an orange tag in its left hind flipper, seen on the 15th July. The annual Grey Seal Pup census conducted in October and November counted a total of 97 new-born pups in the geos around the island, compared to a count of 64 pups in 1999. Common Seals are seen less frequently, as they do not breed on the isle, with occasional 'yearlings' and adults being seen in the South Harbour area.

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Fair Isle Bird Observatory Trust Financial Report and Accounts for 2000

A summary of the Trust's accounts for the year ended 31st October 2000 appears on the following pages. The full statutory accounts and independent accountant's report can be inspected at the Bird Observatory on Fair Isle.

The year ended 31st October 2000 was another successful year for Fair Isle Bird Observatory in every respect: as an immensely enjoyable place to visit, in pure financial terms and in terms of developing the Observatory as a business. Visitor numbers increased by about 7% from 1999 and there was a good response to the wider range of goods available in the shop. The bar takings were down from the previous high levels, whether this reflects particularly exciting or disappointing birding is not clear. Excellent work by all the staff maintained overall income at a high level whilst constraining the level of expenditure, the effect of which was to maintain the satisfactory financial performance of the previous years. We were able to remedy (hopefully permanently) the difficulties with some of the showers and continue the annual program of replacing some problematic windows and doors.

We continued to receive valuable income from the JNCC and Scottish National Heritage for Seabird Monitoring work and the provision of a Fair Isle Ranger Service respectively. This income is vital for the continued financial health of FIBOT and we are working hard to ensure that we continue to fulfil the objectives of these two organisations.

As commented on in previous reports, we have continued to grow the volume of business obtained through organised travel groups. The majority of our visitors will, however, continue to be independent travellers. Another area of development is our increased use of the Internet as a means of information and attracting visitors. Much progress was made with the Fair Isle Bird Observatory web-site during 2000 with regularly-updated pages covering accommodation, bird news and travel arrangements. Readers are recommended to visit our web-site at fairislebirdobs.co.uk to view our progress.

Any readers wishing to make a specific or non-specific donation to support the Observatory can be assured it will be gratefully received and effectively used.

There is much to be optimistic about and our financial situation remains satisfactory. With continued careful management and prudent control of expenditure, there is no reason why the Observatory should not flourish into the future.

Mike Wood
Finance Director

***Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended
31st October 2000***

	2000 £	1999 £
Income		
Hostel Income	52,810	49,715
Shop Sales	6,203	3,829
Bar Income	3,189	4,073
Miscellaneous Hostel Income	1,545	3,448
	<hr/> 63,747	<hr/> 61,065
Cost of Sales		
Purchases	21,400	21,096
Wages & Salaries	27,121	22,457
	<hr/> 48,521	<hr/> 43,553
Gross Profit	15,226	17,512
Other Income		
Interest Received	4,286	3,965
Deferred Grant Income released	2,400	2,400
Subscriptions	6,968	5,169
Donations	3,481	6,107
Grants Received	15,171	14,853
Other Income	0	0
	<hr/> 32,306	<hr/> 32,494
	47,532	50,006
Other Expenses		
Administration	5,745	10,288
Establishment	19,332	15,352
Marketing & Sales	4,838	5,980
Financial & Legal	1,478	844
Depreciation	14,424	16,726
	<hr/> 45,817	<hr/> 49,190
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	<hr/> 1,715	<hr/> 816

Balance Sheet as at 31st October 2000

	31/10/00 £	31/10/99 £
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	106,948	121,372
Investments	10,857	10,857
	<u>117,805</u>	<u>132,229</u>
Current Assets		
Stocks	8,525	5,701
Debtors	9,191	12,826
Cash at bank and in hand	37,397	69,675
	<u>55,113</u>	<u>88,202</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(17,900)	(72,370)
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)	<u>37,213</u>	<u>15,832</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	155,018	148,061
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(2,845)	(8,300)
	<u>152,173</u>	<u>139,761</u>
Representing:		
Accumulated Surplus	135,865	114,376
Appeal Reserve	16,308	25,385
	<u>152,173</u>	<u>139,761</u>

***Fair Isle Endowment Fund –
Accounts for year to 31st October 2000***

	2000	1999
	£	£
Revenue Account		
Investment Income (Gross)	158	158
Investment Income (Net)	187	183
Deposit Income (Gross)	0	0
Tax Refund	32	26
Total	377	367

Capital Account

Investments at Market Value

£2,875 5.5% Treasury Stock 2008/12	2,956	2,850
Henderson 960 Income & Growth Units	4,458	4,187
Mercury 1797 British Blue Chip Units	2,433	2,550
Cash	12	12
Total	9,859	9,599

Represented by:–

Balance at beginning of year	9,599	9,058
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Investments	260	541
Total	9,859	9,599

The John Harrison Memorial Fund

The John Harrison Memorial Fund provides financial assistance in the form of grants to young birdwatchers between the ages of 15 and 21, to enable them to visit Fair Isle and take part in the daily work schedule of the Observatory. It was established in 1968 by Richard Richardson in memory of John Harrison who visited Fair Isle three times before he died at the early age of 19.

Grants normally cover only the cost of travel by the most economical means possible to the Observatory and back home. Full travel costs may only be given for visits of two full weeks or longer.

Whilst at the Observatory awardees are required to pay £10 per day to cover the cost of three meals a day, bed linen and towels, laundry costs and to offset fuel costs. Awardees are expected to take part in the regular work routine conducted by Observatory staff on a five to six-days-a-week basis. Work hours are normally 0900-1800 but may be longer in the seabird breeding season. Work varies depending on the time of year so you are advised to discuss with the warden any particular interest you may have in ringing, migration or seabird work so you can arrange your visit at the appropriate time. Duties may involve some hours of data entry on the Observatory computers, migration census work, ringing, trap repairs, visitor assistance and some maintenance work.

It is very unlikely there will be accommodation available for JHMF awardees between the beginning of September and early October.

Application forms can be obtained from the Administrator at Fair Isle Bird Observatory. Completed application forms should be sent to Dr Peter Evans, **70 Stratford Street, Oxford OX4 1SW** along with your detailed CV, your phone number and the names, addresses and phone numbers of two referees.

Dr Evans will notify you if your application is successful and you should then check the availability of accommodation with the Administrator at the Observatory and make a definite booking. Please provide the Administrator with details of your travel arrangements, save all your travel receipts and present them to the Administrator when you arrive. The costs of your travel will then be offset against your bill for accommodation.

***John Harrison Memorial Fund –
Accounts for the year to 31st October 2000***

Revenue Account	2000	1999
	£	£
Investment Income – Gross	533	642
Net	14	11
Deposit Interest received	80	31
Total	627	684

Grants Paid	350	350
Management Expenses	309	176
Balance to Capital Account	(32)	158
Total	627	684

Capital Account

Investments at Market Value

£7255 6.75% Treasury Stock 2004	7,624	–
£6400 9% Conversion Stock 2000	–	6,475
Mercury 637 British Blue Chip Units	863	904
Cash at bank	1,540	2,987
Total	10,027	10,366

Represented by:–

Balance at beginning of year	10,366	10,312
Balance from Revenue Account	(32)	158
Realised Gain/Loss on Investments	(75)	(6)
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Investments	(232)	(98)
Total	10,027	10,366

Mike Wood
Finance Director

SUMBURGH HOTEL

With spectacular views over the sea to Fair Isle and situated next to the ancient viking settlement Jarlshof, Sumburgh Hotel enjoys one of the most picturesque locations of any hotel in the British Isles.

Our thirty-two bedrooms are all tastefully decorated and have private facilities, so your complete comfort is assured at all times.

You will find that our two bars and restaurant offer fine wines, excellent cuisine and swift and friendly service.

Bar lunches served daily

Monday–Saturday 12pm to 2pm

Sunday 12.30pm to 2pm

Bar suppers

Nightly 6.30pm to 9.30pm

Restaurant

Nightly 7pm to 9pm (bookings required)



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email: sumburgh.hotel@zetnet.co.uk

website: www.sumburgh-hotel.zetnet.co.uk



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available from SIT at the Market Cross, Lerwick**

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Historic Sites

Culloden Battlefield, 5m 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



Castle

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

Arduaine Garden,
20m S of Oban on A816



Mountains & Wild Land

Glencoe

17m S of Fort William on A82

Kintail

Glomach

West Affric

Torridon



16m E of Kyle of Lochalsh on A87

9m W of Kinlochewe on A896

For further details contact

Peggie Gordon, Aberyarff House, Church St., Inverness IV1 1EU

Tel. No. Inverness 01463 232034

website: www.nts.org.uk

islesburgh community centre

Facilities and activities for families, children, young people and adults.

<i>Cafe open:</i>	<i>Monday to Saturday</i>	<i>10.00am - 5.00pm</i>
<i>Youth Cafe open:</i>	<i>Monday to Saturday</i>	<i>6.30pm - 10.30pm</i>
	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>7.30pm - 10.30pm</i>

School holiday programme for children and young people - a wide variety of arts, crafts, games, sports, trips and events.

islesburgh house cafe

Open all year round. Serving a selection of delicious hot and cold whole foods, vegetarian dishes and healthier options.

<i>Open</i>	<i>Monday to Thursday</i>	<i>11.00am - 9.00pm</i>
	<i>Friday and Saturday</i>	<i>11.00am - 5.00pm</i>

The ideal place to enjoy a snack or a full meal, in relaxing and comfortable surroundings.

lerwick youth hostel

Shetland's main youth hostel, situated in central Lerwick and offering quality accommodation to the budget traveller.

The Youth Hostel is fully equipped for every hosteller's need, and is fully accessible for disabled users. Accommodation is provided in dormitories, group and family rooms.

Open April to September.

garrison theatre

Shetland's performing arts venue, with local and visiting events throughout the year.

For information on forthcoming events or ticket details contact the Box Office at Islesburgh Community Centre.

Islesburgh Community Centre

King Harald Street, Lerwick, Shetland, ZE1 0EQ

telephone: 01595 692114
fax: 01595 696470
e-mail: islesburgh@zetnet.co.uk



Notes



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plus 250,000 seabirds!*

FOCUS ON FAIR ISLE 22 - 29 JUNE

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ISLAND INSIGHTS 29 JUNE - 6 JULY

*The Ultimate Fair Isle experience combining
culture, crafts, history & wildlife!*

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